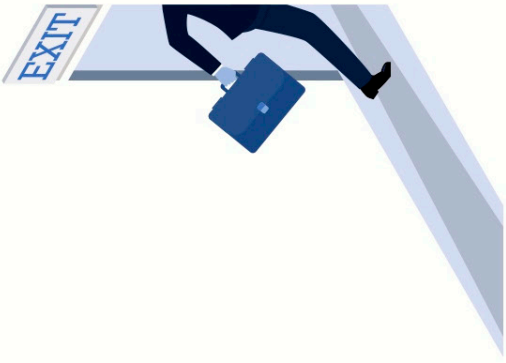


April 2022

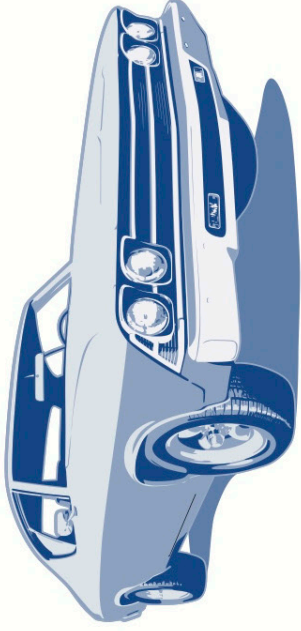
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No. 206 Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut and beyond

Looking Up:

Skunk Cabbage and Starships

By Bob Grindle

Bafflin sanctuary in Pomfret is a worthwhile walk in any season, but there is something rather special about these first spring days when the bluster and cold and micro-environmental chaos of the Sun sparring for sky acreage with rain-heavy, dark steely-gray clouds scudding over the brightly exuberant expanse of a crazy-quiltage of open fields, stitched together, warp and weft, by stone walls, brushy tangles and, in the very vernacular of spring, with water coursing everywhere...there is a relentless sort of challenge as nature mocks our human assumption that life is delicate and the piercingly orchestral wind grinds like a violin bow against the needle-strings of eastern white pine and spruce and the music is both haunting and addictive. Life is not delicate the wind hisses, almost whispering, not quite breathing...life is sturdy and it is everywhere...from mountaintop glaciers; throughout the atmosphere and deep into the deepest reaches of our planet, life has colonized our starship Earth, and our species has claimed the mantle of stewardship. As the red-winged blackbirds squabble over the available food supply, my mind ponders...by what right?

As a species, it occurs to me we have underperformed and, like the garret-dwelling artist, struggling for understanding and survival all the while sketching or sculpting visions of creation, we are always on the verge of exhausting the Earth we inherited while we think we are

fashioning a pathway to the stars.

As the five of us thread our way through the trails of this 700+ acre Audubon sanctuary, often walking backwards against the chilling wind, the skunk cabbage emerging almost underfoot as one hikes must surely be indifferent to our bundling up—this spring ephemeral actually generates its own heat and serves as a sort of traveler’s hostel to early foraging bees and other well acclimated insects—I smile to think I’ve actually thought about a skunk cabbage, a not too distant relative of arum lilies, being aware of our



human behaviors, but talking with the various incarnations of life around me often helps me to feel tethered to that organic foundation that breathes life into all things. Indeed, life is not delicate and even this pop-up walk through a nearby preserve can serve to remind us of the tenacity of the process that finds us still puzzling to understand our roots.



Grindle family members at Bafflin. Photo by author.

New England springtime is not a timid season, but for those willing to brave the bluster of March and April evenings, nights and early mornings there is more than a little inspiration to be found in looking up into the theater of the sky. Early in April, the waxing crescent Moon moves up through Taurus, passing the Seven Sisters in the Pleiades and the bloodshot eye of the bull, a red giant star, Aldebaran...in Hindu myth, Aldebaran was a beautiful young woman being forever pursued by a lecherous father...no matter the culture, the stories that described the night sky were always full of intrigue.

Later in April, the pre-dawn sky on the Monday after Easter will have an irresistible bit of sky theatrics: Jupiter, Venus, Mars and Saturn will line up in an almost perfectly straight line...it will be interesting to watch these solar system neighbors shuffle about in the coming weeks and to enjoy those mid-spring April mornings when the cold bluster of winter’s indelicate grip is but a memory. Stay well and enjoy the coming season when our little corner of the universe breathes a sigh of relief and charms us all with the pleasures of spring.



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On our cover: Ashford photographer Joseph Szalay took these early spring '22 photos at a northeastern Connecticut marsh. At top is a great blue heron, bottom right a beaver and at left an osprey. Thank you Joseph.

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

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

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Incarceration, Love, and Racism

By Loretta Wrobel



Having the privilege of hearing someone tell their own story and explain their actions can be a very inspiring and horrifying experience. I surely felt both of those emotions while watching *Time*, a documentary about Sibil Fox Richardson (also known as Sibil Fox Rich) and her struggles to raise a family while her husband was incarcerated. The movie is done in black and white and uses many of Sibil's home videos, filmed while her husband was in jail serving a 60-year sentence for armed robbery.

This passionate activist did confess she had committed a crime, driving the getaway car while her husband and his nephew robbed a store. She received a 12-year sentence, but only served three-and-a-half years. The film focuses on the impact of the criminal justice system on the family, and how families are altered when a father is imprisoned for the major part of their lives.

Ms. Rich states, "Desperate people do desperate things." For me the issue is the excessive sentencing that her husband received and her difficulties in communicating with the prison authorities. The family spent huge amounts of money for legal assistance and most of the money was lost as Robert Richardson (also known as Rob Rich) remained incarcerated for over 20 years.

The story starkly demonstrates the trauma for the children when a parent is locked up. The couple had six boys that mostly grew up without a father in their home. Raising several children is not easy for anyone, but is especially challenging for a black mother alone while her husband is in prison. Sibil managed all this with the help of her extended family, her church community, and her belief in God.

We all know the truth that Black men are imprisoned at higher rates and that their sentencing is harsher and more punitive. Because of the strength of racism, there are fewer options for people of color in our Country. Yes the fact remains that this couple committed a crime. How do we intervene when a person breaks the law? The answer depends on your skin color, your status, and the size of your bank account. These are fundamental issues we need to address if our aim is to rehabilitate and not destroy.

For me the film is about the power of love and the importance of family. It is a love story. A mother's love for her children, the love of a woman for her husband that endures despite ongoing obstacles, and a woman's love for her community, demonstrated by her intimate sharing of her trials and mistakes. For her it is imperative that she tell her story so others can learn from her unwise decision, pain and struggles. She is committed to informing her community regarding the dangers for people of color in an unjust and racist prison industrial complex. It is easy to be mistreated, ignored and dismissed. Ms. Rich is a compelling speaker and shouts out her truths about her inability to get her husband home without constant vigilance.

I was heartened by hearing Rob Richardson talk

about the power of love. He used the acronym, *Life's Only Valid Expression*, as the truth of love. To still feel that love is all that matters, after being in the penitentiary for two decades, is a credit to his resiliency. Again, it is proof of the strength of the family unit that they stayed in connection to their husband/father, even though he was not living in the home with them.

The film had a rawness and intensity that spoke to me as a white person. To witness the absence of a father is such a familiar situation for many minority families in America. When racism and differential treatment are the societal norms, we all suffer. Black and Brown people do not have the same opportunities that white people barely notice that they do have. A person who has not experienced discrimination can ignore the reality that immigrants, trans people, people of color, and ex-prisoners face on a daily basis.

How do we begin to unravel this societal minefield? We all have made poor decisions in our lives. Sometimes we get caught, and sometimes we escape with no long-term consequences. Those of us who are part of the privileged class have a much better chance of not getting negative consequences for unwise or bad actions. This reality must be acknowledged by all of us so we can apply pressure to our institutions and legal system to improve.

Our prison and judicial systems need to be reformed, particularly courts, probation, and parole establishments. Our penal institutions are not focused on helping prisoners reintegrate. Our inability to understand that desperate people make/take desperate choices/actions means that getting caught in the incarcerated system can be fatal or have major negative impacts on a person's future.

In order to continue to improve how we handle individuals in jails, we must examine our stereotypes of who is a

criminal, who serves time, and what is just and appropriate punishment. To look at who stays incarcerated and who gets released is important. However, first is to consider who is put in jail to begin the process.

Sibil demonstrates that she is a fierce fighter and mother who manages to raise her boys, to constantly seek means to assist her husband, and never seems to give up in the midst of problems, defeats, and loss of big chunks of money. She persists and maintains her belief in her God, love, and her family.

The film was enlightening in that it presented this activist in all her emotions. She keeps her eye on the goals of raising her family, keeping her husband front and center with her children, and fighting as an advocate against the unjust incarceration industry. She presents herself with her flaws, rage and passion without apologies. The film tells a beautiful tale of the magic of love to surmount unbelievable mountains, and the importance of standing up for what you believe in.

The movie triggered emotion and passion within me and I highly recommend that you view it and see what it calls up in you or how it impacts your thinking and emotions. I admire how Sibil did it, raising some beautiful sons while on a journey to bring her man home. I applaud her for that.

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Willimantic, Now and Then:

Café culture: Alive and Well @ the Co-Op!



Leigh Duffy and Mark Svetz enjoy conversation at the Willimantic Food Co-op. The cafe is open again after being closed for the pandemic. Photo by Sarah Winter.

By Mark Svetz

“Next week!” said Patty Smith, Operations Manager at the Willimantic Food Co-op. “Come Sunday!” She whispered to a small group of people, enjoying the coffee, sun and conversation on the bench in front of the store.

With those words, my world got a lot closer to that elusive normal I have been hearing about. Something was back on track that had been lost for two years. Before March of 2020, I had been having coffee at the Co-op most mornings with a group of friends. Then everything started to spin out of our grasp. As Patty promised, we came back together with the first day of spring. I am at peace again.

The Willimantic Food Co-op has been at the center of my life ever since those days on Main Street, when Sarah was co-manager and took messages for me because I didn’t have a ‘phone. From its very beginning, the Co-op has been a source of food, friends and fun. It has all the essential ingredients: coffee, tables, chairs and a steady stream of friends and potential friends.

This all came to a screeching halt two years ago when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The Co-op was closed to shoppers for some time. We placed our orders on line and the staff carried bags out for us. The crisis of the pandemic became very real to me as I went to the co-op to be handed our bags of food by masked friends. As with every crisis, this one made me appreciate the people around me. I was grateful to get provisions safely. The co-op was there when I needed it.

The real shock was to come, however, when we reopened the doors and started shopping inside again. Every few days I would set out for the co-op on my bike, park it out front, get everything on my list and be home in half an hour. Something was still missing. Even though I was accustomed to shopping pretty much every day in the pre-pandemic world, my trips to the co-op would take hours. I’d start by getting a cup of coffee. Then I would study my list, maybe discuss it with the person at the next table. Conversations would start, punctuated occasionally when I went to the produce section for some collards and a bunch of bananas. When everything was checked off my list, I’d have another cup of coffee and check out. I’d head home, groceries in my panniers, a nice buzz from the coffee and a lot of news about old friends to think about.

But with the handful of tables and their mismatched chairs gone, we could shop but but there would be no hanging out; no catching up with old friends and meeting new ones. I think we were in shock. I was at home, keeping busy, talking occasionally on the ‘phone with friends, carrying on with life. Still, there was a spark missing.

As we turned our calendars to 2022, it seemed the whole world was growing impatient with COVID protocols. In our little world in the southwest corner of the Willimantic Food Co-op change was stirring just beneath the surface. Chris, one of our more enterprising members, is on the board of directors at Click, a licensed, co-operative commercial kitchen out on Club Road in Windham. Chris started inviting a few people out to Click on Friday mornings for coffee and conversation.

Randy is a foundational member of our morning group, mostly because he needs his morning coffee and doesn’t have a coffee pot. Stefan is from Germany and teaches at the University of Connecticut. He loves the

café culture we find at the co-op, the debates, discussions, gossip and wild stories we share. As we all began to plot our way back inside to the tables, Stefan and Chris were the most creative. Joe is involved in many things in Willimantic. I can only say, with apologies to T.S. Eliot, Joe is not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be; rather he is an attendant lord, one that will do to swell a progress, start a scene or two. Joe is always ready to do something, it seems. He is a great addition to the circle.

About the same time Chris started making coffee at Click, I started hearing that Randy and Stefan were having coffee on the bench outside the co-op on many mornings. I went down to join them, and soon the five of us (and many passersby!) were meeting most days. Now we had the bench at the co-op most days and Click on Friday mornings. My social life was getting interesting again. As the sun got warmer and I got used to this new routine. There was a bounce in my step again.

For most of my life I have hung out in diners and pubs at one end of the day or the other. I could tell hundreds of stories about great and small adventures in my life, all of them starting in a pub or a diner. When you sit at a bar or counter, everybody talks to everybody else; we make friends, start fights, learn where to get a car and who’s the best floor man in town. We get dates, find room mates, maybe even meet our future spouse. I have gone to the pub to relax after work and wound up watching the sun rise on a beach in Rhode Island. I was at the co-op having coffee more than 10 years ago when I was told about the woman who would save my life by giving me a kidney. You never know what will happen when you sit in a room full of people and open yourself to conversation.

When I came for coffee that first Monday morning of spring, new life was dawning. I stayed until almost noon. It felt so good to sit with friends, catch up on the news. The place had a joyous feel. It was exciting to see new faces and hear new voices. I came back later in the day and the morning group was there again. We couldn’t get enough of it.

It is the potential of those people I haven’t met yet that keeps me ready for the next adventure. In fact the second day inside the co-op, we were talking about something and Stefan made a point about a particular social media developer. A shopper who happened to be standing in front of the nearby freezer took issue with Stefan. A long, interesting discussion ensued between them. I had to excuse myself for a bit and when I returned, the shopper was paying for her groceries and laughing with the group. A new friend? That is what I’ve been missing.

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

Alanon Meetings in Willington

Alanon, a meeting for friends and families of alcoholics, is meeting every Friday morning from 10-11:00 in the Conference Room at the Willington Public Library, on 7 Ruby Rd. in Willington.



Skunk Cabbages

Skunk cabbages - it’s such a primal thing
Their pointed sprouts along the road I saw
In the snow, an early sign of spring
Their life force makes a circle round to thaw

Some cheerful robins hop about in snow
Although it’s still too soon to hear them sing
Another sign of spring along the road
Something about the very first of things

My first love far away in long gone time
He picked for me the blue forget-me-nots
Fast water in the river rushed in rhyme
Grasping him forever in my thoughts

The cabbages poke bravely through the snow
The crows above me cawing what they know
How far this long road stretches from the past
I’m getting close to heaven’s door at last

Poem by Kathy O. LaVallee, North Windham
Photo by Christine Acebo, Ashford

A Celestial Choral Concert in Hartford

Submitted by Sarah Kaufold, Artistic Director Consonare Choral Community

Consonare Choral Community is pleased to present an in-person, collaborative celestial choral concert “Stars are for all who look up” on Saturday, April 9, 2022 at 7:00pm at Charter Oak Cultural Center in Hartford and a pre-concert virtual panel discussion “Are stars for all who look up?” on Thursday, March 31, 2022 at 6:30pm over Zoom. This in-person concert in the Charter Oak concert hall will feature performances by CT’s versatile vocal chamber ensemble, Voices of Concinnity, and Boston’s newest vocal group, Unitus Ensemble, with accompanying celestial projections. Admission is \$15* for the live performance. It is free to attend the virtual panel discussion.

“There is an intrinsic human connection to the night sky, yet current behavior is limiting access to viewing the stars,” said Sarah Kaufold, artistic director of Consonare Choral Community. “The concert will feature celestial projections paired with beautiful a cappella choral music about the stars to explore access to experiencing the night sky. The facilitated pre-concert panel discussion will set the stage by asking whether stars really are for all who look up.”

This concert will feature a collaboration between two accomplished New England vocal chamber ensembles. Described as “silky smooth butter in musical form”, Voices of Concinnity seeks to connect with the community through exquisitely crafted and innovative choral programming that fosters inclusion, promotes collaboration, illuminates variety, and ensures affordable access. Bringing together voices from around the country to sing the group’s mission to life, The Unitus Ensemble seeks to create emotionally immersive concert experiences that spark reflection, promote socially just education and inspire action.

Through celestial projections this live concert will capture our sense of awe and wonder with heavenly choral music underneath the stars featuring works by Erik Esenvalds, Laura Mvula, Saunder Choi, Fanny Hensel, Marques L.A. Garrett, and more. To purchase tickets* for the concert or register for the free pre-concert discussion, please visit: <https://www.consonare-sing.org/concinnity-concerts>
*No one will be turned away from attending the in-person performance if the ticket price is a hardship.

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).

Robert Miller: Want to hurt Putin? Go green
CT Insider. "Want to hurt the corrupt Russian petro-state now invading Ukraine? Get your house checked for energy efficiency. Use mass transit. Telecommute from home. Get solar panels on your roof. This is because all these things — thought of as tree-hugging environmental stuff — touch on global energy markets...On an individual level, [Joel] Gordes said one of the best things people can do is have an energy audit done on their homes. To learn more about such programs, go to Energize Connecticut at energizect.com."

A Leading U.S. Utility Stealthily Fights the Electrification of Heating Systems

Yale Environment 360. "Eversource Energy, New England's largest utility, markets itself as a company that strives for carbon neutrality and invests in offshore wind power. But at a recent industry presentation, Eversource officials outlined a strategy to continue using natural gas for years to come and to fight growing efforts to decarbonize the heating of buildings ... The presentation warned that natural gas is "in for [the] fight of its life" and called for a lobbying campaign in which "everyone needs to contact legislators in favor of NG [natural gas]." Another slide asked how the natural gas industry could "take advantage of power outage fear" to continue promoting the use of natural gas..."

UConn Student Group Stepping Up to Help Push for Clean Energy

UConn Today. "The Clean Energy Society, created in the fall of 2021 by Agriculture and Resource Economics student Liam Enea '24 (CAHNR) unites many elements, including energy regulation, ratemaking, grid modernization, smart technology, and community engagement. The group aims to build knowledge and action for the fast-growing clean energy sector... 'Distributed renewable energy could reduce the spread and intensity of outages by bringing generators closer to where people actually use electricity,' Enea says."

Lawmakers Take Aim at High Electric Bills, Look to Mend "Death By a Thousand Cuts"

CT Examiner. "It's no secret that electricity in Connecticut is expensive. Connecticut electric customers pay the highest monthly bills in the country outside of Hawaii, and they know it. Answering why is more complicated. There's the cost of state policies that support renewable energy, the cost of regional policies that support natural gas, and the cost of living in the Northeast, where prices are high across the board. And customers are quick to point at the massive profits their utilities' parent companies continue to earn as evidence that shareholders come before customers. But to PURA Chair Marissa Gillett — the state's chief utility regulator — there isn't one place to lay the blame...Connecticut customers are suffering "death by a thousand cuts" — a series of obscure policies that go unnoticed, but add up to shift a utility company's risk away from its shareholders and onto its customers."

Connecticut 'right-to-charge' bill paves path for renters to install their own EV chargers

Energy News Network. "Connecticut environmental officials are pushing for legislation that would grant condo owners and renters the right to install their own car chargers, part of a broader effort to dramatically expand the state's electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The so-called right-to-charge legislation would prevent condominium and homeowners' associations, as well as landlords, from prohibiting or "unreasonably" restricting residents who have a designated parking space from installing charging equipment."

By the numbers: A third of Connecticut's trash is food waste, but one town is turning it into energy

Hartford Courant. "A four-month pilot program has residents in Meriden putting out their potato peelings, apple cores and dinner leftovers in specially provided plastic bags alongside their regular trash. Food scraps from households participating in the program are being sent to Quantum Biopower in Southington, where they are turned into renewable energy and used for compost. Since municipalities are charged by weight for their trash disposal, the program to keep food waste out of the city's trash is both good for the environment and saves money."



