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No. 217

April 2023

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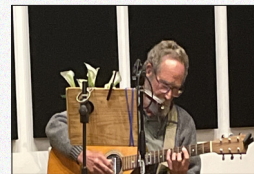
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April 2023

May 2023



# Early in April

On Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> you might want to visit the 8<sup>th</sup> annual **Know Your Farmers Fair** event that is being held at the new Willimantic Community Center which is across the street from the Willimantic Co-op. This event is being held from 11:00am to 2:00pm. The "Know Your Farmer Fair" is an opportunity for the general public, chefs and food service directors to meet local farmers and to look ahead to the upcoming growing season. Residents can shop at the farmer's market as well as discuss local Community Supported Agriculture Programs (CSA), farm stands and pick-your-own opportunities. The farms participating in the year's event are: Cloverleigh Farm, Barton Farms, KDCrop Farms, Spring Valley Farm, Brown Farm, Westview Farm, Russo's Roots, Ramble Creek Farm, Giroux Farm, Black Sun Farm, Shooks Apiaries, BOTL Farm, Kindred Crossings, Grow Windham, Cobblestone Farm, Creamery Brook Bison, Cambera Farm, Double Trouble Acres, Easy Acres Gnomestead, B-Z-B Farm, Radical Rots farm, Mon Soleil Market Garden, Little Dipper

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Bob Grindle, Brian Karlsson-Barnes,  
Bob Lorentson, John Murphy,  
Calen Nakash, Dennis Pierce,  
Bill Powers, Loretta Wrobel

Farm, Coruscant Farm, Madman Micros, Country Critters Farm, and Foliota Farm, Bouquets and Blueberry gardens, and Fairholm Farm.  
-Dennis Pierce

## Jillson House Titanic Program

Submitted by Jessica Polaski

Love history? If so, join us at the Jillson House on Wednesday, April 5th at 5 PM for a special program, Titanic: The Irish Connection. Ernie Eldridge and Anita Sebestyen, Titanic historians, and collectors for many years, will share stories about crew and passengers who sailed in the Titanic. They will be dressed as staff members from the ship giving you an in-depth fun experience! Suggested donation \$10. The mission of the Windham Historical Society is to discover, collect and preserve whatever pertains to the History of the Town of Windham and to make available to the public, the results of this research. In keeping with this charge, the Jillson House Museum welcomes visitors who wish to appreciate its architectural beauty and to discover the many objects of historic significance on display there.

No. 217 April 2023

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

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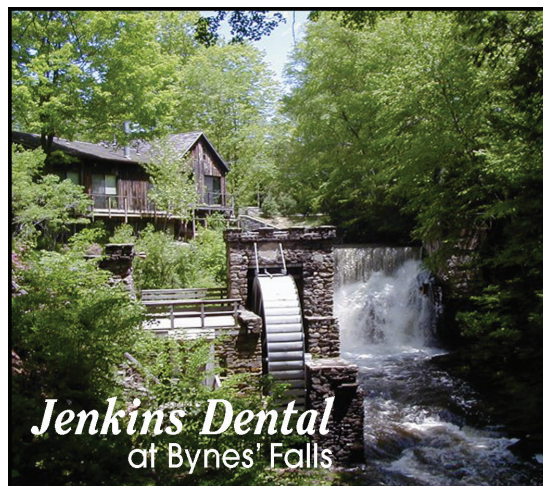
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On our cover:  
Clouds over Mansfield Hollow Lake at  
Mansfield Hollow State Park in Mansfield,  
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# Spring—Another Chance

By Loretta Wrobel

Here we are, another spring and we have a new opportunity to restart our lives and come up with better ways to live on this precious, forgiving, and generous earth. Every March when the Spring Equinox happens, I am infused with staggering spring fever. I am called to be outside to count the brilliant little green shoots popping through the ground and the snow drops with their white flowers dancing in the spring breezes. They are so strong, as they can be standing in snow and still vibrantly alive!

I always feel spring gives us another chance. A friend told me that spring is really like a new year. Everything starts up and seems to move forward, and gets bustling when March shifts to April. I have more energy with the spring unfolding, and love seeing the sun get higher and stronger as spring progresses.

What does spring mean to you? Is it an active, enticing, and creative time? Do you notice the longer daylight and the sun's arc increasing and sitting up higher in the deep blue sky? How about the birds? Have you heard the urgency in their song as they are welcoming the time for mating and building nests? There is much happening as the earth wakes up and beckons us to do the same.

This past winter has been a time of massive anger, depression, rage, and confusion. Covid would not quit, the Ukrainian war continued on and on with no end in sight, the climate catastrophes escalated, the violence in our Country proliferated, and we all tried to make sense of utter senselessness.

Several friends expressed their feelings of being overwhelmed, depressed and confused. These are times of upheaval and despair as we are bombarded with tragic news. Violence can erupt anywhere. The institutions we once trusted are no longer trustworthy. Daily shocks are normalized and horror is no longer limited to the movies. We hear of trains exploding and banks going under, and how are our leaders reacting and responding to these never-ending disasters?

Negotiating these unbalanced and out of control scenarios takes a Herculean and Amazonian effort. The safety and balance must emanate from inside. We cannot depend on rationality and clarity to assist us as we stumble through our unpredictable lives. This is our world in 2023.

It is imperative that we take care of ourselves, and find ways to cope with the tons of information assaulting us and the countless choices available to us. The problem is many of our choices are not healthy for us. Take your average supermarket and carefully examine the food options shouting at you while you peruse the aisles. How many of the food items are processed? How many contain excess sugar? What about the packaging? Is it plastic? To be left with only choosing one of a dozen bad nutritional products does not set well. We have



a truckload of choices, but how does it help us if they are not nutritious foods for us to consume?

I have stood in a store and observed the variety of stuff, and wonder what is wrong with me for not being drawn to purchase anything. The exact situation would occur if I were shopping online. Why are there so many things? It is exhausting to go into a toy department and not find anything that I would want to purchase for my four-year-old grandnephew or sixteen-month-old grandniece. This is troubling. For me it is another sign of the deterioration of our society. We are drowning in stuff.

How do we remain centered in this weird environment? This is why I find myself infatuated when spring treats us to unlimited growth that is so healing! How can you have too many crocuses? What about a super abundance of snow drops and/or daffodils? Are you ever depressed by hearing a crowd of birds singing?

I believe that spring grounds us in nature, which is what we all need--an extra dose of nature each day. Have you been outside today? If the answer is no, you need to revisit why, and examine ways for you to transform your life so you do get outside. We need to walk in the woods, sit with our back to a sturdy tree and listen to the sounds of a rushing river or gurgling brook. This is what can sustain us.

Here in our peaceful northeastern Connecticut, we are blessed with unspoiled natural beauty. Our waterways are unpolluted, and we have many rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes to enjoy. We need to stay mindful of how fortunate we are to live in this healthy environment that sustains us by merely going out and taking it all in. As we breathe in all the peace and beauty, we can practice being grateful and thankful for how the earth keeps coming back at us with the luscious delights of spring.

A human being saying Thank You is energetically a powerful act. We are appreciating our surroundings, being humble and acting in a sacred manner. We are giving back to the planet and acknowledging how special our world is. There are so many places where we don't feel that our society is sensible and loving. To keep ourselves in a good space we must recognize this truth, and immerse ourselves in nature. Then we are free to seek out the comfort and beauty, alone and with friends, and receive the support we must have to continue to grow as decent, kind, and respectful human beings.

What I know deep in my heart is that when we do this action of giving thanks, we have begun the process of healing our planet. We are energized and invigorated to engage in whatever work we can to maintain and sustain our world. Adding our gratitude and our energy to creating a more just and kinder place is revolutionary and extremely doable. It is not impossible, or only for the select few. Everyone can be grateful and appreciative of the sacredness of nature. Do not hesitate, take that first step---Outside!!!!



# Can't Stop the Grass

By Elli Sharpe

The smell of burning wood brings it all back: my grandfather's gray, weathered shack with its lopsided front porch and two rocking chairs, waiting for someone to sit in them. Imprinted on the back of my eyelids is the picture of him in his baggy pants held up by suspenders that draw them up just under his ribs. He always wore a hat, I don't remember ever seeing him without his brown, tattered Fedora, it gave him an important look. When I asked why he always wore it, he said, "As I grew older and wiser my brain got bigger and started pushing its way out of my head. I wear a hat to keep me from losing it. Only problem is it's keeping the hair from growing on the top of my head so it now grows out of my ears." When I asked him where his teeth were he said he had to send them up toward Heaven so they could shine on us at night. He said a lot of people did that so we could have a starry sky. I thought Grampy was very noble.

His mouth didn't talk much but he showed how to press his nose, just right, to make it smile. He smelled of cherry tobacco, burning wood and dust, a good smell. He made a comical picture with his ever present, toothless smile above his jutting, prickly chin. A prickly chin that tickled my cheeks when Grampy kissed me goodnight.

He fit so well in his old weathered shack, they both displayed their vintage with pride. If I started from the front porch of Grampy's shack, I could run straight through to the back door and out into a yard of daisies, golden rod and tall, overgrown grass. The grass came up to my waist. Grampy didn't mow it. "Don't do no good," he said, "can't stop grass from growing any more than I can stop you. It's a good thing."

A huge, ram-shackled barn stood between the shack and a small grove of trees. It was a fortress, a hideout or castle for my brother and me, depending on the mood of the day. Weaving our way through the forest to the brook, resting as the cold water soothed the mosquito bites that I always scratched until they bled. Rotted leaves, tree bark and mud mingled to create a sweet and pungent smell. From the banks of the brook I watched the water bugs dance and wondered why they didn't sink.

An old, gnarled oak stood nearby, the birds let me share their limb as long as I was careful not to disturb the nests filled with tiny blue eggs. Robin's eggs, my grandfather told me.

The very best part of those days were the moments shared with my older brother. We slayed dragons, hunted tigers and wrestled the bears that hid in the grass that my grandfather refused to cut.

They were hard days, my brother lived with my grandfather in Maine and I visited him only a few times from Connecticut but they were days filled with wonder and excitement and love, lots of love.

A weathered shack, a running brook, burning wood and a musty old man allow a brief visit to the backyard where all things were possible, even now when this weed is full grown.

*To be continued...*

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# Good Night Jupiter...A Walk Uphill

By Bob Grindle

We took a walk today, oh boy.

We have climbed this hill so many times in the last 50 years...at first as newly-weds sharing the exhausting pleasure of clearing a walkable pathway around our newly purchased homestead and, after our son was born, carrying his playpen uphill so the three of us could enjoy simply hanging out together during this outdoor adventure of discovery. Now, all these years later, the hill is just as steep, but the climb seems more a journey than an effort, and our regular trips uphill are a bit less frequent. But an old stone wall, carefully reconstructed over these last several years, is now the perfect place to pause on our uphill walk to look across the valley. Ah, these wonderful days when March breaks out of February's icy brittle grip and the Sun's warming touch feels as magical and pure and soul satisfying as a baby's smile: it is almost a tonic to the feverish pace of modern life. It has been therapeutic to have invested so many of our hours on this Earth tending this small patch of ground in eastern Connecticut... less stunningly beautiful perhaps than many other places on our planet, but as warm and comfortable as an old friend and every bit as pleasant to spend time with. Sitting in the long ago constructed shelter—and rain escape—that we built near the top of Clark Hill at the mid-point in our walk, my wife Lin and I will talk for hours or simply listen and smell and watch as time and memory and life play hide-and-seek.

You're it! Something in all of us longs to live forever in that extraordinary moment when time pauses, unpeels, and the bit of space we occupy in this itinerant life brushes softly up against that part of our brain that modulates our responses to the world around us and simply takes our breath away...a piece of music, a gorgeous vista, a haunting memory, a passage from a book (or a whole book, for that matter,) a challenge overcome, a problem solved and the list goes on. We all know something in our lives that touches us in a place that only we can visit; a password to the labyrinth of our own complexity.

We have climbed this hill so many times in the last 50 years. There is an old dug well along the path that we didn't

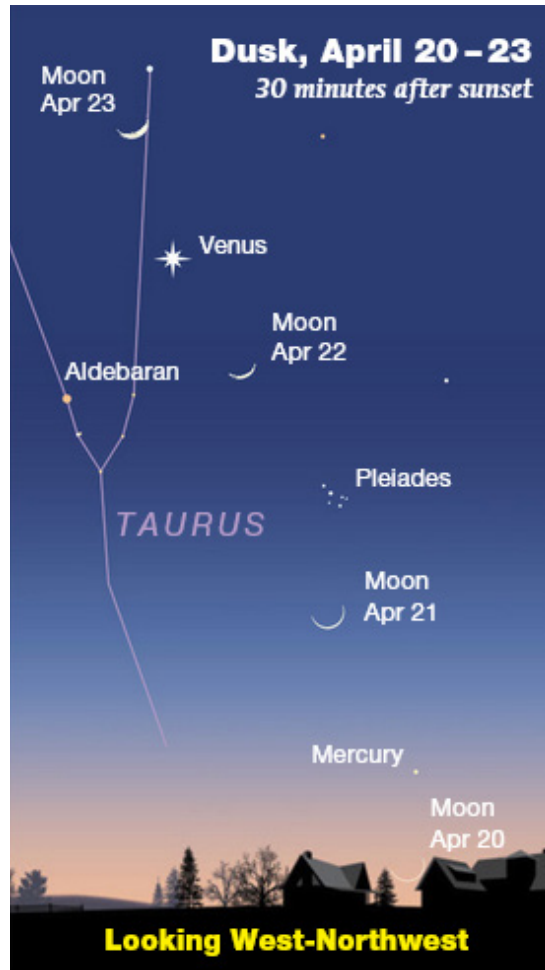
discover for a few years after clearing the trail...a 20 inch or so hand chiseled hole in the capstone was covered by a small boulder that we didn't take notice of. When we did finally discover the well—beautifully constructed, twelve feet deep, sitting atop a naturally occurring and year round spring—we were excited...until we opened it up to discover it had been used as a dump!

I enjoy flopping down in the tall grasses of life and imagining how the world evolved from cosmic fiery fury to the planet we now call home, but our species is a puzzlement...Lin and I spent weeks fishing countless bags of debris out of what is now a shady, cool and clean artifact of the early Europeans who farmed this hillside. I seriously doubt that anyone who had the ability to create this lovely hilltop well would have filled it with the trash we found in it.

We have climbed this hill so many times in the last 50 years...it is surprising how large a bobcat's paw prints are, even in only an inch or two of snow...and how satisfying and simultaneously chilling the thought of such an efficient predator still managing to thrive despite the presence of our clumsy species. The hilltop however, with its fairly thick tree cover, is not a very good place to look at the night sky and as March comes to an end and Jupiter exits our night skies, leaving Venus unchallenged as our guide, we'll head downhill to the fields next to the house where star gazing is much better. Jupiter, by the way will return to the morning skies in May, joining Saturn in the hours as the two play a game of planetary tag.

For April, though, Venus will clearly

be the star of the early evening show as the brightest light in the night sky hangs next to the Pleiades star cluster on April 11<sup>th</sup> and shows off a beautiful conjunction with the waxing thin crescent Moon between April 20<sup>th</sup>—23<sup>rd</sup>. If you have a decent western view of the sky be sure to grab a binoculars and look for Mercury low on the horizon, but it won't last long after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. An one final highlight of April skies will be the Lyrid meteor shower on the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, between 10 pm and 2 am on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. With an early setting crescent Moon the conditions for watching meteors in the northeastern sky should be ideal. Enjoy the beauty of what April almost always brings to this wonderful time of year.





# Jumaadi Puppet Forum at Ballard



Contemporary Indonesian-Australian artist Jumaadi.

Submitted by Emily Wicks

As part of the 2023 *Spring Puppet Forum Series*, the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry is pleased to host *Jumaadi: From Wayang Kulit to Contemporary Art* on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the Ballard Institute Theater, located at 1 Royce Circle in Downtown Storrs, with artist Jumaadi joining us virtually from abroad. This forum will also be broadcast via Ballard Institute Facebook Live ([facebook.com/BallardInstitute](https://facebook.com/BallardInstitute)).

Ballard Institute director Dr. John Bell will host this Puppet Forum conversation with Jumaadi, a contemporary Indonesian-Australian artist, and UConn professors Dr. Matthew Cohen and Dr. Macushla Robinson. The discussion will probe a particular aspect of Jumaadi's creative process: how *wayang kulit*, the tradition of Javanese shadow puppet theater, provides a key source for inspiration and techniques, and how Jumaadi's own shadow puppet plays (performed mainly using overhead projectors and other modern technologies) depart in significant ways from this tradition. The conversation will consider the nostalgic pull of *wayang kulit*, conditions of art making in both Indonesia and Australia, and the possibilities opened up through travel and cosmopolitanism. This conversation coincides with the opening of Jumaadi's solo exhibition *Migration of Flora* at the Contemporary Art Galleries of the University of Connecticut, located at 830 Bolton Rd, Storrs, Conn. To learn more about the exhibit, visit [contemporaryartgalleries.uconn.edu](https://contemporaryartgalleries.uconn.edu).

To learn more about this forum and the speakers, visit: [bimp.uconn.edu/2023/03/21/jumaadi/](https://bimp.uconn.edu/2023/03/21/jumaadi/).

Admission to this event is free (donations greatly appreciated!), and refreshments will be served. For more information or if you require accommodation to attend a forum, please contact Ballard Institute staff at 860.486.8580 or [bimp@uconn.edu](mailto:bimp@uconn.edu).

# Letters and Emails

Dear Neighbors-

I enjoy your paper every month. The articles are very informative. My eyesight is not the greatest, but I will read the whole paper.

Your story about the Ash Borer ('Parasitoids Provide Hope for New Ash Trees' by Emery Gluck, *Neighbors* Jan/Feb 2023) reminded me of a winter quite a few years ago. We had one hatch in our cellar, and yes, they are emerald green.

My husband was always very careful with his wood. But surprise! One morning we went

down to put some wood in the woodstove and low and behold we had hundreds of flying insects. They all flew to the window, wanting to go out. It took us three days to get rid of them.

If you see a hole in your wood, don't bring it into the house.

Your staff is doing a wonderful job. Please keep the articles coming.

Jean Ludwig, one of your neighbors at Parker Place, Tolland

P.S. Please forgive any spelling mistakes (92).

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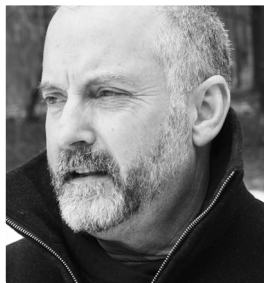


# All About Eggs

By C. Dennis Pierce

*"This broad field, which I have looked at so long, looks not to me as the principal cultivator, but away from me to influences more genial to it, which water and make it green."*

-Henry David Thoreau



Easter and eggs. They go together like tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches. Since we are approaching the Easter season and Easter typically involves eggs in one shape or form, I thought I would take the opportunity to write about this eggceptional ingredient, traditions, and the local egg movement. As I sat down to write and research this column, I came to realize I did not know why eggs are significant to Easter and the tradition of coloring eggs in preparation for Easter Day. It appears that the egg, which is an ancient symbol of new life, has been associated with pagan festivals celebrating spring. From a Christian perspective, Easter eggs are said to represent Jesus' emergence from the tomb and resurrection. Decorating eggs for Easter is a tradition that dates back to at least the 13th century, according to some sources. The early Christians of Mesopotamia began the custom of dyeing Easter eggs. Originally, Christians dyed eggs red to represent the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on the cross. Over time, this tradition spread throughout eastern Orthodox churches and eventually made its way to Catholic and Protestant churches in Europe.

My first memory of decorated Easter eggs goes back to visiting my aunt's house for the holiday. While there I wanted to get a better glimpse of the higher shelf of a chock-full china cabinet. While on tip toes, I could spy a collection of intricate, painted Ukrainian eggs that resided in a set of porcelain egg cups. Later did I come to find out that this egg painting technique has been passed down through generations of Central and Eastern European families, dating back to pagan times. These decorated eggs, after having their contents removed, are called pysanky eggs. They are decorated using a wax-resistant method, resulting in unique symmetrical designs that are deeply symbolic and meaningful. Making pysanky eggs is a labor of love that requires patience, attention to detail, and a steady hand. The name of these Easter eggs contains part of their story. Pysanky (or pysanka in the singular form) is rooted in the Ukrainian verb "to write." In this case, that refers to the pretty patterns you would scrawl across the eggs. Ukrainian Easter eggs often feature intricate designs and symbols, such as flowers, animals, and geometric shapes, each with its own significance.

