

NEIGHBORS

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May 2024

FREE



UConn students stand in solidarity with Palestine and demand the University of Connecticut disclose and divest their endowments with Israel and military contractors. This photo was taken by UConn undergraduate student, Kiki Katsumata-Smith on Friday April 26th, and it shows students connecting their arms to protect the Seder that was being held in the center. Read Phoebe Godfrey's article on page 10.

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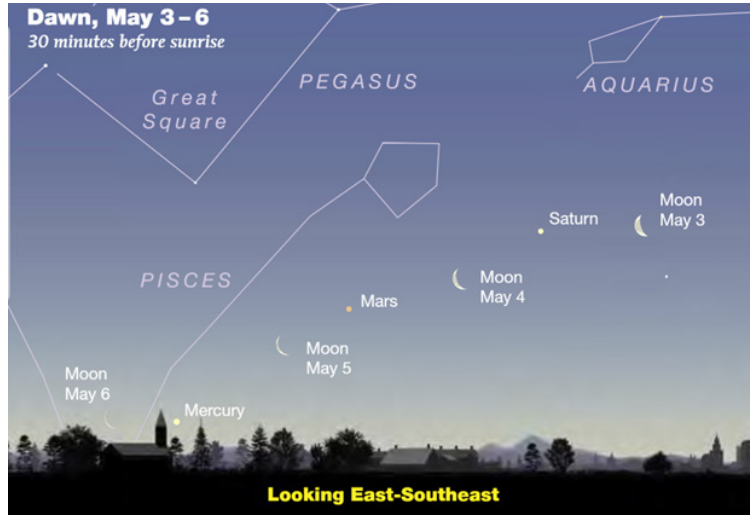
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Nostalgic Longings and an Abundance of Life

By Bob Grindle

It seems a thousand things that we know we should be doing sprout quickly in the composted remains of the time we all promise ourselves we'll use wisely...and then life beckons. A star twinkles into view as dusky evening drifts in from the east and we pause to dream a wish; the smell of freshly cut grass invites a deep inhale of that nostalgic and luscious scent and we sit down for a moment's distraction as we enjoy the tidy look of our handiwork; or perhaps the noise of human activity suddenly gives way to the sensory art and music of the world around us—birds' singing, flowers and shrubs blooming, perhaps the sound of water rushing or cascading over rocks, aromas drifting, then mixing with the breezes whispering through trees and an absolute symphony of insect buzzing and clicking and chirping and humming create an architecture of sound and beauty that speaks to the common soul in us all, and we lose a moment to the pleasure of a relaxing reverie. As I sit down surrounded by the almost indescribably lush, soft, multi-shaded green grass that is the lawn on the sunny south side of our barn here on a south-facing hillside in Hampton, Connecticut, I look up into the quickly darkening sky. The first bright stars are twinkling into view, and I smile to imagine our address in the universe: Earth, Solar System, Milky Way...first the dog stars, Sirius (*canis major*) and Procyon (*canis minor*), then Vega and the red

stars, Betelgeuse, Arcturus and Aldebaran, as the night sky comes gradually, relentlessly to life. It is at moments like this, sitting alone, if only for an instant, a solitary traveler on a planet positively bursting at the seams with life, that I feel most satisfyingly alive: not insignificantly small; not



smugly superior; just delighted to be part of the crew on this singular journey.

Certainly, there are broken tools to repair (always will be) community commitments to keep, household projects to complete, animals to care for, weather to deal with, endless family matters to wrangle and daily chores that

compete with the time it takes to restore one's connection with the world around us, but I often think of these short interludes of reflection as a sort of refueling stop. A way to reignite the imagination and get on with the excitement of living.

May will be a month not only to fulfill April's promise of flowers, freshly restarted gardens, greening landscapes and parades, but also of a parade of planets across the early morning skies. Beginning May 3rd as the waning crescent Moon fades into the sunrise, on each of four subsequent mornings the Moon will pair with different planets. Looking above the East-Southeast just-before-sunrise horizon on the 3rd, you'll see Saturn to the left of the Moon, then on the 4th you'll see the Moon between Saturn and Mars (Mars is the red planet to the left of the Moon,) on the 5th the Moon is between Mars, on the right, and Mercury. Finally, on the 6th, a whisper thin crescent Moon sits above and to the left of Mercury.

With just a little bit of luck in the wee early hours before morning on Sunday and Monday May 5th and 6th you may be able to catch a meteor shower as our planet passes through the left-over debris from Halley's comet back in 1986. The Aquariid Meteor Shower is not known to be a very productive source of shooting stars, but this year there will be little to no moonlight to hide the show and we might just get lucky. The meteors will appear to radiate from the Aquarius constellation high in the eastern sky and should not be too obstructed by treetops.

Sitting here beneath the sky and on top of the Earth, it is hard to fully appreciate the full scale of our existence. In the Milky Way Galaxy alone more than 400 billion stars spread across more than 600,000 trillion miles are busy converting matter into starlight, and there are nearly 2 trillion more galaxies spread across the Cosmos. Here on Earth where matter evolved into a mind numbing galaxy of life forms and ultimately grew into consciousness, it is worth noting that along the way far more species have gone extinct than exist today...and as the sky grows more abundant with stars and a chill descends to remind me that April in Connecticut can get cold quickly, I head back into the house where warmth and light await.

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

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

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My Chart Plus Aggravation + Confusion

By Loretta Wrobel



May is my birthday month, and one of the unavoidable traumas as you age is that you are forced to dance with the medical system more frequently each year. You cannot avoid it. The body does get tired and breaks down and doesn't operate as it used to when you were younger. Fortunately, I have been fairly healthy for most of my long existence on this planet this time around. However, as I pass into yet another decade, I witness my ailments multiplying, not life threatening, but needing attention. Consequently, I am compelled to go to the computer and sign on to My Chart Plus.

Initially, it seemed to be a great invention. You just have a short period of learning to navigate the system and voila, you are contacting medical personnel and getting test results and getting reminders of appointments. What a sense of safety and comfort. That is until the system runs into an error or a blip or you can't remember your password.

I am feeling quite smug and knowing help is just a few clicks along the way. Sending a message seems quick and you get fast results—until you don't. I have waited for more than a week and a half without any return response. That leaves you with one alternative, Calling. This is an anxiety inducing experience, as you need to give all sorts of information and are not connected to the department you want. You have to know what number you want or the name of who you want to speak to. All of these detours take more Time. Finally, when you reach the appropriate office, you get a time frame of two to six months for an appointment.

Here is a lengthy saga of what I experienced recently. I call a clinic for an appointment and I am told I had to have a referral from my doctor. My doctor, meanwhile, had given me the number of the clinic. I use my chart to notify the office for a referral. I do get a response within a few days, asking for what kind of a referral. Finally, I get a notification that the referral has been made. I do not call the clinic back, since I was told they will call me and it could be up to three weeks. I finally get a return call two months later. My appointment is set for three months in the future. I guess they are very busy.

However, that is not the only shock. Here are my instructions. I have to go to pick up my test results and bring it myself to the clinic when I go. I have to contact my doctor's office for them to fax blood test results to the specialty clinic. I say, "Just get it from my chart plus." The reply "Oh no, as this is a different group and we don't have access to your medical chart." I thought the whole purpose was to have coordinated health care where medical personnel could see all of your health history to provide better care.

What happens next? Well, I sign onto the other healthcare system. Wrong, as I don't have an access code

from their medical insurance. Next step is a shot in the dark. I return to my home page for my chart, and—surprise-- I then see a link to the other healthcare system. OK I am riding high. I have solved this puzzle. Not so, as there is a problem loading the information. Check back later. I go back three times and no success. However, on the fourth attempt, I am successful. What a puny reason to be elated. Nonetheless I am. I am driven to feel great about a successful link in. These are the times we live in. No wonder depression and anxiety are on the rise!

This is our highly advanced medical system that functions some of the time and doesn't much of the time. I used to believe, when I heard horror stories about what happened, that it was just a glitch. A friend reports that after a three plus hour test on her gallbladder and pancreas, the results are negative. Why has she been in severe pain? No answer.

We are getting sicker along with our medical systems. We need to create some loud action. No one should have to wait for a critical test for three months. Nobody should be denied a treatment because of a denial by the insurance company.

Next comes the reality of the remuneration that the head, the CEO--chief executive officer, receives from their insurance company. We all know such an excessive amount of salary, bonuses, and benefits are absorbed by the rest of us. We are just trying to take care of our bodies. It is no secret that yet again we are dealing with Corporate Greed.

All of us are struggling as our rates for insurance increase, our coverage decreases, plus our services are often not timely and require longer and longer waiting periods. This is not a sustainable path. And it means we have to wait longer and longer to get even simple tests or services. For older folks how long can we wait? How do we take care of ourselves? Why does it always get back to this: The sane choice is not available.

Healthcare is a fundamental right. As citizens, we deserve appropriate and speedy healthcare to keep ourselves functioning in this dysfunctional system or at best unwieldy system. Perhaps the healthcare companies have expanded too far, with too many mergers, or the desire for profit has taken top seat?

Healthcare needs to remember their goals, not to accrue fatter profits but to bring greater health to the populations they serve. It seems like an easy fix. We need to take back control. My own doctor, not an insurance company employee, sitting at a desk in some home office somewhere on earth, is the appropriate resource to make decisions regarding my care. Good health is not for profit! We need to pressure our insurance companies to stand up for state-of-the-art efficient healthcare that is affordable and available to every person. It is attainable, and we deserve the right to be as healthy as possible. May your next experience with the medical system be smooth and navigatable. I wish you top quality healthcare and health, especially as we move towards November elections!!!

Motherhood

By Carol Wheelock

Being with child for the first time can bring joy and uncertainties to any young lady. The mom-to-be carries a glow on her face and hopes and dreams in her head. There are questions she has for relatives, friends, books, and the doctor in preparation to put herself at ease for the big event and to be the best mom possible. With the relief and happiness that arrives with baby also comes exhaustion which continues with necessary frequent feedings and care. The first coos, smiles, crawls, words, and wobbly standings somehow make it more than worthwhile, despite the former pain, loss of sleep, and occasional explosive diaper change after just dressing them in that cute outfit. You learn that a child can make you laugh and make you cry. You just do the best you can do, the best you know how to do. That's all anyone can do.

Parenting can be difficult. Through the years there can be multiple stressful times for a mom dealing with childhood's illnesses, bumps, and the lessons to impart on the growing individual you created. The best things to hold in your heart are the sweet cherished memories of handholding and cuddles, loving acts and artwork, and experiences together such as holidays, perhaps riding a carousel, or simply eating popcorn at home while watching tv. You do what you have to do and remarkably raise this child all the while juggling your life of family, friends, work and household responsibilities.

There may be some rebellious situations during those teenage years as your child finds its way in the world and sometimes creates havoc. Hopefully with their maturity you will find them to be a wonderful, loving human being once again. You may experience pride and joy with graduations, passing their driver's test, advancements with their social life,

and employment successes. But you also live vicariously as they have their sorrows of life.

And when that child leaves home for good, raised to be independent from all the lessons learned in life, you find yourself with waves of grief because of the "empty nest". Even as he or she ages and may have their own children and grandchildren, you are still their mom, and they are still your child to worry about and to hope for the best for them. And you feel blessed because you are their mother.

Carol Wheelock Hall lives in Columbia, Ct. and is the author of 4 books available on Amazon. One book contains poetry and ponderings (Signs of Light in Life), 2 are children's stories (A Trip to the Carnival; and Photo Safari in Africa), and one is her anthology (Many Spokes in the Wheel).

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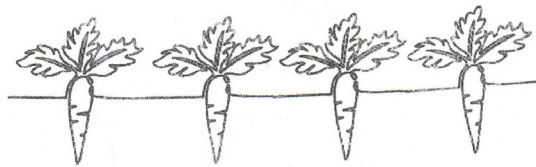
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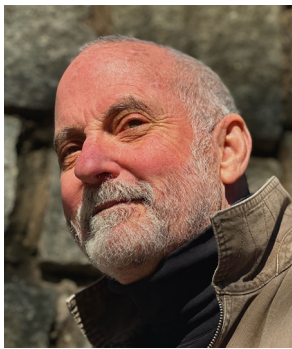
From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut



"We have lived our lives by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. We have been wrong. We must change our lives so that it will be possible to live by the contrary assumption, that what is good for the world will be good for us. And that requires that we make the effort to know the world and learn what is good for it." — Wendell Berry

By C. Dennis Pierce

Do you remember this as a kid? "April showers bring May flowers", an old adage that we all learned as a child. It originated in England where April, for them, is the one of the soggiest months causing flowers to bloom in May.