Lamont: Connecticut rental listings should include cost of utilities

CT Insider. "With New York City apartment hunters able to compare energy costs like car shoppers gauging fuel efficiency between makes and models, Gov. Ned Lamont wants Connecticut to follow suit — starting in a handful of cities with neighborhoods where tenants struggle the most to pay the monthly utilities. Under the Lamont administration's proposal, by 2026, many landlords statewide would have to post an energy "label" for the apartments or houses they market to prospective tenants."

Amy McLean: A chilling impact on Connecticut's EV adoption rates

Hartford Courant. "...sales data shows that states with direct sales have EV adoption rates that are 4.8 times higher than closed states. Connecticut's auto dealers defend the status quo, where they have the exclusive right to sell all new vehicles in the state, on the basis that opening for direct sales would harm their businesses and have a negative impact on employment. An analysis by the Acadia Center found, on the contrary, direct sales has had no negative impact on dealership employment on other states in the Northeast region...States that are fully or partially open for direct sales have seen higher dealership sales and employment growth than closed states."

Connecticut boilermaker reduces emissions further with solar carport

Solar Power World. "Utility subsidiary ConEdison Solutions installed a 209-kW solar carport project at Preferred Utilities Manufacturing in Danbury, Connecticut. The solar array was installed in the facility's parking lot, creating a covered parking area... 'Preferred takes a holistic approach to providing solutions, and adding solar to our building is a great demonstration of what we're able to do. We've upgraded our property, and we're investing in our community. And of course, we're saving money, too.'"

Windham Arts Events

Submitted by Bev York

April 2 Titanic Exhibit at the Coffee Break Gallery. Ernie Eldridge and Anita Sebestyen display their collection of memorabilia including paintings, photography, models and much more. 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 April 30 and closed on Easter.

April 24 Liber TEA Honoring the struggles of enslaved James Mars (1790-1880.) 4:30 out of doors. Meet at Alex Caisse Park/ Park Springs, 620 Jackson Street, Willimantic. Join Bev York for a cup of tea and a story of a quest for freedom. BYO cup. Sponsored by Windham Arts and The America Museum.

April 30 "A Slice of Life: A Day in 1822:" "Experience living history and enjoy fine dining in the Windham Area." Travel to three historic sites: Town Hall, Jillson House Museum and the Windham Center Green. Featuring a town meeting, hearth cooking, candle dipping, and costumed interpreters such as the doctor and Mrs. Jillson and so much more. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and free for children under 18. Tickets at Windham Chamber.com and at all three sites during the event. For more information call 860-423-6389 or 860-423-1878. Sponsored by the Windham Regional Partnership for Arts and Culture, Windham Arts, and the Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

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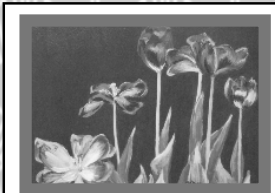
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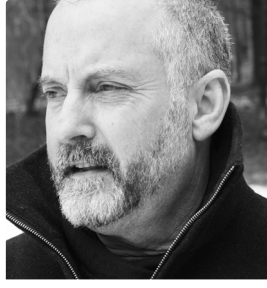
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The Neighbors paper
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From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

Grow Windham: Improving Local Food System

By C. Dennis Pierce



What does, *GROW Windham*, mean to you? Is it an initiative to increase the population of Windham? Increase the acreage of the town of Windham? Well, no, none of these. *GROW Windham* is a remarkable program that is part of the Windham Regional Council. This organization cultivates relationships and creates space for youth, community members and food system partners to work together to build a stronger community and local food system. Why am I writing about this initiative in a column about, “buying local”? Because, in short, it is a very important part of the overall local food system in our community. *GROW Windham* has been a part of the Willimantic community since 2011, when it was founded by Director, Sally Milius and Alice Rubin, the General Manager of the Willimantic Co-op. What started out as a conversation in the Co-op’s aisle turned out to be a multi-faceted, nonprofit collaboration of community partners dedicated to promoting access to healthy food in the Windham region through the support of community food projects and food / garden-based youth programming.

Last week I had the pleasure of speaking to Sally Milius. Director of *GROW Windham*. Sally is a former high school teacher who decided that working with youths, by providing them with tools that they need to be leaders, was more rewarding than a traditional career. During our conversation I learned a lot about the *GROW Windham* initiative. I came to understand, from talking to Sally, that their efforts are committed to providing opportunities for the youth to build and practice leadership, cultivate relationships with community members, and food system partners, in an attempt to work together to build a more just and fair community-led food system. This is accomplished by working with community leaders and community entities, facilitating community engagement, involvement in community problem-solving and leveraging local resources to meet local needs.

The three major enterprises that are part of *GROW Windham* are:

- The Lauter Park Community Gardens, where youth and community members grow food for the community and host workshops, workdays, and community events.

- The Windham Youth CORE Program (“Cultivating Opportunities, Resources, and Education”), that engages local high school students in youth-led community food enterprises through which they build their own skill-set for career and life experiences and build their community at the same time.

- The backbone support for community programs, such as the Windham Community Food Network and the Willimantic’s Farmer’s Market. The Willimantic Farmers’ Market is a community program overseen by an association of the vendors that make up the market. The market receives support from *GROW Windham* and is fiscally sponsored by Windham Regional Community Council.

While all three of these initiatives are important, I was truly interested in the Windham Youth CORE program. This unique segment supports youth to build skills for career and life experience and contribute to their community at the same time. One of their projects is a, “Certified Community” logo which is a designation that recognizes locally grown products and youth initiatives that are dedicated to the well being of the local community. Some examples of their efforts are community certified produce, prepared sofrito, and Frog Fire Hot Sauce. From my conversation with Sally, I came to understand that the CORE effort is a program-based service that creates opportunity for leadership experience for those that participate, participate in social justice advocacy and from this develop their own voice. The benefits of involvement range from summer employment through East Conn, the ability to earn credits and also opportunities for a monetary stipend.

So, this brings me to my plea to our readers. An influential environmental activist by the name of Wendell Berry once said, “*We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.*” It is our responsibility to pay it forward. *GROW Windham*, as a program of the Windham Regional Community Council which is a 501 C-3 nonprofit, relies heavily on grants and donations. Please take the opportunity to go to the *GROW Windham*

web site at <http://www.growwindham.org> and learn more on you may donate to this worthy cause.

We all must agree these are crazy times right now. The price of gas and heating oil has sky rocketed and our grocery bills have risen and, in some instances, we are finding the lack of product on the shelves at our local stores. Here we are in the beginning of April perhaps the best time to think about local grown and maybe even making it more local by trying your hand at gardening. This is not the first time we have been challenged with this situation. As I child I have faint memories of a small patch of a garden in our back yard in New Hampshire while others in the neighborhood, having larger families went at it in a larger scale. My mom had some gardening experience, a product of the depression era, she knew the value of a good meal and a tight budget. I also remember the process of canning food in our kitchen, while preparing glass mason jars in a cavernous, black speckled pot that sat boiling away on the stove. It was a different time when summer crops were produced in your own yard where the vegetables always tasted the best, especially when you were eating them even before they found their way to the kitchen.

I recently was sent the following and thought it would be relevant to our current situation: Victory gardens,



GROW Windham youth group: Mackenzie Hill, Victor Feliciano-Heald, Vania Galicia, Emma Hill, and Ismael Mendez (left to right). Dennis Pierce photo.

as they were known then, had started around 1917 when the United States was heading into World War I when a gentleman named Charles Lathrop Pack established a commission with a focus on gardening. He organized the National War Garden Commission to encourage citizens to grow their own produce and fruit. It was a wonderful idea at a time when it was desperately needed, a way for the ordinary citizens living in the small towns of America to contribute to a greater cause, the war effort. People learned the value of food as well as the value of food storage. If you were patriotic and planted a Victory Garden you helped the war effort by allowing more food to be exported to our allies. Victory Gardens provided a preoccupation to many, to enjoy the outdoors and not dwell on their loved ones serving overseas in the war.

The concept was well managed and promoted by the state and federal government. There were posters created to market this initiative. These posters boasted messages such as “Sow the Seeds of Victory”, encouraging more and more people to plant their own little Victory Gardens. Every little piece of land was targeted to plant seeds and grow, private land and public land alike, gardens flourished everywhere. Unsightly vacant lots were soon planted and gardens grew, back yards, side yards and city parks were also planted. Every civic organization became involved and promoted the concept very well. If you were not planting a Victory Garden you were simply not doing your part for the war effort. The United States Federal Bureau of Education provided training and promoted Victory Gardens at local schools where the children were known as “soldiers of the soil.” It has been said that as many as three million new gardens were planted in the United States in 1917. It was only at the end of World War I when the concept slowed, though many people continued to maintain their own little farms.

As we watch the horrific events that are transpiring in the Ukraine, I thought it would be appropriate to share a recipe that my mother prepared for my family as I was growing up. My mother’s father came to the United States from a small village in the Ukraine. As I child I enjoyed many dishes that was handed down through the generations and to this day I have tried to keep that tradition alive by preparing them as a reminder of the Ukrainian tradition.

Anna’s Mushroom Soup

Ingredients:

- 4 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 ounces of dried mushrooms (that have been soaked in one and a half of a cup of water for hours or overnight. Drain and save the liquid). The stems usually are tough, even after soaking if so, remove those and discard. Chop the “soaked” mushrooms.
- 1 medium size onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced. You may also try grating the garlic instead of mincing it.
- 4 cups broth, vegetable, poultry, or beef
- 4 small or 1 very large Russet potato – optional if you’re adding pasta
- 2 large or 4 medium carrots – diced
- ¼ cup of fresh dill or 1 tablespoon dried dill
- 1 teaspoon marjoram
- 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoon flour
- 3 tablespoons of sour cream
- salt and pepper, to taste
- pasta cooked according to package directions (optional)

Directions:

Chop the mushrooms and set aside. Dice the onion and add to a large frying pan or a French oven which is a large enamel pot sometimes referred to by the manufacturer’s name, Creuset, with 2 tablespoons of butter and the oil. Cook over medium heat until the onions are becoming translucent, about 5 minutes.

Add the minced garlic and cook for 2 more minutes. Add the chopped mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally for 8 to 10 minutes. While the mushrooms are cooking, add the broth to another large pot. Peel and dice the potatoes (if you’re using them), peel and slice the carrots, add both to the broth. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until the vegetable are tender (you should be able to easily insert a fork into them). Add the cooked mushroom, onion, garlic mixture, the dill, and the marjoram to the large soup pot and simmer for 5 minutes. Add dried mushrooms and soaking liquid.

To thicken the soup, add a tablespoon of butter and the flour to a small pan. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat. Slowly add 3 or 4 ladles of the soup broth, whisking the mixture until smooth. Slowly add this to the soup, stirring or whisking until incorporated to slightly thicken the broth. Cook the soup for just a few more minutes. Whisk in the sour cream. Season to taste with salt and pepper. The amount of salt in your broth will determine the amount of additional salt needed.

If you’ve chosen to add pasta instead of potatoes, add cooked pasta to the bowls that you are serving in then fill with soup.

To end this month’s column, I also want to share a concern that a dear friend, Julia Cartabiano shared with me. In my last article I wrote that for spring planning I was preparing to till my raised beds in preparation for this year’s garden. Julia, a strong advocate for “no till” gardening shared with me several web sites that would advocate for “no till” gardening. There is much research in support of the benefits of not tilling in agriculture and gardening to improve soil health and providing climate change mitigation. I thought it would be helpful for the readers of this column to also have this information as they plan out this year’s garden.

<https://extension.unh.edu/blog/2020/10/low-no-till-gardening>
<https://www.ecofarmingdaily.com/bryan-ohara-interview-no-till-vegetable-production/>
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So, until next month, if you have a suggestion for a farm or a local grower or even a recipe that would feature a local ingredient, please let me know. I will do my best to share your suggestions in a future column. Drop me a line at Codfish53@Yahoo.com.

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

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Barbara Lewis

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 Barbara Lewis, a purveyor of "smooth soul" who wrote several of her own hits.

She was born in South Lyon, Michigan, on February 9, 1944. Her parents each had an orchestra. Lewis' father played the trumpet, her mother and uncle played the saxophone, her aunt was a music teacher, and her cousin, Sheldon Brooks, was a songwriter known for "Some of These Days" and "The Dark Town Strutters' Ball." By age nine, Lewis herself was playing the guitar, piano and harmonica, as well as writing songs.

As a teen-ager, she was managed and produced by Ollie McLaughlin, a black D.J. at WHRV (now WAAM) in Ann Arbor, who had previously discovered Del Shannon ("Runaway," 1961). McLaughlin recorded Lewis on his Karen label, named after his daughter. Her first session took place at the Chess studios in Chicago in March 1962. It consisted of two Lewis originals: "The Longest Night of the Year" and "My Heart Went Do Dat Da." The latter became a strong enough local hit that Atlantic approached McLaughlin with a distribution deal.

Lewis' second session occurred in July 1962, but it wasn't until her third go-round that things really began to happen. Her January 1963 session included three more Lewis originals: "Hello Stranger," "Think a Little Sugar," and "Puppy Love." The Dells were on hand to provide back-up vocals. You can hear them on "Hello Stranger" intoning, "Shoo-bop shoo-bop, my baby, ooo."

Atlantic was hesitant to release "Hello Stranger," thinking it sounded too much like the current hit, "Our Day Will Come" by Ruby & The Romantics. But the label relented and put the song out, whereupon it hit #1 on the *Billboard* Rhythm & Blues chart and #3 pop. "Think a Little Sugar" was the B-side, while "Puppy Love" (not the Paul Anka song) came out in December 1963, just cracking the pop top forty. (The flip side, "Snap Your Fingers," also charted.)

In January 1965, Lewis and McLaughlin stepped into the Atlantic studios in New York City for the first time to record three songs, including "Baby I'm Yours." Written by Van McCoy ("The Hustle," 1975) and boasting a lush string arrangement, the single shot to #5 on the R&B chart and #11 pop.

By now married and living in New York, Barbara Lewis continued to record and tour. In July 1965, she returned to the Atlantic studios to record "Make Me Your Baby" with producer Bert Berns. It had full orchestral accompaniment that perfectly augmented Lewis' aching, sweet-soul delivery. And it became her third-biggest hit.

By the time Ollie McLaughlin's distribution deal with Atlantic ended in 1968, Barbara Lewis had essentially been off the charts for two years. In 1969, McLaughlin got his charge signed to Stax Records. In Chicago, he produced fifteen tracks on Lewis. The result was an adventurous LP, "The Many Grooves of Barbara Lewis," and two additional singles, all released on Stax's Enterprise imprint. However, none of it was commercially successful.

By 1971, Barbara Lewis had returned to Michigan and quit the music business. She would, however, subsequently perform in "oldies" package shows featuring 1950s and '60s rock and roll acts.

In 1977, a remake of "Hello Stranger" by Yvonne Elliman got to #15 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. (By then, Lewis had fallen into such deep obscurity, her agent didn't know where to send the royalty check!) In 1985, Carrie Lucas' version reached #20 on the R&B chart. And in 2004, Queen Latifah recorded the song for "The Dana Owens Album."

In 1995, Lewis' 30-year-old recording of "Baby I'm Yours" was included in the film, "The Bridges of Madison County." In 1999, she received the Rhythm & Blues Foundation's prestigious Pioneer Award. And in 2016, Lewis was inducted into the Michigan Rock and Roll Legends Hall of Fame.

Health issues forced Barbara Lewis to retire from singing in 2017.

Rock critic Dave Marsh included both "Hello Stranger" and "Make Me Your Baby" in his 1989 book, "The Heart of Rock and Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made."



Charted singles:

"Hello Stranger" (1963) R&B #1 (2 weeks), Pop #3

"Straighten Up Your Heart" (1963) Pop #43

"If You Love Her" (1963) Pop #131

"Snap Your Fingers" (1963) R&B #21, Pop #71

"Puppy Love" (1964) R&B #14, Pop #38

"Spend a Little Time" (1964) R&B #26, Pop #119

"Someday We're Gonna Love Again" (1964) R&B #34, Pop #124

"Pushin' a Good Thing Too Far" (1964) R&B #47, Pop #113

"Baby I'm Yours" (1965) R&B #5, Pop #11

"Make Me Your Baby" (1965) R&B #9, Pop #11

"Don't Forget About Me" (1966) Pop #91

"Make Me Belong to You" (1966) R&B #30, Pop #28

"Baby, What Do You Want Me to Do?" (1966) Pop #74

"I'll Make Him Love Me" (1967) Pop #72

Other noteworthy Barbara Lewis recordings include "My Heart Went Do Dat Da," "Think a Little Sugar," "Someday We're Gonna Love Again," "Sho' Nuff (It's Got to Be Your Love)," and "Baby, That's a No-No."

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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Keeping the Faith

By Delia Berlin

I have been singing with the Windham Theatre Guild Broadway Chorus (WTGBC) for several seasons, but for the last two years, we were on hiatus. When we went into pandemic lockdown in 2020, we were nearing a dress rehearsal for two planned April performances. We had over 60 enthusiastic singers and, after three months of rehearsals, we were starting to sound great. I was looking forward to sharing the fun but, unfortunately, you already know what happened.



Lois Jungas, who served as an inspirational role model for Larry's directing style. If one had to describe his directing philosophy in just two words, they would be "sharing fun"—he believes that a community chorus is not bound to selecting the best voices, but to giving everyone an opportunity to make the best of their voice at the performance level they seek. The results are wonderful and the fun is definitely shared.

Ken Clark is instructor of piano at UConn and also very experienced as music director in similar performances there. It is amazing to witness how easily Larry and Ken communicate about intricate arrangement details during rehearsals. Larry uses his own artistic expression to modify many



Larry Goodwin (foreground) and Ken Clark at a recent WTGBC rehearsal.

Delia Berlin photo.

After the blur of the worst of the pandemic, our area is now experiencing a guarded return to normalcy. This past December our chorus presented a wonderfully successful Holiday Concert and, in January, rehearsals for our April 2022 performances resumed. Conditions have changed dramatically due to Covid protocols, but we have been able to recruit enough singers to create a full choral sound. Full vaccination status is required for all singers, we social distance at our rehearsals in the large St. Joseph Church Hall, and we are rehearsing masked. Amazingly, masks have very little impact on our singing pleasure or sound output. Although late April may present us with an opportunity to sing unmasked, whatever the rules may be at the time of the performances, we will follow them.

The WTGBC has been in existence for several decades. Historically, there have been several changes in leadership, membership, and direction, but one rule has remained constant: all program selections must be from Broadway musicals. In recent years, Larry Goodwin and Dan Pavone have co-directed most programs, but Larry is our director this year. We also are fortunate to have Ken Clark as our piano accompanist and Jill Goodwin as our organizational support assistant.

Larry and Jill Goodwin have been married for 55 years and you almost could say that they met singing. As children, they both sang for the same church choir in Ashford. Later, Larry sang and Jill played the organ at St. Margaret's Church in Scotland for 40 years. Singing has always been part of their lives.

An important singing venue for Larry has been the Travelers Chorale, which he joined in 1980. Started in 1926 (under a slightly different name), the Travelers Chorale is the oldest company-sponsored chorus in the United States. Comprised exclusively of Travelers employees and retirees, this chorus still performs twice a year at the Bushnell Theater in Hartford. It was one of the directors of this chorus,

of the arrangements that we sing, and Ken takes note and incorporates changes seemingly without effort.

Jill is a retired organizational support professional who generously lends her skills to benefit the WTGBC. She produces attendance sheets, name tags, rehearsal schedules, programs, evaluation forms, and CD covers, among other materials. Her quiet contributions run in the background but make a big difference for a smooth and efficient season.

