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October 2021

A little paper big on community

FREE

# Neighbors



No. 200 Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut and beyond

Looking Up:

# Thoughts Around the Fire... "Anyway"

By Bob Grindle

It has been said that anything is fine to talk about while sitting around the fire and as I close up the animals on this rapidly darkening first evening of autumn on the twenty-first day in the twenty-first year of the twenty-first century the night music of rustling leaves, settling-in birds trilling and chirping, a distant staccato of acorns and hickory nuts falling onto stone walls and shed roofs, a far off barking dog, a few chill-resistant katydids, the distant sound of traffic on the road down the hill and the raccoons once again fussing down by the pond...it all makes me think of instruments in a dimly-lit orchestra pit warming up before another performance. But it is no longer summer and the acoustics of the sounds of the night have changed. Gone is the haunting reverberation when summer's lush curtain of trees reflects and stretches sound until the human ear can't tell where it's coming from. Tonight's still brilliant, waning Harvest Moon rises silently, like the secondary off-stage lights in the trees at Tanglewood, reflecting just enough light to cast a delicate shadow as the evening deepens into darkness. It doesn't take too rich an imagination on a night like this to conjure up the pungent smoky smell of a woody fire and perhaps the hypnotic and rhythmic chanting of a gathering of ancient story-tellers. How magical is the human mind! It can bridge millennia using only a tapestry of its own creation as the carpet on this ride across the ages. The fire crackles higher.

It has been said that anything is fine to talk about while sitting around the fire and I wonder how and even if, our species will manage to repair the damage of its perpetual tampering. If I were a cosmic landlord I should think about foreclosing on the tenants of Earth...the constant warring, environmental upheaval, polluting, disregard of

plant and animal neighbors and perhaps, most of all, the arrogant attitude that someone else will bail us out or we can simply hop over to another address and start anew...all these behaviors suggest that, as Chinese philosopher Laozi (Lao Tzu) pointed out more than 2500 years ago, "if we do not change direction, we may end up where we are headed." As gifted and resilient and successful as our species has been, are we capable of being custodians of the empire?

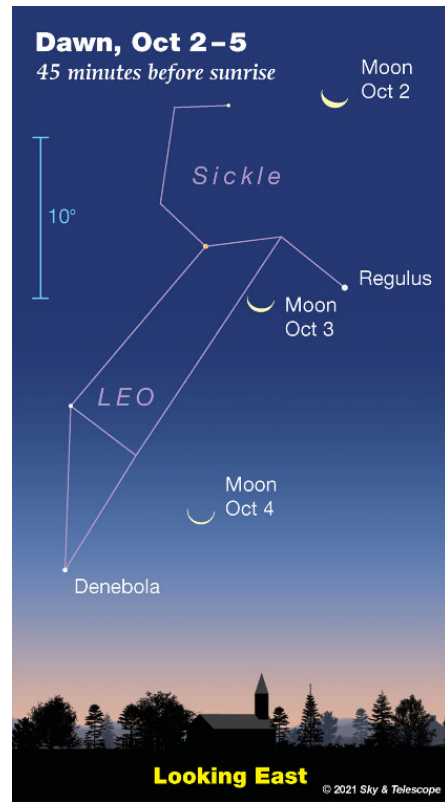
As the fire continues to burn steadily, I am reminded of Mother Teresa's poem "Anyway" and as Jupiter and Saturn faintly show up in the bright moonlight I recall my favorite line from the poem: "Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; Give the best you've got anyway." How will we manage to get our tampering species across this chasm of reckless disregard for our common humanity when all we have is the slender and delicate rope-bridge of our own ingenuity? Again, the Chinese philosopher Laozi and Mother Teresa suggest it begins with each one of us... and each one of us according to what we are capable of. It can be infuriating and discouraging to watch the brilliant and wealthy hurl themselves into space to prove some rationalized point or other, instead of investing their talents and their resources in making the Earth perhaps a better residence, but again, Mother Teresa suggests: "People are often unreasonable,

illogical and self-centered; Forgive them anyway." That can be tough.

Before the fire burns out I lay back and watch as the Full Moon washes out nearly everything else, talking softly as if the night and all that fills it are old friends. In a week the Moon will be a waning crescent rising through Leo before dawn in the east and a week later, a waxing crescent setting into Scorpius and Venus at sunset in the southwest. There is majesty and comfort in the perpetual tick-tocking of the Cosmic clockworks and I smile to think

that while the problems of today seem complex and difficult to resolve, our long ago ancestors must have felt the same as they sat around the fire and tried to understand what was happening as the cold weather seemed to be advancing unrelentingly or the mountains continued to belch smoke and fire or wonder what had happened to all the game animals they were used to eating.

The glow from the embers in the fire pit is dying and it is hard to imagine that this common thing, fire, sometimes relaxing, often destructive, always useful, the first tool of humankind, dating back more than 400,000 years and thought by some to be the single most important and transformative cause of the advance of our species, is also a delightful spark to start a story. Enjoy this delightful season of the New England cycle of life and remember: "If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; be happy anyway."



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



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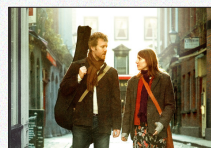
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On our cover: Photo taken at West Branch Pond Camps, an old Maine Sporting Camp on First West Branch Pond, 28 miles north of Greenville, Maine. Photo by Christine Acebo of Ashford.

This is our time on earth.  
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The Purpose of Neighbors:

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

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# NO to Toxic Smokestack

By Loretta Wrobel



On Sunday September 12th I attended a Dayenu, a Jewish call to climate action. Dayenu is the name of a song which is part of the Jewish holiday of Passover. The meaning translates roughly to "It would have been enough." We live in a world where excess is celebrated, money, goods and consumption. Most of us have enough, and to express gratitude for the abundance of gifts given to us in this life is a practice we need to cultivate. This event was a call to stop the Killingly Fracked Gas Plant and energize us to take action for Climate Justice. It was a warm summer day as we met by the Quinebaug River in Putnam next to the Congregation B'Nai Shalom. We were a diverse group of dedicated people who heard the call and answered by showing up.

I was impressed and encouraged that so many organizations were represented at this poignant happening. Temple B'nai Israel Rabbi Jeremy Schwartz hosted the event and read off the impressive list of numerous Jewish, Environment, and Justice organizations that sponsored this climate action protest. There were five local synagogues represented. Other organizations included Connecticut Sierra Club, Quiet Corner Shouts, No More Dirty Power Killingly, Interreligious Eco-Justice Network (IEJN), Windham Region Interfaith Working Group, Windham Chapter NAACP, We the People, Extinction Rebellion, Sustainable CT Windham, Connecticut Climate Crisis Mobilization(C3M), Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut (JFEC), Peoples Action for Clean Energy, plus 16 rabbis!

To be part of a gathering that was so inclusive was refreshing. In these times of polarization and lack of awareness that we are all in this together, a coming together of individuals representing a wide span of the citizens that reside in northeastern Connecticut is a boost to morale. Maybe we have a chance to change this deadly course we have been pursuing. There was a sense of both urgency and empowerment as we all came together to stand up and shout for an end to the madness of promoting climate chaos by supporting dirty energy and building more fossil fuel plants.

It was an honor to be among people who are aware of the dire situation and are not sitting at home, but taking action as they accept that stopping fossil fuel use is critical to our survival. During these times of harsh vitriol and lack of respect, it is exhilarating to witness how caring so many people in our Quiet Corner are. We care that the air remains healthy. We care that our children grow up in a safe environment. We care that our waters remain drinkable and pollution-free. And we care that the earth continues to thrive long after our grandchildren are gone.

A young teenager, Sam Marcus, spoke honestly and eloquently of his desire to be able to live his life in a healthy environment. I was moved by his humbleness and his awareness of what is happening to our planet. He had seen the wild fires around Lake Tahoe this year and was wounded deeply by the devastation. He felt compelled to stand up and speak out.

Now if a teenager can have the courage to stand up and speak his heart in front of about one hundred folks, what does it take for you to add your energy and stamina to the fight?

Why is the Killingly Fracked Gas Plant dangerous? The gas plant will increase our state's carbon emissions by 5%. Burning methane destroys our climate faster than coal or oil does. We already have high asthma rates in our part of Connecticut. This new plant will make us sicker and increase our mortality. The proposed emissions stack is 150 feet, shorter than EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) practice standard of 213 feet. The height is to avoid concentration of pollutants in the air, water, and soil. As if that isn't enough, the plant is within three miles of four Killingly public schools, a daycare center, a convalescent center, and a 74-unit elderly housing complex. Do I need to go on? All of us in northeastern Connecticut will be negatively impacted by this plant.

Governor Lamont has stated the goal is to make our state have 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040. The Killingly plant will make that impossible.

All of us can stop this disastrous action by calling the Governor's office at 800-406-1527 or by email at <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/Contact/Email-Governor-Lamont>. You can also contact your local senator or representative. Senator Mae Flexer is opposed to this plant, and she can be reached at 860-240-8600 or at her website <http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/Flexer-contact> where you can send her an email. She represents several area towns, including Killingly, Windham, Canterbury, Mansfield and Putnam. Senator Flexer did attend this gathering and vowed to fight the building of this toxic power plant.

It is so important in these times of increasing climate chaos to stay informed and protect our environment from further damage. There are ongoing protests at Killingly Commons on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 11am--noon at 581 Hartford Turnpike, Dayville. Several of the groups participating in this call to action would welcome your participation. If you belong to a religious organization, encourage them to take a stand with you.

The words used to describe this action drew me to the event. I read, "Sounding the Call, Stop the Plant, Save the Planet." I heard the call, and raced over to the riverside to be ready for the blowing of the shofar, an ancient musical instrument, usually a ram's horn. I learned that the shofar is blown at Rosh Hashanah. The blowing of the shofar was a call to action to stop the power plant and to focus on a just green recovery for America. To hear the shofar is to hear the voice of heaven. There were many heavenly voices on the Quinebaug riverbank that afternoon, as several shofars were distributed among the crowd.

We heard seven calls that afternoon to energize and mobilize us to not stand idly by. The building of this second gas plant in Killingly is one plant too many. It will influence all of us in creating more pollution, more sickness and deaths, and more toxicity for our children, seniors, and all those in between. This action can be stopped if we join together, hear the call, and respond eagerly.

Join us in building a better energy future for not only Killingly but all of northeastern Connecticut. Our air, water, and environment are too important to ignore this threat. Connecticut does not need this power plant. We have enough power. We need a healthy environment with clean air and water.

## At UConn's Benton Museum

Submitted by Maripaz Shaw

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Artists Talk: Monica Bock, Cora Lynn Deibler & Kathryn Myers  
Wednesday, October 13, 2021; 4:00pm - 5:00pm  
Masks Required.  
Faculty discuss their work in the 2021 Studio Art Faculty Exhibition, featuring Monica Bock, Professor of Sculpture and Ceramic Art; Cora Lynn Deibler, Professor of Illustration; and Kathryn Myers, Professor of Painting.



Critical LOOKing  
Friday, October 15, 2021  
12:15pm - 12:45pm

Masks Required.  
Tap your powers of observation and investigate a single work of art through close looking and discussion with Amanda Douberley, Assistant Curator/Academic Liaison.  
Discussion Subject: Aaron Bohrod's "Of War and Peace", oil on panel, created in 1956.  
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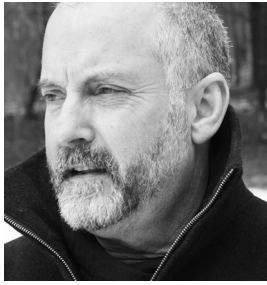
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## From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

## Mums the Word and the Importance of CLiCK

By C. Dennis Pierce



It is that time again. I stayed up too late last night sitting on my back porch waiting to see that guy that sneaks in and carefully paints the leaves on the trees in my back yard. I fell asleep in the chair. Next morning in the haze of the mist I saw his evening's work. He only did a little, so tonight I am sure I will catch a glimpse of him when he returns.

Henry David Thoreau said, "Fall arrives in Connecticut like a prom queen, draped in boastful reds, yellows and rusty browns, perfumed with wood smoke. It saunters through the Litchfield hills, then turns to the suburbs and cities, where one tree, on one block, can inspire an entire neighborhood's devotion." Yes, let's face it, fall garbs hold of us and asks us to stop, take a look around, smell the air and then, and only then, can you resume your fast paced life.

I find it interesting how the season sneaks up on us like a cat sizing up a chipmunk on a garden path. One day we are cutting the lawn with not a leaf in sight and the next, boom! Our yard work takes on a whole new life. And it is not just Thoreau who writes about fall. The season's changes have been highlighted in many works of fiction attempting to capture the essence of it all. In Thornton Wilder's play, *Our Town*, which is set in a fictional New England village, one of the character's asks another actor: "Do human beings ever realize life while they live it?" He sighs in response: "No. Saints and poets—maybe. They do some." So I understand many of us are not Saints or poets. Maybe that is why life for most of us rushes by. Maybe most of us don't stay up at night just waiting for that guy with the paint brush or maybe we should.

Fall, unlike any other season is our most sentimental season. Mother Nature grabs us by the shoulders and says, "Look! Look around you. Stop and experience the wind, the color, and in the wash of rain or snow that one day takes it all away." Fall is about the death of leaves, but it is also about the real mortality of us all. It is the fact that the one thing we cannot change is change itself—and nowhere is change so consistently visible than three weeks every autumn in the Quiet Corner. It is the glory before the bleakness of winter. Fall is timeless because it marks time so clearly but unfortunately, we seldom notice.

Fall not only welcomes us with leaves but also with the tradition of a displays of mums. The reds, yellows, oranges sitting on our front steps or carefully positioned around the yard with pumpkins that have been picked up at the local market. The mums come in a rainbow of fall hues and most people don't realize it, but these are a hardy perennial that shouldn't be discarded after the season is over. These great plants can be placed in the ground to repeat their show each autumn if we wish. However, they cost so little, many folks use them as a throwaway decoration. I for one am guilty of doing just that. My mums usually end up back in the woods next to my compost pile. To be honest I know very little about mums. Was not that the flower that I wore on my jacket to the prom? So, with a little research I found that the chrysanthemum was a late bloomer on Western shores, not appearing in Europe until the 17th century, its beauty has certainly stood the test of time. The flower was first cultivated in China as far back as the 15th Century, where it was grown as a flowering herb.

Around the 8th century AD, it

went on to blossom in Japan, where it was adopted as the crest and official seal of the emperor, and is celebrated to this day with a National Chrysanthemum Day called the Festival of Happiness. By the time it reached Europe in the 17th Century, more than 500 cultivars of the flower had been recorded – and it was then that it was given its modern-day moniker by eminent Swedish botanist Karl Linnaeus, who combined the Greek words 'chryso', meaning gold, and 'antheon' meaning flower.



Before I wrap up this column, I would like to take the opportunity to tell you about a nonprofit in Willimantic, located at 41 Club Road in Windham. I would suggest that you may not have heard about this great effort called CLiCK. CLiCK stands for Commercially Licensed Co-operative Kitchen. CLiCK is a 501c3 non-profit which runs on cooperative values, fostering local economic development by providing low cost commercial kitchen space to small food businesses and teaching and event space for health and nutrition education. CLiCK is also a local food network which is a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption in order to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of the local community. The mission of CLiCK is to provide assistance on so many levels. As a non-profit, the services that they provided are extensive. From offering community educational classes, access to a licensed production facility, outreach to the local community and providing individuals with the tools and education so they can start their own business is only several examples on how they are assisting in the much needed support to our local community.

How does CLiCK help our community?

CLiCK provides *support for local farmers* to create value-added products for individuals like yourself can purchase.

CLiCK's Micro Business Start-Up program *assisted over 65 new local food businesses*, enabling them to open and begin making food products you can buy in our local farmers markets, food co-ops, and at CLiCK.

CLiCK provides *business consulting and financial support in Spanish and English* for low-income and minority members to start food businesses that will feed our community.

CLiCK promotes job growth by *providing training and certification* classes for people in the food industry to ensure a safe food handling and increased professional culinary opportunities.

CLiCK's Food Rescue Program captures surplus food from farms, stores, or local gardens to share with people who need it most, *supporting a Zero Food Waste community*.