Based on what I found on the internet, one origin suggests it comes from the year 1157 where a short "poem" was written by Thomas Tusser, and it said: "Sweet April Showers Do Spring May Flowers". Another notion is that at the end of the fourteenth century the poet Geoffrey Chaucer penned a version that translates as: "When in April the sweet showers fall, that pierce March's drought to the root and all, and bathed every vein in liquor that has power to generate therein and sire the flower".

The cycle of the seasons always surprises me or maybe it just takes me off guard. It amazes me how each of nature's elements interacts with another causing a catalyst for change. For instance, I was recently walking on a very windy day on the path that surrounds Bicentennial Pond. The March rainy season caused the ground to be saturated and very wet and run off water from the forest pooled along the trail. Suddenly, the wind picked up and there was a loud crash as a nearby tree was uprooted and fell causing the ground to shake. Needless to say, it was a frightening experience. It took me a minute to stop and realize what I had just witnessed. My initial thought was at least now I know the answer to that age old question, "If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it does it make a sound? Fortunately, I was there to observe the event, and hear the thunderous boom but it also made me pause to realize the interconnectedness of the elements of nature. The natural cycle of life surrounds us daily, seasonally, yearly, and generationally. Whether it be in the plant world or with man we all have a time when something encourages us to lie down. In this case the soggy ground, rotting roots and heavy wind encouraged the tree that it was time to lay down and now decompose, creating habitats for insects, flora and later enriching the soil. Sometimes we are blind to what is around us. We take for granted on how the earth renews itself as the living things within an ecosystem interact with each other to create the perpetual cycle of nature. At the end of each cycle, we have decay and decomposition. Now it's spring and nature continues the cycle by nurturing life as it provides us with emerging leaves and countless flowers.

Melanie Desch, part owner of Foliota Farms is a nurturer. She grows flowers because they bring her a peaceful opportunity as she gardens early in the morning. "Flowers are a gift that brightens up your life", she told me during a recent visit to the farm where she and her partner Ulises Arbelo grow over 150 varieties of flowers. Foliota Farm, which is located on 40 Woods Road in Mansfield Center, name is derived from the fungi, genus pholiota. One of the species of the genus pholiota is a species called Namiko, an edible fungi also known as Butterscotch Mushrooms, Forest Nameko, and Forest Mushroom. At Foliota Farm Melanie and Ulises incorporate fungi cultivation in some of their bed-prep, as well as employ practices promoting fungal health. As Melanie and Ulises shared their story and how they decided to grow flowers rather than vegetable they realized that from a business sense it is more profitable to grow flowers per square foot than growing vegetables. Sure, they encounter the same challenges as vegetable farmers with lack of rain or too much rain, insects, weeds etc. They, as most farmers, begin the flowers from seeds inside during the colder months and later in hoop or row houses. They have to be conscious of their soil make up since flowers like a PH of around 6.5. Weeds are discouraged by mulching and new beds are prepared by

covering the ground with black plastic in effort to inhibit weed and grass growth. Melanie explained that there are two categories of flowers, "one and done" and "cut and come again". The farm needs to maintain a system of succession planning in order to maintain an ever-bearing inventory. As their farm continues to be successful, they have set their sights on the next project and that is procuring a high tunnel to assist in the off-season.

Foliota Farm puts soil health first, using minimal tillage practices to maintain soil structure and promote microbiological and fungal diversity. They prioritize Connecticut natives, perennial plants, and heirloom varieties. Growing on our land, and helping improve our local ecosystem, has been a dream come true for Melanie and Ulises. The farm's flower selection can be purchased at the Willimantic Farmer's Market. The market is moving to its summer quarters and their first day will be on Saturday, April 27th from 9:00am until 12:00pm. Melanie is adamant that at the market they should offer several price points for their bouquets. "Everyone may not be able to afford a more expensive bouquet so that is why we offer five-dollar bouquets. Everyone one should be able to experience the beauty of locally grown fresh flowers". The farm also is very creative by offering a flower CSA. Information found on their web site explains the services offered. Their bouquets are average market sizes, with anywhere from 15-25 stems. They contain a variety of annual, native, and/or foraged flowers to grab your interest. Color themes will vary, and they will experience the seasonality of different varieties. They will be arranged in a spiral pattern and cut to achieve an aesthetic, rounded look in a vase. The farm wraps their bouquets in paper to keep them secure during transport. All



Ulises Arbelo and Melanie Desch of Foliota Farms in Mansfield Center.

Dennis Pierce photo.

flowers are harvested the day of or the day before pickup and will be in the freshest state possible. Some bouquets may be partially closed and should open over the next few days, which gives you a longer period to enjoy their beauty. The farm provides returnable mason jars to transport them home which fits easily in your car's cup holder. The farm's CSA offers 10 weeks of carefully cared for, locally grown flowers starting the first week of July for two hundred dollars and an option for 6 weeks of carefully cared for, locally grown flowers starting the first week of July for one hundred and twenty dollars. CSA bouquet pickups on Wednesday can be picked up at the farm at 40 Woods Road in Mansfield Center and Saturday's bouquets can be picked up at the farm's booth at the Willimantic Farmer's Market at 28 Bridge Street, Willimantic, CT. Check out their website at <https://www.foliotafarm.com/> for more information and some very attractive photos. The farm's contact information is 908.894.0652 and email at Foliota-Farm@gmail.com.

Local markets will be offering kale as the season begins. While it appears that kale no longer has the popularity it did a few years ago it does provided an excellent source of vitamins. Here is a great way to "sneak" kale into your diet:

Kale Scones with Pumpkin & Cheese

(Makes 8 to 10 large scones)

Pre heat oven to 375 degrees. Set oven rack in the middle of your stove.

Ingredients:

2 cups of kale leaves
2 cups of flour
½ teaspoon of salt
1 teaspoon of baking soda
½ teaspoon of baking powder
1 tablespoon of sugar
1/3 of a cup of cold butter
1 egg (preferably local)
¾ cup of buttermilk
½ cup of cooked pumpkin or squash, diced
¾ cup of grated cheddar cheese

If you do not have buttermilk, you can add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice or vinegar to the ¾ cup of milk and let it stand for ten minutes before adding it to the recipe.

Directions:

Steam kale for a minute or two, just to blanch. Squeeze as much water out by wrapping it in a paper towel.

Chop kale finely. You should have less than one cup of chopped kale.

Blend and sift, flour, salt, baking soda and sugar together. Cut cold butter in small pieces and blend it in the flour mixture with you wintners. Don't overwork since you want your butter to stay cold. You can also use a dough blender / cutter if you have one.

In a small bowl beat eggs and then add the buttermilk. Beat until combined.

Add egg / buttermilk mixture and kale, pumpkin / squash, and cheese to dry ingredients.

Mix with fork just to combine.

Drop by spoonful on a parchment covered cookie sheet. Note, if you want to cut the mixture into shapes such as triangles or if you use a cookie cutter knead in about ¼ cup of extra flour to make the dough easier to handle.

Bake 20 minutes until browned.

Tip of the month: I have a cedar shingled house and this time of the year I am tormented with woodpeckers. I found that by going to the local dollar store I could purchase silver plastic decorations that can be found in their party section, and I attach them to my outside wall and their presence appears to scare the birds away. I guess woodpeckers are not celebratory feathered friends. Another tip which came from Melanie during our conversation was a suggestion on how to lengthen the life of a flowers. Pick them from the garden early in the morning and place them in a jar of water in the refrigerator. She also mentioned adding vinegar and sugar to the vase's water. While she has not tried this, she has heard that by adding Sprite to the water, this too extends the life of the arrangement. Ulises also reminded us to cut the bottom of the stems and changing the water periodically as this adds to the bouquet's life.

As mentioned above, tis the season for local farmer's market transitioning to their summer market location. Besides Willimantic, as listed above here are a few updates:

-Storrs Farmer's Market first day in front of the Mansfield Town Hall – Saturday, May 4th.

<https://www.storrsfarmersmarket.org/about>

-Coventry Market at Nathan Hale – Sunday, June 2nd. <https://coventryfarmersmarket.org/>

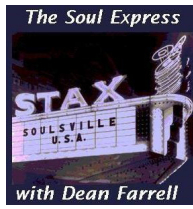
-Ashford Market – Sunday, May 12th (10:00am to 1:00pm). Pompey Hollow Park, across from town hall. <https://www.facebook.com/ashfordfarmersmarketct/>

And some final thoughts...in nature, every day is a new day. As humans we tend to fixate on the past but when you observe nature and see the constant changes around you, you become more aware that nothing and no one remains in the same place. Sometimes we get caught up in living in the past. We must remember that everyday is new and new again tomorrow. If you find that you enjoy reading this column every month or if you have some gardening hacks you would like to share with others? Please drop me a line and let me know at Codfish53@Yahoo.com. Peas be with you. Come celebrate with me and remember, every day is a holiday, and every meal is a banquet. I'll save you a seat at the table!

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Jean Knight

By Dean Farrell



As host of "The Soul Express," I play the biggest names in 1960s and '70s-era soul music. I also mix in the many great soul artists who did not necessarily become household names but were no less talented. This month's column is about Jean Knight, who only had one major hit—but it was big stuff!

She was born Jean Caliste in New Orleans on January 26, 1943. Her father died in 1953. After high school, she sang at her cousin's barroom, Laura's Place. In 1964, Knight recorded a demo. It was a remake of Jackie Wilson's "Doggin' Around," titled "Stop Doggin' Me Around." It caught the attention of producer Huey Meaux, who signed the young singer to his Tribe label. It was around this time that she adopted the professional name of "Jean Knight." (She thought "Caliste" was too hard to pronounce.) She recorded four singles for Meaux that made some noise locally, but that was it. As the '60s drew to a close, Knight took a baking job in the cafeteria of Dominican College in New Orleans.

In 1970, Knight met songwriter Ralph Williams. Through his connections, she came in contact with producer Wardell Quezergue, for whom she would sing background on various sessions. On a Saturday in May, Quezergue brought Jean Knight, King Floyd, and several others acts to the Malaco Studios in Jackson, Mississippi, for a one-off session. Floyd recorded "Groove Me," while Knight recorded "Mr. Big Stuff." Each was a funky, mid-tempo jam with a loping New Orleans groove.

Initially, Quezergue couldn't interest any label in his recordings. So Tommy Couch and Wolf Stevenson of Malaco formed a new imprint, Chimneyville, to release the King Floyd track. When it became a hit, Quezergue suddenly found his product in demand. He placed "Mr. Big Stuff" with Stax, the Memphis R&B powerhouse. In the summer of 1971, Jean Knight's year-old recording spent five weeks at #1 on *Billboard* magazine's Soul Singles chart and reached #2 in the pop market. (Keeping it off #1 was the Bee Gees' "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart?") As Knight recalled years later, "It was unbelievable! I almost had to pinch myself to see if it was real. I went every place, all across the country, and just about every major city in the country." She also performed the song on TV's *Soul Train*.

Knight was less than thrilled with the soundalike follow-up, "You Think You're Hot Stuff." To quote the singer, "That song wasn't my idea. When you're a fresh star like that, it's not much say you have. Everybody's got everything programmed for you. Stax had a really good song for me called 'Cold, Bold and Ready.' It was hot and I was fired up to do that song; but Wardell said, 'No,' they had their own songs. It was a bad move."

Knight charted on Stax with one additional single, "Carry On," after which the hits stopped coming. Between that and Stax's growing financial difficulties, Knight left the label and attended nursing school while gigging on the weekends. After Stax, she released commercially unsuccessful singles on imprints like Dial, Chelsea, Jetstream, and Open.



Knight's musical prospects began to look up in 1981, when she met producer Isaac Bolden, who signed her to his Soulin' label. Together they wrote "You Got the Papers But I Got the Man," which Bolden leased to Atlantic for national distribution. (It came out on the Cotillion subsidiary.) Soon, Jean Knight was touring regularly.

In 1985, she enjoyed her biggest hit in thirteen years with a sprightly version of Rockin' Sidney's zydeco number, "My Toot Toot." (It even reached #3 in South Africa!) Two years later, Heavy D & The Boys made the R&B charts with a remake of "Mr. Big Stuff." And Spike Lee made use of Knight's original recording in his 1994 movie, *Crooklyn*.

While she would not record again until 1997, Knight performed and toured all over the world. In 2003, she sang "Mr. Big Stuff" on the PBS-TV special, *Soul Comes Home*. And in 2007, she was inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame.