To be fair, WTGBC productions are a team effort and many more players contribute to their success. Thanks to producers, additional accompanists, stage managers, sound and light technicians, set construction volunteers, and the kindnesses of so many who lend a hand here and there, the shows go on. We should be grateful for that because, to quote from one of the program's selections, "without a song or a dance, what are we?"

This season, we will be singing selections from four Broadway shows: *Porgy and Bess* (George Gershwin), *Movin' Out* (Billy Joel), *Mamma Mia!* (ABBA), and *Carousel* (Rodgers & Hammerstein). This year's concert is titled "Keeping the Faith" after one of the songs in the program. Given the state of the world at the moment, the title is appropriate, if not inspirational.

If you are interested in joining us for this year's concert, get ready to mark your calendar now. The size of the audience may be limited and this promises to be a joyful culmination of suspended work after two very difficult years. We will be performing on Friday, April 29, and Saturday, April 30, at 7:30 p.m., at the Burton Leavitt Theatre in Willimantic. Admission is \$13 for adults, \$11 for students and seniors, and \$8 for children under 12. For tickets, call 860-423-2245 or visit the theater's website (<https://www.windhamtheatreguild.org/>). Remaining tickets may also be purchased at the door before the performances. I look forward to seeing you there!

How I Lost My Marbles

By Robert Joy

My birthplace, Monongahela, Pennsylvania, is a small yet very historic city in the Southwestern part of the state just a few miles north of the West Virginia border. Our city was smack dab in the middle of the Allegheny Mountains which is part of Appalachia. Monongahela, known as Mon City by the locals, has at least 2 claims to fame: 1. as the hometown of football legend Joe Montana and 2.: as the site of the first incidence of civil disobedience in the new United States.

Back when the 13 colonies first became the United States, Mon City was then known as Parkinson's Ferry. It was where people, animals, and goods were ferried across the Monongahela River. Our town was well known for a Monongahela Rye, a very potent whiskey, made by the locals, which was used as currency in bartering for goods and services. When the new nation decided to tax Monongahela Rye, the locals didn't go for that at all. The first 3 revenuers were tarred and feathered and all the whiskey was hidden in a whiskey cave. President Washington decided to take the matter in hand. He led his troops across the state from Philadelphia, the U.S. capitol at the time. This was the only time a sitting president led his troops into conflict. It wasn't much of a conflict though. When the locals beheld George and his troops, they gave up without a fight. They gave up the whiskey, paid the tax, and the entire incident lasted about a day. It became known as The Whiskey Rebellion. It's historic as it was the first incidence of civil strife in the new nation and Monongahelans became known as a very stubborn lot.

I was born in Mon City on the seventh day of the seventh month of the forty-ninth year. My family made a big deal of this date as 7 times 7 equals 49. At the time of my birth there was Mom, Dad, and my two older brothers, Larry and John. Our family lived on Warne St. - spelled W-A-R-N-E. It was named after a local Civil War hero: Major John Warne. No one called it Warne St. though. We called it Major Holla or "Holla" as we pronounced it. A Holla is a dead-end road which runs in a valley between two large hills or small mountains. Major Holla began at Black Diamond Rd. (called Black Diamond because of all the coal mines) and proceeded in an upward slant to a dead-end at the top of the Holla.

All the houses were on the right side of the Holla. They were well spaced apart as most everyone had a yard where they grew vegetables, flowers, or both. There were a dozen houses. In them lived a dozen diverse families. There were Catholics, Jews, Pentacostals, Protestants, English, Russians, Italians, Germans, Polish, and White and Black families. It was like a little microcosm of the world. Our world. There were a lot of kids who got along well and played together every day from morning until sundown. We went to each other's homes; ate each other's ethnic foods and learned about each other's religions, customs, and traditions.

On the left side of the Holla, running the length of the uphill road was a smooth asphalt ditch. When it rained, the ditch would fill with rushing water like a flash flood. The water would flow from the top of the Holla to the bottom. It seems like it rained often back then. Strange as it seems now, a very common thing for a young boy to do was to sit in the ditch, wearing only his BVDs, letting the rushing water flow over him. It was a poor boy's way of having fun. It seems odd now but we boys did it often and it was a lot of fun!

Another common activity for boys was playing marbles. I was about five when my parents gave me and my brothers each

a bag of marbles. I played the game a few times. They'd draw a circle with chalk and the goal was to knock your opponent's marble out of the circle. If you were knocked out of the circle, your opponent would take your marble. I didn't like that at all. I wasn't very good at playing marbles. Actually, I thought it was a stupid, pointless game. So one afternoon, when no one was looking and it was starting to rain, I threw my marbles in the ditch. I thought, "Well that's the end of that".

The next day, a bunch of kids my age were hanging around listening to our friend Donnie. (His real name was Dominick, but his mother called him Donnie in order to differentiate from his dad, Dominick Sr. He was from a very religious Catholic family.) He told us he'd lost all his marbles yesterday in a game with a bunch of the older boys. He actually prayed he would get more marbles. Later he'd been sitting in the ditch at the bottom of the Holla, across from his house, enjoying the rainwater flood.

"And I turned around" Donnie excitedly told us, "and all these marbles came floating down the ditch! God sent them marbles! I just know it! God sent 'em!" All the kids oohed and aahed at the recounting of his little miracle.

I knew they were my marbles, but I never said a thing about it. In my childish innocence, I wondered: "Am I God?" No, but I started to realize that God works through people to answer others' prayers. Perhaps He was working through me to answer Donnie's prayer. This happened almost 70 years ago.

I left Monongahela at age 18 and moved to CT., but it would always remain part of my heart. It was my beginning; the home of my youth. I've returned often over the years: visiting my brothers, their children, and the graves of my parents and ancestors. A few years ago I ran into Donnie. For almost 50 years now, he has been known as Father Dominick Pietroboni. We had coffee and reminisced.

We talked about our childhood in the Holla and the games we played. We laughed over how we'd bathe in the rainwater ditch. We remembered the kids we knew; how everyone got along. We knew we'd been blessed to spend our childhood in that idyllic place where people from varied backgrounds got along so well; where neighbors cared about each other; looked out for each other, and dare I say, even loved each other. We both carried the Holla with us all our lives as I'm sure the other kids did too.

"Donnie, do you remember when God sent you the marbles in the ditch?" I asked.

"I sure do!" he replied. "I'll never forget it!"

"Neither will I Donnie," I said. "Neither will I."

This in an excerpt from Robert Joy's upcoming book: "Appreciating The Sky."

Joshua's Trust News

Submitted by Angelika Hansen

On Saturday, April 9 at 1:00 pm, join Peg Curtis and Debra Hultgren at Friedman Forest in Ashford. We will be searching for those elusive spring flowers beyond skunk cabbage and for the migrating birds as well as nesting ones.

Please, sign up at activities@joshuastrust.org

How to Calculate Your Net Worth and Why It Matters

By Laurence Hale, AAMA, CRPS®
Principal/Managing Partner,
Co-Founder, & Chief Investment
Officer



We hear a lot about net worth, but what exactly does net worth mean and why does it matter? Here's a look at what net worth is, how to calculate it and the important role it plays in your finances, your investment strategy, and your ability to reach your financial and life goals for the future.

What Does "Net Worth" Mean?

Net worth refers to all of your assets minus liabilities, or what you own minus what you owe. For example, if your house is worth \$1,000,000 and you have a \$500,000 mortgage, you own \$500,000 in equity.

How do you Calculate Net Worth?

To calculate your net worth, first, take an inventory of everything you own. Net worth generally includes cash, investments, property, vehicles and anything else you own. To get an accurate estimate for depreciating assets (such as cars), you may need to research how much they are currently worth. Remember, your net worth can include assets you are paying off (such as a home) because you will subtract what you owe.

Here are some things you should include when calculating your net worth (although this list isn't exhaustive):

- Cash, including checking accounts, savings accounts, CDs (certificates of deposit), and other cash
- Investments, including stocks, bonds, mutual funds, securities, treasury bills, bullion (silver, gold, etc.), and other investments
- Property, including real estate (market value), investment properties, vehicles, jewelry, art and collectibles, and other property
- Retirement funds, including retirement accounts (IRA, 401(K), pension plans, etc.), social security and any other retirement assets

Once you have an inventory of everything you own, subtract what you owe. Some examples of liabilities include auto loans, mortgages, credit card debt, consumer loans, student loans and unpaid taxes.

After subtracting your liabilities from your assets, you will have your net worth.

Net Worth, Financial Health and Your Life Goals

A lot of people talk about net worth as a part of your financial health and while it's an important part, it's

only one part of your overall financial picture. There are many caveats and considerations to take into account.

For example, net worth doesn't include your annual income, so someone with a high annual income but with higher expenses could have a lower net worth than someone with a lower annual income that invests in appreciating assets. Those focused on growing their net worth may consider investing in appreciating assets and lowering their debt and liabilities.

In addition, net worth may have implications on your taxes. Your tax bracket may be determined by your annual income, but those brackets don't necessarily include net worth. So if you are a high-income earner, and have a high debt-to-income ratio, and are in one of the highest marginal rate tax brackets, you may accumulate net worth much lower than someone who makes less money annually, but has less debt, more appreciating assets and is in a lower tax bracket.

When working with our clients, we consider net worth as one important component of financial health, but we also consider lifestyle and what is impacting whether or not you are accumulating wealth. As part of our strategic Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well financial planning process, we'll also look at your investable assets, which is the amount of money you have ready to invest. Net worth can be tied up in property or other investments and may not be liquid enough to invest, so it's important to build your financial strategy on a thoroughly researched foundation that considers every aspect of your current finances in relation to your future goals.

We can help you to build a strategy that will leverage your current net worth and overall financial picture to help you achieve your goals. Learn more at our website, www.whzwealth.com, and contact us at (860) 928-2341 or info@whzwealth.com to get started.

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1 <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-provides-tax-inflation-adjustments-for-tax-year-2022>

"A Slice of Life" is Coming!

Submitted by Bev York, Windham Arts

A new event is coming to town. "ASlice of Life: A Day in 1822:" "Experience living history and enjoy fine dining in the Windham Area" will take place on Saturday, April 30.

Visitors will travel to three historic sites in town: Town Hall, Jillson House Museum and the Windham Center Green. The Windham Town Hall will feature a town meeting from 200 years ago and building tours. The Jillson House Museum will present housekeeping tasks such as hearth cooking, candle dipping, laundry, spinning, and more. Visitors will be able to make their own herbal teas and try their hand at playing dulcimer. The Windham Center Green will showcase village businesses including the doctor's office, church and stories of the Windham Inn. Visitors will meet the doctor and may participate in an early 19th c. wedding ceremony. The Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum

will present transportation before the railroads arrived in 1849. More activities are being planned. Local eateries may offer a special historic entrée or discount. Save the date to make "A Slice of Life" your destination.

The sites will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and a schedule of special events will be available one week before the event. This event, perfect for families, will take place both inside buildings and out-of-doors. Tickets are \$10 for adults and free for children under 18. Tickets can be purchased at WindhamChamber.com and at all three sites during the event. For more information call 860-423-6389 or 860-423-1878. People wishing to role play and volunteer are welcome. One important part of the event that takes place at a day in history is to meet costumed characters portraying people from the time period. Anyone who likes role playing is encouraged call and get involved.

The events are planned by

the Windham Regional Partnership for Arts and Culture, Windham Arts, and the Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Participating historic organizations are The America Museum, Eastern CT Railroad Museum, Windham Historical Society, Town of Windham, Arts & Entertainment Commission, Windham Preservation, Inc., and the Dr. Chester Hunt Museum.

Other Slice of Life events will be:

Saturday, June 4, "The Gilded Age: A Day in 1872" (Festival of architecture, fashion, crafts and tasks demonstrations, interpreters);

Saturday, September 3, "A Day in 1972: Hey Man, Nice Threads! (50 Years Ago)" (Labor Day Weekend);

Saturday, October 22, "Haunting and Historical Things "(in 19th century Windham Area)

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Down Memory Lane

By David Corsini

I have an address book that I have kept for many years. Recently, I was paging through this book and the names sparked memories of days gone by. The entries were made over different periods of my life and entered into the book for various reasons. What follows is an attempt to bring some order to the hodgepodge of names and memories to provide verbal snapshots of my life.

I graduated from high school in Westwood, Massachusetts, in 1957, went to Bowdoin College for a BA and to the University of Minnesota for a Ph.D. My first job was at the University of Georgia and my final job was at the University of Connecticut. Some entries in my address book are of people from those stages.

I found only three entries of classmates from high school. One was a guy with whom I played sports and explored local woods and ponds looking for snakes, turtles, and other wildlife. His name brought back thoughts of the painted, spotted, snapping, and musk turtles I kept as “pets.” I didn’t know any better at the time and seek forgiveness from the reptilian spirits. Also, I thought of my pet de-scented skunk I had obtained by mail order. In retrospect, a skunk was not the most practical pet. And then there was the northern banded water snake that had a litter of thirty-three babies on my front lawn. Some snakes lay eggs while others give birth to live babies. Clearly my interest in engaging with the natural world began early.

Two of the entries were for friends I reconnected with at my twenty-fifth high school reunion. One guy had dated my sister in high school and had become friendly with my mother. After high school he became a clergyman and came out as gay. Subsequent to the reunion, he came to have dinner with my aging mother and me. The dinner was quite pleasant and a tentative visit to his home was planned. But it never happened.

The third classmate, who was probably the smartest member of our class, was significant to me as the person who, at a youth fellowship meeting, asked me if I believed in God. Before that question, I don’t think I realized that disbelief was an option. After graduation he moved to California and was shot in a dispute with a neighbor, resulting in significant physical and cognitive limitations. At the reunion I bought him a beer.

There are five entries for friends from my time at Bowdoin College. For the last two years of college, I lived off campus in an attic room. One entry is from my friend who lived outside my room—in the attic, per se. He and his long-term partner, and then husband, were very active in the arts. I maintained periodic contact by letter over the years and the couple visited Delia and me one time in Windham Center.

The Van Gogh painting Bedroom in Arles reminds me of my attic room. I have fond memories of that room as the place for sleepovers with my girlfriend and the habitat for my pet squirrel. This single room in the attic was the perfect place for someone like me with more than a touch of ADD.

Another entry was for a sophomore-year roommate and fraternity brother with whom I maintained periodic contact after college. When I discovered he had developed an interest in birdwatching, I visited him in New York for a bird adventure to Jamaica Bay—a good spot for shorebirds. Then, with his wife, we went on a Connecticut Audubon Society birding trip to Trinidad, where we spotted several species of trogon, many species of hummingbirds, and raptors that were new to me. Subsequently, he moved to Arizona where I visited him for other birding adventures. He died of alcohol-related issues.

A third entry is for a married couple who I first knew at Bowdoin as a dating couple. I went to their wedding and I visited with them several times over the years. Delia and I have recently reconnected with them for visits to our home, the Tower Hill Botanic Garden, their home in Boston, and Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts.

Many of the entries in the address book have to do with my mother. My mother managed to live in the home where I grew up until she was 97. When she was about 90, we hired a woman who took her shopping, did cooking, and drove her to hairdresser appointments. When my mother moved into assisted living, this woman subsequently became one of a team of caregivers who took care of one of my aunts, who stayed in her home until the age of 104. This woman became a family friend and we still share holiday greeting notes.

A second woman also became a caregiver while my mother was at home. She then continued to visit her on a weekly basis for five more years as my mother moved into assisted living and then on to a nursing home. I also maintain occasional contact with this woman even though my mother died in 2014. During the years when my mother

needed help, we occasionally had the help of workers from agencies. These people almost never worked out well. The women from the local community were a good fit for my mother and became family friends.

And in the book I found the phone number of my mother’s neighbor who looked out for her during her later years at home. It was when my mother started to experience hallucinations and called this neighbor for help in the middle of the night that my sister and I realized the time had come for a move to assisted living. It is nice when neighbors help out the elderly, but there are limits of what to expect from neighbors.

One entry is for a very unique character: Chester. Chester attended school with my sister and me and stayed in town doing yardwork and odd jobs. He did yardwork for my mother over the years and was the kind of person that was more than just a hired worker. In the last few years when my mother was at home and I was visiting, Chester would see my car and stop to chat. His entrance was loud and flamboyant, with a “How’s everyone doing?” He would then ramble on with lots of town gossip. His specialty was his coterie of old ladies. He talked fast with lots of laughter and then he was gone. I enjoyed his visits but my mother was somewhere between annoyed and amused by them.

Chester offered to be of assistance any time of day or night and did help my mother out, without pay, in several emergency situations. When it came time for my mother to stop driving, Chester quickly found someone to buy her car. It was difficult to get personal information from him. But one time he told me that he was Catholic but did lots of volunteer work for the local Baptist church, “just in case.” He wanted to hedge his bets in the afterlife.

There are three friends listed in my book from my days at the University of Minnesota: two fellow students and my faculty advisor. Memories of one friend go back to before his wedding in Minneapolis in 1967. After graduation he taught at the University of Pittsburg and then the University of Houston. Each summer he rented a cottage on Cape Cod. I visited him and his family many times with my first family and then my second family. There are many memories of swimming, clamming, fishing, lobster feasts, and poker on the porch. There were several cottages involved but the first cottage I still remember as having the worst bed imaginable. Was that the origin of my back issues?

When this friend moved to Houston, Texas, I visited him for several years in April for the spring bird migration. He wasn’t into birding so I went birding alone. I left his house before dawn to the calls of a poorwill—a bird similar to a whippoorwill. The drive to Galveston was easy but I had to endure many unpleasant smells and sights of the petrochemical industry along the way. In Galveston I would catch the ferry to Bolivar Peninsula and stop at Bolivar Flats for shorebirds and then on to High Island. This is a famous spot for spring migrants. In addition to the excitement of spotting spring migrants, there was a fantastic heron rookery with many types of herons, egrets, and spoonbills all in spring plumage and nesting. The squawking and nesting chaos was thrilling. Years ago this friend also died of alcohol-related issues.

The other friend from graduate school took faculty positions at Iowa and then the University of Hawaii. I saw him only at conventions. But it turned out he had relatives in Manchester, Connecticut, and when he visited them, he and his wife were able to visit us in Windham. Since his recent retirement, he has begun to make assemblages and we share our creative work via the internet. I regret to say that I never managed to visit him in Hawaii.

Another bond between this friend and me was our mutual friendship with my major advisor, who recently died at 92. We both saw him at conventions and each of us maintained phone contact with him. I am not sure why this professor developed an attachment to me and my Hawaiian friend. I think it had something to do with similar world-views and our senses of humor.

One time he visited Delia and me in Windham Center, where I showed him my assemblages and piles of rusty metal. He understood about collecting, for he collected rocks. Later he sent me some metal pieces he had found and I sent him one of my imaginary animals made from a cow bone. He also sent me self-published books of his poems. After his death, his wife called both my friend and me to tell us how much our phone calls had meant to him in his later years. It is important to maintain contact with elderly friends.

There are still many names in my book with associated memories that I plan to share in another essay. While it is usually not productive to focus on the past, perhaps at this time it provides some relief from our present quandaries and uncertain future.

The Pull of Magnet Fishing

By Bob Lorentson

I believe I was about twelve when I lost interest in fishing, and it wasn’t because it had become apparent by then that fish didn’t have much interest in me either. I think they could tell I wasn’t a fish person. But in a world that at times seemed shoulder to shoulder with fish people, it’s not like they didn’t have choices. So did I, after I first realized that whenever I did catch something, it was always just a fish. And let’s be honest here, a fish is about as exciting as a bologna sandwich. And when you yank them out of the water, they’re even less exciting, and not at all appreciative. In fact, often times they just flopped around a bit and died. Feeling sad, I would try and throw them back quickly, along with my bologna sandwich as my way of apologizing. Thinking back on it, I might have killed more fish that way than I did fishing.

