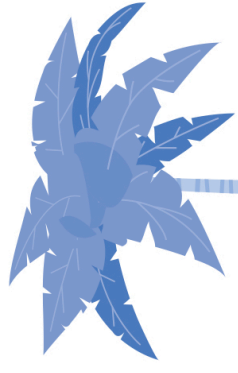


Neighbors



Summer beaches.



Winter beaches,
too.

Financial freedom for any climate.

Beat the blizzards. If your dream retirement doesn't involve shoveling snow, we'll help you get to the retirement climate you desire. Leverage our *Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well* process in favor of your flip-flops.



STRATEGIC WEALTH ADVISORS

Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™

whzwealth.com | (860) 928-2341 | 697 Pomfret Street, Pomfret Center, CT 06259
Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network,®
Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Advisor.



Looking Up:

Defying Gravity and Other Things that Hold Us Down

By Bob Grindle

Waking up in the middle of the night, slipping quietly out from under the warm covers and padding noiselessly across the floor, the slightly-past-full moon-glow makes the house feel organic and cozy, arouses my sleep-shedding brain and I almost forget that I got up to pee. Done! But now I don't want to go back to bed... my wife, bathed in the Moon's diffuse soft silvery light is sleeping peacefully...and despite not being dressed for the chill December night—albeit, a very mild December night—I open the front door and step out on to the porch. It is easy to understand why moonlight so often gets to play the lead part in our fantasies. In tonight's theater of the nocturnal, a gauzy bluish haze fills the cold, breezy night air, a few random clouds scud past the Moon making the air feel colder, and if you believed in phantoms and fairies and ghosts and elves and other perhaps less neighborly creatures that have frequented the dreamy woodlands and byways of our human journey, then tonight would be a night to enjoy their company. I can't shake the feeling that I am looking through the filmy curtains of my own imagination into nature's living room and wondering who...or what...goes there.

Still standing on the porch, staring off into space and looking up through the picket-fence-like thicket of trees that line the top of the hill, the wind causes my body to shudder with the chill while my mind grabs at a fleeting memory of a story I'd read many years ago in which it was suggested that early European settlers who were kidnapped or rescued or escaped into North American indigenous societies almost never wanted to go back to their original culture. I can't recall the author's reasoning, but it is on nights like this that you know it is possible to experience

and understand our world on a sensory level that has very little to do with pavement or machinery or politics or banking or any of the multitude of 21st century human preoccupations. Something has been lost in our journey...dare I call it forward...and, for me at least, it is in the solitary moments on a porch in the night, usually under the stars, whether weather-obscured or not, but always looking up toward a sense that while we may not be able to physically take flight, our minds can defy gravity...breaking free of restraints, including the occasional bondage of public opinion, that often keep us...tied down, or safe, or hmmm, I'm not sure where I want to go with this. High overhead the blinking lights of an over-the-ocean bound jet appear to move slowly eastward and I smile to think of how much trouble we occasionally go to in order to catch a glimpse of a meteor that is likely no more than a piece of cosmic dust vaporizing in Earth's atmosphere, while we take totally for granted that a few hundred fellow humans hurtling through the sky is no big deal.

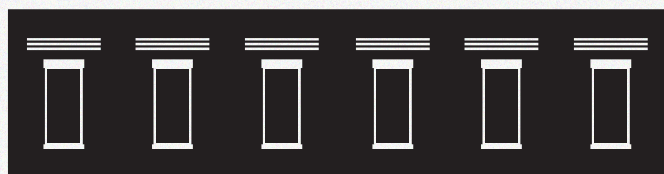
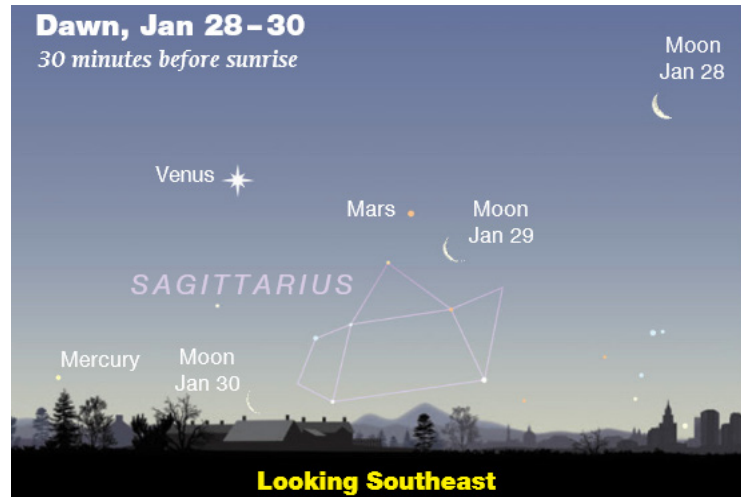
We are a complicated species, still in our infancy. We arrived on the scene without a set of instructions and sometimes it seems as if our cleverness and ingenuity now exceed our ability to grasp the consequences of our actions...rather like an unsupervised but determined baby who manages to get over and past the gated doorway. It has

been pointed out that, perhaps more than any other species, our survival has depended on learning from the accumulated knowledge of earlier generations...don't eat those, don't get to close to that, avoid swimming there in the alligator infested waters, and so on...it has gotten more complicated over time. Human infants require a uniquely long time to become independent and it is likely that in distant ages survival favored those young that obediently did what their elders told them to do. Times have changed...don't we all know that...and society now grapples with changes happening with mind numbing speed and survival no longer depends on obeying rules or learning from the experiences of past generations...or does it still.

The wind has increased a bit, it's colder now and I nod to Orion and Taurus and the Moon moving into the western sky. The solstice has passed and Venus disappears from the sky for a few days before moving into the morning sky. Jupiter will be the bright evening star all of January and somehow there is comfort in the continuity of the Cosmos, a sort of

eternal stage where each species gets its turn on Earth to, as Macbeth might say: "...strut(s) and fret(s) its hour upon the stage...full of sound and fury..."

Back in the house the moonlight is still enchanting and bed beckons. Thoughts of sound and fury fade in the quest for sleep, and despite concerns about the world and the future of our species, I feel encouraged that the hard work of fixing things is in our own hands and that is a good thought to sleep on. Enjoy the coming season when the New England landscape rests up for its spring audition.



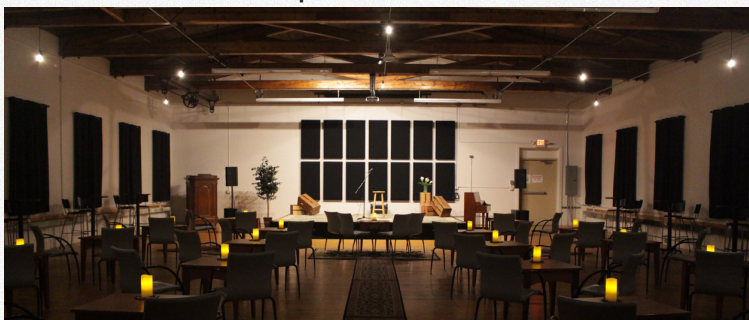
THE PACKING HOUSE

1870

HISTORIC VENUE FOR PERFORMANCE & EVENTS

THE PACKING HOUSE "An Intimate Listening Room"

PROOF OF FULL VACCINATION & MASKS REUIRED
50% CAPACITY | SOCIALLY DISTANCED TABLES



January 2022
FOOLISH WISELY
INDIE / FOLK
January 8th

January 2022
ERIC LEE
AMERICANA / BLUEGRASS
January 29th

February 2022
GRACIE DAY
FOLK / ROCK / AMERICANA
February 5th

February 2022
SALLY ROGERS
FOLK
February 19th

March 2022
SPERRY CREEK
BLUEGRASS
March 12th

March 2022
CALENDULA
INDIE / FOLK
March 19th

Tickets Available Online:
www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming

or Cash at the Door

WWW.THEPACKINGHOUSE.US

THE PACKING HOUSE | 156 RIVER ROAD, WILLINGTON, CT 06279 | (518)791-9474

RECURRING MONTHLY EVENTS TALENT SHOWCASE

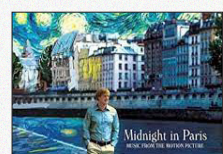


2nd
Wednesday

Call to Schedule: 518.791.9474

"MONTHLY FILM SERIES"

"The Sapphires"
January 20th
~Donation~



"Midnight in Paris"
February 17th
~Donation~

"20 Feet from Stardom"
March 17th
~Donation~



Eastern Connecticut Center for
History, Art, and Performance, Inc.

Become A Chap Today!

www.ec-chap.org

On our cover: Three works from Mansfield artist Scott Rhoades. At top: 'Winter in New England' Bottom left: 'You Lookin' at Me?' Bottom right: 'Wood Chip'. Learn more about Scott and see his work on his website: <http://www.scotterhoadesart.com/>

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

Neighbors
P.O. Box 430
Ashford, CT 06278
phone: 860-933-3376
email: neighborspaper@yahoo.com
website: neighborspaper.com

Tom King, Editor & Publisher
Dagmar Noll, Calendar Editor
Steve Woron, Mac Guru
Marisa Calvo, Graphic Design
Gary Kass, Copy Editor
Julie Englekie, Donna Caplett, Tom King, Circulation

Writers: Delia Berlin, David Corsini, Phoebe Godfrey, Bob Grindle, Bob Lorentson, John Murphy, Calen Nakash, Dagmar Noll, Dennis Pierce, Bill Powers, Mark Svetz, Tom Woron, Loretta Wrobel

The Purpose of Neighbors:

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

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

Neighborspaper LLC is a member of the Ashford Business Association.

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

2022 Resolution: Becoming Earthkeepers

By Loretta Wrobel

Usually, I have no interest or desire to ponder about making new year's resolutions, until this 2022 year. It popped into my mind while watching parts of the Earthkeepers' Summit, orchestrated by Alberto Villoldo. Alberto is a medical anthropologist trained in ancient healing practices in South America who has embraced and enhanced the old shamanic practices of caretaking our blessed earth, and sustainable living.



As I listened to individuals talk about their sense of what is needed in our chaotic world, I felt their wisdom ringing true. The difference is in how indigenous people live and cooperate with the earth, and how we, supposedly advanced western civilizations, exploit and pollute the planet. We do this as we believe we have the right to dominate over all life. Therefore, we take as much as we can for our own advantage. Endless greed and grabbing all we can, without ever considering to ask permission, is our modus operandi. In our capitalist and patriarchal worldview, never is permission asked of the people who have inhabited the resource-rich land for centuries. The empowered institutions operate as if the natural resources are theirs for the taking. Hence, we have the deforestation of the Amazon, the barren landscape of tar sands, and the eroding of our national parks.

I am captivated by the deep knowledge of the keepers of our earth in places such as the Amazon, the Andes, and the far north of Scandinavia, Russia, and Alaska. These peoples learned how to work with Mother Nature, and willingly participated in an equal exchange. The indigenous peoples first asked permission, and took only enough, leaving more for the future. They never forgot to thank the earth for sharing its treasures.

It is an eye-opener to me that people who live in harmony with their environment have an entirely different relationship to life than what I learned growing up in our highly developed America. The idea of cooperation and being part of a larger system where all parts work in harmony is simplistic yet profound. I listened to Bruce Lipton discuss individuals cooperating for the good of the whole. Bruce spoke of our human body consisting of approximately 40 trillion cells that all work together to enable us to function in complex and miraculous ways. When you compare that close harmony with the ability of individual trees in a forest to act as one unit to preserve the vitality of the forest, you get it. Why then is our dominate and overactive western culture continuing to destroy the only home we have, by acting as predators and not stewards of our sacred planet?

When I digest all this sensible and simple truth, I can't accept why we continue to allow the destruction and rape of our planet. The answers are before us if only we choose to open our eyes and not be blinded by things, distractions and fear. Much of our media is designed to lock us into victim status so we feel disempowered. We shrug and say What can we do, it is too big for me to make a difference. The opposite is true, as with more awareness and a sense of consciousness, you can change your mindset and therefore interact with your environment in new and imaginative ways.

As I listened to the dire reality such as two thirds of our animal population has disappeared during the last fifty years, and the forecast that by 2048 there will be no fish in the ocean, the immediacy of the need for a swift and radical shift in how we interact with other living beings is apparent. The wise souls who shared their Earthkeepers wisdom made so much sense. It is refreshing to hear people speaking the truth about the horrors all around us, offering solutions and expressing optimism.

I am comforted by knowing there are ways I can add to the healing and restoration of our planet. I don't have to buy the party line of colonial capitalism that attempts to freeze me in inaction. When I feel disempowered, I believe I can't make a difference, and I view the system as too strong. This is dangerous thinking and it is easy to fall into despair, inaction or denial.

Hearing about the Earthkeepers, who are living in harmony and connection to the earth and all living beings, I get energized. Perhaps there is something I can do to live in gratitude for all the mysteries of life. I can begin by transforming my thinking. Rather than complain and struggle about the insanity, violence, and inequality in today's world, I can pay attention to the ever-present beauty everywhere. I don't need to consume to help me forget, or numb out all the frightening scenes that assault us. I can add sanity and positivity to a shell-shocked environment.

I was out watching the Geminids meteor showers mid-December. What a treat to see the blazing light show. To witness that event is to be grateful and appreciative for the miracle of our spectacular embodiment. To be conscious of the abundance of gifts that are around us all the time is to be humble and connected. This makes sense. This is being aware and alive. Living life to the fullest.

In our highly evolved world, it is easy to be distracted by all the glitter and to chase after what you don't really need. When we are connected to the earth and grounded in the majesty of the life around us, we can live more harmoniously, in community, and less toxically.

I consider that there were at least 80,000 people tuning in to the Earthkeepers summit from all over the world. They are committed to healing our planet and birthing a new world focused on cooperation and connection. This fact feels mighty. If each person enlists one other person and they do the same...you see where I am going.

I sit back and imagine all of us working on becoming Earthkeepers. What a tremendous change that will have cataclysmic results. Just the dramatic shift our planet needs to begin the long process of healing and recovery. One person spoke of how quickly the earth recovers when humans get out of the way. Look at how air pollution decreased when the pandemic started and we all stayed in place. The pandemic demonstrates how interconnected we are. What does it take for us to operate from that perspective? I believe it takes an army of Earthkeepers to constantly remind us of what is important and what is worth saving.

Excitedly, my resolution for 2022 is to gently push myself into remembering my purpose is to take care of the earth by opening to greater consciousness and practicing sacred activism. Are you courageous enough to take this leap with me? Mother Earth is calling to us. The Earthkeepers are awake, listening, and practicing sacred activism. Can we bravely follow their path?

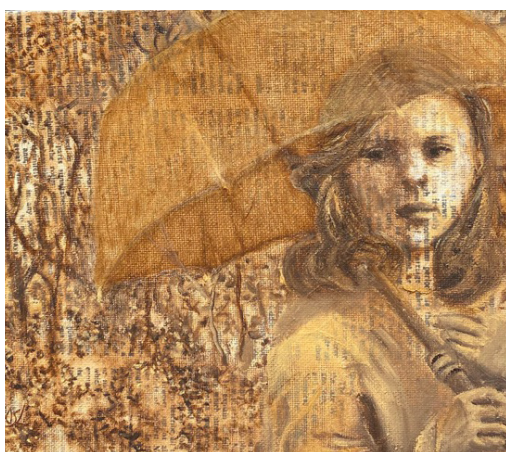
At the Top Shelf Gallery

Submitted by Janice Trecker

"Visions & Memories", the January- February show at the Top Shelf Gallery will feature paintings, drawings and collages by Donna O'Scolaigh Lange. She began her career as a graphic artist, illustrating children's fiction and educational books. Moving to Northeast Connecticut inspired her to paint traditional landscapes in oil, and she has studied at the Worcester Art Museum and with talented local artists.

A trip to West Ireland to research the family's heritage dramatically changed Lange's outlook on her art. "We spent time at Cashel Rock where many of the O'Scolaigh and Scully ancestors are buried. Seeing the carved, ancient stones overlooking that sweeping green land inspired a new direction for me."

"I began layering and scraping back the paint on my canvases, which led to working with mixed mediums, such as acrylics, encaustic wax, and oil pastels, sometimes with the addition of altered photographs,"



she explains, adding that, "My goal is for my work to be universal and personal at the same time."

Lange says that she enjoys creating collage because of its inherent mystery-always veiling the message. "Of course," she says, "I still love to create landscapes and portraits in oil."

Donna Lange shows regionally and has won many awards, including "Best in Show" at the Spiro Gallery, Danielson, Ct. She is represented by the Arts and Framing Gallery in Putnam, Ct. and is affiliated with Bayview Press of Thomaston, Maine, Mystic Art Museum, and ArtsWorcester, Worcester, Ma.

Locally, her work appears regularly at Arts and Framing in Putnam and The Mansion at Bald Hill in Woodstock. Her illustrations of short poems can be seen at www.instagram.com/donnaoscolaigh-lange.

The Top Shelf Gallery is at Fletcher Memorial Library, 257 Main Street, Hampton. Info at 860-455-1086.

it's a great day for a subway!

STORRS LOCATIONS

125 N Eagleville Road • Open till 10 PM
Student Union Food Court
Storrs Downtown • Open till 10 PM

SUBWAY STORRS DELIVERS!
GRUB HUB, DOOR DASH, HUNGRY BUTTON

EASTERN CAMPUS LOCATION
33 High Street • Open till 10 PM

DELIVERING WITH DOOR DASH & GRUB HUB
ORDER AHEAD WITH THE SUBWAY.COM app
7 days a week

LANDON TIRE... DOES MORE THAN JUST TIRES!

We specialize in...

- Brakes • Exhaust • Alignment Shocks
- C.V. Joint & Axles • Struts
- Front End Repair • Under Car Repair and More!

YOKOHAMA GENERAL TIRE TOYOTIRES KUMHO HANKOOK BFGoodrich Firestone Uniroyal Bridgestone Cooper Tires Goodyear Michelin

LANDON TIRE
39 Years of Hometown Service
YOUR INDEPENDENT TIRE DEALER
Just 2 Miles South of the New Thread City Crossing Bridge on Rt. 32, South Windham
RT. 32, SOUTH WINDHAM 456-0000 Mon.-Fri. 8-5:30; Sat. 8-1:30

SERVING YOU SINCE 1951

Largest Selection of Sewing Machines and Vacuum Cleaners in Eastern CT

Sales • Service • Parts • Accessories

Schillers SINCE 1951
HOME TO ALL YOUR SEWING & VACUUM NEEDS

1088 Main Street
Willimantic, CT 06226
(860) 423-6800
SchillersOnTheWeb.com

WE TAKE TRADE-INS!

"Expert Repairs on all Makes of Vacuums and Sewing Machines."

"All Work Guaranteed-Free Estimates"

VISA MasterCard DISCOVER

TRANSFER YOUR VIDEOS TO DVD

Update your audio to CD, and photos and video

COME AND SEE US!

THE GALLERY RECORDING STUDIO
All Work Done on Premises
860-528-9009
TheGalleryAudioVideo.com
Visit us.
8 Meadow Trail, Coventry
One block off South Street Behind the convenience store (cow painted on front)

From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

Phoenix Farm at Coventry Indoor Market

By C. Dennis Pierce

Looking over Wangumbaug Lake (Coventry Lake) on a winter Sunday afternoon is a nice way to spend your time, but it is even better if you are doing it at the Coventry Farmers' Market at their new winter location at 172 Lake Street. The Sunday before Christmas, I dropped by to pick up some last-minute ingredients and say hello to some old friends. As I arrived, I was pleasantly surprised to find the parking lot jam-packed with shopper's cars. As a spot opened up, I slipped in and made my way to the market. As in past winter markets, they offer a wide selection of items, from produce to hand-made items and even locally produced wine and beer. You can find a weekly listing and other pertinent information on their website at www.coventryfarmersmarket.org. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (there is no market on Sunday, January 2).

While checking out the many offerings, I had the pleasure of meeting Christine Whitney of Phoenix Farm in Cromwell. Christine and her friend Bill Painter are regulars at the market, where they sell a variety of produce and other farm offerings. Christine explained that they are able to offer a wide array of produce because they have four large greenhouses on their farm. Unique to their farm, the produce that is grown in the greenhouses is not only organic but also is planted directly in the ground.

Christine said that when she was small, she always visited the family farm, which was then owned by her grandfather. A large conventional farm, it had historically sold its offerings at the Hartford Public Market. As the farm was passed on through the family, Christine's mother no longer could maintain it and Christine took ownership, leaving a corporate job to become a farmer. Since the farm had a long history, from the early 1900s to the late '90s, it was appropriate that its resurgence be celebrated with a new name, and, under Christine's tutelage, Phoenix Farm was born, a certified organic farm rising from the ashes of the conventional farm.

As I gathered more information, I learned that Phoenix Farm will remain in agricultural production in perpetuity, as the Whitneys have conveyed development rights to the state under the Community Farms Preservation Program. This program focuses on smaller farms, often in close proximity to population centers, which do not qualify for the state's long-standing Farmland Preservation Program. Located on Nooks Hill Road, Phoenix Farm is the first farm in Cromwell to be preserved under the state program. It grows more than 80 varieties of organic fruits and vegetables that are sold at the farm, area farmers' markets, and a large local market.

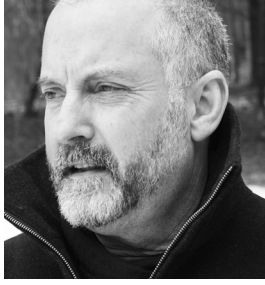
As of this printing, the farm's website is under construction. The new website will feature online ordering, where items can be picked up at the farm or at the Coventry market and other markets in season. Their digital store will have a unique ordering system where you can see the current inventory of their offerings in real time. The farm occupies 48 acres, but they are currently growing on 7½ acres. You can find more information on their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/phoenixfarmorganic>.

As this is the New Year's edition of *Neighbors*, I thought it would be appropriate to add a New Year's recipe. Southerners swear that eating Hoppin' John, a dish made with black-eyed peas and rice, for the new year will bring you good luck. Considering the past year, I think maybe we should be eating a lot of this recipe.

