

# Neighbors



## Bringing the Community Together

By Julie Engelke

Craig Wright, owner and chef of Craig's Kitchen in the Rockville section of Vernon, is coordinating and preparing all the food for his fourth annual Free Thanksgiving Dinner. Most foods are donated and volunteers assist in packaging meals to go. Craig does fill in what is needed from his own pocket and generous donations from folks in the Community. He reported last

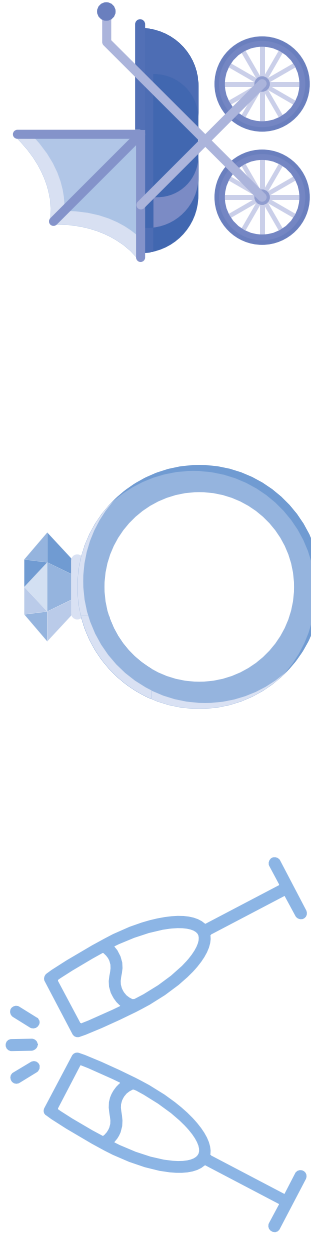
year's event provided a full Thanksgiving dinner to about 250 people and anticipates about the same for this year. Meals will be available to all on Thanksgiving from noon to 3 pm.

You can participate in this event by volunteering or donating by contacting Craig at craigskitchen860@gmail.com or on Facebook at Craig's Kitchen 860.

Craig's Kitchen is located at 13 West Main Street and is open Tuesday

through Sunday for Southern influenced take out food. Craig has been bringing folks together for the five years the restaurant has been open. He also has an Easter event where he donates Easter Baskets to children, again assisted with donations from the Community. You can also pick up a Neighbors Paper there. I hope Neighbor's Readers will join in extending our Community goodwill to Craig and his monumental task of feeding hundreds of people this Thanksgiving.

*Photo by Arlene Avery.*



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Looking Up:

Signs and Seasons and Hanging the Wash on the Line

By Bob Grindle

Sitting here looking up, my fully exposed imagination unsheltered from whatever mystery the cosmos rains down on us all, I sort through the many social attitudes and biases that have cobbled my own uneven pathway thru the not always thriving landscape of human engagement. I sit, and I wonder about humankind’s tendency toward assuming it has dominion over our planet...instead of seeing our orbiting home and all its many resources as a partner and mentor in our species rise... I wonder if there have been signs along the many byways of natural selection that a wise traveler—perhaps as wise as we often think we are—might have read and understood in some language of nature reserved for the environmentally astute that says ‘go back,’ before it says ‘no outlet?’

I tend to be perpetually optimistic, despite a lurking cautiousness about the human race, because to be alive means to have the opportunity to “do something.” Like the traveler in Robert Frost’s signature poem, “The Road Not Taken,” choices are rarely clear-cut, outcomes usually uncertain and if we ever get back to our journey’s starting point, something has changed...most often the traveler. We are not a monolithic species and our different experiences have led to an astonishing number of points of view. Somehow bringing these diverse attitudes and beliefs together to

accomplish almost any long range goal for humanity can feel exhausting. That’s when it feels good to pick up a hoe, or hammer, start the lathe, maybe do a load of wash—and hang it out on the line—turn on the lights in the office or shop, load up your mail sack or stock the shelves, clean the grill, pick up a paint brush or sit at the keyboard...get busy with the infinite tasks of living.

As November looms with its own signs of ‘beware’...the cold, I suppose, at least...there is much to look forward to while looking up. On the first weekend, November 6-7—yes, that would be the weekend of time change... when sunset changes from 5:30 to 4:30 pm (ugh), but dawn changes from 7:30 to 6:30 am (yay)—Venus and a thin crescent Moon serve as docents shortly after sunset in the southwestern sky (6 pm or so) to point out the sometimes difficult to locate Sagittarius. A week and a half later, as Orion rises in the east on the evening of November 18th, the Full Beaver Moon will pass through the earth’s shadow as it prepares to set into the western sky in the wee hours of pre-dawn on November 19th. A nearly complete Lunar eclipse, even at 4 am, is worth the price of admission. As the moon glow gradually fades and the soft shadows disappear, there is an eeriness that descends on this reversal of the passage of time that feels almost seasonally creepy. Rather fun, actually!

Still sitting here, preparing to walk over the hill and spend time with our recently arrived grandson (Sep-



tember 15th), it occurs to me that all of us occasionally feel like the pace of the world has exceeded that speed where we feel comfortable...I’ve said it before and I never tire of reflecting on the simple fact that although the Cosmos is expanding at an almost incomprehensible speed, the gradual pace of the rotation of the night sky can feel like an embrace. Looking up there is much to nourish parts of our being that the rigors of daily life find hard to diminish.

Somehow it seems fitting that the election season ends before the seasons of thanksgiving and peace and good will are upon us. It rarely feels like the signs and rhetoric of early November promote peace, good will or thanksgiving. In his 1956 science-fiction novel, “The City and the Stars,” Arthur C. Clarke mentioned: “If we both believe that we have nothing to learn from the other, is it not obvious that we will both be wrong?” Please get out and enjoy and explore this extraordinary Planet that we call home, listen to the other persons side—kind of like looking both ways before crossing the ...and spend time discovering this embracing neighborhood.

Painting by author.

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

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

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November 6th

November 2021



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November 19th

December 2021



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FOLK / INDIE  
December 4th

January 2022



NICOLE ZURAITIS  
GRAMMY NOMINEE - JAZZ  
December 18th

January 2022



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# Thriving Despite Adversity

By Loretta Wrobel

The power of a book constantly astounds and comforts me. It can provide a path of seeing another being’s perspective and understanding that expands and enhances my knowledge and sense of our complicated world. This is true for the book, *Proud*, by Ibtihaj Muhammad and Lori L. Tharp.

I am so touched by the struggle that this young Black Muslim American woman endured as she fought against extreme hatred and bigotry to become an Olympic Medalist. She demonstrated such fierceness and passion in pursuing her dream. After reading her traumatic tale, I came away with such respect and admiration for her inner strength and Amazon spirit. Ibtihaj is not to be denied no matter how much negativity and cruelty she has to face.

Ms. Muhammad is the first Muslim American to compete in hijab for the United States in the Olympic games. She had to fight through adversity every step of the way on her road to winning a bronze medal in fencing. What an achievement! Getting to the Olympic Games is no small feat, but to do so as a member of a discriminated minority in our country is a daunting task. Adding to this herculean accomplishment is the stark reality that she was able to bring home a medal for her country that did not accept or support her on the journey to success. Many thwarted her as she pushed forward to become a top athlete. What a gal!

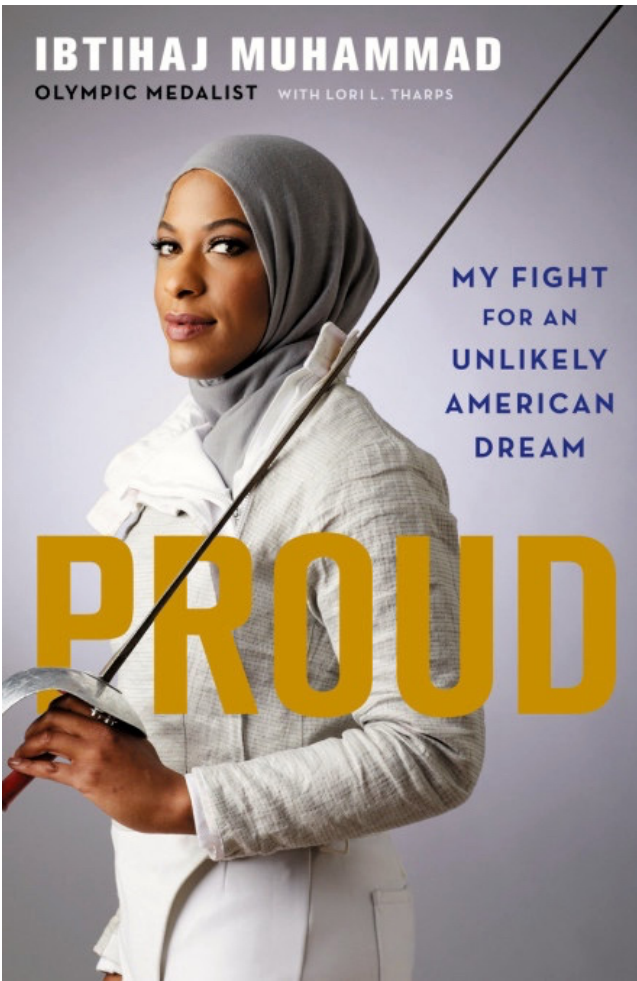
This shocking chronicle underscores the challenges and obstacles that anyone who is not white must bear in our white-dominated society. Ms. Muhammad competed in a sport, fencing, that was primarily peopled with white privileged males. This made her strive for excellence even tougher as she was a Black Muslim American woman and wore a head covering. Throughout her schooling, training and competing, she was always the outsider. Her detailed accounts of shaming, abusive teasing, blatant aggression, shunning and being overlooked were disturbing and frightening to read.

Her family was and continues to be her support system. Her parents had strong expectations for their children and were focused on providing everything they could to assist them in achieving their goals. Her mom was one hundred percent supportive of her decision to choose fencing as a sport and spent hours driving her to lessons, giving her pep talks and managing to produce the finances to enable her daughter to compete in this expensive sport.

Ibtihaj is a well-disciplined soul, and when she sets a goal for herself, she doesn’t let any hindrance impede her. She was a top student in high school and college. Nothing stopped her from her studying and grueling training. She had a laser-like focus on excelling in her classes, getting top grades and becoming a premier athlete.

Her uncanny ability to bounce back following major disappointments, unfair treatment and prejudice, is profound. Of course, she had her moments of despair, questioning, and depression. However, she worked her way through the despair and continued to believe in herself. She understood that she needed to persist for herself. I so admire her confidence in her own abilities and tenacity in the face of resistance. At times even her teammates demonstrated negativity towards her, due to her being different, a devout Black Muslim American.

Ms. Muhammad’s diligence and fortitude won out. She came home with a medal and became a spokeswoman for Muslim women. Along the way she cofounded a clothing company, Louella, for woman who want stylish yet modest clothing and became an ambassador for Black Muslim women. She is a doer to the ultimate degree. Because of her influence there now exists a Barbie with a hijab created in her likeness.



Ibtihaj has become a role model for young black and brown women, especially Muslim women. She has proven that a minority woman can succeed in spite of the hatred that infuses our culture. The chilling truth is when she graduated from college, she was not able to secure a position. Think about that for a moment. Here is a talented, highly intelligent woman who graduates from Duke University and struggles to find employment, because of the race, gender, and religious biases that exist in our country.

I am angered by the waste that narrow thinking creates in our country. Why does an obviously talented individual with a passionate desire to succeed get thwarted at every turn? Why does a person’s skin color cause aggression and hateful behavior? Why does one gender have more privilege? Why must we create an ‘other’ to persecute?

The answers don’t matter. It just needs to stop. Now. We need to learn to be accepting of differences and allow our young people to pursue their goals and encourage them. Ms. Muhammad teaches us a potent lesson. She did not allow herself to be held back by rejection and ignorance. She fought back by sticking to her goal and not letting others determine her future. She did not react with anger and/or quitting. She used compassion and kindness to prove she was as good as anyone. In reality she ended up being better than! What a heartwarming story for all of us in America now.

It is so tempting to give up and say this is too much for me. Because it is too much. We have struggled for over a year and a half with COVID and it still hangs on as we enter into the winter months. Many have lost loved ones and are in deep grief. Housing is a difficult situation for so many, as is finding a job that pays enough to provide for a family. Violence is rising, and young people are committing suicide at alarming rates. Mental health in our country is on shaky ground. The political scene is rife with polarization and a reluctance to compromise. We need to change the narrative.

I imagine a world filled with eager bold innovators that are committed to doing it differently and making our world a more loving, sensible, and compassionate environment. If Ms. Muhammad can do it, we all can. We just need to try, then try harder!



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Willimantic, Now and Then:

# My first bike: Start of a Life on the Road to Enchantment

By Mark Svetz

The other day I was riding my bike along the Willimantic River on the path going out toward Mackey’s, when I started thinking about my first bike. Really it was the turkey vultures that got me thinking. I used to ride that first bike along the Still River, between Winsted and Torrington, and loved the sight, sound and smell of the wildlife along the river.



I got the first bike I had ever owned when I started attending the community college in Winsted. I ordered it from Montgomery Ward, put it together and made plans to ride the 10 or 15 miles to school the next day. I lived in the hills outside of Torrington, and planned a route that took me down into the city and on old Route 8, along the Still River. From Torrington to Winsted was wonderfully flat along that route. After classes, I worked second shift at a factory in Torrington. I had a flat ride back along the river, to the South End, where I worked at the Turner and Seymour Mfg. Co. That left the long climb home for my midnight ride after work. That was fun.

The best part of that whole ride was in the afternoon, when I usually stopped for lunch along the Still River. I had time to ride slowly, and pause when I saw something interesting. I learned a lesson on those long ago rides: Everything is interesting when you ride a bicycle. I discovered I could hear the birds, see the turtle heads popping out of the water, and smell the swampy waters in a way I never could from a car. It has kept me on a bike ever since.

That first bicycle had a seat on the back for Gregory. That seat made a great book rack when Gregory and I were not exploring the neighborhood. I found pleasure riding around the countryside. Pleasure I never knew existed, like the sounds and smells of the roadside and the occasional touch of Gregory’s hand on my back. The bicycle has held me in its thrall ever since.

We moved to eastern Connecticut when I finished at Northwestern Connecticut Community College. I went to UCONN and we lived at Cameo Gardens in Willimantic. Gregory and I enjoyed exploring the new area on that bike. This is when the highway – we call it Rt. 6, now – around Willimantic was under construction. We enjoyed the brief moment in time when we could ride from Cameo Gardens to Park Springs, over the brand new pavement of the unopened highway. That was very cool.

My first bike, that Montgomery Ward special, was stolen one night when I locked it to the drain pipe outside my apartment. In the morning the drain pipe and my first bike were gone. I was seriously bummed. That bike had cost me \$100 and that wasn’t easy to come by. Gregory and I had to be content with walks around town. We discovered many things, like the sweet little dog sculptures cast in the concrete facade of a building opposite the

Garden on the Bridge. That was also fun.

One day our walk took us down to the footbridge. There, we discovered Sunshine Cycle, on Railroad Street. In the window of that small shop was a beautiful five-speed Fuji bicycle with a child seat on the back. It was everything I wanted in a bike. I don’t remember how much that Fuji cost; I’m sure it seem astronomical to me at the time. I do remember that before too long, Gregory and I were mounted again. On that beautiful bike.



Sarah Winter rides her bike along the Hop River Trail between Bridge Street and Mackey’s in Willimantic. Mark Svetz photo.

We moved around a bit. We explored Scotland, and later, Coventry on that bicycle. We lived in Windham Center for a while. I sometimes rode that bike to work at the Chronicle. Back in Willimantic again, Gregory and I got to know our neighbors on Prospect Street and around the Hill Section.

Much later, in the 90s, I would get better bikes. Scott, owner of Sunshine Cycle (which later became Scott’s Cyclery), once said he could expect to sell me one bike every 20 years. It worked out just about like that. Once I saw a Trek road bike in Scott’s window. I stared at that bike in the window every chance I got. Finally I bought it. What a great bike. That Trek carried me over the Rocky Mountains.

Sarah and I went on many bike trips, carrying our tents and food with us. They were great adventures, and we saw a lot of the US and Canada. We rode down the coast of California, which was breathtaking. We rode across the Canadian Rockies to the Pacific Ocean, which was challenging and mind-altering. One trip from Montreal to Quebec City was exquisite, and we met a stray dog that could only obey commands in French. At least that’s the way it seemed at the time. I can’t imagine a better way to see the world than from a bicycle, watching Sarah as we ride through paradise.