Anyway, I recently learned that fishing doesn’t have to be so boring. And, thank goodness, it doesn’t even have to involve either fish or bologna sandwiches. That’s because of Magnet Fishing, the new sport that essentially takes metal detecting on land to the watery depths in which it belongs. All you need are a strong magnet, a strong line, and an equally strong constitution, because all you will attract at first is ridicule. But when you start pulling up coins, cash boxes, jewelry, and valuable antiques, it won’t take long for fishermen to look at you the way Colonel Parker used to look at Elvis Presley, or Colonel Sanders used to look at chicken and cholesterol. Fish will have to go back to looking at each other, and something tells me they’re not excited about the prospect. How they manage to reproduce is beyond me. I expect either they have stronger constitutions or lower standards than I realized.

If you’re anything like me, I will deny any participation in human cloning trials. Also, you probably didn’t know that magnet technology and utilization had come so far. Thanks to advances in modern magnetization, you can now store far more photos of your dog on your computer than you will ever fit on your refrigerator. And thanks to the wonders of neodymium, you can even throw away the photos and attach the dog itself to the refrigerator if you wish. It does tend to make more of a statement to your kids that way.

Neodymium is a rare earth element, which, when combined with certain other metals, produces a magnet with exceptionally high uniaxial magnetocrystalline anisotropy. I’m sure you’ll agree that is a mighty strong statement, capable of making your heart stop, head hurt, or ears ring. Well, the magnet itself can do all that and more, especially if you have a pacemaker, metal plate in your head, or hearing aid. A neodymium magnet can weigh under two pounds yet have a pull strength of anywhere from 200 to well over 1,000 pounds. Even for those without health concerns, a magnet this strong can be a lot for a beginner to handle, as many find out after getting one stuck to their car, a bridge railing, or the badge of the law enforcement officer who has come to check out your catch.

In the interests of public health and safety, it should be noted that law enforcement has taken a sudden interest in magnet fishing. So have criminals, which, unlike neodymium, are not such rare earth elements. The reason is because it is not uncommon for magnet fishers to pull up guns, knives, bullets, handcuffs, safes, and other evidence hurriedly tossed after a crime. DO NOT, I repeat, DO NOT put your fingerprints on them, or the next metal objects you see will be your cell bars. Even this, however, can’t match the explosive excitement of pulling up hand grenades, mortar rounds, or other ordinance on which fingerprints, or fingers, won’t much matter.

To me, the possibility of finding sunken treasure has far more appeal than finding a fish. There is mystery, excitement, and a touch of danger in magnet fishing that fish will never be able to match. There is also the added benefit of removing environmentally harmful objects from the water, an act which might make fish more inclined to skip the hooks and spend more quality time in their natural settings. On top of that, it is always magnet fishing season, as waterways are stocked with weapons and other metallic objects year round. If you are a beginner however, just remember that it is easy to go overboard with magnet fishing, especially if you are sporting any metal when you toss your line in.

SAVE CONNECTICUT FARMLAND



Rural Towns Targeted for Large Scale Indoor Plant Factories

Most Controlled Environment Agriculture “CEA” facilities in New England sensibly occupy urban, industrial land and “brownfields” sites.

But new plans that turn farmland into buildings and parking lots have become controversial.

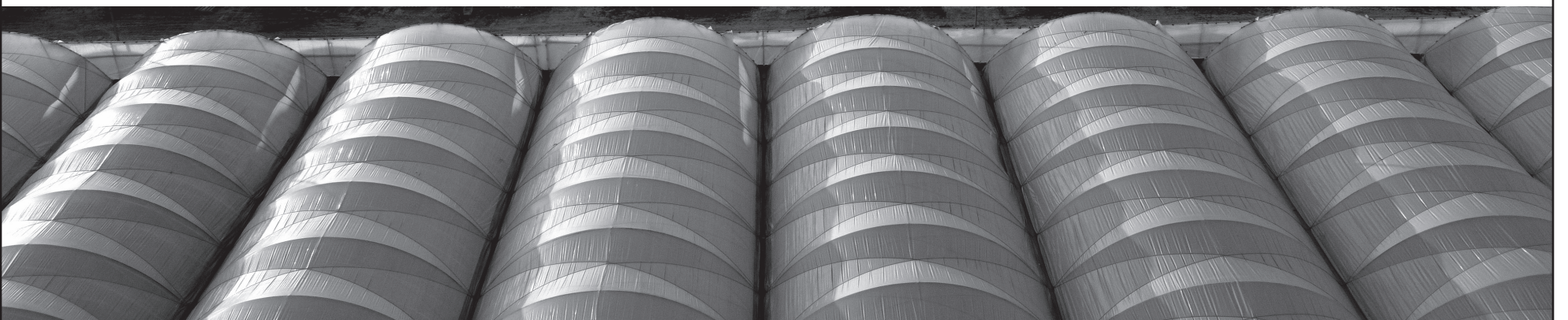
TAKE ACTION

Support special permit requirements to allow for commission and resident input on how this development will impact your town

Farmland preservation has no voice, except for the voices of those who support it



An aerial view of a large indoor plant factory on once tillable fields. Credit: iStock.com/panophotograph



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Part Two: Shetucket River to the Sea

Rivers of the Coastal Lowland

By Brian Karlsson Barnes

The *Last Green Valley (LGV)* is darkest in its forested northern tier, the *last dark valleys* of the **Natchaug**, **Willimantic** and **Quinebaug Rivers** (visited last issue). More people and their bright lights gravitate to the coast. I understand.

BEACH DAYS Moving from Minneapolis to Boston two decades ago, I was smitten with beaches... sunny days at Nantasket Beach, summer weekends along US Highway 6/6a on the Cape... where sunlight is iridescent.

No place on the Connecticut shore is quite like Provincetown, but I was “*good in the woods*”, so here I am. Painted Chaplin farmhouse a bright blue, brilliant in sunlight. As in P-town, any sunny day is a beach day.

Thinking of beach days in early March as war rages in Ukraine with a crazy man in Russia... *How lucky I am !!!* Hoping summer comes, not nuclear winter, when warmer thoughts prevail. I imagine the south shore of Mamacoke Island, submarine passing, sun in my face, pondering... *What is a river, really?*

WHAT IS A RIVER? Rivers were perceived differently by European newcomers and the American Indians, *Algonquin people* who spoke the *Algonkian* language in many different dialects throughout Connecticut (“*Land on the long tidal river*”). *Algonquins* lived in Canada’s Ottawa Valley for 8,000 years before Europeans arrived, and many tribes had spread throughout New England.

EUROPEAN RIVERS are often highways or boundaries, and viewed as one continuous watercourse from source to sea. Colonists could also mistake meaning, assuming Indians referred to the **Natchaug** and **Shetucket Rivers** instead of their uplands beyond. The newcomers garbled pronunciation of the many dialects, and didn’t understand subtle ecosystems.

My *Swedish-American* sense of rivers as highways respects ecological differences from headwaters to ponds, rivers and estuaries. I’ve learned spiritual notions of continuity and connection that see every part of a river as sacred, every ecosystem to be protected. Many 21st century colonists still don’t get ecology, the branch of biology that deals with all living things and their interrelationships. Everything is connected in the Web of Life.

By nature *and* nurture, they can learn. I did.

LGV RIVERS have many native names that vary with ecosystems and dialects. Waterfalls were boundaries for Native Americans; upper and lower rivers could be different ecosystems, discontinuous. They did not conceive of waterpower for profit (and pollution), and could not have imagined a nuclear submarine in the **Great River of the Pequot**, but their riparian sense was very smart.

Brilliant ecologists, Indians viewed ecosystems as differing sources of food and clean water. They saw the broader uplands as another ecosystem, distinct from freshwater rivers and estuaries. The upland “*in-between lands*”, the headwaters and highlands, had different natural resources – plants and animals, rocks and agricultural soils – than riverbanks or the seacoast. Natives also viewed a freshwater river as a “long pond” (*Quinebaug’s* meaning) since ponds and small rivers have similar aquatic plants and animals. Near the ocean is another ecosystem, the **Thames Estuary**. This coastal zone served seaside *Mohegan/Pequot* fisher folk; *Nipmuc* farmers were upland to the north.

Few Connecticut river names refer to canoe routes as in northern New England, because there weren’t as many large whitebarked birches (Canoe / Paper Birch, *Betula papyrifera*, which likes colder winters). Local tribes lacked lightweight birchbark canoes. Heavier dugout canoes were hard to portage, so canoe routes were not common. (Gray Birch, *Betula populifolia*, is native here, but a smaller tree.) Now the lowland rivers offer terrific paddling with

lighter watercraft.

Weather people talk about Eastern Connecticut’s *Highlands* north of Willimantic and Highway 6, different weather at higher in elevation. There is often more snow at the UCONN campus in Storrs, than in Willimantic or Mansfield Hollow or my Chaplin garden close to the **Natchaug** -- all on the *fall line*, a narrow zone between snowier upland weather from Union east through Woodstock, and the mild-



3.28.22 The Shetucket River, looking south from the Windham Center Road (Rt. 203) bridge in South Windham. Tom King photo.

er coastal weather south of Windham to New London. Life on the edge is always interesting.

COASTAL LOWLAND? South of US Highway 6 is lower in elevation with more development and people. The continuing **Quinebaug** and **Shetucket Rivers** are less powerful in vertical drop, but more flowing water, beautiful and fishy. Farther south, Route 2 (Norwich-to-Hartford Turnpike) divides the shore from inland towns, but coastal weather extends north to Highway 6, a better demarcation of highland and lowland.

OR COASTAL PLAIN? Geographers don’t use the term “*Coastal Plain*” for the Connecticut shore, I am advised, because Long Island blocks the open **Atlantic Ocean**: “*We do not technically have ‘coastal plains’ open to the ocean...and that is one of the definitions, to be on the coast and open to the ocean...and we are not.*” I credit the genius of the US Navy to maneuver submarines in the **Thames Tidal Basin** when New London is not technically open to the ocean.

Whatever definition, gardeners welcome the coastal buffering of temperature that shelters tender plants, extending some 15 miles inland from **Long Island Sound**.

SHETUCKET RIVER

The confluence of the **Willimantic** and **Natchaug Rivers** in Windham creates the **Shetucket River** flowing south toward Norwich, a 20-mile tributary to the **Thames River**. Tributaries include **Little River** and the **Quinebaug River** near Norwich; **Moosup** and **Pachaug Rivers** are upriver Quinebaug tributaries south of Highway 6.

The **Shetucket** replaces the **Quinebaug** at **Quinebaug Falls** south of Taftville, and continues into downtown Norwich. It merges with the **Yantic River** at the beginning of the **Thames River Estuary** on the south side of Norwich. Confused?

“**Shetucket**” is an *Algonkian* word for “*Land between the rivers*”, dialect unknown, but similar to “**Natchaug**” that derives from the *Mohegan-Pequot* dialect for “*In-between land*” that may have been the upland area between the **Fenton** and **Natchaug Rivers**. “**Shetucket**” may have meant the lowland area between the present-day **Shetucket** and **Yantic Rivers**. Confuses me.

The **Shetucket** is perhaps the best salmon fishing river in New England, designated a *Connecticut Greenway* and a *National Recreational Trail* (see *The Last Green Val-*

ley website). Paddle the lower **Natchaug River** from Mansfield Hollow Dam or *Lauter Park* off Storrs Road/195 in Willimantic, becoming the **Shetucket** flowing to **Chelsea Landing** in Norwich.

YANTIC RIVER

The “*Frantic Yantic*” is a volatile coastal river of 14 miles, a whiteknuckle whitewater paddling adventure that begins in Lebanon at the confluence of **Exeter** and **Sherman Brooks** and **Deep River**, a deep brook. *Uncas’ Leap* at treacherous **Yantic Falls** is a story of *Mohegan* vs *Narragansett* tribal clash in 1643. The **Yantic** flows to Norwich, meeting the **Shetucket River** to become the head of the **Thames River** estuary.

“*Yantic*” means “*where fresh water flows into the estuary.*”

NORWICH Founded in 1659, this historic seaport had steamboats landing at wharves by the early 1800s, freight and passengers transferring to the *Norwich & Worcester Railroad* by 1840. Raw cotton and wool were shipped to regional mills, and cloth shipped back. The **Yantic** and **Shetucket Rivers** powered local textile factories by the mid-1800s as Norwich became the manufacturing, commercial and transportation hub of the region. *Howard Brown Memorial Park* overlooks the ocean-navigable **Chelsea Landing** marina where the **Thames River** begins its flow to **Long Island Sound**.

THAMES RIVER

This short, wide river formed at the merging of **Shetucket** and **Yantic Rivers** is actually a long tidal estuary with different birds, fish and shellfish. From **Chelsea Landing**, it crosses some 13 miles of flat, low-lying land, yet another ecosystem by the ocean.

First called the **Pequot River** (an Anglicism, not native name) for the residing *Algonquin* tribe; renamed by the first English settlers conferring both **Thames River** and the town name.

NEW LONDON First called *Nameaug* by the *Pequot* but renamed by the first English settlement in 1646, New London was burned in 1781 by Brits retaliating for damage caused by Revolutionary “privateers” sheltered in the port’s deepwater harbor. The city was rebuilt as one of the world’s busiest whaling ports by the early 19th century. Across the river, Groton Naval Base docks submarines.



Mamacoke Island, New London. Mark Mathew Braunstein photo.

The mild coastal climate still shelters plants. *Connecticut College Arboretum* is a horticultural treasure of native and exotic plants, with the *Mamacoke* conservation area, a **Thames tidal island** separated during high tides, with *gneiss* (ancient metamorphic) walls that attract climbers, and a tiny beach! The sugar sand of **Ocean Beach** serves a Norwich-New London metro area of over a quarter-million people. Connecticut needs more public beach. *More Beach Days!*

IF YOU GPS Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic, opposite *Garden on the Bridge*, near **Willimantic / Natchaug** confluence becoming the **Shetucket River** followed by Route 32 into Norwich-New London. *Uncas’ Leap* at **Yantic Falls**, 232 Yantic Street, Norwich. **Mamacoke Island** with short walk from parking near 44 Benham Avenue, Quaker Hill. **Ocean Beach**, 98 Neptune Avenue, New London.

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



New Eagle Scouts and best of friends: Micah Mlyniec, Matthew Gailey, Sam Nunn, and Genevieve Rondeau (left-right). Photo by Heather Nunn.

New Eagle Scouts to be Recognized

Submitted by Michelle Mlyniec

BSA Troop 1093 for Girls and BSA Troop 93 for Boys, sponsored by the Hampton Congregational Church, will hold an Eagle Court of Honor Ceremony on Sunday, April 10th at the JN Webster Scout Reservation at 231 Ashford Center Rd, Ashford, CT 06278. The ceremony will be held at 2:30 in the main dining hall lodge.

We will be recognizing four new Eagle Scouts: Samuel Nunn and Matthew Gailey of Scotland and Micah Mlyniec and Genevieve Rondeau of Hampton. This is an exceptionally robust Eagle class for our small Troop. Moreover, Genevieve Rondeau is the first Eagle Scout for Troop 1093 which formed in 2019 when BSA expanded to allow Troops for girls – She is just the second girl in our Scout district spanning all of Northeastern Connecticut to obtain this rank.

Approximately 4 percent of all BSA Scouts will attain the rank of Eagle. Each Eagle Scout must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges, show leadership, and successfully complete a community or church related service project to complete their Eagle Scout requirements.

Matthew Gailey led the construction of two picnic tables and the woods clean-up for the creation of a new picnic area at the Rock Spring Nature Preserve on Route 97 in Scotland. A senior at Parish Hill High School, he has served as Senior Patrol Leader. He has been active in the Bowling, Cross Country, and Soccer Teams. In addition to the Rank of Eagle, Matthew has earned a Bronze and a Gold Palm for ten Merit Badges completed above and beyond the Eagle requirements. Matthew is the son of Joann and Walter “Sam” Gailey and plans to study computer science.

Micah Mlyniec organized the design and construction of 8 picnic tables for the Hampton Town Hall pavilion on Route 97 in Hampton. A senior at Norwich Free Academy, he has served as a Den Chief and Assistant

Senior Patrol Leader. A member of the Cross Country, Swimming, Indoor Track, and Outdoor Track teams, he works as a swim instructor and lifeguard. In addition to the Rank of Eagle, Micah has earned a Bronze Palm for seven Merit Badges completed above and beyond the Eagle requirements. Micah is the son of Michelle and Martin Mlyniec and plans to study aerospace engineering.

Samuel Nunn chose to organize and direct the reconstruction of a stone wall at the Rock Spring Nature Preserve on Route 97 in Scotland. A senior at Ellis Technical High School studying Carpentry, he has served as a Den Chief and Senior Patrol Leader. In addition to the Rank of Eagle, Sam has earned a Bronze, Silver, and a Gold Palm for fifteen Merit Badges completed above and beyond the Eagle requirements. One to never sit still, Sam works at a variety of handy jobs. Samuel is the son of Heather and Nat Nunn and plans to study criminology.

Genevieve Rondeau planned and organized the construction of 10 picnic tables for the 4H Camp in Pomfret, where she has been a member. A freshman at Eastern Connecticut State University studying Environmental Earth Science, she has served as a Den Chief and Senior Patrol Leader. One of the founding members of Troop 1093, Genevieve earned 23 Merit Badges in just 2 ½ years, making the most of her time in with Scouting. During her years at Lyman Memorial High School, she was active with the Future Farmers of America, competing in the national convention in 2018. Genevieve is the daughter of Heidi and Robert Rondeau.

CONTACTS: The Chair of the Troop Committees is Scott Garafano, Sr. (swgarfano@gmail.com 860.933.0103). The Scoutmaster for Troop 1093 is Michelle Mlyniec (mmlmlyniec@gmail.com 860.465.7344). The Scoutmaster for Troop 93 is Walter “Sam” Gailey (sgailey@outlook.com 860.234.7081).



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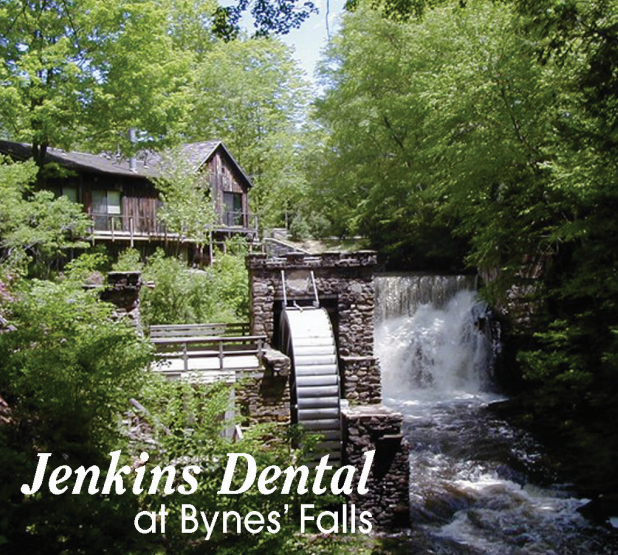
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Community Media and Regional Arts

By John Murphy

Happy Spring everyone, I hope you made it through the winter in good shape and that you are keeping the faith for a better year ahead for all of us. We are not done with Covid 19 yet, but that worm is turning!

1. Local media update—new network under construction:

I am pleased to report that progress continues with the creation of a new independent media ecosystem for public service in our region. This effort to produce and share local stories on radio, TV and print with direct links to social media channels and YouTube has been covered in *Neighbors* for the past year. I invite you to check the archive for past columns with history and details. The website is www.neighborspaper.com.

The current plan is for a formal launch of this network in May, combined with the return of the *On the Homefront* TV series that aired for over 20 years on Spectrum Public Access TV Channel 192 (750 episodes!). This renewed TV program, which will be produced live at WILI Radio, will provide the central hub for all media activity. Thanks to Colin Rice at WILI and Mike Sweet at Spectrum Cable TV for their support.

