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# NEIGHBORS

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Looking Up

# Walking and Talking and So Much More...Thinking by Starlight

By Bob Grindle

It was late in the day by the time we finally set aside the endless chores that fill so many of the hours of all of our lives and ventured out with plans for a hike along a section of the Airline Trail in Pomfret. The lengthening shadows of a near perfect mid-September afternoon beckoned and a soft, warm breeze rustled through the birch leaves gentle as a Siren's Lyre and called us to come explore our lovely and endlessly fascinating green corridor of valleys and by-ways here in northeastern Connecticut. We booted up and headed out...the day's warmth radiated up from the trail and the coolness that the evening's air promised could be felt in every deeply inhaled breath. No need to rush, our small five member, three-generation band of hikers would let the conversation and our engagement with the world around us set the pace...a cadence as relaxed and natural as the dried pine needle carpeting on the trail's stone dust path.

Yes, it is possible to escape the complications and challenges and Gordian tangles of our busy world for a time by slipping into the context of a simple nature walk through fields and marshes and woodlands, and to let the worries and bruises of modern living dissolve momentarily back into the cosmic material from which we are all formed...it is just as possible, though, on that same simple walk to instead reconnect with something of the child we all once were. A child who had no doubt what was just around the next corner or over the next hill...a world of wonder; a world filled with adventure and possibility. Every single one of the more than six billion adult Homo sapiens alive on Earth today began life owning our species' very special gift of a rich imagination, boundless energy, deep curiosity, endless enthusiasm and a sense of wonder. What happened to this priceless endowment? Does it get

packaged up and buried securely in the backyard of our brain—the hippocampus—for retrieval years later after we have jumped out of the hammock of youth, traveled the hazardous road to mature adulthood and finally grown old? Such questions seem to fit within the boundaries of our Airline Trail walk...on the one side the century-plus engineering feat of drilled and blasted walls to make way for America's earliest railroads, and on the other a healthy marsh, filled with red-winged blackbirds, wrens and the occasional heron.

At what point in this journey we have come to know as 'a life' were loyalty to our planet, a passion to stand up for the potential of our species and perhaps even a curiosity about the fellowship of all life on Earth a part of the curriculum? The dilemma is not new... in 1879, in Omaha, Nebraska in a U.S. District Court, a Native American chief, Standing Bear, successfully arguing that Native Americans were 'persons within the meaning of the law,' wrote that: "Life for the Indian is one of harmony with nature and the things which surround him. The Indian tries to fit in with nature and to understand, not conquer or rule it. Life is a glorious thing, for great contentment comes with the feeling of friendship and kinship with the living things around you." There is so much to be lost in the heat of hate. Have we been too consumed with our loyalties to wealth and power and national flags and deities and maybe even personal vanity to grasp the dark irony of

the colossal mess our most gifted of species is making of the only nest we'll ever know?

A conversation...such is the power of walking together. Our hike ended as nightfall and the promised chill descended; the stars twinkled into view and the now waning Harvest Moon rose above the wraith-like silhouettes

of the trees we know less about than the surfaces of some planets...we can split an atom and melt civilization if we're not careful, but we know very little about how trees communicate or bats navigate. But bats or trees or hikers or stars, we are all made of the same Cosmic stuff and as the almost unutterable size of the universe rises with the stars into our imagination...such is the power of looking up.

The last half of October will be filled with the potential for meteor showers

on the 21<sup>st</sup> and then again on the 31<sup>st</sup>. First the Orionid meteors originate in the area of Betelgeuse in the constellation Orion on the 21<sup>st</sup>, and then 10 days later in the area of the constellation Taurus the Taurid meteor shower does an encore. The Moon should not be in play either time and while neither meteor shower is known for large numbers of "shooting stars," they are both known to have a high incidence of 'fireball' type streaks across the late-night eastern sky...worth a wait up. Until next we chat, enjoy those walks with friends and loved ones around our marvelous neighborhood.



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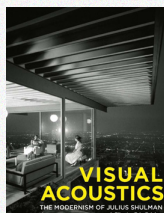


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On our cover:  
At the BOTL farm in Ashford. Piglets and goats photos by Nick Weinstock. Photo of Nick and his sign by Ling Messer. Read Dennis Pierce's article about Nick and his farm on page 6.

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

Neighbors No. 212, October 2022

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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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# Vote As If

By Loretta Wrobel



Back in 1987 when I first moved to Ashford, there was the Harmonic Convergence, a time designated as a unique alignment of the planets and a call for global meditation. This was viewed as a dynamic shift in our planet moving toward the Age of Aquarius, from warlike to peaceful actions. What was to follow, according to Aztec and Maya cosmology, was a few decades of turbulence of the highest caliber. At that time, I questioned this prophecy, as the predictions were for world turmoil and disorder featuring droughts, floods, political instability, wars, fires, massive sickness and financial distress.

I was safe, secure and thriving in the middle of my life and pondered how this could occur in America. Climate disasters, upheavals, disruptions, famines, dramatic upswings in violence etc. on a vast scale in America? Not possible, right? As I continue to live my life into my later years, I remember those predictions, and boom—the pandemic, questions regarding validity of elections, school shootings, increased violence in malls and workspaces, and forest fires, floods and heat descend on us. What now?

Three things I do know. First, the pandemic is “over;” however, many of my friends and relatives have Covid. Second, there is flooding especially in Pakistan, and the wealthy countries can’t provide assistance as there are more important issues to address. Third, massive shootings are no longer a rare event in our Country. Along with all of this, we have endless claims of hoax and conspiracy. Seems like I was mistaken on that summer day in 1987. Oops!

Now in 2022 I take a breath and survey the damage. How do we attempt to right this ship of fools that is taking up valuable air space and feeding us questionable data, aka alternate truths? How do we stop the trend for extreme righteous behavior which excludes anyone who is different or is not totally embracing the patriarchy?

In November we can do the right thing and VOTE. I learned and have heard it said that we are a democracy and the people decide who leads us. We accomplish that feat through expressing our right, going to the polls, and yes, voting for the candidate of our choice. This relatively simple act is the cornerstone of our democracy. Let the people elect the person/people they trust to work for them, which is not the richest white male or the braggart who promises you that all is well if you just follow their fabrications.

Please let your one precious vote be an educated decision that examines the issues and digests what you have heard, read and learned. Decide on the individual who will best work for creating the world you want to live in. I see this as an act of faith in the democratic process that solidifies what our country stands for. Yes I am waving the flag for sanity, orderly process, and accepting the results of any election. This does not seem radical, bizarre or a threat to our country.

Critical is to ensure access to voting so everyone that wishes to vote can do so. The second point is to be ready to accept the results of the election process. The third point is to agree to work together with those we disagree with to create a healthier community. Getting back to dialogue is important to the survival of democracy.

As our election day rapidly approaches, I will gently offer my views on two local candidates in my district that I feel embody the best of being a lawmaker in the Quiet Corner. One is Pat Boyd, again running for state representative, who just recently became a legislator for my town. Pat has been in office since 2017. I have met him and talked with him about the issues that fuel my passion, such as preserving open space, encouraging and maintaining Connecticut Agriculture, and assisting dairy farmers. Pat is a real voice for rural Connecticut and supports protecting our environment. He participates in the rural legislative caucus, is a member of the committee on children and is tuned in to the devastating effects of crumbling foundations. In my mind he is a leader who represents his district and is interested in what the residents of Ashford have to say. I am glad he will represent me at the Capitol.

The other local candidate that I wholeheartedly support is Lisa Thomas. Lisa is running for State Senator in the Quiet Corner’s 35th district, which includes Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Eastford, Ellington, Hampton, Stafford, Thompson, Tolland, Union, Vernon, Willington, and Woodstock. Lisa is strong on all the issues that resonate with my heart. She believes in early voting and “no excuse absentee ballots,” which will make voting accessible to more Connecticut residents. She understands the need for better mental health services, is in favor of affordable housing, and is totally for preserving our rural environment in Eastern Connecticut. Presently she chairs the Coventry Town Council; therefore, she has experience working with budgets and grants, and understands the necessity of compromise.

I hope you will take the opportunity to get to know these candidates and decide for yourself who you want to represent you in Hartford. This November become an informed voter. You can easily check out the websites of the candidates and talk with any potential legislators when they knock at your door or phone you. Many of the candidates show up at town events such as fairs, concerts, and celebrations. Don’t miss the opportunity to get your questions answered or share your thoughts with them.

We have an opportunity each election day to participate in making our democracy function better by getting out to the polls and casting your ballot for the candidates of your choice. The more people who vote, those elected officials will then represent the wishes, wants and desires of the people who reside in their districts.

When a high percentage of the eligible voters cast their ballots, our democracy can thrive, as the lawmakers will enact legislation reflecting the will of the majority of the residents of their district. Do behave like a responsible citizen and vote November 8th as if your life depended on it. Because, no surprise, it does!

# Tracker Pipe Organ Concert in Hampton

Submitted by Michelle Racz

Hampton Congregational Church has announced their 21<sup>st</sup> annual concert on the church’s Tracker pipe organ will be held on Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. The instrument was built in 1836 specifically for the Hampton church, by Dennison Smith of Hartford and is the only known example of his work. It is a one manual of 4 stops. Rebuilt in the 1980’s by Richard Hamar, the organ continues to work well and is used for Sunday preludes. Refreshments will be served after the program. There will be a free will offering.

This year’s artist is Raphael Attila Vogl of Germany who began his early musical study with cathedral organist, Ludwig Ruckdeschel, in Pasaau, Germany. At the age of 18, he attended the Hochschule für Katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik (College for Catholic Church Music

& Music Education) in Regensburg, Germany. While in Regensburg, he studied Organ Performance and Church Music under Stefan Baier and Markus Rupprecht. Subsequently, he studied under László Fassang for one year at the Franz-Liszt-Academy in Budapest, Hungary. Raphael graduated with a Master’s degree in Organ Performance from the world-famous Juilliard School in 2020, where he studied under the Grammy Award winning Paul Jacobs.

In the following year, he was admitted to the most advanced course of study offered at The Juilliard School — The Doctor of Musical Arts. Raphael has taken part in various competitions, winning prizes in: The International Mendelssohn Organ Competition in Switzerland, The International Tariverdiev Competition in Russia, and at The Boulder Bach Festivals World Bach Competition. Raphael made his Alice Tully Hall debut in 2020, where



he performed the New York premiere of Sophia Gubaidulina’s *The Rider on the White Horse* at the Focus Festival at Lincoln Center. As a concert organist, he has performed in concert halls and cathedrals across Europe and America.

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## The Curse of New-Fangled Gadgets (and the curse of the Global Economy)

By Angela Hawkins Fichter

I had a major operation four years ago (reverse shoulder replacement), and since my husband is dead, I thought I better get one of those alert buttons you wear around your neck and press if you collapse and can't get up or have some other medical emergency and can't get to a phone to dial 911. So I got one and wore it. The instructions said to test it. I was afraid to, for fear an ambulance would come that wasn't needed, so I phoned the company and was told to test it while standing right next to the plastic box on the counter. It took me forever to connect the thing because I'm used to making calls in my home from a landline phone. I tested the alert button, the alarm box went off on the counter, and someone asked me if I had an emergency. I said no, I was just testing it. The voice then told me how to undo the alert call.

I was supposed to test the alert button once a month, but I was so concerned about an unneeded ambulance coming that I did not test it again until July this year, when I collapsed in the garden while weeding (sciatic nerve thing) and could not stand up from the ground by myself. I yelled for help, a neighbor came over and picked me up under the armpits, and I walked confidently into the house myself. This had previously happened in 2014, also while weeding, and I stood up by myself and walked into the house to tell my husband. My joints must have been younger then.

Anyway, this garden incident convinced me I should test my alert button again. Guess what. It didn't work. So, I phoned the company. They asked what the name of my landline service company was. I told them the big S. Aha, they said, your old company that was bought out by the big S had no issues with our alert button, but we find that if the big S is your service provider, sometimes our button works and sometimes it doesn't. Well, I need an alert button, I answered. The company said that they have not had problems with alert buttons that activate a cell phone in the plastic box on the counter. Fine, I said. I bought one, and they shipped it to me.

When it arrived, a big installment issue arose. First, I unpacked it and found that the plug for the plastic box was itself in a box. For comparison, I looked at my toaster. It has wires covered in plastic attached to a rubber plug with metal prongs that fit into the electric outlet in my wall. This new gadget had metal prongs inside a small plastic box that was open on one side. I could see the prongs, but I couldn't figure how to use it.

I called the helpline phone number on the slip that came with the gadgets and asked for help with the plug. Someone with a thick accent said she didn't know what I was talking about. I called again and again got someone with a thick accent who couldn't help me. I looked at this stupid plastic box with two metal prongs inside and thought, Angela, do not look at this like you are a male mechanical engineer. Look at it like a woman. What would a woman do in this situation? Fingernails! That was the answer. I used my fingernails and was finally able to maneuver the prongs out of the plastic box. It turns out the plastic box itself substitutes for the rubber plug around

my toaster plug prongs. Huh.

So now I could plug the plastic box with a cell phone inside it into an electrical outlet. But how to disassemble the old plastic box from my landline phone outlet? This needed an electrical engineer, at least, because my landline phone cord ran through the old box, and I wanted to keep and use my landline phone. The company told me I had to mail them back my old counter box; therefore there was a second incentive for freeing it from my landline phone. After a lot of finagling around, I finally got the landline phone



cord away from the old counter box (which was very possessive, so it took a bit of work).

All that was left was to plug my landline phone cord into the wall plug for that line. But it would not go. I tried turning the tiny plastic plug every which way to get it into the outlet. Wouldn't go. This called for a cup of tea (for me, not the outlet). The tea helped, and at last the phone plug went into the phone outlet in the wall. This success called for a second cup of tea and a scone to celebrate. But wait! I must try to make a phone call, and yes, the landline phone worked.

I then called the helpline number to ask if I could wear the alert necklace in the shower. A thickly accented voice said she would have to call the company that made the alert button, then call me back. I asked where she was. The Philippines, she answered. She called the company and called me back. As long as you do not submerge the alert button, it should be fine. I only take showers, not baths, I said. OK then, the voice said.

Used to be you could call the company that made something because it was made here in the U.S., and ask them to explain how to install it. My alert button counter unit was made in Asia. The helpline number was answered by someone in the Philippines. If she had a phone number to call the company that sells the unit, why couldn't the company give that number to buyers as a helpline number to call? Because the sellers don't want to do any work; they refer installation problems to people in a foreign country.

If you are in your nineties, eighties, seventies, or sixties, then you are old enough to remember when this wasn't an issue with new gadgets; you just called a number answered by an American, plus the gadget was made in the U.S. So much for the global economy. As for new-fangled gadgets, I'll let you know if the new counter box with cell phone in it works when I test it for the second time. After all, it's only been a week, more or less, since I finally installed it and tested it for the first time, and I prefer to delay the agony of contact with the alert button company for just a little longer.

## Come, Unity: A Transitional Phase

By Jesse R. Clark

In 2018, people started rediscovering *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. As a child of the '90s, I have been blessed to be part of the last generation that got to experience this amazing man and his revolutionary show. What made this show so revolutionary was that it was one adult just talking to everyone and one person at the same time. He brought us all together, sharing the same space. He didn't talk down to kids. On the contrary, he spoke about adult subjects, but he did it in an age-appropriate way, combining music, puppetry, writing, child psychology, broadcasting, and even religion. Religion was a revolutionary element of this show, for Fred Rogers was a man who preached his religion without actually talking about it. He just loved and invited us to love others and ourselves as he loved us. He loved all of us without ever actually meeting us. Radical kindness. And he loved introducing us, his TV neighbors, to his other neighbors and friends. I tried doing the same thing, making a few videos of my friends to put on Facebook to introduce them to my other friends. I called the series "Come, Unity." I consider Fred Rogers to be one of my personal mentors, so how perfect is it that I am now writing my own stories for a paper called "Neighbors"?

In high school, so many of my friends, like a lot of young people, talked about wanting to leave home, complaining that there is nothing to do around this area. Well, it *is* called the Quiet Corner for a reason. But I never really felt like that. Sure, I wanted to live life, but I loved this area. Still, like George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*, my friends had dreams of leaving. However, unlike George, most of them did. Some moved away and never came back. Others went to college at Eastern. Ironically, I was the one who had to leave not only the area, but the *state!* This came at a time when I started wanting to actually socialize with friends, and now I was leaving them. Furthermore, when I came back, those who had stayed took off and left. *Now* who was I going to socialize with?

Well, that has been the question I've been asking ever since. It seems that so many people nowadays live isolated lives. And this has been happening long before the pandemic. *That* is the real pandemic. But that's life. People grow up, make life choices, and relationships and friendships change. That change is uniquely, profoundly painful. I always say that losing people to life is worse, in a way, than losing them to death, for you know that they are still somewhere out there. But I'm still making friends. Even better, I make friends with people who don't just know me as a relative of my family members, which, in Willimantic, is quite the accomplishment. As I started getting older, I felt that call to move away, like my friends. I could feel the longing for change, to experience life. But the beautiful part of this area, or any area, is that if you stay in the same place, it will soon change into something else, hopefully something exciting. And hopefully, you can be a part of it. You just have to look for it.

Personal transitions happen all the time. We may experience a career change, getting married, having children, moving, retiring. Some are within our control, some are not. Some transitions are community-based. The Jonathan Trumbull Library in Lebanon is transitioning back to its old space, after being in the community center during renovations. Mansfield Elementary is still divided between two schools, after losing one in the process, only to be soon unified in one building. Willimantic's "Nightmare on Main" event is finding a new home in the Railroad Museum after

moving from the Mill Museum to the *actual* mills. Whether personal or more community-based, all these things take time. It's not easy. We want there to be new roads, but we get upset with the construction. But how else are we going to get new roads?

The transition phase forces us to slow down, and we don't want to. We want to hurry to get to the next part, but transitions take time. That's why it's important to slow our bodies and our minds down to match the pace. We don't want to, but we need to. In yoga, when you change poses, you don't just cut from one to the next—you transition slowly, flowing. You should experience discomfort, but never pain. Unfortunately, life transitions can be painful. And, like our relationships with others, we have to acknowledge and feel those changes, as painful as they may be in the moment. For it's in that pain, that struggle, that we grow. We have the ability to grow like a vine around change, but it takes time. This is why it's important to have compassion and understanding not just for others, but for yourself as well. Otherwise that pain can really take you down.

When I started my first real job, I was relieved to find that my co-workers understood that we were all human, just doing our best. We supported each other because we were all in it together. That phrase, "We are all in this together," reemerged at the start of the pandemic. It's a nice thought, but, like most catchy slogans, it lacks nuance. We all have different experiences and different needs. This transitional time looks different from one person to the next. Like the phrase "We are all equal." This feels inaccurate. There are definitely people out there who do not think of everyone as equal. But let's say that it's an *aspiration* for everyone to be treated and seen as equals. What does "equal" mean? It can seem like we are all the same. Well, we are not all the same *people*. We do have differences, which is a good thing. We can be equal in some ways, but each person is different. We are all *similar*, but not the same. Maybe a more accurate slogan would be "We are all congruent." That might not catch one's ear as well, though.

I've also been hearing about the need to be united and to have unity in our nation. This sounds nice, but there is something that sounds much better. "Unison" means one voice, so everyone singing in unison would be an impossible task, not to mention it would sound boring if we all sang in unison. No, the key here is harmony. We can be individuals with the freedom to sing our own notes, just as long as they're all rooted in the same chord. United in harmony. We will not all agree on everything, but to be a strong community, we need to have a commonality that connects us all. Because like that Disney Channel movie *High School Musical* says, "We're all in this together."

It's as if we're playing that game where we join hands in a circle and spin, leaning backwards, keeping each other from falling and even getting some joy and laughter from the experience. Supporting each other, that's what it's all about.

Now, not all of us are Fred Rogers. Maybe you're more like comedy legend Carl Reiner, who once had someone come up to him on the street and ask for a buck for a sandwich. He replied, "I'll give it to you, but you got to promise me one thing." "What?" "That you'll get a drink, because you look like you could use a drink."

No matter who you are like, embrace this transitional time. Slow down and open yourself up to the amazing relationships and opportunities all around you, making every day a beautiful day in the neighborhood.



## It's Fascinating How Things Work Out Sometimes

By Bill Powers

With prices soaring these days, like so many others, I have been making an extra effort to carefully evaluate spending in response to recent increases in monthly and other expenses. In just one month my cell phone company bill increased by 10%. When I called for an explanation, they revealed what the origins of the increase were. The largest chunk was due to a surcharge which they explained was due to a new expense to the company because of a TAX by the State of Connecticut. My state representative is Susan Johnson, and I left her a message about that claim. She called me back the next day and quickly refuted the company's claim.