Actually, dying eggs with food coloring with children is probably a tradition that has gone to the wayside. The traditional dyeing kits contained the metal holder used to submerge the egg into the vinegar-colored water mixture, a wax crayon



to draw designs on the eggs, maybe some stickers and a part of the box that had pop out holes that you would place the masterpieces in while they dried. Looking back, I now realize that this activity also had another purpose. It kept the kids busy while mom took on the task of preparing Easter dinner.

Many cultures have a unique approach to their preparation of eggs. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to visit my daughter who lives in Singapore. Dining in Singapore is a unique experience since the concept of food markets there are called Hawker Centers which offer an array of reasonably priced food options from a multitude of vendor stalls. One morning we set off and enjoyed a selection called, "a breakfast set" for two. This menu option consists of thick toasted bread slathered with kaya, which is a coconut jam made with a base of coconut, milk eggs and sugar. In addition to the toast you are also served four uncooked eggs that are placed in a bowl and then covered with boiling water. Another plate is placed on top of the bowl keeping the heat in and you then wait until the eggs are cooked to the degree that you desire. In essence you are preparing the egg, so it is soft-boiled. When you are ready you crack the egg and scoop out the mixture, add some condiments like soy sauce and then dip your toast and enjoy. Typically, you top it off with a cup of hot steaming kopi which is a mixture of strong coffee and canned milk.

Getting back to the local aspect of eggs where can you find local eggs and why you should purchase them? Well, to start off you know that local eggs are from chickens that are fed with typical feed but also kitchen scraps. The eggs vary in color depending on the breed of the hen. The yolks are a deep orange, and the eggs generally taste better. Chickens are typically allowed to graze and are not factory farmed. Local eggs are healthier. Chickens raised locally receive more humane treatment. They're exposed to sunlight and live a natural life. I have read that studies have found that these eggs have less cholesterol, contain the right kind of fat, and have more vitamins than conventional eggs. Lastly, local eggs help stimulate the local economy, keeping your hard-earned money closer to home.

So where are local eggs found and when can you find them? We do not think about it but eggs are somewhat seasonal. Birds lay for roughly a year and then lose their feathers, stop laying, and go through a 2-4 week dormancy period. Then they begin another production cycle, which peaks early on, plateaus for a couple of months and then gradually drops during the molting period. There are other factors too – in cold weather, a bird uses all its energy just to keep warm, so no eggs. As the days get longer and warmer in Spring, egg production increases again.

Local eggs can be purchased at the local farmer's markets, the Willimantic Co-op and many locations where families have begun raising chickens are offering to the public eggs that the household does not consume. Announcements for

continued on next page

eggs for sale can also be found on Facebook's Mansfield Connections, the web site, Next Door - Mansfield, (Nextdoor.com) and various signs that pop up on the side of the road. Remember when purchasing eggs from local families please have the correct change that you place in the secure payment box. Typically, a dozen eggs are either \$3 or \$4.

As a very young child Easter Sunday for my family always featured a large spread that always included a platter of deviled eggs. I am not sure why, but deviled eggs were always considered special. Maybe, because they were considered a delicacy as an appetizer in restaurants. I have carried on the tradition over the years, however the challenge that I find is that by the time that they arrive at the table several of them have disappeared during the preparation stage.

### My Mother's Easter Deviled Eggs Ingredients:

- 1 dozen hard boiled eggs \*
- ½ teaspoon of sugar
- ½ teaspoon of vinegar
- ½ teaspoon of Colman's mustard powder (you may substitute)
- 6 tablespoons of mayonnaise
- 1 teaspn. of prepared yellow mustard
- ¼ teaspoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon of minced onion
- 1 tablespoon of minced celery
- Topping – 24 tiny celery leaves

### Directions:

Preparing hard boiled eggs – place the eggs in a saucepan and cover with cold water to 1 inch above the eggs. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Remove the pan from the heat and cover. Let the eggs stand for 18 minutes then run cold water over the eggs in the pan until the eggs have cooled. When cool, carefully peel the eggs under running water. Halve the peeled eggs lengthwise and place the yolks into a small mixing bowl. Place the eggs white halves on a plate, cover and refrigerate.

In a small bowl stir together the sugar, vinegar and mustard powder, then mix in the mayonnaise and mustard. With a fork mash the egg yolks into

a smooth consistency.

Add the mayonnaise mixture and salt and mix until smooth.

Stir in onion and celery.

Taste and season accordingly

If you do not have a pastry bag that you would use to fill the egg halves take a sandwich bag and make a small cut out of the bottom corner of the bag.

Add the yolk mixture to the bag and by squeezing the bag fill each cooked egg half.

Top each with a small celery leaf, cover and place in refrigerator until ready to serve.

(You might also put a note on top that reads, "I know how many eggs are here!")

In a medium bowl whisk onion, cider, syrup, ginger, vinegar, thyme, salt and pepper.

Place chicken in a large, zip lock bag. Pour marinade into bag, seal it and refrigerate it for 24 hours. Occasionally rotate the bag so all parts of the chicken are marinated.

Remove chicken from marinade and arrange pieces skin side up in a medium baking dish (9" by 13" or there abouts).

Tuck apples around chicken and pour marinade over top.

Bake, basting occasionally for approximately one hour, until chicken is cooked through, (165 degrees)

Serve chicken and apples with sauce spooned over the top.

I hope to make some connections at the *Know Your Farmers Fair* on April 1<sup>st</sup> so I can set up several visits / interviews in the upcoming months. 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). So, 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!



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# From Green Thumbs to All Thumbs

By Delia Berlin

People often tell me that I have a green thumb. I don't believe there is such a thing. It is true that my plants usually thrive, but there is no secret to it. Give a plant what it needs and it will reward you. Most plants' needs have considerable latitude and are easily met. And since these needs just involve degrees of light, watering, temperature, and fertilizer, they hardly call for high-level knowledge.

My first tip for having beautiful plants is to acquire specimens that will be happy where you plan to put them. For example, if you want a flowering plant for a very cool room, an orchid will not like it, but a cyclamen will. And neither one of these plants will be a prolific bloomer without bright light. There is always a plant that is just right for a given location, and simply following that rule will win you more than half the battles.

Secondly, I would recommend learning enough about the plant in question to have realistic expectations in terms of performance and durability. If you get a waxed amaryllis bulb around the holidays, you are not likely to be disappointed about its bloom. But if you expect repeat performances in future years, you probably won't be happy. On the other hand, an established clivia may give you reliable showy blooms for decades with minimal care. The show will last less than two weeks, though, so if you want frequent and long-lasting blooms, a clivia may not be the best choice.

My husband points out that our plants would not do so well without my attentive observation. That's probably true. Noticing that a plant is getting "thirsty" before it's droopy, for example, will prevent damage and preserve its good looks. Perhaps I take this qualification for granted because I don't see any reason to keep plants if you don't notice them. They are not a mandatory household item and they will take time to maintain. If you enjoy looking at them, it's impossible not to notice them. If you don't, why have them at all? They may end up being a source of frustration and stress.

Many plant lovers get their plants from friends, who usually share them with full care instructions. But plant fans can't resist buying at least some of their specimens at a garden store. In these cases, purchasers rely on the store label for the plant's name and care needs. But unfortunately, that reasonable and helpful practice may be getting phased out.

10 Neighbors



Until recently, a label almost invariably identified a plant and briefly stated its preferred conditions. If the new proud owner wanted to know more, Googling the name of the plant was bound to fulfill that curiosity. But last week, while looking for a plant for a particular spot in my house, I found that most plants were just labeled "house plant" or "foliage plant" and included no other information. I observed this in two different venues. Why wouldn't plant growers do everything in their power to enhance customers' satisfaction and success with their merchandise? Cost-cutting measures cannot explain this change, since a label was still included—it was merely useless. I am certain that most people who buy plants will be annoyed. Many, like me, will walk away without buying a plant at all.



Perhaps I am making a mountain out of a molehill, but this omission of information disturbed me. I could not separate it from its broader societal context. Do we really need to be curious, read books, know history, learn science? Or will that make us too "woke" and more likely to question the status quo? Are plant names about to join the long list of things that we are asked to willfully ignore?

Regardless of the quality and level of education anyone has, most of us rely on each other for continuing learning in adulthood. Cultures get transmitted wholistically in a myriad of ways, absorbed, and processed by our senses and minds. Everything we do involves opportunities to learn something new, and it is our collective responsibility to pass down knowledge and insight to others, in any way we can. Plant growers are not exempt of that responsibility. If they want my business, they will have to enlighten me.

# Pollinator Garden Program at Fletcher

Submitted by Janice Trecker

Saturday, April 29, 10 a.m., Jennifer Sterling-Folker presents "The Do's and Don'ts of Starting a Pollinator Garden," a free program at Fletcher Memorial Library, Hampton. Sterling-Folker is Ashford's Pollinator Pathway Coordinator for the town's Conservation Commission. Her talk will describe the current problems of our key pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and birds, and explain how homeowners and gardeners can make a difference via pollinator pathways.

With urbanization, suburban sprawl and more intensive agriculture, habitat for pollinators has both shrunk and fragmented. The creation of pollinator pathways, chains of habitat patches

both large and small, can provide both food and shelter for pollinators. Ideally, such habitat locations are no more than 750 meters apart, roughly the range of our native bees.

Drawing on her own 20-year experience with a pollinator-friendly, native plant garden, Sterling-Folker will explain best procedures to follow and basic mistakes to avoid. She will also provide information on desirable native trees, shrubs and flowers that enhance pollinator habitat, along with other steps, such as removing invasives, avoiding pesticides, and finding alternatives to lawns and lawn care, that can support pollinators.

A number of Connecticut towns, including Ashford and Mansfield, already have volunteers working on the pathway project. Each town identifies a potential

pathway and offers encouragement and resources for homes and business along it to provide habitat waystations for pollinators. These way stations can be as large as a meadow or as small as a window box so long as they provide food or shelter for pollinators.

Hampton's own project is in the beginning stages under the direction of Marchia Kirkpatrick of the town Conservation Commission.

In conjunction with Sterling-Folker's talk, the library plans a sale of pollinator plants. These can be ordered at the talk for pickup before May 14, Mother's Day, at the library.

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

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# Joe Hinton and Shorty Long

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 features two artists about whom I found only scant information.

## Joe Hinton

Depending on which source you believe, he was born either in Clarksdale, Mississippi, or Evansville, Indiana, on November 15, 1929. He was married to one LaVerne Flowers, and they had children together.

Hinton got his start singing spirituals with the Blair Gospel Singers, the Chosen Gospel Quartet, and the Spirit of Memphis Quartet. Producer Don Robey, who owned the Duke-Peacock-Back Beat family of labels, asked Hinton to try secular music. The singer made his earliest recordings for Peacock in 1958. It was not, however, until 1963 that Hinton saw any real success. His fifth single, “You Know It Ain’t Right,” went top five on *Billboard* magazine’s Rhythm & Blues chart, followed by “Better to Give Than Receive.”



The year 1964 gave Joe Hinton his biggest hit, when he recorded a Deep Soul version of Willie Nelson’s “Funny How Time Slips Away.” For whatever reason, the title was shortened to “Funny.” It spent four weeks at #1 on the R&B chart and reached #13 pop, becoming Hinton’s only single to do well on the *Billboard* Hot 100. “Funny” was also a certified million-seller.

Joe Hinton, 38, died of skin cancer in Boston, Massachusetts, on August 13, 1968.

Charted singles:

“You Know It Ain’t Right” (1963) R&B #5, Pop #88

“Better to Give Than Receive” (1963) Pop #89

“Funny” (1964) R&B #1 (4 weeks), Pop #13

“A Thousand Cups of Happiness” (1964) R&B #19, Pop #111

“I Want a Little Girl” (1965) R&B #34, Pop #132

Neighbors  
Locally Written  
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12 Neighbors

## Shorty Long

He was born Frederick Earl Long in Birmingham, Alabama, on May 20, 1940. His nickname came from his being just five feet one inch in height. As a teenager, he listened to Rhythm & Blues stars like Johnny Ace and Little Willie John. He sang at the Birmingham Baptist Church and became proficient on the piano, organ, drums, guitar, trumpet and harmonica. He also worked as a radio DJ, toured with an Ink Spots group, and played keyboards at a club called the Old Stable before moving to Detroit in 1959.

In the early ‘60s, he recorded for the Tri-Phi/Harvey labels (owned by Berry Gordy’s sister, Gwen, and her husband, Harvey Fuqua). He co-wrote his debut single, “Devil With the Blue Dress,” with Motown songwriter William “Mickey” Stevenson. It was a minor R&B hit, a much faster version of which by Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels went top five on the pop chart in 1966.



Long’s next charted single, “Function at the Junction,” reached #42 on *Billboard* magazine’s R&B chart, though it was a much bigger hit in certain local and regional markets. For example, “Function” hit #1 on WBEE in Chicago and on WABQ in Cleveland.

After coming out with an update of the Big Bopper’s 1958 hit, “Chantilly Lace,” followed by “Night Fo’ Last,” Long enjoyed his biggest record. “Here Comes the Judge” was a novelty number based on Pigmeat Markham’s comedy routine. (Markham also charted with his own version.) After two follow-ups that failed to chart—including a cover of Procol Harum’s “A Whiter Shade of Pale”—Shorty Long and his friend, Oscar Williams, drowned when their boat crashed in the Detroit River on June 29, 1969. Long was 29 years old.

Motown released his final album, *The Prime of Shorty Long*, a few months after the singer’s death.

Rock critic Dave Marsh included “Devil With the Blue Dress” in his 1989 book, *The Heart of Rock and Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made*.

Charted singles:

“Devil With the Blue Dress” (1964) R&B #26, Pop #125

“Function at the Junction” (1966) R&B #42, Pop #97

“Night Fo’ Last” (1968) R&B #42, Pop #75

“Here Comes the Judge” (1968) R&B #4, Pop #8

continued on next page

## Easter Vigil

In the dark church I sit alone  
As nighttime hours tick slowly by  
My heart feels heavy like a stone  
Because the Lord once more must die

Does He relive that day so grim  
The way they did Him vilify  
The cup God did not take from Him  
The people screaming "Crucify"?

Or is the Lord too far away  
No memories can horrify  
Through paradise He makes his way  
So light He's like a butterfly

From ancient pain freed evermore  
The memory faded like a sigh  
So far from all that went before  
All flying up in heaven on high

He seems as distant as a star  
Jesus! I wonder where you are!

Kathy O. LaVallee, North Windham

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Please check out the Unsung Heroes of Soul blog at <https://60459fe07898a.site123.me/>

Dean Farrell hosts "The Soul Express" twice a week: Fridays from 7:00-10:00 p.m. on WECS, 90.1-FM ([www.wecsfm.com](http://www.wecsfm.com)) and alternating Saturdays from 2:30 - 5:30 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).

## Ukulele Workshop

Submitted by Ruth O'Neil

The Song-a-Day Music Center in association with the Coventry Arts Guild will conduct an Introduction to the Ukulele workshop on Saturday, April 15 from 1 to 3 P.M. at the Song-a-day Music Center located at 2809 Boston Turnpike in Coventry.

Participants can expect to become acquainted with this increasingly popular instrument. Music Center owners Jim Hammitt and Ruth O'Neil will facilitate the workshop. Care and tuning of the uke, basic chord and strum patterns along with playing simple and familiar songs will be covered. Next steps will also be explored. Preregistration is required; enrollment is limited.

Cost of the workshop is \$30 per person. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own ukulele but some will be available to use during the workshop.

The Coventry Arts Guild is committed to supporting the visual, performing and literary arts throughout the community. For more information about the Arts Guild and to become a member go to [info@coventryartsguild.org](mailto:info@coventryartsguild.org).

For more information and/or to sign up for the workshop contact the Song-a-Day Music Center at 860-742-6878 or 860-918-5957 or [inquiries@songadaymusic.com](mailto:inquiries@songadaymusic.com)

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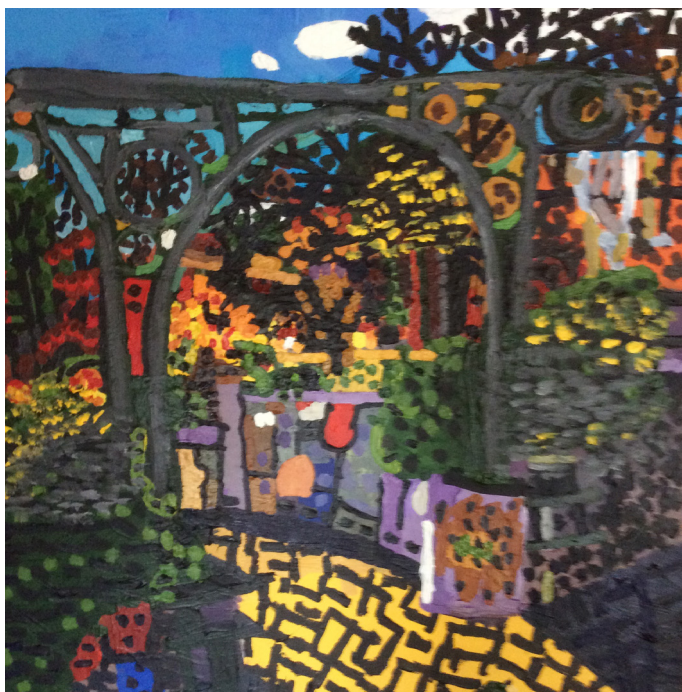
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'The Garden on the Bridge' by Kerri Quirk.



'Iris' by Jim Szarkowicz.

# News from Friends of the Garden on the Bridge

Submitted by Faith Kenton

## Intro:

Celebrate with us! This April marks three years since the Friends of the Garden on the Bridge came together to refurbish this local gem. We can hardly believe it ourselves. We're throwing a bash on Thursday April 13, 6-8 pm, at the new Senior Center, 1 Jillson Square, Willimantic. Please come and support the Friends committee, buy a piece of Garden on the Bridge art, socialize with friends and neighbors, and enjoy a glass of wine and a cookie. Or come early, at 5:15, and meet Jean de Smet and others at 440 Main Street for a pre-celebration walk across the Garden on the Bridge, sponsored by The Last Green Valley.

## Fundraising

Nothing can happen without funding. Over the last three years, there's been a lot of progress, thanks to generous donations from local residents and the Pageau Trust, as well as in-kind contributions from Windham Public Works. But so much more needs to be done, especially on the barren Plaza and Threadway. Our goal is to raise \$15,000 over the next two months..

## Art show

The Garden on the Bridge is such a picturesque spot that it seemed only right to celebrate with art, so we're holding an art sale -- the Shortest Art Show and Sale Ever. It'll take place for just 2 hours during the 3rd birthday celebration. The show features paintings and photographs for sale done by local artists who've been inspired by the Garden on the Bridge and

its surroundings. Artists include Bill Dougal, Donna Martell, Diana Perkins, Scott Rhoades, and Brian Tracy. Prints and greeting cards featuring Jim Szarkowicz' watercolor of irises against the granite wall of ArtSpace will be available. A painting by Kerri Quirk of the Kerri Studio, 861 Main Street, Willimantic, was commissioned especially for this show and will be available for sale. Buy a piece of Bridge-inspired art, enjoy a glass of wine, and support our Garden on the Bridge.

## History

Before it was the Garden on the Bridge, it was the road crossing the Willimantic River from Thread Mill Square-Main St under the railroad trestles to Rte. 32 and Norwich. As traffic increased, this road became inadequate and was replaced in 2000 by today's Thread City Crossing, aka the Frog Bridge. The state advised Willimantic to demolish the stone bridge, which dated from 1857. But locals resisted. Instead, in cooperation with State of Ct and federal agencies, the choice in 2005 was -- revitalize! When the work was finished, the Garden on the Bridge was indeed a garden, with 30 or so planters holding colorful shrubs, perennials and annuals, even blooming trees and a line of river birch in large square planters. The plants were tended by the newly formed Garden Club of Windham.

Then over the years, the Garden on the Bridge fell on hard times. Plants died and planters cracked. The paint on the handsome green metalwork chipped and flaked, benches warped and faded, and weeds grew between the patterned paving stones. Lighting failed. The Garden on the Bridge went from attraction to eyesore.

In the spring of 2020, the Friends of the Garden on the Bridge came together. They see their mission as not just restoring the Garden on the Bridge but improving it. Their

continued on next page





'Winter snowflakes' by Jay Osborne.

vision is to turn the two approaches to the bridge -- the Pleasant Street Hillside and the Main Street Plaza -- into congenial, small-town gathering places. Work started in 2021 with the Hillside, which has been transformed: overgrown junipers have been cut back, new terraces with rugged granite benches now break up the steep climb up the hill, and nestled at the bottom of the hill is the Amp -- a charming, small amphitheater perfect for intimate performances. In summer and fall of 2022, the Amp hosted 5 different small concerts by local performers, New lighting will soon be installed and the cracked sidewalk will be replaced with decorative pavers. There are also plans to repair the planters on the Bridge itself and install lighting there, too.