2. Arts economy update—critical information for post-Covid recovery and restoration:

I recently attended the 2022 *National Arts Action Summit*, presented by Americans for the Arts. Many advocates explored a depth of knowledge from policy experts and field leaders. Current arts data and policy were reviewed, including how to effectively engage decision-makers to support the arts, arts education, and much more! It was an excellent gathering and I want to share what I learned with you.

The material below is provided with permission by AmericansForTheArts.org. It gives an interesting and useful summary of reasons for supporting the arts and includes powerful statements about personal experiences and social values for the arts.

Top 10 Reasons to Support the Arts in 2022

The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They ennoble and inspire us—fostering creativity, empathy, and beauty. The arts also strengthen our communities socially, educationally, and economically—benefits that persist even during a pandemic that has been devastating to the arts. The following 10 reasons show why an investment in artists, creative workers, and arts organizations is vital to the nation's post-pandemic healing and recovery.

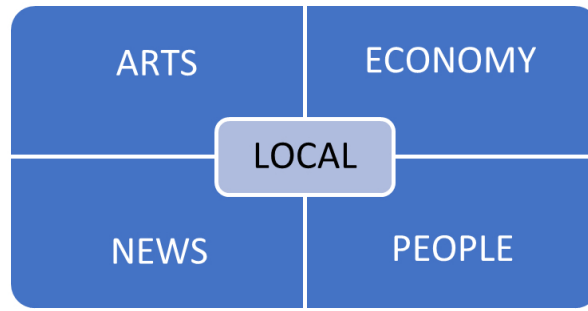
1. **Arts unify communities.** 72% of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 73% agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better”—a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories.

2. **Arts improve individual well-being.** 81% of the population says the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world,” 69% of the population believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences,” and 73% feel the arts give them “pure pleasure to experience and participate in.”

3. **Arts strengthen the economy.** The nation's arts and culture sector—nonprofit, commercial, education—is an \$876.7 billion industry that supports 4.6 million jobs (2020). That is 4.2% of the nation's economy—a larger share of GDP than powerhouse sectors such as agriculture, transportation, and utilities. The arts boast a \$33 billion international trade surplus (2019). The arts accelerate economic recovery: a growth in arts employment has a positive and causal effect on overall employment.

4. **Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses.** The nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$166.3 billion in economic activity annually—spending by organizations and their audiences—which supports 4.6 million jobs and generates \$27.5 billion in government revenue. Arts attendees spend \$31.47 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and lodging—vital income for local businesses. Arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more to seek out authentic culture experiences.

5. **Arts improve academic performance.** Students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs, standardized



test scores, and college-going rates as well as lower drop-out rates. These academic benefits are reaped by students across all socioeconomic strata. Yet the Department of Education reports that access to arts education for students of color is significantly lower than for their white peers. 91% of Americans believe that arts are part of a well-rounded K-12 education.

6. **Arts spark creativity and innovation.** Creativity is among the top five applied skills sought by business leaders—per the Conference Board's Ready to Innovate report—with 72% saying creativity is of “high importance” when hiring. Research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are 17 times more likely to be actively engaged as an arts maker than other scientists.

7. **Arts have social impact.** University of Pennsylvania researchers have demonstrated that a high concentration of the arts in a city leads to higher civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates.

8. **Arts improve healthcare.** Nearly one-half of the nation's healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff. 78% deliver these programs because of their healing benefits to patients—shorter hospital stays, better pain management, and less medication.

9. **Arts for the health and well-being of our military.** The arts heal the mental, physical, and moral injuries of war for military servicemembers and Veterans, who rank the creative arts therapies in the top four (out of 40) interventions and treatments. Across the military continuum, the arts promote resilience during pre-deployment, deployment, and the reintegration of military servicemembers, Veterans, their families, and caregivers into communities.

10. **Arts Strengthen Mental Health.** The arts are an effective resource in reducing depression and anxiety and increasing life satisfaction. Just 30 minutes of active arts activities daily can combat the ill effects of isolation and loneliness associated with COVID-19.

What Americans Say About the Arts

Americans are highly engaged in the arts and believe more strongly than ever that the arts promote personal well-being, help us understand other cultures in our community, are essential to a well-rounded K-12 education, and that government has an important role in funding the arts. (Data from Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2018. *)

1. **“The arts provide meaning to our lives.”** 69% of Americans believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences,” 73% feel the arts give them “pure pleasure to experience and participate in,” and 81% say the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world.”

2. **“The arts unify our communities.”** The personal benefits of the arts extend beyond the individual to the community. 72% believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 73% agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better.”

3. **“Most of us seek out arts experiences.”** Nearly three-quarters of the adult population (72%) attended an arts or culture event during the previous year, such as the theater, museum, zoo, or a musical performance.

4. **“We experience the arts in unexpected places.”** Americans also enjoy the arts in “non-traditional” venues, such as a symphony in the park, a performance in an airport, or exhibitions in a hospital or shopping mall (70%).

5. **“There is near universal support for arts education.”** 91% agree that the arts are part of a well-rounded K-12

education. Over 90% say students should receive an education in the arts in elementary school, middle school, and high school. 89% say the arts should also be taught outside of the classroom in the community.

6. **“We support government arts funding at all levels.”** Most Americans approve of arts funding by local government (60%), state government (58%), federal government (54%), and by the National Endowment for the Arts (64%).

7. **“We will vote for candidates who increase arts funding.”** 53% support increasing federal government spending on nonprofit arts organizations (vs. 22% against). Americans are twice as likely to vote for a candidate who increases federal arts spending from 45 cents to \$1 per person than against one (37% vs. 18%).

8. **“We make art in our personal time.”** Half of all Americans are personally involved in art-making activities such as painting, singing in a choir, making crafts, writing poetry, or playing music (47%).

9. **“Creativity boosts job success.”** 55% of employed adults say their job requires them to “be creative and come up with ideas that are new and unique.” An even greater proportion (60%) say that the more creative and innovative they are at their job, the more successful they are in the workplace.

10. **“Cultural institutions add value to our community.”** Whether people engage with the arts or not, 90% believe cultural facilities (theaters, museums, sculpture parks, neighborhood arts centers) improve quality of life, and 86% believe cultural facilities are important to local business and the economy.

11. **“We donate to the arts.”** 24% of the population donated to an arts, culture, or public broadcasting organization in the previous year. Donors were typically younger and had higher incomes and education.

12. **“Not everyone in my community has equal access to the arts.”** Despite many benefits that the arts bring to individuals and communities, just 50% believe that “everyone in their community has equal access to the arts.”

**Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2018*, conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs for Americans for the Arts in 2018, is based on a nationally representative sample of 3,023 adults. For more information and resources go to: www.americansforthearts.org and facebook.com/americans4arts.

I hope you find this information useful and encouraging, I do! Please remember the incredible investments in our community that were already made and were in process when Covid-19 hit us over two years ago. It has been a horrible slog for all of us, and the temptation for despair and defeatism was and remains strong. But it is finally time to stop that stuff, emerge from our caves and re-engage the Life we treasure in the Quiet Corner.

Thanks for reading *Neighbors*, please let others know about this great resource. Keep the faith!

john@humanartsmedia.com (use this to be a guest anytime)
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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Please thank and patronize our advertisers for making the Neighbors paper possible. Thank you. T. King, Publisher

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:

Another reminder that spring is around the corner. I urge you to be patient with cleaning up leaf debris and starting to mow your lawn. It is a VERY IMPORTANT time for wildlife to replenish itself.

This month I'm going to discuss the importance of choosing a transparent and honest solar company when you are looking into solar or solar plus battery storage.

I recently had the pleasure of working with one of the monthly readers of this column. They had a few marginal experiences with other solar providers and wanted my opinion. They do have a challenging site with roof lines and shading not showing accurately on Google earth and the mapping system I use, a top industry software design program that traditional delivers clear and concise results.

I was honest and transparent throughout the process. I showed them how solar could work for them, shared financial options and was very clear that the design and panel count may change after our site surveyor visits the home and our design engineer conducts a re-evaluation of what was discovered at the site survey.

This is all very important information to gather and share before we submit the findings to our engineering firm to get the building and electrical stamps that are submitted to the town and utility company for permitting and approvals.

For a homeowner, the process of transitioning to solar is quite simple. For a solar company there are many behind the scenes steps that need to be taken in order to get the job install ready. It is 100% in your best interest to work with a reliable sales person and solar company (look at google reviews!) that will smooth over any hiccups that may occur along the way to getting a project from survey to install.

Honesty and transparency are key for a homeowner looking into solar. It's how we would prefer to have all of our relationships... Yes?

BTW >>> C & J, THANK YOU for choosing me/Zen Solar. It is an absolute pleasure to be working with you!

How much information a sales person is providing, or hiding, during the consultation is also very important.

ant. If a sales rep is not disclosing production numbers and costs up front, I would be VERY leery of working with them.

This particular reader I worked with, who is now my customer, was told many mis-truths from a few big name local and national solar companies.

Here are a couple of suggestions and warning signs for you to consider when you are ready to look into solar and/or a battery.

WARNING >> Do NOT sign anything before a sales person goes over proper cost and production values of the system! If they make you sign something up front, you are working with a dishonest company! Apologies if I may sound a bit harsh here but I have seen too many homeowners talked into signing something before fully understanding what they are getting into. This is 100% a sales tactic that a dishonest solar company uses. I will respectfully hold back from naming them here.

I've also seen plenty of circumstances where homeowners are told that they did not sign a contract, or it's just a formality to get a site surveyor to your home, or say "the system will not let me pull up the numbers until I get a signature to authorize me showing you numbers and don't worry because you can cancel at any time". All of this is less than honest tactics to get you to sign up for solar.

C & J had 3 previous companies speak with them and not one was able to produce a solar quote. One guy even flew a drone but didn't have the ability to show them simple numbers until they "signed up". Another company told them that they had to sign a contract for insurance liability issues for if, and when, they send a site surveyor out to see them.

Some companies have a "churn and burn" philosophy where they are pushing sales people to "just make the sale" and they don't worry about any misgivings down the road. It's part of their sales strategy.

Bottom line is to please do your homework and ensure you value the reputation and honesty of the sales person and solar company you choose to work with.

If you'd like to know more or if you're interested in finding out if solar could be beneficial for you, please give me a call. I would love to help you through the discovery process!

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T. King, Publisher

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The Packing House – An Intimate Listening Room!

By EC-CHAP

April

*“Our spring has come at last
with the soft laughter of April suns
and shadow of April showers.”*

- Byron Caldwell Smith

We would like to thank all those who came out to our performances and events since The Packing House reopened on September 18, 2021 for **LIVE PERFORMANCES** and **FILM SCREENINGS!** Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

In closely monitoring National, State, and Local COVID Guidelines, the EC-CHAP Board of Directors relaxed our COVID protocols effective March 9th to include the following: **Masks are optional (encouraged); maintain social distancing practices; and 75% capacity in The Packing House.** These protocols also apply to the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery and Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum.

BENEFIT CONCERT TO SUPPORT UKRAINE – Fall 2022

EC-CHAP will be partnering with the Acoustic Duo, FOOLISH WISELY to coordinate and produce a Benefit Concert at The Packing House Fall 2022 to support the People of Ukraine. 100% of ALL Ticket and Merchandise Sales will be donated to this cause. We envision this concert to be a full day event and encourage like minded musical artists with original works to apply (<https://www.ec-chap.org/benefit-concert-for-ukraine>) if interested in participating.

STEVE KATZ OF BLOOD SWEAT & TEARS RETURNS TO TPH!

We are excited to welcome STEVE KATZ back to The Packing House stage on Saturday, April 2nd! Steve Katz, founding member of Blood Sweat and Tears, will be offering an “An Evening of Music and Intimate Conversation”.

Steve 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. This is a show not to miss! Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Please visit The Packing House for additional details, tickets, and a full schedule of events. If you have not subscribed to our newsletter please do so at: www.thepackinghouse.us.

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.



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.

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.

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.

Spend a memorable evening with Steve Katz – one you will never forget. Tickets \$30.00 Advance / \$35.00 Door.

EC-CHAP Film Series: “20 Feet from Stardom” (PG-13) 2013 - Thursday, April 21st, 7:00pm

“20 Feet from Stardom” is a 2013 American documentary film directed by documentary filmmaker Morgan Neville and was produced by Gil Friesen.

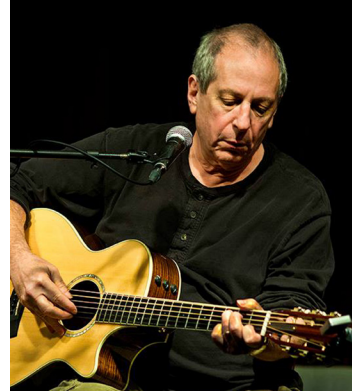
“Backup singers live in a world that lies just beyond the spotlight. Their voices bring harmony to the biggest bands in popular music, but we’ve had no idea who these singers are or what lives they lead, until now.” IMDb

The film follows the behind-the-scenes experiences of backup singers and stars Darlene Love, Judith Hill, Merry Clayton, Lisa Fischer, Tata Vega, and Jo Lawry, among many others. On March 2, 2014, it won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature at the 86th Academy Awards, 23 years after the similar documentary In the Shadow of the Stars (which focused on the members of an opera chorus instead of its stars) won the same award. 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

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

Affectionately known as SOOP, Seat of Our Pants has propelled to the forefront of the Connecticut roots music scene with award winning, heartfelt, and clever songs that get you thinking about the world around you. A regular at The Packing House, with numerous appearances before the world shut down, they are thrilled to be coming back with new songs, and new instruments, including a debut of Carolyn’s latest project, her Dusty Strings folk harp.



Come and see for yourselves what all the buzz is about as Carolyn, Jeff, Mark, and Mike bring their music to The Packing House for the 4th year in a row. The distinct all-American tone of the Appalachian mountain dulcimer, the visual intrigue of the electric upright bass, the energetic beat of the cajon, the impeccable intricate harmonies, and the melodic play of the fiddle and guitar distinguish Connecticut’s one-of-a-kind SOOP.

EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: “Sperry Creek” (Bluegrass) - Friday, April 29th, 7:30pm. (Rescheduled from March)



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: \$10.00 online / \$15.00 at the 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:

*“What you do makes a difference,
and you have to decide what kind of difference
you want to make.”*

- Jane Goodall

Happy Spring!
EC-CHAP Board

SAVE THE DATES:

MAY 2022:

MAY 11, 2022: EC-CHAP Talent Showcase - 6:30pm / Program 7:00pm.

MAY 14, 2022: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: “Lexi Weege with JJ Slater” (Indie/Rock). Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm.

MAY 18, 2022: EC-CHAP Special Program: “Drum Circle 55+ with Bob Bloom”. Doors 6:30pm / Performance 7:00pm.

continued on next page

MAY 19, 2022: EC-CHAP Film Series: A Special Film (TBA). 7:00pm

MAY 21, 2022: 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.

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

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

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

EC-CHAP Lecture Series:

Reviving History in the Graveyard

Replicating Three Revolutionary War Veteran's Headstones with Randall Nelson



By EC-CHAP

In 2019, the director of the Ancient Burying Ground Association asked Mr. Nelson if he could make new versions of three badly deteriorated headstones in the Ancient Burying Ground, which is the oldest existing cemetery in CT. These headstones mark the burials of three Revolutionary War veterans: Captain Joseph Talcott, Captain John Watson and Major Daniel Jones.

Randall Nelson will speak about the Ancient Burying Ground and the individuals for whom the stones were originally created. He will also show the steps involved in producing and installing these replicas of the original headstones, two of which were made from Portland CT brownstone and one from Lee MA marble.

Please join us for this unique lecture about our historic . This program is hosted by the "Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance" (EC-CHAP). Doors 6:30pm / Lecture 7:00pm. Admission is free. Donations gratefully accepted. Soft drinks and snacks available.

For more information, please visit: www.thepackinghouse.com/upcoming or call 518-791-9474.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Mr. Nelson earned his BFA in Sculpture from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY in 1974, then served a five-year apprenticeship in woodworking with Master Sculptor Toshio Odate from 1975 to 1980. He received my MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College for the Arts in 2006, and has been an Adjunct Faculty member at the University of CT, Storrs and the University of Hartford, Bloomfield. He has also been Adjunct Faculty at Quinebaug Valley Community College, Middlesex Community College and Assnuntuck Community College.

Mr. Nelson has been a working artist for thirty years, teaching art courses while maintaining my own art practice and managing a sculptural restoration business specializing in the preservation of building facades, monuments and statuary. He has extensive experience in the different fields of sculptural production, including wood and stone carving, mold making, casting and metal working.

As a restoration sculptor, his company, Nelson Architectural Restoration, has worked on hundreds of decorative stone and terra cotta projects nation-wide, repairing monuments and buildings in New England and other parts of the country, including the brownstone Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch in Bushnell Park in Hartford and the famous brownstone McClellan Gate at Arlington National Cemetery. Mr. Nelson has also worked on several major monument restoration projects for the City of Savannah, GA.

Presently, Mr. Nelson is providing curatorial work for several local historic cemeteries, repairing and replicating damaged monuments and headstones.

Mr. Nelson can be reached at: Nelson Architectural Restoration, (860) 429-3830; andromeda1388@yahoo.com



Songs You Can't Seem to Escape

By Calendula

During my master's studies, I took a course called "Musicology of the Everyday." It covered a variety of different topics, each critically examining the role of music and the definition of music in our everyday lives. We were often directed to examine our personal experiences with music, and particular musical phenomenon. In one such reflection, I wrote about the song, "Knee Socks" by the Arctic Monkeys, which was used as the sound check song in a theatre I worked in, and subsequently seemed to appear everywhere else I went.

The bouncing guitar riff of "Knee Socks" by the Arctic Monkeys came blaring out of the sound system of the small proscenium stage theatre in which my fellow sound designer and I were working. It was my first assignment as a sound designer, and we were testing the speakers which we had installed earlier that day. We had encountered a number of problems with the system, and it was now well past midnight; the only lights on in the theatre at that point were the dim house lights. The thump of the bass drum had the subwoofers booming, and I remember staring into the black abyss which was the empty stage. I was both exhausted and elated. The music suddenly shifted, shrinking into the house left main speaker—the sound instantly becoming trebly and thin. The shimmer of the cymbal crash moved from the house left speaker to the house right speaker—we were leveling the system, speaker by speaker for well balanced mix.


Empty theatres have an eerie quality to them—especially in the hours after midnight. This particular theatre was at least seventy years old; all dust and wood and old paint. The venerable red velvet theatre seats, while regularly maintained, had a bad habit of spontaneously squeaking into a position that looked like someone was sitting there, even though no one was. The sleepy ventilation system would groan into action intermittently, moaning and banging in protest. It was a spooky place to be, even with someone else with you.

"Knee Socks" was chosen as the system's sound check. I had only ever heard the song once or twice before, as I hadn't listened to the Arctic Monkeys much—it was my co-sound designer's suggestion, and we both agreed that it was a fun song. However, by assigning it as the sound check, we listened to it a lot. It was relentlessly stuck in my head, and I found myself humming the tune absentmindedly, when walking to class or getting ready in the morning. It became a song I never chose to listen to voluntarily. Nevertheless, I continued to encounter the song in my life after that assignment. It must have been on multiple playlists at one of the cafés I frequented on campus. It seemed like whenever I sat down with my coffee, I would notice it playing in the background. It would play on my university's radio station quite frequently, too. It even regularly came up on playlists that my friends had playing while we were hanging out. It was like now that I knew the song so well and never wanted to hear it, suddenly, it was everywhere.

