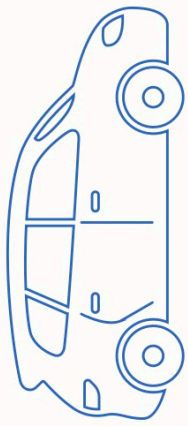
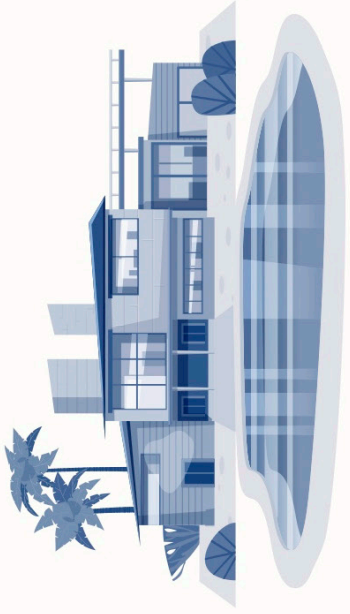


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Artists performing in our region over the coming weeks. Clockwise from top left: Steve Katz will be at The Packing House in Willington. Kristin Graves, The Nields and Rani Arbo will be at the Bread Box Theater in Willimantic. Read about these artists and many others inside on pages 6 and 16. Katz photo was contributed, all others by Pete Polomski.

No. 205 Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut and beyond

Looking Up:

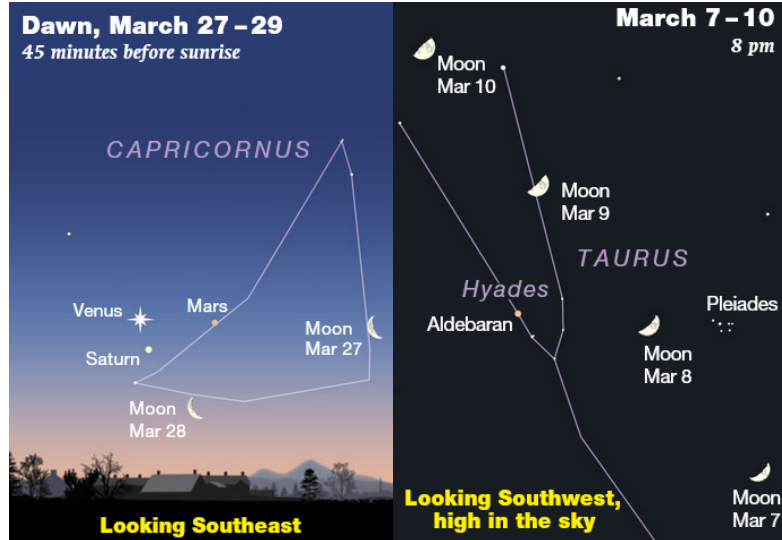
Apple Pie...the First Ingredient

By Bob Grindle

Walking around the room with our grandson in my arms a couple of afternoons ago I unconsciously started to sing a Russian folk song I learned long ago in a junior college Russian language class...“Moscow Nights” is a perfect, deeply sonorous and melodic sort of lullaby and within moments the baby was sleeping peacefully. For forty-five minutes, as I walked about the house murmuring softly and holding this trustfully sleeping newest member of the family, my mind raced through the amazing landscape of future possibilities for one so new to our planet. I tried hard to sidestep the countless tripping hazards he will have to face and that all of us have had to manage in our lives. I’m not sure if my smile was knowing or cynical or wry; perhaps wistful, certainly hopeful...but in that full-color theater room in my psyche where all us humans entertain our demons and sprites I felt like an animated version of myself jumping over the garden wall, into the lane and off on an adventure once again. For sure, it will be our grandson’s adventure, but ours as well...the world is not getting any less complicated or easier to navigate, yet the history of our species has rarely been a quiet or easy journey; it’s frequently quite thrilling and always worthy of our full-on attention. I dare say we have the tools to succeed.

During his noteworthy television series: “Cosmos,” noted astronomer, physicist, writer, teacher, lecturer and combatant of demons Carl Sagan observed, “If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe.” A tough recipe, that! Trudging through this morning’s few inches of sleet as I head out to open up the chickens, I hear the cry of one of our resident pileated woodpeckers. It’s rather far off through the aboriginal haze and

in almost slow motion my mind pictures the sound waves reaching from the bird and modulating their way laboriously downhill through the murky, almost thick, atmosphere of tiny ice pellets. Tipping my head up to the grayness, a few of the icy crystals bounce off my cheeks and nose and into my mouth and it’s as if being 8 years old again is just that close...the taste of a storm. How did we get this far off the track from where we once thought we would be? An apple



pie fresh from the oven, the sound of a pileated, the taste of a storm...we have inherited a magnificent front row seat to the only show of its kind in the universe; we are its star players and each of us owes it to that deep and sometimes hard to reach sense of (I want to help) to step or leap over the wall and get into the lane.

Sometimes the motivation to get back into the busy lane of what needs to be done can be found by simply looking up into the vastness of all that lies beyond our

small spacecraft Earth on its lonely journey. Whenever I’m feeling a bit of the doom merchant about our species’ long term prospects, a few moments of solitary time watching Venus or Mars rise ahead of the morning Sun and disappear as dawn becomes day; or seeing the Moon rise through Leo or perhaps set in front of Taurus...maybe the slow sweep of a seasonal constellation as it crosses the night stage and exits into the wings...our species’ vaulting intelligence has created such breathtaking beauty and understanding in art and music and science and architecture that it’s not possible we couldn’t solve the riddle of our own complexities.

Indeed Venus and Mars and Saturn will be with us as morning stars all the month of March, and by the end of the month the Moon joins the dance as a rising thin crescent to suggest our solar neighbors are audience to the human drama playing out on this Earthly stage. For those who prefer sky-watching at night the second week of March, leading up to the time change on the 13th, will be a great time to enjoy the Moon setting through Taurus in the southwest and as the Moon waxes toward its full “Worm” stage to ponder the scientific difficulty of understanding the motions in play as the Earth turns on its axis, while the Moon revolves around it, and the pair of them orbit the Sun more slowly than Venus or Mercury but faster than Mars or Saturn or Jupiter, as the entire Solar system travels around the center of the Milky Way as the entire Galaxy expands and orbits within the Cosmos. Surely our tendencies toward aggression and blind ritual and hostility toward “others” can be overcome.

As Spring prepares once again to grace us all with the promise of rebirth, I recall something I heard some years ago...those places that have no winter, also have no spring. Pity, that! Be well, and in this season when the sap rises in so many living things may you enjoy the almost limitless beauty our planet offers.

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



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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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Hafiz Nailed It

By Loretta Wrobel



While listening to a highly detailed webinar during a particularly busy day, I heard the presenter recite a poem, which caused a refreshing 'ah' to settle over my entire being. The poem, written by Hafiz, a Persian poet who lived in the thirteenth century, spoke loudly to me in that moment, in spite of the fact that it had been written centuries earlier. I was deeply influenced by this old wise poem. It was just what I needed to hear to ground me and bring me clarity in the midst of an up-and-down pandemic, a world hovering on war, climate change wreaking havoc with our weather, violence soaring, and inflation jumping higher each day! This poem, composed in such a different time, space and lifestyle, whirled with my twenty-first century being with precise synchronicity. How could that happen?

Whenever I get shaken by today's seemingly psychotic world, I often take a deep breath and realize that the world has always been challenging for us mere humans. All generations believe that the younger generation is going to the dogs, to hell, or that the youngsters will never get it right. In my younger days I thought elders were out of sync and were too far gone to adjust to the present moment. How wrong and naïve I was. It is almost humorous how mistaken and inexperienced I was at that youthful time. I have since learned that the longer I live, the less sure I am of anything, and the less I know. What a trip this life is.

Back to this special poem called "Created for Joy." The beginning of the poem caught my attention and grabbed me tight, "I sometimes forget that I was created for joy. My mind is too busy. My heart is too heavy for me to remember that I have been called to dance the sacred dance of life." I falsely assume that being busy is a product of our modern world and that life was simpler and less complicated in earlier centuries. Listening to these words written in the 1300's signals to me that life has never been easy for human beings. The issues we struggle with remain throughout history. There is something comforting about this.

For me our present world can feel heavy and overwhelming. Taking the time to digest the intensity of pain, despair, and trauma that all of us are exposed to daily can zap our energy and spirit. This poem continues, "I was created to smile, to love, to be lifted up and to lift others up." This truth can get lost in the rush of living. It is necessary to be made aware of the reality of our existence. I need to be reminded of this fact, as it is so easy to get diminished by the horror of all that is hard and challenging in our 2022 world.

Remembering the freedom of dancing, and how that can shift both spirit and energy, is essential. Hafiz goes on to ask the "Sacred One" to "untangle my feet from all that ensnares, free my soul that we might dance and that our dancing might be contagious." What a transformative

statement. Hafiz wrote that somewhere around 1380! I stand in awe of his visionary acuity.

The trick for me becomes how do I remember these words when I get caught up in the seemingly unsolvable crises that surround us in our everyday world. We are subjected to the difficulties that are exploding, not only in our country, but all over our planet. With all our modern gadgets, tools and computers, we can know what is going on everywhere almost instantaneous.

The flip side of this is that in our multilayer bureaucracies, we can get lost in the wealth of getting approvals, authorizations, signatures, and dotting all the fine print. This can be such a burden and can feel like an impossibility and be totally frustrating.

To be able to walk through these minefields and not be exhausted and defeated is no small achievement. I often feel, while signed on to one of the ubiquitous zoom calls that we all have to navigate, that I am drowning in data, information, and to-dos. It can feel suffocating. It can feel too hard. Why bother?

As I listened to the poignant words of this guy from the far distant past, I somehow gained energy and a shift in my thinking. To take that long, deep breath and feel the simple joy of life and movement. How simple that is and yet how profound. To embrace the word *joy* is uplifting. To accept being free to dance. The exuberance of embodiment and the untamable power of a smile. Who can resist a smile? I immediately flashed on how every person falls in love when they witness a baby smile. It is in our DNA. Apparently, it has been there forever, as Hafiz knew the beauty

and strength of a smile.

Is it our inherited flaw as an embodied spirit that we lose sight of the jubilation of our precious lives? And is it also the delight of our humanness that allows us to see the bliss? When we dance. When we laugh. When we sing. When we see a baby smile. When we engage in contagious dancing with our brothers and sisters.

On the one hand this is so uncomplicated and yet so thick with wisdom. It is miraculous that a poem of less than a hundred words can wake me up and give me hope, inspiration, and a blueprint for the rough spots. We are a tangle of muscle, bone, feeling, spirit and sensitivity that allows us to do unimaginable deeds.

We only need a tiny bit of encouragement to open ourselves to engage in a graceful dance with each other. And we have our entire lives to practice dancing with all kinds, shapes, sizes, and personalities. The more you dance and the more folks you dance with, the more you move towards clarity, satisfaction and bliss. Will you take the opportunity to dance, untangling your feet? And will you dance with me, and in so doing, expand the joy and spread the love that Hafiz found, touched and experienced so long ago?

Created for Joy

"I sometimes forget that I was created for Joy.

My mind is too busy.
My Heart is too heavy
for me to remember
that I have been
called to dance
the Sacred dance of life.

I was created to smile
To Love
To be lifted up
And to lift others up.

O' Sacred One
Untangle my feet
from all that ensnares.
Free my soul.
That we might
Dance
and that our dancing
might be contagious."

~Hafiz

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106 and Counting

By Delia Berlin

David's mother died in 2014 at the age of 103, just a few weeks short of 104. She was the oldest of three sisters, both of whom survived her. Muriel, the middle sister, died in 2017 at 104. But Mary, their "baby" sister, is still in assisted living in Massachusetts. She recently turned 106 and David and I visited her for the occasion.

Besides all becoming centenarians, another unusual fact about the Wyman sisters is that they all graduated from college. This was far from typical for those born in the early twentieth century, let alone for women. My mother-in-law was a Wellesley graduate who majored in Latin. Muriel studied social work at the College of William and Mary, one of only eight American colleges designated as a "Public Ivy" school. And Mary went to Simmons University in Boston, became an elementary school teacher, and taught first grade for many years.

The three sisters grew up in Dedham, Massachusetts, and spent their entire lives in that general area. Most of their extended families, however, eventually moved to neighboring states. An exception was Muriel's daughter, Judy, and her family, who remained nearby and provided important support to her mother and sisters. Tragically, in spite of longevity on both sides of her family, this caring and devoted daughter died of primary progressive aphasia very soon after her own mother's death. By then, Mary was the only surviving sister. She had never married, so, with both sisters and her niece gone, she had no family left near her.

Mary's physical and cognitive health are still good for her age. She even survived a Covid infection in 2020, before vaccines were available. She only had mild symptoms and recovered quickly. Her memory is excellent. Not only does she remember old events, dates, and places, but she can also remember when we visited last and relate details of the visit. She walks short distances using a walker, but requires help to get up and to get dressed. She can feed herself, but only pureed foods because she is at risk of choking and aspiration.

Mary's needs don't meet the criteria for skilled nursing care, but they are beyond what assisted living normally handles. Because of this, she is a resident in the memory care unit of an assisted living complex. She is likely the only resident there who could carry on a conversation and benefit from meaningful social interactions, but opportunities for these are scant. She shares a small room with frequently replaced unresponsive roommates.

Mary's most significant limitations are severe vision and hearing loss. Communication by phone has been impossible for years. We attempted FaceTime and Zoom, and even had a virtual party for her 105th birthday, during the pandemic lockdown. But it's too frustrating for her to try to make sense of the sound and images on the screen. Sending Mary cards is a hit-or-miss proposition. Someone needs to read her the card and get across its message, which takes much time and patience.

Because of these difficulties and the practical barriers to visiting Mary often, her relatives have teamed up to hire a wonderful woman to visit her regularly and provide some stimulation and support. This person helps Mary arrange for haircuts, nail grooming, hearing aid batteries, and other necessities. She also provides general monitoring and advocacy within the facility. She sees Mary at least twice a week and maintains communication with the family. Without her help, Mary would be completely cut off from reaching out to her relatives. But in spite of her help, significant gaps in Mary's needs remain.



Mary Wyman at 106 years old.

When David and I arrive for a visit, our first task is always communicating to Mary who we are. She can't see well enough to recognize us or hear well enough to easily understand our names. After a while of back-and-forth, she realizes who we are. She is not shy about expressing her disbelief at how old we look. Apparently, David has always remained her cute little nephew in her mind. She can't believe that he has white hair or that he is not as tall as he was in his youth. Last fall, David wore shorts to a visit and she thought that was hilarious: "What happened to your pants?!" During our next visit, a few months later, she still remembered the shorts and joked about his knees.

A source of company for Mary during these last few years has been a group of stuffed animals that she treats as pets. Rational as she appears in her conversations, she also maintains a parallel fantasy world. She is not childish with her animals, but talks seriously and articulately about their health needs, vet appointments, and other anecdotes, as if they were real. But real or not, we welcome any coping strategy that may bring her some joy.

It's sad that institutionalized elderly persons are only partially taken care of, in terms of their basic needs. Areas of near-complete neglect are dental care, vision, and hearing. It is almost impossible for families to assume responsibility for these areas because of the cost, time, and coordination involved. In my view, the only way these needs could be addressed would be as regular in-house services. Every one of these persons has needs in these areas and difficulty meeting them. A fact that seems to escape public policymakers is that by the time people are very old, their children are also old. Driving relatives on congested highways and lifting them in and out of wheelchairs for complicated appointments may be well beyond their ability.

Some of these needs, like hearing aids, may also be unmanageable without significant assistance. Mary couldn't even see her hearing aids, let alone change their batteries, maintain them, or properly wear them. We sent her a special headphone that we thought might help her, but this also requires more help than what's available. We have heard numerous stories about lost dentures, glasses, and hearing aids, causing terrible problems for the users, with no protocols for replacement or remediation. A loss like that may be all it takes to render someone completely helpless for the rest of their life.

In spite of all her situational limitations, Mary seemed happy and was very appreciative of our birthday visit. She knew that we lived in Willimantic and that it was far. She knew that we had driven in bad weather. She warmly and intently expressed her thanks to David for remembering her birthday and visiting her. She loved the soft red slippers that I brought her and reminded me that her favorite color is red. What struck me the most was how content she seemed, in circumstances that would test the will to live in most of us.

We tend to think that happiness and contentment derive a great deal from our situations. What are the essential ingredients for contentment? Seeing Mary navigating the dark waters of her own predicament so successfully makes me wonder if contentment may be just a state of mind. To what extent are we able to achieve it, regardless of our circumstances? I don't know, but I can easily think of a few people who would benefit from at least trying.

November Sound Releases New Album



Will, Melissa and Bill Rood (left to right) of November Sound. Contributed photo.

Submitted by Bill Rood

Embracing an unrelenting thirst to create, family musical trio **NOVEMBER SOUND** announces its fourth studio album release entitled **CENTURIONS**. There listeners find five poignant and original music tracks composed by ace keyboardist and founding band member Bill Rood. For this album, there's a natural acoustic sound without drum sets or synthesized sound effects.

Tunes emerge from the unified forces of human voice, piano, and ukulele. Percussionist Will, fresh off of his duties juggling flaming drum sticks for the UCONN marching band, plays a cajon (a wooden box instrument with snare wires). The tone, tempo, and lyrics are a return to the band's humble pop folk roots, fueled by New England trees and worn stone walls, remnants of when farmlands became neighborhood cul-de-sacs. Each track features a range of accompanying instruments including various strings, assorted hand percussion, piccolo snare with brushes, as well as a bass clarinet.

The whimsically titled *Vanilla Gummy Gears* reminds us to value what we have when we have it, before it's finished through such potent lyrics as "We didn't have much money but we didn't have these cares" and "Throw away the diamonds/ Let me sparkle in my own light." Wistfulness and yearning for simpler times, free of materialistic needs and adulthood's inevitable duties, are prevailing themes in *Put a Fence Around It*. Lead singer Melissa's shimmering chords asks "And what will our centurions say when all the colors fade to grey where they used to run wild and free?" In *All My Perfect*, two people connect with wonderment but there's impending fear at what's next after that moment's end. Audiences know that feeling too well as, "We know that this can't last too long/ Hold me tight; I don't want to go./ Before this night ends I want to know."