Hoppin' John
Servings – 6 to 8

Ingredients:

- ¼ lb. thick-cut bacon, chopped
- 2 andouille sausage links, halved and sliced thin
- 1 small sweet onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 bell pepper (any color), seeded and chopped
- 1 jalapeno or serrano pepper, seeded and diced
- 2–3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb. black-eyed peas, soaked overnight and then rinsed
- 32 oz. chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves



1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning. If you do not have this, see recipe below.
½ cup chopped green onions (scallions)
2 cups long grain rice, rinsed well. I place the rice in a bowl and put cold water on top. I swirl it around like I am mining for gold, pour off the water, and do it again 5 to 6 times more or until the water becomes clear. This way, you are removing the starch from the rice.

Directions:

Set a medium sauce pot over high heat. Add the rice and 3½ cups water. Cover and bring to a boil. Then lower the heat and cook for 15–20 minutes, until light and fluffy. My microwave has an option for rice; yours might have one too. It makes perfect rice every time.
Set a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the bacon. Cook and stir for 3 minutes, then add in the sliced sausage. Brown until the sausage looks crispy around the edges. Stir regularly.
Push the bacon and sausage to the sides of the pan and add in the onions, celery, bell pepper, jalapeno, and garlic. Sauté for 3–5 minutes to soften the vegetables.



Christine Whitney (at left) and Bill Painter of Phoenix Farm at the Coventry Indoor Farmers Market.

Dennis Pierce photo.

Remove mixture and set aside.
Place the black-eyed peas, chicken stock, thyme, and Cajun seasoning in another pan. Cover with a tight lid and simmer for 30 minutes or until the peas are soft and tender. (If the broth absorbs before the peas are soft, add a little water to finish them off.)
Add back all of the ingredients and cook for 10 more minutes.
Taste and season with salt and pepper if needed.
Serve warm over rice with a sprinkling of green onions, and hot sauce on the side.

Cajun seasoning recipe:

- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Mix together

The secret to the recipe? Soak one night, prepare the next night, and serve the third night. It's worth it, since it not only tastes better but it makes your house smell so dang good!

As I researched information on the Hartford Public Market, I came across a historical listing that you may be interested in: <http://www.ctfarmfresh.org/history.html>. It's a timeline of farmers' markets in Connecticut from 1643 to the twenty-first century.

Lastly, as we begin a new year, as I have learned from this past year, keep your faith in the Almighty strong. You will never be early and never late. Your time is being decided; wait for the best one, stay focused on your aim, and you will achieve it. Happy New Year! So, until next month, if you have a suggestion for a farm or a local grower or even a recipe that features a local ingredient, please let me know. I will do my best to share your suggestions in a future column. Drop me a line at Codfish53@yahoo.com. ...Peas be with you. Come celebrate with me and remember, every day is a holiday and every meal is a banquet. I'll save you a seat at the table.

No Bounds

By Judy Davis

It's been said that hunger knows no bounds, and Ireland's Bobby Sands knew that. And he proved it. Bobby, you were of Ireland; and Irish blood, like a river, ran hot, and proud, through your veins. Your eyes, first sparkling, then dimming, as your hunger strike went on and on. In your dreams, flew the Tri-colors, proudly waving, defiant in the face of British oppression. Yet, the wind still blows, awakening all who want a united Ireland. After your funeral, your legacy rang out a tune, which Ireland Still dances to. Bobby Sands – forever Ireland !

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

The introduction of the automobile has changed our lives forever. By the 1920's the automobile was giving people independence they never had before. This new found one car family vehicle became the go to thing for a Sunday family oriented get away. Today it is not uncommon for families to have three or more vehicles available for use on any given Sunday.

With the automobile came the local corner service station. This was where you bought your gasoline (full service not self-service), you put air in your tires, and the attendant checked the oil and other fluids as he pumped your gas. The local service station also offered tires, batteries, exhaust, and minor repairs. The owner got to know you and your needs. The first credit cards were offered by major oil companies to sway you toward their products and be a convenience too.

Today, the corner service station has been replaced by self-service gas islands and convenience stores. Here the air in your tires is not checked by a person, but is instead monitored by the vehicle's onboard computer. Most people rarely check their oil, brake fluid, washer fluid, and transmission fluid when stopping for gas. The reason that I mention the corner service station is that many issues and problems with your vehicle were discovered and trouble was headed off when the attendant checked your car while filling it with gas.

Today the quick oil change business is a convenience, or is it? Here is a common occurrence we have seen in our shop. A pickup truck came in for a tire change. The right rear spring was broken, the vehicle was leaking power steering fluid and coolant, and there was a hole in the transmission fill tube. The oil was just changed at a quick in and out. The customer had no idea that these problems existed on their vehicle. The automobile is just like your body, as you and your vehicle age both need a little more attention.

The full-service repair facility does more with an oil change than just change the oil. This service also takes an average time of about an hour. That nail in your tire, rotted exhaust flange, and leaking fluid can be found as the inspection takes place during this regular oil change service. This can head off many small problems before they become big ones. Mice love to take over an engine compartments air filter box not to mention the cabin air filter that provides air for the interior passenger compartment. All of these things are checked when a full-service facility does your regular oil change service.

I realize that peoples' time is valuable. The quick in and out oil change provides the convenience and speed that many people desire. There is an old saying though, that "haste makes waste." Quick is not always best and many small auto issues can be found and fixed before they become large and costly if the time is taken to have a regular full-service oil change.

Until next month...Be safe and Happy Motoring!!!

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

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).

Lamont aims to succeed on climate where the legislature failed

CT Mirror. "Broadly, Lamont's order takes a whole-of-government approach to address meeting greenhouse gas reduction mandates with resiliency and energy-saving measures in place across many state government practices and multiple agencies. It contains building code changes to foster energy efficiency, land-based efforts for agriculture and offers solutions – such as forest maintenance – to help store carbon. It also outlines innovative actions in the areas of public health and climate change, environmental justice, and economic development..." The administration moving forward to do what it can is great, but that doesn't let the legislature off the hook. They still have a responsibility here and a large responsibility to take action. We would certainly hope and urge that the upcoming session really center actions to address the climate crisis as part of that effort.' " Plus: Lamont Tackles Climate Change On His Own and the full text of Executive Order No. 21-3.

Study: Business lobbying a major barrier to clean energy legislation in Connecticut

Energy News Network. "Brown University researchers found that utility and business interests outspend environmental organizations on lobbying 8-to-1, though an industry group says the study overstates its spending and influence on energy..." Environmental groups and ordinary citizens will never have the money or resources to match what Eversource and the CBIA spend to influence lawmakers. But broad majorities of Americans see climate change as a serious problem and are demanding action from their elected leaders. So the real power is at the polls."

State Officials See Nuclear Plant as Key to Connecticut's Energy Goals

The Connecticut Examiner. "A number of state lawmakers have questioned why the burden of supporting a power plant so crucial to the entire New England region should fall entirely on Connecticut. But without a mechanism for the regional grid operator ISO New England to fund the plant regionally, Connecticut officials say they have no choice but to shoulder the burden of keeping Millstone

open...According to the recent report, if Millstone had closed in 2019, replacing that electricity would have cost Connecticut electric customers an additional \$1.8 billion. And carbon emissions across New England would have increased by 25 percent as the nuclear plant's production is replaced mainly by gas-fired plants."

Solar Energy Project Completed At Cheshire Construction Company

Patch. "A three-part solar energy project at The Lane Construction Corporation in Cheshire has been completed, officials from Hartford-based solar energy developer Verogy announced Monday. The project includes a 210 kW array on Lane's main building, a 129 kW ground-mounted system on the company's property, and a 326 kW system on the company's car port, according to officials. The car port is also equipped with four electric vehicle (EV) charging stations."



HeatSmart: Residents Eligible For Energy, Money-Saving Home Audit

Patch. "HeatSmart Guilford, an energy education and outreach program, announced that more than 125 individual homeowners have already signed up for low-cost home energy audits through the program. The town partnered with Peoples Action for Clean Energy and launched the initiative in summer 2021 to encourage both the audits and the adoption of low emission, heat pump systems to heat and cool homes."

Creating a Culture of Sustainable Thinkers

TEDxHartford. In this 17 minute video, Connecticut's own Leticia Colon de Mejias talks about her journey from unawareness to alarm about the dangers of climate change. Her overall message is one of hope and a call to action: climate change is solvable.

Connecticut's failure to act on climate hurts in more ways than one

CT Mirror. "In my conversations with other young activists, it has long been abundantly clear that we know and care — acutely, often painfully — about these issues, and that we're actively seeking ways to change them. Yet despite all of our action and concern, we're often unsure if elected officials, in their inaction, care nearly as much. It's for this reason — not lack of caring, or ignorance, but quite the opposite — that I've witnessed the greatest shifts towards hopelessness in my few years as a young advocate. It comes from feeling like despite our megaphones, we're speaking to a brick wall; it comes when we watch climate legislation like the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI) used as take-it-or-leave-it bargaining chips or punted by leaders at the drop of a hat when the political stars no longer align, rather than built upon and improved as the critical climate measures we need. Plainly, it comes when young people exhaust their capacity to yell."

A New Project: The American Museum

Submitted by Bev York

Windham Arts and the Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation announce a new project, The American Museum. The Museum, opening in January, will mount exhibits inside the new Eastern Connecticut Veteran's Community Center in Willimantic. The America Museum comes at a time when every citizen needs to reflect upon and understand the struggles and sacrifices that made our country free. Our society must help veterans and all Americans to: acknowledge and honor the brave, relish our victories, study the failures, help heal the scars, connect stories to current issues facing America and ensure that we learn from the past. The premier exhibit opening in early January will be "Pandemic Pandemonium: 1918 The Spanish Flu and World War 1." The museum is interested in stories, and names and photos (copies) of people who perished. The first major exhibition will be "The Vietnam War: Lessons Learned,"

including 'Horribly Ever After' stories of coming home from Vietnam and Afghanistan. Several veterans have already been interviewed for this project. Veterans' viewpoints, including women, blacks and Latino; and their artifact objects on loan are needed for the display. A grant from the Connecticut Humanities has been awarded to help fund the installation.

The Museum seeks to provide an educational venue that presents an unbiased and balanced account that allows visitors to develop an understanding of American history. The public will be engaged in interactive exhibitions, programs and fieldtrips that explain and enlighten about stories of America. Future projects include local individuals' contributions to US engagements, role of women in war efforts, BIPOC contributions to military, trauma of war, and more. Upcoming projects include "Built by Slaves: The United States Capitol", "I Never Knew My Dad", "A Republic- If You Can Keep It," and the "U.S.S. Alligator." The

museum plans to offer programs, field trips, family activities and to collaborate with local organizations.

The exhibits and programs will be managed by local historian, Bev York who currently teaches American and Connecticut history at Quinebaug Valley Community College.

The America Museum is a project of Windham Arts and the Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The Museum admission will be free but donations are appreciated. There is a need for funding and volunteers. A supporting membership to the museum, sponsors and grants will fund the expenses. Donations are being accepted for Charter Members. Checks can be mailed to: The America Museum, Eastern Connecticut Veteran's Community Center, 1320 Main Street, Suite 27, Willimantic, CT 06226. For more information contact Bev at bevishistory@yahoo.com.

HOLIDAY SPIRITS

Liquor • Beer • Wine • Lotto

HOLIDAY MALL

1733 Storrs Road
Storrs, CT 06268

860-429-7786

Visit us on Facebook and
at Untappd.com

HST

Home Selling Team

HST

452 Storrs Road, Mansfield

860-456-SOLD (7653)

info@homesellingteam.com

homesellingteam.com

SENIOR HOUSING

NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS

Willington Woods

25 Senior Way – Willington, CT 06279

Applicants must be 62 or older and not to have income greater than income limits annually established by HUD

CURRENT INCOME LIMITS: One Person: \$33,900
Two Person: \$38,750

For more information call 860-429-8777
and for more information and application process visit us at
www.willingtonwoods.org



SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

CAD Marshall Framing

Professional Picture Framer

Art by local artists is not on
cargo ships...

Stop in - Shop local

Start the New Year Right!

30% off:

Pre-framed Art
Matted Prints • Posters

860-617-5422

Tue.- Fri. 10-5:30 & Sat. 10-4
34 North Street. Wmtc., CT

The Neighbors paper
A little paper big on community

Mind Your Fortunes

By Delia Berlin

A few months ago, while cleaning house, I found two fortunes that I didn't remember I had saved. In pre-pandemic days, David and I used to walk from our house to Oriental Cafe for early Friday dinners. It meant a nice long walk and a good supper, cooked and served by friendly staff, with whom we would share family updates and small talk. The fortune cookies at the end of our meal were a must for David, who never allowed them to be forgotten despite an extra busy evening.

We always looked forward to opening our cookies and comparing our fortunes, sometimes funny, sometimes deep, and occasionally incomprehensible. The two fortunes that I had saved read "He deserves paradise who makes his companions laugh" and "Happiness isn't in having what you want, but rather in wanting what you have." At the time I found them, both provided appropriate prompts for reflection.

The first fortune, naturally, made me think of Eureka, our almost-30-year-old parrot companion who we recently lost to the West Nile virus. I am not religious and simply think of the afterlife as the same as the "before-life"—just a time when one "isn't." But I see no harm in forming positive fantasies and images, so I find comfort in imagining Eureka happy now and in a good place. She certainly made us laugh enough to earn her ticket to paradise.

The second fortune promotes an attitude of appreciation and gratitude that I always try to adopt. It didn't strike a chord immediately, but a few weeks later, while I was cuddling our remaining parrot, it encouraged me to embrace his new role as the king of our roost.

One cannot wish grief away, and Eureka's loss still feels heavy. But one can certainly try to nudge grief along by whatever means work. The truth is that when a source of joy is lost forever, one must stay focused on finding joy elsewhere. We are fortunate to have another parrot. He is just as special and loved as Eureka was to us, but both his environment and our relationship have been altered by Eureka's death.

Baby is a male Senegal parrot and we adopted him seventeen years ago, when he was ten years old. We were already familiar with him. He was my sister's pet and used to stay with us whenever she traveled. In those days, we even had a dedicated and fully equipped "guest" cage for him, and he seemed to enjoy coming to visit us. While my sister loved him dearly, at the time she gave him to us she was overtaken with a baby grandchild and other family responsibilities. She knew that he was welcome at our house and that, in addition to being well taken care of, he would remain in the family. In addition, Baby loved Eureka (although his feelings were not fully reciprocated by her) and me. Multiple close bonds are unusual for parrots, who tend to like just one person. But Baby remains bonded both to me and my sister to this day. During family visits, he has the endearing habit of going from my hand to my sister's without fully letting go of mine. He perches happily with one foot on my sister's hand and one on mine, while making all sorts of kissing and loving noises.

Recently, David was talking on the phone with a friend while Baby was chattering. Our friend said he thought he was hearing a parrot, even though ours had just died. When David clarified that only one of our two parrots had died, our friend asked when we got the second parrot. He couldn't believe that he had been to our house dozens of times over the years and had not noticed Baby. While Baby was always the loudest and more colorful of our parrots, Eureka's outgoing personality apparently eclipsed his presence. Eureka was not the only one to blame for that—so was Baby, who prefers to fly below the radar whenever we have company.

While Eureka loved to come out for guests and show off her tricks, Baby prefers to remain in the safety of his own digs when we have visitors. He has the habit of going to sleep for the night at an early hour and, if our guests stay beyond that time, he most undiplomatically starts saying "Bye-bye!" In addition, while all parrots can bite (and do!), Eureka could be trusted with strangers, un-



der my guidance and supervision. Baby, on the other hand, doesn't like to be touched by anyone except my sister and me, and he particularly hates men. In order to let Baby be handled by David, I had to "stick train" him—that is, teach him to step onto and off of a stick on command, so that he can be safely moved from one place to another without endangering any human body parts.

Because "Baby" is a somewhat lame name that was given to him by his breeder, we thought about changing it. But he knows his name and also says it, and we didn't want to confuse him. Still, he has many affectionate nicknames. Most often, I call him "Batatito," and he recognizes that name. There is no simple translation for "Batatito," but if vegetables used diminutives, it would mean a little sweet potato.

At age 27, our little Senegal is, according to our vet, a lot older than Eureka was at almost 30. I am not prepared to part with him, particularly now that we've lost



Eureka, so I'm hoping he still has many good years left in him. Baby enjoys eating and is quite food-focused. He plays with his toys, explores his environment, and is curious about our activities. But, while he was never very agile, he clearly has slowed down. His play is less energetic than it used to be and he takes several naps a day, practically lying down on his belly. While Baby remains as beautiful as he was in his prime, he definitely behaves like an old man.

Since Eureka's death, Baby's life has changed dramatically. He plainly misses her, but he now has center stage and our dedicated attention as our only pet. We have moved him into

larger quarters set up with many more toys, and he gets more treats throughout the day. We are hoping that Baby's expanded quarters and enhanced interactions may prolong his active years. In just a few months since Eureka's death, he already seems more purposeful and aware of the realignment in our family hierarchy. For instance, he has taken the lead in establishing new routines, including a new bedtime ritual. After we have dinner as a family, I clean his cage, place freshly filled bowls in it, and put him back in. He immediately checks the bowls and eats a few more bites, and soon after starts calling me insistently. At that point, I take him out for a "hug" and rock him for a few minutes, singing his bedtime song, "Rockabye Baby." After a few minutes of this musical cuddle, I place him on his perch and he goes to sleep happily until the morning.

Parrots have excellent memory. Once they like something, they remember it well and are likely to make it happen again. Undoubtedly, we'll be learning some more new routines. While people think that I'm good at training parrots, the truth is that I just let them train me. Believe me, it's more fun that way.

Friday Noir Movie Matinee Series FREE on the BIG screen

Willington Public Library, 7 Ruby Road, Willington, CT
860-429-3854 willingtonpubliclibrary.org

Great American Film Noirs

Are you a fan of the 40's & 50's noir films where sometimes everything is not always as it seems? Join us for a nostalgic afternoon into the world of classic Hollywood filmmaking and witness legendary acting from a bygone era.

Showings: First Fridays (unless otherwise stated)
at 12:30 pm, in the Community Room

Upcoming Scheduled Movie Dates and Titles:

January 7, 2022: The Strange Love of Martha Ivers
The Strange Love of Martha Ivers (1946) 116m. A man is reunited with his childhood friend and her husband, who believe he knows the truth about the death of her rich aunt years earlier. Starring: Barbara Stanwyck, Van Heflin, and Kirk Douglas in his film debut. Directed by Lewis Milestone.

February 4, 2022: The Mask of Dimitrios
The Mask of Dimitrios (1944) 95m. Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre make a marvelous team in this exhilarating and atmospheric film noir the "Daily Variety" hailed as "one of the most brilliant crime dramas yet filmed". Directed by Jean Negulesco and written by Frank Gruber, based on the 1939 novel of the same title written by Eric Ambler.

A Special Quilt Sparks Pleasant Memories

By Bill Powers

"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory." — Dr. Seuss

With fuel prices recently skyrocketing, turning the thermostat down a bit more than usual on cold nights certainly becomes an economic reality of saving money. On one such night, in addition to bed sheets and a blanket, I retrieved a decorative quilt from our closet in an effort to assure a warm and comfortable night of rest. As I settled in under the covers, I was suddenly flooded with a host of vivid heartwarming memories sparked by the thoughts of the quilt that I had just retrieved. I found myself smiling as I thought of our long time neighbors in Storrs, the late Ruth Reichel, who had skillfully and artfully created by hand this beautiful, unique, multicolored bedcovering and her husband, the late Hank Reichel.

It was our good fortune to have been blessed with wonderful neighbors, both when we lived in Mansfield and now living in Windham Center. Ruth Reichel and her husband Hank greeted us warmly when we moved into our first house near Gurleyville in Mansfield. They had relocated from Nebraska where they were both reared and were members of "America's Greatest Generation." They were so down-to-Earth and their mid-western values were both interesting and refreshing to me. Hank was a Marine who served during World War II and later attended the University of Nebraska where he also played football. Ruth, after attending high school in Lincoln Nebraska, worked in a downtown department store in Lincoln during the War. Hank and Ruth came east so Hank could take a teaching job. He taught for many years at Edwin O. Smith High School in Storrs where they raised their own family. They were not only friends to us, but also parent figures in many respects and could always be counted on for help that included sobering advice that was wise and practical.

It was music to my ears whenever Hank often called over to me from his yard: "Hey! Bill, come on over later, Ruthie's baking today." This was an invitation that simply could not be declined. Whether it was cookies, pies, muffins, especially the peppermint candy cane cookies or her runzas (from her Nebraska heritage); My God, she could bake! Her German pastries were absolutely delectable. My wife experienced Ruth's baking skills and good conversation on a regular basis, as she was frequently invited to tea with Ruth.

There was often something at our house that needed attention, and Hank's great arsenal of tools was made available to me — as he always said: "The right tool for every job." He would explain the proper use of tools that I was unfamiliar with. Sometimes, he came with me to "supervise" the job should I appear to be uneasy; his gene for teaching was always present and his expertise was always greatly appreciated.

It was Ruth who introduced us to the amazing artistry of quilt making. Not only did she demonstrate her own quilting techniques to us, but she also accompanied us to quilt shows at the Storrs Congregational Church; and, on an excursion to the New England Quilt Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts. She enjoyed making quilts with a group at her church, the Storrs Congregational Church; and often contributed quilts for the Hole In The Wall Gang Camp in Ashford. Her love for the art of quilting was undeniable. Ruth also enthusiastically accompanied us for our first visit to the phenomenal Ballard Institute and Museum of Poetry, where she was a volunteer.

