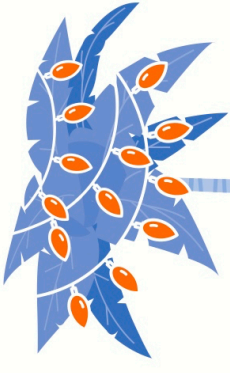




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NEIGHBORS AUG 2022 FREE



No. 210 Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut and beyond

Bugs and Breathing and Riding About

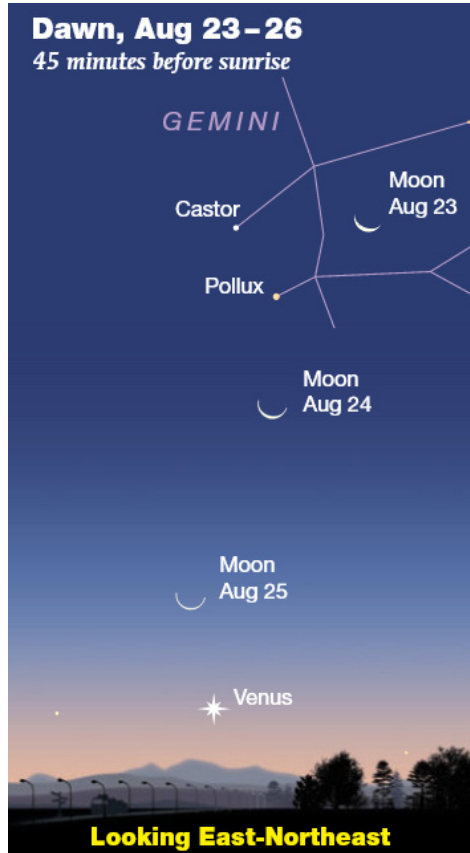
By Bob Grindle

The window next to my desk is open and the sound of the rain...one moment shallow and light, and then deeper and steady almost like something alive outside my window is breathing...teases me into picturing nothing so much as a kind of nature's rinse cycle, without the spin of course. A bit of distant thunder and a softly exhaling breeze that is the raindrops washing their way down through the trees' dusty canopies and over the parched stones, on to the grass and into the little brook that courses through the backyard becomes the musical backdrop to a drought-interrupting afternoon that invites something more perhaps than a simple "we need the rain..." response.

Almost as if on cue, one of the house wrens who are nesting in the fuchsia hanging on the front porch shows up in the downpour with an insect for their brood's lunch...and a hummingbird pauses at a passionflower blossom to grab another insect before darting through the rain up into the towering cottonwoods that face the house; probably also feeding their brood. Despite the rain, the air is filled with midges and gnats and hover flies. They live in a different world from us, their small size allowing them fly between the raindrops, only occasionally getting knocked to the ground where they become food for beetles, mice other critters. It has been estimat-

ed that there are more than 2 billion insects for every human being and I smile to think of how deeply the rainfall somehow nurtures my sense of connection to this one and only world we will ever know. Years ago, during three months of bicycling solo across the United States and up the west coast after being discharged from the US Air Force, I was able to meet and talk with a wide variety of people who were on the road for an endless number of reasons, and I grew to understand that while many, maybe even most, people think of life as a sort of journey, very few of them think of planet (Mother) Earth as their ride.

As the day begins to fade and the rain is finding its way into the soil and begins nourishing a subterranean world so hidden, mysterious, complex, important and barely understood, yet right underfoot I recall an article (Magic Bus) written by Mark Svetz in 2007 and reprinted in last month's issue of Neighbors... Magic Bus is all about a simple adventure that unfolds when two people decide to use public transportation and quickly becomes a metaphor for the majesty and magic and the simple, personal pleasure of each of our participation, in some fashion, in keeping the ride going. I couldn't help, when Mark wrote of being "on the bus," but think of Mother Earth as the bus, and the soon-to-be 8 billion members of the human race as ticket holders on the only ride we will ever board.



The Perseid meteor shower this year will not be much to shout about, coming as it does the night after a full August Moon, but this most famous of all the shooting star shows can actually stretch from mid-July until the end of August and if you've ever witnessed one of the classic meteor outbursts that the Perseids are known for and watched as 120 or more meteors per hour streaked across the sky then you know that the investment of a couple of hours under a late night sky in mid-August, the night of the 12th-13th, can pay off nicely. But for an easier and altogether beautiful, though perhaps not quite as fraught with dramatic possibilities, chance to look up into the beauty of the sky over our heads, the early mornings of late August (23-26) will offer views of the waning Moon passing down through Gemini and very close to the twins Castor and Pollux as they draw your eye to the sparkling and always impressive Venus very near the eastern horizon.








Enjoy this final full month of summer and the busy sounds of a world that is never at rest...stop for a moment and breathe deeply of the what is still a remarkably rich atmosphere here in the neighborhood of eastern Connecticut, and if you find a few spare minutes in your day look through some back issues *Neighbors*, the archives are a treat, and pull up an old article or two written by Mark Svetz... they're quite good.

Rainy days this summer have been few and far between though and the cozy, almost introspective feeling of a summer rain seems a pleasant counterpoint to the clear, warm days when skies seem to stretch forever, especially here in Connecticut. I can't recall a July when there were so many days with clear skies and very little humidity...until this past week, at least. But on to August and perhaps some more clear nights and early mornings.

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On our cover:
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Children playing in a water fountain on a hot day.
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This is our time on Earth.
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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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Why Can't We All...Get Along?

By Loretta Wrobel



While driving on Route 84 this summer, an extra gigantic black pickup truck passed me and the first thought that pulsed through my brain was "Aha, there goes a bigoted white male who wants to maintain the status quo of inequality, has to be a white supremacist who accepts that the richer you are the better you are. As the truck passed me, my eyes traveled to his bumper sticker. In script across his entire bumper, I read out loud, Why Can't We All (spaces due to bracket on bumper) Get Along? I nearly drove off the road! I REALLY missed that one. I was hit by the realization that I carry many biases and prejudices around, without even paying attention to how flippant and dangerous that is. I fancy myself an open and aware individual, and now I have to digest that I have major blind spots.

How could I be so narrow in my reactions? In the world we inhabit, it is easy to make instantaneous assumptions about people and move quickly into stereotypical categorizing. What is the first thought when we see someone? Are we judging them or pretending we know who they are by their vehicle or ...? I had to chuckle as I came to the understanding that it is so much easier for us humans to put people in boxes and categories. It is arduous and challenging to stop the impulse to label someone and to make the effort to get to know what that individual is thinking. When I quickly judge a person, I can feel safe, mistakenly convinced that I know what makes that person tick, without any effort on my part.

The problem with this faulty manner of operating means we start to believe our assumptions. We don't want to bother with taking the time to understand who the other is. We are reluctant to consider what their believe system is, because just maybe, we might discover we have more in common than we think. It was a shock to accept that I casually labeled the driver of the truck. I wonder how many of these hidden myths we all carry in our backpacks?

Communicating is essential and it is not the first tool we are trained to reach for. If I am perceiving that someone is unable to understand my viewpoint, I am not motivated to try to engage in meaningful dialogue with them. I might say to myself "Why bother?" or "They are not worth the time and energy." This is crazy thinking, and it creates an inability to have a real and honest communication with each other.

Is it less taxing to operate from mistaken assumptions? When we engage in real dialogue with a person that we initially disagree with, we may discover places where we connect. We can never know if we don't take the time to seek out our commonalities. What a waste to miss the opportunity. I shuddered to accept the pickup owner had a bumper sticker that reflected a question I have spent many hours pondering.

What kind of a conversation would we have had?

I am curious as to where he found that particular sticker, as I love bumper stickers. Did he have it made especially for that truck? As I open my mind and unpack my biases, I have numerous questions and am intrigued by what motivated the owner to broadcast that profound message to the world.

I hear friends remarking that someone is a _____ (fill in the blank, like Republican or Democrat) and therefore is not worth sharing a conversation. What a terrible situation, to miss the opportunity to find out where you can agree rather than assuming you will disagree. In our complicated world, we need to join together to devise new and unique solutions to never-before-seen issues such as climate change.

I fantasize sitting down and really delving into issues where I possess strong opinions with people I assume will not be on the same track. Not so simple because I know I have to be able to control myself and not let my passion interfere with my listening ability. Maybe if I committed to listening to the other person, and attempted to understand where they are coming from, it would provide an opportunity to expand my horizons. Yes, I am totally aware—easier to talk with a person I know thinks like I do and will validate my opinions. We all enjoy that dialogue.

I do acknowledge life is not so simple. Our ability to mix different ideas and thoughts usually results in a richer solution. One issue is it is frustrating and scary to listen to someone who takes a different approach and lives a different life. Remember the art of communication. Conversing is an art as is listening.

If we engaged in more conversation and less shouting and threatening, would our world be different? Maybe there is hope for us after all. If I can be honest enough with myself to accept areas where I can do better, I am opening up to learning valuable information. The "other" that in the past I may have quickly dismissed could have a potent idea or solution to a problem both of us are concerned with and passionate about.

Learning from each other is a powerful resource we humans possess. Perhaps we don't use this resource often enough. "I don't want to argue!" I hear that excuse often. It doesn't need to be argumentative. We can connect without agreeing on everything. We can choose to disagree, and not stop all future conversation. All of us have the power to change our minds and adopt new ways of operating.

I am wanting to stay ready to unpack my prejudices and predetermined opinions. I know the trucker and I would have had a grand conversation. He certainly stimulated my thoughts with his probing question. I wonder as I am considering all of this. Is the question really "How Can We All Get Along?" and not "Why Can't We All Get Along?"

By the way, after this incident I visited one of my favorite nephews, and guess what? He has a black pickup truck! As long as I can laugh at myself, I will be fine. So will you.

it's a great day for a subway!

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Preserving Awareness of Local History

By Bill Powers

History, geography and geology have not only always been fascinating but have also aroused my curiosity about places and the people who in the past had called them their home. This was also apparent to Sister Grace, my fourth grade teacher; and, I am grateful to her for encouraging my affinity for history. This attraction, despite many twists and turns in my career path, continues to this day. It has always been of special significance to meet and work with others of a similar persuasion. My interest in history notably extends to the places where I have lived. Our “sense of place” connects us human beings to a specific place. It is a feeling that we have, and as we often say, it is where our roots are. The sense of place involves the interaction of humans with the landscape and its cultural and natural features. Our human experience is sustained by knowledge that is passed along through the generations that follow. The love of a place inspires us to know its history.



Last month (July, 2022) on a beautiful summer weekend afternoon in Willimantic, across from the south side of the “frog bridge”, historian Bev York was leading an attentive group of children and adults, who were making candles as was done during the Colonial Era (see photo). The event was being held on the lawn of the Windham Historical Society’s Jillson House Museum. It was part of one of the museum’s summer Saturday afternoon programs that will run through Labor Day. Similar summer enrichment programs that are free for kids and an accompanying adult are being offered by many museums in Connecticut.

Only the day before, Bev York was leading a day long workshop for a dozen prospective museum docents and volunteers. The program began at the Lebanon Historical Society and Museum and was continued after traveling to the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum in Willimantic, with the final stop at the Jillson House Museum. Participants were introduced to the finer points for becoming an effective museum docent. Docents are people who meet and greet guests at a museum or art gallery and give them a tour while sharing interesting stories. The critical importance of the many roles of other museum volunteers for preserving our local history was also emphasized.

Bev York, along with Donna Baron, the museum director of the Lebanon Historical Society Museum, discussed the variety of museums that exist in our area, including their missions and describing the wide range of organizational structures that are found. Some have paid professional staff while others, most of them, are operated strictly by groups of volunteers. Donna Baron pointed out: “Many historic sites would not be able to open their doors to the public, if it were not for volunteers, who tell the important stories about our history.” Some historic sites and museums have had to severely reduce their hours due to the lack of available volunteers. In general, the lack of volunteers is plaguing many non-profit organizations.

In addition to docents, there are many other kinds of volunteers who make invaluable contributions to the organizations they serve. I spoke not only with Donna Baron, but also Ann Galonska from the Mansfield Historical Society Museum and Ryan Elgin of the Gardiner Hall Jr. Museum for their perspectives about the many opportunities available to volunteers.

Museum volunteers include board officers and other board members as well as many others who actively contribute to meeting the important needs of organizations devoted to preserving our history that include: doing

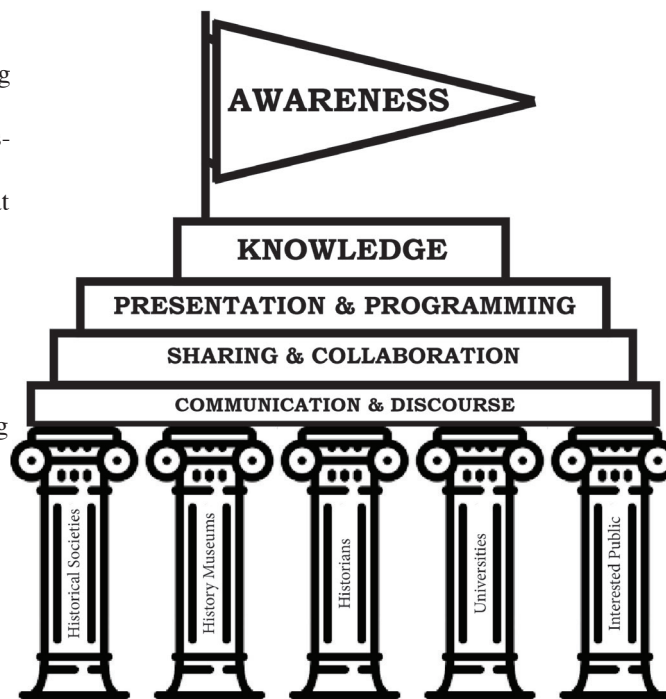
research, writing for publications, fund raising, gardening, maintenance, assistance with mailings, design and construction of exhibits, advertising, marketing, helping at special events, collecting admission charges, providing guidance to visitors about COVID precautions, safeguarding collections, sales of merchandise and offering forms and newsletters to visitors.

Volunteers often bring special skills with them which can be immensely valuable to a museum. During the process of volunteering, they can acquire a new understanding about history of the place where they live which they can share with visitors.

Also, as Donna Baron will tell you: “Volunteering at a museum is fun. At least it should be. You meet new people, share your enthusiasm, and you are making a difference in your community. History museums are all about community and making connections. Yes, volunteers undertake important tasks; but in my experience, it is having a good time and feeling like they are making a difference that keeps them coming back.”

When writing about local history, I often contact our local museums and historical societies and find them to be tremendously helpful; and they provide useful and valid information. It looks as if I’m not alone according to recent surveys in which “the American public regard museums as highly trustworthy sources of information - ranking second only to friends and family, and significantly more trustworthy than NGOs generally, various news organizations, the government, corporations and business, and social media. For respondents who had visited a museum in the past two years (one-quarter of respondents), museums are **the number one trusted source of information.**” (*Museums and Trust 2021, American Alliance of Museums*)

Recently, during my very first visit to the Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum in Willington, I was able to discuss the role of our museums for preserving history by raising historical awareness. The museum is affiliated with the Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance, Inc. (EC-CHAP). Ryan Elgin, the new museum Assistant Director and Museum Curator and Thomas Buccino, Jr., EC-CHAP’s Executive Director shared EC-CHAP’s proposed model that aims at the preservation and stewardship of our local history and called a “Synergistic Framework to Raise Historical Awareness.” (See Image)



A Synergistic Framework for Historical Awareness

In order to promote the goal of historical awareness it includes four critical components: “1) knowledge, 2) presentation and programming, 3) sharing & collaboration and, 4) communication & discourse.” This model recognizes the importance of five types of resources that are key elements for the processes to occur: “1) Historical Societies, 2) History Museums, 3) Historians, 4) Universities, and, 5) an Interested Public.” From my perspective, “An Interested Public” would seem to be the important catalyst for energizing any plan for raising historical awareness, therein the importance of the role of volunteers.