I contacted the provider again and this time asked to speak to a supervisor who quickly apologized and said: "It was NOT a tax, but was simply an added SURCHARGE." When asked about the reason for the surcharge, she said she didn't know but they would get back to me with the answer. I'm still waiting. My next question was: "How do you increase the rate by 10% and not notify the customer in advance?" Her response was that it was announced in the previous bill. Luckily, I had saved it and had the bill right in front of me. There was no announcement! Then she told me that they sent an email with that information. While she was still on the phone, my desktop email history was consulted, and they had never, ever sent an email to me. She quickly told me that since it appeared that I had not been notified of the increase, I would receive a credit for the month, but for only one month. That credit has been received. After all this, it seemed that it might be a good idea to shop around to compare prices and services with other vendors.

At about the same time, I was "shocked" when I received my electric bill. This simply reinforced a growing interest in solar panels for our place. The process of consulting with companies about our options had already recently begun. In actuality, I have been alerted to the seriousness of the impending deleterious impacts of fossil fuels on the environment since learning about the issues as part an environmental studies college course some years ago. When the representatives from two different companies visited our home, both happened to be using the same cell phone carrier, one that is different from mine, and neither of them could get a signal at our place in Windham Center. Incredibly, the company they use has a store about only three miles from my home. By pursuing an interest in saving money with solar panels, I had uncovered useful critical information about a cellphone carrier that has now, after further inquiry, been dropped from consideration.

I should mention that the unrealistic claims of one of solar panel salespersons about my future monthly bottom line electric bill was so off the wall, that I phoned John Boiano who frequently contributes articles about solar power to *Neighbors*. My conversation with John was extremely helpful, especially about valid methods for determining my actual costs for employing solar in the future. At this time, the solar panel project is going well and has really moved forward.

Getting back to the cell phone situation, I found a great deal resulting in remarkable savings with another carrier when compared to what I had been paying. As I left their place of business in Mansfield near Willimantic, my attention was drawn to the sky near the Windham Airport by the droning engine noise of a plane with a glider in tow. This immediately channeled cherished memories of the whoosh of gliders just overhead while summiting peaks in the Presidential Range in New Hampshire and an unforgettable glider ride originating in Gorham, New Hampshire over the summits of those same mountains. As I briefly considered gliders and airports, I was reminded that my car needed to be refueled and there is a gas station across from the entrance to the Windham Airport that offers gasoline at remarkably lower prices, plus it is located on a convenient route back home. After filling my gas tank, it seemed as though I had just saved what amounted to a small fortune. Overall, it had been a profitable trip. Now, I wondered, how long would it be before I invested in a vehicle powered by electricity. Save me a Tesla! 0% interest for 60 months would be great.

It's really fascinating how things work out sometimes.

*Bill Powers is a retired teacher and resides in Windham.*

## The Limbo of Unanswered Questions for the Autistic Mind - An Emotional Plea to Neurotypical Society

By Jaime Heidel

Unanswered questions keep autistic people in a type of social-emotional limbo. When we're young, and our caregivers and teachers become frustrated by our questions and refuse to answer them, our autistic brains have to grow around a huge black hole of missing knowledge.

There's a gap that never gets filled in, and we find ourselves stumbling around in adulthood, blindly making the same mistakes, choosing unsafe people, and unintentionally hurting ourselves because we don't have a fundamental piece of knowledge that neurotypical people seem to gain by *simply living in their environment*.

And this happens over and over again. Each time the neurotypical people around us won't answer a significant question we have, we don't remain confused and in the dark for a few hours, days, or weeks, *a part of us stops growing completely*. This gap in our knowledge stifles our ability to build the foundation we need to mature—but the real issue is we don't even see the gap, we just see the effects of it because we don't know what we don't know!

And, the older we get, the less likely it is that these questions will ever get answered because once we reach a certain age, we are simply expected to know.

The only reason I know this happens is because I've been hit with knowledge that I finally understood like a punch to the gut in my 30s when I should have known whatever it is when I was a child. It's only then that I realize I'd been asking the question, searching for the answer, for years, but yet nobody would explain, even if I begged them to.

And it was so simple. All it would have taken was for a neurotypical person to give me a concise, straightforward answer to the literal question I asked when I was younger and more inexperienced. That's it. It could have saved me decades of grief.

All I know is that the answering of any and all questions is absolutely paramount to autistic understanding. Not answering them, getting irritated by them, dismissing them, or misunderstanding them as attempts to be insolent, is like taking away our air. It stunts our growth so profoundly, and we already struggle so much as it is as autistic people in a neurotypical world.

I really wish I could give examples of things that have hit me like a wrecking ball that knocked the wind out of me, but it's almost impossible (even for me) to describe in words.

Just understand that this is my plea to the neurotypical people, especially parents and caregivers, who have autistic people in their lives; please answer our questions even if you have to tell us you'll get back to us with the answers. Even if you have to go off and think about it before you get back to us. Even if you have to tell us you don't know, and we can look it up together. Please don't deny us this access. Please don't let us float around in limbo for years or decades before life finally smacks us with the answer the hard way—and often way too late.

I will never be able to express to you how fundamentally important it is to see questions from autistic people only as a way to get answers and understand the world, and to also see each answer that you give as a building block on which we can build the foundation of our lives.

The unique pain that comes as a result of unanswered questions is something I'd never wish on anyone else, and even if this post is a bit of an emotional ramble, I hope my earnestness comes through, and that your autistic loved one will never have to experience this sense of emptiness.

May all autistic questions be answered, may all knowledge be freely given—without repercussion. Always.

To all our contributors—  
**Thank You!**

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

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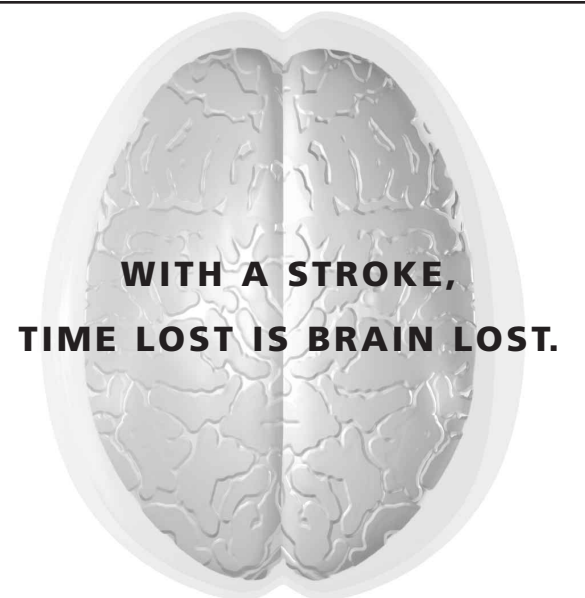


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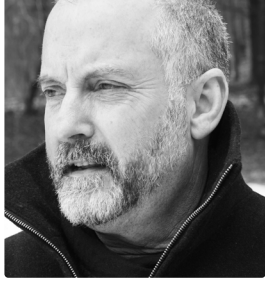




## From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

## A Visit to Ashford's BOTL Farm

By C. Dennis Pierce



The rain on the windshield was, and still is pleasant to watch the way the rain drops clump together and make small rivers that travel up the window before being slashed at by the windshield wiper. Sometimes I feel like those rain drops falling in large round circles on the glass. Today I feel like the wiper. Nothing is getting in my way because I am eager to interview Nick Weinstock, at BOTL Farm in Ashford, Connecticut.

While driving over to the farm I was noticing the trees that have begun sporting shades of yellow, I realized that we are in what I call a seasonal shift. That is what I like most about living in New England. Where else can one experience the yin and the yang of the seasons? Without the heat and humidity that we recently experienced, here in the Quiet Corner, we would not be able to appreciate the crispness of a fall day as we did this past Saturday.

To be honest, I do not think I can capture my experience and do it justice as I met with Nick and toured the farm. What normally takes a half of an hour of conversation the time drifted into a lengthy explanation of all of the unique details that makes the farm unlike others in the area. Like all great stories it is best to start with Nick, a self-proclaimed farmer who has ventured into this lifestyle through a daily learning curve. Nick met his significant other, Danielle while attending college in Michigan. While there, they were not your typical college students dining on Ramen noodles but instead they searched out the best ingredients available as they prepared their meals. Little did they know that was the first chapter that led them into a very interesting documentary. Nick returned to New Jersey where he worked for his family's construction company. There Nick began breeding rabbits and raising bees. He befriended a farmer who needed occasional help around the farm and for exchange he received a wealth of experience and knowledge. There Nick learned the unique methods of raising animals on a pasture-based farm and obtained a mentor who guided him on his apprenticeship in becoming the farmer he is today.

The next chapter begins with a move to New Haven as Danielle pursued her education. Since the farming "seed" had been planted, the plan was hatched to look for at least forty acres in Connecticut because they wanted to be part of the Connecticut Grown movement. In late 2016 their land search was over when they purchased forty-one acres of overgrown land, with a house built in 1820, located in Ashford, Connecticut. As they settled into their new surroundings, they moved their rabbits and beehives to the new farm. Once settled in, they also welcomed their first flock of chickens, goats and sheep and finally their first pod of pigs. Of course, what would a farm be without a farm dog? I had the pleasure of meeting "Pup" while touring the farm with Nick. Pup's job is to keep out the intrusive animals that want to get a closer look at the livestock and also scare off the overhead birds, that may be eyeing the chickens, possibly as a quick lunch. Pup, a mix of Lab, Australian Shepherd, and American Staffordshire Terrier joined the farm in 2017. She is a wonderful obedient pup, a rescue from Arkansas.

So, what makes BOTL Farm unique? As a writer, who has written for Neighbors for the last ten years, I can say I have never come across anyone who maintains a system of raising animals that has its roots in primal, pasture-based farming. Pasture-based livestock farming reintegrates the cycle, putting livestock on grass or in another natural environment where they can roam freely, eat the plants or insects they naturally digest and improve the fertility of the soil. Through this process the farm raise heritage breed animals who have the genetics and instincts to thrive on their pasture-based farm, plus have the hardiness and flexibility to adjust to New England climate of hot summers and cold winters. The farm's animals breed according to their natural cycles and birth unassisted on pasture. Nick and Danielle have developed a pasture-based, intensively-managed rotational grazing farm where they raise Animal Welfare Approved and Grass Fed certified goats, Animal Welfare Approved and Grass Fed certified sheep, Animal Welfare Approved, corn-free, soy-free, non-GMO, and organically-fed pigs, and Animal Welfare Approved, corn-free, soy-free, non-GMO, and organically-fed laying hens.

If you are interested, as I was, you can obtain the farm's products through several options. Their farm store hours are Tuesdays noon-2pm and Sundays 2pm-4pm. Go

to the front door of the farm house and someone will be with you to get you the products you need. All products are available, but they recommend preordering by email or phone to make sure they have it in stock when you arrive and to expediate your pickup. They prefer to have all sales happen within their farm store hours window but understand this may not work for everyone. If you cannot make it during the open hours, please contact them to arrange a special pickup time. Contact information: Nick -908-268-3192 or at nick@BOTLFarm.com or danielle@BOTLFarm.com

The farm also offers CSA options for meat and eggs. For additional details check out CSA options on their web site. BOTL Farm's website, where you may obtain additional information or order product online can be found at: BOTLFarm.com

The farm is at the following Farmer's markets:

**Tolland Farmers Market:**

Located at The Country Butcher 1032 Tolland Stage Rd, Tolland, CT  
Saturdays from 10am-noon every other week. Oct 08, Oct 22, Nov 05, Nov 19.

**Assawaga Market:**

Located at Assawaga Farm, 626 Providence Pike, Putnam, CT  
Sundays from 9am-noon every other week. Oct 09, Oct 23, Nov 06, Nov 20.

**Sturbridge Farmers Market:**

Located at Sturbridge Town Common 308 Main St, Sturbridge, MA  
Sundays from 9am-1pm every other week. Oct 02

After visiting with Nick, I arrived home and experimented with the following recipe. I realize that the nation now runs on breakfast egg sandwiches, however have you ever thought about making your own? Maybe even local eggs such as those from BOTL Farm? Well now that the weather has turned colder a nice warm oven not only will prepare some great egg delicacies but also heat up the kitchen. This week try the following:

## Egg Hand Pies, a Quick Breakfast Treat

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

## Ingredients:

3 eggs, plus 1 more =4 each  
2 ounces of cream cheese, room temperature  
½ cup shredded Gruyere cheese  
2 tablespoons of sliced scallions  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
1 – 9" piecrust (homemade or store bought). Consider purchasing lard from BOTL Farm's pigs and make your own pie crust!  
All-purpose flour for dusting  
1 tablespoon of water

## Directions:

Scramble 3 of the eggs in a skillet. Whisk eggs until frothy. Another trick is to place the eggs in a jar and shake for 39 seconds. This adds air into the eggs. Melt 1 tablespoon of butter in a skillet and heat. Pour eggs in pan and let them cook for 30 seconds. Stir in the cream cheese, Gruyere and scallions. Move eggs with a spatula from the edges to the center of the pan. Remove the pan from the heat while they look wet but not runny. Season with salt and pepper. When cooking eggs make sure to cook, low and slow, for moist, soft and creamy scrambled eggs. Set eggs aside while rolling out pie dough.

On a floured surface, roll out the piecrust dough to roughly, 12 inches square. Cut the dough into twelve, 2 x 4-inch rectangles using a sharp knife. Use trimming and re-roll for more dough if needed.

Arrange six of the rectangles on a baking sheet. In a small bowl whisk the additional, remaining egg and the water.

Top each rectangle on the baking sheet with 2 tablespoons of the egg filling, leaving a half inch border around the edges.

Brush border with egg and water mixture.

Place the remaining rectangles over the egg filling, stretching the dough slightly to fit.

Press the edges of the rectangles together to en-

close the filling by crimping with a fork.

Chill the pies for 30 minutes. Brush the surface of the pies with the remaining egg wash and prick the surface with a few holes in it with a toothpick to allow for air to escape.

Bake until tops are golden brown, about 20 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.

To be creative you can add bacon bits or sausage. You can also use a different kind of cheese if you prefer. Leftover pies can be frozen and then defrosted and reheated in the oven.

I admire Nick and Danielle because they have set out on a path infused with passion and commitment. He has a mission and a philosophy to create the best purest product available utilizing age old practices. I was amazed and overwhelmed by the farm's philosophy and how they bring commitment, good practices and a passion for life to fruition. 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!

## Letters and Emails

To the editor-

Public safety needs to be the top priority for all elected officials, and this is why Lisa Thomas is the clear choice in Connecticut's 35th District State Senate race. As Coventry Town Council Chairwoman, Lisa has consistently voted in favor of fair police contracts and additional training that will increase community safety. Recently, when Coventry needed a new Chief of Police, Lisa prioritized community engagement by allowing residents an opportunity to share the qualities they feel are most important in a Chief of Police. Her support extends to ensuring our officers and emergency response personnel have access to social work providers to assist in their response to mental health and addiction calls, giving us a holistic approach to community well-being.

As State Senator, she looks forward to joining the bipartisan Fire and EMS caucus ensuring that our district gets access to crucial emergency services.

As the only candidate in the race with experience working with a police department, Lisa has the leadership and empathy needed to keep our district secure and thriving.

Jon Hand, Coventry

To the editor-

I would like to express my support for Lisa Thomas for State Senator for District 35.

As a former student of Lisa's, I can speak from personal experience about her strength, intelligence, and caring nature. In Lisa's classes at Hebron Elementary School, she challenged me to think critically and to explore topics, ideas, and books that I had never experienced before. While she taught in Hebron, Lisa introduced the Future Problem Solving Program, which teaches students critical problem solving and teamwork skills and encourages them to engage with complex social and scientific issues. After getting my start with FPS in sixth grade under Lisa's coaching, I participated in the program for seven years, and I look back on my experiences as an FPS-er as some of the most formative of my young adulthood. The program taught me how to work with others on a team, how to think creatively and analytically, and how to lead, and it is thanks to Lisa that I had that opportunity.

Today, we face significant challenges: economic turmoil, disappearing healthcare resources, and public safety concerns. We need a State Senator who knows how to solve problems, who is a passionate advocate for education, and who is committed to her community. Lisa Thomas is that person.

Anna Newman, Tolland

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## Unsung Heroes of Soul:

## Betty Wright

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 Betty Wright, best known for 1971's "Clean Up Woman."

The youngest of seven children, she was born Bessie Regina Norris in Miami on December 21, 1953. She began singing at age two, when her siblings formed a gospel group called the Echoes of Joy. They made an album in 1956 and broke up nine years later. Now eleven years old, Betty Wright (as she now called herself) switched over to soul music. She performed in local talent shows and was spotted by the owner of Deep City, a Miami record label. Wright signed with the company in 1966. Her first two singles, "Thank You Baby" and "Paralyzed," were hometown hits. Her debut album, *My First Time Around*, came out on Atco in 1968. It contained her first nationally charted single, "Girls Can't Do What the Guys Do."

In the fall of 1971, Wright recorded "Clean Up Woman," co-written by Clarence "Blowfly" Reid and Willie Clarke. Released on the Alston label, it became Betty Wright's signature hit when it reached #2 on the Soul chart and #6 pop. "Clean Up Woman" sold over one million copies and was certified gold on December 30, 1971. Nine days earlier, Wright had celebrated her eighteenth birthday.

In 1976, she won the Grammy for Best R&B Song as the writer of her hit, "Where Is the Love?" Two years later, Wright was featured prominently on Peter Brown's disco smash, "Dance With Me." In 1978, she performed a duet with Alice Cooper, "No Tricks," and in 1979 she opened for Bob Marley on his Survival Tour. Wright also remained a constant presence on the Soul chart throughout the '70s and into the '80s.

She spent the '90s releasing new material and performing a successful live act. In 1991, she arranged the harmonies on Gloria Estefan's #1 hit, "Coming Out of the Dark." In 1992, Rhino issued the CD, *The Very Best of Betty Wright*. She was nominated for a 2005 Grammy in the Best Pop Album category for her production work on Joss Stone's *Mind, Body & Soul*. In 2006, Wright appeared on the TV show "Making the Band," mentoring several young singers. In 2008, she was featured on the Lil Wayne track, "Playing With Fire." Wright also co-produced two tracks on the 2008 Tom Jones album, *24 Hours*, as well as *Bible Belt*, the 2009 debut release by Diane Birch.

Her 2011 album, *Betty Wright: The Movie*, featured collaborations with Joss Stone, Snoop Dogg, Lil Wayne and Lenny Williams. A track from it, "Surrender," was nominated for a Grammy in the category of Best Traditional R&B Performance. On New Year's Eve 2011, Wright performed three songs on the British TV channel, BBC Two. And in 2017, the National R&B Music Society honored Betty Wright with its Unsung Heroine Award.

On April 5, 2020, Wright appeared on the TV show, "Unsung." On May 10<sup>th</sup> of that year, she died of cancer at age sixty-six. Betty Wright had five children and was married three times, most notably to the Jamaican musician, Noel "King Spotty" Williams.

Charted singles:

"Girls Can't Do What the Guys Do" (1968) R&B #15, Pop #33  
 "Pure Love" (1970) R&B #40  
 "Clean Up Woman" (1971) R&B #2, Pop #6  
 "Baby Sitter" (1972) R&B #6, Pop #46  
 "Is It You, Girl?" (1972) R&B #18  
 "I'm Gettin' Tired Baby" (1972) R&B #42  
 "It's Hard to Stop (Doing Something When It's Good to You)" (1973) R&B #11, Pop #72  
 "Let Me Be Your Lovemaker" (1973) R&B #10, Pop #55  
 "It's Bad for Me to See You" (1973) R&B #66  
 "Secretary" (1974) R&B #12, Pop #62  
 "Shoorah! Shoorah!" (1974) R&B #28  
 "Where Is the Love?" (1975) R&B #15, Pop #96  
 "Tonight Is the Night" (1975) R&B #28  
 "Slip and Do It" (1976) R&B #21  
 "If I Ever Do Wrong" (1976) R&B #23  
 "Life" (1977) R&B #64  
 "You Can't See for Lookin'" (1977) R&B #73  
 "Dance With Me" (with Peter Brown, 1978) R&B #5, Pop



#8

"Tonight Is the Night (Live)" (1978) R&B #11  
 "Lovin' Is Really My Game" (1979) R&B #68  
 "My Love Is" (1979) R&B #48  
 "What Are You Gonna Do With It?" (1981) R&B #42  
 "Goodbye You, Hello Him" (1981) R&B #65  
 "She's Older Now" (1983) R&B #22  
 "No Pain, No Gain" (1988) R&B #14  
 "After the Pain" (1988) R&B #57  
 "From Pain to Joy" (1989) R&B #39  
 "Quiet Storm" (1989) R&B #88  
 "Keep Love New" (1989) R&B #71  
 "How' Bout Us" (with Grayson Hugh, 1990) R&B #30, Pop #67  
 "For Love Alone" (1994) R&B #98  
 "Baby" (with Angie Stone, 2007) R&B #22

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 7:00-10:00 p.m. on WECS, 90.1-FM ([www.wecsfm.com](http://www.wecsfm.com)) and Fridays from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. on WRTC, 89.3-FM ([www.wrtcfm.com](http://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 [soul-express@gmail.com](mailto:soul-express@gmail.com).