CLiCK is a *community center for food*, offering local education for all ages in growing, cooking, and sharing food in our teaching kitchen, gardens, orchard, and labyrinth.

CLiCK enables the creation of new businesses that contribute to *local economic development*, which is essential for future

prosperity in our Northeastern CT communities.

October is CLiCK's Annual Appeal for funding. Please help CLiCK support your local, resilient, healthy food supply network by making a donation. You may contact the office for a form that can be sent to you by emailing, [clickwillimantic@gmail.com](mailto:clickwillimantic@gmail.com) or send a check to: CLiCK Annual Appeal. P.O. Box 788, Willimantic, CT 06226. Please be sure to include your contact information.

Here is a perfect recipe for the fall season. You can also substitute walnuts for the pecans and semi-sweet chocolate chips for the cranberries.

Cranberry – Pecan, Pumpkin Drop Cookies  
Makes 4 dozen cookies

Pre heat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly butter two baking sheets or line them with parchment paper. You can use oil instead of butter or use a convenient oil spray.

¼ cup of pecan halves  
½ cup (1 stick) of butter  
1 cup of firmly packed light, brown sugar (you can use dark too)  
1 large egg  
2/3 of a cup of pumpkin puree (you can substitute canned, but only if you really have to)  
1 teaspoon of vanilla extract  
1 ½ cups of flour  
1 teaspoon of baking soda  
½ teaspoon of baking powder  
1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon  
½ teaspoon of ground allspice. (If you do not have allspice whisk 3½ teaspoons ground cinnamon, 1¼ teaspoons ground nutmeg and a pinch of ground cloves, then use as a 1:1 replacement for ground allspice in a recipe.)  
½ teaspoon of ground cloves  
Pinch of salt  
1 cup of dried cranberries

Directions:

Spread the pecans on a small baking pan and bake until lightly toasted. Keep an eye on them so they will not burn. About 6 to 8 minutes. Chop coarsely. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer beat the butter until creamy. You can also do this by hand with a whip but it is troublesome. Gradually add the brown sugar, beating until fluffy. Add the egg, pumpkin and vanilla and beat until smooth. In a smaller bowl stir together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, and salt. When thoroughly mixed, add to pumpkin mixture and mix until blended well. Stir in cranberries and pecans. Drop the batter in rounded teaspoons onto the prepared pan. Bake until golden brown about 10 to 12 minutes. Maybe a little longer depending on your oven. Transfer cookies to a rack to cool. The cookies can be stored in an airtight container for a few days or wrap tightly and freeze.

As always thanks for reading my column. I am looking forward to the changing of the seasons. In fact, fall is my favorite season. Maybe that is why I live in New England. I have lived in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts and Connecticut. I have frequently visited other surrounding states but wherever it is, as long as its New England it's ok by me. Until next month, 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](mailto:Codfish53@Yahoo.com). Peas be with you...

Monday, September 27, 2021

Dear Reader-

Thoughts on our 200th edition.

After having experimented with several early editions late last century, it's hard to believe it has been 18 years since I began work in earnest on this publication. A child born in the spring of 2003 would have recently graduated from high school. And like that child this paper has grown, matured and become more worldly. Just as it would have taken a village to raise that child so to our village has created what *Neighbors* is today.

It want to thank the countless volunteer writers, photographers, artists and poets whose work has appeared here. Without the continued support of many local advertisers, this paper would have fallen by the wayside many years ago. Thank you Kevin Rare, our printer, who was very helpful during the early years and continues to produce quality printing at a reasonable cost. Thank you readers for making *Neighbors* self-circulating. Thank you to all the folks who came up to us at the Willimantic Downtown Country Fair to say they love the paper. I am truly blessed to live in this community. We all are. And last, but not least, thank you to my wife Karen, who has supported me from day one. You are my rock. Tom King

## Grave Tales

## Oct 23rd Grave Tales Tour

Submitted by Bev York for Windham Arts

Some people just can't get enough time in old graveyards. If you enjoy cemetery crawls and love to discover the stories and the gravestones- then this event is for you. Visitors will get the list of participating towns on the Windham Arts website and may visit any or all sites during the four- hour event.

Guides at each cemetery will share a few stories of the those long buried but not forgotten. Some stories may be told by the ghosts themselves.

In Windham, some stones date to the late 1600s. Josiah Manning was one of the gravestone carvers who carved many of the ornate and iconic granites in the region. In 1800, he even carved his own stone and died six years later at age 82.

Chaplin resident, Rusty Lanzit, will portray the Reverend Francis Williams (1814-1896) and tell tales in the Chaplin Cemetery.

A visit to the Nathan Hale Cemetery in Coventry may share the unusual 1751 stone of Esther Meacham. The carver is the well- known and distinctive Gershon Bartlett, but her epitaph recounts her experience of being captured by natives in Massachusetts in 1704. The cemetery is famous for the huge cenotaph to Connecticut's State Hero, Nathan Hale.

"Windham Arts is committed to promoting Art, Culture and History and cemeteries have all of that." said one of the organizers, Bev York. Windham Arts is looking to turn a new page and build collaborations between our region's artisans, makers, and heritage organizations that are so rich in art and history.

Visit the participating cemeteries in any order between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Windham Arts website will provide driving directions and parking instructions. Rain date is Saturday, October 30. Sponsored by Windham Arts (Art, Culture, History and Tourism) and the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce. [info@windhamchamber.com](mailto:info@windhamchamber.com) 860-428-7739

# 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).

## West Hartford is First Connecticut Town to Commit to 100% Clean Energy

**we-ha.com.** "When you commit, you raise the sail of intention to the winds of opportunity...The town continues to lead by example as it adopts renewable energy locally, builds and retrofits in "green" ways, and explores how to improve its own fossil fuel powered fleet of cars, trucks, and public transportation. The town has also recently implemented a new Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), which includes many clean energy and resilience goals."

## Home solar growing in CT, but consumers should read the fine print

**CT Mirror.** "Connecticut Public reviewed several dozen complaints filed with the Department of Consumer Protection since last year. It's a relatively small number. But the complaints were from homeowners who said they were promised financial benefits that never materialized. Others signed contracts they didn't fully understand." Plus: **Connecticut seafood restaurant goes solar with PACE financing**

## Connecticut losing ground on building emissions despite efficiency programs

**Energy News Network.** "The report attributes the increases to greater cold-weather heating demand, but climate activists underscore the state's lack of progress on building emissions, which are roughly the same as they were a decade ago. They say the state lags on the adoption of electric heat pumps relative to the rest of New England, continues to expand its natural gas infrastructure, and doesn't allow municipalities to adopt more stringent efficiency standards for new buildings."

## Sweeping power grid modernization plan hits 2-year mark, with small business interests a top priority

**Hartford Business Journal.** "Several tracks within PURA's (Public Utility Regulatory Authority) grid modernization effort focus on, or at least touch on, ways in which the grid, and the regulatory environment surrounding it, can be made more responsive to customers' needs."

This includes greater adoption of power storage devices, allowing customers to continue to run some parts of their household or businesses when storms knock down power lines, and possibly the development of microgrids, which could power private companies such as grocery stores and gas stations independently, at least for a time. "Through all these different programs we're standing up, we're trying to send signals to customers...Deploy storage. Deploy storage plus solar. And we're trying to send the same signals to the utilities about shoring up different parts of their grid."

## Report: CT not meeting emissions goals; Transportation to blame

**CT Mirror.** "This has to be a wake-up call. We are not on track to meet our emissions targets...We need to use every tool at our disposal to decrease emissions across our economy. It means we have to continue the conversation about the need for additional tools."

## Lamont: Votes there to reconsider climate initiative as GOP balks over gas tax

**CT Post.** "I think the votes are there [for the Transportation Climate Initiative], Lamont said Tuesday morning when reporters asked whether he would ask fellow Democrats in the legislature to include the issue this month in a special session to consider the extension of his pandemic emergency powers. "I'm sitting down. I'm talking to the leadership. If they can make it pass, I think it's a good idea. If the Republicans have a better idea, tell me their idea, but give me an alternative. Connecticut has been a leader. I want us to stay a leader." Plus: **TCI-P advances racial justice and is not a gas tax!**



## State Regulators Set to Cut Eversource Profits, Trim Customer Rates

**CT Examiner.** "In a draft decision this week, state regulators signaled that they would require Eversource to drop its electrical rates starting in November, but also limited the time frame during which the utility would be penalized for what the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority found was an inadequate response in 2020 to Tropical Storm Isaias. Those penalties reportedly played a part in Moody's downgrading the company's credit rating outlook to "negative" in June."

## EV Make and Model Movers

**EV Club of CT.** "The chart at the top of the post shows the trend of all EV makes and shows net registrations at each point in time. It makes very obvious the fact that registrations are largely concentrated among a small number of companies...Tesla has continued to have substantial increases. Toyota had a notable pop. Chevrolet reversed the negative momentum and gained modestly. Ford, BMW, Hyundai, Honda, Volvo, Porsche, Chrysler and Jeep all had modest increases. Other makes had very small increases or were flat."

# At the Windham Mill Museum

Submitted by Bev York

October Events at the Mill Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic.

Oct 9 and 10 (Sat and Sun) Nightmare on Main; Phobia: Faces of Fear Tours of the Phobia Exhibit with live interpreters will be held in Windham Mills at 322 Main Street, Willimantic. Tours are scheduled every 20 minutes from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Not recommended for young children. \$15 per person. Face masks required. Make reservations on the website millmuseum.org

Oct 10 "Abolitionists, People of Color, and the Civil War: A Walk through the Old Willimantic Cemetery." A Walktober walk led by Jamie Eves. 1:00 p.m. Meet at the cemetery across from Stop and Shop.

Mon., Oct. 11: Indigenous Peoples Day: Explore the dress of the land's first peoples with Curatorial Director Chelsey Knyff at 7 p.m. on zoom. Register at millmuseum.org. Fee: \$12.

Oct 15, 16 (Fri and Sat) "Nightmare on Main: Phobia: Faces of Fear" see Oct 9

Sunday Oct 17. A. N. Wyeth Print Signing at the Windham Textile & History Museum aka Mill Museum. Andy Wyeth has painted watercolors of the Willimantic Thread Company. Meet the artist and purchase signed prints between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. This event will be held out-of-doors. Event subject to change.

Oct 23, 24 (Sat and Sun)) "Nightmare on Main: Phobia: Faces of Fear" see Oct 9

Oct 23 Grave Tales Cemetery Tour. There are some great stories buried in our cemeteries. This tour invites you to travel to five different locations and meet some story tellers and ghosts of the past. Between 1 and 5 p.m. Get your map of participating cemeteries on Windham Arts FaceBook and Website Sponsored by Windham Arts and the Mill Museum Rain date Oct 30

Sat., Oct. 23. Drop-in Spinning Bee: with Peggy Church. 10

a.m.-1 p.m. in Dugan Hall, Union St., Willimantic. Stop by and bring your wheel. Vaccinations required. All skill levels and visitors are welcome. Free admission. For information, directions, or just to let us know you're coming, email peggychurch@earthlink.net.

Oct 30 "Stories in Stone" Slow paced walk to discover master stone carvers of the 18th and 19th centuries in Windham Center Cemetery. Bev York leads this Walktober walk at 10:00 a.m. Free. The Cemetery is located on Route 203. Raindate Oct 31. For more information call the Mill Museum at 860-456-2178.

Sun., Oct. 31: Hallowe'en: Kids will get a treat and be admitted free today when accompanied by a paying adult. 2 to 5 p.m. Costumes are welcome; COVID masks are required. The Museum will stay open until 5 o'clock for this special day. Subject to change due to covid. Please check website and face book for changes.

Note: All events are subject to change. Please call ahead or check Facebook. Phone:860-456-2178. themillmuseum@gmail.com

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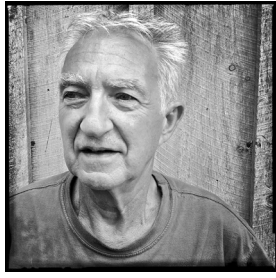
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# With a Little Help From My Friends

By David Corsini



When I reflect upon my interactions with the medical community over the last ten years, ages 71 to 81, I am surprised by the number of medical professionals with whom I have had contact. As a child, things were simple. That was not the case recently.

I grew up in Westwood, Massachusetts in the 1950s. It was a developing small town that was the west woods of Dedham. I believe there was only one doctor in town- Dr. Fisher. He made house calls that would often end up with a shot of penicillin in my butt. It was nice to have a house call but I also can remember the torture while waiting for the doctor to arrive. One time, when I was having a severe asthma attack, I thought I was going to die. I probably should have been taken to the emergency room at the hospital in the next town. But in those days, we waited for the doctor to come to you. His hands were like sandpaper but the shot of epinephrine was a miracle.

Dr. Fisher also had office hours every week day afternoon. People didn't call for appointments but rather went to the office in his home and waited their turn. As an adolescent, I had major problems with asthma. I remember times when I was in Dr. Fisher's office breathing into a machine to relieve my asthma, while he tended to other patients nearby. Things were rather informal. Dr. Fisher kept his own records but I believe his wife helped with the billing. I don't know if my parents had insurance, but I do remember that at one point we had run up quite a bill and my father bartered one of his watercolor paintings in lieu of payment.

As I remember it, there was a long period of treatment of my asthma symptoms rather than a search for underlying causes. I missed many days of school in Junior High and my mother even brought in a Christian Science healer- the mother of one of my classmates. I don't remember any significant change after the visit but I did keep some of the literature that the healer brought. Finally, I was referred to an asthma specialist in Boston and my problem was brought under control. Perhaps a referral to a specialist took too long in those days.

Dr. Fisher treated me throughout childhood for things like the winter colds, boils, broken nose, ear aches, and minor issues. He was the first doctor to mention a small heart murmur detected during a routine physical exam for high school basketball.

He also was instrumental when, at 18, I had to report for my pre-induction physical. The year was 1958. There was still a draft and the Vietnam War had begun. All 18 year old men had to register for the draft and go through a physical exam to determine whether they were fit for military service. I had been told that having been treated for asthma after the age of 13 would exempt me from service. I got a letter to that effect from Dr. Fisher and at the end of my pre-induction physical, I presented the paper. As a result I was classified as 4F---unfit for service.

Fast forward 55 years or so and my interaction with the medical community is very different. What follows is a list of "friends" who have patched me together over the last 10 years.

My most serious medical condition, aortic stenosis, came to a head in 2014 when I was 74. The small heart murmur that Dr. Fisher had detected in my adolescence, and subsequently commented upon by other doctors, by age 74 had become a shout. My GP referred me to a cardiologist. After a series of tests, it was determined that my condition was serious enough to require surgery. Then I was referred to a heart surgeon who agreed that an aortic valve replacement, involving open heart surgery, was needed. But before the surgery, an angiogram was performed to determine if there were any other issues needed to be addressed. Besides the primary doctors involved (GP, cardiologist, surgeon), there were many other medical professionals involved with whom I had only passing interactions. I received great care and the results were very good.

When I think back over these professionals involved with the valve replacement, I am struck by how transitory my relationships with doctors has become. The GP who noted the change in my heart murmur, and who had been my GP for many years, retired from practice. My cardiologist, who referred me to the surgeon, also has retired. And the surgeon who did the valve replacement moved to another hospital. And I doubt I would be able to find any of the ancillary professionals who were involved. While I have not outlived my doctors, I have outlived sev-

eral of their practices, and doctors these days seem to make changes more often than previously.

Six months after I had recovered from my valve replacement, I decided it was time to have my "last" colonoscopy. However, it was not clear sailing. My gastroenterologist found a polyp inside my appendix. Because of where the polyp was located, the doctor could not remove it during the colonoscopy. A biopsy of the polyp indicated it should be removed and it, along with my appendix, was removed by a surgeon. So, two doctors, their office staff, and all the hospital personnel associated with the two procedures were added to my list of "friends".

A less serious and yet worrisome affair involving many doctors was a tooth issue. When I visited my regular dentist several years ago with tooth pain, he said the dreaded, "You need a root canal." A referral was made to an endodontist. Shortly after the completion of multiple unpleasant visits with the endodontist, the procedure failed. The tooth had to be pulled.