### Future

What's next? The Friends still have work to do. The wide Main Street entrance is empty and barren. It cries out for new benches and tables, planters and plantings, maybe even a water feature, a pavilion, a game area, and public art. Also needed: a sign or gateway to the Garden on the Bridge that will make a statement and catch the attention of drivers and pedestrians alike. Too many lifelong Windham residents who go to the Bridge for the first time say, "I had no idea." The Friends' goal is to provide attractive amenities that catch peoples' eye and invite them to come and investigate.

### Support

More progress will require more funding. Help the Friends transform the barren Plaza and Threadway into a lively, comfortable public space. Help them create an all-inclusive multi-use area Willimantic can be proud of, that residents and visitors can bring families to, that visitors will seek out, and that will benefit the local economy of the area. You can help by visiting the bridge, by attending concerts and other events there, by joining in work parties to clean and maintain the grounds -- and by donating to Friends of the Garden on the Bridge, c/o Garden Club of Windham, Box 773, Willimantic, CT 06226. You can also go to the Garden Club website ([www.gardenclubofwindhamct.org](http://www.gardenclubofwindhamct.org)) and make a donation online; the webpage accepts PayPal and credit cards, and donations made between April 10 and May 10 will be matched by Patronicity/Sustainable CT.



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# Healthy or Unhealthy Skepticism?

By Bill Powers

*“We all know that the rooster crows before the dawn, but we don’t think that the rooster made the sun come up. So that is a coincidence. How do we distinguish coincidence from causality? Because we know if we silence the rooster, the sun will come up anyway.”*

- Dr. William Schaffner, Professor of Preventative Medicine, Vanderbilt Medical School

It is easy to get lost in all the research information about COVID-19 vaccines. Two years ago, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many others probably did, I took a close and hopefully thoughtful look at the information that was available to me about COVID VACCINATION.

Looking back to that time and continuing to this day, I am thankful for my college statistics courses that were required for analysis and interpretation of data. Also, continuing to this day are the images of the lines of refrigerated trucks to temporarily store the dead bodies of COVID-19 victims and the interviews with exhausted hospital workers who were stressed by long hours and lack of medical supplies and life support equipment. Those were the pre-vaccination days!

It was disconcerting to read the article in the March edition of *Neighbors* by Gregory B. Park, M.D. titled “The Odds Aren’t Great-COVID Vaccines Deserve Healthy Skepticism.” Dr. Park wrote it “to provide a counterpoint” to Delia Berlin’s article, “Beating the Odds” that appeared in the previous edition of *Neighbors*. It was disconcerting to read Dr. Park’s article for a number of reasons, and I wonder if what Dr. Park referred to as his “healthy skepticism” may in fact be a case in which he is actually foisting an example of “unhealthy skepticism” on the public. Certainly, the doctor not only has his right of freedom of speech, but also as a physician he may also have a responsibility to the public “to do no harm.”

First, as I was reading his article what popped into my head was the now infamous article published in *Lancet* and eventually retracted. It erroneously and fraudulently claimed a connection of MMR vaccine and autism. That article, even though officially discredited, has for many years fueled the false beliefs of deniers, who have refused to have their children vaccinated. I wondered if Dr. Park had first shared his concerns with appropriate medical colleagues in a peer reviewed forum before fobbing off his ideas on an unsuspecting general audience? By this I mean shared them with knowledgeable infectious disease specialists, epidemiologists and medical statisticians.

Second, literally as I had just finished reading his article and turned on my TV for an update on an approaching Nor’easter, I immediately viewed a message from Dr. Manisha Juthani, an infectious diseases physician, who is currently the Director for the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Her message about the bivalent booster was “GET BOOSTED

AND STAY HEALTHY.” Dr. Park’s message seems to contradict Dr. Juthani’s request. Certainly, Dr. Juthani must be aware of the medical issues espoused by Dr. Park. Is Dr. Juthani, for some reason, intentionally or otherwise, misinforming the public? I’ll bet there are conspiracy theorists who would have a field day offering up answers to that question!

Third, is Dr. Park suggesting that older people like me, who have medical issues, should abandon their trust in the doctors who have advised patients about the advantages of COVID vaccines out-weighing the risks? I have complete faith in my doctor who knows me, and he is a Harvard Medical School graduate has an interest in travel and tropical medicine with training at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Should I now be cynical about my own doctor’s advice?

Fourth, isn’t it true, in general, that strokes related to or attributed to carotid artery ulceration are somewhat common? Can the connection to vaccination be interpreted and explained as coincidental? One of the first lessons in my first college statistics course was that correlation is a measure of the relationship between two variables. Even when there is a strong relationship, this does NOT IMPLY CAUSATION, because other variables (confounding) may account for the relationship. When Dr. Park writes about the “35,000 deaths ‘associated’ with COVID-19 reported to VAERS”, use of the word “associated” is problematic and not only because he seems to imply causation. The doctor discusses a few stroke cases referred to him in his practice because of his special situation, and he noticed a pattern: “the patients sustained a stroke 3-6 days following doses of their mRNA vaccines”- coincidental?

For comparison, has Dr. Park taken a close look at his population of stroke patients who were NOT vaccinated? The doctor refers to the cases as “unique” because three other physicians who referred patients to him failed to see a pattern, since each saw a single patient. VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Report System) warns that: “VAERS reports may contain information that is incomplete, inaccurate, coincidental, or unverifiable... The numbers of reports alone cannot be interpreted as evidence of causation between vaccine and an adverse event, or as evidence about the existence, severity, frequency, or rates of problems associated with vaccines.” The most recent March 7, 2023 “SELECTED ADVERSE EVENTS REPORTED AFTER COVID-19 VACCINATION” discusses the stroke concerns raised by Dr. Park. (([www.cdc.gov/.../safety/adverse-events.html](http://www.cdc.gov/.../safety/adverse-events.html)) “CDC’s Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD) met the statistical criteria to prompt additional investigation into whether there was a safety concern for ischemic stroke in people 65 and older who received Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, Bivalent. To date, no other safety systems have revealed a similar signal and multiple subsequent analyses have not validated this signal. **No change is recommended in COVID-19 vaccination practice.**”

Fifthly, Dr. Park appears to be skeptical about the

validity of certain safety systems set up to monitor adverse effects of vaccines, but fails to discuss the OTHER safety systems that are also employed to promote a more encompassing review of adverse effects.

In her January, 2023, *Neighbors* article 'Beating the Odds' Delia Berlin advocated for the use of COVID-19 vaccines. Dr Gregory B. Park in last month's *Neighbors* disagrees with her commentary. I agree with Delia Berlin who concluded: "There are no guarantees in life, but there are excellent ways to improve one's odds. I do not know when the next booster will arrive, but my sleeve is already rolled up." Many of Dr. Park's comments seem to me to be highly dubious. I encourage readers to review the CDC site that I have provided. There you see the numbers of the relatively few adverse events compared to the millions of inoculations. These include cardiac events which were mostly mild and transient. Look at the data, talk to your physician, **improve your odds**, and roll up your sleeves. Think about whether or not there is good evidence that vaccinations **caused** adverse effects. Decide for yourself whether the skepticism is healthy or actually unhealthy.

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## APRIL IS MANSFIELD RID LITTER MONTH

### Let's Clean Up Our Town in 2 Easy Steps:

1. Collect roadside litter in your neighborhood.
2. Put the litter out the next week with your trash service or drop it off free of charge at the Transfer Station.

**Yellow vests are available for participants by calling the Public Works Office.**

For information about the Adopt-A-Road program, call the Public Works Office at 860-429-3333 or visit [www.mansfieldct.org/litter](http://www.mansfieldct.org/litter).

## Letters and Emails

The earth and Mother Nature. One and the same. She has said, "Enough is enough. Man has been polluting me too many years." The Native Americans have lived here thousands of years and used just enough to live content and no pollution. The USA has been here about 250+ years and look what our science has done. Now after 250+ years we are starting to wake up to all the weed killers and other chemicals that we have used. Whippoorwills - they have been gone 20+ years. Very few bats, fireflies, peepers, small frogs, early spring insects. The electronic bug zappers killed them.

It's no wonder people are sick health wise and mentally. All the chemical fertilizers used to produce food - vegetables, beef, etc. Mother Earth - look what she is doing now - wild fires, terrible storms, floods, etc.

View from an 85-year old man.

James P. Balkus, Windham

P.S. I came across the following in a book I am reading: 'Government can help the economy only by protecting you and your property. A free-market economy, limited government, and the 'rule of law' are the keys to prosperity and peace.'

**Noah King, Realtor, ABR, SRS, SFR**

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# Speaking To and About a Rapidly Warming World: The Grammar of Animacy

By Phoebe Godfrey

*The universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects. The devastation of the planet can be seen as a direct consequence of the loss of this capacity for human presence to and reciprocity with the nonhuman world.*



—Thomas Berry, Evening Thoughts:  
Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community

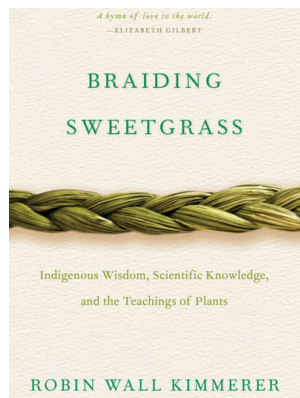
It is a beautiful early spring day in the last week of March and many bulbs in our garden have been visible for over a month. In fact, our first snowdrops and crocuses began to appear in late February, a time when it should have still been cold, the ground should still have been frozen, and snow and ice should have still been glimmering their white granules—if not everywhere, at least in shaded, colder places both on the land and water. However, this was not the case this year, has not been with each passing year, and may not again be the case due to global warming. Usually cause for a celebration in my house, the ever earlier appearances of our bulbs is also an exercise in alarm and a deep questioning of how do I/we respond to a rapidly warming world? How do we respond to these emerging flowering beings, as well as to all the young people who are inheriting these drastic changes, hence challenges?

To help me/us explore these questions and feelings, I turn to Robin Wall Kimmerer's book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (2013), wherein she offers teachings for those of us who are not Indigenous to these lands (although we were once to lands somewhere). A concept that speaks deeply to me is in her chapter titled "Learning the Grammar of Animacy," which she starts off by quoting the late Thomas Berry, a Catholic priest and ecologist, that the living world is made up of "a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects" (p. 56). For Kimmerer, this is an example of the "grammar of animacy," but, as she goes on to explore, such a grammar is made especially difficult by the English language, as opposed to many Indigenous languages like Ojibwe, which Kimmerer's ancestors spoke and which she has come to learn as an adult. Key to such a "grammar of animacy" is that it invites us to ask of all that we encounter in the world, "Who is that being?" as opposed to "What is it?", as would be the norm in English. In contrast, as Kimmerer explains, Ojibwe uses "the same words

to address the living world as we use for our family." It does this because, as she states, "they are our family" (p. 55).

Kimmerer goes on to explain more from her explorations with Ojibwe, that English grammar "boxes us in by the choice of reducing a nonhuman being to an *it*, or it must be gendered, inappropriately, as a *he* or a *she* [italics in original]." As she goes on to recognize, "The arrogance of English is that the only way to be animate, to be worthy of respect and moral concern, is to be a human" (p. 57). And yet even then, not all "humans" are seen as equally human when it comes to how we are labeled and organized by hierarchical categories of race/racism, class/classism, and gender/sexism. Thus, to circle back to my question of how to "respond to these emerging flowering beings, as well as to the young people who are inheriting these drastic changes, hence challenges," we must first attempt to recognize who the others are, and, if they are human beings, then to reflect on how their identities have been constructed, how they are embodying them, how they relate to and understand the land, the crocuses, the weather, and the ways they all intersect. If they are nonhuman, then we must also ask, as Kimmerer argues, who they are, how they live, survive, and thrive, and what they need from us. For in asking all these questions we are already confronting ourselves and others with questions our culture continually seeks to deny, as well as putting humans on the same level as plants—another deeply rooted taboo.

And so, even after we have learned who the others are—both humans and, in this case, plants—my ultimate answer can only be that we must respond with greater practices of compassion, starting with ourselves. We must find ways to tell ourselves the truth that our culture cannot continue along its current path of continual growth and, from there, spread that truth out to all who need to hear it. We must stand strong against all in Florida and elsewhere who see social justice as something that has to "die," and instead turn our focus to the messages from the Earth, which can be heard using the "grammar of animacy." For even if we must speak, ask, and answer in English, as does Kimmerer for the most part, we can find solace in the words she shares from a Cheyenne elder, Bill Tall Bull. Affirming that the plants and the land "love to hear the old language," Bill adds, pointing to his lips, "You don't have to speak it here. If you speak it here," he says, patting his chest, "they will hear you" (p. 59). Likewise, our youth deserve to hear us not only speak the "grammar of animacy," but also the "grammar of truth," which includes their complex and contradictory "truths" about who they are, what they feel, and how all of this is inseparable from the ongoing struggle for a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society.



# Come join us! You're Invited! A Fundraising Reception

Reception Honoring the Garden on the Bridge, and the Artists who Love It.

Our Friends of the Garden on the Bridge (GOB) Committee invites the community.. We aim to publicize the Bridge as being "art inspiring" and thank the artists who have visited the Bridge with their paints and cameras. And we ask for your continuing support as we continue our work to revitalize the Bridge area.

**Reception - Windham Senior Center, 1 Jillson Square, Willimantic, Ct 06226**

**Thursday April 13, 2023 6-8**

**AND - same time/place-**

**Art Show** by local artists and sale of their work -

Come meet the committee members and local dignitaries, meet the artists and buy a beautiful "piece" of the Bridge, hear about our progress, have a glass of wine and have fun.

## Tai Chi Home

By Joe Pandolfo

### A New Leaf

April's here, and a morning in April can change the world. In the palm of your hand you can catch dew rolling off a new leaf.

In the Taoist lunar calendar, it's the Month of the Dragon when April appears. The Dragon is the one animal born in imagination. It carries the energy of transformation.

This is a time you might have some shift you've been longing to make, some vision beginning to take shape. Let the Dragon breathe life into that. Go out one of these mornings to catch the early glow of the sun rising, the songs of the first birds, the enchanted feeling that you've found a new way home.



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## A sincere request for photographs-

I am very thankful for the many writers who contribute monthly, occasionally, or just once. Without them this paper wouldn't be worth printing. Unfortunately, these pages are often heavy with text and light on photographs. It is so easy to take and send photos today. Please take some photos of family, friends, pets, favorite places or events and text them to 860-933-3376 or email to neighborspaper@yahoo.com. Neighbors will be an even more valuable community resource with a regular selection of photographs taken by community residents. Thank you. Tom King



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# Generational Wealth Planning: A Guide to Growing and Protecting Your Wealth for Decades to Come

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



It's common for people to want to leave money behind for their children and family members after death. After spending years working to earn a living, people are proud to leave behind a legacy and help their future generations to be better off. But there's a common saying regarding generational wealth: "shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations" – meaning that by the time wealth has been passed down for three generations there's often actually not much wealth left at all.

Unfortunately, that euphemism is rooted in truth. As I shared in an article on generational wealth published earlier this year, a well-known study conducted by The Williams Group found that about 70 percent of wealthy families lose their wealth by the second generation, and 90 percent lose it by the third generation.

But planning well can do a great deal to help you and your family avoid becoming part of those statistics. Developing a generational wealth plan, communicating with your loved ones, and working with a team of professionals can give your wealth a better chance of lasting for generations to come.

Here's a step-by-step guide to getting started on creating your own generational wealth plan.

## **First, think ahead – far ahead.**

It's important to remember that generational wealth planning is a bit different from designating gifts for your kids and grandkids through estate planning. The point of generational planning is to ensure the ability to pass assets down to those who haven't even been born yet, but it can be hard to try to consider their needs alongside the family members you already know and love. So be careful to keep that top-of-mind as you plan and consider the best strategies for conserving your wealth over the long-term.

## **Second, have those important conversations with your family.**

If you want your wealth to last for generations, it's

crucial that you communicate your desires to your family. This is perhaps one of the most common mistakes that people make when passing down wealth. If you're going to make a generational plan for your wealth, make sure that plan is shared with those future generations if you want it to go smoothly.

You are your family's best resource for wisdom and guidance when it comes to this, so don't make the mistake of thinking that talking about money and your wishes for what happens to your wealth when you're gone is somehow taboo or tasteless. It may be difficult in some respects, that's true – but it's also necessary and the responsible thing to do for all involved.

So take the time to educate your children and grandchildren, sharing your vision with them so that they aren't left feeling confused and frustrated. This is an ideal opportunity to involve your financial advisor, as they can help you communicate your vision, explain the planning process, and answer any of the more technical questions your family may have, and even.

## **Third, put it in writing.**

Your heirs are the ones who will be carrying out your plan after you're gone, and having a written roadmap on what must be done will relieve them of any potential doubt or confusion regarding your wishes. Make sure you specifically identify how the money should be used, how it will be accessed, and how it will be replenished. It may be very beneficial to work with a wealth management professional on this, as he or she can help to ensure the optimal strategies are in place to achieve long-term generational goals.

With proper planning, it's possible the wealth you have today can be used by future generations to build more wealth tomorrow through a continued investment plan and by investing in the ability of future heirs to invest in themselves through such things as higher education or starting a business, for example.

## **Create a Support System**

Do you know what a sustainable withdrawal rate is for your assets? It's possible you may not. And if you don't, it's highly unlikely your heirs will know either. Understanding this, along with a number of other technical details, is an important part of maintaining wealth for decades to come.

This is why working with the right set of financial professionals can offer your greatest chance at a successful generational wealth transfer. They'll work one-on-one with you to determine your goals, develop a plan, and educate your heirs. And just as important, after your passing they'll still be there to help them stay on track.

If you think you're ready to start creating a generational wealth plan, remember to have a clear vision and share that vision with your family members. Put these wishes into legal documents, too, and work with a financial professional who is a fiduciary from the start to ensure your wishes and your best interests are met.

If you'd like help with your generational wealth planning, get in touch with us at Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors. We act as fiduciary wealth management advisors to help our clients build and pass along wealth to future generations through our Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well™ process. You can request a complimentary consultation on our website at [whzwealth.com](http://whzwealth.com) or call us at (860) 928-2341.

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## Showers

Silent raindrops  
drift from the sky,  
leaving sweet scents  
that flavors the air.

Showers embrace the earth.  
They are quenching its thirst,  
awakening every thing  
that is needing to grow.

Storm clouds now threaten.  
Winds steadily increase.  
and with cat paws,  
darkness creeps in.

Leaves turn their back.  
Hind sides appear  
Signs of terror  
stirs in the air

Claps of thunder  
rumble on by.  
Lightning follows  
bright'ings the sky.

Clouds break away.  
Trees are now still.  
Danger departs.  
Harmony reigns.

The ground is soaked.  
Raindrops vanish.  
Sunlight breaks through,  
warming our Earth.

Showers finish.  
Their job is done.  
Earth rejoices.  
Its thirst relieved.

Jeanne Esterquest  
March 2023

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our local farmers  
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## News from Lebanon's Trumbull Library

Submitted by Claire Levesque-McKinney

**Haiku Workshop - Monday, April 17 at 5:00p**  
Join Jen Montgomery for an interactive exploration of the poetry form of haiku. We will listen to many examples, brainstorm concepts, and write our own haiku to share with the group. This is a multigenerational program intended for folks to write their own poems; children 6+ may participate, pre-readers/writers, please come with a helper. At Jonathan Trumbull Library, 580 Exeter Road, Lebanon, CT. [lebanonctlibrary.org](http://lebanonctlibrary.org) / 860-642-7763

**Earth Day on The Lebanon Green - Saturday, April 22 from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm**  
Jonathan Trumbull Library, in partnership with the Congregational Church, invites you all to celebrate our beautiful Earth! Walk the labyrinth, listen to music, read stories, create artwork, tend to the Pollinator garden, and be in community with your fellow earth-dwellers. Meet outside between Lebanon's Library on the Green (580 Exeter Road) and the First Congregational Church of Lebanon.