In Bill's lyrics, nostalgia for what's past still fuels hope for today and tomorrow. *On This Perfect Day* reminds us that we are our own centurions, protecting and resisting, defending who we are, "Negativity from the world gets in the way/ Covering my ears I circle 'round... Oh it's a beautiful day." Resilience abounds with "Some people searching, searching, but I found my way/ Some friends say reverse it but I'm not stopping – no way." *Balance* speaks directly to every listener, reminding each of us that yesterday's baggage does not erase what is happening all around at any given moment, that we all must see and breathe the present. Melissa's rising voice lifts listener's hearts with wisdom and determination as she deftly declares, "We only need one wheel/ The smallest spark can start a flame." In a later refrain there are other melodic treasures including, "My arms are open wide/ As far as I can see/ I wish that I could fly... We only need one wheel."

Established in Columbia, Connecticut during 2014, **NOVEMBER SOUND**'s songs are popular worldwide, including the Father's Day-themed *Strong Love* with over 192k views on YouTube; a British radio show recently featured the band's music in its regular lineup. **NOVEMBER SOUND** has an upcoming residency at Chagall Performance Art Collective at Artist's Row in Salem, Massachusetts. The band plays regularly at New England vineyards and other venues from springtime into early autumn and currently has a few remaining openings for live bookings during the 2022 concert season.

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).

Change solar regulations to achieve climate goals CT Mirror. "...a key opportunity lies in the vast square footage of commercial rooftops and parking lots. Utilizing these sites would reduce electricity costs for businesses, produce more local well-paying jobs, and lower the risks of delivering electricity via vulnerable wires and poles. Some of the savings could be passed on to lower-income residents who bear the heaviest burden from energy costs. So let's do it, right? Unfortunately, state regulations currently place a 50 megawatt cap on new commercial solar projects that are allowed to become operational each year. Once this cap is reached, other viable projects are not permitted. Similarly, the Shared Clean Energy Facilities (SCEF) program is capped at 25 MW. SCEF allows low- and moderate-income ratepayers to own part of a solar system and enjoy the economic benefits."

Climate and consumer advocates call for early end to Connecticut gas program Energy News Network. "As Connecticut regulators consider reforms to a utility-run program that incentivizes homeowners to convert to natural gas heating, the state Office of Consumer Counsel is calling for an end to the program. In testimony submitted this month to the state Public Utility Regulatory Authority, the consumer advocate said the predicted benefits from the ratepayer-subsidized program 'have simply failed to materialize, and ratepayers are now funding investments that are likely to become stranded assets in light of the state's climate and clean energy goals'... 'We can not be expanding the use of gas right now — we need to be moving toward renewables. The expansion plan 'really holds us back from doing that, and it's costing ratepayers millions of dollars.'"

4 things to know about Connecticut's new energy storage incentive program Energy News Network. "Connecticut regulators are offering upfront money to help pay for the installation of an in-home or business battery system, and customers can earn more money by allowing utilities to tap into them during peak demand. Here are four key aspects to know about the residential storage program. 1. Pairing a battery with solar yields the greatest benefits. 2. The program's upfront incentives are highest for low-income customers and customers in distressed municipalities. 3. The utilities will pay you to allow them to dispatch power from your battery during anticipated periods of peak demand. 4. The federal tax credit for solar can further offset battery costs."

Connecticut offering residents up to \$1,000 to install EV chargers. Here's where to find out more Newtimes. "Connecticut will soon begin offering some homeowners up to \$1,000 towards the cost of installing an electric vehicle charger and upgrading wiring as needed. The nine-year program, finalized last year by the Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, is available to residential and commercial customers of Eversource and United Illuminating, both of whom are administering it. The program offers up to \$500 back to residential customers for a new Level 2 smart charger, and up to \$500 back towards the cost of upgrading home wiring to support the home charger."

2 Connecticut solar farms will also grow crops Solar Power World. "'Agrivoltaics,' sometimes called 'agrisolar,' is the co-location of solar photovoltaics and agriculture in the same area. Solar can offer many valuable benefits to farmers, including increased water efficiency, protection from heat stress and extended growing and grazing seasons... In Orange, a 2.9-MW solar farm will occupy around six acres of land at Treat Farm, off of Old Tavern Road. This prime farmland soil is ideal for organic vegetable growth and sustainable farming practices... In East Windsor, a 5-MW solar farm will occupy around 20

acres of land at Mulnite Farms...The improved soil and vegetation growth is expected to sequester more CO₂ than the land would otherwise in previous uses."

Grid operator should stop crying wolf Commonwealth. "New England's fossil fuel interests and electric grid operator are at it again. Every winter, they issue dire warnings that our region's power grid won't be able to handle the stress of another season of extreme weather. As this week's Commonwealth story highlights, 2022 is no different. It's time to call out ISO-New England (our electric grid operator) and fossil fuel companies for this naked attempt to prop up oil and gas at the expense of renewables and state climate policy."



Solar panels at Cromwell retirement home to save \$40,000 in annual energy costs Middletown Press. "The installation of 356 solar panels at the town's senior living retirement community is expected to save the facility \$40,000 a year in energy costs. The project, at the Covenant Living of Cromwell new Town Center, is projected to save \$1.4 million over the next 20 years according to a press release. Executive Director Dan Stegbauer says this is part of the community's commitment to conserve energy and become more sustainable for the future while lowering operational expenses, the agency said. The panels help to avoid releasing CO₂ in the atmosphere, and generates enough power to that equal to providing energy for more than 23 homes in the state..."

Facing opposition, fossil fuel project scrapped for Middletown plant Fairfield Citizen. "The power company that has purchased the NRG natural gas and oil plant on River Road says it will not pursue the prior owners' plan to build a 375 megawatt fossil-fired facility, which drew opposition last year from environmentalists. In a statement, Generation Bridge, a subsidiary of ArcLight of Boston, said it intends to develop renewable energy and energy storage at the site."

As Connecticut falls behind on emission goals, activists want teeth added to law Energy News Network. "Connecticut citizens can already sue the state for failing to protect air, water, and other natural resources. Now, climate groups want the same enforcement mechanism extended to the state's 2008 climate law... 'We have laudable goals in the legislation,' said Shannon Laun, a staff attorney with the Conservation Law Foundation, "but if there's no enforcement mechanism, how do you ensure that the state is accountable?"

Ashford Arts Council Receives Grant

Submitted by Debra Gag and Kathryn Eidson/AAC C0-Chairs

Ashford Arts Council (AAC) is pleased to announce that they are to receive a CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant for the physical year 2022. The purpose of this grant is to assist organizations as they recover from the pandemic and to help them maintain and grow their ability to serve their community and the public. In the pandemic one major way to help arts organizations is to help them improve their information technology and digital infrastructure. Using their allotted \$5,000 funds, the AAC is in the process of fulfilling this infrastructure need by improving their ability to present events to their membership and the community and further their participation with artists in supporting their work.

Ashford Arts Council is one of 624 non-profit museums and cultural, humanities, and arts organizations to receive a total of \$16M in CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grants (CTCFOSG). The CTCFOSG are part of \$30.7M of support allocated to CTH over the next two years by the CT General Assembly and approved by Governor Ned Lamont.

This funding underscores the commitment Connecticut's leaders have made to address the health and wellbeing of the people and communities they serve.

Dr. Jason Mancini, executive director at CTH, explains that "These grants not only meet critical needs today, but they also provide us an unprecedented look into the state of the cultural sector going forward. We have an opportunity to more fully understand and quantify the profound impact arts, humanities, and cultural nonprofits have on the individuals, local economies, and issues in Connecticut."

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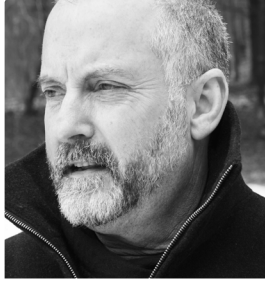
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The Neighbors paper
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From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

My Garden To-Do List

By C. Dennis Pierce



Four weeks until spring and I am shoveling heavy, wet snow. On a positive note, on this grey overcast day, the blue jays are outnumbering the smaller birds at the feeders, and the chickens, more casually referred to as the “girls” from two doors down, have meandered over to my yard to feast on the seeds that gravity has provided. Sometimes one or two are courageous and come to visit, but today they must have heard something great was on the menu, because as I counted there were ten and a rooster that was breaking up fights and making sure that the territory around the bird feeders belonged to his flock.

Growing up in New Hampshire I was always told that these late snowfalls are referred to as “poor man’s fertilizer.” As I researched this, I found there is some merit to that old New England tale. I found that it is good when it snows because aside from water, nitrogen is the only element that snow puts back into the earth. What probably makes snow good for the soil is that it feeds nitrogen into the soil at a slower and more even rate (through melting) than a rainstorm, which delivers precipitation at a more rapid rate.

I begin each morning with looking over my “to-do” list for that day. Today was for pruning, which, due to the weather, I immediately moved to tomorrow. I find that if I vigorously prune my blackberry, blueberry, and raspberry bushes, they pay me back for services rendered by producing a higher yield in season. So instead of venturing out, I began writing my garden to-do list:

1. Get tools and supplies in order.

Go over tools. Clean and sharpen blades.

Take this opportunity to replenish supplies. Buy enough fertilizer and soil amendments to have on hand.

Inventory the supply of plant supports and tomato cages. I find that if I wait, when I finally go to purchase some they are not available.

2. Clear out weeds, mulch, and debris.

3. Prune.

Late winter/early spring is the perfect time to prune back old wood because you can see the branch structure well, and you can shape the plant before the buds break dormancy and the plant starts investing energy in its branches. I just recently found this tip that I had not followed before. Before each cut, use a clean rag and some isopropyl alcohol to sterilize your pruners. This precaution keeps you from inadvertently spreading plant disease all around the garden. Whenever you prune a plant, it is a good practice to add a little fertilizer to the soil to ensure that the plant has the nutrients on hand to heal its wounds quickly.

4. Prepare the soil.

Once the frost has lifted and the soil is workable, prepare the garden beds. In winter, soil tends to become compacted, so the first thing you want to do is loosen it back up by tilling or turning it. Using a tiller or a sharp spade, work the soil to a depth of 12 to 14 inches to loosen it up. Any mulch or leaf litter that is well-composted should be mixed right in, but if it is too fresh, you should remove it first. Next, add compost and amendments.

5. Divide perennials such as daylilies.

I found some instructions on the internet that might be helpful. Before the growing season takes off, give these plants room to spread out by following these simple steps:

Dig out around the perimeter of the clump, giving a wide berth so as not to damage the roots.

Dig under the plant root ball and lift it out of the ground.

Try to disentangle the roots by hand and pull apart the distinct root stocks/tubers. In some places it will be necessary to cut the clump apart with a knife.

Evenly space the new divisions over a larger area and re-plant them immediately.

6. Apply mulch.

Apply a thick layer. Mulch is much more effective at keeping weeds from becoming established if you can

get it in place before the weeds start sprouting.

Several weeks ago, a documentary created by a UConn student was previewed on campus. Recently it was shared with me, and what a great film it is. It focuses on a very important topic, and that is women in farming. Maura Sanchi '22, a BOLD Women’s Leadership Network Scholar and EcoHouse alum, produced the documentary, titled *The Female Future of Farming*. The film features the stories and experiences of four female farmers in the northeast United States: Emma Sanchi, apprentice and aspiring farmer (Scarborough, Maine); Vania Galicia, farm manager, GROW Windham (Windham, Connecticut); and Sarah Brush and Dixie Moon, co-owners, Brush Hill Dairy Farm LLC (Bozrah, Connecticut). I encourage you to take the time to view this poignant documentary, which you can find here (be patient while you sit through the few ads that appear first): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2M0-LLxVn0>

OK, maybe it is wishful thinking, but it is rather challenging to write about local farming this time of the year. In looking forward to the spring, I am shifting into my foraging mode, and I am providing the following recipe. One word of caution: Do not pick dandelion greens from an area that you know has been previously treated with chemicals.

Wilted Dandelion Greens with Hot Bacon Dressing
Servings: 2

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 oz. uncooked bacon, cut into small piece
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- ½ lb. washed, dried dandelion leaves, harvested before the plants flower
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey (preferably local)
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Wash dandelion greens and roll them in a paper towel to dry them.

Chop the leaves into approximately 2-inch pieces.

In a small bowl, whisk the vinegar and honey together until the honey dissolves. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over low heat. Add the bacon bits and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the fat has been rendered.

Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds, making sure the garlic does not burn.

Add dandelion greens to the pan and turn off the heat.

Stir in the vinegar-honey mixture. Coat the greens.

Do not overcook. The greens just need to be wilted.

Add salt and pepper.

Serve warm.

If you have not previously attended, I would suggest that you mark your calendar for this year’s Know Your Farmer Fair, which is being held on Saturday, March 19, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Willimantic Elks Lodge. The fair, which is celebrating its seventh year, is an opportunity for residents, chefs, and food service directors to meet local farmers and to look ahead to the upcoming growing season. Residents can shop the farmers market and discuss local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, farm stands, and pick-your-own opportunities. Come together and find the best way to source your local food for the 2022 growing season.

Four weeks to go until spring. Not soon enough for me. Spring officially begins, of course, with the spring equinox, which arrives on Sunday, March 20, at 11:33 a.m. At this time, the Sun stands directly over Earth’s equator, and we can wake up knowing that we are inching ever closer to the longest day of the year, the summer solstice. Thanks for reading. Until next month, if you have a suggestion for a farm or a local grower or even a recipe that features a local ingredient, please let me know. I will do my best to share your suggestions in a future column. Drop me a line at Codfish53@Yahoo.com.

Peas be with you. And remember, every day is a holiday and every meal is a banquet. Come celebrate with me; I’ll save you a seat at the table.

Trinity Knots

By Judy Davis

Padraic Pearse,
Sean McDermott,
Seamus Connelly -
commit to memory, of the
struggles, and the ceilidhs.
The Easter Rising of 1916
saw their heroic steadfastness
for the beloved green.
They, and many others, took
a stand, always
against England’s cruel hand.
Glorious trinity knots bound
their hearts to Ireland.
They were, and still are,
legends for all to see -
written in song for you, for me.
And was there ever a
grander stage,
than their Irish souls
upon history’s page.

Bread Box Theater News

Submitted by Bruce John

The Bread Box Theater started its 13th Spring Music Series on Sunday, February 27th and as always, all proceeds benefit Covenant Soup Kitchen. Please consider coming out to our safe venue and supporting this essential community nonprofit. They need our help more than ever now to combat hunger.

We are excited to bring you five more first rate concerts with some new acts and some of our beloved past audience favorites over the coming weeks.

March 13th, we welcome back powerhouse Americana Folk Band, Rani Arbo and daisy mayhem. They never disappoint. Sharing the Bill will be folk icon Lui Collins who lived and performed in our area in the early 70’s. Let’s give her a warm welcome home.

March 27th The Niels. One of the premier folk rock bands in the New England and New York region for the past 20 years. You will love their harmonies and audience interactions. Opening the show is the clever and talented singer/songwriter Peter Lehndorff.

April 10th we are bringing back from the Pacific Northwest, Shaboo Legend, John Batdorf of Batdorf and Rodney fame. He is still a prominent singer/songwriter who is a big musical influence in the Recovery Community. Sharing the Bill will be one of our all time favorite Connecticut State Troubadours, Kristen Graves, founder of the (Just Be Nice) Political Party. Her songs and her presence is always a delight.

April 24th is the greatest entertainer ever to play the Shaboo stage and he played there well over 50 times, James Montgomery. Experience this rare, up close, unplugged show in the intimate space that is the Bread Box.

On the same Bill will be young phenom and award winning blues guitar player Jake Kulak with his band The Low Down.

Finally, Saturday May 21st at 7:00 pm the great Jonathan Edwards will return to our stage to make up the show that was scheduled for 2020 and 2021 and canceled because of Covid. All tickets for those shows will be honored and there are a few left for this event.

Season Tickets are still available or get tickets for individual shows at breadboxfolk.org or eventbrite.com...

Remember: Masks and Vaccines (or, a negative test within 72 hours of showtime) are required. We will continue to monitor the Covid situation in our area and make adjustments if necessary.

All shows are Sunday at 4:00 unless noted otherwise

The Bread Box Theater is located at 220 Valley Street Willimantic

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Bobby Taylor & the Vancouvers

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 Bobby Taylor & The Vancouvers, the Canadian soul band who spawned comedian Tommy Chong and whose leader discovered the Jackson 5.



Robert Edward Taylor was born in Washington, D.C., on February 18, 1934. He grew up in the nation’s capital. As a young man, he moved to New York City. There, he performed doo-wop with singers who later joined Frankie Lymon & The Teenagers and Little Anthony & The Imperials. In 1958, Taylor sang with the Four Pharaohs, who enjoyed some local hits in the Columbus, Ohio, area.

While in San Francisco in the early ‘60s, Taylor met Little Daddy & The Bachelors. The group comprised Tommie Melton (vocals), Tommy Chong (guitar), Bernie Sneed (piano), Wes Henderson (bass), and Floyd Sneed (drums). While in Calgary, they had called themselves the Calgary Shades in reference to the fact that the band was interracial. Chong was half Chinese, while the other members were Black, White, and Aboriginal. Taylor, meanwhile, was of African-American, Puerto Rican, and Native American descent.

Little Daddy & The Bachelors released a single, “Too Much Monkey Business” / “Junior’s Jerk.” In 1962, Chong and Melton opened a dance hall called the Blues Palace in Vancouver, British Columbia. Though Little Daddy & The Bachelors had built a following, things soured when they followed Chong’s suggestion that they change their name to “Four Niggers and a Chink.” They subsequently went with “Bobby Taylor & The Vancouvers.”

In 1965, Florence Ballard and Mary Wilson of the Supremes heard the band—whose repertoire consisted mainly of Motown covers—in Vancouver, and alerted the label’s CEO, Berry Gordy, Jr. Gordy brought the Vancouvers to Motown’s Detroit headquarters and signed them to his Gordy Records imprint. By this time, the group’s lineup had changed as the Vancouvers had merged with another local band, the Good Shepherds. They now consisted of Taylor, Henderson and Chong, along with Eddie Patterson (guitar), Robbie King (organ), and Duris Maxwell A/K/A Ted Lewis (drums).

