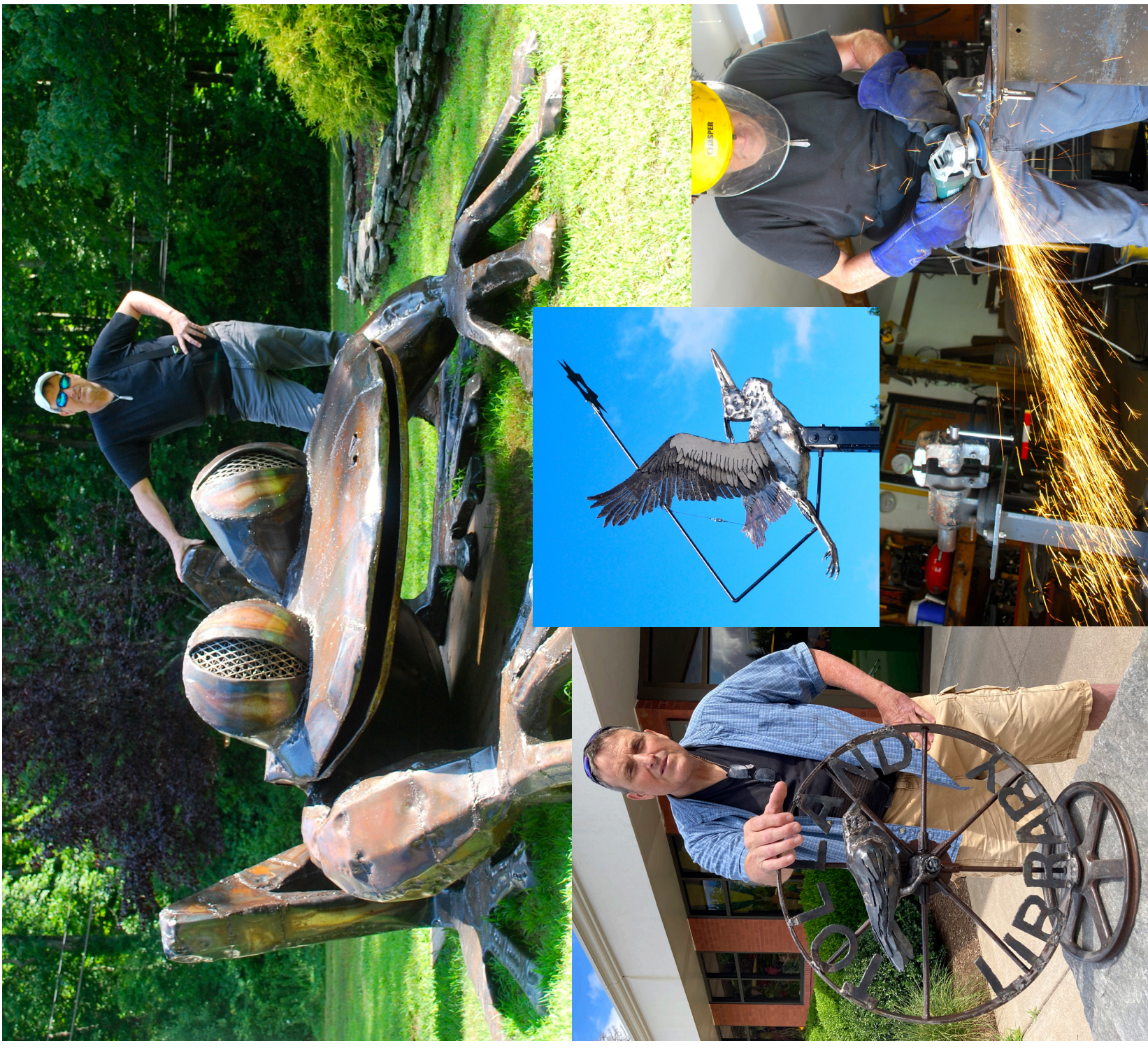


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Looking Up

# Harvesting the Night...The Master Behind the Mask

By Bob Grindle

If there is such a thing as magic then it must reside somewhere in the hills of a perfect New England day such as this. Surely it takes the powers of a wizard to summon up such perfect blue and then to wash it across the sky above the breathtakingly green fields edged with trees in nearly every color in the rainbow. It is moments like this, moments when our planet feels so fully and perfectly alive that I feel hopeful for the future and believe that the evolutionary safari we are on is a special kind of magic. As the Sun passes its zenith and eases lower in the blood-orange western sky on this almost reverentially beautiful day, I nod a thank you to the almost playful brilliance of the joyful architecture of our Cosmic mother Earth.

But I am easily distracted. Earlier this delightful month of October, just after dark I stepped out onto the porch on my way to get something from the trunk of the car; the nearly full Moon was rising over and through the trees to the east; an owl was calling out from up in the field and moments later was answered by another owl over by the barn; a soft breeze was rustling the cottonwood leaves into a gentle chatter; the lights surrounding our neighbor's patio cast an almost carnival glow across the street and a faintly sweet hint in the cool night air was drifting over from a decades-old David Austin rose that is still covered in bloom this early October...ahh, and there is Jupiter, about as eye-catching as it ever gets; brilliant enough to be mistaken for Venus and little more than an extended thumb's width from the Moon. Beautiful... now why was I out here? Oh yes, the night sky.....

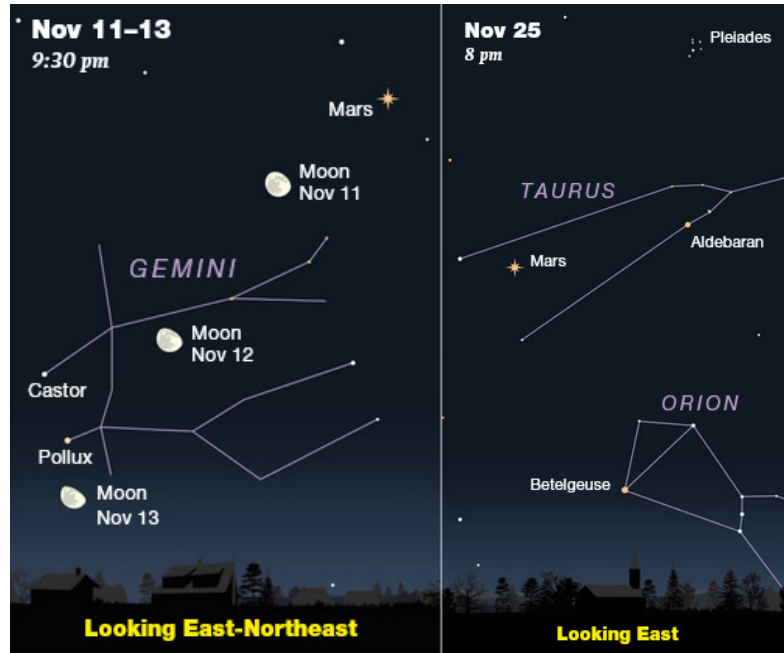
Nearly full Moons and warming southwesterly

winds and scattered herds of clouds that graze across the immense fields of the night sky, moving first this way then that, painting a kaleidoscopic fantasy of moonlight as they feed in the tropospheric darkness can create a kind of theater experience that draws some small part of us out of the comfort of our multiple, Russian doll-like selves and onto the Cosmic stage of the night. Sitting on the deck at

living thing is a part. Ancient Phoenician mariners on the Mediterranean Sea, watching for the guiding fires in lighthouse towers as they charted their way eastward along the African coast toward their home in the Levant, might have looked up to see the same Moon and Jupiter or Mars in the night sky and perhaps felt a similar unfathomable tug from the depths somewhere in our common humanity. But for now...

The porch light is off and the night is lit only with the silvery-gray moonlight, a bit of light from across the street and a lamp in the living room and there is an almost thrilling feeling of mystery in the shadows and smells and sounds of what is quickly becoming a cold night. The stories of our earliest ancestors are lost in the leaf mold of thousands of centuries and a hundred climate changes, but the Cosmos is unmoved by our Earthly reverie. Suddenly I remember a line from an NPR interview with Toni Morrison: "I get angry about things, then I go on to work," and I too know that tomorrow is another day and there is much to do.

The skies of November are at hand, in this 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and by month's end, shortly after Thanksgiving, Jupiter will be upstaged by Venus as this planet of mythology and poetry prepares to slip out of the Sun's glare and back into the evening sky. For the moment, though, Saturn and Mars and Jupiter all spend time on the night stage with the Moon each, in their turn helping direct our attention to the constellations of winter as they rise into the night until, finally, Orion makes an entrance on Thanksgiving eve and will remain the star of the show until late winter. Looking up should be a playful thing filled with the anticipation of coming to understand our world just a bit more and if, this hauntingly exciting season, you happen to see something that stretches your ability to explain, smile and know deep in your being that the Universe is a master at masking itself.



home; lying in a field or on a rooftop; walking in the park or on an errand or even better along the beach; outside on break at work; camping down by the river or perhaps just parked for the moment someplace where the mood is right: I believe a memory that has never vanished, a sort of synaptic harbor-light if you will, soundlessly ignites to refresh our connection to the universe of which every



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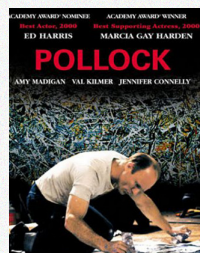
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Tom King photos.

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Tom Woron, Loretta Wrobel

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

Neighbors is published monthly by Neighborspaper LLC. Thomas A. King, member

Neighborspaper LLC is a member of the Ashford Business Association.

Neighbors is printed by Rare Reminder Inc. in Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

# Solutions and Hope from Our Mother

By Loretta Wrobel



These are trying times, as we are continually bombarded by doom and gloom news in all aspects of our lives. First, that pesky COVID doesn't leave us, just surprises us with new variants. Second, each day we see the price of food inching upward. Third, our paychecks, if we have them, stay the same. And last, we are never sure whether we should be wearing masks, hugging friends, and gathering to celebrate. Wars dominant our news, and climate degradation proliferates with each new day. We are not sure which political leaders we can trust and which ones can we believe. As the November election gets closer, the viciousness of the campaigns increases. Depression and despair color our world bleak and gray.

It is extremely challenging to be hopeful and to accept that we will be able to extricate our world from this downward spiral. Certainly, when I look around at the flamboyant colors of fall, I am uplifted. I had prepared myself for a brown leaf display after the severe drought. Miraculously, we had some September rains and the leaves/trees recovered so we witnessed glorious foliage with an excess of yellow.

Thank Mother Nature for constantly managing to recoup, recover and recalibrate so we remain alive and filled with awe as we stumble through our confusing and often traumatic day. Mother Nature is incredibly resilient. We operate without regard for all the wonders that we are exposed to day after day. If we can become astute enough to pay attention, we can find more efficient methods to work with our natural environment and keep our planet buzzing.

I recently discovered a website that provides valuable gems of wisdom for us. The site <asknature.org> is a feast of information and magic that provides practical solutions to the myriad of issues we are facing in our world. The concept of biomimicry, first discussed in a book by the same name written by Janine Benyus, brings a burst of hope and sanity to our chaotic planet. The belief is based on the understanding that nature has a solution for every problem. We just have to search in nature for the answer.

The first time I visited this intriguing website, I was immediately mesmerized by the strident colors on the page. You can get lost and can be captivated by viewing all the ways that nature is so clever, so innovative and intelligent. I love the question asked at the start, "How does nature solve this?" A complicated question, because it puts nature front and center and demands that we observe and view nature as the one in charge. It is not us, mere wee humans. I am awed by how easily we can avoid acknowledging the power and regenerative abilities that are constantly providing us with answers once we take the time to look. We live in a time when we want to believe that our small brains are the best, and using our smarts will save us. The smarts we need to pay attention to are such as these: The wisdom found in a seed, the wisdom in a plant protection molecule in oregano that produces oils that prevent food spoilage, and the wisdom found in mushrooms that can

be used to create sustainable building insulation. Discover how nature deals with stress. Nature has been around for a very long time and has worked out its own solutions that can provide us with ingenious answers to the wealth of problems and issues we face in today's world.

This website is perfect for scrolling through when you are feeling overcome by what appear to be insurmountable disasters and crises. At some moments there doesn't seem any relief, and the issues keep growing like a massive hurricane bearing down on us. As you browse this website, the intricate designs, colors and varieties soothe over your battered mind, body and soul. Nature doesn't run out of ways to work around an issue. It works on creating a better design for life by making the most of whatever is available in the surrounding environment.

Whereas our culture tells us we must extract from our environment, frequently destroying and/or polluting in the process, nature enhances and uses what is present. Nature detoxifies and has methods to manage waste. Nature has organisms that clean up and transform. There are mushrooms that can grow in toxins and transform pollution into fertile soil.

The essence of biomimicry is to teach people to envision a world where nature is applauded for being a storehouse of knowledge and inspiration. What kind of world would evolve if we believed in this truth and our culture reflected that core value? I want to live in that society. Just considering the possibility of such a basic operating principle gives me hope and lifts my spirit.

As I investigate more of this fabulous educational and spellbinding website, I dream of a partnership with nature where we don't think conquer and tame. What if we use our brainpower to devise methods to work with and in cooperation with all the tiny and huge life forces around us? There is so much in this website to explore and investigate. It is not just for educators. All of us can be inspired, nurtured and rejuvenated by hanging out with the biomimicry crew.

What is amazing to me is that nature has so much to offer us. We start to drink from the stream only to find it has many tributaries branching out to keep us engaged and interested. Reading through some of the compelling articles gives me such a monumental appreciation for all the diverse and imaginative forms, colors and mechanisms that surround us. Some of us rarely view these spectacular creations. Many people spend most of their days inside. How sad. When we elevate nature to her true position, it will be easier to seek her out for solutions rather than misuse her for profit.

By now you are shaking your noggin and not quite accepting my exuberance. I plead with you to withhold your judgement and just take a quick peek at the asknature website and make up your own mind. You don't have to accept my word. Take a risk and discover for yourself what nature can do for you. Plus it doesn't cost you anything and can give you vast amounts of knowledge, vitality, hope, and may just rescue us. We simply have to listen, observe, and digest what is right in front of us.

## Veteran's Day Encampment

Better than any textbook is living history! This event is not to be missed.

Submitted by Bev York

A Veteran's Day Encampment and Service Recognition will be held on Saturday, November 12 in Willimantic.

The public is invited to meet re-enactors sharing history from all wars which will be represented in a timeline from the Revolutionary War to Afghanistan. The soldiers will present stories around their campfires, tents, equipment, and vehicles.

Among the many groups represented will be the Vietnam 173 Support Battalion who will bring a large display. A demonstration by the mounted Second Continental Light Dragoons is scheduled. Featured will be an authors tent with their books written about military topics, vendors,

museum displays, demonstrations, veterans organizations, musical performances and food.

Also scheduled are presentations of service awards to Veterans including Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony & Pinning. A color guard will open and close the ceremonies. Local and state dignitaries will present the veterans with their well-deserved awards. Veteran's Day is Friday, November 11. The National holiday is when all Americans should recognize and honor the millions of men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces since 1776. Veteran's Day was originally called Armistice Day commemorating the end of World War 1 on November 11, 1918 at 11 a.m. In Willimantic, there is always a

ceremony at Memorial Park on Nov. 11. at 11 a.m.

For a tentative schedule of events go to AmericaMuseum.org the week before the event. Sponsors to help defray costs are still needed. Volunteers to work the event are also needed. The event will be held at Jillson Square and the Shaboo Stage, which is located at 627 Main Street. The public hours are Saturday, from 10 to 5. Adult admission is \$10 and children are free. The event is sponsored by Eastern Connecticut Veteran's Community Center, the America Museum, Jillson House and the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Windham. For more information director@windhamarts

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## From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

## Invest In Food With A Face – Russo’s Roots Farm, Canterbury

By C. Dennis Pierce



I like older houses. Many years ago, I rented a farmhouse in New Hampshire that was built in the early 1800s. Initially it was a traditional, two-story clapboard on what was considered the original main street. An addition was later built on to the front of the house and it became a general store. I assume it was not successful, since the road that it was situated on is now called “Old Main Street” and another street, a mile away, took on the responsibilities by giving birth to a town hall, an inn, and later a small private college.

Possibly because of the general store’s lack of success, two barns were later joined to the back end of the house. It is very common to see this on farms, for it allowed the family to take care of their animals during the hard New England winters without leaving the main building. The entire property sat on 78 acres, mostly wooded with some overgrown pastures. The farm was called “Windfall.” The owner, who was the sole descendant of the farm family, had no current use for the house and decided to offer it as a rental property. It was my lucky day when I signed the lease.

I share this all as background to explaining my love for the rural quietness that I often experience when I visit the many farms in the Quiet Corner to gather information for my monthly columns. Before I go on, let me take you back to one of my favorite things about living at Windfall. In the evening, I would often sit on the huge granite steps that were outside the kitchen door. They were so large that I often wondered where they came from and how they ever moved these slabs of granite that later took on the responsibility of welcoming guests. The stone itself had veins of white mixed with an off gray. It was scarred with markings where it had been drilled out of a larger piece of stone from some unknown quarry. Over the years, the edges were smoothed down and on the bottom step, implanted into the granite, was a rusty boot scraper that I assume the owner, after walking through the muddy fields, would wipe his boots on before entering the wideboard-floored kitchen. To the right of the steps, many miles away I could see the Mount Sunapee ski area and the mountains that surrounded it. At night, during the winter, you could watch the twinkling of lights that were lighting up the slopes. Where I sat on those evenings, the sky was breathtaking, since the area was so desolate that there were no competing lights to interfere or distract from the dazzling night sky. I cannot count how many shooting stars I witnessed while living there. During the day, the property defined the term “bucolic.” For those not familiar with the term, “bucolic” refers to an idealized rural life (think life with cows) or sheep or even endless gardens where all that one hears is the passing of the wind and the chatter of birds and, oh yes, an occasional farm dog barking in the distance.

I share with you my New Hampshire experience because my recent visit to the Russo’s Roots farm in Canterbury, Connecticut, brought back these memories of Windfall. Russo’s Roots not only has that “bucolic” appeal, it also stands for a return to basic organic farming. I first came to know of the farm from the Willimantic Farmers Market, where I shop pretty much every Saturday. There I had the pleasure of meeting Libby Tarleton, one-half of Russo’s Roots. The day of my visit to the farm, there was a slight wind that was persistent in knocking off the remaining leaves that were clinging on for dear life. Libby met me at the barn at the end of their drive. The barn that stood behind her had seen some years, with a worn front that was painted in a quilt design of red squares. Libby explained that the prior owners ran a feed store on the farm and the front was painted to mirror the Purina logo. The farm was originally called Highland Thistle Farm and was a chicken farm, owned by Don Henry. It offered certified naturally grown vegetables, fruit, grass-fed beef, pork, whole chickens, turkeys, and fresh eggs. The property now known as Russo’s Roots is on 26 acres but currently grows on 2½ acres and utilizes a wind tunnel to extend the growing season. Russo’s Roots is one of a few certified organic farms in the area. Their certification is through Baystate Organic Certifiers, a USDA Organic Program accredited certifying agency that provides organic certification to farm and processing operations throughout the continental United States.

As Libby shared the history of the farm, I could see James Russo walking up from an adjoining field. James and Libby met after college at a farm where they were both working. James, who grew up in the Amherst area, later moved to Long Island, where he learned the trade of organ-

ic farming. Libby was involved at that time with vineyard research, but her heart was in growing vegetables. They were looking to move from Long Island, since land there was cost prohibitive. They first searched for land through Connecticut FarmLink, an organization that lists farms for sale. They continued to look throughout the area until they found their perfect spot in the quiet town of Canterbury and purchased the farm in 2015. After they settled in, they waited for the required three years for the land to be certified organic.