**Poetry Open Mic - Wednesday, April 26 at 4:30 pm**  
All ages community poetry open mic. Join us in the Community Room to listen to and read some poetry. Sign up when you arrive, you may read/recite three poems or read/recite for 3 minutes. If time allows, we can read more. Original poetry is encouraged! At Jonathan Trumbull Library, 580 Exeter Road, Lebanon, CT. [lebanonctlibrary.org](http://lebanonctlibrary.org) / 860-642-7763

**Shaping Words and Worlds - Every Wednesday from 2:30 - 4:00 pm**  
A midweek departure from ordinary language. Join us in the practice of using poetry to honor and hold our unfolding selves. Bring your works in progress, art that inspires you, or just your swirling thoughts, feelings, inner landscapes. All voices welcome. *This program is for young people in their teens and early 20s.* At Jonathan Trumbull Library, 580 Exeter Road, Lebanon, CT. [lebanonctlibrary.org](http://lebanonctlibrary.org) / 860-642-7763



Part Three:

# Get Your Kicks in the *Last Dark Valleys*

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

## The Quiet Corner

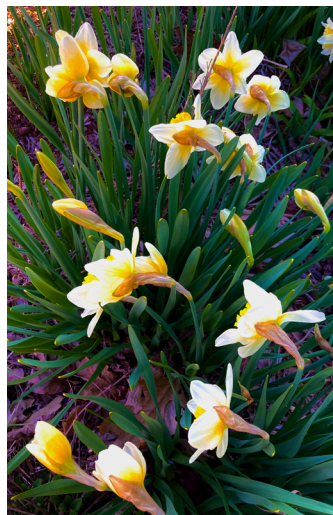
**600-Odd** square miles of Eastern Connecticut's coastal highlands are the *Quiet Corner*. Quaint, quiet, little to do. *How you gonna keep 'em down on the farm?* Well, there's actually MUCH to do here -- often a new natural wonder, farm-stand, restaurant or music venue to be found. Natural and unnatural places, quiet and loud. Many woody walks. With interstate access to Hartford and Boston, the area is surprisingly remote.

Mostly quiet.

The Quiet Corner is a pocket of Americana bounded by **State Route 32** on the west, **Interstate-395** on the east, **Interstate-84 / US Highway 20** on the north, and **US Highway 6** on the south. But paths along river valleys guided settlement before cars.

Part Two noted little journeys along such trails and roads traversing across the *Last Dark Valleys*. Now I share some north-south journeys that descend the highlands from the Worcester Hills on roads following rivers and ridges... and signs of spring.

**Spring!** In the quiet core of the corner, drive north on **Scenic Route 198** along the rocky Natchaug River from **US-6** through Chaplin, Eastford to Woodstock. Or storied **Route 169** north from Brooklyn Fairgrounds past the "joyful pink" Roseland Cottage in Woodstock. Both meet in Southbridge MA, at the northern edge of the QC. Daffodils are everywhere in April.



Drive swarming state **Route 12** through every town, nook and cranny from Auburn MA to Norwich; or switch to **Interstate-395**, the east edge of the Corner, but you'll miss the *Narcissus*.

A fun loop off **US Highway 6** is driving **CT-169 / 197-to-198**. Lunch at Vanilla Bean Café in Pomfret, or the Bach D'or Café that is a motorcycle destination in Chaplin.

**US-6** diverts into Willimantic on **US Route 66**. *Get some kicks*

22 Neighbors

continuing north past *Frog Bridge* through downtown... past the Route 66 left turn... continuing straight north on **CT-32** to the Worcester Hills along the Willimantic River, the western edge of the Quiet Corner.



Route 66 West, North Windham

**Route 66** excited a postwar television audience and an east-to-west movement across the nation with freedom, mobility and the American Dream. The Spirit of Route 66 survives in all directions.

*Leaving the Atlantic*

*West through Willimantic...*

**"Get Your Kicks on Route 66"** is a jazzy rhythm & blues tune famously composed by Bobby Troup in 1946. Popularly known as *The Mother Road*, Route 66 holds a storied place in American road culture. Troup imagined it on a cross-country roadtrip with wife Cynthia to be a Hollywood songwriter. Packing their 1941 Buick in Pennsylvania, they headed west on US Route 40 to Chicago, then drove US Route 66 to the California coast.

*"If you ever plan to motor west  
Travel my way, take the highway,  
that's the best*

*Get your kicks on route 66*

*It winds from Chicago to L. A.*

*More than 2000 miles all the way*

*Get your kicks on route 66*

*Now you go through Saint Louey,*

*Joplin, Missouri*

*And Oklahoma City*

*Looks mighty pretty*

*You'll see Amarillo, Gallup, New Mexico*

*Flagstaff, Arizona, Don't forget Winona*

*Kingman, Barstow, San Bernardino*

*Won't you get hip to this timely tip*

*When you make that California trip*

*Get your kicks on route 66."*

Bobby imagined a US-40 tune, but Cynthia suggested the title “Get Your Kicks on Route 66.” Composed on the 10-day journey, the lyrics list places along the road to Santa Monica CA. Great phrasing, but Cynthia lamented: “What I can’t really believe is that he doesn’t have Albuquerque in the song.”

**Nor Willimantic!** From Highway 6, US Route 66 diverts the storied route becoming Main Street USA as it passes gorgeous granite mills, Garden on the Bridge and Frog Bridge into the small city with a big Shaboo Stage and a thriving food co-op, the far eastern, far out city of Willimantic at the edge of Connecticut’s Quiet Corner. Also WILI Radio (95.3 FM/1400 AM), oldies-but-goodies and Red Sox games.

**Garden on the Bridge** Opposite the **Windham Textile & History Museum** at 411 Main Street.

**Willimantic Co-Op** The Spirit of the Woodstock music festival continues organically at 91 Valley Street.

**Shaboo Stage** Outdoor tribute to **Shaboo Inn**, “Best Little Blues Club in the Country” for 12 years.

**Third Thursday Street Fest** Downtown Main Street, 5 blocks for 5 months, May - September.

**Pho Delight** at 920 Main St. Yummy yellow coconut curry with pineapple, chicken; eat-in, bar, take-out.

**Kicks?** My favorite kick on Route 66 was the 2019 ‘Salute to Woodstock 50’ by Canned Heat at the outdoor Shaboo Stage, a rocking pre-pandemic show with their iconic hippy hymn “Going Up The Country.” We had just come down the country from Boston to Chaplin.

What’s your kick? Wondrous things happen in the Quiet Corner, some only brief. Restaurants don’t survive pandemics, inflation and recession. The Ghost Train was luminescent for only seventeen years. The Shaboo Inn rocked for twelve.

Get your kicks while you can.

**N-S Roads MORE LITTLE JOURNEYS** in the Quiet Corner are along the below north-south roads, listed east to west. They descend Connecticut’s coastal highlands from the Worcester Hills in Massachusetts, and from **Interstates 84/90** and **US Highway 20**.

Water generally flows south from the Worcester Hills down the coastal highlands toward **US Highway 6**, an approximate crease in the coastal plain where land-slope changes from highland to lowland. IMHO.

**1 US Interstate 395 FASTEST Highway/EAST EDGE South from I-90/Auburn MA to Norwich & I-95/New London**

**Thompson Super Speedway Exit 50** to the “Indianapolis of the East.” In 1938, Thompson farms were leveled by the Great New England Hurricane AKA “Long Island Expressway.” America’s first asphalt racetrack followed cleanup. Truly zooming.

**Putnam** Three exits to Civil War mill town with a hurricane-proof Arts District (after 1955 floods); visit First Fridays,



Roseland Cottage, Woodstock

May-October.

**Attawaugan Mill Exit 43** Original town of workers’ houses with adaptive reuse of brick mill; Farther up Five Mile River is a standing mill in Ballouville, and a falling-down, eerily deteriorating stone-brick hybrid mill in Pineville. Going, going...

**2 CT Route 12 SLOWEST BUSY Highway near I-395 South from Auburn MA through every town to Norwich port**

**Courthouse Bar & Grille** at 121 Main Street. One of several worthy restaurants if find a parking space in Putnam’s lively Arts District.

**New York Pizza** at 8 Furnace St, Killingly / Danielson for best pizza in QC? Gorgonzola garlic chicken? Bar, burgers and diners.

**BigY Supermarket** off I-395 / US-6 in Plainville for tasty fish & chips.

**3 CT Route 169 BUSY SCENIC Country Highway South from Southbridge MA through Woodstock to Norwich**

**Hope’s Treasures** Good thrift store at 168 Mechanic St., Southbridge.

**Roseland Cottage** at 556 Route 169, Woodstock; “Joyful pink” elaborate Gothic Revival house open June – October.

**Woodstock Fair** Every Labor Day at 281 Route-169 (169 / 171).

**Country Estates** for cultural institutions abound such as educational campuses, religious churches and farms with fieldstone walls.

**Vanilla Bean Cafe** at 450 Deerfield Road (169/44/97), Pomfret for “Comfort food in a comfortable place” with a musical tradition.

**Vintage Car Weekends** at intersection of 169/101 in Pomfret during the summer, next to Pizza 101 and The Baker’s Dozen café.

**Brooklyn Fair** Each Labor Day just south of US-6; Since 1809, the oldest continuous agricultural fair in US. Food booths and more!

**4 CT Route 97 QUIET SCENIC Country Road South from Pomfret at Route 169 thru Hampton to Sprague**

continued on page 25

Neighbors 23



# New Lyman Allyn Exhibition

## Explores the Hidden World of Insects

Submitted by Rebecca Dawson, Director of Communications

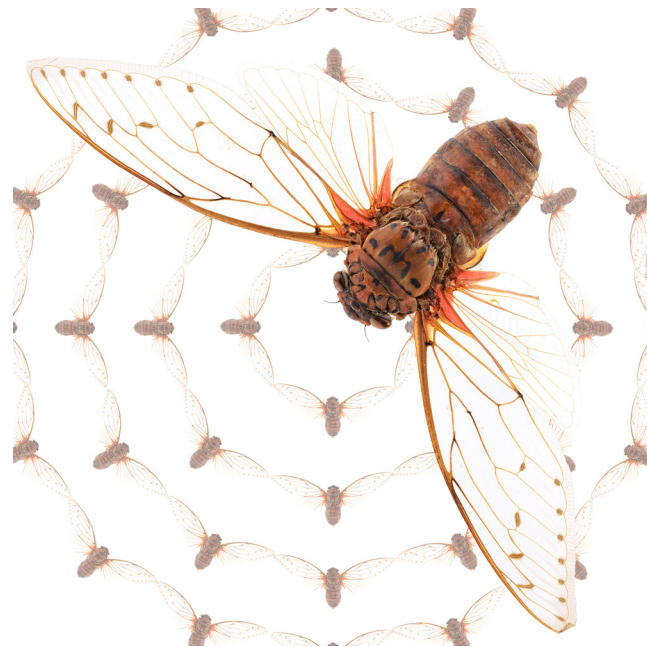
**NEW LONDON** – In the air, water, and even under foot, insects inhabit every domain of our daily lives, performing essential functions that balance our fragile ecosystem on earth. By using cutting-edge technology and custom methods, artist Bob Sober created *Small Wonders: Insects in Focus*, an exhibition of breathtaking beauty that allows viewers to see this hidden world like they've never seen it before. *Small Wonders* aims to inspire, in an artistic way, our natural curiosity to understand the form, function, and diversity of nature. The exhibition opens April 6 and is on view through July 23.

Bob Sober, a visual artist as well as technological pioneer whose photographic techniques are the subject of educational tutorials, offers a series of 30 images that bring the natural world to a scale rarely experienced until now. *Small Wonders* finds viewers at the intersection of art and science and brings together two fields of thought in a provocative and inspiring way.

Insects have been on earth 350 million years, while sharing the planet with humans for only the past 2 million years. Hundreds of thousands of insect species have been documented (scientists believe 30 million may exist), far outnumbering the total of all other animal species. Insects are so prolific that thousands share our own backyards.

Creating human-scale images of insects, with resolution so high that every hair, dimple, and tiny structure is clearly revealed, was impossible prior to the technological advancements of the past ten years. High-resolution digital cameras, fast personal computers, economical digital storage, and powerful software applications capable of assisting with the assembly of hundreds or thousands of individual photographs create the opportunity to capture accurate images of insects as they truly exist.

These new ways of seeing confront viewers with the idea that insects display the elements we attribute to good design or beautiful artwork. Colors like neon green, sapphire blue, crimson red, deep violet, and brilliant yellow are all part of the insect world. Wild, multi-colored patterns sometimes come from hair, sometimes from iridescent scales, and other times from colors integral to the insect's exoskeleton. Smooth metallic finishes and heavily stippled texture may exist on the same insect. Strange body shapes, delicate wing structures, and beautifully engineered body components captivate. These tiny creatures are indeed artwork, in every sense of the word.



Bob Sober, Cicada (*Pomponia intermedia*) Thailand, 2013; digital image printed on aluminum, 40 x 60 inches; Courtesy of art's IMPORTANT, LLC.

**Join us for a family-friendly reception on Tuesday, April 11 from 4 to 6 p.m.** with avid insect collector Maishe Dickman. Examine real insect specimens and explore the exhibition. To learn more about the event, visit [lymanallyn.org](http://lymanallyn.org). To RSVP, call 860.443.2545 or email [info@lymanallyn.org](mailto:info@lymanallyn.org).

### About the Lyman Allyn Art Museum

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

The Museum is located at 625 Williams Street, New London, Connecticut, exit 83 off I-95. The Museum is open **Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sundays 1 - 5 p.m.**; it is closed on Mondays and major holidays. For more information call 860.443.2545, ext. 2129 or visit [www.lymanallyn.org](http://www.lymanallyn.org).

This exhibition is organized by ExhibitsUSA, a program of Mid-America Arts Alliance.

**We-Lik-It** at 728 Hampton Road (97), Pomfret; Family farmstore with beef, ice cream and farm animals.

**Hampton** Traditional New England town with strong sense of community, and a once-thriving dairy industry.

**Organic Roots Farmstore** 147 East Old Route 6 off New Hwy 6, Hampton, for Cinnammmon rolls on Saturdays.

**5 CT Route 198 SCENIC Pristine River Road**  
**South from Southbridge MA to the Natchaug River and Hwy 6**

**Campgrounds** along Natchaug in Woodstock, Eastford & Chaplin.

**Hall's Pond** Quiet launch on Hall's Pond Road off 198, Chaplin.

**Chaplin Street** Notable New England architecture built around 1822 Congregational Church in quiet crescent off 198.

**Diana's Pool** Kayaking, Trophy Trout fishing and frolicking on the rocky Natchaug. But NO Swimming (except the UNauthorized UConn ritual jumping into deep pool by the 198 bridge) in Chaplin.

**Bach D'or** "Back Door" biker cafe at 9 Willimantic Road (US 6), Chaplin, with a \$5 roast beef dinner and a bar scene out back. Motorcycle Destination at the south terminus of Scenic Route 198.

**6 CT Route 89 QUIET SCENIC Road from I-84**  
**South through Ashford along Mount Hope River to 195**

Delightful rural river-road to Mansfield Center.

**7 CT Route 195 BUSY Storrs Road from I-84**  
**South through Mansfield-Storrs-UConn to Willimantic**

**UConn at Storrs** Academic and agricultural serenity in the coastal highlands. Storrs' instant-urban-center is curious. Fenton River valley draining to Mansfield Hollow is wondrous.

**Chang's Garden** at 1244 Storrs Rd, Storrs. Chinese Hunan / Szechuan dine-in-takeout. Love the Happy

Family dinner with flan.

**Gurleyville Gristmill** near Storrs, 624 Wormwood Hill Rd, Mansfield. Preserved milling equipment with hamlet of houses on Fenton River.

**Maharaja** at 466 Storrs Road, Mansfield Center; mmmMixed Grill is my fav Indian takeout meal or dine-in.

**BigY Supermarket** at 141b Storrs Road, Mansfield, tasty fish & chips.



**8 CT Route 32 BUSY Road from I-84 / WEST EDGE South through Willimantic-Windham to port of New London**

**Stafford Springs** 1700s water reputed to cure "gout, sterility, pulmonary, hysterics, overwork and anxiety." **Take a bottle?**

**Stearns Farmstore / Mountain Dairy** off 32 to 483 Browns Road. Produce, pie, ice cream & milk, Mansfield. Top of the world, mmMa!

**Mansfield Drive-In / Flea Market** at CT-32/ CT-31; 3 screens and a Sunday fleamarket: "Closed for Season, Reason? Freezin'" until April.

**Bidwell Tavern** Off 32 west on 31 (Main Street) at 1260 Main Street, Coventry, for popular pubfare, great wings and a good burger.

**City of Willimantic/Windham** ... Far eastern, far out city on Rte 66.

**Connecticut College Conservation Lands / Mamacoke Island** Off 32 in New London to natural and unnatural habitats, plants.

**New London Harbor Light and Ledge Light**

Two lighthouses in the Thames' submarine harbor; one is haunted.

*Photos by the author.*

## TRI-COUNTY GREENHOUSE

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Columbia Congregational Church  
8AM – 11AM

Route 87 in the Parish Hall  
Gather with us Saturday, April 15th  
for an ALL YOU CAN EAT

Breakfast buffet:

Omelets (design your own), scrambled eggs, belgian waffles, home baked pastries, etc.

\$12 per person

Family of (4) 2 Adults & 2 child.  
(under 12) \$30

For information contact Michele  
at the Church Office: 860-228-9306.

## Tai Chi Classes for Health & Balance

**Windham Senior Center:**

Mon, Wed 10-11a; & Wed, Fri 9-10a  
Call or text Sarah Winter: 860-931-8636

**Ashford Senior Center:**

Tue, Fri 9:30-10:30a

**Chaplin Senior Center:** Thu 1-2p

**Columbia Senior Center:** Tue 1-2p

**Coventry Senior Center:**

Wed 9:30-10:30a

**Lebanon Senior Center:**

Tue 4-5p, Thu 6:30-7:30p

Call or text Joe Pandolfo: 959-444-3979

Neighbors  
a little paper  
big on community



# Bicycling in Connecticut (part one)

By Dean Farrell

I didn't get my first car until I was nearly 22 years old. Before that, my three modes of transportation were my feet, the bus, and a twelve-speed Schwinn.

After I put the first Deanmobile on the road, I didn't ride again for 20+ years. However, toward the end of the 2000s (and for reasons I can't recall), I obtained a two-wheeler and got back into riding. It was one of the best decisions I ever made!

Bicycling is healthy, it's fun, and you can view stunning scenery. You don't need a ridiculously expensive bike, either. I ride a \$200 Wal-Mart special. It's nothing fancy, but it gets the job done. And the cliché that you never forget how to ride a bike happens to be true.

The 2020s are an excellent time for two-wheeling. All over the country, new trails are being built and existing ones improved. In Willimantic alone, we have access to not one but two outstanding bike paths!

Here are some of the trails I have ridden in Connecticut east of the Connecticut River.

**Airline State Park Trail.** It begins in East Hampton and runs approximately 55 miles north into Massachusetts. The path is made of ballast, crushed stone, dirt and gravel. My favorite stretch is the southern end through East Hampton, Marlborough and Hebron. The scenery is gorgeous and you'll ride through a marsh! There's also a three-mile spur into Colchester, but I wasn't impressed with it.

In Lebanon, you'll pass a second marsh, as well as a dairy farm. (I've tried to make friends with the cows, but they ignore me.) When you cross over the Willimantic River, you'll see the junction where the Hop River Trail ends. From there, you'll pass the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum—well worth a visit if you can find it open.

After a brief time on-road, you pick up the trail again at Jackson Street and ride into North Windham. At Tuckie Road, you'll encounter a hill that some folks have trouble climbing. Thankfully, my legs are accustomed to the ascent. The pavement ends at the bottom of the hill. To your right is a third marsh, where you'll encounter an impressive feat of engineering: a huge dam of sticks and branches made by your friendly neighborhood beaver.

Once you've crossed Route 203, the trail gets no-

ticeably rougher and bumpier. (That can be a serious problem for us males!) However, if you stick with it, you'll see some beautiful wilderness in the Hampton area. As for the remainder of the path, it's really for hearty bicyclists. Do not attempt it with road tires!

**Hop River Trail.** Following the old Hartford, Providence & Fishkill Railroad, this path of crushed stone runs 20 miles from Manchester to Willimantic. After picking it up at Colonial Road, you pedal 2.6 miles to the well-maintained trailhead at Church and Phoenix Streets in Vernon. Here, you'll find a short



On the Cheney Rail Trail.

stretch of railroad track parallel to the trail, as well as the remnants of a 19th-century roundhouse. From there, you can ride the scenic four-mile Rockville Spur, or stay on the main path. The latter option will take you through steep rock cuts and a gradual climb as you pass Valley Falls State Park and approach Bolton Notch. This leg of the path is dotted with maple and oak trees and, in the warmer weather, a variety of colorful flowers.

At Bolton Notch, the trail proceeds through a lighted 100-foot tunnel beneath the intersection of Routes 6 and 44. Your next trailhead is at Steeles Crossing Road in Bolton. You'll also pass small waterfalls, most notably on Burnap Brook Road. As of September 2022, there is also a new trailhead at Long Hill Road in Andover, just before the covered bridge at Route 316.

One mile later, beneath Route 6, you travel through another lighted 100-foot tunnel. In Columbia, you'll need to pedal about 1.5 miles on Kings and Flanders Roads until the next trailhead. The path proceeds along the Willimantic River until it merges with the Airline Trail.