Now, years later, the song haunts me less. Whenever I do encounter it, I feel less exasperation, and more bemusement, thinking back to the time I couldn't seem to escape from it. I'm taken back to that theatre, to the time of my first design assignment. I remember the anxiety I felt, running about the theatre, after midnight, from the sound station in the catwalk, back to the theatre's house; testing and fixing and breaking, and then fixing again, a myriad of different things. I remember the panicky heart-skips I'd feel when blindly groping for the light switch that would illuminate my way to the amp storage, inconveniently located at the very back of that murky cavern of a theatre. I remember how the bangs from the ventilation system would scare the living daylight out of me as I'd frantically fumble for my keys as I was getting ready to leave for the night. All of that, underscored by "Knee Socks," playing on repeat, inside of my head.

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





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



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

CT WORLD TAI CHI DAY

Sat. April 30th, 10am to 3pm
Colchester Town Green

Join us for this FREE event!
Worldwide healing wave, 10am.
Classes & demos by 12+ Tai Chi teachers
throughout the day.
No prior experience necessary!
Details, schedule & directions:
<http://www.connecticuttaichi.us/>

Resolution or Not

By Felix F. Giordano

This month I'd like to cover an aspect of writing that may not be so clear in the minds of readers until they have finished reading a book or story. At that point they may find themselves satisfied in what they have read or so annoyed by the ending that it hinders their fair objective of the author's writing style and plot development. What I'm referring to is the concept of a resolution to the story or when a story's plot is unresolved. In the first instance, the protagonist prevails and the antagonist comes face to face with the consequences of their actions. The second is when a corrupt or criminal antagonist gets away with something and the honest or brave protagonist suffers the ultimate sacrifice whether it's their life, love, or wellbeing.

In life we always seek resolution whether it's regarding our finances, relationships, or achievements. One aspect of human nature is to view things tidied up, have all our ducks in a row, or follow a project through to completion. It irks us to see something left undone, that's how we as human beings are wired.

In literature and in film, we strive for resolution. We have hope for the protagonist and cheer when they are successful. Part of the reason for that is because most of us identify with the protagonist who usually grows in personality or purpose during the course of the story. This is due to obstacles placed before them which they successfully overcome. We identify with the protagonist because we know what's it's like to be confronted, provoked, or misunderstood. We've all faced adversity in our lives and when we succeed we are stronger in the moment and wiser when future challenges come our way.

In contrast, when the antagonist in the story gets the upper hand, we can experience hopelessness, fear, and anguish. But we can still trust that the tables will be turned and our protagonist will somehow prevail in the end. Perhaps it's our desire to see the antagonist receive their comeuppance or our expectations that good will overcome evil in spite of overwhelming challenges. Again, that's a product of our own life experiences and just like success makes us stronger and wiser, failure or disappointment, though disheartening in the moment, can also prepare us to become stronger and wiser.

Classic literature defined a perfect life as boy meets girl, they fall in love, get married, begin successful careers, have children, see their offspring succeed both in school and in their careers, watch them get married, and have children of their own. But on the way to this idealistic outcome there are impediments along the way. When that happens in real life it presents challenges. That's what an author must develop in their stories to not only make the story mirror real-life situations but provide the reader with an interesting plotline and story arc to draw them into the story.

The best way to develop a plotline and story arc with a clear intent of delivering resolution or not is to outline. An outline helps construct a framework from which to advance the story. When you outline you can see where your story is heading, for instance toward a resolution and what you need to do along the way to make that happen. For more about outlining, please see the Neighbors Newspaper July 2020 edition.

The intent of storytelling is to entertain and additionally we want a story to satisfy us. Usually that means fulfillment by the end of the story. However, in literature things are not always so neatly packed, orderly, or driven down the road to a resolution. Things can get quite messy in

a story and characters don't always adhere to "doing the right thing". We have pause when expected outcomes do not materialize.

If we have a story where someone commits a crime, our expectation is that the robber gets caught and faces punishment. But in some stories the criminal gets away with the crime which is the definition of an unresolved ending. The best example of a criminal getting away with a crime is Cormac McCarthy's character Anton Chigurh in *No Country For Old Men*. In the novel, Anton Chigurh leaves a bloody trail of death and destruction from beginning to end and is never held accountable. No resolution.

Also, the film *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*, which was selected as one of 2007's ten most influential American films by the American Film Institute, starred Ethan Hawke and Philip Seymour Hoffman. The plot seems very simple, one successful brother and one not so successful brother each needing easy money for different reasons. They decide to rob their parents' jewelry store with the intent that no one gets hurt and insurance will cover the loss. However, nothing goes as planned and as the plot unfolds, one crisis after another develops until at the end of the film the entire family is destroyed. In this film, nothing is tidy and the resolution we were perhaps hoping for never materializes.

When composing your story, and before you outline, make sure to flesh out your characters' personalities, ambitions, and desires. Their profiles will determine whether your story develops a resolution or not. Most writers will tell you that their characters take on a life of their own and do the unexpected, often at peculiar times. As you write, some characters may take on a stronger personality than others and that will be the driving force in how your story progresses.

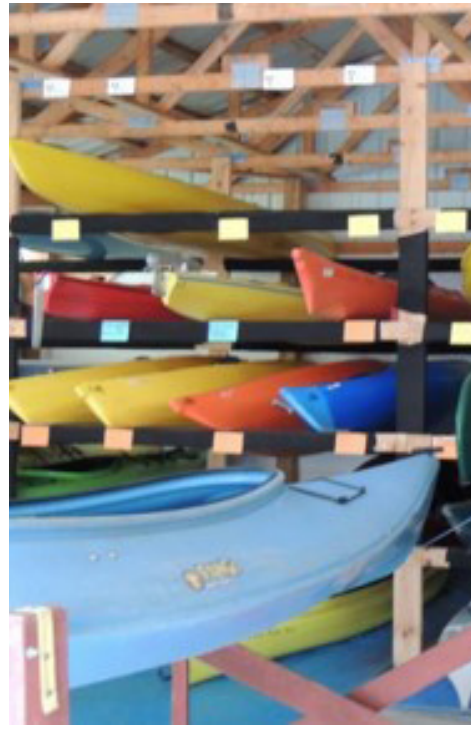
You may start out with a detective trying to solve a crime but then all of a sudden you learn that he is on the take and the crime was committed by the same people who are providing him with the illegal payments. That story can either have a resolution or not. The detective may suddenly have an epiphany and discover his moral compass and bring the criminals to justice (resolution) or he may be so compromised that he helps the criminals evade the law (no resolution).

An unresolved ending can turn off some readers. One reason for an unresolved ending is that the author is writing a sequel which will resolve the loose ends in the original story. Another reason is that the author wants to make the ending so ambiguous that it's up to the reader to imagine what may or may not happen. The bottom line is, consider your intent. Books and stories with resolutions may be easier to pitch to agents or contests while books and stories without resolutions may require a sequel or result in the reader having to delve into a series of "what if" questions.

Whether you decide to write a resolution into your story or leave the outcome open to the reader's interpretation, please remember that you are the author and only you can decide which path to take.

We defined "Resolution or Not" 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 chairs a Saturday writers group and presents a monthly lecture series at the Willington Public Library. Please call (860) 429-3854 for more information. His website is jbnovels.com. Next Month's Topic: What Not to Reveal, What to Reveal, and When to Reveal It



Love Being on the Water?

Join Columbia Canoe Club at Mansfield Hollow State Park

By Susan Audette, chairperson

Spring is here and it's time to prepare to enjoy it. We've had a couple hard years, but outside is where we like to be. The best way to do that is to join the Columbia Canoe Club, Inc.

Columbia Canoe Club is more than a canoe club; it's a lot more than meets the eye. First, we are NOT just a canoe club, as a matter of fact, most of our craft are kayaks. We have kayaks of every size, shape and purpose. There clearly is a boat to fit every person and his or her skill level or needs. Secondly, we are not in Columbia. No, we are in Mansfield at Mansfield Hollow State Park. Our building is non-descript and if you have ever walked the dam side of the Hollow, you probably noticed our building. Membership is cheap, as little as \$65.00 a person, but discounted rates are available for couples and families. Where else might you have a year of fun so inexpensively?

Columbia Canoe Club, Inc. (CCC) is a not-for-profit canoe and kayak club. We are on the dam side of beautiful Mansfield Hollow State Park, Mansfield Center, CT. We have been there since 1989. Mansfield Hollow is a 251-acre state park devoted to fishing and boating. The lake is a 500-acre lake divided by Bassett Bridge Rd. There is no swimming allowed and the park has a 5-mph speed limit which makes it ideal for kayakers and canoeists. Our members have access to the club site and can come and go as they choose, as well as take part in a variety of events throughout the season.

The club was originally founded by Pat Murphy on Columbia Lake in Columbia, CT in 1961. The club was incorporated in 1966 and were National Champions in 1967. Although some of our individual members are still highly competitive, we no longer compete as a club. Instead, our move to Mansfield Hollow State Park in 1989 signified a major change in the impetus of the club.

Now more recreational in nature, we house about 70 boats, mostly recreational kayaks in both individual and tandem models. We also have several easy paddling canoes. In 1998 we were able to build a new clubhouse. Although most of our new members are sponsored by current members, if you are interested in joining, please contact Sue Audette, chairperson. You can find us at www.columbiacanoecub.weebly.com or on Facebook at Columbia Canoe and Kayak Club at Mansfield Hollow State Park.

Colors

By Judy Davis

First Nations women form an arc of vibrancy; full of bright colors gifted to us through generations.

This wonderful light brings such joy to our lives.

We become born again, warm and full.

We dance our satisfaction, step by step, until

we are back in time, with

the colors we knew from the beginnings.

At The CT Audubon Center

218 Day Road, Pomfret Center, CT
(860)928-4948

ctaudubon.org/pomfret-home

Early Morning Bird Walks Every Tuesday in April at 8 a.m. No pre-registration required.

Meet at the Center at Pomfret, 218 Day Rd. With access to over 1,650 acres of land, we will seek out a variety of bird species. Bring binoculars or spotting scope. Fee: \$10 members; \$20 non-members.

April Vacation Camp: Hike, Bike & Bio-Blitz Tuesday, April 19 thru Thursday, April 21

Geared for ages 8 to 12. Camp runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All day outdoor fun and exploration at the Center at Pomfret, 218 Day Rd. Come for one day or all three. Limited to 10 kids per day. Info and forms at ctaudubon.org/pomfret-programs or call 860-928-4948 to register. Fee: \$55/day for CAS members; \$65/day for non-members.

Bafflin Bird Walk

Saturday, April 23 at 8 a.m.

Some of the early arriving spring migrants should be around, such as Louisiana Waterthrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Blue-headed Vireos. Please register by emailing your name, phone, and date of walk to arzenkiewicz@ctaudubon.org. Andy will confirm. Fee: \$10 members; \$20 non-members.

Virginia Rail Bird Walk

Saturday, April 30 at 6 p.m.

The goal is to hear and observe Virginia Rail, as well as other species of birds such as Common Snipe and Vesper Sparrow. Please register by emailing your name, phone, and date of walk to arzenkiewicz@ctaudubon.org. Andy will confirm. Fee: \$10 members; \$20 non-members.

'Focus On Nature' Photography Contest Opening reception: Sunday, May 1 at 2 p.m. at the Center at Pomfret, 218 Day Rd.

Now accepting submissions. To enter the contest, go to ctaudubon.org/pomfret-programs for info & forms. Exhibition and sale runs thru June 30, during regular Center hours.

Et Tu, Brute?

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

...we should settle a few facts that are uncontested. The most crucial one is that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a major war crime, ranking alongside the U.S. invasion of Iraq...

—Noam Chomsky, interviewed on Truthout (<https://truthout.org/articles/noam-chomsky-us-military-escalation-against-russia-would-have-no-victors/>)

For over twenty years now, when I need cutting insight into national/international crises, I look to the linguist and social critic Noam Chomsky, who at 93 years old still consistently speaks out against war, environmental destruction, and injustices of all kinds. Furthermore, he never ceases to hold the United States accountable for criminal acts/war crimes done under some form of nationalistic rhetoric or other. And so, with the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, I looked to see what he was saying, and he did not disappoint. He said what I had been thinking—as in, what needed to be said—which was to draw parallels between Putin's actions and our own.

In an interview on the Truthout website, Chomsky begins as quoted above, by making it clear that Russia has unquestionably committed war crimes. But he does not stop there. As he states, Russia's crimes rank along with our own in Iraq, and I think one could easily add Afghanistan, including our shameful departure. The importance of making these connections is that it prevents hyperbolic claims that Putin is "evil" or "crazy" and places him on par with our own nationalistic, hence militaristic, interests. Additionally, if we were honest about our own war crimes committed in the name of "national security" and legitimized by comparable doses of propaganda that the "enemy" has provoked us, we would be much better at anticipating Putin's actions and could even reach out to him with empathy and humility, as opposed to our ironic shock and self-righteous bravado. For as Chomsky in this interview notes, Russia has for years been very clear that encouraging Ukraine to join NATO and supporting it militarily would, "understandably," escalate tensions, and yet we have not backed off. For a comparison, one only needs to think of the threat the small island of Cuba has presented over the years to our "national security"; now imagine if we had a similar amount of border (1,300 miles) with Cuba as Russia has with Ukraine. Biden's recent gaffe in Poland calling for an end to Putin's reign and his other grand claims to be on the side of "democracy" all do nothing but make the escalation of this war more likely. This escalation includes the ever-looming threat of nuclear war, not to mention a divergence from addressing the climate crisis, where in both cases the stakes are increasingly dire. Thus, Chomsky advises that we offer Putin an "escape hatch" and to not hold up ideals of "justice" that have never been achieved on the political level, but rather to seek compromise in order to avoid a global catastrophe.

To all this I would agree, while also inviting us to not only stand with Ukraine but to go further and stand with the victims of our own wars in which lives, children, houses, and livelihoods were destroyed by us in the name of our own imperial exploits. Such calls for solidarity with all victims of wars, including those carried out by us, of course challenge our "good-guy narratives," as well as our white racism and Islamophobia. Support for Ukrainians is so much easier, in that they "look and pray like us" and thus garner greater empathy in the media and from the public. Of course, they deserve it, but no more or less than all other civilian victims of war, be they in Kiev, Aleppo, Baghdad, Kabul, the Gaza Strip, Beirut, or even some of our own cities if we include police brutality as an extension of war. I invite you to not let this war be another justification for more military spending, but to instead use it as an opportunity to recognize, as does the War Resisters League, that all war is a crime against humanity. If we claim to value life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it is our duty to commit to working toward a world without war, and to support disarmament, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that has already been signed by eighty-six countries. Tragically, of course, ours is not one of them. And so, to quote Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's play of the same name, "Et tu, Brute?"

Maybe now is the time for our country to answer "yes," before it really is too late.



Learning About Our State's Heroine

By Bill Powers

Having been a public school teacher of history and social science in Windham, I have always taken a great deal of pride in the fact that both our state heroes, Nathan Hale, and Prudence Crandall, were both teachers in Eastern Connecticut. Nathan Hale was born in Coventry, Connecticut on June 6, 1755, and was a soldier in the Continental Army. At the age of 21, he was executed after being captured by the British while on a mission to gather intelligence. Prior to his military service, he taught in East Haddam and New London. In 1985, by an act of General Assembly, Nathan Hale officially became Connecticut's State Hero. Ten years later, by an act of the General Assembly, Prudence Crandall was named Connecticut's State Heroine. She had established an academy for female African-American students in Canterbury, Connecticut, the first school of its kind in New England. Students desiring a good education were recruited from throughout the Northeast United States.

However, local residents who opposed the education of the blacks, reacted angrily and threatened violence. As a result, the state passed what was known as the "Black Law" in 1833 that prevented the teaching of "any colored person who is not an inhabitant of any town of this state" without permission of the town. For this, Crandall was arrested, jailed overnight and tried. She endured three trials before her case was finally dismissed, not on constitutional grounds, but on a technicality. During that time, she had continued to operate her academy; but the violence against her and her school continued to mount, and she was concerned about the safety of her students so she closed the school and left the state.

The story of her struggle is also a story about the struggle of abolitionists who were taking on local white supremacists and the oppression of an entire race, both here and across the nation. Insights into the perspectives of white supremacists at that time are apparent from court transcripts from Crandall's trials and other documents from the time. For instance, this is a quote from local state senator Andrew T. Judson who helped to initiate the "Black Law": "we are not merely opposed to the establishment of that school in Canterbury; we mean there shall not be such a school set up anywhere in our state. The colored people can never rise from their menial condition in our country." Connecticut repealed its "Black Law" in 1838.

Today there are some people who are adamant about denying aspects of the "real history" of America, including Connecticut, especially the story of racism supposedly because if it is taught to their children it will

encourage feelings of shame, guilt, anger and resentment. I guess they would "whitewash" the Prudence Crandall story and the threats, violence and oppression aimed at her black students by white supremacists. Our "real history" includes the undeniable genocide of Native Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and the enslavement of millions of human beings.

In colonial times, by the beginning of the American Revolution, Connecticut had more African slaves than any other New England state. The historical accounts of the people who were enslaved during the first centuries of Connecticut's settlement can raise questions about the enslavement of others and how their owners have been portrayed. Often those who wrote Connecticut history in the mid-1800s referred to enslaved persons as "faithful servants" as a way of legitimizing slavery and saying only good things about life in colonial times; and, later, while slavery was permitted in the state. Interpretations, such as these, sidestep criticism while serving to legitimize slavery. Some words just couldn't be said and the use of terms such as "faithful servant" perhaps allowed many, who saw themselves as being of good conscience, to avoid feelings of uneasiness, discomfort, and even guilt if confronted by the truth of what had been done to other human beings.

I believe that Connecticut's students should have an accurate and comprehensive exposure to Connecticut's historical evolution across the board, including racism, freedom, justice, religion, economics, immigration and Black and Latino history. Interestingly, teacher preparation requirements do not include Connecticut history for new teachers. Unfortunately, the new state legislation to require a one-year course for African-American and Latino history in public high school curriculum is not required for all students, but is only an elective course and this is a weakness for promoting future racial understandings for all students. Fortunately, the course will fill in Black and Latino history where the typical American History course fails to do so. Remarkably, the course is designed to include examples from Connecticut history. According to UConn Associate Professor of History and African Studies, Dr. Fiona Vernal: "examples of Connecticut history include information about Venture Smith and James Mars and many links to other relevant local histories including the Sheff v. O'Neill case, the project on enslaved people in Fairfield, the Witness Stones Project and many more." Learning about the story of Prudence Crandall, our State's Heroine is also a meaningful experience for our students.

Bill Powers is a retired teacher and resides in Windham.

All Sleep Partners with Access to Help Residents Recently Displaced by Fire

Submitted by Elisha Sherman

Late January, six families were displaced by a devastating fire in which they lost all their possessions. Access Community Action Agency immediately began assisting these families by helping them find new places to live, getting them emergency food at the Access Food Pantry located at the main office on 1315 Main Street, and referring the families to our partnering community agencies in the Willimantic area. The Access Case Management staff also discovered the need for new bedding for one particular family and visited All Sleep, located at 885 Windham Road in South Windham to ask if they could help. Joshua Eves, owner of All Sleep, compassionately agreed and a delivery of metal frames and bed sets totaling to \$1,330 was immediately coordinated.

"Joshua Eves donated all for this family and was committed to this project in joining the efforts to unite and help these families. Thank you Joshua for being part of this effort, we at Access Community Action Agency appreciate your contribution, your dedication and your effort as well," says Eduardo O'Neill Caban, Case Manager from Human Development Services, who coordinated the efforts with All Sleep.