A dental implant was recommended. The periodontist who was going to insert the post for the artificial tooth, planned to pull the offending tooth but, after looking at the x-ray, backed out. I was referred to an oral surgeon who pulled the offending tooth. However, a piece of the root had broken off and the gum didn't heal for more than a year. Finally, a referral was made to UCONN Dental where an oral surgeon removed the root fragment. Finally, when the gum healed, the periodontist put in a post for an implant. And then it was back to my original dentist to attach the artificial tooth. When all was said and done, I had involved one dentist, one periodontist, one endodontist and two oral surgeons. Of these, I know that the dentist and the periodontist have retired.

And then there was "The heart break of psoriasis". Several summers ago I developed a rash on my hands and feet. When I showed this to my podiatrist on a visit to have my toe nails cut, he said it looked like athlete's foot. Because my hands were also involved, that didn't seem right, so I made an appointment with a dermatologist.

This doctor could not be sure if I had a fungus or psoriasis, so samples were taken. Before a treatment plan could be developed, this doctor left the practice and I was turned over to a physician's assistant. Things were not getting better so I called another dermatologist and was able to schedule a virtual visit. With the assistance of Delia, who did the camera work on my Iphone, I got a diagnosis of psoriasis and prescriptions for medication that eventually solved the problem. Solving this issue involved a podiatrist, two dermatologists, a physician's assistant and Delia.

My hearing is impaired and my Eustachian tubes do not function well. As a consequence, I wear hearing aids but also have frequent ear congestion and sometimes ear infections. Last summer I developed a case of "swimmer's ear" that turned into a lengthy ear infection. Two ENT doctors were involved.

Associated with the ENT practice was an audiologist who had maintained my hearing aids for many years. Last year, he abruptly retired and so I am now working with a different audiologist. So, recently my ears have engaged two ENT doctors and two audiologists.

One of my chronic problems is spinal stenosis. This was diagnosed when I was 67. It was because of the pain associated with this condition that I gave up one of my favorite activities--- playing tennis. While I gave up playing tennis primarily because of back pain, my decision also had something to do with the fact that I had fallen over backwards more than once while back pedaling to hit an overhead. Falling over backwards on the tennis court is not only potentially dangerous but also embarrassing.

In reaching my decision about tennis, I had an MRI of the back and consultations with both an orthopedic surgeon and a neurologist. Surgery was not recommended both because recovery from surgery was long and the results very uncertain. So, for 14 years I have been receiving two epidural shots a year. I have been fortunate to have the shot administered by the same pain management doctor with an ever changing team of assistants. The shots have usually provided temporary relief of my back and leg pain, but this has not enabled me to play tennis and the epidural shots have become less effective.

I have often wondered whether or not it is really true that nothing can be done about my back pain and I have pursued several nonsurgical treatments. I have tried acupuncture with three different practitioners, manipulations by two chiropractors, three physical therapists, and assorted massage therapists. Never have I found much relief.

There is no doubt that I could find a doctor who would promise, if not a cure, significant improvement. So

far, I have resisted further exploration of a medical cure. But, in the back of my mind there lurks the thought that, just perhaps, there is a "cure" for my problem out there. This is an example of a quandary that many face with respect to medical issues. How many opinions should I seek? Should I try this procedure, this medication, or this operation? Often there are no clear answers.

My latest medical adventure involved trying to solve a long period of rather vague breathing problems. I would wake up with a feeling of restricted breathing and chest congestion. I did not cough up a significant amount of phlem but taking an expectorant and using my bronchial inhaler offered some relief. As the condition lingered, I tried to get an appointment with my GP. Because of the pandemic, I could not get an in-person visit with the symptoms I had. I did have a virtual visit by phone and was referred for a chest x-ray. The chest x-ray was negative. I finally got an office visit that resulted in a non-remarkable EKG, a referral for an echocardiogram, a prescription for an asthma medication, and a recommendation to see my cardiologist.

The echocardiogram and another EKG at the cardiologist's office were unremarkable. But the cardiologist suggested I also get a nuclear stress test just to test things out further. As it was clear to me that this was a side track from the problem I was having, I decided not to go that route.

My GP suggested that I consult a pulmonologist and gave me a referral for a pulmonary function test. When I called to make appointments with the pulmonologist and for the pulmonary function test, there was considerable confusion. I eventually had an appointment for a pulmonary function test and then for the doctor. But, when I showed up for the test, I was informed that I needed a negative covid test first. Then there was more confusion about when to get each test. So, finally it became clear that I had to make a new appointment for the breathing function test and then get the covid test within five days of that appointment.

In the meantime, since my symptoms had not improved, my GP had prescribed a short course of a steroid (prednisone). This drug did offer some relief of my symptoms. I was then prescribed a steroid inhaler.

I did eventually have a pulmonary function test and an appointment with the pulmonologist. The diagnosis was asthma. I ended up following the course of treatment I had already begun.

So, over the last ten years I have received treatment from 17 physicians, four specially trained technicians, as well as a multiple ancillary medical personnel and office staff too difficult to count. I am thankful for my good insurance. Although I would be happy to reduce the inventory of my art, I doubt I would be able to barter my artwork in lieu of payment, as my father did back in the day.

## Letters and Emails

An Opinion on "Vaccinated With a Victrola Needle" by Donna Dufresne in the August *Neighbors*

While Ms. Dufresne admits to being baffled as to why so many Americans refuse to be vaccinated, she does not provide any information on how many people she interviewed or what research she did to identify the numerous reasons people may have to not get vaccinated.

Instead, Donna provides half of a page of sarcasm and degradation in an attempt to categorize all unvaccinated individuals as self-centered, stupid, Trump based, nincompoops and cowards. The only thing she has documented in the article is her Trump-like mentality of "My way or No way". This narrow-minded outlook is a big part of why our country is so divided today.

Some actual facts on reasons people are reticent to get vaccinated would have provided a point for discussion and possible convincing of the unvaccinated to reconsider their position.

The lack of tolerance for other people's opinions and lifestyles has been a wedge in dividing our country. Ms. Dufresne has driven that wedge a bit deeper with her squandering of an opportunity to provide some information and knowledge as to why there are still unvaccinated people.

David A. Ducat  
Lebanon, CT

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

# Esther Phillips

By Dean Farrell

As host of "The Soul Express," I play the biggest names in 1960s and '70s-era soul music. I also mix in the many great soul artists who did not necessarily become household names but were no less talented. This month's column is about Esther Phillips, a four-time Grammy nominee whose drug habit frequently interrupted her career.

She was born Esther Mae Jones in Galveston, Texas, on December 23, 1935. After her parents divorced, the teen-aged Esther divided her time between her father in Houston, TX, and her mother in the Watts section of Los Angeles. In 1949, she won a talent contest at the Barrelhouse Club in L.A. Its owner, impresario Johnny Otis, was impressed enough that he recorded her at Modern Records and added her to his roadshow. He also nicknamed her "Little Esther."

As a vocalist with the Johnny Otis Show, Little Esther racked up three #1 hits on the *Billboard* Rhythm and Blues chart: "Double Crossing Blues," "Mistrusting Blues," and "Cupid's Boogie," all in 1950. She left Otis at the end of the year to sign with Federal Records, but had just one hit for the label. Esther's problem was two-fold: she no longer had Johnny Otis to guide her, and she had become increasingly dependent on heroin.

By 1954, Esther had returned to Houston to live with her father and recuperate from her addiction. She sang in small nightclubs throughout the south and periodically checked in to a hospital to treat her ongoing drug habit.

In 1962, the future pop-country star Kenny Rogers heard Esther Phillips (as she now called herself) performing in Houston. He contacted his brother Lelan, who signed her to his Lenox label. Her debut release for Lenox was a soulful remake of the 1954 country hit, "Release Me." It spent four weeks at #1 on the R&B chart and reached #8 on the *Billboard* Hot 100, giving Esther Phillips her first pop hit.

By 1964, she was on Atlantic. The following year, her gender-shifting Beatles cover, "And I Love Him," was a #11 R&B hit. This prompted John, Paul, George and Ringo to fly Phillips to England for her first overseas concerts.

Meanwhile, her heroin addiction worsened. Phillips checked into a rehab facility, where she met singer Sam Fletcher. During her recovery, she recorded some sides for Roulette Records, the biggest of which was 1969's "Too Late to Worry, Too Blue to Cry." Through Sam Fletcher's efforts, Phillips got a 1969 gig performing at Freddie Jett's Pied Piper Club in Los Angeles. The show was recorded and put out in 1970 as an Atlantic album, "Burnin'." (She had re-signed with the label.) Also in 1970, Phillips performed with the Johnny Otis Show at the Monterey Jazz Festival.

That same year, she received a Grammy nomination for her Atlantic single, "Set Me Free." In 1972, on Kudu Records, she released the acclaimed album, "Whisper to a Scream." Its lead-off track, Gil Scott-Heron's "Home Is Where the Hatred Is," was Grammy-nominated. Her cover of Gilbert O'Sullivan's "Alone Again (Naturally)" received a nomination as well.

In 1975, Phillips recorded a disco version of the sixteen-year-old Dinah Washington hit, "What a Diff'rence a Day Makes." It returned her to the R&B top ten, and the pop top twenty, for the first time in thirteen years. And it, too, received a Grammy nomination. That November, she performed the song on NBC's "Saturday Night Live."

In all, Phillips recorded seven LPs for Kudu before she signed with Mercury in 1977. Her total output was four albums. By 1983, she was on the independent Muse label, for whom the singer recorded her last album.

Esther Phillips, 48, died at UCLA Medical Center on August 7, 1984. Cause of death was liver and kidney failure due to years of drug abuse. Johnny Otis, now a reverend, conducted her funeral services.

Phillips was nominated for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in both 1987 and '89, but did not get in.



Charted singles (as Little Esther):

"Double Crossing Blues" (Johnny Otis Quintette, The Robins & Little Esther, 1950) R&B #1 (9 weeks)

"Mistrustin' Blues" (Little Esther & Mel Walker & The Johnny Otis Orch., 1950) R&B #1 (4 weeks)

"Misery" (Little Esther with the Johnny Otis Orch., 1950) R&B #9

"Cupid's Boogie" (Johnny Otis Orchestra, Little Esther & Mel Walker, 1950) R&B #1 (1 week)

"Deceivin' Blues" (Little Esther & Mel Walker with the Johnny Otis Orch., 1950) R&B #4

"Wedding Boogie" (Johnny Otis Congregation: Little Esther, Mel Walker, Lee Graves, 1950) R&B #6

"Far Away Blues (Xmas Blues)" (Johnny Otis Orch. with Little Esther & Mel Walker, 1950) R&B #6

"Ring-a-Ding Doo" (Little Esther & Mel, 1952) R&B #8

Esther Phillips:

"Release Me" (1962) R&B #1 (4 weeks), Pop #8

"Hello Walls" (1964) R&B #36

"And I Love Him" (1965) R&B #11, Pop #54

"When a Woman Loves a Man" (1966) R&B #26, Pop #73

"Too Late to Worry, Too Blue to Cry" (1969) R&B #35, Pop #121

"Set Me Free" (Esther Phillips with the Dixie Flyers, 1970) R&B #39, Pop #118

"Home Is Where the Hatred Is" (1972) R&B #40, Pop #122

"Baby, I'm For Real" (1972) R&B #38

"I've Never Found a Man (To Love Me Like You Do)" (1972) R&B #17, Pop #106

"What a Diff'rence a Day Makes" (1975) R&B #10, Pop #20

"For All We Know" (1976) R&B #98

"Turn Me Out" (1983) R&B #85

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

Dean Farrell hosts "The Soul Express" twice a week: Thursdays from 8:00-11:00 p.m. on WECS, 90.1-FM ([www.wecsfm.com](http://www.wecsfm.com)) and Fridays from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. on WRTC, 89.3-FM ([www.wrtcfm.com](http://www.wrtcfm.com)). He plays vintage soul music of the 1960s and '70s, everything from #1 hits to long-lost obscurities. Dean's e-mail address is [soulexpress@gmail.com](mailto:soulexpress@gmail.com).

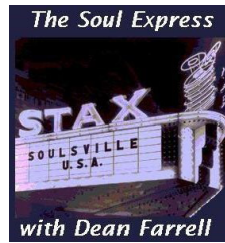
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# Misinformation, Disinformation, and Confusion

By Delia Berlin



There is a lot of misinformation about covid vaccines. This is to be expected, since we are dealing with a new vaccine for a still-new virus and we continue to learn about both. Some people think that it would be better not to get vaccinated until “all the facts” are out. The problems with this line of thought are many. First, since science is a form of inquiry and knowledge continues to accumulate, the time when all the facts are out is never. Second, unlike this “cautious” group, the virus does not wait. Third, when scientists make a recommendation that will affect billions of people, they most certainly have enough facts to support it.

What was not necessarily expected is the amount of disinformation circulating about these vaccines. The difference between misinformation and disinformation lies in intention. While anyone may be unintentionally misinformed, those who spread falsehoods knowingly are engaging in disinformation. Sometimes this disinformation is specific and active, like false conspiracy theories about loss of fertility or sexual potency associated with the vaccine. Other times, disinformation can be vague and passive but part of a larger plot, like the former president and his wife getting their shots in secret, ahead of public availability, rather than showing by example that they believed the vaccines were safe.

Most people are exposed to misinformation and disinformation, as well as some good information, and have difficulty sorting it all out. Confusion is usually the result. But we can't always blame confusion on misinformation and disinformation alone. Sometimes, the reporting of legitimate data and truthful information is also confusing.

Our own state of Connecticut produces a “transparent” daily Covid report, as well as weekly extended reports and vaccination updates. Some of the information, while truthful, is difficult to interpret as presented. As more and more of our fellow Nutmeggers get vaccinated, the comparison of percentages of infections among vaccinated and unvaccinated people can become misleading. I'll try to explain how.

During last week, the Connecticut daily Covid report showed that approximately 70% of new infections were among unvaccinated people. Therefore, 30% were among vaccinated individuals. This may appear worrisome at first glance. Some may think that if such a sizable group of vaccinated people is infected, the vaccine is not worth risking. Granted, many infections among the vaccinated are asymptomatic or mild and do not require hospitalization. But on first impression, some may wrongly see these percentages as approaching a 2-to-1 ratio of infections among unvaccinated versus vaccinated. The true value of vaccine protection against infection is far from that. Let's look into this more carefully.

Connecticut has a very high vaccination rate. That means that our vaccinated population is now much larger than our unvaccinated population. This makes the comparison of these percentages misleading. To take this to an extreme, imagine that 100% of the people were vaccinated. In that case, 100% of infections, hospitalizations or deaths would be among those vaccinated. But that would not mean that the vaccine is not working—it would just mean there weren't any unvaccinated people left to infect.

Now let's look at a more realistic scenario. If 75% of all adults in Connecticut are fully vaccinated and 25% are not, 70% of infections among the unvaccinated and 30% among those vaccinated demonstrate a much higher risk (or infection rate) for the unvaccinated, but that may not be immediately apparent. If we took a representative sample of 100 individuals, we would have:

25 unvaccinated and 75 vaccinated people  
According to the reported percentages (70% and 30%), if we detected 10 infections, we would have:

7 cases among the unvaccinated and 3 among the vaccinated

Which means:

7 cases among 25 people, or a 28% infection rate among the unvaccinated

3 cases among 75 people, or a 4% infection rate among the vaccinated

So, according to current data, unvaccinated individuals are seven times more likely to become infected than vaccinated ones. Rates, instead of percentages, provide a more meaningful comparison when group sizes are very different. These rates would be more helpful to those who are trying to estimate the benefits versus risks of getting vaccinated or not.

The analysis of infection rates alone doesn't consider the severity of the illnesses that infections may cause, which is where vaccines demonstrate their greatest value. So far, even if the protection from vaccines decreases over time or due to new variants, evidence continues to show that they are our best defense. In Connecticut alone, close to 2.5 million people have received two doses without serious problems so far, and soon it will be two years since the earliest vaccine trials.