Despite Taylor’s later claims, Jimi Hendrix never played with the Vancouvers. He and Taylor knew each other from their early days in Seattle-Tacoma, and Hendrix later jammed with the Vancouvers on stage in Europe. But that was it.

The group’s self-titled debut LP came out in 1968 and produced the hit single, “Does Your Mama Know About Me?” Tommy Chong co-wrote the ballad, which hit #5 on the *Billboard* Soul chart and #29 pop.

In July 1968, the Vancouvers played the Regal Theater in Chicago. Taylor was highly impressed with their opening act, a young family group called the Jackson 5. He personally brought them to Detroit and arranged an audition with Motown executive Suzanne de Passe. She and Berry Gordy were similarly impressed with the Jackson 5, who were signed to Motown within the year.

The Vancouvers had two subsequent chart singles in 1968 and later performed behind their fellow Motown artist, Chris Clark. Tommy Chong and Wes Henderson were fired by Clark and Motown producer Johnny Bristol for missing a gig to apply for “green cards.” The band broke up shortly after. Chong later teamed up with Cheech Marin. Their drug-based humor made them comedy legends.

When Motown signed the Jackson 5 in March 1969, Taylor was their first producer. He was behind the lion’s share of their debut album, the misleadingly titled “Diana Ross Presents the Jackson 5.” As a solo artist, Taylor was moved to Motown’s V.I.P. subsidiary, but his singles failed to sell. By 1971, he had left Motown over a financial dispute. Taylor would successfully sue the label for a substantial amount of money.

He moved to England and formed an offshoot group, Bobby Taylor & The New Vancouvers, who recorded a 1990 album for Ian Levine’s Morocity label. However, his later musical efforts were stymied by throat cancer, which Taylor had treated by various holistic doctors.

By 2014, Bobby Taylor had moved to Hong Kong. He died there of cancer on July 22, 2017, at the age of 83.

Charted singles:

“Does Your Mama Know About Me?” (1968) R&B #5, Pop #29

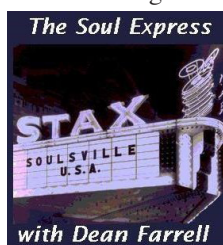
“I Am Your Man” (1968) R&B #40, Pop #85

“Malinda” (1968) R&B #16, Pop #48

“Why Play Games” (Bobby Taylor solo, 1973) R&B #83

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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Ordinary Agriculture

By Jae Wulf

Agbotic, Inc., is promoting the construction of its facilities on farmland that has state or privately funded development restrictions. The company is marketing these facilities as “The Smartest Farms in the World,” and the state and Mansfield have bought into the pitch that this is simply agriculture. Agbotic’s Mansfield neighbors await their day in court.

Meanwhile, residents of Ashford wait on the sidelines while their town’s Planning and Zoning Commission and the Connecticut Farmland Trust consider Agbotic’s plan to build another plant factory on farmland and a woodlot that are “protected” by a conservation restriction and are on a Scenic Town dirt road. The promoter of the factory, which is called “Agbotic Paradise,” claims the development is agriculture and is therefore a “permitted use,” which means no reviews, no resident input, and no hearings.

The common thread, we are told, is that since it is just agriculture the landowners can do whatever they want—including, apparently, excavating farm fields to build concrete and steel buildings with a footprint larger than the average Walmart, bringing in industrial-scale electricity that will require tree removal along the scenic road, and more.

But a closer look at the state statute that defines the term *agriculture* (<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Commissioner/Commissioner/Definition-of-Agriculture>) offers a different perspective.

First, the statute makes very clear that unless something is specifically defined otherwise, the definition of *agriculture* is limited to the text in the statute.

The first notable phrase is “incident to,” which has the common meaning of being an integral, although incidental, part of the whole. In other words, something that is incidental is involved with and in support of an activity, but is a minor and not a major element of that activity.

Consistent with the common understanding of farming practices and agricultural activities, the statute provides further clarity by using the phrase “ordinary farming operations.” In fact, the phrase is used not once, but rather three times, making it irrefutably clear that the statute is referring to standard and commonplace agricultural activities—meaning that something that is not ordinary (or not common) is excluded from the definition.

Against this backdrop, consider Ashford’s Agbotic Paradise facility, which is referred to by the company as controlled environment agriculture (CEA). An internet search brings up articles that refer to such developments as plant factories and describe them as “encompass[ing] a variety of systems that take a technology-based approach to farming.” The description states that the “most advanced systems are fully automated, closed loop systems with controlled lighting, water and ventilation.” (See <https://caes.ucdavis.edu/research/initiative/controlled-environment-agriculture> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/controlled-environment_agriculture). The key point is that these plant factories are fully indoor operations with the building and systems required for, and the essential and primary means to conduct, CEA activities. Year-round microgreen crops are not an “ordinary” sight in Ashford’s farm fields.

As a solution to problems involving land consumption, the 2018 Farm Bill required the USDA to establish the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). OUAIP has helped enable organizations tap into USDA funds for the establishment of urban farms around the country that are assumed to be mostly commercial and indoor. (See <https://www.agritecture.com/blog/2022/1/05/the-9-biggest-controlled-environment-agriculture-wins-losses-of-2021>).

Other organizations are also promoting CEA plant factories as a “more reliable food supply that can be produced year-round, and they can be located close to urban centers.” This can “greatly reduce our agricultural footprint, and the vertical farm concept can then be applied to every urban center, regardless of location.” (See <https://www.edengreen.com/blog-collection/what-everyones-saying-about-controlled-environment-agriculture>)

The record is clear that the federal government and national industry groups are promoting these high-tech methods of indoor farming as a new way to preserve farmland, while Agbotic, Inc., is not. It is also clear that mas-

sive enclosed and temperature-controlled CEA complexes require significant technology to operate. An excellent description of such a CEA plant factory was provided in a report by National Public Radio last fall. Here are just a few snippets:

The facility sits in contrast to the early 19th Century architecture of the nearby town, and unlike the surrounding farms, there are no sprawling fields of corn or barns full of dairy cows.... It also features something not typically present in the average farmstead: a bank of computer servers.

The room feels more like a manufacturing plant than a barn. Fans whirl, pipes and ducts snake overhead, and technicians shuffle in and out.... [The] arugula was picked by a machine that looks like a large Roomba. Seeding and watering are also handled by a machine Agbotic calls the robot gantry.... The techniques employed by Agbotic are so advanced, the company had to invent many of the machines it uses, including the gantry. The gantry was the company’s first patented creation, now joined by five others.... The gantry looks like a miniature crane...

“The robotic gantry carries sensors in watering booms,” Gaus explains [John Gaus, founder of Agbotic]. “It carries every tool you can imagine from seed to harvest and allows one person to manage this space. Literally farming with the touch of a button.” That button typically takes the form of an iPad or iPhone, from which the entire greenhouse can be managed.

While automation is an important part of Agbotic’s business model, the sensors are even more critical.... The servers in the front of the building analyze the data and automatically adjust factors like temperature, water, and nutrient levels to optimize growing conditions.

The quotes above are from a news story and interview about the Agbotic, Inc., plant factory in Sackets Harbor, New York. (See <https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/44377/20210903/robot-farmers-pioneer-climate-resilient-farming-in-the-north-country>)

As for “ordinary farming operations”: a high-tech, nontraditional farm factory is a reach too far. Innovative for sure. Ordinary, not.

The last sentence of the statute: “Nothing herein shall restrict the power of a local zoning authority under chapter 124.” Ensuring residents an objective and thorough review of the proposed development is not only supported by state law, it underscores the value of our local town authority for the benefit of all residents. This is especially important in Ashford, where the proposed development is in a residential/agricultural zone on a one-lane, scenic town road.

Tai Chi Home

Feeling at Home

By Joe Pandolfo

The rascal scholar, ex-Episcopal priest and self-confessed “spiritual entertainer” Alan Watts opened the window of Eastern wisdom to generations of westerners. Most all his books are gems, well worth rummaging the shelves for in your favorite bookstore or local library. One of those gems is “TAO, the Watercourse Way”, written just before his death. It’s an always-new, inside-out view of living.

One way we get to this view is in the tale of the Chinese child, who never asks “How did I come into this world?”, but instead, “How did I come *out* of the world?” Of course! As natural beings we come out of the world, not into it. What a grounding question. What a great way to feel more at home on the planet, more at home in our own bodies.

And what better time than the turn of a season to feel at home this way. In the southern New England woodlands that we come from, when the frost in the ground loosens its grip, our own hunched-up winter muscles instinctively want to relax. We naturally let go of our breath, when the thawing ground releases a cool mist in the morning.

Synchronicity: Ukraine Version

By Dagmar Noll

I’ve been thinking about acquiring a mechanical alarm clock ever since I became a dispatcher. Every time a blizzard or a hurricane hits Connecticut and we lose power, I know I am expected at work to open the office in the dark predawn and start service running regardless of weather, and I am wholly dependent on my phone alarm to wake me up. Every storm I think, “I need a mechanical alarm clock for backup.”

When I was a girl, I had a red and gold alarm clock featuring Strawberry Shortcake waving and declaring “Have a berry good day!” By the time I was a teenager, I had acquired two or three additional mechanical clocks, cast-offs from elders who converted to electric or battery-power. Films and television presented the ticking clock to excite anxiety. Stress. Tension. “The madness of the ticking clock,” was a phrase that stuck in my head. I would wind all the clockworks in my room—even one that was just guts I had pulled out of a broken case to see how the mechanism worked—and skip to bed, laughing, “These should surely drive me crazy!”

They didn’t. Their tattoo of steady pulses surrounded me and brought me rest.

A month ago, another storm approached, and once again I was thinking I should have an alarm clock on hand that didn’t depend on electricity, just in case we lost power. I was also in emotional turmoil, struggling to find rest day or night. An old problem, but acute as the weather hit. I was weary and willing to try weird things for a sliver of peace.

I went hunting for a mechanical alarm clock.

It was easy to find cheap mechanical clocks new, and harder to find designs with visual appeal. I poked around in “vintage” Etsy. Reviews for a seller with dozens of brightly-colored, Soviet-era clocks were outstanding, though comments like, “My only concern is that the ticking sound is a bit louder than expected, thus not great for my massage room” and “the clock does tick so I keep in the bedroom closet over night” gave me pause. Is this really going to help me relax? I squinted into the past at that silly young girl with a mechanical alarm clock collection. I decided that I needed the alarm for power outages, so I had nothing to lose. I picked through the clocks where the seller declared “The mechanism WORK !!” and, playing it safe, ordered two.

From Ukraine.

On February 3rd.

The shipping cost more than the clocks, but even so, they arrived surprisingly fast considering international mail. I set them next to my bed and wound the alarm springs, and then set them off. God, they were jarring. One required the alarm key to noisily wind down until it was in an untensioned state, but the other could be interrupted mid-ring by pressing a button above the clock face. They would do well in an emergency, for sure.

Then, leaving the alarms slack, I wound both mainsprings tight, lay with my eyes closed, and listened.

For a few seconds the clockhearts seemed to beat in unison, but one soon pulled ahead. Then it was a few seconds of syncopation, then alternation, and then a brief trill, until the hearts were back again beating in a brief illusion of unison. As I listened to the pulses fall in and out of line one minute to the next, an afternoon sunbeam threw across my eyes.

And yet sleep descended, slumber moved deep. I had the peace.

It is February 26. I have been glued to Twitter and Facebook for three days, watching the stunning fight of Ukrainians against the Russian invaders. I watch women like me, with no war training or fighting experience take up arms to defend their homes. Their faces are solemn or resolute or tearful, all countenances of bravery.

I wind my two clocks. Suddenly I look at them hard. Note: “Synchronicity.”

I log onto Etsy, where I left a glowing review of the two clocks shortly after I tested them and haven’t been back since. On February fifteenth, the seller sent me the message optimistic about a stable and predictable future: “Hello. Thank you very much for your feedback. I am very glad that you are satisfied with your purchase. I would like to give you a discount coupon in my store as a gratitude. Perhaps it will come in handy for you someday. take care of yourself. Best regards, Vadim.”

Take care of myself.

Like all other Etsy storekeepers in Ukraine, Vadim is, Etsy notes, currently “taking a short break.”

I weep.

Take care of yourself, Vadim. Take care of yourself, Ukraine. Take care of each other, humans of Earth. We are inextricably interlinked, whether we know it or not.

Neighbors
a little paper
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For Women's History Month- An Important Perspective on Women, Finances and Success

By Laura Dunn

Liesl L. Cording, CFP® is among the relatively few women in an advisory and leadership role in the financial industry. Just 25 percent of all financial advisors are women, and even fewer hold a leadership position.



At just 36 years old, Cording is both. She is a Senior Vice President and Financial Advisor at Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors, a Pomfret, Connecticut based independent investment firm serving clients in 35 states.

Her experience as a woman working within a male-dominated industry, as well as her experience working with other women to help them build wealth and become financially empowered, reveals important lessons – lessons that can serve to propel all girls and women to become more empowered both financially and otherwise.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, her perspective is an important one to consider as we look ahead to creating greater equality for women in the future. Here, she shares some of the lessons she's learned as a woman in finance, and the advice she gives to other girls and women about finances and finding success.

What made you want to enter the field of Finance?

When I was younger I liked math, and I also really enjoyed helping people as well. When I started college at Quinnipiac University I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do, but my dad encouraged me to enroll in the School of Business. Then I found finance, which combines math and helping people, and it all came together that becoming a financial advisor was a good path for me.

What was it like studying Finance in college? Were you a minority as a woman in the program?

There were some other women in the program, but it was very male dominated, which is similar to everything I've experienced working in the field since then as well. Once I graduated and got into the workplace, I found that a majority of the leaders were male and a lot of assistants handling the day-to-day work with clients were female, which was interesting to see. That's still pretty much the case today as well, but it is slowly getting better.

What are your favorite parts of your job?

I honestly love helping clients work toward achieving their financial goals, which then allows them to achieve their life goals. When you can help someone feel confident about their ability to accomplish their dreams, that's always really rewarding.

Do you feel you've encountered any bias as a woman working in Finance, and if so, how did you deal with that?

I think I have experienced that in some ways, but I don't let those things bother me. I'm pretty driven and so if there are obstacles like that or things that make me feel disadvantaged, I try to rise above them. I make it known that I'm here, I'm an important member of the team, I'm intelligent, confident, and I have an opinion.

Especially in the early years of my career, I think my biggest obstacle was just building confidence. But my mom has always taught me to have courage and perseverance, and I learned from her that anything I want to do I can set out to achieve, and that everything comes from within. My twin sister Kate (who also works at WHZ) and I have always been each other's biggest supporters in any endeavor as well, from playing soccer to college to our professional careers. I think having those women mentors and supporters around you really helps.

I've definitely had positive experiences as a woman in Finance as well, though. Our leadership here at Weiss, Hale & Zahansky is incredibly supportive and inclusive. Good leaders always empower their team and that's what they do for me and the rest of our team, both male and female. But knowing that women make up only 25 percent of the industry, they make sure I have access to female mentors and women-centric conferences, which is

wonderful.

Are there certain financial challenges that you see women facing frequently? What is your advice?

The biggest challenge I see with many of the women I work with is the same one I struggled with myself, which is just having the confidence to know that you can educate yourself about your finances and then believing in that knowledge and your decisions.

So much of it comes back to the fact that females were just not included in discussions or decisions about money for so long, and so there's this tendency to feel intimidated by it. That's beginning to change now but those attitudes can still persist. So as a financial advisor, it's an important part of my job to help my female clients feel empowered to understand their finances and build confidence in their own financial knowledge. I really enjoy that.

Another frequent challenge that sort of stems from that first one is women not building up enough assets in their own name to feel comfortable retiring. Whether they're single or recently divorced, if they haven't been proactive about saving their own funds their strategy often ends up having to focus on how to get them caught up as soon as possible so they can live well in retirement. So helping my female clients understand how to create a Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well strategy to achieve their goals is another important part of what I do.

Women also tend to be more conservative with their investments, which can hurt them over time in terms of accumulating wealth. Taking on an appropriate amount of risk for your own situation and goals is the key, and that's where a solid strategy comes into play again.

What advice would you give to girls and young women considering a career in Finance?

Well first off, we definitely need more programs that promote women and girls getting into finance. It's really a great job for women, because they tend to be more caring and intuitive about people's needs and wants. So if you like math and caring for people like I do, it's a no-brainer!

But like in my case and in the case of many of my clients, having confidence in yourself and your ability to succeed in the financial field is key. Unfortunately, that's often a challenge for girls and young women, especially because it's so male dominated which can make them feel it's not suitable for them.

I'd advise them to talk with a woman in the field to get an understanding of what the work is like, challenges to prepare for, and opportunities to look out for as well. I would be happy to talk to any girl who's interested in pursuing a career in finance. It's definitely been a great experience for me.

If you'd like some advice on building a career in Finance, or if you'd like help creating a strategy for your own finances using our Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well process at Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors, call us at (860) 928-2341. You can also learn more and access lots of great resources on our website, www.whzwealth.com.

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We Should Save and Study Connecticut's Stone Chambers

By Bill Powers

For many years the existence of distinctive stone structures mainly in New England and New York State, variously called chambers, beehives, caves, root cellars and huts, have raised questions about their origin, age and use. Recently, a neighbor telephoned me to say that Terry Lavoie's book has been published and is titled *Connecticut's Stone Chambers: What Are They? Who Made Them? When? Why?* – December 2021, Fowler Road Press.

Theresa J. LaVoie lives around the corner from me in Windham. Twenty-five years ago, Terry, as she is known to her friends and neighbors, had become intrigued by a manmade structure that she saw while on a tour of a farm in the "Quiet Corner" of Connecticut. She now describes it as: "a very large rectangular shaped stone structure that was nestled on a small hillside along our path. It had a doorway and appeared to be some kind of hut." Members of the tour who were interested

were not only allowed to closely inspect the structure but were also allowed "to take a peek inside." This event was the trigger that sparked her curiosity and led her on an adventure for a quarter of a century. In addition, it spawned an enormous personal undertaking that has now culminated with the publication of her new book.