### Alanon Meetings in Willington

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

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# Dog Days

By Delia Berlin

For someone who loves dogs, I've enjoyed their company for precious little time. I spent most of my childhood begging for one, to no avail because my mother was adamantly opposed to the idea. Then, there were years of transitions, including long-distance moves, incompatible with dog ownership. And for the last forty years, I have lived with someone for whom dogs and cats can trigger asthma. So, canine company remained elusive, but nevertheless, I sometimes managed to befriend dogs.

When I was a young child growing up in Buenos Aires, my paternal grandparents acquired a rudimentary mini-farm in Longchamps, about an hour away by train from the city. It must have been just a couple of acres of fertile ground, with no utilities. My grandparents intended the property to serve as their gardening retreat. They immediately set up to build a basic shelter and to make improvements, mostly by themselves. Eventually, there was a small house, two barns, an outhouse, a brick-and-clay oven, a deep water well with a cement sink and a hand pump, and a windmill to pump water into a large irrigation tank that doubled as a pool.

The entire parcel was fenced with wire supporting fruiting vines, such as raspberries and blackberries. There were fruit trees and shade trees—I particularly remember the mimosas. I could fill pages with memories of those times, when I accompanied my grandparents on their excursions. These memories appear to fill a significant period of my life, but that era must have been quite short. After my grandmother died suddenly when I was about six, the property was seldom used and was eventually sold by the time I was eight. Assuming I wouldn't remember much of anything that happened before I was four, all of my related memories must have formed within four years, at most.

Most salient among these memories stands my beloved and loyal first canine friend, Sultan. Sultan was a border collie mix, probably still young but already fully grown when I met him. I never knew who owned him, but on every trip to Longchamps he arrived at our property as soon as we did and, from that moment to the moment we left, he was most definitely mine. I remember him being bigger than me, but my own size must have been a moving target. Probably a resourceful stray with several welcoming homes, he was always in good shape, but matted with burrs that I loved to groom. He tolerated anything I did and we were inseparable during our stays. More than once, he fought away another dog or even a human that he perceived as a threat to me. Over sixty years later, I still can recall the smell of the soft velvet of his ears and the feel of the fuzz of his muzzle. Each trip to Longchamps was framed between the excitement of our reunion and the pain of parting. But the sale of the Longchamps property ended our encounters.

When I was twelve, my father got a four-month-long work assignment in Europe and decided to take my mother. That involved leaving behind three schoolchildren aged seven, ten, and twelve. As a bribe to accept their absence, a puppy was promised. Somehow, my parents managed to convince my maternal grandparents (who lived an hour away from us) to move into our house to take care of us for the duration of their trip. Remarkable as this seemed to me then, it seems even stranger today, when I am about the age that my grandmother was then. Could anyone convince me to move an hour away from home to take care of three kids for four months? Who would like to try?

But as if the ask of our grandparents



wasn't big enough, on the very eve of his departure my father took us to the Humane Society to get our puppy. He picked the puppy, Duchess. She was a huge four-month-old retriever cross, yet completely untrained. The sheer size of her paws promised that by the time my parents returned she would be the biggest of their charges. But sadly, that would never come to be.

Retrospectively, in spite of the disruptions and turmoil that my parents' trip caused for our family, it was a blessing that they were able to pull it off. My father ended up dying of cancer in his late forties, just a little over a decade after their Europe adventure. That was the only opportunity my parents ever had for extended travel on their own, since their marriage never made it to the empty nest stage.

Duchess was a force, literally. I couldn't really take her for a walk, because instead she would take me for a run. When she jumped in excitement to greet me, her front paws reached my shoulders. One day my grandparents and all three of us kids left for a daytrip to my grandparents' house. My sister and I were wearing pastel checkered skirt suits that our grandmother had made for us. Mine was pink and cream and my sister's mint and cream. I had crocheted matching sweaters (mine pink, my sister's mint) for each of us. We left Duchess on a long leash, tied to an iron post of a swing set in the patio garden, with plenty of food and water.

We came back after dark. As we were unlocking the front door, we were wondering how Duchess had spent the day. But as soon as the door opened, we had answers. First, I had two muddy paws forever printed on the jacket of my suit. Second, the entire patio and surrounding areas were covered with soil from overturned plant pots. The swings had been dragged all around the patio, which looked like a war zone. The canary cage was overturned but, miraculously, the canary was still in it and unharmed. The only thing that was undisturbed and exactly where it had been left was the parrot cage. My Quaker parrot, Cata, did not tolerate anyone's proximity but mine. Duchess had learned that lesson well from Cata's sharp beak on her very first exploration. Give me the bravery of a six-ounce parrot over any man's courage.

Days before my parents were to return from Europe, my grandfather took my brother to the park with Duchess. While playing in the park, a ball shot across the street and Duchess ran after it. My brother called her back and she immediately responded, running into the path of a truck. She was critically injured.

My grandfather returned home carrying Duchess in his arms, with my brother in tow. Duchess was panting hard and losing blood from her mouth. There was a 24-hour emergency vet hospital a few blocks from our house and my grandfather and I made the trek on foot. He was still carrying our enormous pup. Since I was twelve, it was 1966. My grandfather, born in 1898, must have been sixty-eight, my age now. I can well understand the effort he made in that journey.

As we placed Duchess on the examining table, the vet confirmed the hopelessness of her condition. All he could do was to make her passing easier. As I write this, I see my grandfather and I crying over our dying dog, through the eyes of that poor vet. If that wasn't the most pathetic scene he ever had to bear, it must have come close.

Just days later, when my parents returned from Europe, the puppy they had promised us in exchange for their prolonged absence was already conveniently gone. We never got another chance. Unbeknown to us children (and perhaps even to our parents), we had a new baby brother on the way.

# Grandma Daisy, Grandpap, and Aunt Carolyn

By Robert Joy

My Grandma, Daisy Belle Joy, was the youngest child of a high-ranking Union officer in the Civil War. She was the youngest of his eight children, all of whom were very unique and accomplished. Daisy was one of the first ordained female ministers in our area of Appalachia. The folks in our valley knew her as "Sister Daisy." Her deep spirituality, compassion, generosity, and kindness were legendary. Daisy married John, my Grandpap.

They say opposites attract. To my way of thinking Daisy and Grandpap couldn't be more opposite. She was an angel and he was the meanest man I'd ever known.

Yes, Grandpap was just plain mean. It seemed like he and I were at odds for as long as I could remember. He was a hunter and loved killing animals.

The year I was born, he killed a buck with the largest rack in the county. The antlers were mounted on a large wooden plaque which had his name engraved and the year he killed the buck - 1949. This plaque hung on the wall of his big old country kitchen. This is where he gave haircuts to me and my two brothers. I didn't like that mean old man. I didn't want him cutting my hair or touching me. I punched him in the nose. I was a feisty three-year-old. I was wearing those little boy overalls with over the shoulder straps that buttoned to a bib front on my chest. He hung me from the antlers until I tearfully submitted and let him cut my hair. I think I had nightmares about hanging from those antlers for years. When he died, he left me those antlers! They've hung on the wall for over 45 years in every place I've lived. You wouldn't know what they are though. I use them as a hat rack and hang all my souvenir baseball caps over the horns. I guess I got the last laugh, huh Grandpap?

My brothers and I had pet rabbits. One day, my parents said "We're taking the rabbits for Grandpap to see." When we got to my grandparents' home, the rabbits were taken out of sight. I wanted to know where my rabbit was. I went down in their cold cellar which had a stone floor. I was just in time to see Grandpap lop my rabbit's head off with a hatchet. When I saw this, I screamed bloody murder. Grandma Daisy flew down the stairs and lifted me up in her arms. She carried me upstairs and held and comforted me. Though this happened at a traumatic time, the memory of Daisy holding me is a comforting one. She died before my fifth birthday. This is one of my few memories of her. It's a pleasant memory. I guess it was common in those days for poor folk to raise rabbits for food. But nobody told me that! The rabbits were made into stew and later they tried to get me to eat my rabbit! But I wouldn't!

John and Daisy had four children. The oldest, my Aunt Carolyn, was born in 1920 with Down's Syndrome. I don't believe they knew what to do with a Down's Syndrome child a hundred years ago. Daisy was a devoted, patient, and an exceptional mother. Under Daisy's care, Carolyn learned to dress herself, tie her shoes, and carry out her own hygiene tasks. Carolyn helped Sister Daisy with her numerous church duties. Before Dai-

sy passed, Carolyn had even learned to read and write a little. Sister Daisy died far too young from cancer. She was only 54 years old.

After Daisy was gone, Grandpap didn't want Carolyn living under his roof. He was ashamed of having a Down's Syndrome child as if it were a stain on his manhood. He cast her out so she came to live with my family. My Mom, who was so much like her mother Daisy, took Carolyn in and cared for her for over 40 years. She loved her big sister. Carolyn was a lot of fun. I grew up with her. She was more like my big sister than my aunt. We told corny jokes and laughed a lot. We sang a lot, too. Carolyn loved to sing hymns. After leaving home, my chosen field was working with brain-damaged and developmentally disabled individuals. I think growing up with Carolyn had a lot to do with that. She had a strong influence on me.

In her later years, Carolyn did volunteer work with The Salvation Army every week. She was often the bellringer at Christmas. When she passed they held a memorial service at The Salvation Army Citadel.

I was amazed at how many people were at her service and how many lives she touched. Mom was grief-stricken, so she asked me to speak at the service. I spoke of what a pure innocent soul Carolyn was. She didn't have a mean bone in her body. She loved laughing, singing hymns and talking to people. She said hello to everyone she saw.

I told the story of how she and my elderly father would sit under the awning on our front porch all summer long. They would greet every passerby. One day some Mormon missionaries stopped by. They gave my Dad a copy of the Mormon Bible, asked him to read it, and said they'd be back in a week to discuss it with him.

Every day Carolyn asked Dad, "Albert, have you read that book?"

"No", he replied and each day it was the same.

"Have you read that book, Albert?"

"No", he replied.

After a week, Carolyn said with exasperation, "Albert! You better read that book! Those morons are coming back to talk to you tomorrow!"

Peals of laughter rose forth from the congregation which lasted about ten minutes. I thought this was good - a perfect way to remember a loved one with joy, laughter, and celebration.

I firmly believe we go on to a better, happier dimension and we will see our loved ones again.

No offense is intended toward members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Carolyn often confused her words. It was an innocent mistake that made us laugh. She would laugh, too. These innocent verbal mistakes were one of her endearing qualities. We laughed with Carolyn not at her. She was a delight. We loved her. I learned having a disabled child in the family is a blessing we can learn from. God doesn't make mistakes.

*This is an excerpt from Robert Joy's forthcoming book "Appreciating The Sky".*



Aunt Carolyn blowing bubbles.

Photo by the author.



# Investments Aren't Enough – Why You Need a Strategic Financial Plan, Too

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



Making investments without a strategic financial plan is like making payments on a luxurious home to enjoy in retirement without ever knowing where it is, how to get there, or how to avoid the potential roadblocks along the way. And yet, investing without a plan is surprisingly common. If you're making investments (or your financial advisor is on your behalf) but you don't have that plan in place, you're doing yourself a disservice. The fact is, you're really only halfway to making your financial and life goals a reality.

Here's how to begin building out that other critical half of wealth building – your own strategic financial plan – to get you on solid ground and on a clear path to where you want to be.

## First, Understand What Financial Goals Are

At first glance, this section may seem a little silly. The definition of financial goals seems self-evident. But sometimes it's easy to only look at the money-related goals (wanting to save \$20,000 this year) and not the money-required goals that accompany the rest of your life (buying a house, taking a sabbatical from work, or funding your dream vacation).<sup>1</sup>

When you start to identify some of your financial goals, it's important to figure out which goals fall under short-term financial goals and which of your goals require a more long-term plan. In general, short-term goals are defined as any goal that will take three years or less to complete, while long-term goals may take three to five years to complete, or even longer.

Why is it important to identify a time frame for your goals? If your goal is to have \$10 million saved in your retirement account by the time you're 65, it can be hard to stay motivated for a goal that feels so far away. By having a mix of short- and long-term goals you'll be able to build up successes that will keep focused and motivated for those goals that will take a little longer.

## Next, Get Clear About YOUR Financial Goals

Now it's time for the real work. When it comes to identifying your financial goals, leave no stone unturned in every area of life. What does your dream life look like, and how similar is it to the life you lead now? Where are the disparities? Most importantly, are you and your life aligned with your current financial goals? And if not, what do you need to do to close the gap?<sup>1</sup>

The importance of getting clear about the kind of life you want to live and writing it down is two-fold. First, you'll have a written record of what you want to do rather than have ideas floating around in your head. Again, this seems like a simple tactic, but it makes all the difference to see your goals in writing in the physical world. Once they're down on paper, you can start to examine which parts of your life match, which ones don't, and start to close the gap. The second reason is that having something to hang onto is important when the going gets tough. Life happens, and without fail there will be some speed bumps along the way. Writing down your goals can keep you focused when the road gets rocky.<sup>2</sup>

## Then, Set SMART Goals for Your Finances and Future

Now that you have your goals and dreams written down, it's time to figure out how to make them a reality. Sometimes this is an easy thing to do, like canceling a subscription you no longer use, or calculating how much it will cost to spend two weeks in Bali.<sup>1</sup>

One of the easiest ways to turn your goals from dreams to reality is to use the SMART goal method. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. By applying this metric to each of the goals you've defined above, you can create a simple plan for each one.<sup>1</sup>

Let's use the example of saving for a trip to Bali. A few actions that you can take is to find the best time of year to travel to Bali, research the costs of flights and accommodations, and decide what activities you want to do when you're there. But that doesn't necessarily mean that you have an actionable plan to make this happen.

Here's how we can apply the SMART method:

- Specific: I want to save for my dream vacation in Bali. I have estimated this trip will cost \$5,000.
- Measurable: Broken down, this means that I need to save roughly \$97 per week or \$388 per month.
- Achievable: My current budget has \$1,000 of disposable income per month, which allows me to set aside the required funds.
- Relevant: Based on my income and expenses for the past year, this should be achievable.
- Time-Bound: I want to achieve this goal within the next year.<sup>1</sup>

Now that you have identified a SMART goal, it's time to get started. Make it as easy as possible to save by setting up automatic transfers to a special savings account that you know you won't dip into. Track your progress, celebrate your wins, and know that a year from now, when you're lounging on a pristine beach, you'll have proof that you can set and achieve your financial goals.

## Finally, Use Those SMART Goals As Building Blocks for A Comprehensive Financial Strategy

Whether it's paying off debt, saving for retirement, funding education or your dream trip, setting SMART financial goals will help you build the life you've always wanted. They are the building blocks to your dreams but remember that you must also consider the picture as a whole. This is where working with a strategic financial advisor can make all the difference.

At WHZ, we don't just make investments for our clients – in fact, it's almost never the first thing we do for them. Our first step is to get to know them, what their current circumstances are and what their goals are for the future. We help them to define those SMART goals for themselves, but then we go one step further and use them as building blocks to help pave the most direct path possible to achieving their long-term dreams – and we're there to help them stay on that path when the unexpected occurs.

If you're ready to go beyond just investing and see the difference that a strategic financial plan and partner can make for you and your dreams, contact us at (860) 928-2341 or [info@whzwealth.com](mailto:info@whzwealth.com), or visit our website at [www.whzwealth.com](http://www.whzwealth.com).

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1. <https://www.thebalance.com/best-financial-goals-2385552>
2. <https://www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/what-goal-setting-does-to-your-brain-why-its-spectacularly-effective.html>

## Tai Chi Home

### In the Air

By Joe Pandolfo

Here come the first traces of autumn. You can feel it in the air. Just being outside and taking a breath can be like a clean drink of water.

Classical Chinese medicine says that our own autumn energy is centered in the lungs. That's where our exchanges with the world outside are the most direct, the most awake. We take things in. We release. We notice the essence of things and the essence gets clear.

Akin to the trees around us, our own autumn senses have a special tuning for loss - and a brilliant way of letting it go. The classics say our lungs know loss the best. That's where we take in grief.

When you're grieving you sometimes hold it there in the lungs. Just going outside under the sky and taking a good deep breath can release it. And you may notice, when grief releases it turns into kindness.



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# Corn Quest

By Gary Bergquist

My name is Gary, and I am a corn addict.

Well, not just any corn—corn on the cob. Like anyone else, I enjoy popcorn, tortilla chips, shepherd's pie, and corn chowder, but only corn on the cob answers the primal call. I'm not proud of this addiction, but they say confronting your demons is the best way to regain mastery of your life.

This addiction took root at an early age, too early for me to have any control over its pull. During the corn-growing season, which is basically July and August in New England, my family would stop by the local farm stand and pick up two dozen ears of corn.

That sack became the meal for our family of five. Dietitians would have scolded us for the lack of variety, but to me it was heaven on a plate! If the corn was fresh and was well chosen, dinner-time conversation was kept to a minimum. The only sounds were

those of crunching, moaning, and sucking. The measure of quality was the degree of sucking. Once the kernels were chewed from the cob, top-tier corn demanded that you retrace your journey with lips and tongue, sucking the creamy nectar from the crevices of the cob.

Twice a week for two months each year, my parents would bring these addictive sticks into our home and allow us to help ourselves. Where were the food police when we needed them?

One might think when I moved from home, especially since the location was distant from New England, my rehab process could begin. Sadly, it was too late. The addiction was ingrained. In Denver, I am ashamed to say, I would buy Green Giant corn on the cob from the frozen food aisle, prepare the cobs according to the package instructions, and devour them in the privacy of my apartment, with shades drawn. True, the Rocky Mountain high was not the same as a New England fix, but you do what you must.

Within two years, I was back in New England. Friends and family believe job and marriage drove me back, but I wonder.

As the years passed and I found myself unable to resist the pull of corn, I relented and became a lifelong student of the cob, and the acknowledged answer man on the subject.

**Can worthy cobs be purchased from a grocery store, or must you get them fresh from the farm stand?**

The answer is that grocery store corn comes with a greater risk, but it can be good. Conversely, farm stand corn is not always perfect. The deciding factor is freshness. When was it picked? Ideally, the corn was drawing water from the earth that very morning. The trick is to look at the stalk end of the corn. If it looks pale and moist, it's fresh. If it's brown, dry, and wrinkly, the cob was picked a day or more ago, and its sugars have been converting to starch during that time. Alas, beware the conniving vendor who cuts off the end with a knife to make a shriveled stalk end look fresh!

**Does the variety of corn matter?** Remarkably, no, at least not as much as freshness matters. Mostly, the corn being sold is Butter and Sugar (yellow and white), but you may also see Silver Queen (white), which can be a little less sweet, or any of a variety of yellow corn, with fancy names like Candy Corn or Honey Gold. The truth is, if you walk into a cornfield, tear an ear from its stalk, and drop it into a pot of boiling water, you will achieve nirvana regardless of the corn's color or variety. A word of warning, though: Cow corn is for cows. Living in farm country near fields of cow corn, I once ventured into the field and grabbed a few ears to see what the cows were mooing over. Don't do it! Imagine your mouth filled with a mixture of sawdust and paste.

**What is the best way to shuck corn?** Don't fight the husk; let it work for you. Don't peel one leaf at a time, leaving you with a stalk that can be removed only with a knife. Instead, boldly pull back all layers of the husk from silk end to stalk, without tearing it off. In three passes, the entire husk will be wrapped around the stalk, with the lovely, innocent ear of corn poking out. With tender cob in one hand and husk-stalk in the other, snap the two in half. Pull off the silk and admire the shiny ear.

**How do you cook corn?** I have come to realize that all fans of corn are also self-professed experts at

how to prepare it to perfection. Remarkably, though, their methods vary considerably. This is a good thing, because it tells you corn is forgiving and can survive the fumbling of a novice. Still, here are some guidelines.

First, ignore those who tell you to cook corn in a microwave oven. Sure, it will work, and the result is as good as any other method, but who wants to stand in line as one ear emerges from the microwave oven every three minutes? Certainly not a family of addicts.

Second, ignore those who tell you to cook it on the grill. If God had meant corn to be grilled, He wouldn't have given us hamburgers and hot dogs. If you don't plan to slather the ear with BBQ sauce, keep it away from the grill. The concepts of charring an ear of corn and sucking its milky juices are inherently incompatible.

Instead, get out the corn pot and load it to the top with ears of corn. But how much water? Remarkably, it doesn't matter. One fellow addict would line the bottom of his pot with husk leaves and a half inch of water. He would then load the pot with corn, cover it, and let the steam do the work. Other experts claim you should add water until the ears are covered. And I've tried all levels in between. It doesn't matter. Once the water starts boiling, start timing.