But rumors continue to fly. A recent letter to the editor of the *Chronicle* cited many unfounded and unproven concerns about the vaccines, including that they may affect the “male testicles” in unspecified ways. Now, from the little I know about the male testicles, almost any changes I can imagine may actually be welcome. Let's leave it at that. Come on, guys...get the shot.

## Coventry Arts Show

Submitted by Ruth O'Neil

The Coventry Arts Guild will hold the 2021 annual Members Show on October 9th through 11th at Mill Brook Place, 1267 Main Street in Coventry. Works in various visual media will be on exhibit by Guild member artists and crafters. Info for membership and the full exhibition prospectus is online at: <http://coventryartsguild.org/home.html>

The general Public is invited to view the show on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, October 9, 10 and 11 from 1-5 P.M., with a reception on Saturday, October 9 from 6-8 P.M.

Coventry Arts Guild Membership is open to artists and supporters interested in advancement of the arts in the community.

For general information on Coventry Arts Guild activities please visit the Arts Guild Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/coventryartsguild>) and direct any inquiries to: [info@coventryartsguild.org](mailto:info@coventryartsguild.org)

# The Donut Factor – Humanity on the Rise

By Bob Lorentson

The factors affecting the size of human bodies are complex, but primarily involve genetics, environment, and donuts. That last factor, of course, may be just a recent shorthand for lifestyle, but can a pre-donut existence really be called living? It's hard to say. While donut dispensaries may boost life satisfaction levels, at least in the short term, some say that human body sizes have responded in ways that pretty much will only guarantee a short term.

The Donut Factor, however, is just a tiny grease spot on the grand human timeline. So it may be surprising to note that compared to our ancient ancestors, we are shorter, lighter, and smaller-boned. It is only within the last few centuries that average height has begun to increase again. And I'm sure it comes as no surprise that in more recent times, times when the world population is nearly nine billion, that our average weight has been on such an upward trend that it now not only threatens the world's sustainable food supply, but likely the earth's rotational balance as well. This deserves a closer look.

The first modern humans are considered to be the Cro-Magnon people of Europe from around 40,000 years ago. They are considered modern because they were the first to hyphenate their name, thus giving it a more urbane feel. They were also comparative giants, with the males averaging six feet. Being that they were relatively fresh out of Africa, this isn't surprising. Their African kin had long since figured out that a tall, lean body was a useful evolutionary adaptation to a warmer climate, allowing both for better thermoregulation and a sightline on animals that didn't care what size they were as long as they were slow and tasty.

The reason that most historical height data tends to focus on those European males of old, instead of other populations, is probably because most scientists are old European males. But they do concede that the general body size trend has been worldwide. In any case, they note that by 10,000 years ago, the average European male had shrunk to 5' 4", but was considerably bulkier due to their physically demanding lifestyle. This did not sit well with them, but standing did not much improve the view, so they responded to this humiliating loss of eight inches by wiping out all the remaining ice age megafauna.

Scientists attribute this resizing to three things: 1) adaptation to the new ice age, which on top of the already colder northern climate, was necessary for more efficient thermoregulation, 2) the introduction of agriculture, which initially was about as reliable as the Rain Gods, and thus made malnutrition their principal crop, and 3) the domestication of wild animals, which, along with the food and services they provided, also introduced new diseases into their midst. All agree that it was a tough period to be alive, and that with all the difficult introductions going on, it would have been a great time for the introduction of donuts. Alas, it was not yet to be.

By 600 years ago, those European males only managed to add an inch back, on average, to attain the height of 5' 5". Poor diet and health are said to be the main reasons for their smaller stature, no great surprise given the influence of astrology and bloodletting on agriculture and medicine. Perhaps if the people had let a bit more blood out of the astrologists, they could have risen to greater heights.

Enormous improvements in nutrition and health care in the past few hundred years are seen as the principal drivers of the

current height revolution. Scientists note that good nutrition specifically correlates very well with a taller stature. Average male heights throughout Europe and America have risen dramatically during this time, from a short end of 5' 8.5" in France, Italy, and Spain, to a tall end of 5' 11.75" in the Netherlands. American males, by the way, average 5' 9". They just act like they're bigger than everyone else.

To my knowledge, no one has yet proposed a theory as to why the Dutch should be so much taller, so let me throw out the first ball. Or donut, as the case would have it. Donuts, called “oil cakes” by the Dutch, were first invented and enjoyed by them in the early 19th century, giving them a head start perhaps not only on the growth of the donut economy, but the growth of the Dutch people. Now I know some may say that donuts do not generally, or even remotely, correlate well with nutrition, but, well, science doesn't have all the answers.

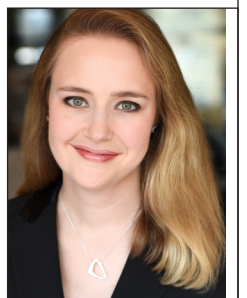
In the interest of full disclosure though, over the most recent 40 year span, global average weight has risen by nearly 18 pounds per person, a 14% increase. Some of this, of course, can be attributed to the 1.3% increase in global average height over this period, but far from all of it. However, as a 6' 0", 160 pound male of northern European heritage, I refuse to accept the heretical insinuations that donuts and their kind could be responsible for the rest without further scientific evidence. If the scientists can change their minds about alcohol and coffee, I can wait them out on donuts.

*Bob Lorentson is a retired environmental scientist and an active daydreamer. For more of Bob's writing, see [www.bobllorentson.com](http://www.bobllorentson.com)*

## Tracker Organ Concert

Submitted by Michelle Racz

Hampton Congregational Church at 263 Main Street, has decided to move forward with this year's Tracker Organ Concert. The Fall event, made possible by the William Utley trust, will be held in the sanctuary at 4 p.m. on Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. Built by Dennison-Smith in 1864, the instrument is the second oldest pipe organ in Connecticut and is used at the beginning of most church services. This is the twentieth concert and features Renée Louprette. Renée played the first and tenth concerts held on the organ and is delighted to return for this the twentieth.



The concert will be followed by the usual coffee social in the parish hall. A free will offering will be taken.

Hailed by The New York Times as “splendid,” and “one of New York's finest organists”, Renée performs widely as organ recitalist, accompanist, and teacher. Based near New York City, she has performed with many of the city's premiere ensembles, including the Mostly Mozart Orchestra and the New York Choral Society. She has appeared in Carnegie, Avery Fisher, Alice Tully, and Merkin Halls. Her recording of J.S. Bach's “Great Eighteen Chorales” (on the Acis label) was named Critics' Choice 2014 by The New York Times. In February 2018, Acis released her new CD, *Une Voix Française: A French Voice*. Ms. Louprette is College Organist and Assistant Professor of Music at Bard College in New York.



# Investment Planning Doesn't End After Retirement—Three Things to Know Now

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



Many people think of investment planning as something you only do leading up to retirement. But it's just as important to plan well after retirement too although the focus is very different – investment planning in retirement is more about spending – specifically how you spend – than it is about saving. Your goal now is to maximize your savings and assets so they can provide for the lifestyle you want for as long as you need. Here are three major things to consider during this time.

## Decide how much to withdraw

A key factor that determines whether your assets will last for your entire lifetime is the rate at which you withdraw funds. The more you withdraw, the greater the likelihood you'll exhaust your resources too soon. But if you withdraw too little, you may have to struggle to meet expenses, and you could also end up with assets in your estate, part of which may go to the government in taxes. So it's vital to estimate an appropriate withdrawal rate for your circumstances, and determine whether you need to adjust your lifestyle and/or estate plan.

Your withdrawal rate is typically expressed as a percentage of your overall assets, even though withdrawals may represent earnings, principal, or some combination of the two. For example, if you have \$700,000 in assets and decide a 4 percent withdrawal rate is appropriate, the portfolio would need to earn \$28,000 a year if you intend to withdraw only earnings; alternatively, you might set it up to earn \$14,000 in interest and take the remaining \$14,000 from the principal.

An appropriate and sustainable withdrawal rate depends on many factors including the value of your current assets, your expected rate of return, your life expectancy, your risk tolerance, whether you adjust for inflation, how much your expenses are expected to be, and whether you want some assets left over for your heirs. You'll probably need some expert help to ensure that this important decision is made carefully.

## Decide which accounts to withdraw from first

Many retirees have assets in various types of accounts—taxable, tax-deferred (e.g., traditional IRAs), and tax-free (e.g., Roth IRAs). Given a choice, which type of account should you withdraw from first? It depends on a number of factors.

If you will not be leaving assets to beneficiaries, the answer is simple in theory: withdraw money from a taxable account first, then a tax-deferred account, and lastly, a tax-free account. This will provide for the greatest growth potential due to the power of compounding. In practice, however, your choices may be directed by tax rules, because retirement accounts (other than Roth IRAs) have minimum withdrawal requirements beginning by April 1 of the year following the year you turn age 72. Failure to do so can result in a 50 percent excise tax imposed on the amount of the required minimum distribution that you failed to take.

If you will be leaving assets to beneficiaries, it's more complicated. If you have appreciated or rapidly appreciating assets, it may be more advantageous for you to withdraw from tax-deferred and tax-free accounts first because these accounts will not receive a step-up in basis at your death and your heirs could face a larger than nec-

essary tax liability. However, if you intend to leave your entire estate to your spouse, it may be better to withdraw from taxable accounts first because spouses are given preferential tax treatment with regard to retirement plans – the funds in the plan continue to grow tax deferred, and distributions need not begin until the spouse's own required beginning date.

## Balance safety and growth with the “two bucket” approach

To ensure a consistent and reliable flow of income for your lifetime, you must provide some safety for the principal in your investments. This is why retirees typically shift at least a portion of their investment portfolio away from riskier high-growth investments to more secure income-producing investments. Unfortunately, safety comes at a price – reduced growth potential and erosion of value due to inflation.

One solution may be the “two bucket” approach. Determine your sustainable withdrawal rate (see above), and then reallocate a portion of your portfolio to fixed income investments (e.g., certificates of deposit and bonds) that will provide you with sufficient income for a predetermined number of years. You would then reallocate the balance of your portfolio to growth investments (e.g., stocks) that you can use to replenish that income “bucket” over time.

Be sure that your fixed income investments will provide you with income when you'll need it. One way to accomplish this is by laddering. For example, if you're investing in bonds, instead of investing the entire amount in one issue that matures on a certain date, spread your investment over several issues with staggered maturity dates. As each bond matures, reinvest the principal to maintain the pattern.

As for the growth portion of your investment portfolio, common investing principles still apply: diversify your holdings, invest on a tax-deferred or tax-free basis if possible, and monitor your portfolio and reallocate assets when appropriate.

## Continued investment planning in retirement is critical, but can be complex.

It's a good idea to consult an attorney who specializes in estate planning as well as a trusted financial advisor for help in creating and managing the best strategy for your particular situation. When it comes to living well in retirement, one size does not fit all. At Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors, we help our clients to create a plan that best meets their individual needs and priorities through our strategic Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well™ process. See how we can help to create a plan for you at our website at [whzwealth.com](http://whzwealth.com), or call us at (860) 928-2341 to get started.

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# OWL Tour Part Four?

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

**OWL TOUR** recently explored America's oldest and most compact, thus walkable big city, on Boston's *Original Water Line* in three-parts (July, August and September issues of *Neighbors*).

Self-guided, we started at Boston Common, where the nation's first public park was on the original shoreline, and walked through the Spruce Street Gate into the toney Beacon Hill neighborhood and around Shawmut Peninsula to the North End and Chinatown. No Boston Public Garden, Back Bay or Seaport district. Boston was simply Shawmut Peninsula in 1630.

Urban delights aside, you can imagine beyond the OWL: no land, no city, only ocean. Most of downtown Boston outside the line is built on "fill" soil, hence the alarm at increasing storm damage and rising sea levels due to climate change.

Part Four is the adventurous benefit that new experience can give our lives at home. Such as Chinatown's venturesome menus of sautéed blood pudding and chicken feet, pickled mustard greens with pork intestines, and Sichuan-style white fish in a pot of bubbling chili oil! Next, it's *tandoori* specialties at the Maharaja Indian restaurant in Mansfield.

Checking BigY's foreign foods, my frozen favorite is Butter Chicken (concept born in a Delhi restaurant when leftover *tandoori* chicken was served in a mild ? tomato curry sauce spiced with cinnamon, cardamom and cloves, and finished with butter). Best imported fresh fav, however, is Brit-inspired haddock fish & chips, not frozen, but fresh-fried to order. My diet says no, but reminds me of fresh haddock at a shop near Victoria Close, Cambridge UK (1970s in USAF), and I occasionally relent.

"*Umami*" translates to "pleasant savory taste", described as meaty, brothy, like foods with a high level of amino acid glutamate, such as seaweed, mushrooms, miso and Parmesan cheese. XO sauce is a spicy umami-rich fish sauce from Hong Kong;

Reviewing OWL dining in Boston also renewed my sense of adventure with the legion of bugs and weeds in the Last Green Valley, the last stretch of dark night sky in the Northeast's coastal sprawl where many things go bump in the night. *Early Adopters* are usually urban and young... as I once was, now older, not even urban, perhaps *noir-ban*? But I respond to reason. I can change. If I have to.

**BUGS** What about edible bugs? "*They're healthy. They're sustainable. So why don't humans eat more bugs?*" asks Aryn Baker (in *TIME HEALTH*'s summer magazine). Maybe.

Hunger is the planet's most immediate problem. Edible insects – grasshoppers, crickets and mealworms – are rich in protein with more minerals than beef. Bugs use less land, water and food, with less waste. Cricket powder is now available in Canada and the European Union has declared yellow mealworms safe for human consumption. Connecticut is pleasantly engulfed by crickets at night.



Dried grasshoppers, mealworms and crickets.

Contributed photo.

Dried grasshoppers, mealworms and crickets are all rich in protein, iron, zinc, copper and magnesium. Some organic groceries now offer chocolate-covered mealworms, and cricket chips or pasta. I keep checking the Willimantic Co-Op.

Fried crickets crusted with chili lime or nacho spice are similar to corn nuts or crispy shrimp, so they say. Sprinkle the mild nutty flavor of cricket powder on oatmeal to boost protein. The ideal "gateway bug" might be the Bacon Bug! Natives in Madagascar augment sparse diets with "*sakondry*" -- plates piled with plump fried bugs "crunchy on the outside with that fatty meatiness of bacon in the middle."

Food culture does change. Five centuries ago, Italians thought tomatoes were poisonous (claims Baker). Americans fed lobsters as "trash food" to prisoners; bug-like, right? Few ate raw fish 50 years ago, and today Mansfield BigY sells sushi.

**WEEDS** In my third Connecticut year, I continue to admire the persistence and occasional ornamental value of weeds along my driveway and wild edges. No *Daucus carota* found yet on my two acres, the wild carrot (forebear of our common carrot) known as Queen Anne's Lace that can cover sunny fields. White doily-like flat flower clusters on tall, slim stems, slowly furl up like tiny bird's nests to hold ripening seeds before they fly with the wind. Some have a single dark red-purple blossom at the center where royal blood dripped, the fiction goes, but the red center actually serves as a "nectar guide" to attract bees. But pokeberry is everywhere.

*Phytolacca americana* (aka Pokeberry, Poke-weed, or simply Poke, with many regional variations) is a native herbaceous perennial in full-to-part-sun throughout the Last Green Valley. It behaves like a 10ft multi-stem small tree, except it dies to the ground in winter. Hollow 4 inch "trunks" are tree-like with long arching stems creating shade canopy. I let it volunteer in 2021 along a sunny fencerow where copious compost had been mounded to plant ornamentals.