James Russo and Libby Tarleton. Dennis Pierce photo.

Since both work on the farm, they have diversified their income by selling at the Willimantic and the Mystic farmers markets. They also have a creative approach to operating a CSA (community-supported agriculture, where shares of a farm’s harvest are purchased by consumers). Members of their CSA, which has 100-plus participants, pick up produce at the farm, farmers market, or a designated spot in Norwich. Libby and James also operate a farmstand that is open from 9:00 to 5:00 on Saturdays, in season. They pride themselves on their fresh vegetables that are harvested from their fields less than 24 hours before they pack and deliver them. They grow over a hundred different organic, heirloom, non-GMO varieties of vegetables. In fields that were once better at growing rocks than crops, they have transformed the soils into a diverse living system teeming with microorganisms that help support healthy and nutritious vegetables. The farm is located at 289 North Society Road in Canterbury. Rather than list their many offerings, I suggest you check out their very attractive website at <https://www.russosroots.com>. You can also sign up for the new season’s CSA and stay in touch with farm “happenings” by receiving their newsletter.

One of my favorite offerings from Russo’s Roots is their potatoes. I have prepared them many ways, but I keep going back to the simple recipe that follows. I am not sure if it is the soil that they are grown in, the variety, or just the freshness that makes them so different from store-bought.

## The Best Simple, Roasted Pommes de Terre

Preheat oven to 500 degrees.

## Ingredients:

20 small potatoes  
½ cup of bacon fat or Olive oil which is a healthier option  
Herb salt (recipe to follow)

## Directions:

Wash potatoes and dry with a paper towel  
Place in a saucepan and cover with cold water  
Bring to a boil over high heat for five minutes  
Drain.  
Place fat or Olive oil in a roasting pan and place pan in oven for about two to four minutes  
Remove pan from oven, add potatoes to pan, gently toss the potatoes so they are covered with the oil / fat  
Place pan back into the oven and turn the heat down to 425 degrees. Bake for 35 to 50 minutes. This will depend on

the size of the potatoes that you are using.

Shake the pan every ten minutes.

Test to see if potatoes are done by inserting a knife in the larger one.

Remove potatoes, drain any oil and sprinkle with herb salt and serve in a pre-heated dish.

## Herb Salt:

## Ingredients:

2/3 cup of vegetable oil

6 ounces of fresh Rosemary, Oregano and Sage leaves.

Typically, one tablespoon of fresh herbs is equal to one teaspoon of dry herbs. However, depending how “fresh” your dried herbs are this may vary. If using dry herbs, taste the mixture and then add more to your liking.

2/3 cup of sea salt or coarse salt.

## Directions:

Gently heat oil in a shallow saucepan over medium heat.

Add fresh herbs and fry until crispy.

Remove mixture and scoop out herbs onto a tray lined with paper towels.

Take herbs from towel and dry again on a separate paper towel.

Place this mixture with the salt in a mortar and crush salt and herbs all together.

Remove and place in an airtight container.

If you are using dry herbs place herb mixture in oven for five minutes and then add to salt and mix.

It is time again for the local farmers markets to transition to winter quarters. I recently received a note from Stuart Hecht, the new market master for the winter Coventry market. I am glad to see that the market moved back to the Coventry High School after several years at the lake location.

The Coventry Winter Farmers’ Market runs for 17 weeks beginning November 13 and ending March 19, 2023, every Sunday (except Christmas and New Year’s) from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At their website, [www.coventrywinterfarmersmarket.com](http://www.coventrywinterfarmersmarket.com), you can sign up for their weekly newsletter.

They will have 25 to 30 vendors each week with local products and produce including baked goods, meat and fish, handmade jewelry and decor, freshly roasted coffee, and much more.

As some of my readers may want to get a jump on holiday shopping, the 2022 Artists’ Open Studios of Northeast Connecticut will be taking place November 25, 26, 27 and December 3 and 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You can find additional information at [www.aosct.org](http://www.aosct.org).



org, including a list of studios that are part of the “tour.” You can also see a brochure that lists participating artists by town and offerings, and a map of locations. Please check with artists (contact information on website) to find out what their individual Covid restrictions will be at the time of your visit. One of the many stops on my list this year is Willow Tree Pottery in Ashford, where Suzy Staubach (photo left) offers pottery that is inspired by Early American and

English country pottery: sturdy yet elegant platters, bowls, tankards, casseroles, olive dishes, mugs, plates, lanterns, spoon jars, and more.

I borrowed the following quote from the Russo’s Roots website. It captures what the essence of life is all about and the joy of purchasing local ingredients to make the perfect recipe.

“One of the very nicest things about life is that we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating.”

—Luciano Pavarotti

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](mailto: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!

# The Opossum – America's National Shame

By Bob Lorentson

America has long prided itself on being an exceptional country. If not for the opossum this might be true. America does have plenty of exceptional animals, but the opossum is not one of them. The opossum is a marsupial, which means that as mammals go, it is more disappointing than exceptional. Except perhaps in Australia, where a marsupial like the kangaroo can become the National animal. But that's Australia, which tends to be disappointing itself at times. What other country would eat its National animal?

In any case, in America we are stuck with the Virginia opossum, the only marsupial that lives north of Mexico. And there's just no getting around the fact that the Virginia opossum is a poor excuse for an animal. The best thing you can say about it is that it is fully capable on its own of stopping any talk of intelligent design. The worst thing you can say about it though is that it even gives evolution a bad name. While other mammals here were busy evolving into fascinating creatures like horses, foxes, and bison, opossums are a 65 million year old reminder of what happens when you don't even try. Scientists see them as living fossils. Motorists see them as dead roadkill. Most people just wish they didn't have to see them at all.

To say that the opossum is ugly is to say that the dictionary has not evolved either. There needs to be at least several more u's at the start of the word to do its appearance justice. The opossum will never become anyone's team mascot or wildlife magazine cover. And if having the opossum as your spirit animal doesn't kill whatever spirit you have left, it will surely roll over and act like it's dead. The opossum's long, hairless, rat-like tail, mangy fur, mouthful of misaligned teeth, and beady, coal-black eyes set too close together give it a completely deranged appearance. It's a look that probably worked 65 million years ago to keep dinosaurs away. I suppose on that account at least you could say it's still working.

If the opossum's appearance has somehow still not managed to repulse a hungry predator, its behavior can usually make one completely lose its appetite. Or even its previous meal. Pride and self-respect have never been in the opossum's arsenal, so instead of fighting like other cornered animals, it will growl, belch, urinate, and defecate. Maybe you can see now why it will never be chosen as any sports team's mascot. If this fails, it will fall over and play dead, drooling saliva and emitting a putrid liquid from its anal glands. Word about this sort of behavior tends to get around. Thankfully pictures don't.

Even opossum romance is frightening. It should be illegal. About the last thing America needs is more opossums. But more opossums is what you get when the females have two vaginal tracts and two uteri. Now if you just stumbled innocently enough on that statement, I'm doubly sorry to have to report that this setup is all because the males have a forked penis. I'm sure you'd agree that nothing good can ever come from a forked penis. Baby opossums should be all the proof we need of that. I even worry if an essay like this can overcome that hurdle.

Showing no regard for how humans or other animals feel about it, opossums have up to three litters a year, with as many as twenty babies per litter. Being marsupials, the babies are born tiny, blind, hairless, and ugly, and kept in a pouch where the mother doesn't have to look at them. Like all marsupial babies, they are called joeys. It's a cute name, but they still grow up to become opossums. The males are called jacks, and the females are called jills. The names are not enough to make me think why a group of opossums shouldn't be called a nightmare.

As bad as it is on the outside of an opossum, the inside is worse. It doesn't even provide a suitable habitat for viruses like rabies, or the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. This is due to its abnormally low body temperature. Scientists have observed that other abnormalities like a slow metabolism even give them immunity to the venom of snakes, bees, and scorpions. Motorists have observed that, so far at least, neither the inside nor the outside of an opossum is immune to cars.

The opossum is widespread in the environment because it is not a picky eater, though it especially loves table scraps. If you want to clear the table, invite an opossum to dinner. Of course if you live in the American South, an opossum may be the dinner. I think it was Jim Hightower who said that a seven course meal in the South is a 'possum and a six pack. As a Northerner, I admire the creative approach to opossum control. But because I don't even like grits, chitlins, or fried green tomatoes, I could never be a Southerner. Give me the six pack though and I'll whistle Dixie all night long. I never said the opossum was America's only shameful animal.

Mansfield

## Jennifer Kaufman- New P&D Director



Submitted by Margaret Chatey

Mansfield Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth has announced that Jennifer Kaufman has been selected as the new Director of Planning and Development for the Town of Mansfield following a nationwide search. A demonstrated leader in this field, Ms Kaufman is a certified planner with a comprehensive understanding of land use, economic development, affordable housing, and natural resource protection. She has been serving Mansfield as Acting Director since Linda Painter left the position to relocate in June.

Ms Kaufman has held several positions in Mansfield since 2000, serving with the Planning Department as Senior Planner/Inland Wetlands Agent since 2019, as Natural Resources and Sustainability Coordinator/Environmental Planner/Inland Wetland Agent. She began her career in Mansfield as Parks Coordinator for twelve years.

An advocate for natural resources, Jennifer earned a Master of Science, Natural Resources Planning and Water Resources from the University of Vermont, and as a researcher she wrote the first Vermont Environmental Quality Index, measuring water and air quality, wildlife and habitat quality, waste management, and energy conservation. She also holds a Bachelor's degree from Bates College.

In her time here, she worked closely with Director Painter to develop Mansfield Tomorrow, the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, and has worked to acquire \$1.7 million in grants for programming, planning, land acquisition, and park development. Her work has led to more than 800 acres of open space and recreational lands protected as well as 740 acres of farmland. Jennifer was a major contributor to Mansfield achieving Silver Certification through Sustainable CT, and she was instrumental in creating Mansfield's Affordable Housing Plan.

"Jennifer is well known both locally and at the state level as a champion of smart growth, open space conservation, and agriculture," says Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth. In addition to many other professional qualities that made her the right choice for this important position, Jennifer enjoys very productive working relationships with a wide range of key stakeholders and has a true passion for, and deep connections to this community that she and her family have called home for many years.

"The Town of Mansfield is on the precipice of experiencing a considerable amount of new development (particularly multi-family development and the desire to significantly expand the availability of affordable and senior housing in our community). The Director of Planning and Development will play a key role in helping to facilitate desired growth while at the same time preserving the Town's rural character, protecting open space, and achieving other goals. Jennifer possesses the knowledge, experience, creativity and other professional skills needed to actively help articulate a shared vision for the future and work in close coordination with myriad stakeholders to ensure anticipated future (smart) growth proceeds successfully in the years ahead."

"I am thrilled to be part of this team at such a pivotal time in Mansfield's history," says Jennifer Kaufman. "In the upcoming months and years, we have new opportunities to support sustainable development, diverse housing choices for people at all stages of their lives, and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. I am committed to developing our Town in a way that aligns with what our residents' values.

She adds, "I have lived here for 23 years, so I have a vested interest in making Mansfield a place where people with diverse backgrounds and interests want to live, work and recreate."

In 2017, Jennifer received the Working Lands Alliance Farmland Preservation Pathfinder Award for Outstanding Individual, and was recognized by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) among Women Inspiring Conservation in Connecticut in 2013.

Jennifer and her husband Doug live in Mansfield where they raised their two daughters.

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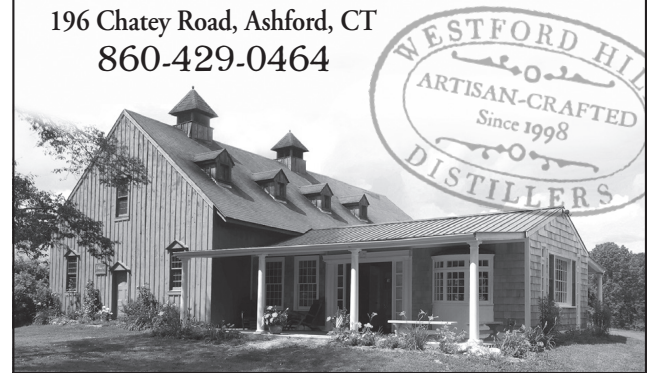
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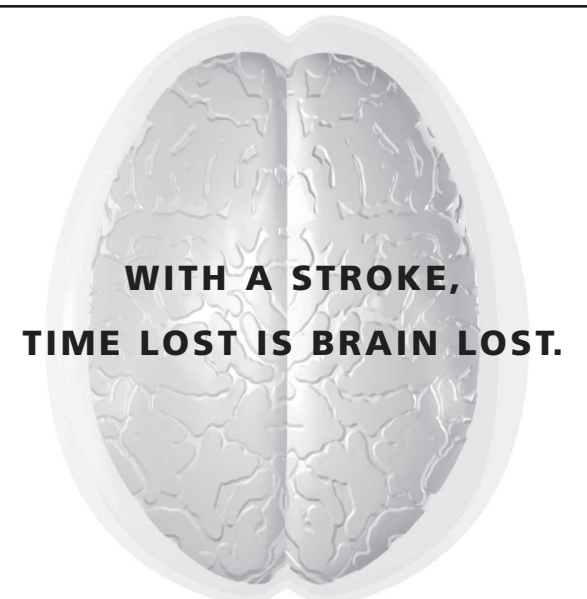


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# Transient Menagerie

By Delia Berlin

The other day I was visiting my daughter and her family in Manhattan. We were walking around some of the parks and gardens near their home and we stopped to admire a huge specimen of elephant-ear caladium. It reminded me of an identical plant that we had in our patio garden in Buenos Aires, when I was growing up. That plant became unforgettable one day, when a large wild bird ingested a piece of a leaf and almost died. Eventually, the bird recovered and was permanently separated from the plant. But it's quite a story.

Childhood memories usually become diluted with passing years. In relating them, we rebuild them by filling in blanks with educated guesses and necessary assumptions. When, in addition, we need to translate the memories and adapt them for a new audience, the resulting stories may not be completely accurate. But if accuracy was paramount, this story couldn't be told.

I was, perhaps, eight years old. It was winter, for sure, since it was cold and dark while we waited for the school bus. To avoid the worst of the morning chill, we usually waited inside a room that faced the street, so we could see the arriving bus through the window and come out of the house just in time. That particular morning, my siblings and I had plenty of company while we waited. Many wild animals of multiple species were running around free throughout most of the rooms and patios of our house. Here is where I must start to fill in some blanks to tell the full story.

My father, RIP, was generally fond of animals and plants. But he had recently returned from a hunting trip to the pampas. For reasons that I can't explain, most of the animals he "hunted" were still alive and well. For even more mysterious reasons, he had brought them with him to the city. I'm not sure what was his plan, if he had one. Perhaps he just thought that it would be nice to show these live specimens to us kids and didn't bother to assess the next steps.

Since I remember the names of these species in Spanish and we don't have the same animals in New England, I had to look up likely candidates in the appropriate field guides. In addition to a hare and a Patagonian mara, there were several species of ground birds, such as tinamou and quail. But the most magnificent of all these specimens was a huge white bird that, according to my limited research, must have been a coscoroba swan. It was this swan that ate the caladium and, by then, it had already become clear that bringing these animals to the city had not been a good idea. Each one of them would need to be suitably placed elsewhere and fast.

Fortunately, my father had many friends who lived in rural areas or had large aviaries, so most of the animals left our house in just a few days. But there were no takers for the swan. The caladium ingestion acted as a catalyst to intensify the search for a new home for the swan. His placement had to be moved to the front burner. Not only was the swan in a dangerous and grossly inadequate environment but, as coscoroba swans do, he "trumpeted" extremely loudly. He started these deafening calls very early each morning, even before sunrise. Our neighbors were not pleased.

Having exhausted the potential for avian hospitality in our family's extended social circle, it was time to think outside the box. One of our uncles had an unorthodox idea. Buenos Aires is known for its beautiful parks and green spaces, many of which sport lakes and ponds with waterfowl. Would anyone mind an extra coscoroba swan? If dropped off at one of these lakes early in the morning, it may not even be noticed...

We lived quite a distance from the most suitable of these parks, but our uncle had a car with enough room for three kids and a swan. He picked us all up. I recall that the swan traveled under the front passenger seat, but I can't remember if he was bagged or simply tied down. What I do remember is that when as we arrived at the park and our uncle parked near one of the lakes, the swan started trumpeting and getting ready to go. As soon as we opened the car door, he made an enthusiastic run straight to the water.

Whether there were other coscoroba swans to befriend him in that lake, we never knew. Perhaps there were, or maybe some swan passersby joined him later in his new digs. It's even possible that at some point the swan may have flown back to the pampas, a stone's throw as the swan flies. But what I know for sure is that he had a very strange story to tell.



# Mill Museum Events

Submitted by Kira Holmes

**Fri., Oct. 7 – Nov. 13:** Special Exhibit: "Building Thread City: The 200th Anniversary of When the Industrial Revolution Came to Windham/Willimantic in 1822." Located The Mill Museum 411 Main St., Willimantic, 06226. In 1822 a Rhode Island entrepreneur, Perez O. Richmond, erected the first industrial factory in the Willimantic section of the Town of Windham, at cotton mill, launching the Industrial Revolution in Windham. Richmond built the mill itself, a dam, raceways, worker housing, and a company store, creating a village that for a while was called Richmondville. Not everyone in Windham welcomed the changes, especially the arrival of new industrial working class, and it was not long before Richmondville acquired the pejorative name, Down Sodom. The central humanities questions raised by the exhibit will be what economic factors led the industrial revolution in Windham to begin in 1822, how did industrialization reshape the environment, why were some residents apprehensive about the influx of new, working-class people, and what is legacy of Down Sodom in Windham today. Exhibit Fee included in Museum Admission, Fri. – Sun. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Sat., Nov. 18:** Sign up to be a Holiday Shop Vendor. Vendors, why not do several holiday fairs at once? At our Holiday Shop, the Mill Museum will sell your craft while you set up at another fair! Contact Kira Holmes at director@millmuseum.org for an application. One weekend is \$65 and two weekends are \$75. Send the check to: The Mill Museum, 411 Main St., Willimantic, CT, 06226. The dates for the Holiday Shop are December 3, 4, 10, and 11. If you want to learn more, contact us now. Applications will be accepted till Nov. 18.

**Opens Nov. 4- Closes Dec. 4:** Special Exhibit. "Terese Ridgeway (1936-2022): A Retrospective." A special pop-up exhibit celebrates the rugs and tapestries of acclaimed weaver Terese Ridgeway (1936-2022). Free with admission to the Mill Museum. Located on the Mill Museum's 2nd Floor, 411 Main St., Willimantic, CT, 06226.

**Sat., Nov. 12:** Building Thread City: The City: The 200th Anniversary of the Industrial Revolution's Arrival in Willimantic. 2:00 p.m. at the Windham Inn, 4 Scotland Road, Windham Center, CT. A joint program of the Mill Museum and Windham Preservation, Inc. Relax around the Windham Inn's fire pit and listen to Kira Holmes, Director of the Mill Museum, share the 200-year legacy of the Willimantic Mills. Grab a cup and apple cider, hard or regular – we'll have both on hand – and learn about these pivotal events in our local history. We have chairs but bring a spare, just in case. This is a free program, but donations are encouraged and will be split between both non-profits.