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

Community Support Strong in Rockville

By Julie Engelke

Craig Wright, owner and chef of Craig's Kitchen in the Rockville section of Vernon, is sponsoring the 4th annual Easter Basket Giveaway on Easter Sunday, April 17th. All baskets and contents are made possible with donations from the community. Craig is looking for baskets, children's books, candy, toys, basket "grass", anything you would like to find in your Easter Basket as well as monetary donations to help fund the many baskets he needs to have ready. Last year he was able to give out 200 baskets in one hour!

Baskets will be distributed by Craig in his Easter Rabbit costume between 1 and 2 pm. in front of the restaurant at 13 West Main Street, Vernon (Rockville). Parking is available in the public parking lot off Main Street close to the restaurant. There is no age limit to receive a basket.

Donations may be dropped off at the restaurant from 11 am to 8 pm. Tuesday through Sunday, closed on Mondays. You can contact him in person by phone at 860-871-6066 or on facebook at "craigskitchen860". Please have all donations delivered by Wednesday, April 13th. Thank you Craig for all you do!



Photo by Arlene Avery.

The Oligarch in His Bathroom: Trump's Obsession with Putin

By Donna Dufresne

Some of you might remember that poster about “Bolsheviks in the bathroom,” which was used in anti-communist propaganda during the McCarthy era. Interestingly, the original poster was designed in the 1930s by Madison Avenue “Mad Men.” It was nothing more than a clever ad for Scott paper towels. The irony captured the growing tension between industrialists and labor, implying that better towels in the bathroom would keep the workers happy and prevent a strike (or revolution), wink, wink. Sadly, America’s long obsession with communism has prevented us from noticing that untethered wealth and power have eroded democracy.

Recently the entire world watched in stunned disbelief as Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, bombed civilian targets, killed women and children, and committed war crimes unseen in Europe since World War II. The Bolsheviks and their Communist Party of the early twentieth century seem almost quaint compared to the autocratic dictatorship of Putin and his oligarchy. Those old-fashioned Marxists must be rolling in their graves. Putin is the antithesis of the Russian Revolution, which dethroned the czars and promised “Peace, Land and Bread” to the masses. Wealth disparity has deepened during Putin’s reign while he sits on tens of billions of dollars attained by dubious means. The Russian electoral process is nothing more than a sham to appease citizens who believe they live in a democracy. Meanwhile Putin and his oligarchs have infiltrated the government and filched money from the people to line their own pockets. Yet we don’t hear much dissent from Russians. That’s because Putin’s chessboard has been carefully constructed with strategic moves from the dictator’s playbook—the same one used by China, North Korea, and a former American president. Anyone to the left of comatose will recognize the familiar chess tactics used by Putin to snuff out democracy in Russia and recently applied by a not-so-genius wanna-be dictator to divide and conquer America:

1. Erode confidence in a free press by discrediting independent news agencies, calling them “fake news.” Install a Foxy state news organization for your own propaganda, guarded by the Rooks.

2. Erode voting rights by discrediting the electoral process and cultivating distrust in the system. Whip the Pawns into a frenzy to do your bidding, then declare martial law so you can appoint family members and sycophants to government positions. Fire scientists and experts from government agencies.

3. Erode freedom of speech by discrediting dissent, making protests illegal. Apply martial law to clamp down on dissidents and protesters, except for the state-appointed Knights who will do your bidding with an attempted coup.

4. Appoint Bishops to the superior court to discredit and overturn the laws that protect women’s rights and racial equity in the name of God, Amen.

5. Discredit First Amendment rights while arming ordinary people with military weapons. Install Bishops to remind them they have the right to kill in the name of God and country, Amen.



6. Discredit universities and public schools, the enemy of tyranny. Cultivate hatred, mistrust, and division by engaging working-class Pawns in domestic terrorism against those you wish to silence—the ones who stand up for democracy and justice.

While the rest of the world responded with outrage and stood up to Putin’s bullying tactics, another member of the Putin chess team sat on his throne of shredded classified documents in Mar-a-Lago, egging him on. Like a schoolgirl with a crush on a bully, Trump gushed about Putin’s “genius” tactics showing military might, and how he would like to do the same on the border of Mexico.

While America lay sleeping, drugged by the anti-this-and-that propaganda of Fox News, we allowed the American oligarchy to slip out of the boardrooms and into the Republican Party. Oil, gas, and coal tycoons with a personal stake in debunking climate change; media conglomerates who have destroyed independent news agencies and stolen hometown newspapers; and white supremacists who have dominated social media with hate speech have somehow slithered into the GOP. Sadly, few Republicans have stood up to Trump and his Putin Envy.

I can’t believe I’m quoting Reagan here, but Putin really does represent the “Evil Empire,” and Trump is obviously a spoke in his wheelhouse. It’s about time we break up this bromance and put them both in prison where they belong.

Relief Woodcarving Demo

Submitted by Deb Gag

Relief carving refers to carving on a surface that is to be seen from one primary direction, versus carving in the round, where the subject will be viewable from all angles.

Steve Gerling has been doing relief woodcarving since the mid-1970’s. He has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from UConn, with a major in sculpture. After school, he was drawn to the additional challenges of relief carving. Not only did an object have to be sculpted but it had to be skillfully distorted in scale, perspective, and space to create an image convincing to the viewer.

Traditionally, much relief work was intended as decoration or embellishment to works of architecture or fine cabinetry. Steve chose to make the carving the primary object. And while much of the work, especially early work, was incorporated into objects of fine woodworking, using them as a utilitarian frame, the main focus of attention has always been the carving.

At the Ashford Arts Council meeting on April 13th at 7pm Steve will demonstrate all phases of what goes into a relief carving, working on a demo piece that has sections at all stages of the process, as well as discussing use of tools, appropriate woods, and anything else attendees might be curious about. The AAC is thrilled to have Steve as our April presenter! We love it when members of our communities come to the first portion of our monthly meetings, so don’t feel obligated to stay for the business portion. The AAC meets at the Knowlton Memorial Hall on Route 44 in Ashford.



Mill Museum News

Submitted by Chelsey Knyff

Wed., Apr. 6: **Crazy About Quilting.** Join Chelsey Knyff, historian and Curatorial Director for The Mill Museum, at 4 p.m. for a free lecture about the Industrial Age, fashion, and the influence on crazy quilts. The presentation at the Willimantic Public Library (905 Main St., Willimantic) will include a free pattern on how to make your own crazy quilt. Feel free to bring your own sewing, knitting or crocheting project to work on during the talk.

Sun., Apr. 17: **Easter – THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED.**

Sat., Apr. 23: **Huge Mill Museum Tag Sale,** 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., indoors and out. Find treasures galore at this fundraising event. No admission charge. Limited outdoor sales spaces available at \$25 each. Vendors must bring their own tables, chairs and/or tents. Set-up at 7:30 a.m. Rain date: Sun., Apr. 24. For more information, or to reserve a 9’ x 12’ space, Call Andrea Ader at (860) 742-5234 or e-mail BrickAder@yahoo.com.

Sat., Apr. 23: **Drop-in Spinning Bee** with Peggy Church. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Museum’s 2nd Floor, 411 Main 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 peggychurch2@gmail.com.

Sat., Apr. 30: **Textiles and Garments of the Victorian Era,** a live presentation by Chelsey Knyff, the Mill Museum’s Curatorial Director and the Executive Director of BHistorical, at 6 p.m., in Dugan Hall, 3 Union St., Willimantic, CT. The Victorian Era was a time of drama, intrigue and beautiful clothing. See original artifacts and patterns, and listen to the stories of the innovations, both dangerous and amazing, of this period. Learn how the 19th century evolved from a simple era of wools and linen into a booming industry of commercialism and fashion. Attendees will get to see and touch original garments, patterns, sewing machines, chatelaines, and other fashion artifacts. Questions will be welcomed and encouraged. Members \$12; Non-members \$15.

Acoustic Music Jam

Submitted by Joan Sinder

The Franco-American Club, on Club Road in Willimantic, is the location for our acoustic music jam, being held on the second and fourth Fridays of each month, starting at 6:30 P.M. The jam is open to all string and other acoustic instruments, such as dulcimers, accordions, harmonicas, and keyboards. All traditional music genres are welcome, but no modern country music, hip hop, heavy metal, etc.

Also open to those wanting to just listen or maybe dance a little. The Club offers drinks and has a small bar menu available. No cover charge, no advance registration needed. Information, call Joan at 860-423-2739 or joan.b.sinder@snet.net.

To all our contributors-

Thank You!

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

T. King, Publisher



Daeini Cabrera (left) Elizabeth Huebner in Crossroads. Contributed photo.

Raising Awareness Onstage

Crossroads: In Celebration of the Earth will be performed on Earth Day Weekend in Willimantic

By Calen Nakash

In today’s world, many feel disillusioned or hopeless about a livable future. To raise awareness about all we can do to help, and to celebrate life on this extraordinary planet, Willimantic resident and director Carol Macy will be presenting a show entitled *Crossroads: In Celebration of the Earth* on Earth Day weekend.

In 2019, an international group called Climate Change Theatre Action 2019 wrote to award-winning playwrights from around the world asking them if they would write a five-minute play about any aspect of the climate crisis. The organization received 49 plays. Actors will perform eight of these plays to help raise awareness in the community and to reconnect us to the Earth.

In addition to the plays, actors will be joined by artists from various disciplines. “One Drop,” which is choreographed by Dimensional Dance’s Matisse Madden, explores the connection between all people and the majestic power of the oceans. Oswaldo Tirano, Aida Torres Prieto and Ayda Parra Rojas will be performing “Tree of Life Celebration,” a traditional folk dance from Columbia, South America. The dances will be performed on both evenings.

On Friday, April 22nd, guitarist Arnaldo Rivera will be joining the performance and on Saturday April 23rd, Kala Farnham, a singer/songwriter/musician will lend her talents. Earth Day weekend is a celebration of both the Earth and the Arts, and we hope to see you on April 22nd and 23rd. The show will be located at first Congregational Church Auditorium, 199 Valley Street in Willimantic CT at 7p.m. Tickets will be \$10 at the door to cover all expenses. Seating is limited.

Tai Chi Home

Spring in Your Step

By Joe Pandolfo

Walking in the woods this time of year, we can feel Spring under our feet. The ground is starting to soften and become part of our step.



As the Taoist classics say, the character of the Earth is a receptive character. In Taoist medicine, we keep our own inner earth healthy by keeping a good balance of give and take.

Walking in the woods this time of year – what a great way to cultivate this balance. With each step, setting the heel down softly to meet the shape of the ground. With every flex of the ankle, feeling the ground give a little and the whole earth roll underneath.

April Is Autism Ableism Awareness Month

By Michelle Baughman

There is truth to the adages “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks” and “Old habits die hard,” because despite a decade of autistic self-advocates trying to change the narrative to acceptance instead of awareness, many people still consider April to be “Autism Awareness Month.” Awareness doesn’t do anybody any good. What autistic people need is acceptance and inclusion in society—particularly inclusion in the workforce, because ableist attitudes and misinformation about autism and other disabilities deter employers from hiring autistic employees.

So, instead, I am declaring that April is **Ableism Awareness Month**. Ableism is the social prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities (PWD). It is based upon the belief that people who do not have disabilities are superior, and it encompasses harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and broad generalizations about PWD that often lead to violating their civil rights and dehumanizing them. Just as with racism and sexism, ableism classifies an entire group of people as “less than,” and “others” them.

“Othering” refers to in-group/out group dynamics, and it has moral and ethical consequences because it leads to dehumanization. For example, people may harm those whom they perceive as being in an out-group in ways that they would not harm an in-group member. This can be a very dangerous thing because when an in-group’s “othering” causes them to fail to see an out-group as human, it makes them capable of perpetrating all kinds of atrocities upon them. The Judge Rotenberg Center in Canton, Massachusetts, which, up until last April, used painful shock therapy treatments on autistic children, is an example of this. In any other context, people would be horrified by such inhumane treatment to a fellow human being, particularly vulnerable children, and they would insist that it stop immediately. But, because many people (including judges) do not see autistics as fully human, this “treatment” persisted for decades while autistic self-advocates fought to get an injunction. (To learn more, see <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-care/decades-long-fight-over-electric-shock-treatment-led-fda-ban-n1265546>).

This definition of ableism sounds quite harsh; most people consider themselves to be decent, good-hearted human beings, and would not recognize their own attitudes or behaviors in it. In fact, telling someone that they are prejudiced is bound to put them on the defensive. So, let’s unpack some of the language here: A stereotype is a widely held but fixed, oversimplified image or idea of a particular person or thing. Stereotypes inform prejudice. Prejudice, in the most academic definition of the term, is any preconceived opinion, feeling, or attitude, either favorable or unfavorable. Thus, a prejudice is what someone thinks about something or someone before they have had any chance to experience it/them for themselves.

The prejudices that people have include unconscious biases, which are automatic thoughts. These opinions, feelings, or attitudes slide right past our conscious awareness, but have an impact on the assumptions we make that affect our behavior and decision-making, and even influence our impressions. They get into our subconscious through subtle things like images in the media, connotations of the language that is used to describe a person or thing, and observations of other people’s behavior toward that person or thing. According to studies in cognitive science, everyone has unconscious bias. This is because our brains receive over 11 million pieces of information per second, but we can only consciously process about 40 of those pieces per second. This makes people more than 99% unconscious. (See LinkedIn Learning’s “Understanding we’re all biased.”)

Because of this unconscious bias, people and organizations who view themselves as allies or champions of those with disabilities can hold some of these harmful stereotypes. Some of these stereotypes include the widely held but fixed ideas that there is something wrong with PWD, that they are broken or somehow not whole, that they are incompetent and incapable, or that they need to be fixed or cured. This last one is particularly deleterious, because all children need to know that their parents love

them unconditionally, but when autistic children come to realize that their parents think they need to be fixed or cured it undermines their felt sense of unconditional love, making them susceptible to attachment trauma. And when parents subject their children to hours upon hours of therapy (especially if that therapy uses “aversives”) instead of spending time connecting with them, or just letting them have unstructured playtime like other children, it can be further traumatizing.

There are thousands of autistic adults in the online autism community who were subjected to applied behavior

analysis (ABA) therapy as children who say that it traumatized them. Thousands more fiercely resent the Autism Speaks organization and its puzzle-piece logo that visually symbolizes the harmful stereotype that autistics are incomplete human beings, and they consider it a microaggression when people wear and display the puzzle piece.

A microaggression is a statement, action, or incident of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group.

Unintentional microaggressions happen when people are unconscious of the bias that informs their words, actions, or behavior. So, all those self-proclaimed good-hearted, puzzle-piece-bedecked people who think that they are showing their support to the autism community by wearing that symbol and donating to Autism Speaks are actually alienating the autism community! Allies to the autism community listen to us, respect our perspective, and support the Autistic Self Advocacy Network instead. We recognize our allies because they are the ones wearing that organization’s rainbow infinity symbol (see <http://retrophiliac.etsy.com>).

To illustrate what microaggressions look like, I am sharing a post from one of my disability colleagues: “The other day I went out to dinner with my partner and the waitress was very insulting and aggravating the entire meal. She noticed that I have a disability, so from the beginning she decided to ignore my presence. Anytime she needed to know something regarding my thoughts about the meal, things I wanted to order, or paying for my food, she spoke to my girlfriend instead of asking me. For example, I told her I wanted to try a type of bread I had never had before, so she brought over a sample. As soon as she saw I tried the bread, she goes over to my partner and right in front of me, as if I am not sitting right there, asks her, ‘Did she like the bread?’ without ever bothering to ask me directly. Another example is when we were paying for our meal. I paid for the both of us. I handed the waitress my card and then she turned to my girlfriend and asked her if she wanted to check the purchase details. I was highly insulted by her behavior the entire time and I wanted to speak to the manager, but he wasn’t available. My partner and I swore we will never eat at that disgraceful establishment ever again.”

Ableism is systematic, meaning that the bias permeates every level of society from our educational systems to our government policies, transportation systems, public buildings, medical and psychiatric industry, employment sector, and judicial system. According to the social model of disability, it is not so much the individual’s impairment that poses a significant barrier, but the society or environment in which people interact that dis-ables an individual. Individuals may have impairments, but it is how society is designed that excludes and oppresses them. Our society is designed from a very ableist perspective, not just in its physical design, but also in the derogatory attitudes and social exclusion (intentional or inadvertent) that make it difficult or impossible for individuals with impairments to function and attain their value.

So, let this April be a time of becoming more aware of and examining ableist bias—both your own unconscious bias and the systematic bias that permeates society. Make it a game, or something like the Audubon Bird Count, and track how many instances you notice: from the design of airplane seats to the design of websites inaccessible to people with vision impairments, to the lack of our demographic represented in your volunteer organizations or among your co-workers and friends. Disability is not a problem to be cured, but a part of our identity and a part of all human diversity. This April, think about ways that you can include the unincorporated.



<https://pinkunicorndesigns.com/>

Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery:

Fiber – Wood – Metal

By EC-CHAP

A new Exhibit,
“Fiber – Wood – Metal”

will be on display at the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery from **Saturday, April 2nd through Saturday, May 14th**. Please visit www.ec-chap.org for the date of the Opening Reception for this exhibit.

The exhibit includes original work of three regional artists: Sally Rogers, Randall Nelson, and Scotty Opperman.

SALLY ROGERS: Although Sally Rogers mostly known as a professional folksinger, songwriter and educator, her

“chocolate” is found at my sewing machine. Locally, she helped found the group **Quilters: Piece for Peace** in the 1980’s. They made and raffled off three lovely peace quilts raising money and awareness for the Nuclear Freeze Movement. All three of those quilts were quilted by hand and two were given to the Thomas Dodd Peace

Center at U-Conn. Sadly, they were stolen from the Center in 2016. Images of these and other quilts can be found at Sally’s website, www.sallyrogers.com

This show features smaller quilts: lap quilts, baby quilts, table runners and wall hangings. She has included one quilt inspired by my time with the Gee’s Bend Quilters in Maine, during the summer of 2017 (“Flying Geese Go Fishing”). Sally has been using her work time as a teaching artist to also do my work as a quilter, by consolidating quilt design with songwriting and other areas of curricular interest in residencies. It is through these residencies that she has managed to force herself to take time to create new ideas in her quilting while also teaching young students to hand sew while also learning math and language arts skills.

RANDALL NELSON: Randall Nelson’s early training as a sculptor was as a wood carver and the focus of his earliest work period was on making abstract wood sculptures. After several years of doing abstract pieces he began making animals, combining carved wood and other materials such as old “found object” metal castings that would suggest an element of the piece, usually as the face of the animal. Randall also started making carved furniture that incorporated ceramic elements that he had also made, all combined to tell a story.

In recent years Randall’s style of production has diversified and his art has become more personal and more overtly political. Many of his more recent works are in the form of large installation pieces, designed to comment on an event or tell a specific story. However, no matter what the subject or method of production, he has always tried to maintain an element of humor in his artwork.

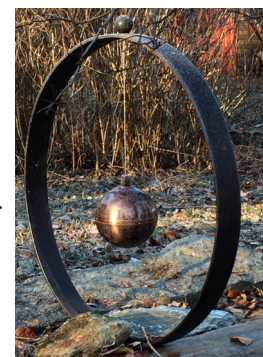
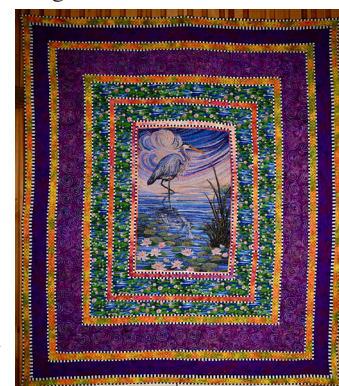
SCOTTY OPPERMAN: Scotty Opperman is a local artist. He made his first ring and sphere sculptures in 1976 and after setting the art aside in the early 80s to raise his daughter, returned to metal work in 2010.