Many questions were created between what Terry not only heard from the farm tour's guide but by what she also saw with her own eyes concerning the manmade structure. "He called the structure a 'root cellar' and explained that colonists had probably built and used it many years ago to store fruit or root vegetables that were grown on the farm." Terry's immediate reaction, kept to herself, was, "why would they make such an elaborate structure that was so far from a house or any other farm structures? The structure even had two distinct rooms, connected with a dividing wall almost in the middle of it... For me visions of the large stone structure stayed in the back of my mind for years as a reminder of something very unique."

As it turns out, in eastern Connecticut the existence of stone chambers as part of our shared cultural landscape is more prominent than one might expect and Theresa LaVoie had knowledge of their locations for more than sixty of them, as a result of her exploration and research over the years. She explains in the very beginning her book the following: "When you pick up this book and start reading it, please be aware that it is not one of facts about archeology or astronomy nor visitors from other continents or even planets. I am an amateur researcher - one who has loved the outdoors and what that encompasses, the trees, shrubs, brooks, ponds and lakes; and, especially the stones. More recently (in about the last 25 years), I have become extremely interested in some of the items that have been constructed in the past from

local stone that was readily available to those who lived here in eastern Connecticut and other nearby places." A stone chamber generally is a small enclosed stone building. Chambers in the United States are found mostly in New England and New York and their origin and use are not fully known. Similar structures have been found in the British Isles.

Although the author states that she is an "amateur researcher", I can attest to the fact that her extensive and meticulously kept volumes of field notes over the

Connecticut's Stone Chambers What Are They? Who Made Them? When? Why?



Theresa J. LaVoie

years, including sketches, GPS data, and photographs rival those of any "professional" researcher. In writing this interesting and fascinating book, Theresa LaVoie has teamed up with documentary photographer Markham Starr who contributed many photographs. Starr himself is a well-published author.

Several years ago when attending a Connecticut State Museum of Natural History program at the Groton, Connecticut, Gungywamp site, I was fortunate to be present for a discussion about the origin of a particular stone chamber that is present there. At that time Nick Bellantoni was our State Archeologist who interpreted that the structure was from the Colonial period based upon the scientific methods of his discipline. Another gentleman presented a theory that it was Viking settlers hundreds of years prior to that who had built it. There have been many theories proposed about the origins of stone chambers; and, at times, controversy. Regardless of whether stone chambers were constructed by Native Americans or European settlers 300-400 years ago, what is also important as proposed by Theresa LaVoie is that "It is important to let people know that stone chambers exist in Connecticut and are a part of our state's history that should be preserved and further studied" We should absolutely save and study the stone chambers of Eastern Connecticut.

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

Is Connecticut Funny?

By Bob Lorentson

The following story is true, only the events have been changed to protect me from lawsuits, brickbats, and evil curses. Names are real however, and nobody is innocent, particularly me.

I recently came across an opinion piece in a prominent state newspaper with the provocative heading, "Why isn't Connecticut funnier?" Imagine my surprise and anger to find that it was written by a self-described humorist, from a neighboring state no less. I shall not dignify either the state or the writer by mentioning names. Take my word for it, neither are as funny as Connecticut, and when's the last time you ever heard me lie or exaggerate? But I cannot in good conscience sit here without defending the state I'm in. (That would be Connecticut, not any of the more worrisome states I'm often accused of being in.) It is never funny to attack a state in this manner. And it certainly should never be done without first checking to see if it is armed.

Let me say this at the outset, Connecticut has been well-armed with funny people ever since those nutty colonialists laughed themselves silly listening to newcomers trying to pronounce the name they had just given their new state. Later on came Jonathan Edwards, East Windsor native and fiery revivalist preacher who was also possibly one of the first Puritans to look closely at themselves, and to understand God's sense of humor. Even from God's perspective it must have seemed like Jonathan came right out of Comedy Central with the way he could drop such prayers as, "God, stamp eternity on my eyeballs!" And isn't humor all about perspective anyway? Take Nathan Hale of Coventry, who, while standing in front of a decidedly hostile audience, got off a zinger in "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." That one must have had the Tories rolling in the aisles long after they hung him.

Now most reasonable people agree that the Civil War was not a funny time. No states were at their best then. But even the estimable and usually deadly serious John Brown of Torrington had his moments. Like most Connecticutters? Connecticutites? John could bring the funny when needed most, as when he came through for Connecticut with his unforgettable quip, "The United States is a place where the men govern, but the women rule." This rib tickler undoubtedly had every woman from Elizabeth Cady Stanton to the current members of NOW in hysterics as they struggled for women's rights that weren't dictated by men.

Jumping ahead, who can ever forget that the funniest U.S. President, George W. Bush, was born right here in New Haven. Comedians everywhere have always been envious of his material, and books have been filled with such classics as "I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully," and "Rarely is the question asked, is our children learning?" It's almost a shame he was limited to a two-term engagement, as he seemed to be just finding his comedic groove. And while we're in the political humor arena, otherwise known as the Major Leagues of Comedy, what about Roger Stone of Norwalk? The man not only looks like he walked straight out of a 1950s comic strip, but every time he opens his mouth, he adds laughable reinforcement to that hilarious observation from P.T. Barnum of Bethel that "There's a

sucker born every minute."

I could go on. But for a state that's generally viewed as merely a highway bathroom stop between New York City and Boston, I'd say we got the last laugh after we closed them. And I must disagree with the writer's denigration of the Nutmeg State moniker. To me, it's pure comic genius, likely thought up by the same person who had the idea of calling our State Animal the sperm whale. Just thinking about all the tourists who come here looking for tropical nutmeg trees and sperm whales is enough to make me laugh for days. Just thinking about tourists in Connecticut at all gives me quite a chuckle too.

I thought it was really hitting below the belt though to criticize the shape of Connecticut, in particular the little stubby foot that sticks into New York, as the writer says, like it's trying to sneak onto the big stage. This little New York joke is all wrong. That stubby foot is Greenwich, and it's where Connecticut puts its wealthiest residents, who also happen to be the most in need of humor, so that they'll have something to laugh at. We're considerate that way, and don't believe that karmic laws should stand in the way of an equal right to humor. To prove I'm not biased, I'll leave it to readers to judge which state motto is funniest, New York's "Excelsior," or Connecticut's "Qui Transtulit Sustinet." Personally, I think ours is three times funnier, and I don't even know Latin.

In conclusion, I'm quite certain the evidence shows that we have the highest humor density of all the states. I'll mention a few funny people here just to make my case that we are well-armed indeed, and not afraid to fight back.

Mike Reiss, Bristol: Writer and producer of "The Simpsons"

Norman Lear, New Haven: Creator of "All in the Family" and other sitcom classics

Seth MacFarlane, Kent: Writer and creator of "Family Guy," and many more shows and movies that have been called hysterical, among other words

Colin McEnroe, Hartford: Radio host and author of "Swimming Chickens"

Regina Barreca, (Brooklyn, NY, but she wasn't funny until she moved to Connecticut): Author of "They Used to Call Me Snow White, but I Drifted"

Mark Twain, (OK, so he wasn't born in Connecticut either, and in fact has been dead for many years, unless those reports of his death really are greatly exaggerated. But he also called Connecticut home. I won't mention the other things he called it.)

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

Don't Hand Medicare to Wall Street

By Donna Nicolino, LCSW

Medicare is one of the most trusted government programs. Polls by Gallup and others show that the elderly and disabled who have traditional Medicare - not Medicare Advantage, which is a privatized version of the program - report high satisfaction with it.

As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker psychotherapist, I have had many clients over the years who use traditional Medicare, and I can attest that the program functions well and compensates providers fairly. Privatized Medicare Advantage on the other hand, often does not cover mental health care or other important services, which ends up costing members more over time.

Unfortunately, there is a movement which began under the Trump administration and has been continued under President Biden, which would insert a profit-seeking middleman called a Direct Contracting Entity or DCE into the picture.

DCEs are organizations which enroll healthcare providers in their systems, then act as a middleman between the provider and the patient, and are allowed to keep the money that is not given to the provider. In exchange, the provider receives a paycheck from the organization. Patients who originally signed up for traditional Medicare can be switched to a direct contracting without their knowledge if their provider has signed up for it. This provides a dangerous financial incentive for DCEs to restrict and ration patients' care. The DCE profits, the provider profits, but the patient loses out.

Recently, industry lobbying groups have tried to promote the message that Direct Contracting "promotes cooperation between insurers and providers" but as a provider who has dealt with both traditional Medicare and the privatized version of it, I can assure you that privatized Medicare does nothing of the sort, and in the end, saves money for corporate middlemen by denying services to seniors and the disabled.

Medicare Direct Contracting is a threat to the future of Medicare. While traditional Medicare is incredibly efficient, spending 98% of its budget on patient care, experts estimate that Direct Contracting Entities could spend as little as 60% of what Medicare pays them on patient care — keeping up to 40% of revenues for their own profit and overhead.

The data from commercial Medicare Advantage plans is clear: Inserting a profit-seeking middleman into Medicare costs taxpayers more, and leaves seniors with fewer choices and worse health outcomes.

If left unchecked, the DCE program could radically transform Medicare within a few years, without input from seniors or even a vote by Congress. Since Direct Contracting is a pilot program that only started in 2021, it can be stopped by the Biden Administration.

A new grassroots movement has formed to stop Medicare Direct Contracting. Thousands of doctors and other advocates have signed a petition demanding an immediate end to the DCE program, and 54 members of Congress including John Larson and Rosa DeLauro, recently sent a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services calling for a halt to DCEs.

Everyone who wants to protect Medicare for future generations should learn more about Direct Contracting and call their members of Congress and ask them to stop this dangerous pilot program, so Medicare can be preserved for future generations.

For more information, please visit pnhp.org and click on the "Stop DCEs" tab.

Overlooked (A Parable)

Text and art by Brian Thomas Merrill

The great olive tree had lived a long life beside the stream. How long no one knew, for no one had been this far east in the land of Nod. Perhaps the tiny branch Noah's returning dove brought back to the ark was from this very tree. Who was to say? The birds and animals welcomed the tree's fruit each year. When the fruiting was past, not a single olive could be found beneath its wide crown.

In the fullness of its time, the tree succumbed to old age and died.

A man came along and seeing the dead tree, cut it down, branch by branch, and hauled it away. Part of it became his home, part of it became wood for fire, to cook and keep warm. He dug up the stump and roots and used them too, for a bench, a table and chair.



His eyes had overlooked a tiny twig. The stream running by, overflowing in the spring rains, carried the twig along into a valley fertile with grasses, rushes, and flowers. It came to rest on a muddy bank where it was soon submerged in silt deposited by the receding stream. A tiny bud on the end of the twig was the last breath of life in the old tree. The twig pushed itself into the soil and up through the water, sending down a tiny root. Sun and a firm footing favored the twig and its tiny bud opened.

Drinking sunlight and making sugar sent life to its fragile root. The twig grew stronger and at last spread out a branch above, another root below. Receiving light and giving sustenance back to roots and soil, the process above and below went on until, years later, the olive tree bore its first fruit. Birds and animals again came and ate, spreading the seeds far and wide. Those same seeds remembered the tenacity of their forbearer and celebrated—by giving life to fields of trees beyond the first garden.

Among the oldest variety of their kind, olive trees grow all over the earth, renewing the cycle of growing and fruiting each year. Their oil, used for cooking, anointing and giving light, is prized as it was by the first people who found the tree growing by a comforting stream not far off. It tastes like fresh herbs, with a pungent, fruity scent. What was once only a thing to be used and forgotten had become food for life. For many lives.

Stick-to-itiveness is the wellspring of success.

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

This month I would like to talk about three words that are becoming rare today. These words are quality, workmanship, and pride in what you do. The motor vehicle trade touches on these three words whether we talk about new vehicles or repairs on older ones.

The first word I'm going to address is quality. The products of today that we receive to make a repair have definitely changed. The poor-quality control when a part is being manufactured bares a large part of the blame. The failure rate is high and mostly on imported parts. We have no control on foreign manufacturers policies. The manufacturer has figured in the price of failed parts. This means a part right out of the box could be damaged, defective, or not machined correctly. The list price is determined by two things, the price to manufacture the part and defective or warranted parts. The part is only a portion of the repair. The finished repair on your vehicle depends on the quality the facility expects from their staff. This is where workmanship comes into play.

From the dealership to the repair facility its only as good as its staff. Today's high-tech vehicles take longer to repair. The world today is going at a faster pace than ever. The inconvenience of a failed vehicle seems to send people into a tail spin. This puts pressure on the repair facility's staff to do the repair as quickly as possible. We have already talked about the parts problem, now time to get the vehicle finished affects workmanship. The reputation on any business depends on its finished service or product. The words good enough are another thing that effects workmanship. I'm often reminded that I am old school, well here's a news flash, there's more businesses large and small that feel and have succeeded with old school policies. The quiet corner, as we are often called, is home to many thriving businesses.

The last word to talk about is pride. This is when you can sign your name and feel good about the job you just completed. I see this time and again in our staff. After 50 plus years I still have that feeling of pride when something I've worked hard on comes out just the way I wanted it to. There is nothing better than taking pride in what you do. A job well done gives you such a feeling of accomplishment.

For the most part the American worker possesses these three qualities. Pride, workmanship, and quality are essential when doing any task. It's important not to lose sight of these three words and to be sure to pass them on to the next generation.

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

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Part One: Northern Tier Descending from Sources

Rivers of the *Last Green Valley*

By Brian Karlsson Barnes

There is a rhythmic rise-and-fall driving across the *Last Green Valley* (LGV) that drains to the **Thames River**... across the **Quinebaug**, **Natchaug** and **Willimantic** river valleys of North Connecticut's "*Quiet Corner*". Best part of a drive from Boston.

Interstates are fast and I often take I-395 south to US Highway 6 West, but I can decompress sooner by driving west on Mass. Route 16 through Webster... until Massachusetts runs out of land. I outrun traffic at the Connecticut border, but the roadway continues seamlessly as Conn. Route 197 west across the northern tier of the *Last Green Valley* to **Mashapaug Pond** (via 198 and 171). I veer south on Scenic Route 198 in Woodstock Valley, and follow the **Natchaug** valley home.

Mashapaug Pond in Union may be the true source of the **Thames River**. It has two outlet dams, one flowing *North* into Massachusetts, some claim, circling east to begin the long **Quinebaug River** -- "*Top of the world, Ma!*" -- and one flowing *South* as **Bigelow Brook**, beginning the **Natchaug River** watershed, central in the *Last Green Valley*. The **Willimantic River** flows on the west to merge with the **Natchaug**, becoming the **Shetucket River** that reunites the Quinebaug at the port of Norwich.

THREE OR TWO? Two major rivers drain Eastern Connecticut in federal eyes. The *Last Green Valley* is a **National Heritage Corridor** recognized to get federal funds in 1994 when "*Congress designated the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley as a national heritage corridor to recognize the valley's unique natural and historical qualities. This federal designation was partly due to a grassroots effort. One reason Congress cited for designating the corridor was that Connecticut ranked LAST among the states in the amount of federally protected park and open space land. The law designating the corridor encouraged the state to prepare a non-binding management plan and authorized matching funds to help implement it.*" - Connecticut State Report, 2000

More protected park and open space land? *Yes, please!*

"*The Last Green Valley*" is a nonprofit organization smartly marketing the perceptible *Darkness* between Hartford and Rhode Island, seen while flying over the bright megalopolis that is Washington DC to Boston. Especially the less-developed tier north of US Highway 6. My use of *LGV* refers to the land, forest, farms, and the entire Thames River watershed to the ocean. The **Last Dark Valley** would be a spooky term, but my "*Muldering*" about finds remarkable, sometimes odd, and often horticultural phenomena throughout the Thames watershed. The Truth is Out There.

TRUTH? Whatever arcane river names and lengths, corridors and greenways, truth is, all rivers are significant. Some say the truth -- the proof -- is in the pudding, which is to say, taste it yourself.

Truth is certainly in the topography that changes in all directions. *East-to-west*, the less-developed rural landscape between Rhode Island and Hartford-to-Storrs, is less disturbed. Quieter. *North-to-south*, the waterpowerful descent from the Massachusetts plateau follows all rivers, rapids and pools, to the port of Norwich and the sea at New London.

Mill remains take us back a few hundred years to America's early industry, but rivers take us back thousands of years to glacial melt, the deposit of till, boulders to sand, and the remaking of Connecticut's coast. Most important, rivers provide water, requisite for civilization.

Part Two: Coastal Lowland: Shetucket to the Sea I'll be visiting rivers south of US Highway 6 to New London. This coastal lowland is less rural, more intensely developed. The rivers are less powerful in vertical drop, but beautiful and fishful. Maybe a beach day at Mamacoke Island subma-

rine-watching across from Groton's deepwater port!

QUINEBAUG RIVER

The **Quinebaug** watershed drains from south-central Massachusetts to Norwich, the historic seaport at the head of the **Thames** tidal basin. Longest river in the corridor at either 69 miles (if **East Brimfield Lake** in Sturbridge MA is source), or 80 miles (if **Mashapaug Pond**), the **Quinebaug River** offered *uber*-waterpower for grain and textile mills.

The original **Nipmuc** (American Indian) name was **Assawaga** meaning "Halfway Place" -- between bigger rivers at Hartford and Providence? The term **Quinebaug** may have derived from first land laid out that was "*supposed to be about five miles*" from Woodstock. Another interpretation is "Long Pond" from "*qunni*" = long, and "*paug*" = pond.



The Natchaug River above Diana's Pool in Chaplin.

Brian Karlsson Barnes photo.

Many tributaries include **French River**, **Little River**, **Mashamoquet Brook**, **Blackwell Brook** and notably **Fivemile River**, actually 24 miles with several dams and former mills; Fivemile's largest impoundment is **Quaddick Reservoir** in Thompson, the very northeast corner of Connecticut. South of US Highway 6 are the tributary **Moo-sup** and **Pachaug Rivers**.

KILLINGLY Surviving **Fivemile** mill villages are in Pineville, Ballouville, Attawaugan and Dayville on Route 101; drive a mile west to the **Quinebaug River** (Pomfret townline) and paddle against summer's low current, to a massive stone wall (circa 1920) before the river gets too shallow. This abandoned dam of the short-lived *Pomfret Power Company* was to generate electricity for Danielson mills thriving downriver by 1909 (per Donna Duchesne, June 2021 issue). The Great Depression damned the project.

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.