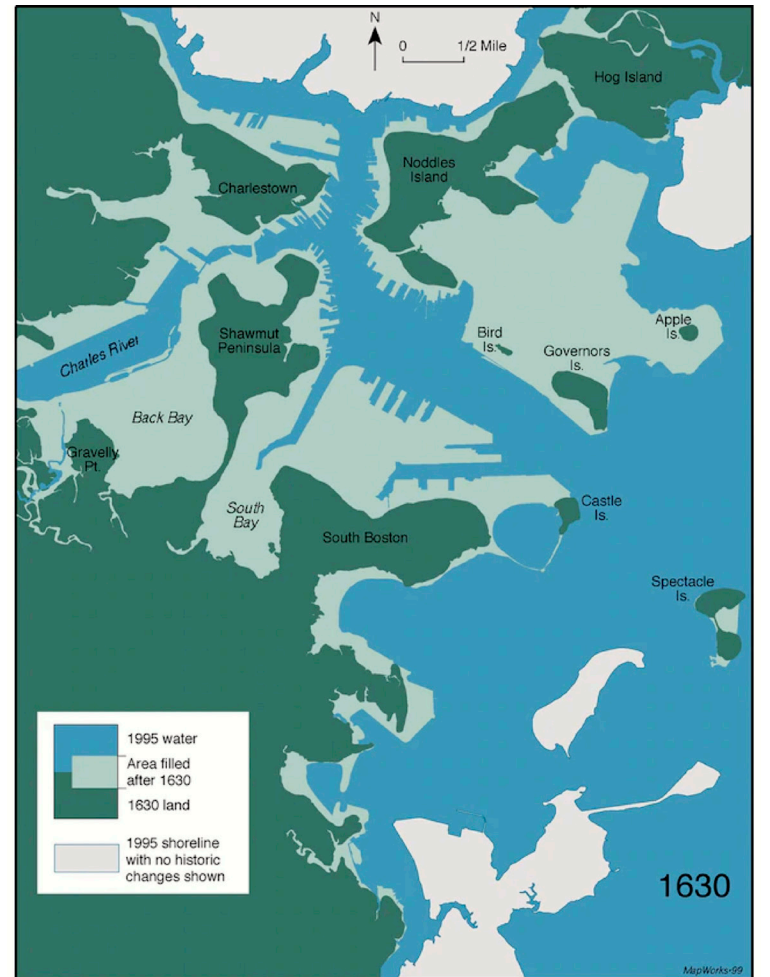


Towering Pokeberry, colorful and useful, an aspiring tree-like weed. Contributed photo.

Towering 7ft tall and 9ft wide this first year, my pokeberry survived weeding because my hip objected to manicuring an ornamental bed. It probably came with transplanted red-twigged dogwood from Newton, Mass., but it's native in Connecticut. Pokeberry is a truly indigenous American plant ranging westward from Maine to Florida. It prefers rich loamy soils but adapts to coastal sand dunes.

Ornamental, in fact, gorgeous. Magenta stems and plump pink-to-purple berries are striking. Flowers not so much. Each berry has "primal white markings all around its center naval, alluding to ancient wisdom carried in its belly" (according to *The Witchin Kitchen*). Large green leaves turn a deep violet hue in autumn. Good weed!

However, America largely regards *Phytolacca americana* as dangerously toxic, perhaps poisonous. Every part is toxic. Wear gloves gathering roots and berries in autumn for medicinal use. Seeds are dangerous; okay if not chewed, so they say, but don't take my word for it. Besides, it smells bad. Bad weed!



Note: our ubiquitous yews (*Taxus*) and the *Oleander* planted in playgrounds throughout Southern states are also toxic. Bad ornamentals!

"*Beauty is as beauty does*," Pamela Jones observed in *Just Weeds* (1991, harking back to Chaucer, also inspiration for Gilligan's Island, Mickey Mouse Club, and Spiderman scripting, even Forrest Gump's "*Stupid is as stupid does*"). Meaning, beauty is worthless unless it comes with a kind soul -- judged by actions, not appearance.

An attractive (if malodorous) plant, pokeberry also acts medicinally on our human behalf, stimulating the immune system and treating many ills. Action AND appearance! Like Taxol, an early cancer drug derived from yew, poke's toxicity has benefits. Pokeberry teas are prescribed by homeopaths for body aches, catarrh and other respiratory ailments; also used for arthritis, laryngitis and tonsillitis, for rheumatism and mumps! Farmers have used extracts of poke root and seeds to treat chickens and cows for years. Good weed.

Going into winter is a good time of year in traditional Appalachian herbalism to make poke medicine. Cold weather, rich foods and less activity make things move slower and accumulate in our lymph and glandular system, and elsewhere. Also an early 1800s preparation infusing pokeberries in brandy. Good weed.

Before European settlement, Native Americans ate very early poke shoots in spring, when white with no tinge of red. Roots and berries were gathered in fall and dried for medicinal use. Clothing and crafts were decorated with the purplish red juice; Connecticut River tribes stained splintwood baskets a deep rich blue. Good weed.

Rarely cultivated in America, pokeberry was introduced to Europe about 1770. In France and northern Italy, "the very young succulent shoots gained a reputation as a tender spring green at least equal to, if not better than, asparagus" (according to Jones). Health foods advocate in the 1960s, Euell Gibbons wrote how his mother crushed three dozen pokeberries in a pint of boiling water for sibling tablespoons of cooled, strained infusion "to purify the blood." Also, with "some salt and quite a lot of butter, margarine or bacon drippings," he wrote, poke is "a delicious vegetable. It so closely resembles asparagus that some may be fooled." Good weed!

**SOON...** Bugs annoy us, but weeds seldom attract much attention until they threaten lawn and garden. Until we remember that human food origins were weeds until domesticated to magically appear on grocery shelves.

Food culture does change. Soon we will farm insects. Next, salt-roasted crickets with your beer at an organic brew pub in Boston, and soon available in bulk at the Willimantic Co-Op. Challenged by my mild Swedish-American palate, I am, however, possibly an early-adopter of cricket cheese when available.

Soon a pop-up stand with *Sakondry* plates piled with plump fried bugs "*crunchy on the outside with that fatty meatiness of bacon in the middle*" and poke brandy soda will appear on Boston Common.

Life in the city. Things change. Just a matter of time.

*Brian Karlsson-Barnes is a master gardener living in Chaplin.*



## Teens Raise \$11,000 To Save Pond at Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp

Submitted by Elaine Nelson, Windham County 4-H Foundation Board Member

Since 1954, thousands of campers have enjoyed the jewel of our camp – the pond. It is the site for all our watersports programs and home to the fish we catch and release every summer and the birds that swoop over it and do some fishing too! There is a problem though – there are issues with the long-term stability of our earthen dam, last repaired in the 1970’s. It appears that this time around a new dam will need to be constructed. The fundraising goal for this project is \$1 million dollars.

The kick off event for this fundraising challenge was held on September 11, a “Dam-Aid Craft Fair & Family Fun event”. Camp teen leaders were offered the opportunity to help raise funds separately however by gathering pledges and camping out on the dam the night before. They needed to obtain at least \$100 in pledges to

participate. Twenty-nine teens accepted the challenge and participate they did! They raised \$11,000! They arrived Friday night, had dinner and s’mores by the campfire and spent a somewhat chilly night under the stars. The next morning, they were available to help vendors set up, spent time reconnecting with each other and helped with clean up at the end of the day. The weather was gorgeous for the event, which was covered by WINY Radio live. Camp staff and teens also happily accepted a “big check” donation of \$500 for the cause from the Pomfret Proprietors Association (VisitPomfret.com). This volunteer organization of business owners in Pomfret raises funds at the annual Town Wide Tag Sale event and has donated over \$16K for community needs since 2006.

Camp staff and Foundation members are grateful to all those who supported these teens and for their energy and enthusiasm in helping us to save “their pond.”

*Photo was contributed.*

## Are you a photographer? Aspiring photographer? Curious about making images?

By Celeste Estevez and Christine Acebo, Co-Presidents

With the advances in technology, most of us are carrying around a camera in our pockets each and every day. We can freeze moments in time, whether a scene to cherish, a snapshot to post to social media, or an image of an interesting bug in the garden for later identification.



Perhaps you already have an “eye” for photography and are well versed in the technical aspects but you’re  
See Photography on page 13



### Perhaps

When the stars find the center of your eyes,  
do not glance away.  
When the rain trickles across your tilted brow,  
allow it there to stay.  
When the new day sun meets your darkened night,  
rejoice in all the splendor.  
When the music finds your unexpected delight,  
invite the talented sender.  
When the leaves fall below your walking meditation,  
notice the hued goodbyes.  
When the wind shuffles through your open lessons,  
Notice that nature tries  
When the stones turn cold placed against your skin,  
warm them there again.  
When the light finds your shadow and casts new doubts,  
believe all you got  
When there is no other sorta rhyme or a reason,  
try these... or not. *Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.*

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## Coming Home

By Adelaide Northrop

Leaves - fall's brilliant compensation  
 For days of grey precipitation.  
 I cherish, walking, the crisp sound  
 Of scraps of color on the ground,  
 Reminded that this very road must lead to winter.  
 Yet the goad, premonitory of its breath,  
 Illuminates this shroud of death  
 Which warms my mind and wraps the earth  
 Releasing incense. Rebirth  
 Seems so far away.  
 The bitter cup of shortened day  
 Holds whine of wind in barren limbs.  
 Ahead, the cross of seasons looms.  
 With icy crystal, cloth of snow,  
 The supper table's laid.  
 The silver light of afterglow  
 Diminishes the chill of fate,  
 And resurrects, upon my plate,  
 A hunger, freshly made.

*Ed. Note: The Chaplin Library Board of Trustees selected Adelaide Northrop as Chaplin's first Poet Laureate, an honorary position to celebrate Chaplin's Bicentennial in 2022 through the power of poetry and the spoken word. Adelaide was honored at a reception on Sept. 10, 2021*

## The Cowbird Chick

Brown-headed cowbirds I have seen before  
 Stalking in the grass with hordes of starlings  
 About their lifestyle I have heard the lore  
 Their family trees have many twists and gnarlings.

I never really grasped the situation  
 Until this spring when I saw at the suet  
 A tiny wren who fed with dedication  
 A very large and noisy orphaned truant.

It seems to know it's in an awkward plight  
 But not quite ready yet to fly away  
 It huddles waiting for a suet bite  
 It's crying in a mournful, tuneless way,

Encouraging the labors of the wren  
 Who diligently feeds her giant baby  
 But does she wonder every now and then  
 Why everything seems different this year maybe?

I felt for that drab ruffled little chick  
 It never chose to be an imposition  
 Its mother laid the egg and got out quick  
 So goes the cowbirds' family tradition.

Kathy O. LaVallee, North Windham



## Honor

By Judy Davis

Walking one autumn day,  
 I came across a  
 cemetery on my way.  
 At the bottom  
 of a hill, standing all alone,  
 a grave, a carved  
 name on moss-covered stone.  
 It read William Hall,  
 Antietam, 1862.  
 Age 17.  
 No other stones nearby,  
 It was his age  
 that made me cry.  
 Oh, William,  
 you died alone,  
 far from family and home.  
 This grave, near a glade  
 by a hill;  
 at only seventeen,  
 how much life  
 did you fill?  
 You fought for the blue;  
 you battled the gray.  
 Did you lie  
 where you fell,  
 or did they  
 cart you away?  
 On  
 Antietam's bloody field,  
 the  
 drums were met with tears;  
 they beat  
 for your parents,  
 who lost your  
 future years.  
 Now I stand  
 before you, a flower in  
 my hand.  
 Are you now the hawk soaring  
 above? Or sad dust in the land?  
 I'm at your grave, faded  
 by time.  
 But I will remember your service  
 and name,  
 and the honor is mine.

*Photo by Bill Powers.*

## The Awakening of September

She awoke to her existence on a late summer day  
 up high in the treetops before she was fully formed.  
 She looked upwards and the clouds were close  
 her eyes the color of sky  
 She could feel the leaves fluttering  
 while her fingers formed.  
 She wiggled them to try them out  
 Her legs, now freed, moved independently  
 when only moments before they were anchored to the trunk.  
 The forest floor was far below  
 She crouched there holding tight as a warm gust blew  
 and her wild orange hair flailed  
 as she plucked the yellow Aspen leaves and watched them careening downward.

Debra Gag  
 Font n' Pen  
 September 13th, 2021

## Click

The world spins  
 with one click it stops, frozen  
 water droplets hanging  
 waves towering  
 never crashing  
 children playing  
 reaching for balls they will never catch  
 planes floating  
 All this I hold in my hands  
 possibilities endless  
 with just one click  
 the world becomes still

-Calen Nakash

# Ticks, I'm Ticked Off, Ticking

By Angela Hawkins Fichter

How many definitions of tick can you come up with? Firstly, a tick is a blood sucking arachnid that is a vector of disease. Secondly, tick means the fabric case of a bed or pillow. Thirdly, tick is a light rhythmic beat, as in a clock ticking (is toc a separate entity?). Fourthly, ticked means angry or upset.

So how many Windham County people have gotten ticked off when removing ticks from themselves this summer? If you took a poll, I'll bet the answer would be a lot of people. This spring the CT Agricultural Experiment Station warned it would be a heavy tick season, and they warned to check yourself when you come back inside after doing any yardwork, garden work, work or walking in the woods. Well, I love gardening flowers. But I follow the advice, and I take off my jeans and look them over, inside and out. Then I hang them on a certain old oak chair. I sit on that chair when I put on or take off my jeans, rather sitting on the bed, just in case I missed a tick. And I have missed them in spite of thorough inspection of the jeans inside and out.

One morning, as I was about to put my jeans on and venture out into the

garden, I saw a tick on the floor beneath the oak chair. Picked it up with facial tissue and flushed it down the toilet. I don't wear my dress jeans in the garden. By dress jeans I do not mean expensive jeans, I mean jeans that are dressy because they are not frayed, torn, or stained by garden plants.

But one morning on the way to a friend's home and wearing my dress jeans, I took a short walk across my lawn to see the flowers in the garden. I inspected those jeans in the evening when I took them off, both inside and out. Decided they needed a different place to hang overnight than the oak chair because my garden jeans were already there, and they declared eminent domain. So I hung the dress jeans over the empty towel rack in the bathroom of the guestroom. Next morning, there was a tick on the floor under the dress jeans. Where do they hide that I don't see them when inspecting the jeans? Inside the hem or seam of the jeans?

What's particularly bad about ticks this year is not just their abundance, but also the new varieties in the state, immigrant ticks. Who are they? The Gulf Coast tick, the lone star tick (from Texas?), the Asian long-horned tick. The latter transmits disease

to people and cattle. A bite from the Gulf Coast tick can cause rickettsiosis, which is similar to but less serious than Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. The Lone Star tick carries ehrlichiosis and a handful of other diseases, plus a bite from this tick can cause the victim to develop an allergy to red meat. Is the poultry industry financing the spread of this tick?

We already had in CT the deer tick, which carries Lyme disease. I challenge you to find a surveyor who has worked for years in CT that has not had Lyme disease. An acquaintance of mine has had babesiosis. He went to donate blood, and they tested his blood and refused him because he had babesiosis. He didn't know he had been bitten by a tick nor that he had a serious tick caused disease. Two people I know have had anaplasmosis from a tick bite. Both had to be hospitalized with anaplasmosis, one in the Intensive Care Unit for days. Are you ticked off about ticks yet?

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Solar Today:

# Questions and answers about solar in our community and beyond

By John Boiano

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

Autumn is in the air. This month I'm going to share information on using gas powered equipment vs electric and leaving leaves to help the environment.

Below is from 2 articles on the Sustainability website of Washington University in Saint Lewis.

As we transition into autumn, leaves will soon begin to fall and scatter throughout lawns and streets. How will you manage your leaves this fall? Selecting the right equipment and strategies can minimize environmental impact.

## Lawn Care Equipment Can Emit Toxic Gases

Gas powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers are more detrimental than you would think. Many consumer-grade blowers (and some mowers) use a two-stroke engine, which lacks an independent lubrication system, so fuel has to be mixed with oil. Burning oil and fuel emits a number of harmful toxic pollutants into the air, including carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides (which cause smog formation and acid rain), and hydrocarbons (a carcinogenic gas that also causes smog). Surprisingly, the number of air pollutants emitted by gas-powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers exceed pollutant emissions of large automobiles, which are regulated to reduce and capture many air pollutants. A 2011 study showed that a leaf blower emits nearly 300 times the amount of air pollutants as a pickup truck. Similarly, a 2001 study showed that one hour using a gas-powered lawn mower is equivalent to driving a car 100 miles. Gas-powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers have the potential to cause serious environmental damage, so finding alternatives and utilizing best practices is key (Source: Washington Post).