Some of the best riding I have done, however, is right here in Willimantic. Picture a frosty Fall morning, rolling across the footbridge on my bike watching the sun rise over St. Joseph Church. Imagine pedaling up Church Street, leaning my bike against the front window at Bud’s, and walking into the steamy warmth of the diner, full of friends and acquaintances. Now that’s a bike ride.

Or the ride I took just the other day that started this whole fantasy. I rode up the new bike path from Bridge Street towards Mackey’s. After stopping to drink my tea on the benches and watching the river for a while, I continued on to Flanders Road. There I visited an old swimming hole where, so long ago, Tony Clark and I had ended many summer work days, plunging into the cold waters of the Hop River. It’s a spiritual journey I make regularly.

On my way back, I was along the Willimantic River again when I saw what looked like a giant, wriggling animal in the grass beside the trail. As I got nearer, the mass disarticulated itself into a bunch turkey vultures, snacking on what looked like it might have been a rabbit. When I rode past, one flew up in front of me, which was exciting. A few others walked around nervously looking at me. Most of them just went on picking at brunch. It was a great moment. I loved seeing those birds, up close, in a way I never could in a car.

I thought about those rides along the Still River 50 years ago, delighted by the turtles, ducks and other creatures. It was a nice feeling. I am still riding along the river, caught in the meditative rhythm of the pedals, enchanted by what I see in the world I ride through. What a thrill.

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

## Letters & Emails

Dear Neighbors,

I write to you as the fate of Windham Community Memorial Hospital’s beloved 88 year old Maternity Unit will be decided on November 10, 2021 by the Office of Health Strategy’s Certificate of Need hearing that will be held by zoom. They will listen to the sad but necessary termination of our local maternity services due to dropping childbirth numbers and say that our women chose to go elsewhere to give birth. It will be testimonies by Hartford Healthcare Corporation members as well as testimonies by ordinary and extraordinary citizens of our community and the surrounding towns.

A little historical background about the numbers. 428 births, a viable and healthy number for 2010 at Windham Hospital were noted by the then healthcare partner, Hartford Healthcare. They came to help us, to strengthen our medical services close to home. They would telehealth link us to specialists, recruit providers, put colorful ads in our local paper about the growth in services right here, pure and simple.

Somehow, sometime later, Hartford Healthcare became the parent

corporation over Windham Hospital, and they would use our hospital to further their corporate goals of being #1 in the Northeast in 2023. Their corporate logo went up on all their endeavors and they boasted of standards that were all in superlatives: best, safest, most caring, and the right thing to do. Just this month they added a fifth one: equity. That means fair and just access to optimal healthcare.

We lost our ICU in the middle of the decade, and despite cries from the medical and citizen communities, Hartford Healthcare closed it anyway. It made sense to their corporation, but it did not make sense to our community.

When Covid hit the spring of 2020, we were left without an ICU to help the most acute cases get adequate care locally. Remember there would not be an available vaccine till a year later.

It was during that spring of shut-down and isolation that Hartford Hospital announced the termination of Windham Maternity Unit. There was no filing for a certificate of need, no open forum for our community to be heard. Once again the corporation opted to trim the services of our local hospital and endow our monies, our donations, our resources to a more deserving Backus Hospital, or to Hartford Hospital. They cleared out the unit and later morphed into the COVID vaccination

Unit. Their official statement said the closing was a sad and necessary measure.

Starting in June 2020, women could have home births, births in their cars, or on the side of the road, or if they got to the ED, a nurse would deliver your baby. Rest and comfort, no way. Off you would speed in an ambulance down a century old Rte 32 with no shoulders, hills, turns, blind spots and many accidents in the Franklin area. What would happen to breech presentations, umbilical cords around the neck, dropping fetal pulses, maternal health issues?

Gone are our sibling visits, La-maze visits, home VNA visits and dinner for the new couple. All the touches of our 88 year old Maternity Unit would be a thing of the past.

Gone are our monies, our public trust, our endowments and memorial funds and family trusts given to Windham Hospital. Hartford Healthcare can use them to build the corporation while they leave Windham Hospital a healthcare desert.

Windham Hospital has been outsourced, consolidated and regionalized to promote Backus Hospital. It does not matter the mental and physical health of our diversity of vulnerable women, our equity access, our rights to keep our beloved community maternity services. They have left us behind to be a healthcare desert.

They failed to notice our hospital is a jewel of the East.

Our ED now is a triage and transportation hub to move patients out of our area for services. Ambulance rides are costly and risky. LifeStar Helicopter rides are \$25,000 a piece, often not covered by insurance. How is that equity and best care?

We have a small window of time left to be part of the certificate of need hearing. You can submit a written testimony to CONcomment@ct.gov or go to our FB page: Windham United to Save Our Healthcare to sign an online petition. It is simple and easy, and while you are there, please join and indicate a “like” on our facebook page.

If you want to give a verbal 3 minute testimony on November 10 Certificate of Need Hearing, write us a message on our facebook page indicating this with your name, email and phone number and town of residence. We will get back to you in a timely way.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this vital effort.

Brenda Buchbinder, LCSW  
Willimantic resident and mother of three born safely at Windham Hospital  
Member of Windham United to Save Our Healthcare



# 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).

**Amid debate over natural gas, Connecticut ratepayers are subsidizing new connections**

**Energy News Network.** “State regulators are exploring ways to modify a program that was designed to convert oil heating customers to natural gas. Consumer and clean energy groups say the program should be scrapped altogether...The idea of natural gas as a cleaner alternative ‘has been thoroughly debunked as we’ve learned just how damaging methane is to the climate,’ said Shannon Laun, a Connecticut staff attorney for the Conservation Law Foundation. ‘It’s now clear that we should not be converting people from oil to gas; we should be converting people to electric heat pumps, which are far more efficient.’ “

**Connecticut hotel cuts energy costs in half with solar installation**

**Solar World.** “Econo Lodge is a prime example of how going solar can be a smart way for businesses to reduce their electricity costs and increase customer satisfaction... In addition to cost savings from the rooftop solar project, Econo Lodge received financial support from Connecticut’s Zero Emissions Renewable Energy Credit (ZREC) program. Econo Lodge received a ZREC contract which served as the main funding source for the project, offsetting nearly 80% of its costs.”

**Connecticut Democrats say climate change legislation could help save the planet. Republicans dismiss it as just another tax on gas.**

**Hartford Courant.** “ ‘By calling TCI a tax, Republicans are using “a classic strategy to kill environmental policies,” said Kenneth Gillingham, a professor at the Yale School of the Environment. “This goes back decades and sometimes it’s a successful approach.” TCI “will raise the price of using fossil fuels,” he said. “But the revenue that will be raised will be used for more efficient transportation solutions. The revenue will come right back to Connecticut. The state is incentivizing people to stop using the fuels that

both lead to climate change and reduce our air quality.’ ”

**A big source of carbon pollution is lurking in basements and attics**

**Yale Climate Connections.** “Oil- and gas-burning furnaces and HVAC systems produce a vast amount of planet-heating gases. But in many locations, heat pumps offer a solution...Think about it: The lifespan of a gas pack unit is roughly 10 years. If I had decided to replace the old machine with a new one just like it, I would have committed my household to burning natural gas from now until approximately 2031, producing tens of thousands of pounds of carbon pollution in the process.”

**Connecticut’s First 71-Seat Electric School Bus Hits The Road**

**NBC Connecticut.** “ACES Transportation in North Haven is charging up Connecticut’s first full-sized electric bus and getting it ready to hit the road. ‘Eventually down the road it will become something that’s charged through solar panels, totally sustainable and even the charging we can sell back to the grid,’ Tim Howes, deputy executive director of ACES, says. Howes eventually wants to change over his entire fleet to electric vehicles.’It will be less on maintenance. You won’t spend the time filling it up. And we won’t have to inventory diesel fuel,” Howes says.’ “



**Regulators split on vote approving \$103M Eversource storm settlement**

**Hartford Business Journal.** “Marissa Gillett, chair of the state Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, voted against her agency’s acceptance of the \$103.4 million plan, which was brokered earlier this month by the administration of Gov. Ned Lamont and Attorney General William Tong...In her dissent, Gillett pointed out that Eversource’s Connecticut-based president will remain accountable to an Eversource-controlled board of directors, and that the new “independent” seats will be outnumbered by company executives, making any tangible benefits from the restructuring “nebulous at this stage.”

**Leaf Blower Ban Debated**

**New Haven Independent.** “Are gas-powered leaf blowers an environmental hazard, or an economic necessity? And do the noise and air pollution dangers they present outweigh their benefits for working-class landscapers? Local land-use commissioners wrestled with those questions during the latest regular monthly meeting of the City Plan Commission...More than 200 cities and towns across the country have already enacted legislation restricting or eliminating the use of these devices...”

## At the Windham Mill Museum

Submitted by Kira Holmes, Executive Director

Thurs., Nov. 4, 7 p.m.: “The Yellow Roses: A Short History of Women’s Suffrage.” This 45-minute Zoom presentation by Chelsey Knyff, The Mill Museum’s Curatorial Director, covering the history of women’s suffrage from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, will be followed by an audience Q&A. Historically, those in support of giving women the vote wore yellow roses; the opposition wore red. And there WAS opposition by men and women alike. Tickets: \$15 at millmuseum.org. Link will be provided ½ hour before the program.

Fri., Sat., Sun. Nov. 5, 6 & 7: Last chance to see “Unlacing the Corset, Unleashing the Vote” exhibit at the Mill Museum (411 Main St., Willimantic). 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Nov. 6: Maker’s Fair Booth: Stop by The Mill Museum’s Information Booth from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the East Brook Mall. Children are welcome to stop and get a free basket to make. The Basket-Making Class for

preregistered adults starts at 3 p.m. to make an 8” berry basket. Fee is \$25, and participants must preregister at millmuseum.org. Space is limited. Bring scissors, a pail or basin, a towel, and a gallon of water.

Nov. 10 at 7 p.m.: “Meet Mother Jones.” Bev York, the Museum’s Educational Director, will give a Zoom lecture on this famous female labor activist. Register at millmuseum.org. Fee: \$10. Link will be provided ½ hour before the program.

Nov. 13: Mill of the Month travels to Yantic, one of the villages of Norwich. Explore this area and its stories with Bev York, the Mill Museum’s Educational Director. Meet at 10 a.m. at Yantic Mill off Rte. 32 at the junction of Chapel Hill and Yantic Rds. Bring \$10 cash. No pre-registration necessary.

Nov. 20: Drop-in Spinning Bee with Peggy Church. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. in The Mill Museum’s Dugan Hall, 3 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.

Nov. 27- Jan. 2: “Trees, Traditions & Tiny Treasures.” Glenn Martineau displays his whimsical breadbox dioramas amid decorated holiday trees and ethnic and religious traditions at The Mill Museum, 411 Main St., Willimantic. Explore holiday celebrations and the transformation of not only our first, but also our second and third floors with cheer and traditions galore. Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Nov. 27: “Trees, Traditions & Tiny Treasures” Virtual Gala at 7 p.m. Put on your holiday best (or wear your comfiest informals) and BYOB to this on-line gala. Have a close-up view of the exquisite details of the fascinating wonderland of miniatures created by Glenn Martineau and enjoy a pre-recorded interview about the artist’s work in this very special holiday treat. Tickets: \$12 at millmuseum.org. Link will be provided ½ hour before the program.

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# On Local Maple Syrup and Reaching a Milestone

By C. Dennis Pierce

Do you remember how many times you have driven up Route 89 in Ashford and glanced over and saw the sign, Rivers Edge Sugar House, and stopped to wonder what it was like or made a mental note to check it out in the future? I know I have.



As usual in preparation for this column I contacted Bill Proulx from River’s Edge sugar house to set up a visit, tour and interview. My visit was on one of those fickle days, alternating heavy clouds and slanting sunshine. It was one of the mornings where a glimpse of colder weather was preparing for a future visit. The smell of wood smoke filled the air and I regretted that I did not dress in warmer clothes.

Traveling down the zig zag road until I came up the sugar house and Proulx residence. Bill and his wife Amy came out to greet me and for the next hour I entered the world of maple syrup production. As during most times, when interviewing for this column, I carry a small notebook. Bill and Amy shared with me information that took up ten pages of interesting details that I am sure I will not be able to capture but I will try. Maple syruping started for the Proulx’s back in 1993. It began with twenty maple trees that were tapped and the sap was transferred to a makeshift fire that was set up in their driveway that held a lasagna pan for boiling. As they continued to boil their sap so it would result in syrup, I am sure that were not dreaming of the amazing system that they have in place today. What started out as a neat thing to do as a family event on a small scale still involves many of the Proulx family, and extended family, as production levels have significantly increased.

Let me pause and provide some interesting information on Bill and Amy’s current operation. Harvesting sap from maple trees require the right conditions for the sap to run. Trees must be tapped for the season’s production. Originally the Proulx’s have relied on a gravity system but now have transitioned to a vacuum system to gather their sap. What started out as a handful of trees now has resulted to 2,400+ trees. Harvesting sap is a short season that changes based on what Mother Nature throws at you. Ideal conditions are when nights drop below 32 degrees and days are above 32 degrees. It is a short season, typically over by the end of March.

The sap is transported from acreage throughout Ashford and the surrounding area where the “giving” maple trees reside. Bill and his family members and part time staff haul sap in a truck that has a 700-gallon container. On a good day the tree may produce 6,000 gallons of sap. Sap is about 90% water and 2% sugar. It takes about 40 to 80 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup. When the sap arrives at the sugar house it is put into a holding tank and then introduced to the evaporator. The evaporator is a large tank system that is heated by a wood fire. The majority of the sugar house hosts the evaporator. It is an amazing piece of equipment that provides a deeper appreciation of the syrup that we pour on or pancakes for breakfast. In the beginning of their venture the boiling process would use 20 to 30 cords of wood to stoke the evaporator. By using greater efficiencies and updated equipment they now are using about 12 to 15 cords per season. The challenges? Breaks in their hosing from tree to tree causing the vacuum system to stop working. Deep winter snow that buries the hoses that then need to be shoveled out. And of course, the right weather conditions. To me the process seemed demanding requiring full attention all hours of the day and night. When asked, Bill smiled and said, “that if my day ends at 10:00pm, that’s banker’s hours.”

Maple syruping is a New England practice that has been going on for centuries. Like a lot of commodities, we see on grocery store shelves the production of local maple syrup is a great example where you can bring your children to witness a truly, locally grown Connecticut product. Make plans for next March to be on the look out for a sign on Route 89 that states, “Boling Today” and stop in for a visit and purchase some of some local maple syrup. Can’t wait? Take a look at River’s Edge website <https://riversedgesugarhouse.com> that hosts several videos, great information and online ordering. Now, you would think that Bill and Amy are busy enough? They also have 25 bee hives and they sell their honey too. Maple syrup and honey too? Now that is heaven.

the neighbors paper  
a little paper big on community

I would be remiss if I did not add here, the poet, Robert Frost’s poem that pays homage to the process of making maple syrup.

### Evening In A Sugar Orchard

From where I lingered in a lull in march  
outside the sugar-house one night for choice,  
I called the fireman with a careful voice  
And bade him leave the pan and stoke the arch:  
‘O fireman, give the fire another stoke,  
And send more sparks up chimney with the smoke.’  
I thought a few might tangle, as they did,  
Among bare maple boughs, and in the rare  
Hill atmosphere not cease to glow,  
And so be added to the moon up there.  
The moon, though slight, was moon enough to show  
On every tree a bucket with a lid,  
And on black ground a bear-skin rug of snow.  
The sparks made no attempt to be the moon.  
They were content to figure in the trees  
As Leo, Orion, and the Pleiades.  
And that was what the boughs were full of soon.



Bill and Amy Proulx.

Dennis Pierce photo.

Keeping in line with the season you might have a pumpkin that needs to take on another life other then being a doorstep decoration. For this month’s recipe try the following with some local maple syrup for a true taste of “local”.