If you are interested in helping to preserve our fascinating local history, visit a local museum and volunteer. There are plenty of ways that you can contribute to the success of the museum that will be a rewarding experience. Whether it is an afternoon each month or more frequently, you will not only be glad you did but you will also be contributing to the preservation of your local history.

Bill Powers is a retired Windham school teacher, volunteers at the Windham Textile & History Museum and writes a weekly column about local history for the Willimantic Chronicle.

An Old Child’s Lament

Simple, cold creatures
Small fry of fish or frog
Need the sun on the bog
They struggle fiercely to survive
When no more siblings are alive
To pass on the precious seeds
That’s all Mother Nature needs

But now the frogs and fish are lost
Huge tire tracks their swamp crisscrossed
And when the scene lights up at dawn
The springtime peepers are long gone

Going to school the child walks by
Too young to leave, too old to cry
At school the childish dreams are dead
The happy picture books unread

The adults fear their older children
Their crazy natures are bewilddin’
When did my baby turn this way?
They fear the dawn of judgement day

But where’s the land we children loved?
That you were s’posed to take care of?
You’ve lost the precious seeds of life
Raised me in ignorance and strife.

Kathy O. LaVallee, North Windham

Thoughts on the Legacy of Mark Svetz

For readers of the *Neighbors* paper and others, Mark Svetz will be sorely missed. Mark was a giant in his role as a person that established and maintained our important connection to humanity.

A page is being turned that I hope his followers will be able to negotiate in a positive manner. Few people get to the level of being inspirational, but Mark accomplished this. He kept us connected to our best instincts from the past during a lifetime in which erosion of real values has occurred at a significant level. We’re kidding ourselves if we don’t realize this.

The answer is not to see his passing as tragic and give up. Don’t fold the tent. Rather, remember his sage viewpoints and continual progressive stands that make a better people, a better community, and a better nation. I can see him nodding his approval of this approach.

Unlike most ‘liberals’ Mark talked the talk and he walked the walk. His adventures with Tony Clark put them in that unique role. Groundbreaking, in the case of the Needle Exchange Program they instituted, and in other ventures as well like the Iran Contra days with a sandwich board on Main St.

Functioning as a journalist and truth teller fits that role as well. Educating readers regularly like Mark did is a form of walking the walk. Important arguments and moral stands are sort of useless just bouncing around in your head. Mark had the courage and tenacity to communicate his thoughts through his writing and it will be missed.

I will miss his wise advice and open-door policy, when occasionally, I had a major gripe about an issue local or national, I was always encouraged to stop by 380 Pleasant St.

Some of the things I have done as an activist with Veterans for Peace have been the highlights of my life. The memories and the personal satisfactions resulting, perhaps, would not have occurred or certainly would have had lessened impacts without Mark Svetz.

His following in the *Neighbors* paper allowed me to fill the bus to Fort Meade, Maryland in our support for Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning. I’m fully aware of that and very grateful as Mark researched the issue and presented it to the public in a professional way in the paper. (I actually learned more about the issue that drove me). We even lured the publisher, Tom King to participate in the trip and hear Daniel Ellsberg (of the Pentagon Papers fame) express his respect for Manning’s actions.

I’ve expressed directly to Mark his importance in helping me in several projects, my interest in the concept of the 99% prompted his wonderful article that brought back the important thought conceived during the Occupy Movement. I told him “You’re my springboard for reaching more people and increasing the message reach”.

Mark’s reaction was so rewarding as he smiled and responded, “glad to help”. I won’t forget that glow that came over him. He was doing what motivated him for his life- trying to help us all become better neighbors and better people. Certainly, that’s the lesson he’d want us to keep in mind going forward.

Bill Potvin

The American Experiment

By Gary Bergquist

Many Americans have contempt for groups such as the Taliban, ISIS, Boko Haram, and al-Qaeda. These groups hold their religious views to be superior to those of other groups. They forcefully impose their will on those around them, a practice that is contrary to American traditions and sensibilities. The first words of the First Amendment of the American Constitution state, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..." In other words, we are free to practice the religion of our choosing, and the government may not abridge our freedoms by imposing anyone's religious edicts on us.

This "freedom of religion" principle works. We shake our heads as we read of never-ending conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, driven inevitably by groups identifying themselves primarily by their religious views. We wonder, why can't they just live and let live?

The principle of allowing others to exercise their freedom while we exercise our own began as an experiment. In a letter penned on January 9, 1790, George Washington said, "The establishment of our new Government seemed to be the last great experiment, for promoting human happiness, by reasonable compact, in civil Society." On June 28, 1804, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "No experiment can be more interesting than that we are now trying, & which we trust will end in establishing the fact that man may be governed by reason and truth."

The views by these Founders on the new American government reflect their recognition of the novel and extraordinary trail being blazed at the time. It also reflects their uncertainty of the eventual outcome of the "Experiment." Today, we tend to take the American exercise of freedom for granted. Fading in our memories is the understanding that the notion of liberty through democracy is unnatural. History seems to prefer arrangements derived of power, not votes, and of slavery, not freedom. Only the fortuitous confluence of events and circumstances, namely Great Britain's dominating rule, a rugged and independent attitude borne of overcoming adversity in a challenging environment, an ocean of separation, and a collection of educated and idealistic visionaries, prepared the perfect seeding ground for the Experiment in America.

While the rules for this Experiment, namely the American Constitution, define its framework, the rules alone do not guarantee its success. Evident to the Founders was the fact that freedom, to work, must be a two-way street. To be free, you must engage in a "reasonable compact" in which you exercise your freedoms while allowing others to exercise theirs. Seemingly obvious, this practice is the crucial factor in determining whether the Experiment succeeds. Because human interactions overlap, we inevitably tread on one another. While freedom implies we can do what we want, our actions may conflict with the actions or attitudes of others. It is self-evident that if we expect our freedom to be honored, we must honor the freedom of others. And therein lies the challenge.

For the system to work, there must be give and take. Two personality traits ease this process. While not codified in the Constitution, they are as important as any passage in that document: manners and tolerance. Nowadays, we might call these traits consideration and thick skin. Imagine each of us living in a glass house. Within the walls, we are free to do as we please. But our actions can be seen by others and can affect them. As such, we must be considerate of our neighbors as we exercise our freedoms. At the same time, we must have thick skin for when we are offended by our neighbors as they exercise their freedoms. Our consideration can compensate for our neighbor's lack of thick skin, and our thick skin can compensate for our neighbor's lack of consideration.

Implied in this model is the acceptance that we each must be willing to sacrifice some of our freedoms for the sake of the freedoms of others. This is the paradox inherent in liberty, and this is what makes the pursuit of freedom challenging, which brings us to the current day.

Circumstances have brought us to a point where consideration and thick skin are only rarely practiced. We have lost sight of the "reasonable compact" with our fellow citizens. Tensions are high. As Abraham Lincoln said in his Gettysburg Address:

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure."

We are held together by a common history and a common set of rules, but rules alone cannot unite us. The issue of abortion is a case in point. Advocates on both sides seem to abhor members of the other side, demeaning them at every opportunity. Both camps stretch their arguments to the limit, referring to themselves in glowing terms ("pro-choice" or "pro-life") while disparaging the other side

("violators of women's bodies" or "baby killers"). Rational discussion is impossible. Consideration and thick skin are in short supply.

Understanding the underlying issues in the termination of an unwanted pregnancy is not the problem. The cause, motivations, methods, and outcome are clear. The intractable question is that of murder. In America, there are two definitions of murder. One comes from the lawbooks (homicide, manslaughter, suicide, first-degree murder, and so on). The other comes from our religious training ("thou shalt not kill"). The former is pliable and reflects the will of the people as enacted by elected officials. The latter comes from our religious documents and training and is set in stone.

Those of us in the pro-choice camp opt for the former definition of murder. Since abortion has been legal for the past half-century, it is not murder. Those of us in the pro-life camp opt for the latter definition of murder. Our religious and moral upbringing teach us that killing is never justified, regardless of any words in the lawbooks. Killing is a sin for which our eternal souls will answer.

Stated in this way, there is no argument that can sway either side. Each camp attempts to use the branches of the federal government to establish laws or judicial precedents that will elevate its views and coerce those on the other side to accept them. Both sides see the enforcement power of the federal government as the proper tool to ensure that its views are practiced by all. Forgotten is the Founders' fear that the greatest potential for abuse comes from the government, not from the people. Their mission in drafting the Constitution was to define the role of the federal government while limiting its power over the people. Yet, we find ourselves pursuing that very power so we may use it to control those with whom we don't agree.

Our glass houses are becoming brick fortresses.

Those in the pro-choice group would likely argue for glass houses since their desire for choice aligns with the edicts of freedom. Those in the pro-life group face a subtle and more difficult dilemma. Since everyone is free to not get an abortion in the event of unwanted pregnancy, they need not violate their moral views should they face an unwanted pregnancy. They can stay true to their beliefs and give birth. But their morality demands they stop others from perpetuating the murder of babies. This is where they knowingly and reluctantly choose to abridge the liberty of others in an overt attempt to stop them. They choose life over the Experiment. After all, when they reach the end of their own mortal journeys, they must answer to their Maker. Will they face His wrath for permitting others to kill, or will they face His wrath for allowing the American Experiment to fail? Ironically, this is the choice those in the anti-pro-choice camp must make. As pro-lifers, they choose souls over experiments.

The Founders faced the same choice two and a half centuries ago. While deeply religious, they understood the conflict inherent in promoting freedom and religion at the same time. They managed this conflict by resolving that they were responsible for their own souls and not the souls of others.

The decision by pro-lifers to choose life over freedom is not an easy one. However, it is a choice that is natural. It is in our nature, as creatures of God, to mold others in our own image. The act of imposing moral and religious views on those around us has been the way of humankind for more centuries than the Experiment has been run and will likely be that way for many centuries after the Experiment has been buried by these choices. For the sake of preserving life, pro-life proponents pray that the imposition of their views over others is not perceived by our Maker in the same light as theological repression by the Taliban. Glass houses or not, none of us wish to spend an eternity in the same neighborhood with them.

Gary Bergquist is a local freelance writer. His latest book, Becoming What We Watch: Television's Unintended Legacy, is available from Amazon.

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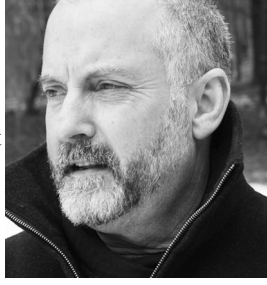
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I Never Met A Tomato I Did Not Like

By C. Dennis Pierce



Summer tomatoes right off the vine or fresh from your local farmer's market, what is not to like. Every year I plant way too many tomatoes of various kinds. I have come across some with names like characters out of a 50's Western, Red Brandywine, Radiator Jack's Mortgage Lifter, Red Oxheart, and Shady Lady. All of which are heirloom tomatoes. To grow a great tomato it takes sunshine, complex organic soil with lots of nutrients and judicious amounts of water to make a memorable tomato.

When selecting tomatoes, they should be heavy for their size and have a vivid color. When selecting them they should yield to the touch but not be too soft. They should also smell earthy and aromatic. When storing tomatoes, it is suggested that you never refrigerate tomatoes. Store them in a bowl or plate away from the sunlight but make sure they are not stacked on top of each other. They like each other but not that much. Lastly, make plans to use them. As they get older, they can attract fruit flies. Either purchase smaller quantities or be prepared to make sauce, salads, or salsa with the others that are not consumed immediately.

I cannot say I am lucky with my tomatoes but then again, I always have enough. I always grow a couple of cherry tomato plants next to my back porch either for snacking when I let the dogs out or to grab for a quick sauté of tomato, fresh basil and garlic. Another quick recipe, which to me, screams out summer, is a salad that is made by placing a slice of tomato on a plate, followed by a slice of mozzarella cheese and then repeat possibly with four slices of tomato in total. Top this with chopped, or threads of fresh basil. Drizzle olive oil over the top and also add balsamic vinegar. Add a sprinkle of salt and a heavy dose of ground pepper. I could eat this combination every day.

Right now, I am on the look out for "field tomatoes". These are tomatoes that might be disformed or have darker spots where they grew on the ground. These are typically less expensive in the markets but these are the ones I purchase to make my, one or two batches of tomato sauce that is later frozen so it will be a glimpse of summer, when served mid- winter.

This month's recipe is a family favorite. I have made it while visiting the Jersey Shore utilizing Jersey Tomatoes. If you have never had Jersey Tomatoes you don't know what you are missing. I am not kidding. At the local farm stands in New Jersey, the price of these tomatoes is comparable to the price of steak. The following Panzanella salad is a traditional Italian salad. I urge you to try it at least once. You will see what I mean. Panzanella comes from the Latin word panis, meaning "bread". This is a dish that was originally created because it was a great solution to utilize leftovers. The bread absorbs the flavors of the recipe without falling apart.

The important thing to remember when creating this dish is that you need to use stale bread. I have also prepared this with cubed mozzarella cheese. If you are using cheese add the cubes to your pepper mixture and toss.

Panzanella Salad
Servings – 6

Ingredients:

6 ripe tomatoes, about 2 ¼ pounds.
12 ounces of a few days old country style bread, Ciabatta, Italian (something dense and crusty not soft)
2/3 cup plus 4 tablespoons of olive oil. Extra Virgin preferred.
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar. In a pinch I have taken red wine and added white vinegar to it.
2 garlic cloves, minced
¾ teaspoon of salt, plus more to taste
¾ teaspoon of freshly ground pepper, plus more to taste.
½ cup of thinly sliced fresh basil
¼ cup of capers, drained
1 cup of jarred, roasted red bell pepper, cut into strips
¼ cup of pitted, kalamata olives, halved lengthwise

Directions:

Some individuals like to blanch their tomatoes ahead of time and then remove the seeds. I think that process hinders the flavor of fresh summer tomatoes so, as you can see, I suggest that the tomatoes are cubed. In a small bowl, soak the capers and remaining 2 tablespoons of vinegar for 10 minutes. In another, small bowl, toss the roasted peppers with 2 tablespoons of oil. Season the peppers with ¼ teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Set aside. Cut tomatoes into 1-inch cubes. Cut or tear the bread into 1-inch cubes. In a bowl, whisk 2/3 cup of oil, ¼ cup of vinegar, the garlic and a half of a teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Whisk together. In a large bowl add mixture of oil, etc. to the bread and tomatoes. Mix thoroughly. Set aside for 5 minutes.

Take your final serving dish and transfer one half of the bread mixture. On top arrange half of the roasted pepper mixture, capers and olives over the bread mixture. Repeat layering with the remaining bread mixture, then peppers, capers, olives and basil. Cover the salad and let stand for thirty minutes. Do not refrigerate. Before serving drizzle the remaining two tablespoons of oil over the salad.

My last word of warning is do not let tomato season sneak by you. Before you know it, it is over and you are out of luck. Yes, summer is zipping by. UConn students start arriving mid -August, I just hope the days/nights will get a little cooler but hey at least we do not have to shovel. Adeau, for another 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!



Writing

By Judy Davis

Writing is when I am standing
in
the middle of a
contradiction.
It is using
my imagination
to peer into a
dusty corner
of a day,
and saying,
"Look what I found!
Life!"

Free Admission to Windham Museums

Submitted by Bev York

The America Museum and the Jillson House Museum were recently awarded a grant from Connecticut Humanities to support our participation in the CT Summer at the Museum initiative.

The program invites Connecticut children ages 18 and under plus one accompanying Connecticut resident adult to visit participating museums free of charge from July 1 through September 5, 2022. Funding for the initiative is provided by the CT General Assembly, with the support of Connecticut Humanities and the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of the Arts, which also receives support from the federal ARPA.