Jean Knight, 80, died on November 22, 2023.

Charted singles:

- "Mr. Big Stuff" (1971) R&B #1 (5 weeks), Pop #2
- "You Think You're Hot Stuff" (1971) R&B #19, Pop #57
- "Carry On" (1972) R&B #44
- "You Got the Papers But I Got the Man" (1981) R&B #56
- "My Toot Toot" (1985) R&B #59, Pop #50

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

Dean Farrell hosts "The Soul Express" Fridays from 7:00-10:00 p.m. on WECS, 90.1-FM (www.wecsfm.com). He plays vintage soul music of the 1960s and '70s, everything from #1 hits to long-lost obscurities. Dean's e-mail address is soulexpress@gmail.com.

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A contra dance is a social dance that one can attend without a partner. The dancers form couples who form sets in long lines. Throughout the course of a dance, couples progress up and down these lines, dancing with each other couple in the line. The dance is led by a caller who teaches the sequence of moves in the dance before the music starts. This sequence is repeated as couples progress up and down the line. Since there is no required footwork, many people find contra dancing easier to learn than other forms of dancing.

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The Ball of Curly at the End of the Rainbow

By Delia Berlin

When our last parrot died this past June, after our more than three decades of birdkeeping, a dark silence fell on our home. It was deeper than our grief. All the whistles, phrases, laughter, and songs of our parrots ended abruptly. And it was lonely. Most people can relate to the loss of a dog or a cat, but few are familiar with the bond that can be developed with a parrot. While our family and friends understood our loss, several acquaintances could not even bring themselves to express sympathy, as if the quality of such a pet did not justify it.

Compounding our sadness was the realization that our advanced ages and parrots' long lifespans now made us unsuitable companions for them. But, as time passed and our acute mourning eased, we became more open to possibilities. Parrots' long lives also result in many parrots requiring rehoming. We knew several organizations dedicated to that mission and they certainly could help us identify an older parrot in need of a loving home.

First, I should explain that the word "parrot" is way too broad to describe this potential pet. In a nutshell, there are approximately 350 species of parrots that range from tiny (like a budgie) to huge (like a macaw). They also differ significantly in temperament, habits, and loudness. Considering the possibility of needing condo or apartment living in the future, we would have to rule out any parrot too big or too loud for those conditions. That would narrow the pool significantly.

In addition, since we would be keeping a single parrot, we needed one oriented to humans that would not miss the company of peers. Strange as this quality may seem, it is common among pet birds. Most parrots bred in captivity are raised by humans and remain more interested in people than birds for life. At least we had some criteria to begin a search for a companion bird.

Fast forward a few months of internet searches, phone calls, and adoption applications, and we were still birdless. For the first time in our 42 years together, we had been without a pet for many months. Perhaps out of frustration and impatience, we started considering other pets. In the distant past, David had been allergic to cats and dogs, but he had not reacted to any of the many dogs in our extended family and friends' homes for a long time. After some reading, we decided that an extra-small dog, or a small dog of a hypoallergenic breed, would be safe.

At this point, the search broadened and intensified. We would try to adopt an adult dog locally, but we would also continue our parrot search. If we found a good match, we would take in either a parrot or a dog, and possibly both. But even with these broader requirements, we were unprepared for the difficulty of the search.

There is a website, Petfinder, that (presumably) acts as a gateway for any pet search. You can enter your zip code, the type of pet you are looking for, narrow it down by size, age, and even behavior, and find potential matches nearby. But I soon found out that many of the dogs listed were hundreds of miles away. They were usually in a Southern state, awaiting transport to New England. Many of these dogs were expected to be purchased or adopted on faith alone, for a price that included transport to Connecticut. We were not willing to go that way.

I also discovered that while Petfinder allowed narrowing the search to local pets only, many organizations were finding a way around this. A potential pet may be listed at a local rescue, for example in Lebanon or East Hartford, but phone calls or emails may reveal that the pet is actually in the South. A local address seems to be enough to meet the "local pets" requirement at Petfinder.

With these problems exposed, we got suspicious about "rescue" organizations. Would we be supporting an unethical profitable industry disguised as a charitable enterprise? We thought it would be best to keep checking our local animal control offices and shelters instead. But unfortunately, our local pounds tend to be flooded with pit bulls and other large breeds. Occasionally, when a small dog showed up, we were outcompeted.

We also checked the Connecticut Humane Society, with an adoption website that is updated every five minutes. They only do adoptions in-person and their

main kennels are in Newington. It was a long trip for us, but when we saw a dog with potential, we headed there. We found out that they do not hold any pet, even overnight. Leaving with the dog we came to check on seemed daunting to us, but we were willing to do it if we could get enough positive information about him. Yet, upon arrival we were told that the senior dog we were interested in came with a "bite waiver" and nobody knew for sure if he was housebroken. We declined, without even seeing the dog. We decided that going to Newington to check prospects in those circumstances was too much for us.

During this long process we came across several amazing organizations that impressed us with their dedication, advocacy, and responsibility. Some had sweet dogs with more special needs than we were able to fulfill from the start. Others did not have any candidates meeting our criteria. And there were also those that would not consider us because we lived outside of the radius for required home visits to make sure the pet is a good match with its new owner. In one case, we suggested virtual visits, or in-person visits by a surrogate of their choosing, but our offer was not accepted. Most of these organizations are operated by volunteers and have limited resources. They have the best interest of each animal in mind, but they must be practical by necessity.

At one point, one of our local animal control offices had a dog that was described as almost exactly what we were looking for. We applied immediately, but received an email the next day stating that there was lots of interest in that dog. They wanted to know the last time we had had a dog. Since we kept parrots for over 30 years, we had not had dogs for a very long time. We explained that and, without even a phone call or a home visit, we were rejected for lack of experience. Hopefully, that dog went to his perfect home and is doing well. But we think that having a dog is a bit like riding a bike—you do not forget what it is like.

Reluctantly, we decided we needed to expand our search to nonprofit rescue organizations. We found one that holds periodic adoption events at Petco in Dayville. They bring dogs from shelters in Tennessee, but their process is reasonable. There is an extensive adoption application that requires personal and vet references, in addition to a small fee. They check the references and conduct a virtual interview and home visit. If one is approved to adopt a dog, the pet can be picked up at the adoption event. If for any reason that dog does not seem like a good match, the application remains approved for available pets at future events. There is also an adoption fee, but the organization emphasizes that it is not a sale price but covers the cost of neutering or spaying, vaccinations, deworming, several tests, microchipping, and transport.

Of course, when it rains it pours. Suddenly, Foster Parrots, a large parrot rescue and sanctuary in Rhode Island, asked to interview us for potential matches. During the same week, Connecticut Parrot Rescue called us to assess our household for an older parrot in need of a home. And Paws Rescue League conducted a virtual home visit ahead of an adoption event the following weekend. We proceeded, one thing at a time, and the adoption event at Petco came first.

On March 3rd, we brought home Curly, a six-year-old mini-poodle mix. He had been found as a stray in Tennessee on Valentine's Day, and in a little over two weeks he had been through a lot. During the previous ten days or so, he had been at a foster home. His foster mom brought him to Petco with his favorite toy and lots of information that we later found to be accurate and helpful. Soon after we got home with Curly, our local animal control officer called to ask if we were interested in a chihuahua. But our search was over.

For now, our parrot pursuit has been suspended. Curly is just a little over 10 lbs. but he is worth his weight in gold. He is smart, affectionate, playful, curious, cuddly, and funny. He happens to be hypoallergenic and David has not reacted. We are both so in love with him that we must pinch ourselves to believe that he is really with us. Frustrating and long as this search was, it landed us the best pooch in the whole wide world. Our parrots will remain in our hearts forever, but at least the silence in our home has been replaced with the pitter-patter of little paws.



Memorial Day in Hampton- A Slice of Americana

"The patriot's blood is the seed of Freedom's tree."
- Thomas Campbell

By Bill Powers

Visiting the Hampton General Store on a regular basis has become a happily anticipated occurrence for us. There is a large selection of ice cream sodas available at the soda fountain, including my personal favorite a root beer float. We always look forward to taking home delicious frozen or refrigerated prepared meals available from a large assortment. Always a treat are the freshly baked goods from a good selection of brownies, cookies, cakes or pies. We are always greeted by a welcoming and smiling face and by Brutus the friendly resident canine who inhabits the store during the day.

As my wife and I were approaching the front door on our last visit, we read an announcement printed on a chalkboard calling attention to the Hampton General Store's participation in Hampton's upcoming Memorial Day Observance (May 27th). This year the Hampton General Store will participate in Memorial Day activities at the store's location across Main Street from the Library and Congregational Church.

Further investigation revealed that there are detailed plans that should prove to be engaging for anyone who participates in Hampton's Observance of Memorial Day on May 27th. Thanks to Bob Grindle, who is the chairman of Hampton's Memorial Day Planning Committee, I was able to learn about the plans for their remarkable program.

A parade is scheduled to begin assembling in front of the Hampton Congregational Church at 9:00 am; stepping off at 9:30 am. Those walking in the parade won't have to do so on an empty stomach since there will be a pancake breakfast at the Congregational Church from 8 to 9:30 am. At 10:00 am a Memorial Day Ceremony with speakers and a recognition of our Veterans will follow at the Town Hall.

At that time John Tillinghast will provide opening remarks. This will be followed by: 1) the Invocation by Reverend Alan Freeman; 2) the "National Anthem" sung by Michelle Brett, during which local Scouts will walk to the flag pole and perform a flag ceremony... raising from ½ staff to full height – then lowering it back to ½ staff; 3) placing of the memorial wreath commemorating fallen veterans to the side of the Memorial Monument; 4) a gun salute by the National Guard "firing detail" and the reading of the names of recently deceased Hampton veterans by Stan Crawford; 5) Taps and Echo Taps played by the Parish Hill band – followed by a moment of silence; 6) the singing of one verse of "America the Beautiful" by Perry Mandanis; 7) a medley of military service themes during which veterans who are attending will be asked to stand and be recognized; 8) the introduction of the First Selectman; 9) a **Retrospective on the passing of Hampton's last WWII veterans and a brief history of the Korean War/conflict** (the subject of this year's program; 10) speakers; 11) PHMHS Band performing the "National Anthem" led by Benjamin Loomis; 12) military members who are currently serving read by Stan Crawford; 13) the presentation of the Marsh-Chesters Awards; 14) singing of "God Bless America" by Ms. Bonnie Cardwell and Ms. Renee Cuprak; 15) announcement of the Float Winners; 16) Recognition Announcements; 17) Benediction by Pastor Paula of the Hampton Congregational Church.

Jane Ireland and her equestrian drill team will perform on the ball field immediately after the ceremony. The Annual Chicken BBQ will begin at 11:30 am at the Community Center. The local band, *The Barstool Diplomats* will be performing during the afternoon in the Community Center.

At 12 noon there will be a brief Little River Naval ceremony – It will take place on the Little River bridge at the base of Hammond Hill. Participants will gather flowers and release them to the water in honor of those veterans lost at sea.

In Hampton Memorial Day is a day-long observance designed to involve everyone in this small town to honor and mourn those who made the supreme sacrifice for America. The way they go about it, is a good way; an incredible way to remember and pay tribute. It is a slice of Americana that should be emulated far and wide.

Members of The Hampton Memorial Day Planning Committee are: Bob Grindle; Morris Burr; Allan Cahill; Jerry Mizak; Renee Cuprak; Dayna Arriola and John Tillinghast.

What is the Best Way to Save for College?

By Michael Baum, CFP®, RICP®
Vice President, Associate Financial
Advisor



For many families, saving for their children's or grandchildren's college education is a top financial priority. With the rising costs of higher education, it's important to start planning and saving early to ensure you have the funds available when the time comes. Fortunately, there are several tax-advantaged savings options available to help you reach your educational goals. In this article, we'll explore the different college savings programs and discuss their pros and cons to help you determine the best approach for your situation.

529 College Savings Plans

One of the most popular and flexible options for college savings is the 529 plan. These state-sponsored investment accounts offer significant tax benefits when used for qualified education expenses, such as tuition, fees, room and board, books, and supplies.¹

The primary advantage of 529 plans is that your contributions grow tax-deferred, and withdrawals are tax-free when used for eligible expenses. Additionally, over 30 states offer a state income tax deduction or credit for 529 plan contributions, further enhancing the tax benefits.²

Another key benefit of 529 plans is that they have no annual contribution limits, allowing you to save as much as you need for your family's education costs. However, contributions above \$18,000 per year (for 2024) may be subject to gift tax.³

529 plans also offer flexibility in terms of beneficiary changes. If your intended beneficiary doesn't use the funds for education, you can transfer the account to another eligible family member, such as a spouse, child, grandchild, or first cousin.⁴

Coverdell Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)

Coverdell Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) are another option for saving for education expenses. While not as popular as 529 plans, ESAs offer some unique advantages.

