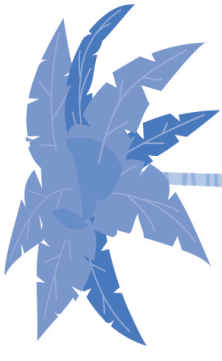


Neighbors



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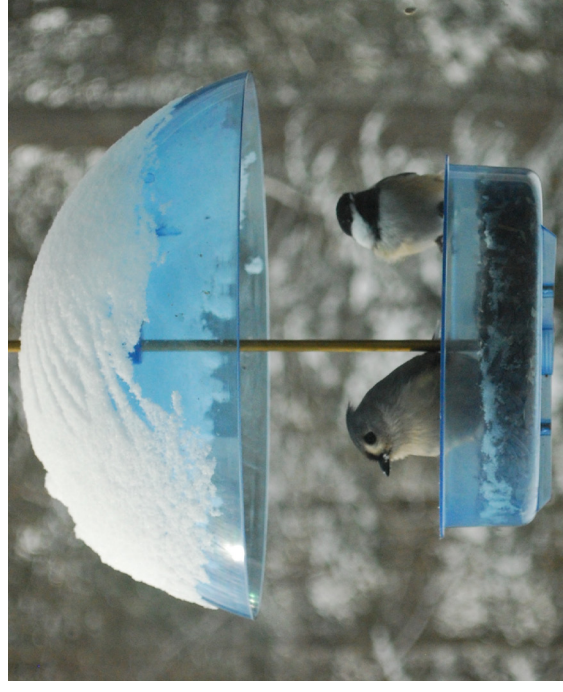
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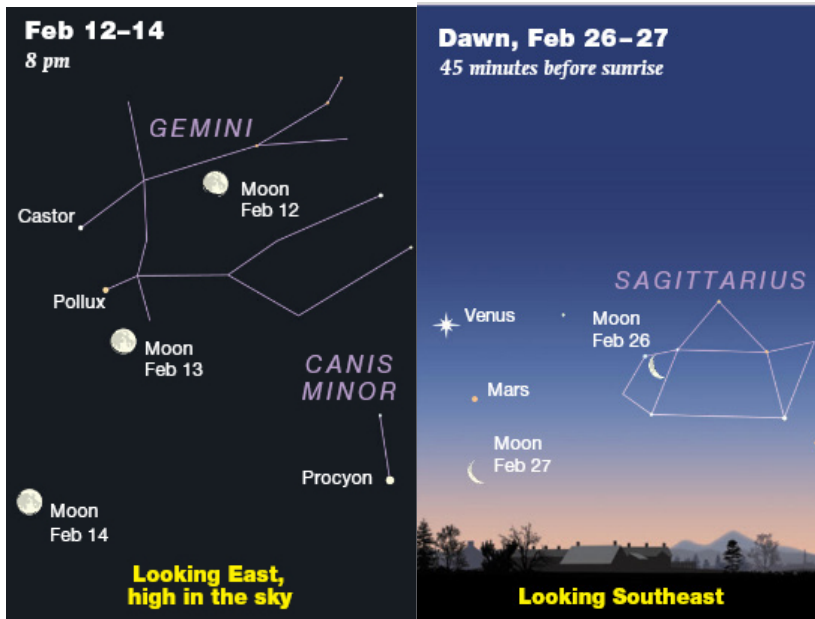
Ego On the Chopping Block; a Metamorphosis

By Bob Grindle

I can remember looking forward to Valentine's Day with a kind of ego-on-the-chopping-block youthful, nervous eagerness. The ritual exchange of handmade heart-shaped cards and notes expressing 9 or 10 year old thoughts about friendship and affection, timidly put into the slot of a gaudily decorated drop-box, would have been almost too anxiety filled were it not for the student-mother-provided-cupcakes and teacher's story reading hour that were promised if we all behaved. Behave we did...and the entire class eagerly awaited the bribed payoff. As the chronic new-kid-in-school—our family moved 6 times in my first 5 years of school—my ego had become fairly resilient and I looked forward to the treats and especially to the stories that usually followed special occasions much more than the occasion itself and, in the years since, I have spoken with many of my old classmates and we pretty much all agree that story time was special. A well-chosen story could quickly engross our tumbling-about, aching to get outside and wildly divergent young minds.

After listening to a chapter of Jack London's "Call of the Wild," or Gene Stratton-Porter's "Tales of the Limberlost"; perhaps the story of Aladdin or Ali Baba from the middle eastern folk tales of "One thousand and One Nights," or any story by Jules Verne or Rudyard Kipling we would hurry out of class hungry for more...another chapter or verse...and into the wintry afternoon streets of our small farm/working-class Indiana town and head home to live our own lives and stories. They were never quite as thrilling perhaps as the lives of Buck, the dog

who is stolen and suddenly has to live a life he wasn't prepared for in "Call of the Wild"; or as filled with courage as the story of Elnora, a lonely girl trying to tiptoe her way through a complicated life, in "A Girl of the Limberlost"; and certainly not as exotic and filled with strange people



and architecture and places as the adventures of Aladdin and Ali Baba, or Kipling's Mowgli or the Professor in Verne's "Journey to the Center of the Earth," but these stories helped us fashion roadmaps to navigate our own imaginations and to splash about with our emotional luggage as we learned to listen carefully, and to carry the details of someone else's story in our memories, often finding inspiration in a character's struggles to understand and make sense of the world

around them. Not surprisingly, these stories often sparked the fire that helped burn away the brush hiding the pathways through our minds that we never would have found otherwise.

Perhaps as much as any other piece of the educational metamorphosis that mentors our growth from wide-eyed youth to seasoned adult, I am often prone to think that it is these stories about the lives, and imagined lives and fears of our global neighbors; fellow members of the human race that connect us most firmly to our common humanity. Ah yes, those story times from elementary school set the stage for my own love of Greek and Roman and Persian and North and South American Indian mythology, and more recently for the more ancient tales of East and Central Asian mythology. One has only to look up into the night sky to see the index of stories that echo down through our human journey.

As our northern hemisphere winter season crests in early February to begin its inevitable denouement and ease into spring, it is appropriate that Venus takes its place firmly in the southeastern pre-dawn sky. This brightest of celestial lights will be at its brightest this month and with Valentine's Day coming up in a couple of weeks how nice that Venus, the goddess of beauty and of love; the mother of Cupid, and heir to the legends of the irresistible Greek goddess Aphrodite...how nice that Venus can join the party, and on valentine's night Castor and Pollux, the Gemini twins, who symbolize a mythic level of brotherly love and loyalty will share the eastern sky with a nearly full Snow Moon. One can only hope that the snow that is currently falling will be gone by then. Stay well, stay warm and look forward to the lengthening days and ever so gradually warming airs that come to the northern hemisphere as the Earth leans gradually toward the Sun and moves ever so slowly away from it.

On our cover: At top: Snowy Owl Winter © Lynn Bystrom | Dreamstime.com. Bottom left: Titmouse and Chickadee. Tom King photo. Bottom right: Chickens out for a walk. Christine Acebo photo.

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

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

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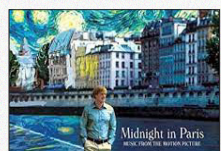


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It Takes Courage

By Loretta Wrobel



Infrequently you come across a book that grabs at your insides as you read it, and it is impossible to ignore. I read such a book, *Against White Feminism*, by Rafia Zakaria. As I read, I inwardly asked, "Why are you saying this?" I had to swallow hard to accept the raw honesty and vulnerability in the writing. I knew it was only my defensiveness that was blocking the acceptance.

Ms. Zakaria is an attorney who has worked with survivors of domestic abuse. She readily acknowledges that she was in several domestic violence shelters earlier in her life, as she was married to a man who was abusive. Rafia Zakaria was born in Pakistan and came to the United States to marry and go to school. When she understood that her husband was excessively controlling, she had to flee with her child. She not only escaped, she continued her education and became an outstanding role model for other survivors of domestic violence. The trials she endured only made her fierce and outspoken. It honed her sharp criticism of our systemic white feminist supremacy and racism. She is not hesitant to offer her experiences to back up her carefully delineated, blunt analysis of racism among popular white feminist leaders. Impressive, yet hard for me to digest.

The author does not accuse all white feminists as operating from white privilege, nor does she believe that only white feminists are at fault. For her, anyone who views people of different backgrounds, color, religion, sexual orientation or belief systems as unequal or not worthy of knowing the path to empowering themselves is part of the systemic racism and white supremacy that infects our world. These unjust, cruel and negating systems need to be upended and reconfigured to map out a healthy, just world that doesn't equate different with unequal.

Rafia Zakaria explains the white savior complex that diminishes minority woman. It sets up a power dynamic. The white feminist leader is blind to the ideas, input and knowledge that the woman of color possesses, and cuts herself off from a productive exchange. Ms. Zakaria argues that white feminists are part of white power privilege. It is often hard to understand privilege when you have it. If you don't, you are constantly aware of the inequality and dismissal by the dominant group. The tendency for feminist leaders to act as if they know what is best for women who come from different cultures, countries, and religions is reiterated throughout the book. The white feminist leader believes women of color want what the white feminist wants. The lack of consultation and awareness of the needs and desires of the other is often lacking. Frequently, the heads of organizations are white and do not engage with women from different backgrounds to take the time to understand what their needs are. This chilling realization is easy to gloss over, as the feminist intention is to save the women who don't have the privileges that the white feminist does. In that dynamic the feminist is not seeing and treating the woman as an equal being who know what she needs. To be told what you need is patronizing and condescending.

The author talks about the history of colonialism, when white women visited other colonial countries and were given superior treatment due to their whiteness. They were there to supposedly offer support to the inhabitants, but did not see them as equal beings. Instead, they were viewed as inferior and weak.

The early roots of this unequal dynamic persist today, as the majority of leaders in the feminist movement are of the dominant race and only a few minority women are allowed into the pack. Many nonprofits and organizations whose mission is to empower women do not actively involve and allow women of color or from different cultures to sit at the table as equals. The author states how easy it is to view the minority person as inferior and needing to be taught how to be a feminist and embrace the philosophy of the white privileged feminist.

All of this makes such perfect sense when I step back and read what Ms. Zakaria is exposing. However, she also is naming the heroines of my earlier years. I admired and respected these loud, strong Amazons who stood up to the patriarchy. Now I have to rethink my long-held idols, and reexamine their actions and beliefs. More importantly, reexamine my own actions and beliefs. There is the crucial sticking point. Inspecting my own actions and how I have and can operate from "I know what's best for all." This is an easy trap to get my ego stuck in and cause defensiveness. Evaluating my own actions is necessary and challenging. It is less anxiety provoking to accuse others and point the finger outward. Looking inside is always the most productive place to begin. That is, at the same time, the most painful place to begin.

With that in mind I revisited this book and can appreciate and congratulate the energy and courage of Rafia Zakaria. She takes that deep breath and reveals her own insecurities and fragility. I see what a gift she offers to all of us, if we can be courageous enough to examine, change, and/or adapt new behaviors, beliefs and actions.

As a white feminist I will be influenced by my own experiences in the world. I need to expand my mindset to be open to listen, and not reject other viewpoints when they don't flow with my views. I thank the author for giving me the opportunity to grow into a more compassionate and inclusive feminist that is accepting of many differences and solutions to issues. My way is not the only way. The more I am willing to dialogue and be flexible, by accepting and learning other customs and ways to empowerment, the easier it is to treat all as equal and right for themselves.

I acknowledge this is an ongoing learning process. Can I stay open to allowing others to point out my limitations or when white privilege overtakes me? Identifying as white in a world of white privilege just means I have to be ready to acknowledge when I am operating from that privilege. In this manner I feel we can be united by sisterhood, break barriers, and embrace other approaches where everyone has an opportunity to achieve their dreams.

Are you courageous enough to risk the same exploration?

Happy 200th Birthday Harriet Tubman

Submitted by Bev York

Two hundred years ago, in 1822 perhaps, one of the most remarkable Americans, or one of the most the most remarkable human beings, was born. Harriet Tubman, or Araminta Ross, was born into slavery in Maryland, maybe in March 1822, but the actual day of her birth is unknown. As a child she was whipped and beaten. She suffered from a traumatic head injury by the master so she suffered from dizzy spells and fainting. In 1844, Harriet married John Tubman who was a free black man. Five years later, Harriet escaped to freedom at age 27. She traveled mostly at night and followed the North Star. She had help from people on the Underground Railroad. She risked re-enslavement or death by returning to the South to help her family, friends and others escape. Tubman is often referred to as the most famous "conductor" on



the Underground Railroad, the one they called "Moses." She made some thirteen dangerous missions and freed about seventy persons. She "never lost a passenger." She had worked with famous abolitionists Frederick Douglass and John Brown. During the

Civil War she was a cook, nurse, scout and a spy for the Union Army.

She said "I should fight for ...liberty as long as my strength lasted." Harriet died March 10, 1913 at age 91. Ask your family and your coworkers if they know about Harriet. We need to spread the stories of courageous American heroines. We need to teach more history, geography and civics. We also need to discover what we can do to help all people to find dignity, equality, and civil rights. Everybody can do something. Start now!

Join Windham Arts and The American Museum in celebrating Harriet Tubman's 200th Birthday. For our monthly Liber Tea, a party will be held at the Coffee Break Gallery on Friday, February 18 at 4 p.m. Eastbrook Mall, 95 Storrs Road, Mansfield. For more information leave a message at 860-423-1878

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Willimantic, Now and Then:

New garage is a great place to see Willimantic And you can park there, too!



Looking north from the top of the new parking garage, over the roof of the Police/Fire Complex, at the Hill Section.

Mark Svetz photo.

By Mark Svetz

The other day, circumstances found me in the new parking garage downtown. I was looking for exercise but I ended up taking a nostalgic tour of my life in Willimantic. I was just poking around, you might say, and I found some things that seem to have been missing in my life lately.

The first is a routine for my morning cup of coffee. Before the pandemic, I had it most days at what I called the pensioners' corner in the Willimantic Food Coop. It's easy to understand why that's gone, and who knows when it will come back. The second thing is less simple, but I am looking for ways – motivation, if I am honest – to get more exercise. Necessity being the mother of invention, and all that, I discovered an unlikely place to find what I'm looking for on both counts. Not so unlikely, I guess, since someone else has made a similar discovery.

While we wait for our new Community/Fitness/Senior Center to open its doors, some of us have been using what we have to create what we need, to borrow an idea from poet Adrienne Rich. I rode my bike to the top of the new parking garage the other day, just to see what was there. I got to the top and the view was evocative, if not breathtaking. I also felt like this view might motivate me to ride up there a few times you know, for the exercise.

Yesterday I walked around my block, which includes Main Street downtown, and I stopped for a cup of coffee at a local shop. The shop was a little crowded, and I decided to find a seat outside. It was a sunny day, and as I walked out back, there was the parking garage. I took the stairs this time to the top of the garage, where I enjoyed my coffee in the sun and brisk breeze.

I heard about a new friend – local artist Robert Avery – who has been making several trips a day up one staircase and down the other. Bob is an avid walker and enjoys the view while he enhances his daily walks with some aerobic exercise. I don't know if Bob and I are the only ones working the new garage into our routines. It sure wouldn't surprise me to meet others there on their walks. We are that kind of community.

I have often said Willimantic is a DIY community. The wonderful and world famous Boom Box Parade is the best example: When they couldn't find bands for the parade, a group of people figured out how we could do it ourselves. We have, of course, been doing it ourselves ever since.

The climb up the stairs was taxing but invigorating for me. I can imagine a time when I might be able to do it without stopping every other landing to "look at the view." Don't get me wrong, the view is worth pausing to soak in. On every floor I could see more of the parking lots and back yards that are often hidden from street view. I could see a little alley-way off High Street with a couple houses where some of my students lived in the 80s. That brought back some memories.

When I got to the top floor, I took a couple sips of my cappuccino as I looked in each of the four directions. It was a nice routine. In the near distance, I could find landmarks from different times in my life. Farther off, I could see the ridges and valleys where other people, longer ago, made their homes. Although we are removed in time, we all share this beautiful home.

To the west, of course, the view is dominated by Town Hall and its wonderful clock tower. I recalled when, back in the 70s, Town Hall janitor Jim Fogarty took me up into that tower. Climbing that old ladder into the otherworldly light behind the clock face was a trip. It was very



cool to hang out with Jim in this most public, yet secret place.

I was pleased to find, as I made my way around the garage, I could see three places where I had lived at one time or another. Right behind me, on Main Street, I lived for a couple years in the building that now has the Kerri Gallery on the first floor. When I lived there, that store front was the Willimantic Co-op's first home. The Co-op has always been close to my heart. In those days, it was close in every way. I tried an experiment when I lived there. I left a notebook in the telephone booth in front of my building. I wrote a note, asking anyone who might answer a call for me, to please leave a message in the notebook. I gave that as my number for a while, but never got a message. In those days, it was easier to find me out on the street.

When I walked to the north wall, I could see my old bedroom window on Spring Street. That was the first apartment Sarah and I shared. We used to walk from there down to Bridge Street at 1:00 in the morning to get the train to New York City when Sarah was taking classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology. We moved from that apartment to 262 East 2nd Street, in Manhattan. Living there was an adventure I'll never forget. The most memorable entrances into Manhattan were on that sleepy train, approaching the city as people began to wake up. They began right there on Spring Street.

A little to the right and up the hill a bit, I could see the house on Prospect Street where I lived after my divorce. I moved there during a lonely and difficult time, but I found a whole community in the Hill Section. That community of friends and neighbors, many of whom are still at the center of my life, are the reason I made my home here. It was in that apartment, in the mid-70s, that I came to know one of the central facts of my life: Willimantic is my home.

Lately, it seems everywhere I look I find memories and stories. I suspect that parking garage, with its fifth floor aerie taking in so much of Willimantic in one panorama, is going to give me a passel of stories in the weeks and months to come. Oh, and I suppose I'll get some exercise and maybe meet someone else turning what they have into what they need.

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

Joshuas Trust Lichen Walk

Submitted by Angelika Hansen

Saturday, February 12 1 p.m. at DUNHAM WOODS
"Ever wonder what those leafy-looking green and gray growths are on trees as you hike by? Come explore lichens with Zach Muscavitch who studies them. We'll bring hand lenses for even closer observation. This is a great activity for kids as well. Park on Rt. 275 (South Eagleville Rd.) Sign up at activities@joshuastrust.org

Mansfield Library Book Sale

The Mansfield Friends of the Library will be hosting its winter book sale on Saturday and Sunday, February 12th from 9:00am to 4:00pm and the 13th from 9:00am to 3:00pm at the Mansfield Public Library's Buchanan Center, 54 Warrenville Road in Mansfield Center. Proceeds from the sale go towards the library's programs, books and other services.

Everyday Black History Through a Local Lens

Submitted by Donna Dufresne

It's February and teachers across America are scrambling to dig out their Harriet Tubman and MLK posters to pay homage to Black History Month. We do our best to teach students about African American writers, scientists, inventors, freedom fighters, and leaders. But February is a short month and not nearly enough time to get beyond a tokenistic drive-through of African American history. With the emerging paranoia about critical race theory, some districts have even banned Black history from being taught. By the time they get to college, many students know little about African American history beyond slavery and Martin Luther King.

However, tenth graders at Killingly High School and EASTCONN's Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT) magnet high school in Willimantic are learning about an aspect of Black history not found on calendars or even in their textbooks. Thanks to a grant from The Last Green Valley, a nonprofit organization, education specialist Donna Dufresne has been guiding students in a yearlong investigation of local Civil War soldiers from the 29th Connecticut Colored Infantry Regiment. Once a month, the students learn how to analyze and interpret primary sources during a history lab that examines how local history can help us understand the big ideas in American history.

Both schools were granted yearlong Ancestry.com K-12 memberships so students can access census data from the nineteenth century at school. During their history labs, they have learned how to identify local soldiers on the 29th Regiment roster websites and search for them in local census records. Recently, they learned how to identify where some of the soldiers lived, using the 1856 census map and 1860 census data from several towns in Windham County. By following the footsteps of the census taker as he went from house to house, students were able to identify the neighborhoods of the enumerated Black and mulatto soldiers. The 1856 census map shows the dwellings of large property owners, who were mostly white males at the time. It does not include Blacks, immigrants, or millworkers who were counted in the census but did not own property. To locate where the soldiers lived in 1860, students had to identify the white property owners who were enumerated immediately before and after them on the census report. The maps were overlaid with modern roads, making it easier to identify the streets and accurately locate where the soldiers lived.

While investigating local history and primary sources, students are beginning to develop a narrative about each soldier, including vital records, where he lived, his occupation, the composition of his family and neighborhood, enlistment data, and whether he survived the war. By looking at census data over the period from 1840 to 1910, students can learn a lot about individual soldiers, African American communities, movement and migration, labor, and the changing landscape of northeast Connecticut from agriculture to an industry-based economy.