In addition to air pollution, ozone is created when heat and sunlight react with nitrogen oxides and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) that are emitted from combustion engines, including lawn equipment. St. Louis is among the top-ranked areas for ozone and particle pollution. In fact, according to the Clean Air Partnership, summertime ozone levels have exceeded federal-based health standards every year since the passage of the Clean Air Act. Therefore, small actions, like seeking alternatives to standard use of lawn equipment, can go a long way in improving regional air quality and human health.

## What Can Individuals Do?

For one, switching to electric alternatives can drastically reduce the number of toxic pollutants directly released into the air. While electric models do not eliminate your contribution to greenhouse gasses, it shifts combustion to power plants. Power plants are equipped with scrubbers that filter out pollutants, sharply reducing the overall amount of air pollution being released when fossil fuels are burned.

Time of day matters too. According to the St. Louis Clean Air Partnership, if you are using a gas lawn mower, mow before 10 a.m. or after 7 p.m. to avoid peak ozone formation hours.

For smaller landscapes it may be possible to switch to an emission-free, non-motorized push mower. Push mowers are solely operated by the user pushing the lawn mower across the yard, meaning it emits absolutely zero pollutants. Similarly, an old fashion yard raking can be fun (jumping in leaf piles, anyone?) and a good work out. Be sure to compost your leaves over winter or bag the leaves in paper bags for pick up.

Rather than collecting your leaves, you can mow over your fallen leaves, as they provide protective and nutrient-rich mulch for your lawn.

Leaves aren't litter!

According to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, "one of the most valuable things you can do to support pollinators and other invertebrates is to provide them with the winter cover they need." Leaving the leaves, either by mowing them into a thin layer of mulch on your lawn or leaving them whole on landscaped areas, is actually the best alternative for everyone!

Of course, this will require a shift in mindset, but it's not out of reach. Here are some things to consider:

A thin layer of mowed/mulched leaves is beneficial for grass, as it cycles nutrients back into the soil. However, too much will damage or kill your grass – find the right balance!

Leaves are a great addition to compost. Bag or pile extra leaves near your compost pile, and add a handful or two every time you empty your food scraps. This helps the compost process, protects insects hibernating in the leaf litter, and also deters scavenger animals. Note that it is better to leave leaves whole (rather than mulch them) to protect overwintering insects.

Many of the insects we love and attract with native plants (like pollinators!) require safe habitat over the winter. The majority of butterflies and moths overwinter in the landscape (including leaf litter) as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, or adult. Some tuck themselves into a pile of leaves for protection. Others lay eggs in fallen leaves, which are also food when the eggs hatch. Some (like Luna moths and swallowtails) disguise cocoons and chrysalis as dried leaves, blending in with surrounding leaves. Bumble bees burrow under the ground and need leaves for extra protection from the cold. Other leaf-dependent animals – spiders, worms, beetles, millipedes and more – are necessary food sources for chipmunks, birds, and amphibians. Leaves are free mulch, protecting perennial plants, especially those that sprout early. Consider piling leaves on empty vegetable beds or perennial beds, or around the bases of trees to protect from cold and keep in moisture. They also keep weed seeds from sprouting.

However: thick leaves on the sidewalk can be a hazard. Kindly relocate these to another landscape to avoid creating a slippery surface as they decompose.

In the spring, after the last frost, you can compost any remaining leaves as needed.

Back to me, JB: I hope that you learned something new. I sure did! Until next month... ENJOY!

John Boiano  
860-798-5692  
john@zensolar.net  
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Photography continued from page 11

looking to make images that are more compelling and emotionally engaging. Whether you are capturing images with your phone, a digital camera, drone, or perhaps a film camera, the Quiet Corner Camera Club will welcome you to learn and share.

The Club began in 1969 as the Windham Photography Club through the efforts of Charlie Sanborn. Mr. Sanborn, an avid photographer, with the help of three other camera buffs, organized the club with the purpose of bringing together those who enjoy photography. We have a very diverse membership in both ability and interests; what brings us together is our love of photography.

When we can gather in person (in accordance with Covid-19 restrictions), the group meets twice monthly, on Tuesday evenings, September through June at the Mansfield Senior Center, 303 Maple Rd., Storrs. In addition to sharing our work, we host presentations by members and outside speakers, and provide workshops, hands-on activities, and critiques to help each other develop and learn new skills. We have a members-only FLICKR group and, as an affiliate of the New England Camera Club Council (NECCC), our members participate in electronic and print competitions. We also provide local exhibit opportunities for members to show and sometimes sell their work.

Until the Senior Center is available for in person meetings, we will be using Zoom to conduct our meetings. Currently, dues are \$30.00 for an individual and \$40.00 for couples/families.

Need more information or want to come to a meeting? Email Mike Adams, Secretary, qcccsec@gmail.com. Dues are minimal and rewards are maximum!

Photo by QCCC member Drew Hyatt.

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# Farming the Heart

By Donna Dufresne

My dad, Richard H. Dufresne, passed away on August 26, 2021, at age ninety-six. Right down to the end he identified strongly as a farmer, even though he never owned his own farm. At age eight, during the Depression, he was sent to work on Fred D. Whittier's farm in North Andover. The Whittiers took him in and shaped him into the son they wished they'd had. He learned how to milk cows and drive the teams of workhorses still used on the farm. But dairy farming wasn't the only skill he learned. He learned how to fit in with people who were not his own family, which was struggling with the medical issues of my dad's younger brother besides the loss of jobs.

The Whittiers delighted in my dad's ability to sing and mimic accents (especially Scottish and upper-crust). Edith Whittier found roles for him on the Grange stage when he got older. Fred, who was master of the Grange and the Masons at different times, mentored my dad in an oratory style that stayed with him for the rest of his life. When he became Master of the Grange, and later of the Masons, my dad memorized every ritual and degree by heart. People came from miles around and from other Granges when Dick Dufresne was going to recite the Pomona ritual or one of the degrees.

The Whittiers were cut from old New England cloth as were my dad's people on his mother's side, although a bit more moneyed and educated. Fred was a cousin to poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier, who lived over in Newbury, and Fred's farm had been in the family for generations. I was fortunate to grow up on that land in its waning days. My parents rented one of the small, boxy tenant houses Fred had built in the late '30s. I would walk the dirt tractor path every day to visit Fred and Edith and sometimes sneak into the barns and sheds, which were filled with antiques and artifacts. When I was three, Edith began giving me piano and singing lessons. She put me on the stage next to my dad in one of her yearly shows. We sang "Down in the Valley," and I stole the show.

Like a dutiful son, my dad looked after the Whittiers as they got older. He mowed their lawn, plowed their driveway, and stopped by twice a day to check in. He would get thoroughly annoyed with Angie, Fred's nosey sister, who called up several times a day to see what he was doing, what he had had for "suppa," and who was visiting. Sometimes she would listen in on phone conversations on the party line, and my mother would have to yell at her, "Angie! Hang up the phone!" Even so, my dad never stopped longing to belong to the Whittiers as a son and wishing he had been adopted.

Although he never was able to afford to buy his dream farm, Dad's work life revolved around farming. After a few very short stints in woodworking mills, he found work as a farm manager on the Hayward Dairy Farm in New Hampshire and on Mr. Bigelow's estate just down the road from the Whittiers. When Mr. Bigelow died (before I was born), my dad got a job as a milkman for Glennie's Dairy. That's how I remember him:

*I come from a place where you can hear  
The tap, tap, tap of the milkman's boots on  
a cement walk  
And a whistle fading into the dawn  
Telling me my father has gone  
Into the world of working men*



Later, he worked for Blue Seal Feed & Grain, and as a teamster for Bruin Hill Farm sleigh rides and hayrides. He had a custom farming business that morphed into landscaping after my brother graduated from Essex Aggie with a certificate in landscape design. I would not have seen much of my father, given the way he worked two or three jobs to try to make ends meet. But I was fortunate to follow him around on various jobs: picking up Cobb chicks for the henhouse; haying someone's field; plowing someone's garden; planting 250 strawberry plants every year; jumping in the dump truck when he had to go to Newburyport to get a part for the tractor. In the winter, I kept him company while he plowed driveways.



Photo of Dick Dufresne taken in 1942, probably by the my mother just before they were married. He's holding the head of my grandfather's fox hound. It was probably taken in Hookset, NH. Provided by Donna Dufresne.

Even though the Whittier farm and our little rural lives were swallowed up by housing developments and a suburbanized culture, my dad held tight to his rural roots. He never did get that John Deere tractor he wanted when he got older and hayfields shrunk into house lawns, but he always saw himself as a farmer. Cut from the same cloth as my dad, I too am a country girl at heart.

Of course, he didn't want anything to do with a funeral or a memorial service. He didn't care much for religion and didn't understand that death rituals are not for the dead, but to help those who are left behind. I can hear him cussing up a storm about spending all that money on a funeral when you're dead and can't enjoy it. He wished to be cremated and for his ashes to be spread on Mount Kearsarge in Warner, N.H. He and my mother lived there for ten years, and my dad had fond memories of snowmobiling on the trails behind their house. My nephew was part of those memories, and we've toyed with the idea of taking my father's ashes up the mountain in the sleigh of his restored 1971 Arctic Cat. A noble thought for a winter dream.

In the meantime, I'll remember my dad taking me for a walk through the back fields when we all thought my mother was going to die in the hospital. He said something like, "I'm not a religious man and I don't believe in church, but this is where I think God lives—in the fields, the trees, and the sky."

That early childhood memory stayed with me as a clue that my father, with his high cheekbones and hooked nose, really *did* have "Indian blood," as family lore would say. At least that's the storyline I grabbed onto, just as my father believed he always was and always would be a farmer.

## A Little Blue Ribbon Survival Story

By Bill Powers

At our annual traditional family Thanksgiving dinner, there was an obvious silent conspiracy to avoid any discussion of recent political events. Conversation soon turned to hiking plans for the upcoming winter when my son Rob reminiscently wondered aloud, "Has it actually been twenty years since dad and I started winter hiking in the White Mountains. I replied, "Wow, Rob, I think you are right. I'll never forget our first winter climb to the summit of Mt. Washington and the alarmed surprise of the staff at the Mount Washington Weather Observatory when we arrived, especially when their advice was to get started back down right away. The forecasters had not predicted the snowstorm because it was suddenly intensifying and unexpectedly becoming a reality. It was that little blue ribbon survival story of people moving down the mountain as fast as they could to avoid the unexpected storm."

Rob replied, "Yah, if we hadn't seen that little blue ribbon attached to that small scraggly bush, we might not be here today." I nodded my head in agreement and briefly closed my eyes "To this day, that image of us in the blowing snow whipped by the howling wind is permanently etched in my mind." Aunt Abbie Fenn from Hampton asked, "What the heck happened?" Rob explained to the others, "The wind at and near the summit of Mt. Washington was 50 mph with a wind chill of 40 degrees Fahrenheit below zero, sometimes in whiteout conditions."

And so, during dinner we entertained four generations of our family with the snowstorm story from the beginning to the end. As the dessert course made its first appearance on the dinner table, Aunt Abbie remarked "Wow, that's a great story."

As aunt Abbie ceremoniously began to slice the pumpkin, pecan, chocolate cream, and apple-cranberry pies she added, "You guys should write it down and share it with others." We took her advice; and, father and son working together, happily spent many productive hours writing and rewriting the story. We can now share the story of our winter adventure in the Whites. It will be published in the upcoming winter/spring edition of Appalachia, America's Longest-Running Journal of Mountaineering & Conservation.

Incidentally, at the time of their first winter climb to a summit in the White Mountains, Mount Washington, Bill was residing in Mansfield and his son Rob in Ashford. They had previously participated in a winter climbing school. Since his first winter summiting, Rob, still an avid hiker, has climbed all of the 4,000 foot mountains in New Hampshire in winter and all the 4,000 foot mountains in New England, more than once, during the other seasons. Now, Bill prefers to kayak.

## Halloween Apothecary

By Ginny Brousseau

A Halloween apothecary  
Can be very, very scary.  
Eye of newt,  
Tongue of toad,  
Things that ne'er  
In garden growed.  
Ear of bat,  
Leg of spider,  
Pinch of something else  
That sat beside her.

## Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

I thought this month I'd talk about time, and how we are trying to do as much as we can with the time we have. I came into work Monday feeling good that we finally were able to finish a job that just took too much time. The lunch truck we were working on needed an engine. The vendor promised the new engine in 3 weeks. Well, 3 weeks turned into 6 weeks. We planned for 3 weeks not 6 weeks. We lost 3 weeks because each day the engine vendor said it was coming, the other large repairs had to be put on hold. This had an impact on our daily scheduled work as well.

The daily scheduled work is allotted so much time per vehicle. This seldom happens. Here's an example of what I mean. We had a jeep that was scheduled for a lubrication and oil change. The gas tank fasteners were broken and rotted. The gas tank repair took 5 hours to complete because the rear facial and trailer hitch had to be removed to fix the rotted fasteners. This was 5 hours taken away from planned work. The flat tire, break down, wrong part, or the unseen repair takes time and often work that was planned can't be finished.

This week we had some customers become upset because repairs on their vehicles were either not started or not finished. The customer who uses their vehicle as a daily driver to get back and forth to work is a priority for us. The commercial vehicle that a customer uses for his or her business is again a priority. We try to fulfill our obligation to every customer. We appreciate every customer, be it new or old that comes in the door, but time is our worst enemy.

Please make sure your vehicle or trailer is safe for the road. We have found many vehicles to be unsafe for the road. You, as the driver, have an obligation to make sure you, your passenger, and other drivers are not another accident that could have been avoided. We have found bad tires, brakes, steering, and other safety problems on vehicles. Please again be aware of your vehicle's problems. We live by the principle that each repair will be done to the best of our ability. This may mean it will take longer to do the repair, but we will not compromise the quality of our work.

*Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors.*

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# Eradicating Invasive Purple Loosestrife

By Carol Davidge

Crews of folks in Eastford are battling a beautiful but dangerous invader. "Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum Salicaria*) invades wet lands, pushing out our native species. EACH mature plant can contain as many as 2.7 MILLION tiny seeds," said Mary Ellen Ellsworth, Ph.D. and Co-Chair of Eastford's Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission.

Facing the challenge along Route 198 in September with permission of land-owners were volunteers Theresa Becker, Rebecca Gurland, David Jakubowski, and Dale and Joanne Warren. They cut seed heads containing MILLIONS of seeds and then incinerated a pickup load plus six huge paper bags full of seeds.

"The wetlands we worked in today, across the street from the ball fields, drains under the road and under the ball fields

and empties into the Still River. Just downstream are wetlands where the Purple Loosestrife could take hold and wreak havoc if the seeds have not already reached this area," said Dale.

"Purple Loosestrife takes over wetland areas, squeezing out native plants that should be growing there and thus starves out animals that rely on that native vegetation for food, shelter, and nest sites," said Deborah Lee, Ph.D. ecologist and Co-Chair of Eastford's Commission.