**Wed., Nov. 16:** "I Am Servant of Your Voice: Armenian-American Soprano Zabelle Panosian, 1891-1986," 7:00 p.m. This lecture will be presented by Ian Nagoski at Dugan Hall, 155 Union St., Willimantic. Lecture costs \$10 for members and \$12 for non-members. Co-sponsored by Willimantic Records. Pay in person on the day of the lecture.

**Sat., Nov. 19:** "The Steampunk Curio Fair," 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Vendors, entertainment, lectures, and more. Free with admission to the Museum. The Mill Museum, 411 Main St., Willimantic, 06226.

**Fri., Nov. 25:** Windham Light Parade, 5:30 p.m. Parade participants gather Memorial Park; the march begins at 5:45 p.m. and heads down Main St. to Jillson Square to light Windham's community holiday tree. We need volunteers to swell our ranks. Contact the Mill Museum director@millmuseum.org or call (860) 456-2178. Wear a Light-up necklace, hat, or both and join the Mill Museum's contingent in the parade!

**Sat., Nov. 26:** Small Business Saturday and Free Admission to The Mill Museum. 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Visit the Mill Museum, 411 Main St., Willimantic, 06226. See our permanent exhibits for free today and shop local at our gift shop.

**Tues., Nov. 29:** Giving Tuesday. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. This Mill Museum Facebook fundraiser delivers the spirit of giving to everyone. You can participate online through our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/WindhamTextileandHistoryMuseum>. This fundraiser will be up on Facebook for the next two weeks. Another way to contribute is by signing up to be a member, volunteering for a day at the Mill Museum, or giving towards our upcoming Annual Appeal. The Mill Museum is a regional museum that contributes to the community.

# Hold On

By Judy Davis

Like the oak tree's branches that keep reaching to the sky; like the crystal-clear river that keeps on rolling by. As the mountains before us, so may we stand. For the heart of our country lies in the land.

From the mountains to the shore-side, from the valley to the hill. Each homestead of the Irish was dreamed and built from strength of will. As the legends live forever, as the promised eagle flies, as Leitrim's ways surround us, and the days go by.

There's the need to keep on changing, and the need to look behind; to look beyond to foundations and ties that bind. For the promises of yesterday which are buried In the ground. And for songs we hear inside which never make a sound. Hold on to all that's true. Hold on to all that pulls you through. Hold on to the memory of Ireland's dream. And always hold on to the old, old things.

# Christmas in the Village

Submitted by Ruth I. O'Neil

Coventry's Christmas in the Village will be held on this year on Sunday, Dec. 4, 2022, from 12 noon to 4 P.M. This annual town event brings community members and businesses together to welcome the holiday season. The activities will culminate with the annual town tree lighting celebration which will take place at **4:30 P.M.** After enjoying an abundance of holiday happenings throughout the village area earlier in the day, community members and visitors can gather together to share in this long-standing tradition. Students from the Coventry High School Choral and Band program will provide songs of the season. Santa will lead the tree lighting, having been escorted down Main Street by the Coventry Fire Departments' Torchlight Holiday Parade. Fire trucks and other vehicles from the towns' fire department will be adorned in holiday lights and decorations.

Activities during the afternoon include pony rides, the "Polar Express" train ride, horse drawn wagon rides, live musical performances by local artists and students from the Song-a-Day Music Center, crafts, and a holiday dance performance by students of The Can-Dance Studio. Santa pays a visit to Coventry, traveling down Main Street to Coventry Arts and Antiques where guests may visit and have photos taken with him, or take their own.

More holiday activities will be held at the Booth and Dimock Library, including a Youth Art Show coordinated by the Coventry Arts Guild and the library

The Coventry Lions Club, current sponsor of the event, will host its popular annual Christmas Tree Festival, a holiday décor sale, along with a Crafter Exhibition at the Coventry Community Center. Drawings will be held for trees decorated and donated by local organizations, businesses and individuals. Call 860-803-7163 for details on contributing a decorated Christmas tree or wreath to the Festival.

Merchants along the renovated historic stretch of Main Street will be open, offering demonstrations, holiday gift ideas, specials, free drawings, and more. The Coventry Visitors Center will feature a Country Gift Cupboard along with an array of area tourist material. Other organizations will be set up along Main Street, and also in the area of the Community Center/ Patriots Park offering holiday goodies.

At a special mailbox, set up by the Coventry Parks and Recreation Dept., children are encouraged to drop off letters they have written to Santa.

Coinciding with Christmas in the Village is the multi-day Eastern Connecticut event, Artists' Open Studio. Several area artists will have exhibits at Main street's Mill Brook Place not only during the afternoon of Christmas in the Village, but earlier on Nov. 26, 27, 28 and December 3, 4, as well. Two Main Street studios, Timberman Studio and Maple Brook Studio will be open to the public as part of the Artists' Open Studio. Visit [aosct.org](http://aosct.org) for more information on the Artists' Open Studio.

Christmas in the Village began in 2003 by the Coventry Village Improvement Society. This is the 19th year for the event.

Visit Coventry's Christmas in the Village's Facebook page for detailed schedule information, all subject to change. Sponsorships and volunteers to help are welcome as well as donations. Call the coordinators at 860-617-3588 or 860-918-5957 for more information.

# Unsung Heroes of Soul: The Originals

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 the Originals, “Motown’s Best Kept Secret,” who sang back-up on numerous hits before recording a smash of their own.

Formed in Detroit in 1966, the group comprised Freddie Gorman, Walter Gaines, Hank Dixon, C.P. Spencer, and (for about six months) Joe Stubbs. Spencer had previously sung with the Spinners, while Gorman co-wrote Motown’s first #1 pop hit, “Please Mr. Postman” by the Marvelettes. Stubbs had belonged to the Falcons (“You’re So Fine,” 1959) and was the brother of Levi Stubbs, lead singer of the Four Tops.

The Originals initially attained success at Motown as background singers. They provided uncredited vocals on hits like “What Becomes of the Brokenhearted” (Jimmy Ruffin), “A Place in the Sun” (Stevie Wonder), “Does Your Mama Know About Me” (Bobby Taylor & The Vancouvers), “For Once in My Life” (Stevie Wonder), “Chained” (Marvin Gaye), “25 Miles” (Edwin Starr), “Yester-Me, Yester-You, Yesterday” (Stevie Wonder), “My Whole World Ended (The Moment You Left Me)” (David Ruffin), “What Does It Take (To Win Your Love)” (Jr. Walker & The All-Stars, “War” (Edwin Starr), and “Just to Keep You Satisfied” (Marvin Gaye).

The Originals also recorded their own material, but only one single—a remake of Leadbelly’s “Goodnight Irene”—initially saw release. Their unissued 1966 track, “Suspicion,” became a favorite on Britain’s Northern Soul scene when it finally came out in the ‘90s. The year 1969 saw the group’s second single, “We’ve Got a Way Out of Love” / “Green Grow the Lilacs,” but it did nothing.

Later that year, Marvin Gaye took the Originals under his wing. He co-wrote and produced “Baby, I’m For Real,” a doo-wop flavored ballad that spent five weeks at #1 on the Soul chart and crossed over to the pop market at #14. It was followed by another ‘50s-styled slow jam, “The Bells,” which also did well on both the Soul and pop charts.

After 1970, the group’s popularity waned. In 1972, C.P. Spencer left the Originals to pursue a solo career. Ty Hunter, formerly of the Voice Masters and the Glass House, replaced him.

With the rise of disco, the Originals enjoyed revived success. Their 1976 single, “Down to Love Town,” hit #1 on the *Billboard* Dance chart. The follow-up, “Call On Your Six-Million Dollar Man,” was also a Disco hit. The group left Motown in 1977 and signed



with the Phase II independent label. Following the 1981 death of Ty Hunter, the Originals stopped recording and broke up a year later. They would subsequently get back together to record for the UK-based Motorcity label.

Joe Stubbs died on February 5, 1998; C.P. Spencer passed away on October 20, 2004; Freddie Gorman died on June 13, 2006; and Walter Gaines passed on January 17, 2012. Of the group’s line-up, only Hank Dixon remains alive.

Charted singles:

“Baby I’m For Real” (1969) R&B #1 (5 weeks), Pop #14

“The Bells” (1970) R&B #4, Pop #12

“We Can Make It Baby” (1970) R&B #20, Pop #74

“I Like Your Style” (1970) R&B #20

“God Bless Whoever Sent You” (1970-71) R&B #14, Pop #53

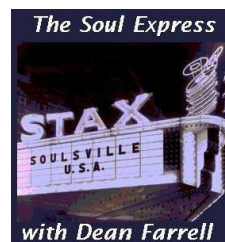
“I’m Someone Who Cares” (1971) Pop #112

“Good Lovin’ Is Just a Dime Away” (1975) R&B #53

“Down to Love Town” (1976) R&B #93, Pop #47, Disco #1 (1 week)

“Call On Your Six-Million Dollar Man” (1977) Disco #6

“Medley: Waitin’ On a Letter / Mr. Postman” (1981) R&B #74



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 [soulexpress@gmail.com](mailto:soulexpress@gmail.com).

# The Bobcat: Connecticut’s Secretive Wild Cat

## Master Wildlife Conservationist Presentation

Submitted by Mary Albro

Paul Colburn, a master wildlife conservationist, will speak about bobcats on Saturday, November 5, at 2:00 p.m. at The Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) Center at Pomfret, 218 Day Road, Pomfret Center. Adult admission is \$5.00 for CAS members, \$10.00 for non-members. There is no charge for children 12 and under.

During his program, *The Bobcat: Connecticut’s Secretive Wild Cat*, Paul will discuss the natural history of bobcats, their habitat, diet, behaviors, and reproduction. He will review current research studies by CT DEEP wildlife biologists.

In recent years, bobcat numbers have increased in Connecticut. Reports of sightings and vehicle-kills

show that bobcats live throughout the state, in both urban and rural areas. According to Andy Rzeknikiewicz, the land manager for CAS sanctuaries in Pomfret and Hampton, “Bobcats have been observed on CAS and nearby Wyndham Land Trust properties and appear to be thriving.”



The presentation also will include discussion of the plausibility of another wild cat, the mountain lion, living free in Connecticut.

Paul Colburn is a graduate of the Connecticut Department of

Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Master Wildlife Conservationist Program (MWCP). The MWCP is an adult education program that trains volunteers in the fields of wildlife management, natural history, and interpretation. Mr. Colburn has provided hundreds of wildlife presentations for a wide variety of public and private organizations in all corners of the state.

218 Day Road,  
Pomfret Center, CT 06259  
860-928-4948  
[ctaclubon.org/Pomfret](http://ctaclubon.org/Pomfret)

*The Connecticut Audubon Society protects Connecticut’s birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through conservation, education, and advocacy.*

Photographer Nancy L. Barrett took the bobcat photo at the Bafflin Sanctuary in Pomfret.

# Ashford Farmers Market



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Save the date for Christmas on the Farm Event, Saturday, December 10th

## Tai Chi Home

True Colors

By Joe Pandolfo

The pond has a certain calm in the autumn, a stillness on the surface and also deeper underneath.



This is a good season to nurture your own deeper calm, a place to touch down to when trouble disturbs you, a place where you distill things.

In a time of trouble we find our true colors. They can really glow... like the brilliant minerals the autumn leaves reveal before they let go.

## 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

## 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.

# RVing the Adirondacks

By Dennis R. Blanchette

*I felt my lungs inflate with the inrush of scenery—air, mountains, trees, people. I thought, “This is what it is to be happy.”*  
—The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath

The ant infestation was vanquished, the tongue jack gently lowered Harvey the RV onto the hitch ball, and it was off to the Adirondacks. People conjure up different visions when they hear “Adirondacks.” My parents often talked about Ausable Chasm, possibly their one and only vacation. Maybe you think of fly fishing in the Au Sable River. (It’s spelled Au Sable, Ausable, or AuSable, depending on whether it refers to the river, the chasm, or the town.) Or possibly the Olympics at Lake Placid. Some may think of Paul Smith’s College, built on the site of the first wilderness resort, offering twenty B.S. degrees on one of the largest (14,200 acres) campuses in the world. Adirondack State Park was established in 1892 and consists of 6 million acres (an area larger than New Hampshire), 10,000 lakes, and forty-six 4,000-footers.

The High Peaks region in the northeastern quadrant of Adirondack Park is considered the hiking hub of the park. We stayed in Wilmington, near Whiteface Mountain and a few miles from Lake Placid. Lake Placid was the host of the 1932 Winter Olympics, where Sonja Henie won the second of her three gold medals in figure skating, and the 1980 Winter Olympics, starring Eric Heiden, Ingemar Stenmark, and the U.S. hockey team’s “Miracle on Ice.” The town is cute, with many good shops and restaurants. It was undergoing a facelift during our visit, in preparation for the 2023 FISU World University Games.

We arrived at the campground around 2:00 p.m. and I pushed the button on the tongue jack to unhitch Harvey from the truck. It clunked and stopped. I pushed again. Another clunking noise, but no movement up or down. The troubleshooting guide said there was no repair for this situation, buy a new jack. This was taking things to a whole new level. I had already replaced the water filter, screen door latch, sink faucet, and drain valve on four-year-old Harvey, and now the metal parts were breaking. Do not be fooled by the fancy graphics you see on RVs going down the road. It is truly a case of beauty being only skin deep, either due to planned obsolescence or puny profit margins. Underneath those shiny scenes of moose and waterfalls are cheap plastic valves, tubing that does not exist outside of Taiwan, and metal that begins rusting the day you drive it home. Of course, the model of our jack was not to be found on the Internet, so we enlisted the help of a local RV store.

On a day off from hiking, we decided to drive up the Whiteface Veterans’ Memorial Highway. Reminiscent of the Mt. Washington Auto Road, but not as long or scary, it is five miles from the toll booth to the summit castle. The castle is being renovated, and very little of it was

accessible. It was windy, so we elected to take the elevator to the summit and hike down the Stairway Ridge Trail. A 426-foot-long pedestrian tunnel leads to the center of the mountain, where an elevator rises 271 feet to the Whiteface summit (4,867 feet). It is said that it was FDR’s idea to provide accessibility to the summit. It appeared that there were attractions here also, but they, too, were closed. With amazing 360-degree views, including Mount Marcy and Lake Placid, it was still worth the money.

The next hike was Cascade Mountain, a 4,000-footer but just barely (4,098 feet) and one of the most popular hikes. The guidebook said there was only a small parking lot, so we arrived early and got the last spot. Upon reaching the summit, we found fifty or sixty hikers already there. A young woman sat down near us and gave us a speech about the damage caused by sitting on moss (which we weren’t). It was annoying, but at the same time, I could understand that with all the hikers coming here, some of them would not be familiar with the fragility of alpine vegetation. In the distance we could see the Olympic ski jumps jutting above the trees like slides in a giant’s playground. On the descent, hikers continued streaming past us up the mountain, and we decided the park must be running a shuttle service. Back at the trailhead, it became clear. Cars were parked along both sides of the road—it looked like Pinkham Notch on a sunny Saturday.

Seeing the ski jumps from the top inspired us to see what they looked like close up and from ground level, so we headed to the Olympic Jumping Complex. Young adults in skis, ski boots, and life jackets practiced their aerial routines, landing in a swimming pool. The ski jumps were being wetted by huge sprinklers and we watched as jumpers came down, throwing up a spray of water as they hit the grass at the bottom of the jump. The Mount Van Hoevenberg complex is newly renovated and home to a state-of-the-art skeleton and bobsled track. Janet took a ride on the Cliffside Coaster, which follows the route of the 1980 Olympic sliding track. Visitors are also able to try luge and the biathlon course, using a bike instead of skis.

During our travels around the area, I noticed that many buildings were painted brown instead of the white seen so often in New England. This is apparently due to the availability of a local mineral deposit known as Johnsbury Brown, which makes a practically indestructible paint.

On Friday, Max from Happy Camping RV brought over a tongue jack he had found online and installed it just in time for our departure the next day. Only time will tell which of these experiences my mind will think of when I hear someone talk of the Adirondacks.

*Dennis R. Blanchette is a travel writer and occasionally civil engineer. For pictures and additional information, visit his travel blog, Derelicting About with Dennis, at [www.dennisblanchette.com](http://www.dennisblanchette.com).*



Ashford Women’s Group leaders wore pink for Breast Cancer while sharing information about breast cancer care, especially for uninsured women. Left to right are: Misty Doering, Esther Lovell Jagodzinski, Cathryn Silver-Smith, Jill Marie Ianniccheri, Carrie Surdell Hastings, R.N., and Seema Gupta. Not shown is Tracy Hammer-Will.

## Ashford Women’s Group Shares Breast Cancer Information

By Carol Davidge

On October 8, the Ashford Women’s Group (AWG) held a breast cancer awareness program, led by Carrie Surdell Hastings, R.N. who has seven years’ experience specializing in women’s health care. “Nurse Carrie’s information **included free programs** to assist women with breast cancer,” said Jill Marie Ianniccheri, co-founder of AWG.

Nurse Carrie recommends online information about services available especially to uninsured and underinsured women on the CT Dept. of Public Health’s Early Detection and Prevention Program (CEDPP) website: <https://portal.ct.gov/dph/Comprehensive-Cancer/Comprehensive-Cancer/The-Connecticut-Early-Detection-and-Prevention-Program-CEDPP>

For years, Connecticut has had the second highest incidence of breast cancer in the United States. Some 40,000 women here are not receiving the health care they need because they do not have health insurance. The CEDPP program helps with **free** doctor visits, mammograms, pap tests, PHV tests and cardiovascular screenings. Participating hospitals include ECHN, Day Kimball Hospital and Windham Hospital, according to Nurse Carrie. She urged everyone to get regular health screenings and to take care of themselves with healthy nutrition and exercise.

Cheryl Sturgis, an 11-year breast cancer survivor, described her journey which began with a routine mammogram, the last appointment of the day. As she sat alone in a private waiting room, a nurse brought a bouquet of pink carnations to her and Cheryl learned that she had breast cancer, a memory that brought tears to her listeners. Also participating was Probate Judge Leah Schad.

“The mission of the Ashford Women’s Group is ‘Women Empowering Women.’ That can be done in many ways, no matter where women are in the journey of their lives. If we assist just one woman, then our mission is accomplished,” said Jill. AWG was founded by Jill, Seema Gupta and Ashford Selectwoman Cathryn Silver-Smith. AWG leaders include Misty Doering, Tracy Hammer-Will, Carrie Surdell Hastings, and Esther Lovell Jagodzinski.

Meetings of the AWG are free and support the Ashford Food Pantry and an area woman’s shelter, for which the October meeting collected hundreds of dollars’ worth of children’s toys, clothing, and toiletries. For information, go to Ashford Women’s Group on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/979051055773625/?ref=share>

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# November is National Family Caregiver Month: Here's What Caregivers Need to Know About Retiring Early

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



November is National Family Caregiver Month, an opportunity to honor the physical, mental and emotional effort that caregivers put into caring for a loved one every day. If you're a family caregiver, know that your efforts are recognized and so very valuable. But also know that it's important (and OK) to still tend to your own needs as well. Those in the "sandwich generation," who are caring for both their children and a parent or parents at the same time, carry an especially heavy load.

Whether by choice or necessity, many caregivers may find themselves retiring early. If you're a family caregiver and are considering exiting the workforce, here's what to consider to make sure you and your family are supported as well.