When I was conducting oral history interviews about life during World War II, Ruth immediately volunteered to participate. Ruth was a constituent of "America's Greatest Generation," having witnessed the Great Depression and the War. She talked about the hardships faced by civilians during the War but also with how people felt compelled to support the war effort. When I asked about her memories of December 7, 1941 and how she, her family and neighbors in Lincoln, Nebraska reacted to the events of that day, she told me passionately with tears in her eyes about the twin brothers she knew from her neighborhood who were killed at Pearl Harbor on the USS Oklahoma; and while swinging her clenched fist declared: "Bill, we were going to knock out those damn Japs!"

We received a wonderful quilt created by Ruth Reichel as a cherished gift. On a recent cold night this special quilt would spark many special and pleasant memories.

Bill Powers is a retired teacher residing in Windham Center.

Unsung Heroes of Soul: The Falcons

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 the Falcons, an early soul group that spawned both Eddie Floyd and Wilson Pickett.

In 1955, Eddie Floyd and Bob Manardo worked together in a Detroit jewelry store and decided to form a group. Manardo brought in Tom Shetler while Floyd recruited Arnett Robinson, who came up with the group's name. Finally, Willie Schofield came aboard. Manardo and Shetler were white, making the Falcons one of rock 'n' roll's first mixed-race groups.

In 1956, they auditioned for Mercury Records. Their debut release, "Baby That's It," came out in August. Not long after, Manardo and Shetler enlisted in the military, reducing the Falcons to a trio. Their manager, Robert West, hired two new members: Lance Finnie and Joe Stubbs (brother of the Four Tops' Levi Stubbs). About a month after the new guys came aboard, Arnett Robinson quit the group; his replacement was Mack Rice. The "classic" Falcons were now born.

Their next several releases were on labels owned by Robert West. It was on his Flick imprint that the Falcons got their first taste of the big time. One of the earliest soul records, "You're So Fine" was released in January 1959 and quickly took off in Detroit. West negotiated a distribution deal with Unart, a division of United Artists. The song became a national hit, going to #2 on the *Billboard* Rhythm & Blues chart and #17 pop.

In the summer of 1960, Wilson Pickett, 19, joined the Falcons to replace the departing Joe Stubbs. Pickett's first lead was on the Sam Cooke-written "Pow! You're In Love," released in January 1961. Not long after, the Falcons' United Artists contract expired and was not renewed. Robert West would now put out their material on his new imprint, LuPine.

In January 1962, West issued "I Found a Love," a remarkable ballad with a Pickett lead that was pure Southern church. Though far too gutbucket for the pop charts, where it stalled at #75, "I Found a Love" was an R&B smash, going to #6 on that survey.

In 1963, Pickett left the Falcons to launch his solo career. Not long after, Willie Schofield got his draft notice and the group broke up. However, Robert West did not want to give up the name; so he approached another of his groups, the Fabulous Playboys, and asked if they would become the new Falcons. The Playboys, having been together for seven years, were reluctant to give up their established name. However, they agreed to do so when West convinced them that they would make a lot more money as the Falcons.

In 1964, West was shot in a dispute over the management of Motown singer Mary Wells. Needing a long period of recovery, he could no longer manage the Falcons. Frank Kocian took over and recorded them on his Big Wheel label. Their most successful release was "Standing On Guard," a #29 R&B hit in 1966. Kocian put out three singles on the Falcons, who disbanded in 1970.



In 1965, Mack Rice wrote and recorded "Mustang Sally," which became a big hit for his former bandmate, Wilson Pickett, a year later. In 1966, Eddie Floyd signed with Stax Records in Memphis and hit paydirt with "Knock On Wood." Joe Stubbs went on to sing with two Motown groups, the Contours ("Do You Love Me") and the Originals ("Baby, I'm For Real"). And in 1980, Joe Stubbs, Mack Rice, Willie Schofield, and Lance Finnie teamed up with James Gibson to form a new Falcons group.

Joe Stubbs, 55, died on February 5, 1998. Wilson Pickett, 64, died on January 19, 2006. Mack Rice, 82, died on June 27, 2016. And Willie Schofield, 81, died on March 30, 2021.

Rock critic Dave Marsh included both "You're So Fine" and "I Found a Love" in his 1989 book, *The Heart of Rock and Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made*.

Charted singles:

"You're So Fine" (1959) R&B #2, Pop #17

"Just For Your Love" (1959) R&B #26

"The Teacher" (1960) R&B #18

"I Found a Love" (1962) R&B #6, Pop #75

"Standing On Guard" (1966) R&B #29

Other noteworthy Falcons tracks include "Baby That's It" (1956), "Sent Up," "Can This Be Christmas" (both 1957), "This Heart of Mine" (1958), "Goddess of Angels" (1959), "Pow! You're In Love" (1961), "Take This Love I've Got," "Let's Kiss and Make Up" (both 1963), "Has It Happened to You Yet" (1964), and "(I'm a Fool) I Must Love You" (1966).

Marv Goldberg's definitive essay on the Falcons provided much of the material for this month's column. You can read his many biographies of vintage R&B acts at www.uncamarvy.com. 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) and Fridays from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. on WRTC, 89.3-FM (www.wrtcfm.com). He plays vintage soul music of the 1960s and '70s, everything from #1 hits to long-lost obscurities. Dean's e-mail address is soulexpress@gmail.com.

Franc MOTORS INC.
Since 1949

ROUTE 32
WILLINGTON
(860) 429-2614 • www.francmotorsinc.com

Franc Motors is a general automotive repair facility servicing cars, trucks, trailers and RV's. We offer medium & light, and heavy duty towing and recover. Road Service is available.

Open Monday-Friday
8:00am-6:00pm

Cooper TIRES
SNOWPLOW SALES AND SERVICE

Lettering & Graphics

Banners • Magnetics • Decals
Full Color Photo Signs, Carved, Electric & Neon
Signs for Real Estate, Trade Shows, Site Signs, Window Lettering
Cars • Vans • Trucks • Motorcycles • Boats

Signs Plus
OF WILLIMANTIC, LLC

Ph: 860.423.3048
Fax: 860.456.3003
700 Rear Main St.
Willimantic

Hi! My name is Josh and I'm the owner of **All Sleep**. We take **Guaranteed Lowest Prices** very seriously here. But what does it mean? It means that we'll not only beat **ANY** lower advertised price, but we'll also adjust our pricing so the next person who comes in the store will also get the **NEW** lower price. It's the only fair thing to do!

WE ARE ALL YOU NEED FOR SLEEP!
Eastern CT's Highest Reviewed Mattress Store On Google!

All Sleep

885 Windham Rd
Rt. 32 South Windham
(860) 423-0234
www.allsleep.net

Song-a-Day Music Center

Coventry, Connecticut
860-742-6878 or songadaymusic.com

Lessons in: Guitar, Piano, Bass Guitar, Banjo, Mandolin, Ukulele, Dulcimer, Violin, Woodwinds, Brass & Drums
Instruments New & Used - Books, Gifts, Accessories, Instrument Repair
Buying used instruments! We pay cash!
Band Instrument Rentals & Supplies

Noah King, Realtor, ABR, SRS, SFR

Find Out What Your Home is Worth Today!

Contact me for a free, no obligation market analysis of your home.

The "King" in Real Estate

HST Home Selling Team

Ashford native and resident for 30 years
noah@homesellingteam.com
860-933-3432 860-450-8134

Coventry Winter Farmers Market

Every Sunday through March 27, 2022
Except for December 26th & January 2nd

10:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Patriots Park Lodge
172 Lake Street, Coventry

www.coventrywinterfarmersmarket.com

At the Ashford Senior Center

Tai Chi - Monday and Friday 9:30-10:30
\$10 per month for one day/wk; \$20 for two

Low Impact Aerobics
Thursdays at 10:45; \$2 per class

Programs not limited to Ashford residents.

Contact the Center at 860-487-5122
25 Tremko Lane, Ashford

Change

By David Corsini

Updated, new, improved, enhanced, advanced, revised, and upgraded are terms that no longer please me. I avoid most change for as long as possible. I do not look forward to breaking in a new pair of shoes, changing my car or place of residence, or modifying any type of electronic device. If the change is something that cannot be avoided and involves technology, my armpits become moist and I look to Delia for guidance and assistance. Recently, Delia's iPhone was not holding a charge and, since our accounts are linked, she proposed we go to Verizon to get new phones. The last time Delia changed her phone, I had resisted because my phone was meeting my needs. But because I depend on Delia to help me with technology, I decided I better get on board before she declared my present phone too outdated for her to be of assistance. So, with a sense of dread, I set off with her to Verizon.

Changing phones involves making many decisions about multiple options. My phone was so old, our service rep told us, that there was a \$100 credit to upgrade, but Delia's phone did not have that credit. Then the rep began to describe the different types of phones and various plans of service and payment options. Delia was processing the different alternatives, but within five minutes my eyes were glazing over and I believe I was beginning to drool. So, with good reason, our representative directed his attention to Delia and my role became saying "Yes" to whatever Delia thought reasonable. We left with a plan, but the phones themselves had to be ordered.

It seems to me that the number of choices in many aspects of my life are increasing exponentially. I find this both confusing and anxiety producing. What if I make the wrong choice? Is there a way back? Recently, I needed a new pair of swim goggles. Since the sporting goods shop in East Brook Mall has closed, I went online. When I bought goggles at the shop, there were probably three choices. Now I went to Google and typed in "swim goggles." There were many sites to choose from. On just one site, there were hundreds of choices. After a short while of examining options, I lost patience and ordered some goggles I hoped would be good.

When they arrived, it turned out I had chosen goggles with UV protection and iridescent lenses. These might be good for swimming in a lake on a sunny day, but they would look pretty weird in the Mansfield Community Center pool. But at least when I tried them on, they fit better than the ones I was replacing. I will have to put up with weird.

Within a week Delia got notification that the phones had arrived. It was back to the store and, luckily, the same service representative. The phones had to be activated and information transferred from the old to the new. There were still decisions to be made about phone cases and screen protectors. As I am a bit rough with things, I chose to have a screen protector.

I remember that the last time I changed my phone, my old phone and new phone were taken into the back room for 20 minutes while the transfer of information was made. This time the transfer happened wirelessly while we sat there. I was not even aware that it was happening.

But there were still many tasks that the representative had to do before we could pay and leave. For example, he had to apply the screen protector to my phone and put each of our phones into cases. And there were many things that had to be done on his computer to activate the accounts. One thing I found unsettling was that even though our representative was multitasking with our phones, he also had to answer the store phone, satisfy the requests of the people on the line by going to talk with someone, and respond to inquiries from other workers. While I was making faces, Delia told me to chill. Apparently, that is how things are done these days.

It seemed like we were in the store a long time, and we were anxious to get out. At one point the representative suggested setting us up with Siri. I was interested,

but Delia said not to bother with that. She wanted to get out of the store. That several customers were without masks did not help the situation. But I suspect that Delia just didn't want me talking with a strange woman.

I had seen that my new phone could receive e-mail, but I failed to check out two tasks I depend upon the phone for: the Bluetooth function to stream sound to my hearing aids and searching on the internet. At home I discovered that I could not hear anything on the phone. I checked to see that Bluetooth was on and it was. But I still could hear nothing. I turned Bluetooth on and off and turned the hearing aids on and off, and still nothing. As my hearing is such that I have a difficult time on our landline, not being able to use the iPhone would be a big problem.

But then Delia looked in the hearing aid manual and found out how to sync the hearing aids to Bluetooth. Again, Delia to the rescue.

The other issue we had failed to resolve at the store was how the bills were going to be sent. Previously, Verizon had sent me both a text and email about the monthly charge. Since the messages about the new phones had been sent to Delia's email, we were afraid that future bills would also be sent to her. Since I pay these types of bills, we didn't want them sent to Delia. I called our representative at Verizon and he told me he was busy and that customer service at 611 would help me.

I called 611 and got a recording asking me what I wanted. My concern was with where the bills would be sent but I couldn't think of the correct way to ask. So I said, "Billing address." The auto-

mated voice said an email would be sent to me. And it was. But the information was not the information I wanted. I tried again, with the same result. It was during the third or fourth time calling 611 that I finally said the words that got me to a live person. Even though the voice of the person with whom I was speaking made me suspect he was in India, he spoke clearly and appeared interested in helping.

I explained my concern. He said that to get that information, he would have to put me on hold. And I was on hold for what appeared to be a long time. But since I had had the experience of being on hold for a long time while waiting to make my first Covid vaccine appointment, I did not fret. In fact, the music that was playing while I waited was quite danceable. I was tempted to dance around the room, but I feared that might confuse our parrot. But what the heck was this person doing in India? Was he dancing around? Anyhow, he eventually came back and told me nothing was going to change with the billing. Our worry was unfounded, and I guess that is good enough—if indeed it is true.

So far my new phone appears to be performing well, but there are still things to get used to. It took me four days to figure out that to search on the internet I had to type at the bottom of the screen and not at the top as I used to. Duh. I have yet to use the camera and I expect I will need some guidance with that function. It is a shame that I am not young enough to utilize more of the potential of this new technology. The instrument has been upgraded, but the performer remains the same. I am about to break in a new pair of shoes and I am not looking forward to that.



The author in his new 'shades'. Photo by Delia Berlin.

It's Not All Tea And Picnics For Black Bears

By Bob Lorentson

Because I am a scientist, I am often asked about things I know little about. But as knowing little is generally enough for most people, I always attempt an answer. For instance, I am often asked, "What color is a black bear?" In this case I can say that black bears are not blue, green, yellow, orange, or purple. If they want to make fools of us, however, and be brown or white, I'm sure they have their reasons. I am also asked, "Are black bears dangerous?" To this I say that while they may steal your picnic basket or raid your refrigerator, they seem no worse to me than teenagers in this regard. Black bears are omnivores, and will literally eat anything, including grubs, mushrooms, skunk cabbage, garbage, beavers, and rotting fish, not all of which you are likely to find in the average refrigerator. You can rest assured that if a black bear eats you, it likely mistook you for one of these things.

Male and female black bears are called boars and sows, the same as pigs. Although this can be confusing to some, they are not related. A good way to keep them separate is to remember that black bear hides are made into rugs, while pig skins are made into footballs. A group of black bears is called a sloth, which comes from the old English word for slow. This nomenclature may prove detrimental to anyone wanting to turn bears into rugs, as they are capable of running 30 mph, can weigh well over 500 pounds, and climb trees with the speed and agility of a squirrel. Also they are omnivores, a point I think I should stress again.

Most black bears make their homes in forests, except those that do so in zoos. In the wilds from northern Mexico to Alaska and Canada, they may range up to eighty miles in search of food, mates, and places where they aren't hunted. In zoos their ranges are much smaller, in part because the only thing they need to search for is their self-respect. If black bears in the wild choose their territories wisely, they may live up to forty years. In places where they are hunted, they live two to three years on average. Although they are not listed as a threatened species, they are considering an appeal.

There are anywhere from 600,000 to 900,000 black bears in North America, and they can be found in all but nine states. Hawaii is either too far to swim to, or they haven't yet seen the travel brochures. Wild bears have too much self-respect to consider Delaware, which is no bigger than a zoo anyway. Most plains states lack woods, which would leave bears nowhere to relieve themselves without compromising a certain rhetorical question, not to mention leaving them more vulnerable to hunters and ridicule. That leaves Indiana and Illinois, and let's be honest here – would you live there if you had other choices?

Black bears mate from May to July, beyond which they are too tired to continue. Usually in November, when the weather turns colder and the food scarcer, they begin their search for a den in which to hibernate. During hibernation they do not eat, drink, urinate, defecate, or watch TV. Their heart rate drops from 50 to 10 beats per minute, they take a breath only once every 45 seconds, they lose up to 45 percent of their body weight, and they dream of trout stocked streams and fully stocked refrigerators. The only time they wake up is when they give birth, or someone pokes them with a stick. Do not poke them with a stick. They likely haven't eaten for a long time, and as I believe I mentioned, they are omnivores.

In January or February, black bear sows are woken from their sleep to give birth, a fact that reminds me I should never again complain about being woken from my sleep. The average litter consists of 2 – 3 cubs, each weighing ½ to 1 pound at birth. They are weaned at six months, then forced to eat grubs, garbage, and rotting fish until they learn to like it. Despite this, they stay with their mothers for a year and a half. Afterwards they leave in search of picnic baskets and refrigerators.

Black bears have a large brain to body size ratio, a good indicator of intelligence and feelings of superiority. Their memories are exceptional and standardized bear tests do not often fool them. Their nasal mucosa areas are about ten times larger than in humans and they know how to use them. They have a keener sense of smell than nearly every other animal and can track a refrigerator for miles. Their vision and hearing are also excellent. Their communication skills, however, leave room for improvement, consisting mostly of woofs, grunts, snorts, moans, and tongue clicks. They do not roar or growl, except when they are trying to make a name for themselves in a Hollywood movie. Despite these vocal shortcomings, they still scare people who got the message that they are omnivores.

In Our Community-

Saturday, January 1, 2022

Pomfret Proprietor's Food Drive to benefit the TEEG Food Pantry at Pomfret from 9 – 11 AM at Pomfret Senior Center, 207 Mashamoquet Rd, Pomfret Center. Nonperishable Items, canned or boxed and dessert mixes are much appreciated. Representatives from Berkshire Hathaway will be there to collect donations.

Saturday, January 8, 2022

Visit the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp Open HHouse from 1 – 3 PM at 326 Taft Pond Road, Pomfret, CT. Meet the director & other camp staff, take a camp tour, registration materials available, masks required indoors. Take advantage of early bird discounts – details available at the open house or on the website.

Nix The ‘Behavior Gap’ Now for A Happier, Financially Healthier 2022

By James Zahansky, AWMA®
Principal/Managing Partner
& Chief Goal Strategist



Personal or widespread events that cause anxiety or panic often lead people to make poor financial decisions. The volatility of the last two years is no exception. As we head into 2022, much uncertainty remains. But the good news is, you can control the way you respond in order to set yourself up for better financial health in the year ahead.

At Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors, we share a belief expressed by the notable financial planner Carl Richards, author of *The Behavior Gap*. In his book Richards writes, “It turns out my job was not to find great investments, but to help create great investors.”

There’s actually a framework that Richards has outlined in his book to explain how people’s emotions interact with their actions when it comes to financial decisions. Understanding this process can help you to take control of it, and you’ll be a better investor as a result.

Understanding the Behavior Gap

From increasing our budget mindfulness to taking a steadier approach to investing, Richards has drawn attention to the way our unexamined behaviors and emotions can be our detriment when it comes to living a happy and financially sound life. He’s labelled this phenomenon “the behavior gap.”

The behavior gap refers to the difference between a smart financial decision versus what we actually decide to do. Many people miss out on higher returns because of emotionally driven decisions, creating a gap between their lower returns and what they could have earned.

4 Common Emotions that Can Create a Behavior Gap

#1: Excitement When Stocks Are High

Whether in a bull market or witnessing the hype from a product release, many investors may feel tempted to increase their risks or attempt to gain from emerging investments when stocks are high. This can lead to constant readjustment of portfolios as the market itself experiences upswings. An investor who follows such patterns is likely to do the same with declines and may end up always trying (and often failing) to time the market.

#2: Fear When Stocks Are Low

As a response to the coronavirus, the market has seen losses as many investors feel the need to choose more secure investments and avoid uncertain or seemingly unsafe investments. When stocks are low, a common response may be to sell and effectively miss out on potential long-term gains.

#3: Engagement in the Search for Alpha

People yearn to make money and take action to do so. Throughout our lives, this emotional desire is likely a constant one. As such, many seek the help of a financial advisor to procure above-average returns, otherwise known as “alpha.”¹ However, in this search for “alpha,” our humanness - our emotions and our behaviors - may lead us astray.

Ironically, studies done by DALBAR (the nation’s leading financial services market research firm) have calculated the average investment return as compared to investor returns and have shown that investor returns are lower.¹ This is because investor behaviors often dilute

the possible return on any given investment by switching investments too frequently in search of the next alpha. The underlying emotional desire and pursuit of money is exactly the recipe for unwise behaviors in response to emotions - but only if left unchecked.

#4: Short-Term Anxiety and Focus

As humans, viewing aspects of our lives through the lenses of current circumstances is normal. One emotional response to any event, however, is letting the moment consume us, especially if faced with grave consequences - from our personal health being compromised to the loss of loved ones. Many may find it difficult in these times to both think long-term and to remember logic. However, making a rash decision can inhibit the long-term benefit that comes from maintaining a balanced perspective without reactionary behavior.

How to Lessen the Behavior Gap for Your Financial Health

At any given point, the market can go up, down or it can remain the same. While market forces are out of our control, one thing we can control is how we handle our financial strategy.

Take the effects of the pandemic, for example. In the past, the market has recovered in response to epidemics with an average of 17.17 percent over time.³ While no two situations are alike, remembering the likelihood of recovery over time - and the market’s nearly inevitable up-and-down movement - can provide a more logical angle to calm the nerves.

If you’re experiencing financial anxiety in response to the pandemic, current events, or other forces, take a breath and also remember the potential for long-term gains. Don’t be a victim of the behavior gap in 2022. Instead, start the year off with a strong strategy and hold steady with that strategy in the weeks, months and years ahead. Doing so could make 2022 the most financially impactful year for you yet.

We can help you to build a strategy that will allow you to Plan Well, Invest. Well and Live Well in 2022 and beyond. Learn more at our website, www.whzwealth.com, and contact us at (860) 928-2341 or info@whzwealth.com to get started.

Presented by Principal/Managing Partner James Zahansky, AWMA®. Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. These materials are general in nature and do not address your specific situation. For your specific investment needs, please discuss your individual circumstances with your representative. Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice, and nothing in the accompanying pages should be construed as specific tax or legal advice. 697 Pomfret Street, Pomfret Center, CT 06259, 860-928-2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com>.