NATCHAUG RIVER

Pure heart of the **Thames** watershed is the 18-mile (plus Mashapaug tributary) **Natchaug River**. Less industrial with woodsy trails, rocky kayaking and *Trophy Trout* fishing (creel limit of two), it has benchmark water quality in an *uber*-healthy ecosystem, designated a *Connecticut State Greenway* for environmental protection.

Natchaug is a **Nipmuck** word for "*Land between the rivers,*" the physical landform where two rivers become one.

From **Mashapaug Pond** where Bigelow Hollow State Park and the Nipmuck State Forest lie within unbroken forest, pristine **Bigelow Brook** flows to merge with **Still River**, forming the **Natchaug** at Charlie Brown Campground, Route 198 in Eastford. Other tributaries are **Bungee**

and **Stonehouse Brooks**; also the **Fenton** and **Mt. Hope Rivers** (also environmental *Greenways*) that flow into **Mansfield Hollow** downstream.

EASTFORD Walks in the Natchaug State Forest are a time machine to remains of small mills, dams, stone houses and cisterns. Large boulders on ledges -- "*thunder rocks*" -- were lifted with logs and dropped, legend says, booming to alert natives.

CHAPLIN **Diana's Pool** is a geological gem at the southern end of Scenic Route 198. Water cascades over small falls into a 15-foot deep pool but hazardous rock ledges prohibit swimming. There are many campgrounds and a stay along the Natchaug Trail certainly has more than a week of adventure -- even a nearby drive-in movie theater and flea market in Mansfield.

Downriver, the **Natchaug** flows into **Mansfield Hollow Lake** where the **Fenton** and **Mt. Hope Rivers** flow into the upper pond, two becoming one again as the **Natchaug** flows out.

MANSFIELD HOLLOW Early as 1728, a grist mill was grinding grain in the historic village on the swift-running **Natchaug River** and an early dam. The enduring granite Kirby Mill was built in 1882. Mansfield Hollow State Park opened in 1952 with the 500-acre flood control lake created by damming the Natchaug. Designated a State Recreation Area, horse-riding, hiking, fishing (notably northern pike) and boating are encouraged. But NO swimming since the lake is a public water supply. (Yet boat engines are allowed to pollute, I don't understand.)

WILLIMANTIC RIVER

Formed at the confluence of **Middle River** and **Furnace Brook** near Stafford Springs CT, the 25-mile **Willimantic River** is joined by the **Hop River** before it runs the rocky ravines of western Windham. It merges

with the **Natchaug River** slightly downstream of downtown Willimantic, two rivers again becoming one as the **Shetucket River** continues in the coastal lowland to the port of Norwich.

Willimantic is native Algonquin often translated as "*Land of the swift running water*", but it might mean "*place near the evergreen swamp*" (where Revolutionary frogs were?).

STAFFORDS SPRINGS A popular paddling route begins along Route 32 where the river is mostly quickwater to the flat water of **Eagleville Pond**. Beware the dam at the Route 275 bridge. *Easy-peasy* to the take-out at Route 66.

WILLIMANTIC Now a small city, western Windham was mostly "scrub oak forest" in 1820 with a few pre-industrial mills grinding grain, subsistence farms, two turnpikes and a tavern. 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. "*Cotton was 'King' in New England as well as in the South.*" (Windham Textile & History Museum)

The **Willimantic River** was a waterpowerful gorge, dropping ninety 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.

Willimantic's enduring granite architecture is an *uber*-model of redevelopment in the 21st century with apartments for artists, and the celebrated Garden on the Bridge. I yearn to dine on a warm summer evening at mill remains on the water, looking upstream to the granite bridge with a garden on top.

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

Our 'Village' is Failing Kevin Pratt Jr.

Editor's note:

In the final days of 2016 I said good-bye to one of the best jobs I ever had. I drove a Dial-A-Ride van a couple days a week over seven years for the Windham Region Transit District. I met many wonderful people, both fellow employees and passengers, but no one more impactful than a guy from South Windham in a wheelchair. He always had a smile on his face and ready to converse interlacing his great sense of humor. Often I would pick him up at the North Windham Walmart after his part-time shift.

Kevin Pratt Jr. spends his waking hours in a wheelchair as cerebral palsy has paralyzed his legs and greatly limited the use of his arms and hands. That didn't stop him from earning a B.A. in Communications from Eastern Connecticut State University.

Kevin liked his job at Walmart, especially greeting customers he came to know. His a very social person. He worked at Walmart for 23 years. In the spring of 2019 he was called to the store manager's office to be told his position was dissolved. Kevin was devastated. It's been three years and he still can't find a part-time job. Occasionally he tells me, "All I want is a wife, two kids and a dog."



Kevin Pratt Jr.

Photo by Tom King

Kevin needs a few hours of care each day - help getting out of bed, food preparation and toileting. He greatly enjoys apartment living and his independence. His current dilemma is threatening to totally change his life and not for the better. Last fall he was encouraged to find another agency to provide care as Hartford Hospital at Home could no longer visit him on weekends. In January of this year he received a \$59 increase in his Social Security Disability check. The State of Connecticut immediately dropped the insurance which pays for the care he receives through a new agency. Kevin's entire life has been a struggle and what do 'we' do? 'We' make his life more difficult! I asked him what is his greatest fear. "My greatest fear is I'm going to end up in a nursing home and I'm not going to have a say as to what happens to me." I will let him explain what's going on 'in his own words.' T.K.

I believe my story needs to be told because I am not the only person that is going through this. Especially people that are on state insurance or title 19. When you are on title 19 they call it Husky C. Now with this type of insurance it's supposed to cover any kind of medical or home care cost or nursing cost that you may need as time goes on. But what the state doesn't tell you is that if you get any type of raise in Social Security or if you don't have enough medical expenses to cover the insurance deductible of \$738 they automatically put you on spend down which means your insurance is no longer effective until you meet the deductible. As I mentioned above, being a disabled individual or handicapped individual you are not always told this information until they're about to drop the insurance.

Now being a 48-year-old disabled person with cerebral palsy and that needs help every day and you get told that you need to come up with medical bills to cover the spend-down within three weeks. Otherwise the insur-

ance gets dropped and you are totally screwed. I have been totally screwed for the last six weeks or so and I've been fighting to get some unpaid medical bills to submit to them to cover the deductible which is been a hard and arduous process by itself. They should offer you the opportunity to be able to pay the deductible or portion of the deductible once a month and they never offer that as an alternative right away which is really sad.

When Hartford Health-care at home dropped me from services back in October I had no choice but to go with a certain PCA (personal care attendant) program, Connecticut First Choice. I was not told in the beginning that it is an income based program. So when I got a raise in Social Security in January of \$59 a month I was automatically dropped from the insurance.

It affected the PCA program I was on so I've been trying to rectify the problem ever since then. Being a disabled individual, it's very hard to do and I don't even know if I'm explaining all of this correctly. I haven't been able to sleep in several nights because I'm worried the current PCA I hired is not not getting

paid. She's going to walk out on me. She's been patiently waiting for me to get reinstated but I know her patience is running really thin so I pray to God every night that she doesn't walk away. I'm telling you guys my story because anytime that you get forced out of an agency because they claim that they don't have enough manpower or there is no long long-term care, make sure you're careful on which PCA program you sign up with. Make sure you get told every aspect of the agency that you're signing up with because not everything is explained to you when you sign up with these outside agencies.

Footnote: Kevin and I have become good friends. I love this man and hate seeing what he's going through. As this issue goes to press Kevin is paying for his care with funds given by another friend. We have contacted numerous agencies, politicians and the media through emails, phone calls and in person. No viable response. Kevin urgently needs a case manager to help him negotiate through the maize of bureaucracy that frustrates him every day. If you know someone who could help Kevin please email (neighborspaper@yahoo.com) or call me at 860-933-3376. Thank you. Tom King

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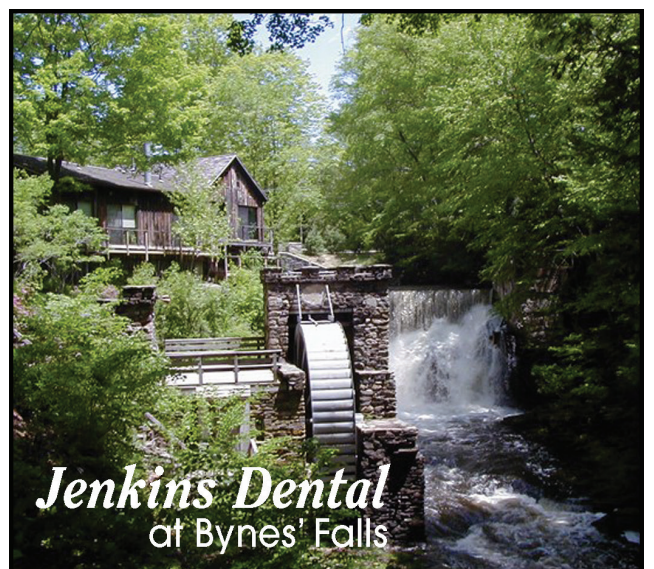
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Winters Storm

The hush of the storm enraptures our senses as white snow softly blankets the ground.

From the warmth and safety of our shelter, as branches bow and sway in a reverent dance with barely a sound, the peace and calm that comes from watching nature paint her latest masterpiece is unparallel to none.

But dare I say, go outside and stand in the midst of the storm.

Listen to the enchanting song, mother earth is so sweetly singing.

Open your eyes and witness nature's process of renewal and feel the strength of her surround you, and draw you in.

-Lynda George Bowen

Mill Museum Events

Submitted by Chelsey Knyff

March 5th **Grand Opening of "Something Old / Something New"** at The Mill Museum. Join us for a glass of champagne-style beverage and some tasty treats as we officially open our exhibit on wedding traditions. We'll gather at 6 p.m. to celebrate the restatement of vows by couples who want to reaffirm their love in a historic setting. The exhibit includes antique and vintage wedding gowns and examples of wedding quilts as well as the history of the accoutrements of the wedding experience, like bouquets, veils, guest books, photos, traditions and more. Want to join in? E-mail your wedding story to themillmuseumarchives@gmail.com or bring it to the Museum for our "Community Wedding Wall" where we'll post photos, traditions and more of people around Eastern Connecticut.

March 12 **"If Walls Could Talk: Researching the History of Your House - A Guide for Beginners."** 7 p.m. 1-hr. The Mill Museum Lyceum Zoom presentation by Windham Town Historian and former Title Abstractor and Paralegal Jamie Eves. Using the Windham, CT, town records as a model, Dr. Eves will walk the audience through the nuts-and-bolts basics of using land and probate records to research the history of their houses. Museum members: \$12; Non-members: \$15. Sign up online at <https://millmuseum.org/currentevents/>. The Zoom link will be sent out ½ hour before start time.

March 19 **Explore Irish Heritage** for a day. Visit The Mill Museum between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. to learn about the Irish and make a paper scrap Irish Flag for ages 8 and under. Craft is free with admission to the museum, (\$10 adults; \$7 kids/students/ seniors).

March 26 **Drop-in Spinning Bee at the Mill Museum** with Peggy Church. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. in Dugan Hall, 3 Union St., Willimantic. Stop by and bring your wheel. Vaccinations required. All skill levels and visitors are welcome. Free admission. For information, directions, or just to let us know you're coming, e-mail peggy-church2@gmail.com.

Apr. 23 The Mill Museum **Tag Sale:** both indoors and outdoors, with spaces available to rent in the parking lot. Rain date: Sun., Apr. 24 (the weekend after Easter). Info on how to rent a space coming soon. Watch www.MillMuseum.org for info.

Windham Arts Events

Submitted by Bev York

March 1 Partnership of Arts & Culture in the Windham Region zoom meeting 2 p.m. For information and zoom link email bevishistory@yahoo.com or leave message at 860-423-1878

March 5 Women in the Arts Exhibition at the Coffee Break Gallery. Women artists display their paintings, photography, baskets and pottery for show and sale. Hours: Saturday and Sunday from Noon to 4 p.m. and by chance. East Brook Mall, 95 Storrs Road. Mansfield CT. Sponsored by Windham Arts. Exhibit runs through March 27.

March 19 and 20 Mapfest in Hebron Center. The America Museum will present a display of historic New England recipes or receipts and cooking implements. March 26 Remember the Triangle Factory Fire Victims. Sidewalk chalking activity to commemorate the 146 victims, mostly teenage immigrant seamstresses, who died in New York City's worst industrial accident. We will tell the story and chalk names and ages on the sidewalk at Memorial Park on Main and Watson Streets. 10 to 11 a.m. Please stop by. Sponsored by The America Museum. 860-423-1878 leave message

March 26 Author Talk and Book Signing. 1 p.m. Harriet Grayson tells the story of "Accidental Gangster." Coffee Break Gallery. East Brook Mall, 95 Storrs Road. Mansfield CT. Sponsored by Windham Arts.

March 27 Women's History Month Program and Liber TEA "Meet Jeannette Rankin, Jeannette Who?" 4 p.m. Coffee Break Gallery. East Brook Mall, 95 Storrs Road. Mansfield CT. Sponsored by Windham Arts and the America Museum. Donation.

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The Elements of Writing-

Climax

By Felix F. Giordano

In literature, Climax is defined as the point at which the highest level of interest and emotional response is achieved in the story. It follows a series of scenes comprised of ever-increasing tension. To identify the climax in a story consider where the greatest intensity of the plot occurs. It should be suspenseful and surprising, even shocking.

Because climax usually occurs when the plot of the story achieves full fruition, near the end when a resolution is imminent, it resolves the conflict in the story. It can involve any character and happens when either the protagonist or antagonist, is vindicated or vanquished. When the climax is over the reader should be aware of a certain sense of closure to the story.

It usually elicits a heartbreaking, thought-provoking, or otherwise stirring reaction from the reader. The climax can be sudden, drawn-out, a punch to the gut, or a never-saw-it-coming experience, but it is never subtle or flat. A good climax will bring the reader to tears, laughter, or produce shivers down their spine. It can take your breath away, anger you, or simply make you sit in stark disbelief. Sometimes the climax can surprise us like when a protagonist shows their inner mercy or when the antagonist has a change of heart and rejects the dark side of their soul.

The story's plot leads readers in a certain direction and then when the climax hits, the remainder of the story is, well anti-climactic. Take for instance, the novel *Jaws* by Peter Benchley. We know the climax of the book. It's when the Great White Shark is finally killed. As a result of that climax, the remainder of the story shows Chief Brody and Matt Hooper paddling back to shore.

I can't emphasize enough how dependent the plot and the climax are to one another. Usually when an author conceives of a story they can visualize the ending scene of the plot in their thoughts. That encompasses the climax. Once the writer has achieved that then the full blown plot begins to develop, the characters are created and brought to life, and then subplots are born.

Occasionally, a writer may construct a plot but has no clear ending, and therefore no climax. How many times have we read a book, usually a who-done-it, where the plot captures us and brings us along for the ride? But near the end, instead of a climax that brings the plot full circle, we are force-fed a lengthy piece of dialogue where the author believes they must explain everything to the reader.

Let me clarify.

If a situation occurs where the protagonist is confronted by the antagonist at the end of the story, the climax falls flat if the protagonist and antagonist engage in conversation solely for the sake of the reader. Consider how out of character it would be for an antagonist to tell the protagonist how he or she disguised themselves, plotted and then robbed the bank, evaded the police, framed someone else, how they plan to kill the protagonist, and finally how they will get away with it. In real-life there would be no conversation. The criminal mind does not delve into explanations when confronted by a threat.

Explanations at the end of a story

are only offered for the reader. We often see this in film presented as a series of flashbacks near the end of the movie that identifies who did what to whom and when. In my own opinion, this technique is used because the author or director has presented the reader or moviegoer with a plot full of holes. Or that sometimes the author thinks that the reader may not have clearly followed all the clues or fully understood the plot.

A plot can also fall flat when the author manufactures an ending that is not logical resulting in an ineffective climax. We can sense when a climax is contrived and the scene seems artificial. How often have we read a book or seen a movie where the ending challenges our common sense? It usually occurs when we are presented with the fact that the entire book or film was a dream or the events that previously happened are being repeated.

Sometimes it's not necessary to explain everything to the reader. In the classic film, *Dirty Harry* we are not presented with a tit for tat conversation during the film's climax on why the antagonist went on a killing spree. *Dirty Harry* provides the killer with a question asking him if he feels lucky. Harry doesn't wait for an answer but quickly dispatches him when the antagonist goes for his gun. It's the quintessential climax, not a long drawn-out explanation detailing the motive. It's a split second choice. In that aspect, it is more true to life.

Usually each story has just one main climax. However, sometimes an author will incorporate more than one climax if their intent is to create an anticlimactic situation. Anticlimactic is a term for a technique where the story arc is complete but for one reason or another, the story continues and weaves in a plot twist. This occurs, usually in a novel at the very end, where the author sets up the reader for a sequel. We see this expressly used in the Harry Potter novels. The ending of one novel entices us to find out what happens in the next novel in the series.

For your story to be effective stick to the advancement of the plot and utilize the full impact of the climax so that the reader is astounded at the outcome and feels emotionally bound to the characters. It's how our brains work, to remember the last thing we experienced. If we have constructed an effective climax to the plot, that is, an emotional resolution that clears the air for everything that happened in the novel, then that lasting memory will be indelibly etched in the reader's mind. It will be what they tell their friends, what will drive their Amazon review, and what their expectations will be for your upcoming novel.

We defined "Climax" 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.

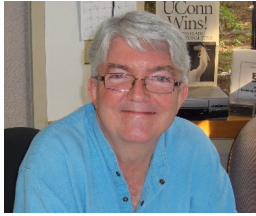
Felix F. Giordano is a local author with books sales in excess of 7,000 and has had more than 4 million pages of his books read by Amazon Kindle Unlimited subscribers. His website is jbnovels.com.

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: Resolution or Not

Community Media and Regional Arts

By John Murphy



Greetings fellow travelers! I have good news to share this month about the new regional media network for eastern Connecticut. I want to provide a project update and ring the bell loudly for you to contact me now if you will have news and stories to share with the public this spring. I am scheduling for March through May now!

During the past year, a multi-platform media story generator was created—based in local radio that is extended into other local channels as production partners. The purpose, method and creation process was covered in previous columns, so I invite you to visit the *Neighbors* archive for that background.