Pumpkin Pancakes with Maple Syrup (hopefully Rivers Edge Maple Syrup)  
Makes 12 to 14, 3 ½ inch pancakes

Ingredients:  
1 ½ cups/192 grams all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder  
¾ teaspoon baking soda  
¾ teaspoon kosher salt  
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/8 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
1 ½ cups buttermilk  
(The simplest way to substitute buttermilk is to pour 1 Tbs. of vinegar into a 1 cup measurer and then fill the rest of the measuring cup with milk. Then gently stir the mixture and let it sit for about 5 minutes. In this case you will have to add 1 tablespoon and add the remainder of the cup and then add ½ of a tablespoon and add the rest with milk in a half of a cup.)  
¾ cup pumpkin purée. This can be canned or by taking a fresh pumpkin and cook it with a little water or cider until it can be pureed.  
2 eggs  
3 tablespoons melted butter, plus more for greasing the skillet  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions:  
In a large bowl, whisk the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and spices together until well combined.  
In a medium bowl, whisk the buttermilk, pumpkin purée, eggs, melted butter and vanilla extract until well combined. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and gently fold with a rubber spatula until just combined. (A few small lumps are O.K.)  
Heat a lightly greased griddle or nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Drop the pancakes into the pan by the 1/4 cup, making sure to leave plenty of room in between for the batter to expand.  
Cook for a minute or two, until the batter bubbles at the edges and browns on the bottom, then carefully flip.  
Cook another minute or two, until the batter is completely cooked through and the pancakes are puffy and deep golden brown. Repeat until all of the batter is used. Serve the pancakes as you make them or keep the pancakes warm as you cook them by setting them on a baking sheet in a 250-degree oven.  
Top with a drizzle of Rivers Edge maple syrup.

I am soon reaching a significant milestone in life and I find myself focusing on better health to extend my lifespan. I recently came across an interesting article that I wanted to share some of what I learned. I found that the planet’s longest-living communities all have access to food from farms and orchards down the road — that’s to say, within a 10-mile radius of their homes. These ingredients aren’t treated with pesticides or pumped with preservatives; they’re their original nutrient-dense, fiber-rich selves. It may sound expensive but so are late-life medical bills. The following are some evident and not so evident tips:

Eat a wide variety of vegetables. But if you want to unlock your true longevity potential — and lower your risk of everything from cardiovascular disease to macular degeneration — you need to regularly cycle through the whole menu, cruciferous veggies, dark leafy greens, edible plant stems, roots and marrows.

Eat until your 80% full. Hara hachi bu is a Japanese saying that translates to “Eat until you’re 80% full.” It’s an alien concept in America, where portion sizes are the biggest in the world. Finding yourself “slightly full” will directly reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease or stroke while giving your body more energy and less bloating in the short term.

Make more PB&Js. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are having a moment. A few years ago, ESPN devoted a profile to the NBA’s “secret addiction.” Tom Brady revealed not long

after that the PB&J is his pregame meal of choice. And this year, a study concluded that the sandwich can add 33 minutes to your life. Remember to use whole-wheat bread and all-natural jelly.

Eat more beans. The backbone of the centenarian diet. Beans are high in fiber, protein, iron, magnesium, potassium and B-vitamins, and low in fat and calories. They fill you up as well as meat and cook easy (serve them on their own with olive oil and a bit of sea salt, or put them in a burrito or salad). Beans are called the world’s greatest longevity food.

As always thanks for reading my column. Farmers Markets will be transitioning soon to their winter operations and some will be saying adieu until next year. I will gather details for my next column to share with you. 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).

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## Unsung Heroes of Soul:

# Lee Dorsey

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 Lee Dorsey, an early New Orleans funkster who worked with producer Allen Toussaint.

He was born Irving Lee Dorsey on December 24, 1924. He was a childhood friend of Fats Domino before the Dorseys moved to Portland, Oregon, when Lee was ten years old. He was drafted into the U.S. Navy during World War II. He served on a destroyer and sustained a leg wound when a Japanese Zero attacked the ship. Dorsey later became a professional boxer under the name “Kid Chocolate,” but fought only one bout and was knocked out in the second round.

Dorsey returned to New Orleans in 1955, studying body and fender repair under the G.I. Bill. He also hung out in the nightclubs of the French Quarter, but did not sing in them. He did, however, sing at work, and a local record producer was taken with Dorsey’s somewhat nasally voice. He ended up recording his first single, “Rock Pretty Baby,” on Cosimo Matassa’s Rex label in 1959. It got some local airplay and led to Dorsey’s next release, 1960’s “Lottie Mo” on Valiant Records (and picked up for national distribution by ABC-Paramount). The session was produced by the New Orleans Rhythm & Blues veteran, Allen Toussaint. Though “Lottie Mo” was not a national hit, it did earn Lee Dorsey an appearance on Dick Clark’s “American Bandstand.”

Dorsey later met A&R (artists and repertoire) man Marshall Sehorn, who got him signed to Bobby Robinson’s Fury Records. While Robinson was visiting Dorsey’s house, they heard some kids outside chanting a catchy tune that Dorsey, Robinson, and a third collaborator, C.L. Blast, turned into “Ya Ya.” (“Sittin’ here la-la, waitin’ for my ya-ya, uh-huh, uh-huh.”) The funky novelty song hit #1 R&B in November 1961 and peaked at #7 on the pop chart. It sold more than a million copies and received a gold record from the Recording Industry Association of America. Dorsey’s next single, the similarly themed “Do-Re-Mi,” also made the charts, but his subsequent Fury releases did not. He next recorded unsuccessfully for the Smash and Constellation labels.

By 1965, Dorsey was again working with Allen Toussaint, recording “Ride Your Pony” for Bell Records. (Toussaint wrote the song under the pseudonym “Naomi Neville.”) It became his biggest hit since “Ya Ya,” and was followed by pair of top five R&B smashes: “Get Out of My Life, Woman” and “Working in the Coal Mine.” The latter also was a top ten pop hit in 1966. Dorsey ended the year with another chart hit, “Holy Cow.” He also recorded two albums, “Ride Your Pony Again” and “The New Lee Dorsey.” Unfortunately, his constant touring put a strain on Dorsey’s marriage; he and wife divorced.

His 1969 single, “Everything I Do Gohn Be Funky (From Now On),” with instrumental backing by the Meters, is acknowledged as a forerunner of the ‘70s funk movement. In 1970, Dorsey and Toussaint collaborated on the “Yes We Can” album. The title cut made the Billboard Soul Singles chart and became an even bigger hit for the Pointer Sisters, who did it in 1973 as “Yes We Can Can.”

In 1976, Dorsey appeared on the LP, “I Don’t



Want to Go Home” by Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes. This led to a recording contract with ABC Records, from which came Dorsey’s 1978 album, “Night People.” In 1979, he suffered two broken legs in a motorcycle accident. However, that did not keep Dorsey from playing jazz festivals in New Orleans and opening for The Clash on their 1980 U.S. tour. He also went on the road with Jerry Lee Lewis and James Brown.

Lee Dorsey developed emphysema and died on December 1, 1986, at the age of 61. His signature hit, “Ya Ya,” inspired numerous cover versions. They included Tony Sheridan & The Beat Brothers (A/K/A The Beatles, 1962), Tommy James & The Shondells (1966), Mouse & The Traps (1967), the Hombres (1968), Lee Michaels (1971), John Lennon (1975), Trio (1981), and the Steve Miller Band (1988). There were also French-language versions called “Ya Ya Twist” by both Petula Clark and Johnny Hallyday in 1962.

Rock critic Dave Marsh included “Ride Your Pony” in his 1989 book, “The Heart of Rock and Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made.”

Charted singles:

“Ya Ya” (1961) R&B #1 (1 week), Pop #7  
 “Do-Re-Mi” (1961-62) R&B #22, Pop #27  
 “Ride Your Pony” (1965) R&B #7, Pop #28  
 “Get Out of My Life, Woman” (1966) R&B #5, Pop #44  
 “Working in the Coal Mine” (1966) R&B #5, Pop #8  
 “Holy Cow” (1966) R&B #10, Pop #23  
 “My Old Car” (1967) Pop #97  
 “Go-Go Girl” (1967) R&B #31, Pop #62  
 “Everything I Do Gohn Be Funky (From Now On)” (1969) R&B #33, Pop #95  
 “Yes We Can, Part 1” (1970) R&B #46  
 “Night People” (1978) R&B #93

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.wrtc.fm.com](http://www.wrtc.fm.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).

## Artists’ Open Studios of Northeastern CT

Submitted by Suzy Staubach

First weekend: November 26, 27 & 28  
 Second Weekend: December 4 & 5  
 10 am to 5 pm

The popular Artists’ Open Studios of Northeastern Connecticut is returning to an in-person event this year with 72 artists welcoming visitors to their studios and group shows. The Tour will be held Friday, Saturday and Sunday November 26, 27 and 28, and Saturday and Sunday, December 4 and 5, from 10 am to 5 pm each day.

Guests are asked to follow each venue’s Covid guidelines such as wearing masks or social distancing. Site specific guidelines are available at [aosct.org](http://aosct.org). You can also find a map of the tour on the site and descriptions of individual artists’ work.

The self-guided art adventure features fine art, pottery, oils, watercolors, acrylics, woodcarving, furniture, sculpture, weaving, quilt-making, jewelry, fiber art, drawings, photography, glassworks, metal works, pyrog-

raphy and mixed media. Pieces range from the practical to the whimsical, from small to monumental. Many local AOS artists enjoy national

or international reputations far beyond our pretty corner of Connecticut. Artists invite you to view their work, learn about their processes, hear about what inspires them and, if you like, shop.

Studios and group shows are located in picturesque 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century houses, charming outbuildings, historic old post offices, along rural

roads, and in the heart of the small mill towns Eastern Connecticut is known for. Printed tour guides with maps are available at area businesses, town halls, post offices and libraries.

AOS is an opportunity to spend time visiting with artists who live and work in the beautiful Quiet Corner of Connecticut. The free art tour is open to all. Spend a day or spend a few days on the Tour. Area eateries, inns and B&B’s offer pleasant and convenient food and accommodations.

For a map and complete listing of artists visit <http://www.aosct.org>. Contact: [suzy@willowtreepottery.us](mailto:suzy@willowtreepottery.us) 860-287-8056 <http://www.aosct.org> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aosct.org/>



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# Shooting Stars – Good Luck, or Goodbye

By Bob Lorentson

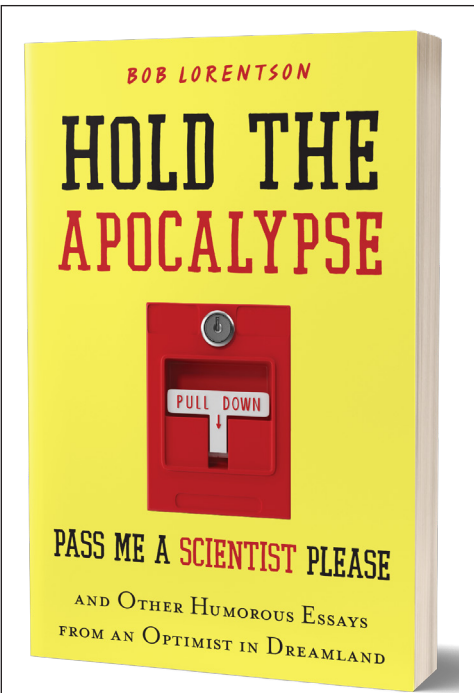
Who doesn’t marvel at a shooting star, and wonder what it means? Some cultures believe a shooting star represents the soul of a new baby falling to earth, or that a soul has been released from purgatory and can finally ascend to heaven. Some, like seafarers, believe they can predict which way the wind will blow. Others believe that if you spot one on your right, it means good luck, but if it’s on your left, beware, because misfortune will follow you. Still others believe a shooting star means that a celebrity has gone postal.

Shooting stars, for the celebrity and celestial impaired, are meteors. What are meteors you say? I’m glad you asked, because no one should be left thinking that God is throwing rocks at us. Meteors are small bits of space debris, usually rock, but possibly also the remnants of Flat Earth Society member’s minds, that get sucked into earth’s gravitational field, then burn up and disintegrate due to the friction encountered while travelling through the gases in our atmosphere. It’s much like what happens to anyone entering a boy’s locker room unprepared. As they burn, these objects then emit a bright light which appears to ‘shoot’ across the sky.

Surprisingly, most meteors that enter the earth’s atmosphere are only the size of a pebble, or even a grain of sand. Occasionally they might get to the size of a human fist. It doesn’t take much to excite the sky. Or the sky watchers, for that matter, at least those night owls who find daylight overrated. The odds of spotting a meteor though are not good. Twenty-five million of them enter earth’s atmosphere every day, and under good conditions at the best of times (September mornings), one can perhaps see 8 – 16 per hour. This drops off progressively to a low of 2 – 4 per hour on March evenings, before increasing again. Meteor showers, which derive from comets, are the exception, and can produce up to 50 – 100 per hour, along with the belief that we’re under attack by alien invaders.

Those beliefs aren’t always wrong. About 17 times a day, on average, a meteor hits the ground, whereupon it is then dubbed a meteorite and treated like a long lost cat who has discovered the secrets of the universe in its wanderings. If one can be found, which is rather like looking for one particular pebble on Pebble Beach. Only about ten are recovered every year. Of course, one can always find you. In 1954 an 8 ½ pound, 4.5 million year old meteorite smashed through Ann Hodges roof in Sylacauga, Alabama, making her an instant celebrity and a firm believer in hard hats and hard liquor. Giving no respect to its venerable age and origin however, she promptly used it as a doorstep.

In 1911 a meteorite killed a dog near Cairo, Egypt, lending further credence to the belief that God is a cat person. In 2013, a 7,000 ton meteorite the size of a bus exploded with the force of 20 atomic bombs near Chelyabinsk, Siberia, creating a shockwave that injured 1,000 people, but no cats. NASA figures that once every 2,000 years a meteorite the size of a football field hits the earth and causes people to change religions. But neither hard hats, hard booze, nor even hard cats would have helped anyone had they been around 65 million years ago to see the Chicxulub meteorite wipe out the dinosaurs and three-quarters of all life on earth. (These are merely offered as facts so that you might also consider anti-anxiety medication while you’re watching the next meteor shower with zombie cocktail in hand, football helmet on head, and your cat in your lap.)



To my Neighbors: I would like to thank publisher Tom King and the readers of this wonderfully unique newspaper for indulging me in my writing excursions this past year. I would also like to take this opportunity from Tom to announce the publication of my new book, *Hold the Apocalypse - Pass Me a Scientist Please*, which contains some of the essays you may have read, and much more. You can find it at Amazon directly, or through a link on my website, [www.boblorentson.com](http://www.boblorentson.com), under My Books. And thank you for your support.

Though just released, the book has already earned a five star review from the popular ‘Readers’ Favorite Book Reviews’, which said “Hold the Apocalypse is best read when .... you are alone, because otherwise you will annoy everyone around you with bouts of laughter and “listen to this” while you read passages from the book to them. If you are looking for a gift for anybody, look no further, you just found the perfect book.” BL

As might be expected when confronted by mysterious fireballs in the sky, and falling rocks that can bring out the Chicken Little in the best of us, human imaginations through the centuries have soared into the stratosphere and beyond in search of answers and superstitions. Aristotle, who apparently never subscribed to the ‘write what you know’ advice, literally wrote the book on the subject anyway, *Meteorologica*, in 340 B.C., in which he described shooting stars as “a dry exhalation ... scattered in small parts in many directions ... and the more and faster a thing moves, the more apt it is to take fire.” To be fair though, I do now stick to the speed limits.

In more recent times, meteorologists have distanced themselves from Aristotle and co-opted the term meteorology, while making it about the study of television newscast domination. This has stuck the people who actually study meteors with the awkward name meteoricists, who get no TV time. Despite the slight, meteoricists will still tell you about how most meteors occur in the region of our atmosphere called the thermosphere, between 50 and 75 miles high, and how they range in speed from 25,000 mph to 160,000 mph. But they will also tell you that meteorologists are mere weather forecasters, lucky poseurs who should return the term meteorology to the scientists it belongs to. Meteorologists respond that meteoricists still don’t understand that, weather forecasting aside, one makes one’s own luck, and it starts by observing shooting stars from the correct side.

# Staying Sane

By Calen Nakassh

“The Wheel of Time turns, and Ages come and pass, leaving memories that become legend. Legend fades to myth, and even myth is long forgotten when the Age that gave it birth comes again.” That is how every book in the Wheel of Time fantasy series, which was recently picked up to be turned into a series by Amazon, starts. I’ve been thinking a lot about the age we live in, and what the consequences of this age will be for the future. I’ve been thinking about how to move forward in a world that seems more and more unfair, where one senator can kill a climate bill that the future of our Earth depends on and that would barely do enough as is. I’ve been thinking about fantasy tropes and how the bad guy tends to lose in the end, but how submersing yourself in the news to become more informed shows you the bad guy getting off time and time again, with Bill Cosby now out of prison and a president who was involved in an insurrection possibly able to run again.