1 <https://behaviorgap.com/outperform-99-of-your-neighbors/>

2 <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/2020/10/staff-analytical-note-2020-22/>

3 <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/heres-how-the-stock-market-has-performed-during-past-viral-outbreaks-as-chinas-coronavirus-spreads-2020-01-22>

HOSMER MOUNTAIN BOTTLING CO.
Since 1912
217 Mountain Street, Willimantic, CT 06226
(860) 423-1555 • Fax (860) 423-2207
email: mail@hosmersoda.com • www.hosmersoda.com

860-450-7227 (phone)
860-450-7231 (fax)

A member of
Women's Health Connecticut

Find us on Facebook
www.mansfieldobgyn.com

Roa Alammari, MD, FACOG
Robert Gildersleeve, MD, FACOG
Lesley Gumbs, MD, FACOG
Veronica Helgans, MD, FACOG
Yvette Martas, MD, FACOG
Devon Root, CNM, WHNP-BC
Stephanie Welsh, CNM, DNP

Lifelong Women’s Healthcare
Adolescence • Pregnancy • Menopause

LAWRENCE REAL ESTATE
“We Care”
860-429-7240
email gary@lawrenceells.com

Confidential Counseling Services Offered

- Buying a New Home
- Selling a Home
- Buying or Selling Land
- New Home Construction
- Land Development
- Market Values
- Financial Counseling
- Mortgage Payments Behind?
- Need help in deciding? What?
- Plan for Future! Move forward!

glawrenceells.com
126 Storrs Road, Mansfield Center, CT 06250

Susan Gerr
Birch Mountain Pottery

Studio • Gallery • Classroom
www.birchmountainpottery.com
Rt. 195, 223 Merrow Rd,
Tolland Shopping Plaza, Tolland
(860) 875-0149
Tues. 10-5, Wed/Thurs. 12-5, Fri./Sat. 10-5,
closed Sunday/Monday

Your Local Potter since 1985

SENIOR HOUSING

NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS
Elisha Brook
56 New Park Ave, North Franklin CT, 06254

Applicants must be 62 or older and not to have income greater than income limits annually established by HUD
**CURRENT INCOME LIMITS: One Person: \$35,350
Two Person: \$40,400**

For more information call 860-886-0367
and for more information and application process visit us at
www.elishabrook.org

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

the neighbors paper
a little paper big on community

To all our contributors-
Thank You!

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

Second Saturday Community Breakfast

Columbia Congregational Church
8AM – 11AM Route 87 in the Parish Hall

Gather with us Saturday January 8th for an ALL YOU CAN EAT Breakfast buffet: Omelets (design your own), scrambled eggs, belgian waffles, home baked pastries, etc.
\$12 per person
Family of (4) 2 Adults & 2 child. (under 12) \$30
For information contact Michele at the Church Office: 860-228-9306.

Quiet Corner Contra Dance

First Friday of every month through June
Introductory session at 7:45

Patriots Park Lodge
172 Lake Street, Coventry, CT,
Adults \$12, Students \$6
Partner not required - all dances taught
Covid restrictions apply-mask & proof of vac.

See: HCDance.org
Questions: Dennis at knowdj@charter.net.

Wabbaquassett: The Mashamoquet Uplands in the Time Before

By Donna Dufresne

This is an excerpt from chapter 2 in the book I am writing, titled *A Good Piece of Land: A Thousand-Acre Journey Through Time*.



The understory is a lush thicket along Mashamoquet Brook as it cascades out of a large beaver swamp into a ravine. The steep hillsides are lined with ancient hemlocks and white pines, their feet ruffled with mountain laurel. It is a refuge for deer and other animals seeking food and shelter. The tumble of rocks on the slope provides temporary dens for wolves, porcupine, and bobcat. The wetlands and vernal pools teem with life, an uninterrupted fecundity in the delicate web about to be broken, one strand at a time.

The nimble-footed Nipmuc Wabbaquassett have lived on and managed this region for thousands of years. Among the stony rubble left behind by the last glacier trickle spring-fed rivulets spilling toward Mashamoquet Brook, a torrent by comparison. Here one might find *ziboiskotam*, the Abenaki word for brook trout. The boggy edges are packed with *asakwam* (moss), including what we call sphagnum. The terrain is too rough for regular travel, with its thick underbrush, glacial till, and boggy patches. Yet it is a rich pharmacopeia, a source for nutritious roots and berries, *nebizon* (medicine), and fungi that need a dark, damp place to call their own. The women gather *dkinogniz* (Jack-in-the-pulpit), *odamogniz* (Indian pipe), *gogowibagw* (wintergreen), and *masozi* (fern), to name a few.

An *azeban* (raccoon) wanders to the muddy edge of the brook to fetch freshwater clams and mussels, while a *gogokhas* (owl) hunts from the soft boughs of pine and hemlock. A *wobikwsos* (mouse) scurries for shelter as a *bittolo* (puma) crouches for her lunge toward a tasty snack. Further upstream, where the *demakwa* (beaver) have built and sporadically maintained a substantial dam for millennia, a large pond has opened a space in the forest. Dead *mekwisagezo* (cedars) and *mskwebages* (red maples) stand guard along the edges while a large stand of *bakwaaskw* (cattails) spills away from the inlet. It is a rich source of food for animals and humans alike.

Downstream, the understory begins to change as the topography gives way to rolling hillsides and drier soil. The brook flattens into small plains interrupted by more subtle drops and cascades as it makes its way toward the Quinebaug River. Here the understory opens into hardwood forests with grassy fens and intermittent patches of wild blueberry. Huckleberries hover along the edges of ponds and wetlands, and blackberries thrive in the wasteland where a burn went out of control. The women will dry the berries and mash them into pemmican, a highly nutritious paste made of dried meat such as deer or moose, melted bear fat, and dried fruit. This survival food will provide calories for warmth in winter and can be easily carried in a pouch for long journeys.

The Wabbaquassett have practiced managed burns over vast areas of the landscape, as have their Abenaki

relations throughout the Northeast. The thick-skinned deciduous trees can withstand the heat of the intermittent fires, which rarely burn out of control because the fuel of shrubbery on the forest floor is burned off. By controlling the understory and the growth of the forest for thousands of years, the Wabbaquassett have created a permaculture rich in a variety of food sources. Chestnut, hickory, and oak provide protein-rich nuts. The maples provide sugar, as do a variety of indigenous berries. The forest floor is devoid of litter and carpeted in native grasses—a rich grazing ground for deer. Turkey scratch for acorns and the berry patches attract bear.

The managed habitat is designed to attract game and provide clear sites for hunting with bow and arrow. The Nipmuc are able to travel unencumbered by undergrowth and fallen limbs on soft-footed paths that interlock with trade routes throughout the Northeast and reach westward to the Great Lakes. The resulting permacul-



Photo by the author.

ture provides an abundant grocery and economy shared between multiple indigenous nations in the pre-contact Americas. It is a balanced ecosystem with scant agricultural practices that provides nutrients for the soil and minimal disturbance.

The environmental disasters perpetrated by clear-cutting forests and tilling thousands of acres—and the resulting erosion, siltation, and eutrophication of rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams—are somewhere in the future, along with the multiple dams and industries that will interrupt the running of salmon and shad. For now, these things are unknown in the peaceful breath before the European concept of time will change everything.

But five hundred miles away from the land of the Wabbaquassett Nipmuc, a dark shadow hovers on the horizon. Strangers with strange ways have imposed themselves upon the land and the Native people since 1603. They have renamed sacred places as Virginia, New Netherlands, New France. They have brought disease, disruption, and a clash of cultures which has wreaked havoc on the natural rhythms of the indigenous people throughout the East Coast of the Americas. Their ships have probed the most secret of inlets on every major river in search of a passage to China. Each vessel spills forth its cargo of pale-skinned men armed with swords and long guns, eyes frenzied with greed. They tread heavily upon the Earth, claiming it as their own. A shudder runs through the bones of the Earth, a foreshadow of paradise lost. The people who have lived and adapted to this land for millennia have suddenly lost their footing. And now, another disruption is about to converge. Chains rattle. The Earth sobs. Bloodlines merge.

Deer in the Neighborhood

The snow was deep and falling still
In the silent night
Outside the window all the world
Was darkly glowing white
And as we watched the falling snow
Some deer came into sight

No cars had passed for many hours
Because of how it snowed
And through the ever deepening snow
Outside our snug abode
More deer than we had ever seen
At once, came down the road

Like Mother Nature's gentle army
Five or six abreast
Thronging the deserted road
To find some food, their quest
They boldly searched the neighborhood
By hunger pangs hard pressed

We'd cut some branches recently
From pines along the street
The fragrant boughs still lay in heaps
Just what deer love to eat
They dug the branches from the snow
With their graceful feet

They found what they were searching for
Even as we gazed
'Til every tender branch was gone
The hungry creatures grazed
Just to see them in such numbers
Had us quite amazed.

Kathy O. LaVallee, North Windham

ACT Students Present Lovely: Dance Showcase

Submitted by Michael Hamad

(Willimantic, CT) – EASTCONN's Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT) magnet school will present **Lovely: Student Dance Showcase 2022** on Friday and Saturday, January 7 and 8, 2022, at 7 p.m. on the Capitol Theater's main stage, 896 Main Street, Willimantic. This family-friendly, annual dance performance is open to the public.

The evening will feature a variety of original solo, duet and group performances choreographed by student Dance pathway majors at ACT.

In preparing for **Lovely**, students were inspired by the concept of Universal Love. Through a range of dance genres — jazz, hip hop, ballet and contemporary — students will portray elements of attraction, insecurity, reluctance, fear, hope and even physical abuse, as they explore different stages of romantic relationships ranging from first love to divorce.

ACT students performing in **Lovely** include seniors Alanis Mendez (Windham), Aria Martin (Norwich), Ariana Sandi (Coventry), Bianca Pontes (Norwich), Tegan Praytor (Hampton, Student Dance Company director) and Emma Paterson (Manchester); juniors Alora Kerwin (Tolland), Madison Dufault (Sterling), Sam Mallory (Coventry) and Samantha Perry (Lebanon); and sophomores Alexis Butler (Baltic), Emma Kent (Ashford), Kaylie Nazarko (Norwich), Layla Edminton (Sterling) and Madison Raymond (Thompson).

Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and students, and \$5 for military and ACT students/alumni. To reserve tickets, call the Capitol Theater Box Office at 860-465-5636.

ACT is a public, performing arts magnet high school administered by EASTCONN. ACT is currently recruiting academically motivated students who will enter grades 9-12 in the 2022-2023 school year. To learn more about ACT or to download an application, visit www.eastconn.org/act or call 860-465-5636.

EASTCONN is a public, non-profit Regional Educational Service Center that has been serving the education needs of northeastern Connecticut schools and communities since 1980. Learn more at www.eastconn.org.

Advertise in
the Neighbors paper
Locally Written
Locally Wread

Read the Neighbors paper
on your desktop, laptop,
tablet or smartphone.
Go to neighborspaper.com for link
to current and past editions.
All in beautiful COLOR!

Winter Apparition

By Debra Gag

November was bleak. My mood was bleak. The color outside my window showed shades of grey and brown in the fading light. On this last day of November, no bird sings and the leaves are gone from every tree. A gust of wind rattles the deck door. My dog groans as she lay down. I sigh in refrain. Switching on a light I look around me. Cobwebs in the corners, the floors need sweeping and I don't care. I hear a drop of water, a slow leak, and now another drip in the kitchen sink. There are dishes stacked haphazardly from breakfast and lunch.

I eat a piece of bread standing by the counter, and then another. I don't feel like cooking; open the refrigerator, something stinks. I drink milk from the bottle. The phone rings. Oh, hi Larry. How's your mom? It's nice you're there to help her out. What's that you say? Snowstorm Coming? Okay I'll light a fire in the fireplace and get out the candles just in case. Thanks for telling me. See you tomorrow night. Give your mom my love. Bye Bye.

The house suddenly shudders as a gust of wind comes out of the North. The shed door slams. Must have left it open open. Okay dog let's go out. Winter coat and gloves. As I step outside the wind lays my hair across my face then suddenly sends it up and back. I see clouds rushing across the dark sky, gathering, broiling. The shed door slams again. The dog looks worried as she gazes up at me. Heading to the back property to close it, I gaze upwards and, in its glory, like a rock star, like a diva when the curtains open, the moon emerges from a hole in the clouds dazzling, a circular rainbow framing it. The hole closes and I remember my mission. I bolt the shed door and rush back to the house. The wind blows a chair across the back deck, and the moon reappears. How very beautiful.

Lighting a fire, I moved the rocking chair close and grasping my warm soothing cup of Chamomile tea began to gently rock, watching the flames lick and dance. So mesmerizing; so peaceful. I can see the moon through the window now there, now gone. My eyes are getting sleepy. It's time for bed.

Under the fluffy down quilt, I adjust my pillow and feel the letting go, and as my eyes blink near sleep, the snow starts to fall. I revel in the magic of that silent descent, the flakes so large, so light, slowly, slowly, beautifully indescribable. I close my eyes; feel myself smiling as I drift off to dreamland.

And then its morning. My bedroom window has splats of snow on it and intricate patterns of frost. "Wow!" I say to no one in the room. I put on my long underwear, wool pants and a sweater. The dog wags her tail. I strap on my snowshoes and head for the forest bordering our property. Two feet of the blinding pure white virgin snow make it hard for me to break a trail, but I'm mesmerized by brilliant blue skies and the snow like heavy frosting weighing down the pine boughs.

Everything sparkles as I smile on the inside, my breath coming out in cloud puffs. The dog bounds up and down scooping up snow in her open mouth, eating it, the first snow. Trudging by the ancient foundation of settlers past, I pause and try to imagine them as I always do, and the Indians before them. I close my eyes and feel my heart and soul and send out a greeting to those who had been here before me.

Taking a cleansing breath, I stomp down the hill to the stream, cross it in three giant steps, and struggle up the next hill. The dog runs ahead as I stop to catch my breath. I stand alone there leaning on my walking poles and begin to look around me at 360 degrees of magnificence; the deep heavenly blue sky, the silent white blanket with smooth mounds covering every fern and bush in the understory, the violet shadows, the sparkles, the majestic trees.

The scene envelopes me yet also fills me with a reverence that feels like something holy. I feel the spirit of the forest and there to my amazement and silently from the east come two large wolves. They are running together, coming closer now, and then they pass me not 4 feet away, and we make eye contact! Their eyes are golden and deep and wise, their fur so thick and glossy, and their gait so sure as they then head west and over the next rise. I let out my breath in a whoosh. I had forgotten to breathe. What did I just witness? Who would believe me? And now here my own dog comes back. She who I always thought was white now looks yellow against the snow there on the hilltop. Let's go home dog. I've just witnessed a miracle, and no one could ever convince me otherwise. Does the forest hold the spirit of all time and all who have passed here? I move slowly replaying in my mind's eye what I'd seen. Could they have been German Shepherds? Somebody's dogs? But they had no collars, no tags and why would they come so close and make eye contact and why were they here deep in the forest?

I would treasure this moment forever. The spirit of the forest has visited me, and my heart is open, yesterday's malaise erased.

Fiber Artist Joan Blade Johnson at Ashford Arts

Submitted by Debra Gag

The public is welcome to attend the Ashford Arts Council's monthly meetings to enjoy the presenters that kick off each meeting.

Our next meeting will be on January 12th at our usual location, Knowlton Memorial Hall/Babcock Library.

The fantastic Fiber Artist Joan Blade Johnson of JBJ Fiber will be our presenter that evening from 7:00-7:30pm. Feel free to leave before the business meeting.

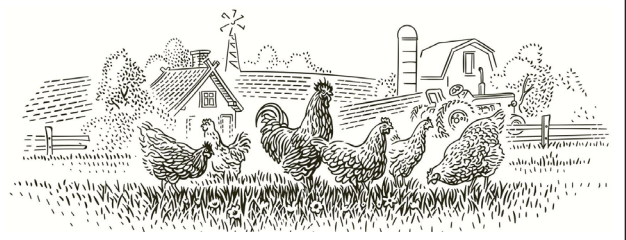
Joan Blade Johnson is a Hampton, Connecticut-based fiber



artist who exhibits nationally and internationally. Joan will talk about her journey from a traditional quilter to a

contemporary fiber artist who employs a number of surface designs in her art quilting. She enjoys the creative process involved in composing fiber art pieces using non-traditional methods and materials to achieve her artistic vision, most often inspired by nature and her original nature photography. The surface design materials that she regularly works with on fabric include paint, foraged natural plant dye, rust, fiber reactive dye, and photos printed onto fabric. She'll share samples of her work to show her personal evolution in fiber art.

Pasture raised, non-GMO chemical-free eggs



Organic Roots Farm at Popover Hill

147 E. Old Route 6, Hampton
Call or text: (860) 336-8823

Farm Store Now Open Year 'Round
Fresh homemade bread and
cinnamon rolls every Saturday!
New fragrances in our popular
Farm Suds Handmade Soap

Monday-Friday 11-5 Saturday 10-5
Closed Sunday

WESTFORD HILL DISTILLERS

Tours & Tastings

Friday to Sunday ~ 12 noon to 5 pm
Gifts & Bottles to Take Home

196 Chatey Road
Ashford, CT
860-429-0464



INFO@WESTFORDHILL.COM

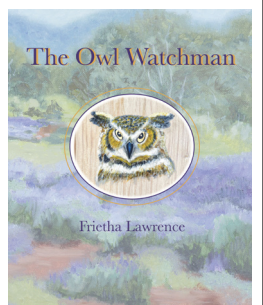


Ashford Author Has Upcoming Book Release

'The Owl Watchman' by Frietha Lawrence
January 8, 2022; 1-3pm

Hanks Restaurant,
416 Providence Rd. (Route 6),
Brooklyn, CT

Come Meet the Artist and Author
Book Signing - Books Available
Have a chance to win the door
prize!



From the author-

Behind every picture there is a story to tell. In my book "The Owl Watchman" I share delightful insights that helped frame their creation. I have been drawing and painting since childhood. After retiring from forty plus years as a nurse, I wanted to seriously pursue art. At Eastern Connecticut State University I earned a degree in studio art. Shortly after graduation Count It All Joy Studio was opened on our Ashford farm. Classes in Zentangle pen and ink drawing, which I am certified to teach, are often held in the studio.

There were many animals and interesting events on the farm to record and paint. Travels to England, Scotland and Ireland also offered many scenes to capture in pen, ink and paint. I thought of someday writing a book about the pictures and the tales behind them. I am presently enrolled in the 'Thriving Christian Artist' online art course. There is encouragement in the course to create story boards about seeing yourself in the future. One thing that is often on the story boards is about writing a book. I asked myself "Why am I waiting to write it?" That is how the book "The Owl Watchman" came about!

Pompey Hollow Senior Housing Waitlist Open

49 Tremko Lane, Ashford, CT

Application Deadline January 28, 2022

Office Hours T, Th, F 9-12

Phone: (860) 429-8556

Fax: (860) 487-4500



Your New Home Awaits

Spacious one bedroom apartments in an idyllic rural setting, with shopping and services nearby.

To qualify you must be 62 years old or disabled and meet required income limits. **Applications can be found on our website or mailed by request.**

Amenities Include: Heat/Hot Water, Discounted Cable TV, On-Site Laundry, Free Wi-Fi available, Pets Allowed.

www.ashfordhousingauthority.org

What Is Horticulturally Most Important First?

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

FIRST in my humble opinion, is loving plants. Graced by my mother Ingrid's spiritual respect for all living things, our interconnected web of life, and by neighbors with indoor **African Violets** (*Saintpaulia*) blooming all winter, perhaps I was born to be a gardener. Gardening is a humble hope, a belief in the future, that grows flourishing plants in a window, that embraces the land to create gardens. That finds something at a nursery and the Right Place for it. Good to know where it grows well.

Better to know your land and what grows well there. Not only the native plants; exotics such as **Burning Bush / Winged Euonymus** (*E. alatus*) are naturalized, here to stay. Learning by trial and error, from nature and others' mistakes, I've decided that coexistence is easier (and more ethical) than controlling the land.

Best is the next level, Master Gardening.

MASTER GARDENING Programs are found throughout New England. The University of Rhode Island created a manual of horticultural instruction used in my Massachusetts Horticultural Society (MassHort) course a decade ago. Eastern Connecticut is served by UCONN in Storrs (Mansfield): Certified Master Gardeners complete a 16-week course in Botany, herbaceous and woody ornamentals; Orchards, small fruits and vegetables; Soils, water quality and other ecological factors affecting plant growth; Turf grass, weeds and invasive plants; Pesticides and integrated pest management (IPM); Plant pathology and entomology (diseases & bugs) and diagnostic techniques. Plus a 60-hour internship.

MOST IMPORTANT FIRST As Beth Chatto famously observed, **Right Plant, Right Place** is the essence of gardening. My architectural studies (Univ. of Minn.), landscape design-build work (as Weston Nurseries, Hopkinton, Mass.) and MassHort training, all produced a level I call master garden design. My humble advice:

Suit the site,

Fit the space,

Then seek Beauty.

1st SUIT THE SITE

Cold is the most limiting factor. Plants are rated for USDA Cold-hardiness in low temperature zones of a regional Macroclimate. Eastern Connecticut is mapped mostly **Zone 6a** (average low of minus 10 degrees F. to minus 5 degrees F.). The coast is a warmer **Zone 6b** (minus 5 degrees F. to Zero). We're at least a half-zone warmer in the last quarter-century due to climate change.

At a smaller scale, garden sites have many *Micro*-climates with varying cold and moisture conditions, and sun exposures. Many variables. One side of a building, wall or fence is quite different from the other.

Solar Exposure is vital, but the sun can be kind in the morning and harsh in the afternoon, depends on the plant. Observe the sun at 9:00am, noon and 3:00pm. Full-sun is 6 to 8 hours exposure. Grass grows and roses bloom in 5 hours. Trickier is the bright-to-full-shade that is less than 5 hours.

Soil Fertility, Moisture and pH are critical, but can be amended, fertilized, mulched and irrigated. Only pH is hard to change. Most garden plants do well in the slightly acidic (6.0 to neutral 7.0) soils of New England. Lawns need lime every few years. A soil test reveals pH and existing nutrients.

Native plants are suited to local conditions and wildlife. Exotic (non-native) plants perform well if originally from the same conditions, but might not suit local bees.