Purple Loosestrife can advance eight feet every year across

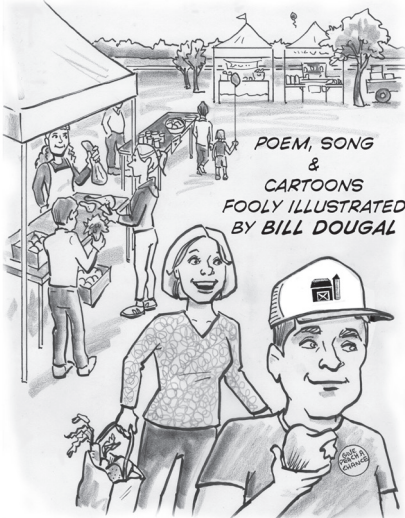
a pond and is just one of the non-native plants that are overwhelming Connecticut's forests and waterways, including Oriental Bittersweet, Winged Euonymus (Firebush), and Honeysuckle. Entire forests have been covered by Oriental Bittersweet vines with their lovely orange seeds; these are often used for fall decorations



Eastford volunteers Joanne Warren and Rebecca Gurland removed Purple Loosestrife seedheads at Bowen's Field on Sept. 4. Contributed photo.

but are spread by birds so don't use bittersweet for decor. The challenge of invasives is immense. Eastford volunteers worked for 20 years at one pond-site before the invasive waterchestnut plant was eradicated. Information may be found at websites of UCONN's Extension Service or the CT Invasive Plant Working Group: Invasive Plant Working Group link: <https://cipwg.uconn.edu/> Invasive Plant List: [https://cipwg.uconn.edu/invasive\\_plant\\_list/](https://cipwg.uconn.edu/invasive_plant_list/)

## AT THE FARMERS' MARKET



### New Book by DougalArt

Submitted by Bill Dougal

The variety of offerings at local agricultural markets is a subject that Bill Dougal treats with rhyme and humor in his new book; "At The Farmers' Market". It has a heaping helping of rhyming veggies and humorous concepts. His cartoon artwork has a friendly look. Running through this parade of produce, is a sincere tribute to the missions of nutritious food, and grass-roots farming and commerce. Following the illustrated poem are some cartoons on the theme. The project also exists as a song and video. The book is available at the Willi Food Coop. Also on Amazon by searching; "amazon at the farmers market Dougal". Contact [Bill@DougalArt.com](mailto:Bill@DougalArt.com)

Excerpt:

The farmers market is a nice place. You can pass a lovely hour Watching shoppers buying flowers and cauliflower. At the Farmers' Market, we're gonna get good food.

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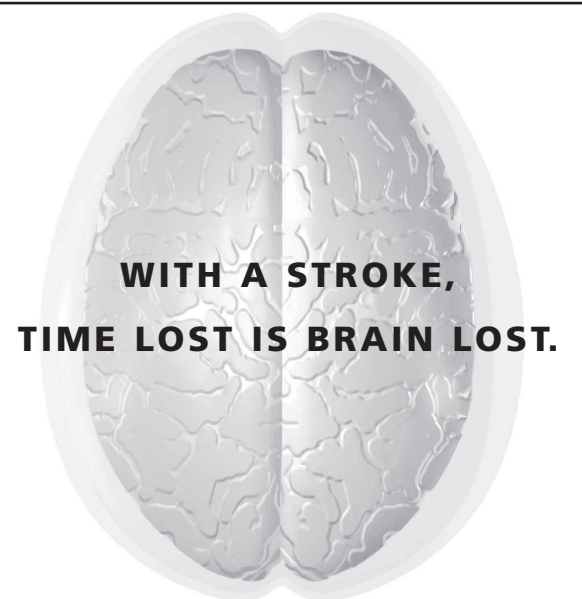
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#### Dear Reader-

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



## Performing Arts



## The Packing House – Your Regional Performance Venue!

By EC-CHAP

## October

“I wish that every day was Saturday  
and every month was October.”

- Charmaine J. Forde

The Packing House successfully reopened September 18th with the sounds of “Curtis Brand and the On Call Band”, and featured artist, acoustic duo “Twice Around”. This opening was followed by Ramblin’ Dan Stevens on the 25th with his classic blues and entertaining stories.



We send out BIG thanks to the artists and all those in attendance for their support and confidence during this extraordinary time. EC-CHAP is taking necessary COVID precautions to provide a safe and enjoyable experience – maintaining a 50% capacity, mask requirement, social distanced tables, and sign-in should contact tracing be required.

We continue the momentum with a full slate of performances and events through October and November:

**Saturday, October 2nd:** Acoustic Artist Series - *An evening with Singer/Songwriter and Keyboardist Bob Malone (Rock/Jazz)*

**Friday, October 8th:** Special Program - *An Evening with Spiritual Medium Maura Geist*

**Saturday, October 9th:** EC-CHAP Jazz Series - *Greg Abate Quartet (BeBop)*

**Wednesday, October 13th:** EC-CHAP Talent Showcase (2nd Wednesday of the month)

**Thursday, October 21st:** EC-CHAP Film Screening – *“Begin Again” (R) 2013*

**Saturday, October 23rd:** Acoustic Artist Series – *AJ Jansen Band: The Outlaw Woman of Country Show (Country)*

**Saturday, November 6th:** EC-CHAP Jazz Series – *Luke Hendon (Gypsy Jazz)*

**Thursday, November 18th:** EC-CHAP Film Screening – *“Once” (R) 2007*

**Friday, November 19th:** Acoustic Artist Series – *(Americana/Blues)*

Advance tickets may be purchased online or cash at the door. With the recent dynamic conditions, we strongly suggest checking our website for performance updates and cancellations [www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming](http://www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming). Advance tickets purchased for any performance or event that is cancelled will be promptly refunded.

We will 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.

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](mailto:volunteer@ec-chap.org)

We leave you with the following:

“Success is not final,  
failure is not fatal:  
it is the courage to continue that counts.”

- Winston S. Churchill

Peace,  
EC-CHAP Board

Please visit [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us) for artist profiles, audio and video samples, tickets and concert information.

## OCTOBER 2021

**“An Evening with Singer/Songwriter and Keyboardist Bob Malone” (Rock/Jazz). Saturday, October 2nd, 7:30pm.**



Bob Malone has toured the world as a solo artist for over two decades and has played keyboards with rock legend John Fogerty since 2011. Classically trained, with a degree in jazz and a lifetime playing rock & roll clubs, theatres, and arenas, Bob’s sound is a one-of-a-kind hybrid of rock, blues, and New Orleans R&B, delivered with high-energy piano virtuosity and a voice all his own. Tickets: \$25.00 online / \$30.00 Cash at the door.

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

The evening will begin with a discussion lead by Maura. She will discuss when and how this unique ability began, what a Medium is and her understanding of the Afterlife. She will also give an overview of how a reading is done, methods used in the process and what she will need from the audience. Maura will then make connections for the audience members and bring loving and healing messages from loved ones that have crossed over. Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.



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

Greg Abate jazz saxophonist, flutist, composer continues as an International Jazz/Recording Artist with 225 days a year touring the globe. Greg is currently a Whaling City Sound recording artist. His newest album, *Magic Dance*, released in 2021 Greg has received significant acclaim. Greg will be joined at The Packing House by Matt deChamplain on piano, Lou Bocciairelli on bass, and Ben Bilello on drums. Tickets: \$25.00 online / \$30.00 at the door.



**EC-CHAP Talent Showcase. Wednesday, October 13th, 7:00pm (2nd Wednesday of the month)**

Acoustic musicians, film makers, poets, comedians, jugglers, puppeteers, and creative artists of all ages are invited to perform at The Packing House. Here is an opportunity to showcase your work in an intimate historic setting before a live audience. Test ideas and concepts and solicit feedback. PA / sound reinforcement, video projection, and up to 3 microphones provided (Please - No full drum kits unless prior arrangements have been made). Free Admission - Donations graciously accepted.

**EC-CHAP Film Series: “Begin Again” (R) 2013. Thursday, October 21st, 7:00pm**

“Begin Again” was written and directed by John Carney, starring Keira Knightley, Mark Ruffalo, and Adam Levine. The film portrays “a chance encounter between a down-and-out music-business executive and a young singer-songwriter, new to Manhattan, turns into a promising collaboration between the two talents.” –IMDb. Suggested Donation \$5.00

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

Jansen first hit Nashville stages in 2006 after winning the Connecticut Country Music Association’s “Female Vocalist of the Year” award. Since then, she’s performed at countless venues - from New York’s The Bitter End, to Nashville’s iconic Tootsies, to headlining Hartford’s Infinity Music Hall and Mohegan Sun Casino in Connecticut - traveling back and forth between Connecticut and Tennessee. Along the way, she’s had the opportunity to open for artists like Phil Vassar, James Montgomery and James Otto. Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

**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](http://www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming); or may be purchased at the door (cash only) 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](http://www.thepackinghouse.us) for the secret recipe.

Program cancellations will be listed on the EC-CHAP website ([www.ec-chap.org](http://www.ec-chap.org)), and The Packing House website ([www.thepackinghouse.us](http://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](mailto:info@ec-chap.org)).



# Mobile Musicology – The Music in Your Daily Life

By Calendula



Mobile music studies, in short, is the study of the issues of interactive music in mobile situations, the development of technology that allows humans to customize their personal aural experiences, especially while traveling, and in turn, how this affects the ways in which humans interact with their environment and experience time. We can think about this in terms of how smart phones and streaming services changed the way we interact with music, but mobile music can also be understood in a geographical sense—places and spaces where people engage with each other, as well as the music they listen to and the sounds of their surroundings.

Musicologists and writers alike have explored how people engage with their aural surroundings, and the dynamics that interplay in their interactions. This includes musicological concepts like sound walks, as well as more abstract ideas regarding the complexities of the interactions in the everyday.

In the words of Michel de Certeau “The ordinary practitioners of the city live below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk - an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, Wandersmänner, whose bodies follow the thick and thin of an urban ‘text’ they write without being able to read it. These practitioners

make use of space that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other’s arms.” Essentially, he means that people live their everyday lives and unconsciously engage with the places and spaces they find themselves in, writing their own stories without always being aware of what they are writing. However, there are ways in which the populace becomes more aware of their surroundings, and in the case of mobile music (aural environments)—this is mainly done through experiences such as sound walks.

Andra McCartney defines “sound walks” as a, “creative and research practice that involves listening and sometimes recording while moving through a place... concerned with the relationship between sound walkers and their surrounding sonic environment” (McCartney 2014). Sound walks can be taken in a group setting or solitary, but the primary purpose is for the walker to focus on and connect with the environment and sounds that they encounter. This can involve simply walking through the streets of a place, or using an app on a mobile phone to guide them, which can inform of the history of past aural environments (i.e. New York City surely sounded much different 150 years ago as compared to today). It can also be a stationary walk, in a sense, as many artists have uploaded audio and video samples of their own sound walks on

the internet, allowing for other viewers from all over the world experience aural worlds second hand. The medium in which the active listening takes place is less important than the actual active listening taking place.

These sound walks and practice of active listening accentuate further discussions on how we separate our ideas of “space” and “place.” This is particularly relevant to discussion on mobile music, as the liminal space or place of “on the go” proves difficult to pin down. To Michel de Certeau, “a place is the order in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence” and a space is “a practiced place.” Movements seem to define space, so that we can further associate it with a history or a story. A country road in the south of France in summer becomes a space when a sound walker interacts with it, for example.

Engagement is key, and this shift in interaction also goes on to affect sense of memory.

Many people associate certain songs with particular memories (i.e. the “our song” effect for couples). These memories

are incredibly personal, indicating a variance of meaning from one person to the next. One song can bring up memories of a place that means a lot to someone, and then nothing to another person. This individuality of perception enhances the creation of personal spaces and metaphorical cities. Although we are constantly on the move,

we are rarely present. However, the moment we become present, the monotonous everyday mobile space is shaken by consciousness, and becomes something different.

In 2017 I was awarded a UConn IDEA grant which funded the production of an experimental sound album that is loosely based on the idea of the Sound Walk. I traveled to a number of different countries, and while exploring the city on foot or on public transportation, I recorded almost everything I heard. I took these sounds and made songs from them, recreating the feelings of the city as I remembered them. The album is called *Sonder: Experiments with Cityscapes*, and you can listen to it on Soundcloud for free here: <https://soundcloud.com/abigailgolec/sets/sonder>

In this album, I recreate the cityscapes of Amsterdam, London, Paris, Barcelona, Helsinki, Berlin, Athens, and Rome. For those of you who have been to these places, it might remind you of your own time there, and for those who haven’t, perhaps it gives an idea of what it might be like.

*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*



# Reconnecting Heart Strings: Behind the Scenes

By Cate Solari



By now, you have seen the incredible work on display in *Reconnecting Heart Strings* at The Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery at EC-CHAP, up until November 6th. As the curator of the show, I will give you an insight into the behind the scenes of putting this show together: seeking work, curatorial vision, and final installation.

*Reconnecting Heart Strings* is the culmination of three months of collaboration between artists: Joshua Allen-Silvia (@jasilv), Laurel Pehmoeller (@laurelfolia), Stephanie Sileo (@stephsileo), and myself, Cate Solari (@cate\_solari). We are all founding members of the artist’s collective Studio:116 founded in 2017.

Beginning with the title, *Reconnecting Heart Strings*, was inspired by the curatorial concepts of the show. In response to new normals brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the works chosen seek to demystify a major adverse consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased social isolation and loneliness. The scale of the works presented in this exhibition mimic the intimacy of the subject matter addressed by the artists. In piecing together their memories, from the idealized to the monotonous, and constructed imagery of loneliness, the artists of Studio:116 evocatively problematize and reflect on the impacts of social distancing.

Joshua Allen-Silvia is currently based in East Lyme, CT and works primarily in ceramics and a new focus in Bonsai. During his time in isolation during the COVID-19 lockdown, Allen-Silvia explored the intersection between ceramics and Bonsai by throwing his own pun (shallow basins or flattened bowls, Bonsai pots) and pairing them with his own experimentations of Bonsai trees. Both ceramics and Bonsai have a long history of preservation through replicas, surviving their makers through centuries. As a curator, I was interested in how Allen-Silvia’s work could inject life into the gallery and a particular slowness. A reminder to those who are experiencing the show, life will prevail, even in the most unlikely of times.

Laurel Pehmoeller has an extensive background as a filmmaker. She is currently based in Coventry, CT and works for University of Connecticut’s Global Partnerships and Outreach as a Multimedia Specialist. Her work, *At Sea* is an experimentation with the juxtapo-

sition of still and moving images that break the typical frame through which we view films. It was created from an original intaglio print that was scanned and altered digitally during her time in quarantine. Curatorially, *At Sea* conjures oceanic imagery, providing flow and sustenance for other works in the space.

Transitioning from the land and the sea, Stephanie Sileo’s work introduces the self and the anatomy of the body through her prints and drawings. Sileo is a printmaker and teaching artist based in North Branford, CT.

Combining scientific imagery reminiscent of MRI’s, X-Ray, CT Scans and PET Scans, Sileo’s work brings the show together curatorially, reminding viewers of the medical panic that consumed many during quarantine. Sileo asks us to approach the work through our own lived bodily experience.

My own work brings a viewer through the full cycle of life to death. The work conjures imagery of tombstone and memorial structures. By continually casting I am able to build relationships with these pieces, and help them evoke their own material memories that emerge from the process.

Ultimately, the artists do not strive to monumentalize their experiences, but rather, make them accessible through the context of the practice of abstraction.

*Cate Solari is an Artist-In-Residence (visual arts discipline) at EC-CHAP; Director of the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery; and Adjunct Professor, School of Fine Art, at the University of Connecticut. Cate can be reached at: communitygallery@ec-chap.org*

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## Seeking New Board Members

The Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) is a 501.c.3 nonprofit cultural organization serving Eastern Connecticut and beyond.

EC-CHAP is positioning its Board of Directors to ensure we have the capacity to oversee a **major facility project**, and respond to a **changing environment**. We embrace diversity, and invite individuals with a broad range of creative and analytical skills to apply.

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By Focus on Veterans, Inc.



the Neighbors paper  
a little paper big on community

## Life and Death on the Garden Frontier

*When man decides he can control nature, he's in deep trouble.*

Laura Dern

By Phoebe C. Godfrey



One of the dominant themes in the American story has been gaining control over the Indigenous inhabitants, as well as over the land and nature, that includes its 'concept of nature'. For in having control over others, lands and nature one gains domination, power and ultimately, in the case of the capitalist model of economics, wealth. Additionally, such control fulfills, as well as creates, intersecting notions of American masculinity, white racism, and Christian notions of 'manifest destiny'. The repercussions of this seminal need for control have of course been the genocide of the majority of the Native Americans, with those remaining being colonized on reservations, as well as the on going colonizing, domesticating and desecrating of the land and all the living beings that these lands have incubated. In fact, I would argue that climate change, of which we have been and remain a major contributor, is a direct result of this very desire to control Mother Earth and to enslave her in the same manner that those from the African continent were enslaved for over 200 years in the name of power, control and profit. And so, it goes on and will go on in large and small ways until we are willing to look at these toxic cultural values and to change them to ones that are more in line with life and living with rather than in line with death and living over and / or from others.