One of the main benefits of ESAs is that you have more control over how your contributions are invested. With a 529 plan, you're limited to the investment options offered by the plan, but with an ESA, you can choose from a wide range of investments, including stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.⁵

However, ESAs come with stricter contribution limits and income restrictions. You can only contribute up to \$2,000 per year per beneficiary, and the ability to contribute phases out at higher income levels (\$110,000 for single filers and \$220,000 for joint filers in 2023).⁶

ESAs also have age restrictions for beneficiaries. Contributions can only be made until the beneficiary reaches age 18, and all funds must be withdrawn before the beneficiary turns 30.⁵

Like 529 plans, ESA contributions grow tax-deferred, and withdrawals are tax-free when used for qualified education expenses. However, ESAs have a broader definition of qualified expenses, including certain K-12 expenses not covered by 529 plans.⁵

Roth IRAs for Education Savings

While not specifically designed for education savings, Roth IRAs can also be a viable option for funding college expenses. Starting in 2024, new legislation will allow unused funds from 529 plans to be rolled over into a Roth IRA without incurring penalties or generating taxable income, subject to certain conditions.

Additionally, you can use a Roth IRA for education savings from the start. Contributions to a Roth IRA are made with after-tax dollars, but qualified withdrawals, including those for education expenses, are completely tax-free.

Using a Roth IRA for education expenses offers some advantages, such as no age limits or restrictions on when you can use the money for qualified expenses. However, withdrawing funds from a Roth IRA may impact your retirement savings goals, so it's generally recommended to prioritize dedicated education savings accounts like 529 plans over using retirement accounts for college funding, if possible.

Choosing the Right College Savings Strategy

When deciding on the best way to save for college, it's important to consider your specific financial situation, investment goals, and tax implications. Here are some key factors to consider:

1. **Tax benefits:** Evaluate the potential state and federal tax benefits of each savings option to maximize your tax savings.
2. **Investment flexibility:** Determine how much control you want over the investment choices for your college savings.
3. **Contribution limits:** Consider the annual and lifetime contribution limits of each savings vehicle to ensure you can save enough for your education goals.
4. **Beneficiary flexibility:** Assess the importance of being able to transfer the savings to another family member if your intended beneficiary doesn't use the funds.
5. **Qualified expenses:** Understand the types of expenses that are eligible for tax-free withdrawals from each savings account.
6. **Retirement savings impact:** If considering using a Roth IRA, evaluate the potential impact on your retirement savings goals.

By carefully evaluating these factors and consulting with a financial advisor, you can develop a comprehensive college savings strategy that aligns with your goals and financial situation. Starting to save early and taking advantage of tax-advantaged savings options can help ensure you have the funds available when it's time for your loved ones to pursue their educational dreams.

Our team of advisors at Weiss, Hale & Zahan-sky Strategic Wealth Advisors is available to discuss the various education savings options and help you determine the best strategy based on your goals and tax situation as part of our strategic **Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well™** process. Schedule a **complimentary consultation** on our website or call us at (860) 928-2341.

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1. <https://www.savingforcollege.com/intro-to-529s/what-is-a-529-plan>
2. <https://www.savingforcollege.com/compare-529-plans/state-tax-deductions>
3. <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/frequently-asked-questions-on-gift-taxes>
4. <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/transferring-529-plans-to-another-beneficiary-4157853>
5. <https://www.savingforcollege.com/article/coverdell-esa-versus-529-plan>
6. <https://www.calcpa.org/public-resources/ask-a-cpa/education/saving-for-college/coverdell-education-savings-accounts>

To all our contributors- Thank You!

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

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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

Our Indian Heritage

By Martin Moebus

The Willimantic Mill Museum website hosts a map showing three Mohegan villages in the land that became Windham. To the north are three Nipmuc villages. Who were these neighbors?

Native Americans have been living in this region for thousands of years. Unfortunately, we don't know who these original inhabitants were. Artifacts, including a three- to four-thousand-year-old "arrowhead," were found near Woodland Road in Mansfield, according to the Mansfield Historical Society website. Artifacts have also been found in Windham, Lebanon, Hebron, and other locations, some perhaps 11,000 years old. They probably were used by hunters, gatherers, fishers and, later, farmers.

The Nipmucs

The Nipmucs, or Nipnets, meaning "pond" or "fresh water," moved with the seasons, hunting, trapping, and planting. Most Nipmucs lived in Massachusetts territory, but some lived in the northern parts of eastern Connecticut. The name "Nipmuc" covers a range of tribes. Some were called Wabbaquasset, or "mat-producing tribe"; "Wabbaquasset" refers to the plants used to make homes/wigwams. Wabbaquasset territory included what would become Somers, Stafford, Union, Woodstock, Thompson, Putnam, Tolland, Ashford, Eastford, Pomfret, and Killingly. The English first became familiar with what would become Windham County as they traveled to make their first settlements in Connecticut. The Connecticut Path Trail crossed Wabbaquasset country and became the main thoroughfare for travel between Boston and Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield. Some of you may have hiked the Nipmuck Trail in Ashford, which is part of the Connecticut Path.

Not many stories survive about the Nipmucs. Main Street in Willimantic is part of a Nipmuc path to Mohegan (now Norwich/Uncasville). Nipmuc names abound in Windham County. Mashamoquet Brook State Park uses the Nipmuc word for "important fishing place." If they had called it "Machimucket" instead, we would have "Bad Fish" or "It Stinks State Park," perhaps a more appropriate name nowadays.

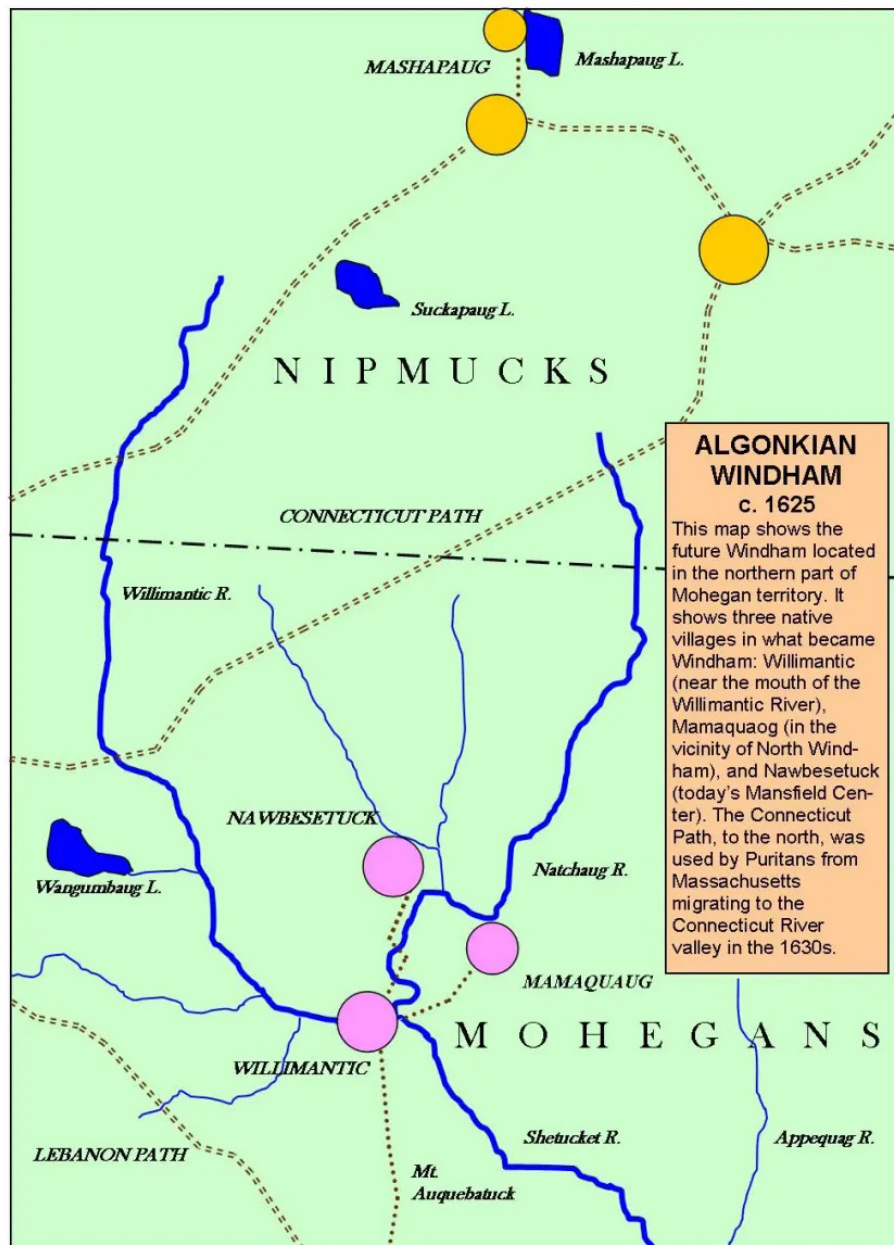
In 1621, English settlers were starving in Boston. Acquittimaug, a Wabbaquasset Nipmuc, along with a few others of his tribe, walked to Massachusetts bringing corn for the colonists. If they had foreseen the future actions of these colonists, they might have had second thoughts.

Don't Go to a Nipmuc Dinner

While we don't know much about the Nipmucs, we do know they never would have gotten a Michelin star or James Beard Award. They were culinarily challenged, or, more bluntly, very bad cooks. Just ask their neighbors, the Narragansetts. The Narragansetts, being very sociable, once invited the Nipmucs to a shore dinner. The Narragansetts were well-known chefs extraordinaire. You can imagine the veritable gastronomic delight of boiled lobster, heated butter, steamed clams, mussels served with a delectable sauce, corn on the cob, boiled potatoes, coleslaw, and rolls. Everybody had a good time with good eats all around, so the Nipmucs decided to return the favor and invite the Narragansetts to dinner. They served lamprey eels. As everyone knows, eels should be served with a nice red wine reduction, vinegar, herbs, butter, or perhaps a nice spicy mustard sauce. Struggling in the kitchen, where culinary prowess remained an elusive dream, the Nipmucs cut corners and served the eels simply, without any adornments or side dishes in sight. Despite the abundance of eel, the Narragansetts, displaying expressions of disdain on their sour faces, refused to indulge in the nearly flavorless offering.

This elicited indignation on the part of the Nipmucs. "Don't you like eel?" they asked haughtily. "We do if served right. We've tasted better microwave meals," retorted the Narragansetts. "Eat it!" replied the Nipmucs. "We would rather go home hungry!" said the Narragansetts. Food was thrown. A fight ensued. The Nipmucs grabbed their weapons. The Narragansetts, as they had thought they were traveling to a formal dinner party, wore well-fitting suits with no room for weapons. Most

of the Narragansetts were killed, but two survivors swam the Quinebaug and ran through the forests of Windham County, getting back home with their precision-tailored attire torn to pieces. "They served plain eels," complained the survivors. Now it was time for the Narragansetts to be incensed. Leaving their grilling, roasting, sautéing, baking, steaming, and frying implements home, they grabbed weapons and return to Nipmuc country, battling for three days near where Route 6 turns by St. James Catholic Church in Danielson. The Nipmucs prevailed, but their gastronomic catastrophe would forever scar their culinary reputation.



"Algonkian Windham." Jamie H. Eves, "A Historical Atlas of Windham, a Connecticut Mill Town," website of the Windham Textile and History Museum—The Mill Museum. <https://millmuseum.org/historical-geography-of-windham/>

Tribute Tribes

The Pequots subdued the Quinebaugs and Wabbaquassetts and assumed jurisdiction over all the territory now occupied by Windham County. Lower Windham County may have already been under the rule of the Mohegans, a closely aligned tribe, which explains why they lived in Windham. Like the Nipmucs, they also likely moved with the seasons, hunting, trapping, fishing, and farming.

Under Indian law, weaker tribes paid tribute to the stronger. The Nipmucs were subject to these more powerful tribes. Pequot enforcers would approach a village and comment on the nice wigwams, using the "it would be a shame if anything happened to them" line. After collecting protection money in the form of deer, bear, wolf, and beaver skins, the Pequots would go away and leave the Nipmucs alone. Later, the English would invent taxes to replace tributes.