**Charter Oak Greenway.** You pick up the 16-mile asphalt path at Bolton Notch and head four miles to Highland Street in Manchester, after which you'll proceed down a steep hill into

the Birch Mountain Brook valley. Soon you'll be in Charter Oak Park with access to restrooms, water, and other amenities. From there, you'll ride parallel to Interstate 384. Turn right on to Keeney Street and left on to Hartford Road, where you'll ride on-road for about one half-mile. Turn left on to Bidwell Street and the campus of Manchester Community College. Follow the trail through a beautiful pine forest, and you're again riding next to 384. In East Hartford, the trail takes you past the Rentschler Field football stadium on Silver Lane. You'll be on-road again at the intersection of Main and Willow Streets.

Soon, you'll be at the Connecticut River's east bank in Great River Park. As you ride along, you'll encounter sculptures and other artwork,

as well as an impressive view of the Hartford skyline. The trail crosses the river into downtown Hartford. From there, you'll proceed along the Riverwalk two stories above the streets. Due to the high volume of foot traffic, it's best if you walk your bike here; but it gives you an opportunity to check out the river below you and the skyscrapers above.

You'll be elevated for several blocks from the Mortensen Riverfront Plaza to Prospect Street. There, you'll have access to the Connecticut Science Center, along with prominently displayed art and other attractions. The trail ends at Bushnell Park near the State Capitol.



On the Charter Oak Greenway.

**Cheney Rail Trail.** Made of crushed stone, this 1.7-mile path follows part of the old South Manchester Railroad. Built by the Cheney family in the 1860s, it transported passengers, silk goods and raw materials from the Cheney silk mills to the main Hartford, Providence & Fishkill Railroad line. The path begins at 2 Main Street in the north end of Manchester and terminates at the Clocktower Mill and Velvet Mill Apartments on Pine Street near Hartford Road. The trail passes through Purdy Nature Park, whose one-mile Bigelow Brook Loop is well worth hiking.

Since it is so short, Cheney works best as a walking path. The goal is to eventually connect it to the Hop River Trail at Colonial Road in Manchester.

In the next issue of *Neighbors* I will discuss bike paths I have ridden west of the Connecticut River.

*Photos by the author.*

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Refreshments available for purchase.

Thanks to the generosity of the Leo J. & Rose Pageau Trust

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 Kala Farnham

**April 16**  
 Walt Woodward and the BOSH

**May 7**  
 Rick Spencer

**June 4**  
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**Bingo is Back April 4th!**

**Better Payouts and a Progressive Payout**  
 Doors open at 5p for food  
 Game 6-9:30p

**Ashford Senior Center Organization**  
 25 Tremko Lane, Ashford



# Facing Ecological Crisis with the Buddha

By John Schwenk

*An earlier version of this essay was given as a speech delivered at a 'Spiritual Earth Day Celebration' held in Willimantic.*

We live in scary times. Catastrophic climate change looms. Insect populations are plummeting across the world. Nano-plastics suffuse our environment. We've begun the 6<sup>th</sup> Great Extinction on planet earth. Our children are revolting against the actions of a system they (rightly) see as stealing their future...

The spiritual path the Buddha gave us, the Noble Eight-Fold Path, offers us guidance and solace in these very challenging times. We can choose to learn and follow this path – whether we are “Buddhists” or not.

This wisdom is timeless, part of what Aldous Huxley called “The Perennial Philosophy.” It doesn't belong to Buddhists. It can be adopted and adapted by anyone, regardless of religious tradition or beliefs (or lack thereof).

This is partly because it's not so much about what you believe as what you do.

Yes, the teachings of the Buddha contain many concepts & ideas, but they are offered in a pragmatic and empirical spirit: we use them, practice them, and see how they work for us.

The practice is about how to be content in the present moment. How *not* to suffer, even as suffering, hatred, greed, want, and confusion, rage around us.

The first Noble Truth the Buddha taught acknowledges that discontent, dissatisfaction, and pain are inevitable in the individual lives of sentient beings. All of us will grow old, experience sickness, and, ultimately, be separated from everything we hold dear.

The second Noble Truth tells us that it's our *emotional clinging* that precipitates suffering – a clinging to things that, inherently, cannot not be clung to. It's like trying to keep a barge from flowing down river by tightly grasping a rope. We must learn to let go if we wish to avoid rope burn.

The third Noble Truth says we *can* end this suffering. (This is the Buddha's “good news.”) And the Fourth Noble Truth tells us *how*.

This “how” is the Noble Eight-Fold Path I mentioned earlier, the spiritual path the Buddha offers us. The eight parts of the path fall into three “Trainings.” Practitioners use the trainings to develop, hone, and purify their hearts and minds.

28 Neighbors



I'll call the trainings *Wisdom*, *Mind*, and *Action*.

How can these 3 Training categories guide us in these troubled times?

*Wisdom* is a gut-level understanding of the Four Truths above... and also that we are all connected. Nature and humanity are one. There is no “away” in “throw away.”(1) This is the fundamental insight of Ecology - and a truth known long-before by all indigenous cultures. The late great Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh called it “interbeing.”

But it's one thing to “know” this intellectually and another to *feel* it at such a deep level that we naturally act from that understanding.

If we identified with all humanity, how could we war? If we truly knew our intimate embeddedness in nature, how could we create and dump toxic wastes into the land, sea, and air? If we felt our kinship with all sentient beings, how could we eat and exploit others? (And thus greatly contribute to global heating...)

Wisdom is also the knowing that everything – *all things*(2) – are impermanent. Nothing lasts, everything changes. All living things will die. In 300 years, unless we become *very* famous, we will be *forgotten*.

Without Wisdom, we are deluded... we will cause harm... and we will suffer.

What I called the “Action” part of the path deals with how we treat one another. What is the most skillful way to speak, act, and earn our livings so that harm is not done to ourselves and others? What are the kinds of thought and intentions that naturally lead us to acting skillfully in the world?

The Buddha tells us that we can develop wonderful qualities of the heart and mind that illuminate our way and give us a wholesome motivation to act from. These are: compassion, loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, and nondiscrimination. When we see suffering in the world, we meet it with an open, undefended, heart of compassion. We practice an attitude of loving-kindness toward all beings. We take joy where we find it and rejoice in the good fortune and happiness of others. And we apply these divine qualities equally to everyone, even our enemies.

To the extent that we do act to change the current destructive path our society has taken, we are often motivated by fear and anger. These might be natural, but they are not the most effective motivations. Fear often paralyzes. Or it can lead to panic – and who acts wisely when they're panicked? Anger involves a tightening and a closing of the heart. It turns others off, saps our energy, and leads to burn out. Fear and anger *are* suffering and they cause suffering.

continued on next page

Activism – our attempts to transform the horrors we face - can, instead, be motivated by the divine and wholesome qualities I mentioned. Action thus motivated is inclusive, joyful, energizing, helpful, and recruits others to the cause.

Ghandi was one of the most effective activists in history. I ask you, was he motivated by anger and fear, or by love and compassion? Ghandi was not a Buddhist. Nor need you be.

Finally, we have the Mind Training part of the path. This is the part that involves meditation and the “mindfulness” we hear so much about. With meditation and mindfulness, we begin to wake up, become aware of what’s happening in the here and now, in our bodies, hearts, and minds. We develop focus of mind and “present moment awareness.” By focusing our awareness on our bodies, thoughts, feelings, and motivations, we start to see how we act unskillfully, motivating us to let go of the harmful patterns and adopt healthier habits of mind, increasing our energy and effectiveness.

Rooting ourselves in this one and only (but eternal) *present moment*, the only place where life actually happens, the only moment in which we can act, we are less likely to be swept away by fear of a highly uncertain future or regret for a past irretrievably gone. Mindful of how thoughts, facts, media, people, substances, foods, ideas... impact our hearts and bodies, we are less likely to be driven and overwhelmed by unskillful motivations and unconscious urges and habits. We begin to wake up.

Following this path, we might better navigate the coming changes; the greatest threat ever encountered by our species. Indeed, one of the greatest threats ever faced by life on earth. By learning to let go of our clinging, we can not only accept the radical changes to our society necessary for human survival, we can each, individually, face our inevitable loss of everything we know.

With the wisdom we’ve been given, we *can* weather the coming storms... both within and without.

1. For example, those nano-plastics that suffuse our environment and our bodies were once our soda bottles, clothes, packaging, even our shampoo.
2. Actually, all “compounded” things. Some types of subatomic particles may last forever.

*John Schwenk, an engineer by profession, lives in Willimantic where he coordinates a meditation group on Sunday nights and occasionally teaches free informal courses on the Buddhist teachings. He can be reached at johnschwenk.com.*

## Famous for More than Frogs

Submitted by Bev York

Many students, local residents and tourists marvel at the local history. Much of the rich heritage in Windham is evidenced through the architecture of bridges, mill buildings, immigrant worker houses and homes of prosperous residents. But wait, there’s more!

People who lived and worked here in Windham were truly a part of the progress that made America a great nation. From 1811 through 1899, seventy-six men and one woman were inventors that received a total of 166 patents. Their ingenious ideas contributed to the success of many manufacturing operations. Modern society transformed labor from work by hand to mass production by machine, and Windham was there! In 1849, Abner Follet patented a bog cutter to till through heavy sod. (Could this be the same family of Follet’s mill pond where the frogs made a lot of noise one night in 1754?) William C. Jillson and Amos B. Palmer patented the cotton opener machine. This state-of-the-art carding machine cleaned 60 bales of raw cotton weekly. The machine was manufactured in Willimantic and shipped to cotton industries across the continent. The Hatch name is known in the community for donating a wing for Windham Hospital, but Jonathan Hatch made the family fortune with hard work and brilliant inventions from a paper pulp engine to a collapsible music stand.

Also, Catherine Griswold held 30 patents between 1860 and 1888 for improvements and designs for ladies’ corsets. She had more patents than any other woman in America at that time. The Willimantic Linen Company (later American Thread) was on the cover of Scientific American Magazine due to many cutting-edge ideas and practices as well as the patent for a labeling machine. Henry McCollum of Windham and Francis Treadwell of New York invented a machine for producing cylindrical strips of dough for a cracker making machine. Charles H. Barrows inventor of the three-wheeled carriage, wood splitting machine and even a mustache-protector guard is recognized in Windham as the new STEM Elementary school is named for him.

The Smith- Winchester Company in South Windham is one of our most famous stories for manufacturing the fourdrinier machines that produce paper on a roll instead of one sheet at a time. The patents allowed for the paper to be dried and cut into pieces. The factory revolutionized the newspaper and book printing industry worldwide. Guilford Smith, owner of three patents, left the family homestead for the Guilford Smith Memorial Library, a cultural gem today.

The Jillson House Museum, ( Windham Historical Society) received funding from the Connecticut Humanities to research and create an exhibit and hold programs to share and discuss these stories. The Jillson House would love to document any recent patent holders in town. Please send any stories to P.O. Box 105, Willimantic, CT 06226

Our region is rich with both rural and urban treasures. Our city is restoring, renovating and building anew. We can take pride in our past as we build our future.



# CT Green Energy News

Submitted by Peter Millman

Welcome to the CT Green Energy News, a weekly digest of stories that has been condensed into a monthly format for *Neighbors* readers. To read the full stories online, just Google the titles below. You can also subscribe to the free weekly email newsletter by contacting Peter Millman at peter.millman7@gmail.com.

News and events for advocates of clean energy, energy efficiency, and climate action at the state and local levels, focusing on Connecticut. Brought to you by People's Action for Clean Energy (PACE) and Eastern CT Green Action (ECGA).

## Connecticut Needs A Plan — And A Definition — For 'Clean Hydrogen,' Stakeholders Say

**CT News Junkie.** "Hoping to tap into the billions of dollars in federal incentives coming available for renewable energy projects, Connecticut is preparing to lay out a strategic plan for developing a hydrogen economy....A bill based on recommendations from a state hydrogen task force calls for developing a strategic plan for encouraging hydrogen produced with renewable energy, and to prioritize its use in hard-to-electrify sectors. ..Renewable energy is still relatively scarce, and as more sources come online, that power will be needed to power heat pumps in homes and buildings and charge electric vehicles, [Charles] Rothenberger said. Diverting that renewable energy to produce hydrogen only makes sense if the hydrogen is being used to decarbonize the sectors that are the hardest to electrify, he said."

## Citing extreme consumer demand, major CT energy assistance program is on hold

**CT Public.** "A year-round emergency energy assistance program in Connecticut is pausing for the month of March, saying it can't keep up with demand from customers struggling with their bills. Energy assistance requests to Operation Fuel doubled from July to October, said Brenda Watson, the agency's executive director. She said demand only got worse when the state's two major utilities – Eversource and United Illuminating – raised their rates on Jan. 1..." "This is not about our funding," Watson said. "This is really about being able to pause and allow our team to catch up to the influx of applications that we've received. And prepare for the next round of applications that are going to come in."

## Meriden officials eye energy savings through solar

**myrecordjournal.com.** "City officials eye potential electricity cost savings through proposed multi-year agreements with a national solar energy firm...a San Diego, California-based solar energy developer, recently approached city and Board of Education officials with proposals to enter into two separate 20-year renewable energy purchase agreements. Those agreements, if adopted, would be entered into through the state's Non-Residential Solar Renewable Energy Solutions Program, which is a successor to its previous Virtual Net Metering

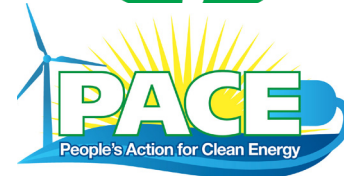
30 Neighbors

program..." "This contract will take advantage of credits authorized by the State for renewable energy production that will result in Meriden (City and BOE) receiving substantial payments in excess of \$500,000 a year combined, when electricity is purchased under current usages..."



## FERC must ensure that customer funds are only used to benefit customers and not political activities

**Utility Dive.** "The Boston Globe revealed that utilities and their lobbyists funded and directly edited a faulty study by the University of Massachusetts at Lowell propping up hydrogen for home heating, which directly benefits the gas industry's business model...The utilities and a trade association, the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, hoped some of this new study's findings would provide support for the expansion of the gas system throughout New England, and for an energy system heavily reliant on hydrogen and renewable natural gas for decades to come...In December 2021, FERC [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission] launched an inquiry into utility lobbying on the customer's dime. New rules could halt customer-funded campaigns that spread disinformation about gas and electrification. With the midterm election over, the gas industry is gearing up to deploy its army of lobbyists, front groups and allied trade associations in Congress, state legislatures, regulatory commissions, city halls and zoning boards across the U.S. in an all-out blitz against building electrification."



## Can utility regulators adopt Silicon Valley's 'fail fast' approach? A new Connecticut program may tell

**Utility Dive.** "It's rare that the word "innovation" appears in the same sentence as "utility" or "regulation." Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, or PURA, is changing that through one of the country's most exciting innovation programs, having launched the Innovative Energy Solutions, or IES, Program in early 2023 to quickly identify, pilot and scale new ideas that enable a cleaner, more affordable and more equitable electric grid for Connecticut...A regulatory sandbox increases the speed at which regulators can facilitate innovation by providing a framework that allows for live testing of pilots in a bounded, consumer-friendly manner."

## CT AG announces suit against NJ-based Vision Solar after complaints of high-pressure sales tactics

**New Haven Register.** "State Attorney General William Tong's office on Thursday announced a lawsuit against Vision Solar, alleging the residential solar company pressured homeowners into signing up for solar power systems. State officials allege the company also failed to obtain the proper work permits, in some cases leaving homeowners without a working solar power system that could be hooked up to the grid, and misrepresented financing and tax credits to residents..." "Vision Solar

continued on next page

preyed on low-income, elderly, and disabled homeowners, pressuring them into unaffordable loans for solar panels that in some cases were never activated.’ “

### **How one CT town is teaming with Eversource to reduce energy bills**

**CT Insider.** “Branford has a total of 1,800 businesses and if you give Bob Babcock enough time, he will visit all of them in an effort to extol the value of energy efficiency programs and clean power sources...The committee’s energy efficiency outreach efforts focus on directing local small businesses to explore the Energize Connecticut programs Eversource offers, primarily the Small Business Energy Advantage program, according to company spokesman Mitch Gross...Out of the 82 small businesses, organizations and houses of worship that Babcock and the committee reached out to in the first year, nearly 60 have taken, or are taking steps to save energy...”Big companies have staff that have a high level of expertise when it comes to energy,” he said. “The little guy doesn’t have the money to hire someone to do it for him.

### **CT startup promises waste haulers ‘everything but the driver’ to go electric**

**CT Insider.** “Roundtrip EV Solutions is promising an “everything but the driver” service for waste haulers to go electric....In addition to leasing trucks, Roundtrip EV envisions a turnkey service itself handling battery charging infrastructure, ferreting out government incentives for customers and taking on vehicle upkeep on an outsourced basis... It is a concept gaining traction in the waste disposal industry. This week, the nation’s fifth largest hauler, Republic Services, committed to electric trucks for one of every two purchases over the coming five years, with its current diesel fleet numbering 17,000 vehicles...The trucks do not come cheap. Miami Dade County officials in Florida revealed last year that their new Mack LR Electric cost \$600,000 plus extra for charging infrastructure and a service agreement. However, they expect the truck will pay for itself in five years based on savings from fuel and maintenance.”

# An Open Letter to the Ashford EDC

I am asking you, the Ashford Economic Development Commission, to rescind your endorsement of the proposed changes to the Ashford, CT Zoning Regulations submitted Jan. 9, 2023 by Ashford Realty Trust LLC and Campanelli Rodolakis Acquisition LLC related to the land in northwestern Ashford. The construction of a mega-warehouse would work against our hard-won image as a picturesque, rural town. It would negate our brand, a brand your mission statement supports (“The Commissions is guided by the belief that the business community should be compatible with our rural character.”)

I participate in Artists’ Open Studios and the Art and Garden Tour. Both these self-guided tours are highly successful and well established. Visitors (and customers) are attracted to these tours by the art we make, by our gardens in the case of the Art and Garden Tour, and most of all, by our setting. Repeatedly, visitors coming to our area for one of the tours exclaim at the beauty of the farms, quiet roads, and forests. I recently attended a meeting of a regional Arts and Culture Roundtable in Mansfield. The many professional artists there each mentioned how frequently visitors bring up how pretty it is here.

Indeed, that beauty is the subject matter of many of our fine artists’ and photographers’ work. They are capturing barns, hayfields, beebalm, daylilies, bees, ospreys, herons, sheep, cows, turtles, old farm equipment, and stone walls in their paintings and photographs. No one is asking for images of mega-warehouses to hang on their living room walls.

We have all seen what happens when a town or city forgets its brand, forgets who and what it is, and chases the latest trend in the name of economic development. Think of Constitution Plaza in Hartford. This early urban renewal project delivered none of the benefits its promoters promised. The city’s population declined. Jobs left. Taxes went up. Today, decades later, Hartford still pays for this and similar mistakes and suffers from economic decline and a lackluster

image. Towns and cities that embraced a shiny new mall or an Amazon warehouse or Wal-Mart mega-store without considering the full impact, saw their existing businesses destroyed, their Main Streets decimated.

Ashford of course is not a city. But Ashford has a persona, an image, a brand. We are a treasure in the Quiet Corner, a key part of The Last Green Valley. We are a genuine rural town with dark skies, farms, orchards, hiking trails, protected forests, nature preserves, ponds, rivers, marshes, wildlife, interesting architecture, an important watershed, and history. Paul Newman did not choose Ashford for the Hole in the Wall because he hoped one day we would have a mega-warehouse. He chose it because it was and is rural. He was happy to stop at Midway for a beer and a meal. Tim Page described his wonder at seeing the copper dome of St Philips’ Church while on a school trip to Boston in his best-selling book *Parallel Play* because it made more of an impression on him than anything he saw in Boston. Is there anyone in town who dreams of Ashford becoming the next East Hartford or the next Killingly? Do we really want to be known for a towering warehouse twice the size of Buckland Hills Mall?

We must protect and celebrate Ashford’s rural character - our brand - in all economic development projects. Otherwise, we will harm what we have. Like the towns that ruined their Main Streets for “economic development” we will ruin what makes Ashford desirable, much of it forever. That would not be sound economic policy. It would be irresponsible. It would work against the Commission’s mission. And it would work against what the clear majority of Ashford citizens prefer.

Please rescind your endorsement of the proposed zoning changes.

Thank you.

Suzy Staubach  
Ashford, Connecticut



# Let's Be Honest About the 'Choice' vs. 'Life' Debate

By Robert J. Enright

I would like to comment on Mr. Conrad McIntire, Jr.'s, assertion, in his article, "Why I Am Pro-Life: A Rational Defense," published in the January-February issue of *Neighbors*, that he is "literally" both pro-choice and pro-life. I wish to comment, as well, on whether he makes good on his laudable intention to prevent incendiary rhetoric from fueling the discussion.