A very small example occurred recently in my neighborhood of Willimantic and it is one that I have seen before and no doubt will see again. I live in the hill section where, as is the case in many areas, we have over the last ten years lost many big old trees- two from my own yard- due to stronger storms, insects, drought and other causes that have stressed many of the older trees. The loss of these old trees has changed the look and feel of the neighborhood and making it more barren, sterile and to be honest unattractive. Even the beauty of the many large and some colorful Victorians is reduced when their geometrical lines are not offset by the unpredictable, flowing, circular and majestic shapes of green tree canopies. Other trees have been purposely taken down on command from insurance companies as more homes become rental units owned for real estate profit rather than for any emotional commitment to the property, neighborhood or even the larger community. These houses tend to have their lawns clear cut with all trees and plant life being eliminated to ensure ease of care, or should I say rather control.

Such is the case in the recent example, where a once charming garden that surrounded a ginger bread type Victorian, including 4 very large old rhododendrons along one side of the house, as been totally eviscerated. There are now merely stumps where the 50-60 years old rhododendrons once held court, while the hosta, lilies, iris and other enlivening plants have all been weed wacked as if they all were non-living and of no value to the house, its inhabitants or the neighborhood.

However, plants, flowers and greenery have tremendous value in that they not only feed our souls and make all neighborhoods more livable (I emailed

many other gardeners in the neighborhood and they were all equally upset), hence our lives more meaningful. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly they also birth and feed a world of insects that are essential for all life on Earth, even as they too are in serious danger.

As an avid gardener myself, I look to others to also do their part of create a more vibrant and beautiful neighborhood and many do give generously through their gardens.

Thus, when I first saw the intentional soulless damage, I gasped and said to the first person I saw who happened to be a white male in an EMS uniform – "Wow, that's so upsetting...look what they have done", to which he answered, "They were out of control, they had to do it". This answer at first further shocked me as I had expected empathy and concurrence but then I quickly slipped into my sociological mind and thought of larger social implications as explored above. Of course, his race, his gender, his uniform, all would weigh in on the side of control over nature / others, as opposed to on the side of beauty, wildness, spontaneity, hence nature. This control over nature also manifests on the garden frontier in the form of pesticides, insecticides, weed killer and all the other ways lawns are created and controlled. In fact, Americans use over 70 million pounds of pesticides (including herbicides) on their lawns each year; a number ten times the amount applied to American farmland, acre for acre. And for what? The iconic image of lawn conformity and control that also speaks volumes in terms of social class, as in being able to allow land to be unproductive in terms of food. However, allowing it to also be unproductive in terms of flora and fauna takes this practice to new dangerous levels. Additionally, the idea that in this case 'there was no other choice', that ultimately the ones who caused such needless killing of healthy, vibrant and visually pleasing plants are not responsible for their actions further cemented for me the American mantra of shameless entitlement, despite a legacy of crimes against humanity and of course nature.

Now I could end here on a depressing and defeated note but instead I invite readers to go out to the frontiers of your lawns and plant flowers and trees, create gardens, create beauty in order to support the diversity of life in all its uncontrollable wonders. Or if you don't have your own garden or maybe you do but you want to move onto new beds, join and support the Garden Club of Windham (see <https://www.facebook.com/GardenClubof-WindhamCT/>) or support other initiatives that focus on giving up having control over nature and that aim to work with Her. For if we do not, we will be, to paraphrase the actress Laura Dern, 'in even deeper trouble' than we are already. So, get outside and in the spirit of the French author Voltaire 'cultivate your garden' for our lives depend on it- quite literally!

**To all our contributors-  
Thank You!**

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

## Growing Farms and Community: A Snapshot of Mansfield Agriculture

Submitted by Stacey Stearns

Mansfield's farms are a rich part of our history and key to creating a sustainable future. Over 75% of Mansfield is farm or forest. That's means about 22,175 acres of our town is quietly—and often very scenically—busy growing food, lumber, firewood, sequestering carbon, employing people, and paying taxes.

Each of our farms has its own unique story, just as you and your family do. Our farms chose Mansfield as a place to grow their business and plant their roots. In turn, they strengthen our town by building community around their farms.

For some Mansfield farms, community is built at the weekly Storrs Farmers Market. Other farms grow community through the town residents employed on the farm. Your own family becomes part of the farm community when you visit a farm to purchase a product, join their community supported agriculture (CSA) program as members, or buy products at the farmers market on Saturday.

"Our farm sells through the Storrs Farmers Market and our CSA program," says Diane Dorfer of Cobblestone Farm in Mansfield Center. "I love having a direct relationship with the people I grow food for. Frankly, farming is a challenging, highly-skilled—though low-paying—job. But it's important work and knowing that the people we help feed value and respect our work is a form of payment in itself."

"I particularly like farming in Mansfield because I get to meet a lot of different people in our community through the farm - from folks whose families have lived here for generations to international families who've recently made Mansfield their home," Diane continues. "I love hearing people's farming and food stories, often from when they were kids. Stories about raising thousands of pullets just down the road from us, community freezer-lockers in the Midwest, farming in segregated Florida, communist Romania, and China. I especially hope that when kids come to our farm, and cook with their families, they're building stories that they'll one day pass along when they're older."

Agriculture in Connecticut is an over \$4 billion industry. Farmers create jobs, support service businesses, and grow independence in our food system. Mansfield is home to over 30 agricultural businesses. From fruits and vegetables to dairy, meat, and forest products, agriculture is an important part of our economy.

The largest benefit our farms provide is hard to quantify. We call it the intangible benefits, and it may be what initially drew you to Mansfield. Our town has large swaths of farm and forestland that creates beautiful vistas in every corner. Farms support an abundant wildlife population, and farmers enhance our environment through stewardship of the land.

Growing agriculture has been a cornerstone of Mansfield since the town was founded. Part of growing agriculture is understanding the unique demands of the business. There are many ways that you can support local farms, including these adopted from the AgVocate program, part of The Last Green Valley:

1. Give a thumbs up for farm traffic. Be patient and understand that these big machines are not designed to move quickly. The farmer will pull over when it's safe; please pass with caution.

2. Know that our farmers are responsible and use best practices. Many of our farmers have lived on their land for generations and want to ensure that their business is viable for generations to come. The state requires farmers to be trained and licensed on proper pesticide stor-

age and usage. Acre for acre, the typical homeowner uses far more chemicals keeping his/her house clean and lawn green and free of weeds than the average farmer uses for cropland.

3. Respect the farm's private property. The farms in our town are privately owned and operated by our farmers. Farm land is not a park or open space for exploring. Please respect that it is private property, and part of the farmers business. Enjoy the view from the road, but do not trespass to look around or take photos.



4. Be Neighborly and Communicate. Farmers work seven days a week, dawn to dusk—and sometimes later. If you're planning a backyard event in the middle of the growing season, talk with your farmer neighbor and negotiate a compromise. Most farmers have families too and are very understanding and accommodating. If you and your farmer neighbor can't work out a compromise, reach out to the Agriculture Committee or our staff liaison.

5. Understand that farming is a business. While farmers are responsible for being good neighbors, they must also farm. Noise, dust, and smells are part of successful farm operations. Take a deep breath. Savor The Last Green Valleys fresh, clean air. You will sometimes smell manure, silage, and other odors—that's part of farming. Many of us around here have gotten used to it and even like it. Think of it as eau de farm! It was here before all of us.

6. Farm animals are not pets. Livestock tolerates adverse weather much better than humans do if they are fed properly. Animals typically prefer not to be locked up indoors. Our farmers work with university educators, livestock experts, and veterinarians to ensure that farm animals are well cared for this important farm asset.

7. Buy Local. It's healthier for us, better for the environment, and we are lucky to have it. Buy local products at the grocery store—if you don't see it, ask for it. Stop at local roadside stands and farmers markets. When you buy local, you support farm families and preserve the character and the food supply of Connecticut's Last Green Valley. Remember, we can't have farms without farmers.

We encourage you to grow your own family with our Mansfield agricultural community. Our stories are intertwined as we work together to build community in Mansfield. You can find a list of many of our farms at [MansfieldCT.gov/MansfieldGrown](http://MansfieldCT.gov/MansfieldGrown).

*Photo by Molly Deegan.*

# The Elements of Writing- Comic Relief

By Felix F. Giordano

Comic relief is the use of a humorous scene, character, or dialogue inserted into the body of a novel, short story, or film with the intent to relieve tension. Usually applied in a serious product such as a mystery or thriller, it gives the reader or audience a chance to catch their breath after a stressful or nail-biting scene before the next nerve-racking scene comes along. It may elicit laughter from the reader or viewer or be so absurd that it blatantly appears to be irrational and ridiculous.

What's the point of comic relief, why not just move on with the story instead of inserting something so irrational that it deviates from the plot? After all, we want to find out what happens next, don't we? Let's review a couple of hypothetical examples.

A gang breaks into a gun store at midnight to steal weapons and ammunition. Then they plot a bank robbery in broad daylight. They break into the bank and brutalize customers in the bank's lobby, and a hostage is taken. So far, we have a story that's in the thriller genre.

Everything goes according as planned for the robbers but as they exit the bank with their arms full of money sacks; their driver is not in the getaway car. Then they spot him across the street walking arm in arm with a former girlfriend. While the young couple's conversation centers on reacquainting, the robbers are frantically trying to figure out how to escape. Incredulous as it seems, the getaway driver is oblivious to the robbers' plight as he and the young woman share laughter and walk away. The hostage bolts into the bank as the robbers run for their lives and drop the sacks of cash. Then a huge gust of wind disperses the money all over Main Street where town citizens stuff the bills into their pockets.

Why insert this into the story? Don't we want to find out whether or not the bank robbers will face justice especially after a series of tension-filled scenes at the gun store, during their scheming, and inside the bank? However, the scene where the getaway driver attempts to rekindle a former romance helps the reader catch their breath. It can also add a subplot to the story: the bank robbers are now after revenge for the getaway driver's ineptitude and for putting them in danger of being caught. Because this scene departs from the original story of the ruthless bank robbers' mission, it doesn't necessarily mean that the rest of the story delves into comedy. On the contrary, that scene can serve to relieve the strain on the reader's nerves as he or she becomes engaged in the plot before the story reverts back into the suspense/thriller mode.

How often have we watched a movie where a wealthy husband, for one reason or another, wants to kill his wife. It may be because of an inheritance, an affair, or simply the fact that he no longer loves and respects her and wants to be free. The husband prepares their customary evening beverages but then laces his wife's drink with poison. Up to that point the story can be very tense as we witness the antagonism and resentment between the couple, the fighting, hidden receipts, unfamiliar phone numbers or messages, business cards, etc., and the husband's plotting.

The husband expects his wife to quickly down the poison-laden drink but as they converse, she carries the drink around the living room placing it on an end table, then picking it up and placing it on the fireplace mantle. All the while we see the husband's eyes peeled on the drink and trying to carry on a conversation with his wife. Then the wife leaves the drink on the fireplace, walks over to her husband, and while they speak, without thinking she picks up her husband's drink and finishes it off. Then the unsuspecting wife apologizes and offers her drink to her husband. We may even see the husband use his handkerchief to pat sweat from his forehead as he is being unmercifully tormented to our exquisite delight.

The husband may or may not be successful with his intent to finish her off and the rest of that story can be left to our imagination. But just as the bank robbery example, the rest of this story can return to tense-filled scenes but the viewer is given a pause to regroup their emotions.

The reason why authors and film makers use comic relief is for the benefit of the reader or moviegoer. If there was no comic relief embedded into the story, then the reader or viewer would be so exhausted by the end of the story. In that case, the reading or viewing experience may not be pleasurable at all. There have been many stories written and films made where there is no comic relief. Many of them are masterpieces but most leave the reader or viewer drained of emotion. They are the stuff of tragedies, the opposite effect of comic relief. Many of Shakespeare's plays are tragedies. The one that I refer to most is Romeo and Juliet. While it may appear to be a romantic

story, the last scene in the play is simply a gut-wrenching punch to our senses and leaves the reader psychologically drained. One film that was nearly unbearable to watch was the early Al Pacino film, *Panic in Needle Park*. The characters are hopelessly caught in a situation where there is no way out. By the end of the film the viewer's emotions are completely sapped.

There are many examples of comic relief in our culture, not just in literature or film. How often have we attended a lecture or sermon where the presenter or pastor provides us with a story that will make us laugh? Like comic relief, it is a mechanism to lighten the air. Granted, it may not be used to relieve built-up tension since it is often used during an introduction but it can be defined as comic relief nonetheless. It helps relieve anxiety and any feeling of dread that the audience may have brought with them. Then when everyone is feeling a bit safer, the speaker can proceed with the substance of his or her presentation.

The use of comic relief in literature sometimes utilizes a character that will either make us laugh or not. Sometimes the interlude is not comedic but it can still relieve tension. It can provide us with a sense that nothing bad will happen because that character is now in the scene. Take for instance the TV series Columbo. In each show we know that a murder has occurred but when Peter Falk, as Columbo is in the scene we know that we won't see violence occur. When Columbo is in the scene, it gives us a sense of pause and allows us to regroup and examine what he has discovered. Columbo is a sleuth and his skillset is catching the killer slip up, unlike Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry character who relishes violent confrontations with killers.

So in summation, use comic relief to break up the tension in your writing. Do this by either inserting a relevant scene that will bring a smile to your reader or have a character do something humorous. Just ensure that if the scene is not relevant to the overall story, that it is used in a way to convey or enhance the personality of a character or characters. That will make the reader feel that the scene is part of the story and convey something important to the reader.

We defined "Comic Relief" 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.

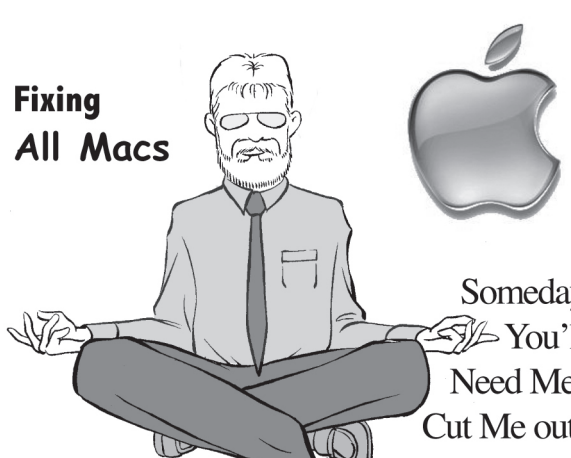
*Felix F. Giordano is a local author with books sales in excess of 7,000 and has had more than 3 million pages of his books read by Amazon Kindle Unlimited subscribers. His website is jbnovels.com.*

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October 30, 2021, 1pm-4pm.  
\$5 per child. \$10 Family Cap.  
Ashford Parks & Recreation & Social Services Depts. Halloween Party. Decorate a pumpkin & bring to enter the Great Pumpkin Contest! Food, music, games & hayrides on CONNRI Storybook Trail. To reserve your family's spot, please contact Sherry York at syork@ashfordtownhall.org

December 3-4, 2021: 5-9pm: \$45 pp. Quiet Corner Productions "Christmas Carol Reunion & Farewell" Dinner Theatre. Enjoy an evening of good food and a live play written by Ashford's own David Barbour & talented Thespian's. Advanced Seating only. To reserve your seats or table in please email Diane at Diane.Wheeler@use.salvationarmy.org

Breakfast with Santa  
December 18, 2021:  
9-1pm \$13 per child; \$15 over 12  
All you can eat pancakes, home fries, bacon in the beautifully decorated Dining Room. Everyone receives a Gingerbread man to decorate at your table while waiting to take a pic with ole' Kris Kringle himself. Each child also receives a small gift. To reserve your Family table please email Diane at Diane.Wheeler@use.salvationarmy.org

Wellness Retreat: January 21-23, 2022 Price TBD.  
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WINTERFEST 2020: February 5, 2022 Music with Bruce John & Ashford's Desiree Bassett Ragoza & her husband combined are an extraordinary mixture called Team Ragoza. Magic & Magician Show, Curious Creatures, Sledding, Ice Skating, Food, Building Snowmen, fairy houses, relaxing by the Lodge fireplace, firepits sipping hot cocoa... Need to I say more???

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