But how long? Again, the answers are all over the lot, so I've run experiments to nail it down. It turns out that less than seven minutes leaves the corn tasting uncooked. More than fifteen minutes leaves the corn tasting soggy and overcooked. Anything in between works, with ten minutes being a nice, easy number to remember. When it's done, dump out most of the water so the corn doesn't keep cooking, but keep the cover on the pot so the corn stays hot and doesn't wrinkle.

**With fresh corn perfectly cooked, how do you dress it?** The standards, of course, are butter and salt.

Applying the butter with a table knife is an exercise in futility, as the pat of butter keeps falling from the knife. As kids, we used pieces of a heel of bread, applying the butter to the bread and then using the bread to spread the butter. When done with the corn, we could eat the spreader. Save the planet! Some families instead pass around a communal stick of butter, each diner rolling his or her ear on top of the stick. This method is efficient but crude, as it leaves the stick homely and unsuitable for any other purpose. The practice is acceptable, but only in the privacy of your own home.

As you age, you may want to substitute olive oil (with a brush) for the butter, and pepper for the salt, so you can live to tell your grandkids how to fix corn.

**With corn cooked and dressed, how do you eat it?** Corn skewers were designed to let you hold the corn without burning your fingers and getting butter on them, but some people insist on living on the edge, licking their blistered fingers after each ear. These people are show-offs. Use the skewers, as pain and showmanship are just distractions.

In general, people select from one of three schemes for biting the kernels from the cob: typewriter, adding machine, and spot checker. The typewriter eats three or four rows from left to right (or right to left if contrary), and then moves up to the next set of rows. The adding machine eats three or four rows across one mouth-width and rolls the cob downward (or upward if contrary) until the vertical strip is complete, then moves over to start another vertical strip. The spot checker hunts and pecks all over the ear like a chicken seeking the perfect grain of feed. The spot checker likely had a bad fall as a child.

One final note. Once human DNA had been sequenced, geneticists set their sights on the genetic code of corn in the quest to perfect it. And they succeeded. Kernels these days are perfectly aligned, perfectly sweet, easier to grow, longer lasting in the market, and immune to corn borers. In days of old, trimming corn borer damage was a regular part of the shucking process. No longer. The borers won't touch the new corn.

And neither will I. Corn borers may be simple-minded, but they know corn. The new corn is sweet but no longer suckable. The creamy nectar is gone, as is my addiction. I still rush to the farm stand each year in search of the perfect high, but each year I am left wanting. I have redirected my yearnings to pizza.

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

# Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

The weather is getting colder so it's that time again to get ready for the W word. There are a few things that we should do to prepare for winter driving and the harshness of the elements.

One of the first things that should be done is often one of the least thought of and that's a survival kit for your car. A well-equipped kit should include the following items: a snow shovel, a bag of kitty litter, a blanket, a flashlight and extra batteries, flares, a cell phone (be sure to have a car charger), a well-equipped first aid kit and mittens or gloves. I personally like mittens better as the hands tend to stay warmer in them. Drivers with a long commute may want to include a few nutritious snacks with a shelf life too. There are other items that can be carried but these items are really the essentials. The idea is to keep warm and as comfortable as you can just in case you become stranded. Freezing is not very pleasant so the idea is to be proactive and prepare in advance.

Another way you can prepare is to have the antifreeze in your cooling system checked. This actually should be done year round. The PH level of your coolant plays a large role in the deterioration of your engine parts. A good example of this was a Ford Taurus that came into our shop with an overheating problem. On examination, the coolant was rusty brown with a lot of sludge build up. The coolant thermostat was checked and replaced. The radiator flow was also checked. (This is the amount or volume of water passing through your radiator at a given time.) The radiator flow was checked again and was OK. The vehicle was then road tested. The engine temperature was lower but it still was not right. The technician then checked the water pump flow and found that it was not adequate. He removed the water pump and found that the impellent had rotted away. The water pump was replaced and a recheck found the coolant temperature to be normal. This is a good example of why your coolant should be checked for a high PH level once a year.

Your electrical system works harder in cold and hot weather and is another thing that should be checked in preparation for winter. Your battery should be checked for its cold cranking reserve and your alternator checked for its maximum output. Today's computerized vehicles depend on these two components to function properly. When they don't work properly the computer systems in your car don't function properly and systems begin to shut down.

The tires you ride on are another item that should be checked before bad weather hits. Tires need to be checked for wear and they need to be inflated properly. Some tires are made for performance driving. You should be sure that your tires are at least mud/snow rated. This is easy to check and can be found by looking for the stamping of M+S on the sidewall of the tire.

Some people are lucky enough to have a garage and can keep the vehicle out of the elements and old man winter's harshness. For those of you who are not lucky enough to have a garage, there are still some precautions and preparations that you can take. They are:

- Spray silicone around your door rubbers. This helps to keep the doors from freezing.
- Make sure your windshield wipers are clear of snow and not frozen to you windshield.
- Always warm up your vehicle before driving. This gives the mechanical parts and fluids a chance to warm up. It also gives your windshield a chance to defrost so you aren't looking out of two small holes with little or no visibility.
- Put a can of dry gas in your fuel tank every third fill-up. This will help to stop fuel line freeze up due to condensation.

The last thing that we'll discuss is what you as a driver can do. There are several things you can do to make winter driving easier to cope with.

- Be sure you give yourself plenty of distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- If you have to talk on a cell phone or text, please pull over to the side of the road. Two hands on the steering wheel is a must when the weather is bad.
- Pay attention to road conditions. If the pavement looks wet but you see no spray from the tires of the vehicle in front of you, there is a good chance that the highway is freezing.
- Drive defensively and stay alert. It only takes a second for things to change.

I hope this article can help to make your winter driving experience a bit more pleasant. Keep safe and be alert and of course - happy motoring.

*Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.*





The days seem narrowed like the last few pages of a novel too good to put down.  
 You can feel the pages thin,  
 so much more is now on the done side  
 than what remains to the unread right.  
 The feelings, I don't want the story to end, must keep going to find out what happens  
 I hold these days ahead in my hands,  
 more precious now than when the end seemed so far away.  
 The truth is, this is a great book  
 I wish with all my heart that it would go on and on and on...

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.



## Letters and Emails

To the Editor-

Are you ready to battle the authoritarians in the upcoming election? Our democracy is badly broken and remains under ferocious attack from a growing fascist tinged authoritarian movement. For those astute enough to see the danger of our real slip towards fascism, I would urge you to wake up quickly and vote this time.

After observing the Jan 6th insurrection you must be conscious of its gravity to the 246 year U.S. experiment called democracy. Our fathers and mothers (or grandfathers and grandmothers) were willing to make major sacrifices to stop Adolf Hitler in the 1940's. We must never forget that.

I actually remember seeing newsreels of the scary energy that Hitler generated to vast crowds of Germans. Even as an eight year old, I wondered how the people could fall for it. I saw him as a satan figure and we all know what it led to... WWII with all its mayhem, suffering, pain, and the Holocaust.

We appear to be trending back to those days- defending the world against rising authoritarian leaders on the way to replicating nazi-like beliefs.

Don't kid yourself, we in the US are showing the signs that the majority of 'WE THE PEOPLE' are being ignored, especially in many recent decisions. Minority rule clashes intuitively with democracy and voting is our last hope. I feel that it's sinful to suppress the vote. Voter suppression aims to discourage people from participating; just stay home, and give up hope for a role in determining a positive direction for the nation.

Some countries have already sold out to classic 'strongmen' emulating Hitler and Mussolini. Supporters

believe the promises of improvements in their lives- improvements that don't arrive. Historically, off year elections are known for low turnout but this year it's really urgent to change this norm. Please keep this in mind as a motivation to head for the polls in this non-presidential voting year.

Bill Potvin, Willimantic

To the Editor-

The cost of healthcare and medical care keeps rising. We need someone who will fight for these rights on our behalf at the state Capitol. The more I learn about Lisa Thomas, the local candidate for State Senate, the more I believe she can be our advocate.

Lisa Thomas is working to restore hospital services that have been reduced in our region, limiting choice and negatively impacting families everywhere. She played a strong role in developing a regional self-insurance pool that made coverage more accessible for many people.

I think what's most important, though, is that she has first-hand knowledge of how tough the health care system can be. In her caring for her disabled brother, Lisa knows firsthand how challenging the system can be. That means she'll be fired up to fix as many problems as she can. Additionally, her daughter is a health care worker, allowing Lisa not only to know challenges firsthand, but how she can improve the system for overworked staff as well. It's easy to support Lisa Thomas for State Senator. She knows what's broken and we can send her to Hartford to get the job done.

Susan Grace, Coventry

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All are invited to a Pasta dinner and Basket Raffle October 22 at 530pm. Sponsored by The Haitian Ministry of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish St. Mary Church 1600 Main St, Coventry Meal includes pasta, meatballs, salad, Italian bread and dessert. Cost \$10 pp. Tickets available at the door. Take out available. All proceeds support the secondary school in Les Palmes, Haiti.

**COVENTRY CHILI FEST**

The Coventry Chili Fest is back for another year. Sponsored by the Coventry Lions Club, the Chili Fest will take place on Saturday Oct. 22 from 12-2pm at Coventry HS. Prizes will be awarded. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and student ID, and free for age 6 and under. Information will be available on the Lions' Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CoventryLionsClub>. Or call 860-888-5172.

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## Trick or Treat !!!

## 'JUST WEEDS' Part Two

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

Pamela Jones' book **'Just Weeds'** noted America's disdain for weeds last month. She countered with fascinating history, myths and uses of thirty intemperate plants of the temperate world.

Condensing to my dirty dozen yielded two parts. September was my *Fab Four* 'Delightfully Useful Weeds.' Now for Halloween, some are scary, and some are treats...

## Treat or Trick ???

**WEED TREATS** "Beauty is as beauty does," Jones observed, alluding to Forrest Gump's "Stupid is as stupid does." Beauty is judged by actions, not appearance, and worthless unless accompanied by a kind soul. My Final Four delights offer visual and less discernible treats:

1 *Cichorium intybus*

**CHICORY** coffee with a "beignet" (Cajun donut) is a fond memory of visiting New Orleans with my Mother Ingrid. Louisiana's French roots give us several chicorian delights. A nutritious if bitter salad green, Jones notes, the loosely-bunched grocery endive and elite "ahndeeve" -- "chic and expensive... blanched and crisp, tightly leaf-wrapped heads" of Parisian endive -- are both leaves of chicory.

The coffee-like beverage from chicory root was brewed in France before coffee beans arrived. Adding chicory gave coffee a darker color and a bitter taste, still a French thing. Boiled in milk, Jones adds, chicory provides "a sort of noncafe au lait," more like the sweetish half-coffee-half-milk mother gave me, a Swedish thing.

Tiny brilliant blue flowers on a dandelion-like form, *Cichorium* forms colonies of green leafy rosettes in barren dry, sunny spots. Aka **Blue Dandelion**. Both are salad greens.

Chicory has been cultivated for at least 5000 years for culinary and medicinal properties. Egyptian and Arabian practitioners knew it, and eventually Europeans. It was drunk, Jones notes, "as a depurative, a digestive, and a restorative." Nicholas Culpepper (17th century English herbalist) recommended chicory for "swooning and passions of the heart."



Queen Anne's Lace with nectar guide

**BFRs** Dr. Edward Bach posited that illness results from an internal conflict between behavior and the purposes of the soul, leading to negative moods, a lack of "harmony" and physical disease. One of his (in)famous **Bach Flower Remedies** uses chicory.

Dr. Bach based his results on personal "intuitive" psychic connections to flowers, rather than scientific research. He would hold his hand over different plants, and if one alleviated a "negative emotion", he ascribed to the plant the power to heal that emotional problem. Huh?

He imagined early-morning sunlight passing through dew-drops on flower petals, transferring the flower's healing power onto the water, so he would collect the drops and preserve the dew -- with an equal amount of brandy -- to produce a "mother tincture."

Bach "liked the method's simplicity," well, simple for him and his subjective research. And I suspect he liked his brandy. By his death in 1936 at 50 years of age, he had created a system of 38 different remedies. Well-marketed. Probably safe.

The **Chicory Flower Remedy** is for those who may be possessive of those they love, perhaps overly... or simply very mindful of others' needs, as my gracious mother Ingrid Karlsson.

2 *Daucus carota*

**QUEEN ANNE'S LACE** A colony of this lace-like,

densely-clustered disk of tiny white flowers swaying gently on tall slender stalks is a summer delight in fields, meadows and pastures. Its taproot likes deep soils. Aka **Wild Carrot**, Queen Anne's Lace is the ancestor of our common carrot.

Legend says Queen Anne Stuart of Great Britain (1702-14) pricked her finger while sewing lace and the dark red flower(s) in the center of some plants is royal blood. It also serves as a nectar guide for pollinators.

Wild or cultivated, *Daucus* is a rich source of vitamin A, valued for antiseptic properties since ancient times. Wild carrots are medicinally better, Jones notes. All parts are used: "leaves, roots and seeds -- in the form of tea or poultice, juice, pulp, soup or vegetable"... "beneficial for liver and kidney disorders... ulcers and skin disorders, and for coughs and flatulence." In France, a wineglassful of freshly expressed carrot juice every morning is said to avoid upper respiratory infections, bronchitis, colds and flu.

Ms. Jones' mother and grandmother said, "Eat your carrots, they're good for you, they'll give you rosy cheeks!" Better is a 30-minute facial of wild carrot roots and parsley, the juice thickened with honey and yogurt. Best is carrot cake!

3 *Rhus glabra / typhina*

**SUMAC** Woody (not herbaceous) **Smooth / Staghorn Sumacs** are small trees up to 30 feet with tropical palm-like compound leaves. Very hardy, these native shrubs and trees are so common that it's considered a weed across the US. Also in Asia, southern Europe and the Middle East. The two natural species are practically alike, both found on old fields and dry hillsides, mostly upland. The suckering rhizomes can appear on the other side of a path.

Unnoticeable white flowers become red hairy berries called drupes in cone-shaped clusters at branch ends, like deer antlers. Very showy. Fall leaf color is a fiery blaze of purple, red and yellow.

"Summaq" is an Arab word for the plant used as lemon-like seasoning, that gave us the common name. Native Americans made "Indian lemonade." The drupes were soaked in water, stirred and strained to remove the fine hairs from a tart pink lemonade, sweetened with sugar or honey.

Sumac leaves were smoked with other leaves and bark, Jones notes, as "a religious rite, an offering of respect to elders, and a means of curing disease." More often, an infusion of red berries eased a fever, or treated diabetes and intestinal ills. It was "antiseptic and astringent, as well as tonic." The "deep crimson, plumed antlers" are showy in dried floral arrangements.

4 *Taraxacum officinale*

**DANDELION** Every part benefits humanity: a delightful crown of flowers, a seed-toy in the wind, a nutritious green leaf sold in stores, and a root for culinary and medicinal use. High in protein with calcium, iron, niacin, phosphorus, riboflavin and vitamins A, B<sub>1</sub> and C.

In no way toxic, but America's lawn industry has sold the public on killing dreaded dandelions. And the chemical industry has just the thing to kill broadleaf weeds, not blades of grass, with a selective herbicide developed from chemical weapons research.

The bright yellow flowers and large jagged leaves violate the iconic perfect lawn. Leaf shape was like a lion's tooth, and the French "*Dent-de-lion*" was anglicized to Dandelion. Found in sunny fields, waste spaces and imperfect lawns. Aka **Blowball** for those seedheads blown in the



Stinging Nettle

wind.

Like many plants, origins were in arid Mediterranean regions in the early Middle Ages (500-1100 AD, the Dark Ages). Arabian physicians likened it to chicory, possibly the first to use it medicinally. English apothecaries knew it as *Herba Urinaria* for its diuretic effect, and patients called it **Pissabed**.

*Taraxacum* was "very effective for obstructions of the liver, gall and spleen," found English herbalist John Gerard (c. 1545-1612); also for consumption, jaundice, and urinary infections. Families in southern Europe still harvest tender young dandelion greens, and Ms. Jones remembers Sundays in NYC when Italian neighbors took trains to the country in early spring and returned with baskets of dandelion leaves and roots.

"Nature provides few finer delicacies," says Ms. Jones, sharing a dandelion salad recipe for two: Thinly slice 8 to 12 crowns crosswise, add a small finely chopped onion, a bit of sugar, salt and pepper, a little olive oil and cider vinegar.

Dandelion beer has long been a wholesome fermented beverage in England and Canada. Brewed by a neighbor of Ms. Jones, whole plants were boiled in water with ginger root and lemon peel, strained with brown sugar and cream of tartar, fermented with yeast and stored a week. "Mr. Moll claimed that dandelion beer doesn't keep very long -- isn't that a bit of luck?"

## Trick or Treat ???

**TRICKY WEEDS** Some weeds are scary!

1 *Agropyron repens*

**WITCHGRASS** spreads at an alarming rate! Underground rhizomes branch in all directions and many nodes send up new shoots of grass that plague a garden bed. The rhizomes have long been prescribed in Europe "to induce sweating and as herbal treatments of urinary and rheumatic ailments and chronic diseases of the liver and spleen."

I've found it best to just get rid of it. Working the soil with a garden fork, gently pull out as many spreading roots as possible after a drenching rain. Doable. So I don't

use toxic chemicals. (Smothering fabric also works but surrounding plants need soil vitality and moisture.) Repeat twice a year. Or thrice.

2 *Phytolacca americana*

**POKEBERRY** is a colorful "herbaceous shrub" that wants to be a tree. Useful, ornamental and toxic! It's an indigenous American plant ranging westward from Maine to Florida. It prefers rich loamy soils in full-to-part-sun, but adapts to coastal sand dunes.

It behaves like a 10ft multi-stem small tree, except it dies to the ground in winter. Hollow 3-inch "trunks" are tree-like with long arching stems creating shade canopy.

Pokeberry (aka Pokeweed or Poke, with many regional variations) is a native herbaceous perennial throughout the Quiet Corner. It volunteered along a sunny fence-row where compost fed my ornamentals. Towering 7 feet tall and 9 feet wide its first year, the pokeberry survived weeding because my hip objected to manicuring an ornamental bed, and the second year because I liked it. Now it towers over the redbird dogwood (formerly *Cornus*) planted as a screen, pokeberries hanging over the large shrub. A taller screen. Food for birds. Good weed.

Ornamental, in fact, gorgeous. Magenta stems and plump pink-to-purple berries are striking. Flowers not so much. Each berry has "primal white markings all around its center navel, alluding to ancient wisdom carried in its belly" (according to *The Witchen Kitchen*). Large green leaves can turn a deep violet hue in autumn. Good weed!

However, *Phytolacca* is dangerously toxic, perhaps poisonous. Every part is toxic. Wear gloves gathering roots and berries in autumn for medicinal use. Seeds are dangerous; okay if not chewed, so they say, but don't take their word for it. Besides, it smells bad. Bad weed!

(Note: our ubiquitous yews (*Taxus*) and the *Oleander* planted in playgrounds throughout southern states are also toxic. But only if enough (alot) is ingested. Bad ornaments!)



Pokeberry overhanging dogwood shrub.



Poison Ivy - "Leaves of three, let it be."





# You Can Help Restore Nature

By Emery Gluck

Recent studies have documented alarming declines in bird populations and insect extinctions.

The latter is concerning as insects are needed to pollinate all flowering plants and they are among the little things that rule the world. Ecosystems become less productive and stable as species are extirpated or diminished to the point where it can no longer perform their ecologically role effectively.

One way to help offset these losses is to find ways for nature to thrive in more places in our human dominated landscape.

An easy place for everyone to start is to reduce the size of their lawn. Almost all lawns are made from previously natural landscapes or former agricultural land. They are second only to paving on their effect on biodiversity. There is an estimated 40 million acres of lawn in

this country or about the size of New England, more acres than in wheat production. The EPA estimates 40-60% of all fertilizer applied to lawns ends up in surface or groundwater where it can kill aquatic organisms and often promotes algae blooms. Their care is estimated to account for 5% of the country's carbon footprint as gas lawn mowers are very inefficient and highly polluting.

Even if you don't reduce your lawn, participating in "No Mow May" or cutting your lawn less often may help some pollinators and reduce pollution.

But to help offset this massive loss of natural landscapes, consider allowing a substantial part of your lawn to grow up into a native meadow or field. Non-native plants such as asiatic bittersweet and multi-flora rose need to be controlled for a native meadow to thrive. Native meadows provide pollinators and other animals with a trove of flowering plants. Goldenrod, which abundantly grows naturally in most meadows, host at least 110 species

At left: Author and wife's Little bluestem and goldenrod field in Lebanon September 2022. At right: Same field burned annually to promote Little bluestem and flowering plants while keeping woody plants from taking over. Photos by the author.

of caterpillars plus pollinators. Their seeds are used by finches, juncos and sparrows, and their nectar are important for migrating monarchs. Fall blooming aster, which also seed naturally in meadows, provide essential forage for migrating monarch even after goldenrod bloom ends. Pithy stem bees nest in goldenrod, blackberry, and senescing Black-eyed Susan. Butterfly bush, zinnias and impatiens attract bee generalist but without a compliment of goldenrod, blueberry, asters, and willow, many bee specialist were not present in one study.