Most importantly, I’ve been thinking about how to stay sane. I have a “save the world” mindset, but I first need to save myself, find a writing job that is able to support me, and eventually be in a position where I can help others. The often shortened biblical quote “the love of money is the root of all evil” means that humans who prioritize money over all else turn to evil, and it is exhausting and draining to see that playing out in the news, time and time again. The minimum wage is not high enough in any state, and it will not be until healthcare and college is free, but as houses are being picked up at a premium and more and more streaming services go online (Disney’s originals are locked to its service forever), the bottom line seems to be a future where we do not own anything.

That is even more evident as Amazon repeats the sins of the past with its factory towns. To put it simply, unions fought factory towns in the past and lost. It is gross to see Bloomberg News supporting Amazon and stating that its towns will “lift workers up,” when it ties its job not only to healthcare, but to its workers’ living arrangements. The r/antiwork subreddit on Reddit—which, contrary to its name, is not against working, but instead about giving fair pay and rights to those who, lest we forget, are leasing their time away for money—featured a screenshot of a text message exchange where a worker threatened to quit because of an unsafe environment, and his employer said, “Are you sure you want to do that? Throw your healthcare away?”

None of this helps me stay sane. I never said I had the answer, but it helps to see that the worker quit anyway, leaving the company and feeling happy to be able to serve his kids pancakes in the morning, even if he’s lost his healthcare.

I firmly believe that we are at a turning point in history. Reddit featured a sign that employers are now hiring children to plug the employment gap, showing that when we as a workforce stand up and demand higher pay, they will take our children instead of providing a living wage. I’d like to offer my services to anyone who needs help fighting corruption in this area, but I still haven’t received any requests to my email, [calennakash@protonmail.com](mailto:calennakash@protonmail.com), and I’ll put my primary address here too: [calennakash@gmail.com](mailto:calennakash@gmail.com). I want to fight, because I want a future for our children, but the system is remarkably good at keeping ways to do that out of the public eye.

So how do I stay sane? There are two mindsets I shift between: It’s too late to save the planet, and We can do better. It’s possible my words can convince someone in a position of power to fight back, and maybe I have contributed enough. I know I shouldn’t blame myself for the state of the planet, but when you’re the only person you know inside and out, it’s hard not to believe you should have found the answers by now.

I still firmly believe that resistance begins at the local level and moves up. It’s been said that your vote is your loudest voice, but I believe that is nonsense—a person’s work is their voice, and we can bring the system to a halt if enough of us refuse. The planet is burning and the nations of the world were revealed to have lobbied to change the most recent climate report. Our future is at stake, and every person who happens to read this should think hard about what they can do to not only bring awareness, but to slow the decline of our planet.

I will give an answer, however: to stay sane, find something you can do to fight back or make a difference. Know that no matter what horrible news comes out of the woodwork, you are making a difference in that one area. If every person did that, things would become marginally better.

To stay sane, focus on the moments in front of you right now, the earth and trees that might not be there in the future, the dog you meet on your walk. I don’t take a nihilist approach, but there’s something to be said for knowing that extinct animals had their moment in the sun, and that nothing lasts forever.

But it’s up to us to make it last as long as possible.

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# 50 or over? How to turn your tax bill into retirement savings.

By Laurence Hale, AAMA, CRPS®  
Principal/Managing Partner,  
Co-Founder, & Chief Investment  
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Tax day is months away, and while most of us would rather think about holiday festivities than taxes or retirement planning, taking some time now to do just that could really pay off, especially if you’re over 50. Here’s how...

If your end of year tax estimates show you’re going to owe taxes for 2021, you can help to reduce that tax liability by making an increased contribution to your retirement account. Since retirement account contributions are not taxed, you’ll reduce your taxable income by the amount of your contribution. There are limits to how much you can contribute each year, but if you’re 50 or older you can contribute more than the usual limits through a catch-up contribution.

## What are catch-up contributions?

If you are 50 or older, or you will reach age 50 by the end of the year, you may be able to make contributions to your IRA or employer-sponsored retirement plan above the normal contribution limit. This is called a catch-up contribution, and it’s designed to help you make up any retirement savings shortfall by bumping up the amount you can save in the years leading up to retirement.

Catch-up contributions can be made to traditional and Roth IRAs, as well as to 401(k) plans and certain other employer-sponsored retirement plans. But if you participate in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, check plan rules — not all plans allow catch-up contributions.

## How much can you contribute as a catch-up contribution?

How much you can contribute depends on the type of retirement plan you have and the tax year for which you are making the contribution. Here are the limits for various retirement plan types in tax year 2021:

401(k), 403(b), or governmental 457(b) plans have a regular annual contribution limit of \$19,500 and a catch-up contribution limit of \$6,500, for a total possible contribution of \$26,000. (403(b) and 457(b) plans also have special catch-up rules that may apply.)

SIMPLE plans have a regular annual contribution limit of \$13,500 and a catch-up contribution limit of \$3,000, for a total possible contribution of \$16,500. Traditional and Roth IRAs have a regular annual contribution limit of \$6,000 and a catch-up contribution limit of \$1,000, for a total possible contribution of \$7,000.

## When should I make a catch-up contribution in order to reduce my 2021 tax burden?

The deadline for contributing to your retirement account so that it gets credited to the 2021 tax year is April 15, 2022. This is true for both regular contributions and catch-up contributions. But if you make your contribution after the first of the year, just be sure to indicate that you’d like it credited to the 2021 tax year; otherwise, it will be automatically be credited to 2022.

## How can I continue to maximize my retirement savings going forward?

Tax time shouldn’t be the only time you think about how to increase your retirement savings. If you want to live well in retirement, you’ve got to plan well and invest well consistently all year long. A financial professional can provide invaluable experience and assistance in ensuring you stay on the path toward achieving your financial life goals.

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# Coventry’s Christmas in the Village

Submitted by Ruth I. O’Neil

Coventry’s Christmas in the Village will be held on this year on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021, from 12 noon to 4 P.M. This annual town event brings community members and businesses together to welcome the holiday season. The activities will culminate with the annual town tree lighting celebration which will take place at 4:30 P.M. After enjoying an abundance of holiday happenings throughout the village area earlier in the day, community members and visitors can gather together to share in this long standing tradition. Students from the Coventry High School Choral and Band program will provide songs of the season. Santa will lead the tree lighting, having been escorted down Main Street by the Coventry Fire Departments’ Torchlight Holiday Parade. Fire trucks and other vehicles from the towns’ fire departments will be adorned in holiday lights and decorations.

Activities during the afternoon include: pony rides, live musical performances by local artists and students from the Song-a-Day Music Center, crafts, and a holiday dance performance by students of The Can-Dance Studio. Santa pays a visit to Coventry, traveling down Main Street to Coventry Arts and Antiques where guests may visit and have photos taken with him.

More holiday activities will be held at the Booth and Dimock Library, including a Youth Art Show coordinated by the Coventry Arts Guild and the library.

The Coventry Lions Club, current sponsor of the event, will host its popular annual Christmas Tree Festival, a holiday décor sale, along with a Crafter Exhibition at the Coventry Community Center. Drawings will be held for trees decorated and donated by local organizations, businesses and individuals. Call 860-803-7163 for details on contributing a decorated Christmas tree to the Festival.

Merchants along the renovated historic stretch of Main Street will be open, offering demonstrations, holiday gift ideas, specials, free drawings, and more. The Coventry Visitors Center will feature a Country Gift Cupboard along with an array of area tourist material. Other organizations will be set up along Main Street offering holiday goodies.

The Coventry Winter Farmers’ Market held at the Patriots Park Lodge will be open from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. followed by activities for children of all ages coordinated by the Coventry Parks and Recreation Department. Children are encouraged to drop off letters they have written to Santa at this time.

Coinciding with Christmas in the Village is the multi-day East-

ern Connecticut event, Artists’ Open Studio. Several area artists will have exhibits at Main street’s Mill Brook Place not only during the afternoon of Christmas in the Village, but on Nov. 26, 27, 28 and December 3, 4 as well. Two Main Street studios, Timberman Studio and Maple Brook Studio will be open to the public as part of the Artists’ Open Studio. Visit [aosct.org](http://aosct.org) for more information on the Artists’ Open Studio.

In keeping with the current health and safety mandates and guidelines in place by the state and the town of Coventry, guests must wear masks while inside any municipal building. Guests are also asked to comply with requirements that businesses have in place, and practice social distancing both indoors and outdoors. Hand sanitizing stations will be available throughout the village.

Christmas in the Village began in 2003 by the Coventry Village Improvement Society. This is the 18th year for the event.

Visit Coventry’s Christmas in the Village’s Facebook page for detailed schedule information, all subject to change. Sponsorships and volunteers to help are welcome as well as donations. Call the coordinators at 860-918-5957 or 860-617-3588 for more information or 860-918-5957.

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A Secret Garden at Connecticut College, New London

# The Caroline Black Garden

By Brian Karlsson Barnes

Five acres of flowing garden rooms in New London are named for the first Professor of Botany at Connecticut College, Caroline Black. Earning her Ph.D at Indiana University in 1912, she came to New London to lead the botany department in 1917, and was soon leading the campus with the notion that

**Landscaping “creates a sense of place.”**

A century later, the Caroline Black Garden is a special place for conservation, coexistence and world peace. Yet quiet, secluded, almost secret. Tours are scheduled online and six of us were well-guided on October 10th by a docent master gardener named Tracy.

**EAST OF MOHEGAN** Professor Black planted an “off-campus” garden in 1928 to teach native Connecticut perennials in an outdoor classroom on the Thames River side of Mohegan Avenue (that continues north as Route 32 to Willimantic). She died tragically in 1930 after presenting a botanical paper and contracting spinal meningitis in Iowa, and the College named the garden for her.

Her Sense of Place has evolved to a series of garden rooms with a mature collection of ornamental woody plants -- 170 trees, 423 shrubs and 4 vines (at recent count) and some herbaceous perennials – to honor her legacy.

In 2001, the Caroline Black Garden became a member of *Gardens for Peace*, an international organization promoting world peace “through the universal language of gardens.”

In October 2021, the autumn garden spoke to me with elegant weeping and upright trees and shrubs, showy leaves, berries and bark. An autumn azalea (*Rho.*) was blooming pink, possibly evergreen in this mild climate. I hope to check in spring. The essence of gardens is hope for the following year.

Beautyberry (*Callicarpa*) had clusters of bright purple berries. A Japanese Maple (*Acer*) was not yet bright scarlet in fall color, but the glossy bark of graceful Yoshino Cherry (*Prunus*) and the flaking bark of gangly Seven Son Flower (*Heptacodium*) attract attention fall into winter, all seasons.



Beautyberry (Callcarpa)                      Brian Karlsson Barnes photo.

A vigorous semi-evergreen groundcover of Ivy (*Hedera*) under a Western Red Cedar (*Thuja*) is an option for a sparce lawn in shade; herbaceous Barrenwort (*Epi-medium*) is better in dry shade. Keeping up with the tour, I didn’t stop at a bench under an unidentified weeping tree where I’ll sit next spring.

More secluded was a Japanese water garden. Large boulders with limited flow at grade reminds me of the adjacent Thames River to which the Last Green Valley drains -- not wide but a deep ocean port for the submarine base across the river.

**WEEPING**  
**Laceleaf Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum* “Crimson Queen”)**

A dwarf weeping tree or large shrub, it grows slowly up to 10 feet tall -- and wider in a cascading

mounded form. No showy flowers, but the finely dissected leaves are crimson red in summer and bright scarlet in fall (not yet 10 October). Deciduous, it loses leaves in autumn to reveal elegant branching. Sun-tol-erant in cooler regions where exposure intensifies the foliage color, it is best in afternoon shade in warmer regions. Prefers moist, but well-drained, organically rich and slightly acidic soil.

If left alone as a dense mound, Laceleaf Japanese Maple is low mainte-nance -- but with increasing heat and humid-ity promoting pests and disease, I’m pruning more for better air circulation. Besides, there is often tip dieback to remove. Easier to see



Autumn azalea (Rho.)                      Brian Karlsson Barnes photos.

when branches are bare, but removing all crossing branches is difficult in such a dense form; prune off the ground and within as able. Except dieback, avoid tip-pruning to shape the weeping form; it promotes dense interior growth.

**Weeping Cherry aka Yoshino Cherry (*Prunus x yedoensis*)**

A fast-growing early-flowering deciduous tree that can reach 50 feet high and 40 feet wide at maturity, usually smaller. It can be relatively short-lived (15 to 20 years) and grows best in moist acidic loam or clay soils; if in well-drained sandy ground, topdress with ample compost and water in hot, dry weather. It prefers moist conditions, and has some drought tolerance, but if you want it to live more than 20 years in global warming, water as needed.

Because it also flowers! The Yoshino cherry -- known as the *Japanese Flowering Cherry* -- is famed for its multitude of white-to-pink blossoms with an almond fragrance in spring. Another return required. Dark-green leaves drop in fall to reveal attractive branching and glossy silver-gray bark has all season interest.

Native to Japan, it was introduced to America in 1902. In Japanese legend, a fairy maiden hovers low in the warm spring sky, awakening the sleeping cherry trees with her delicate breath. The sweet breath of spring.

Yoshino Cherry with its cousin Kwanzan (also known as Japanese Flowering Cherry) provides the spectacular floral show each spring in Washington, D.C. Japanese plants grow well in temperate coastal climates. New England mimics the Asian island’s weather, from Connecticut up to the Coastal Maine Botanical Garden in Booth Bay, some say. Connecticut College’s campus and gardens have milder weather (except the errant hurricane).

**UPRIGHT**  
**Kwanzan Cherry (*Prunus serrulata*)**

This Japanese Flowering Cherry has vibrant pink bloom in pendulous clusters of 3-5 large double flowers. A small, deciduous tree that grows to 35 feet with stiffly ascending branches, it has a vase-shaped habit, spreading wider as it matures. It prefers moist, well-drained sandy-to-clayey loams in full sun, but will tolerate light shade. Fall leaf color is usually orange-bronze.

Kwanzan Cherry needs good horticultural care. It has viral and fungal diseases, and is susceptible to borers and scale. Potential diseases include fireblight, leaf curl, leaf spot, powdery mildew and root rot. Other pests are aphids, caterpillars, Japanese beetles, leafhoppers and spider mites. Add a large compost saucer (good for every ornamental).

**Fragrant Viburnum (*V. x carlcephalum*)**

This large old-fashioned shrub is also known as Snowball, growing 10 (15?) feet high and wide. Very fragrant pinkish-white flowers in dense, snowball-like clusters (5 inch cymes) become red berries (drupes) that ripen black. Not showy but birds love ‘em. Deciduous fall color is reddish purple.

Snowball’s form is wide, open, loose and irregular. (Could underplant with the floriferous, blowsy blue New England Aster.) Best in well-drained, slightly acid soil with even moisture, full-to-part-sun.

**BERRY**  
**Beautyberry (probably *Callicarpa dichotoma*)**  
A graceful medium shrub with long slender branches arching 4 to 6 feet, it has small cymes of pinkish lavender flowers in summer, becoming metallic magenta-violet berries in autumn. Prune to 6 inches in spring as it flowers and fruits on new deciduous growth in well-drained soil, full to part sun. Avoid excess fertility.

**BARK**  
**Seven Son Flower (*Heptacodium miconioides*)**  
A large deciduous shrub 10 to 15 feet high, its gray-brown peeling bark provides interest all year long, akin to Crapemyrtle in the South. Glossy spring leaves develop long twisting tips. Fragrant creamy white flowers on 6 inch panicles in August drop to reveal vivid red bracts. Its multi-stem form is gangly, somewhat inelegant, and always interesting.

It has tip dieback farther north in USDA zone 5, not so much in zone 6/7 (as here). Suited to well-drained, acidic organic soil, full to part sun

**AND One with Everything \***  
**Japanese Stewartia (*S. pseudocamellia*)**

IMHO, the showiest Asian tree is Japanese Stewartia. One with Everything (like a hotdog in Minnesota) with summer flower, fall color and tri-color peeling bark on sinuous trunks – soft grays and browns to reddish brown and orange in all seasons. Very showy.

Nonfragrant, but the flowers look like white camellias with orange anthers in yellow centers, and they appear later in summer when less is in bloom. The flowers have the charming habit of falling to the ground face up, easily seen. Reddish purple fall color. (Except berries \* )

Growing 30 to 40 feet tall, best in moist acidic soil “abundantly supplemented (Michael Dirr suggests) with leaf mold or peat moss,” Japanese Stewartia is 60 feet in the wild with massive muscled trunks. Wants sun most of the day, but shade in hot afternoons. During a heat wave several years ago, Stewartia leaf edges were scorched after a 100 degree (F.) day in full sun at Arnold Arboretum in Boston.