The Jillson House Museum is located at 627 Main Street in Willimantic. The Museum will offer different Early American crafts and activities for children and families each Saturday from noon to 4.

The America Museum will start the summer out with a History Scavenger Hunt. Pick up your participation sheets and visit local historical places around Windham. When you are finished you can turn in your sheets at the Hoppy Days Diner and get a free ice cream cone. Learn some local history and interesting stories and cool off with local ice cream. You can pick up your History Scavenger Hunt forms at either the America Museum, 47 Crescent St, or the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce, 1010 Main Street, Willimantic anytime during the week and weekends. For more information please call us at 860-423-6389.

The CT Summer at the Museum program was extremely successful in the summer of 2021, with museums throughout the state hosting hundreds of thousands of children, many of whom would not otherwise be able to afford admission. This program is even more important in 2022 given that inflation and high gasoline prices are already adversely impacting attendance at our institutions, especially among lower income families.

A visit to a museum provides a special opportunity that can positively impact mental health, demonstrably improve learning outcomes among children and youth, and offer positive activities and outlets in many of the neighborhoods, towns, and cities that we serve. As children and students missed out on more than two years of group and school visits to our institutions as part of hands-on, interactive learning, the CT Summer at the Museum Program gives these children and students a chance to experience our institutions and benefit from our programs, activities, and exhibits.

About the America Museum

The America Museum seeks to have visitors reflect upon and understand the events, struggles and sacrifices for freedom, equality, and democracy. The Museum creates concise unbiased and balanced exhibits on relevant topics that connect stories to current events. The public will be enlightened and engaged in discussion, interactive exhibitions, and programs. Americans must acknowledge and honor the brave, relish our victories, study the failures, help heal the scars, and ensure that we learn from the past.

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Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Bettye Swann

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 Bettye Swann, who wrote her own #1 Soul hit.

She was born Betty Jean Champion in Shreveport, Louisiana, on October 24, 1944, and grew up in Arcadia, about 50 miles east. There, she sang with a female group called the Fawns. They were not, however, the same Fawns who recorded for Money Records during Bettye’s tenure with the label.

As a young woman, she relocated to Los Angeles to pursue her dream of making it in the music business. By then, she had taken on the professional name of Bettye Swann. On her 20th birthday, she signed with the independent record label, Money. In early 1965, she reached #27 on the *Billboard* Rhythm & Blues chart with “Don’t Wait Too Long.” Swann would have to wait two more years for her next charted single, a number she wrote herself.

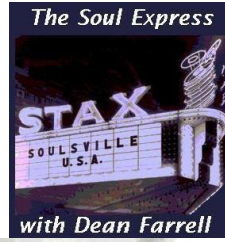
“Make Me Yours” supplanted Stevie Wonder’s “I Was Made to Love Her” at #1 on the *Billboard* R&B chart dated July 22, 1967. It held the top spot for two weeks. (On the pop chart, it peaked at #21.) The session included guitarist Charles Wright, who later had hits with the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band; pianist James Carmichael, who would produce the Commodores; vibraphonist Roy Ayers, who would play with Herbie Mann and have a successful solo career; and bassist Bob West, who would write songs for the Jackson Five.

Arranger/producer Arthur Wright remembered Bettye Swann as a shy, capable artist who liked to be prepared. “She wanted to be involved in every part of the record, and we had a good time. The only problem was that high note where she comes back into the song after the sax break. She didn’t like to sing high notes.”

Shortly after “Make Me Yours,” Swann married her manager, George Barton. They relocated to Georgia, where Barton became a music promoter on the colorfully named Chitlin’ Circuit. Within a year, however, Swann was back in L.A. When her contract with Money expired, she signed with Capitol and worked with producer Wayne Shuler, a fellow Louisianan. He had wanted to make an R&B version of Jeannie Seely’s country hit, “Don’t Touch Me,” and found the perfect vehicle in Bettye Swann. The resulting single became her second-biggest hit, reaching #14 on the Soul chart (#38 pop). It also was the first of many country-soul recordings that Bettye Swann would make. She even recorded a duet with Buck Owens.

By 1972, Swann had left Capitol for Atlantic. There, she had her third-biggest hit, the decidedly non-country “Victim of a Foolish Heart.” Her final charted single, on Big Tree, was a 1976 duet with Sam Dees. After that, Swann left the music business, moved to Las Vegas, and assumed her husband’s surname of Barton. She became a teacher in the Las Vegas school system, working with special-education students.

Swann’s fellow soul diva, Candi Staton, remembered her as “a beautiful lady. She was really, really friendly. Soft-spoken, very generous. Just a down-home girl, someone you’d be glad to know.”



Charted singles:

- “Don’t Wait Too Long” (1965) R&B #27, Pop #131
- “Make Me Yours” (1967) R&B #1 (2 weeks), Pop #21
- “Fall in Love With Me” (1967) R&B #36, Pop #67
- “Don’t Touch Me” (1968) R&B #14, Pop #38
- “Angel of the Morning” (1969) Pop #109
- “Don’t You Ever Get Tired (Of Hurting Me)?” (1969) Pop #102
- “Little Things Mean a Lot” (1970) Pop #114
- “Victim of a Foolish Heart” (1972) R&B #16, Pop #63
- “Til I Get It Right” (1973) R&B #88
- “Today I Started Loving You Again” (1973) R&B #26, Pop #46
- “The Boy Next Door” (1974) R&B #71
- “All the Way In or All the Way Out” (1975) R&B #83
- “Storybook Children” (duet with Sam Dees, 1976) R&B #84

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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Upcoming Scheduled Movie Dates and Titles:

August 5, 2022: Detour (1945) 67m.
Al Roberts’ life takes an unexpected and unpleasant turn when he

decides to hitchhike to the West Coast in pursuit of his girlfriend Sue. When the driver who gave him a ride turns up dead, Al decides that the police won’t believe his innocence and decides to dispose of the body. Starring Tom Neal. Directed by: Edgar G. Ulmer.

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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.

History in the Present: Sharing Stories in the Continuum of Life

By Jesse R. Clark

My life has been filled with storytellers and teachers. More often than not, they end up being one and the same. Teachers often teach through stories, specifically when it comes to history. We think of history as famous people who did great things, good or bad. Famous painters, writers, actors, who have achieved national or global recognition. However, each individual is a bit of history and we all have a story. Actually, we all have a *lot* of stories. My grandparents, Tony and Kathy Clark, had a couple of stories. We heard how my grandmother created the Boom Box Parade with help from Wayne Norman. We know how my grandfather and Mark Svetz started the needle exchange program, an act both heroic and controversial, as most heroic acts can be. But they had a lot more stories than just that. And, besides, how many people *really* know those stories? I had a sign at the Boom Box Parade thanking these three, but I wonder how many of the spectators knew who they were? So many people grow up, move away, have their own families. Their own stories. How many people in this Quiet Corner still know them and all they did? And for how long?

After my grandparents died, I felt strange about going back to their house, even though Mark and his wife, Sarah, were still living there. It wasn't until after Mark's recent passing that I went back. I braced myself to see how much things have changed, but the spirit was still there. It was still a place for friends and community. It was some of the same people, only older and with a few younger additions. I could still imagine my grandfather being there, sitting and drinking a beer, keeping an eye on things. Mark and Sarah had made it about *their* family, but their family was a part of mine. Their *story* was part of mine. Even to the point of how I describe myself. Mark told me that he liked to describe himself as a bald man with hair. In turn, I

say I'm a quiet person who talks.

I still remember being a young child asking my grandfather for stories about when his children were children. But life gets busy. I wanted to live my own stories. Still, what magic is a story! For some truly seem stranger than fiction. More entertaining, at least. And to think that the person I viewed as a grownup was once a child!

In Mansfield, as you probably know, they are building a new school, combining the three elementary schools. In June, I went to the Southeast Elementary School party where people came to say goodbye to the school. I worked there as a substitute teacher for the past few years. This school was not just a school. This school was a community. You know that expression, "It takes a village to raise a child"? This was that village. Entering the classrooms was like entering different stories or homes. This was a special place. I expected the event to be for the staff and family members, but what I saw was a true tribute to the place. It seemed that all the staff, all the students, and all the families that ever were associated with that school were there. It was both humbling and a blessing to realize that, although I was only part of that school for a short amount of time, I was part of its history. Seeing teenagers, young adults, and adults with children of their own, all of whom used to be little children going to this place, made me feel so honored to play such an important part in the continuum of life, as young as I am. We were all part of this place. I saw adults I had never met that went there as children. They saw me as a teacher. I saw them as a child. It was a strange moment on this continuum of life. Looking into the past, being a part of the present, all preparing for the future. Everyone there had their own connection, their own stories. Yet, we were all united.

If I could, I would write down all these stories and put them somewhere where people could read them. Of course, some stories are personal and with some you have

to "know your audience," but if you really want to know the history of a place, of a time, of a community, those small, funny, universal stories are important. Each person remembers it differently and had a different emotional connection. We are all history and one day there may be a museum dedicated to any of us, even if that museum is just in the consciousness of those in our community down the road. We can't take it for granted that people will know these stories. Heck, people don't even want to hear stories of "important, historical" people; why would they want to know about local people they've never met? Because these people have stories that they can relate to, stories that have changed their lives, somehow. And these people aren't big, famous historical people that seem like they're a million miles away, almost made-up; they are people in your community.

I am grateful for the opportunity to write and share my thoughts here. I love the idea that stories can inspire others, in the present and the future. I love how good writing has the power to change things. People are always getting older, but new people are always being born. And writings like this can help show people what life was like, what our cultures were like, and that, although things are always changing and cultures can seem so different, we are all still humans, singing songs, weaving tales along with our own tapestry of life. And our shared experiences, our celebrations, are what make life so great. So keep telling the stories of those who are important to you, and share your stories as well. That is how we can overcome all these social/political issues. For as much as we argue and say that the other person is wrong, you cannot deny one's personal experience. That is the first step in working together. That is the first step in changing someone's life. Sharing experiences. Sharing understanding. Building relationships.

Spread stories. Spread love. Change the world.

Adventure Travel to the Canadian Rockies

By Dennis R. Blanchette

It is good to have an end to journey towards, but it is the journey that matters, in the end.

—Ursula Le Guin

After several years of avoiding air travel because of Covid, it was time to hit the friendly skies again. The criteria for our re-immersion into flying included a foreign destination that was not too far away, with reasonable Covid protocols and good hiking. The Canadian Rockies met all criteria. Bradley Airport did not offer any nonstop flights to Calgary, so Janet booked and paid for a nonstop flight from Logan, arriving in Calgary at 6:00 p.m. A few weeks before the trip, the dreaded email appeared: Your flight has been changed. It now has a two-hour layover in Toronto and arrives in Calgary at midnight. If you haven't flown lately, you'll find it's easy to book a flight online, but changing one is harder than getting Elon Musk to stop reproducing. The best one can do is schedule an appointment for an airline agent to call you. At the appointed time, she called and informed us there were no nonstop flights to Calgary anymore, on any day at any time. And despite paying for one, no refunds, either. After an extended conversation, Janet changed our departure day in order to arrive by 6:00 p.m.

Since our last flight in 2019, "apps" have taken over the world of air travel. I downloaded the ArriveCAN app, filled out the various forms, and uploaded my Covid vaccination data. Then I got a warning that one may be subject to random Covid testing even if fully vaccinated, so please register with the testing agency. Next was a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) form. The questions were routine until I got to Question 3: "Are you bringing in marijuana – Yes or No?" It seemed like a trick question, so I clicked the tab for more information. It explained that if I clicked "yes," I would be subject to immediate arrest on arrival. Since "no" was the only

right answer, I wondered why they bothered posing it as a question and whether anyone ever checked "yes." I then downloaded the WestJet app and uploaded the QR code provided by the ArriveCAN app. WestJet informed me that the registration was "complete, but not successful." The app wouldn't let us check our luggage even as it informed us it would be much cheaper if we did it in advance. It took most of a Sunday morning and we grumbled to each other about privacy concerns and the data we were giving up, while trying to convince each other it would save time in the long run.

At the departure gate, the airline agent was unable to process our luggage or get boarding passes, either. She made some calls and found that when we changed the departure day the WestJet representative had not completed the process. As the baggage disappeared down the conveyor belt, she asked, "Are there any computers in that luggage?"

"Yes," Janet responded.

"Then we'll have to get it back—no computers are allowed."

We remained calm, which must have irritated her, so she played her trump card.

"Prove you're coming back to the U.S.," she said.

"We're in your system," I responded.

"I can't see that," she replied.

"But we have round-trip tickets."

"I don't know that."

Janet rummaged around in her briefcase, found a paper copy of the itinerary showing the return flight, and gave it to her. Grudgingly, she issued us boarding passes. Another battle won. Not so good for the guy next to us, who had a one-way ticket. Since he could not prove he was coming back to the U.S., he was not allowed to board the plane.

With all the apps filled out and new Covid protocols complied with, we approached the security area, trepidatious but hopeful that security measures had been

updated or revised during the pandemic. At the scanner, everyone was still taking off their shoes, even though there has been only one attempted shoe bomber, in 2001, and he failed. The rule about carry-on liquids is still in force, even though there has been only one attempt in history at blowing up a plane with liquids and it failed when the would-be bomber set his crotch on fire. Risk assessment does not seem to be a strong point of the TSA. I emptied my pockets, took off my belt, got scanned, failed the scanner, got wanded, patted down, and yelled at by the TSA guy, and was finally set free.

Landing in Toronto, we certified our identity at a kiosk and successfully answered the question "Why are you here?" and were headed for the door. Until a CBP agent intercepted Janet and wordlessly directed her down a signless hallway. Our adrenaline rose as we walked down the institutional green corridor that never seemed to end, wondering what she could have done. Eventually we found a CBP agent at a desk who wanted to know about the bear spray in the suitcase, which had been declared on the ArriveCAN app.

"We're going hiking in the Rockies," Janet said.

"You don't need it," she replied.

"All the travel books said we need it," I responded.

"Are you sleeping in a tent?"

"No."

"Then you don't need it."

"But we're going hiking in the backcountry and the National Park Service says the bears are down in the valleys because of too much snow in the mountains and every one should carry bear spray," Janet said.

"You can't carry it around Banff," she said.

We promised that we would never publicly display our bear spray in any town and she let us go 10 minutes before boarding. We cleared security, ran through the airport like gazelles being attacked by lions, and were the last to board, with

seconds to spare.

The plane landed on time in Calgary but there was an hour delay disembarking because, the pilot informed us, there was a thunderstorm, the ground support staff had left, and there was no one to connect the jetway. At baggage claim, the luggage excreted slowly out onto the conveyor belt, one piece every few minutes, as if the machinery had become constipated. We assumed this was a staffing issue as well, but then the intercom announced that there was a system error in the baggage handling system and that repair personnel had been "notified." An hour later, our suitcases arrived and we headed for the car rental.

We looked in vain for the Alamo desk, the Alamo shuttle, or an Alamo sign. A maintenance worker directed us to the second floor of the parking garage. Eventually we found them, hidden and signless, as if to forestall any attempt to actually rent a car from them. As the adrenaline wore off, it occurred to us that the adventure was over. We also realized that though we were ready to travel, the airlines were not ready for us. Then the lightbulb went on in my head: If we survived the grizzlies and avalanches, we would get to do it all over again at the end of the trip.

Dennis R. Blanchette is a retired civil engineer and travel writer.

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What to Do If Interest Rate Hikes Are Impacting Your Major Purchases and Life Events

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Inflation is ballooning to its highest rate in 40 years. You're likely feeling the effects when buying gas or groceries, and you'll almost certainly have noticed it if you're in the market for a new car or home.