2 FIT THE SPACE

Use a plant's mature size to avoid foundations, walkways, windows and other plants, and to allow passage or view without continual pruning. A tree or shrub expresses its natural form with selective pruning of crossing branches. Shearing promotes new growth, thus more work. A well-pruned shrub or tree with naturalistic branching, no leaves nor noticeable cuts, is a joy in winter. OR some like a manicured style. It's a subjective question of style, order and control, not right or wrong.

Some plant a "living tapestry" growing densely with continual horticultural interest. Humidity is a threat to dense branching in a warming climate, however; pests and disease attack such as evergreen *Ilex* hollies. Prune to allow air circulation.

A layered approach puts taller plants in back. Except a focal plant set forward, as an exotic tree:

Japanese Stewartia (*S. pseudocamellia*) has camellia-like white and yellow flowers in summer (but no fragrance), purple fall color and showy tri-color tan, gray and orange bark.

Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) has no flower but red leaves all summer, more intense in autumn, and attractive ascending branching (but twiggy, needs more pruning).

Native trees are faster growing, especially good at a wild edge:

Redbud (*Cercis*) has a similar ascending form but less density, branches lined with tiny red-dish-purple buds opening rosy pink in very early spring before the leaves. Yellow fall color.

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier*) is larger, often multi-stem, with white flowers tasty berries and orange-to-red fall color. The fruit is sweet like blueberry, but birds beat you to 'em.

Some design for early plant replacement and use the 10 to 15 year size listed in catalogs, not mature size. Herbaceous perennials mature in 3 to 5 years, shrubs in 5 to 7 years, and trees in decades.

"Form follows function" is not only architectural dictum, but also what happens while time passes. Life happens while we make plans. A woodpile ends up here, a thicket there, or a car. Whenever you act, use your criteria of site, size and desired bloom to use the right plants for you.

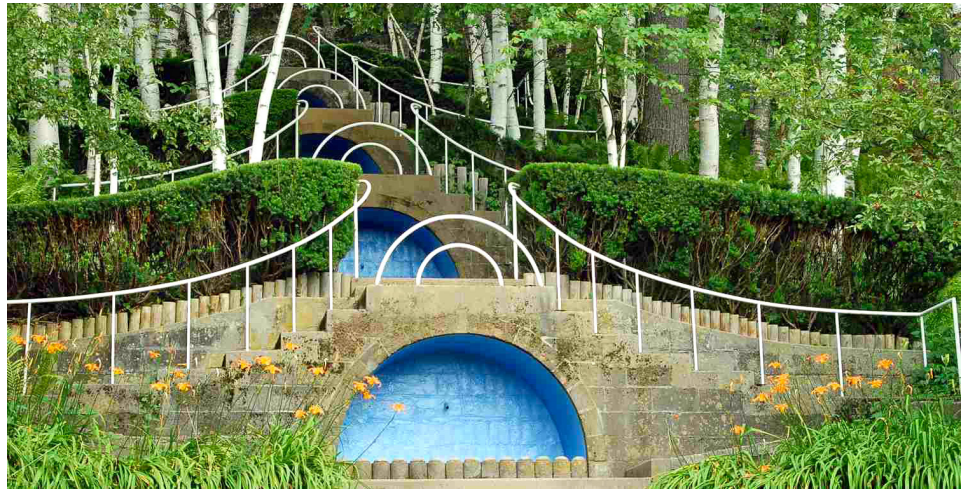
3 DESIGN

I seek functional beauty after the constraints of site and space are known. How is the land used? You can measure, draw a base map with vegetation, and plan all winter.

OR simply proceed *ad hoc* in spring, a few shrubs here, a large tree there, and continue planting throughout the growing season into fall. Spread garden hoses as flowing bed lines, easy to mow. Reverse curves add drama. Reduce lawn to where it is most usable and plant the rest. Add 2 inches of compost to the rest.

Aesthetics are subjective -- not right or wrong. I like a dense naturalistic asymmetry, but it's not better than formal symmetry. I seek all-season interest with color and texture in each season, displayed in a layered pattern, lower plants in front.

Other elements of style are form and scale...



Blue Steps at Naumkeag in Massachusetts' Berkshires.

Contributed photo.

rhythm and flow... (mystery) and surprise! Observe arboreta, botanical gardens and leafy neighborhoods. Consider intellectual styles such as Fletcher Steele's birch-lined steps at Naumkeag in the Berkshires. History is often copied. Symmetry reflects the formal facades of many historic New England homes. Naturalism relates to nearby thickets and woods. I juxtapose formal and informal style for contrast and transition to the wild beyond. Whatever the aesthetic, layered seasonal interest that suits the site and fits the space is good garden design.

Function trumps style if growing flowers for cutting, or harvests for eating. Roger Swain (PBS Victory Garden) advised MassHort students that edible gardening was a civic responsibility to grow real food... and an ornamental opportunity. **Blueberry** (*Vaccinium*) has tasty fruit and gorgeous red fall color, excellent with **Redbud** and **Serviceberry** for the wild edge.

4 EVOLVE

Living in Connecticut three seasons now, I've observed the Good and the Bad of my few acres... the glory of the woods behind, and the wicked wind around

a corner that my patio garden endures, the Ugly. Two small-sized but fast-growing evergreens, native **White Pine** (*Pinus*) and **Pacific Redcedar** (*Thuja*), might block the wind in a decade with a **Japanese Umbrella Pine** (*Sciadopitys*) that languished in a client's shady yard and was transplanted to that corner.

Larger shrubs and trees, the structural "bones", were planted in 2018. Five species of **Birch** (*Betula*) were introduced. White-barked Birch is a favorite. 'Whitespire', a cultivar of native **Gray Birch** (*B. populifolia*), seems best in rural Connecticut. But no flower.

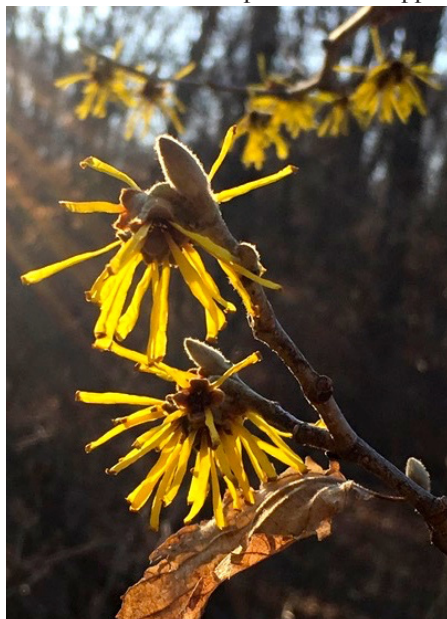
Next woody plantings were for colorful flower and leaf. "**Arnold Promise**" **Witchhazel** (*Hamamelis*) blooms in February (!) with

long yellow petals that uncurl like party blowers on warm days, curl up cold nights. (Add some herbaceous perennials for April, as **Creeping Phlox**.) Then the spring bloom of **Forsythia**, **Redbud** and **Rhododendron/Azalea** with fragrant **Lilacs** (*Syringa*) and **Viburnum**. **Mountain Laurel** (*Kalmia*) in early summer. **Roses** (*Rosa*) all summer when herbaceous perennials offer even more flower into autumn. Fall color! The bright red leaves of **Blueberry**, **Burning Bush** and several **Maple** (**Japanese** and our native **Red**), join orange-red **Serviceberry**, **Sumac** (*Rhus*) and **Sugar Maple** into the woods beyond.

Maintenance is life or death in gardens. Observe all year. All plants need timely water to establish roots, and during drought. The first heat of summer is a stressor for spring plantings. I add 1 to 2 inches of compost to most gardens to stimulate roots, and mulch with 3 inches of shredded pine bark to conserve moisture and prevent soil heaving in winter's freeze-thaw cycles. Cover crowns of tender plants in winter, especially the newly planted. To thrive, not simply survive.

I'm evolving with my garden. "Weed" grasses volunteer in perfect clumps. I let grow. Otherwise, cut back, dig out, replace? Coexisting with the land is easier than controlling it. IMHO.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, master gardener / designer, Chaplin



Arnold Promise Witchhazel. Cont. photo



Herbaceous Phlox in April. Photo by author.

The Artist as Witness at ECSU Gallery

The Artist as Witness:

Elise Engler, Michael Caron, Ryan Carpenter, Nancy Chunn, Sue Coe, Lee Jupina Sr., Käthe Kollwitz, Michael Reddick, Rowan Renee.

Through February 1, 2022.

Submitted by Julia Wintner, ECSU Art Gallery

The Artist as Witness presents a group of artists whose work has a laser focus on conflict and suffering, commentaries on injustice, and provoking social change. It is a visual companion to our NEA Big Read grant for the graphic novel, *The Best We Could Do*, by Vietnamese American writer Thi Bui - itself a work of witnessing, par excellence. Bearing witness through everyday events, Bui traces her journey through Viet Nam, Malaysia, and the United States, melding together grief and hope, the personal and political, the familial and national. Our exhibition comprises works by academically trained artists; artists trained in the Community Partners in Action Prison Arts Program; and students of art, sociology and history from Eastern, Central, UConn and Manchester Community College. They all challenge us with their profound engagement, whether as direct participants, or sympathetic supporters and allies. Their witness is rendered in meticulous figuration, the emotions conveyed are raw: empathy, compassion, outrage.

Käthe Kollwitz's desire to "bear witness" and "express... the suffering of human beings," is mirrored by Sue Coe's intent to "help serve justice and highlight the oppression that is concealed." Elise Engler performs a daily ritual of witnessing of listening to, and illustrating, the daily radio news broadcast. In 1996, Nancy Chunn famously transformed the daily front page of *The New York Times* - with her comments, redactions, and drawings. Chunn channels our collective "talk backs" to the media into a visual record of her own stream of consciousness reflections on both the events transmitted and the world itself.

Revealing draftsmanship is common to these artists: its legibility is particularly suited to their evidentiary vocation. To look closely at a drawing is to trace the history of its making, and, in this sense, each drawing acts as its own witness. The artists follow assertion by Art Spiegelman that "history is far too important to leave solely to the historians." Instead, they materialize history through the work of hand on paper and canvas. They give history corporeality, a physical presence. They render solid proof of unjust events so that they become impossible to ignore. From the time of Goya's 1810's *The Disasters of War*, artists have chronicled orally transmitted stories and documentary evidence of the effects of war and incarceration.

The graphic record produced by these artists challenge traditional notions of chronology, linearity, and causality, as well as the idea that history can be a closed discourse, or even, simply, a progressive one. Their subjective commentary on injustice is an alternative to, and questions, the widely accepted veracity of photography.

The Artist as Witness brings together nine artists working from the 1930s to today, and features new, student work made for the exhibition. Each artist produces consciously political art in response to specific events, or circumstances; their work is characterized by figurative representations of people and actions. They return often to the same image or theme over and over again, to accumulate evidence and solidify their commentary. *The Artist as Witness* informs the ways we understand the ethical imperative to witness. It provides a bracing reminder of the danger inherent in being a politically committed artist who feels compelled to speak about what she sees.

The exhibition is nourished by its range of different circumstances and perspectives:

Nancy Chunn, Sue Coe, Kathie Kollwitz, Elise Engler, Rowan Renee claim their works as weapons in the fight for justice, records that bear witness to terrible circumstances, containers of memory, and portals to a better future.

Michael Caron, Ryan Carpenter, Lee Jupina Sr., Michael Reddick developed their own rigorous, evolving, artistic practice as part of a dynamic arts collective in the Prison Arts Program. They explore within the prison, and within themselves, of darkness, confusion, path-making, road-blocking, connection, separation, building, demolishing, remembering, forgetting, moving forward, and giving up.

Aniya @L, Hovie, K, Kinzie, Theresa, Yabluetiful are students of Prison Arts Collective (PAC) at California Institution for Women and also contributed work to the exhibition. Using a graphic novel, they were able to share stories, journeys, or memories during a class PAC facilitated in August, 2021. Excerpts from Thi Bui's illustrated memoir, *The Best We Could Do*, were referenced to give examples of artists that told descriptive stories by primarily using imagery and very little text.

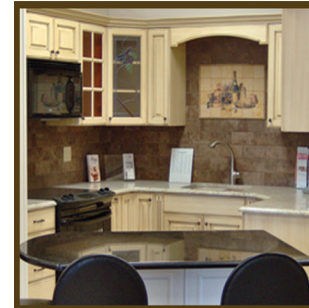
This teaching encouraged students to brainstorm a story, journey, or memory that they could turn into their own artwork. Basic watercolor techniques were demonstrated so the students could use the medium to add color, imagery, and detail to their work. Not only did the students use their imaginations, but they also chose different ways to use watercolor based on what was most accessible to express their stories uniquely. To conclude the class, the group shared the stories and meanings behind their art, and were incredibly brave and supportive of each other's reflection.

Student responses to the book, *The Best We Could Do*, will be filtered through their class discussions and personal reflections on the experience of witnessing. They will explore artmaking as a tool for understanding and processing the symbiotic relationship of intellectual and emotive learning.

The Artist as Witness brings us face to face with the political moment. It demonstrates the modest means, but immodest impact that has been the gift of fine draftsmanship for millennia. This exhibition is our modest contribution to the ubiquitous and necessary attention in today's art world, to social injustice. It is an integral part of Eastern's role as a public gallery serving the campus and neighboring communities.



Sue Coe, Strike, 1980. Mixed media on heavy white board. 27 x 20 Poster design for the Hospital and Health Care Workers Union. Image courtesy of the artist and the Gallery St. Etienne.



When The Time Is Right
renew,
redecorate,
rediscover
the excitement of living
in your home.

The right changes can make you fall in love with your home all over again. We have every element you need to create the home of your dreams, one affordable step at a time.

Cabinets - Counter Tops
Carpeting - Flooring
Come see our wool carpets

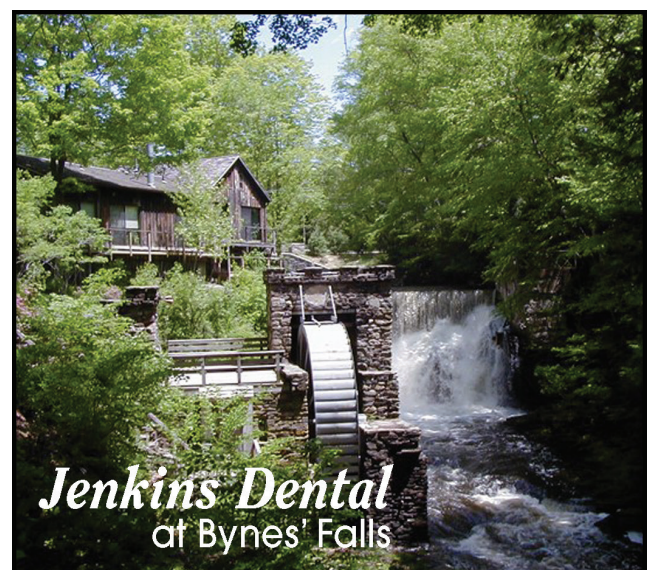
Stop by today for the best products, advice and inspiration to bring home a whole new look.

Design Center East LLC
Distinctive Cabinetry & Flooring
For Your Home or Office

27 MEADOW STREET, WILLIMANTIC • 860-450-8442

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 to 5; Sat. 9 to 2

Special Appointment Available Upon Request



Jenkins Dental
at Bynes' Falls

Cosmetic and Family Dentistry

Gentle and Effective Treatments

Open Evenings • Whitening
Relaxing Gas • Sedation Dentistry
E4D Technology/Crowns in One Day

860-742-6665

2991A South St., Coventry, CT 06238

www.bynesfallsdentistry.com

email: info@jenkinsdentalpros.com

TERRY'S TRANSMISSIONS



WE KEEP YOUR REAR IN GEAR

Ashford, CT

Phone (860) 429-6571 • Fax (860)429-0246

www.terrystransmissions.com • Email: terrys.trnsmsns@snet.net

Automatics / Standards / American / Foreign / Differentials / Transfer Cases

Try Our Famous 16" or Half 8" Grinders

Roast Beef
Capicola
Tuna
Ham
Turkey

Cold Cut
Italian
Genoa
Chicken Salad
Salami

Vegetarian
Pepperoni
Liverwurst

We Now Have Salads & Wraps

G.M. Thompson & Son's, Inc.

54 Middle Turnpike, Mansfield Depot

"Call Your Order In" 860-429-9378

Deli hours: M-F 9:30a-2:30p; Sat 10:30a-1:30p

Store hours: M-F 8:00a-5:30p, Sat 8:00a-3:00p, Closed Sunday



Dana P. Woods, MD

Windham Eye Group PC

Board Certified Ophthalmologists

Medical and Surgical Eye Care

Routine Eye Examinations * Premium Refractive Implants

Contact Lenses * Glasses * Designer Frames

(15% off Glasses with a Routine Eye Examination)

Optical Shop (860) 456-SPECS (7732)

NEW PATIENTS ALWAYS WELCOME

83 QUARRY STREET, WILLIMANTIC, CT 06226

(860) 423-1619



Tim Brangan, LO



William J. Kaufold, MD



Jennifer L. Capstick, OD

Collaborative Play: Building Big and Working Together

By Cate Solari

Collaborative Play: Building Big and Working Together is an interdisciplinary art curriculum designed to give eighth grade students confidence in innovation and fabrication, and develop collaboration and critical thinking skills. As the public education system prepares students for placement into the real world, it is important to understand that students, no matter what future careers they find themselves in, need the ability and skills to communicate effectively and work as a part of a team. The art classroom is the perfect opportunity to create a laboratory for student development that focuses on project based collaboration between the entire class, and gives agency to students as their own advocates of learning.

The future of the human race relies on innovation. Finding new ways of thinking, doing, and making, to ensure that climate change and pollution do not get the best of us. In order to prepare students to become innovative thinkers, schools must prepare students to think beyond themselves and beyond their limits as a single person. The intention of *Collaborative Play: Building Big and Working Together* is to teach students that they are stronger together, and with each other they can accomplish projects that extend beyond themselves, both physically and cognitively.

The conceptual framework for *Collaborative Play: Building Big and Working Together* stems from an understanding of the importance of team building and an interest in educational toys and the impact they can have on an eighth grade student. Students will be encouraged to think creatively and invent their own ideas, drawing from all disciplines and other classes they are taking. By providing students with the tools, skills, and guidance, a whole new level of creativity and confidence can be achieved.

In 2019, Netflix released season two of *Abstract: The Art of Design*. Episode three is titled *Design for Play*, and features artist and designer Cas Holman. Cas Holman is the founder of toy company, *Heroes Will Rise*, where



Children building with *Rigamajig*. Contributed photo.

she designs and “manufactures tools for the imagination” (Holman). The materials Holman designs are meant to be manipulable parts and pieces which inspire constructive play, imaginative forms, and cooperative interactions between people.

Holman’s most recent tool/toy (tool/toy is Holman’s term for the toys she manufactures, they are both tools for learning and construction as well as toys (Holman)) is called *Rigamajig*. *Rigamajig* is a large-scale building kit for hands-on free play and learning. The collection of wooden planks, wheels, pulleys, nuts, bolts and rope, allow children to follow their curiosity through play. Abstract in their identity, these tool/toys inspire children and adults to imagine the origin and story of the



toy as well as how to use it. “What is it?” and “What does it do?” are answered in intuitive details, play prompts, and semiotic clues, making the instructions implicit in the tool/toy.



Children engaged in *Anji Play*.

Collaborative Play: Building Big and Working Together is explicitly inspired by Holman’s philosophy of play and the intersecting early childhood curriculum *Anji Play* designed in China by Cheng Xueqin, Director, Office of Pre-Primary Education, Anji County Department of Education, Zhejiang Province (Xueqin). Holman discovered *Anji Play* after Xueqin reached out after seeing her work with *Rigamajig*. Holman began traveling to China to study the schools in which a complete curriculum of *Anji Play* was being taught. At this point, *Rigamajig*, is just a tool for educators, but how can the philosophies of play behind *Rigamajig*, be implemented across curricula like *Anji Play*.

Collaborative Play: Building Big and Working Together is an attempt to incorporate the curricula of *Anji Play* and the philosophies of Cas Holman and *Rigamajig* into mainstream public education. Histories of the impacts of play on childhood development and creative experience are expressed in Amy F. Ogata’s book, *Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America*, and book, *Makers, Crafters, Educators: Working for Cultural Change* edited by Elizabeth Garber, Lisa Hochtritt, and Manisha Sharma. These books provide a deep historical context of educational toys and how play has been shown to aid in childhood development.

Charles Baudelaire, one of the pedagogies discussed by Ogata states, “in their games children give evidence of their great capacity for the abstraction and high imaginative power” (Ogata 36). As well as Fredrick Froebel and Maria Montessori who believe that objects teach real skill and abstract values. Toys act as an entry point for students to access greater understanding of life values.

Specifically, this curriculum has been inspired by the pedagogy of Simon Nicholson’s loose parts play theory. Developed in 1970, Nicholson claimed that in a play, loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. They are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used alone or combined with other materials. Encouraging children to use resources as they choose can provide a wider range of opportunities than one that is purely adult led.

The format of the curricula is designed based on methods of team building. Team building is a collective term for various types of activities used to enhance social

relations and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks. Traditionally, team building occurs in four phases: framing device, planning time, execution of the task, and debriefing. *Collaborative Play: Building Big and Working Together* uses phases two and four, planning time and debriefing, as a framework for the class’s success. During planning time, students will gather collectively in a circle, making sure each student can see each other, and discuss a plan. The instructor need not offer questions or guidance during this time. Students may spend five minutes planning or an hour. It is important to let students know that they can come back to planning time. They may plan for five minutes, attempt the task, and fail, realizing that they need to plan out their task more. The teacher can play the role of a facilitator, where if everything is going wrong, offer more planning

time, or if all is going very wrong, offer a clue or hint to get the ball rolling again.

In team building after each task/activity a debrief occurs. The debrief occurs even if the task was not completed or if the task was failed. During debrief the teacher can act once again as a facilitator. Offering questions that help the students understand their role, and their fellow classmates’ roles during the activity and what things went well and what things need to be changed for next time. In the art classroom, debriefing can also be used to evaluate the success of an artwork and what and how the



Children at play ‘Team Building.’