**DESIGN** Showcasing plants that thrive in Eastern Connecticut, there are also design lessons in the Caroline Black Garden. First, use mature sizes for ornamental shrubs and trees (as seen in arboreta and mature gardens) to fit your spaces. Less lawn !!! Rather, plant flowing garden rooms with surprises around the curves. Start at corners of expansive rectilinear lawns, adding trees and large shrubs, then link smaller areas of grass with mown paths. Live with the structural bones awhile and evolve the gardens over time.

**If You Go** Free parking at 4 Winchester Road. Garden is across the street from the College’s main gate on Mohegan Avenue (Route 32). Take road to the athletic center, and turn an immediate right onto Winchester Road. First drive-way leads to the Vinal Cottage parking lot.

*Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Master gardener/designer, Chaplin*



# RIP, Eureka (Feb. 14, 1992–Sept. 27, 2021)

By Delia Berlin

Recently, our beloved companion of almost 30 years died peacefully in my arms after a week-long decline. We are trying to contain our sadness for the sake of our remaining parrot, who also misses her, but our home is undeniably duller, quieter, emptier.

My heart is heavy but full of gratitude for the three decades of love and laughter that Eureka so generously gifted to us. Reluctant to stain her joyful memory with my grief, I offer “Breakfast with Parrots” as a repost from brighter days.

Rest in peace, my loyal friend.

## Breakfast with Parrots

With few exceptions, I’ve been having the same breakfast daily for 28 years. It consists of black coffee, a slightly green banana, a bowl of hot oat bran with skim milk and peanut butter, and a bundle of joy. I would not object to some variation in this menu, but my 28-year-old parrot would. So, as long as these ingredients can be found, the program is likely to continue. But we have noticed with alarm that oat bran is disappearing from store shelves.

Until recently, all local grocery stores carried at least two brands of oat bran. A few months ago, we started encountering one brand only. Then, it disappeared completely at Stop & Shop, but still could be found at Big Y. Soon it was gone from Big Y also, but Ocean State still had some. Finally, we couldn’t find any oat bran there either. By now, we can only purchase it in bulk at the Willimantic Food Co-op.

Puzzled by the disappearance of this common cereal, we noticed that there are still plenty of rolled oats, in many varieties, as well as oat milk, oat bars, and several other oat products. Obviously, a failed oat crop could not be the explanation for this sudden shortage. I Googled “oat bran shortage” and ended up learning a lot about oat bran, but nothing about a shortage. Google did have suggestions about where to get oat bran in our area, which sent us in search of it to the Walmart superstore. But Google was incorrect—there was no oat bran there either. I have no idea what’s going on...

Meanwhile, I’ve learned that my choice of cereal is a very good one. Oat bran is higher in fiber, protein, and other nutrients than oatmeal, with fewer calories. Eating it cooked with skim milk and natural peanut butter, my older parrot and I are also getting plenty of calcium and good fats. The milk is lactose reduced, because both my parrot and I are lactose intolerant. In fact, since birds have no need to digest lactose in nature, all of them are lactose intolerant.

Once, I went to a parrot nutrition workshop where the presenter said that even lactose reduced milk could be toxic to parrots. In this type of milk, the lactose is broken down by a natural enzyme into glucose and galactose. But apparently galactose is toxic for parrots. At the time, in view of that information, I asked our bird vet if I should continue with our breakfast routine. He asked how long I had been following it, to which I answered about ten years. He said that since my parrot was very healthy after a decade of such breakfasts, he could see no reason to deprive her of them.

To some it may seem laborious to make hot cereal

every morning, but I use shortcuts galore. I have a special cup that allows me to estimate the right amount of oat bran to go with a spoonful of natural peanut butter, and then top it with milk to the level that will cook perfectly in four minutes of medium-high microwave power. The moment the microwave bell rings, my parrot starts getting antsy. She knows that it takes me another minute to stir the cereal into a creamy mix, and that it will be too hot to eat immediately. But she has also learned a trick that helps her wait.

To explain this trick, I must first say something about parrots’ linguistic abilities. Frequently, people ask if a parrot can really talk, assuming that at most they may be able to repeat, or “parrot,” some words. However, parrots who grow up around humans actually learn language, much like children. Our parrots are not very talkative, but when they do talk, they mean what they say. I talk to my birds much

like I would talk to a child, and they respond accordingly.

When my parrot gets impatient to eat before the cereal has cooled, I tell her that it’s still too hot and ask her to “take a turn” to wait. Using my fingers as perches, she then makes a full-body 360 degree turn on my hand, which takes quite a few seconds and helps her control her temptation. I can ask her to take additional turns, if necessary. When I think it’s safe for her to try the cereal, I tell her to be careful because it’s still hot. She then tests the cereal very delicately with the tip of her beak before taking a mouthful.

Those who don’t share their life with parrots may not appreciate my bird’s excellent table manners. When my parrot was young, the breakfast table would become a war zone and had to be cleaned top to bottom on a daily basis. Now, her delicate elegance certainly surpasses mine, not to mention that of other family members. Each morning, her antics provide the last ingredient of my breakfast: joy. I feel grateful for that.

To be fair, before I get up for breakfast, my sweet husband wakes me

up with a cup of coffee. Having recognized early in our relationship that my neurons are very slow to synapse in the morning, he won my heart with this most endearing gesture. After 37 years, he hasn’t given up on me, so I’m grateful for that too.

Once my parrot gets her fill of cereal, we head to the kitchen sink for a good beak wash. She drinks some water from the spout, I rinse both of her mandibles, and then I dry them with a towel. She makes the same squinty face that one often sees when wiping the nose of a toddler. But her cooperation is amazing. At that point, she is ready to return to her cage for some rest and relaxation.

You would think that I could then eat my cereal in peace. But not yet, because we have another parrot. At 25 years of age, he has lived with us since he was 10 and came with some established habits. He enjoys his cereal in his pellet bowl. So, after feeding one parrot I must place a spoonful of cereal in the bowl of the other. It would be impossible to forget this, since even the slightest delay results in pleading “reminder” calls.

We are certainly hoping that this mystery of the disappearing oat bran comes to an end soon. Parrots are serious creatures of habit and I don’t look forward to having to explain a different cereal to them. As for myself, I could adapt to change if it was unavoidable, but I recognize perfection when I see it. And of course, I’m grateful for that.



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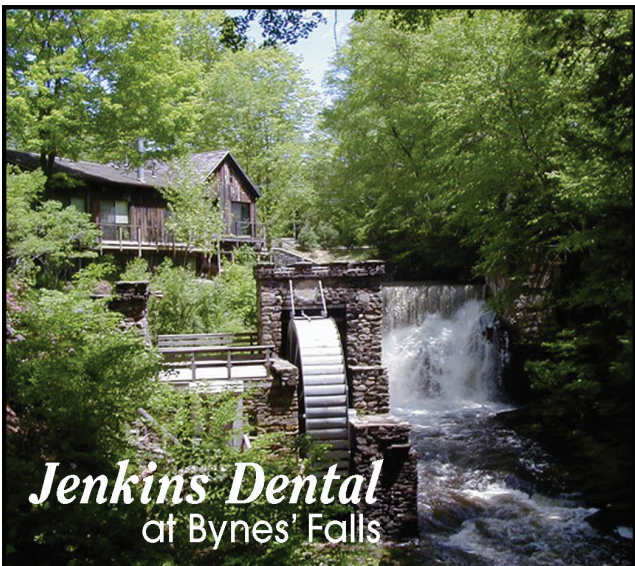
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# Walking in Her Footsteps

By Phoebe C.Godfrey

On October 8<sup>th</sup> my mother Gillian Wendy Slater-Godfrey passed away at Windham Hospital unexpectedly and yet in exactly the way she had wanted. This is remarkable given that she was 92 and had come to stay with my wife and I as a result of intense back pain. Her pain become so bad that we took her to Windham Hospital and it was not until four days later that it was made apparent that her pain was the result of an advanced form of lymphoma. She was seen by Dr. Michael Keenan on October 6<sup>th</sup> who joining myself, my wife and my brother (who was one the phone) told her the news. Unlike so many other doctors before, Dr. Keenan treated my mother as a whole human being (as did all the nurses, all of whom were exceptional) in that he held my mother’s hand, looked her in the eye and told her that she was most likely dying, but that she could choose to continue interventions. He briefly considered her options and then told him with the most surprising confidence and conviction that she would choose to do nothing- a choice that she had always wanted to make. This struck Dr. Keenan to such a degree that he said in the 40 years he has been a doctor that no one has accepted their fate with such ‘grace and dignity’ and with that we all had tears in our eyes to mark the memorable moment. He then went on to essentially say that it is the people who have lived from their hearts who act this way, whereas those who have lived from ego do not do very well in accepting their inevitable fate.

I have been thinking about her reaction ever since, in that the way in which my mother responded to Dr. Keenan (she went on to tell him one of her favorite limericks– she was British after all) choosing to fearlessly die, was also how she lived her life-with courage, grace, dignity, and of course love. As such, she was able until her last breath to stay committed to her principles and values of ‘keeping calm and carrying on’. Additionally, having just written her obituary (see below), it has become ever more apparent to me that the way I have chosen to live my life has been indelibly shaped by my mother. It is from her that I acquired my commitment to social justice, as well as the greatest lesson of all, which is to treat all people regardless of their social standing or other ascribe attributes, with compassion, empathy and the utmost respect. This is a lesson that shaped my work in co-founding CLiCK- a place that I modeled on the senior center she ran from 1986-1994 in Princeton, New Jersey and it has also shaped how I teach, how I do my research and how I ultimately live my life day to day. This is the power of a mother’s love in that it can call us to be our best, most evolved selves, while still lighting the way before us, even unto death.

In homage to my mother.

Gillian Wendy Slater-Godfrey was an extraordinary woman. From her birth in London on June 14, 1929 to her peaceful passing in Connecticut on October 8, 2021, she had the gift of connecting with others. In fact, Wendy’s generosity of spirit led her to always know what an intimate moment required to make it memorable, by either offering loving advice, compliments, witticisms, intellectual insights, lines of poetry & song and if you were very lucky– a dirty limerick or two!

Trained as an occupational therapist at Dorset House, Oxford and St. Lloys, Exeter, Devon in 1952, she combined the gift of connection with her creative talents. Wendy, or Gillian as she referred to herself professionally, had a long career as an occupational therapist including working in the Napsbury Surrey County Psychiatric hospital and Netherne Psychiatric Hospital in the UK, the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children in Trinidad, as the senior art therapist at Deveraux Ranch School in Goleta, California, to teaching art at the British School of Brussels. From Europe, Gillian came to Princeton where she first



became involved with the AAMH creating the Boarding Home Outreach Program. This position allowed her to bring love and compassion to those who society overlooks. All these years of experience led her to her final and most significant professional achievement of her life, which was the first director and creative force behind the Suzanne Patterson Center / Princeton Senior Resource Center. Gillian created the center as a place of genuine community where everyone was welcome and they knew it. She brought her unique ability to emanate an energy of light, learning, collectivism and ultimately love to people’s lives.

Retiring in 1994, she further developed her passions and gifts as a gardener, an artist and a writer all of which continued to flourish and evolve even up to her last moments, demonstrating that one is never too old to live life creatively and to its fullest. Furthermore, she never stopped creating community wherever she went, including in Willimantic CT where she spent much time with her daughter, her daughter-in-law and their friends, all of whom who quickly became her friends as well.

Predeceased by her husband of 58 years, Dr. Leonard E. A. Godfrey, Wendy leaves behind her son Nicholas Godfrey, his wife Allison, their two children Slater and Alta of Boston MA; her daughter Dr. Phoebe Godfrey, her wife Tina, of Willimantic, CT and their



Gillian Wendy Slater-Godfrey

Phoebe Godfrey photo.

son Dylan Fedora of Brattleboro, VT. Her beloved cat Cleome now has a new happy home and lives on Godfrey Street in Willimantic. It would be an understatement to say that she will be missed by us and all who knew her, but at the same time the love she gave continues to grow and bear fruit, and will do so far into the future.

Finally, it must be said that up to her last moment, Wendy lived her life according to her deeply seated values of compassion, empathy, equity, respect, grace and dignity.

In homage to her favorite poet, William Blake and his poem *Jerusalem*, she never ceased from mental fight, nor did her sword sleep in her hand, and there is no doubt that she has returned to England’s green and pleasant land.

Those who would like to support Wendy’s life long commitment to social justice and the empowerment of those in need may make donations in her name to any of the following non-profit organizations: The Guardian (online newspaper that she supported); CLiCK Willimantic (co-founded by her daughters); The Children’s Home Society of New Jersey (run by her neighbor and friends); The Suzanne Patterson Center / Princeton Senior Resource Center (where she worked); the AAMH of West Windsor Township (also where she worked); or any other of their choice.

## ‘Piglet’ Coming to Willington Library

A MOST SPECIAL Program here at the library!  
Piglet and his piglet mindset, Live!

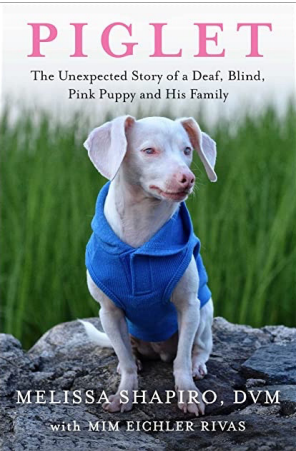
Submitted by Debbie Linares  
Program Coordinator/Co-Director;  
Willington Public Library

1:00 pm, Saturday, November 6th

We are so fortunate to have visiting with us author and veterinarian Melissa Shapiro with her special little deaf blind pink puppy named “Piglet”. Piglet and his piglet mindset have become world re-known! Learn how Piglet faces his challenges with a positive attitude (something we can all learn from and about).Through an interactive presentation, you will understand what it’s like to be Piglet, how he learned to communicate through tap signals, how he maps his environment, and how he interacts with his human and dog family.



Ms. Shapiro’s book is titled, “Piglet: The Unexpected Story of a Deaf, Blind, Pink Puppy and His Family”. In the tradition of the beloved New York Times bestsellers Marley and Me and Oogy: The Dog Only a Family Could Love, it is a charming, inspirational memoir about empathy, resilience, kindness, and an adorable deaf blind pink dog.



We can learn a lot from this little guy. Come meet Piglet and see what a Piglet Mindset looks like!

Seating is limited, so registration is a must. Please call the Library to register.

Books will be on sale and Melissa will be happy to sign and personalize copies.

## Holiday Artist Market

Saturday/Sunday, November 20-21, 2021  
10am-4pm  
Knowlton Memorial Hall  
25 Pompey Hollow Rd., Route 44, Ashford

Masking required.  
The Ashford Arts Council is so excited to host this free and safe event.  
These artisans will have unique handmade items for you just in time for Holiday Shopping.

Saturday Artists:  
Maggie Kendis: printmaker, jewelry  
Joan Blade Johnson: botanical prints, jewel tone scarves, fiber arts  
Christine Acebo: photography  
Charles McCaughtry: watercolor paintings and block prints  
Ron Page: woodturner: bowls, boxes, lamp bases  
Suzy Staubach: pottery, books  
Gretchen and Lauren: wooden cutting boards, woodburning designs  
Linda Rogers: encaustic paintings  
Lori Smolin: watercolor paintings  
Frietha Lawrence: Zentangles, paintings and cards  
Valerie Burnham Oliver: historical arts and cards  
Mike South Handmade guitars

Sunday Artists:  
Jennifer Misseri: CT Valley Baskets  
Anna Harding: glassworks  
Kathleen Lepak: calligraphy cards, illustrated books, blank books  
Pat Morris: wildlife art, feather painting  
Dan Rackliffe: pottery  
Jane Rackliffe: kiln-fired glass bowls and jewelry  
Mike Metsak: goat milk soaps and creams  
Linda Saucier: gold and silver jewelry, semi-precious stones  
Lorraine Foster: gourd luminariums  
Marilyn Makuch: beaded jewelry and gifts  
Kathy Weigold: handwoven items  
Sandra Huber: Handmade kiln-fired glass beads  
Gretchen and Lauren: wooden cutting boards, woodburning designs



Solar Today:

# Questions and answers about solar in our community and beyond

By John Boiano

Greetings,

I invite you to join a peaceful revolution by simply changing how you buy your electricity.



Before I get started with this month’s article, I want to let you know that new net metering laws and regulations are coming to CT January 1, 2022. I will provide information next month after the program briefing meetings with the CT Green Bank and PURA this month.