First off, he writes: "[I] am in agreement that if the mother's life is at stake, abortion may be the lesser of two evils." That statement, on its face, at least in theory, endorses "choice," if only qualified choice. But there is no further discussion of it. For that reason, it needs further examination.

That inquiry pivots on the answer to this question: Where her life is at stake, is a woman's exercise of "choice" untrammelled, or is it subjected to governmental restrictions and regulations? Is exercise of "choice" blocked, for example (among many possibilities), unless and until a panel of "independent" physicians certifies to a governmental authority that, without abortion, the death of the mother is inevitable, or, not just that, but imminent, as well?

Let's be honest. One can endorse "choice," but, at the same time, impose upon it such an array of legal impediments as to render its actual exercise impracticable, if not almost impossible. This question of constraints upon exercise of "choice" needs to be squarely addressed; one can claim to be "literally" pro-choice without being meaningfully pro-choice.

Then the article addresses a similarly excruciating issue: whether a woman may "choose" to terminate a pregnancy that resulted from rape or incest. We read: "I am also open to discussion regarding rape and incest...possible use of the morning-after pill before conception has taken place can be considered" (emphasis mine).

This triggers an obvious question: How does recourse to the morning-after pill, the purpose of which is to prevent conception, have any bearing on "choice," an issue that arises here only after conception has occurred? Note, though, no sooner is it stated at the beginning, "I am literally both pro-choice and pro-life," than this statement follows: "A choice takes place before anyone can get pregnant" (emphasis mine).

This is what pregnant victims of rape or incest are being told: While you are begrudged recourse to the morning-after pill to prevent conception, should you fail to seek or gain access to it, and pregnancy follows, you will be deemed to have "chosen" pregnancy. Not only is "choice" -- whose meaning here varies greatly from how that word is otherwise used -- imputed to such victims by default, victims forfeit, once

conception occurs, any further prerogative to "choose," i.e., undergo abortion.

Once again, let's be honest: The putative pro-choice position here does not countenance "choice" in cases of rape or incest, once conception has occurred, which means, effectively, not at all.

There is no discussion of any other circumstances where exercise of "choice" may be justified.

At this point, analysis of the claim of being "literally" both pro-choice and pro-life devolves into a mathematical exercise.

First, 98% of all abortions are castigated as merely "convenient," so they get factored out of the pro-choice side of the equation.

Second, cases of pregnancy from rape or incest are excluded from the remaining 2%. This leaves a tiny fraction of a tiny fraction of cases that might qualify for the exercise of "choice."

Let's resort to honesty. What's left of the "literally" pro-choice and pro-life position appears to be this: at most, strictly theoretical "choice" for no more than a minute fraction of all cases, i.e., where the life of the mother is at stake. Thus, the verdict on the claim of being "literally" both pro-choice and pro-life is NOT PROVEN, to borrow a phrase from Scottish jurisprudence. And that is not necessarily the last word on the subject.

For now, let's turn to the secondary, if no less important issue. We read: "If we are going to have a real discussion, we need to get off the rhetoric-fueled emotional roller-coaster." True, but we go on to read that the pro-choice/abortion position is "scientifically unsupportable, philosophically and logically incoherent, as well as socially destructive and humanly degrading." And, to boot, "racist." The pro-choice position is linked to Nazi ideology, and the Holocaust is invoked.

The reference to racism constitutes a facet of the anti-abortion message that is aimed particularly at women of color. First, the article notes, citing Gary Franks as the source, that Black women undergo a greatly disproportionate percentage of abortions. And remember, 98% of all abortions are "done for convenience."

Here is where honesty gets brutal. Isn't this the message that is being directed to Black women: By undergoing "convenient" abortion, you engage in a "socially destructive and humanly degrading" act; and, not only that, you become complicit with a racist effort to suppress Black population growth. This article advances an argument that (1) converts

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Where Nazi ideology, coupled with good old-fashioned American racism, is imputed to “abortionists,” well, that’s more than enough rhetorical fuel to put any prospect of reasonable debate to the torch.

Returning to the principal issue, for one last time, one might question the NOT PROVEN verdict as generous to a fault. Remember, abortion is characterized as, at best, the lesser of two evils. At heart, abortion is regarded as evil, plain and simple. Thus, one might wonder whether any support for it, no matter how qualified, might amount to nothing more than a “smokescreen.”

After all, if abortion is “evil,” isn’t one who purports to hold both a pro-choice and pro-life position engaging in a diabolical concession, even where exercise of “choice” is apparently confined to only a smattering of cases? By any reckoning, whether mathematical or metaphysical, the lesser of two evils is still an evil.

It is unimaginable that any proponent of “life” could sustain such a morally untenable position. One is constrained, therefore, to reach this final conclusion: that (1) “literally” here equates only to “theoretically, because (2) any compromise with “evil” would be palatable -- if at all -- on the basis of some tacit, if immutable understanding that “choice” exists only “theoretically,” inasmuch as (3) the apparatus of law, in various and sundry, if undelineated ways, shapes, and, forms, can be relied upon to prevent “choice” from ever being actually exercised in daily life.

That said, I otherwise remain “open” to discussion, as long as it is “real,” i.e., dispassionate.

## America Museum and Windham Arts Events

Submitted by Bev York

April 2 “Nathan Hale, Connecticut State Hero” will be presented by Bev York at the Ashbel Woodward Museum in Franklin at 2 p.m. York is the curator of the America Museum in Willimantic and a former administrator at the Nathan Hale Homestead. The Woodward Museum operated by the Franklin Historical Society is located on Route 32. Bevishistory@yahoo.com 860-423-1878

April 3 The “Beautiful Earth or Art for Earth Day” Exhibition will be at the Coffee Break Gallery during the month of April. The show includes landscapes, art about the environment and art from recycled materials. The hours are daily Mon through Fri from 9 to 5. The Gallery is managed by Windham Arts and is located in the Eastern CT Veteran’s Community Center, 47 Crescent Street, Willimantic. Director@windhamarts.org

April 16 Cabaret Concert- Walt Woodward and Band of Steady Habits will present The Irish in Connecticut at 4 p.m. The program is second in the “America the Great” Cabaret Series for the America Museum. Seating is cabaret style and refreshments are available. Adults \$10.00 Eastern CT Veteran Community Center at 47 Crescent Street, Willimantic. Sponsored in part by the Leo J. and Rose Pageau Trust. director@windhamarts.org

April 24 Liber Tea featuring the “Borinqueneers 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry” 4 p.m. Discover and discuss some little known stories these Puerto Rican military heroes. Tea, coffee. Donations appreciated.. Eastern Connecticut Veteran’s Community Center, 47 Crescent Street, Willimantic. The monthly LiberTea program is sponsored by the America Museum.

## Be Light as a Feather

Loretta Wrobel - Feminist Therapy

860-429-2629

297 Pumpkin Hill Road, Ashford, CT

## Quiet Corner Contra Dance

1st Friday of every month

Patriots Park Lodge

172 Lake Street, Coventry

Dance 8:00 - 11:00; beginner workshop 7:45.

Live caller and band. Partner not necessary.

Soft-soled shoes, light layered clothes & water bottle. Snacks are also welcome.

For more information contact Dennis at knowdj@frontier.com or 860-742-9498

## 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

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

To all our contributors-

## THANK YOU!

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

T. King, Publisher





## The Packing House: Your Regional Performance Venue

By EC-CHAP

April

*“April is the cruelest month,  
breeding lilacs out of the dead land,  
mixing memory and desire,  
stirring dull roots with spring rain.”*

- T.S. Eliot

Welcome to April! We have a full month of programs, film, and performances for you!

### “SONGS FOR UKRAINE” – BENEFIT CONCERT NOW STREAMING!

The people of Ukraine continue to need assistance and EC-CHAP is committed to extend our Benefit Event to reach a goal of \$10,000. The entire benefit concert, “Songs for Ukraine”, is NOW STREAMING! Tickets are available as a Free Will Donation. Please visit <http://thepackinghouse.us/upcoming> for ticket availability.

The concert features three performing artists: Xavier Serrano with Derrick Bosse; Foolish Wisely; and Frank Critelli with Muddy Rivers. Visual artists, Blanche Serban and Carol Mackiewicz Neely each created a painting “live” during this event which was raffled to guests. Scot Haney, Meteorologist for WFSB Eyewitness News 3 TV served as Master Of Ceremony for “Songs for Ukraine”!



To learn more about how you can help, and to donate to this cause, please visit: <https://www.ec-chap.org/benefit-for-ukraine>. 100% of all funds raised go directly to the people of Ukraine through our Charitable Partner, Direct Relief.

### EC-CHAP HISTORICAL LECTURE SERIES:

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023: EC-CHAP Lecture Series: “The Button Industry and a Willington Button Producer, An Historic Prospective”.** Doors: 6:30pm / Lecture: 7:00pm. **FREE ADMISSION - REGISTRATION REQUIRED.** Register online at: <http://thepackinghouse.us/upcoming>

This presentation represents the first of many collaborations between EC-CHAP and the Willington Historical Soci-

ety. This historical lecture will be presented by Mark Masinda, President of the Willington Historical Society, and consists of a narrative about how Waclav Masinda, emigrated to the United States in 1891 to help pioneer the pearl button industry on the Mississippi River. The talk will explore the journey that brought him here to Willington CT to set up a button-making shop on Sharps Mills Pond. The rehabilitation of the Masinda button shop will be discussed. Mark will be joined by Paul Weigold, Technical Consultant and Board member, Willington Historical Society.

### EC-CHAP ACOUSTIC ARTIST SERIES:

**SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: “An Intimate Evening of Music and Conversation with Singer/Songwriter Kate Taylor” (Folk/Americana).** Doors: 7:00pm / Performance: 7:30pm



“Fifty years ago, James Taylor’s sister released her debut album, then promptly vanished from the scene. Now, decades after she traded rock stardom for life in a teepee, Kate Taylor is back.” — Rolling Stone

**KATE TAYLOR**, of the renowned Martha’s Vineyard via North Carolina musical clan that includes brothers James, Livingston, Alex and Hugh, is returning from a long hiatus with a new studio album, **WHY WAIT!**, which reunites her with many of the key players, including renowned session musicians Russ Kunkel, Danny Kortchmar, and Leland Skar, who backed her on her 1971 debut, **SISTER KATE**. Produced by music veteran Peter Asher, who was at the helm for the **SISTER KATE** sessions, the album marks the 50th anniversary

of Kate's foray into the music biz. The album was released in 2021 on Compass Records.

James Taylor told Rolling Stone: "For Kate to be doing this with Peter, and that both of them have this life experience that brings them back together, it's really a moving thing. I think it's so great that Kate will have this next iteration, you know, this next chance for people to hear her and pick up on her."

**SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2023: EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: "Singer/Songwriter, Multi-Instrumentalist, and CT State Troubadour Kala Farnham with Jenna Nicholls" (Indie / Folk). Doors: 7:00pm / Performance: 7:30pm**



**KALA FARNHAM** is a multi-instrumentalist singer/songwriter hailing from the Quiet Corner of CT. Kala's signature songwriting has been described as a reinvention of the folk tradition made popular by artists such as Joni Mitchell and Joan Baez.

She has been praised for her classical undertones and playful dose Broadway theatricality onstage, and a lyricism that springs to life with creative storytelling, cultural references, and rich metaphor. Her first full-length studio album, "Anahata: Wake Up Your Heart", was nominated for "Best Americana Album" in RI's Motif Music Awards alongside a nomination for "Best Female Americana Vocalist".

As the new Connecticut State Troubadour, Kala plans to apply her foundations and strong background in music performance and human service in this honorary role to foster healing and community connection through music. Kala will be joined by NYC based singer/songwriter **JENNA NICHOLLS** (photo at top of previous page).

**EC-CHAP MONTHLY TALENT SHOWCASE – 2nd Wednesday of the Month:**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2023 (2nd Wednesday). Doors: 6:30pm / Performance: 7:00pm. Free.**

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. Monthly Talent Showcase the 2nd Wednesday of every month (October – May). Call to be placed on the schedule: 518-791-9474.

**EC-CHAP Film Series – 2nd Thursday of the Month:**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2023: EC-CHAP Monthly Film Series (2nd Thursday): "Trane Tracks: The Legacy of John Coltrane" (Unrated) 2005. Doors: 6:30pm / Screening: 7:00pm. Suggested donation \$5.00.**



Trane Tracks: The Legacy of John Coltrane is a Brit-produced documentary covering the life of tenor and soprano saxophonist John Coltrane. Through exclusive interviews, video clips and rare photos, this film uncovers the life and career of one of the most influential and revolutionary musicians of the 20th Century.

**SAVE THE DATES!**

**Saturday, May 6th, 2023 - 7:30pm - EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series: Singer/Songwriter, Amy Rigby (Indie).**

**Wednesday, May 10th, 2023 - 7:00pm – EC-CHAP Talent Showcase (2nd Wednesday)**

**Thursday, May 11th, 2023 - 7:00pm – EC-CHAP Film Series: "Round Midnight" (R) 1986.**

**Friday, May 12th, 2023 - 7:30pm - EC-CHAP Special Program: An Evening with Spiritual Medium, Maura Geist.**

**Saturday, May 13th, 2023 - 7:30pm - EC-CHAP Jazz Series: Leala Cyr Quartet (Jazz).**

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

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

We leave you with the following:

*"The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide you're not going to stay where you are."*

**- J.P. Morgan**

Happy April Showers!  
EC-CHAP Board



# Let's Be Honest about the "Choice" vs. "Life" Debate

By Robert J. Enright

I would like to comment on Mr. Conrad McIntire, Jr.'s assertion, in his article "Why I Am Pro-Life: A Rational Defense," published in the January-February issue of *Neighbors*, that he is "literally" both pro-choice and pro-life. I wish to comment, as well, on whether he makes good on his laudable intention to prevent incendiary rhetoric from fueling the discussion.

First off, he writes: "[I] am in agreement that if the mother's life is at stake, abortion may be the lesser of two evils." That statement, on its face, at least in theory, endorses "choice," if only qualified choice. But there is no further discussion of it. For that reason, it needs further examination.

That inquiry pivots on the answer to this question: Where her life is at stake, is a woman's exercise of "choice" untrammelled, or is it subjected to governmental restrictions and regulations? Is exercise of "choice" blocked, for example (among many possibilities), unless and until a panel of "independent" physicians certifies to a governmental authority that, without abortion, the death of the mother is inevitable, or, not just that, but imminent, as well?

Let's be honest. One can endorse "choice," but, at the same time, impose upon it such an array of legal impediments as to render its *actual* exercise impracticable, if not almost impossible. This question of constraints upon exercise of "choice" needs to be squarely addressed; one can claim to be "literally" pro-choice without being *meaningfully* pro-choice.

Then the article addresses a similarly excruciating issue: whether a woman may "choose" to terminate a pregnancy that resulted from rape or incest. We read: "I am also *open to discussion* regarding rape and incest...*possible* use of the morning-after pill *before conception has taken place can be considered*" (emphasis mine).

This triggers an obvious question: How does recourse to the morning-after pill, the purpose of which is to *prevent* conception, have any bearing on "choice," an issue that arises here only *after* conception has occurred? Note, though, no sooner is it stated at the beginning, "I am literally both pro-choice and pro-life," than this statement follows: "A *choice* takes place *before* anyone can get pregnant" (emphasis mine).

This is what pregnant victims of rape or incest are being told: While you are begrudged recourse to the morning-after pill to prevent conception, should you fail to seek or gain access to it, and pregnancy follows, you will be deemed to have "chosen" pregnancy. Not only is "choice"—whose meaning here varies greatly from how that word is otherwise used—imputed to such victims by default, victims forfeit, once conception occurs, any further prerogative to "choose," i.e., undergo abortion.

Once again, let's be honest: The putative pro-choice position here does not countenance "choice" in cases of rape or incest, once conception has occurred, which means, effectively, not at all.

36 Neighbors

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Second, cases of pregnancy from rape or incest are excluded from the remaining 2%. This leaves a tiny fraction of a tiny fraction of cases that might qualify for the exercise of "choice."

Let's resort to honesty. What's left of the "literally" pro-choice and pro-life position appears to be this: at most, strictly theoretical "choice" for no more than a minute fraction of all cases, i.e., where the life of the mother is at stake. Thus, the verdict on the claim of being "literally" both pro-choice and pro-life is *not proven*, to borrow a phrase from Scottish jurisprudence. And that is not necessarily the last word on the subject.

For now, let's turn to the secondary, if no less important issue. We read: "If we are going to have a real discussion, we need to get off the rhetoric-fueled emotional roller-coaster." True, but we go on to read that the pro-choice/abortion position is "scientifically unsupportable, philosophically and logically incoherent, as well as socially destructive and humanly degrading." And, to boot, "racist." The pro-choice position is linked to Nazi ideology, and the Holocaust is invoked.

The reference to racism constitutes a facet of the anti-abortion message that is aimed particularly at women of color. First, the article notes, citing Gary Franks as the source, that Black women undergo a greatly disproportionate percentage of abortions. And remember, 98% of all abortions are "done for convenience."

Here is where honesty gets brutal. Isn't this the message that is being directed to Black women: By undergoing "convenient" abortion, you engage in a "socially destructive and humanly degrading" act; and, not only that, you become *complicit* with a racist effort to suppress Black population growth. This article advances an argument that (1) converts "choice" into acquiescence in a racist policy that is being "pushed" (that is the word that is used) on Black women, and (2) stigmatizes those who exercise "choice" as race traitors.

Where Nazi ideology, coupled with good old-fashioned American racism, is imputed to "abortionists," well, that's more than enough rhetorical fuel to put any prospect of reasonable debate to the torch.

Returning to the principal issue, for one last time, one might question the *not proven* verdict as generous to a fault. Remember, abortion is characterized as, at best, the lesser of two evils. At heart, abortion is regarded as evil, plain and simple. Thus, one might wonder whether any support for it, no matter how qualified, might amount to nothing more than a "smokescreen."

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## Here to Stay...



Submitted by Diane Rutherford

My grandson got a new job in Tennessee and asked if we could keep his kitten Gypsy until they got settled and could fly her there. I told him just let her stay with us. She is with us and is now known as Double Wide. It is a good life here.

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After all, if abortion is “evil,” isn’t one who purports to hold *both* a pro-choice *and* pro-life position engaging in a diabolical concession, even where exercise of “choice” is *apparently* confined to *only* a smattering of cases? By any reckoning, whether mathematical or metaphysical, the lesser of two evils is still an evil.

It is unimaginable that any proponent of “life” could sustain such a morally untenable position. One is constrained, therefore, to reach this final conclusion: that (a) “literally” here equates only to “theoretically,” because (b) any compromise with “evil” would be palatable—if at all—on the basis of some tacit, if immutable understanding that “choice” exists only “theoretically,” inasmuch as (c) the apparatus of law, in various and sundry, if undelineated ways, shapes, and, forms can be relied upon to prevent “choice” from ever being actually exercised in daily life.

That said, I otherwise remain “open” to discussion, as long as it is “real,” i.e., dispassionate.

## Missionary Tales

Submitted by Lorraine Reeder

If you’ve ever wondered what it would be like to be part of a team on a missionary trip to Guatemala, be sure to head to Christ Church by 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 16.

Volunteers from various trips to southwest Guatemala will share background information about the needs of the people in Guatemala, as well as specifics about the work they have done through the organization called Partners in Development. In addition to talking about their personal experiences and sharing photographs, they will offer information about the Massachusetts-based organization, which has been working in Guatemala for more than 15 years, as well as in other countries.

Mitzi Davis of Pomfret has organized and participated in six trips to this part of Guatemala, providing medical care and other services to the local populations. This year the Pomfret Lion’s Club was able to arrange the loan of an eye screening camera from the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation to the team, who were then also able to perform vision screenings. Other speakers at the event have traveled one to six times, and all are eager to share their stories and encourage people to join the next trip.

Christ Church is located at 527 Pomfret Street (Route 169). All the church’s programs and services are open to all, regardless of religious affiliation or none.

## Talk on Stone Walls

Submitted by Terry Cote

*Eastford’s Historic Stone Walls: Suggestions for Conservation and Management.*

Friday, May 5, 5:30-7:00 PM - Eastford Town Hall, lower level.

Robert M. Thorson is a professor of Earth Sciences at the University of Connecticut and coordinator of its Stone Wall Initiative. He is an expert on the historical archaeology of New England as revealed by the tangible clues left behind, most notably stone walls and other ruins. He is the author of three books on the region’s stone walls, and a strong advocate for their conservation as signature landforms. Most recently, his interests have shifted to helping communities manage this legacy resource.