As a result of inquiry-based learning, some students have been inspired to want to know more. Their questions will lead to deeper research about the soldiers who deserted and the soldiers who were recruited or drafted to substitute for white men, and why so many Civil War soldiers died of disease. As always, the key to greater understanding lies not in the answers but in the questions raised during an investigation. By the end of the school year, participating students will be able to share what they learned through civic engagement projects, which will help to shed light on the 29th Connecticut Colored Infantry Regiment and those who have been omitted from or deliberately written out of history. Hopefully, students will learn that Black history goes beyond the month of February.

Letters and Emails

To the editor-

Thank you to everyone who contributes to *Neighbors* Paper.

Creativity, angst, history, imagination, events, poetry, social commentary, information and more. All in one place. I don't think there's any other publication like it.

Jean de Smet

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).

Fuel Oil Associations Issue Misleading Claims

Acadia Center. "Oil and gas dealer associations initiated a media campaign today calling on the region's governors to cease support for clean, consumer friendly electric heat pump options. In fact, heat pump rebates are already insulating consumers from volatile heating oil price spikes while improving indoor air quality, reducing pollution, and providing efficient, comfortable heat..." Calls to cancel heat pump rebates are a sad example of the fossil fuel industry once again fighting the clean energy solutions that will keep our communities, safe, warm, and healthy.' ...ISO-NE's Gordon van Welie has raised concerns about supplies of home heating oil, citing pandemic-related shortages of truck drivers that could affect deliveries. Given that the supply chain for heating oil, gas, and other fossil fuels has been disturbed by the pandemic, increasing reliance on those fuels makes zero sense."

2.6MW Solar Array Construction Underway at North Branford Site

Zip06. "Citrine will install 6,000 solar array panels on about 10 acres among 27 acres on the farm property...Once the solar array is operational, both the landlord and the Town will benefit from virtual net metering agreements with energy provider United Illuminating (UI) for the 25-year period...'What happens is the Town sells electricity from the solar farm to United Illuminating at the full retail rate, and then we pay back some part of that to Citrine Power, who are investing something like \$6 million in this program...The net to the Town, if you use that 20-to-30-percent range, is between \$90,000 to \$120,000 per year. Given that it's a 25-year program, it's kind of like a boost to the grand list.' "

Winsted joins CT Green Bank loan program

Fairfield Citizen. "Business owners can now apply for loans from the Connecticut Green Bank, offered by the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy program, or C-Pace...Money from the CT Green Bank program provides financing for "green" energy projects, ranging from installing solar panels to upgrading HVAC systems or improving air quality."

PURA launches statewide electric power storage program

Hartford Business Journal. "The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority formally launched the "Energy Storage Solutions" initiative on the first of the year, in partnership with the Connecticut Green Bank, which will administer the program, Eversource and UI. End users will be eligible to receive incentives for setting up power storage devices, which can help make the broader power grid more resilient, especially at times when the system is under strain due to inclement weather." **Plus: Connecticut Aims Big Subsidies at Home and Business Energy Storage Plan**

'Green Hydrogen,' Small Solar Projects, Electricity Bills Top Arconti's Energy Agenda

CT Examiner. "Encouraging the development of shared solar projects, planning a path to "green hydrogen," and lowering electric bills for customers of the state's largest utilities will top an abbreviated agenda of the legislature's Energy & Technology Committee when it reconvenes in February...Arconti said that in his view a key priority would be to address how the state can encourage more local, cost-effective clean energy projects that spur local investment and jobs – especially by raising the cap of the Shared Clean Energy Facility program..." "This is going to entail looking at current programs and adjusting rules to allow for more localized resources, which have the most positive impact on rates, and also delivering clean energy jobs to Connecticut workers.' "

First, end ratepayer subsidies for natural gas expansion.

Then study the future of gas in Connecticut

CT Mirror. "At the time [that the expansion program began], it was believed that burning gas instead of oil would reduce emissions (though it turns out that between combustion emissions and methane leaks, gas is not a good climate solution). The conversion program required ratepayer investments in gas pipelines and infrastructure that will lock in the use of natural gas for decades. Meanwhile, the supposed cost benefits to customers have disappeared as gas prices have increased...In Connecticut, we need to ask the following question: who will pay for gas infrastructure that becomes obsolete as the state transitions away from burning fossil fuels."



Volkswagen money helps Connecticut start 'long road' to electric school buses

Energy News Network. "Children in seven environmental justice communities in Connecticut will soon be breathing fewer diesel fumes thanks to the latest round of state grants from the Volkswagen settlement funds. The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection announced last month that the third round of Volkswagen funds will provide more than \$9.5 million to help replace old diesel buses with 43 new electric school buses in Middletown, New Britain, Hamden, Stamford, Bethel, Ansonia, and Griswold."

Electric Utility Providers Can Increase Satisfaction by Supporting Local Economic Development Efforts, J.D. Power Finds

J.D. Powers. In its 2021 Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study, J.D. Powers gives Eversource the 15th lowest score of 17 large utilities in the Eastern Region.

New Single Family Residential Charging Incentives

EV Club of CT. "The incentives drafted by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority that will be made available through Eversource and United Illuminating have been mostly finalized. There are a number of parts to them and we will be writing about them periodically over the next few weeks. There are subsidies for residential, commercial, municipal, and fleets. The residential charging program includes incentives for multi-unit dwellings (MUD) as well as single family. Incentives include subsidized charging stations, installation, make-ready, discounts on electricity, and demand charge mitigation". Plus: Charging Incentives for Condos and Apartments

Greenskies completes 1-MW solar portfolio for Connecticut town

Solar Power World. "These solar installations are a win-win. They demonstrate the benefits of renewable energy to our entire community. We're helping the environment and saving the town money.' Rather than purchase the solar equipment directly, the Town of Killingly, in conjunction with the Killingly Board of Education, entered into PPAs with Greenskies Clean Focus. Under the contract, Greenskies developed, constructed and will operate and maintain the systems, and Clean Focus provided financing and will own the systems. Killingly will purchase the electricity generated at a low, fixed-rate for the term, resulting in both immediate and projected long-term cost savings."



Photography Exhibit at VBC

Submitted by Celeste Estevez and Christine Acebo, Co-Presidents, Quiet Corner Camera Club

The Quiet Corner Camera Club will have member photographs on the walls of the Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Road, Pomfret Center, CT. Enjoy a scenic ride to the Café, eat some excellent food, and see diverse work from the Club's talented photographers at one of the Quiet Corner's iconic music and art sites. Most of the photographs will be for sale. The exhibit will be up from Feb. 2-28.
Photo by Christine Acebo.

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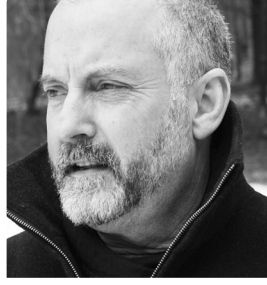
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From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

New England Weather and Market Planning

By C. Dennis Pierce



As I sit down to write this month's column, the fine snow outside is blowing sideways like the sand on the beach on a stormy day on the Cape. The grinding of snowplows interrupts the stillness that comes with the storm. I feel for those drivers since they have been plowing all night, working abbreviated shifts, stopping to take a brief nap, and then back on the road again. It is definitely not a labor of love but it is a necessary task to keep the roads clear for emergency vehicles and those hardcore individuals who plow driveways and parking lots for a living.

New England weather has had a significant impact on my life. I grew up in New Hampshire, went to college in Maine, and did a short stint working at Mount Snow. As time has evolved, I find that the media has

played an instrumental part in reporting the impact of Mother Nature. Sure, there is the drama that sells the news, but as I have witnessed year after year of weather events, I have come to realize, as this natural cycle takes place, it is not so much a drama as a fundamental ritual. Sure, the main characters may take on different roles, whether they be snow, sleet, rain, wind, or sun, but it is all in due course of the natural year and its ever-changing harmonies.



In preparation for this month's article, I contacted Erin Richter of Forever Farm in Mansfield. Erin is the Storrs Farmers Market's market master. I was interested in gaining some insight into what is new for this year's market and also, if one is interested in selling at the market, how to go about joining this worthy cause.

To begin with, the summer market starts on the first Saturday of May, which will be the 7th. Erin shared that if weather permits, they will start at the Town Hall location in April. This year, one of the Saturdays each month will feature a theme or a special event. The season activities calendar is currently being worked out and should be available on the Market's website in the near future.

If you are not a regular shopper at the market, know that you will find an array of offerings from local farmers, bakers, and craftsmen. Since 1994, Storrs Farmers Market has provided the greater Mansfield community with fresh, premium quality CT Grown foods. The Storrs Farmers Market is a Connecticut Certified Farmers Market, meaning everything sold at the market is grown or produced in Connecticut. Farmers and vendors grow or produce everything they sell. The Storrs Farmers Market Board of Directors reviews each application, and vendor attendance is contingent upon board approval. If you are interested in participating, you can find an application at <https://www.storrsfarmersmarket.org/apply/>.

Those interested in participating on a full-time basis must commit to being at the market every Saturday. The current annual vendor fee is \$325.00. Since the market already hosts a wide array of products, the selection of new members is mostly based on your product line and where it fits in with what the market needs to offer. Currently the market is specifically looking for individuals who can offer seafood, dairy, or eggs.

The market also provides an opportunity for guest vendors. Guest vendors should indicate their preferred dates for attending. Being a guest vendor is a great option for farms and businesses that are new to selling at farmers markets to learn about the market experience. Vendors of handmade soap and body products, and original, handmade crafts may apply to be guest vendors. Farms and prepared food vendors are also welcome to apply to be a guest vendor. Guest vendor attendance is contingent upon approval by the board and submission of all required paperwork and vendor fees. The guest vendor fee is \$25.00 per market.

To complement the market activities, there is an opportunity for food trucks too. Food truck attendance is limited to two trucks per market day. Food truck vendors are encouraged to feature CT Grown products on

their menu when participating in the market. Food truck attendance is contingent upon approval by the board, submission of all required paperwork, and vendor fees, and licensing through the Town of Mansfield. For additional information, check out <https://www.storrsfarmersmarket.org/about/>.

As the snow continues today, there is a fire roaring in my wood stove. I plan this afternoon to peruse the many seed catalogues that filled my mailbox this past week. Let's hope the weather clears soon, since my "to do" list for preparing for the spring includes trimming fruit trees that did not cooperate last summer by producing a bountiful supply of fruit.

I find I do not provide enough meatless recipes in my column, so to make up for it I am providing an alternative to the traditional shawarma sandwich, which traditionally is made with lamb. I picked up a head of cauliflower from the Co-op and was eager to prepare this so I could share it with you.

Cauliflower Shawarma
Servings: 4

Ingredients:

4 tablespoons salted butter, melted
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 medium garlic cloves, finely grated
1 tablespoon coriander
1 tablespoon plus ½ teaspoon ground sumac (can be purchased at the Willimantic Co-op), or substitute 2 tablespoons grated lemon zest
2 to 2½ lb. head of cauliflower, trimmed and cut into 1-inch florets (buds)
kosher salt and ground pepper
1/3 cup plain, whole milk yogurt, room temperature
pita bread rounds cut in half
sliced red onion, thinly sliced tomato, sliced cucumber

Directions:

Preheat oven to 500 degrees.
In a large bowl, stir together the butter, oil, garlic, coriander, and 1 tablespoon of the sumac (or lemon zest).
In a separate bowl, gently toss cauliflower with ¼ cup of the butter mixture.
Cover baking sheet with tin foil and spoon cauliflower mixture onto it. Pour or scrape any remaining contents on top of the cauliflower.
Salt and pepper the mixture and roast in oven until well browned and tender, about 18 to 20 minutes. Keep an eye on it so it will not burn.
Take the remaining butter mixture, stir in the yogurt, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the remaining sumac (or lemon zest).
Assemble the roasted cauliflower, tomatoes, onions, and cucumbers in a pita half and spoon on the butter-yogurt mixture.
You can garnish with chopped parsley, a squeeze of lemon juice, or chopped-up fresh mint if you want to add an extra dazzle.

As we long so earnestly for the Spring, and perhaps still trying to maintain our New Year's resolutions, I want to share an insightful quote from Mark Twain, celebrated author, historical figure, and Hartford native. I found I had to read it several times. It took a few moments for it to sink in, and only then I appreciated the wisdom. "The two most important days in your life are the day that you were born and the day you found out why."

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. 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.

...Peas be with you.

At the Storrs Farmers Market.
Betsy Paterson photo.

Words

By Judy Davis

Jack Kerouac believed that writing was recollection, and amazement.

Words can heal; be a question, and an answer.

They can be angry, sad, and peaceful.

Words can raise us to great heights, or lower us to a depth we never knew existed.

Words can introduce ourselves holding up a mirror of reflection.

They are pebbles we toss into the waters of lives,

creating ripples that may continue long

after we are gone.

Words reach out and pull back. They are

newborn, and old souls. Words can pave a road where there wasn't one.

They can be a fight, as well as a truce.

Most of all, I believe, words are destiny. For me, writing has led me down a path of great satisfaction.

Yes, life is recollection!

And I love the amazement!

Windham Arts Events

Submitted by Bev York

Feb 1 2022 Organizational meeting for- Windham Regional Cultural Partnership -Zoom Meeting to plan collaborative promotional events for 2022. This committee of local museums and arts organizations is a project of Windham Arts that promotes art, history, culture and tourism. Zoom at 2 p.m. If interested in receiving the zoom link contact Bev York at 860-423-1878.

Feb. 3 Opening Reception for Arts at the Capitol Theater, A Collection of Student Work. 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Coffee Break Gallery at East Brook Mall, 95 Storrs Road, Mansfield. The exhibition will be available through February on Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 4:00 p.m. Arts at the Capitol Theater is a project of EASTCONN. The Coffee Break Gallery is managed by Windham Arts. For more information galleries@windhamarts.org

Feb 18 200th Birthday Party for Harriet Tubman. The Liber TEA is a monthly program of The America Museum which is a project of Windham Arts. 4 p.m. The Birthday Party will be held at The Coffee Break Gallery at East Brook Mall, 95 Storrs Road, Mansfield. All are welcome.

Feb. 20 Drawing Class of Patriotic Symbols (eagles and flags) will be held at The Coffee Break Gallery at 2 p.m. The class is sponsored by the America Museum, a project of Windham Arts. Registration is suggested and space and materials are limited. Call Bev at 860-423-1878 and leave message. \$10 cash per person. The gallery is located at East Brook Mall, 95 Storrs Road, Mansfield.

Baked Potato Buffet



Submitted by John D. Ryan

There will be a baked potato buffet in the downstairs hall of St. Mary's Church, 218 Providence Street, Putnam, on Saturday, February 5, from 5:00 to 7:00 p. m. Five dollars per person buys a whole baked potato, with seven toppings to choose from, plus dessert and coffee or tea. Eat in or take out. Proceeds benefit the Boy Scout Troop 21 2022 summer camp fund. For information, call (860) 928-7241.

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Denise LaSalle

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 Denise LaSalle, who Richard Skelly of Allmusic.com called “a modern-day Bessie Smith. She wrote funny songs full of sassy attitude.”

She was born Ora Denise Allen near Sidon, Mississippi, on July 16, 1934, the youngest of eight children. (Some biographies give her birth year as 1939.) She also went by Denise Craig. Her family worked as sharecroppers. From age seven, she lived in Belzoni, Mississippi, where she sang in church choirs and local gospel groups in Leflore County. She grew up listening to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio. She also lived across the street from a juke joint in Belzoni and became influenced by Rhythm and Blues singers like Ruth Brown, LaVern Baker, and Dinah Washington.

At age 13, she went to Chicago to live with her oldest brother, frequently attending shows at the Regal Theater. She also wrote songs and sat in with R&B musicians. Circa 1965, she worked as a barmaid at Mix’s Lounge when she met Billy “The Kid” Emerson, a Chess recording artist. He helped get her a one-year contract, but no session was forthcoming. Emerson later formed his own label, Tarpon, on which he recorded Denise LaSalle (as he had renamed her). The resulting single, “A Love Reputation,” became a local hit in 1967.

In 1969, she met and married businessman Bill Jones. Together, they formed Crajon Productions. LaSalle wrote the majority of the songs recorded by the company’s artists, and both shared in the production work. Crajon’s most successful act was LaSalle herself. She did much of her recording at the Hi Records studio in Memphis, arranged by Willie Mitchell and backed by the Hi Rhythm Section.

Her work in Memphis impressed Armen Boladian of Westbound Records in Detroit—so much so that he signed her to his label. During her six years with Westbound, LaSalle came out with twelve singles and three albums. Her first and biggest, “Trapped by a Thing Called Love,” hit #1 on the Soul chart and #13 pop in the fall of 1971. It also received a gold record for sales of one million copies.

Denise LaSalle and Bill Jones divorced in 1974. By 1976, she was living in Jackson, Mississippi, and signed with ABC Records. There, her biggest hit was 1978’s “Love Me Right.” ABC was later taken over by MCA, for whom LaSalle recorded three albums. In 1977, she married her second husband, James E. Wolfe, Jr. He was a disc jockey who later ran several radio stations and then became a preacher. In Jackson, LaSalle opened a restaurant called the Blues Legend Cafe. (It later closed.)

In 1982, she signed with Malaco Records as a songwriter, composing tunes for acts like Z.Z. Hill. LaSalle would later start her own label, Ordena, and put out albums like the two-disc set This Real Woman and the gospel release, God’s Got My Back. By 2002, she was recording for the Memphis-based Ecko Records. Her first album there was Still the Queen.

In 2009, LaSalle was honored with a marker on the Mississippi Blues Trail in Belzoni. In 2011, she was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame. In 2013 and ‘14, she



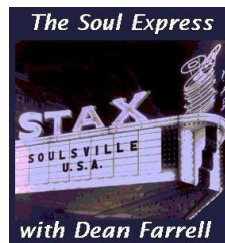
was nominated for a Blues Music Award in the category of Soul Female Blues Artist. And in 2015, she was inducted into the Rhythm and Blues Music Hall of Fame.

Denise LaSalle had serious health issues, including heart problems. In October 2017, her right leg was amputated due to complications from a fall. She died on January 8, 2018, surrounded by her family.

Rock critic Dave Marsh included “Trapped by a Thing Called Love” in his 1989 book, The Heart of Rock and Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made.

Charted singles:

- “Trapped by a Thing Called Love” (1971) R&B #1 (1 week), Pop #13
- “Now Run and Tell That” (1972) R&B #3, Pop #46
- “A Man-Sized Job” (1972) R&B #4, Pop #55
- “What It Takes to Get a Good Woman” (1972) R&B #31
- “Your Man and Your Best Friend” (1973) R&B #92
- “Don’t Nobody Live Here (By the Name of Fool)” (1973) R&B #67
- “Get Up Off My Mind” (1974) R&B #96
- “My Brand on You” (1975) R&B #55
- “Married, But Not to Each Other” (1975) R&B #16, Pop #102
- “Love Me Right” (1978) R&B #10, Pop #80
- “One Life to Live” (1978) R&B #87
- “Workin’ Overtime” (1978) R&B #70
- “P.A.R.T.Y. (Where It Is)” (1979) R&B #90
- “I’m So Hot” (1980) R&B #82
- “My Toot Toot” (1985) R&B #79



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.

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Simple Pleasures

By David Corsini

With all the doom and gloom we have endured recently, it is easy to slip into a depressive state. I have found that a partial remedy to mitigate this tendency is to focus on the simple pleasures in our lives.

Typically, I wake up before dawn. My first small pleasure is stepping out onto the front steps to assess the weather conditions, glimpse the western morning sky, and listen for bird calls. There are too many streetlights nearby to get a brilliant sky, but once in a while the sky is very clear and the stars and planets are distinct. I like that. There are no birdcalls in the dead of winter, but it is surprising how soon Carolina wrens, titmice, and then robins will call before the sunrise.

Then, after clearing the dishwasher and beginning the coffee, I check the eastern sky. Sometimes I am blown away by the sunrise. On the morning of December 13 the eastern sky was ablaze. Perhaps there was a huge fire down by the mills or maybe a volcano had erupted by the Frog Bridge. I hoped there was no need to evacuate and sure enough the sky mellowed out and I was left to smile at the beauty of nature.

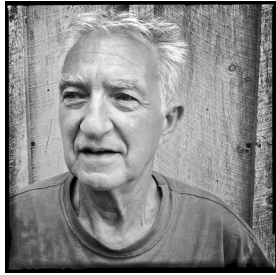
Because both Delia and I have a longstanding interest in the natural world, many of the simple pleasures we enjoy and share involve the antics of the birds and animals in our yard. We feed birds and, by necessity, squirrels year-round. What we feed and where we feed varies throughout the year. As I write this in early December, one of the feeding stations is on our deck, where the activity is easily observed through the sliding glass door. At this time of year, we feed sunflower chips, safflower seed, dried mealworms, suet, and water. There are at least twelve bird species that are regular visitors and we enjoy observing all of their antics. But there are two that give us a little extra boost. One is the Carolina wren that comes every day at 4 o'clock and collects seeds from a little tray on a platform. Often there is a pair. The second is a small flock of chickadees that eat seed and drink from a small rubber bowl that collects water from the roof. It is hard not to be charmed by chickadees.