As a result, the Federal Reserve has indicated it plans to keep raising short-term interest rates to help manage that inflation. (On June 15, the Federal Reserve raised the benchmark interest rate by 0.75 percent, the largest increase in almost 30 years.) By raising interest rates, the Fed hopes to slow spending, bringing down consumer prices.

Historically, that's been effective in bringing down inflation and normalizing the economy over the long-term. But in the short-term we're all feeling the pinch, perhaps most of all millennials and even older Gen-Zers.

Their buying power is being hit with a double-whammy at a time in life that's typically full of big purchases and major life events. As a result, many in their 20's and 30's are having to delay major purchases like a car or first home, as well as milestone life events like getting married or having a child.

If you're in that situation yourself, here are some tips and insights to help you tame your stress, regain control of your finances, and get a plan in place that will set you on the path to attaining those big purchases and plans that are central to your vision for living well in the future.

FIRST, MANAGE THE SHORT-TERM FINANCIAL CRISIS

Adjust Your Budget for the Higher Cost of Living

The first plan of attack should be to revisit your budget and see where you can cut costs. Non-essentials like dining out, vacations and other types of discretionary spending should be the first to go.

After that, see how you might be able to trim your costs of living. Can you trim your weekly grocery bill, do without cable, or work from home to save on gas costs, for example? If your situation is more dire, consider even moving in with family or downsizing to save on rent or mortgage costs.

Instead of or in addition to cutting costs, another option is to try and increase your income to make up the shortfall. Consider asking for a raise at work, looking for a higher-paying opportunity, or taking on a second job.

If your budget still doesn't cover your necessary costs, only then should you consider temporarily cutting back on the amount of your earnings allocated to your savings account and retirement fund. But don't ever dip into your emergency savings to cover everyday costs – it's even more important to have on-hand when the markets, economy and your personal finances are volatile.

Pay Down High-Interest Debt (And Avoid Racking Up More)

If you have a balance on a credit card or an adjustable rate mortgage, you might be noticing changes in your payments. That's because higher interest rates mean that debt is now more expensive to have as well. So if you have high variable interest rate debt, it may make sense

to temporarily divert some of the funds you'd normally allocate to savings or retirement to paying down that debt.

THEN, GET BACK ON TRACK WITH (OR BUILD) YOUR LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Manage Your Stress

Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors Principal/Managing Partner Laurence Hale has written previously about ways to manage investment and financial stress during market volatility (you can read it on our blog at whzwealth.com/advisor-blog).

Much of the stress relieving strategy relies on taking a pause to reduce your panic, assessing your situation, and making strategic adjustments to your financial plan to keep your budget and goals on track (thereby putting your mind at ease).

That's why having a financial plan in place, and a financial advisor to guide you through volatile times, is crucial to not only your finances but to easing your anxiety during times of financial stress. If you don't have a financial plan yet, work with a trusted financial advisor to build one.

Manage Your Portfolio and Financial Plan to Manage Your Future

Although inflation and higher interest rates are already affecting your budget and possibly your financial and life decisions in the present, only time will tell if they'll prompt changes to your investment portfolio going forward. Remember, your overall strategy should already take into account that there will be transition periods in the economy and markets.

In the meantime, check in on your portfolio frequently and work with your financial advisor to adjust your overall plan to one that can keep you on solid ground now while still paving the way toward the big goals you have for the future, whether it's a new car, your first home, your dream business venture, or adding a new member to your family.

If you have any questions about inflation or interest rates and how they're affecting your progress toward reaching your financial goals, please reach out. We're always here to help put things into perspective, and our Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well strategic process can help put you on the path to where you want to be. Visit our website at www.whzwealth.com, e-mail info@whzwealth.com, or call (860) 928-2341 to set up an introductory meeting in person, by phone or online.

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Cows, Colleges and Contentment?

FARMS and such in the Quiet Corner

By Brian Karlsson Barnes

Wandering the last green valleys of Eastern Connecticut's highlands reveals edges of history... edges of farm and forest, town and country, and of the three watersheds draining the Quiet Corner to the sea.

Driving west, you see the ridges of the "land between the rivers." From Rhode Island's highpoint, the eastern edge of the Quinebaug valley, you can see the western crest beginning the Natchaug valley, where the Willimantic ridge can be seen farther west.

WHERE wild woods and rocky rivers were settled 300 years ago. Forests were cleared for construction, fuel and farming. Fields were edged with the fieldstones and cultivated to sustain families and contain cows. Timber was profitable. By 1820, only 25 percent of Connecticut was still woods.

Good news for farming and settlement. Bad news for forest wildlife. But grassland species benefitted. Farming moved slowly back then, allowing birds time to nest in pastures and hayfields before mowing. (Moral justification for my delight letting an old barn foundation go to wondrous weeds.)

WHERE some farms have prospered for 150 years... offering rich milk and fresh food, perhaps homemade ice cream and pie at a farmstore, perhaps a family-friendly barnyard zoo... and where some are sadly abandoned.



UConn cows in Storrs.

ley, I wander contentedly back and forth to Boston. My ag-adventuring is certainly not exhaustive. There are 125 farms in "Farm Fresh Food in Northeastern Connecticut" (2022 edition) published by UCONN Agricultural Extension – farm listings from Killingly west to Coventry, and Union south to Lebanon. Always good to buy local. Freshest !!!

QUINEBAUG The longest, most water-powerful river flowing to the Thames tidal basin, the Quinebaug River and its tributaries powered many mills and attracted many large power-users, and larger settlements. Less rural. There is less family farming in the more developed corner that is Thompson and Putnam CT.

Researching mills (February issue) in Pomfret, I was *time-travelling* back into mill history along the Quinebaug and tributary Fivemile River as I drove off US Route 44 on Tyrone Road. I stopped to look east over the river's wide valley near Putnam.

From Tyrone Road, you can see the dairy barns of Longmeadow Farm near Bark Meadow Brook. They may not be milking many cows now, but their land has sprouted suburban "farm estates" with mini-mansions.

Beyond the valley, you can see the eastern edge of the Quinebaug Valley along the high ridge of Rhode Island's highpoint, Jerimoth Hill. 812 feet! (About a mile east of the state line with a short trail off highway 101).

Wandering to Attaugan's brick mill, adaptive reuse in progress, I found older deteriorating mills up the Fivemile River, where suburbanization has supplanted many farms in the Quinebaug Valley.

NATCHAUG Flowing from Bigelow Hollow in Union, Bigelow Brook joins Still River from Woodstock Valley to create the Natchaug River in **Charlie Brown's Campground** along Scenic Route 198 (98 Chaplin Road, Eastford). For occasional comfort camping, **Woodstock Sustainable Farms** (211 Pulpit Rock Road, Woodstock) offers Bed & Breakfast and nutritious meals sourced from the farm.

The pristine Natchaug River is a 'benchmark' river whereby others are judged. Diana's Pool is a gem. It flows into the lower pond of Mansfield Hollow Lake where tributary Fenton and Mount Hope Rivers flow into the upper pond, all with early grist mills serving many families (especially corn that sours quickly). They join the Natchaug at the 500-acre flood-control dam built in 1952 that created a state park with the sprawling lake and a boat launch. Where I have coffee with my paper most mornings.

FISHING Earlier settlers, the native Nipmuck farmed the land and fished these rapid waters. The Natchaug still flows by the 1882 Kirby Mill, but fish can't get upriver past the 1952 dam. Just as well.

Firefighters used to train downriver with foam that polluted the river with PFOA (Perfluorooctanoic Acid) -- "forever chemicals" -- that have been detected in the fish. Can't be good for the Shetucket River downstream. Better to fish upriver? The upper Natchaug River is still quite pristine and stocked with trophy trout.

FARMING Looking east from Storrs Road / Highway 195 is a commanding view of the upper Natchaug valley that overlooks UConn's 700 acres. These highlands between the Natchaug and Willimantic Rivers are "land between the rivers" (as "Natchaug" translates in native Nipmuck dialect).

University of Connecticut The rich agricultural valley was recognized by Charles and Augustus

Storrs, brothers who established the Storrs Agricultural School (now University of Connecticut). Student-run Spring Valley Farm feeds dining students.

Born to a "hardscrabble farming family" (Wikipedia) and "having experienced the intellectual privations that are too commonly incident to farm-life" the Storrs brothers said, they donated land and money for Connecticut's agricultural school in their hometown Mansfield in 1881.

Storrs Farmers Market was established in 1994 to feature local farms. Saturdays, May to November, it sets up at Mansfield Town Hall, 4 South Eagleville Road; winters at the Library auditorium.

Cobblestone Farm CSA (87 Bassetts Bridge Road, Mansfield Hollow) offers sustainably grown vegetables, eggs and chicken in Mansfield Hollow with 20-week and 7-week fall CSA programs.

420 Bassett Bridge Road was my favorite drive-by barnyard of goats, pigs, chickens, and ducks that occasionally escaped the yard for a vernal pond across the road, all gone. Loved those little black guinea hens. House and farm buildings FOR SALE.

"The more things change, the more they remain the same," as French writer Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr was credited in 1849. As in the 21st century, the only thing constant is change.

We-Li-Kit Farm 728 Hampton Road / Route 97, Abington (Pomfret). A 6th generation family farm selling "our own hard ice cream", pure maple syrup and beef, the barnyard animals attract many.

Organic Roots Farm at Popover Hill, 153 East Old Route 6, Hampton. A farm since a chimney brick was inscribed "1809", the Ostby family later christened "Pop-over Hill" to describe the narrow, stonewalled drive lined with tall pines "and popping over the top of the hill" to reveal the bucolic landscape, an old center-chimney-cape farmhouse nestled within rolling hills.

New owners, the Fisher family with four sons are Mennonites from Pennsylvania who are preserving the farm's name. Their own roots are visible in the garden, heirloom tomatoes for "Amish paste" and a special thick tomato sauce. Yummy cinnamon rolls are fresh-baked on Saturdays. *Amish pastry?*

Bigelow Brook Farm on Westford Road, Eastford, on the other hand, is not a farmstore, but a company that designs and makes hydroponic and aquaculture products.

Agbotic, Inc. is an automated farm factory soon growing "microgreen" crops such as arugala, with computerized robots that seed, water and pick the harvest in Ashford. One-person control. Reported in March, the fully indoor industry is marketed as "The Smartest Farms in the World" (as in Sackets Harbor NY). Can be close to cities, but rural land is cheaper. Its need for industrial electricity will remove trees on a scenic one-lane road. Solar?

WILLIMANTIC Mansfield stretches over two watersheds from the Natchaug west to the Willimantic River. The Stearns family found a fertile valley on the hills north of Willimantic, the city another town likes to call Windham.

Mountain Dairy They have been milking cows at 50 Stearns Road, Mansfield, since 1871 and don't reblend whole milk so it has a higher butterfat content and a rich creamy texture. No artificial growth hormones and fresh in most local stores.

Stearns Farm Store (aka Twin Ponds) is north of the dairy farm at 483 Brown's Road, Mansfield, with vegetables and pot-pies. Apple pie and homemade ice cream. Eggnog in November. The view is a refreshing high vista of the Willimantic Valley all year long.

Brian Karlsson Barnes, Master gardener / designer and wanderer, Chaplin
Photos by author.



Abandoned farmhouse in Mansfield

People rave about the pristine rivers and forests in this corner of Connecticut, but it's the human fabric of farm towns that have kept the QC alive with interconnections of personal responsibility. What have you done for your town lately?

WHERE some have simply chosen a quiet lifestyle of living more sustainably, more simply. As Tractor Supply bags say, *It's Better Out Here*. Enjoy it while you can. My favorite drive-by barnyard is dwindling, for sale on Bassetts Bridge Road. The goats are gone from Bedlam Corner for several weeks now... will they return? *Carpe diem*.

WHERE it wasn't a lifestyle choice 150 years ago. Children worked and inherited the family farm. These "olden days" in the *Last Green Valley* were documented by Alison Davis in HAMPTON REMEMBERS (1976, reprinted 2019 and available at Organic Roots Farm). A taped oral history in 1976 by thirty older neighbors, all since passed, it is a first-hand telling of a simpler time, 1885 to 1950.

Things were already changing by 1950, Davis observed. Hampton remains rural but has changed from a dairy town to a bedroom community. There IS an upside... "today more and more small family farms are supplying the area with chickens, eggs, vegetables, fruits, breads, jams and jellies." Buy local, buy fresh.

Born decades ago in the Borough of Manhattan NYC, I later lived thirty years in Minnesota where farms and fresh food abound. Co-ops and fresh-picked sweet corn. Dairy and timber were also profitable in the temperate band reaching across North America. Where the diverse Eastern Deciduous Forest ends in the Mississippi Valley.

The Quiet Corner reminds me of prosperous Northfield, Minnesota, where I lived a decade. An hour south of the Twin Cities and home to Carleton College ("Harvard of the Midwest"), St. Olaf College and the Cannon River flowing to the Mississippi, its highway billboard proclaims "Cows, Colleges and Contentment." Applies to the northeast corner of Connecticut?

Now living in the center of the *Last Green Val-*



Stearns Farm Store, Mansfield



7.17.22. The Ashford Women's Group. Photo by Katelynn Sherrell.

Ashford Women's Group Gathers In-person

By Carol Davidge

On Sunday, July 17, the Ashford Women's Group held its first in-person meeting since the pandemic began. "We called it a 'Soiree' because we wanted to celebrate the joy of gathering. We also learned about programs that assist victims of domestic violence and collected over \$500 in gift cards plus supplies for homeless women," said Jill Marie Ianniccheri, founder of the Group.

"The mission of the Ashford Women's Group

is 'Women Empowering Women.' That means lifting all women whatever they do and wherever they are in their lives - business women, artists, farmers, home makers, moms, grandmothers, retirees. Major services of the AWG are collecting for a food pantry and for a women's shelter. If we even assist just one woman, then our mission is accomplished," said Jill.

Group leaders include Misty Doering, Seema Gupta, Tracy Hammer-Will, Carrie Surdell Hastings, Esther Lovell Jagodzinski and Cathryn Silver-Smith.

The meeting on July 17 featured guest speaker Karen O'Connor, Executive Director of The Network Against Domestic Violence in Enfield, which provides free services to residents of central Connecticut.

Meetings of the Ashford Women's Group are always free. For information, go to Ashford Women's Group on facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/979051055773625/?ref=share>

'A Summer's Palette' Draws Big Crowd

Submitted by Deb Gag

A picture-perfect summer's day on July 9 brought nearly 400 people to "A Summer's Palette: Art and Flowers at Westford Hills Distillers" sponsored by the Ashford Area Arts Council in partnership with distillery owners Margie and Louis Chatey. Artists, artisans, and musicians collaborated to create a fun and cultural event for the attendees. Master distiller Lou Chatey gave a talk about the history of the area and offered a walk-through tour of the distillery. The property has been in his family since 1919. There was merriment wherever you looked. Attendees strolled

the gardens on the beautiful and bucolic 200 acre historic property, listened to live music, sampled a cocktail, visited the 20 artisan's booths to enjoy the wide variety of media and techniques, and tried their hand at watercolors made available by the AAC. Professional plein air artists set up their easels and created masterpieces. A pollinator pathway informational booth was also popular.

Visit the Ashford Arts Council Facebook page and our website, ashfordarts.org, to learn of more activities, and how to become a member.



A young painter (above) and Blanch Serban paint 'en plein air' at 'A Summer's Palette' event in Ashford. Contributed photos.



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Our Birds and Farmlands—What’s the Connection?

By Paula Coughlin

It’s the evening of summer solstice, and I’m walking on the Wyndham Land Trust’s Duck Marsh Preserve, in Pomfret. I follow the path through the grassland, in search of bobolinks. It’s a rare treat to see this Bird of Special Concern. I spot a straw-colored bobolink as it disappears into the tall grasses. Aha—her hidden nest. I hear the bubbly song of her black-and-white mate, the back of his head flashes yellow.