The Mohegans (Wolf People)

According to the Mohegan tribe, the Mohegans came from the Lenni Lenape Delaware Indians. They resided for a time in New York and migrated here for the great hunting and fishing, probably arriving before the opening of fishing season sometime in the 1500s.

Uncas, born a Pequot, had many names, including Poquiam ("oak tree") and Wunix ("fox"). As a sachem for his tribe, he was respected but not the top man. He married a daughter of Sassacus, a Pequot royal, to move up in the social order.

Upon the death of the grand sachem, Tatobem, Uncas laid claim to the grand sachemship. Unfortunately for him, Sassacus, Tatobem's son, was chosen. Refusing to submit to Sassacus, Uncas was ousted from the tribe and

sought refuge with the Narragansetts. His irresistible charm repeatedly earned him a welcome back to the Pequots—five times. But he was promptly shown the door five times for refusing to yield. His followers started using the name Mohegan to distinguish themselves from the Pequots.

While he enjoyed the good cooking of the Narragansetts, in his heart he wanted to be the boss of bosses. He joined with the English, leading to the decimation of most of the Pequots in the Pequot War. With that, he became the grand sachem of the entire region. Uncas ran the Windham territory along with all other Pequot lands.

How Did the English Settlers Get the Land?

With the Pequot influence gone, all the land was under Uncas's control, as well as tributes from the tribes. Uncas was generous with the English settlers, granting them land, including what would become Norwich.

Over time, Uncas divided his land with his family. His sons became river sachems—a very nice title, if you ask me. Atanawahood, or Joshua, received Windham County along with Niantic, East Hartford, Manchester, Vernon, and Glastonbury. Owaneco, his brother, got the Wabbaquasset lands where the Nipmucs resided and became the grand sachem of all the Mohegans upon Uncas's death. The tribe, always loyal to the English, fought for their side in King Philip's War.

Thank You, Joshua!

In 1676, Uncas's son Joshua died of injuries sustained while fighting for the English and willed his Windham land to 16 men, mostly from Norwich. This became known as Joshua's Tract. To the Indians still living on that land, he left nothing. He kept the land in Old Saybrook in the family. This was a smart move, as average house prices are \$574,000 in Old Saybrook whereas Windham house prices are only about \$335,000, according to Zillow.

Owaneco

Not as much is mentioned of his brother Owaneco, who was dealing with all the land-hungry settlers as best he could. The Mohegans, being more than generous, were taken advantage of at every turn.

James Fitch was perhaps the biggest land grabber of all the settlers. From his seat in Canterbury, Owaneco signed over the Wabbaquasset country to Fitch, who apparently needed more land than what he already had in Windham, Mansfield, Canterbury, and Plainfield. In later life, Fitch got his just reward for being so greedy, losing most of his holdings and selling some for pennies on the dollar.

While today the price paid to the Indians for land bought seems small, it was considered fair compensation at the time. The worst offender in stealing land was Nathaniel Foot, an agent for the future Colchester settlers. Owaneco had a drinking problem. Daniel and Samuel Mason, sons of John Mason and friends of Uncas, became guardians for Owaneco. Any land transactions he made were to be co-signed by the Mason brothers. The nefarious Foot ignored this arrangement and entangled Owaneco in drink. When he was drunk, Owaneco illegally signed a document handing over the Colchester lands for only six shillings (about \$40.00 today)! The Colchester settlers were not superior individuals either. When Daniel Mason rode to Colchester and pointed out to the locals that their land claims were illegal, they threatened to shoot his horse out from under him.

Bending every moral boundary, Foot schemed and plotted to exploit legal loopholes and keep his ill-gotten gains. Lawsuit followed lawsuit, going all the way to the British Royals. Queen Anne ruled in favor of the Mohegans. The Mohegans were owed large sums of money as well as land, but the unscrupulous settlers of Colchester tied the decision up in the courts, even getting the governor on their side. The matter was never resolved, and it was quietly dropped. If you visit the Colchester Historical Society website, you'll notice it discreetly conceals the embarrassing details of the town's founding.

While the native villages are long gone, their influence remains in the neighborhoods we inhabit, the roads we travel, and the names of our landmarks.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch – What’s in a Name?

By Bob Lorentson

Studies have shown that the average person has around 6,000 thoughts per day, and that 95 percent of them are about themselves. Almost none of them are about garbage. OK, I made that last part up. But if you only had 300 thoughts a day to work with, would you think about garbage? I myself only think about it when I am reminded to by my wife, or if she’s away, flies. So it’s a good bet that no one is thinking much of anything about even the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, let alone any of the more run-of-the-mill garbage patches of the world.

But now that you’ve stopped obsessing about yourself, I’ll bet you’re thinking, What makes the Great Pacific Garbage Patch so great? And I have to admit that while it is nothing like those other great world monuments, the Great Wall of China and the Great Barrier Reef, neither is it a fading relic of a time or environment gone by. Before we throw out the name along with everything else we throw out, however, let’s think about some possible reasons for its greatness.

1) It’s big! At 618,000 square miles, there’s plenty of room in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch for everyone’s garbage. Scientists say that it’s twice the size of Texas! While Texas is an appropriate measure when comparing garbage patches, a better measure might be to say that it is about the size of our indifference, which, let’s face it, is pretty great. And it’s only getting bigger! Scientists say that it’s showing a 2.5 percent growth rate, which makes it a better investment than recycling! It has, in fact, grown to become a new type of monument, the biggest we’ve yet created to our modern throw-away society. (And if you visit, the great thing is you can forget that ‘take only pictures, leave only footprints’ rule and leave whatever you like.)

From its humble beginnings in the 1960s, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch has grown to become the world leader in garbage patches. To understand how it grew so big, let’s take a glimpse into the life cycle of plastic, its primary component. Following manufacture, ninety percent of all plastic items are used once and tossed out, victims of their cheap and easy availability. While about nine percent of it is recycled, eleven percent escapes into aquatic environments, where it can then find its way via ocean currents to the nearest garbage patch. There it can live out its years in the company of other plastic bottles, bags, fishing nets, and enough miscellaneous plastic debris to choke a sea turtle. Or thousands of turtles, fish, whales, dolphins, ... It’s not pretty, but then -

2) We don’t have to see it! Located between California and Hawaii, and 1,000 miles from land, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch was only discovered in 1997 by an oceanographer who knew what the ocean was supposed to look like. Throwing out his concerns, however, was as easy as throwing out a plastic bottle. Which leaves me wondering if any enterprising alien reconnaissance crews could also have discovered it, and are currently assessing our willingness to trade our ancestral planet for cheap trinkets, or to turn it into an inter-galactic dump.

While it’s true that many sea creatures do have to see it, swim through it, live in it, or get entangled and die

in it, we generally don’t have to see them either, until they end up on our plates. Which is apparently what worries the scientists who say that all that plastic eventually degrades into tiny micro particles that permeate the oceans from top to bottom and pole to pole, whereupon it then enters the food chain and ends up on our plates also. I’ll believe it when I see it.

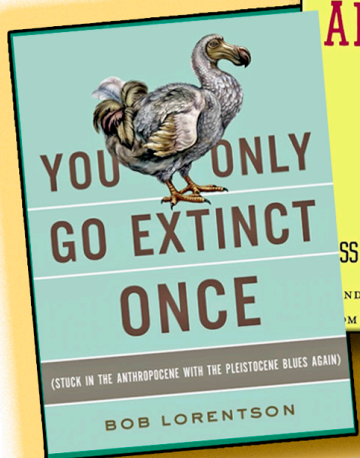

3) It’s free! Normally a monument of this size and complexity would be ridiculously expensive, and come with intense wrangling over who was going to pay for it, and how. Scientists say that if we’d only listen to them, we’d know that we’re all going to pay for it if we don’t stop doing what we’re doing. That’s one reason why nobody listens to scientists. Another is because anyone can see that the Great Pacific Garbage Patch built itself, and it didn’t cost us a penny. We just did what we always do, look the other way, and Voila! Who knows what other big surprises we could have in store for us by looking the other way?

4) It’s creating a new environment! Bold coastal creatures like crabs, anemones, and many others that would ordinarily never get the chance to experience more of the world are now turning their backs on the coast and thriving on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. These new floating plastic waste ecosystems have even been given a name - the Plastisphere. Who knew that creating new environments could be so easy? Only time will tell if evolving in a plastic environment is the way of the future, or the end of the future, but if we’ve learned anything about ourselves, it’s that we can waste time too.

Ok, so maybe we need to either raise our standard of greatness, or lower our standard of living. It’s something to think about anyway.

Bob Lorentson is a local writer and retired environmental scientist. His latest book is YOU ONLY GO EXTINCT ONCE (Stuck in the Anthropocene with the Pleistocene Blues Again).

Two books by
Bob Lorentson

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— book review in *Neighbors Paper*, January 2024

www.BobLorentson.com

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Tai Chi Home

Look Before the Leap


By Joe Pandolfo

Follow the path through any forest or meadow and there you have it - nature’s “Wood element” pushing up and out, wearing green crowns, weaving new shoots of vine.

Taoist tradition says, among the five vital elements Wood is the one that gives clear vision. It’s the pulse behind Spring energy, and Spring is the season for looking and reaching ahead.

Taoist wisdom - always with a balance - also says be sure to reach from rootedness. Look before the leap.

When you’re ready to spring to your toes, mind the ground under your heels. When things go to your head, trust the wisdom of your gut. Let the in-breath know which way the out-breath goes.



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

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

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

“We Have to Act with Peace and Love” (and Justice)

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

I am a Holocaust survivor. I experienced as a child every single thing a Gazan child is experiencing on a daily basis, including the loss of my family, war, firebombing, hunger. It pleases me to no end to see you here... I take courage and urge you to keep going... We need to bring this to an end, there is no excuse for the slaughter of 15K+ children and untold others. We have to act with peace and love, and I am proud to be here with you.

—Marion Ingram, author and peace activist, speaking at an American campus protest

Yesterday I was sent a mini-video on X (formally Twitter) of Marion Ingram speaking at a campus protest about the ongoing slaughter of Palestinians, and I was deeply moved by her words. In fact, I was so moved that I knew I had to write about her courage to recognize that the slaughtering of innocent civilians, and in particular children, regardless of who is doing it and the reasons claimed as to why, constitutes what can be considered crimes against humanity. In short, what is happening to Palestinian civilians by the current Israeli government cannot be justified and therefore should not be supported by our government, and certainly not by our tax dollars, as in military support. And yet, as succinctly pointed out by Jon Stewart during his April 8th show, the same actions for which we have no trouble critiquing Russia, when done by Israel receive no condemnation at all. Fortunately, many of our nation’s college students disagree with our government and even with many of their universities, which, despite their generally implied missions to stand up for the public good, and even for truth and justice, often do not.

When I was at Rutgers University in the spring of 1985, we had a student protest movement—the Rutgers Coalition for Total Divestment—that, through persistence over years and months, including many weeks camping out on campus, resulted in “a New Jersey Senate committee approv[ing] a divestment bill that would remove \$2 billion worth in investments of pension funds from companies associated with South Africa” and that led Rutgers to announce “a total divestment worth \$6.4 million from over ten companies, including Coca Cola and IBM.” Our student protesting “made Rutgers one of over twenty schools that adopted or that would go on to adopt policies of at least partial divestment from companies that did business with South Africa.”¹

I share this because, as I write, many of my own students, as well as many other students at UConn and around the nation, are calling for their universities to divest from the fossil fuel/military industrial complex as they recognize the direct links between these industries and what is happening in Palestine. Many of these students identify as Muslim and are also standing up to the Islamophobia that our nation’s blanket support of Israel embodies, and many others who do not hold that identity are nevertheless standing in solidarity with their peers, as they know that what is being done in our name, with our taxpayer money and with direct links to our universities, is wrong. As Ingram says, “there is no excuse for the slaughter of 15K+ children and untold others,” including journalists, medical personnel, and aid workers. Except...ahh yes, and it is always the same, for the ruling few there is power to be gained and money to be made. Shame! Shame! Shame! as students have been chanting.

It’s Third Thursday Time!

Submitted by Erin Morelle

We are excited to bring you the 3rd Thursday Street Fests in Willimantic for the 21st season! Our 21st birthday is destined to be a special one! We have new team members bringing fresh perspectives on a number of our beloved attributes! We are also unveiling a new 3rd Thursday website for everyone from vendors and the community to utilize to discover what each month will bring. You’ll have a new way to register, to donate, and to get involved!