His best-selling *Stone By Stone: the Magnificent History in New England’s Stone Walls* won the Connecticut Book Award for nonfiction in 2003. Twenty years after its original hardcover publication, Tantor Media published an audio version now available to libraries and for sale.

His public talk, cosponsored by the Eastford Democratic Town Committee and the Eastford Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission, will introduce the regional phenomenon, review its history, justify enhanced conservation measures, and make recommendations specific to the town of Eastford on how to proceed. A Question & Answer session will follow the talk.

**Ashford Senior Center Organization Presents:**

## *The Spring Fair*

**Saturday, April 29th, Doors open at 9am  
Craft Tables, Bake Table and Lunch  
is available for purchase.**

**25 Tremko Lane, Ashford**

**Call Elaine for directions and information.**

**860-338-0674**



# How to Preserve the POTency of POT

By Mark Mathew Braunstein

Warmth. Light. Air. Water. The same elements that empower living plants to grow and flourish also reduce the potency of cannabis after it's been dried and cured. This is especially true for stash stored in permeable containers or exposed to light or to hot and humid air. By a lucky coincidence, the word Pot is woven into the word Potency, so it's high time to learn the applied science and fine art of preserving the Potency of your Pot.

## Herbology 101

The stronger the smoke, the less you will toké. That's simple arithmetic. Compared to strains of lower potency, a higher power flower can medicate you or elevate you with less huffing and puffing. And the less you toké, the less you endanger the health of your lungs. That too is simple arithmetic.

Bedazzled by enticing numbers, some cannabis connoisseurs chase after THC as their top-choice cannabinoid. Judging cannabis by its ratio of THC alone is as simplistic as rating wine solely by its percentage of alcohol. THC content is more a measure of quantity than of quality. Over 125 other cannabinoids in cannabis contribute to your high or to your relief. The same headcount applies to terpenes, the aromatic oils that distinguish a strain of cannabis by its colors, flavors, and aromas. Over 100 different terpenes can make the air redolent with the sweet and skunky fragrance of Eau de Cannabis.

The entire profile of all the cannabinoids and terpenes contributes to your euphoria or analgesia. Their synergy is dubbed the "entourage effect." Unlike concentrates and derivatives that are isolated and extracted from nature, raw and wholesome cannabis equals more than the sum of its parts. That's why, despite the proliferation of alternative methods of consumption, the smoking and vaping of whole herb remain so popular. To preserve that full entourage, whole herbal cannabis requires proper storage.

## The Proof is in the Puffing

All dried herbal veggies and especially those with pungent aromas lose their potency over time. For this reason, culinary chefs recommend consuming dried seasonings within two years, and of aromatic herbs within one year. As an aromatic herb, cannabis is ruled by the same inescapable laws of physics as are basil and oregano.

When you purchase cannabis from a legal source, the label on the container may list the percentage of some of its terpenes, its CBD (technically CBD combined with CBDA), and its THC (again, actually THC combined with THCA). If the label boasts an astounding 38% THC, that may have been accurate upon analysis, but not for when you purchase or consume that batch. If proof is in the puffing, you may later have good cause to question that eye-popping number.

In nutritional supplements, potencies printed on labels take into account that their strengths diminish over time. In order to remain accurate until their expiration dates, the potencies

during manufacture exceed what's stated on their labels. You get more than what you paid for. The analyses listed for dried and cured cannabis, however, grant no such grace period. Due to time lag, the inflated numbers you read on the label or website are *not* what you get. You get less than what you paid for.

From the moment the cannabis was analyzed, its strength declines when exposed to the elements of Warmth, Light, Air, and Moisture.

## WARMTH – Keep It Cool, Baby

No matter how airtight or waterproof or childproof the container, it is not heatproof. Temperature grossly affects the rate at which cannabinoids and terpenes inevitably decompose. Researchers have conducted many controlled experiments chronicling the depletion of THC over time. Let's examine the results of just three of them.

As the first of its kind, an American study showed that dried cannabis stored in darkness and in airtight containers, but at room temperature, lost THC content at the rate of 3% to 5% per month, which after one year compounded to a loss of between one-third and one-half.

In 2015, an Austrian study analyzed dried cannabis stored in darkness, in airtight containers, and at room temperature. Their results were "in good accordance" with the American study that indicated THC loss of 3% to 5% per month. The Austrian researchers also froze samples at -25°C (-13°F). After four months, the THC content remained totally stable. After one year, slight loss was barely detectable.

In 2019, an Italian study sealed samples in airtight containers under four different environments. The variables were light and temperature. Exhibits A and B both were stored at room temperature, A exposed to light, and B shielded in darkness. Exhibits C and D both were held in darkness, C refrigerated at 4°C (39°F), and D frozen at -20°C (-4°F).

After three months, the THC in Exhibit A had degraded 13%, and in Exhibit B 11%. Only slight loss was noted in refrigerated C. Frozen D showed no loss at all.

Three months is an average turnaround time between when legal cannabis is analyzed and then imbibed. As shops store their cannabis at room temperatures, no wonder their claims of high potencies so often prove unfounded.

After one year, Exhibit A exposed to light lost slightly more than 50% of its THC content, and B in darkness slightly less than 50%. Refrigerated Exhibit C lost 10%, while frozen D lost less than 5%.

One year is the typical turnaround time for outdoor growers who harvest their crops in the fall and stretch their personal supplies into summer. If you grow your own and intend your outdoor harvest to last a year, you should freeze it. The Italian researchers' important takeaway is that, "Freezing is the best storage condition to avoid the reduction of the cannabinoids content over time." Truly frozen in time.

Be aware that frozen herb demands special handling. When frozen, the delicate resin-rich trichomes can turn brittle. If shaken, the trichomes can flake off. So pack your cannabis to the brim so that it does not rattle inside its container. Also,

avoid thawing frozen herb and then refreezing it. That second cycle can cause your bud to crumble to pieces. This happens to baked foods such as bread and cookies that are refrozen and rethawed. That's the way the cookie crumbles.

*Storage Tip for Temperature Control:* For short-term storage, place cannabis in the fridge. For storage longer than three months, freeze it. Because refrigerators and freezers are humid inside, first seal your cannabis in airtight and therefore watertight containers. Keep only your room at room temperature, not your stash.

### **LIGHT – It's Better to Sit in the Dark**

Light is the power source for all living plants that harness that energy with their chlorophyll. Cannabis grows in the light, but once cannabis is harvested that light betrays it and becomes its destroyer. Light and especially sunlight fade colors, shred plastic, sunburn skin, and degrade the potency of any dried herb. That 2019 Italian study and every previous study it had cited all showed that light degrades the THC.

*Storage Tip for Light Control:* Aspire to see the light, but do not store dried cannabis in it. To preserve cannabis, seek the darkness.

### **AIR & MOISTURE – Gone with the Wind**

Oxygen is air's main culprit responsible for decomposition, aptly called oxidation. Oxygen rusts metals, fans flames, spoils foods, ages living matter, and reduces the potency of any dried herb. Match the size of your container to your stash because when a container locks air and moisture out, it also traps them in. Even worse, if odor is leaking out, then air is seeping in.

Seek an airtight hard container whose static charge is nearly neutral, else trichomes adhere to its walls. The front-runners are glass jars followed by metal cannisters that, unlike glass, block out light. But both are only as secure as their lids. Durable bags that are almost as airtight while not too sticky include oven bags, silicone food storage bags, and mylar pouches and bags. Mylar is such a compact choice that some pot shops package cannabis in mylar pouches.

Containers that are airtight are also watertight, so when your container is impermeable to air you are freeing two birds from one cage.

### **The Sniff Test Put to the Sniff Test**

Among the vast annals of cannabis research, the most wildly imaginative experiment was published in 2020. Researchers investigated the cue for warrantless searches during traffic stops when American police officers claim to detect the distinct aroma of unsmoked bud. Real-world traffic stops mingle with a vehicle's competing Smell-a-Rama of tobacco smoke, body sweat, smelly socks, air fresheners, luxury perfumes, leftover food, gasoline fumes, and tailpipe exhaust. Amid such odiferous distractions, can a cop's claim be credible that drivers' cars did not pass the cop's sniff test? To find out, researchers put the sniff test to the sniff test.

Two fresh strains of dried bud were each dispensed into five different plastic containers. Each container then was paired with an identical container that was left empty to serve as a plasticized placebo. The five different containers included:

an open bowl; second, a food storage bag made of HDPE (plastic recycle number 2); third, a resealable food storage bag made of LDPE (recycle number 4), the kind in which black market cannabis is traditionally peddled; fourth, a pharmacy vial made of polypropylene (number 5), the type in which many dispensaries market medical marijuana; and fifth, vacuum-sealed double sheets of composite polyethylene and nylon. (Glass jars, metal cannisters, oven bags, and silicone and mylar food storage bags were notably omitted because those were seldom used for transporting contraband cannabis.)

The containers were randomly placed one at a time into separate chambers simulating the interior of a car and were sniffed by 21 seasoned cannabis users who had developed a good nose for cannabis. In case they could see past their noses and had developed a good eye for the herb, they were blindfolded.

The cannabis was detected with "100% accuracy" from the open bowl (no surprise there!) and from the LDPE and HDPE food bags. Cannabis in the pharmacy vial was detected most of the time. Only the doubly vacuum-sealed composite sheets "reduced diffusion of cannabis odor to levels where olfactory detection" was totally eliminated. The odious other containers all failed to contain their odors. If odor was leaking out, then air was seeping in.

*Storage Tip for Air Defense:* The classics among static-free airtight hard containers are glass jars and metal cannisters. Mylar or silicone food bags and oven bags are almost as airtight, but not as free of static.

### **The Daily Grind**

When it's time to test if your preservation efforts rendered their desired effects, sit back and toké up. In order to keep it fresh, you've also kept your bud whole. Until now.

Whether its destination is a joint or a hand pipe or a waterpipe or an herbal vaporizer, the cannabis should be ground in order to assure consistent and thorough combustion. In a pinch, you can crush a bud between your fingers, though you'll lose the oily trichomes deposited on your fingertips where you won't be able to smoke them. Disk-like pocket-size herbal grinders to the rescue. The resinous oils will coat a grinder's interior once, and hardly further. As grinding exposes the herb's highly perishable oils to air and therefore oxidation, grind only just before use.

### **Futility and Ephemerality**

No matter what precautions you might take to curb erosion by the windswept sands of time, cannabis will lose some potency with age. The fragility of cannabis teaches us lessons in the futility of hoarding and in the ephemerality of all existence.

*Storage Tip to Preserve Potency:* Loss of potency over time makes it imperative to store cannabis properly. Recite this incantation: "If odor is leaking out, then air is seeping in." Protect cannabis in airtight containers and in darkness. The 3% to 5% loss of potency per month at room temperature matches the same 3% to 5% loss per year in the freezer. For easy access, retain only a small portion at room temperature. Chill the rest of your vulnerable stash in the fridge or freezer. Having observed these precautions, you now can chill out.



# Traditional Publishing vs. Self-Publishing, Part 1

By Felix F. Giordano

There are three aspects of publishing. The two that many are familiar with are traditional publishing and self-publishing. However, wedged between those two is a third called vanity publishing which is a gray area that can be easily misunderstood. It may seem like traditional publishing or self-publishing but it's neither. Some writers may not even realize the difference between traditional publishing and vanity publishing. In this issue of Neighbors Newspaper, we'll cover traditional publishing and vanity publishing. In the next issue we'll cover self-publishing.

Your book is ready for publishing only after you have done everything possible to make it the best product it can be. That means, writing and rewriting, having it reviewed and critiqued by colleagues in writer's groups, and possibly even edited by a professional editor. Only then can it be deemed worthy of publishing.

Let's begin with traditional publishing. For some of us, seeing our work published is a personal goal. It may be that we have a story to tell, advice to offer, or we just want our work recorded for posterity. Whether you've written a novel, memoir, or non-fiction book, traditional publishing is an old paradigm. Unless an agent or publisher can envision your work as the next best-seller, the odds are they won't take a chance on a new author.

Traditional publishing requires time, resources, and patience. Whether you query agents or publishers the process and results will be similar. A query letter is your personal opportunity to convince an agent or publisher to take a chance on evaluating your manuscript. After waiting weeks or months, more than 50% of the responses to query letters are rejection letters. Some typical reasons for rejections from agents and publishers are: we're not accepting new authors, the agent no longer works here, we don't support that genre, or your submission is just not for us.

If you do receive an interested response from an agent or publisher, they'll request you send them a synopsis of your book, the first 50 pages, and an author bio. Then you wait to hear back from them. If you do receive a positive response from an agent or publisher upon second contact, they will then ask for your manuscript which will require another wait time. If you receive an agent's offer for representation, they'll send you a contract which typically stipulates that the agent is to receive a 15% commission on your royalties. The successful process for representation from query letter to contract can take a year or longer.

If you accept the contract, then the agent pitches your book to a publisher. Additional work may be required on your part such as providing a suggested list of publishers, requiring the author to work with an in-house editor, insisting that changes be made to the manuscript, cover, and/or book format, or negotiating a separate contract with the publisher. In the case of a direct query letter to a publisher, your manuscript would already be in-house but many of the previously mentioned aspects would still be required.

If your book is finally published, it is at the discretion of the publisher. They can delay publishing to accommodate their corporate business strategies such as waiting for the summer or holiday reading seasons, a conflict with the book launch of a similar book by another author they represent, or the timeliness of the subject matter in your book. The bottom line is that if you first wish to try traditional publishing then you must be prepared for a lengthy amount of time from when you first compose your query letter to when your book is available for sale. It could be months, it could be years, or it may never happen.

Here's a website that can assist with crafting your query letter:

<https://thewritepractice.com/how-to-write-a-query-letter/>

But honest agents and publishers will never ask you for upfront money. They offer you a contract and make their money when your books sell. If it doesn't pan out with traditional agents or publishers don't get discouraged. If you've spent a considerable amount of time trying to get traditionally published with only query letter rejections to show for it, there may come a time when your frustration is so great that you may be swayed by a TV or radio message, a mass mailing, a phone call, or an email promoting what is referred to in the industry as vanity publishers. Don't opt for what on the surface may appear to be an easy path to publishing. There are wolves in sheep's clothing that dominate the dark side of the publishing industry and are lurking to separate you from your hard-earned money. Beware of "publishers" that promise sales and royalties in exchange for a modest fee that covers editing, publishing, or marketing. Any publisher requesting upfront payments is a scam, plain and simple. Vanity, Subsidy, & Fee-based publishers do not have your best interests in mind. They're out to make money for themselves for less than legitimate reasons.

Don't be that person who later regrets they didn't fully control their publishing effort. If a publisher or agent ever asks you for upfront money in the form of reading fees, publishing fees, or marketing fees, they must be avoided. They promise sales and promotions with little accountability and recourse and

delay or keep royalties based upon their “take it or leave it” contractual terms.

In some cases, they retain publishing rights leaving you with no ownership of your original creative effort. These scammers sometimes mandate that your book be a hardbound copy, the most expensive format with you paying for all of that. They may not allow your book to be available in versions with less expensive production costs but that produce higher royalty percentages such as paperback, eBook, and audio book. They may require you to purchase hundreds of hardbound copies of your books. Bookstores and libraries are often reluctant to carry books from these publishers due to the lack of editing and the publishers’ no return policies. There may be little or no marketing – promotional materials and book copies are usually provided at the author’s own expense. They promise book signings and readings but neglect to make the necessary arrangements leaving the author without a scheduled event. These publishers are at best unethical and at worst, fraudulent.

People have paid thousands of dollars to these so-called publishers who have promised book sales, book signings, book trailers, marketing and media campaigns, inclusions in libraries and major bookstore chains across the country. After spending a small fortune, some authors are left with thousands of their books stored in their basements and garages with no plan to get them to interested customers. When a number of authors have been scammed, these vanity publishers are rightly sued but then declare bankruptcy and reform under another corporate name and resume their scam to avoid the negative news associated with lawsuits filed by former clients against their old business name.

Here’s a link to a site maintained by the Science Fiction Writers of America (SFWA) which lists valuable information regarding vanity publishers and scam artists to avoid:

<https://www.sfw.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-be-ware/thumbs-down-publishers/>

In summary, traditional publishing is a legitimate option to pursue when publishing your manuscript and it’s worthwhile to experience the process. But at all costs (no pun intended) please avoid vanity publishing. Again, to repeat, in the next issue we’ll cover self-publishing.

We defined “Traditional Publishing vs. Self-Publishing – Part 1” 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: Traditional Publishing vs. Self-Publishing, Part 2.

## An Afro-Caribbean in the Nazi Era

Submitted by Robin Miyashiro

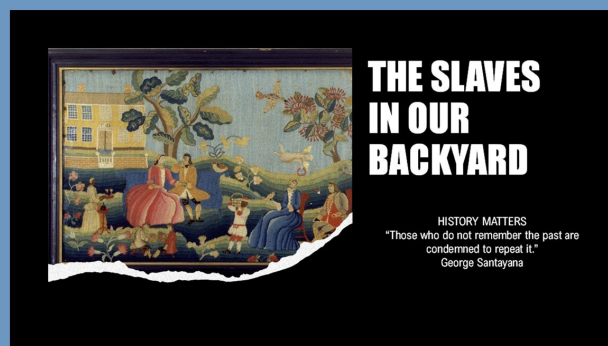
A presentation entitled ‘An Afro-Caribbean in the Nazi Era’ will be hosted by the Storrs Road Church of Christ at 335 Storrs Road, Mansfield Center, CT on Saturday, April 29 at 3:00 pm. All are welcome to attend.

This FREE event will feature a presentation by Mary Romney-Schaab about the wartime experiences of her father, Lionel Romney, who was one of the few Black prisoners in the Nazi camp system to experience the horrors and live to tell about it. The information he shared with his daughter in his oral history is the basis of the presentation, which will include excerpts from the recordings. The presentation will also include some comments on the importance of oral history for all families.

Ms. Romney-Schaab’s presentation will be followed by a discussion and a Q & A period. Refreshments will follow. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

Ms. Romney-Schaab is the author of a book about her father’s wartime experience entitled *An Afro-Caribbean in the Nazi Era: From Papiamentu to German*. His oral history is the centerpiece of the book. The book also contains personal recollections of Ms. Romney-Schaab’s visits to the concentration camp where her father was imprisoned.

### POMFRET HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS



#### Witnessing the Enslaved People in Windham County in the 18th Century

Donna Dufresne will share what she has learned about slavery and the West Indies trade in Pomfret and Woodstock during her research for The Witness Stones Project

**APRIL 15TH, 1:30 - 3:00 P.M.**

**Pomfret Community Center**

**207 Mashamoquet Rd., Pomfret, CT**

**Refreshments will be served; donations welcome**

**<https://pomfret-historical-society.org/>**



# Solar Today - Honoring Earth Day, every day

By John Boiano

Greetings all,

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

This month I will be covering a couple of topics, enjoy!



## **Spring is here; a gentle reminder to please leave the leaves and your grass too.**

Please wait as long as you can to do your spring lawn clean up. Ideally, you should wait until the daytime temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees F for at least 7 consecutive days. This way most of the little critters that use the leaves and overgrown grass for protection can start their families and then fully come out of hiding to work their magic in our gardens and on our lands. The Earth benefits greatly from this simple act of patience. To those of us who do wait... *THANK YOU!*

## **Some Legislatures are stepping in to help our energy costs.**

I am not a financial or political wizard but it sure seems that we need some laws to protect us against the massive rate hikes that hurt our wallets and enhance the paychecks of utility company executives.

Guess what happens when investors start seeing minimal or lower profits? They start to pull their investments away. So, how do you keep those investors rolling funds into Fat Cat Salaries of those who work for energy conglomerates? You show huge profits. And that's what happened with the recent and past rate hikes. It's very interesting that Eversource claims that supply costs are astronomical while raising the supply side of our bill by 100% to .245/kwh when every third party supplier is between .10/kwh and .169/kwh. *Hmmmm, let's think on that a moment.*

Eversource and UI are both investor owned companies. They are regulated by PURA (Public Utilities Regulatory Authority) who is a quasi-judicial regulatory body. They are the hub in a wheel of regulations that is statutorily-charged with ensuring that Connecticut's investor-owned utilities, including the state's electric, natural gas, water, and telecommunications companies, provide safe, clean, reliable, and affordable utility service and infrastructure. PURA's mission is essential to advance the state's energy, economic, and environmental goals and is critical to maintaining public health and safety as well as a robust economy.

What recently happened in the CT energy markets effective 1/1/22 were pretty much written by the utility companies and the CT Green Bank. I was on a self-proclaimed task force to try

and block what they were implementing. What they implemented is so challenging for the CT solar industry that PURA hosted a half-day session with the solar industry to try to find out how much havoc was created by the new regulations that were implemented on 1/1/22. At the end of this meeting PURA thanked us for our time, said that had listened to us and promised that there would be no immediate changes, if any at all. So my question is, "who are they actually protecting"?