Then there is Lefty the three-legged squirrel. About sixteen months ago we noticed a squirrel in our yard that had lost its right paw. We called her Lefty. During all of the summer, fall, and winter of 2020, Lefty would come regularly to the deck to eat sunflower chips. Delia and I frequently asked each other: "Have you seen Lefty today?"

We were very happy when Lefty made it through the winter and spring. But in the summer of 2021, we did not see her and were worried. But then Lefty reappeared in the fall and stayed the winter. Lefty provides a burst of happiness. While Lefty has a special place in our hearts, all squirrels give us joy. While there is more going on in our yard that gives us pleasure, our small pleasures are not limited to natural events.

In many months of the year, the flea market at the Mansfield Drive-in is open on Sundays. Most Sundays, Delia and I attend, looking for treasures. Our treasures are quite different. Because I make assemblages, my search is for items to incorporate into my art. Recently, I found a two-foot-in-diameter intricate, black metal piece that formerly held a clock. I painted it silver and attached a piece of orange glass. It is now in residence at Whitewater Park, accompanied by a silver bicycle wheel. Other recent finds have been some interesting silver-plated disks and multiple pieces of brightly colored glass.

Among Delia's recent finds have been matching lamps for our living room, a night table for Eva's room and a beautiful mahogany table in need of repair. The table, which had feathers carved into the legs, was resurrected into a memorial table for our late parrot Eureka by the able hands of Johnnie Walker. Delia has written about this in earlier *Neighbors* articles. The people and merchandise at the flea market are always a source of distraction and can provide finds that bring pleasure.



The flowering plants within our house, particularly in winter, are another source of joy. Delia has a way with plants and could be said to have a green thumb. There are always plants flowering in our house. Four years ago, Joan and Terry Webster gave us a cyclamen that was in full bloom. After it lost all its blooms and many of its leaves, it looked to me like it was on its way to the compost. But Delia recognized that it was not dead but going into dormancy. She put it in a north window with minimal water for the winter and spring. In late summer, the cyclamen began to sprout new leaves and, soon after, flower buds. This pattern has been repeated for four years. Now, in early December, it is sporting fifteen large flowers and with many more to come. Also at this time our Between-Thanksgiving-and-Christmas cactus is in full flower. And throughout the house there are plants sharing our lives. They require constant care from Delia but we enjoy them.

Not all my simple pleasures are within our house. One thing that gives me a lot of pleasure, particularly when I get my own lane, is swimming at the Mansfield Community Center. While no reservation to swim is needed currently, at one point during the pandemic a reservation had to be made online. The challenge in making a reservation was that it had to be made eight days in advance at exactly the same time of day you wanted to swim. So, you had to think eight days ahead and pick a time. If you forgot to sign up at your desired time, the time slot you wanted likely would be booked. Remembering to sign up was like a game.



When I succeeded in getting my time, there was a burst of satisfaction. While no reservations are needed now, there is no guarantee of a free lane when you show up. These days, happiness at the pool is getting my own lane.

I am particular about the socks I wear. I like wool socks. When I don't wear wool socks, I develop athlete's foot. However, I find that not all wool socks are equally effective. Two years ago I found some wool socks at Kohl's that gave me pleasure. I wore them out and as I threw them away, I held a brief memorial service—"sweet dreams, good friends." After those I tried several brands of wool socks. But it wasn't until I found Maggie's Organics Mountain Hikers merino wool socks at the Willimantic Food Co-op that my feet were happy again.

Something that has added to the pleasure in our lives throughout the summer and fall into winter is our participation in the community-supported agriculture provided by Russo's Roots in Canterbury. Every week in the summer, at the farmers' market, and every two weeks in the late fall and winter, at the farm, we receive a large share of organic vegetables: root vegetables, greens, squashes, and more. It has been lots of work for Delia, but by combining the vegetables with various grains and local fish from the fish market, we have enjoyed many delicious meals.

Pre-pandemic we had the habit of walking to downtown restaurants three times a week. As the pandemic eased a bit last fall, we started walking to the Main Street Café to eat outside. Both the eating out and the walking have been a simple pleasure that we hope to continue.

I make assemblages and do offer them for sale. But recently I have been finding it more rewarding to place my assemblages throughout the community. It gives me pleasure when people tell me they make them smile. Making assemblages for the community has given me a sense of purpose.

And finally, my simple pleasure at the end of the day is crawling into bed, holding Delia for a while, giving her the last kiss of the day, and turning over to sleep. What have been your simple pleasures?

When Your Freedom Hurts Your Business

By Delia Berlin



I recently returned from New York City. Surprisingly, in the midst of the Omicron surge, I felt safe riding the bus, eating at a restaurant, and going to museums there. In contrast, I have been avoiding similar activities at home. Why?

New York City has a mask mandate for public transportation and indoor public spaces. This means "public" as in "shared" and so, it includes elevators, stairwells, and hallways in private buildings. Masking is enforced and people comply. For example, at a museum I visited, a man briefly pulled down his mask to drink from a bottle. Within seconds, a security guard showed up and reminded him that no food or drink was allowed inside the museum, where masks had to be worn over mouth and nose at all times. The man quickly obeyed without a fuss.

The city also requires proof of vaccination to eat at a restaurant. Vaccine passports and IDs are checked outdoors, before accessing the premises. These requirements and other precautions instill enough of a sense of safety for business to be brisk. Most of the city appears to be functioning normally, even at the height of a Covid surge.

Meanwhile, in Connecticut, authority over mask mandates has been delegated to local governments. The most obvious problem with this approach is that Connecticut has 169 towns, all with different rules. Since many towns are just bedroom communities, larger towns like Windham act as hubs for shopping, entertainment, and other business. Therefore, even though Windham does have a mask mandate, many coming to shop in town seem uninformed or unwilling to comply. The mandate is neither enforced nor enforceable.

Just the other day, at Stop & Shop, a man ahead of us in the checkout lane was not only unmasked but very proudly so. He was wearing a green sweatshirt that read "PRO COVID" and a cap embossed with a profanity directed to the current president of the United States. His female companion, also unmasked and doing his bagging, kept her gaze averted. I detected a hint of shame, but it may have been my projection. The man glared at all around intermittently, while the essential worker checking him out tried to avoid his breath by staying behind plexiglass. I grieve for my country.

We would like to support local restaurants, but we have followed the public health recommendation of socializing only in small groups of fully vaccinated and boosted people. That has been impossible in Connecticut restaurants. I can't say if they are busy or not now, since we have not been frequenting them, but I can say that New York City rules, while appearing restrictive, have been helpful to the industry. The rules are actually liberating for the great majority of people, who got the shots to try to stay safe and protect others.

These rules affect other businesses too. Around Thanksgiving we started having intermittent problems with an appliance. We decided to replace it before it stopped working completely. Instead of going to a chain store, we visited a local independent business to order a replacement and schedule an installation. But soon after, Omicron began to explode and we remembered that the employees in that store had not been wearing masks, in defiance of our town ordinance. We worried about having an installer breathing inside our house in winter, at the height of a Covid surge.

I decided to call the store. I mentioned that we had noticed their lack of masks and wanted our installer to wear one. I was told that "that shouldn't be a problem" and I could just ask the installer. But I didn't really like to be the one who had to ask the installer. What if the installer came with a flimsy mask and wore it below the nose? Was I also supposed to enforce proper mask use in a person of unknown vaccination status?

As Covid cases increased and we started hearing about more Covid-positive people in our community, we decided this winter was not a good time to replace our appliance. We canceled our order and we will revisit the issue in spring, when at least our house will be more easily vented. Would we have been so hesitant if employees had been masked? Perhaps. But if a sign had stated "for the safety of our customers, our installers are 100% vaccinated and masked," we would have undoubtedly proceeded with the installation without concern. There is definitely a market niche out there and it's bigger than you think.

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Love and Money: Real Life Advice for Every Relationship Status

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



Few things can stress a relationship like the issue of money. From how to divvy up bills, to whether or not to share a bank account, to budgeting and how (and how much) to save and invest for the future can all present tense discussions. But they are essential discussions to have in order to ensure financial wellness for each of you as well as a healthy relationship. Here are some helpful financial tips to consider for various stages of a relationship.

Advice for Unmarried Couples

As unmarried partners, you need to decide whether to handle your finances separately, together, or in some combination. Whatever you decide, there are several important things to consider.

The most immediate need will be to decide how to handle household finances. If you prefer a simple financial arrangement and want to avoid the liability of a joint account, you can keep your finances separate and agree on how to divvy up expenses. Another approach is to open a joint checking account for shared bills, while keeping separate checking accounts for personal expenses. You can also opt to pool your incomes and pay expenses from a joint account. This may work best when you're in a long-term relationship, when your incomes are comparable, or when you've made equivalent tradeoffs.

It's also important to think about long term finances, particularly retirement. Will you plan for retirement separately or as a couple? Remember that unmarried couples lack certain benefits available to married couples, such as social security benefits and defined benefit pension plans, so you should consider creating your own separate safety net when it comes to retirement. Another option is to designate your partner as the beneficiary of your qualified retirement plan.

Merging Your Money When You Marry

Getting married is exciting, but it brings more financial planning questions into the mix. Planning carefully and communicating clearly are important, because the financial decisions that you make now can have a lasting impact on your future.

The first step is to discuss your financial goals. Start by making a list of your short-term and long-term goals. Next, you should prepare a budget that lists all of your income and expenses over a certain time period. You can designate one spouse to be in charge of managing the budget, or you can take turns keeping records and paying the bills.

At some point, you and your spouse will have to decide whether to combine your bank accounts or keep them separate. If you're thinking about adding your name to your spouse's credit card accounts, think again. When you and your spouse have joint credit, both of you will become responsible for 100 percent of the credit card debt. And if one of you has poor credit, it will negatively impact the credit rating of the other.

If you and your spouse have separate health insurance coverage, you'll want to do a cost/benefit analysis of each plan to see if you should continue to keep your health coverage separate. It's a good idea to examine your auto insurance coverage, too.

Finally, if both you and your spouse participate in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, you should be aware of each plan's characteristics. Review each plan together carefully and determine which plan provides the best benefits. If you can afford it, you should each participate to the maximum in your own plan.

How to Protect Your Finances If You Get Divorced

Divorce is emotional, and financial protection may not always be top of mind. But being cautious and prepared early on can help prevent financial stress later down the line. If you're in the midst of a divorce, keep the following in mind...

Make sure you're familiar with your family's finances, especially if you weren't as involved with them before, because nearly every financial aspect of your life is scrutinized and addressed during a divorce. Gather and protect important paperwork – the divorce process requires detailed records. Also do an inventory of your home to prevent headaches and stress later on. Through photos or video, document all items of value in your home and the condition they're in.

If you and your spouse share a joint credit card, you'll want to close the account as soon as possible. Neglecting to close the account could make you liable for paying any charges your spouse accrues on the card. On a similar note, it's likely your spouse is listed as the beneficiary for various accounts, policies and assets. If you'd like to change your beneficiary designations, you'll need to do so for every instance where they are listed.

Next, reevaluate your budget, because divorce isn't cheap. An uncontested divorce costs between \$600 and \$1,600 on average in lawyer fees, while a contested divorce could put you back upwards of \$15,000. Once the divorce is finalized, you may need to readjust your own expectations for saving and spending as a single person.

Lastly, build your team of legal and financial professionals. This can be a crucial step in protecting your assets and financial wellbeing during a divorce.

Whatever stage of life or relationship you're in, it pays to plan and be strategic in order to maximize your finances and meet the goals you have for yourself and your loved ones. At Weiss, Hale and Zahansky, we help our clients do this through a strategic Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well process that considers your entire financial picture, personal circumstances, and individual dreams and desires. Learn more about our process, our team and services at whzwealth.com.

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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, February 12th 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.

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First Friday of every month through June
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A Welcomed Encounter

By Brian Thomas Merrill

A walk whets the appetite. It's best done with the taste of pouring rain. You may not be tracking anything, but chances are, something may find you.

Hard drizzle poured off the front of my cap. Tipping it just so drained the excess without drenching my neck. Where the town road split, one leaving, the other staying, I took the outbound. Perched overhead, in a leafless oak, was a raptor. Soaked, still, and silent, it scanned the snowy playground. Probably in no mood for gawkers.

At first sight, I thought it could be my favorite 'call bird,' a raven, black as the oak, with feathers raised like pine quills, each shedding a tiny stream of rain. I had learned to mimic the irascible scrounger's rasp, or so I thought—until I heard a gang of them harass an eagle on an Adirondack lake. Aerial bullies are the worst until you hear a human imitator.

This hawk was no bigger than many ravens, yet its broad cowl and hooked talons were unmistakable. Hawks and owls can swivel their heads halfway around. Other birds? Aside from their waiting and circling, I know little of avian behavior—something poets ply in pretty phrases: mariner Coleridge with his ancient albatross for one.

At length did cross an Albatross: thorough the fog, it came; as if it had been a Christian soul, we hailed it in God's name.

With ebony eyes in a fathomless sea, the hawk turned towards me. It shook off the heavy rain, as if preparing to take flight to find a drier, sheltered niche. Then it settled again. I wandered into its homing zone and stared upward. The rain abated momentarily, giving me a sharper view of the pensive sitter in short-lived quietude.

Over the trees, a murder of crows rambled, circled and descended to the hawk's roost. Their complaints added sonic torment to the returning rain. The hawk never flinched.

Crows are bold enough, even casual observers agree. These were insolent, hopping from branch to branch around the quiet hawk, growing louder and more brazen with every stinging raindrop. A few, precariously close, began flapping their wings like tattered sails. I was rapt.

Why didn't the hawk leave?
"CAW, CAW...CAW, CAW, CAW." I belted out a long tirade of my

own, hoping to startle the pestering horde. After more blustering, arms flailing, I drove them away. When I regained composure, the hawk was throttling a crow in its beak, feathers dropping like chunks of excrement. It never left its perch—tossing the dead crow to the ground.

Troubler dispatched, the raptor preened its feathers, hunkered down and resumed its vigil. My eyes were fixed on



the spitting sky and the motionless hawk as it opened its beak, yawned and tilted its head downwards. Drenched and satisfied, it dozed off. My cue to go home.

I was famished by the commotion. A meal and sleep made sense. Why didn't hawk eat crow?

My friend, a self-professed "hawkologist" said the raptor was gorged. Too tired, too full to fly, hoping to be left alone. It killed the crow because the fool got too close, too troublesome. It wasn't hungry, it just wanted to sleep. The hawk read the scene and played its part. I witnessed an act of bullying terminated; the hawk took no prisoners. Peace resumed.

Days later, I drove by the playground and watched crows forage within eyeshot of their fallen compatriot. Do birds remember their last meal, fight, or flight from being eaten? Would I?

Dark birds fascinate me, especially the ones not easily flustered. Hard rain, long winters and forked roads are a favored respite for a soul who's seen too many easy ways—calm blue skies without a caw, or screech, only plaintive twitters—a lull from life's needful cries and the silence they hold dear.

Illustration by the author.

Mansfield-Willi Restaurant Week

Submitted by Margaret Chatey

The Town of Mansfield's economic development team has joined up with Thread City Development, Inc. in Downtown Willimantic to collaborate on a promotion to bring new customers out to local restaurants in the two communities. The Mansfield-Willi Restaurant Week will run Monday, February 21 through Sunday, March 6

"As the centers of cultural and economic activity in our region, we have a rich array of restaurants between Downtown Willimantic and Mansfield. We want to encourage folks to get out of the wintry doldrums, discover new restaurants or re-discover their favorites. Think about it—it's a culinary melting pot of ethnic foods to explore," says Chris McNaboe, President of Thread City Development. "The past two years have created unprecedented challenges for our restaurants. This is another opportunity to support our favorite establishments when they need it most. Within our boundaries are some very creative and innovative food concepts. Restaurant Week will provide our neighbors and destination diners from all

over a little incentive to explore what our communities have to offer."

The campaign to promote the participating restaurants will begin in mid-February once restaurants have registered. Prospective visitors will be able to preview menus through the Mansfield-Willi Restaurant Week website at Taste2Towns.com after restaurants sign on to join the promotion. Participating restaurants, which include counter and full-service, will offer multi-course offerings for a single price, known as prix-fixe. The promotion will include breakfast, lunch and/or dinner menus.

The initiative is also seeking sponsors who are interested in associating their product or business with Mansfield-Willi Restaurant Week. Prospective sponsors can find more information and register at <https://form.jotform.com/220046041891145>.

"We know that sharing a meal with friends is one of those activities that people enjoy most," says Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership who also leads Mansfield's economic development initiatives. "Wheth-

er people want to take home a special meal or come out of hibernation in late winter by dining out, our Restaurant Week will provide that chance. Our hospitality community offers an array of dining experiences, and we aim to position this area as a great dining destination," she adds.

Andrew Gutt, founder and owner of Stone Row Kitchen and Bar in Downtown Willimantic initiated the idea. An active leader with Thread City Development, he has already signed his restaurant on to the promotion concept. A growing list of participating restaurants also includes Fenton River Grille, Willimantic Brewing Company and Main Street Café, Dog Lane Café, Gansett Wraps, and Fresh Fork Café. Gutt says, "We're a robust hospitality community out here, often under-appreciated among top food centers in Connecticut. The cohesiveness of a Restaurant Week will help place us on that same stage."



"This area is unique and diverse. The conflux of generations of immigrants, agricultural to industrial history, and the new economy driven by two universities gives us an interesting locally and internationally diverse audience to develop concepts around," says Gutt.

"Add to that our robust agricultural surroundings and cottage industries—the set of tools for food ventures to work with out here is really extraordinary," Gutt adds. "We urge diners to come try a bite of our region."

Restaurant Week organizers were encouraged by a robust reception to another promotion in Downtown Willimantic in December called Jingle Bars. The event, which provided visitors the opportunity to visit multiple locations sampling the offerings of different venues, sold out beyond expectations. Customers seemed enthused to join with friends to try new places.

Restaurant Weeks are organized all across the country and typically provide a value-priced dining experience. It is believed that New York City hosted the first organized Restaurant Week in 1992.

The Button Box

By Kathy Lepak

It was years in the making; years of favorite patterns and fabrics; the cutting and stitching of shirts, dresses, vests, skirts and coats. My mother was a seamstress with extraordinary skills. She fashioned clothing for clients, for friends and always for family. We had new outfits for those special Easter Sunday services every year, along with the many costumes pieced together for school plays and clothes for special events. There were wonderful hand-knit sweaters every Christmas - some with buttons, some without. Images come to mind of gleaning buttons from old, worn clothing, and extracting the extra, unused buttons from the cards purchased at the fabric mill. The once empty box began to fill. Large buttons for wool coats, covered in the same wool fabric, small white ones for dress shirts; rings of similar styled buttons held together by wire or string were emptied into the box as time went on. The feeling of running my hand through the massive collection and trying to find those that matched, turned into a favorite childhood pastime. I pulled out buttons of leather, silver buttons with engraved patterns, small white buttons emblazoned with blue floral patterns,

raised gold buttons, and endless varied styles and tried to pair them up on the kitchen table.

It might very well seem as if something as small as a button, or a collection of them, could possibly be a valuable possession. However, looking through that octagonal box with the hinged lid and the imprinted scene on the top, brings my childhood back into focus; scenes of everyday life in the years following a world war. A time of make-do, a time of struggle, a time that demanded ingenuity and creativity. "Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without." An image of a young mother, sitting in a small corner of our very small kitchen, leaning over her Singer sewing machine, making school clothes for her two young children comes into focus; a mother who continued that tradition for years to come. Into his senior year in High School, my brother would go to the fabric store to pick out the materials and buttons to bring home so that she could make his shirts for the coming year. Throughout my school years and beyond, no one had the same clothes as I - they were stylish and unique, and helped me to become somewhat unique as well. Others may very well label me with slightly different adjectives, but I'll stay with unique.

As time passed and I became a new mother myself, I took on that tradition of making clothing for my young family and myself. I was not quite as proficient as my mother in the early years, but my lack of experience

did not deter me from taking the time to learn the skills needed from her. Although I never did quite attain her level of expertise, I was more than happy for our shared time together.

After her passing, as the eldest daughter, I chose to inherit my mother's button box, gifting her wedding ring and her diamond ring to my two younger sisters. I did keep a lovely gold necklace and a few smaller items, along with all of her beautiful, unfinished hand-pieced quilts, but truly prized the button box and its valuable memories. My own collection of buttons was added to hers.

Over the years, my children and grandchildren have enjoyed trying to match the styles and colors of the hundreds of buttons contained within the box, played counting games with its contents and I am sure, felt the same pleasure as they ran their hands through the overabundant collection. The button box and all of its memories still holds a special place in my heart.

The Neighbors paper
A little paper
Big on community

Agriculture. Really?

Coming to your town next?
Time to learn more and get involved.

By Claudia Ursin

A company called Agbotic, Inc. led by their Chairman, John Prete, a former utility executive, is showing up in our small rural towns selling a vision of “greenhouses” that use modern technology, create new jobs and contribute to the tax base. Using the term “alternative agriculture” this all sounds great; right? A closer look suggests not.