Native grasses had previously thrived with Native Americans' use of fire but now have been largely displaced European grasses. Native grasses such as Little bluestem hosts Swarthy and Dusty skippers while Deer tongue host Tawny edged skipper. If left uncut over the winter, Little bluestem provides cover for birds and small mammals as it is a bunch grass that stands erect and resists being matted

continued on page 15

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# Children's Health Defense Launches a New England Chapter

By Janet Lowe

Children's Health Defense, a nonprofit activist group, is launching a New England Chapter with a series of events throughout the region including the first one in Madison, Connecticut, on September 15. It featured live presentations followed by a Q&A session with global experts. Mary Holland, president and general counsel of CHD, gave the keynote talk, titled "How Do We Know Who to Believe?"

Before joining CHD's staff in fall 2019, Holland directed the Graduate Lawyering Program at the NYU School of Law for fifteen years and lectured at the Columbia Law School on international human rights advocacy. She frequently testified in state legislatures around the country to retain or expand religious, medical, and philosophical exemptions to vaccine mandates. Holland has co-authored two books on vaccines, *Vaccine Epidemic* and *The HPV Vaccine on Trial: Seeking Justice for a Generation Betrayed*, and many articles about vaccine law and policy.

Other speakers included Dr. Andrew Bostom, who is taking on Brown University for mandating vaccines for students after hiding a case of vaccine-induced myocarditis in a 21-year-old male undergraduate (see <https://rumble.com/c/c-1841841>); attorney Bobby Ann Cox, who successfully stopped Gov. Kathy Hochul's "regulation" to allow New York State government and health officials to send citizens to quarantine camps without due process; and economist and author Jeffrey Tucker, who helped organize the Great Barrington Declaration (<https://gbdeclaration.org>), signed by more than 47,000 medical practitioners and nearly a million citizens expressing grave concerns over damaging COVID policies.

The mission of CHD New England is to protect the future of our children and their families by defending human and planetary health in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The new chapter is dedicated to achieving this by proactively working to eliminate the harmful substances making people sick, by holding those responsible accountable, and by establishing safeguards to prevent future violations. Its members are called to action for many reasons. Some have been injured from toxic exposure or have children and family members who have been medically harmed, or have witnessed a health injustice and felt compelled to act. Some have been impacted by attempts to take away their medical freedom or their freedom to make other critical personal decisions for themselves and their children. No matter the reasons that brought them to CHD, the members of the New England Chapter stand together and are passionately committed to educate, empower, and mobilize New England citizens so they can protect human and environmental health, which will benefit them, their families, and others in their communities. (To learn more, see <https://new.childrenshealthdefense.org/about-us/>.)

Their strategy is to create an informed and motivated citizenry who will strengthen local economies, protect civil rights, establish food security, regenerate the natural environment, and develop an education system that builds a hopeful, vibrant future for all our children.

The CHD New England Chapter strives to build strong, well-educated communities that place human and planet health and well-being over corporate profits and government control. This will require people power. Therefore, their focus is to mobilize and support the 30% who are already aware of the threats to health and civil liberties and to educate the 40% who know something is not quite right, in hopes of getting them to join their ranks.

The methods they plan to use to help people disengage from corporate and government overreach and to protect our basic human liberties are:

1. Build a diverse coalition of political leadership

throughout New England to preserve our fundamental rights and medical freedoms.

2. Raise community awareness through broadcasting key narratives often ignored by the media (e.g., natural immunity, informed consent, doctor-patient rights, free speech) to foster truth, balance, and transparency around key issues.
3. Develop a structure to engage the community using strategic partnerships and robust volunteerism.
4. Build informed and empowered communities using a variety of educational programs and participation in local events.
5. Serve as a watchdog to expose the causes of the epidemic of chronic illness in children and suspicious community disease trends and to alert citizens when their civil liberties are being threatened or eroded, so those who are responsible can be held accountable and safeguards put into place to prevent future failures.

The Children's Health Defense organization has grown significantly since it was first started by Chair Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. For over three decades, Kennedy has been one of the world's leading environmental advocates. He is the founder of Waterkeeper Alliance, the umbrella group for 300 local Waterkeeper organizations, in 34 countries, that track down and sue polluters. Under his leadership, Waterkeeper has grown to become the world's largest clean water advocacy organization.

Around 2005, parents of vaccine-injured children began encountering Kennedy's speeches and writings about the toxic mercury-based preservative thimerosal. They embraced new hope that this environmental champion would finally expose the truth about vaccine injury and win justice for injured children.

Kennedy is known for his fierce and relentless brand of environmental activism and his advocacy for transparent government and rigorous science. He launched his nonprofit, the Children's Health Defense, with vaccine safety advocates Lyn Redwood and Laura Bono, legends themselves among parents of vaccine-injured children. He is now applying his tenacious energies and sophisticated strategies to exposing the fraud and corruption within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the pharmaceutical industry.

Kennedy has taken on Big Pharma for the disastrous 72-shot childhood vaccine schedule, pushed by the big pharmaceutical companies, encouraged and supported by our medical professionals, and mandated by our government agencies. This schedule has ushered in the sickest generation of children America has ever seen, with over 50% suffering from some chronic illness including allergies, asthma, eczema, ADHD, and autism. Autism now affects 1 in 34 American boys. That is an enormous societal burden and a huge financial burden to millions of families.

Our government spends billions of taxpayer dollars helping other countries yet makes its own citizens fight for compensation for injuries caused by its policies. Our citizens send millions of dollars to help "suffering nations" while neighbors and family members struggle financially to support special needs children. The leaders who are supposed to represent us have voted to absolve the pharmaceutical companies of any liability for the damage they commit with their experimental drugs, which individuals and their children are often forced to take without informed consent.

We are now in a place where people turn their backs on their neighbors and open their hearts to strangers across the globe; where people no longer question the corrupt decisions of our government leaders; where people blindly follow medical advice without understanding what is being put into the bodies of their children. So how did

we get here?

The captured media shares most of the blame, along with the corporations who control the narrative and propaganda that people are exposed to daily. The reason the health of our children and our planet has degenerated so alarmingly over the past century is that kindhearted, good-intentioned Americans have been lied to and prodded into a mind-numbing consumerism that feeds the corporate beast, which then uses science and technology to engineer and fund our demise. The premise of a democracy and of a republic is that an informed public will make the right decisions. Those types of decisions can't be made when a population has been fed a steady diet of mis- and disinformation for over a century and which was only made worse with the advent of television in the '50s and the creation of the Internet in the '90s. Too many people default to the mainstream media narrative rather than seeking out alternative sources of information or using the critical thinking skills they were supposed to have honed during their years of education and experience.

The solution to this is a *free* press that is committed to reporting the truth, unbiased and not influenced by either government or the private sector. The Defender, CHD's news and opinion website, is a good place to start. The daily content coming out of The Defender and CHDTV is well researched by a large team of researchers and writers, is truthful, features expert presenters, and provides information that the industrial-military-pharma-tech complex has been censoring. (Facebook just last month permanently de-platformed CHD.) CHD has also assembled a professional, talented, and experienced team that is doing an amazing job of litigating against corporate corruption and educating on government overreach and violation of our constitutional rights.

CHD's calls to action are clear. People need to:


1. stand up and fight for their first amendment rights,
2. become better educated around current issues, and
3. do everything in their power to disseminate the truth.

That's where CHD New England comes into play. Research shows that grassroots activism can sway governments and the direction a society takes. But the research also shows that for the activism to be effective there needs to be clear, constant, and consistent messaging. Therefore, it is so important for all of us to get behind CHD and help them get their information out to the public.

CHD encourages people to take the "Defender Pledge" (<https://new.childrenshealthdefense.org/take-the-pledge/>), which is designed to empower local communities with legitimate information. They are asking everyone to become a CHD Defender by committing at least one hour per week to promoting CHD information. The time is now. You can be part of the solution that will make a change. Go to the CHD website and take the Defender Pledge. There you will also find actionable ideas and practical tools (flyers, posters, stickers) to support your efforts. Ask yourself, is one hour of my time each week too much to ask for when it comes to defending my freedom, my children, and my planet?



CHD New England aims to inspire in New Englanders the passion to work together for a vibrant and hopeful future for our children and our planet. Please join. They need your help. If we stand as one, we will make a difference.

Future launch events for the CHD New England Chapter will run throughout the region in coming months, so keep checking the CHD New England Chapter website for updates (<https://childrenshealthdefense.org/support/new-england-chapter-launch/>).



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Attractive if malodorous, pokeberry also acts medicinally. Like Taxol, an early cancer drug derived from yew, poke's toxicity has benefits stimulating the immune system and treating many ills. Homeopathic pokeberry teas are prescribed for body aches, catarrh and other respiratory ailments; also used for arthritis, laryngitis and tonsillitis, for rheumatism and mumps! Farmers have used extracts of poke root and seeds to treat chickens and cows for years. Good weed.

Before European settlement, Native Americans ate early poke shoots in spring, when white with no tinge of red. In fall, roots and berries were gathered and dried for medicinal use; Connecticut River tribes stained splintwood baskets a deep rich blue. Good weed.

Appalachian herbalists make poke medicine going into winter when cold weather, rich foods and less activity make things move slower and accumulate in our lymph and glandular systems, and elsewhere. An early 1800s preparation infused pokeberries in brandy. Good weed.

Rarely cultivated in America, pokeberry was introduced to Europe about 1770. In France and northern Italy, "the very young succulent shoots gained a reputation as a tender spring green at least equal to, if not better than, asparagus," according to Jones. Health foods advocate in the 1960s, Euell Gibbons wrote how his mother crushed three dozen pokeberries in a pint of boiling water for tablespoons of cooled, strained infusion "to purify the blood." And with "some salt and quite a lot of butter, margarine or bacon drippings," he wrote, poke is "a delicious vegetable. It so closely resembles asparagus that some may be fooled." Good weed!

**3 Toxicodendron (formerly Rhus) radicans Beware!** **POISON IVY** is not only a bad weed, it is the ONLY weed that I spray with a toxic chemical (with a mask on a still day). Or I spray with blue marker paint to later hand-remove in long pants and sleeves, with fabric gloves and a washable hat, Ms. Jones advises, and "wash them all - especially the gloves - with naphtha soap and borax." Avoid burning it and the wafting smoke. My partner swears poison ivy wafts after her. Suffered for weeks until she learned to look.

Its acrid oil affects people differently and some are immune, until they're not. Painful itching blisters erupt, perhaps a month to heal. I scratch and scratch and rub with a special gel. Repeatedly. Until I learned to look.

Poison Ivy likes semi-shaded moist edges of woods and thickets, hedgerows and gardens throughout the Quiet Corner. Look for its "Leaves of three, let it be." Insignificant flowers then berries are spread everywhere by birds. Crimson red fall color is easy to identify; remove in early winter when the plant is least active. Keep looking.

**Virginia Creeper (Parthenocissus)** is a similar but harmless vine with reddish orange fall color, and five leaflets. Another coexisting plant is **Jewelweed (Impatiens)** with delicate orange flowers; its succulent stems seep an orange watery juice that American Indians used for the ivy's itch (also for stinging nettle). Good weeds.

**4 Urtica dioica Beware!**

**STINGING NETTLE** The genus is rooted in the Latin "Urere" = "to burn." Stems and long downy heart-shaped leaves are covered with stinging hairs, but the burn is disabled by heat -- boiled, steamed or simply dried. Before seeking remedy on your phone for the instant *Sting!*... simply find soap and water. Lather the itch, rinse and repeat. Ms. Jones offered several herbal remedies; Mother Google said soap and water. Then remove the nettle and what better way than eating it?

A healthy spring soup per German folk tradition (and Jones): When spring growth emerges, scour fields to pick stinging nettle with chickweed, ground ivy, dandelion, purslane, sorrel and/or yarrow. Three tablespoons of mixed herbs are washed, chopped and sautéed in 1.5 oz. of butter. Stir in 1.5 oz. flour until pale golden brown. Add 2 pints chicken stock or water, and whisk quickly to blend. Bring to boil, perhaps some salt, and simmer 5 minutes. Whisk a beaten egg into the herbal broth before serving. *Zum Wohl!*

Perhaps served with *Vollkornbrot* Rye Bread, surprisingly easy to bake at home with rye flour and berries with sunflower seeds, fermented with sourdough. Popular in Germany and Scandinavia.

Other nettle byproducts are medicinals, beer, tea and a very durable cloth. Bleached, dyed and mercerized, nettle cloth compared to silk, plush and velvet.

Finally, for the amphibian-aware of Willimantic, a stand of nettles is said to protect beehives from predatory frogs.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Master gardener / designer, Chaplin, Connecticut

Photos by the author.

'Helping Nature' continued from page 13

down after a heavy snow, unlike European grasses.

Meadows and fields will eventually succeed to forests, invasives, and/or grape vines without occasional mowing, cutting, grazing, and/or burning. Author Wendell Berry wrote "The forest is always waiting to overrun the field". A Connecticut College study of burning a Little bluestem field concluded burning increased Little bluestem biomass and made the field more resistant to be invaded by non-native plants. Another recent study claims burning promotes the storage of carbon in the soil.

A burn permit is required for open burns and is only good for low and moderate fire danger days. Most local burning officials are reluctant to give permits for burning meadows and fields as they can burn very hot and fast before they green up in the spring. Fire Departments could be asked to burn a field for training. It is suggested to have unmowed areas no closer than 30' to structures for a defensible space. Do not discard wood stove ashes in these areas.

Planting can augment Nature if you go Native. Native plants are almost always far better at performing local ecological roles than plant introduced from elsewhere. For example, there is evidence that some of the 4000 species of native bees prefer native flowers to alien flowers. Berries from non-native plants typically contain <1% fat while berries from natives often have nearly 50% fat, which birds depend upon for needed fat for fall migration.

Most plant-eating insects are restricted to eating one or a few plants as plants have evolved over the millennia to develop chemical defenses toxic to most insects. Since native insects hadn't evolved with them, non-native plants rarely provide suitable hosts for native plant-eating insects. While the lack of insects feeding on it is good for the plant, it fails miserably in providing a source of food for the ecosystem's food web.

Caterpillars are key to the food web as they transfer the most plant based energy to animals. Most terrestrial birds in North America feed their nestlings caterpillars far more than any other insect type as they are soft and large. Caterpillars are so important to breeding birds that many species may not be able to adequately breed in habitats that do not contain enough caterpillars. Areas dominated by non-native plants might not have enough caterpillars for birds to raise their young. One study found that 6000 to 9000 caterpillars are needed to raise a brood of nestlings. Another study found a neighborhood dominated by non-native plants provided 75% fewer chickadees and were 60% less likely to have breeding chickadees. A different study found that native plants must make up more than 70% of the plant biomass for birds to have enough nestlings to replenish its own population. Unfortunately, non-natives plants are increasing at an alarming rate especially where native trees are dying due to exotic insects and drought.

Since oaks, cherries and willows overwhelmingly host the most caterpillars, planting them or managing to increase the oak components in forests would greatly increase bird populations and diversity. Oaks host the most caterpillars (462 species in Connecticut) but maturing oaks are declining in numbers and are not being replaced with juvenile trees. Even though they will potentially benefit from a warming climate, there will likely be fewer oaks in the future without substantial planting or forest management designed to replenish oak forests as there is too little sunlight under most forests for shade-sensitive young oaks to thrive. Red maple has replaced red oak as the most numerous tree in Connecticut's forests. Sustaining oak forests is very important as they have more bird diversity and abundance than maple forests.

Sustaining caterpillars requires not only native plants but leaf litter as almost all species overwinter in the ground as pupae to complete their life cycles. Hard covers such as lawns prevent them from burrowing in.

Leaving dead standing trees (only if far enough away from people and structures) will also provide perches for many birds and habitat for many birds and insects. Down dead wood also provide habitat for native bees, other insects and mammals.

Lastly, cut the lights. Outside night lights create havoc on moths and decimate their numbers. Installing motion detectors or yellow LED light would drastically reduce their exceedingly high mortality.

Nature needs your help now more than ever so she can be there for your children and grandchildren.

This article is based on the work of Entomologist Douglas Tallamy and some of the author's 42 year experience as a forester (now retired).

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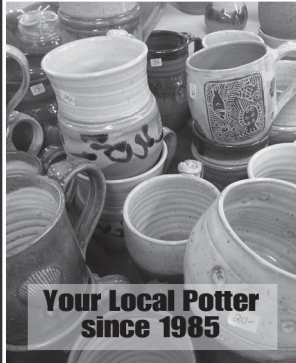
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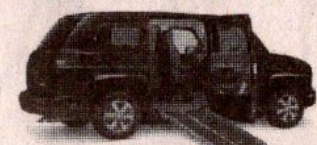
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## The Packing House in October!

By EC-CHAP

### October

*"Live in each season as it passes:  
breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit."*  
- Henry David Thoreau

As Dr. John put it, Such a night, it's such a night – "Songs for Ukraine", September 24th – it was a successful night! Our Benefit Concert raised over \$5,000 for the people of Ukraine!

We would like to THANK ALL those who came out to this Benefit Event and gave generously to this important cause. We are sincerely grateful for everyone who attended; for the performers Xavier Serrano with Derrick Bosse, Foolish Wisely, and Frank Critelli with Muddy Waters who shared their time and talent; for Scot Haney, WFSB Channel-3 TV, who served as Master of Ceremony; for Larry Grasso and Cindy Moeckel, Platinum Sponsors of the event; for visual artists Carol Mackiewicz-Neely and Blanche Serban for creating paintings "live" during the concert; for over 50 donors of food, beverage, services and raffle items; for EC-CHAP Volunteers; and for our Charitable Partner, Direct Relief. 100% of all funds raised go directly to the people of Ukraine.

Unfortunately the impact of war is lasting... and current events suggest further escalation. EC-CHAP plans to extend this Benefit Event and continue our efforts to reach a goal of \$10,000 for Ukraine. We hope you will consider joining us and give what you are able. To learn more, and to donate to this cause, please visit: <https://www.ec-chap.org/benefit-for-ukraine> or click the "Songs for Ukraine – Extend" Flow Code.

We also plan to present a recording of the September 24th concert in the near future available to view online.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**EC-CHAP JAZZ SERIES: GREG ABATE QUARTET**  
– Saturday, October 1, 2022 – 7:30pm (Doors Open 7:00pm)

We're thrilled to have the Greg Abate Quartet back at The Packing House this fall as part of EC-CHAP's Jazz Series!

Soon after graduating from the Berklee College of Music in the mid-seventies, Greg began his rich musical career playing lead Alto Sax for the Ray Charles Orchestra. From there, the rest was history.

As an internationally recognized Jazz Artist, Greg Abate is on the road plying over 200 engagements a year across the US and abroad. His unique Bebop style has bodies swaying and feet tapping across the room.

Greg has recorded a number of live and studio albums since his Live CD at Birdland in NYC under the Candid Jazz label. He is currently a Whaling City Sound recording artist; adjunct professor of Jazz Studies at Rhode Island College; and is also a very active jazz clinician with co-sponsorship from the Conn-Selmer Instrument Co., conducting workshops and master classes.

Greg will be joined at The Packing House with exceptional CT based jazz musicians including Matt deChamplain on piano, Lou Bocciaelli on bass, and Ben Bilello on drums. Tickets \$25.00 Online / \$30.00 at the Door.

**EC-CHAP SPECIAL PROGRAM: AN EVENING WITH THE BLUES PROJECT** – Wednesday, October 5, 2022 - 7:30pm (Doors Open 7:00pm)

We are excited to present this Special Program



featuring The Blues Project! Steve Katz, one of the founding members shared stories of his time with The Blues Project and Blood Sweat and Tears at The Packing House last April. He now returns with original member Roy Blumenfeld and the entire band.

In the fall of 1965, The Blues Project played alongside the likes of Big Joe Williams, Son House, Bukka White, Skip James, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters and Otis Spann, to name a few. It was these legendary sold-out performances at the famed Cafe Au Go Go in Greenwich Village that eventually led to the release of their phenomenal debut album, *Live at the Cafe Au Go Go*. The Blues Project made a musical revolution, turning many people on to the American blues heritage.

Straight out of New York, the Blues Project soon toured all over North America. Back then, California, was the place to be, with San Francisco and Los Angeles as the two epicenters of the new age of rock and roll. The five New Yorkers played there and conquered the West.

In 1967, at the peak of their success and after the release of their third album, *Live at Town Hall*, the band appeared at one of their last gigs - the legendary Monterey International Pop Festival which featured Otis Redding, The Byrds, Jimi Hendrix and many more soon to be legends. The Blues Project then split up in two different directions, with Kooper and Katz forming Blood, Sweat & Tears, and Kulberg and Blumenfeld keeping the Blues Project name and carrying on for another year and for another album, *Planned Obsolescence*, before changing the name of the group to Seatrain.