For the May 16th fest, Historic Main St will come alive from 6-9pm with vendors to shop, amazing authentic food in which to delight, and street performers ranging from dance troupes to drum cores. Children’s activities are engaging at a number

of the vendor booths or get out some energy at the fun bounce house! This season for entertainment, we have some familiar and loved faces as well as new talent gracing multiple musical stages and of course the beer and wine garden right in the middle for those 21+ will feature an approachable variety for the microbrew connoisseur to the long appreciated lager. Main St merchants stay open late and feature great opportunities to eat, shop, and explore- take time to appreciate the local talent from pottery and pizza to cupcakes and paintings.

The street fest recognizes the importance of sustainability. With the help of CLiCK, we have Waste Not stations centered in multiple locations to help our fest-goers to recycle and compost during the Fest, and to learn more about how to have less of an im-

Given the students’ divestment agenda, I decided to investigate UConn’s links to the military industrial complex and was not surprised how easy it was (given the internet) to connect the dots. In fact, just last month UConn renamed its engineering building from the United Technologies Engineering Building (after the seventh largest military contractor in the country) to the Pratt & Whitney Engineering Building, no doubt due to the donation of large sums of money.² This all sounds well and good—who doesn’t want money to name buildings and fund students?—but when I further googled Pratt & Whitney, I found that last year they were awarded a defense contract worth “\$2,023,073,136 ... to procure materials, parts, and components for Lot 17 of the F135 Propulsion system for F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft.”³ Then I looked up where some of these planes have ended up and found that recently the “State Department authorized the transfer [to Israel] of 25 F-35A fighter jets and engines worth roughly \$2.5 billion,” as well as 1,800 “2,000-pound bombs,” which the planes are able to carry. These bombs, which, according to the *Washington Post*, are “capable of leveling city blocks and leaving craters in the earth 40 feet across and larger, are almost never used anymore by Western militaries in densely populated locations due to the risk of civilian casualties.” Yet, as the article goes on to say, “Israel has used them extensively in Gaza, ... most notably in the bombing of Gaza’s Jabalya refugee camp Oct. 31.” As a result, “U.N. officials decried the strike, which killed more than 100 people [among many thousands of others], as a ‘disproportionate attack that could amount to war crimes.’” However, “Israel defended the bombing, saying it resulted in the death of a Hamas leader.”⁴ Of course that would be the claim, just as when we were killing thousands of civilians in Iraq (about 200,000, at the cost of \$728 billion)⁵ during the so-called Operation Iraqi Freedom (nothing was further from the truth), any number of casualties would be justified by unsupported U.S. military claims of having successfully killed at least one of our extremist enemies.

And so, when we take the time to connect the dots we must concur with the students that UConn, and many other universities around the nation, are financially tied to our military—a military which has committed and continues to commit atrocities directly and indirectly, through equipment support and sales, all in the name of ridding the world of so-called “evil.” Additionally, we must listen to Marion Ingram, who was interviewed by Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now!*,⁶ where she said that such wars only increase terrorism, suffering, and death—as well as, I would add, climate change and ecological destruction. They do not lead to peace, nor increased global security, and they certainly don’t help us, as a species, maintain a livable planet.

The only answer I can offer to all this death and destruction, based on my past activism and my educated understanding of the world, is almost the same one Ingram offers. It is one that so many who have gone before, including all the world’s great spiritual leaders (but, sadly, not most of their followers) have offered, and that is, “We have to act with peace and love” (and justice).

Ceasefire now! Divestment now! Peace now!
Anything less is shameful! Shame! Shame!
Shame!

act on our environment. We encourage vendors to use sustainable bags/containers for guests as well!

Creating joy is always of value in our lives- and at the 3rd Thursday Street Fest, it is our bailiwick to make you smile, relax, and have fun in your community in a safe, vibrant, and supportive environment.

As always, we cannot do this without the physical and financial support from the community! Big thank yous to the Town of Windham, CT Visit (ERTD), the Thread City Hop Fest, Berkshire Bank, and the Leo J. and Rose Pageau Trust for their very generous contributions AND to all the supporters and friends that give every year to keep the fun and variety alive in Willimantic. Visit the website or the info booth in MidTown the day of the fest for more on how to help :) See you May 16th!!

Free parking. Free to attend. Free to have FUN!

Rust

By Jesse R. Clark

I walk along side the train tracks.
I look at the tracks, rusty, yet timeless.
I appreciate how old it is,
how long it’s been around.
Some still being used,
others, a living museum piece.
What once was new and seen as unnatural,
now seems like natural history,
as much as part of the environment
as the grass that engulfs it.
Not updated with new steel, or changed
to run smoother,
bullet trains,
in an updated world.

There is a benefit to progress,
but progress doesn’t *have* to look sleek
new, shiny.
It can be timeless in its authenticity.
Appreciated by those who see the beauty
of these tracks.

As I think of my community,
realizing how we all get older,
I appreciate the benefit of those train tracks
for we don’t want to be replaced,
discarded as we age.
We should remain authentic,
timeless.
Improve, keep progressing,
but still be true to the past.
Say, this is history,
this is my story.

There are so many changes in a community,
yet, so much remains the same.
The spirit, the life, the energy
will always be there,
passed on to the next generation,
both moving on to the future
while keeping that spirit of the past.
Timeless.

Out and Make Way

By Judy Davis

Cornelius Colbert was born in Limerick into a family with Fenian connections. Speaking fluent Irish, he was asked by Padraig Pearse to be a drilling instructor.

In the rising, Colbert and his men began fighting at Watkins Brewery, and then moved to Jameson’s Distillery.

After the Rebel’s surrender, he was tried by court-martial, and executed on 8 May 1916. As one of the youngest leaders, his execution is said to have angered the people who supported the rebels.

In a song beloved by those who want a free Ireland: “From each glen, from mountain and valley, ‘tis Liberty’s Rally - out and make way for the bold Fenian men !”

The Indigenous History & Archaeology of Connecticut: A view from Lebanon

Sunday, May 5th, 4:30pm

Presentation by Connecticut State Archaeologist, Sarah Sportman
Free and open to the public.
Program follows the 58th Annual Meeting of the Lebanon Historical Society.

Join us for refreshments after the program at the Lebanon Historical Society Museum located at 856 Trumbull Hwy., Lebanon

For more information call 860-642-6579
www.historyoflebanon.org

In Your Corner

By Pam Skelly

Our Freedom Fund Luncheon is an annual event held every June. The event celebrates our work during the past year and inspires us for the upcoming year. This year's theme is *A Vote for Democracy* which ties directly into our Get Out The Vote (GOTV) efforts. We support democracy but do not promote a particular party. For NAACP members, that means we vote for candidates whose policies support civil rights and justice. This year's luncheon will be held on Saturday, June 15th from 1-4pm at Georgina's Restaurant in Bolton.

Our guest speaker is Stephanie Thomas who is the current Secretary of State for Connecticut. Stephanie earned a Bachelor's Degree in sociology from New York University and a Master's Degree in Nonprofit Management from The New School in New York City. She has worked as a strategy and fundraising consultant since 1996, opening her own firm in 2013, and raising more than \$20 million annually for organizations working to help those in need. As well as her professional career, Stephanie Thomas has volunteered in her community serving on many boards and planning committees. In 2020, she became the state representative representing the 143rd District in the Connecticut House of Representatives, representing Norwalk, Wilton, and Westport. In the House, she served as a member of both the Commerce and Transportation Committees, as well as the Government Administration and Elections Committee. As Vice-Chair of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, Stephanie sponsored and helped pass a variety of voter-focused bills, such as automatic voter registration and resolutions to advance early voting and universal access to absentee ballots. She is committed to protecting voting rights and strengthening civic education in Connecticut. Her extensive knowledge about voting in our state is vital to the free and fair elections we cherish.

As well as an inspiring speaker, our Freedom Fund Luncheon includes a lunch buffet. This year we are excited to go to Georgina's in Bolton for the first time. Enjoying good food with great company is definitely the highlight of the event. We also celebrate and honor the work of local students and community members. This luncheon is really our big annual fundraising event. We ask for local businesses and community groups to join us, to sponsor a table or a scholarship, or to donate raffle items. Individual tickets can be purchased on our website.

I truly value and respect the ability to vote in our country although this can be more difficult depending on where you live and your skin color. I ask the friends of my voting age children if they are registered and if they plan on voting. One responded, "Are you going to tell me how I should vote?" My answer was that I would never tell anyone how they should vote. Then she mentioned she hadn't decided. My comment was that she didn't need to make that decision until she was actually voting and she didn't need to tell anyone how she voted. I can be a bit of a nerd, but I really do believe this.

My first voting experience was as a young child, going into the old curtained voting booth with my father. When I was strong enough, I was allowed to pull the lever to first close the curtains, and then, after my father made his selections, pulled it in the reverse direction to record his vote and open the curtains. Now we fill in bubbles on a piece of paper similar to answering on a standardized test. It feels less important because there's so little physical effort involved. In truth, these newer machines that use the scanned paper forms are more accurate and there is a paper trail to verify the vote count.

I feel even better about voting in Connecticut over the past few years. The reason I feel this way is because I've experienced it firsthand. Since retirement, I work the election polls in my town when I am available. I've worked as a checker, the person who checks your address, and as a tabulator tender, the one who stands by the tabulator and makes sure your ballot is counted. I've attended training as required before each election and, as an election worker, I have rules to follow as dictated by law. One of the most important rules is guaranteeing the privacy of the voter. As the tabulator tender, I need to stay near the tabulator but I cannot look at the voter's ballot. The election registrars, moderators, and workers take their positions seriously and follow the legal procedures properly.

Most readers have probably decided who they want as the president at this time. Sometimes we see the importance of that role and downplay the importance of



Connecticut Secretary of State Stephanie Thomas. Contributed photo.

our local politicians. The local people live in the community and, if they want their constituents to vote for them again, they will listen to you. It's at the local level that citizens can influence policies. It's unlikely that we can discuss our zoning issues with the President of the United States, but you can attend local meetings and make your opinions known.

In the April 2nd presidential primary, the turnout was small, probably because most citizens felt the decision had already been made. The state primary will be on August 13th but I won't be working at the polls because I'll be visiting family in another state. I do plan to take advantage of early voting, a new procedure in Connecticut. In Connecticut you must be registered to a party in order to vote in the primary. If you will be 18 by Nov. 5, 2024, you can register now and still vote in the primary.

I think the biggest change in Connecticut voting is we now have early voting. Here is some important information taken from Connecticut's Early Primary Fact Sheet: A Primary is an election where voters in a political party choose the candidates of that party that they would like to be their candidates in the upcoming General Election. Our state primary election is on August 13, 2024.

May 13, 2024

-Last day to switch parties prior to the August 13th election

August 2, 2024 at Noon

-Deadline for unaffiliated voters who want to vote during the Early Voting period to enroll in a party
Voter Registration for Early Voting

-If you are not yet registered but want to vote during the Early Voting period before the Primary Election, file your voter registration application (for a party holding a primary) with the registrars of voters in your town by noon on the business day before the day you want to vote

August 12, 2024 at Noon

-Deadline for registering in person with the registrar of voters or town clerk in your town of residence to vote on August 13

-Deadline for unaffiliated voters to enroll in a party in person for voting on to vote on August 13

Early voting is from August 5-11 from 10am-6pm, on August 6 and 8 from 8am-8pm

-To find your Early Voting location, and for all you need to know about elections in Connecticut, visit MyVote.CT.gov or call 860-509-6200.

The MyVote.CT.gov site has great links to information on voting in our state. You can check your current voter registration to see if anything needs to be updated.

Please join us at our Freedom Fund Luncheon, from 1-4pm at Georgina's Restaurant, 275 Boston Turnpike, Bolton, CT 06043. You can reserve tickets at our website, <https://windhamctnaacp.org/>, under Events. I know there will be good food and good company doing good work. I'm sure Stephanie Thomas will be an informative and inspiring speaker. Moreover, you will be motivated to promote *A Vote for Democracy* this election year.

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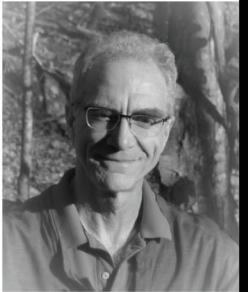
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Is there a violin in your home hiding under a bed or tucked away in a closet somewhere? Are you an active player or has it been many years since you played? The Quiet Corner Fiddlers are seeking new members and we would love to have you join us. We meet on Monday evenings to play jigs, reels, waltzes and traditional fiddle tunes. If you are interested in joining us, please email Bernie Schreiber for further information at b.schreiber@snet.net.