Research is underway and initial discoveries should sound alarm bells for our towns. The claim of “greenhouses” proposed for construction on open land, often which has sold its development rights to the State’s Department of Agriculture, is actually an industrial-scale complex (larger than a typical Walmart). A plan in Ashford called “Agbotic Paradise” is for 6 buildings with a 410 foot x 436 foot +/- building footprint (approximately 178,760 sq ft). This is larger than 3 football fields. These greenhouse factories use approximately 2 megawatts of electricity each day to power the automated systems including cloud/wireless communications, hi-tech machines, robots, fans, packaging machinery, 24-hour lighting and more. The six buildings will use up to 6,000 gallons of water per day (1000 gallons of water a day per greenhouse according to documents filed with the Town of Housfield, NY).

With the goal of maximizing production of leafy greens with accelerated crop cycles for continuous production of fully processed and plastic packages for retail sale just like a food manufacturing plant, these projects are all about high volume. Besides the major construction traffic impact, the factory-scale operation means a big increase in daily commercial traffic on our rural and scenic roads. It also means the hum of large fans, the night time glow of lighting, smells from continuous fertilizing, and more.

Although these food factories claim that they plan to produce salad products for high-end grocery stores and restaurants, if they don’t switch to industrial hemp or marijuana, everything they do is indoors, uses hi-tech machinery and requires modern industrial-scale infrastructure from electricity and trucking, to robots to minimize labor (a/k/a jobs). Maybe that’s why the majority of this fledgling industry known as “Indoor or Vertical Farming” is located in urban areas using creative building designs, rooftops, former factory sites and other locations close to population centers and the stores they seek to supply. This makes sense since the commercial infrastructure is already there, industrial and commercial sites are often sitting idle, and their customers are close by. Many examples can easily be found like the nearby plant on a former GE Factory site in Providence, Rhode Island <https://www.foodmanufacturing.com/home/news/21104959/gotham-greens-opens-hightech-greenhouse-at-former-ge-factory-site> and the recent approval of a development in a Colorado industrial park <https://www.reporterherald.com/2021/12/18/windsor-town-board-unanimously-approves-gotham-greens-incentive-package/>. What is notable and obvious is that building these factories in areas other than agricultural land, and using innovative designs like vertical structures, saves agricultural land. For example, a company named Plenty that recently announced an agreement to supply Walmart, claims that their approach “... condenses hundreds of acres of farmland into the size of a big box retail store. That’s efficient.”

Why then is Agbotic targeting agricultural land in Connecticut’s rural towns? Maybe it’s the opportunity to buy land cheaply, lure landowners with visions of pots of gold, or maybe it’s the chance to maximize tax breaks claiming their factories and machines are agricultural implements like they stated to the Town of Granby where an Agbotic proposal was rejected. Maybe, with the apparent “rubber-stamp” of approval from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, the very agency that is supposed to be protecting farmland from development, provides them the opportunity to expand their factories and add infrastructure like power generation equipment, all consuming more agricultural land. And, since Agbotic apparently has

not provided a business plan or explained how they will compete with the dozens of similar operations already in business in urban areas maybe they are just trying to see how far they can get (many similar companies are not profitable according to the CEO of Gotham Greens) . <https://www.forbes.com/sites/chloesorvino/2020/12/08/with-87-million-in-fresh-funding-lettuce-grower-gotham-greens-plots-greenhouse-expansion/?sh=4a2f5a0f615e>

Whatever the case, our communities and our elected officials need to find out more and demand details. It is notable that there are already allegations of misleading statements and deficient review processes like the current lawsuit in Mansfield <http://civilinquiry.jud.ct.gov/DocumentInquiry/DocumentInquiry.aspx?DocumentNo=21150159> and evidence of other actions which are



raising concerns about transparency and ethical conduct. The Department of Agriculture needs to explain how they can justify using taxpayer dollars to pay landowners for their development rights, only to then approve the destruction of the very same farmland with an industrial scale greenhouse factory, 96 times bigger than the total living area of the abutting residential home, which will have an irreversible impact on tillable soils. Trying to portray such industrial development as simply a “farm building” seems to be a massive stretch that is non-sensical. Why does Connecticut seem to be the only state promoting farmland destruction instead of optimizing the use of urban and industrial locations for these factories?

We must demand a careful, deliberate and transparent process. Communities must consider all the risks, the short and long term impacts and require evidence of the claimed benefits. For more information about the Mansfield Agbotic proposal, check out <https://bit.ly/3GYFQzC> by Ronald W. Cotterill Emeritus Professor, Emeritus Director of the Food Marketing Policy Center, now the Zwick Center, University of Connecticut.

Technology continues to enrich our lives. Creative entrepreneurs make our country special. Innovation is certainly helping agriculture be more productive while reducing carbon footprints. However; hi-tech factories on agricultural fields under the smoke screen of “Alternative Agriculture” needs the bright light of transparency and clearer thinking.

When something sounds too good to be true, perhaps it is.

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

Zen and the Art of Garage Sitting

By Bob Lorentson

Over the past half dozen years or so I have increasingly noticed an odd sight in my travels through rural and suburban America that I have come to believe is the beginning of a movement of some sort. Never mind the fact that it doesn’t involve any movement. I’m talking about garage sitting, the new activity-less activity whereby people with perfectly good houses and perfectly good TVs plunk down in a folding chair in the opening of their garage and watch the world go by. Or, perhaps for those with memories or imaginations of more tranquil times, to watch the world go bye-bye.

A curious thing about these garage sitters is that they are also likely to have perfectly relaxing backyards to escape to, in some cases complete with decks, patios, pools, grills, grass, and gardens enough to replace the world entirely with a substitute more to their liking. So who are these people who have turned their backs on their backyards and said the heck with the deck, traded the privacy fence for the seat by the street, birds and squirrels for cars and people, and who look as comfortable as if they’d been transported back to a 1950’s front porch swing?

From what I can tell, garage sitters are most apt to be men and women who are old enough to remember front porches and neighbors, at least neighbors who weren’t so prone to yelling “Get off my lawn!” It may have been started by some of the bolder ones who grew tired of peering at the world through curtained windows, but who weren’t quite ready for such public activities as walking the neighborhood. Garage sitters have the security of the home at their back and the adventure of the world at their feet, since the garage is connected to the driveway, the driveway is connected to the street, and the street is connected to the imagination, for it can go anywhere. Sitting quiet and alone at the entrance to the world can be a powerful Zen-like experience, marred only by the occasional dragon passing by in the form of a barking dog, a belching motorcycle, a screaming fire truck, or a door-to-door evangelist from an entirely different world.

I believe these garage sitters are the spiritual kin to the cave sitters of mankind’s early days, when the neighborhood was full of dragons that came in the from of large, hungry creatures who discovered that Zen-like experiences were meant to be savored, one practitioner at a time. It paid to be cautious then, as now, when it is only memories that can eat one up.

Some garage sitters, however, do so expressly to invite the world in. They might not have the welcoming front porch, but they do have a welcoming wave, an extra chair, and a thick enough hide to ignore the nagging to get out of the chair and do something for a change. News from the neighborhood is generally far more interesting than either news from the newspaper or from inside the house. Additionally, people watching with a friend is always more fun than doing so alone, and provides a terrific chance to really sharpen one’s critical evaluation skills. Experienced garage sitters strongly advise that anyone actively engaging in this sport keep the garage door remote close at hand.

Don’t despair if you’re a novice though and social media is as social as you’ve been for years. Dogs and babies offer great opportunities for engagement. If this sounds like something you’d like to try, just remember that it is usually enough to comment on passing dogs and babies, there is no need to procure them for yourself. Having cold beverages available however can help. And if you’re still having trouble drawing people in, try a garage sale. Why not, you’re already there, I’m sure you can find something to offer besides your spouse’s car. Do not, however, attempt to sell any dogs or babies you hurriedly procured in your rush to make new friends.

There is yet another category of garage sitter that has taken things to a whole new level. These are typically younger men who have moved the cars out of the garage and replaced them with car posters, not to mention rugs, recliners, TVs, beer fridges, pool tables, poker tables, and weekend football parties. Many traditionalists feel that this has gone too far, and that these people do not have the proper spirit of garage sitting. Many spouses feel they don’t have the proper spirit of garages. Or of relationships.

Already I have seen the signs that garage sitting is sweeping America, opening up new vistas to people feeling isolated in their homes and backyards. Soon, perhaps, fences will come down and neighbors will again be neighbors, sipping lemonade and chatting breezily in their garage openings as they wonder why they don’t have front porches. It could be worse. As this trend catches on, there are undoubtedly those like myself who will be looking pretty silly sitting on a folding chair on the driveway as we wonder why we don’t even have a garage.

For those interested in more of Bob’s writing, please check his website at www.boblorentson.com

Beginning America's Industrialization Mills of the Last Green Valley

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

Three main rivers – the **Quinebaug**, **Natchaug** and **Willimantic** – drain the *Last Green Valley* of Eastern Connecticut. The three rural valleys are a *National Heritage Corridor* that is less-developed between Hartford and Rhode Island, and darker at night. Quieter.

From above, the LGV might be seen as an elongated dark heart. An antidote for pandemic depression is **JOY** wherever you find it, perhaps herein... *Happy Valentine's Day!*

Rivers were the first highways. After **Boston's 1630** founding, placid flow across the Massachusetts plateau allowed easy passage and settlement along the 80-mile **Charles River**. Eastern Connecticut's watershed was another story. The Quiet Corner was blessed with woods for fuel and framing, and abundant if rambunctious water and rain to drink and grow food. Farmland was somewhat limited by narrow valleys descending to the sea. Hard passage, but falling water generated power. Mills profited (and polluted).

The *Last Green Valley* is still mostly forest and farms – 84% of the land -- among 35 towns. Remains take us back 300 years to the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, to the earliest mills and King Cotton, to the Era of Edison and Hydroelectricity. To the power of Eminent Domain as companies acquired private property in the guise of progress. To profit made and people paid as water quality degraded.

QUINEBAUG RIVER

Longest at 69 miles, the **Quinebaug** (plus tributary **Fivemile River**) offered *uber*-waterpower. Cotton, however, wasn't important here or in the colonial South before the American Revolution -- not until two revolutionary New England machines made cotton cloth and thread important everywhere.

In **1790**, the first modern massive textile mill in the nation began operating in Pawtucket RI, launching the American Industrial Revolution. And in **1794**, Eli Whitney of New Haven CT invented the cotton gin ("cotton engine") that easily separated cotton fibers from sticky seeds. (Windham Textile & History Museum).

KILLINGLY The "greatest cotton manufacturing town" in Connecticut -- in **1836** claims the Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society -- had six curtain factories, and was known as "*Curtaintown USA*" in the **1920s**.

Mill Remains The most picturesque ruin may be the **Sayles Mill** (photo below) in **Dayville** (Killingly rail station) where Route 101 crosses **Fivemile River**. The remains of a deteriorating brick tower along 101 are iconic... hurry while it lasts. Built of brick in **1882**, it was a "*modern building with model appliances for manufacturing*", eventually many brick buildings, now in decay. Brick is better than flimsy, fiery wood framing, but not as sturdy as granite.

More mill remains are up **Fivemile River**, and the farther north, the older. Off I-395, **Attawaugan Crossing** seems a stabilized brick mill, a work-in-progress; the mill village dates to **1865**, end of the Civil War, some thirty small wood duplexes in parallel rows like a military post. Farther north on the river toward **Ballouville** is an older defunct mill on a pond... farther to a haunting ruin, an early hybrid of fieldstone and brick. Farthest upriver on my limited quest were rumored remains near Stone Road of "**Daniels Village**" aka **Warsaw**, not found. A fine granite house at 18 Putnam Road may remain from one of Connecticut's first textile mills, now gone except for a dam. No sign, but I enjoyed looking. Only paddling would be more joyful.

West on Route 101, paddle up the **Quinebaug**

River against a low current in summer, to a massive stone wall (circa **1920**) "just before the river gets too shallow to paddle" writes Donna Dufresne ("*Big River, Big Dreams*", Neighbors, June 2021). This abandoned dam of the short-lived *Pomfret Power Company* was to generate electricity for Danielson mills thriving downriver by **1909**. The Great Depression damned the project.

VALENTINES East on 101, Zip's at I-395 has fine diner food for Valentiners. South on Highway 12 to Danielson, New York Pizza has hearty pizza and a bar at 8 Furnace Street.

DANIELSON The 2,000-acre triangle between the **Quinebaug** and **Fivemile Rivers** was purchased by James Danielson in **1707**. Within a century, there were many textile mills along both rivers. The industrial **Quinebaug**, Dufresne notes, was "choked with bleach, dye and other toxic chemicals" from mills by the early **1900s**. Better now.

NATCHAUG RIVER

Central in the *Last Green Valley*, the **Natchaug River** is 18 miles long (plus tributaries **Still River** and **Bigelow Brook**), and the pure heart of the **Thames** watershed. Not as industrialized, it has woodsy trails, rocky kayaking and Trophy Trout fishing (creel limit of two).

Natchaug is not a native tribe, but a *Nipmuck* (American Indian) word that means "*Land between the rivers*," the physical landform where two rivers become one.

CHAPLIN Diana's Pool is a geological gem off Scenic Route 198. Distracted Diana leapt to her death under a full moon, the lovelorn story goes, and when the moon is full, you can still hear her weeping over the water... The Pool is lovely in moonlight. Water cascades over small falls into 15-foot deep pool. Hazardous rock ledges prohibit swimming; nonetheless, jumping in the pool may still be a UConn rite of passage.

Upstream along the trail into **Natchaug State Forest** are remains of small mills, dams, stone houses and cisterns. Walks in these woods are a prehistoric time machine. Large boulders on ledges -- "*thunder rocks*", legend says -- were lifted with logs and dropped, booming to alert natives. Downriver, the **Fenton** and **Mt. Hope Rivers** flow into **Mansfield Hollow's** upper pond, two becoming one again as the **Natchaug** flows out. Up the **Fenton** near Storrs, **Gurleyville Mill** dates to **1749**, Connecticut's only remaining granite gristmill.

MANSFIELD HOLLOW Early as **1728**, a grist mill was grinding grain in the historic village that grew around the swift-running **Natchaug** and an early dam. Also a sawmill and blacksmith, an oil mill to extract linseed oil from flax seeds, and a fulling mill to finish homespun woolen cloth. Eventually a wooden multi-mill community. In the **1830s**, a mill made silk thread with "innovative winding and doubling machinery," later the Paisley Silk and Thread Company. (Mansfield Historical Society)

In **1882**, the enduring granite mill and clock tower was built by the National Thread Company (when Killingly's brick Sayles Mill was built), replacing wood buildings. Providence RI jeweler George Kirby bought the mill in **1902** to make eyeglass frames. Conveyed by estate in **1965** to UConn, Mansfield sold it in **1997** for two dollars to Sam & Michelle Shifrin.

Kirby Mill (photo right) is a handsome edifice that represents the continuing genius of American industrialization. Renovated with \$500,000 plus investment by the Shifrins in **1997**, Sam also invented an innovative water turbine to power the mill and some 250 homes in **2014**. Their former compa-

ny (now *Nustream LLC*) is still in the building, making evolutionary hydropower equipment that eliminates the need for a dam. Energy is harvested from existing systems with low environmental impact.

(Kirby Mill's parking lot along the Natchaug often hosts my morning coffee and newspaper with a Great Blue Heron. But he's gone for the winter.)

Mansfield Hollow State Park opened in **1952** with the 500-acre flood control lake created by damming the **Natchaug River**. Horse-riding, hiking, fishing (notably northern pike) and boating are encouraged. NO swimming is allowed since the lake is a public water supply, yet boat engines are allowed to pollute, I don't understand.

VALENTINES Maharaja Fine Indian Cuisine is nearby at 466 Storrs Road (195), Mansfield Center, with Tamboori oven and spicy Valentine fare.

WILLIMANTIC RIVER

The **Natchaug** joins the 25-mile **Willimantic River** slightly downstream from the city's "*Cotton Kingdom*" origins in the rocky ravines of western Windham. (Downriver, the two rivers become one, the **Shetucket River** flowing south toward the port of **Norwich**.)

WILLIMANTIC Thomas Edison wired Mill No. 2 for the Willimantic Linen Company in **1879**, the first electrified mill in America !!! Not turning the turbines (the river did that), but lighting the lights! Brighter and safer than gas.

King Cotton? Not as well known is Windham's role in the South's "*Cotton Kingdom*". Killingly may have manufactured more, but cotton created Willimantic, Connecticut! Now a small city, western Windham was mostly "scrub oak forest" with a few pre-industrial mills grinding grain, subsistence farms, two turnpikes and a tavern in **1820**.

But 40 years before the Civil War, the sparsely populated village of Willimantic Falls was able to profit on slave-picked southern cotton -- as many northern towns with waterpower. The Willimantic River was a waterpowerful gorge of steep hills, dropping nearly 100 feet in less than a mile. By **1826**, Willimantic had four cotton mills of granite and a post office. A turnpike, and railroad after **1849**, connected the mill village to a port city 15 miles away, Norwich at the head of the Thames River basin, thus to Deep South cotton fields. "*Cotton was 'King' in New England as well as in the South.*" (Windham Textile & History Museum).

'The Cotton Kingdom' was published in **1853** by Frederick Law Olmsted, a young journalist from Hartford who revealed the South's dependence on cotton. (By **1886**, the nation's first landscape architect would design Boston's Emerald Necklace and Arnold Arboretum.)

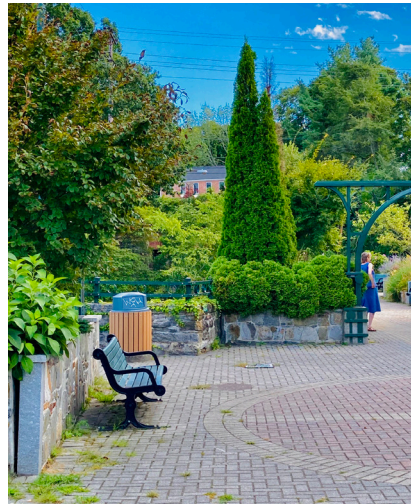
VALENTINES Pho Delight at 920 Main Street, Willimantic, is a new Thai dining find with pineapple coconut curry (mmm good takeout on home-baked salmon) and pho noodle soups.

Garden on the Bridge (photo above) Willimantic's handsome granite architecture is now a model of redevelopment with apartments for artists, and the celebrated Garden on the Bridge. Last year, *Friends of the Garden on the Bridge* were evaluating the aging park that dates to the **2005** transfer of the granite bridge to the town. Now? We lost a year and more, I'm not quite sure.

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." - Dr. Seuss

Yet gardens grow again each spring.

IF YOU GO Kirby Mill Dam is at 114 Mansfield Hollow Road, Mansfield. Garden on the Bridge is opposite the Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic.



Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Master gardener/designer and Wanderer, Chaplin
Photos were contributed.

The Materiality of Relationships: Navigating All that Remains

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

“Death ends a life, not a relationship.”

—Morrie Schwartz (in *Tuesdays with Morrie*, by Mitch Albom)

Last October my 92-year-old mother passed away peacefully and willingly at Windham Hospital, having come to stay with us for what we thought was backache but which turned out to be terminal cancer. She left behind her Princeton, New Jersey, house of forty years, full of her beloved art, artifacts, books, clothes, jewelry, and furniture, as well as her hand-nurtured palatial garden and cat. Without going into much detail, it needs to be mentioned

that my mother’s house had already been sold and that she had been the new owner’s tenant for several years. What this meant was that we were now faced with the monumental task of cleaning out and saying goodbye to her house and all its contents by the end of the year, as the owner had plans to resell it for demolition and development.

I am sharing this story as it is one no doubt many will or have already faced. The loss of a loved one is often followed by differently, yet nevertheless still painful emotions while sorting, curating, saving, letting go of the loved one’s stuff (and therefore one’s own), both ephemeral and more permanent, including their house. This involves evaluating the multiple “values” that become ascribed, embodied, and attached to stuff, both our own and that of others. And given that ultimately all values are

socially constructed, including monetary values, taking this process into one’s own hands in relation to one’s own stuff, as well as that of a loved one, is an exhausting and multifaceted process. Of course, my mother’s house was also my house, from the age of 13 even up to this past summer, when I spent many weeks visiting, and so in it lived my life memories, marks, ghosts, and items, as well as all of hers, my father’s, and my brother’s. As such, a question I was left to ponder in the fog of loss with the support of my wife, my stepson and his partner, and other friends of mine and my mother’s, was what does one keep, what does one let go of, what does one give away and to whom? Additionally, when such choices are made, what does one do with all that which one chooses to keep—where does the stuff actually go in terms of fitting into one’s own house and life, and what role do we seek it to play in terms of fulfilling Morrie Schwartz’s insight that death ends a life, not a relationship?