## 1. Understand Your Resources

When faced with the responsibility of becoming a full-time caregiver, you might think that your only option is to leave the workforce. But there are a few other resources available that may be useful in your situation.

The Family Medical Leave Act allows for "eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons."1 Check with your company if they offer this coverage.

You may also be eligible to receive payment from Medicaid for the care you provide to your loved one in your or their home. This Medicaid benefit differs by state, so contact your state's Medicaid program to see if you or your loved one qualify.2

## 2. Have an Income Plan

Planning for retirement takes careful strategizing and becoming a caregiver adds a new wrinkle. By retiring early, you may miss out on ongoing contributions to an employer-sponsored retirement plan. In addition, you may not have access to Social Security, Medicare or pensions yet. You may also be hit with withdrawal penalties if you want to access your retirement funds early.

However, even with these additional complications, it's still possible to prepare ahead for any income gaps. Working with a qualified retirement planning financial professional is key to making this transition a smooth one.

## 3. Consider Your Future

Every caregiving situation is different and it's important to consider both your short-term and long-term goals. Do you plan to take on a part-time job if you have the time and capacity? Do you want to re-enter the workforce? Are there other options available so you can still work while your loved one is taken care of? Having a clear sense of what you want for yourself can help you plan for your financial situation in the coming years.

## 4. Plan for the Emotional Changes, Too

While it's important to plan for the financial changes of becoming a caregiver, it's important to consider the emotional changes as well. Being a caregiver can be hugely rewarding, but it can also take a toll on your mental health.

Consider ways to maintain your connections to your community while being out of the workforce. This could include joining a support group with other caregivers, picking up a new hobby or making time to connect with friends and family more often. There are also some programs that offer respite care, meaning that they will care for your loved one for a short time while you get a much-needed break. In addition, seeing a mental health professional that specializes in working with caregivers may be helpful. You don't need to trade your own mental health for the health of your loved one. A healthy, happy caregiver is a confident caregiver.

## You've Got This and We've Got You.

There's a lot to consider when becoming a caregiver, especially if you plan to retire early to focus on your new role. Be sure to consider all your available resources to help close any income gap and account for the financial and emotional changes you'll likely undergo, from income planning to finding a support system. And remember, your financial professional is here to help with life's big transitions. If there's anything we can do to support you, please reach out.

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1. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla>

2. <https://www.medicaid.gov/about-us/contact-us/contact-state-page.html>

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# The Gift of Fall and Leaves

By Jesse R. Clark

Fall is my favorite time of year. A fresh new school year, changing leaves, and a little chill in the air that motivates you after the humidity of the summer. It's the paradox of everything getting busier and slowing down at the same time. As you read this, it is probably around Day of the Dead, All Saints' Day, or All Souls' Day. Maybe your mind is moving away from All Hallows' Eve and thinking of Veterans Day or Thanksgiving. Either way, this time of year is filled with history, stories—and death. And talk about serendipitous! Celebrating these holidays in New England in the *fall*? The time of year when we are in awe of the beauty of the changing leaves? What timing! We love the New England fall because of the colors, but they are a result of death and dying. It is very natural to want to avoid the idea of death—too scary to talk or think about. Yet, the leaves show that it can be something not just natural but healing as well. These holidays/celebrations are ones where we don't simply honor the dead but can set our own spirits free as well.

Halloween originates from the pagan Celtic celebration of Samhain (sow-when), the night when the veil between this world and the spirit world is at its thinnest. It is a time when people can connect with the spirits of those who have passed on. Since its origins—as with most holidays—it has been altered to make it more Christian and “wholesome.” Interestingly enough, when the Pilgrims came to America, they outlawed the holiday for being too pagan *and* too Catholic. We now appreciate the idea of wanting to talk to and picnic with dead relatives.

There is a reason that New England has so many great myths and legends. It's not just the changing leaves as a beautiful backdrop, but also the fact that you can't throw a stone without hitting a cemetery. It is there that we realize that death is the one thing that unites us all. Each gravestone is someone's life, someone's relative. And when we die, we will be honored by those who come after. That's why people love myths, history, and legends. They connect us to the past, to *our* past. Here is a short story I wrote last year called “Backstory”:

It was a crisp fall day. The sun was shining so bright that the leaves on the trees looked like they were giving off their own light, powered by the trees themselves. James was walking down the street, breathing in the fresh, crisp air.

He came across his friend Sam, who looked sad. When James asked why, Sam replied, “It's my dad. He is deployed overseas, so he's not here for Thanksgiving. God! Sometimes I wish he never enlisted in the stupid army!”

James didn't know how to respond. His family never felt comfortable talking about the armed forces, or anything political for that matter. That's the way he was raised. The joke in his family was that whenever someone would be reading the paper and give a sigh, someone else would respond, “I thought we weren't going to discuss politics.” It wasn't that funny of a joke, but it always brought a chuckle to his lips. The funny part about the whole thing was that his father had been part of the army, but never seemed to have any opinions on it one way or another. He never really showed his feelings about anything. When James's grandmother died, he asked his mother why his father hadn't cried. She replied, “He

has never been much of a mourning person.” To this day he wasn't sure if that joke was intentional or not.

Still, he wanted to be a good friend, so he comforted Sam as best as he could before going on his way. He stopped and watched as a leaf made its way down a nearby creek, flowing like the lives of his family, many of whom had gone before him. He realized that, despite being a young adult, he didn't know the stories of his own family. He thought of all the people in his community and all their stories, so different from his. How could he relate to their experiences, their points of view, if he didn't even know those of his own family?

He went home and sat down for Thanksgiving dinner. He turned to his father and asked about his experience in the army.

“You don't want to know,” he said, brushing him off.

“No, pop, I do. Please, tell me your story.”

His dad looked up at him as a smile slowly appeared across his face.

We may be scared to be open about ourselves because we want to protect ourselves. We also may be scared of asking people to share their story, not just because it may be awkward, but because we don't know what their story *is*. Can we handle what they have to say once they open up? As a child, I, like most children, had a night light. It wasn't the physical darkness that scared me, but the darkness of life. I just could not handle the negative aspects of life. My fear of the physical darkness came from my imagination, which had the power to scare me even worse than the dark. In fact, it was my fear of my imagination and my dreams that caused my fear of the dark. Likewise, when I would hear about the negative experiences of my friends, I would retreat in fear, unable to handle their reality. I was always trying to be a good kid, so anything that seemed remotely dark or not on the straight-and-narrow, I avoided. It wasn't until years later that I allowed myself to face the darker side of life in a way that was liberating. I never felt lighter, more filled with a joyful spirit. Dipping my toe in the waters of the side of life I had avoided, I was filled with peace instead of anxious fear. I realized I was in control and it's not an “all-or-nothing” situation, pure avoidance vs. drowning.

We can't let our own fears and our judgments of others get the better of us. That's what the witch trials were about. People were so scared of evil and monsters that they became the very monsters they were trying to get rid of. Yes, there are horrible people committing unthinkable acts in this world, but there are *sooo* many people whose motivations are caring, love, and healing. But in order to heal, one must go through pain. In order to see the light, there needs to be darkness. We must acknowledge our darkness. Then we can move on.

Leaves fall when they need to, because it's time to let go. Falling onto the ground and into lakes, blown by the wind, they just let go, not worried about where their journey will take them. The tree was where their story started, then they continue without the tree.

Our primal brains work by putting people into categories, friend or foe. Even when our hearts are open, fear may temporarily override our hearts to protect us. Let go of that fear. Let go of that hate. That's the trick. Then, if we can live life with love and understanding for each other as well as for ourselves, that is the ultimate treat.

# Failure to Pass

By Gary Bergquist

“License and registration, please.”

Two days in Atlanta and I'm being stopped by a Georgia state trooper. I remove the paperwork from the glove box of the rental car and pass it through the window along with my license.

“Was I speeding, officer?” I ask.

“Not at all,” he says. “That's the problem.” With that, he heads back to his cruiser, leaving me to puzzle over his words. If I wasn't speeding, why was I stopped?

Five minutes later, he returns, gives me back the paperwork, and hands me a ticket. “You're being cited under Ordinance 333, Failure to Pass. Given you're from the North, I don't reckon you know our laws. On the back of the ticket is a website where you can read up on Ordinance 333. The fine is \$333, which you may mail in the attached envelope. Have a nice day.” And he walks away.

I put away the papers and drive off, feeling like I've been sucker-punched. In the span of fifteen minutes, I've become \$333 poorer and have no idea why.

That evening, back in my hotel room, I open my laptop and go to the website shown on the back of the ticket. There I find a comprehensive explanation of Ordinance 333. Wow! I've never heard of anything like this.

Apparently, as commerce and population in Georgia have expanded during the past several decades, highway traffic has become a problem, especially in and around Atlanta. The obvious, but costly, solution was to add more lanes to the congested highways, which they did. And indeed, traffic congestion eased for a while. Over time, however, the population continued to grow, as did the traffic. Anticipating even more growth, the state authorities brought in a consulting firm to study the problem. How many more lanes would be needed to ease the growing traffic both now and into the future? What would be the cost of the highway construction project?

Surprisingly, the consultants came back with a less costly alternative to adding more lanes, one based on an approach that had been tried elsewhere—in Australia, of all places. Apparently, a study had shown that more lanes do not necessarily provide proportional relief in terms of traffic volume. You would expect, as you go from four to six lanes, that the wider highway would handle 50% more cars. Not so. It seems there is an aspect of driver psychology that also must be considered. The more lanes there are, the more drivers spread out to fill them. They say nature abhors a vacuum; apparently, so do drivers. Six drivers can congest six lanes as well as they can four lanes. Yes, more lanes improve flow, but without driver cooperation, the full benefit of the extra lanes cannot be realized. To get the most out of multiple lanes, you need drivers to behave properly, with those traveling the slowest keeping to the right, and the rest using the left lanes for passing only.

But how do you motivate drivers to “keep right except to pass”? Driver education classes teach this edict, but it's not followed in practice, even where road signs have been planted to serve as a reminder. Drivers tend to find a particular comfort lane and stay there, regardless of cars that may be queuing up behind them. The solution implemented successfully in Australia and recommended by the consultants in Georgia was to motivate drivers by fining them. Drivers who clog up the highway by not keeping right should pay a fine.

The consultants suggested the law be called the “Ordinance 333” as a mnemonic that would help drivers remember the salient points of the regulation:

**three hundred feet**

**thirty seconds**

**three seconds**

It works like this: If you stay in the rightmost lane, you're safe. You cannot be ticketed for “failure to pass.” If you move to another lane, you're safe if someone is in front of you (within 300 feet), since your ability to pass is being blocked. Otherwise, you have 30 seconds to reach the car in the lane to your right. Once you reach the car, you have three seconds to pass it. You cannot remain adjacent to the car being passed and thereby create a blockade in those two lanes. Then the clock starts over. If no one is in front of you (300 feet), reach the next car (30 seconds), and pass it (three seconds). If you can't, then pull back into the right lane.

As an additional mnemonic, and perhaps to remind drivers who's the boss, the Georgia authorities set the fine at \$333. After the ordinance was announced four years ago, state troopers were instructed to ease back on minor speeding violations and to concentrate on the slowpokes. As expected, there was a learning curve as drivers were forced to undo their ingrained pattern of mindless driving. Eventually, the sting of the fine brought most drivers around. In newspapers, on websites, and in blogs, there were articles and editorials from those who disagreed with or refused to comply with 333. Some were tagged with fines as many as a dozen times. The state seemed to have no objection to this civil disobedience as long as the fines were being paid. (For me, once was enough. The sting of the fine did its job.)

And then the miracle occurred. As with the waters parting for Moses, drivers moved right, and the lanes of Georgia highways opened up. True, during rush hour, it was still stop-and-go. But otherwise, the roads afforded smooth sailing. An unexpected benefit (perhaps not unexpected to Australians or the consultants) was that road rage disappeared. Though a stick was admittedly being used to enforce civil behavior, the result was civil behavior, nonetheless. Drivers even began flashing their headlights to let passing cars know they had cleared their front bumper and it was safe to return to the right lane before being ticketed. Drivers were now cooperating to foil the state (and their \$333 fees) instead of competing with one another to get to their destinations twelve seconds earlier. The pleasant irony was that with less-congested roads, drivers were reaching their destinations earlier anyhow.

In time, as Georgia drivers learned to consistently keep right (or pay), the state troopers again turned their attention to speeders. It was my fear of a speeding ticket that had me tootling along in the middle lane in front of the trooper. Little did I know he would instead nab me for impeding his progress. Failure to pass. \$333. A lesson for the ages.

After a few weeks in Georgia on my business trip, I'm delighted to be back home. The South is a nice place to visit, and the folks are friendly, but too much about it seems foreign to me. I welcome the comfort and familiarity of New England. I do notice, though, that some things have changed in my short absence. The highways seem more congested, and people seem to have forgotten how to drive. If only they would keep right...

**Author's note:** Every word of the above article is a lie; well, a daydream. This is the daydream I have on the highway whenever I find myself in the passing lane behind a poke.

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



A collage of Joe Marandino's work. Joe took the gargoyle photo, all others by Tom King.

## On the Pot-holed Road to Wellness

Ed. note:

A few months ago I received an email from Tolland resident, Joe Marandino. The email included some photos of his work. I have met with Joe a few times since with the intent of writing an article about how he came to produce his art. I decided the best thing to do would be to show as much of his work as possible and let him tell his story 'In His Own Words.' TK

I started creating metal sculpture and art due to a major illness and injury that came about right after I completed the welding and fabrication adult program at Cheney Tech High School in Manchester CT. My intention was to join the Ironworkers Union after I completed the program. I completed the program and passed the examination. Unfortunately, it never happened because I ended up with the devastating autoimmune disease of Crohn's Disease which really worsened to Ulcerative Colitis. Then I had a pretty bad injury. All of this left me totally laid up so bad with sickness that I couldn't even leave my house for a long, long time. To clear my mind, I started creating metal sculpture in my garage. I never set out to be an artist or took art classes. I never knew I had this creativity in me until I started tinkering with the metal in my garage.

All of my early work started with doing large scale outdoor sculptures which include a giant 1000-pound spider, frog, praying mantis and other work. I never imagined that I would have created the massive body of work that I have done to date and that it would end up all around the country and the world.

I work with the very basic of tools which include: an old Lincoln Tombstone stick welder, oxy-acetylene torches, a vice, angle grinders, a drill press and basic hand tools. No bending equipment or plasma cutter or anything else for that matter. I have five of my earliest large-scale sculptures at the beautiful New England Motorcycle Museum in downtown Rockville CT. The giant tree frog was a two-year project that I thought would never end. I put over 1200 feet of 1/2" diameter solid round stock framework in him, roughly 5 feet x 50 feet of 14ga. sheet steel skins on him. I made all the mounting hardware so that it came apart in 5 pieces for transport and set-up. Ivan is just over 9 feet long. I ended up making the second giant steel tree frog that is 12'x12' and was another two-year project that is currently displayed on my front lawn.

I build anything from scrap metal art pieces to high end sculptures. Indoor or outdoor large scale to more simple pieces. Wedding, birthday, anniversary, trophies, awards, custom pieces with lettering and everything in between. My medium is steel and I build anything. Some of the best photos of my older and current work are on my instagram: Metal Genius Joe. All of my social media is Metal Genius Joe and my website and the best way to contact me is through my website: MetalGeniusJoe.com

Through so much illness and injury and adversity came the beauty of the metal work. Life is good.

Metal Genius Joe, (Marandino)

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# Native American Use of Fire Shaped Connecticut's Pre-settlement Landscape

By Emery Gluck

The forest European settlers found was likely different from that of today. This was primarily due to the frequent fires Native Americans set, in some places, to make the land more habitable for themselves. Fires were prevalent enough that seafarers said that you could smell the land before you could see it.

The burns increased grasses which attracted their game animals, increased berry production, made travel easier, reduced pests, aided in defense, facilitated the collection of firewood and acorns as well as providing numerous other benefits. Frequent low- and moderate-intensity fires killed smaller trees and larger thin-barked fire-sensitive trees. If the area was not burned for many years, oak and chestnut sprouts would shoot up in gaps in the forest canopy created by fire, possibly grow thick fire-resistant bark before the burning resumed, and then might eventually join the older trees in the overstory.

Native Americans may have burned to promote nut-producing trees such as oaks and chestnuts. The fires killed thin-barked trees leaving the oaks and chestnuts more room to expand their crowns and produce more nuts. Acorn meal and acorn mush were important to their diet.

This Native American mortar (photo to right) was probably used to grind corn and/or acorns. It is approximately 20" wide, 20" deep, and was carved into moss-covered bedrock in Union, Connecticut. White oaks were known to the Native Americans as the sweet acorn, as they had less tannins than red oaks which produced the bitter acorns. Acorns were soaked in water to remove the tannins prior to being prepared as food.



Forests near Native American villages, encampments and main trails were probably open woodlands. They had fewer trees than today's forests and a grassy understory, as they were probably burned frequently.

Oak savannas, grasslands where the fires left only a few larger thick-barked trees, were reported on the first 15 miles of the Quinnipiac River, starting in New Haven. Along the coast and major rivers, where more Natives lived, there apparently was so much intense fire in some places that the forest reportedly gave way to grasslands. In the 1660's, Connecticut Governor John Winthrop said, "Pine knots were all that remained from generations of fallen trees in fields burned clear by the Indians". A study by Clark University documented that 17 towns in Connecticut settled by Europeans prior to 1650 were founded in openings that were previously cleared by Native Americans. Stonington, one of the 17 towns, had a Native place called Wadawannuc, which meant a place destitute of trees.

There are many places in Connecticut that have or had native names meaning "cleared, opened or broken up land" that are in the following towns: Poquonock (Poquonock village in Windsor), Pequonock (Bridgeport, one of the 17 towns), Poquonock Plains (village of



Connecticut DEEP personnel sustain what the late Dr. Bill Neiring of Connecticut College and co-founder of The Nature Conservancy called the last remnant of eastern prairie in Connecticut. Harkness State Park, Waterford. Drone photo Joel Stocker.

Poquonock Bridge, Groton), Poquetanuck (Preston); Paquanauge (Glastonbury), and Pacoquarocke (Ansonia & Derby, one of the 17 towns). Places named for naturally clear land or open country include Poconock (Milford Point), Packquahaks (plains in Milford, one of the 17 towns), Pahquioke or Paquiaug (Danbury plains), and Poquiogh (Waterford). Mattatuck, the native name for Waterbury, meant "a place without trees".

Fires and/or tree girdling with stone axes were used to clear land for planting. After years of use, the planted areas were often abandoned as the soil become less productive, and because nearby sources of firewood would be exhausted.

The "old land" or "abandoned land" was known as "Tawaway" to the Pequots. This was one of the Native names for New London. Mattaneaug meant abandoned field and was the Native name for Windsor. Much of the land cleared by Natives was abandoned as their population was decimated by European diseases and war.

Though the extent of Native American fire has been debated, it apparently had been frequent enough to support sufficient grasslands, savanna, and open woodlands for large grassland grazers. Bison made it to Massachusetts in the 17th century. Elk bones have been found in Rhode Island. The last elk in Massachusetts was reportedly shot in 1732.

Further from Native American population centers, there were fewer fires. The forests were more like the dense closed canopy forest prevalent today. Even the grasslands, savannas, and open woodlands filled in with trees when the burning stopped and eventually became dense closed canopy forests. Author Wendell Berry stated, "The forest is always waiting to overrun the field".