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Art and Garden Tour of Northeastern Connecticut

Saturday and Sunday, June 8 & 9, 10 am to 5 pm

Submitted by Suzy Staubach

Visit ten professional artists' private gardens, many with additional guest artists on site. Experience paintings, sculpture, ceramics, fused glass, woodwork, pyrography, photography, calligraphy, jewelry, and other works of art. The gardens, which vary in style, include sculpture gardens, woodland trails, acres of mountain laurel, a labyrinth, handmade stone arches, fountains, pools, a wildflower meadow, paths, terraces and an abundance of flowers, shrubs, trees, fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Art work, much of it horticulturally inspired, will be available for purchase. Individuals, families and groups are welcome. Bring your camera or sketch book if you wish. This relaxing self-guided tour through Ashford, Coventry, Mansfield and Willington in the beautiful hills of northeastern Connecticut is free.

For more information and a map, please visit: ArtGardenCT.com

Ashford

Rackliffe Garden, 49 Lakeview Drive

The Rackliffe "Secret Garden" features paths and boardwalks over a brook, a large collection of labeled miniature hostas, and a variety of interesting shade plants. There are enchanting planters created from recycled daybeds, handmade stepping stones, a totem pole, and other surprises throughout.

Host Artist: Jane Rackliffe creates bowls, serving pieces, spoon rests and decorative art in fused glass. Jane is fascinated and challenged by the endless possibilities that arise when transforming a sheet of glass into a shimmering piece of art.

Host Artist: Dan Rackliffe makes hors d'oeuvre platters, casseroles and other functional pottery for the home. He primarily uses a deep blue glaze that breaks over his richly textured surfaces. His pottery is food safe, microwave safe and oven ready.

Willow Tree Pottery, 24 Bebbington Road

Set in an old hayfield, this is a welcoming old-fashioned country garden. There are arbors, informal hedges, stone benches, an armillary, antique hay rake, and a Szalay hummingbird print on the corrugated kiln shed. You are invited to sit or meander. You can even pose with Josephine (a scarecrow, but she does not know that).

Host Artist: Suzy Staubach, garden historian, writer and potter, throws on a simple kick wheel and makes her glazes from feldspars, clays and sand. Her rolled rim mixing bowls, oval bakers, covered dishes, platters and fun pieces for the garden are meant to be used and enjoyed. Hers are quiet rustic pots to share with family and friends.

Guest Artist: Barbara Katz is a sculptor and potter working with clay. She creates simple forms based on, and evocative of, ancient rituals, artifacts and shamanic figures. She makes large vessels and other pieces for the home and garden.

Guest Artists: Gretchen Geromin and Lauren Merlo work as a team, collaborating on unique, handmade cutting boards and signs made from local fallen or dead trees. A meticulous craftsman, Lauren builds the boards from strips he glues together. Gretchen burns her original art onto each piece - birds, flowers, horses, frogs, rabbits, mice, dragons and fairies.

Coventry

Barbara Timberman Watercolor Paintings, 1194 Main Street

Visitors will delight in the abundance of lettuces planted in red-and-green patterns; the later veggies laid out in pleasing blocks of green, and the startling explosion of color from the central poppy walk. Surrounding the entire edible gardens are the delightful flowers of late spring: foxgloves, roses, Canterbury bells and columbines.

Host Artist: Barbara Timberman creates exuberant water color paintings and hand bound journals (perfect for your next garden diary). Her detailed still lifes celebrate plants and flowers complimented with charming domestic objects such as tea cups, vases, bottles, and recently, origami birds.

Maple Brook Studio, 950 Main Street

A stone labyrinth, its path defined by moss, graces this hidden garden. Walk the coiled path, as people have done in labyrinths for millennium, and you will feel serenity.

There are also outdoor sculptures and an in-process Sanctuary Garden.

Host Artist: Aline Hoffman has been working with tree bark and polymer clay this past year to create what she calls her Forest Delights series of sculptural pieces. She also creates gourd art, birch paintings on textured paper and pyrography on wood.

Guest Artist: Elizabeth Lindorff throws and hand builds pottery that is functional for daily use yet wonderfully distinctive for special occasions. Each pot is unique with glazes that complement rather than repeat on similar pieces. Food, oven and dishwasher safe.

Storrs/Mansfield

FentonRiver Studio, 287 Gurleyville Road

A planted "Garden Lady" greets visitors to this unique garden bursting with a vibrant display of colorful blooms and sculptures. There is a seven-foot lion, a fountain, a large lighted fairy house, a koi pond, cast cement leaves, and so much more. Peonies, iris, poppies and roses flourish throughout.



Michelle Allison - Steel Garden Vessel

Host Artist: Shauna Shane works in oil, pastel, watercolor and sculpture. Her subject matter includes landscapes, still lifes, figures and animals. Shauna creates cement leaves, cement and planted sculptures, and hyper-tufa planters. She will have more than 150 paintings in her studio and more than a dozen outdoor sculptures.

Flying Dragon Farm Studio, 533 Chaffeeville Road

An expansive, colorful garden surrounds the spacious barn studio. Guests can wander through a lush mix of fruit, flowers and vegetables. Amidst this profusion of horticultural delight, there is an unusual aquaponics garden in a greenhouse and a fish pond. Birds and bees abound.

Host Artist: Mary Noonan works in oil, water colors, encaustic and collage. Using multiple styles and techniques, Mary reflects her relationship to the people and natural world around her in each of the pieces she creates.

Guest Artist: Elizabeth Clark makes a variety of crafts and art with a concentration on jewelry. She embellishes her pieces with stones, glass, wood, leather, resin and metals. Sometimes she adds an insect wing that she has found or a snippet from a plant. Elizabeth creates with a touch of whimsy. "Odd," she says, "can be beautiful."

Guest Artist: Leanne Peters creates imaginative nature art using oil, graphite, and colored pencil plus digital tools. In addition to offering her art directly, she licenses her artwork to national firms for puzzles, fabrics, paint by numbers, and cards. She created the logo for the Art and Garden Tour.

Khuyay Farm, 441 Warrenville Road (Route 89)

This is an alpaca farm with fenced pasture land, a pretty red barn, gnarled old trees and wildflowers. There's a new shade garden and a new emphasis on native plants, with a goal that 75% of the plants will be native within the next couple of years.



Leanne Peters - 'Grandma's Garden.'

Host Artist: Janet Dauphin creates fused glass night-lights, dishes, and window hangings in brilliant colors and exciting forms. This year she is making necklaces with glass pendants. She continuously marvels at how the heat of her kiln transforms, shapes and colors glass. Magic!

Guest Artist: Nora Charters' photographs honor small-town life and the softer, moodier side of the Quiet Corner: the people, farms, woods, and flowers. Recently she has focused her lens on yoga and trucks. Working in both black and white and color, she offers prints on canvas and fine paper.

Michelle Allison: Michelle: Metal Art, 638 Browns Road

This is two intriguing gardens. There is a perennial flora garden with an eye-catching water feature and striking architectural elements. There is a spectacular sculpture installation space featuring large, airy vessels that are a stunning new interpretation of the classic "garden urn." **Host Artist: Michelle Allison** continues her fascination and exploration of the vessel form, but after 55 years working with wood, she has turned to metal. Constructed of ribs and rings, her large metal vessels include capacious negative space, thus appearing light and open. For some pieces she uses the bold automotive colors that enhanced her wood vessels, for others, a rich rust patina.

Scott Rhoades Studio, 422 Browns Road

Ellie and Scott Rhoades have created a picture-perfect garden around their house and the studio Scott built himself. There are stone arches, formal borders, terraces, a pool, fruit trees, a highly productive vegetable garden, an old-fashioned swing and a wealth of specimen shrubs, trees and perennials.

Host Artist: Scott Rhoades' award winning acrylic paintings are in the style of traditional realism. His subjects are based on his experiences and travel: the wilderness, weathered barns, historic buildings, people, and animals. His works are shown and collected throughout the US and internationally.

Special Guest Writer: Jana Milbocker, landscape designer, author, and expert on garden tourism will be signing her books in Scott's gardens Saturday, 11 am to 1 pm. Jana is the author of *The Garden Tourist's New England* and *The Garden Tourist: 120 Destination Gardens and Nurseries in the Northeast*.

Willington

Holes in the Woods, 17 Lustig Road

A labor of love, this garden includes streams, a half-acre pond, a colorful wildflower meadow, and acres of blooming mountain laurel. Two miles of named woodland trails wind through a lavish display of ferns, moss, boulders and ledge. And, oh yes, there are traditional flower beds too. Trail maps available.

Host Artist: John C. Starinovich uses natural holes from downed trees combined with metals, crystals, deer antler, bone, shells, seed pods, various woods, LED lights, and most importantly, mirrors to create his sculptures. He works with both hand and power tools to create his one-of-a-kind art. John has more than 100 wall hung and pedestal sculptures in his gallery.

The Art and Garden Tour is a member of the Last Green Valley and participates in CT Open House Day. Several of our gardens are on the Pollinator Pathway. You can follow us on Facebook at ArtandGardenTourofNortheasternCT. For more information Visit ArtGardenCT.com



April Showers bring . . .

By Marie Cantino.

Mayflowers, of course. As a child, I always welcomed the month of May because it contained my birthday, as well as the promise that the school year would soon end. But May has so much more to offer, and we at Joshua's Trust want to ensure that everyone can embrace it where it is best appreciated: outdoors.

You and your family might enjoy our May 4 Maypole celebration at Atwood Farm. Maypole celebrations, common in Europe, were imported to the colonies by early settlers. William Bradford, governor of New Plymouth, wrote in 1628 about renegade indentured servants who created their own colony and erected a maypole, around which they were seen "dancing and frisking together" like "madd Bacchinalians." [History of Plymouth Plantation. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. pp. 237-238] We expect our Maypole celebration to be a bit less rowdy, but equally entertaining, especially with the Mansfield Middle School players to provide accompaniment.

If, on the other hand, you would like to experience May in a more peaceful and secluded setting, try one of three Wednesday Walks, where you are likely to see many of Connecticut's spring ephemeral flowers. Michelle Poudrette, who leads these walks, has a knack for spotting and identifying these May beauties. If you would like to learn about identification and ecology of local trees, join Michael Lascaleia at Iron Mine Valley Preserve on May 19. And for history buffs, this area has its own connection to our colonial past. . . at the time of the American Revolution, bog iron was mined from the riverside wetlands.

Events for May are listed below. As always, they may be cancelled by rain, so check our website <https://joshuustrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

Wednesday Walk at Allanach-Wolf Woodlands

05/01/2024 9:00 AM

164 Back Road, Windham, CT

Joshua's Trust Allanach-Wolf Woodlands should be teeming with life by early May. We'll stop to view the pollinator garden before heading out to the bird blind on Lake Marie. The length of this walk will be determined by the

water levels over the yellow trail but will not exceed three miles. Bug protection strongly advised.

Maypole Celebration at Atwood Farm

05/04/2024 2:00-4:00 PM

Atwood farm, 624 Wormwood Hill Road, Mansfield Center, CT

Come welcome spring while we dance around the May Pole accompanied by the Mansfield Middle School String Players.

Wednesday walk at Tinkerville Brook Preserve

05/15/2024 9:00 AM

135 Armitage Road, Ashford, CT

Joshua's Trust's Tinkerville Brook in Ashford boasts a beautiful 2 mile loop through wetlands, mountain laurel thickets and a stop by a historic mill site. Be sure to visit <https://joshuustrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

Tree Identification walk at Iron Mine Valley Preserve

05/19/2024 3:00-4:30 PM

Iron Mine Valley Preserve, 31 Sand Hill Road, Ashford, CT

UConn Ecology and Evolutionary Biology PhD candidate, Michael Lascaleia, will help us learn to identify common New England trees and discuss their importance to our native ecosystems as we hike the trail through Iron Mine Valley Preserve. The trail includes a mix of swamp, marsh and upland forest. Strongly recommend bug protection. Please note that we will begin at the trail head near 31 Sand Hill Rd, Ashford, CT (41.89910° -72.16769°). Be sure to visit <https://joshuustrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations

Wednesday Walk at Wolf Rock Preserve

05/29/2024 9:00 AM

Near 62 Crane Hill Rd, Mansfield Center, CT

Joshua's Trust's Wolf Rock Preserve is a fairly hilly, 2-3 mile loop with spectacular views and a trip to the marsh along the Nipmuck Trail. Be sure to visit <https://joshuustrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

Maypole photo by Nancy Silander.