We are blessed to live in the Northeast Corner, with its abundance of forests, wetlands, grasslands, and yes, farmlands. And we are lucky to have land trust preserves for us all to enjoy. Historically, farmlands with their expanses of grasslands were a haven for grassland birds. But now there are fewer farms. Bobolinks migrate between North America and South America, an amazing 12,500-mile round-trip journey. They arrive in our Northeast Corner and search for the grassland habitat they require for nesting.

I perch on a bench. My eyes carry me from the grassland high up to the green hillside and fertile soils of the Amaral Farm, one of the most beautiful farms in the Northeast Corner. For a moment, I breathe in its beauty; then I remember that this valuable piece of agricultural land is at risk because of a proposed 12-acre solar array.

We can’t afford to lose our farms or our birds. It is imperative that we value and protect prime agricultural land in our state. Putting large solar arrays on prime farmland soils is counter-productive to our local food production. Solar “farms” are a significant threat to farmland in Connecticut.

The livelihood of farmers is threatened throughout the nation due to soil degradation, erosion, warming temperatures, development, and financial issues. Northeast Connecticut is home to many farms that serve the local population.

It’s not easy for farmers to make a living these days, and solar companies (including out-of-state businesses) are ready to peddle their products. Instead of subsidizing solar “farms,” Connecticut should offer grants and subsidies to farmers to produce their own energy with panels on barns and outbuildings. Supporting farmers (while keeping funds within our state) and supporting state clean energy goals is a win/win for all.

To take the pressure off our farmlands, Connecticut should look to other more suitable solar sites such as brownfields, landfills, wastelands, industrial sites, and highway corridors. (Massachusetts has placed thousands of solar panels along its major highways.)

It’s not your imagination—you are hearing fewer songbirds than in the past. Long-term studies in North America indicate a drop in common birds: 3 billion fewer birds! The state should prioritize habitats that are valuable to birds, but which face many challenges: habitat destruction, development, pollution, changing climate.

The Amaral Farm has the highest number of grassland birds in Windham County: bobolinks and Savannah sparrows, eastern meadowlarks breeding and wintering, northern harriers attempting to nest over the last two years. Wintering American kestrels, short-eared owls, and long-eared owls hunt over large grasslands. These birds represent large numbers of state-designated threatened species.

Adjacent to the Wyndham Land Trust’s Duck Marsh, the proposed solar installation would negatively affect the conservation values of this preserve. The birds need both properties to thrive or even exist on the preserve. This is one of the top birdwatching destinations in Northeastern Connecticut, drawing people from all over the state to view grassland bird species.

The Connecticut Siting Council decides whether to allow a solar installation. If you care about conserving farmlands and bird life, make your voice heard. Remember, we do not have to sacrifice our farmlands and our birds for energy. There are other options for solar arrays.

Unfortunately, on June 9, the Council rendered a decision to approve the solar project, Petition No. 1487. But the Council welcomes public comments, even post-decision, so it’s important that we make our voices heard. The “declaratory ruling” (final decision) is scheduled for August 9.

Now is the time to send an urgent message to Melanie Bachman, Executive Director, Connecticut Siting Council, 10 Franklin Squire, New Britain, CT 06051, or to Siting.Council@ct.gov, regarding Petition No. 1487. Tell the Council that it is critical that it deny the Amaral solar array to save the farmland and grassland bird habitat.

Also contact your local civic leaders, as well as Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Katie Dykes, at Katie.Dykes@ct.gov. Google your state reps and congressional house and senate leaders Richard Blumenthal, Chris Murphy, and Joe Courtney (all have email contacts online.)

Spread the word in your community. Save our farmlands and the grassland birds.

People, farms, and birds are all connected.

Could All These Post-Pandemic Testy, Irrascible, Volatile, Flaky, Apathetic Behaviors Be Unresolved Trauma?

By Michelle Baughman

The Covid pandemic has taken a lot from us: The loss of jobs and economic growth, and diminished savings, which results in a loss of a sense of security. The loss of our sense of normality because of the disruption in our regular routines like participating in classes, hobbies, and activities, which results in the loss of social interaction and sense of human connection. Many of us experienced the loss of loved ones who passed away during this time, and we lost the opportunity to properly grieve our dearly departed due to social distancing precautions. Another casualty of Covid that might under-ride all of these losses is unrecognized and unresolved trauma.

Post-pandemic, a lot of people seem easily irritated, impatient, bad-tempered, and easily angered. Many others seem lethargic, disengaged with life, burnt-out, and even despondent. The lucky people who have managed to keep on keeping on seem to exhibit new ADHD-like symptoms of forgetfulness: spacing out at times (getting lost driving someplace that used to be familiar), impaired problem-solving skills, and difficulty focusing or concentrating on tasks. And many parents are experiencing increased emotional reactivity and behavioral issues in their children, such as having a very low frustration tolerance, being inflexible, rigid, and quick to tantrum, having poor impulse control or an inability to delay gratification...as though the child’s maturity has regressed to that of a much younger child.

An understanding of how stress and trauma affects the brain can account for these post-pandemic behavioral changes people are experiencing. First, there are hormonal changes in the brain. Cortisol causes the hippocampus to shut down. The hippocampus is responsible for rational thought, problem solving, learning, declarative memory (converting short-term memories into long-term memories), and spatial relationships (like driving routes). Adrenaline causes the amygdala to increase its functioning. The amygdala helps control bodily functions like the endocrine system (which secretes hormones), laying down emotional memories, and the fight-flight-freeze response.

Evolution endowed us with the fight-flight-freeze response; it is a primitive defense system that is common to creatures lower on the evolutionary scale. This response is very quick and helps us in emergency situations when we don’t have time to think. In fact, thinking takes place in a different part of the brain (which is why this is called a “response,” because there is no thinking involved). Our ability to think and reason is often said to be what separates us from animals. However, a traumatized brain is cut off from this ability because the hippocampus is shut down.

There are three important networks in the brain that are also impaired by trauma: the default mode network, the salience network, and the central executive network. The default mode network processes self-relevant information like helping us know what we are feeling inside (emotions as well as interoceptive things like hunger, thirst, and the need to use the bathroom), and it helps us to process our memories and think about the future. Observable behaviors that indicate an impaired default mode network include a child who doesn’t seem to understand the consequences of their behavior; toileting accidents; and a person who forgets to eat or becomes dehydrated. The salience network helps us figure out what in our environment is important to respond to. Observable behaviors that indicate an impaired salience network include walking into things or bumping into walls or people, or even causing fender benders while driving (like backing into another car). The central executive network helps us plan, think, focus our attention, and engage in concentration. Observable behaviors that indicate an impaired central executive network include spacing out or not seeming to be in the present (lost in thought) and symptoms of dissociation (such as getting lost driving to a place you have driven to many times before or feeling as though “time has gotten away from you” during your day). Those folks I described earlier who seem lethargic, disengaged with life, burnt-out, or despondent may be experiencing dissociation (but these are also symptoms of depression). When one’s central executive network is offline, it affects their short-term memory. This can account for a lot of those ADHD-like symptoms that folks are now experiencing for the first time in their lives.

Disassociation is an adaptive survival response that happens when the nervous system shuts down. It is the “freeze” part of the fight-flight-freeze response.

It happens when the other two options of this response are not available, such as when faced by an inescapable threat. Think of the feigned death response of an opossum when it is threatened by a predator; it is too small and ill-equipped to fight, and it is too slow to run, so it “freezes.” This is actually a protective state, because endorphins are released so that it temporarily cannot experience pain (so if the opossum were eaten by the predator, it wouldn’t feel it).

Disassociation is problematic because it fragments a person’s ability to integrate experiences and memory into different parts of the nervous system. When this happens, it disrupts the ability to bring one’s nervous system back into balance. Humans and other vertebrates evolved to have a nervous system that is supposed to respond to situations and then have recoveries that support health, growth, and restoration. (Think of a cat that has been threatened or upset: as soon as the threat is over, it will lick and groom itself, seeming completely unfazed by what has just transpired.) An unbalanced nervous system blocks one’s capacity for flexible, adaptive, stable functioning, and inhibits the ability to regulate one’s emotions. Many of the post-pandemic behaviors parents are seeing in their children appear to be indicative of an unbalanced nervous system. It makes sense that children may have been experiencing dissociation during the pandemic, because kids are small and powerless and dependent on adults (and the adults haven’t even been able to protect them from the threat).

According to “The Neurobiology of Trauma—What’s Going On in the Brain When Someone Experiences Trauma,” a course from the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine, research shows that developmental trauma, which happens early in life, blocks the growth of the integrated brain. People with developmental trauma might lack emotional balance, not be able to think clearly under stress, exhibit chaotic behavior, and be unable to just sit quietly by themselves. They may also be rigid and inflexible, which might make it difficult for them to form and maintain mutually rewarding relationships.

What is needed to heal an unbalanced nervous system is activities that can help the brain to integrate. A person with an integrated brain is a person who can regulate their emotions and their nervous system. There are two types of brain integration: *left-right integration* (harmonizing the two hemispheres of the brain) and *vertical integration* (involving thoughts, emotions, and the body). Any activity that uses both sides of the body in alternating motion (such as riding a bike, swimming, walking, horseback riding) can help with left-right brain integration. Activities like singing and creating music together (especially with choreographed body movements) can achieve vertical integration because music engages our emotions, learning the piece engages our thoughts, and choreography engages the body.

Getting in sync with and being socially engaged with others (like working together to create a piece of music or to learn a new dance) is a form of co-regulation, which is how people learn to regulate themselves. When a parent comforts and soothes a crying baby, that is co-regulation, and it helps the child to learn to self-soothe. Dancing (particularly line, contra, and square dancing) are great ways to get in sync and be socially engaged with other people.

However, the most effective way to achieve vertical integration is through *somatic therapy*, a type of trauma therapy that engages three levels of information processing—thoughts, feelings, and interception/proprioception—by working with the body (through various postures and movements) and the cortex and limbic system of the brain (by mindfully exploring emotions and their accompanying visceral feelings). Unfortunately, it is currently very difficult to find therapists trained in somatic therapy. This is largely because insurance companies determine what is and is not covered, and therapists are not inclined to learn therapies that are not covered by insurance. It is my sincerest hope that we will see more therapists becoming trained in somatic therapy in order to meet the demand of traumatized post-pandemic individuals seeking effective treatment for their unresolved trauma. Because trauma has a profound impact on how an individual interacts with their world, I shudder to think what our society will look like a few years from now if our citizens do not get the help they need to heal, and these issues remain unaddressed.

Michelle M. Baughman is a late-in-life diagnosed adult on the autism spectrum, an educator, a parent of a twice-exceptional child, and a trauma-informed AANE Certified AsperCoach.

Autistic People Do Not ‘Get Used to’ Forced Sensory Stimuli

By Jaime A. Heidel, The Articulate Autistic

I’ve had a working theory for years that autistic people do not habituate to sensory input the way neurotypical people do, even after repeated exposure, and it turns out I was right. Recently published studies (see links below) have proven that, indeed, autistic people do not experience sensory habituation the way neurotypical people do. This means that “exposure therapy” techniques used to force autistic children into enduring harmful sensory stimuli such as bright lights, loud sounds, and offensive textures do not make autistic children less sensitive to them.

“But my child doesn’t react the way they used to when [insert sensory stimuli here]! Exposure therapy is working!”

That depends on what you mean by “working.” Is prolonged exposure to harmful stimuli making your autistic child less sensitive, or is it causing them to dissociate? I’m willing to bet the latter, and I’m not the only one who believes this. Not only can I tell you from my own experience that I learned to dissociate from reality at a very young age to the point where I looked like I was having absence seizures (I wasn’t), there are plenty of autistic people on my Instagram page who have spoken out about their traumatic experiences, as well.

Common Traumatic Experiences Associated with Forced Sensory Exposure

Mental Illness Misdiagnosis

While autistic people are more likely to have mental illness comorbidities, forced sensory exposure can cause the type of dissociative symptoms associated with borderline personality disorder, anti-social personality disorder, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. The autistic individual may not have any of these mental health conditions but still be (falsely) diagnosed and medicated, further complicating their mental and physical health as well as their identity and sense of self.

Lack of Emotional/Physical Awareness

Alexithymia, the inability to recognize and/or describe one’s emotions, is common in autistic people. Poor interoception is another common struggle among autistic people, whereby we have difficulty recognizing and responding to our body’s physical cues, such as the need for water, food, sleep, the bathroom, etc. Forced sensory exposure can further complicate these issues by forcing the brain into a permanent or near-permanent dissociative state.

Gaslighting/Threats/Abuse

Many autistic adults will tell you that the professionals they were forced to work with as children caused emotional damage not only because of the repeated exposure to harmful sensory input, but also the gaslighting, threats, and abuse that went alongside these practices.

Autistic children, understandably, have frequent meltdowns and behavior that’s classified as pathological demand avoidance (PDA) when forced to endure repeated sensory assaults, and the professionals working with them often lose their temper, screaming at, threatening, verbally abusing, and even physically abusing these children to scare them into “complying.”

Forced Masking

A combination of dissociation and masking is oftentimes the only way an autistic person can survive long-term forced sensory exposure.

Their brains disconnect from reality due to trauma, and they begin to mask, meaning they do all they can to repress their natural autistic traits in order to blend in as effectively as possible with their neurotypical counterparts, so the torture of forced exposure and compliance training either stops or is reduced.

Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

So many autistic people, especially late-identified autistic people and children, teens, or young adults who have experienced compliance training, have complex post-traumatic stress disorder.

While PTSD occurs when one significant trauma happens in one’s life (a car accident, a fire, a robbery, etc.), complex PTSD develops as a result of repeated and sus-

tained trauma over the course of years or even decades—the type of trauma that develops from forced sensory exposure, gaslighting, and long-term abuse.

The Takeaway

Listen to autistic adults. You’ll only have to do a little bit of searching to find thousands of horror stories associated with forced sensory exposure and other ABA (applied behavior analysis) practices. We don’t want that for your children, and it’s why so many of us write about our experiences.

Read books written by autistic adults, consume content online written by us, join Autism Inclusivity on Facebook, and read before you make a post. And parents, trust your gut. If you feel something is not right for your child, no matter how many professionals are pushing it, it probably isn’t.

Sources:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32926307/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33179147/>

For more information on better understanding and communicating with your autistic loved one, visit www.thearticulateautistic.com.

Tai Chi Home

The Heart of the Thing

By Joe Pandolfo

It’s an amazing time of year to walk in a wildflower field. Among what’s growing there you’re bound to find lots of blossoms wide open, in their prime, their fullest time of give and take. With a blossom in this phase you can really see what’s inside, the heart of the thing.

We’re in the same season ourselves. Seeing each other with a bit more revealed. In the midst of a field full of wild hearts and kind hearts and stout hearts and light hearts, it’s a time to tip your own heart up to the warm sun and feel it open wide, whatever might be inside.


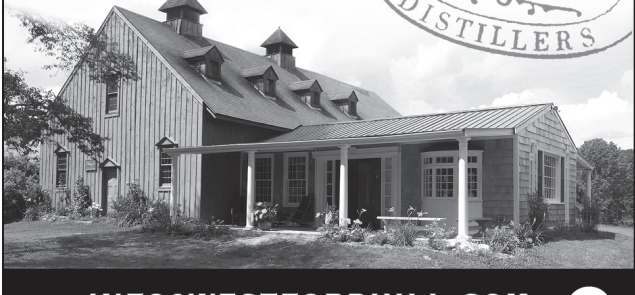




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More About the Inner College and Its Forthcoming Reunion



Submitted by Herman Stargardter, Len Krimerman, Rhonda Kincaid

In July's *Neighbors*, Rhonda Kincaid described the Inner College(IC) well: *The Inner College was a six-year experiment initiated in 1969 by a group of students and faculty interested in establishing a community for learning. It encouraged independent study and self-directed education, and offered opportunities to unique courses, pursue inter-disciplinary studies, and use individualized evaluation methods instead of standardized grades...This innovative community learning experience continues to have a significant influence on the life paths of many IC alumni.*

Rhonda also spoke of our forth-coming reunion in Storrs and UCONN - on *August 6th of this year*: It welcomes anyone who was in the IC, as well as those who, while not members, took IC courses or participated in IC activities. For more information, email ucninnercollege@gmail.com, or call Rhonda Kincaid @860-933-2043 or Herman Stargardter at 860-377-1190.