This month’s article is titled **“Buyer Beware – part 1”**. I will talk about the mystery of solar advertising, mis-leading tactics from sales reps, solar financing and the solar agreement.

**I spend a lot of time in solar consults educating people on the benefits of solar along with helping them to decipher what they saw online and what click-bait sales reps say to homeowners is not necessarily always true.**

I get a LOT of questions from solar customers on misleading Facebook ads, telephone calls, Internet pop-up ads on YouTube, Tictok, LinkedIn and Instagram.

The most asked question? “Is it True”? My answer is, “Well sometimes, but mostly no, it’s not true!

**Click-bait advertising often claims:**

Free solar, free batteries, no cost, free re-roof, eliminate your electric bill, new program (*there hasn’t been a new program for many years*), limited time, offers of cash rebates and many more false claims.

Solar costs money, if solar is a good fit it for you, it will cost less than utility energy. There are NO new programs. Batteries, re-roofs and carports all cost money. Your electric bill will not be eliminated, however, with solar electricity, you simply take the same money that is already allocated for your electricity costs and you simply pay less for solar.

On rare occasion, I do see click-bait ads that are straight forward and honest about an offer to look into solar. I LOVE those ads! To me, it shows integrity and honesty and it makes my job a whole lot easier.

**CT Rebate**

The CT Rebate Program has exhausted all of its funds. There are currently more solar installs in line for the CT rebate than there is money to support them. I’m sorry if you turn out to be one of the customers that a solar company promised this rebate to. I’ve been telling people for months that I could not honor the rebate since the funding was already spoken for.

If a company offers you a rebate, it’s simple – they jack the price to the amount of the rebate and give that back to you in cash once the system is installed. Guess what, YOU just paid more to borrow your own money!

**Beware of online solar cost calculators.**

Most online solar calculators are pure click-bait

where you have to enter all of your information and then your info is sold to a couple of bidders. Then voilà, your phone lights up and doesn’t stop for months!

One of the ways they really “get you” to fill in your information is that they give you a false rate that is super low, so low that it’s actually under the procured cost that the installers buy the equipment at.

Low cost solar = false claims and lower warranty periods.

**Beware of companies from other states.**

They mostly use hired gun sub-contractors that they’ve never actually met in person. This equates to not having quality control at the job site. They make the commission on the sale and hand the job off to someone else.

Solar Pro’s Facebook feeds. I see many solar sales reps putting requests out for the lowest EPC (equipment procurement cost) and lowest red-line (cost the installer or contractor sets as a base price for salespeople to gauge their profits on) in certain areas of the country. These salespeople are sitting at home in whatever part of the country they live, hooking up with an installer or contractor in other states and then creating Facebook and other media click bait ads. Someone clicks it, they make a low ball sale and you never hear from them again. Good luck getting ahold of someone if anything happens along the way to install or worse, if the system is installed and you have a problem with it.

*Google reviews are your friend!*

**Have I been Bamboozled?**

**It’s VERY IMPORTANT to work with someone you trust** and who is not pushing you to sign up. One of the sleazy tactics companies use is that they will not show you proposal numbers without you first signing something. *Guess what, if you sign something, you have signed a contract!* I can’t tell you the amount of times I’ve been working with a homeowner and they show me a proposal from another company and it is actually a legal binding contract for a solar system. If any solar rep makes you sign something before they show you accurate production numbers, cost of system and energy offset, they should be swiftly shown the door. It’s a sleazy old school tactic that some use to get you to sign with them. Yeah, but don’t worry... they tell you that you can cancel at any time, even though their contract clearly states that you have “x” amount of days to cancel... Yikes!

**You’ve been bamboozled if a solar company tells you that you have to sign something before they can show you a proposal.**

I also see a lot of engineering designs that falsify shade readings to give a homeowner an impression that you are getting a better bang for your buck than what an honest tree shade reading shows.

**You’ve been bamboozled if a solar company tells you that you’re going to get better production value out of the solar system than any other quotes –** Simply put, a tier 1 panel produces like a tier 1 panel.. period! A change

of tree height will give you false production numbers. It’s an old solar trick to make their company look better than yours. Once the system is live it will not produce as they stated.

**You’ve been bamboozled if a solar rep says.... “Don’t worry, you can cancel at any time!**

**You’ve been bamboozled if a solar company tells you they are going to roll in a re-roof and it doesn’t list the EXACT roof planes they are replacing and the cost of it on a line item.**

**You’ve been bamboozled if you click baited an online ad that says solar is FREE, no cost, free battery or re-roof, you get money back and there are NEW programs!**

Keep it simple, keep it local.

The product I sell is electricity, solar is a conduit for that electricity. In order to find out if it will save you money, we will need to take a small journey of discovery. If you’re interested, please give me a call.

Next month I will continue this 2 part article with Solar Financing, the different Solar Agreements and the new Net Metering changes.

Until next month... ENJOY!

John Boiano  
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# The Old Town House—An Emblem of Participatory Democracy

By Donna Dufresne

The Pomfret “Old Town House” was erected in 1841 smack dab in the middle of town as a means of equalizing the voice of democracy. The fledgling republic of the United States of America was just coming round to giving voice to the people, and it seemed imperative at the time that those who could vote should be able to have equal access regardless of how isolated their district was. Prior to the Old Town House, town meetings were held in the schoolhouses in each district. Mind you, this was a rural New England town, and, as in many towns in New England, the town meeting was paramount in the great experiment of participatory democracy.

Of course, most of the country was disenfranchised from voting, which was limited to yeomen, an archaic term for landowners. At the time, it was generally accepted that the voting populace consisted of white male landowners. Women, Native peoples, enslaved Africans, free Blacks, and immigrants were certainly not included in the right to vote. Despite the preamble to the Constitution alluding to a future when we would all be equal in a “more perfect Union,” only white males were privileged to participate in the great experiment of a democratic republic in 1841.

But keep in mind that the American ideals put forth in the Constitution have always been a work in progress, and we are not done yet. When the Pomfret voters of 1841 agreed to build a town house to be placed in the exact middle of town, they were making a statement that they were willing to move toward the equalization of society, meaning that every man’s voice would be heard at the town meeting, regardless of their wealth, status, and what part of town they lived in. Prior to the Old Town House, town meetings were held at district schools, some on the far edges of town. Given the fact that transportation was limited to horse, oxcart, and walking, it was unlikely that a farmer living in Jericho would be able to make a town meeting in the Gary Schoolhouse district. One can imagine the discrepancies and dissension as decisions were made based on vested interests and the power of class. What was good for “The Hill” wasn’t necessarily in the best interest of Abington and other agricultural sections of town.

While America was becoming increasingly divided over the issue of slavery, the general populace was finally awakened to the ideals set forth in the Constitution. What exactly did it mean to be a citizen? Could anyone born in the United States become a citizen? If that were so, could we deny the rights of citizenship to women? Native Americans? Free Blacks and the 59,000 enslaved Africans? What exactly were the rights of citizenship?

Throughout the antebellum era, court cases tested the citizen rights of free Blacks in the North as well as the enslaved, as a new generation in the republic began to define First Amendment rights, which were then tested in the courts. Prudence Crandall’s is probably the most famous Connecticut case in 1834. Crandall’s lawyers argued that free Blacks were citizens and therefore should enjoy the same rights and freedoms as white citizens, i.e., an equal education. It was the first time that an argument for equal education regardless of race was made in the courts, making it a landmark case for Brown v. Board of Education in

1955.

In the 1830s, Canterbury’s town meetings were held in the Congregational Meeting House right across from the Canterbury Female Academy, which later became the Canterbury School for Young Ladies and Little Misses of Color. One can only imagine the heated debates and the mob of angry spectators who had no voice on the ballot but made their voices heard in the gallery. The question on the ballot was whether to shut down Miss Crandall’s school and how to go about it. There had already been heated conversations in private when Crandall admitted Sarah Harris, a young Black woman, to her academy. The parents of the white students were outraged when Crandall refused to dismiss Miss Harris. They lobbied and pleaded, but their pleas were ignored and only served to tip the scales



The Pomfret ‘Old Town House’                      Contributed photo.

of justice toward an equal education for Blacks. When a Mrs. Peterson asserted, “We cannot have our daughters going to school alongside a n— —,” Crandall became more determined than ever to offer her services as an educator to the abolition cause. The final straw was when another parent said of Harris, “If you don’t dismiss her, we shall withdraw our daughters and your school shall sink.” Crandall reportedly replied, “Then sink it must. I will not dismiss her.”

The rafters of the Canterbury meeting house must have shaken with the wrath of men and women alike who were outraged that a young schoolteacher would overstep her bounds in such a public manner. Character assassination abounded in newspapers across the state. The white supremacist rhetoric of fear was instilled in the minds of the nouveau riche middle class, whose families had only recently clawed their way to a higher rung on the economic ladder due to hard work, some luck, and the privilege of being white. The burgeoning Industrial Revolution and mercantile explosion had brought wealth to northeast Connecticut. Those who teetered precariously on the upper rungs were an easy mark for the propagandists.

It is remarkable that the same white supremacist rhetoric that drove the country in the 1830s continues to drive today’s culture war machine. In the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, fear-mongering pundits used talk of jobs and property values as dog whistles to derail the socioeconomic progress of African Americans, Native peoples, and immigrants. The results of that disinformation campaign were laws that prevented integration, education, and economic access. The dog whistles in the Canterbury of the 1830s were not subtle. Wealthy folks were told their property values would go down if Prudence Crandall’s school was allowed to continue. Her opponents painted a dystopian future of free Blacks and runaway slaves making their way to Canterbury, bringing vagrancy and indigence, and stealing factory jobs from the poor whites who had only recently begun to rise up. The racist rhetoric that spewed from the pulpits at town meetings across the state

incited mobs of young men to taunt the Black students who had risked everything to attend Crandall’s school. They drunkenly snake-danced around the school through the night when the state legislature passed the Black Law, making it illegal for out-of-state African American students to attend a Connecticut school. An even more violent mob did the work that the legislators could not accomplish: When the Superior Court ruled that Crandall could continue her school, the school building was attacked by angry townspeople who smashed all the windows on the first floor.

Even though we may have a more perfect union now than we did in 1841 when the Old Town House opened its doors to all eligible white male voters, we are not there yet. Not long ago, we had a president who shamelessly used the same dog whistles trumpeted in the 1830s. Using the age-old tactics of a fearmonger, he first turned the American psyche against Mexicans and Syrian refugees. Then, as many Americans began to speak out against police killings and brutality in Black communities, he drove a rhetorical wedge through the heart of America by claiming that more policing and military intervention were required to get Black and brown communities under “control,” hence the great divide between “Back the Blue” and “Black Lives Matter.”

Although that president is no longer in office, he continues to drive wedges through American culture. It is no coincidence that after a record turnout of Black and brown people in the 2020 election, the biggest sore loser in history has continued to dismantle the most sacred tenets of democracy: the right to vote and the First Amendment rights of all Americans regardless of race. The big lie that the election was stolen has melded with the same old white supremacist rhetoric that emerged in 1619 after the first African slaves were brought to American soil, i.e., that people of African descent are inferior and less deserving of the rights of citizenship. After instilling and nurturing fear of the Other in white America, the failed 45th president of the United States revived racist tropes against African Americans which have led to overt voter suppression laws in eighteen states, laws which will effectively prevent Black and brown people from voting by installing too many hoops for them to jump through.

In 1841, Pomfret, like many towns in New England, decided to make it easier for people to vote and give voice to their opinions. The result wasn’t always pretty. Democracy is a messy process, and some feelings are bound to get hurt along the way. But I like to think that the disgruntled naysayers were drowned out by the voices of the women who fought for suffrage and, later, of Martin Luther King and so many others who struggled for voting rights. In the spirit of a rabble-rousing town meeting, it’s time that we use our voices to drown out the old racist narratives that have held this nation back. Voting restrictions are akin to tearing down the Old Town House, a symbol of equal access and participatory democracy. By installing roadblocks that make it impossible for an already disenfranchised part of society to have a voice, Republican-led states are providing the wrecking ball that will destroy the people’s house and finish the job started by the insurrectionists of January 6. Perhaps that is the intent. Once you go down the road of treating voting as a privilege only for certain people, you might as well make the rest of America wear yellow stars.



## Enchanted Not

The wizard raised his magic wand  
And erased my writing on the walls  
Who was he to tag along  
And ignore my tearful calls  
No magic man this fairy be  
No thoughts to how I would feel  
Without a care about my heart  
He covered all my things for real  
And in their place he did insist  
To gather some things of his own  
Without regard for what they mean  
His wand vanished what I’d known  
The hurt in my chest undeniable  
My eyes hide from looking in there  
Where all the spells are hanging  
Against paintings that are smothered and scared  
Know I cannot hear me leaving  
For nothing I say will make sense  
About how this clueless charmer  
visited with cold maven pretense

Photo and poem by Wayne Erskine.

## Little Bats in Fall

Little bats in fall  
In the wall  
They slept so sound  
They didn’t want to wake at all  
Little, warm and brown  
Extending their delicate wings

Beautifully crafted things  
Able to flit through the sky  
Though they are mammals only  
Similar to birds they fly

I hope they find a home  
Now that they have to roam

Fall this year is mild  
And little bats are wild  
Lost in the bright day  
Let them find their way

Kathy O. LaVallee, North Windham



The Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra will be playing a string concert titled “Bach and Blue” at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Route 44 in Ashford on Friday November 19 at 7pm, and Sunday November 21 at 2pm. Admission is Free. Donations are welcome. Vaccination encouraged and Masks required.



## Villages

By Judy Davis

When I reached a certain age, I began to  
see my memories on a page.  
I appreciate more of the villages, all  
those adults I grew up around – who  
who taught me, nurtured me, kept my feet  
on the ground.  
I knew early on, that I was not  
alone – I felt, well through time, that  
I was always “home”.  
Each person I spent time with, gave me  
so much each day. No matter what I  
was going through, they helped me on  
my way.  
I’m grateful for what I learned – I  
apply those lessons at every turn.  
Each year, the villages did their  
part. And, for all those who have gone  
on, I thank you from the bottom  
of my heart.

## Darnella’s Song

By Larry Gag

You were down on the street with a knee on your neck  
Six and half minutes, he was blocking your breath  
Darnella was threatened, but she held her phone high  
She shared with the world, the truth of the lie.  
We all watched you die, and she made us all cry

So many have died without her phone near by  
In the street, In the alley, wake from your bed in your home  
To jog in wrong places, to be black and alone  
In your building stairway, or locked up in a van  
Driving while black, or packing a phone  
Eating your ice cream on a couch in your home

The hair trigger cops, they’re so pumped and afraid  
Their fear and their power puts you in a grave  
Being black in this country is a dangerous mode  
But cell phones like Darnella’s the truth will expose  
Tried to clear us with tear gas to allow former guy  
To pose with a bible, fake PR on the sly

400 years of enslavement, they never let go  
Despite losing that war one fifty ago  
Hanging on to oppression with things like Jim Crow  
Supremist obsession , unending White lies  
Exclusion from voting still going on strong  
Structural racism still carries its claws  
Terrorist threats and attacks, often at night  
Attempt to keep people down through terror and fright

So, get out your cell phones and hold them up high  
An army of truthers can disarm all the lies  
Follow the courage of a 17-year-old  
Follow Darnella, we have to be bold

You were down on the street with a knee on your neck  
Darnella was threatened, but she held her phone high  
She shared with the world, the truth of the lie.  
We all watched you die, and she made us all cry



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Performing Arts



PACKING HOUSE

1870

HISTORIC VENUE FOR PERFORMANCE & EVENTS

# The Packing House – An Intimate Listening Room!

By EC-CHAP

## November

*“This is the month of nuts and nutty thoughts-  
that November whose name sounds so bleak and cheerless-  
perhaps its harvest of thought is worth more  
than all the other crops of the year.”*  
- Henry David Thoreau

November is upon us, and the season of Thanks-giving. We are grateful and send out thanks to the artists and all those who have joined us 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 round out the year with a full slate of perfor-mances and events through November and December:

- Saturday, November 6th:** EC-CHAP Jazz Series - An Evening of Gypsy Jazz with Luke Hendon and Jack Soref (Gypsy Jazz). Doors 7:00pm / Performance: 7:30pm

**Wednesday, November 10th:** EC-CHAP Talent Show-case (2nd Wednesday of the month). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474. Doors 6:30pm / Perfor-mance: 7:00pm

**Thursday, November 18st:** EC-CHAP Film Screen-ing – “Once” (R) 2007. Doors 6:30pm / Performance: 7:00pm

**Friday, November 19th:** EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Eric Sommer in Concert (Americana/Blues). Doors 7:00pm / Performance: 7:30pm

**Saturday, December 4th:** EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Singer/Songwriter Tracy Walton (Folk/Indie). Doors 7:00pm / Performance: 7:30pm

**Wednesday, December 8th:** EC-CHAP Talent Show-case (2nd Wednesday of the month). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474. Doors 6:30pm / Perfor-mance: 7:00pm

**Thursday, December 16th:** EC-CHAP Film Screening – “It’s A Wonderful Life” (PG) 1946. Doors 6:30pm / Performance: 7:00pm

**Saturday, December 18th:** EC-CHAP Jazz Series – An Evening with Grammy Nominated Artist, Nicole Zuraitis (Contemporary Jazz). Doors 7:00pm / Performance: 7:30pm

Advance tickets may 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.