The central answer that we came up with over the weeks (we went to New Jersey weekend after weekend and rented multiple moving trucks) was that we would engage with every item—from the smallest, like pieces of paper (such as letters from my grandfather), to the largest, like beds and dressers—and make gut-level, heartfelt decisions as to where they would best belong. Yes, we decided to keep much stuff that had sentimental and aesthetic value, but we also aimed to gift-forward as much as we could, as per my mother’s request. As a result, in our house there is now new life in terms of how her belongings have melded with ours, keeping some of their original essence while also changing in the context of their new location. I can now walk around my house and be bathed in memories, moments, sights, and textures—the materiality of my extended life and relationships continue. In my stepson’s house, I can now see artwork by my mother—his step-grandmother—as well as in our neighbor’s house, in our friends’ houses, and so on and so on. Additionally, my mother had a greenhouse with 15-foot trees, and so we have rented a studio space next to our own art studio and created a mini version of her house with some of the larger and most aesthetically pleasing pieces. It is a bit like a museum installation, but the trees make it vibrant, and now that we have held a number of memorial-type events

in that space to honor her, we are ready to transition it into an artistic event salon that will bring new life and dynamic ways of being in relationship with her and her former possessions. Thus, we seek to avoid holding onto and seeing stagnate all that has and must pass, even as many actual items remain.

As for all that we could not keep, even if we had wanted to (we all have limits to how much space we have, assuming we don’t want to cross the line into obsessive possession), we drew up lists and charts of who we knew would get what, including (as mentioned) much of her original artwork. In fact, we set up an art show in her house and invited her friends and neighbors for an art and plant giveaway, which we had planned with her before she died. She gained great delight from the idea of her friends coming to her house and leaving with a piece of art under one arm, a plant under the other, and walking down the street sobbing—and so it happened. We had photographed her artwork before giving it away and made a book of her work that we gave away at her memorial and to friends and family around the world.

We also held a “garage give-away” that we advertised in the local paper, which included inviting people to dig up her garden—and, as counter-intuitive as it might sound, it was an inspiring day. The reason I say this is that as soon as people heard that my mother had died, that the house was to be demolished, and that we were doing what we knew she would want, the love, appreciation, honoring, and help poured in. People gave us gifts, hugs, smiles, and offers of help, and it became what can only be described as a magical day. Between the pulses of my own heartache was an elation that was as true to the essence of my mother as any memory I could utter or write. In fact, as I said to many who passed through our web of life that day, it was as if each item was a seedpod from the mother plant that would now be carried out on the winds of people’s own desires to connect to the materiality of stuff and thereby create new relationships and new ways of turning what remains into what renews.

And so, what I can share from this ongoing experience (much is still in boxes that need to be resorted, reevaluated, and so on) is that when your next loved one passes and you (hopefully with the help of others) have the task of navigating all that remains, take as much time as you can (we did not have much time, but the time we did have we used intensely) to make decisions about what to keep, how to keep it, and where to keep it, so that you can extend the materiality of the relationship in a new and energizing form. However, also find ways to pass on for free, if possible, what can still be enjoyed by others, as it makes the process much easier and more heartfelt, while recognizing that at some point we must also let go of all that we cannot save and that has come to its end (as in the case of my mother’s house) and grieving accordingly. For as I look back on the weeks before my mother died, to her actual death and to the months of sorting through and repurposing/placing her stuff (and by the way, her cat now lives in Willimantic on “Godfrey Street” and she has also grown and changed as a result of her experiences), I do not see them as separate but rather as the endless waxing and waning of distinct yet equally necessary threads of life that weave together our interdependent, relational, and ever-evolving identities.



Saying good-bye to my mother’s house. Left to right: Tina Shirshac (Phoebe’s wife), Phoebe, Dylan Fedora (Phoebe’s step-son) and Chris Dubis (Chris’s partner).

Photo contributed by author.



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'Tis the Treason of Our Folly

By Donna Dufresne



The Christmas season limped into late November in a fatal attempt to reclaim life as we knew it before Covid. Amid crowded stores and airports, at family gatherings that included the unvaccinated and the unmasked, blue-blooded Americans flaunted that good old American patriotic spirit: "Omicron be damned!"

But this pony is not yet broke, and we cannot expect to ride it out on the coat-tails of American grit and exceptionalism. Although 62.8% of Americans have been vaccinated, the other 37.2% have thrown caution to the wind and given up the fight in a feeble-minded spate of libertarianism. A few may have legitimate health reasons for not getting vaccinated, but there is no excuse for the "unmask our kids" crowd, egged on by disruptive politics, Foxy disinformation, and social media. Many of the newbie civil libertarians appear to shop at Killingly Commons, where the sentiment at large is no longer "America First," but "Me First." Duped by the political ruse that civil liberties are threatened by wearing a mask, they have put the rest of us at risk, not only for the virus, but for the loss of democracy itself. Anti-vax and anti-mandate protests have led to disruption and chaos in the health system, schools, and the economy, and caused governmental impotency. We are quickly spiraling downward into a dumbocracy, opening the door to autocracy and fascism. Another Trump.

Liberty without a covenant, liberty without a social contract, becomes the design of its own undoing. A few weeks ago, I started an editorial essay titled "Time for an Anti-vax Tax." But Quebec beat me to it. The Canadian spirit evokes the kind of brotherly love that democracy is supposed to uphold. Doing the right thing, looking out for your neighbor and your community, and governance for the greater good. It is the antithesis of the current American zeitgeist: ME! ME! ME! AND ME TOO! Americans have lost their moral compass, and with it their true liberty.

Lady Liberty was already gasping for air by the time January 6, 2021, rolled into the United States Capitol, and she continues to wheeze in 2022. In a blatant act of treason and hypocrisy, Trump and his henchmen cheered the crowd to attack the Capitol building. Whereas he threatened to turn the armed forces against a peaceful Black Lives Matter protest, Trump encouraged pseudo patriots like the Oath Keepers to join him in a ragtag militia and an attempted coup—an assault on democracy. It was an act of terrorism yielding the violent symbols of white supremacy: the

hangman's noose, the Confederate flag. Justice may have prevailed when President Biden was sworn in, but it has been severely wounded, because of Trump's seditious pattern of speech, lies, propaganda, and actions. In the spirit of a true megalomaniac, Trump has demagnetized the needle in our moral compass and pointed the arrow toward himself. Unfortunately, he remains the pied piper of disenfranchised whites, nationalists, and wannabe patriots, leading us all down the path to ruin.

The phrase "Give me liberty or give me death" has taken on new meaning for those who refused to get vaccinated or wear a mask and found themselves in the ICU. But it has also distorted the meaning of our civil liberties. Without a covenant and a moral compass, our "liberties" have become an anachronistic exercise in hypocrisy. The right to bear arms was not intended as a green light for a child to access a gun and shoot up a school or murder protestors of police violence. The right to petition the government was not intended as a free pass for sedition, violence, and destruction. The right to the pursuit of happiness was not intended to give free range for the destruction of the planet for the sake of personal greed. Certainly, no one could have imagined that the hard-earned right to vote in the 1960s would revert to the return of Jim Crow voting laws in the twenty-first century.

Although he tipped the scales away from long-standing democratic principles, Trump is not the only one who has led the nation away from reason and toward treason. Unfortunately, we lost several generations of active citizens when public education bought into the corporate, data-driven model of high-stakes testing. History, civics, science, and critical thinking were taken out of the elementary education curriculum. We've created our own undoing, reverting back to a classist education where only the students in elite private schools and those tracked for college learn about American history and the function of government. Generations have had their inalienable right to a good public education ripped off by a conservative movement driven by racism and the "moral majority," whose intent was to dismantle public schools and implement school choice. Because of civic illiteracy, Americans can't tell the difference between communism and fascism, and they surely don't understand a democratic republic. More important, they have forgotten the role of citizenship in the collective WE. The so-called patriots of the Trump regime should put the US back in USA. Meanwhile, participatory democracy has been reduced to errant children stomping their feet, refusing to follow science and protocols during a pandemic. It has led them into the waiting arms of treason and sedition, the folly of our ignorance.

The Elements of Writing-

Epiphany

By Felix F. Giordano

In everyday life an epiphany is defined as an experience of a sudden and striking realization. Epiphanies often occur in real life during either emotional or reflective moments. They happen when someone either learns something that completely changes their belief systems, causes them to reflect on what just happened, or an incident occurs that results in their lives becoming very different from that time forward. Perhaps it's when they find out that someone wasn't being truthful or when they determine the best course of action runs contrary to everything that they have been taught. Either way, it has the power to jolt a person and in some cases the impact can cause them to make a change that will affect them for the rest of their lives.

But some epiphanies are not so dire. They can be as heartwarming as a coincidence. Take for example this moment of epiphany for a couple I know. One spouse was born in 1948 and the other in 1957. If you add all the numbers for their birth years they total 44 which is the U.S. Route they live on. If you then add the last two digits of each birth year they each total the number 12. In addition, one spouse was born on the 31st of a certain month while the other was born on March 1st, or 3-1. The final coincidence, they were each born on a Friday. They didn't comprehend all these coincidences until a few years after they were married. To them, the epiphany taught them that they were destined to be together.

In literature, an epiphany is often used as a mechanism to instill upon a reader a sense of awe or create an "aha" moment. It can be conveyed either in a positive or negative light and the characters affected by it can either react to it with acceptance or respond to it with rejection. Epiphanies can teach us about the characters in a story since how they react to the epiphany often reveals their virtues and flaws. Epiphanies can be thought-provoking and occur at the spur of the moment or be events marked by profound insight. They are often used as turning points and usually are inserted later on in the story when the reader isn't expecting it.

Many epiphanies involve characters finding about deep and sometimes dark secrets hidden away from most people until they are all but forgotten. Perhaps their parents aren't really their parents, the person they thought was ignoring them is someone who is just trying to deal with a life or death situation, or the employee from the mailroom is really a superhero.

There are many examples of epiphanies in film and literature. How often have we read a book or watched a movie where a law enforcement officer is investigating a series of crimes and later in the story his partner is revealed as the real criminal. That is an epiphany. Most everyone is familiar with the Star Wars saga. The huge epiphany in Star Wars is when Luke Skywalker finds out that Darth Vader is his father and Princess Leia is his sister.

Usually epiphanies result in a revelation embedded into the story. The facts were always there but were so well hidden that the epiphany surprises us. I won't mention the name of a certain film because I don't want to create a spoiler but in the film the citizens of a city are besieged by what appears to be an alien invasion. It's not until the last third of the movie that we learn the invading aliens are in fact humans

and who we thought were the humans are really androids. That flash of realization becomes the "aha" moment. When you look back at the film or view it a second time you can spot the subtle clues that hint at the upcoming epiphany.

In my first novel, *Montana Harvest*, sixteen year old Alma Rose Two Elk was led to believe that her aunt, Sarah Whispers Two Elk was her mother. However, her real mother was banished from the reservation when Alma Rose was an infant due to a tribal council ruling based upon Alma Rose being born out of wedlock. The man Alma Rose believed to be her uncle who is also a county sheriff, was really her father and that secret was also kept from her. When Alma Rose's aunt needed a liver transplant, Alma Rose donated blood for the surgery. An astute nurse recognized that a daughter/mother relationship was biologically impossible due to the different blood types and revealed that fact to Alma Rose. The nurse also discovered a criminal organ donor conspiracy was in the works at the hospital and told Alma Rose's father. The emotional upheaval of this epiphany was so intense that in the novel, Alma Rose and her real father had a confrontation in the hospital where he also revealed to her that he was not her uncle. She says to him, "Today I found out my mother is not my mother and now I find out that my uncle is not my uncle?" Her father then tells her who he really is. She ends up slapping him in the face and then runs out an emergency exit with the alarm blaring. My intent was to make this epiphany for Alma Rose so powerful that she showed to the reader both her built-up emotions and the forceful actions that she took. The epiphany hit her on an emotional level and disrupted everything that she had believed in for sixteen years.

We all know that as writers we see our characters come to life right before our eyes and do things that we sometimes don't expect. Make the epiphany scene do just that. Let your characters act out that scene and see how they respond to the epiphany. If you have to rewrite the scene more than once, do it. If you've done the proper preparation and planned out the scene and what will come next then the characters' actions will seem real. When you write an epiphany in your story, for it to be effective it should affect you emotionally. Make sure that it has such a moving impact that it will even take your own breath away.

We defined "Epiphany" 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 Willington Public Library. Please call (860) 429-3854 for more information.

Next Month's Topic: Climax



Community Media and Regional Arts

By John Murphy

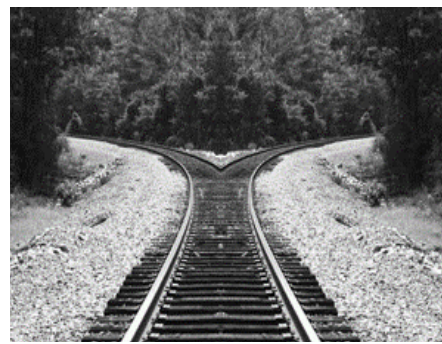
Greetings everyone, I hope you are making it through our winter and keeping the faith for a better 2022.



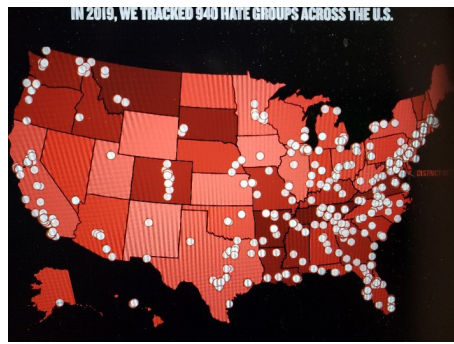
Despite the continuing political surprises and bad behaviors from too many of our public servants across the spectrum, we can still end this year on a higher note than it began. As a nation we need to get it together!

This is an important mid-term election year, and that means we have another opportunity to get our media in better shape to serve the nation and support the kind of *dialogue and exchange* that our republic and its democratic processes so desperately need. But it is a mess—we agree on that part but not on how to fix it.

Is There a Free and Safe Media Space for Engaging the Hate in Our Media Landscape?



our polarized media is at a point of no return



from the Southern Poverty Law Center website



We Need Dialogues at the Extremes to Make a Lasting Peace



This month I will focus on a renewed effort to connect with people at our political and social extremes, to co-create new dialogues for mutual understanding and respect. No fake or feigned “polite chats” with no truth or reality that lasts after the talking stops, but rather a free and safe media space for co-existence and exploration among those with strong differences. We do NOT have this space! Our many available media silos for like-minded people to talk to and reassure each other, and for preaching to the converted just don’t make it!

My July 2021 column covered this issue in depth with several resource links, and if you are interested it is posted in the *Neighbors* archive: <https://neighbors.pageflip.site/editions/NP33034#page/21>. I received a mixed bag of over 100 comments, some complimentary and others highly critical, usually from those unhappy that I would consider giving an open mic to those on the extremes. But what does “extreme” mean in a country that is losing its center? And it is “nonpartisan” my ass—even an ass needs two cheeks! If you don’t have two then how can you turn one when you need to? Seriously. In the mental space where alleged human communication occurs, if it is *all me* full force straight ahead to the goal then there is no room for anyone else and no time for a pitstop. Simple, even banal, but still true. This is our dilemma—not enough time and no safe space.

The cliché holds, our media is the problem and the solution. It is a matter of access and control. At the local level you potentially have the best of both—plenty of time available and a safe space without the usual corporate, religious or other influences. Local has economic problems now but local still holds potential for viable sustainable scaled service. This is the beauty of *Neighbors* and all our local media in any form. See last month’s column for a review of a new regional media collaborative that would create a multi-media media hub for community service at <https://neighbors.pageflip.site/editions/NP64398#page/15>

Since the July column, I have reached out on many websites of so-called “extreme” groups and sent emails and replies that asked about interviews and opportunities to reach the public for open discussion and information exchange—without the usual baggage or histrionics. Just a simple conversation to make more sense of what is happening and why. But so far, I only hear the crickets and it is very disappointing. I am doing this again this month, with more than a polite invitation—it will be a challenge for these folks to have the courage and integrity to open and just share a conversation that honors unfiltered truth and exchange of ideas with no manipulation (or arguing).

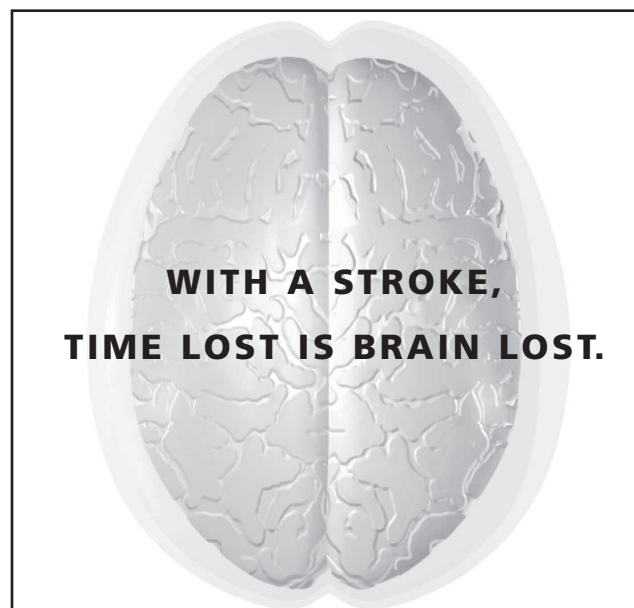
If you are an activist in any form and you are *pushing the limits* of ideas or actions or proposals for making things better, then you have a free and safe media space available—and you are invited and encouraged and challenged to speak up! We need some mental BBQ in the local studios!

This effort is a tribute to Lewis Hill, a broadcaster who created a new kind of radio after World War II—based on using the microphone instead of the gun to make peace after the greatest failure in human history, and in the face of the emerging Cold War. He opened his studio to the American Nazi Party and the lefties went crazy. He gave the same mics to Communists, and he was called a Communist. Malcolm X said it was going to “the ballot or the bullet” in 1964, before the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Acts were passed, and in 2022 I say no shit! At some point the old home movies will become so painful to watch that something will get done, amen.

Do you know (or remember) that the KKK held a rally here about 40 years ago? A newsman from a local radio station covered the gathering and aired a tape of a young boy sitting on his dad’s shoulder’s saying how nice and warm it was to stand near the burning cross. I can still hear that kid today when I listen to the news. How far we have come!

Thanks for reading *Neighbors* and for doing what you can, in any way, to support our local community. Always keep the faith, see you next month!

John Murphy
john@humanartsmedia.com
WILI Arts Radio Wednesdays 5:35 pm at 1400 AM and 95.3 FM
WECS Radio Wednesdays 12—3 pm at 90.1 FM and www.wecsfm.com



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The Packing House – An Intimate Listening Room!

By EC-CHAP

February

“February is short and very sweet”

- Charmaine J Forde

What a January... World tension; increased COVID positivity rates; apprehension; unusual weather conditions; cancellations - you name it. We hope you have remained safe and healthy through this challenging month.

The Packing House, Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum, and Dye & Bleach House Community gallery remain open with the following COVID Safety Protocols:

Proof of Full Vaccination or Negative COVID Test within 72-Hours (administered by a health professional) & Masks Required | 50% Capacity | Socially Distanced Tables | and Mandatory Sign-In (should Contact Tracing be required).

EC-CHAP is grateful for grant awards received from DECD, Connecticut Office of the Arts, and Connecticut Humanities. This funding has allowed us to offer opportunities for access to programming that did not exist in the past. EC-CHAP will soon be offering listening devices for the hearing impaired at live performances, and live streaming of performances for those unable to physically join us. EC-CHAP also plans to create and offer live and virtual program series in a variety of topics.

We have a great lineup of new and returning artists and this month we will begin to include a “Save The Date” section, as well as details for current month offerings. We are excited to welcome **STEVE KATZ back to The Packing House - Saturday, April 2nd. Mr. Katz is a founding member of Blood Sweat and Tears, offering an Intimate Evening of Song and Stories from an incredible musical career.**

We hope to see you soon as we begin February with the following performances and events:

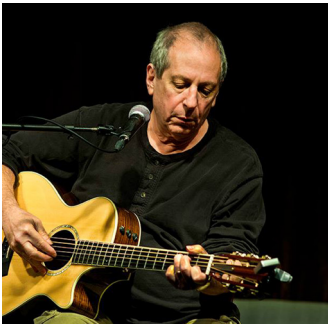
FEBRUARY 2022

EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: “Gracie Day with Calendula” (Folk/Americana). Saturday, February 5th, 7:30pm.

GRACIE DAY released her first EP in November of 2017 and quickly won attention for her songwriting, singing and performances, achieving “Best New Act” in 2017 and “Best in State for CT” in 2018 at the New England Music Awards, an organization that acknowledges musical acts throughout all six states. Also, in 2018, Day was a semi-finalist in the international Unsigned Only Songwriting Contest, and nominated in the prestigious Boston Music Awards.