Contributed photo.

work is referencing within the art world.

Collaborative Play: Building Big and Working Together will help students understand one another, and that working together and supporting each other is far more effective than trying to tear each other apart. Cognitively students at this age are developing problem solving and thinking skills, question things beyond face value, aware of how current actions can affect the future (Morin). Using the art classroom as a means to engage students socially with good intentions can be beneficial not only for the completion of a successful art project, but also throughout their careers as students in the district.

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

To all our contributors-
Thank You!

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

Advertise
the Neighbors paper
Locally Written
Locally Wread

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

Community Media and Regional Arts

By John Murphy

Welcome to 2022, we made it!



I want to begin with a few words about the mess we are in and how our media can change from being part of the problem to being part of the solution.

This year must be better than last year but that will happen only if we become smarter than Covid-19. The virus is beating us while we wail and argue with each other! The endless roller coaster of illness and death is powered by people who live in mental silos or want to gain personally from our global crisis. The media we love to hate lies at the heart of the problem and the center of the cyclone.

Our precious media tools have been weaponized for the darkest reasons. The various industries are struggling to separate illusion from fact, hype from hope, and propaganda from what used to be called the news. Real news (information separate from opinion) is becoming an endangered species. Individual liberty means nothing unless it exists in a shared and safe space for meaningful communication and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. If it is going to be *the ballot or the bullet*, as Malcolm X wisely warned 56 years ago, then the answer may be revealed sooner than we want. I remain positive but the path forward in unity remains elusive.

The media we love to hate exists at the heart of the problem and the center of the cyclone. With the collapse of local journalism across the country in recent years, the quantity and quality of local journalism has been damaged in tangible ways, and that is negatively impacting our democracy and our ability to communicate and govern ourselves. The continuing dysfunction of our highly inbred national leadership across all lines of party and difference is, for me, the primary reason for the worst aspects of our crisis. Our leaders are out to lunch.

With this context in mind, I am pleased to share good news about a new local media collaboration intended to help everyone in our region communicate more effectively to improve the quality of the everyday life we share.

COMING IN 2022

A NEW LOCAL MEDIA COLLABORATION FOR EASTERN CONNECTICUT



PROJECT HEADQUARTERS:

All content will be produced live at the WILI Radio studios in Willimantic, Connecticut. Programs will be audio and video recorded for posting and sharing with our project partners, to provide the maximum scale of coverage and promotion for our guests and the organizations they work with. We will start with 30-minute weekly programs and expand to one hour as more people get involved.

Currently, my weekly program on WILI, *Eastern Connecticut Arts Review*, airs at 5:35 every Wednesday. It has focused exclusively on the arts up to now, and the arts coverage will continue, but there will be a new program name to reflect additional reporting on the growth of our local economy, as well as local news and stories about the people in our region who are making a difference.

Sharing resources and cross-promoting programs across all channels can leverage the existing work and investments to build a larger media structure for the public to connect to our regional community in new and more sustainable ways. The goal, of course, is for a rising tide to raise all the boats.

LOCAL PARTNERS INCLUDE:



Neighbors

Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut
A little paper big on community

Neighbors Newspaper (www.neighborspaper.com)
Spectrum Public Access TV Channel 192 (<http://www.ctv192.org/>)
WECS Radio 90.1 FM and www.wecsfm.com
You Tube Dedicated Program Channel (title pending)
Social Media/Facebook Page (title pending)
Project Website: www.humanartsmedia.com

This project is a true group effort and I want you to know about all the production partners:

Colin Rice at *WILI Radio*—his radio family has served our community since 1957 and it's an honor to base this project in their studios!

Tom King—Publisher of *Neighbors*, a vital resource for our region in all aspect of community living, the writers can provide valuable information, insights, and program guests

Michael Sweet—Studio Manager at Spectrum Cable Public Access TV, his channel is surviving the pandemic at a reduced scale (congratulations!), but local content is still being produced for Channel 192

Additional program distribution will be provided by *WECS Radio* at Eastern Connecticut State University. After the startup period I hope to include *WINY Radio* in Putnam and a radio station in Norwich (tba) complete the media matrix across Windham, Tolland, and New London Counties. About 1/2 million people live there!

There is one missing piece that would complete this media model in the best possible form—*The Willimantic Chronicle*, our local daily newspaper for well over 100 years. My hope is for Chronicle reporters to join us in the radio studio sometimes, to share their local stories and participate in the discussions. I am trying to reach the current Publisher, Michael Schroeder, to join our team—I hope he agrees that this project is worthy of his support for the proof-of-concept test run we will begin early this year.

for your comments and suggestions from past columns. I appreciate your interest and support for local media and hope you will stay connected with this project in the coming year. And if you would like to be a guest to share information and inspiration then jump aboard!

Always keep the faith, see you next month!

John Murphy
john@humanartsmedia.com
WILI Arts Radio Wednesdays 5:35 pm
WECS Radio Wednesdays 12—3 pm

Mansfield Library 'Donation Day'

The Mansfield Friends of the Library will be hosting it's next book, "Donation Day", on Saturday, January 15th at the Mansfield Public Library's Buchanan Center, 54 Warrenville Road, in Mansfield Center.

Donations will be accepted from 9:00am to 12:00pm. There are no limits to the number of books that you may donate. All donations go towards the Friend's Book Sale. Proceeds from the sale go towards the library's programs, books and other services.



Made in Willimantic



Clothworks

Clothes, Hats & Bags

www.SarahWinterClothworks.com

available at: Swiftwaters Artisans' Co-op
866 Main St. Willimantic

NOW THAT'S LOCAL!

Swift Waters Artisans' Co-op

Whether you are looking for art, household goods, pottery, cards, jewelry, clothes or handwovens
It's all *Handmade* in Connecticut

THURS 12-5
FRI 12-5
SAT 10-5
SUN 12-4



WWW.SWIFTWATERS.ORG 860-456-8548



Buddha's Bees Apiary

Wildflower Honey

www.buddhasbeeshoney.com
860-786-8670

click

commercially licensed co-operative kitchen, inc.

Growing to serve our Community

Helping Small Businesses, Culinary Entrepreneurs, Local Farms & Community Unite in the Cooperative Collaboration

- Commercial & Teaching Space Available
- ServSafe Classes for Certification
- Rental opportunities for events



41 Club Road, Windham
860.786.7907
clickwillimantic@gmail.com
clickwillimantic.com

Be Light as a Feather

Loretta Wrobel • Feminist Therapy

860-429-2629

297 Pumpkin Hill Road, Ashford, CT 06278

860-233-6076 (Office) Sliding Scale

Artisans at Middle River Gallery and Gifts

Two Dozen Artists - with Something for Everyone!

60 Main Street, Stafford Springs, CT 06076

860-933-3653 artatmiddleriver@gmail.com

Support our local farmers.

You and your family will eat better.
The entire community will be healthier.

Shop at the Willimantic Food Co-op and frequent our farmers markets.

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



Performing Arts



The Packing House – A Safe Intimate Listening Room!

By EC-CHAP

January

*“The new year stands before us,
like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written.”*
- Melody Beattie

Welcome to 2022 and new beginnings!

EC-CHAP reopened The Packing House in September, just four months ago – maintaining a 50% capacity, mask requirement, social distanced tables, and mandatory sign-in. As we listen to the news we see the Omicron variant placing new threats to public safety, and positive COVID cases are rising daily.

The EC-CHAP Board of Directors continues to place a priority on implementing COVID procedures to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. In evaluating the current climate, a decision has been made to revise our COVID practices and require a proof of full vaccination for all patrons, performers, and visitors to EC-CHAP facilities.

Effective January 1, 2022, COVID Safety Practices for The Packing House include the following:

Proof of Full Vaccination and Masks required; 50% Capacity; Socially Distanced Tables; and Mandatory Sign-In (should Contact Tracing be required).

Similar practices will be implemented for the Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum and the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery. All EC-CHAP Volunteers are fully vaccinated.

We begin 2022 with the following performances and events:

Saturday, January 8th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Acoustic Duo, Foolish Wisely (Folk/Americana). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

Wednesday, January 12th: EC-CHAP Talent Showcase (2nd Wednesday of the month). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474. Doors 6:30pm / Performance 7:00pm

Thursday, January 13th: EC-CHAP Information Exchange Meeting. The Packing House. 5:00pm

Thursday, January 20th: EC-CHAP Film Screening – “The Sapphires” (R) 2012. Doors 6:30pm / Screening 7:00pm

Saturday, January 29th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Poor Monroe (Bluegrass). 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. Advance tickets purchased for any performance or event that is cancelled will be promptly refunded.

Please consider participating in our monthly Talent 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, and social media experience; as well as those that would just like to lend a helping hand. If you are interested in learning how you may be able to assist, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Julie Engelke, at: volunteer@ec-chap.org

We leave you with the following:

“The beginning is the most important part of the work.”
-Plato

Happy New Year!
EC-CHAP Board

JANUARY 2022

EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: “Foolish Wisely” (Folk/Americana). Saturday, January 8th, 7:30pm.



FOOLISH WISELY lives in the space between waking and dreaming. Intricate Folk/Americana-inspired songwriting supported by a diverse variety of instrumentation lays ground for luxuriant harmonies to paint over, which bring to life a surreal-yet-familiar world that exists within us all.

The band is made up of RJ Mac Carthaigh and Julia Autumn Ford, both multi instrumentalists and internationally touring artists with their own extensive histories in groups including Belle of the Fall, Field of Birds and The Slambovian Circus of Dreams.

They draw inspiration from the likes of Paul Simon, David Byrne, Van Gogh, Blind Connie Williams, Ai Weiwei, Crosby Stills & Nash, Britney Spears, as well as the world and phenomena surrounding and within them. Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 Cash at the door.

EC-CHAP Talent Showcase. Wednesday, January 12th, 7:00pm (2nd Wednesday of the month)

Acoustic musicians, film makers, poets, comedians, jugglers, puppeteers, and creative artists of all ages



are invited to perform at The Packing House. Here is an opportunity to showcase your work in an intimate historic setting before a live audience. Test ideas and concepts and solicit feedback. PA / sound reinforcement, video projection, and up to 3 microphones provided (Please - No full drum kits unless prior arrangements have been made). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474. Free Admission - Donations graciously accepted.

EC-CHAP Film Series: “The Sapphires” (R) 2012. Thursday, January 20th, 7:00pm

“The Sapphires” was directed by Wayne Blair and written by Keith Thompson and Tony Briggs, the latter of whom wrote the play. The Film stars Chris O’Dowd, Deborah Mailman, Jessica Mauboy, Shari Sebbens, and Miranda Tapsell. This 2012 Australian musical comedy-drama film based on the 2004 stage play of the same name, which is loosely based on a true story.



“It’s 1968, and four young, talented Australian Aboriginal girls learn about love, friendship and war when their all-girl group The Sapphires entertain the US troops in Vietnam.” - IMDb

This film is a part of the EC-CHAP Film Series hosted by the Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP), a 501.3.c non-profit membership-based cultural organization. Suggested Donation \$5.00

EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: “Poor Monroe” (Folk/Americana). Saturday, January 29th, 7:30pm.



Formed at the start of 2021, POOR MONROE is a New England-based bluegrass collaboration of long-time friends with nearly a century’s worth of performing experience (cumulatively speaking).

Drawing from distinct musical paths, this energetic group of seasoned players bring a unique approach to their performances, delivering unmistakably tight vocal harmonies and scorching tempos that are the benchmark of the genre.

Eric Lee (guitar/fiddle), Sean Davis (guitar), Gareth Buckley (bass), John Benjamin (mandolin), & Chris Boucher (banjo), perform traditional material and Lee’s original songs with a deep sense of honoring the legacy of bluegrass. Together, they show how the love of music and a good sense of humor can transcend trying times. Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

Tickets, Reservations, CANCELLATIONS, and Contact Tickets for all shows and program registrations are available for purchase online at 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). Snacks and soft drinks will also be available. You can also bring your paid ticket to Willington Pizza House (or WP Too) for eat-in or take-out the night of the show and receive 15% off your meal purchase.

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

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

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

Indonesian Gamelan in Performance

By *Calendula*

My bare feet cold on the stage floor, I walk towards my instrument in procession; always careful to walk around the other instruments instead of over. I find my spot behind the *reyong*, a row of kettle drums which three other instrumentalists and I play. I wait until all the other instrumentalists also take their places, and with a gong chime, we bow to the audience; another gong chime, and we take our spots, each kneeling on an ornately embroidered cushion. I look towards the man sitting cross-legged in the center-front of the band. He is the conductor of the gamelan, and with a glance and a nod to us all, he begins his solo on the *kendangs*, drums typical to gamelan. This is the prequel to the piece the ensemble is about to play. As he finishes, the *gong gede* tolls, and the *gendens*, the keyed metallophones of the ensemble, begin to play the melody of the song. Although I have no musical notation in front of me, I learned to play these songs by ear, and I know that my part is coming up. My fellow *reyong* players and I each pick up the wooden sticks we use to play and have our arms at the ready. We take our cue from the conductor's nod towards the *reyong*, and we join in the song.

In the spring of 2018, I had the opportunity to play in a *Gamelan Semar Pegulingan* ensemble—an old form of Balinese Gamelan. This ensemble was half and half, students and adults, and our leader was my friend Krishna Sutedja, a master's student at the Conservatory of Rotterdam. The ensemble was created in order for Krishna to perform the pieces he'd written for his final exams. The adults of the ensemble had experience with gamelan, but for the most part, all of the students, myself included, had never played in a gamelan before.

This experience of performance changed the dimension of gamelan music for me in a way that got me thinking critically about the ways that the physicality of performance effects music making.

Writer Martin Clayton claims, "There are many more ways which musical experiences are meaningful. These include the ways in which auditory information can be understood metaphorically as patterned movement independently of its parsing into elemental notes, chords, and the like. This kind of meaning may be more akin to gestural communication – continuous, imagistic, and non-hierarchical." In this way, playing gamelan is much more gestural than "western" music, as there is tradition-



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

Artist-In-Residence: Music



ally no written notation. Without having knowledge of the playing practices of gamelan, one cannot acknowledge the different bodily meaning in the music.

Another significant aspect to the performance is the traditional process of a serious performance. At Krishna's final exam recital, the entire ensemble dressed in brightly colored, traditional Indonesian costumes, rice was pressed into our foreheads as a blessing, and we prayed before the performance. The way we processed onto stage and began the performance was part of the ritual, as was how we sat during it, and how we processed off stage afterwards. It was lovely and beautiful, and



as a not-especially-religious white woman from the United States, with almost no background in Indonesian practices, it was a step into unfamiliar territory. We were there to play for Krishna, and the ritual of the music making that took place outside of actually playing the songs was something spiritual and special, and a vital part of the performance as a whole. As someone with relatively little background knowledge of the form, my performance outside of the music meant something completely different to me as compared to what the performance meant for Krishna, for example, who had been performing gamelan for years, and who is religious in a way I am not. I found this realization to be something fascinating and beautiful. It is difficult to compare or value the depth of meaning one glean from participating in or observing a performance, but isn't it amazing to understand the differences of where we each come from, and to still be able to find all sorts of different beauty in the same type of art?

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

Photos of gamelan instruments were contributed.

Photos of gamelan instruments were contributed.

Pho Delight Thai Opens Doors to Willimantic

By Calen Nakash

If you've been scrambling to survive Covid times, you may be surprised to learn that Willimantic finally has its own Thai restaurant. *Pho Delight Thai* opened September 9th and is owned by a man named Saeng as well as his wife and son, Tony.

The family, which has many years of restaurant experience, chose Willimantic due to the lack of Thai restaurants, but the lack of street parking and Covid has made this hidden gem less accessible than they'd have liked.

Saeng's son Tony stopped college to help out full-time, and while he's done a fantastic job so far, he has struggled with the English speaking barrier. His favorite item is the spicy red snapper, while his father Saeng prefers the Bok Thai.

Like many business owners, Saeng and Tony have found Covid difficult, both for the lack of patrons and issues with getting supplies (*Pho Delight Thai* will be increasing their prices slightly in February to make up for it). The food is savory, juicy and crisp, and provides a rich and cozy alternative to Willimantic's normal pizza places or pubs.

Too many restaurants also get the colors wrong, but *Pho Delight Thai* had a comforting orange wall and a classy bar section that looked right out of New York (which will be up and running once the restaurant obtains its liquor license soon).

In terms of my own experience, I found *Pho Delight Thai* while looking specifically for Thai to help me eat more vegetarian, as it's difficult to go wrong with noodles and flavoring. I was surprised to find a restaurant right on main street, which had seemingly popped up overnight.

For someone under a lot of stress who was looking for some comfort food, I was ecstatic to see yellow curry on the menu. I sipped my lemon-infused water and basked in the atmosphere as I was treated by Peter, who I was told later was Saeng's wife's friend that helps out now and then. When the yellow curry arrived, I felt my troubles melting away with the flavor. The soft potatoes and tofu absorbed the expertly cooked broth, and it felt like coming home. Since then I found myself returning again and again, lamenting at the lack of customers on certain days. Their busiest times are Thursdays and Fridays.

Pho Delight Thai is located across Main Street from the Willimantic Public Library and provides a nice break from the hustle and bustle of life. I recommend the Thai tea to relax and unwind on a rainy or snowy day, it might be just the comfort food you need to recharge your batteries.



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

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 or call: **518.791.9474**.

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

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

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 to learn more and to apply online. Questions may be addressed by email to: info@ec-chap.org; or by calling: 518.791.9474.

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

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

Advertise in
The Neighbors Paper
Locally Written
Locally Wread

Read the Neighbors paper on your desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Go to neighborspaper.com for link to current and past editions. All in beautiful COLOR!

Turning Point

By Felix F. Giordano

Many of the terms we use in the Elements of Writing series have familiar everyday uses and Turning Point is one of them. We see this term used in business, sports, and even in a person's own life. Turning Point can refer to how a person reacts to a situation or how an outside influence can enhance or disrupt the normal course of things.

When Turning Point is used in a literary sense, it can become an ominous, cathartic, or epiphanic experience. Turning points can be defined as when a pivotal moment occurs in the story that either causes harm or creates a benefit to the characters in the story or even drives the plot toward a different and often unexpected direction. The turning point usually involves the main character and is marked by a scene of intense action or reflection followed by a moment of resolve. Turning points can also be subtle or internal and sometimes the full effect of them are not realized until further on in the story.

Every story needs turning points. Without them, the protagonist wouldn't grow along with the story's plot. Consider that when you read a book or watch a film, there comes a point in the story when things change. It may be when the protagonist learns who his or her antagonist is, that the love of his or her life really isn't, or that a long-held belief is discovered to be false due to a hidden secret. These are the turning points in the plots of stories.

Turning points are used to weave a more complex plot line, perk the reader's interest, or even astound the reader beyond their expectations. An effective turning point will intensify the story, make the reader closely identify with the protagonist or antagonist, or deepen the reader's interest in the story. Turning points must be effective without suspending belief within the context of the story. It's all right for your protagonist to sprout wings and fly away from the antagonist if your story is in the science fiction or horror genres but that wouldn't cut it in a crime drama or romance story. Also, be aware to not provide convenient situations that would not be plausible in real life. An example would be for a protagonist to find an envelope containing a million dollars in plain sight on a busy sidewalk right in front of the office building where they were just fired from their job.

It's okay to have dramatic turning points but they must either move the story in a different direction or change the behavior of the characters in the story. One example would be if a passenger who happens to be a licensed private pilot is recruited to pilot an in-flight airliner after the pilot and copilot were poisoned by an unknown assassin who is still onboard the plane. Another example would be for a gruff law enforcement officer to become an advocate for nonviolence after their child is threatened by a street gang.

Turning points can show the reader how your characters respond to unexpected changes and how those changes mold your characters into the persons they need to become by the end of your story. That doesn't mean that your story needs to be linear. You can have multiple turning points in your story each with its own twists and turns. However, they each need to be meaningful and contribute to your character's growth. That way your character becomes the person they need to be by the end of the story.

Turning points maintain the reader's interest while they heighten tension in the story and either move the plot forward or send it in a different direction. Turning points should change your character's values, behaviors, or thoughts in some way or your characters may even discover something about themselves. Turning points should come logically in your story and should never seem contrived or unnatural. They also need to contribute in some meaningful way to the climax of your story.

In popular literature we can find many examples where authors use the technique of turning points but for this exercise we'll simply use one of the best examples. Consider the Wizard of Oz and the turning points that Dorothy faces. She is confronted with a turning point every time she meets up with a friend on the Yellow Brick Road. Originally, she is on her way to Oz to find a way back to Kansas. When she meets the Scarecrow her quest has now expanded to finding him some brains. The Tin Man further serves as another turning point when he reveals that he doesn't have a heart and Dorothy invites him to join her. The Cowardly Lion then appears and Dorothy assures him that the Wizard will give him the courage that he's lacking.

When you delve deeper into these turning points in the Wizard of Oz you can see that they are all aimed at Dorothy and her response to them and how they change her. Dorothy has the heart, compassion, and leap of faith to ask the Scarecrow to join her on her journey. When she meets the Tin Man she displays the courage to fight off the Wicked Witch in the apple orchard. Finally, when she meets the Cowardly Lion it's Dorothy's brains that make her realize the lion is not as ferocious as he tries to pretend.

Let's go off topic for a bit and I'll show you how it connects with turning points. There is one set of imageries in the Wizard of Oz that is no coincidence. It is not happenstance that the slippers on the Wicked Witch of the East are ruby. Throughout history the color red represents war and death which is what Dorothy has to potentially deal with from the Wicked Witch of the West on her journey to Oz. The color of the Yellow Brick Road represents caution. It reminds Dorothy that there is danger on her journey. Finally, the color of the Emerald City is green for a reason. It signifies the acknowledgment that Dorothy achieved her goal of reaching the city for a private meeting with the wizard. It is also no coincidence that these colors are the colors of a traffic light. You can even say that each of these colors represents a turning point in Dorothy's journey of self-realization. It would behoove us to pause and capture the imagery in stories and novels we read as their symbolism is there in both subtle and obvious ways that provide underlying meanings to the stories. That way we gain the full impact of what the author is trying to convey.