This new media service model has been operating for many months in the “test” mode, quietly and slowly—program by program and channel by channel. The *Human Arts Media* website and YouTube channel has an archive of some of the content that was produced. More is being added all the time. There will be a more public launch this spring, with special programs that will highlight the capability for larger and more significant media service to eastern Connecticut—where about a half-million of us live together in Tolland, Windham, and New London counties.

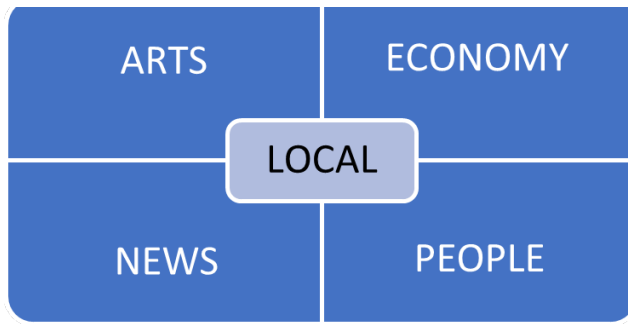
As we move forward into enjoying life more fully in a “post-Covid epidemic mode,” there will be many delightful stories to share about the return of “normal” and the social and economic rejuvenation of our communities. We need to hear more joyous noise across the Quiet Corner, in small and large towns!

I deeply appreciate the ongoing support from Tom King at *Neighbors*, who provides me with this column to keep you informed and connected with a growing regional media resource. Also, my other critical project support comes from Colin Rice at WILI AM/FM—the home studio for this network. Live radio programs are video recorded for posting on the WILI YouTube channel that will feature separate sections for several local shows. Thanks to additional support from John Zatowski at Eastern Connecticut State University, some radio content is aired on WECS-FM to maximize exposure and outreach for guests and organizations.

ON THE HOMEFRONT WILL RETURN AS A MEDIA PLATFORM

I am pleased to report that this project will enable me to resume production of *On the Homefront*, an award-winning media series that aired live and online for over 22 years on *Charter/Spectrum* local cable access TV and WHUS-FM/Community Radio at UConn/Storrs. Over 750 programs and more than 1200 interviews, I was honored to share the studio with an incredible range of people, groups, organization and even children and animals (they always stole the show!). Experiencing these good people and their stories changed my life for the better and I hope the renewal of this series will be a nice surprise for past viewers who may remember.

When this project officially launches in the spring, my current weekly arts program on WILI Radio, *Eastern Connecticut Arts Review*, will be converted from a single-focus half-hour program into a one-hour variety show that is modeled after the *On the Homefront* Series. The arts will continue weekly as a core topic for stories and interviews to provide ongoing support to our regional arts community. But there will be so much more!



In addition to the arts, this expanded one-hour program will include regular coverage of our local economy and all aspects of living in our shared communities: environment, farming/agriculture/food, education, government, recreation. A wide open and free media space will be available to all as a communication resource.

A few specially targeted areas for coverage will include:

1. Town of Windham participation—the coming wave of development needs coverage in depth

Town government officials and staff from Economic Development will be occasional guests and provide story leads to connect us with new businesses, entrepreneurs, and developers. There is an effort underway to have Willimantic officially declared as a Connecticut Downton District, but I do not know how much is official and how much of it is still being developed. Our project can provide excellent support at many levels.

2. Linking to Chambers of Commerce and Councils of Governments (COGS)

Whatever we can develop with Windham, our region has many other important partners for wonderful storytelling. Regional Chambers and COGS can provide both guests and referrals to other people who could be excellent guests. They all have a need to connect with the public, and you need to know what they are up to.

3. Expanding our existing links to the arts community—a crucial social and cultural safety net

I am a board member of the *Connecticut Arts Alliance*, a statewide arts advocacy organization. I am in my second three-year term, ending in 2025. In my role I learn about and support new arts organizations, events, programs, and artists. I have produced many interviews with these folks. The stories are endless.

I look forward to sharing more news about progress with this effort in April. Please be sure to connect with me now at the email below to plan for media coverage—we can plan ahead on both ends for optimal results.

Thanks for reading *Neighbors* and see you next month. May I be among the first to say *Happy Spring!*

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

March

*“By March, the worst of the winter would be over.
The snow would thaw, the rivers begin to run
and the world would wake into itself again.”*

- Neil Gaiman

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 offer listening devices for the hearing impaired at live performances this month; and a live stream alternative for performances beginning in April. Plans are also in place to create and offer a variety of virtual programs beginning this summer. “Beginning Wood Carving” and “Cigar Box Guitar Making” are on the drawing board.

The Packing House has a “packed” schedule for the upcoming month. We hope you can join us!

EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: “Poor Monroe” (Bluegrass). Saturday, March 5th, 7:30pm.



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

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

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

EC-CHAP Talent Showcase. Wednesday, March 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 Acoustic Artist Series: “Sperry Creek” (Bluegrass). Saturday, March 12th, 7:30pm.



SPERRY CREEK bring fresh harmonies and instrumentation that hold true to the bluegrass genre. This five-piece band from Connecticut formed after some local pickers spent the height of the pandemic keeping each other sane through socially distant backyard jam sessions. It didn’t take the group long to realize that good sounds were happening. They soon adopted the name of a nearby creek, and the band was officially formed in the summer of 2020.

Sperry Creek is made up of longtime musicians Scott Freemantle (bass); Marilyn Toback-Reveley (guitar); Bill Reveley (fiddle); Corrie Folsom-O’Keefe (mandolin) and Dan O’Keefe (banjo), who all share a passion for bluegrass music. Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

EC-CHAP Film Series: “Midnight In Paris” (PG-13) 2011. Thursday, March 17th, 7:00pm



The film was written and directed by Woody Allen and stars Owen Wilson, Rachel McAdams, Kathy Bates, Adrien Brody, Carla Bruni, Tom Hiddleston, Marion Cotillard, and Michael Sheen.

In 2012, *Midnight in Paris* won the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and the Golden Globe Award for Best Screenplay. It was nominated for three other Academy Awards: Best Picture, Best Director and Best Art Direction. For more information visit: www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming.

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

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



CALENDULA is a singer-songwriter based in New England. Calendula (Abigail Golec) is the stage name of her folk music project. Her work is inspired by personal experiences and ethos; and musical choices are typical folk, with instrumentation consisting of acoustic guitar, vocals, and banjo. Calendula has an interest in the history of folk music as it pertains to societal change and action for the betterment of communities, especially working class communities.

Calendula will be joined by Moonbasket. Moonbasket was formed in 2020 by Jeffrey DiIorio and Abigail Golec. Drawing on various musical influences such as Belly, The War on Drugs, and Sharon Van Etten to name just a few, they’ve created songs with a unique blend of singer-songwriter and indie-rock vibes, inspired by love, life, and nostalgia.

Tickets: \$10.00 online / \$15.00 at the door.

Abigail Golec is a sound artist, musician, and researcher and Artist-In-Residence at The Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP).

EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: “Foolish Wisely” (Folk/Americana). Saturday, March 26th, 7:30pm. RESCHEDULED from January 8th.



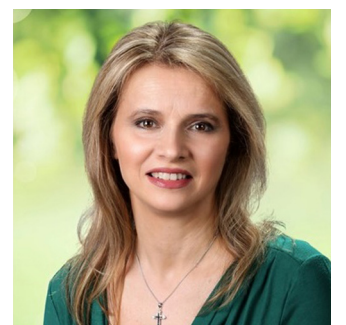
FOOLISH WISELY lives in the space between waking and dreaming. Intricate Folk/Americana-inspired songwriting supported by a diverse variety of instrumentation lays ground for luxuriant harmonies to paint over, which bring to life a surreal-yet-familiar world that exists within us all.

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

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

SPECIAL PROGRAM: “An Evening with Spiritual Medium Maura Geist” – Friday, April 1st, 7:30pm.

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



continued on next page

SPECIAL PROGRAM: “An Evening of Music and Intimate Conversation with Steve Katz” – Founding member of Blood, Sweat, and Tears (Rock). Saturday, April 2nd, 7:30pm.



STEVE KATZ has played on an enviable string of recordings during the 1960s and '70s in acoustic folk, jazz, blues, R&B, hard rock, and almost every other popular genre that's come along in America since the start of the 1960s. Katz was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1945 and grew up in the upstate city of Schenectady. Already a gifted musician in his early teens, he was good enough to get hired for a local television program called Teenage Barn, doing his versions of pop hits of the late '50s.

As he got older, Steve was drawn to folk music and blues. He studied traditional American guitar styles with Dave Van Ronk and the Rev. Gary Davis. Eventually, he became part of a circle of similarly minded folk and blues enthusiasts who formed the Even Dozen Jug Band, which also included John Sebastian, Maria Muldaur, David Grisman, and Stefan Grossman.

After moving to Greenwich Village, Steve Katz became an established part of the Village music scene, eventually joining The Blues Project, New York City's first major home-grown contribution to bluesrock. The Blues Project had an impact on music that far exceeded their relatively modest record sales. Katz was part of the Blues Project lineup that played the Monterey Pop Festival.

Later that same year, with Blues Project bandmate, Al Kooper, Katz founded the original Blood Sweat & Tears. He recorded five albums with the band. Throughout the end of the 1960s and early 70s, Katz performed at countless historic venues including the Fillmore East, and several major rock festivals including Woodstock.

Among a host of other awards, the band won three Grammys, including one for Album of the Year. Steve's influence on BS&T resulted in several chart topping hits and millions of record sales worldwide.

Steve left BS&T to pursue the craft of record production. One of his first productions was the Lou Reed classic, Rock'nRoll Animal. He went on to work with Reed on two more albums before returning to his musician roots in the countryrock band, American Flyer, whose first album was produced by the Beatles' George Martin.

Steve was offered an opportunity to get closer to the business of music in 1977 with his appointment as East Coast Director of A&R and later as Vice President of Mercury Records. The highlight of the three years that Steve spent at Mercury was his being able to produce the great Irish group Horslips. Rather than sit in his office listening to 12-minute conga solos on disco demo tapes, Steve opted to spend a good deal of time in Ireland during this period and produced three albums for the group. As a New York A&R executive in Dublin, Steve had also passed on a young group by the name of U2, a decision that Steve would regret for the rest of his life.

Steve Katz has been performing and doing book talks all across the country to rave reviews and rapt audiences. He will take you back to a time we all remember and to the music we all grew up with. Spend a memorable evening with Steve Katz - one you will never forget. Tickets \$30.00 Advance / \$35.00 Door.

Advance tickets may purchased online or cash at the door. Student and EC-CHAP Member Discounts offered. 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 only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary.”

- Vince Lombardi

Keep the faith! EC-CHAP Board

SAVE THE DATE (S)

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

May 2022:

Wednesday, May 11th: 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. Final Showcase for the Season!

Thursday, May 12th: EC-CHAP Information Exchange Meeting. The Packing House. 5:00pm

Saturday, May 14th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Lexi Weege (Indie). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

Thursday, May 19th: EC-CHAP Film Screening – TBA - A Special Final Film for the Season! Doors 6:30pm / Screening 7:00pm.

Saturday, May 21st: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series – Calendula ~ Loveletter, a CD Release Event (Indie/Folk). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm

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.

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).



Preservation has no voice, except for the voices of those who support it.

Changes in technology and legislation are impacting how land is used. Large scale industrial farming operations are targeting rural Connecticut towns.

For information email:
info@saveCTfarmland.org

Storrs 860-576-8441 saveCTfarmland.org



COME JOIN US!

**QUIET
CORNER
FIDDLERS**

Is there a violin in your home hiding under a bed or tucked away in a closet somewhere? Are you an active player or has it been many years since you played? The Quiet Corner Fiddlers are seeking new members and we would love to have you join us. We meet on Monday evenings to play jigs, reels, waltzes and traditional fiddle tunes. If you are interested in joining us, please email Bernie Schreiber for further information at b.schreiber@snet.net.

Traditional Music in Connecticut's Last Green Valley

You Cannot Solve a Problem with the Same Mind That Created It

(paraphrase of a quotation by Albert Einstein)

By Michelle Baughman

According to the Centers for Disease Control, developmental disabilities are defined as “a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas.”

This can include conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, cerebral palsy, deafness and low hearing, blindness and low vision, Tourette’s, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and others. Intellectual disability (what used to be called “mental retardation,” but this antiquated term has been retired because it is derogatory and robs individuals of their dignity) is only one type of developmental disability. Many of the developmental disabilities I listed above do not coincide with intellectual disability. However, these conditions still cause significant impairment to an individual, and thus require support.

Unfortunately, the state of Connecticut seems to conflate developmental disability with intellectual disability, at least in terms of what it has historically supported and funded. And what historically got funded created a “culture” or “belief/values system” (for lack of better words), and an “industry” for delivering those funded services. This industry produced professionals who honed their careers within the belief/values system of that industry. Thus, these professionals think inside that box. Unfortunately, this misconception (developmental disability = intellectual disability) is virtually inescapable in the state of Connecticut.

This leaves a lot of individuals with unsupported developmental disabilities “falling through the cracks” in the state. I experienced this firsthand as a late-in-life-diagnosed adult on the autism spectrum. (Granted, part of the reason for going undiagnosed for so long lies with the country’s historic misunderstanding of the full autism spectrum, including the fact that females can have autism too. Many forward-thinking pockets of our country have caught up with modern-day research and understanding of the entire autism spectrum. Connecticut, however, is still in the dark ages in this regard.) It has been ten years now since my diagnosis, and I have not seen any improvement in this. It isn’t only the lack of support that is problematic. The lack of understanding from medical professionals actually puts our lives at risk! (This happened to me, but that is an article for another time.)

I joined the Council on Developmental Disabilities because I want to help improve the wellbeing and life outcomes for people like me who fall between the cracks. The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities was created in 1971 by Gov. Thomas Meskill to enable Connecticut to receive federal funding for implementing a plan to meet the need for services to persons with developmental disabilities. It aims to build advocacy, capacity building, and bringing about systematic change. It does not provide services directly to individuals, but rather provides grant funding to 501-c organizations that propose programs in alignment with the goals of its strategic state plan (which can be seen here: <https://portal.ct.gov/CTCDD/Common-Elements/V4-Template/Five-Year-Plan>).

One of the objectives in the Council’s plan is “Developing more effective means for individuals who live with developmental disabilities to enter the workforce in meaningful, gratifying employment.” This is greatly needed in this state (and elsewhere: 95% of autistic individuals are unemployed or underemployed). Few of us fortunate enough to be earning a paycheck are in “meaningful, gratifying employment” that utilizes our skills, expertise, or experience. (Yes, we autistics do have expertise and experience despite not being gainfully employed because of our autistic traits of intellectual intensity and our ability to hyper-focus and persevere in our areas of interest.) These things can provide us with a richer, fuller understanding than our neurotypical peers, and thus we are an untapped talent pool that would greatly benefit many employers and industries. We also tend to be very loyal and prefer predictability and consistency, which means less turnover and the associated costs of training new staff. If this untapped neurodivergent workforce were to be employed, we could add to the state’s income tax revenues and alleviate the Great Resignation problem.

As I have mentioned, I am a full decade into my autism diagnosis, and I was a client of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)/Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) that entire time, trying to find meaningful, challenging, gainful employment that would be accommodating of my disability. However, BRS/DORS is a product of that history of the culture/beliefs and values system that yielded the industry and “professional” knowledge base I described earlier. They



never even presented me with any opportunities for meaningful and challenging employment (or any employment that was a good fit), because they cannot think outside of that box.

Many of the opportunities they did present to me were completely inappropriate to my disability. Their one-size-fits-all approach seems to be to develop relationships with one or two employers (like a warehouse where employees must lift 75-pound crates and climb ladders) and then funnel all of their clients to those employers, regardless of how irresponsible and inappropriate the job match is. Customized Employment is a far better system: It requires counselors and job developers to understand their clients’ disabilities, strengths, and aptitudes and to seek and find employers and positions that are a good fit, sometimes even creating jobs where none existed before. When Customized Employment began to be considered in the state of Connecticut in 2016, I told my BRS counselor about it. She did not attend because she wasn’t paid to do so, but I attended myself, in hopes of finding leads to more appropriate employment for myself.

I am not clear on exactly what happened with the implementation of Customized Employment in Connecticut, but it never materialized for me. Several other people in the state who have autism without intellectual disability that I have met in the last ten years have described similar experiences, frustrations, and disappointments with their involvement with BRS/DORS. They have told me that when they refused jobs that were inappropriate for their disability, their BRS/DORS counselors branded them “unemployable” and purged them from the client list. This is very sad indeed, because Connecticut doesn’t have much to offer people like me with developmental disabilities that do not include intellectual disability, or blindness or deafness. The one service Connecticut does offer us is BRS/DORS to help us find employment. So if BRS counselors are ineffectual, and are cutting clients from their services presumably so that the statistics do not reveal their ineffectiveness, it sounds like a civil rights issue to me, because a whole class of people are being barred from employment just so a few ineffectual state employees can keep their jobs!

Given this past experience with BRS/DORS, I became very excited when, in my role as a member of the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities, I had the opportunity to help fund a grant for a consultancy of organizational psychologists from California, named Grit & Flow, that specializes in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that has proven success in neurodiversity employment. They will be providing “Train the trainer” sessions for job developers in Connecticut to help them become more effective in helping neurodivergent candidates find employment.

In my excitement, I called my former BRS counselor to let her know about the program. (I cannot benefit from it myself, being on the Council, but I wanted her to know about it for the sake of other clients like me.) She summarily blew me off and told me that a representative from the BRS “regularly attends Council meetings, to keep them informed.” However, the position on the Council that she speaks of has been vacant for some years now! If there is no one to keep them informed, how will they know about the training sessions?

I have heard gossip to the effect that job trainers in other state entities besides BRS may not attend these trainings either, because the training is being provided by an out-of-state consultancy. Apparently it is a political snubbing or something. How frustrating that federal government funds that are spent to resolve problems in this state can be prevented from being effective by the attitudes of government employees like this!

I think Grit & Flow is exactly what is needed to bring Connecticut into the current century with regard to its understanding of neurodivergent conditions. I am doubtful that an organization from Connecticut could achieve this, because of the aforementioned history of how we got to where we are today, with the state conflating developmental disabilities with intellectual disabilities. You cannot solve a problem with the same mind and thinking that created it.