White oaks proliferated with fire. A study of the pre-settlement forest found approximately half of the trees in eastern Connecticut (probably near and east of

I-395) were white oaks. They are among the most rot-resistant of native oaks. The flaky bark absorbs significantly more rain from stemflow than other trees. The moist bark provides added protection from fires. Fire injury would impact red maple the most as it is thinned-bark and rot-prone.

Without fire, red maple has replaced red oak as Connecticut's most abundant tree. According to a study at



Open woodland with native grasses, Nehantic State Forest, Salem after harvest and prescribed fire. Photo author.

Yale Forest, red maple produces the most methane of all the native trees, probably due to its high percentage of decayed wood. Other thin-barked trees such black birch and beech have also flooded in with the absence of fire.

The Natives believed that they were given responsibility for caring for the land. This meant actively participating. "The natural world relies on us to do good things and to contribute to the well-being of the world." "Fire helps a lot of plants and animals. We're told that's why the Creator gave people the fire stick - to bring good things to the land." One elder is quoted "The land gives us so many gifts; fire is a way we can give back. In modern times, the public thinks fire is only destructive, but they've forgotten, or simply never knew, how people used fire as a creative force. The fire stick was like a paintbrush on a landscape. Touch it here in a small dab and you've ade a green meadow for elk; a light scatter there burns off the brush so the oaks make more acorns...."

The next article explores the rise and diminishment of today's oak forest.

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## A Memorable Autumn Display

By Bill Powers

*“Autumn is a second Spring when every leaf is a flower”*

– Albert Camus

The Old timers tell me that this year’s spectacular autumn display is the very best in their memory. They have mentioned to me that the beauty of individual trees they have seen, that are adorned with four or as many as five different colors at the same time. There was an abundance of brilliant and luminescent colors that included amber, gold, orange, scarlet, crimson, maroon, auburn, purple, red and pink interspersed by shades of green that occupied our trees and bushes. After a few weeks, the views changed from being showered by magnificent brightness to the more typical earth tone hues. Being embraced by the splendid light from the assortment of the vibrant rainbow colors, even if relatively short-lived, was especially welcomed by me and was very meaningful this year. The wonderful different tree colors waving in the wind have proved to be a greatly needed respite and a vital distraction from any of the horrors that exist in today’s world.

It just seems that the frequency, duration; and intensity of horrific events both around the world and in America, has become overwhelming. While natural disasters, as always, have taken their toll, most of the current events are results from the actions

of human beings. People throughout the world have significant global environmental concerns. The invasion of Ukraine has created: 1) a greatly diminished food supply in many parts of the world; 2) an undermining of the global prices and availability of fuel; 3) the destruction of a country and attempted genocide of its people; 4) the almost daily commission of war crimes, including murder of innocent Ukrainian citizens; and, 5) the threat of a nuclear war.

In our own country mass shootings, often using weapons designed for war, occur on a frequent basis and include the slaughter of innocent children and teachers in our schools. There are white supremacists who advocate fascist Nazi philosophy and who target Jews; and as I write this, celebrity Kanye West, has been making hateful and dangerous anti-Semitic remarks. Intimidation is occurring as voters attempt to cast their ballots for the mid-term elections. Poll workers have been threatened and continue to be threatened. The underpinnings of our democracy are threatened, as some candidates for office claim that if they are elected, they will overturn election results legally determined by the people. Even-though there is no proof that our last presidential election was “stolen”, today many high-profile politicians refuse to admit it publicly, which in turn allows ignorance to survive and hate to fester. Violence was advocated in order to obtain whatever goals extremists strove to achieve. Lies

fueled the storming of the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters, who tried to overturn the election by enforcing violence.

Is our democracy imperiled? Some Americans lost trust in our election process when former president Trump and pro-Trump lawyers in public and on conservative news networks reiterated unfounded conspiracies and baseless claims about Dominion voting machines. They claimed, among other things, that Dominion’s voting machines rigged the elections by switching votes from Trump to Biden. There have been terrible and frequent threats to Dominion’s staff that continue to this day. Clearly, trust in our election process is vital to our democratic system.

I have been grateful for the opportunity to appreciate the spectacular beauty of this year’s autumn foliage. The glorious blaze of color was apparent wherever I walked, kayaked or drove in eastern Connecticut. The marvels of this year’s autumn have served to provide a temporary breather and distraction from the many horrific events and difficult situations that challenge humanity today.

*Bill Powers took the photo above on a pond in Windham from his kayak. He is a retired Windham teacher and a graduate of the James L. Goodwin Conservation Center Master Naturalist program.*



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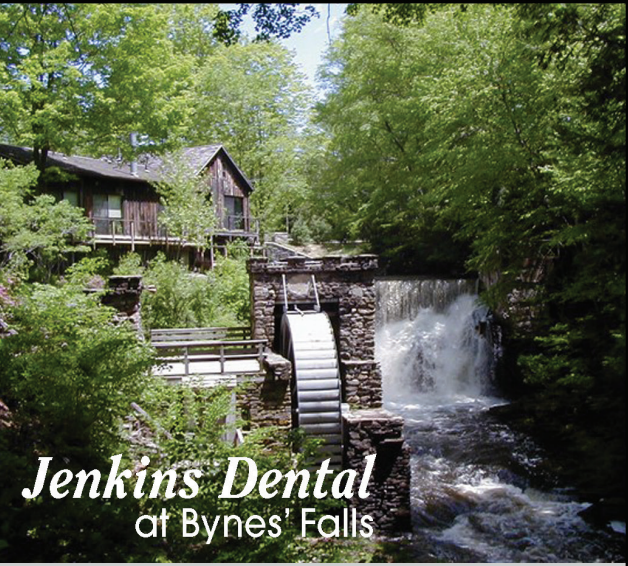
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## A Nation of Nincompoops

By Donna Dufresne

In the winter of 1981, I worked in a health food store on Whitney Avenue in New Haven. I was penniless, having sold all my worldly goods to hike the Appalachian Trail by myself the summer before. When I returned in the fall, I lived in a “cooperative household” with some friends where the rent was cheap and I could get my feet back on the ground. There was a long-haired creepy guy with a messiah complex who never wore shoes—not even in the February snow—and who frequented the store. Of course, I was a friendly cashier, ever ready to welcome the stranger even if he was a weirdo. He would proselytize and I would nod and smile as I did with the impeccably dressed Jehovah’s Witness boys who would show up on the doorstep every spring. “Live and Let Live” is a motto worth living by whether you are sober or not.

One day a well-dressed customer, clearly middle-class and health-conscious, invited me to her house for a party. She and her husband lived in a nice old house close to Yale. It was a rather posh neighborhood. When I arrived, there was a handful of other young people mingling in the living room. While we chatted, who should come sauntering out of the back room but the barefoot weirdo who thought he was Jesus Christ incarnate.

It didn’t take me long to realize I was being groomed by a cult leader. Red lights and sirens were blaring from my gut. As soon as everyone gathered in a circle of pillows and sat cross-legged, with adoring eyes on the would-be Jesus, I slipped out the door and bicycled back to Fair Haven on the slippery dark streets.

In the early 1980s, college towns were riddled with leftover cults from the ’60s and ’70s. Orange-robed Hare Krishnas delighted us with their tambourines and vegetarian meals at every nuclear protest; the Moonies sold carnations on every street corner; Jesus freaks preached from makeshift soapboxes, blaring out the “Epoxi-lips” song about the end of the world through microphones. There were more than a few Hallmark TV specials about nice middle-class girls who had to be “rescued” from cult brainwashing and mind control. I’m sure my own parents wondered about me when I began to practice yoga. It was a heady and confusing time at the cusp of the American paradigm shift.

I may have appeared to be an easy mark for religious charlatans because of my high voice and friendly affect, but having come from a working-class, rural family, I recognized a fool when I saw one. To this day, I hear my white-haired mother click her tongue over some foolishness, asking, “What the hell’s the matter with those people?”

And that is exactly what I thought when I saw Trump, the divider in chief, in a brief newsclip back in September. He was at a Republican rally in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., proudly wearing a big old silver “Q” pin on his lapel. “Q” for QAnon, that is, the biggest weirdo-collecting cult in America, whose members include the imprisoned insurrectionist who dressed up as a satanic goat critter at the Capitol on January 6. Of course, the megalomaniac narcissistic Trump would be enthralled with QAnon because of their belief that he will save the nation from a satanic cult of child sex traffickers run by Democrats.

What’s really scary is that I know people who teeter on the edge of Christian nationalism and who actually believe this stuff. Let’s just say they are not from my side of the family, which was too busy scratching out a living to get sucked into a mega cult.

Rather than behaving in a presidential manner and dismissing the fringiest of the social media zeitgeist, Trump’s response was Yeah, baby! Asked about QAnon, he said, “Is that supposed to be a bad thing?” He added, “If I can help save the world from problems, I’m willing to do it.”

Why is this fool still at the podium when he should be locked up in solitary confinement for life? Treason, lies, corruption, and a heavy lean toward totalitarianism and fascism (not to mention mega racism) are only the tip of the iceberg for the boatload of reasons why Donald J. Trump should never be allowed to run for office again. But the biggest reason of all is his embracing of a dangerous cult that believes “the storm is coming,” a reference to Trump’s final victory when he will regain power and his opponents will be tried and potentially executed on live television.

If that doesn’t scare the bejesus out of us, then we truly are a nation of nincompoops.

Solar Today:

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

By John Boiano

### People often ask me, “When’s the best time to go solar”?

An old industry saying is; *“The best time to go solar is when you first thought about it”!*

The real answer for me is; *When you’re ready to look into it and when it feels right for you!*

### When is the best time of year to go solar?

First I will lay some groundwork:

After deciding to have solar installed at your home, the process takes approx. 90 – 120 days. If you’re lucky (*if engineering, the utility and town permitting are in your favor*), the process from saying yes to install and then turning the system on is in the 60 – 90 day timeframe.

The sun cycle for the most gained solar production during the year is late April to mid-September. When a solar system produces more energy than your home uses, the extra production is tracked by a netting meter and those kilowatts show up on your electric bill as a credit. You use those credits at night and through the winter. When I design a solar system, I look at a homeowners currently yearly usage and see if their home can fit a system that offsets as much utility power as possible. A 365 day synopsis is evaluated and then a discussion around system sizing and financial comparisons are at hand. At this point we know if it will make financial sense.

### OK so when’s the best time of year to jump in?

Based on the information above, **November through February is the best time** to get the most out of your first years production! This way the system is up and running by the time the sun starts to produce the most usable energy for the year. *With that said, ANYTIME, and as soon as possible is the best time!*

The utility companies announced last month that they are asking the energy commission for another 33% price increase for this coming January 2023. They may not get all of it, but they’ll get some. They always do!

### What is the motivation to go solar?

People are motivated many different ways about going solar. Financially, emotionally, environmentally, their lack of love for the utility company, etc..

When I went solar about 13 years ago, I was motivated for a few reasons that were; helping the environment, financial reasons and to role model the life style I choose to embrace.

A little push to seriously look into it was when I saw my first electric bill in our new home that has geo-thermal heating and air conditioning. I am not much for air conditioning except on super-hot and humid days and the first winter before I installed a fireplace insert our electric bill was very high. That’s really what triggered me to get serious about it. Even though we do not buy / burn oil or gas, except for our propane cooking stove, the electric bill was shocking, even back then, 13 years ago.

I did my own research with online calculators and I tried to figure it out myself but it wasn’t until I had a solar representative come to the house and explain everything to me that I realized it would really make sense for us. It was a fast decision and I have not regretted it since.

A few years later I was so inspired that I jumped into the industry as a sales manager at SolarCity training over 500 people on how to sell solar and then went off to start a couple solar companies with other industry professionals.

To this day, I am passionate about helping others transition to solar energy.

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

*Thanks for reading my article and let’s make every day Earth Day!*

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

## Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

This last month the 19<sup>th</sup> annual car show on the Willington Hill Green was held. Joe Philippi has spear-headed this event all 19 years with help from the Connecticut Street Legends Car Club. All proceeds go to the families of a marine or federal law enforcement officer who lost their life serving our country. These different events show that people still care about one another and show that people are still willing to give back. A special thank you to Joe!!

The automobile has been around for 100 plus years. The vehicle we drive today did not just happen, it took years to develop and evolve into what we drive now. In the early days if a vehicle got 80,000 miles it was considered a high mileage vehicle. The average now is 200,000 miles. Much of this depends on normal maintenance and undercarriage rust because of where we live.

Our current and future vehicles depend heavily on electrical components to operate correctly. Hurricane Ian showed us just how vulnerable an EV car’s battery is. Salt water compromised the batteries causing them to short which caused a fire. The EV just like the ICE vehicle will take time to develop components that are environmentally friendly. The EV’s wiring, batteries, and electric motors as of right now have no real track record. An owner really does not know how long they can expect their vehicle to last before it will need to be replaced.

The repair industry is having problems finding qualified repair technicians just like many other skilled worker occupations. This along with the availability of parts has made some repairs take longer than they used to. I will give you an example of our parts problems. We were doing a radiator replacement. The first radiator we ordered was boxed wrong so it would not fit. The second radiator had a cracked fitting which rendered it useless. The third radiator had the same cracked fitting which again made it useless. This is an example of poor-quality control. We then purchased a radiator from a different manufacturer and were able to finally complete the repair. This took 10 days to do a 1-day repair. The words good enough seems to have plagued our work force and replacement part manufacturers. This costs the repair facility time and money. This does not even consider how the customer reacts to a problem that the repair facility has no control of. Even what is considered a simple repair can demonstrate this.

Most vehicles have a locking lug nut on each wheel. The dealer supplies a special socket to remove the lock. Please become familiar with the socket and where it is stored. It is surprising how many car owners are not aware that their vehicle has locking lug nuts until services have to be performed and they have no idea where this socket is.

Each month I try to write about things of importance that have happened since my last article and may be of use to the motoring public. Hopefully this will help customers understand the changes and problems that are happening in the automotive industry.

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

### Quiet Corner Contra Dance

Friday, November 4, 2022

**Different location – this month only:**  
Mill Brook Place, 1267 Main St., Coventry  
(across the street from the Bidwell Tavern)

Dance 8:00 - 11:00 p.m.

Introductory lesson at 7:45.

Mask optional & proof of vaccine or negative covid test within 72 hours required.

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# Why Your Autistic Loved One May Need to Cook Alone

By Jaime A. Heidel – The Articulate Autistic

Have you noticed that when you enter the kitchen while your autistic loved one is cooking, they seem anxious, distracted, or irritable? Do they appear to ignore you? Does it upset you that they appear uninterested in spending time with you, accepting your help, or delegating cooking tasks to you?

This is actually down to a difference in neurology, not a lack of interest in connecting with you. If you're having difficulty understanding your autistic loved one's reactions to your presence while they're cooking, what I'm about to explain could shed some light on their point of view.

While this won't apply to all autistic people, here are some reasons your autistic loved one may need to cook alone:

## Distractions and Interruptions

Being distracted or interrupted when I'm cooking, even a simple dish, can spell disaster. Unlike non-autistic people, whose brains seem to *automatically* filter out extraneous stimuli while sequencing mental steps, and effortlessly moving their bodies, I have to *manually* concentrate on doing these things. This means I have to put every ounce of my energy and mental focus toward the food preparation task at hand, or I'll risk cutting myself, tripping, burning myself, or missing an ingredient or step in the process.

## Working Memory

Both my working memory and my short-term memory are terrible. Thus, in addition to having to focus on manually filtering out sensory stimuli, I have to read and re-read instructions multiple times, sometimes needing to repeat those instructions back to myself as I do the task. If someone comes in to talk to me, my already-tenuous grasp on what I'm doing is snapped like a rubber band, and I become disoriented.

## Coordination

Like many autistic people, I have poor proprioception (proprioception being the ability to know where my body is in space and relation to other objects). Just in everyday life, it takes nothing for me to trip, slip, run my fingers into a wall when walking from one room to the next, or clip an object with my hand while reaching for another object behind it.

My coordination is terrible, and that's just when I'm moving around, never *mind* trying to concentrate on sequential tasks like cooking!

Interruptions, whether sudden or expected can lead to me accidentally cutting my finger, burning myself, or dropping a glass jar because I've missed the counter by half an inch when setting it down.

## Anxiety

Anxiety can also play a large role in why your autistic loved one needs to cook alone. We may prepare food in a different way than you believe is "correct", or you think you can show us an "easier" way, but it won't be easier for us because the steps we've practiced are the steps we've memorized, and they are embedded into our mental map.

Moreover, we may have been yelled at or teased because of the way we do things, how many times we need to refer back to instructions, or mistakes we've made in the past.

Furthermore, many autistic people can go from appearing to be masters of a task to looking like clumsy beginners if anyone is watching them.

## Slower Processing Speed

In addition to memory challenges and anxiety, your autistic loved one may also have a slower auditory or visual processing speed. So, for example, when you try to show them how to make Grandma's Famous Meatloaf, they may not be able to process your instructions fast enough, or they may make mistakes on tasks you consider "easy". When you get frustrated or angry with them, or when you accuse them of being "willfully obtuse", what you envisioned to be a fun family bonding experience can quickly turn into a nightmare on our end.

## Sensory Differences

The only way I can cook is to be alone in the kitchen while listening to podcasts, music, or white noise. In other words, the only way I can cook (and do other household chores) is by drowning out other sensory stimuli, especially anything that might startle me and/or disrupt my concentration.

Listening to something predictable that doesn't expect me to provide reciprocal feedback works to focus my mind while also helping get me into a rhythm that makes preparing a meal an easier and more streamlined process for my neurology.

When someone talks to me during meal preparation, especially if they expect well-thought-out responses complete with head nodding, smiling, open body language, and a friendly vocal tone, all of this takes so much manual concentration, I can damn near forget how to butter bread.

## The Takeaway

If your autistic loved one has the age, ability, and experience to cook alone, let them do it. If you're teaching your autistic loved one to cook, be clear and concise in your instructions, answer all questions, and only talk about the task at hand while learning is taking place to avoid unnecessary confusion, derailed concentration, and depletion of mental energy.

# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Artists Market

Submitted by Debra Gag

November 19 – 20, 10 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.  
25 Pompey Hollow Road, Ashford  
(Babcock Library Hall)

The Ashford Area Arts Council is so excited to host this free event. Mark your calendars! Pass the word! These artisans will have unique handmade items for you just in time for your Holiday Shopping. Live music!

Deb Aldo: Mosaics (Sunday)  
Christine Acebo: photography (Sunday)  
Lance Arnold: Glassworks and Fairy Houses (Saturday)  
John Boiano: pottery (Saturday)  
Nancy Bunnell: pastel paintings, photography (Sunday)  
Cindy Curry: Photography art cards (Saturday)  
Mark Drobney: laser cut objects (Sunday)  
Lorraine Foster: gourd luminariums (Saturday)  
Deb Gag: Oil Paintings (Sunday)  
Sandra Huber: Handmade kiln-fired glass beads (Saturday)  
Maggie Kendis: printmaker, jewelry (Sunday)

Joan Blade Johnson: botanical prints, fiber arts (Saturday)  
Frietha Lawrence: Zentangles, paintings and cards (Sunday)  
Kathleen Lepak: calligraphy cards, illustrated books, blank books (Saturday)  
Marilyn Makuch: beaded jewelry and gifts (Sunday)  
Charles McCaughtry: watercolor paintings and block prints (Sunday)  
Gretchen Geromin and Lauren Merlo: wooden cutting boards, woodburning designs (Sunday)  
Mike Metsak: goat milk soaps and creams (Saturday)  
Dana Monaco: cartonnage (Saturday)  
Pat Morris: wildlife art, feather painting (Saturday)  
Sue Muldoon: Basketry (Saturday)  
Linda Saucier: silver jewelry, semi-precious stones (Saturday)  
Lori Smolin: watercolor paintings (Sunday)  
Michael South: Windjammer Guitars (Sunday)  
Suzy Staubach: Pottery, books (Sunday)  
Kathy Weigold: handwoven items (Saturday)

# At UConn's Benton Museum

Submitted by Maripaz Shaw

2022 Digital Media and Design Faculty Exhibition  
October 27 - December 18, 2022

This annual exhibition features new work by the artists and designers who teach in UConn's Digital Media & Design department, School of Fine Arts.