Before her recent move to Massachusetts, Gracie Day lived in the greater Hartford, Connecticut area where she first started performing music and establishing herself in the arts community. Her episode of the TV show “Amplify” on Connecticut’s PBS was nominated for an Emmy in the New England Chapter. Despite winning “Best Folk Band” in CTNow’s Best of Hartford Reader’s Poll in 2017, the genre “Folk” does not quite describe the mixture of rock and soul in her sound. Day cites her parents’ music of the 60’s and 70’s having the largest initial influence on her love of music.

Opening for Gracie will be local singer/songwriter and EC-CHAP Artist-In-Residence, “Calendula” (Abigail Golec). You can see Calendula’s debut performance at The



Packing House along with “Moon Basket” on March 19th. Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 Cash at the door.

EC-CHAP Talent Showcase. Wednesday, February 9th, 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, February 17th, 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: “Special Program with Sally Rogers - Singer/Songwriter and Textile Artist” (Folk). Saturday, February 19th, 7:30pm.

Folk singer, songwriter and educator SALLY ROGERS has performed from coast to coast for forty years! She has performed for audiences around the world at festivals, concerts, schools, and most any other public place you can imagine. Sally is equally talented at stirring a crowd to sing, or at using music to draw out even the shyest child in a classroom to become an active and enthusiastic participant.

Widely known for her crystal clear voice, Sally accompanies herself with guitar, banjo and mountain dulcimer. Many of these instruments are used in her solo performances, as a duo with her husband Howie Bursen, with long-time buddy Claudia Schmidt, or as part of her interactive school residencies.

In addition to your musical talents, Sally is an accomplished textile artist, creating unique and colorful quilt panels. This special program will include songs about textiles, some commentary on the quilts and the songs you



expect to hear from Sally. Her work will be on display and available for viewing during her performance. Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

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 EC-CHAP at: info@ec-chap.org.

We leave you with the following:

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart.”

-Helen Keller

Keep the faith!
EC-CHAP Board

SAVE THE DATE(S)

February 2022:

Saturday, February 5th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Singer/Songwriter Gracie Day with Calendula (Folk/Americana). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

Wednesday, February 9th: 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, February 10th: EC-CHAP Information Exchange Meeting. The Packing House. 5:00pm

Thursday, February 17th: EC-CHAP Film Screening – “The Sapphires” (R) 2012. Doors 6:30pm / Screening 7:00pm

Saturday, February 19th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Special Program with Sally Rogers - Singer/Songwriter and Textile Artist (Folk). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

March 2022:

Saturday, March 5th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Poor Monroe (Bluegrass). RESCHEDULED from January 29th. Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

Wednesday, March 9th: 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, March 10th: EC-CHAP Information Exchange Meeting. The Packing House. 5:00pm

Saturday, March 12th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Sperry Creek (Bluegrass). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

Thursday, March 17th: EC-CHAP Film Screening – “Midnight in Paris” (PG-13) 2011. Doors 6:30pm / Screening 7:00pm

Saturday, March 19th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Calendula with Moon Basket (Indie/Folk). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

Saturday, March 26th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Foolish Wisely (Indie/Folk). RESCHEDULED from January 8th Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

April 2022:

Friday, April 1st: EC-CHAP Special Program – An Evening with Spiritual Medium Maura Geist. Doors 7:00pm / Program 7:30pm

Saturday, April 2nd: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – An Intimate Evening of Music and Series with Steve Katz (Rock). Founder of Blood, Sweat, and Tears. Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

Wednesday, April 13th: 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, April 14th: EC-CHAP Information Exchange Meeting. The Packing House. 5:00pm

Thursday, April 21st: EC-CHAP Film Screening – “20-Foot from Stardom” (PG-13) 2013. Doors 6:30pm / Screening 7:00pm

Saturday, April 23rd: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series Seat Of Our Pants (Folk/Bluegrass/Americana). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

continued on next page

Folk(s) with Revolutionary Spirit

By *Calendula*

As part of my EC-CHAP Artist Residency, I've been working on a project. This project has taken the form of an album. Titled *Loveletter*, the work reflects my thoughts and feelings about class politics in conjunction with climate change, and is made up of a number of original songs, as well as reimagined protest tunes from some of my favorite folk artists.

At its heart, the album is meant to tell a story about love – for the planet and for each other – and it imagines the possibility of a better world for all of us.

I want to take this opportunity to share a bit about some of the artists that I've been inspired by throughout this process.

Buffy Sainte-Marie is an Indigenous Canadian-American singer songwriter, composer, activist, educator, and icon. Her accomplishments are numerous and include winning an Oscar (the first Indigenous person to do so), creating one of the world's first electronic vocal albums, and writing numerous pop standards for various artists – from Janis Joplin to Joe Cocker. She's been a unique force for artistry and humanitarian efforts in the music industry, and her work has particularly focused on issues facing Indigenous peoples of the Americas throughout her career. Her unique voice and brilliant lyrics are moving in a way that sends goosebumps down my arms – her songs, "Universal Soldier," "Little Wheel Spin And Spin," and "Cod'ine" are some of my personal favorites. She released her first album in 1964 and is still performing and making music today.



Phil Ochs was an American songwriter and protest singer. He was known for his sharp wit and sardonic humor, and his music centered around political activism. He wrote hundreds of songs, released 8 albums, and performed at many political events during the 1960's counterculture era, including anti-war demonstrations, civil rights rallies, and organized labor events. Unfortunately, his mental health took a turn for the worse as his career progressed, and he died young, at the age of 35. I love so many of his songs, but "Power and Glory" is one of my favorites – particularly the demo version, which includes a "controversial" verse.

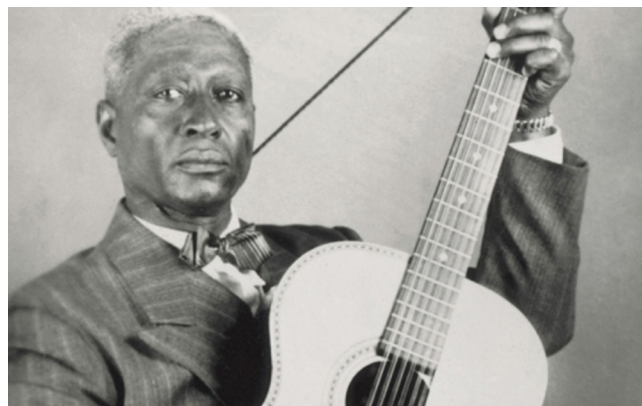
Odetta was an American singer, actress, guitarist, lyricist, and human rights activist. She was often referred to as "The Voice of the Civil Rights Movement." She influenced a variety of key figures in the 1960's folk revival including Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and Janis Joplin to name a few. She is remembered for her performance of "O Freedom" at the March on Washington in the 1963 civil rights demonstration. Her voice is stirring and deep. I find the album, "Odetta Sings Folk Songs," particularly inspiring.

Judy Collins is a singer songwriter and social activist. Her music spans a wide variety of genres, but her folk repertoire is my favorite. Funnily enough, when she was starting out, her music became popular at the University of Connecticut, where her husband taught. In addition to performing at parties in the area, she also performed at the campus radio station, our local 91.7 WHUS FM. Her song, "Bread and Roses," is a beautiful commentary worker's rights as well as women's rights and was inspired by a speech given by American suffragist and worker's rights activist, Helen Todd.

While most of the tunes I mention above are from some time ago, I find much wisdom and passion in them. They speak about struggles that are still relevant today, and they do it in a way that gets you to listen.

Loveletter will be released in May, and I'm excited to premiere some songs from it at The Packing House on March 19th.

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



Huddie William Ledbetter (aka Lead Belly) was an American folk and blues artist, known for his strong vocals, musical virtuosity on a number of instruments (particularly the 12-string guitar), and for a number of folk standards he introduced. He wrote a wide range of content, from gospel and blues, to topical folk songs. He was a prolific artist, and the effect he's had on other artists throughout the years is indisputably significant – from Kurt Cobain to Bob Dylan, Peete Seeger, and George Ezra. His tune, "Bourgeois Blues" is a favorite.

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).

Mansfield Historical Society Receives Grant

Mansfield, CT (January 2, 2022) — Connecticut Humanities (CTH), the statewide, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has awarded the Mansfield Historical Society a \$8,400 CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant (CTCFOSG).

"We are extremely grateful to have received this operational support grant," said board president David Landry. "Like many other cultural organizations in Connecticut, the Mansfield Historical Society's finances and operations were severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. We had to close our museum in 2020 and re-opened for a shortened season this past summer. We've done our best to compensate by providing historical content online and offering virtual programs. This grant funding will enable us to increase our efforts to promote local history through new exhibits, more programs, and additional online content."

The Mansfield Historical Society was one of 624 organizations in Connecticut that was awarded CT Cultural Fund support totaling \$16M from CT Humanities. The CTCFOSGs are part of \$30.7M of support allocated to arts, humanities, and cultural nonprofits through CTH over the next two years by the CT General Assembly and approved by Governor Ned Lamont. The CTCFOSG will assist organizations as they recover from the pandemic and maintain and grow their ability to serve their community and the public.

This grant was administered by CT Humanities (CTH), with funding provided by the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/ Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the Connecticut State Legislature.

About the Mansfield Historical Society

The Mansfield Historical Society is a private 501(c)(3) organization that preserves and promotes the history of the Town of Mansfield through exhibits, programs, research and publications. It operates a museum and research library in Mansfield's former Town Office Building and the original Mansfield Town Hall.

About Connecticut Humanities

CT Humanities (CTH) is an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. CTH connects people to the humanities through grants, partnerships, and collaborative programs. CTH projects, administration, and program development are supported by state and federal matching funds, community foundations, and gifts from private sources. Learn more by visiting cthumanities.org.

About Connecticut Office of the Arts

The Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) is the state agency charged with fostering the health of Connecticut's creative economy. Part of the state's Department of Economic and Community Development, the COA is funded by the State of Connecticut as well as the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Seeking New Board Members

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

EC-CHAP is positioning its Board of Directors to ensure we have the capacity to oversee a **major facility project**, and respond to a **changing environment**. At this time we are inviting interested individuals possessing Social Media, Video Production, or nonprofit Development experience to apply.

Please visit www.ec-chap.org/board2022 to learn more and to apply online. Questions may be addressed by email to: info@ec-chap.org; or by

WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG

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



Seeking Museum Curator

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

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

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

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Book Review:

Is That Clear? Effective Communication in a Neurodiverse World: Autism-Inspired Tips for Allistic (Non-Autistic) People

By Zanne Gaynor, Kathryn Alevizos, and Joe Butler

By Michelle Baughman

It really warms my heart that these three compassionate allies to the autism community took up the mantle of creating this wonderful little pocket-size guidebook. For far too long, the emphasis has been on making autistic people do the work of trying to understand and fit into the neurotypical/allistic world. This is tantamount to speaking a foreign language or trying to acclimate to a foreign culture without an interpreter or guide: We've been expected to do all the work of decoding cryptic neurotypical communications, formulate our response, and figure out how to relay our thoughts to the non-autistic in a way they find palpable. This never really made sense to me, since we are the ones already at a disadvantage because of our disability. After all, one of the four defining characteristics of autism is difficulty with social communication, so it is unjust that the onus of the extra effort to communicate effectively should always be on us. And far too often, even after we have made our best efforts to be understood, it is seldom acknowledged, and when breakdowns in communication occur, they are attributed to our (autistic people's) fault. Well, this book is a breath of fresh air because it turns that status quo on its head!

What is so refreshing about this book is that it is aimed at allistic (non-autistic) people, giving them tips, insights, and advice on how they can improve their communication to be more effective and inclusive for autistic people. I cannot say it better than the quote from Dean Beadle, autistic speaker, trainer, writer, and singer, on the back cover of the book: "At long last, here is a book that not only acknowledges how confusing non-autistic people can be for us autistics, but also supports and empowers them to make their communications with us more successful."

This book came about because of Zanne Gaynor and Kathryn Alevizos, language specialists who train employees and business professionals in international communication skills. They published a book in 2019—titled *Is That Clear? Effective Communication in a Multilingual World*—that was intended to help native English speakers adapt their language in international settings. In that book they advised using more literal speech; shorter, less complex questions and instructions; and better signposted talks and presentations. During the workshops they facilitated based on the book, they received feedback from participants that the same advice applies equally well when communicating with autistic individuals. So Zanne and Kathryn partnered up with Joe Butler of SEND Support, University of Leeds, who has a twenty-year career of working with autistic people, and has many autistic friends and colleagues. (SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability.) Together they sought input from autistics in writing this book. They even had a review panel of autistic readers! Which is probably why this book is so respectfully written.

In the foreword of the book, Butler explains how the four areas of difference in autism (communication, social understanding, information processing, and sensory processing) can influence clear and effective communication. I really appreciate how she skillfully makes our situation relatable to allistic readers as she explains,

It is important to recognize that difference does not mean that autistic people are inevitably less communicatively successful.... Whether autistic or allistic, we all experience fluctuations in our ability to understand others and express ourselves depending on our internal state, e.g. stress levels or tiredness, and the context we're in, place, people or time.

Examples of this respectful attitude can be found throughout this book. One that I particularly appreciate can be found in section 3.1 on nonverbal communication, where the authors write,

As allistic people, we can and should learn and validate how autistic people express themselves. There could be mutual misunderstandings. Challenging our unconscious assumptions and biases about people's actions is key. For example, repetitive sounds or movements (stim) such as humming, rocking or bouncing a leg can be indicators of emotion, as well as being used to self-regulate. It's important not to discourage these as they can help autistic people to function, concentrate and process information, as can the use of fidget or gadget toys. Recognizing that autistic

people may have their own ways of communicating is part of the shared responsibility of communication.

Gems of advice are offered throughout this book, which is divided into sections on Adapting Your Language (such as adding pauses to allow for processing time, omitting filler words and ambiguous language), Inclusive Not Exclusive (making small talk work, making groups work, valuing different identities, etc.), and Different Ways to Communicate (nonverbal communication, utilizing visual aids).

One of my favorite tips that this book offers to its readers, and that I wish more people were aware of, is: "Avoid speaking in an unnaturally loud voice. You can be clear without being patronizing." In my role as a personal support staffer, I have seen this so often when I take clients to doctor's appointments. It seems that nurses, receptionists, and even some doctors conflate all disabilities with deafness, because they talk so loudly to the client, as if they thought the client was hearing-impaired! I suppose they are trying to be mindful of the client's disability and they are making an effort to treat them differently, but ironically, most autistics are unnerved by loud and unexpected sounds, so speaking in a loud voice to us is the antithesis of what the situation calls for. I would like to give these professionals the benefit of the doubt and not say that they're deliberately being patronizing. They just don't know any better way of interacting. So a book like this would be very beneficial to them.

Another patronizing way in which some allistic people talk to us autistic adults is when they use the kind of voice that one would use with a very small child. "Infantilizing" is the term that I have learned for this phenomenon in my interactions with the online autistic community. It is perceived as being very ablest because it denies us our full humanity. People who do this are operating from an assumption that we are less than them, and this is their way of showing that attitude by talking down to us—literally treating us as children—instead of affording us the respect due to the adults that we are!

What is said in Section 2.3, Including Everyone, really resonated with me. This section offers excellent insights on why small talk is so difficult for us, and how we can be forced into a passive role, despite having much to contribute, because we get overwhelmed by our communication challenges:

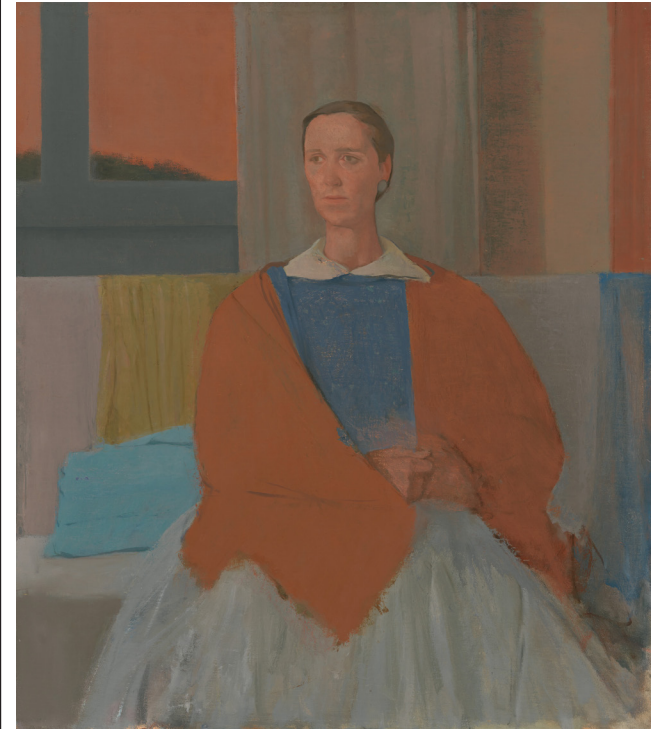
Autistic people sometimes find themselves unable to formulate responses quickly enough as it is difficult to recall the words they need, or to put thoughts into words. Whilst mentally processing what they want to say, some autistic people might not hear what others are saying because their focus is on retaining the point they want to make. They may try to interrupt abruptly as it is the only way to join in before the conversation moves on. If they wait until they feel able to join in, the conversation may have progressed away from the original topic.

I also appreciate (and identified with) this explanation (of what I have been told is one of my more annoying behaviors): "Autistic people can experience daily or even constant high levels of anxiety when trying to understand and fit in with how allistic people communicate. They may therefore sometimes try to make social communication more predictable and accessible by unintentionally dominating, appearing to control the interaction."

This truly is a great resource that I cannot recommend enough. It is even thoughtfully "packaged": it is a small, pocket-sized paperback book; it has color-coordinated sections for easy reference; it utilizes bulleted, easily actionable items; and I love the feel of the cover—it has a kind of rubberized texture to it, so it doesn't slip out of your hand.

For more information on how to get yourself a copy and to learn more about the authors, follow these links: <https://www.acrobat-global.com/> <https://www.sendsupport.co.uk/>

Lennart Anderson at The Lyme Academy of Fine Arts



Submitted by Sarah Wadle

Old Lyme, CT- Lennart Anderson: A Retrospective opens at the Chauncey Stillman Gallery - Lyme Academy of Fine Arts January 14, 2022 on view through March 18, 2022. Described by the New York Times as one of the "most prominent and admired painters to translate figurative art into a modern idiom," Lennart Anderson (1928-2015) was an American artist renowned for his mastery of tone, color, and composition, and for a teaching career that deeply influenced future generations of painters.

Curated by Artistic Directors Amaya Gurpide and Jordan Sokol in collaboration with the artist's estate and the New York Studio School, the Lyme Academy will be the second venue for this first major survey of the artist since his death in 2015. The exhibition brings together over 25 paintings and drawings from both public and private collections, including paintings from the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Bank of New York Mellon Collection, as well as from Anderson's own gallery, Leigh Morse Fine Arts. In addition to several works featured at the exhibition's opening at the New York Studio School, newly selected works that emphasize the artist's sensitivity to portraiture and the intimate relationships he formed with his subjects will be featured at the Lyme Academy.

"As a painter I've studied Lennart's work for years, so the opportunity to co-curate this exhibition has been particularly meaningful," says Jordan Sokol. "Lennart's paintings brilliantly fuse the figurative tradition with a modern sensibility, making his work especially relevant for the Lyme Academy, as well as generations of painters after him."

The exhibition is accompanied by a scholarly catalogue that pairs more than fifty full-color reproductions of Anderson's work with essays by art historians Martica Sawin and Jennifer Samet and painters Susan J. Walp and Paul Resika. Catalogues will be available for purchase at the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts during the course of the exhibition.

Born in Detroit, Lennart Anderson (August 22, 1928 - October 15, 2015) studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, Cranbrook Academy, and at the Art Students League under Edwin Dickinson. He was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and National Academy. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship, the National Endowment for the Arts grant, the Tiffany Foundation grant and the Prix de Rome. Anderson's work is in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the Delaware Art Museum, among others. He taught at Columbia University, Yale University, and served as a distinguished professor emeritus of Brooklyn College. The Estate of Lennart Anderson is represented by his longtime gallerist, Leigh Morse Fine Arts, New York.

Following its presentation at the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts, the exhibition will travel its next venue, the Southern Utah Museum of Art.

The Chauncey-Stillman Gallery at Lyme Academy of Fine Arts is located at 84 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, CT. The gallery hours are 10am-4pm daily. Entrance to the exhibition is free, donations are welcome. Free parking is offered onsite.

Solar Today:

Questions and answers about solar in our community and beyond

By John Boiano

Honor Earth Day every day!

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



Starting this month's article is a **HUGE THANK YOU to YOU**, all of the people who read these articles. I get calls and emails weekly with folks expressing their gratitude and appreciation for the information in the articles, folks who have questions about their existing solar systems and quite a few folks that are ready to look into seeing if solar is a good choice for them. Some I help transition over to solar and some we discover that it may not be right for them. Either way I appreciate the connection with you. THANKS again for your continued support and interest!

One of the questions I get most often is, "When is the best time to go solar"?

Half-jokingly, I say: "5 years ago when the incentives were better"!