I believe an out-of-state organization with a proven record of success (from a forward-thinking state that is current in its understanding of the full autism spectrum as well as its understanding of other neurodivergent conditions) is exactly the right one to do it!

The views expressed in this article are my own, and not those of any organization with which I hold membership.

Lyman Allyn Art Museum Showcases Work By Women Photographers

Submitted by Rebecca Dawson

NEW LONDON – The Lyman Allyn Art Museum is showcasing its growing photography collection in an upcoming exhibition, *Unbeatable Women: Power and Innovation in the Work of Women Photographers*, which opened to the public on Saturday, Feb. 26. The exhibition examines women’s many important contributions to modern and contemporary photography and presents compelling images that address female innovation, power and identity. The exhibition will be on view through June 19.



Brianna Harlan, *Flight*, from “What the Dark Knows” series, 2017, digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

Curated in partnership with Connecticut College students, the show features additional images augmented by select loans. The show’s title, “Unbeatable Women” derives from photojournalist Donna Ferrato and her powerful work fighting domestic abuse. In addition to Ferrato’s images, the exhibition includes work by photographers such as Cindy Sherman, Carrie Mae Weems and Shirin Neshat, and other regional artists.

“We are excited and humbled to showcase powerful images by women photographers from our own collection and to work closely with Connecticut College students,” said Museum Director Sam Quigley. “Collaborations like this one provide us with new opportunities to learn about and support the work of deserving artists.”

To accompany the exhibition, New London photographer Brenda De La Santos will lead a photography workshop on self-portraits on Wednesday, May 18 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. To learn more about the workshop or to reserve a spot, email donovan@lymanallyn.org.

This exhibition is made possible with support from the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of the Arts; and an anonymous foundation.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Dawson by email at dawson@lymanallyn.org.

About the Lyman Allyn Art Museum

The Lyman Allyn Art Museum welcomes visitors from New London, southeastern Connecticut, and all over the world. Established in 1926 by a gift from Harriet Allyn in memory of her seafaring father, the Museum opened the doors of its beautiful neo-classical building surrounded by 12 acres of green space in 1932. Today, it presents a number of changing exhibitions each year and houses a fascinating collection of over 17,000 objects from ancient times to the present, including works from Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, with particularly strong collections of American paintings, decorative arts and Victorian toys and doll houses.

The museum is located at 625 Williams Street, New London, Connecticut, exit 83 off I-95. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Sundays 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.; closed Mondays and major holidays. For more information call 860.443.2545, ext. 2129 or visit us on Facebook or at www.lymanallyn.org.

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.



Helping the environment, one leaf and blade of grass at a time:

Spring is around the corner and I urge you to be patient with cleaning up any leaf debris and please wait to mow your lawn. It is a VERY IMPORTANT time for wildlife to replenish itself.

I've already notice that we have many more birds in our yard picking through the lawn than our neighbors do. This is because I leave most of the leaves on the ground in the fall and don't clean them up until mid to late spring. I also stop cutting my lawn while it is still long enough to help protect the Earth and the small critters during the winter months.

The birds are showing us their appreciating while gathering food by taking their time and sitting close by in the sun on tree limbs, the garden fence and structures within.

I've noticed many of my neighbors here in the woods take a lot of time in the fall to continually blow every leaf off the ground each day for over a month and a half. Not only is it annoying as all get out for sound and the exhaust smells, it is extremely harmful to the environment in numerous ways. You can read a previous article of mine that goes into deeper detail. ... or just google it. There is a lot of supportive information on the topic!

Ok – On to solar: ... actually on to price increases and batteries.

Have you noticed the price INCREASE that Eversource rolled out yet? **It's a HUGE jump!**

If you haven't noticed it yet, it is most likely because you are still receiving a discount on your bill that Eversource had to pay US for their gaff on storm Isaac charges! Once that goes away, you will notice that you are paying almost **24% MORE** for the delivery side of your bill. That's HUGE!

I know a great way to get out of the continual price increases from the utility. If you're curious and don't already know, please give me a call and I can run you through a possible solar option.

Batteries “may” now be worth looking at!

I am pleasantly surprised that CT has rolled out a new battery incentive that is actually better than the one offered in MA! This is pretty much unprecedented. CT usually has lower incentives than our neighbor does. NOT this time. CT's program is actually better! The program is modeled after a distributed energy incentive that was not necessarily started by Green Mountain Power in VT, but they are most noted for it here in New England. MA adopted it about a year or so ago and now CT is following suit.

How does it work?

Eversource (and UI) will pay you money over a timeframe to use a percentage of your battery during high demand daytime peak hours in the summer and refill the battery at night for you. They will pay you to be a part of the program.

The process:

You buy the battery and get the 26% federal tax credit. Then depending on the amount of energy the utility uses from your battery, they pay you an amount that helps offset the battery cost. They will not tap your battery during the winter and if a storm is on the horizon.

Why are they offering this program?

Simple answer: To save money!
A deeper answer: Eversource and UI purchase a high percentage of their supplied energy from outside sources. This cost them more during peak demand times than at low demand times (IE: 2AM). During the time where the cost is greater to them to procure supply electricity to re-sell to you, they tap your battery. When their supply costs are down during the late night and early morning hours, they replenish your battery with less expensive electricity. The benefit for you is they pay YOU for the energy rather than outside suppliers. Sure, they pay you less than what they pay big corporate suppliers but they still pay you. All and all it's a progressive program that more and more utilities will adopt over time.

As I see it, it is a win, win for them and for us as consumers.

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

My Quiet Place

By Jeanne Esterquest

My quiet place

Known only to me. Peaceful, beautiful, fulfilling
Yet lonely, mysterious, quiet and intriguing.
It leaves me with questions.

My quiet place

Has many doors. Some lead me into worlds that I might explore.
Others are barely ajar.
Leaving me in suspense.

My quiet place

May hold me in place
Like flame that doesn't flicker.
There is no movement of air.

My quiet place

Blankets me with Peace.
It allows me to dream, explore all that I seek.
It shelters me from from turmoil, stress and fear.

A quiet place

A sunny lane, tall trees, ribbing streams.
Birds singing, clouds floating by.
Peacefully it embraces me.

My quiet place

Has no hint of thunder, no raindrops.
No suspense of lighting.
It calms me.

My quiet place

Banish harsh thoughts, words, actions
It covers me with open arms.
Contentment, peace and soulist

My quiet place

May be standing alone in a busy mall.
Waiting for dinner to be ready.
Watching my family in action.

My quiet place

No one knows,
No one may visit
It is within me, alone.

My quiet place is ME.



TRASH DAY!

Spring Cleanup of Ashford Roads

Sat., March 19

Pick up vests, bags and pickup sticks at Knowlton Hall

8:45 - 9:00 am

(Rain Date, March 26)

Info: Loretta 860-429-2629

lorettaw886@gmail.com

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WHATEVER
JUST
DON'T
TEXT
AND** 

STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG



Walking Through the Understory

By Donna Dufresne

The understory is the most important part of a forest. It is where nutrients are formed, the building blocks for diverse species of plants, fungi, and animals. In the understory you will find rich soil, the bedrock foundation that supports the roots of trees from saplings to those hundreds of years old. The forest floor in the understory tightly embraces pools of carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere. Within the understory you will find leaves and debris that become detritus broken into mulched humus by an underworld of invertebrates all doing their part to build the story of the forest. The forest is a tightrope dance between carbon storage, CO₂, and oxygen in the Cirque du Soleil of climate change.

We humans don't always see the forest through the trees. In New England, we focus on the majestic maples, ash, oaks, and pines towering above the canopy. The understory and the forest floor hold no esteem for those who have a mercantile eye. They see forests measured in board feet, monetary value, and opportunity, the locomotion of economy and power. In the name of progress, the understory has too often been plundered, leaving swaths of erosion, depleted soil, siltation, and eutrophication, not to mention huge releases of carbon into the atmosphere.

History is not unlike a forest. We have been taught to revere the sturdy oaks of heroes and villains, an entitled and privileged class who have taken the world on a roller-coaster ride of economic ups and downs, bipolar politics, and unnecessary wars. Meanwhile, the real work of history has been constructed in the understory by everyday people who remain in the shadows. In America, the shadow dancers consist of disenfranchised poor whites, Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrants—the worker bees who built the land of honey on which we sup. The foundation of American history was not created by those who tower above our canopy with their big truths and little lies. Only a small portion of the story can be found in the whitewashed museums, textbooks, and controversial statues that trumpet supremacy and power. Instead, we must dive deeply into the dark, rich soil of the forest floor, where everyday people have carried our national legacy on their backs. It is the understory of American history that intrigues me most, and this is the story I am cultivating from the forest floor of a local past.

Digging the Past

In 1996 I participated in an archaeological dig at the ruins of the Higginbotham homestead in Pomfret. The cellar holes on the east and west sides of Nightingale Brook were part of an eighteenth-century farm once owned by Obadiah Higginbotham and his son, Darius. The site includes the remains of three small mills and a graveyard they shared with the neighboring Randalls. Jonathan Randall's enslaved Africans, who are buried in the graveyard, are the subject of much of the folklore and ghost stories about the property. In the 1930s, Susan Griggs interviewed the descendants of those slaves for her book *Folklore and Firesides*. Mary Webster and Lucretia Taylor recalled stories passed down in their family about their enslaved ancestors who believed the graveyard was haunted.

The oral history of the enslaved Randalls was taken up in a sort of telephone game by the children of the neighborhood, for whom these watery memo-



ries recalled a haunted village. Generations of tweens believed the abandoned farm of the Higginbothams was occupied by the ghosts of disgruntled slaves who had vowed to haunt the place because of their unmarked graves. Indeed, there are several unmarked burial sites where enslaved Randalls may be interred.

However, we cannot presume what the enslaved inhabitants of the late 1700s felt or said, because their history has been stolen from them by the lack of a record. What remains is a string of shiny beads that attracted the imaginations of children and paranormal detectives. The real words from the mouths of the enslaved Randalls, as well as their names, have been long buried in the understory.

Lost Village (Bara Hack) was once called “the Village of Voices” because it was thought that you could hear the voices of the past there: children laughing, dogs barking, the rhythmic rumble of horse hooves and carts rolling through the woods. This was first written down in a poem by Odell Shepard in the early 1900s when he visited “the Village of Voices” while trekking across the northern border of Connecticut on foot. By the time I volunteered on the “dig,” I had already spent years investigating the Higginbothams through primary sources and discarded the Bara Hack lore as unfounded bunk perpetuated by generations of oral history. However, I had an epiphany while digging near Darius Higginbotham's cellar hole.

That morning the archaeology crew and I met some tree trimmers cutting along the road near the trail to the site. About mid-morning, while digging on the north side of the cellar hole, I heard the laughter and conversations of the woodcutters. It seemed like they were only a few feet away when a chainsaw interrupted their banter. I peered through the woods but saw no movement in the direction of the sound. There were only a few other people working their test pits around the site, and no one was talking. On the way out, I saw the woodcutters in the same spot where we had left them. I asked if they had been cutting in the woods further down the trail, but they had been in the same spot all day. I found it curious since I could hear their conversations over a mile away in the woods. I had a hunch that the shape of the land might have something to do with the way sound travels down to the site.

When I got home, I looked at the topographic map of the land that cradles the homestead and found that the dig site is the focal point of an amphitheater-like bowl. I realized then that the shape of the land had sculpted the history of the Mashamoquet Uplands. Folklore was only the tip of an iceberg shaped by the last glacier, the cherry garnish in a cocktail of geology, natural history, and social history. The ghostly voices were in fact rooted in topography and the physics of how sound skips its way across a landscape and time. And there it was, graphically displayed on a map I pulled from a drawer.

Still, I do listen to the voices of those enslaved people whose names we do not know. But rather than rustling in the wind, they rattle on the pages of census data, vital records, and scant written references from the deeply buried past. Digging into the understory of African American history requires some specialized tools and a lot of patience. But I am determined to give those people back the dignity of their names.

My Refrigerator Key

By Angela Hawkins Fichter

My refrigerator key is different from anyone else's. It's my car key. I can hear you asking, how can a car key open your refrigerator? Because my car is my refrigerator now. On February 19 I noticed in the morning when I poured the milk over my breakfast cereal, that the milk wasn't cold. I ran and looked at the thermometer I keep in the frig to tell me the real frig temperature. It said 60 degrees Fahrenheit. I checked the freezer compartment, and it was still all frozen. I called the major store appliance repair unit, and they sent out a truck. The guy checked the frig and said he would have to order a new part for the frig, as he did not have that part in his truck. The earliest date he could give me for the installation of the new part was February 28. Immediately I moved the milk, cheese and meat from my dead frig to my new frig: the car trunk. Boy, am I glad my frig died in February and not July. The car trunk would not be cold in July. Apparently, machines talk to each other now, because after United Parcel delivered the new refrigerator part, the service repair unit rescheduled the frig fix to February 25.

Normally, if there is a day in February when the meteorologist predicts that the next day will be 60 degrees, I am elated, because I can then take a walk outside without any ice on the roads. Now that prediction makes me depressed because my new refrigerator will die! But today, February 25, nature heard my complaint about 60 degrees and my car trunk being too warm, and voila! Snow, sleet and ice. The frig repairman called and said he would be at my house about 12:30 PM. I told him the driveway wasn't plowed yet, so please descend my hilly driveway slowly. Just after he hung up, my snowplow driver came and plowed the driveway. Do machines have ESP, because I hadn't called the plow driver. After the repairman fixed the refrigerator and left I kept hearing noises outside. I looked out and saw he was having trouble getting his van up my driveway, which had frozen right after getting plowed. He did get out after trying several times. The store van didn't have studded tires, that's why he had trouble. As my Vermont step-son would say, Vermonters understand ice and that snow tires and 4-wheel drive can't compete with studded tires on ice. My first winter here in Hampton on my hilly driveway I got studded tires after talking to my stepson for advice. I think the real problem is that Connecticut legislators don't understand ice. By state law in both Connecticut and Massachusetts you have to take your studded tires off by April 30. But in MA you can put them on your car on November 1, yet in CT, not till November 15. If you live in Woonsocket just a few miles away from Webster, MA, you don't get glare ice till November 15? Maybe those folks who live in the Berkshire mountains in MA have more pull with their legislators than the folks in Litchfield County and Windham County, CT have with their own legislators.

No home appliance is made as well as it used to be. My husband and I lived in Scotland, CT for 32 years. In our last year there we started looking for another house that was not so full of stairs as our Scotland one. Stairs to get into the house from the back door, from the side door, from the front door, and lots of stairs inside the house. Meanwhile, our current frig had died after three decades of faithful service. We figured that it would cost a lot to fix an ancient frig, if they even made parts for a frig as old as ours. So in 2015 we shopped for a new frig, bought one, and

guess what? It died, but fortunately during the six-month warranty period. The store service truck came, and the frig needed a new major part that would have cost us \$500 but was free because of the warranty. And that major part was right in the truck. The serviceman who came to my Hampton home on February 19 said this same major store appliance repair service doesn't let them keep many parts on their trucks anymore; the repairmen have to order new parts from the worksite.

I then called a girl friend for the real scoop. She said the reason that appliances don't last for decades anymore without needing repair is that not all parts are manufactured here in the US anymore, but elsewhere, and if you need a new part for the frig, guess what! Shipping takes longer. Sigh. I cannot help but think of my great-grandfather, who was an immigrant from Sweden. When he got to the US in the mid 1800's, he was asked at the immigration entry site in NY what his name was. He answered, Anton Johansson. “Oh, the government worker said, that's Anthony Johnson in this country. Next customer please.”

Now Anthony understood cold. After all Sweden was very frigid in winter. He told my grandfather that when he was a small boy in Sweden, his mother would rub all her children with bear fat and sew them into their clothes (with a trap door) once winter came, just so the skin wouldn't crack and bleed. When he moved to Long Island, he became a confectioner. He made candy and ice cream. The candy he sold both to merchants on Main St. and in his own store by his home. The ice cream he only sold in his store. Why? Because it had to be eaten right after it was made. No electricity yet, just an ice box. The ice box was a wooden cupboard in which you put ice you had sawn off of ponds in the winter. You kept that ice in a wooden structure called the ice house and kept it covered with sawdust for insulation. Anthony would understand my dilemma.

My “fixed” frig still does not work, so I went to store and bought a new frig before we lose those cold outside temperatures. When we moved to Hampton in 2016, I was talking to a Hamptonite woman about new appliances, and she asked how old my frig was. I said only a year old. She answered, maybe you will be lucky enough to go five years without it breaking down. I responded that our old frig had gone decades without a problem, and she said that they don't make them as well as they used to. The makers manufacture planned obsolescence so you have to buy a new appliance every few years. I am sorry to report that she is right. Anyone else having problems with new appliances? Gee, do you remember the auto lemon law? That was passed because so many people were getting new cars with problems. The CT statute covers defective vehicles under two years old or under 24,000 miles. Should we ask for a new law mandating that all appliances (refrigerators, dishwashers, stoves, washers, dryers) must be defect free for X number of years or come with a warranty for X number of years for any repair of defect, covering parts and labor?

Music for the Earth



Artist-In-Residence: Music

By Calendula

Last month I wrote about a number of different folk artists that have been influential in the creative process and production of my upcoming album, *Loveletter*. I want

to take the time now to write on another artist who I take great inspiration from, and who I've had the unique and wonderful opportunity to work for.

Paul Winter is a saxophonist and bandleader, whose career includes a wide array of accomplishments, from winning 7 Grammy® awards to playing the first ever jazz concert at the White House in 1962. He pioneered the genre of Earth Music, he's been an advocate for environmental sustainability and protection, he's traveled the world and inspired connection between folks of all different cultures. In the 1980's he and his band, the Paul Winter Consort, along with the Russian vocal group, the Dmitri Pokrovsky Ensemble, produced the first record of original music created by American and Russian musicians in collaboration (during the Cold War, no less).



Paul Winter. Photo by Bill Ellzey.