The variety of media featured reflects the diverse academic concentrations offered by the department, including Motion Design & Animation, Web/Interactive Media Design, Game Design, and Digital Film/ Video Production.

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# COMMUNITY MEDIA AND REGIONAL ARTS ON THE HOMEFRONT UPDATE A PROMOTION AND OUTREACH TOOLBOX

By John Murphy

Hi everyone, as we change the clocks again in early November, I am reminded of our curious history of marking our daily lives against the passing of time, and how we stumble along with shared mythologies of consciousness with occasional shots of humor, hubris, and compassion to wash them down.



If we all live in the spectacular now, with everything happening everywhere at once, like the recent film posed, then reading *Neighbors* is a fantastic way to slow the blur down and relax and focus on our local realities—hard and soft—in eastern Connecticut. This newspaper offers a wonderful cruise every month, one story or column at a time, to help us feel warmer and fuzzier about where we live and the people who are all around us. At its best, every town can be Our Town, and thank you Mr. Wilder, my choice for Stage Manager is Mark Twain!

## ON THE HOMEFRONT SERIES UPDATE

*On the Homefront* was created with that wonderful play *Our Town* in mind, with the program host as Stage Manager and Coach, breaking down the media fourth wall between guests and folks who listen or watch.

I am pleased to report that our new regional media hub is alive with its new multi-media format, and it is working to serve people across eastern Connecticut. We launch new live shows every Wednesday from 5-6 pm on WILI AM 1400 and digital 95.3 FM, and if you miss them, they are posted online for you to enjoy and share with others anytime, anywhere.

The arts community in all its forms was our launching pad and ongoing partnerships have been established with many important arts organizations that provide support and outreach, with regular reports every 4-6 weeks from the following—and thanks to every guest for contributing to this effort:

- Windham Regional Arts Council
- Coventry Arts Guild
- Ashford Arts Council
- Putnam Arts Council
- Arts Center East (Vernon)
- Cultural Coalition Serving Southeastern and Northeastern Connecticut

Music venues are critical resources for our social and cultural wellbeing, and I am working with a small but precious network to cross-promote events and share audience building for live music in our region. Despite real progress, we are still recovering from the heavy economic impacts of the Pandemic, and it is critical for people to remember how vital their support is needed for the Creators and take action to attend live events.

- The Packing House in Willington ([www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us))
- The Stomping Ground in Putnam ([www.the-stomping-ground.com](http://www.the-stomping-ground.com))
- The Side Door Jazz Club in Old Lyme ([www.sidedoorjazz.com](http://www.sidedoorjazz.com))

My next effort to build this information infrastructure is to expand the topic focus and participation to include our local economy, local government, and the regional environment, with the following:

- Council of Government (COGS)—connecting several towns across the region
- Chambers of Commerce (Windham and Northeast Connecticut)—new businesses
- Connecticut Chapter of The Sierra Club
- Audubon Connecticut
- Nature Conservancy in Connecticut
- Clean Water Action Connecticut

If you are involved with any of these efforts, please contact me to arrange for coverage in the months ahead.

## A PROMOTION AND OUTREACH TOOLBOX FOR THE COMMUNITY

This new regional media hub is more than it seems! There is something happening here that is beyond the production and distribution of local programs and stories. And it comes from the heart of our community.

My original vision and intention for this holistic effort was to **create a community advertising and promotion agency**, freely available for people and organizations to use throughout the year, when there is a critical or strategic need to reach the public at a larger than normal scale. This could be a wonderful resource for annual meetings, fundraisers or collaborative events or programs—for people, groups, or organizations.

Media is usually expensive and communication budgets are usually limited. Occasional use of traditional media coverage is great when you have access to it, but that is no longer enough. For sustainable success communication with the public must be regular and frequent to build and maintain connection and momentum.

This agency function was already integrated in all my local media work over the years, but now the scale can be larger with increased impact to serve the communication needs of guests. With the expansion of our production format from live radio at WILI to include video with YouTube and public access TV channels and other local radio broadcasts, a genuine regional network for information sharing has been created. Sharing links to this network content adds power, reach and impact to all your messages and appeals for local action and support.



My previous *Neighbors* columns have documented the developmental process and progress with this effort over the past several years. The website has a complete archive of issues at [www.neighborspaper.com](http://www.neighborspaper.com). I am pleased that the entire media hub is alive now and operational and it is ready for people and organizations to learn about it and get to work! All it takes to open the door is an email to me at [john@humanartsmedia.com](mailto:john@humanartsmedia.com).

Studio photos from a recent show on October 26—join us at WILI 702 Main Street in Willimantic:



Liz Bologna of Arts Center East and John Murphy.



Miriam Drew and Mark Lowe from the Prometheus Theatre of the Air with John Murphy. Contributed photos.

The whole show is available on the WILI Radio YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/RAdEDp7DkU4>.

Other guests that day included David Sullivan (Board Member) from the Putnam Arts Council and Charlene Haukom, NE Region Coordinator, Cultural Coalition serving southeast and northeast Connecticut.

The following link will take you to the WILI Radio YouTube channel, where many of the special weekly programs are posted—they air Mondays through Fridays from 5:00-6:00 pm:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFY4\\_TDRh\\_jING-5Z0k6pmKg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFY4_TDRh_jING-5Z0k6pmKg)

How you can access our network—to learn more or participate:

- WILI Radio 1400 AM and 95.3 Digital FM—our home base on Wednesdays at 5-6 pm
- WILI YouTube Dedicated Channel = search on WILI Radio or open email links
- 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)

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.

Always keep the faith, see you next month,

John Murphy  
[john@humanartsmedia.com](mailto:john@humanartsmedia.com)  
WILI Radio Wednesdays 5—6 pm  
WECS Radio Wednesdays 12—3 pm



**Seeking New Board Members**

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

EC-CHAP is positioning its Board of Directors to ensure we have the capacity to oversee a **major facility project**, and respond to a **changing environment**. We embrace diversity, and invite individuals with a broad range of creative and analytical skills to apply.

Please visit [www.ec-chap.org/board2022](http://www.ec-chap.org/board2022) to learn more and to apply online. Questions may be addressed by email to: [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org); or by calling: 518.791.9474.

**WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG**

156 River Road, Suite 2106A, Willington, CT 06279 | 518.791.9474 | [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org)



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



## NCC Orchestra Concerts

By Jane Anderson Vercelli

The Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra will present a Winter Concert on Friday, Nov. 18, 2022 at 7 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 525 Ashford Center Road (Rte 44) in Ashford. The church is between the Hole in the Wall Camp and the Ashford Dairy Bar. Admission is free. Masks are required. Donations are welcome.

We are grateful to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for providing us with an auditorium in which we could rehearse while socially distanced (and masked) during the Covid quarantine.

Our program to celebrate the season features music by Corelli, Bach and Vivaldi as well as Torelli and Rowley. Our all-strings orchestra consists of musicians from towns throughout eastern Connecticut. Our conductor is Dylan Lomangino of Bloomfield.

We are also excited to return to Clark Memorial Chapel on the Pomfret School campus to play our Winter Concert on Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022 at 2 p.m. Admission is free. Masks are required. Donations are welcome.

This will be our first concert at Clark Chapel since December 2019 just before the Covid 19 quarantine of March 2020.

The orchestra welcomes musicians of all ages to join us in weekly rehearsals. Vaccinations are required of all musicians. Questions? Call or text 860 428-4633 or message [janevercelli@gmail.com](mailto:janevercelli@gmail.com)

## Letters and Emails

To the Editor-

If you are interested in voting for a state senate candidate with an existing track record of improving our community, Lisa Thomas is the obvious choice. Lisa has been a teacher in Connecticut public schools for over 37 years, serves on the CT Grown 4 CT Kids Advisory Council, and is the current Coventry Town Council Chairwoman. These are just a few of the ways she has demonstrated her commitment to our towns.

It's important to me to have a state senator who prioritizes education because the youth in our towns today will be the leaders of our towns tomorrow. As an educator, Lisa has supported equitable access to education at all levels from pre-k through college. She has founded educational programs that prioritize collaborative learning and supports teaching the vocational skills that are key to our region of the state. In her platform to become our state senator (available on her website, <https://lisaforstatesenate.com/>), Lisa outlines her commitments to secure equitable funding for schools in our district, achieve effective student-to-social worker ratios in our schools, and work towards debt-free community college. She truly understands the education system inside and out, and I want her voice to be heard at the state level.

The knowledge and commitment that Lisa demonstrates is exactly what I am looking for in a state senator. I will be voting for Lisa Thomas on November 8th, and I encourage you to do the same.

Lisa Famularo, Vernon, CT

### Holiday Market

Saturday, November 19th 9-1  
Community Room, Scotland Firehouse  
47 Brook Rd. Scotland

Food & Craft vendors with vegetables and baked goods for your Thanksgiving table plus holiday gifts from birdhouses, alpaca apparel, soaps, gift boxes to greenery and wreaths for decorating. Also Chowder and refreshments for purchase. Come support our local Cub Scout Troop who will have a fundraiser as well!

### Windham Arts

is looking for actors to be involved in scenes from **A Christmas Carol**. Only two rehearsals required. Performances at the Jillson House museum the evening after Thanksgiving and one date in December. Please call Carol Macy if you are interested! 860-575-9490.

## Letters and Emails

To the Editor-

After the Supreme Court's unprecedented and unjustified decision to strip away people's right to choose, it is more important than ever to elect politicians who are unwavering in supporting healthcare and safety for all of us. Throughout the country, we have seen examples of patients being denied treatments for miscarriages or other life-saving procedures because doctors are afraid that treating them would be considered performing an abortion and lead to prosecution. Connecticut is not removed from this crisis; as more states take away fundamental rights, people across the country will look to our state for healthcare and leadership. One of the greatest leaders on this issue is Coventry Town Council Chair Lisa Thomas, who is running for Connecticut's 35th Senate district. Lisa unequivocally supports contraceptive equality and access to abortion care for all. Our district deserves an advocate who is bold and unwavering in supporting reproductive freedom. Because of this, Lisa Thomas is the clear choice for our next state senator.

Meredith LaMalva, Coventry, CT

To the Editor-

Our General Assembly needs legislators with experience working on local budget issues and responding to the fiscal needs of our small towns. To achieve this, we need leaders that understand how to navigate budgets and advocate for state grants in a way that targets our public works and essential services without giving into wasteful spending. That is why we need Lisa Thomas as our next state senator for CT's 35th district to provide fiscal leadership and responsibility in our region. During her 7 terms on the Coventry Town Council, Lisa has consistently advocated for responsible budgets that balance the needs of the community with residents' ability to pay. Her record as Council woman includes passing bipartisan budgets that reduce or have no mil rate. Most importantly, Lisa has kept these budgets balanced while maintaining essential services and a school district recognized for its excellence. This mix of fiscal discipline and support for our schools and public services is exactly the kind of leadership we need in the state senate.

Claire C. Twerdy, Coventry, CT

To the Editor-

I am a local resident who would like to submit this letter about Lisa Thomas and the upcoming midterm elections.

When I look at the election this year, I'm not voting by party. Whether they're a Democrat or a Republican, we need elected officials who are willing to work across the aisle and get things done for our region. When I reviewed the local candidates, one of them stood out.

Lisa Thomas is endorsed by the Independent Party, which means she is being recognized for her ability to think for herself. When she says she'll work with everyone in Hartford to do what's best for our towns, I believe her. Our elected officials need to be able to focus on our needs first, and someone with an Independent Party endorsement is more likely to do that.

Her campaign platform only makes me more confident in her. Lisa isn't listing talking points - she's talking about the real issues impacting us, including creating jobs and supporting our fire and police departments to protect public safety. That's the kind of effort we need from a State Senator. I'll be happy to vote for her.

Simar Grewal, Tolland, CT

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Call 860-576-8111.



### Harvest Dinner

November 5, 2022, 5pm - 7pm  
Hampton Congregational Church  
263 Main Street, Hampton  
Meal includes Roast Pork or Vegetarian Stuffed Squash, Maple carrots, roasted potatoes & desserts  
Tickets \$12 adults; \$6 children; under 5 free  
For info 860-455-9677

### Help Me Form a Band!

I'm a Mansfield Center resident who sings and writes lyrics but never learned an instrument. I am seeking a lead guitarist, a stand-up bass player, and a drummer for a 1950s-styled rock 'n' roll band.

To date, I've recorded five of my songs. You can hear them at [bopflu.bandcamp.com](http://bopflu.bandcamp.com).

Interested? Please contact Dean at [bopflu@gmail.com](mailto:bopflu@gmail.com).

### Coventry Winter Farmers Market

November 13, 2022 through March 19, 2023  
(no Christmas or New Years Markets)

Website: [www.coventrywinterfarmersmarket.com](http://www.coventrywinterfarmersmarket.com)  
Sign up for our weekly newsletter on the site. We will have 25-30 vendors each week, consisting of local products and produce including baked goods, meat and fish, handmade jewelry and decor, freshly roasted coffee and much more. The market is back at Coventry High School from 10:00-12:30 every Sunday. Stuart Hecht, Market Master

### Fletcher Memorial Library News

Fletcher Memorial Library's fall author series continues with a program featuring local author, illustrator and artist Helen Scanlon. She will offer a kid-friendly program, Saturday November 12 from 11 am - 12 noon, when she will talk about horses and horse books and do a demonstration drawing, along with providing tips on improving the participants' own horse drawing skills. Scanlon has been drawing since childhood, with horses on the farm where she grew up as her favorite subject. In col-



lege, she studied dressage and worked as a groom at a large dressage facility where she was again able to draw horses from life. Scanlon had her first equine artwork published in an Arabian horse journal when she was thirteen, and she has subsequently written and illustrated *The Great Red Horse* series of books for children, as well as publishing two adult volumes on the University of Connecticut equine sciences program, *My Horse, My Heart: The Morgan Horses of the University of Connecticut* and *Dust and Determination: A History of UConn Polo*. Her illustrations have also been featured in *Polo Players' Edition* and *Connecticut Horse* magazines.

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

Neighbors  
a little paper  
big on community.

# Point of View

By Felix F. Giordano

In my opinion, Point of View is the one elemental aspect of writing that gives many authors the most difficulty. The reason is that when authors present an incorrect point of view, they sometimes don't even realize they've made that error because they're more engaged in telling the story. I was constantly flagged by my writing professor, Jordon Pecile PhD, for using an incorrect point of view when I attended creative writing classes at Manchester Community College. It took a while but I did learn from my mistakes.

What is point of view? Think of point of view in the terms of your view of the world. Suppose that you're at someone's house, in the dining room with a half-dozen guests. You converse with them, listen to what they have to say, see how they're dressed, and even examine their mannerisms. You can remember everything that occurred in that room and can easily tell someone who wasn't there all about what transpired. However, what you can't possibly see or know is what happened in the kitchen. You may sense cooking aromas emanating from the kitchen, see people coming and going into the kitchen, and even hear conversations from inside the kitchen. What's impossible to know is how the kitchen looks, the physical appearances of the people who never left the kitchen, and what interpersonal interactions took place inside that kitchen.

If we're telling a story from say, Johnny's perspective then we have to stick to the sights, sounds, and details that Johnny is aware of. Johnny can't possibly know what Mary is thinking unless of course, Mary informs him. Johnny can't know what Mary is seeing or experiencing unless he's with her. Even then Johnny can't be aware of Mary's emotions unless, again, Mary informs him of her feelings.

Here's where it gets tricky. We can write a short story from one character's point of view but if we try to do that in a longer piece, like a novel, we must have plot discipline. This ensures that we don't stray from any one point of view during a passage in the story while providing the reader with enough information to keep them engaged. So, what do I mean by that? The traditional way to effectively tell a novel-length story is that we need to present it in multiple points of view, or rather, in the viewpoints of different characters.

Say you're writing a romance novel. Peter's in love with Joan but it's not reciprocal and he doesn't know that. When telling the story in Peter's point of view you can show how much he's in love with Joan and how he places her on a pedestal. Then when telling the story in Joan's point of view you can show how she despises him and is only going along with the romantic farce in order to gain access to Peter's fortune.

I find that it's easier to segregate the different points of view by chapter. That is, in one chapter I may have the point of view be that of the protagonist. Another chapter I may use the point of view from the perspective of a minor character. Then in another chapter I may use the point of view of the antagonist. Using this method, the story develops and the reader doesn't wonder whose point of view is being presented because they become aware of that at the beginning of each chapter. For instance, I start a chapter either naming the character in whose point of view the chapter will be about or have that character start a conversation or suggest a thought. For instance: Alma Rose took the window seat next to the wing in the Boeing 727. We have a hint that the point of view in this chapter will be Alma Rose.

Going hand in hand with point of view is telling our story in either the first person, second person, or third person. In first person we tell the story in the voice of the protagonist and it's represented in the story by referencing, I went down the subway steps or I suspected the food was a gift from an unknown benefactor. Some authors use this method of first person and it is very common in memoirs and short stories.

Second person is a bit tricky in that the story is told as if the story itself is having a conversation with the reader. An example would be, You took the subway train to the end of the line and then discovered a cache of military weapons on the platform. You're wondering what to do. Should you alert the police? But what if you find out they're in on it?

In both first person and second person you can only tell the story in ways that the characters become aware of. In other words, you can't tell the reader that an ocean volcano just erupted four-thousand miles away and triggered a tsunami because it would be impossible for a first person or second person narrative to know that.

That brings us to third person which is the most common usage in storytelling and the practice of switching from different points of view for the characters. In my opinion, this is the easiest way to tell a story. It's also using an omnipresent voice where you can alert the reader of certain things in the story which the characters may not be aware of, like the volcanic eruption that just took place four-thousand miles away. As an example, this passage is from my upcoming novel, Montana Ripper:

Louis stomped on the gas pedal and the Corvette lurched forward. The torque shifted the car's center of gravity toward the rear axle which lifted the front end slightly off the pavement. At that same moment, Louis felt a hard jolt. The van rear-ended his Corvette. The combination of the shift in center of gravity and the collision sent Louis' Corvette airborne off the right side of the road and over the guard rail.

The impact compromised the car's drivetrain and caused the engine to stall. The Corvette's momentum flung it more than fifty yards down an embankment and through a grove of aspen trees. The car came to rest hidden in a cluster of trees and shrubs just a few yards short of the Bull River. Good fortune was all that kept the car upright and the occupants free from major injury. But that would be short-lived.

Dazed, Louis turned to Hanna and in a slow, methodical voice asked, "Are you all right?"

As you can see, this chapter is written in third person and from Louis' point of view. Then it goes into omnipresent voice in respect to the compromise of the drivetrain since Louis can't possibly know about that unless he got out of the car and inspected the undercarriage. Also, the hint of impending danger by using the words "short-lived" is also representative of omnipresent voice.