Born of a love and curiosity for welding, his sculptures are a unique combination of copper, steel, brass and aluminum. Scotty enjoys the challenge and beauty of the welding and machine work techniques it takes to make his work three dimensional.

The finished pieces represent his view of the shape of the universe, celestial orbits and unknown planets. Most of his raw materials are salvaged from scrap metal yards across the country.

The Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery open Saturday mornings from 10:00am to 12:00pm and by appointment. The Gallery is located at 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. For information, please call 518-791-9474, or visit www.ec-chap.org.

EC-CHAP
Eastern Connecticut Center for
History, Art, and Performance, Inc.
Artist-In-Residence: Visual Arts



Stafford Baptist Church's Black History Concert

By Arlene Avery

In the rural town of Stafford, on the northwest edge of Connecticut's Quiet Corner, we are blessed with cultural richness. On Saturday, March 5th, people came from near and far; Stafford Baptist members who lived in the neighborhood, along with performers and guests who drove from out of town to attend and perform. It was a diverse gathering; racially, culturally, and with people of all ages, from young children to a member celebrating her 93rd birthday.

It began with Wayne Dixon on organ and Emery Austin Smith on piano playing "We Shall Overcome". Unprompted, many of us joined in with our voices. It felt so natural to do so. Pastor Paula Waters welcomed the

Congregation and gave the opening prayer. "We praise God for your presence... We pray Lord that your spirit might be in the midst of us. That you will speak to hearts, that you will give us respite from the turmoil of the world..." She went on to say, "On the back of the program you have the words to 'Lift Every Voice and Sing'. Let's stand and sing. You didn't know you were part of the concert, did you?" I knew. I had texted her days earlier, asking if we were going to sing it. She replied, "I was thinking this morning that we should sing it." I happily spread the news that all who attended would have the opportunity to sing this beautiful hymn.

'Lift Every Voice and Sing' was originally a poem written by James Weldon Johnson in 1900. It was first recited by Black students at a segregated school in Jacksonville, Florida. Five years later in 1905, Johnson's brother, J. Rosamond Johnson put the poem to music. In 1919, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) adopted it as its official song, dubbing it "the Negro national anthem". More recently it's been called "the Black national anthem". The first verse goes in part, "Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty... Facing the rising sun, of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won."

Pastor Paula explained the rich musical culture of the African American community. "We use music to express what we think. We use music to express how we feel. We use music to comfort ourselves. So, our theme today is **Lyrics of Lament, Laughter and Love**. We'll be looking at it through the spiritual, the blues, gospel and jazz."

Wayne Dixon, Minister of Music at Faith Congregational Church in Hartford, spoke about spirituals, the music of his enslaved ancestors. Wayne described how spirituals came from a people who had absolutely nothing but their deep, abiding faith. Out of their strong faith came the spiritual, which he considers the most pure of worship music, especially in the United States. He states, "I am here today because of the faith of my ancestors. Can you just here them crying out from their condition?" "Come by here my Lord, come by here. Come by here my Lord, come by here. Come by here my Lord, come by here. Oh, Lord, come by here. Someone's crying my Lord, come by here..." "They used them as teaching tools, signature songs..." He sings the spiritual 'Balm in Gilead'. He points out the verse, "Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain. But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again" to stress how their deep faith sustained them and kept them from giving up.

We learned of the significance of signal song spirituals like 'Steal Away'. Signal songs were used to send secret messages when slaves were not allowed to gather in groups. These songs could be used as a signal to gather in a secret, designated spot, or to give a designated time to leave on the Underground Railroad. Wayne stressed how the condition of his ancestors thrust them to become champions of justice, not just for themselves, but for all of humanity.

Stafford musician and educator, Kit Randall delved into the blues for us. Blues music is said to have originated in the Deep South after the Civil War from the musical form of call and response. While most Western music is based on the diatonic scale, the blues has its own scale. Kit explained, "The blues was not always just for unhappiness. But it was a way for people to get out some

of that blues that they had." Kit described the blues as a "truly original American art form". He noted how remarkable it was that this original, American form of music was created by a people who have been subjugated and kept, and put down by white society for so long.

Wayne Dixon did double duty by teaching us about gospel music. He described gospel music as a descendant of the spiritual. "It is basically the same thing. The structure of it is the same and oftentimes the messages are the same." During the 1920's there was a massive migration of African Americans from the rural South to the large cities of the North. "They brought their spirituals with them... They started their own churches... They had access to pianos and drums... Then sometime in the mid 1940's a very inexpensive Hammond organ became avail-



Emery Austin Smith on piano. Arlene Avery photo.

able... They installed them in their churches, and this new music which was centered around the Hammond organ came into existence... The Hammond organ really, really shaped the sound of African American gospel music."

He described how in the urban North the pace and the rhythm of life changed. He used the spiritual 'Come by Here' as an example. The message was the same, as they were still being oppressed. Call and response was still used, but the pace and rhythm had changed to reflect their new condition. Another feature of gospel music was how it adapted European hymns to fit their own spiritual and worship needs. He used the hymn, 'Blessed Assurance' to show

how Black churches changed the hymn to stress the reassurance of their deep faith in order to meet their spiritual needs.

The concert continued with veteran jazz pianist, Emery Austin Smith teaching on jazz. Emery took us back to the days of Jelly Roll Morton out of New Orleans. "He was the first one to take the piano, and take what he heard from the people, which was a blues-oriented culture at the time... He was the first one to actually write for orchestras based on what he knew as a pianist. He played in those bordellos... They were great places to learn to play. Jelly Roll Morton was the first one to write arrangements for an orchestra, for a band. During that time also, we had a guy named Scott Joplin who started this ragtime. He was a well-trained musician/pianist... He took the way people played marches and brought it to the piano."

Emery went on to talk about the great Harlem stride pianists James P. Johnson, Fats Waller and Art Tatum. Fats Waller was his favorite. James P. Johnson taught Fats how to read and write music and play piano. Fats went on to teach Count Bassie piano and organ to keep the music going. "Art Tatum, the great pianist said he came from Fats... He had a lot of energy inside of him." George Gershwin greatly admired Fats and gained a lot of knowledge from him. "Fats was a great composer and also wrote some great Broadway musicals... 'Ain't Misbehavin' was one of them."

Emery played Fat's tune 'Ain't Misbehavin'. He went on playing an example of improvisation. He described it as, "making up songs based on the harmony, or the chords underlying the melody." Emery learned improvisation from old timers when he joined the musicians' union in 1947, at the age of 15. At the time, the unions were segregated. Emery joined the "Colored Local 335" after passing the rigorous entry exam.

Emery taught us jazz and jazz history from his lived experiences. He was present at the historic opening of the jazz club Birdland in December 1949. "That night Charlie Parker played... That was the first time I saw Harry Belafonte, but he wasn't singing Calypso. He was singing 'Blue Moon'... Before that, it was called Club Harlem... That's where I saw Art Tatum playing with a trio. Tatum was a great player... You couldn't keep up with him... Plus, Art was legally blind!"

Emery ended the concert with his fun rendition of Nat King Cole's recording, 'The Best Man'. What an incredible afternoon it was learning about African American history and culture through such rich and beautiful music. What I describe here are only some of the concert highlights. An audience member recorded the concert. If you'd like to learn more and hear the concert, the recording can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/4z5tkz5y>

Mansfield SWAC News

By Rita Kornblum, Member of the Mansfield Solid Waste Advisory Council (SWAC)

From time-to-time, the Mansfield Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) likes to report back to the community at large to let everyone know what we are currently involved in and to encourage others to work on similar efforts. "It does take a village"

What follows is a summary of our current efforts to contribute to a more environmentally sound community that we are all part of.

1) Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach that assigns producers responsibility for the end-of-life of products rather than a municipality. This can include both financial and operational responsibilities and as such, producers are required to provide funding and at times, services that assist the proper disposal of a product that most of us consume. Connecticut already has four EPR laws in place, which has relieved towns and cities the cost of hard-to-handle electronics, paint, mattresses and mercury thermostats at the end of their life.

The Mansfield's Town Council received a proposal from SWAC to show their support for packaging EPR as an important component of a comprehensive approach to address recycling challenges and concerns over single-use plastic pollution. On November 23, 2020 the Town Council adopted a Resolution Declaring the Town of Mansfield's Support for a Federal and State Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act.

SWAC has also met with local legislators, Rep. Haddad, Senator Flexer and Rep. Smith who have expressed their support for the three EPR bills that have been proposed this session.

They are:

S.B. No. 115 AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSUMER PACKAGING

H.B. No. 5139 AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR TIRES

H.B. No. 5142 AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CERTAIN GAS CYLINDERS

Anyone interested in learning more about extended producer responsibility should go to <https://epr.sustainablepackaging.org/>.

2) Mansfield Compost Campaign was launched in 2021 with the focus of seeking better and more ethical ways to reduce waste. Mansfield residents continue to receive information about the many benefits of composting to reduce the amount of total waste, to reduce costs, to reduce pollution from transporting and incinerating waste and to improve the soil quality from using compost. SWAC launched a video and poster contest for Mansfield youth to help raise awareness around composting and its effect on climate change. This contest is open to all Mansfield children in grades K-12. Winners will be announced at the Earth Extravaganza on Saturday, April 23, 2022 at the Mansfield Community Center. Residents have access to free compost bin kits. Made from salvaged chicken wire and posts that residents bring to the Mansfield Transfer Station, the kits are put together to make it easy to set up at home. Mansfield has also joined with the Towns of Hampton and Windham to offer a compost bin/rain barrel pre-order sale. The sale is already underway and ends April 16, 2022. To order go to: Mansfield residents - <http://www.enviroworld.us/mansfieldct> Hampton residents - <https://enviroworld.us/hamptonct> Windham residents - <https://enviroworld.us/windhamct>

3) The Repair Café returns on Saturday April 9, 2022 from 10 AM to 2 PM at the First Congregational Church located at 199 Valley Street in Willimantic. After a long hiatus due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Repair Café doors will be open again for free repairs of different items such as bicycles, small appliances, vacuum cleaners, lamps and sewing repairs. Participants are expected to cover the cost of spare parts needed for the repair and they must be able to carry their items in and out of the Café. The use of masks is recommended to ensure everyone's well-being. Please check the Willimantic Repair Café Facebook page @repaircafewillimantic the day before to ensure no cancellation due to a COVID spike.

Anyone interested in more information should contact Virginia Walton, Town of Mansfield Recycling Coordinator at waltonvd@mansfieldct.org or 860-429-3333.

And many thought we just talk trash!

MMS Students Earn Art and Writing Awards

Submitted by Margaret Chatey

Four Mansfield Middle School students have earned recognition in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a prestigious competition with 975 Connecticut students submitting creative work.

Sophie Marcus, a grade 8 student, earned a Gold Key and was nominated for the American Voices Award for her poem, "Frozen." As a Gold Key awardee, a top award in the competition, Sophie advances to the national competition.

Alice Han, grade 7, earned two Silver Keys, an extraordinary achievement, for her poems, "Her Story" and "Behind Closed Doors."

Honorable mention was awarded to two Mansfield students. Ella Gan, grade 7, earned honorable mention recognition in two different media, one for her art piece, "Education Should Not Be Manipulation"

and her story, "The World Beyond."

Grade 8 student Kalyani Tihaiya earned an honorable mention for her poem, "Parasailing."

Established in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards is a prestigious nationwide competition challenging middle and high school students to express their creative ideas.

The awards ceremony for state winners was held recently and there is a video of Gold Key winner Sophie Marcus and other nominees for the American Voices Award reading her poem at <https://cwp.uconn.edu/home-1/scholastic-writing-awards-2022-2/>.

All students selected to advance to the national level will have the opportunity to travel to New York City for a star-studded ceremony. Those students achieving national Gold Medal status are also eligible for scholarships.

Frozen

By Sophie Marcus

I am twelve.

I am holding back a sob
And tears roll down my cheeks like little ovals of pain
The death box disappears lower
And lower into the earth.

Younger, I run up to hug him and
I step into the house where a whirring Cuisinart lives
And I know it won't be long before the rich chocolate ice cream is frozen.

He sleeps peacefully in the red plaid chair by the roaring fire
With aromatic spices filling up his dreams yet
His laugh haunts me forever.

I now stand on the ground in which he lays
A deep breath fills up my chest and it takes
All of my energy to keep upright.

I want to tumble to the grass that is as frozen as his ice cream.

He is now in the earth, the crumbly chocolate dirt
The monster dumps more and more over the copper death box and I hold back a wail
I'll never see him again.

And I too pick up the happiness killer and throw a little bit of madness
Maybe sadness on top of the pile where he sleeps peacefully one more time
And then he is
Gone.

'Catch and Release'

Submitted by Steve Gerling

You may see some colorful new signs at popular fishing access sites in the northwest part of the Quiet Corner in the next few weeks.

The Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, with the support of local sportsmen's clubs, are launching a campaign to encourage more catch and release fishing.

Gary Lussier, President of the Thames Valley Chapter of TU, states: "The intent is not to discourage people who like to enjoy a fresh trout now and then (who doesn't?) but to raise awareness of the benefits of catch and release with minimal harm to the fish."

Figures from Andrew Bale of the DEEP show about 120,000 freshwater licenses and permits being issued. This includes about 80,000 trout stamps. Plus who knows how many younger kids who don't need licenses. At the same time the state stocks about 500,000 catchable size trout annually. According to Steve Gerling, coordinator of the project: "Fishing provides a truly great opportunity to enjoy the best of the outdoors But with those numbers it's not hard to see why the lakes and streams can be quickly depleted of trout when many people keep their entire catch at every outing."

He continues, "The main message of the campaign is that more catch and release will yield better fishing for more of the season. Especially in the case of trout, this also increases the possibility of more "hold-over" fish and ups the chances for natural reproduction in our lakes and streams. The signs give tips on how to minimize injury to your catch, and will even have a small pair of pliers attached for those who wish to bend down hook barbs at waterside."

In addition to the Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the following clubs added their endorsement and support to the effort: Putnam Fish and Game Club, Pomfret Rod and Gun Club, Eastern Ct. Sportsman's Club (Ashford), Fin, Fur, and Feather Club (Chaplin) and Stafford Fish and Game Club.

All of these groups ask you to please consider Catch and Release. It makes for better fishing for everyone.



An Update on Kevin

By Tom King

Thank you to all who sent emails and made phone calls as a result of the article in the March *Neighbors*. I have been contacting many different agencies/advocates in an effort to help Kevin. I did learn that because Kevin is not mentally deficient he cannot receive help from the State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Disabilities. Unfortunately, as this issue goes to press, his situation has gotten worse. The PCA that helps him has found another job and will be leaving in April. His stress level is through the roof as he faces the possibility of having to drive his wheelchair to Windham Hospital. There he will tell the emergency room staff he has no one to help. He is convinced that will result in a one-way trip to a local nursing home.

I'm beginning to think the only way to improve Kevin's life is for Governor Lamont to issue an executive order to reinstate Husky-C insurance to those whose coverage has been dropped because of the \$59 monthly increase in Social Security benefits. I am sure Kevin is not alone. Our government has screwed up and needs to make it right.

Help Wanted CNA or PCA

Disabled Windham resident in need of help a few hours a day. Must be dependable and have own transportation. References required. For more information call or text 860-933-3376.

The 1619 Project

By Cathy Cementina

The 1619 Project, like Critical Race Theory, has become a lightning rod for certain people who evidently see it as either disingenuous or a threat. This does beg the question of how many of those people have actually read The 1619 Project in its full book form. My guess is zero.

I have read each paragraph, each chapter, of this book. I can assure those who are afraid of or resentful of it that the goal of its authors' is to open our eyes to the history of the Black experience in this county – and, importantly, to bring our attention to the contributions Black people have made toward this country's commerce, education, legal systems, democracy, arts and music.

One of the wealth of issues discussed in The 1619 Project is citizenship. We learn in detail that as early as the 1830s there were "colored Council" meetings in Buffalo, in Syracuse, to share thoughts and ambitions in a business-like manner about how to make citizenship a birthright for all those born on this nation's soil. Including freed slaves. Do people know citizenship by birthright came about after much measured debate among Black men – not fiery rebellion, not vitriol aimed at white people -- but focused discussion about what the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution mean for the citizenship of those born in this country? For a long time, being born in this county was not enough to be declared one of its citizens. Birthright citizenship became the law only with the passing of the first Civil Rights Act of 1866. But we also learn in The 1619 Project that the President at that time, Andrew Johnson, threatened to veto that Act. Why? Because "the distinction of race and color is, by this Act, in favor of the

colored and against the white race." Johnson said this, a former president of the United States. Why should we not know that? In the end, Congress over-rode President Johnson's veto and birthright citizenship was born with the first Civil Rights Act, later to be reinforced by the Fourteenth Amendment. This is history as recounted in The 1619 Project. Nothing to be afraid of.

And interestingly, The 1619 Project brings into relief the way in which Black enslaved people were instrumental to the emergence of early capitalism in this country. Without their labor, it is doubtful the early colonists would have developed the commercial industry they did from cotton. Together, cotton plantation owners, enslaved workers in the south, wage laborers in the North who turned raw cotton into textiles, and consumers from across the ocean helped fashion a new economy, one that was global in scope and required the movement of capital, labor, and products across distances. In short: capitalism. "The beating heart of this new system was slavery." And it is also doubtful that our revolution from England would have succeeded without the wealth generated from slave-picked tobacco in Virginia: "It was Virginia tobacco, cultivated and harvested by enslaved workers, that was exported to help finance the Revolution."

Returning to the matter of democracy: The message that comes through repeatedly in this so-called controversial text is that, throughout all that they have endured, from slavery through lynching through Jim Crow through redlining through the denial of GI benefits to Black soldiers through the beating of Black bodies, Black people's faith in America's message of justice for all has persisted. Though they have been treated with profound inequality throughout our history, there is no group of people in America who so treasured freedom and equality as those who have been denied it. This is good stuff to think about.

This is what stimulates young brains to think reflectively about our democracy and its institutions. Why disparage that?

"We were told once, by virtue of our bondage, that we could never be American. But it was by virtue of our bondage that we became the most American of all."

References: Jamelle Bouie, Martha S Jones, Mathew Desmond, Nikole Hannah-Jones, The 1619 Project

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

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

Upcoming Scheduled Movie Dates and Titles

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.

May 6, 2022: The Mask of Dimitrios

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

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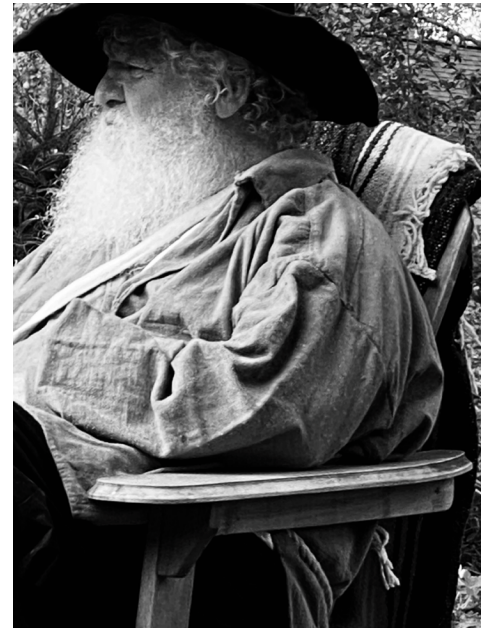
Thine

I believe I hear them calling
From the fields just over the way
Voices that I seem to remember
Though not so familiar today

I thought I would never forget
All the faces I hold so dear
Perhaps if you would just whisper
Your name in this old cloudy ear

Something will caress my fading memory
And wipe away this agonizing fear
of not always knowing your relationship
nor the joy felt throughout the years
So..

Please never shy from telling me why
You will love me still way over here
And will take the time now and then
To find me waiting for you to be near



Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.



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