Paul was a member of the Lindisfarne Association, founded by William Irwin Thompson, of scientists, artists, scholars, and contemplatives devoted to the study and realization of a new planetary culture. Through this organization, he met the Very Reverend James Parks Morton, Dean of New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine, who asked Paul to become artist-in-residence there, to build bridges between spirituality and the environment with his music. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the largest cathedral in the world and known as "the green cathedral." In the 1980s and 1990s, it became the cen-



ter of a vital community of thinkers and seekers working on issues of ecology and environment and world peace. It is at this cathedral that Paul and his Consort celebrate the Winter Solstice, every December since 1980, with a concert featuring music and dance from cultures around the world.

Paul Winter is a particularly inspiring example of a musician that has kept his ethos at the core of his artistic work throughout his career, consistently creating music that showcases the beauty of humanity in concert with nature, and underlines the importance of diversity on earth.

This message of unification and celebration of diversity is something I hope to emulate in my own work, including my upcoming album, *Loveletter*. Although my music is of a different genre, I feel inspired by Paul's dedication to community and diversity, as well as his love for nature and the earth. I admire his ability to express this through his music, as well as his ability to use music as a means to support a cause; to bring folks together through music.

Paul prefaced this past year's Solstice Celebration with a quote by Rusty Schweickart, an old friend of his who was also the Lunar Module Pilot on the 1969 Apollo 9 mission:

"And a little later on your friend goes out to the Moon. And now he looks back and he sees the Earth not as something big, where he can see the beautiful details, but now he sees the Earth as a small thing out there. And the contrast between that bright blue and white Christmas tree ornament and the black sky, that infinite universe, really comes through, and the size of it, the significance of it. It is so small and so fragile and such a precious little spot in that universe that you can block it out with your thumb, and you realize that on that small spot, that little blue and white thing, is everything that means anything to you - all of history and music and poetry and art and death and birth and love, tears, joy, games - all of it on that little spot out there that you can cover with your thumb. And you realize from that perspective that you've changed, that there's something new out there, that the relationship is no longer what it was."

This perspective of the earth and of ourselves, as something so small in the vast infinity of the universe, is a perspective I find quite beautiful. Like Paul's music, it's a message of unity for us, for this little blue and white dot we live on.

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

What is Clay?

And How You Can Use Clay at Home

By Cate Solari

What is clay? Clay is a soft, loose, earthy material containing particles with a grain size of less than 4 micrometres. Think the PlayDoh of the earth. It forms as a result of the weathering and erosion of rocks containing the mineral group feldspar (known as the 'mother of clay') over vast spans of time.

You can squish it, roll it, carve it, and create your own creation right before your eyes using clay.

Clay comes from the earth. The clay many potters use to make cups and mugs is processed clay. It comes from a factory and is processed and prepared to some degree, to make it easy to use. Originally, clay was dug from deposits along river beds. You can still collect your own clay from local deposits in your "backyard" by digging it out and removing



any impurities.

Here, in Connecticut, most of the land is covered by a type of clay known as Connecticut Valley Varved Clay (CVVC). This deposit formed at the bottom of a large glacial lake, commonly known as Lake Hitchcock, which once filled almost the entire valley from Vermont to near Long Island Sound.

Of all the arts, ceramics has perhaps the longest history, dating back to when people first discovered how to control fire. People used clay for practical purposes, and for creative outlets. You may experience clay in your everyday life through kitchen dishes, tile floors, even your toilet is made out of clay.



Clay can help us in our daily needs, and it can also help us take a mental break. Throughout various applications of



clay work within the realm of art therapy, clay has been seen to reduce negative mood and anxiety, awaken creativity, foster socialization, and help heal from trauma.

You can experience the magic of clay at home with the following activity!

The Little Blue Hippo: Clay Learning Activity
Ages 5 to 105

What you will need:
-Crayola Model Magic (4oz. per person) -Blue Markers or Blue Paint
-Popsicle stick or ChopStick
Directions:



1. Watch the read aloud of *The Little Hippo* by Anja Klauss and Geraldine Elschner. You can find it on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYhhx07BX7w>).
2. Use your Crayola Model Magic to create your own clay hippo!
Roll 4oz. of Crayola Model Magic into a ball.
Pinch four legs from the bottom of the ball.
Pinch your hippo head and tail.
Use your popsicle stick to carve marks on the back of your hippos - just like in the read aloud!
Add any decorations you like!
3. Let your Crayola Model Magic hippo dry overnight.
4. The next day, color your hippo blue using a blue marker or blue paint!



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



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**.

WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG

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Dear Reader-

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

T. King, Publisher

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

Death Before Dawn: Medical Inequity During the Civil War

By Donna Dufresne

A young nurse rushes to the bedside of her patient, responding to groans so loud they reverberate through Ward Ten and down the hall. The rattling in his lungs contributes to the cacophony of the sick and dying. She is overwhelmed. Stretchers laden with the deathly ill arrive by the dozens every day while dozens more are removed to the morgue, where the bodies are stacked because the autopsies are beginning to lag. There is no cure for this pathogen, this disease. Patent medicines have failed. The doctors themselves are at wits' end. The nurses, the orderlies, and the doctors are exhausted. The nurse falls into her bed each night and cries herself to sleep. Her heart aches.

The exhaustion and helplessness felt among medical workers is all too familiar in 2022. But the scene described above is not from a Covid ward. It's from 1863, during the Civil War, at Knight U.S. Army Hospital in New Haven. The disease was typhoid, and it took a deep toll on the soldiers from the 29th Connecticut Colored Infantry Regiment who were infected at base camp in Fair Haven while awaiting orders to ship out. Our own Charles Webster of Eastford was in the hospital from March 10 to May 24, when he was discharged on disability as "unfit for service." On March 9, 1864, the rest of his unit set sail at dawn for Annapolis, Maryland. But Charles was too ill. He would never fight in a battle or witness the victory of the Union and the emancipation of slaves in the South. He died in Eastford on June 17, 1864, of complications from typhoid pneumonia.

Charles Webster was not alone in this ill-fated death. The Black and mulatto soldiers of Nipmuc and African descent from rural Northeast Connecticut quickly succumbed to the rampant disease that thrived in the unsanitary conditions of crowded encampments. Dysentery, pneumonia, typhus, and typhoid were common illnesses in urban areas, but our rural soldiers had little exposure to these and therefore no immunity to the bacterial pathogens. Several of the soldiers I've been researching were struck down within weeks of enlistment and muster. Perpetuated by poorly constructed latrines and the lack of handwashing, typhoid easily contaminated drinking water and food. Unfortunately, it wasn't until the dawn of professional nursing that surgeons were convinced that handwashing could control disease.

We can thank Florence Nightingale for the eventual improvements over death and disease in military field hospitals on both sides of the Civil War. The renowned "Lady of the Lamp," a British nurse who revolutionized nursing practices by teaching sanitation and handwashing, was consulted by American doctors and medical professionals in 1861. Eventually, her practices as well as battalions of newly educated professional nurses made their way to the front lines of Union and Confederate hospitals. But it was too late for Charles Webster, descendant of Nipmuc Indians and enslaved Africans. In the spring of 1864, Knight Hospital was overwhelmed by the sick and the wounded. They discharged Private Webster and sent him home.

Founded as Yale/New Haven Hospital in 1826, Knight Hospital was designated as a military hospital in 1863 and renamed for the chief surgeon of Yale, Dr. Jonathan Knight. Patients arrived from the battlefields and encampments via transport ships and rail. Before the war, the hospital had accepted "ladies" as volunteer nurses who helped to feed and comfort patients. Although not a paid profession,

nursing had been in the domain of women for centuries. It was often wealthy women who organized the healthcare of their families and their communities. Indeed, Yale/New Haven Hospital had been accepting female "nurses" since 1826. Most often, the volunteers read to patients or helped them write letters. But the transition from a community hospital to a military hospital brought wartime demands and recognition to nursing.

Inspired by the Nightingale School of Nursing in Great Britain, the United States appointed Dorothea Dix as superintendent of army nurses in 1861. She took charge of the training of over 3,000 army nurses who would serve Union and Confederate soldiers, with an emphasis on sanitation practices. They were not always welcomed by skeptical male surgeons in the trenches, but their service was invaluable and cheap. They were, after all, volunteers. The primary prerequisite of Dix's nurses was that they be plain and over age 35.

It's hard to say if Knight Hospital had nurses on the wards in 1864 when Charles Webster (Eastford), Giles Gardner (Killingly), John Nichols (Canterbury), and other 29th Regiment soldiers lay dying on Ward Ten. Their medical treatment begs the question of whether racial inequity contributed to their deaths, as it so often does today. According to "The Civil War's Black Soldiers" in the National Park Service's Civil War Series, it was difficult to find surgeons and nurses who would serve the "Colored Troops." The Colored Troops unit field hospitals and military base hospitals were notoriously understaffed. Whereas hospitals for the white troops were required to have at least three surgeons on staff and a volunteer nursing staff, the Colored Troops hospitals were lucky to have one surgeon and unlikely to attract nurses. Much of the work of saving lives on the battlefield and in the field hospitals was left to Black soldiers and orderlies. Consequently, the incidence of death from wounds and disease was 2½ times greater than that of white soldiers.

The 1863 record book of autopsies at Knight Hospital shows that most corpses were Black and mulatto. This may be attributed to the fact that the 29th Connecticut Colored Regiment Base Camp was in New Haven. Except for a few gunshot wounds, most of the deaths were caused by preventable diseases and unsanitary conditions. As the war progressed and casualties rose, even the medical examiner appeared to be inundated and understaffed, with autopsies taking place within days rather than hours of death. Our Black and mulatto soldiers may not have had equitable treatment by the medical establishment, but they contributed to medical progress in death. While emptying lungs of quarts of fluid, and noting the odd pustules left on organs by typhoid pneumonia, doctors began to understand the disease. Perhaps it led to more effective treatment, but handwashing and sanitation probably saved lives.

After the Civil War, Knight Hospital reverted to Yale/New Haven and continued its storied history of medical research and community care. In the age of Covid and racial reckoning, we have learned that disenfranchised groups of Blacks, Latinos, and immigrants suffer from inequities in the healthcare system. Once again, we must look to the past to understand the present as we try to move toward a more equitable society.

Sources: Annie Bell, Nurse in Nashville TN: American Civil War Museum; Medical Record, Charles Webster, Folder 3

Family Partners with Wyndham Land Trust to Expand Nightingale Forest



Townshend Pond. Harry Townshend enjoyed fishing on the family property.

Photo courtesy of Wyndham Land Trust.

Submitted by Joyce Fountain

POMFRET CENTER — A remote section of unbroken forest in the Quiet Corner has been protected from development thanks to the acquisition of a large piece of land by the Wyndham Land Trust.

The Wyndham Land Trust recently acquired 364 acres in Pomfret from the Townshend family. The land—the largest single acquisition by the land trust in its 46-year history—includes a large scenic wetland with open water, marshlands, shrub swamp, and forested swamp that form the headwaters of Nightingale Brook. The woodlands that surround the wetlands support important forest-nesting birds such as Canada Warbler and Black-throated Blue Warbler.

The property sits in a remote corner of Pomfret that borders Eastford to the west and Woodstock to the north. The Wyndham Land Trust is actively working to protect this area of extensive woodlands and has christened it the 'Nightingale Forest.' Their Nightingale Forest now covers 1,120 acres of protected land, of which almost 800 were donated by or purchased from the Townshend family.

The late Henry "Harry" Townshend, the patriarch of the prominent Townshend family in New Haven, was responsible for creating the core of this valuable habitat. Harry, looking for a place where he could enjoy his passion for hunting and fishing, purchased almost 1200 acres in Pomfret in the late-1950s.

The Pomfret land soon became a cornerstone of the lives of Harry Townshend and his wife Deb, and their five children spent many happy hours exploring the woods. The family kept horses and rode on the extensive trail system that was created to support dog field trials.

"Dad loved the outdoors which offered him fields, forests, mountains, streams and lakes to satisfy his hobbies of hunting, fishing, and field trials," said Nancy Townshend Vess. "But I think the biggest reason he liked the outdoors was the solitude it brought him. The properties he bought in Pomfret were all places of solitude."

"We children grew up surrounded by nature," continued Nancy. "Each of us has an appreciation of the natural world as a result of this upbringing. I do believe the Wyndham Land Trust is an organization that will help the Pomfret community balance man against nature. I'm glad we were able to work with the land trust to maintain that balance."

"I'm happy to give this Pomfret land over to the protection of the Wyndham Land Trust and for the enjoyment of the public," said Sharon Townshend. "Nature has been a source of renewal, healing, adventure, and art ideas for me; and I'm glad I can now enjoy this land as a member of the public."

"I once asked Dad if he believed there was a 'God,' said Hervey Townshend. "His answer was 'no not in the common belief.' But he said 'if there was a God, his spirit would live in the woods among the trees, in nature, and in all the animals.' Nature was Dad's God. Walking in the forest was entering a spiritual place to be treated with respect. We would often walk together, stopping occasionally to listen to the silence of the woods."

"This new property contains an excellent network of trails," said Penny Foisey, land trust treasurer and president of the Pomfret Horse & Trails Association. "The forest here is pristine and open. It reflects the careful planning of Mr. Townshend with many of his original field trial markers still there for the observant to find."

The land trust plans to mark the trails and parking areas this summer, and information about public access to the property will be available on their web site. Funding for the acquisition came from the State of Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program, the Bafflin Foundation, the Town of Pomfret, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, the Summerhill Foundation, and from Wyndham Land Trust members and supporters.

The Wyndham Land Trust was formed in 1975, and the work of the all-volunteer group is possible only through the generosity and dedication of its members and donors. To learn more about the Wyndham Land Trust visit wyndham-landtrust.org. You can also follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

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A New Partnership For Arts & Culture

Submitted by Bev York

Windham Arts and the Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation have launched a new program to support art, culture, history and tourism. They have formed the Partnership of Arts & Culture and invite any groups to participate. The 2022 efforts will feature all groups and fundraise for museums. Four days of living history events will be held on April 30, June 4, September 3 and October 22. All activities planned on those days will be part of large scale marketing making the area a tourist destination. It is hoped that the participants will offer activities such as: living history, costumed guides and greeters, role playing actors, music, story telling, hands-on activities for families, and more. Visitors would purchase a joint ticket to attend many events. Some events would be free and others would have admission fees.

The 2022 themes are Saturday, April 30 : "A Day in 1822, 200 Years Ago" ; Saturday, June 4 : "The Gilded Age: A Day in 1872"; Saturday, September 3: "A Day in 1972 Hey Man , Nice Threads! (50 Years Ago)" (Labor Day Weekend) and Saturday, October 22: "Diseases, Death and other Dreadful Things "(19th century history.) The Partnership will meet on March 1 at 2:00 p.m. on zoom. Any interested groups, museums and libraries can contact Bev York for information, an application to participate and zoom link at bevishistory@yahoo.com or 860-423-1878 and leave message.

Our mission:

To promote, support, celebrate the arts, history and culture of Windham Region and to foster a positive send of community and connectiveness thus spurring tourism and economic development in the region.

Our Vision:

To successfully create well attended events that bring people and revenue to the businesses and organizations in Windham and its surrounding towns.

Our Goals:

To bring together as collaborative partners all people, groups, organizations and businesses that have interest in the arts, culture and history of Windham Region.

To help build the operational capacity and financial stability of these partners.

To plan, develop, coordinate and implement four large scale, community wide living history themed events where all partners can be involved and which draws visitors to the region as a "destination event".

To collaborate with our partners on marketing, promotions and branding to efficiently and effectively use the limited resources of The Partnership.

To support, promote and collaborate with local businesses by including them in our planning and events so that they bring greater value to our destination events.

To form a specific sub-committee that will begin planning a community wide collaborative event that will commemorate and celebrate our country's 250th anniversary in 2026.

Ann Rosebrooks Exhibit at Top Shelf

The March April show at the Top Shelf Gallery will be "Images and Memories", acrylics by Ann C. Rosebrooks, who paints brightly colored depictions of daily life. Her pictures of concerts, exercise studios, parties, family gatherings, and political demonstrations are distinguished by a multitude of lively figures.

Rosebooks, who has been creating artwork seriously since she was a teenager, has a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She has been showing work since the early 70's and has been a member of the Artworks Gallery for 30 years. Her artwork has appeared in regional and national juried and invitational shows, and her paintings are represented in both public and private collections.

Rosebooks credits an artist's residency in Ubud, Bali in 2000 for a new appreciation of landscape and Hindu culture, and travel, music, and dreams, as well as her personal experiences, continue to inspire her work. The Top Shelf Gallery is at Fletcher Memorial Library, 247 Main Street, Hampton. Information at 860 455 1086.

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

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.

To all our contributors- Thank You!

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

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:

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.

April 1, 2022: The Strange Love of Martha Ivers

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

Where to find the Neighbors paper

Ashford

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

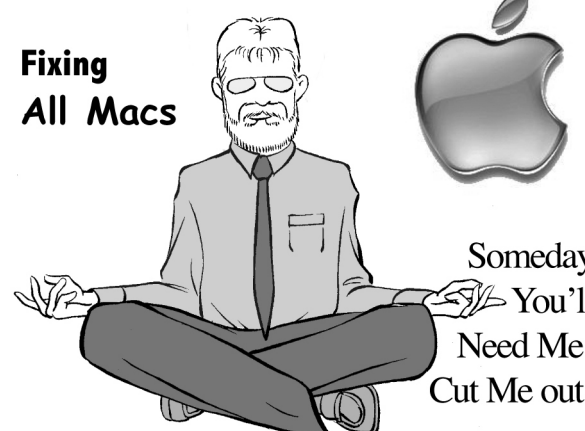
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That Breakfast Place
All Subways
Super Washing Well
Elm Package Store

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Barn Dance

What door will they open tomorrow? Will they find we've left the lights on?
Are there small little pieces of torn tissue paper, with all the names now gone?
Will they still hear the orchestra playing, in the far corner of the room?
Who are the ones left dancing, is one a bride without her jumped broom?
Listen for the absence of laughter that covers the now barren walls
Are the others just quietly hiding away down the darkened once hallowed halls?
How will you be able to find us, without remembering, we're so different now?
The music is no longer playing, yet the voiceless choirs still silently bow.

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine



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- Steeple Chase
- No Freeze Shelter
- WAIM/Walk for Warmth
- Friends of the Garden on the Bridge
- Windham Community Food Network
- Windham Farmers Market – Double Up SNAP
- First Baptist Church Meals

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