The mistake that some writers make is when they begin a chapter in one character's point of view and then switch to another character's point of view. Here's an example of a point of view mistake:

As Johnny reached over to kiss Mary he felt his face grow warm all over. Mary knew he was going to kiss her but she thought their relationship was moving too quickly.

It sounds okay but the mistake is that if this story or chapter was written from Johnny's perspective, we can't write that "Mary knew". That would be violating the rule of point of view. If you wanted to write it that way to show the reader the evolution of their relationship, authors use hashtags to indicate a point of view switch. It would look like this:

As Johnny reached over to kiss Mary he felt his face grow warm all over.

Mary knew he was going to kiss her but she thought their relationship was moving too quickly.

I still feel that utilizing the chapter method of assigning point of view is best. Here's how to compose it and keep the story in one character's point of view:

As Johnny reached over to kiss Mary he felt his face grow warm all over. But then he saw Mary pull away.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

Mary said, "I think our relationship is moving too quickly."

This is how we approach point of view in writing. If a character is driving their car to work, they can't possibly know what's happening that very moment at work. As writers we have to be very careful not to switch from one character's point of view to another just to tell the story. If you plan to submit your work to an editor or an agent, point of view is one of the primary mistakes that will produce a negative flag for your submission.

Here's a web link that you can use for additional research on this topic:  
<https://tutors.com/lesson/point-of-view-first-second-third-person>

We defined "Point of View" 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](http://jbnovels.com).*

Next Month's Topic: Language, Dialects, Phrases, and Idioms

## Invisible

Born of flesh and blood, a beating heart  
and a different pulse right from the start.

Invisibility follows her every footstep  
like the grasp of an afternoon shadow,  
impossible to escape. Or like the rose  
that no one bothers to smell.

Few ever take the time to see or hear the pain,  
much less remember her face or even her name.

Even in the midst of a bustling crowd  
She feels alone and as invisible  
as a dark evening cloud.

She speaks and no one listens.  
She enters but no one sees.  
Could it be that life's cruelest joke of all  
is that she was actually BORN a ghost?

Anonymous

## 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](mailto:deb.pietredure@gmail.com)

More about the instructor- [www.pietreduredesign.com](http://www.pietreduredesign.com)

Instagram [@deb.pietredure](https://www.instagram.com/deb.pietredure) Facebook [deb.aldo](https://www.facebook.com/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).

## Is it a good time to buy an electric car? It's complicated.

**CT Mirror.** "The rush to buy for many is on when it comes to thinking about electric vehicles, or EVs. Hurry and buy now? Maybe. Wait and buy later? Maybe. It's complicated. That's not just because of the incentives in the new Inflation Reduction Act. Many states also have incentive programs designed to get residents to buy electric vehicles. And there are all kinds of state and federal one-off endeavors designed to lay groundwork so you can actually use the EV when you buy it...First figure out if you want an EV and then if it can actually do whatever it is you plan to do with it... That means looking at how far you're likely to drive; the kinds of vehicles that are available; the support structure such as public charging stations where you're likely to travel, and availability of charging at home. And anything else that may have a bearing on your driving. Then look at all the incentives."

## PURA Wants The Public To Get Involved

**CT News Junkie.** "One thing consumers should imagine when thinking about what exactly Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulation Authority (PURA) does, is to think along the lines of Law and Order or Perry Mason, according to PURA Chairman Marissa Gillett...Gillett, who has been chairman for a little more than three years, started holding "PURA 101" workshops right before COVID hit. While some are held on Zoom, more and more are now in person. Usually partnering with a state legislator, Gillett will visit a community to address any questions. Her office has come up with several YouTube videos to address topics like how to read an electric bill – which is currently undergoing a redesign – and how to get involved in a rate case. "PURA, in my mind, is one of the least-understood agencies, which is a shame, because we have kind of the biggest demonstrable impact on your day-to-day-life," Gillett said." See the new PURA Quarterly Newsletter

## Farmer's Cow turns farm waste into sustainable power

**Daily Campus.** "The Farmer's Cow brand of companies and Connecticut-based Circular Energy Group have announced their plans for the "Anaerobic Digester" project, an alternative energy source to create sustainable renewable energy in Connecticut...the digester systems will be placed on 20 farm-owned acres. They will process manure from dairy and chicken farms in the area, creating Renewable Natural Gas (RNG). The systems are designed to digest and process manure from 6,500 dairy cows and approximately 6 million egg-laying chickens. The project is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to removing 7,000 gasoline/diesel-powered automobiles from our roads; plus produce enough energy, in power equivalence, to power 8,000 homes."

## Severe winter could strain power grid amid natural gas shortage

**Hartford Business Journal.** "The operator of New England's power grid, ISO New England Inc., says the region could face a strain this winter as it competes with European countries for shipments of liquefied natural gas, according to the Wall Street Journal. The grid relies on natural gas imports to supply New England with electricity during the winter months. ISO New England told the newspaper that an extremely cold winter could result in "rolling blackouts to keep electricity supply and demand in balance," according to the report."

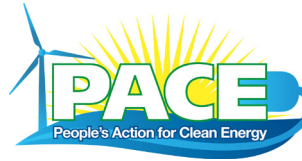
## CT lawmakers help boost low-income home energy program

**CT Mirror.** "A program that helps low-income households pay for home energy costs will get a \$1 billion infusion in Congress' short-term bill to fund the federal government as Connecticut and the New England region brace for high heating prices this winter..."Strengthening LIHEAP is the

best and most direct way to provide people with support to lower their home energy costs, and under new guidelines there are more households than ever that now qualify for the assistance..." Plus: Connecticut Energy Assistance Program May Receive an Extra \$20 Million

## New England states poised to capitalize on new federal climate law incentives

**Energy News Network.** "Years of work crafting climate and clean energy plans have left New England states in a prime position to take advantage of renewable energy incentives in the historic climate bill enacted by Congress over the summer, advocates say...The incentives in the IRA can enhance some of the state-level programs already in place, such as by stacking federal tax credits on top of existing credits for electric vehicles or energy efficiency work, said Charles Rothenberger, climate and energy attorney for Save the Sound, in Connecticut...Other funding streams could help get clean energy or emissions reduction programs off the ground that have previously failed to win approval because of cost concerns, he said...Because the federal funding has a limited time span, "states can't take their eyes off the ball."



## Connecticut pays \$7.3M for natural gas power plant in Hartford. It serves state and privately owned buildings.

**Hartford Courant.** "Connecticut has paid \$7.3 million for a natural gas power plant in Hartford to heat and cool more than a dozen buildings, saying the acquisition will save money and improve energy efficiency...The purchase was made despite an executive order by Gov. Ned Lamont in 2019 requiring the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to analyze and recommend strategies to achieve a 100% zero carbon target for the electric sector by 2040...The Capitol Area District Heating and Cooling System is a state-owned thermal energy supply system with two closed loop distribution systems, hot water and chilled water, and a pump house...More than 3 miles of underground pipes deliver hot and chilled water to 10 state-owned buildings and five privately owned buildings in the Capitol District, including the Legislative Office Building, Supreme Court, State Office Building, Armory and Bushnell Performing Arts Center."

## Northeast embraces first-of-a-kind virtual power plant

**E&E News.** "New England became the first regional energy market to use a virtual power plant this summer, with thousands of home solar and battery storage projects exporting power to the grid. Solar giant Sunrun announced on Tuesday that it had succeeded in providing power to customers in June, July and August through a virtual power plant that combined an estimated 5,000 small-scale solar energy systems in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. The systems, which included solar panels on homes, were paired with batteries to store excess solar power, which could then be shared with the grid when energy demand was high..."Having these resources participate in the wholesale market increases visibility to the grid operator to know these resources are available." Sunrun's program was able to leverage sunny days this past summer to add power to the New England grid, reducing the grid operator's need to rely on more expensive fossil fuel plants, the company said in a news release."

## New battery storage facility proposed in Preston

**The Day.** "FirstLight Power gathered company and local officials at its power generation station along the Quinebaug River Wednesday to announce it is retiring the last remaining fossil-fueled plant in its system in May 2023 to be replaced with renewable battery facility. FirstLight operates a 17-megawatt Kerosene-fired power generation plant, located on the same property as the Tunnel Dam hydropower facility in Preston. The 1969 plant operates only at times of peak power needs, FirstLight CEO Alicia Barton said. The company will replace the Kerosene facility with a 17-megawatt cleaner, more efficient battery energy storage system..."

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

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



At a recent event are Rikke Wassenberg, Friends of L'Ecole Agape (center), with (l) Esther Jagodzinski, and (r) Lorraine Cloutier, both of the Hungarian Social Club of Ashford. The HSCA is a public charity that supports local causes while promoting the culture of Hungary. Contributed photo.

## Hungarian Club Donates to Haitian School

By Carol Davidge

The Hungarian Social Club of Ashford is a public charity since 1935 that supports local causes while promoting the culture and food of Hungary. The HSCA recently presented a check of \$200 to the Friends of L'Ecole Agape School in Haiti, which provides free education, meals, books, and support to girls living there.

"L'Ecole Agape provides students with tools for the future to prepare for a better life. Years ago, Hungarians in America suffered many mining accidents, creating thousands of orphans in this country. Now that this is no longer the case, we have extended charity to beneficiaries that are close to our members hearts," said Esther Jagodzinski, President of the HSCA. "Our Secretary, Mrs. Lorraine Cloutier, cares deeply for these children, and we have participated in several events benefitting Friends of Ecole Agape, including annual wreath decorating and chili competitions," she added. Contributions help the girls of Haiti to create opportunities for themselves and security for their families. Donations may be sent to: Friends of L'Ecole Agape, P.O. Box 303, Ashford, CT 06378.

"These actions are part of many services that the Club undertakes throughout the year," said Esther. For information about the HSCA: go to facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/hungariansocialclubofashford-connecticut>

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

**STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG**



Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance, Inc.

## Performing Arts



# The Packing House in November!

By EC-CHAP

### November

*"Welcome sweet November,  
the season of senses  
and my favorite month of all."  
- Gregory F. Lenz*

We begin the month of November with a very special performance! 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** has 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.

our "Songs for Ukraine" Benefit Event to reach a goal of \$10,000 to support the people Ukraine. The nightly news continues to reveal the ongoing destruction We're over halfway to our goal and 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 - Extended" QR Code. 100% of all funds raised go directly to the people of Ukraine through our Charitable Partner, Direct Relief.



### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### EC-CHAP MONTHLY TALENT SHOWCASE – 2nd Wednesday of the Month – Wednesday, November 9th, 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).

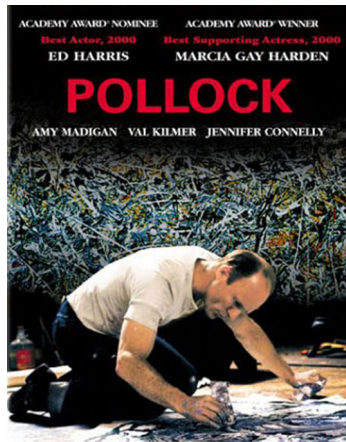


Please consider participating in our monthly Talent Showcase the 2nd Wednesday of every month (October – May). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474. Not performing – no problem - simply join us to see and hear local and regional creatives sharing their talent. Free Admission – Donations Graciously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

#### EC-CHAP Film Series – 2nd Thursday of the Month: "Pollock" (R) 2000. November 10th, 7:00pm (Doors Open 6:30pm)

Join us for an evening of Jackson Pollock! We will initially screen the feature film "Pollock" - A film about the life and career of the American painter, Jackson Pollock, starring Ed Harris, with Marcia Gay Harden, Amy Madigan, Tom Bower, and Jennifer Connelly.

Ed Harris directed this film and received an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor for his portrayal of Pollock. Marcia Gay Harden won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for portraying Lee Krasner, Pollock's wife. The film was a long-term personal project for Harris based on his previous reading of Pollock's biography, Jackson Pollock: An American Saga, written by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith.



For those with greater interest, we will screen the original 1951 short film of Jackson Pollock by German Photographer Hans Namuth and discuss the artist's style and works.

And for those die-hard enthusiasts, we'll look at the inspiration and making of the feature film and by Ed Harris. Suggested Donation of \$5.00 at the Door.

#### SPECIAL PROGRAM: "An Evening with Spiritual Medium Maura Geist". Friday, November 18th, 7:30pm (Doors Open 6:30pm).

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



### SAVE THE DATES:

- Saturday, December 3rd, 7:30pm** - EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: **Ash & Eric** (Folk/Indie).
- Saturday, December 10th, 7:30pm** - EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: **Tracy Walton** (Folk/Indie).
- Wednesday, December 14th, 7:00pm** - EC-CHAP Talent Showcase (2nd Wednesday)
- Thursday, December 15th, 7:00pm** - EC-CHAP Film Series: **"It's A Wonderful Life"** (PG) 1946.

### 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).

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! Click [HERE](#) for secret recipe.

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)).

We leave you with the following:

*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow.  
Learn as if you were to live forever."  
- Mahatma Gandhi*

Peace,  
EC-CHAP Board



### Artist-In-Residence

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

EC-CHAP offers an Artist-In-Residence (AIR) program and will have an opening effective **February 1, 2023**. Artists of all disciplines are welcome to apply. The term of the residency is one (1) year, with possible renewal.

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

**WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG**  
156 River Road, Suite 2106A, Willington, CT 06279 | 518.791.9474 | [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org)

The Neighbors paper  
A little paper  
Big on community

## Artist Spotlight:

## Kenneth Heyne and “Saturdate”

By Cate Solari

Kenneth Heyne is a visual artist, working primarily with ceramic and sculpture. Originally from Connecticut, having gained his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of



Chicago, IL, he has returned home for his Master of Fine Arts from the University of Connecticut ('24). His work simultaneously considers domestic wares and the decorative arts across all cultures. Compositions and motifs are derived from Antiquity and the Iron Age cultures from Europe.

Following the opening of Heyne's solo exhibition, “Saturdate”, at the Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery, I sat down with Heyne to discuss his work and his inspiration for the show.

You can see the work in person, on view until November 12, 2022 at the Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery, located at 156 River Road, Willington during open gallery hours, Saturday's 10-12pm.

**What inspired this body of work?**

My Grandmother inspired a lot of this work. Growing up I learned to cook from my grandmother in the kitchen. And in that house her most prized possessions were ceramics out for display on the wall, on a pedestal and in a curio cabinet. I remember a few pieces of fiesta ware she had and being really impressed with the color. If it was a special dinner or if she wanted to add extra emphasis to birthday she would put away the Corelle “Butterfly Gold” plates and break out the nice plates, with decorative flowers and gold banding.

**How did you decide on the title “Saturdate”?**

Over lockdown, my partner would use the term to tease me about going on a date. It was a time where everyday kind of felt the same and we were confined to our small Chicago apartment. With some luck the show opening happened to be opening on a Saturday. So in a small way for the opening, I was inviting all of you over for a date.

**Can you walk us through the making process of your ceramics?**

It's a dance when you are making sculptures with clay. You really become beholden to the material. It takes all of your time and asks for more. At the beginning of this year I was luckily selected for a grant for the Marks Family Endowment in Fine Arts. It afforded me the opportunity to slow down in my practice over the summer conducting research.

The process starts with research and drawing. I was able to go to the Aurbach library and the Wadsworth Athenaeum. From there I moved to the studio and treated that space like a laboratory. I was able to test things out like a mad scientist embarking on a stream of consciousness fueled ride. With ceramics you are actually part chemist; testing out glaze interaction while praying to the kiln gods that it works out. Gradually rules are introduced and from there things get fleshed out. Out of this process I found pillows, vessels and furniture could be used as language to talk about the theater that takes place on the domestic plane.

The grant provided me time and confidence to take risks within my own

practice. So that I could think and make. It was a gift really. A work of art gets better if you spend as much time as necessary with it; It's funny because it is also true for the viewer.

**What is the relationship between ceramic work and wood furniture?**

My mom really liked throwing get-togethers. Inevitably after all the cleaning was done ceramic serving trays, crock pots, coffee mugs, and “party furniture” would be brought out. So growing up this idea of transforming the home was always in the air. Ceramics and wood furniture just happened to be the catalyst for transformation. For the show I wanted to talk about home and my memory of these materials together, to put me back in that space.

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

It's hard to pick Cate. The truth is though I never have a favorite. The day after the opening I was back in the studio thinking about how things can evolve and change.

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

This show brought into focus the importance of furniture and furniture making in my practice. As well as thinking more seriously about the sculpture and its pedestal relationship. The only problem is I am not much of a woodworker. The biggest challenge was making furniture without knowing how to. It was a steep learning curve at the beginning of the process. I was lucky to be able to learn from Gary Krewson and Chris Sancomb in the woodshop at UConn.

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

I am a second year grad student at Uconn. Uconn is having their MFA open studios November 4, 2022 at Kirby Mill, 5pm to 9pm, so I am trying to decide what to have out. But between now and the end of the semester I am going to carve out some time to do some reading. Some books on the list are “Bauhaus to our House” by Tom Wolfe and “The Pig and the Skyscraper” by Marco d'Eramo.

Thank you Kenneth, for an inspiring conversation! I look forward to seeing your studio during open studios and for more visitors to see your work while “Saturdate” is open through November 12th.

For inquiries Kenneth Heyne can be reached at [kenneth.heyne@uconn.edu](mailto:kenneth.heyne@uconn.edu) and you can follow his work on Instagram @kennyheyne

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).*



## The Hazard Powder Company

By Ryan Elgin

Returning to our series, Connecticut Industry During Times of War, I wanted to highlight a company and industry of particular note as we enter the Civil War era. This would be the Hazard Powder Company, a large mill complex formerly located in its namesake, Hazardville, a section of Enfield Connecticut.

The Hazard Powder Company manufactured gunpowder and explosives from the early 19th

century to the early 20th century. You would be forgiven for thinking that the company was named due to the hazardous and often very explosive business of manufacturing gunpowder but in fact it was aptly named after its owner: Colonel Augustus George Hazard. A wealthy and politically connected businessman, in 1837 he would go on to acquire a portion of a small gunpowder mill that had been built two years prior in an area then known as Powder Hollow. By 1843, he had dissolved all other partners

and became the principal owner. The newly named Hazard Powder Company would be turned into a much larger gunpowder manufactory, coupled with the high demand for gunpowder through the 1840s and 1850s, setting it up to be a million dollar business by the start of the Civil War. Of course, the Civil War would be the biggest boon. War-time production of gunpowder from Hazard Powder Company would reach 12,500 pounds per day and it's estimated that an astonishing 40% of all the gunpowder used by Union forces was coming from Hazard's company. Some of Hazard's product would also find its way to the Confederate states. The mill complex spanned over a mile and a half in length with 125 buildings powered by twenty-five water wheels and three steam engines. Rolling mills, granulating mills, screw press buildings, dusting, assorting, mixing, and packing buildings, machine shops, and glazing houses to name a few of the facilities.

Most of these buildings and mills were built in duplicate at a minimum in addition to having operations spread out across multiple buildings so that operations could continue in case tragedy struck. Buildings were constructed with large frames to slow the spread of fire, walls were designed to collapse outward, and blast walls were made to separate buildings in the hope it would prevent chain reactions if an explosion were to occur. Making gunpowder was dangerous business and explosions were an inevitable and expected occurrence. The gunpowder was made by mixing sulfur, charcoal, and saltpeter (Potassium nitrate) together and then grinding this mixture through heavy wheels. Throughout this process, water was used to keep the mixture wet as one small spark from the grinding friction could set it off. The moist mixture was then formed into blocks, chipped into coarse grain of varying sizes, dried, glazed, and then sifted into barrels for transport.