My serious answer is: "TODAY, because the longer you wait, the more you will pay to the utility and the price of solar installations also keep going up".

I often get calls from people I spoke with years ago that are finally tired of the continual increased cost of utility power. They are not surprised that it will cost them a bit more from when I first met with them and they are relieved that solar is still a viable money saving option.

Some of the reasons for jumping in sooner than later are stated above but here's a bit more detail, to include; declined Federal rebates, steady depletion to now zero CT state rebates, the rising cost of equipment and equipment procurement (shipping, supply, etc.), permit and engineering costs. Transformers are also filling up to capacity which means we are seeing an increase in the utility company declining approvals for residential solar installations.

The good news is:

- Solar STILL COSTS LESS than the current cost and the projected continual rising cost of utility power.
- Solar finance companies special in clean energy loans that can include .99% interest rates and interest deferrals on the 26% federal tax credit. We are also seeing lower credit scores approved through these companies because they realize that solar costs less than what they already pay and it is NOT an added monthly expense like doing an addition on a home. Solar is same money already being spent for electricity except at a lower locked in rate!

When is the BEST time of year to say yes to solar?

As stated above, today is a good day to say yes to solar! The longer you wait.... Well you just read all that above.

When a solar system is designed, we take into consideration maximum and minimum solar production months. Can you guess when those are? Yup, mid-spring through mid-fall for best production and winter for lower production.

We add up all 12 months of solar production and then see how much we can offset 12 months of your usage history from your electric bill. If you look at your utility bills historic usage of the kilowatts that you bought over the past year (page 2 of your Eversource bill) you will see that your usage goes up and down through the year. Solar production also goes up and down monthly. Our goals is to maximize solar so it covers all 12 months of a homeowners usage. In some cases we can cover all 12 months and in some cases such as my own home, I cover a large percentage of my usage with solar and buy the remaining amount at the ever increasing prices Eversource charges. If you remember from previous articles, I buy solar at a 12 year ago price of .09 cents per kilowatt hour.. delivered (final cost).

So, when we look at production months, summer offers the best production so the best time of year to say YES is typically November to March. This way the panels should be installed and working to capture the highest solar production value through the summer months. Now, with that said, *and IF you and your home qualify for solar*, I will reiterate again, that **the best time to say yes to solar is today**, because no matter what time of year you get installed, any amount of electricity you can get from solar production will cost you less than what the utility charges. And don't worry, if the system is designed properly, you will get the full years' worth of solar production value within the following 12 month cycle.

What if I don't have 12 months of historic production? Should I wait to look into solar?

Heck NO! I help a LOT of new home owners transition to solar as soon as they buy their home. Including those who have not yet moved in or those who only have been in the home for a few months. I go through an in-depth Q & A of one's usage patterns, what you may be adding (a hot tub, mini splits, new EV, etc) along with any other future changes. I've been doing this a long time and I have seen thousands of utility bills. There are usage patterns/trends that most homeowners follow, so it's pretty easy for me to calculate what a new homeowners needs will be. I also use online calculators to help me guide a homeowner a down a path to discover if solar will be a good choice for them or not.

Solar savings starts good and gets better over time!

How does that work? Well it's simple! You have a locked in rate for solar, the utility price keeps going up. As the utility price increases, your solar costs stay the same and there's an ever increasing wider spread of what you pay compared to what you would be paying if you didn't have solar.

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.. Zen Solar

Until next month... ENJOY!

John Boiano 860-798-5692 john@zensolar.net
www.zensolar.net

Lebanon Historical Society Receives Grant

Submitted by Grace Sayles

The Lebanon Historical Society is pleased to announce that it is the recipient of a CT Cultural Fund operating support grant from CT Humanities (CTH), the statewide nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. These grants provide assistance to history, arts and humanities organization like museums, as they work to weather the challenges presented by the COVID pandemic. The \$18,500 grant will focus on community outreach to expand our membership and volunteer base and marketing to increase visitation.

According to Lebanon Historical Society Museum Director Donna Baron, the Museum, like most small local museums around the state, has seen fewer visitors and volunteers over the last two years. "These dedicated funds will allow us to focus on rebuilding and expanding the number of visitors and strengthening our member and volunteer base."

The Lebanon Historical Society grant funds will be used to hire a part-time Community Outreach coordinator to increase the membership and engage new volunteers to assist with exhibits, tours and day-to-day operations. The Society will also be expanding its marketing in an effort to attract new and diverse audiences, especially families with children.

The Lebanon Historical Society was one of 624 Connecticut organizations that were awarded CT Cultural support totaling \$6M from CT Humanities to assist organizations as they recover from the pandemic and support their ability to serve their communities and the public.

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

The month of January was not your typical Southern New England weather. Your vehicle like your body does not like drastic temperature changes. The expansion and contraction of metals, plastics, and rubber products causes fluid leaks and failures. Air pressure in your tires will drop causing your tire monitor light to come on and the neglect of normal maintenance can cause other problems.

The initial cold start in the morning to your engine is very critical. Eighty percent of engine wear happens at cold starts. The reason behind this is your oil. The engine oil drains back into the oil pan. The viscosity of your oil as a fluid thickens when it is cold. The oil pump takes time to build pressure to lubricate the engine's internal parts. These are just a few contributing factors to engine wear. The manufacturers have a large variety of suggested oils for their vehicles. Make sure you are using the correct oil. The oil filters also need to be OEM correct when changed. An example is the Subaru. It has an inverted oil filter. The filter has a check valve to hold the oil from draining down. This is only one of many examples for why you need an OEM correct oil filter. Engine oil loses its lubricating ability over time. We suggest 3,000-mile intervals for oil changes with synthetic blend oil and 5,000 miles on full synthetic oil. I know the manufacturers suggest longer mileage between oil changes, but oil changes are low cost when you compare it to the high cost of engine repairs. The simple process of having an oil change and vehicle safety check can head off costly repairs down the road. No one likes to be sitting on the side of the road for hours waiting for help to arrive. It is so much better to be proactive rather than have to be reactive. Normal maintenance can head off many small issues before they become large, costly, and very troublesome.

The aftermarket people offer engine oil additives to help lower first start or cold start wear on your engine. If you use an additive make sure your manufacturer's warranty is not voided. Please let your vehicle warm up on the first start on these cold days, your engine will thank you!

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

**TEXT AND
WHATEVER
JUST
DON'T
TEXT
AND** 

STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG

the Neighbors paper
a little paper
big on community

Yeah, Right!

By Bill Powers

The phrase “Yeah, Right” came immediately from my mouth when the naturalist at the Goodwin Conservation Center enthusiastically told me: “Bill, your picture is on the cover of the new Connecticut Woodlands Magazine.” He most certainly had to be pulling my leg. Over the telephone, the director of the Center had just shared this information with him. While it was often our practice to kid around with one another, this was out of the ordinary. Was he in cahoots with Beth, the Center’s director? Clearly they must be joking around. Going along with it, I replied: “I guess they messed up; my photo was supposed to be the ‘Centerfold’ section and not on the cover.” But, he emphatically insisted: “It’s not a joke! No kidding.”

It was a beautiful Third Thursday Festival evening in Willimantic, and I had joined Jasper Sha, the personable naturalist wearing his official state DEEP uniform; and we quickly became occupied by throngs of visitors to our Goodwin Nature Center information booth. All thoughts of our magazine cover conversation had quickly faded away as we became engrossed in both meeting the public and discussing the Center’s programs. In addition, I didn’t miss my opportunity to kid with him about the very large number of ECSU coeds that were surrounding him while they asked him countless questions. Several groups of young women walking along Main Street, upon seeing Jasper, would quickly gather around him. It was like observing a strong magnetic field in action. Later, as we packed up to leave, I mentioned my observation to Jasper while adding that clearly many of them seemed to find him attractive. To this he expressed skepticism saying “Yeah, right.” I answered: “It was very obvious. No Kidding.”

I was genuinely shocked the next morning when I picked up our mail at the post office. Indeed, on the cover of “Connecticut Woodlands” summer 2016 issue, was a photo of my wife and me. How was this possible? As I turned to the accompanying article, it all became clear. Almost a year earlier, a student editor for UConn’s newspaper, The Daily Campus, had asked us for an interview about recent changes concerning the shifting of responsibility for inspection of dams from the state to dam owners. We were joint owners of a dam and agreed to the interview during which she snapped several photos. Since we do not subscribe to the Daily Campus, we asked if she would notify us when it was published, and she quickly agreed. However, that notification never came.

Six months later, I submitted an article to “Connecticut Woodlands Magazine” about my observations of the behaviors of the Eastern Painted Turtle while conducting research for the Master Naturalist Program at the Goodwin Conservation Center. The article was published in the fall issue of 2017. While interacting with Christine Woodside, the magazine’s editor, she asked for a couple of photos of me to accompany the article. I also told her that: “Our picture was on the cover of your magazine last year.”

I never thought I would make the cover of a magazine; but, the centerfold was always a possibility.” Fortunately, she laughed and said: “Well, I’ll see what I can do about that.” When the fall issue came out, my two page article was placed exactly where the center fold should be. The photo was of a very handsome Eastern Painted Turtle.

Christine Woodside is an accomplished editor and author; she teaches Journalism at UConn. While she is no longer the editor for the Connecticut Woodlands Magazine, she is now the editor of Appalachia, the Appalachian Mountain Club’s Journal of Mountaineering and Conservation. My son and I wrote an article about climbing Mount Washington in the winter and finding ourselves in white-out conditions. So when it, “Light Snow in the Whites”, was accepted for publication in Appalachia for the 2022 Winter/Spring edition, she asked for photos of the authors, I wondered to myself: Could this be another centerfold opportunity? Yeah, Right!

Bill Powers is a retired Windham school teacher and a graduate of the Goodwin Forest Conservation Center’s Master Naturalist Program.

Requiem for a Tomcat

My Lee-Lee’s just a memory
The sad voice of the chickadee
Is crying “Lee-Lee” from the wood
Just as if they understood

A winter storm stole him away
A Siamese beauty running stray
Where was he running to that night
Siberian winds were whipping white?

In memory he comes to me
And through his eyes of blue I see
Into his nature sweet and wild
Like when my heart he first beguiled

Little tomcat, brave and gay
Wild spirit of a lonely stray
I know we’ll never really part
His spirit lives within my heart.

Kathy O. Lavalley, North Windham

Poetry Expresses the Essence of One’s Inner Spirit

By Bill Powers

I had never before attended a poetry reading featuring local poets. In the early afternoons of the second Saturday of the month, the Willimantic Public Library offers local poets an opportunity to share their work. I was there to listen, enjoy and learn. It was much more than I expected. I don’t write poetry myself, but I do have a friend who writes poetry; and, I had gone to this public opportunity to hear her read. Having read some of her creations in the past myself, I never before enjoyed the opportunity to hear her read them aloud. Personally, being averse to writing poetry or anything resembling it since I was 9-years-old, I was pleasantly surprised to find the readings from the different poets were not only uplifting and powerful but also the expressions were overflowing with insights and meaning that made one more cognizant of living a meaningful life.

As a child, after laboring for more than two or three days with my efforts at composing my own poem about being a choir boy at my first Christmas midnight mass, I was accused by my teacher of not authoring it while she crumpled it up and tossed it in the wastebasket. The August 2020 issue of Neighbors contains my story about the episode and is titled “Why I Don’t Write Poetry.”

Fortunately, the library program allowed each of the poets to discuss how and why the poems they had just shared had come to be created. In every case, the poems that they had just read were in some way related to life experiences that had been packed with emotion and were uniquely personal. Suddenly, it was apparent to me why people write poetry. They had shared what made sense in their world of experience while giving voice to the intensity of their feelings. Their creative choices of words and phrases were successfully expressing the neurologic connections to various emotions that they had experienced. Their individual readings were both memorable and passionate as they shared their creations aloud and expressed the ardor of their carefully chosen words. At times, there were tears, sometimes tears of sadness or tears of joy, as the poets read their creative words that successfully retouched the source of their emotion.

In the past, I had the extreme good fortune to twice hear Maya Angelou in person read some of her creations. For me, to hear her rich voice, to experience her linguistic style, the intonation and rhythm that she projected as she read her words, added tremendously to the unique enjoyment of the experience. I heard more than words; I felt her passion. I guess the point is: reading a poem is one thing; and, listening to it spoken by its creator is so much more. A poem is meant to be heard and in what better way than from the one who gave it life, the essence of one’s inner spirit.

Bill Powers is a retired teacher and resides in Windham.

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

Hither, Thither and Yon

By Angela Hawkins Fichter

If you are young, you might not ever have heard of the term: hither, thither and yon. But I am not young and did hear this occasionally from old people when I was young. It was used in the old days. You know, the “good old days.” Do you really want to go back to the “good” old days? When there were no antibiotic medicines, so if you got an infection, it could easily lead to widespread infection in your body and death. When if you got cancer, you died, but they gave you opium or morphine or lots of booze towards the end of your life? What about good old-time language, like hither, thither and yon?

In case you wonder why I care about old-time language, I came across some recently on the website for the Windham Mill Museum. Please look it up on your trusty computer. Once you have the website go to the top of the screen (this is drafted for old people like me) and click on history. Then click on A Historical Atlas of Windham, CT, a CT Mill Town. Up will come page 15 of the 70 page history shown at this site. Page 15 shows a map called Settling Joshua’s Tract/Windham, 1675-1700. Under the map it says that this map comes from Ellen Larned’s History of Windham County. I have that two volume publication, but the map is not in there. I asked an historian, and he answered that only the original publication of Larned’s work in 1874 has it, not the modern publications. Huh. Is that because they changed the names of places on that map? After all, on the map there is a place called Hither Place. That is now known as Windham Center. I checked the meaning of Hither. It means here. Apparently, the guy who drafted this map lived in a place not yet officially named, so he just named the place here/hither. I asked an historian about Ponde Place. He told me that’s now known as Mansfield. I did NOT ask him about the place on the map named The Crotch, out of fear that this history treatise had been confused with a medical/anatomical chart. Even if there was a geographical place called The Crotch, those Puritanical Congregationalists might well have drowned it with the Willimantic Reservoir, so no one could look for it anymore.

I want to know whether there was a place in Windham called Thither. That means there. And where is the place or person called yon? Yon means that person or thing. So in the 1600’s if you pointed to some guy in a line and asked your friend who is yon man, your friend might have answered with the guy’s name, if he knew. Today you would ask who is that, and your friend would give the name, and you’d yell, Yo Juan, not Yon.

Frankly, I think modern times with modern medicine and household appliances, like hot running water, washing machines and dryers, air conditioning and good heating systems, are much nicer than living in the old days. In the 1970’s I visited a place in Greene, RI that was for sale. It had been a dairy farm from the time it was built 200 years earlier and had been in the same family for all those years. The men in the family had never allowed any electricity to be installed. The water came from a type of well I had never seen before, called a well sweep. Instead of a bucket on a chain that you lowered into the well, there was a very long wooden rod with a bucket suspended from one end. Can’t picture it? Ask Google. Anyway, the family that bought this antique farm were from Providence, and they informed the local natives that they would use it as a summer campsite. Hmmm. I’d love to sneak back there and see if the women in the family insisted on electricity, flush toilets (not outhouses), heat, etc.

As for old-time language, I think here, there and everywhere is a lot more descriptive than hither, thither and yon.



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By Focus on Veterans, Inc.

The Rise and Fall of r/Antiwork

By Calen Nakash

The year is 2022, and America has continued its march toward a dystopian society with a deadly pandemic brushed under the rug. Employees are told to risk their lives while their bosses work from home, wages refuse to rise with inflation, and the American dream of working hard, saving up, and buying a house or supporting a family is a pipe dream because the average house costs \$389,400 in 2020 in the USA and the average minimum wage sticks at \$7.25, with rent averaging one thousand a month.

The average American has evolved dark humor to cope, with a prevalent thought being that during the actual apocalypse, work would continue as usual.

BOSS: Why were you late to work today?

EMPLOYEE: A lake of fire opened up in front of me.

BOSS: I feel like you're not getting how this affects the company.

This is how a hypothetical conversation on Reddit reads as people struggle to make sense of a world that doesn't care if they live or die, only that they work.

This is even assuming workers can afford to have a home to go back to. During the pandemic, a friend who worked at a mortgage company told me they'd have 400 calls at any given time in their call center. Pre-pandemic, she worked as a bankruptcy lawyer and really took in how emotional it was for people to face losing their homes. Once the pandemic hit, it was much worse.

"People were crying their eyes out on every call," she told me. "I'd hear 'My relative just died. My kid just died. I just lost my job. I can't pay my mortgage because I need medicine.' That wasn't a super uncommon thing to hear, but we were hearing it from every single person we talked to. Every single one. And we'd have to recite the same heartless script because we were being graded on calls." She couldn't even use the word "forbearance," she said, because the big investors didn't approve of it. My friend got into mortgages to help people in trouble, and the reality of the system beat her down. To make matters worse, she realized that the phone calls she took could be her in an instant if she didn't do a good job—at one point her husband got Covid, and she was refused time off to take care of him, as stepping away to get him food, water, or medicine affected her call center stats (despite the company email claiming they put family first). The workers at the center were coerced into 10- to 12-hour shifts, simply because they needed the money.

Even for those barely scraping by, emails waited in millions of inboxes about restarting loan payments soon with the tone of an adult scolding a child, just after *Forbes* reported that 87% of loan borrowers were not financially ready to resume payments. High interest rates meant that even if the loans were on hold due to a massive pandemic, every missed month meant more debt.

For those that manage well-paying jobs, it's worth noting that \$3 billion of stolen wages were recovered from 2017 to 2020, begging the question just how much employers have managed to take from their employees that still lines their pockets. If the shoe were on the other foot, workers would be facing prison time in an instant.

In the wake of such insanity, a subreddit on Red-

dit.com called r/Antiwork gained notoriety. The subreddit, which was originally a purely anarchist domain against working in general, grew in momentum as people from all walks of life flocked to it. Workers shared screenshots of abusive texts from their employers, chiding them for threatening to leave as their job was linked to insurance. Doctors told stories about saving their patient during a life-saving operation, only to see the pure fear in their eyes when they pondered their pending financial ruin. (One doctor shared an email he wrote insulting his young patient's insurance company after the company claimed that the child's vomiting *can't be from cancer*, and thus the procedure wouldn't be covered.)

Users lamented the rolling back of child labor laws "to fix supply shortages" during the Great Resignation, where millions were quitting to find better-paying jobs. "If we don't play by the rules," one poster from the subreddit said, "they come after our children."

Restaurant servers shared the fact of their \$2.13 an hour wages, with the public expected to bear the brunt of their paycheck in tips. Some workers showed proof of their bosses taking their share of said tips.

The community grew, and the movement gained momentum. Those who were scared to leave their abusive jobs found solidarity on the subreddit, receiving advice and support. Given the nature of the internet, some of the posts were questionable, with some got-em' moments at the expense of cartoonishly evil bosses as users looked to gain popularity through fake stories. In general, however, it was a very strong subreddit shared by users with differing ideals.

It was then that Fox News got wind of the subreddit. After doing their research, they reached out to a specific "mod" (moderator) called "Abolishwork" on the site, a self-identified autistic and trans person, offering them an interview. The community immediately reacted, telling them not to appear. No good could come of it—Fox News tends to edit even the best speakers to make it look like they lost. The mod team did not listen.

What followed was the perfect storm as the mod was eaten alive by ineptitude. Their idea of preparing for the interview was "taking a shower." In the space of three minutes, the entire movement was set back a hundred years as the mod touted laziness as a virtue, said they didn't believe in eye contact, and generally looked the stereotype of an anti-worker. The Fox reporter threw softball questions as his eyes glittered, knowing Fox had its scapegoat. "They threw softball question after softball question, and she kept hitting herself with the bat," one user posted. The video interview hit the front page of Reddit immediately, debuting on r/Cringe, among others.

Instead of apologizing, the mod team doubled down, banning users who criticized their decision and making the subreddit private. The most prominent post before the shutdown, which received 100 awards (each of which requires giving money to Reddit), stated, "Sorry doesn't cut it. Mods are not leaders of this sub... You should have no influence on this sub and if you *are* having influence on this sub then there is something immensely wrong." At the time of writing, the subreddit is back up with a faux-apology from the mods and the mod who went on Fox has been removed, but the most prominent post is *asking the mods to shut down the subreddit*, and the major-

ity of posts are understandably vitriolic toward leadership. On top of that, another mod joined the community with a 17-hour-old account, causing users to wonder if Abolishwork was back, a wolf in sheep's skin. After some digging, users found that the previous mod was a self-admitted sexual predator.

While r/Antiwork was offline doing damage control, r/Workreform gained 300,000 users. As ideologies in r/Antiwork were clashing, the idea of reforming work to be fairer seems to be a nice change of pace. At the time of writing, the new subreddit is at almost 500,000 members. Like all movements, a spokesperson is important. While it's unclear who leads the new subreddit and what they will do in the future, the community seems to unanimously agree that interviews are off the table, and no mods from r/Antiwork will be allowed in.