But there's more - As part of ongoing discussions between IC members, Reggie Beamon of Waterbury has proposed a new and provocative focus/initiative for the IC, beyond nostalgia and reunions. Specifically, *to fund scholarships to support students of many varieties engaged in creating their own forms of self-directed education.* This sort of learning can take shape in many ways, from small individual research projects to large group efforts involving collaboration and sophisticated implementation, e.g., as in starting a food co-op or a community-based alternative school. With integrity, self-directed learning can create deep impressions on learners, who often become mentors of younger folks.

Already, a small group of us has formed to meet during our reunion, to discuss how to proceed on developing this new initiative. Please join us!

Actors and Volunteers Needed- Nightmare on Main 2022

Submitted by Sandy Proctor

Nightmare on Main, 2022, will be held at the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum in Willimantic, which is a new location for the event. Nightmare On Main is a theatrical tour event, held during October, where visitors are guided passed several staged scenes and actors portray historical characters telling some creepy, haunting stories based on real history. The 2022 theme is "Ghost Town – Shadows of the Past."

Actors are needed to join our cast of characters. Some parts have scripted speaking parts, and some are non-speaking 'crowd.' Actors must commit to all the events plus a few rehearsals and work sessions. Volunteers are also needed for backstage jobs, parking cars and more. Anyone interested in joining the cast or crew should call Sandy Proctor at 860-944-4945. or email Sandra.jean.proctor@gmail.com.

Tall Tales

You and night air find the windows.
The breeze summons me home.

All my breaths whisper the plain names.
Wooden children unable to play.

Consider moments not ever granting our wishes.
Doorways leading beyond a belief.

Seeking a hidden pathway defying any description
.
Every stone turned politely over.

Wait patiently where I cannot find you.
Blonde hair tied in tightened tales

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.



Heatwave

The summer grass already warm
Another birthday will be celebrated today
in the shade of a pavilion
The mother hangs silver blue ornaments
on wooden beams
She lays down a brightly-colored tablecloth
and the small son greets me from the ground
rocking belly down on a sea green inner tube
The river is
still today
warm around its edges
cool as I move deeper
Just across the way a great blue heron
Its tall white neck stretching
to the overhanging leaves
Its tall white neck stretching
across the water where minnows swim
We are here in the early morning
Two fine creatures together on a fragile planet
Early morning
The great blue heron
is just across the way
and water bugs dance on a shimmer of sunlight.

Carol J. Macy

SAVE THE DATE! The 23rd Annual Willimantic Downtown Country Fair Saturday Oct. 1, 2022 11am – 4pm

Submitted by Alice Rubin

On Saturday October 1st, Jillson Square – home of the Shaboo Stage – will be transformed into the site of a Country Fair! The Willimantic Downtown Country Fair! For the past 22 years The Willimantic Food Co-op has hosted this fair which celebrates our Community and the many talented people who are part of it. There will be vendors selling the goods that they make, right here in the Quiet Corner. There will be Music played by people who live in our neighborhoods. There will be information from organizations who, with the participation of all of us, work toward making our Community the great place that it is.

New this year, we will be partnering with the Willimantic Public Library and the Friends of the Willimantic Public Library to bring the 2nd Annual Eastern CT Children's Book Fair to the Downtown Country Fair. There will be readings by authors and a Book Bus.

Other activities for kids, including Mini Golf will be here along with a Clothing Swap and lots of great food!

Please come on down and spend the day, visit with friends, make new friends!

We hope to see you there!

Paws & Read with Willow at Willington Public Library

Join us on the third Saturday of the month at 1:00 p.m. to read with Willow. Registration is required. Come and earn a ticket!

Willow is an American Foxhound and a nationally registered Therapy Dog with "Cold Noses, Warm Hearts". She knows that when you keep trying to do something (like reading or becoming a therapy dog), you will get better and better. Willow loves visiting the library, loves company, is very patient and loves listening to stories, just like you! She would like to meet you, so be a super reader with Willow!

Children who are reading independently can sign up for a 15-minute reading slot by calling the library at 860-429-3854 or by stopping by the Circulation Desk to register ahead of time. You may register for multiple days, but only one slot per day, per person.

An adult must accompany the child and may wait nearby while the child is reading, but does not need to sit in on the actual session. If you cannot make your session for any reason, please call us to cancel so we can open up the slot for other children, as spaces are limited.

When the weather is nice, we will be enjoying the warmth and sunshine outside. Otherwise, we will be in the Library Reading Room.

Upcoming dates: Saturdays, August 20 and September 17

Willington Public Library, 7 Ruby Road, Willington, CT

860-429-3854, willingtonpubliclibrary.org

Common Sense Car Care



This is a Ford Focus ECM mounted in the left front wheel well, the wiring failed due to the environment.

By Rick Ostien

I began writing car care articles years ago (when my wife typed and stored the information on 3 and 1/2 floppy disks) to inform automobile and truck owners of things that are often taken for granted when getting car repairs done. We often find things when repairing vehicles that the owners just aren't aware of or that we did not expect ourselves.

In the past few months, we had a vehicle that was towed in with no brakes. A rear brake line was leaking, the repair was completed, and the braking system was checked for correct operation. While doing this check we found that the left rear brake did not work. After a very close inspection we discovered that someone had crimped the left rear brake line. Things like this bother me. What in the world was someone thinking? The tires, brakes and steering are the three most important parts of your vehicle. As a driver you have a responsibility to be sure that the vehicle you are driving is in safe working order for operation on the road. Many accidents happen that can be avoided because repairs that should be done have not been or have not been done properly.

The last couple of months I have started to really research and write about EV's or electric vehicles. My opinion, and everyone has one, is that the words common sense has been left out. The extension cords coming out of apartment building's windows has already begun. In California, waiting lines at public power sources have started. Remember it takes 45 minutes per vehicle to have a quick charge. People become impatient at the gas pump where it takes less than 10 minutes to fill up, so what do you think will happen at a public power source? The EV is very new to mass production. In my 50 plus years I have not seen a vehicle without some sort of common problem. A very common problem of today is failure of the power distribution box. Mice are a common cause for this box to fail. They love to chew the wiring. The back order for these boxes is becoming a problem, if they are available at all. What I am trying to say is there is going to be some kind of common problem on an EV. The vehicle manufacturers at this time only have to provide parts for 7 years. We have a steady flow of vehicles from 2000 to 2016 to repair. Will there be parts for your EV when it reaches an age of 7 years or older?

The hybrid vehicle is getting up in age and mileage. The track record on these vehicles is just like any vehicle. The love/hate for the hybrid is either I'll buy another one or I'm going back to an ICE vehicle. Usually, the cost of the repairs is a major part of the decision. The hybrid's wiring is more complicated than an ICE vehicle. Over time age of the vehicle will come into play. Repairs for an electrical problem take more time to diagnose and repair, which makes the repair more costly. The new generation of vehicles whether an ICE, hybrid, or EV are all more complicated to repair. The environment we live in will also play a large part in the condition of a vehicle. The EV manufacturers have already stated that the underneath of the vehicle has to stay clean. This could be a big problem in New England. The next 5 years will definitely be interesting to see the outcome of vehicles in general.

Solar Today:

Questions and answers about solar in our community and beyond

Greetings all,

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



This month my article is a revised version of an article published here in *Neighbors* Newspaper last year around this time!

We live in challenging times. Mother Earth is hanging in there, waiting for our commitment to jump into action as peaceful warriors on the path of preserving a healthy and vibrant planet. And fortunately, we are at the perfect time in history to take peaceful, but powerful revolutionary action as individuals - simply by changing how we access our energy by installing solar energy at home. When "We the People" use our collective power to create sustainable change, magic happens. With today's easy access to solar financing and power purchase agreements, we can control how much we pay for our energy and we can help revolutionize the world. Let's face it, electricity is a monthly budgeted expense. In most instances, switching to solar is not an added expense. It simply takes LESS of the same money you are already spending and puts it into a renewable resource where you have control of the cost!

The solar movement is a peaceful revolution, giving us the reigns to take control over our energy access and costs. Let's face it, your contract with the utility company basically says they can charge you as much as they can get away with, change the rate at almost any time (with utility commission complicity) and shut off your power if you don't pay your bill. Controlling your energy supply and cost by going solar contributes to a peaceful and healthy planet, as well as provide you with the peace of mind that you are doing something to help humanity with every kilowatt a home solar system produces.

When my wife, daughter and I went solar thirteen years ago, we were pioneers in the solar revolution. Today our planet is in the early stages of a worldwide switchover to sustainable and less costly renewable energy. Bill Nye, The Science Guy, believes that with today's technology in solar, wind, geothermal and a little bit of tidal energy, we could be using 80% renewable energy worldwide by 2050!

Let's dig into some of the most common questions about installing solar energy at home.

What are the top reasons why people go solar?

1. Save money and take control of energy costs
2. Collect federal incentives
3. Save the environment (or more like save humanity; Mother Earth will be fine without us)
4. My neighbors, family or friends have gone solar

Is installing a solar system too expensive for average homeowners?

Solar myth #1: Solar is too expensive. *Fact:* In most cases, solar costs less than staying with your current energy supplier. Going solar means taking control of your energy costs in the short & long term. Your agreement with the energy company lets them charge you however much they can get away with. With solar, you pay a set lower rate that does not increase in price. Once the system is paid off, you get free electricity!

Are state and federal incentives still available?

The federal credit is currently 26 percent of the cost of the system. The CT state rebate program ended last year. There is a pretty nice battery incentive that works for some homes.

Are there financial risks associated with going solar?

Not really. Unless you get scammed - (*If you read last month's article, you know what I'm talking about.*) You're buying electricity for less, the price is locked in and Zillow claims that a home's value increases up to 6% with solar.

Will I get all of my energy from the solar panels?

Every solar home is unique. It depends upon roof direction, roof pitch, shading and energy usage, these are a few of the variables considered when designing a solar system.

Will solar extend my roof life?

In most cases your roof shingles will last much longer with solar panels covering them. The panels are now taking the weather hit rather than the shingles. Snow will also slide off of your roof faster with the tempered glass panels.

Will I need a re-roof before going solar?

It all depends on the integrity of your shingles. Before solar is installed, a site surveyor will evaluate the current condition of the shingles to make sure they are safe and secure to install solar on. If, in the future, you decide to do a home upgrade or to re-roof after the panels are installed, most solar companies offer a low-cost service to take the panels off and re-install them after the work is completed.

Do solar companies offer equipment warranties in case of roof penetration?

Yes, the best companies, like mine, offer a 30 year warranty on production, efficiency and workmanship!

What about aesthetics and resale value?

I don't know about you, but I love the way solar looks! It looks like the future. It looks like taking control of your energy costs. My home will sell faster than the neighbor's because ***I have the added benefit of a lower electric rate that competing homes for sale can't match.*** One of the top four reasons people go solar is because their neighbors are doing it. If aesthetics is an objection to get past, my suggestion is to look around. The industry is growing fast. It won't be long before the majority of homeowners have solar on their roof. My company offer a Pearl Appraisal Certification for solar. An Appraiser and Real Estate Agent can use this certification to market and sell your home as a renewable energy home.

If you'd like to see if solar would help save you money, please give me a call and we can discover it together. A complimentary evaluation of your energy bill vs the cost and potential savings of solar will determine if solar could be a good financial fit for you. With the proper information, you can make an educated decision and decide for yourself if solar is the right choice for you and your family.

Keep it simple, keep it honest, keep it local... Zen Solar

Thanks for reading my article. Until next month... let's make every day Earth Day!

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



Artist-In-Residence

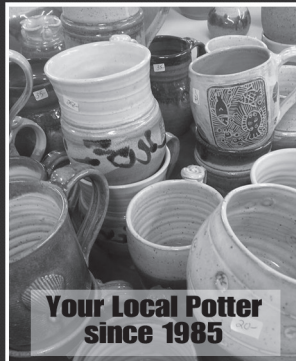
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Please visit www.ec-chap.org/artist-in-residence to learn more and to apply online. Questions may be addressed by email to: info@ec-chap.org; or by calling: 518.791.9474.

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Is This the Coolest Summer of the Rest of Your Life?

By Calen Nakash

With the Supreme Court justices raining down metaphorical fire and brimstone, climate change might not be the top issue on people's minds right now. But we are seeing the impact of humanity's choices in our day-to-day lives, with temperatures and humidity matching what I felt when I lived in Texas. We might as well plan for lava raining from the sky if this keeps up.

This is not some freak event of nature—temperatures have been rising steadily for a long time, and we need more people demanding change than currently are. The American dream of owning a home on a single salary was taken from us, and I know many of you are struggling with an insanely low minimum wage that ignores inflation. But an infinite number of future human lives are at stake. Forget about leaving the planet and eventually living among the stars (which would greatly increase the odds of humanity's survival, since it's hard to have mass extinction on multiple planets). If we do nothing, we're looking at water and food shortages, and mass migration.

To everyone who is reading this: *If you live life as usual, the life you know may cease to be.* We need people to demand change now, and to make any options that harm the planet incredibly risky to take. Public perception is important, and the most important thing I've learned from late-stage capitalism is that the thing corporations care about most is making more money every year, no matter the cost. Until there's a fiscal benefit to protecting the planet, those with money will destroy it. And it falls to the public to get us to that point, which seems like such an utterly harrowing climb that most people don't even try. Before anything else, we need to form groups and organize. It's a lot easier when you have friends by your side. But whenever I run the numbers in my head, there is always one institution standing in the way: the police.

Say a group of people gains power and finds themselves with enough numbers to stand in the way of the next big coal power plant that's about to raise emissions and set us back. The coal company will immediately send in the police—an organization that has cost cities \$1.5 billion to cover for misconduct, with cops who are not required to know the law (it takes more training to become a barber, and only a high-school diploma in most places). Intrinsically, we know this. People know that if they try to make things better in any meaningful way, they're going to have the law sent after them—and, as America has more prisons than schools, that's by design. The U.S. spends \$100 billion on the police and \$80 billion on incarceration, and that's not all that makes the police unpopular. You've no doubt seen headlines about the rampant racism inherent in the system, or the laws being passed making it illegal to record police from a certain distance. The saying is "A few bad apples spoil the bunch" because rot spreads, and while good policemen exist, they're often harassed into leaving the system while police unions protect officers who abuse their power or even kill with impunity. It's even been ruled that *policemen have no duty to protect people.*

If there is to be any chance of major systemic change, the police need to be made irrelevant, because we've seen that they're not capable of fixing themselves from the inside. That means we need neighborhood watches and to get to know our neighbors instead of being scared of them. It's easier to reduce crime when people have what they need to survive, and, with the climate crisis underway, there's a big chance you're not going to have what you need. It's time to get to know each other now, and to get ready for the climb ahead. I am volunteering to help. Email me at calennakash@gmail.com with ideas (or if you have a remote job opening—I get it just as much as you).

Stay safe and stay hydrated.

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By Focus on Veterans, Inc.



The Packing House – Save The Dates!

By EC-CHAP

August

“...August still stretched before us – long and golden and reassuring, like an endless period of delicious sleep.”
- Lauren Oliver

The Packing House will be closed for performance during August. EC-CHAP’s Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery and the Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum will remain open with new exhibits and programs throughout the summer.