Please consider participating in our monthly Tal-ent Showcase the 2nd Wednesday of every month (October – May). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474. Not performing – no problem - simply 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, photograph-ic, 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:

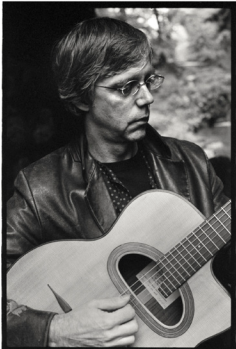
*“November: The last month of autumn,  
but the beginning of a new adventure;  
time to take a risk and do the unexpected.”*  
- unknown

Happy Thanksgiving!  
EC-CHAP Board

## NOVEMBER 2021

**“An Evening of Gypsy Jazz with Luke Hendon and Jack Soref (Gypsy Jazz). Saturday, November 6th, 7:30pm.**

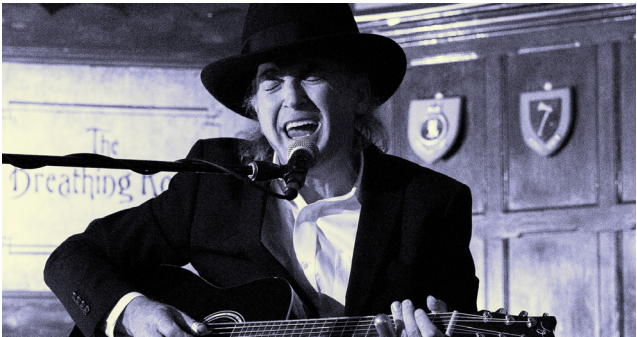
LUKE HENDON has had success in the world of Django music, performing with top players from around the world. A Veter-an guitarist, Luke has had many successes in his career. He has opened for legendary acts such as Al Green, Sun Ra, and Los Lobos, performed on Broadway, composed and recorded for television and film, worked with dance ensembles, cruise ships, theatre companies, and many, many bands. Luke will be joined by jazz gui-tarist JACK SOREF. Both Luke and Jack are among the notable guitar staff/artist instructors who have taught at the acclaimed Django in June Gypsy Jazz event held at Smith College, North Hampton, MA. Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 Cash at the door.



**EC-CHAP Talent Showcase. Wednesday, November 10th, 7:00pm (2nd Wednesday of the month)**  
Acoustic musicians, film makers, poets, comedians, jug-glers, 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). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474. Free Admission - Donations graciously accepted.

**EC-CHAP Film Series: “Once” (R) 2007. Thursday, November 18th, 7:00pm**  
“Once” was written and directed by John Carney, and stars Glen Hansard, Marketa Irglova, and Hugh Walsh. “A vacuum repairman (Glen Hansard) moonlights as a street musician and hopes for his big break. One day a Czech immigrant (Marketa Irglova), who earns a living selling flowers, approaches him with the news that she is also an aspiring singer-songwriter. The pair decide to collaborate, and the songs that they compose reflect the story of their blossoming love.” Rotten Tomatoes | 97% on Tomatome-ter. Suggested Donation \$5.00

**“Eric Sommer in Concert”. Friday, November 19th, 7:30pm.**



Singer/songwriter ERIC SOMMER is an unbel-ievable intersection of improbable influences and experi-ences channeled into an amazingly diverse catalog and a résumé that reads more like a musical adventure novel than a series of career bullet points. Since the early eighties, Sommer’s wanderlust took him from Boston to New York and Atlanta to Washington D.C. where he founded the Georgetown Film Festival. He has been a troubadour with no fixed address, playing well over 250 gigs a year and slowing down just long enough to record a handful of bril-liant albums, including Rainy Day Karma with his band, Solar Flares, and his latest solo effort, Brooklyn Bolero. 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 un-sure, 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)).

## A Synergistic Framework for Raising Historical Awareness

By EC-CHAP

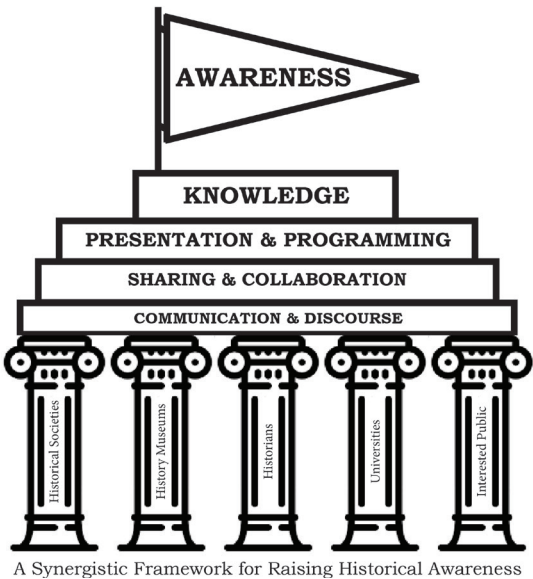
Did you know that there are over 200 organiza-tions identified as “Historical Societies” registered with the Connecticut Secretary of the State’s Office? And did you know that of these, there are over 10 Historical Organi-zations serving the entire state of Connecticut? And did you further know, that there are over 25 local Historical Societies situated within a 25 mile radius of EC-CHAP in Willington, Connecticut? (Source: <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Register-Manual/SectionX/Historical-Societies>)

Local Historical Societies, Museums, Universi-ties, and Historians provide a rich knowledge of area histo-ry – possessing important writings, oral histories, original photographs, artifacts, research, and other resources that describe the evolution of the area they serve. This collec-tion of unique assets and knowledge assists in answering critical questions, and provides a roadmap of sorts to help explain the challenges, hardship, innovation, rewards, and growth that leads to who and what we are today.

Imagine if these organizations and individuals are able to come together to share this knowledge in coordinat-ed public forums. If each organization is given a platform to communicate and describe the historical significance of their piece of the world, what new knowledge and connec-tions could be made? We believe a shared model of col-laboration and equity that promotes discourse and engages collective knowledge will result in a heightened awareness and importance of history, and the need to continue to preserve the valuable resources that tell our story.

Prior to the Pandemic, EC-CHAP developed “A Synergistic Framework for Raising Historical Awareness” representing a model of collaboration. in 2019, we initiated a dialog with historical organizations and individuals to facilitate opportunities for conversation, collaboration, and programming. There appear to be pockets of rich history just waiting for connections to be made.

The time to re-address this valuable collaboration is upon us. As your regional cultural organization, we hope to play a small part in bringing together the many folks who can share knowledge, common interests, and help to connect the historical “dots” that will yield better under-standings. Please stay tuned for opportunities to share and collaborate. If you are interested in participating in conver-sation, or learning more about this project, please email us at [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org), or call 518-791-9474.





From Portugal to Connecticut:  
Artist Thomas Pilnik Prepares to Open Your Local Package Store:  
A New Way to Package Shop

By Cate Solari

It is July, 2021, the sun beats down, the sharp smell of petrol in the air, the streets are full of the hustle and bustle of summer tourists in Lisbon, Portugal. Eyes glued to the ground, artist Thomas Martinez Pilnik (@tmpilnik) scans sidewalks, gutters, and forgotten spaces in search of what most would choose to ignore - Trash. Thomas Martinez Pilnik grew up in London to Brazilian parents. As a sculptor and installation artist, Pilnik uses his strong global ties to investigate new environments and reflect upon how these places are affected by challenges in late-stage capitalism and the unstable democracies of the 21st century.

Traveling to Lisbon, Portugal, Pilnik is in an exciting environment to explore, which he does so as artist in residence at Zaratan – Arte Contemporânea. In his new environment, Pilnik collects trash across fourteen different neighborhoods around Zaratan; picking up bottles, discarded yogurt containers, someones lost flip flop, all cultural reminders of those who have passed through before him. As Pilnik collects these discarded items he keeps careful records of their neighborhood’s of origin.

Back in the studio, Pilnik transforms his stockpile of trash into treasure. Adopting the tradition of paper mache he tears and pastes colorful donated paper to the surfaces of the trash. Suddenly, what was once a dirty, tarnished, discarded object on the sidewalk has become an object of wonderment.

Ai, Que Coisa Feia (Oh, What an Ugly Thing), Pilnik’s culminating show at Zaratan, puts these objects of wonderment into action. Advertised as a pop-up concept boutique, visitors are encouraged to pick up and purchase the paper mache objects. Their place of origin, as trash, takes a back seat in the environment of a gallery and explores the duality of tourist and local, giver and taker, ugly and beautiful, and disgust and pleasure. It meets the viewer in the grey-space in-between in order to disrupt their automatic assumptions of consumption, capitalism, and wastefulness.

Fast forward - six months later - having returned to Connecticut to complete his Master of Art at the University of Connecticut, Thomas Martinez Pilnik finds himself in an environment vastly different from the crowded streets of Lisbon, Portugal.

Upon his return, I had the opportunity to meet Thomas in his studio at Kirby Mill in Man-



sfield, CT and experience some of the paper mache objects that made the journey with him from Portugal. I was intrigued - not only by the objects themselves, but by the spectacle that Thomas was able to create through the execution of the pop-up boutique. Selling trash for money?! And people were struck - he recounts to me - that it seemed as if visitors felt a sense of ownership for the objects, finding objects cataloged as found in their neighborhood drew awareness to not only the harm that the trash at its prime was causing but also to the responsibility of the care of these neighborhoods that were being dominated by tourists eight months out of the year. Is it the responsibility of the locals to pick up all the trash?



**DYE & BLEACH HOUSE COMMUNITY GALLERY**  
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SPECIAL OPENING EVENT  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH - 4PM  
THOMAS MARTINEZ PILNIK - @TMPILNIK

of the area, the local package store being a specific point of exploration for his most recent body of work. As a non-local to the area, the notion of package store offered Pilnik a fun play on words: package store referencing a liquor store for local Nutmeggers, and to those outside of the state, as a place to purchase...packages?

Collecting liquor boxes, hoarding his own trash, and visiting all of the package stores in the area, a new collection is ready for a show. The Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery (DBHCG) is pleased to present Your Local Package Store: A New Way to Package Shop, a solo exhibition by Thomas Martinez Pilnik. Using similar concepts explored in Portugal, this show allows Pilnik the opportunity to take on a new persona and engage with a new community in Willington, CT.

Opening NOVEMBER 20, 2021 at 4:00p folks will be welcomed into DBHCG and encouraged to encounter the work as if visiting their local package store and picking out their favorite item.

Join us for shopping, beverages, and live music while experiencing the package store transported to the gallery.

What Came First: Speech or Song?

By Calendula

It’s an interesting question - the origin of human musicality. There are a number of theories that postulate various reasons and origin stories for our inclination toward music. Many of these theories examine the connection of music and language. There is so much information that we can discern from both speech and song. For example, when listening to music, many people are able to identify various information pertaining to the sound, including what type of instrument is playing, whether or not the artist is in tune, and also even the emotional context of the song. Similarly, when listening to speech, humans can detect a wealth of information about the speaker; including age, sex, and emotional state. Research shows that the expression and understanding of human emotion leads to survival advantages, and that the human aptitude for discerning emotion from music could be based in the human capability of discerning emotion from the voice.

Various academics have proposed theories about how human musicality evolved in the first place: Charles Darwin championed the theory of musicality coming from sexual selection, Steven Brown put forth his theory of ‘musilanguage,’ and Steven Pinker proposed a theory of music as ‘auditory cheesecake.’

The core of Darwin’s theory is that human musicality developed through musical courtship – early humans likely made use of vocal utterances, like other primates, as part of mating rituals. The better the ability of the singer, the more likely they were to find a mate. The vocal practice and the advantage of having a good voice in order to find a partner could have led to the advancement of the human vocal tract through sexual selection – therefore aiding in the development of our musical and linguistic abilities. Darwin thought that music came first, and true human speech followed after.

Steven Pinker’s theory postulates that music is essentially a super-excessive stimulus, catchily coined as ‘auditory cheesecake.’ This theory surmises that musicality is a by-product of evolution and natural selection, as music stimulates certain key areas of the brain, encouraging the growth and development of particular neurological capabilities. This theory also accounts for the pleasure humans experience from engaging



with and listening to music, as it has been proven that dopamine is produced in the brain as it listens to music. In this way, musicality becomes a by-product of language; an aural confection designed to stimulate pleasure in the sensitive mechanics of human auditory processing, but overall, non-essential for human life or survival – so Pinker thinks speech came first, and music followed.

Somewhere in the middle rests the theory of Steven Brown. Although this theory sits somewhat closer to Darwin’s, it proposes an evolutionary ‘musilanguage’: an evolutionary stage in human communication abilities which both music and language evolved from. This model argues that this musilanguage consisted of at least three of the properties shared by both music and language: lexical tone, combinatorial phase formation, and expression phrasing mechanisms. This theory further argues that these structural similarities common to music and language are not coincidence, as the two disciplines evolved from the similar musilanguage. This theory validates both Darwin and Pinker to some degree. The musilanguage would have likely had a part in sexual selection, and as humans developed their vocal and communication abilities further, it is logical to hypothesize that this musilanguage separated into language (a source of referential meaning) and music (a source of emotive meaning). It also makes sense that they would develop independently of each other as human social behavior developed: language and speech became a predominant focus for communication, and music aided in the development cultural traditions and enjoyment.

Brown’s theory might be the most productive to consider, as its encompassment of both sides of the language/music evolution debate is thoughtful as well as logical. I also personally favor this theory – I like the blurring of the boundaries here, because our spoken language still has musical elements in it (i.e. spoken word poetry), and as a singer-songwriter, my music almost always includes language. It’s interesting to consider how our ancient ancestors might have communicated though, in a world with neither human music or language, but instead a melding of the two subjects. 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



Seeking Museum Curator

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

To learn more please email: [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org) or call: **518.791.9474**.

[WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG](http://WWW.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.

Please visit [www.ec-chap.org/board2021](http://www.ec-chap.org/board2021) to learn more and to apply online. Questions may be addressed by email to: [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org); or by calling: 518.791.9474.

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# Conundrum

By Felix F. Giordano

A conundrum is defined as a confusing and difficult problem or question. Conundrums lead to decisions, both good and bad. There are two main types, moral and practical conundrums and in real-life we often come face-to-face with conundrums.

Here are three common scenarios. 1) You’re late for work and then discover there’s a traffic jam on the highway. 2) You just bought a new computer and then learn that a software program you love is no longer compatible with the new PC’s operating system. 3) You’re holding a wrapped birthday present for your mother and then watch mom open a gift from your sibling and you realize it’s an identical match to a sweater that’s inside your gift-wrapped box. How we react to these scenarios can be emotionally satisfying or jarring, can lead to joy or sorrow, empowerment or hopelessness.

These are typical occurrences that happen to everyone sometime during their life. They give us pause, can irritate us, and even force us to consider other options. Because we have real-life experiences with conundrums we know how they can affect us not just in an internal emotional way but how we decide to react to them on the spot and how they influence our future decision-making. Just as these situations happen in real-life, they can also occur to the characters in our stories. The What, How, and Why they occur and how our characters react to them is totally up to us as authors.

In literature, a conundrum can be used to show how a character reacts to certain unexpected situations which then allow us to see how resourceful or utterly flawed the character is. Here are two real-life scenarios, which both could have resulted in similar endings but didn’t:

Sir James Clark Ross commanded a successful Antarctic expedition with the ships HMS Erebus and HMS Terror to chart Antarctica’s coastline and he returned to England a hero. Years later, Sir John Franklin commanded the same two ships with the hope of discovering the Northwest Passage in the Arctic but his ships became stuck in the ice, crushed, and then sank. Eventually he and the entire crews of each ship were stranded and died in the Arctic. The conundrums faced by both expeditions were the severe climates at both the South and North Poles. The Ross Expedition faced inhospitable conditions but overcame them while the Franklin Expedition succumbed to those same harsh conditions.