*Hopefully, we will finally be getting support from the legislature.*

Pura has some unique regulations on how people including legislators can approach and suggest changes in PURA's business. Currently all the legislators can do is exactly what you and I can do. Write letters that can almost be heard hitting the shredder as soon as they are received in PURA's office. Representative Christine Conley recently introduced House Bill 5013. The proposed legislation, if it became law, would give both chambers of the state's General Assembly the opportunity to vote on any electric or natural gas rate increases approved by Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority. It's one of several bills expected over the course of the next few months that would be an effort to directly combat high electric rates. *Yay, and, it's about time!*

## **A wonderful leap forward for solar in CT's HOA's.**

*CT Homeowners Associations* can no longer block solar installations. An article on the "Energy News Network website" recently posted that "Buried in the 35-page Connecticut Clean Air Act, or Senate Bill 4, is a provision that prohibits common interest communities from adopting or enforcing rules that would prevent any unit owner from installing a solar generating system on their roof." This is great news because there are many viable homes in HOA's that were previously restricted from going solar due to their particular HOA's bylaws. Now those homes are able to save on their energy bills with solar.

**If you'd like to know more about Solar and how it could possibly help you to save money, please reach out to me directly.**

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

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

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

# News from the Mill Museum

Submitted by Kira Holmes

## April is full of wonder and Town Pride!

**The "Here All Along" exhibit is open.** It is included with admission to the Mill Museum at the regular price. Mill Museum members may attend for free. This exhibit will explore the African American experience in northeastern Connecticut (with an emphasis on Windham and Willimantic) from the 1600s to 1910, with an additional section relating to the 20th century. Learn the stories of Jo, Eliza, Job and Jesse Leason, Lyman and Clarissa Jackson, Ceasar and Julia Hall, and others who experienced Connecticut, its rural communities and mill towns, and the meaning of freedom in different ways than their white neighbors.

**Sat., April 1: Renew your Membership Today!** The Mill Museum membership is good from March 31, 2022 – April 1, 2023. It is time to renew your Mill Museum membership today. Members receive discounts on programs, free admission for our regular operational hours, and discounts on mugs in our gift shop. If you renew in person on April 1 or April 2 receive a free *Mills and Meadows* book.

Sun., April 9: **The Mill Museum is Closed.**

**Sat., April 15: Volunteer Gathering.** The Mill Museum wants to celebrate our past and present volunteers. Prior to the dinner feel free to visit the Mill Museum from 4:30 - 5:15 p.m. for an after-hours viewing of the "Here All Along" Exhibit. Then let's gather at Willimantic Brewing Company from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. for a fun evening. Please RVSP by April 8 to reserve your space at the restaurant. Each person who attends will pay for their own meal.

**Sun., April 16: The Art of Vacuum Forming.** Dan Thomacos will lecture about vacuum forming in

the Dugan building at 157 B Union Street will have a lecture at 2pm. Learn about all of the elements of the process. See art and fabric in different way than before. This lecture will have a demonstration and a piece of art each attendee may take with them. \$15 for members and \$20 for the public. Please purchase your ticket in advance through our website, by PayPal, or at the Museum Gift Shop, cash or credit card.

**Sat., April 22: The Drop-in Spinning Bee with Peggy Church,** 10 a.m.-1 p.m., in person at Dugan Hall, 157B Union St., Willimantic. Bring a spindle or wheel and join us at this free event. Beginners are welcome. We are still requesting that you be COVID vaccinated. Please let us know that you plan to come, and if you have questions, contact Peggy Church at peggychurch2@gmail.com.

**Sat., April 22: Crazy Lady Plant Party.** This event is a presale of plants and a chance to socialize from 3 - 7 p.m. with light refreshments in the Dugan building at 157 B Union Street. On Earth Day The Mill Museum will have a plant sale in Dugan at 157 B Union Street. There is no admission fee for this event. When you purchase the plants please pay with cash, but check and credit card will be accepted too.

**Sun., April 23: Earth Day Plant Sale.** This sale will occur from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. in the Dugan building at 157 B Union Street. This event will include light refreshments and several moments to chat about plants. There is no admission for this event. When you purchase the plants please pay with cash, but check and credit card will be accepted too.

**Sun., April 23: Town Wide Town Pride.** Thanks to Eastern Connecticut State University for this day. The Mill Museum shall have several students from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. to assist with painting and yard clean-up projects.



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860-742-6878 or [songadaymusic.com](http://songadaymusic.com)

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(1/10th miles from Storrs Road./Route 195)  
**7:00 pm EACH 2nd MONDAY of EVERY MONTH since 2011**

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# Regional Media and Arts News

By John Murphy

Happy Equinox Everyone!

Mother Earth tilts once again, oblivious to all human foolishness, and I am grateful for her warm winds of spring. My winter was very busy with a lot of media and arts activity, and for this month I have three updates:

1. The *On the Homefront* series is available on YouTube for 24/7 access anywhere. Subscribe and you will automatically get every new program in your inbox. Guests get links for their own sharing.
2. Continuing coverage of Ashford—a town in crisis with an economic development proposal
3. Important arts resources for individuals and groups

## ON THE HOMEFRONT IS ON RADIO AND YOUTUBE

Programs air live on Wednesdays from 5-6 pm on WILI AM 1400 and 95.3 digital FM. They are videotaped and posted on the radio station's YouTube channel. Enjoy our recent programs! To share information or be a guest use email—the studio doors are wide open at [john@humanartsmedia.com](mailto:john@humanartsmedia.com). Come on down!

February 1: <https://youtu.be/63tv3pEIWkM>  
Live music in eastern Connecticut with Bill Dumas, Jim Carpenter, Brian Gore  
Arts coverage/part one of Arts-Culture-Tourism Legislative Caucus Meeting (1/13/23)

February 8: <https://youtu.be/9X6sEKgMg9I>  
Willimantic Chocolate Fest 2023 with Jean deSmet  
Taste2Towns Restaurant Week with Andrew Gutt, Kathleen Paterson, Mark Moodus  
Arts coverage/MASS MoCA/Assets for Artists with Molly Rideout

February 15: <https://youtu.be/ljCPUX6rpe4>  
Second special panel on Connecticut journalism today with Neill Ostrout (Journal Inquirer), Matt Dwyer (CT Public), Todd Charland (The Chronicle), John Penney (Norwich Bulletin).

February 22: [https://youtu.be/W0NUq2J\\_fX8](https://youtu.be/W0NUq2J_fX8)  
Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance with Sarah Moon, Mark Bilokur  
Coventry Art Guild with Richard White  
Arts coverage/part one of Arts-Culture-Tourism Legislative Caucus Meeting (1/13/23)

March 1: <https://youtu.be/OuIkXODqpTE>  
Special program on the history and future of Generations Family Health Care Center with founding/outgoing CEO Arvind

Shaw and Incoming CEO  
Melissa Myers

March 8: <https://youtu.be/6-zmuepr71M>  
Introduction to the Ashford development challenges with residents Charles Vidich and Chuck Funk

March 15: <https://youtu.be/0hGmXMCAgPc>  
CLiCK Willimantic with Leigh Duffy and Jessica Rier  
Windham Community Food Network—Know Your Farmer Fair/April 1 with Sydney Clement and Vania

March 22: [https://youtu.be/Xm\\_tcoVNEEc](https://youtu.be/Xm_tcoVNEEc)  
Musician Bruce John and the Bread Box Folk Theatre Series to benefit Covenant Soup Kitchen  
Arts resources/Creative Ground with Dee Schneidman and Sharon Amuguni  
Eastern CT Veterans Community Center Benefit Concert with Bev York and Kala Farnham

WILI YouTube Channel for all M-F local talk shows:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@wiliradio7000>  
Subscribe and you will automatically get every new show!

## ASHFORD: ANOTHER TOWN IN CRISIS OVER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

I have been covering Ashford for many weeks regarding an increasingly controversial proposal to amend(change) the text of local rules in an established development zone. As I understand it, the intention is to modify the requirements for the zone to allow construction of a larger warehouse/distribution center than current rules permit.

I am still learning about the layers of control and the complexities involved. The political heat is high and local town officials are under a great deal of pressure as the review and approval processes move forward.

My WILI and WECS programs will continue coverage in the months ahead. For me this is an important local story that also represents a challenge and opportunity facing towns across our state. Balancing the absolute need to grow our local economies with planning for appropriate development is a core requirement for the future of our state. I've covered this challenge in different forms across our region in recent years. The lack of regular local media coverage has contributed to lower levels of public awareness and knowledge that create unfortunate and sometimes unnecessary obstacles and difficulties for development projects. I want to avoid the good guy/bad guy trope and the old worn-out denials of the need for any change.

I strongly suggest that interested people watch the last three hearings of the Planning and Zoning Commission. You will learn a lot about the process and how powerful yet fragile



it is. You will hear the expressed hopes and concerns—and this will be a sneak preview for you and your town of the kinds of situations popping up everywhere as post-Covid business development resumes. Hearings are available on the Town website and there are several related local Facebook groups that share links and local information. Each hearing concluded with a section for public comments, and there were so many people waiting to speak that each hearing was extended and now April 10 is the next date. You can get a link to watch and learn at the town website.

On March 8, I presented an introductory/overview program with two Ashford residents, Charles Vidich and Chuck Funk. The link is <https://youtu.be/6-zmuepr71M>. They shared their questions and concerns.

I have been trying to get guests who will speak in favor of the proposal, but I have NOT had success! The developer/applicant has not responded to several invitations, but I continue to try. I am reaching out to members of the Ashford Economic Development Commission, and I hope to have 1 or 2 of them in the studio. To be frank, it has been frustrating but in order for coverage to be fair and accurate I must include many perspectives. If you or someone you know supports this proposal, please send them my way. I want to give them a free and safe space to communicate with the public and participate in these public discussions. More news next month!

#### HOW TO CONNECT TO OUR NETWORK

The following link will take you to the WILI Radio YouTube channel, where the local weekly programs are posted—a full weekday block airing live on Mondays through Fridays from 5:00-6:00 pm:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFY4\\_TDRh\\_jING5Z0k-6pmKg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFY4_TDRh_jING5Z0k-6pmKg)

How you can access our regional network—to learn more or be a guest:

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 (subscribe!)

Neighbors ([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)

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, my best wishes for spring, it is on the way!

John Murphy  
[john@humanartsmedia.com](mailto:john@humanartsmedia.com)

## EC-CHAP Awarded Grant: A Call for Artifacts

The Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) has been awarded the Museum Makeover Grant for 2023. EC-CHAP, a non-profit cultural organization located at 156 River Road in Willington CT, operates the Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum, the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery, and The Packing House performance venue, and offers an Artist-In-Residence Program.

Museum Makeover is a program of Conservation ConneCTion and is supported through a partnership with the Connecticut League of History Organizations with a grant from the CT Cultural Fund administered by CT Humanities, with funding provided by the Connecticut Office of the Arts from the Connecticut State Legislature. EC-CHAP was one of 12 organizations across the state to be awarded this competitive grant. The award consists of \$4,000 and visits from a team of traveling curators, allowing EC-CHAP the opportunity to upgrade the Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum with self-guided exhibits, upgraded informative signage and text panels, and provide new and interesting programming.

Additionally, this grant will further EC-CHAP's goal of increased awareness of local history. This program will take place through the year, completing in Fall of 2023. The Gardiner Hall Jr. Museum was founded in 2014 with a primary theme focused on preserving the long history of the historic mill building it is located in, its inhabitants over the years such as the Gardiner Hall Jr. Company, the Hall family, and their contributions to the town of Willington and beyond.

The Museum is seeking donations of historical artifacts - including physical items, photographs, diaries, oral histories, etc. that help to tell the story of the Gardiner Hall Jr. Thread Company and development of the Town of Willington and surrounding area from the mid-19th to mid-20th century. If you have information or items that you would like to donate or place on loan as part of this Exhibit, please contact Ryan Elgin, Museum Curator at [ryan@ec-chap.org](mailto:ryan@ec-chap.org). All artifacts will be properly acknowledged by the donor/loaner. The Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum is open to the public on Saturdays from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

To all our contributors-

### THANK YOU!

Without your submissions of writing, poetry, artwork and photographs, NEIGHBORS would not exist. T. King, Ed.

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# Democracy Needs Theater

By Sarah Moon



Artificial intelligence. Climate change. Global pandemics. At this point in global civilization, we face incredible challenges which we must learn to handle responsibly and humanely. To this end, we need public forums of debate to help us make intelligent, examined choices about our courses of action. Unfortunately, since the turn of the century, Web 2.0 has offered a bait and switch to democratic citizens. While the internet was initially heralded as a wonderful new venue for public discourse, time has borne out a darker reality. Social media platforms do offer anyone a virtual soapbox, but these spaces are not actually free and open spaces for curious listeners to discuss important issues. They are professionally engineered sites used to drive profit for the tech companies that own them.

Where can we look to better support public debate for the purpose of intelligent, humane collective action to address our most pressing social issues? I'd like to put forth that yes, even now in the digital age, live theater is an important site for providing space for publics to engage thoughtfully in social matters.

The link between theater and democracy in the West can be traced back to 5th Century BCE Athens. In Golden Age Athens, rhetoric developed as a necessary *techne* within the context of a democracy of roughly a quarter of a million citizens. The democratic Assembly was composed of 30,000 adult, free, native-born males with some 6-8,000 of these attending any given meeting. Each meeting would follow an agenda set by a council of 500 citizens who were selected by lot each year. Assembly members used their rhetorical skills to hold forth in this setting and influence votes.

The same rotating council of 500 had the privilege of sitting in a special block of seats at the Theatre of Dionysus, home of the Dionysia festival in which tragedies and comedies were performed in competition with one another. In both the Assembly and the Theatre, there was an open recognition between a large, gathered public and an orator/actor. In both cases, the speaker might be shouted down or applauded. In both settings, a judgment was made (in the case of the theater festival, the judgement of best play), giving high stakes to the speech made or the play performed.

In the history since, the dramatic genre has provided an essential arena for both introducing and critiquing rhetoric around issues of social importance. It is an arena in which dialogue can be examined in order to expose both just and unjust uses of rhetoric, helping cultivate a more savvy citizenry. Drama can celebrate the triumph of rhetoric, as it does in Henry V when Henry delivers his St. Crispin's day speech

to the soldiers, and it can also expose manipulative rhetorics as it does in Moliere's *Tartuffe*, about a pious fraud who tricks a good family.

Among the dramatists whose work intended to expose misleading uses of rhetoric by those in power, German playwright Bertolt Brecht stands out. Brecht began his career in Weimar Germany developing didactic dramas, *lehrstucke*, which revealed the corruption of the powerful. Brecht took direct inspiration from Plato in his philosophical treatise *Messingkauf*. In these dialogues, Brecht elaborates on what he finds is a key inhibitor to critical public discourse:

For countless numbers of people, great wars are just like earthquakes, it's as if they were not caused by humanity but by forces of nature against which the human race is powerless. Perhaps what seems most natural of all to us is the way we earn our living.... That's just a free exchange of things, we think; but look closer and you realize what the terrible experiences of our daily life also go to prove -- that this exchange doesn't just take place between people but is controlled by specific people. (*Brecht, Bertolt. "Part One Messingkauf, or Buying Brass." Brecht on Performance: Messingkauf and Modelbooks. Trans. Tom Kuhn, Marc Silberman, Steve Giles. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 1-96. Print.*)

Brecht points out that major machinations in society, engineered by those in power, often appear detached from a human hand. Because of this, they go un-critiqued. Brecht's plays aim to expose the ways that language is used to deceive the public so that the powerful may evade critique for their actions.

Today we suffer as much as ever the gulf that separates the powerful from the everyday citizen. Plays like Brecht's that address social issues hold a new value in our social media-dominated democracy as events that brings local publics together in a space where they can see and hear fellow citizens. Audience talkbacks and even casual conversations that might take place over a drink after the show extend the conversations that the play raises. Locally-produced, nonprofit theater is one of the few true public spaces that exist in our lives today. As a result, nonprofit theaters should take their responsibility seriously and produce work that can raise up questions about the most pressing issues of our time.

Our democracy may not be as direct as it was in ancient Athens, but when it comes to making changes, especially at the local level, we cannot underestimate the importance of the free public exchange of ideas. Internet-fueled divisive politics have fomented a chilling effect in the exchange of ideas around social issues from national elections to local school-boards. This chill threatens to freeze us into immobilization. It's spring, so let's embrace the metaphor of the thaw. Theater is one place where we can and should raise the heat.

*Sarah Moon is an Artist-In-Residence (Theater discipline) at EC-CHAP; Director of the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery; and Assistant Professor of Humanities at Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Sarah can be reached at: [communitygallery@ec-chap.org](mailto:communitygallery@ec-chap.org).*

# Connecticut's Rich Tobacco History

By Ryan Elgin

The section of the Connecticut River Valley spanning from Portland, Connecticut to the southern tip of Vermont is home to the best farming soil in New England. This region is colloquially referred to as Tobacco Valley. If you've driven anywhere in North-Central Connecticut above Hartford, you've probably noticed the long, usually red, tobacco barns. I recently visited the Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum in Windsor, partly built inside one of these historic barns. The museum is dedicated to the history of the tobacco farming industry and is the source for the information in this article, unless otherwise stated.



The history of Connecticut tobacco starts long before European settlers came to America. Archaeological evidence suggests that tobacco in the Northeast dates back to 2,500 years ago. The Algonquin peoples maintained tobacco as one of their crops for medicinal and traditional purposes. In 1633, settlers founded Windsor as the first town in Connecticut. In less than a decade, tobacco was being farmed for trade, personal use in pipes, and even used to make tea. Allegedly, it was Israel Putnam, of Revolutionary War fame, who brought a different type of tobacco seeds back to Connecticut after a military expedition to Cuba in 1762 that led to the development of Connecticut's famous cigar wrappers. By the early 1800s, cigars surpassed pipe smoking in popularity. Connecticut devoted more acreage to commercial tobacco, with family farms planting the Connecticut Broadleaf variety. During the Civil War, the CT valley region crop yielded up to ten million pounds annually. Throughout the United States, CT tobacco became synonymous with quality. To compete with foreign competition in the tobacco market, the Havana seed was introduced to Connecticut soil. Both of these "sun grown" tobacco leaves were primarily used for the wrapper of the cigar, the outermost leaf, or for the binder, the leaf underneath the wrapper that holds the filler tobacco together.

In 1900, with the help of the USDA and Connecticut farmers, the tobacco industry was revolutionized when the first shade tent went up in Windsor. These light cotton cheesecloth tents were spread over a new hybrid tobacco leaf, creating Connecticut Shade tobacco. The cloth prevented direct sun from hitting the plant while simultaneously raising humidity levels. This produces leaves that are thin and smooth with minimal veins. After curing, the leaves turn a light golden brown. This Connecticut Shade tobacco is still widely regarded as some of the finest cigar tobacco in the world (Cigar Aficionado). Tobacco use soared into the 1920s with cigars at the forefront. In 1925, Connecticut was dedicating more than 30,000 acres

to produce Shade tobacco as it rose to become the state's top export.

This booming industry began to decline in the 1950s. Cigarettes overtook cigars and a new paper/tobacco blended wrapper emerged as a challenger of Shade tobacco. Continuing past the 1950s and into the last few decades, other countries such as Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Cuba began to produce Shade tobacco. It became increasingly hard for Connecticut to compete as Shade tobacco grown here was far more expensive for cigar brands to purchase due to cheaper labor, better yields, and in some cases better cloud cover in these competing countries. A Shade wrapper grown in these countries using seeds from CT are still referred to as Connecticut. For instance, the blend information on a cigar with a Shade wrapper produced in Ecuador would be called Ecuadorian Connecticut.



The once massive tobacco industry in Connecticut has slowly faded. From a height of more than 30,000 acres to less than 2,000 in 2019 (Hartford Courant). The red tobacco barns now serve as a vestige of Connecticut's longest standing industry. The tracts of land that used to be tobacco fields have often been developed for housing, or more recently, used for solar farms or growing grains for craft beer. This is not to say that the tobacco industry in Connecticut is dead. There are still a handful of growers and families that have kept this tradition alive and continue to sell Connecticut Shade to premium cigar brands. In fact, the hobby of cigar smoking seems to be making a comeback in the last couple of years. Cigars are selling at a rate not seen in more than two decades (Cigar Association of America). Connecticut Broadleaf and Shade can still be seen growing in towns such as Enfield, Windsor, Suffield, Somers, and more. A photo accompanying this article is of five new tobacco barns going up in Somers in March 2023, showing the industry is here to stay, at least in some capacity.

In my next article, I'll continue the story of tobacco in Connecticut. Focusing on the farming and harvesting process along with a spotlight on those that have worked the fields over this industry's long history

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.*





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