Despite these precautions and many others, such as the use of one-legged stools for workers so that if they fell asleep they are woken up by hitting the floor, no iron tools, and of course no matches or



smoking, multiple tragedies befell the Hazard Powder Company. In its 78 years of operation there

were 67 deaths with newspapers at the time reporting the gruesome details. A massive chain reaction of

explosions destroyed much of the company in 1862, a year into the civil war. A July 25th issue of the Hartford Courant reported that such a loss would not interfere with operations, as there were still 75 mills left on the property. There would be more explosions over the years from before



and after the Civil War but this is outside the scope of this short article. Many years after Colonel Hazard's death in 1868, the gunpowder facility would be shuttered for good in 1913 after another massive explosion.

Not much of the Hazard Powder Company remains today. An original horse barn for the mill still stands. Now called Powder Mill Barn, it hosts weddings and square dancing. If your hobbies include



both hiking and history like mine, then you may enjoy heading to the Scitico and Hazardville regions of the Scantic River State Park in Enfield, CT. The remnants of the company can be seen there. Shown in this article is a picture I took of the raceway gates on the dam that held back the Scantic River and supplied power to the mill buildings. The large gear was part of the mechanism that would open a single sluice gate when the river was high. There are many other bits of history that dot this trail and I recommend seeing them and visiting the Enfield Historical Society, where the information for this article was sourced.

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).*

# Safer Ways to Fire Up Your Cannabis

By Mark Mathew Braunstein

## What You Smell is What You Breathe

Countless medical studies have shed light upon the health risks of smoking herbs, be they tobacco or cannabis, and smokers acknowledge those risks. Yet most smokers tend to hide behind a smokescreen of denial in recognizing the risky business of inhaling the ignition fumes from lighters or matches. Their foul odors alone should alert us that they are unsafe to breathe. Because if you're smelling them, then you're breathing them.

Typically, you light up a tobacco cigarette just once. Chemical additives that control the burn rate account for that one-match wonder. Thankfully, even corporate cannabis lacks such additives. Our joints sometime require firing up a second time, and pipefuls several times. As the cumulative ignition fumes for every joint or pipeful of cannabis pose more risks than the single flick per tobacco cigarette, it is high time to explore safer ways to tune up your ignition system.

## The Unmatched Hazards of Matches

Most matches are "safety matches," the word "safety" distinguishing them from less common "strike-anywhere matches."

*Strike-anywhere matches* contain potassium, phosphorus, sulfur, and perchlorates combined into one matchhead. Perchlorates also ignite explosives, flares, and fireworks. Stand anywhere within their striking distance and you will be made painfully aware of the foul smell of the plume from strike-anywhere matches. Simply sitting in the box, they smell toxic.

*Safety matches* are those you must strike on the matchbook or matchbox. The sulfur and highly flammable phosphorus are removed from the matchhead. Instead, they are placed into the striking strip glued to the matchbox or matchbook. Thus the phosphorous and sulfur do not fill the air with their toxic fumes. Safety matches, indeed, are safer for your lungs.

*Matchsticks* of both types of matches present another peril. Hold them for too long and, ouch! You'll burn your fingers. Numerous studies have proven that burns are not conducive to good health.

Hot air rises, so when striking a match hold it at arm's length or over your head. You might feel funny, but because you're not inhaling the matchhead's fumes, you'll breathe easier.

## Making Sparks with Spark Lighters

Flicking a lighter fills the air with less noxious fumes than when striking a match, so lighters are potentially safer than matches. Cheap disposable lighters designed to fit inside a pack of cigarettes are sparked by ferrocium flint, while non-disposable models are sparked by piezo quartz.

*Flint lighters* require you to flick the flywheel with your thumb. After many flicks the tip of your thumb forms callouses, even abrasions. Flicking the flywheel creates a spark by scraping against ferrocium, a hazardous metal. By flicking, you create a toxic cloud of microscopic ferrocium dust. Allow that ferrocium dust to settle before you hold the flame to your joint. Forget about these for pipes. The flames from flint lighters rise only vertically, same as from candles. For pipes, if you hold lighters sideways, their flames easily extinguish while you inhale, thus inhaling incompletely combusted butane fumes, which are worse than combusted fumes. More about that in a moment.

*Piezo lighters* are sparked by quartz crystals that create an electrical charge. They eliminate the toxicity of ferrocium flint. Their flames can be aimed sideways and even upside-down. Also known as torch lighters or cigar lighters, they are ideal for firing up pipes. In fact, piezo lighters are also called pipe lighters. Ignited by a pushbutton rather than a sparkwheel, piezo lighters are kind on both your thumbs and your lungs.

Both flint lighters and piezo lighters are usually fueled by butane. Beware butane.

## Fanning the Flames of Butane

As the most common fuel for cigarette lighters, when butane is stored under pressure inside the lighter it is liquid. Once released from the lighter, the liquid turns into a colorless gas with a very faint but unpleasant odor. If you've always ignored the frightening fine print on the warning labels on lighters, once you do read one, you'll probably never again want to hold a lighter in your hands.

Butane fumes are both toxic and intoxicating. Some foolish little kiddies, desperate to get high, intentionally

sniff non-combusted fumes from butane cannisters. Doing so can prove fatal. Small-dose effects include headache, dizziness, and coughing. Effects from repeated use include kidney, liver, heart, and brain damage. The direst effects are from non-combusted fumes straight from the butane cannister or lighter. So never press on the lever of the lighter without sparking it. Yet even when you do light the butane, your first toke will cause you more harm than any smoke from any herb, be it tobacco or cannabis. Because during that first toke to fire up your herb, way too many smokers also inhale the butane fumes.

As a sober-minded adult, keep your lighter out of reach of children. And as an adult, go light on your use of lighters.

## Flaunting Flameless Lighters

Flameless lighters have been dubbed with a variety of descriptive names such as Tesla lighters, electric-arc lighters, electronic-coil lighters, and plasma-beam lighters. Nowadays almost all get juiced on USB charges, so add USB lighters as an alias. While the buzzword "plasma" sounds like something living, and "electric-arc" adds some hi-tech allure, calling them "flameless" better distinguishes them from the more ubiquitous flame-emitting butane lighters.

Flameless lighters are windproof, waterproof, and leakproof. Their buttons, unlike those on flint lighters, are easy on your thumb. Free of chemicals and odors, they eliminate the toxicity of both flint and butane. Press its button, and the coil emits an arc-shaped spark that dances between two electrodes. Place your joint into that arc, and your joint ignites. Because the housing or the cap can get in the way, the arc of many flameless lighters cannot reach inside the bowl of a pipe. That's a job for flameless torch lighters.

Rather than single-coiled, flameless torch lighters are double- or triple-coiled. The bowls of pot pipes are smaller and shallower than those of tobacco pipes, so smaller torch lighters that make no claim about being suitable for tobacco pipes often work fine for pot pipes. Larger torch lighters, also called "pipe lighters," work fine for tobacco and cannabis alike.

Never apply a torch lighter to a pipe's metal bowl unless its shaft is wood and you are holding the pipe by its shaft. Otherwise, it will shock you with a mild electrical impulse. Still, you might relish such a shocking experience, like schoolchildren do during static electricity experiments in science class.

Compared to fossil fuel butane, the ignition of rechargeable flameless lighters is eco-friendlier. Hardly emitting any detectable odor, they are safer to inhale. No flame, no fumes, no smoke. Unfortunately, absent from this list is "no problem." The technology is still in its infancy. Even high-priced models remain functional for barely a few months. Over time, charges do not last long, and recharging takes longer. Their nonreplaceable batteries soon die, leaving you with a nonrecyclable hunk of junk.

## Choose Your Weapon

Match or lighter? Striking a match fills the air with more noxious fumes than does flicking any lighter, so you would think that lighters win over matches. Not so fast! A match can be an appropriate tool when you're lighting up a pipe rather than a joint. So the first question is, joint or pipe?

**Health Tip for Lighting Up Joints:** With your two hands occupied striking a match, you must hold a joint in your mouth, where you can't avoid inhaling ignition fumes. In contrast, with one hand flicking a lighter and the other grasping the joint, you can hold both at arm's length. That distance minimizes your exposure to the ignition fumes of a lighter. So to more safely light up joints, look to lighters.

**Health Tip for Lighting Up Pipes:** Unless the pipe stem is more than a foot (30 cm) long, when lighting the bowl you're holding that flame right under your nose. Smoked leisurely, especially during solo sessions, cannabis snuffs out easily, requiring several firings per bowl. That's toxic buildup. Nix to matches and cheap lighters that force you to suck in that flame. When smoking a pipe, the safer ignition system is the piezo lighter that can aim its flame sideways or downward, and safer still is the flameless pipe lighter.

## The Fire Power of Candles

But wait! You can still more safely use matches or cheap

flint lighters. Strike just one match or hit just one flick, not to light your pipe, but to light a candle.

Candles are made from a variety of ingredients, including paraffin from petroleum, beeswax from bee hives, tallow from animal fats, and vegetable oils often from palm, soy, or coconut. Hold a white sheet of paper or board



high above a burning candle, and you will capture a coating of soot, which is mostly carbon ash. Soot is only what you happen to see. Hidden to the naked eye, the candle's fumes also contain, for example, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds (VOC), and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). All are toxic.

As a petroleum distillate, paraffin is plentiful, cheap, and potentially the most harmful, as its fumes contain phthalates, a class of chemical plasticizers known to be harmful to human health. Health food, new age, and occult stores sell vegetable oil candles that are labeled as free of phthalates. Soy candle manufacturers make unsubstantiated claims that their candles not only emit no phthalates, but also the least amount of soot.

Despite the ubiquitous use of candles since the dawn of human history, only a few studies have evaluated the emissions from burning candles. We do know that added scents of any kind add to the candles' pollutants. And we know that compared to the pollutants from the fumes of commonplace paraffin, beeswax is far less polluting.

Rather than repeatedly flicking butane lighters or striking many matches, lighting a candle only once has much to commend. You can place your burning candle at arm's length, so you are out of range from its fumes. In the candle's flame, you can stoke up a glass wand, a hemp wick, or a toothpick. Then to toke your pipeful, apply that glowing wand, that smoldering wick, or that burning toothpick. No toxic plume in your face, so none in your lungs.

*Glass wands* are also called weed wands. You heat the tip of thin borosilicate glass rods and then insert them into your herb. But danger lurks after using those scorching wands. Good luck on placing the cylindrical wands somewhere safe so they won't roll away, ignite a conflagration, and burn down your house.

*Hemp wicks* are spools of hemp twine coated with beeswax that burn slowly just like the wick of a candle. Igniting cannabis with hemp is a romantic notion that has inspired many a toker to give it a try. But in between tokes, you must keep a watchful eye on the flimsy and cumbersome burning wick, else it can ignite the entire spool. For hemp enthusiasts only.

*Wooden toothpicks* are safer than glass wands and hemp wicks. Flat toothpicks easily ignite from candles, and then stay lit long enough to fire up your pipe. They also are handy for stirring the contents of your bowl.

**Health Tip for Lighting Up Pipes:** Light an unscented candle made of beeswax or vegetable oil, and then place it at arm's length, so you are out of range of its fumes. Light a flat toothpick in the flame of the candle. With the lit toothpick, light up the bowl of bud. A natural fiber same as are hemp and cannabis, it's wood to the rescue. To misquote Jim Morrison, "Come on, baby, light my toothpick!"

**Mark Mathew Braunstein** has contributed to many holistic health magazines, including *Natural Health* and *Vegetarian Times*, and is the author of six books, including *Mindful Marijuana Smoking: Health Tips for Cannabis Smokers* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2022), from which this article was adapted. For a PDF of the bibliographic citations for the medical studies referenced in this article, see Mark's webpage about this book. You can also read his many editorials and articles about medical marijuana and recreational cannabis at [www.MarkBraunstein.Org](http://www.MarkBraunstein.Org)

# At the Top Shelf Gallery

*Art & Quantum Biology*, Steve Schumacher's November- December Show at the Top Shelf Gallery, will open with an artist's presentation and reception November 5th at 1:30 p.m.. The show features vibrant watercolor and acrylic paintings inspired by Schumacher's interest in quantum physics, and the artist will explain his painting process with examples from his notebooks, sketches and finished paintings.

Schumacher explains that his wife's complex illness awakened an interest in fundamental processes, particularly quantum biology. Of his unusual source of artistic inspiration, Schumacher says that "the vibrant forms and colors of nature" combined with the human form serve in the works to form a "bridge between our perceptions and the quantum world."



The resulting paintings incorporate historical images like the 1906 cover of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and attempt to relate everyday life experiences to the underlying quantum processes and to the modern forces that can disrupt them.

Schumacher has drawn and painted since he was a child, particularly enjoying what he calls "free style" drawing that begins without any starting image in mind. He also paints and sells watercolor landscapes, unique drawings, greeting cards, and screen-printed apparel.

Schumacher has shown work in both group and solo shows locally at the Gallery at Wauregon in Norwich, Ct. and in Cincinnati where he exhibits regularly at the SOS Cincinnati show at the Cincinnati Art Academy. The Fletcher Memorial Library's Top Shelf Gallery is at 257 Main St, Hampton. Info: 860 455 1086.

# Festival of the Trees

Submitted by Kira Holmes

The Mill Museum, an organization that preserves and celebrates the unique textile heritage of the region, is hosting its first Festival of Trees at the museum, 411 Main St., Willimantic, CT, with decorating starting on November 28. Celebrate the season and share your organization's contribution to the region's dynamic, past, present, and future.

The Festival of Trees is designed to be a regional community event in which non-profits and businesses can bring in an artificial tree to The Mill Museum to decorate between November 28 and December 7. Each participating organization must provide its own artificial, lighted or unlighted 5 to 7-foot tree and its own decorations. The tree can highlight an ethnic, historical, commercial, cultural, or whimsical theme. Each entry should be accompanied by an 8½"x11" rigid sign identifying the theme and the sponsoring group. There is no charge for entering. This is an excellent opportunity to promote a group or business beyond its geographic area. Contact Andrea Ader (BrickAder@yahoo.com) or Kira Holmes (director@millmuseum.org) to schedule your tree set-up and decoration. Space is limited.

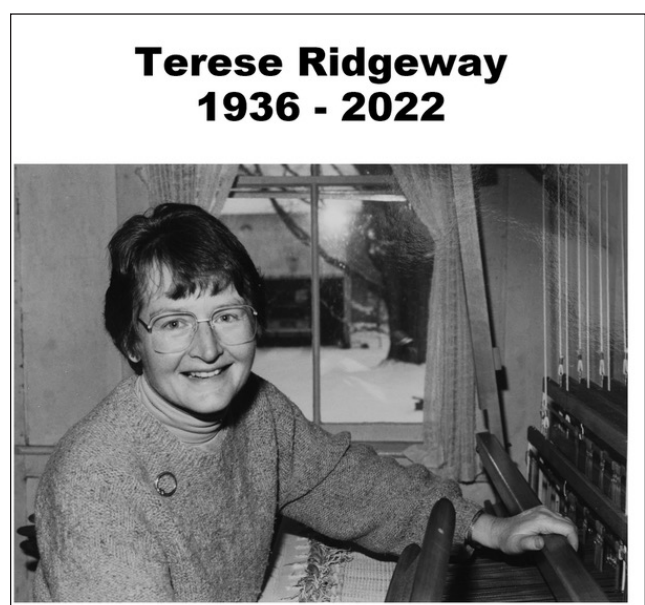
A free reception with light refreshments and tree-judging will open the festival on Fri., Dec. 9, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., subject to change if COVID numbers significantly increase. The trees will be voted on, and the top three winners will receive prizes.

The trees will stay up during the holiday season, Fridays through Sundays, until January 2, with viewing a part of the normal museum admission charge. (Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.) Please contact either Andrea Ader or Kira Holmes to coordinate tree pick-up between January 3 and 6, 2023.

## "Teresa Ridgeway Retrospective" at Windham Textile History Museum

Submitted by Peggy Church

The Windham Textile History Museum will host a pop-up exhibit "Teresa Ridgeway Retrospective" beginning November 4th. When Teresa Drivdahl Ridgeway (1936-2022) and her husband bought their home in Chaplin in 1975, they found a large barn frame loom in the loft of their barn. Already skilled in other textile arts, she began a long and illustrious career in weaving. From napkins to coverlets, greeting cards to rugs, lampshades to tapestries, her work won prizes wherever she competed. She was the first to be awarded the accomplishment of Master Weaver by the Handweavers' Guild of Connecticut. And at the New England Weavers' Seminar she achieved the status of Weaver of Distinction after winning so many first prizes.



### Terese Ridgeway 1936 - 2022

## A Retrospective

Opens November 4, 2022

Windham Textile & History Museum  
411 Main Street  
Willimantic, CT 06226

860-456-2178

OPEN: Fri, Sat, Sun 10am-4pm

# Letter and Emails

## Speak out! Vote

Reasonable people can disagree about what a "just" society is but they cannot disagree on whether democracies want everyone to vote. Or whether anyone should be above the law.

Or whether a chosen few know the mind of God and should make our laws. U.S. Representative Lauren Boebert of Colorado recently addressed a church service saying "Donald Trump was chosen by God to be president of the United States... The church is supposed to direct the government. The government is not supposed to direct the church. That is not how our Founding Fathers intended it."

Wrong. The Founders intentionally separated Church and State. And despite the fact that the majority of Americans are culturally Christian, it's become a secular nation of many faiths.

Boebert is not alone in wanting to change our American system of government; listen to Marjorie Taylor Greene, Matt Gaetz and Dr. Oz. America is threatened by an anti-democratic, potentially violent and fervent minority that believes God is on their side, but despite losing the popular vote by over 7 million votes, a majority of Republicans believe they won the 2020 Presidential election.

Not all Republicans love Putin and the Saudis. Not all Republicans think the 13th, 14th, 15th, or 19th Amendments were a mistake. Not all Republicans hate gays. But they are not running the party and have been silent.

*"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."*

-Martin Niemöller, Lutheran minister who spent 8 years in Nazi prisons and concentration camps.

Speak out! Vote on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Chaplin CT  
Bob Ciernia, White River Junction VT



## Celebrate the Season

with the  
**Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra**  
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Torelli Bach  
Rowley  
Corelli

On **Friday, November 18** at 7 p.m.  
at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Ashford  
525 Ashford Center Rd. (Rte 44), Ashford, Connecticut, between the Hole in the Wall Camp and the Ashford Dairy Bar  
Ample Parking



and on **Sunday, November 20** at 2 p.m., we're happy to be returning to  
**Clark Chapel, Pomfret School**  
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## Join us for Thanksgiving

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I feel you watching me somewhere in places I cannot find.  
Is there something you need to say?  
I can hear you deeply breathing and the quiet night interrupts my wish to be beyond this again and again illusion.  
The air is sweet with sandlewood bathing my desires in the wispy smoking burn.  
Have your eyes always been this color? Your hair smells of morning dew vanishing in new day light.  
Nothing and everything is as I remember. If I call your name will you acknowledge?  
I search in the cracks and crevices of my mindless intent, begging to find why I always come back to this corner .  
Find me sitting alone again and without my shadow for even I cannot recognize one or the other.  
I am counting on you, watching me still, to bring me back once more to where it all begins to make uncommon sense.



Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.



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