As we prepare for our upcoming season - September 2022 through May 2023 - we would like to inform you of the exciting events we have planned and hope you will “Save The Dates” and join us in the fall! We will provide additional details in upcoming issues of the Neighbors Paper. We also invite you to visit EC-CHAP’s Calendar Tab (<https://www.ec-chap.org/>) or The Packing House (<http://thepackinghouse.us/upcoming>) for ongoing details.

SONGS FOR UKRAINE – A Benefit Concert to support the people of Ukraine – September 24, 2022

EC-CHAP is collaborating with the Acoustic Artist, Julia Autumn Ford coordinate and produce “**SONGS FOR UKRAINE**”, a Benefit Concert at THE PACKING HOUSE - September 24, 2022 to support the People of Ukraine. 100% of ALL proceeds from Ticket and Merchandise Sales, Donations, Sponsorships, and Raffles will be donated to this cause through our Charitable Partner **Direct Relief**.

We will host three performances during this special evening from 6:30pm to 10:00pm. Performances will be provided by acoustic artists **Xavier Serrano, Frank Critelli, and Julia Autumn Ford**.

Visual artists, **Christopher Gunderson** and **Carol Mackiewicz Neely** will each create a painting “live” during this event which will be raffled to guests along with many other interesting items. **Scot Haney**, Meteorologist for WFSB Channel-3 will serve as our Master of Ceremony.

We invite you to save this date and join us for this benefit concert. If you are unable to join us in person, we ask you to consider donating what you can to this important cause. We are also seeking individuals and organizations to serve and be recognized as sponsors of this event. To purchase tickets, provide a tax-deductible donation, or become a sponsor, please visit: <https://www.ec-chap.org/benefit-concert-for-ukraine>.

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:

*“Be courageous. Challenge orthodoxy.
Stand up for what you believe in.
When you are in your rocking chair
talking to your grandchildren many years from now,
be sure you have a good story to tell.”*
-Amal Clooney

Be warm, Stay cool!
EC-CHAP Board

SAVE THE DATES:

SEPTEMBER 2022:

Saturday, September 17th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: Twice Around (Folk/Indie)



Saturday, September 24th: Songs for Ukraine: A Benefit Concert to Support the People of Ukraine



OCTOBER 2022:

Saturday, October 1st: EC-CHAP Jazz Series: Greg Abate Quartet (Bebop Jazz)



Wednesday, October 5th : The Blues Project (Rock)



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

NOVEMBER 2022:

Thursday, November 3rd: An Evening with Tom Paxton and the DonJuans (Folk)



Friday, November 18th: Special Program: An Evening with Spiritual Medium Maura Geist



DECEMBER 2022:

Saturday, December 3rd: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: Ash & Eric (Folk/Indie)



Saturday, December 10th: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: Tracy Walton (Folk/Indie)



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).



Seeking New Board Members

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The Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery - Artist Spotlight: Nathanael Read

By Cate Solari

Nathanael Read is a visual artist, originally from Utah, who is currently working towards his Master of Fine Arts at the University of Connecticut ('23). Read works across media with a focus on printmaking and quilting.

He has exhibited nationally, at the Springville Museum of Art and Finch Lane Gallery in UT, South Cobb Art Alliance in GA, the Hartnett Museum at the University of Richmond in VA, and the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury, CT. His work is also in the collection of the LDS Church History Museum in Salt Lake City, UT.

In preparation for his solo exhibition at the Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery, I sat down with Read to discuss his work and his inspiration for his exhibition, *Dood from the West*.



makes the heart grow fonder” definitely applied to how I viewed my homeland. Combined with the culture shock of arriving in Connecticut, I’ve become almost obsessive about my homeland. A particular experience I had hiking Mount Washington might be illustrative:

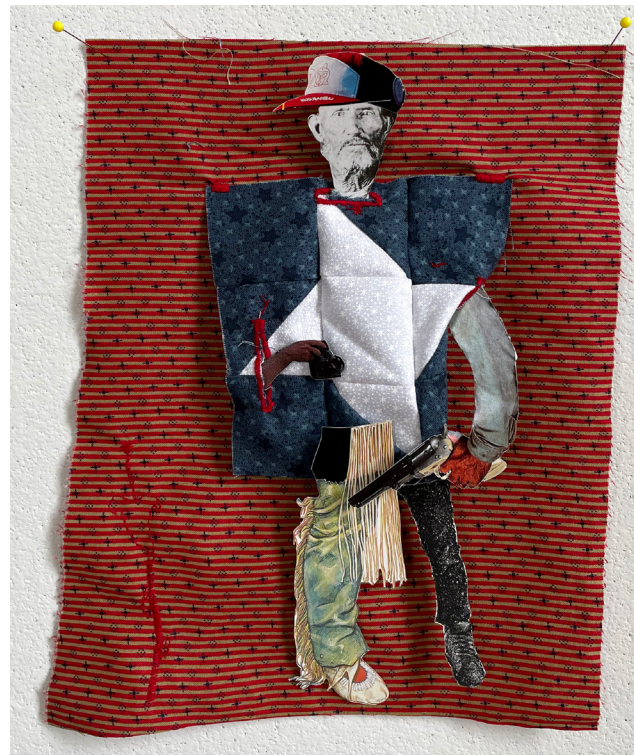
My wife and I have a tradition for celebrating our anniversary. We hike somewhere interesting; carrying the clothes we got married in, and take pictures wearing those clothes. When we did this for Mount Washington, most people we passed as we hiked would ask what the garment bags were for. We’d explain with a smile and continue on. One particular hiker offered some unsolicited advice that maybe the next time we should choose an “easier hike”. On the outside I laughed, on the inside I raged. I wanted to say “Easier!?! I’m from the West! I eat mountains like this for breakfast!”

I guess the point I’m trying to make is that I’m more invested in everything Western here in Connecticut than I ever was in Utah.

CS: Craft seems to play a very important role in your work and how you communicate your themes to a viewer. What got you interested in these crafts (Printmaking and quilting)?

NR: I came to printmaking because I loved to draw, and an etching felt like a more beautiful or interesting way to make a drawing. Once I found etching, I quickly fell in love with the procedural process. Some people feel restricted by the lack of immediacy, I’ve found that the routine of it oddly comforting. The significant amount of time that is poured into an etching plate gives the image on the plate an intangible energy that I’ve never been able to rival with a pen and ink drawing. An exacting process continues to attract me, and quilting fits the bill.

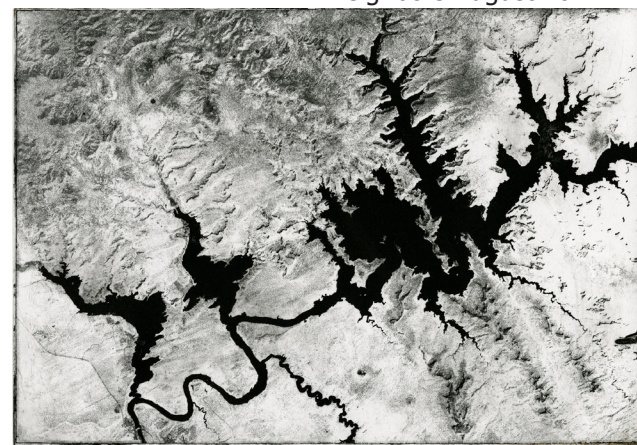
As I described above, quilting was an easy leap from collage, but also it’s common for printmakers to print on fabric, but prior to embracing a quilt, I had rarely printed on fabric. I had never had a good conceptual reason to move my imagery from paper to fabric. So when I finally had a solid reason to print on fabric, I jumped at the opportunity, because what artist doesn’t love experimenting with a new material?



jim side swipe starr

CS: Where do you source your materials and images from?

NR: My imagery comes from a variety of places, most notably: My own photographs of Western landscapes, growing up in the West I have a lot. Found images in old magazines and books. I’m especially interested in anything that comes from the 1950’s and onward, because this was the time that Hollywood was solidifying the myth of the West and the gunslinger. Stills from Western films that have made an impact on me, most often John Ford and Sergio Leone filmography. Of course, *Top Gun*. I’ve always loved that movie. It has a distinctly 80’s approach to masculinity and a recontextualized gunslinger that is fabulous, despite all the warts. And lastly, any map imagery from either satellite photographs, vintage maps, or GPS mapping software (i.e., Google Maps).



Colorado River Compact

CS: There seems to be a real nostalgic quality to the work, almost a patina of age, or a sense of love and use, is this something you try to control?

NR: Depends on the piece. A couple quilts I’ve intentionally weathered by placing them outside in the elements for over a year, so I’ve ‘collaborated’ with nature to make those happen. Others I choose older materials (such as the fabrics inherited from my great Aunt Sarah) or reused slats of wood to recall the broken down barns or old fence posts that dot the rural West. I control it as much as I feel is necessary, but I do love when things just fall into place.

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

NR: I don’t think I can call this my favorite, because that’s a word I try to avoid, but I can call the Colorado River Compact the one with the most potential for what’s next. With the ongoing drought and water crisis all across the American West, I’ve been continually etching and printing a single copper plate for 24 hours. The image and plate degrade in a way I have little control over. I feel like it’s a piece that is the beginning of an idea that will probably take a while to fully iterate.

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

NR: Putting the time into the printing of the Colorado River Compact, etching and printing it takes about 2.5 hours (plus drying time) per iteration. With 24 prints, it’s taken quite a while to get done. I’ve listened to more than one audiobook.

CS: What do you do for fun outside of art?

NR: I love movies, hiking, and road trips. I’ve also recently gotten into baking, I make a mean snickerdoodle.

CS: What’s on the horizon for you, after your show at D&BHC?

NR: Working on my thesis show, the central work for that is an artist book that has been 2 years in the making, so there’s quite a bit of drawing and design in my future.

The Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery and adjoining history Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum are open Saturdays 10am-Noon or by appointment. For more information or a request to display your original work, please email info@ec-chaop.org or call 518-791-9474.

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

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How to Remember

By Felix F. Giordano

How often have you developed a thought or had an epiphany that you deem to be brilliant for a story but are unable to jot it down during those precious moments? You may have been on the road driving when the inspiration burst into your senses. You may have overheard an interesting luncheon conversation between two eclectic people at a restaurant. You may have even awakened in the middle of the night and had a dream of epic proportions. Often, by the time you have access to pen and paper you have forgotten most or all of your inspirational thoughts and are scrambling to recall the bits and pieces of those fleeting memories. You may be able to remember the broader idea but the minute details may be gone forever. That clever dialogue that you wanted your protagonist to say at the most opportune time has vanished or the perfect name for a character is on the tip of your tongue but simply unable to reveal itself to you.

Because inspirations are thoughts that come to us from the ether, they are neither tethered to our consciousness nor ideas that are fully fleshed out. They are the isolated fragments which drive us writers to develop stories. What can we do to capture those influential moments in time that are mesmerizing, compelling, and often remarkable?

We are in essence living, breathing computers and our brain is its Central Processing Unit (CPU). If you stop and think about what a computer is, how it stores information, and how that information is recalled you can see the obvious similarities between computers and humans. Everything we type onto a computer is saved and stored on a hard drive or now, in the Cloud. If we wish to recall that information we need to “remind” the computer where it is. We do that by searching for the name of a file or a few key words that are contained in that file. That’s exactly how our brains work. They retain every experience we’ve ever encountered, every sight or sound we’ve ever experienced, and every thought we’ve ever considered. We can recall many of them by remembering bits and pieces of those memories until the entire experience floods our conscious mind and we then remember it in its great detail, just like a computer. But some thoughts are often difficult to recall.

One way to remember inspirations is to carry a small pad and pen on your person. When an idea for a story comes to mind jot it down on that pad. Try to be as detailed as possible. When we are sitting at our writing station, we can then refer to our notes and begin the process of brainstorming a plot, characters, and perhaps even develop an outline. What we don’t write down will often be forgotten.

Another way to remember is to record our thoughts or describe what we’ve seen or have just experienced. We can use a handheld voice recorder or a cell phone. If you can’t record a message on your cell phone but have an answering machine at home, call your home number and leave a detailed voice mail message. In that message describe what is pertinent to the story that you are or will be writing about.

Visuals are the ultimate way to remember. If you have a camera or cell phone, take a photo of what inspired you. Suppose you’re writing a story and a scene involves Willimantic’s Frog Bridge. A few photos of the bridge will help you describe it in greater detail than if you simply relied on your own memory of the bridge. In the photo, you may notice how the sun casts its shadows on the sidewalks, or how the roofs of motor vehicles first come into view as the cars make their way down toward Main Street, or perhaps a section of sidewalk was recently repaired. Include that detail. It will make your story that much richer.

Sometimes it’s not the thoughts that we wish to remember but we simply need to research information for what we are writing about. In the past, writers conducted personal interviews, visited locations, or even learned the skills related to their writing project. They also visited libraries and either borrowed books or sat in the library for hours and collected notes from many different sources. Then when a writer composed their story they usually had to refer to those notes countless times. If they lost or damaged the notes, then they were back to square one.

Today, it’s much easier to sit at our computers or in front of our TV and be transported to the very location

we’re writing about or watch a professional describe what he or she does. When you write a story with characters whose profession involves detailed skills, procedures, or techniques, you will need to complete impeccable research. Stories about airline pilots, police detectives, or surgeons require that we convince readers that we know what we’re talking about and that they can have faith in our characters’ language, behavior, and motivations.

Also today, it’s possible that you don’t even have to take notes or print copies of your research. All you have to do is copy a unique URL which is short for Uniform Resource Locator. A URL is the web address of a domain name, along with other detailed information, which creates a complete address that directs a browser to a specific location. If you want to search my website for information regarding my research you can go to jbnovels.com. There you will find a wealth of data that I continue to use for reference purposes in my novels. The information contained on my website was inspired from researching maps, law enforcement websites, and various other websites that I used to create the fictional town of Taylor Montana and fictional Cedar County. I plan to add more data as I continue to work on future novels. Having this information available on my website provides me with the ability to reference it at any time and at a moment’s notice. This allows me to be consistent in my writing.

Also on my website I have complete diagrams of each floor of the fictional Cedar County Sheriff’s Office which is critical to my novels. I can actually “see” where my characters have to turn down a hallway to enter someone’s office or get into an elevator. In those diagrams, at ground level is a sally port entrance. I had never heard of the term “sally port” until I watched a detective movie a few years ago. A sally port is a secure room or portal in which suspects, prisoners, evidence, or sensitive information is usually transferred from law enforcement vehicles into the sheriff’s office or police department. This safeguards the chain of custody and protects the public. I took notes, did the research, and now I’ve incorporated a sally port into my novels when prisoners or evidence is being transported.

My fourth novel, *Missing in Montana* dealt with a religious cult and the aftermath of their influence on young people. To conduct research for that book, I watched a series of episodes from the Dr. Phil show where he interviewed former cult members. They spoke of how cult members would seek out vulnerable prospects, recruitment them, brainwash them, and then ultimately deny them the freedom to leave the cult. I ended up with three pages of notes that I then used to help develop the personalities, motives, and physiological profiles of not just the cult members in that novel but even those of the cult leader.

In closing, what is important to “remember” is that we try to utilize every resource possible to transcribe and describe notes, ideas, plots, settings, and our character’s descriptions, personalities, moods, and relationships. In that way we can best capture what we want to show our readers.

We defined “How to Remember” as part of The Elements of Writing, and I hope I’ve piqued your interest in writing. Storytelling is inherent in us all. It is who we are as social human beings and we all have stories to tell.

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

Mr. Giordano also chairs a Saturday writers group and presents a monthly lecture series at the Willington Public Library. Please call (860) 429-3854 for more information.