Somewhere in the plot of our short story or novel, usually our protagonist or sometimes even our antagonist is faced with a situation where he or she cannot sense their way out of their predicament. Sometimes they do have an exit strategy but at the cost of a heavy price in either blood or treasure.

Think of the film Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. They are on the run and injured at the end of the film and are cornered in a building. In what appears to be a hopeless situation, dozens of armed Mexican soldiers wait for them to emerge from the structure. The way Butch and Sundance deal with their conundrum is to go out in a blaze of glory.

Sometimes conundrums drive the story. If anyone has read Ian Fleming’s James Bond novels or watched the films, you know that the main character is constantly confronting conundrums. He often faces them head-on with brute force, sometimes with skillful avoidance, and even with ingenious gadgetry. But the main takeaway is that Bond always comes out on top and exits every conundrum with a witty remark. As a reader or viewer, we get so involved in each conundrum that we can lose sight of the overall plot. But it works for Bond because the action/thriller genre takes us for a ride and doesn’t disappoint. The James Bond franchise is more character-driven than plot-driven.

A conundrum in a plot-driven novel or film is different than a conundrum in a character-driven piece in that instead of a succession of conundrums like the Bond series, there is usually one conundrum in a plot-driven novel. Consider the novel Atonement. In that novel, the conundrum is the viewing of an intimate moment between two people. The action taken as a result of that conundrum is that the protagonist falsely reports a rape. That conundrum changes the course of history not just for the person accused of the rape but for the entire family throughout the novel. The choices some characters make or the situations they are placed in as a result of actions taken after that one conundrum, lead to their ultimate demise.

Now that we can envision what a conundrum is and how it may be used in a short story or novel, let’s con-

sider three conundrums that can be used in one’s writing:

Say a husband is out holiday shopping for the family but meets an old friend and the two go into a bar where the friend convinces the husband to place a bet on a horse race. The horse doesn’t win and the husband loses \$500 on the bet. After they part ways the husband is upset that he let down his family but then he finds a wallet on the ground with \$1,000 inside. The conundrum becomes, does he do the right thing and bring the wallet to the police station and perhaps receive a reward or does he take the \$1,000 to replace the money he lost on the bet and then some? If the husband keeps the money and the owner of the wallet finds out who took it, that conundrum’s decision could eventually lead to a confrontation between the husband and the owner of the wallet.

A soldier is separated from his platoon in a war zone. He comes upon a lone enemy soldier who is unconscious and injured. The conundrum becomes does the soldier kill the injured enemy soldier and be done with it and move on? Or in a fleeting moment of humanity, does he grapple with his conscience and help his enemy survive? If he does, he must know full well that he may eventually be held accountable for aiding the enemy.

The last scenario has a young woman on a blind date. While in the car with her date, a news report on the radio alerts the public that a serial killer is on the loose. Her date immediately turns off the radio and then slams his fist on the steering wheel. Her conundrum becomes does she end her blind date at the earliest convenience because her date might be the serial killer or does she stick around to see if she can discover information on who this man is? He could even be an undercover detective who is upset that the killer is still on the prowl. If her decision on this conundrum is to end the date, it can take the story in either one of two directions. She will either save her own life by escaping the killer or if the date is truly an undercover detective, then perhaps she aroused the detective’s suspicion? He may think that she has information about the serial killer from her actions to abruptly end the date right after the news report.

However you choose to use conundrums, have fun with them. They add an element of authenticity to our writing that can reveal our characters’ personality, values, morality, temperament, and many other attributes. They make our characters truly multi-dimensional. Some of the examples I’ve given above show how conundrums can drive the story’s plot. Quite often, conundrums spark a reader’s interest and can make our stories become true page turners.

*Felix F. Giordano is a local author with books sales in excess of 7,000 and has had more than 4 million pages of his books read by Amazon Kindle Unlimited subscribers. His website is jbnovels.com. Mr. Giordano also chairs a Saturday writers group and a monthly lecture series at the Willington Public Library. Please call (860) 429-3854 for more information.*

Next Month’s Topic: Character-Driven Vs. Plot Driven Writing

## Art Exhibit at East Brook Mall

Submitted by Erin Avery for Windham Arts

Windham Arts presents an art exhibit “Exhibition of Abstract Art ” at the Coffee Break Gallery at East Brook Mall. The show will open with a reception on Thursday, November 11, at 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Abstract art uses visual language of shape form, color and line to create a composition. By the end of the 19th century many artists developed a new form that ventured outside the box of visual representation, perspective and reality. The art exhibit will include paintings, photography and sculpture.

The exhibit will be open on weekends and by chance from November 11 until November 28. Most of the works are available for sale. The exhibition is sponsored by WindhamARTS, a Windham regional organization promoting arts, heritage, culture and tourism in 36 towns. It has served the Windham Region since 1999 and become Northeast CT’s Designated Regional Service Organization.

The exhibit will be held at the Coffee Break Gallery. The Gallery’s name celebrates the story that the coffee break was invented in the Willimantic Thread Company in the 1870s. The gallery is located at the East Brook Mall, 95 Storrs Road, Mansfield, CT For more information contact gallery@windhamarts.org

# Sustainable Agriculture Must Be Our Future

By Judith Lovdal

We live in a country that has such an abundance of natural resources and such a strong agricultural heritage and backbone.

This past year has given us the opportunity to reflect on what is really critical and important to us all -- good water, good food, and of course shelter and a strong social/family network. Yes, health care and education follow but the basics for survival really are our food and water supply. Protecting and nurturing our precious resources has become even more critical as the effects of climate and pandemics force migration and relocation. We are in need of new and creative ways of addressing food supply.

It’s not the first time the nation has tried to address concerns for food shortages. Many remember stories of the “victory gardens” planted during the war- where every American could contribute in a small way. Over 20 million gardens were created which produced over 40% of all the fresh fruit and vegetables consumed in the U.S.!

After the war, large agribusinesses began to blossom in the West and Mid-West and little New England farms began to disappear. The lure of real estate property sales became the way for these farmers to survive and ease into an unfunded retirement. Farming, as we had known it, just was not profitable on our small stony fields Land competition and a lack of willing, able, young farmers to take over further complicated a transition.

As a nation we transitioned to large-scale agricultural endeavors, and we are feeling the impacts. Efforts have been made to try to reverse or modify many of the practices that had brought such abundance. New forms of irrigating to more effectively utilize water resources were needed as water wars began. New (or return to old) practices of tilling were needed to prevent erosion, nutrient depletion and dust bowls. Law suits surfaced over the extreme use of chemicals as health issues manifested after years of application of highly toxic chemicals. Clearly the rush to large, commercial agribusiness wasn’t and isn’t “the answer” and panacea we’d hoped for. Large scale and highly mechanized technology were not necessarily the best solution for every acre of land. Small, in many cases, really is beautiful and can be done sustainably! It has become evident that even those small gardens can be a valuable part of our healthy food supply.

We, once again, are in the midst of redefining agriculture. We are finding creative ways on a small scale to produce healthy foods and distribute them locally. Grass roots and from the ground up – that’s how we will succeed.

As a supplemental benefit farming in America can also be a wonderful source of community. Some farmers share their abundance with neighbors, schools, churches and nonprofits- dropping off surplus or helping a neighbor develop a garden with mulch and “organic fertilizer” (otherwise known as manure)! Local CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and the Taste of Mansfield are excellent examples of community building and generosity. Students have opportunities to observe, work and learn from our local farmers. The sense of community revolving around agriculture can be very strong.

We are all farmers at heart. Watch a kid as they observe a tiny seed in a cup turn into an amazing plant! Ask yourself how you can contribute – one tomato at a time. Whether you raise a few chickens or plant a garden you could be helping the environment and contributing to the food supply. We have many resources to help us get started – like the UConn Extension Service that has a wealth of information and expertise to assist. The Mansfield Agriculture Committee is here to hear your concerns and help inform Town policies, so they better suit local farming operations. The Town has even developed a great program to help get started with composting and to develop a pollinator corridor. We are off to a good start!

Mansfield/Storrs has been under great pressure to bring in development and grow. We need to achieve this in a balanced and responsible manner. It is not either/or but both that is needed to grow. Our University and Town have a strong, rural foundation upon which to build. And we should not destroy or forget that is the backbone of who we are and how we are able to prosper. Let’s proceed with caution and concern – lets maintain balance.

Maybe there will even be a vineyard in our future and we can all celebrate and give a toast to those that help keep us fed and strong!



# Parents: Trust Your Instincts And Avail Yourselves Of The Latest Research

By Michelle Baughman

On a public forum recently, a mother of a one-year-old daughter with special needs sought advice on whether or not to put her child into daycare because she has severe separation anxiety, such that she screams and cries until making herself sick when her parents leave her in the care of the child’s paternal and maternal grandparents. This parent also mentioned how she felt that her pediatrician was dismissive of her concerns when she had asked him for his advice, considering the child’s separation anxiety (her pediatrician even went so far as to laugh at her).



I was surprised at how many people who do not have any experience (either as a parent, or as a parent of a special needs child) freely and thoughtlessly offered their advice that “it would be good for the child” to be put into daycare. Several of them deferring to the pediatrician’s ‘expertise’ as the be-all-end-all of the matter, completely disregarding the pediatrician’s insensitivity and unprofessionalism. As a trauma-informed disability advocate and parent, I was incensed by the rampant ignorance and carelessness of the responses to this post, not to mention disgusted by the pediatrician’s attitude.

But this situation did illuminate for me how misinformation persists despite all the recent advances in research: The pernicious myth that a medical professional (who spends about 15 minutes with a child) knows better than the parents who live with and care for the child 24/7) is a dangerous delusion, indeed! And the arrogance some of these professionals have that demeans and undermines a parent’s instincts ought to constitute malpractice. (I do not feel that I am being hyperbolic here when you consider that the Hippocratic Oath states to first do no harm), and when you consider how damaging it is to both the parent and the child to induce attachment trauma (by disconcerting and pressuring parents into ignoring their instincts about their own child).

Something that the general public ought to be more aware of is that the average medical practitioner receives only about one or two hours of lecture on disability in the entirety of their professional education (Nerenberg 2021). Their coursework in psychology is similarly minimal. Also, most of them do not receive any continuing professional education, which means that they are not exposed to up-to-date developments in research in these areas. So, depending on when your doctor earned his degree, he may be completely ignorant of Polyvagal Theory, trauma theory, attachment theory, and effective care for persons with disabilities (especially since The Medical Model of Disability is essentially a philosophy that completely disregards the input of the stakeholders! So as long as the medical profession embraces the medical model of disability it will be incapable of advising and providing appropriate care for people with disabilities).

The following was my reply to this parent’s post:  
You mentioned your daughter is “special needs” but you did not specify if she had a developmental delay? If so, then if you can afford not to work, or find a work at home job (like a virtual assistant), staying home with her

and giving her more time would be best all around. Pediatricians are not experts in developmental disabilities and the advice they give is based upon neurotypical development (which often doesn’t necessarily apply to neurodivergent children), and obviously, a developmentally delayed child is not going to fit in the neurotypical timelines.

Your child’s behavior is communicating to you that her body/nervous system is dysregulated (a very stressful state) when she is not with people with whom she has formed an attachment. Even some neurotypical children can feel this way (and it is referred to as “temperament”). In either case, you risk raising a fearful child if you do not respond appropriately to her attachment needs. Also, if she has a developmental disability, she is not likely to develop an attachment relationship with a daycare provider at this time because of the lack of availability of the daycare provider (they will have several other children to attend to in addition to your daughter). Also, your daughter may have sensory integration issues, and the noise and activity of a daycare center may be too overwhelming for her.

There has been tremendous ignorance about autism in this country, and this ignorance has led parents to believe that their child “developed” autism at around the time they received vaccinations (which are required in order to put a child into to daycare). In truth, children do not develop autism, they are born with it. What the parents observed was that their children’s nervous systems went into a Dorsal Vagal state (which looks like they shut down and withdrew from the world). Polyvagal Theory explains this: It is the nervous system’s evolutionary survival instinct: when a prolonged threat to the nervous system (fight/flight/freeze/fawn response) overwhelms the nervous system it shuts down. Your child’s need for secure attachment is also evolutionarily developmentally appropriate (after all, vulnerable babies need the protection and care of someone who is invested in their survival). She is communicating to you that she doesn’t feel security attached yet to anyone other than her own parents. And it is entirely developmentally and evolutionarily appropriate for your daughter to cry and object as she does when she is separated from you (because vulnerable human infants left alone did not survive).

She needs more time to develop some more attachment relationships. This can be done by having her spend time with other care providers (grandparents, aunts & uncles) while you are also there so that she doesn’t feel threatened and so that her nervous system can experience feeling regulated when she is in the presence and care of other adults besides her parents. Not allowing this can have detrimental behavior and health effects throughout her lifetime. (For more information on this look up Gabor Mate on Google and YouTube).


## To all our contributors- Thank You!

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

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# Coming Home to Chaplin

By Bill Powers

Last month in *Neighbors'* articles, several fabulous poems were published. Two of them, I am delighted to say, were the work of talented poets that I have some connection to. I have known Judy Davis for several years and have interviewed her for my Willimantic Chronicle column concerning a play she wrote about her immigrant ancestors who settled in Willimantic. Her passionate poem titled "Honor" is dedicated to a teenage Union soldier from Chaplin, William H. Hall, who was killed at Antietam on September 17, 1862. She was inspired by William H. Hall's gravestone that is located in the small cemetery on Bedlam Road in Chaplin.

On the same page, page 12 of the October issue of *Neighbors*, was the marvelous poem titled "Coming Home" by Adelaide Northrop. She was recently selected

as Chaplin's first Poet Laureate, an honorary position to celebrate Chaplin's Bicentennial in 2022. At one time, we both trained emergency medical service providers who were ambulance corps members and firefighters.

Chaplin to this day remains a mostly rural community with many picturesque country roads lined with stone walls that help us to recall its long agricultural past. During the early industrial revolution flowing waters from its rivers and streams supported small mills and factories. Today the town is characteristically covered by woodlands and more than 30 percent of the town includes land that is part of the Goodwin State Forest, the Natchaug State Forest and the Mansfield Hollow State Park.

The center of town was developed in conjunction with the building of the Congregational Church that was provided for in 1795 by the will of Deacon Benjamin Chaplin. The resulting rural village, greatly

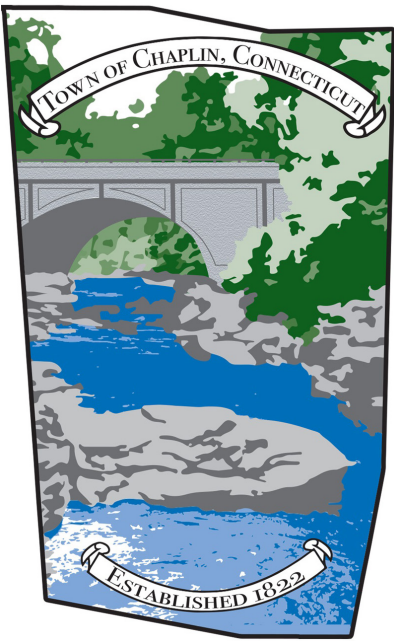
preserved to this day, became the Chaplin Historic District in 1978. This village was built between 1815 and 1840. The district is composed of 43 properties along Chaplin Street. Traveling down Chaplin Street today is what it must have been like 180 years ago. The buildings have been well preserved and the architecture is of that period. A long time Chaplin resident expressed to me recently: "Chaplin represents a certain way of life and positive life style."

The town was incorporated in 1822 and has an ad hoc committee devoted to planning and coordinating this once in a life time historical bicentennial celebration. Chaplin has many features that continue to allow residents of Chaplin, past present and future, to form important unique connections with its historical development. Geographers study what they call the sense of place. It is a sense that connects a human to a specific

place. The sense of place involves the interaction of humans with the landscape and its natural and cultural features. The human experience is sustained by knowledge that is passed along through the generations that follow. Knowledge is passed along by names of places, written and spoken words, its cemeteries, and architecture, coupled with many other historical reflections.

Adelaide Northrop, Chaplin's Poet Laureate, has written a poem titled "Coming Home" that may be interpreted as "Coming Home to Chaplin." Coincidentally, Willimantic poet Judy Davis wrote her poem "Honor" about a 17 year old Civil War soldier from Chaplin, William H. Hall, who was killed at Antietam in 1862. He came home to a small cemetery on Bedlam Road in Chaplin.

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





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