At the dawn of the 70s, for the joy of their old fans, Danny Kalb and Roy Blumenfeld put together a new version of the Blues Project with which they released two new albums, *Lazarus* in 1971, and *Blues Project* in 1972. The good reception eventually led to what their fans really wanted and waited for a long time, i.e. the reunion tour of the classic lineup which culminated with their widely acclaimed appearance at the 6th Annual Schaefer Music Festival in Central Park in June of 1973, and with the release of a live album, *Reunion In Central Park*.

After a few sporadic reunion concerts through the 80s and 90s, the "original" Blues Project disbanded for good. Despite it all, even in the new millennium, the band maintained a diehard fan base of old and new fans, so it was mostly for them that at least Danny Kalb, Steve Katz, and Roy Blumenfeld, did a new reunion tour in 2012.

The shows were well received and their fans asked for more so, in 2021, here we go again. The Blues Project is alive and well, with Katz and Blumenfeld leading a new powerful lineup that also includes three young and talented "pupils": Chris Morrison on lead guitar, Scott Petito on bass, and Ken Clark on keyboards and vocals. The Blues Project will debut their new album, "Evolution" at The Packing House!

Join us for trip back in Rock & Roll History!  
Tickets \$30.00 Online / \$35.00 at the Door.

**EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: A Special Evening with Tom Paxton and the DonJuans (Folk) – Thursday, November 3, 2022 – 7:30pm (Doors Open 7:00pm)**

November 3, 2022 will certainly be a Special Evening at The Packing House! Folk Legend and Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Tom Paxton will grace our stage with his song, humor, and wit. Tom will be joined by Acoustic Duo and Grammy winning artists, the "DonJuans". This is a show not to miss!

TOM PAXTON as become a voice of his generation, addressing issues of injustice and inhumanity, laying bare the absurdities of modern culture and celebrating the



tenderest bonds of family, friends, and community.

In describing Tom Paxton's influence on his fellow musicians, Pete Seeger has said: "Tom's songs have a way of sneaking up on you. You find yourself humming them, whistling them, and singing a verse to a friend. Like the songs of Woody Guthrie, they're becoming part of America." Pete goes on: "In a small village near Calcutta, in 1998, a villager who could not speak English sang me *What Did You Learn In School Today?* in Bengali! Tom Paxton's songs are reaching around the world more than he is, or any of us could have realized. Keep on, Tom!"

Tom received a 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Recording Academy during the 51st Annual GRAMMY® Awards. He was nominated for a GRAMMY for Comedians and Angels in 2007, and *Live in the U.K.* in 2006. He was also nominated for GRAMMYS in 2003 for his Appleseed Records CD, *Looking For The Moon*, and in 2002 for his children's CD, *Your Shoes, My Shoes*. He has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from ASCAP, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the BBC in London.

He is one of the great songwriters of the last century and will be reckoned as one of the greats in this new century, as well. He is a man we have come to regard as our friend.

THE DONJUANS will join Tom Paxton to make this memorable evening one to never forget! By their name you might assume that the DonJuans rely merely on their good looks. However, you will be impressed to know that the group includes two GRAMMY® Award-winning songwriters, Don Henry and Jon Vezner. Their song, "Where've You Been" (recorded by Kathy Mattea) was the first song in country music history to sweep all major song of the year honors including the GRAMMY®, ACM®, CMA, and the Nashville Songwriter's Association International (NSAI) awards.

Join us for a Special Evening with Folk Icon Tom Paxton and the DonJuans! Tickets \$35.00 in advance online / \$40.00 at the door. 20% Discount at Door for EC-CHAP Members.

**EC-CHAP MONTHLY TALENT SHOWCASE – 2nd Wednesday of the Month – Beginning Wednesday, October 12, 2022 - 7:00pm (Doors Open 6:30pm)**

Acoustic musicians, film makers, poets, comedians, jugglers, puppeteers, and creative artists of all ages are invited to perform at The Packing House. Here is an opportunity to showcase your work in an intimate historic setting before a live audience. Test ideas and concepts and solicit feedback. PA / sound reinforcement, video projection, and up to 3 microphones provided (Please - No full drum kits unless prior arrangements have been made).

Please consider participating in our monthly Talent Showcase the 2nd Wednesday of every month (October – May). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474. Not performing – no problem - simply join us to see and hear local and regional creatives sharing their talent. Free Admission – Donations Graciously Accepted.

**EC-CHAP Film Series – 2nd Thursday of the Month: "Visual Acoustics: The Modernism of Julius Shulman". Unrated. 2008. (Documentary) - October 13, 2022 - 7:00pm (Doors Open 6:30pm)**

Narrated by Dustin Hoffman, VISUAL ACOUSTICS celebrates the life and career of Julius Shulman, the world's greatest architectural photographer, whose images brought modern architecture to the American mainstream... IMDb

The film Directed by Eric Bricker; Writers: Eric Bricker, Phil Ethington, Jessica Hundley (co-writer); Stars: Frances Anderton, Wim de Wit, Beth Edwards Harris.

"This absorbing documentary from 2008 focuses on Julius Shulman (1910-2009), a photographer best known for his stylish, dynamic studies of mid-century modern Californian architecture by the likes of Richard Neutra, John Lautner and Pierre Koenig. Although Shulman himself is less well-known outside the photography and architecture scenes than those architects, his frequently reproduced images of their structures helped to create the iconic status of those buildings.

Director Eric Bricker has adeptly assembled a seamless bricolage of vintage 20th-century footage together with material from a doc made in the earliest years of

continued on next page



## Air

by Judy Davis

Sagebrush dances around me,  
weaving magic –  
the joy of it is in  
the very air.  
The aroma  
is that of honor,  
and  
it fills my happy soul.  
My eyes soak up  
the bluest sky of days –  
a sky my ancestors  
reveled in.  
They took a breath,  
and then exhaled,  
that my life  
fills  
with  
their essence.

## Ashford Area Arts Council Members Show at VBC!

Come to the Vanilla Bean Cafe during the month of October to view and perhaps purchase a special gift for that special someone, made with love by our talented artists.

Our artists: Christine Acebo(photography), Deb Aldo(mosaics),Lance Arnold(glasswork) Nancy Bunnell(pastel painting), Joseph Burger(watercolor painting), Cindy Curry(photography), Judy Doyle(acrylic and oil painting), Dot Drobney(photography), Deb Gag(oil painting), Sharon Garrison(acrylic painting), Steve Gerling(oil painting), Michael Hughey(calligraphy), Kathy Lepak(calligraphy), Charles McCaughtry(watercolor painting), Pat Morris(acrylic painting), Linda Rogers(encaustic painting), Lori Smolin(watercolor painting), Joseph Szalay, and Kathy Weigold(weaving)

The arts have always coincided with VBC fresh foods and homestyle atmosphere, as they pride themselves on being “a friend of the arts”.

The Vanilla Bean has both indoor and outdoor breakfast and lunch dining. They are located at 450 Deerfield Rd, Pomfret, CT 860) 928-1562.

this century when Shulman was in his 90s – along with nifty new animation and interview snippets that bridge ideas and fill gaps.

The film itself is like a building made from standing ruins and broken masonry, as well as contemporary girders and glass, producing a structure that flaunts rather than hides its composite nature.” - Leslie Felperin, The Guardian, 25 Nov 2020. Suggested Donation of \$5.00 at the Door.

### EC-CHAP SEEKING MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS

EC-CHAP continues to seek new Members and Volunteers! To learn about various Membership opportunities and benefits, please visit our website at: <https://www.ec-chap.org/membership-information>; or call 518-791-9474.

We need volunteers 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](mailto:info@ec-chap.org).

We leave you with the following:

“Whatever you are, be a good one.”  
-Abraham Lincoln

Onward, EC-CHAP Board

Soft drinks and snacks available at all events. Unless otherwise noted, we are pleased to offer our exclusive “BYOB&F” TM model - Bring Your Own Beverage & Food TM (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). You can also bring your paid ticket to Willington Pizza House (or WP Too) for eat-in or take-out the night of the show and receive 15% off your meal purchase. Ask for “The Packing House” pizza!

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](mailto:info@ec-chap.org)).

## Kerry’s Story

By Calen Nakash

It would be nice to live in a world where law enforcement leads with empathy, reason, and strict guidelines that are enforced. In nineteen countries or territories, the police do not carry firearms unless the situation is expected to merit it. Regardless, they get the job done. Knowledge of mental health is key, as is knowing how to respond to situations, which allows well-trained men and women to diffuse situations even when firearms are involved. That training, however, is beyond the required high school diploma (or GED) for Connecticut’s law enforcement. When officers are not required to know the laws they enforce, stories abound of tragedies caused by reckless individuals who are backed by their departments.

According to a research article in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS.org), the second most-cited scientific journal, about one in every thousand Black men in the United States will be killed by police. “For young men of color,” the article says, “police use of force is among the leading causes of death.”

If you are white, nonthreatening, and friendly, your encounters with police may be entirely benign, or you may find yourself only interacting with kind police. If you have a history of mental health problems and get hit with a bout of anxiety, however, you can find yourself in real trouble, as one man and his partner did.

In Oregon, a music teacher and performer named Hector Zabata had a panic attack while interacting with law enforcement and was arrested. (For reference, half of people killed by police have a disability, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.) A dashboard camera caught the footage, which showed Hector having a mental health crisis, but still not resisting, according to his attorney, who reviewed the film and gave Hector the go-ahead to post the footage. Hector was arrested.

But this is not a story about Hector.

During the incident, Hector’s partner, Kerry—a woman with a cognitive memory condition who cooks for the homeless and who, Hector says, is so empathetic that she “puts unwanted insects like spiders outside”—sought to inform the officers about Hector’s mental health crisis the best she could, while Hector was pinned to the ground. Instead of listening, the officers berated Kerry before roughly grabbing her and pushing her against the hood of their vehicle, pressing against her pelvis so hard that she relieved herself.

The arresting officer claimed that Kerry had pushed him, and filed harassment and interference claims against her. Without the dashcam footage, which showed Kerry complying with the officer’s request, this would be impossible to disprove. Kerry received bruises on her abdomen that correlated with the injury.

“My battle with mental health has inadvertently harmed Kerry by means of the police... she shouldn’t have been harmed because of my mental health,” Hector said on his GoFundMe page, and while he is taking the case to court, his musician’s salary has not been able to keep up with the attorney’s fees to defend the charges against both of them, which come to \$22,000.

Hector states about his partner, “She is adamant about seeking restitution but she is also expressing severe shame (victim’s remorse) and fears police retaliation if restitution is sought.” The GoFundMe page ends, “Thank you and please have a musical day.”

You can find the GoFundMe page at <https://go-fund.me/9fcd5e52>, and you’ll find a link to the dashcam footage there. At the time of writing, the fundraiser has only reached \$5,360 of its \$22,000 goal.

### Celebrate 300 years of History at Henrietta House Bed & Breakfast

Submitted by Marian Matthews

Henrietta House Bed and Breakfast inhabits one of the oldest homes in Ashford CT, originally built in 1722 on over 400 acres; we are celebrating its 300 years of standing strong on its now three-acre homestead. The house still retains most of its original features and may have been on the Underground Railroad.

We will be giving tours during our Open House on October 3rd, 4th, and 5th from 10:30 to 12:30 starting with Walktober walks on the adjacent Joshua’s Trust Byles Trail. (See details in the LGF Walktober Calendar).

Food delights will include our goat cheese as well seasonal goodies from our gardens. We look forward to seeing you then at 125 Ashford Center Road.

## Ukraine: “Little Brother” No More

Submitted by Julia Tikhonova Wintner, Coordinator of Eastern Art Gallery and Museum Services

Since February 24th, 2022, when Putin gave the order to invade Ukraine and to bring Russia’s “little brother” back into the fold, Ukrainians have demonstrated their fierce resistance to being re-colonized by Russia. They have begun a self-guided journey of liberation from Russian imperialism, a contemporary, Slavic version of the settler colonialism that ravaged the Americas.

*Women at War* is the passionate call to arms of a national liberation struggle being shaped in real time by the machinations of countless nations, each with its own geo-political agenda. Ukraine has been a Russian colony for centuries. With this current invasion, Putin continues the lineage of “brutal, expansionist dictators” – like Ivan the Terrible and Joseph Stalin – with his multiple, horrific wars in Chechnya, and attempts at dominance in Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

These former Soviet era territories were well-springs of the political and economic wealth enjoyed by generations of Russian politicians and oligarchs. In Ukraine, the post-colonial struggle began in 2014, with the annexation of Crimea. It was no surprise that when Ukraine attempted to defend its independence by allying with the Western powers, Russia responded with brutal military force.

The war has made crystal clear the impossibility of brotherhood as the so-called “Little Russian” sibling. Today’s independent Ukraine is a former colony forcibly tasked with the struggle for decolonization. Woman at War pursues this Sisyphean task. The artists seek to subvert the colonial power by disentangling language, reclaiming memory, and aggressive de-Russification. Importantly, they call out rape as a signifier of imperial violence and colonial power.

*Women at War*, an exhibition by 14 contemporary Ukrainian women artists, opens at Eastern Art Gallery at a time of extraordinary destruction and disruption in their country. Two of the exhibiting artists remain in Ukraine, others have only recently left the country. These artists proclaim their right to exist as Ukrainians under the shadow of the untold violence, destruction, and death Russia has inflicted. They echo the struggles of persecuted minorities around the globe whether Dalits in India, Uyghurs in China, or African Americans.

While in the West decolonization is a long-time subject of extensive theorizing, Ukrainian artists decolonize in full view of a global audience. We are yet to witness more provocative decolonial art making by the victims of war. As Ariella Azoulay teaches us about the effects of colonialization: “dealing with the damage and wound it leaves in people’s minds and bodies requires directing all resources from production to recovery. Imperialism cannot just be dumped, and you move on. It created huge material remains that we now have to ask how to decommission.”

This war is a global warning in the face of rising imperial ambitions and quasi-imperial ethnic rivalries that deny the human rights of vast population groups. At Eastern we are grateful for the opportunity to serve as the first traveling venue for this exhibit, and to add our voices to the decolonizing aspirations of the Ukrainian people.

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### The Event of the Season!

The Grand Opening of Manifest Station.  
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View the 45-canvas print Photo-Poems  
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and enjoy a poetry reading at 8 sharp.  
Bring family and friends  
and sample a complimentary offering of exotic  
teas courtesy of Manifest Station.



# Supporting Characters

By Felix F. Giordano

In the May 2021 edition of Neighbors Newspaper, we discussed the main characters in our stories. We identified one as the protagonist (hero) and the other as the antagonist (villain). To collectively label the other people in our stories we use the term “supporting characters”. If we compare the elements of a story to what comprises us as human beings, then we can describe the plot as the skeleton, the protagonist and antagonist as the mind and soul and the supporting characters as the flesh and blood. These components bring our stories to life.

Without the protagonist and antagonist it would be impossible to tell a story, or at least a story worth reading. Without supporting characters, a story can still be told but it would be limited in scope. There have been many stories written without supporting characters. Most are in the sci-fi or apocalyptic genres. To compose a story without supporting characters, a writer must have a strong protagonist plus an equally matched antagonist and/or an overwhelming plot. In the latter case, that would actually serve as the supporting character by default.

We can't expect our protagonist or even our antagonist to be all-knowing. Only if God is the protagonist in our story, can we get away with an all-knowing pass from our readers. Even superheroes have faults and so should both our protagonist and antagonist. Each should attempt to discover the other's flaws and exploit them. We may have a protagonist who is a mechanical wizard but clueless when it comes to money or abounds in physical strength but is weak-willed. This is where our supporting characters come into play. The mechanical wizard is short on scruples but is married to an economics professor. The person with superior strength but is easily led astray is friends with an exceptionally moral person. We can also have a protagonist who is a by-the-book detective partnered with a rookie apprentice who likes to take risks and shortcuts. Or a dry-humored protagonist paired with a gullible sidekick. We can even have a fiendish antagonist whose lover seeks redemption for them so they can begin life anew. It's basically the yin and the yang. The supporting characters compensate for the talents and flaws of the protagonist and antagonist resulting in either a confrontation or avoidance. You could even have a supporting character encourage the antagonist to become even more dastardly.

When it comes to describing your supporting characters, it's best to invest as much time and detail into their physical looks, they're behavior, how they dress, and their motives just as you would for your protagonist and antagonist. Match their physical descriptions with their behaviors. An evil henchman may have injuries, scars, or a dark personality while a kind person may have a soft voice, a beautiful physical presence, or an angelic behavior. It will make your story that much richer to the reader and it will allow the reader to easily associate the intended behavior with the character.

We can use supporting characters to develop love interests or nurturing intentions which show the softer side of our protagonist and/or antagonist. We also use supporting characters to provide technical information. You've seen or read stories where the detective seeks out a forensic pathologist to help solve crimes. Again, the protagonist cannot know everything nor be everything to everyone else. They need other experts in many different fields and other characters with many different personalities to successfully navigate through your plot. Sometimes you will even find that you get to a section in your plot where you're stuck and you need to create a supporting character to resolve the impasse. Don't be afraid to do this. You also don't have to go back to the beginning of the story to add in a new supporting character. Using the example of the detective, say in your manuscript he or she is stuck attempting to solve a crime. To resolve the deadlock in the plot you choose to recover DNA evidence. Instead of creating a new supporting character in the forensic lab, which you may not have even included in the manuscript to start with, you have the detective contact an old colleague who now works for the FBI laboratory in Quantico, Virginia. The detective then sends a DNA sample to the FBI for analysis. Result: supporting character added with minimal disruption to the original manuscript.

Supporting characters also lend themselves to describing backstory which is a technique writers use to relate important information to the reader about people or

incidents without getting bogged down in a blow-by-blow retelling. You've seen it in film and literature through the use of flashbacks. However, be careful how you use backstory and how often you use it because if you provide too much information without showing the reader what's happened that's called a data dump and you end up with more telling and not enough showing. As an example, show a flashback scene with two characters conversing about a winning lottery ticket rather than a backstory scene where one character tells another character about a conversation they had about a winning lottery ticket. That is one of the cardinal rules of writing. We always want to show and not tell.

We can use supporting characters to add flavor to our story. You may want to add supporting characters to show the ethnic composition, language, or local dialect of the town in the story. Supporting characters can also provide the reader with the demographic make-up of your story. Your story may have elitist supporting characters trying to control an underclass such as in George Orwell's novel, *1984*. Or a ruthless antagonist who uses their power to corrupt a town full of supporting characters such as in the film, *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Instead of having supporting characters named John Smith or Mary Thomas, you can name supporting characters based upon what qualities you want them to possess or what you plan to have them do in the story. Consider the subliminal impressions these supporting character names would make on you if you were the reader: Phoenix Risen, Angel White, Maxwell Blood, Willie Spears, Lisa Carr, Rocky Turner, and Red Sparks. These are just a few suggestions. You can develop better and more appropriate supporting character names for your stories by investing time, resources, and your unlimited imagination.

Be careful not to use real people's names. Innocuous names fall under the guise, “Resemblance to actual persons living or dead is purely coincidental”. The rule to follow here is not that a character's name happens to be the same name as a real person. It's that the physical description, habits, behavior, and historical actions of the character should not closely resemble those of a real person or fake names of real people who by their physical descriptions or actual behaviors telegraph who the actual people are.

Say you wanted to name your character John Smith. There are probably thousands if not millions of John Smiths who have existed so you have a first amendment right to use that name. However, you cannot write a story about an Olympic wrestler named John Smith because there really was an Olympic wrestler named John Smith and your story cannot mirror his real life unless you obtained a release to write a biographical or historical fiction novel about him.

There are supporting characters that you may not want assigned a name. They are people such as the doorman at the swanky hotel, the ticket taker in the movie theater or on the train, the pinsetter at the 1920's bowling alley, the taxi driver, or any of a dozen or more precinct policemen. Too many named characters who are not critical to the story can overload a reader. That is, unless you have a plan to make them your protagonist or antagonist. You do however want to name supporting characters that have a distinct bearing on the plot or are involved somehow with the intricate behavior of the protagonist and/or antagonist.

In closing, remember that supporting characters can provide depth and richness to your story, move the plot along, and compensate for the strengths and weaknesses of your protagonist and antagonist.

We defined “Supporting Characters” 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 7,500 and has had more than 5 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: Point of View

## Grand Opening of Manifest Station

Submitted by Nicholaes Roosevelt

Andy Oliver-Rudis and Nicholaes Roosevelt would like to invite you to The Grand Opening of Manifest Station, at 12 Merrow Road, Storrs, CT, 7:30-9-30. Please see the accompanying advertisement. At the Opening on Friday the 14th, Nick will be showing forty-five Photo-Poems: “Touching your Natural State of Peace.” And at 8:pm, will give a poetry reading. Ten percent of our sales will go to our Willimantic homeless shelter.