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

Felix F. Giordano is a local author with books sales in excess of 7,000 and has had more than 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 presents a monthly lecture series at the Willimantic Public Library. Please call (860) 429-3854 for more information.

Next Month's Topic: Epiphany

By Chance the Natchaug Trail Led Me to the Goodwin Nature Center

By Bill Powers

Last month in the December 2021 issue of *Neighbors*, I described a fortuitous meeting along the Nipmuck trail with geologist Robert Thorson and some of his UConn students. For me, it was just the beginning of a way for being able to better appreciate natural history, especially when hiking. The value of an outdoors hands-on experience with an expert interpreter not only provides important new perspectives about natural history but also greater enjoyment while hiking. As time went on, this idea would be extended to other fields in addition to geology.

Enhancing our connections with nature is of great value. Other connections can come from the love of hiking, such as lasting friendships with hiking buddies. More than two decades ago, my son Rob and Bob Buxton from Massachusetts, who is affectionately known by us as "Mountain Bob", were two strangers hiking on Mount Jefferson in New Hampshire; and while intermittently passing each other on the trail, they struck up a conversation. It was the beginning of a strong and lasting friendship that happened by chance. Together, over the years, their shared love of hiking has led Rob and Bob to hike together in many locations, including all of the 4000 foot plus mountains of New England; and, also, all of them in the winter. Their friendship has been extended to their families. For years Bob and his wife Bonnie have come to our family celebrations. Our family has travelled to Massachusetts on special occasions to join Mountain Bob's family.

Also, by chance, my very first hike on the Natchaug Trail through the James L. Goodwin State Forest led me to the Goodwin Nature Center and a Goodwin Naturalist on a beautiful day; and, while walking along a large Pond, I encountered a man photographing plants along the shore of the pond. As I stopped to drink from my canteen, I briefly watched him as he carefully walked along the shore while photographing plants and jotting down notes. As he turned to walk up to the trail, he saw me and greeted me with a broad smile and said, "It's a beautiful day." I responded, "And this is a beautiful place. Do you know its name?" He explained that it was Pine Acres Pond, and then introduced himself. He was Richard Haley, the Naturalist for the Goodwin Nature Center, and he pointed up the hill toward the location of some buildings. Then he held up his camera and explained he was preparing talks about the ecological significance of forest and pond communities for a group of teachers.

When I told Richard Haley that I was a public school teacher, he suggested that I might be interested in attending his teachers' workshops. Fortunately, I was able to do that, and it was among the best things I have ever done. His programs included learning activities that occurred outdoors. As a field naturalist, he would explain what seemed to be the secrets of nature that involved both forests and ponds, and he taught about the intricacies of ecology and environmental science. His programmed activities included walks and canoe and kayak paddling trips. I have always been grateful that I, by chance, met Richard Haley. It began a relationship with the Goodwin Conservation Center that was wonderful and long lasting.

Over the years, I have been able to learn about the wonders of the natural sciences from many expert presenters at Goodwin like Richard D. Haley, where visitors of all ages learn about natural history and the environment. It was all because of a chance meeting when the Natchaug Trail led me to the Goodwin Conservation Center and Richard Haley, naturalist and field researcher.

The Richard D. Haley NATIVE WILDLIFE GARDEN at the Goodwin Conservation Center was established in his memory after he had a tragic car accident. At the time of his death in 2006, he was the Director of Centers and Education for Audubon New York.

Bill Powers is a retired teacher and a graduate of the first Goodwin Conservation Center Master Naturalist Class.

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

'Free Write' Tuesdays at Willimantic Library

Submitted by Dan Paquette, Director

Are you a writer looking for the company of other writers? Are you interested in finding a safe place to generate new writing? Come join us at the Willimantic Public Library at 905 Main Street in Willimantic, CT from 6:30-7:45pm on the first Tuesday of every month beginning on January 4, 2022. We will be in the Community Room; ask for us at the Front Desk.

The main purpose of the Free Write is to create a judgement-free and open-ended space for a writer's

voice to emerge, and to allow for play and experimentation with ideas and language.

Writers of every and any genre are invited to bring pen and paper along with one or two prompts (words, short quotes or phrases, etc.). After a prompt is read out loud, participants will write for ten minutes in response to the prompt. After four or five prompts (an hour or so total), participants can choose to share what they have written with the group.

Claudia McGhee, a local poet and speculative fiction writer will

facilitate.

Special COVID-19 Note: Masks are required. Our plan is to meet in person in the Library's Community Room. However, because of the uncertainty caused by the rising number of cases of COVID-19 in CT, please call the Library at 860 465 3079 on either January 3rd or January 4th to confirm that we will be meeting in person. If an in-person meeting is not possible, please leave your email address and we will send you a Google Meet invitation and link.

Solar Today:

Questions and answers about solar in our community and beyond

By John Boiano

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

This month I will be talking about the Eversource price increase and the new net metering structure and what it means to homeowners who go solar. I will keep the net metering section quite simple.

You may have received a courtesy notice such as I did from Eversource letting me know that they are raising their rates... again.



for solar covering 40 to 60% of their bill. Think about it, do you like paying less for the gas across the street or a grocery item that is on sale? Solar is a simple choice if you like to pay less.

You may be tired of reading this from me but I've been selling solar for over 8 years and "IF" solar works for you, 100% of the time it pencils out to save you money! If it doesn't, then it's simply not worth going solar.

If you read my last article, the only time that you have to pay anything up front out of pocket is if you pay cash. Other than that, all other payment options start, on average, 45 to 60 days after a solar system starts producing energy. You simply switch who you pay for energy and spend less of your money for solar.

START - Email from Eversource-

Price of electricity rising this winter!

In Connecticut, the cost of electricity changes twice a year for Eversource customers – Jan. 1 and July 1. Because of the increased demand for natural gas and electricity and rising prices, this January, electric customers will see an increase on the supply portion of their bill. This supply rate will be in effect from Jan. 1 through June 30.

What you can expect:

In January, a residential customer that has chosen Eversource as their energy supplier and is using 700 kilowatt hours per month will see a **21% or \$31 increase to their total bill compared to December.**

How much your total bill is will depend on how much energy is used, the rate you are on, and weather conditions.

As a regulated energy distribution company, Eversource purchases electricity from wholesale suppliers on behalf of customers and passes the cost on with no profit to the company.

We're asking all customers to prepare for higher-than-normal bills this winter and to take steps to reduce your energy use.

Steps to lower your electric use and bill:

Take advantage of energy-saving improvements, such as air sealing, to help you stay comfortable efficiently with Home Energy Solutions SM. You can receive on-the-spot services plus recommendations and rebates for additional ways to save.

See how the weather impacts your bill and how small adjustments to your thermostat can help you save with our Heating Cost Calculator.

Equalize your monthly energy bills to avoid seasonal spikes with Budget Billing.

Even if you've never needed help before, you may now qualify for special programs to help lower your monthly bill, reduce your past due balance, or extended payment plans.

We know any increase to your bill is challenging. We're here to help you get ready now for the winter season ahead. "

END – Email from Eversource -

Fun Fact: A great way to save yourself from price increases is to go solar!

Did anyone else notice that in the "Steps to lower your electric use and bill" section, Eversource did not mention that installing solar will drastically reduce and protect you with a low delivered electric rate?

When my wife and I chose to go solar many years ago, Eversource was charging .115/kwh and we signed up for solar at .09/kwh. Today (as I write this, before the coming price increase) Eversource is at .255. The bottom line is I pay .09 cents for my delivered solar electricity from my roof instead of .255. I am not subject to the price increase unless I buy energy from Eversource, which unfortunately, I do since solar covers about 60 – 65% of my electric use. If I had today's 400watt panels on my roof, I would cover more than 100% of my use. Back in the day when I went solar, 215 watt panels were the BIG panels! In the same square footage today with 400watt panels, I could produce 12,000 Kilowatts instead of the 6,450 kw's that the 215's produce. But hey... as we say, "some is WAY better than none"! I have a LOT of people sign up

Here's a small bit on the new net metering laws.

The new changes are a bit complex and I won't get into the nitty gritty here. However, the GREAT news is that CT will remain a net-meter friendly state! This is wonderful news because without net metering, it is quite challenging for homeowners to capture and get back solar production credits during the times that solar produces more than the homes current usage, such as in the middle of the summer.

Ok, so what is Net Metering anyway?

Before you have solar, the electric meter on the side of your home tracks how much energy you purchase from the utility company. When you go solar, the utility changes your meter to a 2-way meter. When your solar system produces more energy than what your home is currently using, the extra energy flows backwards through the meter and that amount is tracked by the meter as a credit to your electric bill. When you need any of the credited energy, such as at night and in the winter months, the credits come back to you at no charge. If you use all of your credits then you buy the extra energy from the utility at the going rate for delivered electricity just like I do. Currently the program is a "full retail" payback program.

If there is enough room on your roof and the utility allows you to hook up to their grid (this is a whole other topic) we will design a solar system that over produces in the summer so you can use your credits through the entire winter and essentially have no money owed to the utility company!

There are new additions to the net metering laws that I will not expand on here due to the complexity of them. I will say that just like each and every solar installation has it's individual value for each home and customer, the net metering choices for a homeowner is best discussed at an initial solar consultation. The choices will be particular to each homeowners current and future needs.

If you'd like to know more, please send me an email or better yet, give me a call.

Keep it simple, keep it local.

Until next month... ENJOY!

Contact John at 860-798-5692; john@zensolar.net
www.zensolar.net

Support our local farmers.

You and your family will eat better.

Our community will be healthier.

Look for locally sourced produce when you dine.

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

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

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

Events at The America Museum/ Eastern Connecticut Veteran's Community Center

Submitted by Bev York 860-423-1878

Jan. 9 Cabaret Musical Performance: "To End All Wars: Songs of the First World War" is music and talk by Rick Spencer, music historian, and Dawn Indermuehle. 3 p.m. The program is part of programming for the new exhibit: Pandemic Pandemonium: The Spanish Flu and WW I at The America Museum at the Eastern Connecticut Veteran's Community Center. 1320 Main Street in Willimantic. The program is open to the public and admission is a donation to support The America Museum (suggested donation \$10. for adults) Cabaret seating provides for social distancing. Refreshments available. A snow date is planned for January 23

Jan. 17 Martin Luther King Day Family Fun Program: Building Bridges. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King came to Connecticut as a youth to pick tobacco. It was here that he witnessed different races worshipping and dining together. He spent his life working for civil and equal rights. Celebrate his birthday at the new The America Museum. 10:00 a.m. Masks and distancing required. The program is by donation to support The America Museum. Registration is suggested because materials are limited. To register call 860-423-1878.

Jan. 17 Liber TEA Dr. Martin Luther King. An illustrated talk on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King" by Bev York. 4 p.m. tea and coffee served. The program is open to the public. Donations appreciated to support The America Museum.

The America Museum is located inside the Eastern Connecticut Veteran's Community Center, 1320 Main Street, Willimantic, CT (behind Taco Bell) The America Museum is a project of Windham Arts (promoting art, culture ,history and tourism) and the Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation. For more information bevishistory@yahoo.com or 860-423-1878.



Share Curiosity. Read Together.



www.read.gov

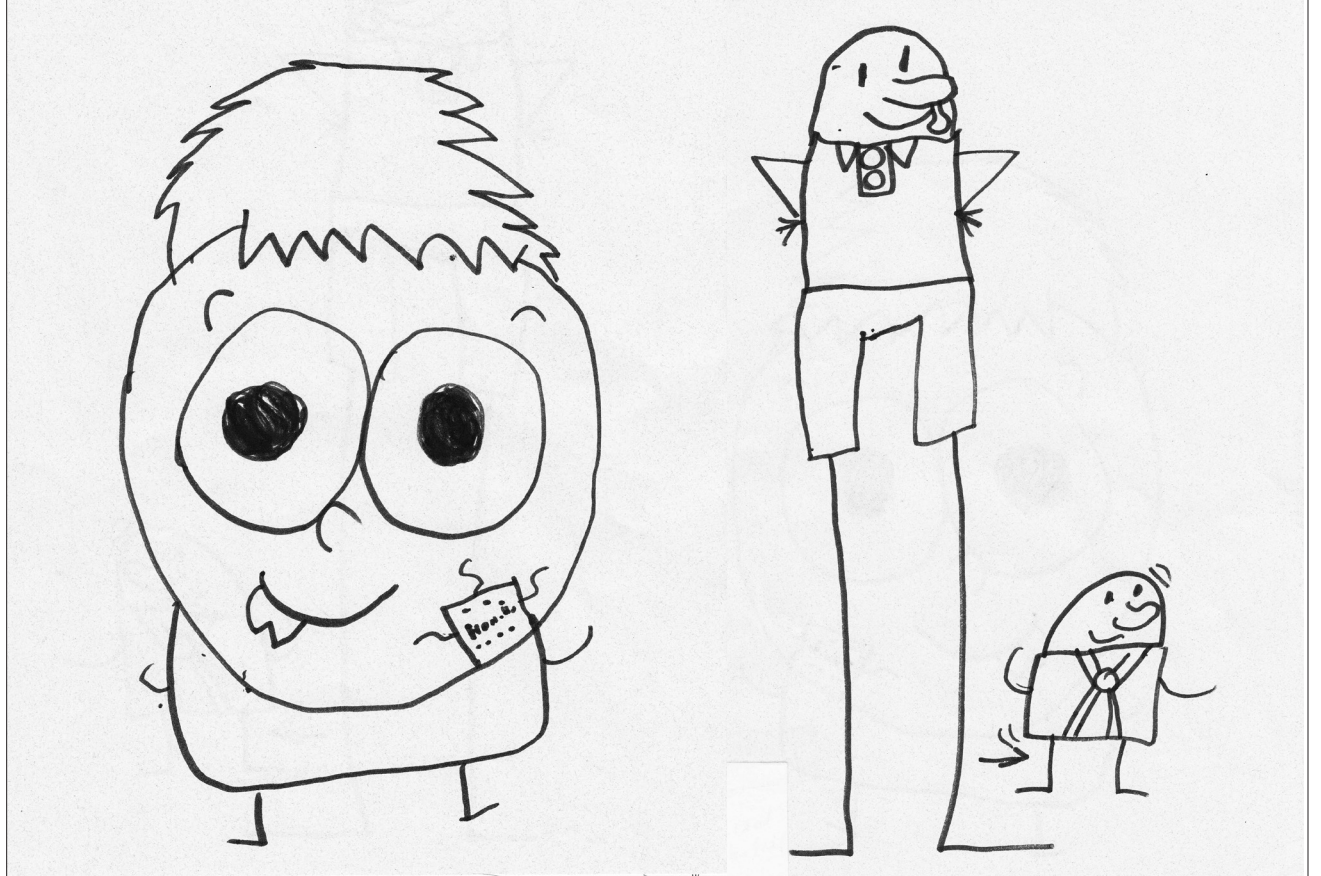


the Neighbors paper
a little paper
big on community

Our Neighbors Art



'Delilah The Pretty Pitbull' by Michelle Baughman.



Three characters created by Parker King, 7, of Ashford. The middle character "can't get COVID because he's too tall," says Parker.

Autism Advocacy Through Artwork

By Michelle Baughman

I am neurodivergent (autistic, ADHD, and PTSD). I am also an autodidact (no formal art training). Creating art is both a stim and a therapy for me: being in "flow state" or "the zone" (which happens when I am fully engaged in creating something) gives me a reprieve from the constant anxiety that accompanies these conditions and allows me to achieve emotional and nervous system regulation.

I think it is interesting how some dog owners seem to think that cats are very aloof creatures that are not capable of showing empathy. But cat owners know that felines are indeed quite empathetic toward humans as well as toward other cats. It's an interesting parallel to how some neurotypical people, unenlightened about autism, seem to think that we autistics are aloof loners who lack empathy. Yet the truth of the matter is that we are actually very empathetic and sensitive...we just do not show it in the way that some NTs expect to see it, so they are not capable of recognizing it. And when we are among our own autistic peeps with whom we feel safe and comfortable, we can be quite gregarious, the antithesis of loners! Anytime people of one "culture" judge another culture by their own standards, there is bound to be misunderstandings. It is time we retire these old erroneous misconceptions about autism. To say that autistic people lack empathy is a distinct lack of empathy!

If you are interested in purchasing my artwork, please visit:

<http://m-baughman-art.redbubble.com/>
<http://aaneartists.org/artists#/michele/>

Fight Hunger this Winter

Submitted by Elisha Sherman

Killingly and Willimantic, CT – Fight hunger in Killingly and Willimantic with a simple purchase of a floral bouquet! Access Community Action Agency has been selected by local Stop & Shop store leadership as the benefiting hunger organization in the Stop & Shop Bloomin' 4 Good Program for the month of January at both Stop and Shop locations in Killingly and Willimantic!

The Stop & Shop Bloomin' 4 Good Program, which launched in February 2021, is an easy way for shoppers to give back as part of the regular shopping routine. Every \$10.99 Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquet with the red circle sticker sold supports a hunger organization local to the Stop & Shop in which it was purchased. According to Feeding America, every \$1 donation to a local hunger organization can provide 10 or more meals to someone in need.

As part of this ongoing program, every month at every Stop & Shop location a different local hunger organization is selected to benefit from the sale of the Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquet. Access was selected as the January beneficiary by local store leadership at the Stop & Shop located at 1094 Killingly Commons Drive, Killingly CT and the Stop & Shop located at 1391 Main Street, Willimantic CT. Access will receive a \$1 donation for every \$10.99 Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquet purchased at both these Stop & Shop locations in January. All the funds raised will go directly to the Access Food Pantries located in Willimantic and Danielson and will help families in need this winter.

"What a beautiful way to give back, help to fight hunger in our local community, and make a room, or home even brighter," said Kathleen Krider, Senior Director of Community Engagement and Resource Management of Access. "Now they can fight hunger too! We are thrilled to be chosen to benefit from this unique and impactful Stop & Shop Program, as the demands of those in need are higher than ever this year."

The Access Community Action Agency is designated by the federal and state government as the anti-poverty agency in northeast Connecticut. Access provides food, affordable housing, job readiness services, and other pathways to economic self-reliance for vulnerable limited-income families and individuals throughout the region. Learn more about Access by visiting <https://accessagency.org/>

For more information about the Stop & Shop Bloomin' 4 Good Program, please visit stopandshop.bloomin4good.com.

Women and Girls Funds Award a Record \$324,784 in 2021 Grants

Submitted by Pamela Mola

NEW LONDON – The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut announces a record \$324,784 in 2021 grants from its four Women & Girls Funds – a 44% increase over 2020 grants. The goal of the Women & Girls Funds grants is to invest in women and girls across the 42-town region by supporting programs that focus on economic security, education and workforce development, health and well-being, and leadership.

- Northeast Area Women & Girls Fund awarded \$24,485 to 11 nonprofits
- Norwich Area Women & Girls Fund awarded \$20,000 to three nonprofits
- Southeast Area Women & Girls Fund awarded \$217,300 to 21 nonprofits
- Windham Area Women & Girls Fund awarded \$62,999 to 17 nonprofits

The Southeast Area Women & Girls Fund additionally made a two-year grant to the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund for their advocacy and communications initiatives.

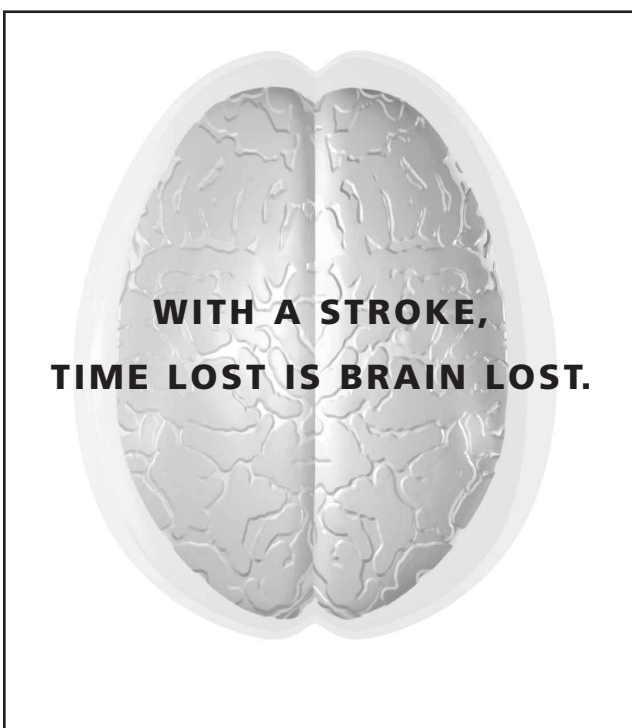
"As we put the greatest challenges from the pandemic behind us, women – especially women of color – are still dealing with the consequences of inequity in our healthcare and economic systems. The Community Foundation grants focus on advancing equitable policies and supporting more vulnerable members of our community with services addressing immediate needs. We believe a two-pronged approach is required for long-term success," stated Program Director Jennifer O'Brien.

In 1999, the Community Foundation established its first Women & Girls Fund to support nonprofits that empower women and girls to pursue positive, productive lives – for themselves and their families. Since that time, three other Women & Girls Funds were established in Windham, Norwich and Northeast Connecticut to advance the equity and well-being of women and girls through grantmaking, advocacy and action.

Collectively, the four Women & Girls Funds have an endowment of over \$7 million and have awarded \$2.7 million in grants to 584 programs.

To learn more about the Women & Girls Funds or how to set up your own named fund to benefit women and girls in Eastern Connecticut, contact Lauren C. Parda at lauren@cfect.org or call 860.442.3572.

Please visit our website for a complete list of grantees.