One person derailing a movement is nothing new. Back during Occupy Wall Street, the movement chose two individuals named Ketchup and Justin to be the voice of the people. The movement fizzled out shortly after the Stephen Colbert interview.

It's important to note that when it comes to change, the news will rarely be on the side of the people. I learned in college that while the news might not tell us what to think, it tells us what to think *about*. And now that there are sound clips and video of a disheveled representative from one of the biggest subreddits of all time saying "laziness is a virtue," any large enough outlet that wants to quell dissent can simply play that clip and boil an entire movement down to one unprepared moderator on a forum.

One egregious example of the rhetoric around the Great Resignation, where workers are quitting around the country, is *60 Minutes'* piece on what they cleverly dubbed "The Big Quit" (cleverly because it avoids the use of "great," which is seen as positive). The piece did not interview a single employee, did not ask why they chose to leave or what conditions they were working in. There were no stories of Amazon workers peeing into bottles to meet quotas, only how the employers themselves were affected.

Millions of Americans joined r/Antiwork and said, "No, I am worth more than this. I will suffer if I have to, but I am not going to give you any more of my time when I cannot afford to eat, to save, or to start a family." I know several people who have become alcoholics just to dull the pain of surviving the 9-to-5 and the conditions that come with it even in companies that pay closer to a living wage, and it is these people who need the most help.

The new subreddit seems to be doing well, and may be the next step toward working-class solidarity. As the media mocks and labels the disenfranchised "millennials," despite the oldest millennial turning 40 this year, it's nice to see solidarity online. The new subreddit is pro-union, which is good news as even the 9-to-5 workday was only made possible because of unions.

Time will tell what becomes of this movement, and how much will spill into real life, but it is my firm wish that we make a world that is fairer to everyone, not just those born into riches. People need a way out, they need a *choice*. And more often than not, when given what they need to thrive, people want to work. That's not being lazy. That's being human.

Programs at the CT Audubon Center in Pomfret

Grassland Bird Conservation Center
218 Day Road, PO Box 11
Pomfret Center, CT 06259
860-928-4948 ctaudubon.org/pomfret

Owl Watch

Friday, January 28, 7 p.m.
Andy Rzeznikiewicz will call in various owls in the area near our Bafflin sanctuary. Possible sightings include Eastern Screech Owl, Barred Owl, and Great Horned Owl. Fee: \$10 CAS members; \$20 non-members. Space limited. Must email arzeznikiewicz@ctaudubon.org to register.

Nightingale Forest North Hike

Saturday, February 12, 10 a.m.
Sunday, March 13, 9 a.m.
Join Andy as he guides you along this brand new 364 acre addition to the Nightingale Forest Preserve. This property is part of a large intact forest block. Fee: \$10 CAS members; \$20 non-members. Space limited. Must email arzeznikiewicz@ctaudubon.org to register.

Bird Walk

Wednesday, February 16, 1 p.m.
During this guided walk, Andy will point out various bird species. You'll search for water birds, raptors, Horned Larks and more. Fee: \$10 CAS members; \$20 non-members. Space limited. Must email arzeznikiewicz@ctaudubon.org to register.

Woodcock Watches

Thursday, March 10, 5:45 p.m.
Saturday, March 12, 5:45 p.m.
Thursday, March 17, 7 p.m.
Thursday, March 24, 7 p.m.
Land Manager, Andy Rzeznikiewicz will bring you to a location on our sanctuary to seek out the mating ritual of the American Woodcock. We often see other interesting species like Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, and Short-eared Owl. Fee: \$10 CAS members; \$20 non-members. Space limited. Must email arzeznikiewicz@ctaudubon.org to register.

Cabbage Hill Hike

Saturday, March 26, 9 a.m.
Hike around this new 112 acre Wyndham Land Trust Preserve in Woodstock with Andy as your guide. This property consists of a large scenic field, old overgrown Christmas tree grove, woodlands with large trees, beaver pond, streams, and an old graveyard. Fee: \$10 CAS members; \$20 non-members. Space limited. Must email arzeznikiewicz@ctaudubon.org to register.

Bull Hill Hike

Tuesday, March 29, 9 a.m.
Enjoy a guided hike around this large preserve. We'll go to the scenic vista and bushwhack to the waterfall on a section with moderately rough terrain. Fee: \$10 CAS members; \$20 non-members. Space limited. Must email arzeznikiewicz@ctaudubon.org to register.

MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM

Tuesdays, March 29 through May 31, 8 a.m. - Noon

Have you always wanted to learn more about the natural sciences? Want to volunteer at the Center?

With 40 hours of training (ten four-hour sessions), this may be the program for you. Registration is limited. Check our website ctaudubon.org/pomfret for the training outline and application.

Programs at TRAIL WOOD

93 Kenyon Road, Hampton, CT 06247
860-928-4948 ctaudubon.org/trail-wood

Seeking applicants for the Summer 2022 Trail Wood Artists & Writers In-Residence Program

This program annually selects three writers and three visual artists to complete one-week summer residencies at the Connecticut Audubon Society's Trail Wood - the Edwin Way Teale Memorial Sanctuary. Applicants who are interested in exploring the natural world through artistic means should apply by the deadline of March 13, 2022. Go to our website ctaudubon.org/trail-wood to read more about the program and directly download an application.

Artist Spotlight with Catherine Nelson at the Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery

By Cate Solari

Catherine Nelson is a visual artist, originally from Louisiana, who has lived across the West, South, and Northeast of the United States and internationally in Rome, Italy. Nelson experiments with process and how decision-making methods affect creative outcomes.



She has exhibited internationally in venues including Redline Contemporary Art Center (Denver), Antenna Gallery (New Orleans), and Philobiblon Gallery (Rome). Her work is part of the collection of the Print and Picture Collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia, and her residency history includes the Vermont Studio Center, Women's Studio Workshop, and the Denver Public Library's ideaLAB. Nelson is currently pursuing an MFA in Installation and Performance at the University of Connecticut, works at the University's Contemporary Art Gallery, and continues to co-produce the digital artist residency, Southern Heat Exchange.

In preparation for her solo exhibition at the Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery, I sat down with Nelson to discuss her work and her inspiration for her exhibition *To Try and To Let*.



CS: I'd like to start off at the very beginning with the show's title, *To Have and To Let*, what was your inspiration behind naming it?

CN: Sometimes in the studio these little fragments of text bubble up while I am working with materials, and that was one of them. It felt like weird advice to myself, permission to let things happen that weren't in the original design of the piece. Even in the planning of the show I felt like the advice was useful for all the challenges that go with mounting a show during this time (of social-distance). I like to let fun unexpected things fit in just as well as the planned things.

And it's two verbs, a push verb and a pull verb. It has a rhythm to it that also fits into the water metaphor that I use a lot in my work.

CS: You mention in the subtitle "installations inspired by the Mississippi River and our constant dance with forces beyond our control" the word *dance*, is that term used in conjunction with rhythm and water?

CN: Yes, and the best way to describe how dance fits in is, I'm not necessarily dancing when I make the work but the mentality of dance comes into play. Like balance movement, giving and receiving, there is definitely a physical sensation to it when I am in the studio.

CS: You grew up in Louisiana by the Mississippi River, how has that influenced your art making practice?

CN: I lived in New Orleans for four years, one side of my family is from that part of Louisiana, and the river is a really dramatic part of the shape of that city, and it's constantly trying to breach its levees, like it did for many years before humans tried to control it. There are areas that I like to go walking that collect debris inside the levy, sometimes they are underwater, sometimes they're not, and those little spaces have a way of making found

compositions that I end up referencing when I am making work.

CS: Is that where you source your materials? From the levees?

CN: You know, not directly, but there's so much water damage constantly in south Louisiana that there are often piles of debris on the sidewalk. I'm thinking about a big flood in Baton Rouge that happened years ago, there's insulation foam, dry wall, and everything is torn to bits and wet. So I collect things that have that quality to it.

CS: Coming from New Orleans to Eastern Connecticut, have you had to adjust your thinking based on what you find for materials?

CN: Here I find more farm stuff, and I've been interested in empty sign frames. The debris of life in Eastern Connecticut is very different than in South Louisiana, but the way it ages and the economic context can feel really similar to home in some ways.

CS: It seems like there is a patina to the work in terms of age, or sense of love and use. Is that something you try to control?

CN: I definitely pay a lot of attention to the surface and end up using layered ways of treating the surface. I think I like the feeling of time, like there's a history to the materials before it was arranged like this. And I think at the base of the Mississippi things have traveled for a long time, and I'm sure I'm subconsciously drawn to this look to mimic what has already been traveling for a long time.

CS: Do you have a favorite piece in the collection and if so, what makes it your favorite?

CN: They definitely complete each other when seen in a group so to single one out it's tricky, but if I have to pick, probably this one, in terms of the title this one feels like it carries a lot of the sensibility behind the title of the show, in that to cut and to finish and to patina this piece of steel is a very specific and orderly process, and then this dried palm I found in garbage at the greenhouse on campus. It is not even attached to the back of the metal, it's just sitting there. I like that tension between effort and discovery.

CS: I see that tension showing through in your use of pattern, you have the grid and then these stripes, can you talk a little bit about where these patterns come from and how they are being used?

CN: The grid and the mesh were originally sourced from the interior armature of poured concrete. There's a pier in New Orleans that is half falling into the river and the grid of the mesh is exposed to the rebar, and I like to think about it as naked infrastructure. The stripes as studs, something that has had a surface layer peeled back. And it also serves as a great contrast to gesture and looser line work.

CS: What is the biggest challenge you faced while creating this body of work, if any?

CN: There were never any challenges! No I wish, I think the biggest challenge is just to stay in touch with my own intuition, to know when a piece feels finished, to know what it might need, when I am pushing it, trying to get something from it. Usually, I need to just listen. But the busier I get the worse I get at that level of intuition.

CS: I see a contrast between nature and nurture and the industrial landscape, is that something you want your viewer to take away from the work?

CN: There's definitely a gentle apocalyptic feeling to it, like using a bed sheet but it's oiled and rusted and it's not soft and clingy anymore. It puts you the viewer in a long timeline with how these materials age, and I enjoy that expansiveness.

CS: Where do you see your work going in the future?

CN: I am sitting in on a movement class right now, and just lead my first movement and improvisation exercise for others. It's really interesting and I think I am going to take some time to explore the gestures I use often and isolate that part of the practice and see how it works for me. I have been focusing a lot on the materials so it will be a nice change.

CS: What inspires you outside of art?

CN: There's a dance community in New Orleans that is really focused on somatic knowledge and ways of knowing things and discovering things through your body. It's a



Artist-In-Residence: Visual Arts



lot of really sophisticated improvisation techniques that I'm sure stem from being so close to the birthplace of jazz and also a place that experiences a lot of trauma. Somatic dance and therapy explores where trauma can be stored in the body to help release it. I am really interested in what they discover about body work and how I can apply it to my own practice.

CS: What's on the horizon for you, after your show at DBHCG?

CN: I'll be preparing for a group show coming up at the Mattatuck Museum, it's called *I Ran Out of Reasons*, it will open in the spring.

To Have and To Let will be open February 18th through March 19th on Saturday's from 10am - 12pm. An opening reception will be held and open to the public on February 18th at 5pm. For more information about *To Have and To Let*, visit www.ec-chap.org/dye-and-bleach-house-community-gallery and to see more of Catherine Nelson's work check out her website at www.catherinetnelson.format.com

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



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Mansfield Historical Society Receives CTH SHARP Grant

Mansfield, CT (January 2, 2022) — Connecticut Humanities, the statewide, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), has awarded the Mansfield Historical Society a \$5,460 CTH SHARP Capacity Grant to support its collaboration with the University of Connecticut's Digital Public History Internship Program. In April 2020, the University of Connecticut was awarded a NEH planning grant to develop a new undergraduate minor in digital public history. Since then, members of the departments of history and digital media & design have been collaborating to design the minor's curriculum. An experiential internship program will be a core component.

The Digital Public History minor will launch next September but a few trial internships will pilot this spring. The Mansfield Historical Society will host one of the first digital public history interns. These initial internships will help UConn's digital public history team determine how to best structure the internship program so that it will benefit both the student and the host organization.

"We are very excited to have this opportunity," stated museum director Ann Galonska. "With the student intern's help, we look forward to improving our website and exploring new ways to bring local and state history to the Internet. With the CTH SHARP Capacity grant, we will be able to upgrade our computer equipment to better support this work."

The NEH received \$135 million from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, which was approved by Congress this past spring. The state humanities councils, including CT Humanities, each received a portion of the NEH award to support museums, archives, historic sites, and other humanities-focused nonprofits. The Mansfield Historical Society was one of 69 organizations in Connecticut that was awarded ARP funding totaling \$640,192 from CT Humanities. CTH SHARP Capacity Grants provide funding to organizations for projects including building their information technology infrastructure, making their collections more accessible, conducting strategic planning, and undertaking inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access work.

"Our cultural nonprofits enrich lives, and it is important that they remain viable and accessible to all residents," said Dr. Jason Mancini, executive director at CT Humanities.

Support for this project is provided to the Mansfield Historical Society by CT Humanities (CTH), through the Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this announcement do not necessarily represent those of CT Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

At UConn's Benton Museum

Submitted by Maripaz Shaw

Faculty Dialogue

At The Benton Museum UConn Campus Storrs: Tuesday, February 8, 3:30-4:30pm

Kelly Dennis, Associate Professor of Digital Culture, and Heather Elliott-Famularo, Department Head, Digital Media & Design, discuss work by the Guerrilla Girls in the Facing History exhibition.

Co-sponsored by American Studies and the Center for the Study of Popular Music at UConn.

Kelly Dennis's research focuses on the histories of visual communications technologies as they impact the production and consumption of images, both analog and digital.

Heather Elliott-Famularo is an award-winning filmmaker and artist active internationally in the fields of broadcast television, computer graphics and interactive multimedia, with a focus on collaborative digital humanities and public education through digital media.

Drawing Workshop

Thursday, February 10, 6:30-7:30pm via Zoom

Learn the basics of still life drawing in this popular class with artist Magdalena Pawlowski.

Draw along from Magdalena's still life arrangement. Or, make your own arrangement of nuts inspired by the exhibition, Remembering the Nut Museum: Visionary Art of Elizabeth Tashjian.

Materials needed: drawing paper (or any paper will do), drawing pencils or your favorite pencil, a good eraser, and a pencil sharpener. Optional: nuts to create a still life arrangement.

Register in advance for this Zoom webinar event: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EKw-zAkRpTRq9k0SUwm22pA

Register early. Space is limited. Please note: This program is best viewed on a laptop or tablet, not on a phone.

Gallery Talk

Thursday, February 17, 5:30-7:00pm via Zoom

Guest curator Christopher Steiner introduces the exhibition, Remembering the Nut Museum.

In this virtual event, guest curator and Connecticut College Art History Professor Christopher Steiner will introduce the exhibition, Remembering the Nut Museum: Visionary Art of Elizabeth Tashjian.

Register in advance for this Zoom webinar event: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9FwNm2EURIW-zjk0FsUipGQ

ART+FEMINISM Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon

At The Benton Museum UConn Campus Storrs: Wednesday, February 23, 3:00-5:00pm

Co-sponsored by American Studies and the Center for the Study of Popular Music at UConn.

Art + Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon is an annual, global collaborative effort to redress the under representation of women, gender fluid, and BIPOC women editors and artists to the global online encyclopedia. artandfeminism.org offers online training for instructors/editors, provides grant monies for pizza and childcare, and backup when the inevitable "old guard" male Wiki editor resistance to an addition kicks in. The edit-a-thon is held globally in and around March, which is Women's History Month.

Kelly Dennis, Associate Professor of Digital Culture in the Department of Digital Media & Design, will introduce the Edit-a-Thon and offer a crash course in Wikipedia editing. Bring your laptop to join the edit-a-thon and help close the information gaps related to gender, feminism, and the arts. More information: <https://artfeminismwikiedit.uconn.edu/#>

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www.benton.uconn.edu

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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:

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 written by Eric Ambler.

March 4, 2022: The Captive City

The Captive City (1952) 91m. A small town newspaperman's investigation turns up a web of organized crime. One of several early 1950s films to capitalize on the Kefauver Committee's investigation into illegal activities, "The Captive City" stars John Forsythe (Bachelor Father, Charlie's Angels, Dynasty) as crusading small-town newspaper editor Jim Austin. Directed by Robert Wise.

Where to find the Neighbors paper

Ashford

Terry's Transmissions
Ashford Spirit Shoppe
Ashford Post Office
Babcock Library
Cash Store

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

Columbia Post Office

Coventry

Highland Park Market
Meadowbrook Spirits
Coventry Laundromat
Subway
Song-A-Day Music

Eastford

Eastford Post Office

Hampton

Hampton Post Office
Organic Roots Farm

Lebanon

Lebanon Post Office
Market on the Green

Mansfield/Storrs

Holiday Spirits
All Subway shops
Bagel Zone
Storrs Post Office
Starbucks
Storrs Comm. Laundry
Liberty Bank

Mansfield Center

Lawrence Real Estate
Mansfield Library
East Brook Mall

Mansfield Depot

Thompson's Store

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 Post Office

South Windham

Bob's Windham IGA
Landon Tire
So. Windham Post Office

Stafford

Stafford Coffee Company
Subway
Artisans at Middle River
Stafford Post Office
Stafford Cidery
Hangs Asian Bistro
Stafford Library

Tolland

Birch Mountain Pottery
Subway
Tolland Post Office
Parker Place

Willington

The Packing House
Franc Motors
Willington Pizza I & II
Willington Post Office

Windham/Willimantic

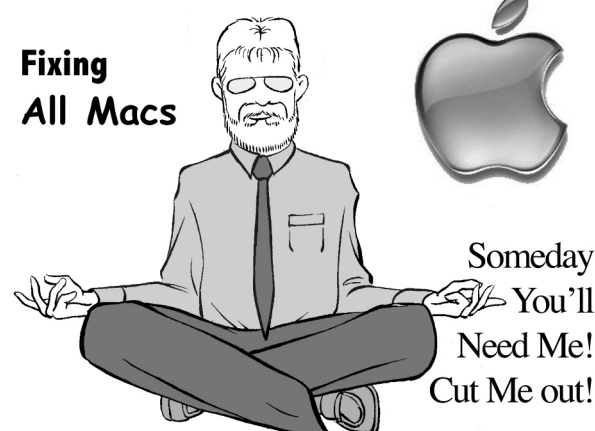
Willimantic Food Co-op
Design Center East
Schiller's
CAD Marshall Framing
Clothespin Laundromat
Main Street Cafe
That Breakfast Place
All Subways
Super Washing Well
Elm Package Store

Windham Center

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Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors Earn Three 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager Awards

POMFRET CENTER, CT (January 10, 2022) All three financial advisors at Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors (WHZ) have been awarded the 2021 Five Star Wealth Manager Award, the largest and most widely published wealth manager award program in the financial services industry. Nearly 3,200 Connecticut-area wealth managers were considered for the award. Less than 10 percent of those wealth managers – 272 – were selected.

WHZ Managing Partner and Chief Investment Officer Laurence Hale, AAMS, CRPS®, Managing Partner and Chief Strategy Officer James Zahansky AWMA® and Vice President, Associate Financial Advisor Leisl L. Cording, CFP® each received the award. This marks the eighth consecutive win for Hale and the third for Zahansky (he has been eligible for 3 years). This is Cording's first win, and the first year that she has been eligible per the stringent criteria.

WHZ provides comprehensive financial planning and wealth management services to individuals at every stage of life, from creating a strong financial plan for the future through to wealth management, retirement income planning and estate planning. WHZ also partners with business owners on strategies for business growth and succession planning.

The Five Star Wealth Manager awards are presented by Five Star Professional in partnership with Connecticut Magazine as a means to help consumers find wealth managers and investment pro-

fessionals in their area. The award is given based on a multifaceted research methodology, which incorporates input from peers and firm leaders along with standards for industry experience, education and professional designations, client retention rates, and a thorough review of regulatory history.

"It's already an honor to be among only nine percent of wealth managers in the state selected to receive this award, but to have all three of our advisors here at WHZ selected is an incredible accomplishment,"



Laurence Hale, Leisl L. Cording, and James Zahansky (left to right).
Contributed photo.

Hale said. "I'm so proud of our team for both the strength of their knowledge and skills, as well as the personalized service we provide to our clients."

On winning the award in the first year she was eligible, Cording remarked, "I'm so proud to have been selected for this award and to be part of the great work we do for our clients here at WHZ. I'm especially proud to be one of

the dozens of women to receive the award among hundreds of men, and to be part of a firm that empowers me to be a leader in the finance industry, which is still in need of female representation and leadership."

WHZ was founded in Pomfret, Connecticut in 2006. Today the firm offers financial planning and customized financial planning services to individuals, families, businesses, and not-for-profit institutions in 35 states. To learn more, visit www.whzwealth.com.

Marks

Across the way I walked today
my footprints in the snow
I left them there among the trees
hoping that you would know
That my steps have lead you there
see what I left to remind
Each print a recent memory
of things I've left behind



Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.

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