Manifest Station is an arts and wellness center. Our vision is to provide a sanctuary for creativity, community, and wellbeing. There are two large spaces in the building available to rent for events, classes, or private gatherings. Possibilities abound; the space is suitable for a wide variety of community needs such as movement arts, sonic arts and sound healing, creative arts, gallery space, poetry readings and more. We hope you will join us for The Grand Opening, ‘Touching Your Natural State of Peace.’ For Information on the Photo-Poems contact nick-onbb@me.com

If you want to learn more the Arts and Wellness Center: andy@mfstation.com  
www.instagram.com/mfsstation/ (860)-477-0777

## Ashford Arts Council Program:

### Mixed-Media Mosaic Ornaments Workshop With Mosaista Debora Aldo

Submitted by Debra Gag

Mini Mosaic Ornaments is an exploration of colors and textures that strike your fancy. Materials include glass, stone, shell, pebbles, plastics, and other miscellanea. You will work in a round plastic cap that is filled with adhesive. You'll add hanging hardware and assemble your ornament (1 or 2 pieces can be made in 2 hours). Hands on, slow and relaxing, this class will begin with a guided explanation and demo. All materials included with tools on loan for the day. Class is limited to 9 students. Basic instruction included and play is encouraged!

Deb Aldo has been making mosaics since 1997. She has worked, taught, and lectured internationally for the last 2 decades.

Date: November 12, 2022

Time: 2 pm to 4 pm

Costs:

\$25 registration fee

Cash or Check: Windham Arts, Memo Line: AAC Aldo Workshop

\$7.00 materials fee due at time of class

Cash or check made out to Deb Aldo

Location: Ashford Senior Center, 25 Tremko Ln, Ashford, CT 06278

To Register: Email Debora Aldo deb.pietredure@gmail.com

More about the instructor- www.pietreduredesign.com

Instagram @deb.pietredure Facebook deb.aldo



Dear Reader-

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

T. King, Publisher

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



# 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).

## Connecticut looks to shrink energy burden disparities with discounted rates

**Energy News Network.** "Connecticut regulators are proposing a discounted electric rate that would cut bills by as much as 45% for the state's lowest-income residents. In a draft decision released last week, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, or PURA, proposed a two-tier discount rate that would further efforts to reduce energy costs and help out customers before they fall behind on their bills... The new rate won't go into effect soon enough to help ratepayers this winter season..." "Connecticut has some pretty good protections in place on behalf of low-income ratepayers," said Bonnie Roswig, an attorney with the Center for Children's Advocacy, a Hartford nonprofit that advocates for low-income children and youth. "The challenge has always been to get the utility companies to ensure that their customers know about these programs. That's been the disconnect."

## Connecticut wins \$52 million in federal backing for electric vehicle build-out along state's highways

**Hartford Courant.** "Connecticut has won federal approval, and \$52 million over five years, to build out electric vehicle chargers across the state. Funding is part of \$900 million authorized by the sprawling federal Infrastructure Law signed last year by President Joe Biden to install 500,000 chargers at regular intervals across 53,000 miles of U.S. highways. In Connecticut, 10 locations are planned for at least four public fast chargers with a minimum power level of 150 kilowatts per port along the interstate system. The state Department of Transportation expects...to partner with the private sector that owns or operates electric vehicle charging network sites."

## Heading towards winter, New England debates the role of natural gas

**Connecticut Public.** "The price of electricity has spiked this summer in many parts of New England, and it's mostly due to the price of natural gas. But stakeholders responsible for the region's electricity grid disagree on whether to decrease the region's dependence on natural gas — or strengthen and build new gas infrastructure...[FERC] Chairman Richard Glick...said the challenges the region is facing require a different solution. "...relying on importing LNG, as we've seen, with world events over the past year, is not a sustainable solution. We have to figure something else out."...Mireille Bejjani, who leads the environmental nonprofit Slingshot, said ISO New England's belief that natural gas and reliability must go hand-in-hand is misguided."

## Boston moves to ban fossil fuels in new construction

**WGBH.** "The Boston City Council Wednesday voted to sign up for the state's new pilot program banning fossil fuels from most new construction except labs and hospitals. The move is the first step in a process that could ultimately make New England's largest city part of an innovative experiment — that is controversial in some quarters — designed to help mitigate climate change."

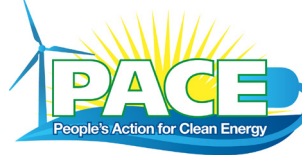
## New England's grid operator needs to admit gas is unreliable

**CT Mirror.** "Winter after winter, when the cold weather returns, our regional grid operator, ISO New England, issues dire predictions of an energy crisis. The cause? An overreliance on methane gas for heating and power generation. Yet, little has been done to move the region away from gas. In fact ISO-NE's rules continue to favor gas over renewables like wind and solar...Moving away from methane gas towards renewable energy at ISO New England and in Connecticut is critical for our state to reach its greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, clean our air, and stabilize energy prices...On top of being inequitable and dangerous, the gas supply chain — from pipeline to power plant — is ripe for disruptions from extreme weather

(think: frozen pipes), leaks, accidents (like an explosion of this highly combustible gas), or global crises (Russia's war in Ukraine)...Without clear and firm leadership from states like Connecticut, ISO-New England is not likely to change."

## Before going solar, the Lamberts' house gets a Home Energy Solutions audit

**Monroe Sun.** "The Lamberts, who have three children, took advantage of the Home Energy Solutions program, in which an authorized contractor does a home energy audit for a \$50 copay...homeowners installing a solar energy system are required to participate in the Home Energy Solutions program to ensure the right size panels and system is chosen for their needs. Aside from solar customers, many homeowners participate in Home Energy Solutions simply to improve energy efficiency in their homes and identify upgrades beyond the home visit...Through the HES program, homeowners receive a visit from an authorized contractor who provides approximately \$1,000 worth of diagnostic and energy savings services for a \$50 co-pay. The visit includes blower door and duct tests to identify significant air leaks, and professional sealing to improve energy efficiency."



## Connecticut has 420,000 electric, natural gas customers who are more than 30 days behind in paying bills

**New Haven Register.** "About 420,000 Connecticut customers of Eversource Energy and Avangrid's electric and natural gas utilities were more than 30 days behind in paying their bills last month, according to Claire Coleman, the state's Consumer Counsel. That figure has Coleman and state officials, as well as social services advocates, worried what will happen once the home heating season starts a couple of months from now. While the price of gas has slowly declined over much of the summer, natural gas and home heating oil prices remain high as summer comes to an end. Home heating oil prices are up 98.5 percent from this time last year, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, while natural gas is up 38.9 percent over the same period." **Plus: Winter Heating Assistance Program Opens This Week**

## Massachusetts neighborhood to get networked geothermal system

**Yale Climate Connections.** "The temperature of the earth several feet underground is about 55 degrees year-round. Geothermal energy systems make use of that stable temperature, pulling heat out of the ground to warm buildings or pumping it back for cooling. Typically, they're installed one house at a time, and the upfront cost can be significant. But next year, a neighborhood in Framingham, Massachusetts, will become the first in the country with a networked geothermal system. "[The technology] connects multiple customers together so that you can gain some efficiency ... and ultimately save everybody on energy costs to operate it," says Eric Bosworth of Eversource, the utility company running the project. Eversource will install a centralized system of vertical, underground pipes to absorb the earth's heat and release it. "And then we'll run mains in the street, similar to how a gas main or a water main would be run..."

## EV Transferable Tax Credit Included in Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

**EV Club of CT.** "President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law on August 16th. With it comes a new EV purchase incentive. It was past time to revise the existing federal EV incentive. The IRA brings with it some improvements, along with more complexity and some uncertainty. I have read a lot of the reporting around this legislation and find much of it not completely clear and sometimes inconsistent. There is also still additional rule-making that has to happen. This is what it looks like to me with the caveat that your mileage may vary and the content may be updated based on new information." [Article includes a detailed summary of the new incentives]. **Plus Tax Credit for Purchase and Installation of an EV Charger**

To all our contributors-  
**Thank You!**

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

## Poetry Reading at The Fletch

Submitted by Janice Trecker

Fletcher Memorial Library will present a free evening of poetry readings Wednesday, October 19 from 6:30-7:30 p.m., featuring Maureen Korp and Christie Max Williams. Both are well published poets who have recently issued their first poetry collections.

Maureen Korp is an independent scholar, writer, and art critic with interests in philosophy, religious history, and art history. The Ottawa, Canada resident has published more than 180 articles and three books, besides contributing to TV, radio, and film documentaries on environmental art and artistic vision.

Besides her many critical essays, Korp has published poems in literary journals and anthologies. Her first poetry collection, *There and Here*, debuted in 2021.

Christie Max Williams is a writer and actor as well as a published poet and a co-founder of The Arts Cafe Mystic, now in its 28th year of presenting readings by leading American poets. Besides his work as an actor and director in California, New York and Connecticut, Williams has fished for salmon, consulted on Wall Street, and written for the National Audubon Society.

His poetry has been widely published and has earned the Grolier Prize, but *The Wages of Love*, 2022, is his first collection. It won the 2022 William Meredith Poetry Prize. He lives in Mystic, CT.

Fletcher Memorial Library is at 257 Main Street, Hampton. Info: 860-455-1086.

## Towns Seeking Community Input

Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield and Tolland  
Seek Community Input on  
New Regional Tourism Branding  
Residents and Business Owners Encouraged to  
Complete Online Survey by October 11th

Submitted by Margaret Chatey

The Towns of Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield, and Tolland have hired Dornenburg Kallenbach Advertising (DKA) to create a tourism brand for the four-town region. As part of the branding development process, the four towns are seeking community input on draft branding options. A short survey is available online. It will only take a few minutes to complete and responses will remain anonymous.

The online survey is available through October 11, 2022 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/4TownsBrandSurvey> or <https://bit.ly/3qHjCM4>.

This new collective brand for the region as a destination will be a supplement to each individual Town's marketing, and will not replace each individual Town's logo or branding.

An Action Plan for Economic Vitality prepared in 2020 by AdvanceCT, in collaboration with the CT Department of Community & Economic Development, determined that the region could better promote its assets to encourage visitor attraction and business growth.

The Action Plan recommended that the region has a significant opportunity to be seen as a desirable destination to dine, shop and play, based upon its distinctive combination of resources across the four towns. These resources include outdoor recreation, agriculture and agri-tourism, culture and entertainment, higher education institutions, and small businesses and entrepreneurs.

## At the Ashford Senior Center

**Tai Chi** - Tuesday & Friday 9:30-10:30am  
\$15 per month for one day/wk; \$25 for two  
Drop-in \$5

**Low Impact Aerobics**  
Tuesdays 10:45-11:30am; \$2 per class  
Programs not limited to Ashford residents.  
Contact the Center at 860-487-5122  
25 Tremko Lane, Ashford

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Thank you. T. King, Publisher



# Community Media and Regional Arts

## THE REBIRTH OF ON THE HOMEFRONT WATCH THE LAUNCH PROGRAM\*

By John Murphy

Greetings—I hope the Autumn Equinox is treating you well. I have good news to share, and YOU, dear reader, are part of the story!



Work has finally been completed on building a new media collaboration to serve people and the communities of eastern Connecticut—in Tolland, Windham, and New London Counties. The media matrix logo at the opening of my *Neighbors* columns has a foundation now, and it is alive and producing a wide range of stories about people, groups, and organizations from across the region. The studio doors are wide open!

With local journalism struggling to survive and adapt to new marketplace realities, *there is an expanding vacuum in the precious space we share where communities communicate with themselves*. This is beyond politics and advertising, or violence and other forms of persuasion and illusions of control.

We are losing the safe spaces, in the streets and on the screens, where we can find the social and spiritual glue to hold ourselves together despite the differences, as fellow citizens, including the Loyal Opposition, who navigate the Life and Time we share in this place called Home. *This new media effort is intended to co-create and share much more of this safe space in our region*. There is a growing need for it as we collectively try to do our best to find solutions that move us forward. To do that we have to talk out the shit that keeps us apart and clean the sand from the gears. The little things make the big things fit and they can be found only in safe spaces.

### What is the collaboration? What is the goal?

This is a unique effort by our local media channels to work together for mutual support and cross-distribution of (your) stories across our different platforms—radio, TV, print and YouTube (with links). It's a local adaptation of the national/global industry model with a level of detail and intimacy that is impossible except with people who live near each other. The goal is to provide the maximum support and outreach for our guests and the good work they are doing. This is where YOU must come into the story. *YOU are the reason why this media hub was created. We built it—will you come?*

Sharing your work in this new safe media space will help you succeed with anything that serves our community, and it can inspire others to try and make a difference with something they care about. This happens every day, thanks to the good people all around us. This is a manifestation of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, and we are the cast, and we are the story!

Looking at the topic grid below, you can see the infinite possibilities for ongoing weekly conversations and features. There will always be room for special event coverage and timely news. This is one way we can restore the gift of giving our community another chance to communicate with itself.

This regional media hub will also function as the reincarnation/rebirth of the radio/public access TV series *On the Home-*



*front*. Over 22 years I hosted and co-produced more than 750 programs that aired on WHUS Radio at UConn and Charter/Spectrum public access TV channel 192. It was a joy working with a team that was deeply dedicated to using media for public service. We won a national award and two regional awards. It was a joy as a host to meet so many amazing people and organizations that were doing interesting and worthwhile things. That magic I still happening now in our communities, every day, and I am very happy to resume this service in an expanded media form that connects to so many more people in new ways that they can use.

### How will it work? How can you access the content?

All content will be produced live at the WILI Radio studios in Willimantic, Connecticut. One-hour programs will be audio and video recorded for posting on the WILI YouTube channel and sharing with our project partners. The program format for *On the Homefront* is a magazine featuring conversations with 2-4 guests each week on Wednesdays from 5-6 pm.

Regional arts coverage will continue, but there

will be additional reporting on the growth of our local economy, the state of our environment, and profiles about the people in our region who are making a difference.

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

### LOCAL PARTNERS INCLUDE:



- WILI Radio 1400 AM and 95.3 Digital FM
- WILI YouTube Dedicated Channel
- Neighbors Newspaper ([www.neighborspaper.com](http://www.neighborspaper.com)) (monthly reviews and guest/topic previews)
- Spectrum Public Access TV Channel 192 (<http://www.ctv192.org/>) (schedule, program info)
- WECS Radio 90.1 FM and [www.wecsfm.com](http://www.wecsfm.com) (rebroadcasts on Wednesdays between 12-3 pm)
- Project Website: [www.humanartsmedia.com](http://www.humanartsmedia.com) (the primary portal to the media hub)



The Media Collaboration Partners—at the launch program on 9/21/2022\*

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

- Colin Rice** at WILI Radio/Hall Communications—his radio family has served our community since 1957 and it's an honor to base this project in their studios! (back right)
  - Tom King**—Publisher of *Neighbors*, a vital resource for our region in all aspect of community living, the writers can provide valuable information, insights, and program guests (back left)
  - Michael Sweet**—Public Access Coordinator at Spectrum Cable Public Access TV (front left)
  - Your truly**—Program Host and Co-Producer (front right)
- Posthumous thanks—to series co-founder James Diaz, RIP and see you on the other side (front middle)

Our official launch program was on September 21, 2022. I posted it on YouTube so you can meet the people behind the scenes who will support your community outreach efforts. \*The link is: <https://youtu.be/2VLv3w1k-Lt8> Take a look and please join us in the studio when you have a story to share.

I have been traveling the airwaves in this area with thousands of people since 1978, when I came from New York to manage WHUS Radio at UConn, and I have never felt more positive and optimistic about the recovery and renaissance of our region. I know enough of the past to know how far we have come—we are on the way.

I want to thank you for reading *Neighbors* and for your comments and suggestions from past columns. I appreciate your interest and support for local media and hope you will stay connected with this project in the coming year. Don't forget to vote and don't forget the people of Ukraine! Put the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in its place!

Always keep the faith, see you next month,

John Murphy  
john@humanartsmedia.com  
WILI Radio Wednesdays 5—6 pm  
WECS Radio Wednesdays 12—3 pm

## Solar Today:

## Questions and answers about solar in our community and beyond

By John Boiano

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

Autumn is in the air and this month I'm going to share information on the importance of leaving leaves alone to help the environment and using electric lawn care equipment benefits all.

Below are excerpts from 2 articles on the Sustainability website of Washington University in Saint Lewis.

As we transition into autumn, leaves are beginning to fall and scatter throughout lawns and streets. How will you manage your leaves this fall? Selecting the right equipment and strategies can minimize environmental impact!

### Traditional Gas Powered Lawn Care Equipment Can Emit Toxic Gases

Gas powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers are more detrimental than you would think. Many consumer-grade blowers (and some mowers) use a two-stroke engine, which lacks an independent lubrication system, so fuel has to be mixed with oil. Burning oil and fuel emits a number of harmful toxic pollutants into the air, including carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides (which cause smog formation and acid rain), and hydrocarbons (a carcinogenic gas that also causes smog). Surprisingly, the number of air pollutants emitted by gas-powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers exceed pollutant emissions of large automobiles, which are regulated to reduce and capture many air pollutants. A 2011 study showed that a leaf blower emits nearly 300 times the amount of air pollutants as a pickup truck. Similarly, a 2001 study showed that one hour using a gas-powered lawn mower is equivalent to driving a car 100 miles. Gas-powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers have the potential to cause serious environmental damage, so finding alternatives and utilizing best practices is key (Source: Washington Post).

In addition to air pollution, ozone is created when heat and sunlight react with nitrogen oxides and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) that are emitted from combustion engines, including lawn equipment. St. Louis is among the top-ranked areas for ozone and particle pollution. In fact, according to the Clean Air Partnership, summertime ozone levels have exceeded federal-based health standards every year since the passage of the Clean Air Act. Therefore, small actions, like seeking alternatives to standard use of lawn equipment, can go a long way in improving regional air quality and human health.

### What Can Individuals Do?

For one, switching to electric alternatives can drastically reduce the number of toxic pollutants directly released into the air. While electric models do not eliminate your contribution to greenhouse gasses, it shifts combustion to power plants. Power plants are equipped with scrubbers that filter out pollutants, sharply reducing the overall amount of air pollution being released when fossil fuels are burned.

JB here: ALL of the electric lawn equipment I own, does as good, or an even better job than the traditional gas powered counterparts!

For smaller landscapes it may be possible to switch to an emission-free, non-motorized push mower. Push mowers are solely operated by the user pushing the lawn mower across the yard, meaning it emits absolutely zero pollutants. Similarly, an old fashion yard raking can be fun (jumping in leaf piles, anyone?) and a good work out. Be sure to compost your leaves over winter or bag the leaves in paper bags.

Rather than collecting your leaves, you can mow over your fallen leaves, as they provide protective and nutrient-rich mulch for your lawn.

### Leaves aren't litter!

According to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, "one of the most valuable things you can do to support pollinators and other invertebrates is to provide them with the winter cover they need." Leaving the leaves, either by mowing them into a thin layer of mulch on your lawn or leaving them whole on landscaped areas, is actually the best alternative for everyone!

Keep it simple, keep it honest, keep it local... Zen Solar. Thanks for reading my article and let's make every day Earth Day!  
John Boiano 860-798-5692 john@zensolar.net  
[www.zensolar.net](http://www.zensolar.net)



# Giant Crayons Make Giant Fun!

By Cate Solari



Crayons, crayons, crayons. A childhood staple, a coloring wax stick that gave you the ability to create anything imaginable on paper. For many, a crayon is the first writing utensil introduced. You may remember your own relationship to crayons, or can visualize a small child, fist gripping a bright blue crayon, swinging their arm back and forth across the page in front of them, completely unaware the bounds of the paper even exist, making their first marks using a crayon. It is this childhood wonderment, the first moments of discovery, that I, as an artist, explore, and aim to embody within my work.

How can I create an experience where adults can feel the same childhood wonderment of discovering something for the first time? Easy. Giant crayons. I have spent the last few months developing and building two giant crayons, one red, and one blue. When I say giant, I mean giant. Each crayon is roughly four feet tall, with an eight inch diameter. Each crayon has a wooden shaft and a wax tip, and surprise - each crayon is also broken and held together by short pieces of chain. As you are hopefully imagining, these crayons are heavy, cumbersome, downright annoying, how can anyone possibly use them to draw or color!?

Enter stage left, teamwork! Not only am I recreating a childlike wonderment, but also, a developmental milestone. In childhood development, teamwork requires children to cooperate with each other, and children who learn these skills are also on their way to establishing solid skills in problem-solving, communication, listening, creativity, and high self-esteem. Why bother recreating this milestone in adulthood - especially if it is something that should have already been received during childhood? My answer is simple, everyone, no matter your age, can continue to improve themselves. In this case, it is through playing with giant crayons.