Next Month’s Topic: Background - Developing a World Apart

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

New Law Protects Employee Freedom of Speech & Conscience

By Attorney Kevin M. Tighe

On May 17, 2022, Governor Lamont signed into law Public Act No. 22-24 (“An Act Protecting Employee Freedom of Speech And Conscience”) (the “New Law”). The New Law became effective July 1, 2022.

The New Law significantly expands the current protections provided to employees in the private workplace by Connecticut General Statutes Section 31-51q, i.e., protection against adverse employment action when an employee exercises their right to free speech under the United States and Connecticut constitutions.

Generally, the New Law prohibits employers (including the State of Connecticut, towns, cities and other political subdivisions) from penalizing and/or threatening to penalize an employee because the employee refused to attend an employer-sponsored meeting, listen to speech, or view communications which are primarily intended to communicate the employer’s opinion about religious or political matters (called “captive audience meetings”). The new prohibition covers meetings with the employer or its agent or representative.

“Political matters” are defined in the New Law as relating to: (1) elections for political office, (2) political parties, (3) proposals to change legislation or regulation, and (4) decisions to join or support a political party or political, civic, community, fraternal, or labor organization. “Religious matters” are defined in the New Law as relating to: (1) religious affiliation and practice and (2) decisions to join or support a religious organization or association.

The New Law permits certain exceptions to both its prohibitions on penalizing employees for refusing to attend “captive audience meetings” and Connecticut General Statutes Section 31-51q’s prohibition against penalizing employees for exercising certain rights set forth in the United States and Connecticut constitutions. The New Law expressly allows the following: (1) an employer or its agent, representative, or designee to communicate to employees information (a) required by law, but only to the extent required by the law in question, or (b) the employees need to perform their job duties, (2) a higher education institution, or its agent, representative, or designee to meet or participate in communications with employees that are part of coursework, a symposia, or an academic program at the institution, (3) voluntary, casual conversations between employees or between an employee and an employer’s agent, representative, or designee, or (4) a requirement that is limited to the employer’s managerial and supervisory employees.

The New Law also exempts, under certain circumstances, a religious corporation, entity, association, education institution, or society that is exempt from (1) the federal Civil Rights Act’s prohibition of religious discrimination in employment or (2) the state’s prohibitions on discriminatory employment practices and sexual orientation discrimination under the Connecticut Human Rights Act and related contracting provisions. This exemption applies to speech on religious matters to employees who are engaged in work connected with carrying on the organization’s activities.

Currently, Connecticut General Statutes Section 31-51q prohibits employers from penalizing employees for exercising certain rights under the United States and Connecticut constitutions. Specifically, Section 31-51q makes an employer potentially liable to the employee who has been penalized by the employer for damages caused by the prohibited action, including punitive damages, and reasonable attorney’s fees. Such employers are also liable for a \$300 civil penalty imposed by the Department of Labor. The New Law extends this potential liability to employers who (1) penalize or threaten employees for refusing to attend, listen to, or watch a “captive audience meeting,” or (2) threaten to penalize employees for exercising their First Amendment rights. However, the New Law explicitly limits the potential award in civil cases involving violations of Section 31-51q or the New Law to the full amount of gross lost wages or compensation, with costs and reasonable attorney’s fees, but without punitive damages or other unspecified damages being available to a prevailing employee. As under Section 31-51q, if a court determines that the employee brought an action against their employer without substantial justification, the court may award the employer their costs and reasonable attorney’s fees.

Note that the National Labor Relations Act allows “captive audience meetings” in certain circumstances; but those circumstances are not discussed in this article.

This article and its contents are not intended to be a substitute for professional or legal advice. If you believe that you have been affected by the application of the New Law, please feel free to email me at AttorneyTighe@tighelawfirm.com.

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).



No Sacrifice on Going Green

CT Examiner. "...we can do this while steadily lowering the amount of carbon emissions we use to generate all this energy. If we look at the amount of greenhouse gasses emitted per unit of electricity produced in the US (that is, how much carbon we spew to produce one kilowatt-hour), our emissions have dropped by 30 percent in the past two decades. We also know that there is a lot of margin to cut these emissions; the UK uses 70 per cent of carbon emissions we do to generate one kilowatt-hour; the French only 17 percent. That is: we can reduce energy use and we can cut carbon emissions while growing the economy. We are already doing it. Our problem is not one of technology, or engineering, or lifestyle, but about who is making money by preventing this from happening. In other words, we have a political problem."

Connecticut approves 3-year, \$708M energy efficiency plan with focus on equity, affordability, decarbonization

Utility Dive. "The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has approved a \$708 million, three-year energy efficiency plan projected to generate \$1.7 billion in total benefits and avoid 4.6 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions. The 2022-2024 Conservation and Load Management Plan focuses on equity, decarbonization and affordability, DEEP said in a Thursday statement. The plan prioritizes energy efficiency efforts directed towards electric and gas utility customers with the largest past due balances and most frequent shutoffs, the department said. It also calls for identifying areas of Connecticut with lower energy efficiency program participation in order to develop new customer outreach strategies."

Greenskies Clean Focus installs 752 kW of solar across 2 Connecticut schools

Solar Power World. "Putnam School District of Putnam, Connecticut has offset 70% of its total electricity load with a 752-kW solar project...In total, Greenskies installed over 2,000 solar panels on the rooftops of Putnam High School (520 kW) and Putnam Middle School (232 kW). Together, the rooftop arrays are projected to produce an estimated 866-MWh of clean energy each year...The PPA structure ensures the town pays no upfront costs and will have reduced energy rates, saving approximately \$875,000 over the next 25 years."

Connecticut weatherization program will tackle mold, asbestos, other barriers

Energy News Network. "Mold, asbestos and other hazards can prevent energy efficiency contractors from moving ahead with weatherization projects. A new state program will create funding to help homeowners address those barriers...Leticia Colon De Mejias, owner of an energy efficiency contracting company and executive director of the nonprofit Efficiency for All, said the program is long overdue. She has been advocating for a more equitable approach in the state's efficiency programs since 2015...The new program is expected to cover the cost of remediating hazardous conditions for up to 1,000 income-eligible households over the next three years. The program will draw from a utility-maintained list of some 20,000 homes that have been deferred from participation in the state's energy efficiency programs due to barriers."

Ellington Farm to Convert Manure Into Natural Gas
NBC Connecticut. "Oakridge Dairy Farm in Ellington is the first farm in Connecticut to install a methane digester, which converts manure into natural gas - but how will it work? "Methane Digester is really just a big giant tank. We're trying to replicate the cow's stom-

ach to get the remainder of energy she ate and turn it into a gas" said Seth Bahler, owner of Oakridge Dairy Farm. "So a cow eats about 100 pounds of food a day and roughly 75% of that energy in that food is used for keeping her healthy and happy producing milk. Now the other 25% passes through into the manure. That manure will then go to the methane digester," he said. From there, the team will pull the gas off the top of the methane digester, putting it through a process where it's cleaned and will be put into a tanker which will be filled with natural compressed gas every other day."

Battery power storage has potential, but getting homeowners hooked up could take time

Connecticut Public. "The state is trying to boost adoption of electricity-storing batteries in homes and businesses through an incentive program called "Energy Storage Solutions," which kicked off in January. But batteries are expensive. And the incentive program, which can provide up to \$7,500 to offset installation costs and give customers payments for power fed back to the grid, is still relatively new. All that means Connecticut consumers and batteries still need some time to connect... 'If there's a power outage, I can limp along with the batteries for three or four days," he said. "Should the sun come out anytime within those three to four days, I could go even longer without the grid working."



CT providing more incentives to get electric cars on the road

News8 WNH. "Electric vehicles have long been thought of as luxury vehicles, but Connecticut is trying to change that by providing more incentives to drive electric. On top of the \$7,500 federal income tax credit, purchasing a new EV could get you up to \$7,500 through the state's CHEAPR rebate program. There's also a \$500 rebate from Eversource for your home charger. All of that could get you \$15,000 in savings."

New England grid capacity likely to rise over 100% by 2042 amid heating, transportation electrification: ISO

Utility Dive. "The New England ISO said it anticipates powering 1.1 million air-source heat pumps by 2031, and more than 1.5 million electric vehicles, potentially accounting for more than 3,000 MW of demand. As New England adds large amounts of wind, battery storage and solar, some "balancing resources" will remain necessary for reliability, the grid operator said. But a look at the ISO's interconnection queue gives a good idea of where the region's power mix is headed. Five years ago, the ISO's generator interconnection queue was 48% natural gas, 44% wind and 6% solar, representing about 13 GW. In March of this year, it was 66% wind, 21% battery storage, 9% solar and 3% gas, for about 30 GW."

The first self-driving vehicle test track and research facility in the region may be coming to UConn. Here's what it could look like.

Hartford Courant. "A vacant portion of the University of Connecticut's campus in Mansfield is on track to become the first autonomous vehicle and smart city research facility in the region... 'What we're proposing and hoping to be able to build is a facility that anybody that's developing this technology can bring their car here. The goal would be to provide this rich environment for faculty, staff and students, both graduates and undergraduates.'"

Wind farm, environmentalists agree on ways to protect whales

Stamford Advocate. "The agreement involving Orsted and Eversource — developers of South Fork Wind off the coast of New England and New York — was signed by the National Wildlife Federation, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Conservation Law Foundation... "We don't need to choose between clean energy development and wildlife protection, and this agreement shows how we can do both," ...Under Monday's agreement, South Fork Wind will adopt monitoring measures to help ensure right whales are not close to the site during active construction. South Fork Wind will also work to reduce noises made by pile driving and implement a 10-knot speed limit for project-related vessels to cut the risk of vessel strikes."

Introducing a History of Connecticut Industry During Times of War

By Ryan Elgin



Firstly, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance in appointing me as Assistant Director and Curator of the Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum. During my time here, I plan to reach out to knowledgeable local speakers and historians for EC-CHAP's Historical Lecture Series. In addition, the Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum is always looking for new artifacts and pieces to display. The museum has placed emphasis on the enterprises that have operated at The Mill Works, their connection to the local community, and on the Hall family. In addition, we plan to expand our scope to raise awareness of significant historical events that have shaped our lives on a local, regional, and statewide level. If you have something that you're interested in putting on display, please contact me at ryan@ec-chap.org.

Since childhood, one of my strongest passions was history. I can vividly remember myself in the Somers Elementary School Library flipping through the DK Eyewitness Books each time I was there. Who can forget such classics such as Viking, Arms and Armor, Titanic, and Ancient Egypt? Just seeing the cover of these books brings back a wave of nostalgia. Their format of large diagrams and photos accompanied by small, albeit relatively informative, snippets of text served as a fantastic introduction to a wide variety of topics. I would wager that the Eyewitness Books, since their start in the 80s with topics spanning from History to Sports, to Cars, Artists, and Space, have acted as the spark for many individual's sources of interest today.

My interest in history simultaneously became stronger and more specific over time. One look at my bookshelf and you could easily ascertain that my primary area of interest was military history. For the past few years, this interest in military history has taken me down two niche paths; one being the recreation of a Swiss infantryman's complete uniform in the Swiss Armed Forces during the late Second World War period using all authentic pieces. Indeed, the small neutral nation of Switzerland had an extensive conscription program and undertook thorough preparation for a potential invasion of their country. The second of these niche interests involves a deep dive into literature surrounding the Second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945), what led up to it, and its expansion into The Pacific War. Of particular interest to me are the memoirs of the

Japanese people during that time period; not exclusively a soldier's thoughts, but also the personal opinions, mindset, and experiences of the machine shop laborer, the doctor pressed into service, the baker attempting to continue working through extreme rationing, and many others. Wartime accounts are comparatively rare in Japan. Personal accounts translated into English are even scarcer. As Americans we, understandably, focus on our side of the conflict. However, I believe we cannot earnestly attempt to understand a topic without considering multiple points of view or the zeitgeist of the period. History is often colored by the lens of our ideals and attitudes of today. Many would argue that this should be the way that the past is analyzed. Even so, I think we would all agree that personal accounts and oral histories act as an interesting time capsule to a historical event, as disagreeable as they sometimes are.

Using this space in the *Neighbors* Paper, I would like to further explore my interest in military history and how it interacts with my burgeoning interest in regional history. Over the next couple of months, I plan to do a "series" in which I discuss Connecticut's industry and how it supported the United States' war efforts. Connecticut has a rich history, and it comes as no surprise to any Connecticut resident that mills and factory industry were vital in the development of our state. Many towns and villages owe their existence to the fact that there is, or was, a mill to act as the area's life center. I am hopeful that this series will span the Revolutionary War, Civil War, First World War, and Second World War. Although the mills and industries of Connecticut before the height of the industrial revolution are not typically what we think of as "industry" today, they still served an important role. Connecticut grew from supporting George Washington's Army with small home shops and some mills to an industrial powerhouse in the 19th century. Truly, Connecticut played its part throughout our country's history and became a symbol of America's growing industrial might on the world stage.

Our first revisit to Connecticut's industrial past will be the Revolutionary War. Until next time.

The Gardiner Hall Jr Museum is open to the public Saturdays from 10:00am to 12:00pm. For more information, please call 518-791-9474.

Ryan Elgin serves as EC-CHAP Assistant Director, Curator of the Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum, and Volunteer Coordinator. He may be contacted directly at ryan@ec-chap.org.



Curb Appeal

By Delia Berlin

Years ago, we had a next-door neighbor who planted zinnias from seed every spring against his south-facing house wall. He couldn't see the colorful zinnias from his own windows. They were even hard to appreciate from the sidewalk or the street. But plant them he did, as a gift to his neighbors. I enjoyed seeing them from my kitchen window, as I cooked. Close neighbors were also invited to use them as cut flowers, if they wished. It was a generous gesture from Bill. He was not a particularly chatty or gregarious man, but this was one of his ways of giving us a neighborly smile. We miss him.

Our cheerful summer view of Bill's zinnias made me realize that our yards can have a profound effect on others. At least in our section of Willimantic, where yards are relatively small, our windows tend to offer views of our neighbors' gardens, instead of our own. Because of this realization, in return to Bill's gesture I decided to grow flowers on our north-facing side, mirroring his zinnias, so he could see them from his sunroom. Better suited to perennials and shrubs than to annuals, that side of our house got landscaped with

lilacs, hibiscus, clematis, viburnum, roses, and blueberry bushes. Although Bill moved away several years ago, we have continued to maintain that part of our garden landscape. By now, our own plants have grown enough to offer us more privacy on that side, and we can see our own flowers on that visually shared border.

A walk around our neighborhood shows a wide variety of landscaping styles, from naturalized to manicured, from simple to elaborate. There are raised beds with vegetable gardens, fences with climbing vines, lawns dotted with a few specimen plantings, pollinator gardens, cottage-style borders, welcoming arbors, and charming front porches with hanging baskets and planters. With very few exceptions, houses and yards look cheerful, neat, and well kept. Almost every home in our vicinity offers something to smile about.

Some of our neighbors go beyond gardening to add appeal to their yards. Several have incorporated wind chimes, interesting rocks, garlands of LED lights, or 3-D art installations. There are also a few quaint birdhouses, feeders, and birdbaths. One nearby household even has a mini-library in a box on a post, where the homeowners place books they have read, so passersby can just take them for free or barter them for different books. Yet another neighbor marks special holidays with whimsical

decorations displayed in her second-floor window. All these gestures add to the quality of life in our neighborhood and to the holistic value of our homes. It doesn't seem like much, but I'm thankful for it.

So, next time you need to mow the lawn, rake leaves, groom plantings, or simply sweep your front door path, don't

think of it as just a chore done for the sake of maintaining your own property. Consider it a gift to your neighbors—parents with children in strollers, dog owners, local students, joggers, walkers, and any others who may go by your house in need of a little cheer on a given day. Your work may feel more purposeful and lighter for it.



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