What to Know About Your Tuna Sandwich



(StatePoint) Do you always look for the “dolphin-safe” and “sustainably caught” labels on your tuna? If so, you’re probably already thinking about how your meals impact marine life and the environment. A new report shows that protecting human rights within the tuna industry is not only just as important as sustainability, but that the two issues are actually interrelated.

According to Greenpeace USA’s latest report, “The High Cost of Cheap Tuna: US Supermarkets, Sustainability, and Human Rights at Sea,” American demand for tuna has risen steadily while fish stocks have declined due to overfishing and ocean warming driven by climate change. As commercial fishing escalates to meet demand, so have reports of forced labor and human rights violations aboard fishing vessels. The report highlights how loopholes in human rights policies governing U.S. retailers’ supply chains have left many migrant fishers vulnerable to such exploitative labor practices as forced labor, debt bondage and physical abuse.

Advocates say that although major U.S. retailers don’t directly employ fishers, these companies can help put an end to this cycle by buying tuna only from ethical suppliers. Unfortunately, all 16 of the retailer chains surveyed in the Greenpeace report received failing scores. The report, which for the first time assesses the human rights policies applied to retailers’ tuna supply chains, found that many companies have ignored this issue or have opted for only surface-level changes that have not delivered meaningful impacts.

Despite these results, there is some good news.

“The seafood industry has come under more scrutiny as consumers better understand the links between environmental damage and human rights abuses,” says John Hocevar, oceans campaign director, Greenpeace USA. “Consumers are demanding that their retailers act sustainably and ethically. The report offers some encouragement that we are progressing in the right direction. However, it is clear that a large amount of work lies ahead to get these corporations to make the changes necessary to ensure they are protecting human lives and the environment.”

To read the entire report and view the ranking, visit: <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/tuna-scorecard>.

“Retailers and the consumers they serve can become voices for change,” says Hocevar. “We urge retailers to take ownership of human rights and sustainability issues at the same time, and we encourage consumers to demand that they do.”

Photo: (c) Zephyr18 / iStock via Getty Images Plus

To all our contributors-

Thank You!

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

the Neighbors paper
black and white
and read all over!!!

Cultural Sensitivity

A short work of fiction (and let’s hope it stays that way).

By Alan Smithee

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury: in all likelihood, you recognize me. I am a well-known and highly controversial comedian. I specialize in satire, an often misunderstood form of humor. In my stand-up routines, I employ the rhetoric of those who hate as a means of excoriating hate-mongers. Until recently, that was legal. But under the newly-passed Cultural Sensitivity Act, the use of certain words in any context is now a federal crime.

The prosecution will present evidence that I have used such words. Indeed, counsel will show a video of my October 29th appearance on the TV talk show, *The Midnight Express*, in which, during my stand-up routine, I vocally utter a word—not once, but several times—the oral and written use of which is now a felony.

I do not deny that I used the word in question. I do not disagree that the word is hateful and vile. What I do disagree with is the passage of the Cultural Sensitivity Act—so blatant a violation of the free-speech clause of the First Amendment, it is now the subject of a civil-rights lawsuit wending its way through the courts.

Like a drill sergeant ordering recruits to perform push-ups, the Cultural Sensitivity Act is collective punishment with zero regard for context or intent. It lumps in comedians and satirists with the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party. Were it possible to monitor one’s thoughts, I’ve no doubt it would be illegal to think such words, as well as to speak and write them. Luckily, such technology does not yet exist.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I am clearly guilty of the so-called “crime” of which I am accused. But just because something is law, does that make it morally just? In the case of the Cultural Sensitivity Act, I would argue an emphatic no! If you wish to strike a blow for the freedoms that so many of our fellow Americans have fought and died for, if you wish to send a message that the suppression of speech will not stand in our democratic republic, I urge you to find me not guilty. Thank you.

**THE STORM
JUST HIT AND
WE WENT FROM
DONATING TO
THE FOOD BANK
TO NEEDING IT.**

Donna, Louisiana

**HUNGER
IS A
STORY
WE CAN
END.**

FEEDINGAMERICA.ORG

Dear Reader-

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

T. King, Publisher

Access to Employment Training Session Accepting Applications

Submitted by Elisha Sherman, Communications and Development Coordinator

Willimantic, CT: With the new year comes new opportunities! The Access Community Action Agency is again offering its job skills training program, Access to Employment, to the public. Now in its seventh year, the program focuses on eliminating barriers to employment for the low-income population of Tolland and Windham Counties. A2E offers coursework focused on personal development, empowerment, financial literacy, and technological literacy. The course culminates with a graduation ceremony and presentations of community projects which our students work on as a component of the curriculum.

Access to Employment will be starting its next session on January 11, 2022, and is currently accepting applications! This is a free program available to anyone over the age of 18 who resides in any of the towns in Tolland or Windham Counties. Our winter cohort will run for 11 weeks, with classes meeting for two hours, twice a week. Anyone interested in applying to or learning more about A2E please check out our webpage: www.accessagency.org/access-to-employment or contact Sherry Perkins at 860-450-7400 x7457, by email at sherry.perkins@accessagency.org, or in person at Access’s office at 1315 Main Street in Willimantic. We will be following all standard and state mandated precautions including social distancing and mask requirements.

There are three primary components of the training: personal development, which relies on the University of Connecticut’s People Empowering People (PEP) curriculum. This section of the course is focused on motivation, effective communication techniques, problem-solving strategies, and developing leadership skills. Our financial literacy training is based on the FDIC’s Money Smart program and covers budgeting, financial goal-setting, developing spending and savings plans, appropriate use of credit, and debt management. The computer training provides an introduction to many of the programs most commonly used in the modern workforce. Students learn general computer basics, Gmail and professional email etiquette, the functions of Google Drive, document formatting, spreadsheet use, and digital presentations. This training is all done on Chromebook laptop computers which are given to the students upon completion of the program.

The Access Community Action Agency is designated by the federal and state government as the anti-poverty agency in northeast Connecticut. Access provides food, affordable housing, job readiness services, and other pathways to economic self-reliance for vulnerable limited-income families and individuals throughout the region.



Each week, dozens of volunteers from all over Connecticut assist us in providing care to the deserving animals at our Sanctuary in Ashford. We hope you will consider getting involved as a Sanctuary volunteer.

Visit our OurCompanions.org for full job descriptions and volunteer requirements or call us at 860-242-9999.

the Neighbors paper
a little paper big on community

Being Prepared for Natural Disasters

(StatePoint) A time when natural disasters are growing in frequency, most Americans are not physically or financially prepared to handle them.

According to a new Wells Fargo & Company survey, 84% of Americans live in areas that have experienced some form of natural disaster in the past three years, and 54% live in areas that have experienced severe natural disasters, specifically hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, wildfires or earthquakes. Despite these sobering statistics, 71% admit they don't have a detailed emergency plan and 16% haven't thought about emergency planning at all. Even those with some kind of plan seem anxious that it's inadequate. Indeed, 40% of those surveyed described their planning style as "Barely Covered."

According to Rullah Price, head of Public Affairs Resiliency & Enterprise Incident Communications at Wells Fargo, these survey insights can help you tighten your emergency plan:



Plans Often Incomplete

The 29% of Americans who do have an emergency plan prioritize having food and water supplies (78%), emergency cash (63%), access to important documents (61%) and a planned transportation/evacuation route (59%). Items of slightly lower priority include a plan for medical needs (54%), a family communication plan (52%), a shelter plan (49%) or plan for pets (44%).

"Most people's plans are lacking detail. For example, only a quarter of respondents have outlined specific plans for members in the household of different ages. This is incredibly important for vulnerable ones like children and seniors," says Price.

Price points out that less than a third of respondents have a go-bag packed in case of natural disaster and many of those with cars don't keep their gas tanks filled halfway for emergency evacuation. Ensure your plan includes these details. You should also have an emergency kit containing supplies for several days.

Most Not Financially Prepared

In addition to lacking a physical plan, most Americans are not financially prepared for disaster. Only 44% have started an emergency savings account and 39% say they have no emergency cash in the house.

"We're evolving into a cashless society — but during an emergency, you may not have access to an ATM, and credit cards may not work if electricity is out. Be prepared for all possible events," says Price."

The study also found that only 43% of Americans have a consolidated file of important records and receipts safely stored digitally and in a waterproof, fireproof container. And only 55% have recently reviewed their insurance policies to ensure they have the right types and amounts of coverage.

"Contact a qualified financial counselor who can help organize your finances for an emergency," says Price. "Less than a quarter of respondents have done this."

Communication is Key

Although most Americans are likely to be directly affected by natural disasters at some point in their lifetime, only 32% have had a conversation with family members about how they would locate each other if they were separated during such an event.

The survey revealed that only 37% of parents have discussed the possibility of disasters with their school-age children, only 36% of parents have made plans for school-age children in case they can't get home, and just 13% have discussed disaster plans with their neighbors or community.

"Because a natural disaster can occur anywhere, any time, it's crucial to have a detailed emergency plan and communicate with your family how you will protect one another," says Price.

Photo: (c) doble-d / iStock via Getty Images

Making Your Household More Earth-Friendly in New Year



(StatePoint) Resolving to green up your act in the New Year? Here are just a few tweaks you can make right at home to substantially reduce your environmental footprint.

Make Appliance Upgrades

Home appliances are improving all the time, with many newer models designed specifically with efficiency in mind. If your home appliances, such as your washer, dryer, dishwasher, refrigerator and HVAC system, are on the older side, it may be time to replace one or more of these items. Over time, you'll offset the upfront cost with reduced energy bills. Plus, you'll be helping protect the climate. Look for ENERGY STAR-rated products, which have met strict EPA standards.

Optimize Heating and Cooling

North American Technician Excellence (NATE) offers the following energy-saving tips to help you keep your home comfort system running at peak performance:

Change your air filters monthly, or as directed by the manufacturer.

Add weatherstripping and caulk around windows and doors to improve your home's insulation. Improperly insulated walls, floors, attics, basements and crawlspaces waste energy and can also lead to moisture imbalance.

Install a programmable thermostat to help regulate temperatures.

Don't keep clutter near your HVACR units, and don't store anything next to them that could impede ventilation. Likewise, keep vents and returns free of obstructions. Don't lay carpet over vents, place furniture over or in front of them, or obstruct airflow.

Dry air feels cooler than moist air. A simple humidifier may make your home feel five degrees warmer.

Even the most efficient system can suffer if it's not properly maintained. For optimum comfort and sustainability, make sure all your HVACR installation, maintenance and other work is performed by a NATE-certified technician. NATE-certified technicians have demonstrated their knowledge of today's increasingly sophisticated heating and cooling systems by passing a nationally recognized test developed and supported by all segments of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning industry. Better installation and service means your equipment will run at peak efficiency. Visit nate.org for additional HVACR energy-savings tips and resources, and to find a NATE-certified technician in your area.

Reduce Food Waste

American food production uses 10% of the nation's total energy budget, 50% of its land, and 80% of its freshwater, according to FoodRescue.net. Unfortunately, up to 40% of all food ends up in landfills. Label food items in your pantry and fridge and organize them by date to help ensure you consume food before it spoils. If you see that you've prepared too much of a certain item, freeze it. Of course, many foods produce unavoidable scraps. Use them to create stock or compost them. Composting will reduce your home's contribution to landfills while enriching your garden. Bonus: it's also a great way to reduce yardwork waste.

Make an Impact Today

Want a quick project you can complete in an afternoon? Swap out incandescent lightbulbs for energy efficient LEDs. According to the EPA, residential LEDs -- especially ENERGY STAR-rated products -- use at least 75% less energy, and last up to 25 times longer.

This year, consider making Earth-friendly New Year's resolutions. A few tweaks can reduce your household's impact on the planet.

Photo: (c) maruco / iStock via Getty Images Plus

New Year's Resolutions You'll Actually Keep

(StatePoint) It's no secret that many people wait for a new year to commit to implementing better habits. They'll start eating more vegetables next week, they'll cut out wine with dinner next month, and they'll use their gym membership next year. These are things you've heard before, and likely even things you've said yourself. So how do you make resolutions you'll stick to?

Declutter.

Have you ever intended to use a free weekend to clean and organize and then felt defeated by the enormity of the task? If you resolve to declutter, start with one room a month, slowly working your way through your space.



Celebrate with friends.

Ever get so busy with commitments that you forget to celebrate those who mean the most to you until a special occasion comes around? Celebrating at these times is certainly nice; but imagine how your loved ones would feel if they knew you were going out of your way to connect with them and celebrate an ordinary day?

With SmashUps from American Greetings, you don't have to wait for a birthday or holiday to send a personalized message to friends. These customizable eCards allow you to send greetings celebrating, encouraging and congratulating, any time. Start the year by sending one friend or family member a SmashUp each week. You can even schedule them so you'll never miss a moment. You'll likely make their day and feel pretty good for the rest of yours, too.

Create a sleep routine.

Many people realize just how worn out and tired they are at the end of the year. When holiday breaks arrive, they may find themselves more inclined to relax and sleep than to celebrate. Starting in 2022, create a sleep schedule and stick to it. By sleeping enough each night, you'll likely wake up feeling refreshed, ready to take on commitments and energized to do more of the things you enjoy.

Read a dozen books.

Setting overly ambitious goals can be a downfall for New Year's resolutioners. Create small, realistic goals for a better chance of really sticking to them. For example, if your resolution is to read more, make it your goal to read one book per month. By tying a number and timeline to your goal, you'll feel a sense of pride when you accomplish it and be motivated to continue.

Make meals at home.

Many people start the year with the intention of "eating healthier," but don't define what that means and get off track fast. You might start by committing to cooking dinner at home once a week. After a long day of work, ordering in or eating out can be tempting, but by committing to cooking once each week, you'll save money and likely eat more healthfully. It can also be a fun activity to look forward to with your spouse, roommate or children. The same can be said about your morning coffee. Instead of making a daily stop at Starbucks, find a coffee you love and make it at home.

With smart strategies, you'll be able to see how your new habits have become a normal part of your daily routine by the end of the year.

Photo: (c) Jacoblund / iStockPhoto.com

Noah's Closet Celebrates 15 Years

Submitted by Debra Martin

Children's clothes and toys are in piles on the tables. The volunteers are busy sorting, cleaning and pricing everything. Another volunteer creates a winter display on the shelf and arranges books and toys around it. It is a Tuesday morning and everyone is preparing for the 15th anniversary celebration on January 29th at Noah's Closet in Coventry.

It all began fifteen years ago when two women and the Interim Pastor at Second Congregational Church of Coventry joined forces to develop a one-of-a-kind children's re-sale shop in town. The idea was to request kid's toy and clothing donations to resell and give the proceeds to the church's Missions Team to do outreach projects in Coventry and the surrounding communities.

A space for the shop was found in the church Community House. The Interim Pastor suggested that the shop be named Noah's Closet. The tag line was added: The Shop at Second Where Kids Come First. Volunteers from the church would staff the shop when it was open for business. Noah's Closet had a ribbon cutting ceremony on January 27, 2007. Word spread quickly about the shop and the customers and donations started arriving.

In the beginning, proceeds from Noah's closet were used for "camperships" to send kids to camp. Noah's Closet began a voucher program with Coventry Human Services to provide free children's clothes, shoes and coats to local families that requested assistance. When a local family lost everything in a house fire, Noah's Closet offered to donate clothing for the children. Noah's Closet

continues to donate gently used clothing to Windham Area Interfaith Ministries (WAIM) in Willimantic and the Cornerstone Clothing Bank in Vernon. Recently, Hurricane Ida tore through Louisiana and Noah's Closet sent a box of children's clothes to a Methodist church for distribution to families that lost everything.

At one point, a professor contacted Noah's Closet about the Women Weavers in Otavalo, Ecuador. The weavers made scarves that were sold in the market and the proceeds were used to send kids to Catholic school in Ecuador. Soon after, Noah's Closet was selling the scarves and sending the money to the weavers in Ecuador. When Noah's Closet learned about a program to collect shoes for the children, they boxed up a pile of shoes and sent them to Ecuador.

Our customers are now parents, grand-

parents, foster parents, teachers, day care providers and children. We are open because of our loyal customers and everyone who donates clothes and toys that their children and grandchildren have outgrown. Noah's Closet invites you to celebrate 15 years of providing low-cost children's clothes and toys to the communities we serve. Join us from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, January 29, 2022, to celebrate 15 years of Noah's Closet: The Shop at Second Where Kids Come First. Yes, bring your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. We will have a special story time and refreshments for them. Noah's Closet is located at 1746 Boston Turnpike (Route 44) in Coventry, CT. The shop is open on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call the shop Saturday morning at, 860-742-1616.



TEXT AND WHATEVER JUST DON'T TEXT AND

STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG

Advertise in the Neighbors paper Locally Written Locally Wread

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

VETERANS FREE MEDICAL RIDES to CT and RI VA Medical Facilities 860.317.1025

By Focus on Veterans, Inc.

the Neighbors paper a little paper big on community

Where to find the Neighbors paper

- Ashford**
Terry's Transmissions
Ashford Spirit Shoppe
Ashford Post Office
Babcock Library
- Brooklyn**
Brooklyn Post Office
Baker's Dozen Coffee Shop
Salem Village
- Bolton**
Bolton Post Office
Subway-Bolton Notch
- Chaplin**
Chaplin Post Office
Pine Acres Restaurant
- Columbia**
Saxton Library
Columbia Post Office
- Coventry**
Highland Park Market
Meadowbrook Spirits
Coventry Laundromat
Subway
Booth and Dimock Library
Song-A-Day Music
- Eastford**
Eastford Post Office
- Hampton**
Hampton Post Office
Hampton Library
Organic Roots Farm
- Lebanon**
Lebanon Post Office
Market on the Green
- Mansfield/Storrs**
D & D Auto Repair
Holiday Spirits
All Subway shops
Bagel Zone
Storrs Post Office
Mansfield Senior Center
Starbucks
Storrs Comm. Laundry
Chang's Garden Rest.
Liberty Bank
- Mansfield Center**
Lawrence Real Estate
Mansfield Library
East Brook Mall
- Mansfield Depot**
Thompson's Store
Tri-County Greenhouse
- North Windham**
Bagel One
Subway
No. Windham Post Office

- Pomfret**
Weiss, Hale & Zahansky
Vanilla Bean Restaurant
Pomfret Post Office
Baker's Dozen Coffee Shop
- Putnam**
Subway
Putnam Post Office
- Scotland**
Scotland Library
Scotland Post Office
- South Windham**
Bob's Windham IGA
Landon Tire
So. Windham Post Office
- Stafford**
Stafford Coffee Company
Stafford Library
Subway
Artisans at Middle River
Stafford Post Office
Stafford Cidery
Hangs Asian Bistro
- Tolland**
Birch Mountain Pottery
Subway
Tolland Library
Tolland Post Office
- Willington**
The Packing House
Franc Motors
Willington Pizza I & II
Willington Post Office
Willington Library
- Windham/Willimantic**
Willimantic Food Co-op
Design Center East
Schiller's
Windham Eye Group
CAD Marshall Framing
Clothespin Laundromat
Main Street Cafe
That Breakfast Place
All Subways
Super Washing Well
Willimantic Public Library
Windham Senior Center
Elm Package Store
Not Only Juice
- Windham Center**
Windham Post Office

DR. MAC

Fixing All Macs

Someday You'll Need Me! Cut Me out!

Mac Running Slow??
Your mac should be maintained every 6 months!
I'm your Apple/Mac "Guru"
Repairs · Service
If it's Apple/MAC, I do it!
Call Steve for an appointment TODAY!
(860) 431-7080 10am-6pm M-F
email : illstudio@snet.net



**WILLIMANTIC
FOOD CO-OP**
a community market

Start the New Year off Right!

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Bring in your own containers to refill in the Bulk Department or Produce!

Get 5¢ off your bill for every container (bag, bottle, jar etc.) you bring in to refill

and 25¢ off when you bring in your own coffee/tea cup.

91 Valley Street, Willimantic, CT 06226
WWW.WILLIMANTICFOOD.COOP

Read the Neighbors paper on your desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Go to neighborspaper.com for link to current and past editions. All in beautiful COLOR!

Rapture

Granted some wishes under the warmth of your touch
The magical moments when all things don't matter
Searching beyond the sweetness of your kiss
Reminders to cherish all that will be forgotten

Hands trembling to gather all time that will pass
Breathtaking expressions lost on faces too timid to stare
Your eyes like September on a cloudy afternoon
Inviting exploration filled with unguided self-doubt

Shall we meet one another behind an old smoking shed
where the curious find us both dying to not tell
About all the things we can no longer hope for
and how broken each one of us must feel

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.




Sonya Maher, L.O. invites you to come into eyeTrade Optical Shop
SAVE TIME, SAVE MONEY order your contacts on-line eyetrade.vision

eyeTrade™
Optical Shop in Coventry
BUY ONE GET ONE 1/2 OFF

the Chronicle BEST OF 2020 READERS' CHOICE AWARD

With the purchase of Frames and Lenses
*Certain Restrictions Apply. See Store for Details.

ACCEPTING HSA, HRA, HFA and Carecredit

Call Sonya for an appointment Today! 860-498-0717

A Portion of Every Purchase Helps Others See!

eyeTrade, LLC, Optical Shop
1197 Main St., Coventry, CT • eyetrade.vision

NOW ENROLLING FOR 2022-2023



CALL 860-456-1031
or
EMAIL admin@ogms.org
For more information www.ogms.org

Our talented faculty has been teaching children Ages 3 to 12 since 1981. Accredited by C.A.I.S. and members of AMS and MSC




Hope and Wellness is a complete wellness and salon facility specializing in a variety of services.

FULL SERVICE SALON

Reflexology • Massage • Manicures • Pedicures • Reiki
Craniosacral Therapy • Cupping • Biofield Tuning • Facials

Come visit our gift shop for locally produced soaps, lotions, plants, jewelry, hand bags. Also pottery, candles and CBD products.

39 Nott Highway (Route 74), Suite 2, Ashford, CT 06278
www.HopeandWellnessOnline.com • 860-477-0994

Find us on **Instagram**  LIKE US ON **facebook** 