These two crayons have come together in a piece I titled, *Together, Red and Blue make Purple (Crayons)*. I offer *Together, Red and Blue make Purple (Crayons)* as a collaborative play experience. I encourage participants to work together to pick up the crayons and color, as if coloring in a coloring page without the lines. It will take communication, failure, and intrinsic motivation to color on the page using the giant broken crayons. I aim for *Together, Red and Blue make Purple (Crayons)* to be both fun and challenging.

Those who choose to observe, will notice how the work evolves and changes throughout the duration of play. Marks will overlap, the page will fill, and ultimately an unspoken language of play will emerge through each participant's input.

The irony of the title, *Together, Red and Blue make Purple (Crayons)* is that no matter how many layers of scribbles end up on the paper, the two colors never actually mix or combine to make purple. You can choose to read into this however you see fit, I want there to be several entry points for this work. One of the more obvious readings beyond fun for adults, is the direct correlation to our democratic two-party system. Red and blue are the clear colors representing the republican and

democrat parties, respectively. Red and blue never mix to make purple, yet they still work the same way, under the same systems, neither red, nor blue ever completely dominate the page.

So far, I have exhibited this piece twice and both times have yielded their own unique results. I save the paper from each experience for comparison. Each time, folks seem to have similar sentiments about how the crayons and how interacting with them makes them feel. There are



usually two distinct participants - those who walk by and are excited to participate, and those who walk by and make a comment about how their body couldn't lift that crayon and keep walking. It is the ones that keep walking blaming their body for lack of trying and not understanding the teamwork that would not only benefit them in completing the task at hand (draw with

a giant crayon), but also, benefit them in a way their childhood development may have lacked them. Allowing them to gain skills in problem-solving, communication, listening, creativity, and high self-esteem.

I encourage you, my reader, to be a person who walks by and says "yes, I am excited to participate!" Find something that excites your childhood

wonderment like my giant crayons, and experience it for all it is worth. You can share your experiences with me or if you are interested in hosting an event for *Together, Red and Blue make Purple (Crayons)* at [communitygallery@ec-chap.org](mailto:communitygallery@ec-chap.org). Keep exploring!

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](mailto: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-chap.org](mailto:communitygallery@ec-chap.org).*



# David Bushnell's Turtle

By Ryan Elgin

When writing my previous article on Connecticut's industrial contribution during the Revolutionary War, I wanted to include something about David Bushnell's and Isaac Doolittle's invention. I decided that this topic deserved its own article. Their invention was the Turtle: the first submarine to be used in combat.

I took a trip down to the Connecticut River Museum in Essex, CT. Established in 1974 in an old steamboat warehouse, the nonprofit institution focuses on the history of the Connecticut River and its people in addition to having an exhibit dedicated to the Turtle submarine. The Turtle's main inventor, David Bushnell, was born in 1740 in a district of Saybrook, which is now Westbrook, CT. Farming for most of his life with his brother Ezra, he eventually attended Yale college in 1771 at the age of 31 and took an interest in explosive mines and experimenting with detonating gunpowder underwater. He successfully designed and tested small underwater bombs during his college career. Word of Lexington and Concord reached Yale's campus in April 1775, just a few weeks before Bushnell's graduation. Upon graduation, he immediately moved back to his home on the Connecticut River to find a way that his explosive could help the Continental Army. An underwater explosive could certainly damage a British ship. However, the Continental Navy was no match for the British armada and so the bomb would have to be attached unnoticed by any lookouts aboard. Bushnell sought to build a submersible that could attach an explosive to a ship in the darkness of night.

David Bushnell intended to keep his project a secret from everyone but needed help if he wanted his idea to be a success. His brother, Ezra, was already enlisted with the Continental Army stationed near Boston. David Bushnell reached out to Ezra's commanding officer, who happened to be David's former classmate, Nathan Hale. Hale granted the request for Ezra to return home to help his brother and they began to construct the Turtle. The body was constructed out of two large pieces of solid oak, leaving only one seam to be waterproofed, which would then be reinforced with iron hoops similar to a barrel. The resulting shape looked like a clam or turtle's shell, hence the name, and had enough room to fit one man. The pilot would use foot treadles or a hand crank to rotate the front propeller to move forward. A hand pump would allow water into or out of the Turtle in order to lower or raise the vessel. Air was supplied to the pilot via snorkel. Once underwater, the pilot would have about 30 minutes to complete his mission before he ran out of air. He would also be in almost pitch darkness when underwater with water pooled around his feet and using only the glowing light of some Foxfire wood fungus placed inside the Turtle to see his compass and barometer. Bushnell worked with local artisan Isaac Doolittle to make the 150-pound time bomb. Doolittle was a clockmaker and devised a way that the turtle could tow the bomb attached to a large screw facing upwards from the turtle. The pilot would use a crank to screw into the bottom of a ship, detach, and have a few minutes to get away before the bomb exploded.

After a successful test, permission was granted from Connecticut Governor Trumbull and George Washington to use the Turtle against British Admiral Howe's flagship HMS Eagle stationed in New York Harbor. A volunteer named Ezra Lee would be the pilot. A whale boat took the Turtle

as close as possible to the British fleet before casting Ezra off. He moved by pedal and crank for 2 ½ hours before he descended underneath the HMS Eagle. Exhausted, he still attempted to screw the bomb to the hull but was unsuccessful. For some reason, the screw could not pierce the hull. The current belief by historians today is that Ezra was unfortunate enough to hit an iron plate near the rudder which the screw could not bore through. With dawn approaching and air running low,



Ezra attempted to make an escape but was spotted by lookouts aboard the ship. The British pursued the unidentified slow moving vessel in rowboats. To deter them, Ezra armed and released the bomb which harmlessly exploded but caused the rowboats to give up the chase.



The Turtle would see two more attempts to fulfill its mission but was spotted and fired upon in both. After this, the transport vessel for the Turtle was sunk by the British, ultimately leading to the conclusion that the project was a failure and would not be tried again by the patriots. Some say that the Turtle was recovered by Bushnell, though it has never been found. After his experiment, Bushnell joined what would eventually be called the Army Corps of Engineers and continued his work in underwater explosives. Submarines would not see combat again until almost a century later by the Confederates in the Civil War.

The fascinating story of Bushnell and the Turtle deserves a much deeper dive than I have provided here and I highly recommend visiting the Connecticut River Museum or researching this topic more in your own way. The pictures you see with this article are of the two replicas of the Turtle at the Connecticut River Museum with one of them being a working replica.

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](mailto:ryan@ec-chap.org).*



# The American Caliphate

By Donna Dufresne

A young Iranian woman was recently arrested and beaten to death in police custody. She and tens of thousands of women were protesting the mandate to wear the hijab, a fundamentalist interpretation of sharia law enforced by the so-called “morality police.” As in Afghanistan, the women of Iran are fighting for their right to pursue their education and career, to decide whom to marry and when to start a family, as well as control over their own bodies, a civil right American women may have taken for granted until the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* by the Caliphate Supreme Court of the United States.

Fascism is so easy to recognize from afar and frighteningly invisible when it lurks upon our own doorstep. We value our liberty. Yet We the People have fallen prey to the false idols of those who promise to protect our freedom. We have supped upon the propaganda of fear screamed at us from the political pulpit of “Fox in the Henhouse News.” We turned our heads away from the telltale signs of fascist rhetoric spewed by Donald Trump and the uber right Republican Party: anti-immigration, white supremacist narratives, fear mongering, the dissemination of lies, corruption, and the dismantling of voting rights and civil liberties. And we ignored the emblematic banners of fascism in the guise of “patriots” parading around town with larger-than-life Confederate flags alongside Trump slogans on their diesel trucks. And while we looked away, Trump stacked the courts with a caliphate and the intent to erase our civil liberties on behalf of the not so moral majority. Nothing good comes from a theocracy.

There is good reason the writers of the Constitution insisted on a separation of church and state. Many in New England who fought in the Revolutionary War, including our own Israel Putnam, born in Salem in 1719, were only a generation removed from the Salem witch trials. It is no accident that the majority of female accused witches were independent, free-thinkers, or widows who owned property and chose not to marry. The world was changing rapidly. There was a shortage of land and labor. The economy was shifting. Fear and damnation rang from the pulpits, the linchpin of political manipulation. Women became both the target and the perpetrators of misogynistic wrath in the theocracy of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

While Iranian women struggle for their fundamental rights, women in the United States have been robbed of the right to make reproductive choices. The nationwide fallout has catapulted us into a healthcare crisis reaching far beyond the womb. The draconian and punitive laws in some states have already left a wake of death. Hospitals and physicians, afraid of breaking the new caliphate laws, have refused to treat women who have miscarried. Women whose health and life are at risk from an ectopic pregnancy have been turned away while our own version of the “morality police” litigates our bodies.

Like the women of Iran, our fight goes deeper than the right to choose. Being pro-choice does not make one pro-abortion. This is a fight for our civil liberties and well-being. We are not baby machines. A woman has the right to live and to choose life when a pregnancy goes wrong. The radicalized anti-abortion movement has little to do with the sanctity of life. It has become the political base of neo-fascism no different than the Taliban, acting as a political body cloaked in religious law and throwing women back to the Dark Ages. While claiming the sanctity of life, the same body politic votes against policies that would support women and children. The anti-abortion movement has proved to be only a sanctimonious ruse which has strayed far from being “pro-life.” One cannot claim to be pro-life while supporting capital punishment or the NRA and its campaign to arm young white men with weapons of mass destruction. While the Trumpian Republicans were dismantling the rights of women to have control over their bodies, they refused to pass sensible gun laws. Apparently, the Second Amendment Trumps a woman’s right to live.

Oh, the irony of America, where a Black man risks state-sanctioned murder for driving with a broken taillight while Kyle Rittenhouse, a white boy under the age of 18, can easily get his hands on a semi-automatic rifle, openly murder Black Lives Matter protesters, and walk away with a not guilty verdict. Oh, the irony of America when 20-year-old Adam Lanza used his Second Amendment right to acquire an AR-15 and murdered twenty children and six adults. God bless the sanctity of the Second Amendment, amen. Oh, the irony of America when a woman who has suffered a natural miscarriage cannot get medical care because of the draconian laws that prohibit her physician from performing a life-saving D&C, leading to death from infection. So much for the sanctity of life.

The women of Iran are risking their lives by cutting their hair in public, burning their hijabs, and standing up to a totalitarian regime that threatens to dismantle what’s left of their civil liberties. The Trumpian Republicans and their Supreme Court caliphate would do well to remember that “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.” Women are the backbone of this country. We can shape or break the future with strikes, protests, and voting. God bless the sanctity of women.

## Fall Poetry Workshop

Submitted by Deb Gag

Tony Patichio, Ashford’s Poet Laureate, will be hosting a Fall 2022 Poetry Reading and Writing Workshop for up to ten participants via Zoom on the following six Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:40 PM: October 5, 19, November 2, 16, 30, and December 14.

Sessions will begin with close readings and discussions of several selected poems, focusing for the most part (though not exclusively) on free verse by 20th and 21st Century poets, followed by readings and discussion of poems and short prose pieces composed by workshop participants. We will generally have a theme for each session’s readings, and will consider and discuss not just the sense and meaning of the selected poems, but also how the poems are constructed, including, among other things, how word choice, meter, sound, tone, repetition, metaphor, line length, and speaker voice contribute to our experience of reading the poems.

Writing participants may choose to follow the session theme, but are free to submit one to two pages of any new or revised work at each session. No prior experience reading or writing poetry is required. I will provide to all workshop participants a selected reading list of resources, as well as a glossary of terms we will want to be familiar with and use as we consider and discuss poems.

Participants: This workshop is open to writing participants who are willing to share and workshop their own poems, as well as to those who are interested in reading and discussing poetry, but don’t now have work of their own to share. Please indicate your preference when you contact me.

PLEASE CONTACT ME AT 04AJPATI@GMAIL.COM IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WORKSHOP AND IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE, SPECIFYING WHETHER YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE AS A WRITER AND READER, OR SOLELY AS A READER.

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742-9498

## Ghost Town History Haunts Willimantic Event

Submitted by Bev York

Silver Plume, Colorado. Former Ghost Town. Today 203. “Population may include dogs, drop-ins and ground squirrels!” Ghost Towns is the theme of Nightmare on Main, the creepy, but historically based, October event being held this year at the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum in Willimantic. Ghost Towns are spooky mysterious and sometimes haunted places. There are some 3400 ghost towns in the United States. A ghost town has structures but few or no remaining inhabitants. A town often becomes deserted because the economic activity like gold or silver mining went bust. The town may also have declined because of natural or human-caused disasters such as floods, droughts, disease, lawlessness, pollution, or nuclear disaster. Some say that Bodie, California was the first town deserted by its residents.

Today some ghost towns have become tourist destinations or communities with small populations. One such town is Silver Plume, Colorado. The town website says “*Elevation: 9116 Population: 203\** \*Population figure may include dogs, drop-ins, and ground squirrels (quote it with caution).” Silver Plume is a Home Rule Town located in Clear Creek County. It is a former silver mining camp on the front range of the Rocky Mountains. Gold was discovered in the area in 1859. The fortune hunters came seeking nuggets of ore found in the rock and dust in the waters and gravel

of the creek. They traveled from around the world. Although gold was the original metal sought in the Silver Plume area, in 1864 “some bright soul recognized that the grayish rock everyone had been kicking around and cursing was in fact silver ore”, and the boom era for Silver Plume began. Some of the miners inhaled the dust caused by the jack hammers that drilled the rock. The died of silicosis.

The main buyer of the silver was the United States government. America’s money at the time was based on a “bimetal” standard of gold and silver. However, when Congress revoked the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and switched to a gold standard, the “Panic of 1893” caused the price of silver to fall and ended Silver Plume’s boom era. Silver Plume has seen lead mining come and go during WW 2. Today, the Georgetown Loop, built in the 1880s to haul supplies, is one of the nation’s famous and spectacular tourist railroads.

However, some Ghost Towns are totally deserted except for occasional apparitions.

Nightmare on Main: Ghost Towns: will feature stories from nine ghost towns in America. October 8, 9, 14, 15 and 23. Folks ages 10 and up, Arrive between 7 and 9:30, \$15 pp Cash Only, Rain or Shine, Refreshments available. For GPS use 55 Bridge Street A special family event is Sat, Oct 22. Kids can come in costume and trick or treat in the Ghost Town. www.cteastrrmuseum.org

## Fletcher Memorial Library News

Submitted by Deb Andstrom

What’s Going On in October?

Poetry Reading at the Fletch, Wednesday, Oct. 19, 6:30 – 7:30p Connecticut Poets Maureen Korp and Christie Max Williams

Fletcher Memorial Library will present a free evening of poetry readings Wednesday, October 19 from 6:30-7:30 p.m., featuring Maureen Korp and Christie Max Williams. Both are well published poets who have recently issued their first poetry collections.

Top Shelf Gallery, September & October

Kim Bova is our featured artist/photographer for September and October. Her exhibit is entitled “Photography Real & Imagined”. Stop by the library during regular hours to see this talented photographer’s work.

Baby Story Time Song & Play (Birth - 3), Friday mornings, 10:30-11:30

This is an interactive program using a variety of musical instruments, rhymes, songs, finger plays, puppets, as well as a story or two. Our goal is to encourage a lifelong love of reading and learning. Older siblings are always welcome. Call or email with any questions, 860-455-1086 or fletchermemoriallibrary@gmail.com

Story & Craft, Wednesday Afternoons, 4-5 pm

Join us for a story and a related

craft every Wednesday! Call or email with any questions: 860-455-1086 or fletchermemoriallibrary@gmail.com

Mah Jongg 101 – Thursday Mornings, 10-12 am

Join us for free classes on Mah Jongg, an ancient Asian game played with tiles, in the Community Room every Thursday morning from 10-12. All skill levels are welcome.

Mexican Train - Fridays, 9-12 am

Join us for free classes on a modern version of Dominoes called Mexican Train on Friday mornings, 9-12. All skill levels are welcome.

FML Book Discussion Group, Wednesday, October 12th @ 7 pm

We’ll be discussing *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James. Stop by the library to pick up a copy of the book. New members are always welcome! We meet in the Community Room, but there is always a Zoom option for those who are not able to come to the library. Just call or email the library for the link. 860-455-1086 or fletchermemoriallibrary@gmail.com

Senior Delivery Service

The library is happy to provide a delivery service for library items (books, audio CDs, and DVDs). Please call or email the library with your requests and/or questions. 860-455-1086 or fletchermemoriallibrary@gmail.com





## Winetasting at Church Farm

Photo and words submitted by Nord Yakovleff

The Friends of the Babcock Library held a fund raising wine tasting event at the Church Farm site in Ashford. The event was well attended. The weather was pleasant. Music was provided by the Quiet Corner Fiddlers, Bernie Schreiber band leader. The event, organized by members of the Friends of Babcock and library staff, featured six local



vendors, a silent auction, and a delicious assortment of hors d'oeuvres.

## Memories from the Fire!

By Morgan Cunningham

I have to tell everyone how moving this was for me.

I am used to helping clients with all kinds of stories when it comes to helping them preserve their physical media by way of digital files.

This story, though, is a bit touching.

A client recently reached out to me about scanning their photos. A typical job.

What wasn't so typical is that her family's house had burned down a few years ago. Not much survived.

Among the ruins were a few hundred photos. They had been stored in a part of the burned house that apparently didn't get too ruined.

Her hopes were that she could scan what was left of her photos so she could have digital files to share and backup with family and friends.

I was handed over 300 photos, in mostly good condition.

Some of the photos smelled like smoke.

Some of the other photos actually had smoke or flame stains.

To my surprise, all of the pictures were salvageable and scanned nicely.

It dawned on me as I worked the job: there's little "proof," or physical evidence, of the memories in her mind. And I helped her relive and reconnect with that part of her past that disappeared physically in a matter of moments.

It was a pretty touching experience for me. An honor, really.

*A graduate of Eastern and a current radio news anchor, I'm always happy to discuss media preservation at Morgan@Digitize-AndDone.com.*

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

## Written In Stone

Connecticut Humanities Funds Gravestone Carvers Workshop and Virtual Tour in Pomfret's Historic South/Sabin Cemetery

Submitted by Donna Dufresne

The Cemetery Corporation for the South Sabin Cemetery in Pomfret is pleased to announce receipt of a grant from the Connecticut Humanities to present a one-day workshop on the gravestone carvers represented in one of Pomfret's earliest burial grounds. The burial ground features many of the remarkable 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century gravestone carvers from Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and even as far away as Vermont.

The program, *Written in Stone*, will take place on October 22, 2022, from 12:30 to 3:30. The workshop and tour will be led by gravestone carver scholars, Keegan Day and Ruth Shapleigh Brown, and local historian, Donna Dufresne. The workshop/tour will feature some of the region's renowned gravestone carvers as well as the lesser-known locals with unique styles.

Keegan Day will lead the tour of gravestone carvers, explain the funerary art, symbology, spiritual evolution of the carvings from the austere Puritan era to the Age of Enlightenment, the geology of the stones and geographic connections to other parts of New England.

Ruth Shapleigh Brown will tutor those interested in preserving early gravestones in cleaning techniques and reading and interpreting written data, while Donna Dufresne will highlight social history derived from the epitaphs and vital data recorded on the stones.

The grant is also funding a twenty-first century tool: *Written in Stone: The Virtual Tour* of the South/Sabin Cemetery. The virtual tour will be accessible by QR codes. The *Written in Stone* website is being developed by Janet Booth of Brooklyn. Visitors will be able to access extensive information about individual burials, gravestone carvers, genealogy, and primary sources through an interactive map. The virtual tour will be ideal for researchers, educators and those interested in local history.

The *Written in Stone* workshop, which is also listed as a Walktober event, is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is recommended as parking is limited. Contact: windsong@snet.net.



Ribbon cutting for Veterans Base Camp in Chaplin brought dignitaries including Congressman Joe Courtney (4th from left) and Base Camp Masterchief Mitch Wilsie (4th from right). Contributed photo.

## Hungarian Club Donates to Veterans

By Carol Davidge

The Hungarian Social Club of Ashford is a public charity since 1935 that supports veterans and local causes while promoting the food and culture of Hungary. Recently the group raised \$1,000 for U.S. veterans groups. First was \$500 to the Veteran's Base Camp in Chaplin to help the Camp purchase the property, and \$500 to the Eastern Veterans Coffeehouse in Storrs. Both groups serve veterans in many ways.

The Club also recently donated \$200 to Ecole Agape.

"These actions are part of many services that the Club undertakes throughout the year," said Esther Lovell Jagodzinski, President. The Hungarian Social Club will hold a Hungarian Freedom Dinner on Sunday, October 23. Reservations are requested.

For information: go to facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/hungariansocialclubofashfordconnecticut>

### A TALK ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

## WHY EVERYONE IS NEEDED

SUNDAY, NOV. 6 @ 3:00 pm

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**Eastern Connecticut State University**  
Smith Library, Johnson Room  
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### SPEAKER



**James Shepherd, CS**  
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