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Traditions and Technological Transitions: AI's Tale

By Kathleen Bagioni

Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the lives of people across the globe. The world has endured a seismic shift with the recent release of AI engines available to the everyday consumer. This is reminiscent of advances that rocked the quilting world in the 1990s.

For most of the twentieth century, both writing and quilting remained skills practiced by individuals with little assistance of technology.

Before the 1980s computers were known only as business systems. But computers were quickly evolving. They went from huge machines taking up entire rooms, with banks of blinking lights, tape reels, and miles of wire and cables, to smaller units sitting on top of a desk. Before, the machines required support staff and specialized climate control. Now they no longer needed a dedicated staff to input info, maintain their functioning, and decipher their output. An individual could now plug a computer in and use it immediately with no specialized training. Initially the success of the personal computer overwhelmed the supply chain. Long waits for delivery were common. IBM's sales exceeded its expectations by 800% in one year alone. And this was only one of the nascent retail computer companies.

Overnight, everyone needed to be able to type. But no longer were hours and hours needed to type and re-type papers and laboriously correct errors with Wite-Out or correction tape. It now became a simple matter of entering corrections into an existing document. Gone were the days of editing prose with red pens, style manuals, and gallons of coffee. Spell check, grammar check, and a host of other editing tools slid seamlessly into our everyday lives. As I sit and type this, my word-processing program is automatically capitalizing words, entering periods at the end of sentences, and underlining misspellings as I continue merrily along. When I compose an email, suggestions to finish my sentences pop up. Some of this is powered by AI.

Quilting is a craft, sometimes an art form, practiced for generations. Archeologists have discovered quilted garments, blankets, and other household items in ancient Egyptian archaeological sites. Though it was mostly a utilitarian craft, the creator of the piece occasionally had the resources and the artistry to elevate it above the ordinary.

When the sewing machine was invented in the late nineteenth century, it revolutionized needlework. It shortened production times for clothing and assembling quilt tops, but the hand-quilting tradition persisted. It reduced the tedium of sewing, but the artistry of turning out beautiful quilts continued. The practical difficulties of feeding the multiple layers of a quilt top, plus batting and backing fabric, under the presser foot of the sewing machine slowed its use for quilting. But during the resurgence of quilting after America's bicentennial, an explosion of adaptive tools and specialized machines made machine quilting easier. The machines evolved. Long-arm machines that allowed quilting of all the layers together were marketed to the home sewer.

In 1984, I attended my first quilt guild meeting of like-minded sewers and immediately got swept into the world of quilt shows and competitions. This began my 30-year history with the Vermont Quilt Festival, the largest annual festival in New England, first as an attendee and later as a member of the board of directors. During this time, I was also writing extensively for the quilt magazines. Ironically, one of these articles was on the use of computer programs to manage a group quilting project.

Hand quilting had been the norm until then. But now machine quilting began showing up in shows and exhibits. There was a vehement uproar against allowing such work into respectable shows. Warnings arose about the end of an honored American tradition.

Would machine quilting destroy the legacy of centuries of handcrafted needlework? Would this be the end of the honored tradition of quilting, relegating it to the easily reproducible production of pieces fed into a machine? When long-arm quilting became more common, the arguments became louder. When computerized long-arm quilting machines hit the market, the arguments became a scream. The quilt world could no longer ignore the trend.

But if you stopped to look at the work, some of it was quite good. Sure, some stitched a random design willy-nilly across the quilt. But most machine quilters put as much creative thought and expertise into the new method of quilting as they had in their former hand quilting. Careful maneuvering of a motif to accent the design elevated the work. The whole became more than the sum of its parts. Machine quilting led to a new range of designs that were impossible to accomplish with handwork.

It did not destroy the legacy of the quilting tradition.

But it did shift it.

The quilt world adjusted. Now there are separate categories for quilting, distinguishing between hand and machine techniques, acknowledging the importance of this latest step in the artistic process. Rather than destroy the honored tradition of quilt making, machine quilting allowed it to expand into a range of new quilting styles. Far from producing generic, easily reproducible designs, it enabled creativity to expand in directions never before considered before the new tools.

The effects of the use of AI on, say, creative writing is just as shattering. AI-generated chatbots have burst onto the scene. Available free on the internet, they can generate prose to rival human efforts in seconds.

No more hours and days of research are spent in the long, cold stacks of institutional libraries. Gone is the art of rifling through 3x5 cards in card catalog cabinets with drawers as long as your arm. Gone is the skill of decoding the information typed on those dog-eared cards. Gone is the experience of developing patience when your desired reference work is unavailable and needs to be ordered from another library. Now we enter a search term, or keyword, and a search engine spits out an array of references and websites about the desired topic. AI generates these answers in a hierarchy of relevance. And it includes a short blurb to help you determine if the reference really is helpful. It takes only seconds to complete this process.

The use of search engines and word processing software and chatbots has not destroyed creative writing.

But it is shifting.

Now, of course, AI can be used to circumvent actual study and the assimilation of knowledge. It spits out text in well-written prose. But AI-generated works can be as bland and boring as one would expect. And it is not necessarily truthful. Ironically, even with the whole of the internet behind it, AI isn't conscientious about fact-checking its own work.

Once again, human input—I daresay human creativity—is necessary to produce something worthwhile. Whether it's beautiful quilting designs that complement and elevate a pieced quilt top or well-worded prompts that help craft a readable report or enjoyable story, the hand of a human makes the work come alive.

This resistance to AI is another instance of human society's growing pains. AI is here to stay. The explosion of new tools available to the individual are as incredible and exciting as they are unnerving.

The genie is out of the bottle. It's now our job to ask for the right wishes.

(DISCLAIMER: I am considering only creative writing here. The use of AI has serious ramifications in so many other aspects of our lives.)

UConn Chemist to Explain How Recycled Textiles Can Produce Plastic Alternatives

Submitted by Ed Silverstein

Challa Kumar, an emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of Connecticut, is scheduled to speak at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15 at Willimantic's Mill Museum on his discoveries related to discarded cloths. Professor Kumar will explain how recycled textiles and proteins can be used to produce an alternative to plastic. The research is critical given the widespread pollution that is generated by certain kinds of fabrics, as well as plastics. Under some estimates, 400 million tons of plastic waste are generated worldwide. An additional 92 million tons of cloth waste is generated annually.

"Plastics are polluting our world and their manufacturing [is] releasing vast amounts of carbon dioxide," Kumar explained.

"To mitigate these issues, we are developing protein-based plastics that are green, sustainable, and completely biodegradable or compostable," he said. "Our invention also uses waste textiles and recycles them as useful plastic replacement products."

The process will result in high-quality products that do not endanger human health or the health of the planet, but still compete with fossil-fuel-based plastics, he added.

"Textile waste is growing rapidly due to the fast-changing fashion industry and lack of adequate recycling," according to Kumar. "This inexpensive material can be recycled to make useful products to replace conventional plastics, which is a huge step for conserving resources on the planet."

He says that protein-based plastics and those that are reinforced with waste textile fibers can be excellent alternatives to conventional plastics and products. Protein-based plastics also provide a path forward to lower emissions by using proteins derived from plants, crops, and agricultural waste.

"Thus, while not competing with the food chain, we can find alternatives while also using waste textiles to make innovative solutions and promote a sustainable bioeconomy," Kumar said.

Currently, the plastics industry is one of the major contributors to the rapid warming of the planet. Warming is due to increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

His research has led UConn's Technology Commercialization Services (TCS) to file two patents to protect the invention and its technology. The team is currently in discussions with several industrial partners to commercialize the products.

"Businesses that are interested in making safe and sustainable plastics should come forward to partner with UConn to deliver sustainable plastics to the public," Kumar said. "There is a huge opportunity for them to revolutionize the plastics industry."

Professor Kumar has been a researcher and professor at UConn for decades. Previously, he received a doctorate from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, and was a researcher at the Radiation Laboratory, University of Notre Dame, and at Columbia University. He also was a Visiting Professor Fulbright-Nehru Scholar at the Indian Institute of Science.

He has won the Fulbright Distinguished Chair Award, the National Research Council (NRC) Research Associateship Award, and the AAUP Research Excellence Award 2015. He also has been on the editorial boards of two journals: *Biosensors* and *Materials Chemistry*.

The upcoming lecture is open to all. It will be held in the museum's Dugan Building. The presentation coincides with an art show, *Footprints in the Changing Sand*. The exhibit runs through June 2. It examines the human relationship to the changing environment.

Located in the historic former headquarters of the American Thread Company, 411 Main Street, Willimantic, the Mill Museum houses a museum, historical society, library, and archive. Through its exhibits, programs, activities, lectures, and collections, the museum preserves and interprets the history of textiles, the textile industry, and textile communities in Connecticut.



Professor Challa Kumar. Photo courtesy of UConn.

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Ballet

By Jolene Munch Cardoza

I was wondering if Twyla Tharp is a Capricorn or a Cancer, my mind distracted by this thought as the time arrived when the sun should be sinking into the sea, a glorious canvas of colors as a cool breeze blows by.

But instead it was shrouded in clouds, pregnant with rain and threatening to break water at any minute.

Over me, my house, my little quiet corner, the one place filled with people I never thought I would meet, much less love.

There's a river running through town, everyone tries to ignore it, except when it floods it becomes so dangerous that we wring our hands and pretend to fret. As though the very act of being put-upon, of feigning concern, were the immunity from little tsunamis drowning the trees.

But just as it starts to drizzle, politely and in no hurry to fall faster, I remembered the taste of fresh coconut on a hot summer day in Marigot. My mom and I went swimming once near the beach at Emerald Bay, but that was on the Dutch side of the island, I think. And I once had a fancy dinner, handmade Italian pasta prepared just for me by a lovely little bistro in Maho.

She wasn't with me then, I was newly married and ashamed, I had almost died that morning. Still, my mind kept dancing back to New York City, and sweaty rehearsals inside the hallowed halls of Juilliard.

We are all getting older, that's the context here, writ large in black and white. I see my crow's feet, a murder of wrinkles beneath my eyes. I am aging. My mother is a sacred place, timeless and total. When she dies, I won't know where to go.

But this is a different woman, a different story by a different author, offering a message of hope. So I keep on reading, she is a mother to a son and a grandmother now. She looks good for her age. And she was born on July 1st, in case you were wondering.

It's an old-fashioned block party!

Submitted by Barbara Wright

This Memorial Day, May 27, the Friends of the Garden on the Bridge will host an old-fashioned block party, noon to 4 pm on the Plaza facing Main Street. And it's all free!

Come join us for food, music, and activities for kids. It's a chance to meet up with friends and make some new ones. DJ Eddie Rios (DJ Chuck) will provide music, there will be a food truck, and the Friends will provide free pizza and drinks. Or you can bring your own picnic. Kids can enjoy the bounce house, water balloon games, corn toss, and chalk drawing.

Why a block party? The Friends (Jay Osborne, Dan Phipps, Jean de Smet, and Barbara Wright) are celebrating the arrival of four bright, new picnic tables, made possible by a grant from AARP. "We want to share the good news," says Barbara Wright, "and invite all our neighbors, near and far, to use them regularly." She adds: "The Garden Club is co-sponsoring this event, and we'd like everyone to learn more about the Garden Club's work, too."



"One of four new tables at the Garden on the Bridge. The opening between the curved benches allows easy access for a wheelchair or baby stroller."

The colorful picnic tables are a first step in the Friends' plan to make the Plaza a people-friendly space for everything from a take-out lunch to a community celebration. Party-goers will also be able to walk the Bridge and see the work in progress there to repair cracked planters.

The block party will follow the traditional VFW Memorial Day parade, which begins in Jillson Square at 10:30 a.m. It proceeds up Main Street to Memorial Park, where the ceremony will begin at 11:00 a.m. Afterward, there will be plenty of time to stroll back down Main Street to the Garden on the Bridge and the block party.

"We'd like this to become an annual event," says Jay Osborne, chair of the Friends and the originator of the idea for a block party. Jay lived in New York for years, experienced many a block party, and says there's nothing like it for fun and bringing people together.

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Mansfield musicians on national record label

Submitted by Sarah Kaufold

We are a professional choir based in northeast Connecticut hoping to share more about our recent album release on Navona Records, a Grammy-winning record label. As you may be aware, there is not much arts funding or arts news coverage available in the northeast corner and we are hopeful that you can help us share our music with a wider audience in the state.

Our album, *Awaiting Golden Light*, consists of music about finding connection through universal experiences. Voices of Concinnity is a 12-voice professional chamber vocal ensemble of dedicated, seasoned classical choral artists from diverse backgrounds, moving audiences through innovative programming that melds the unique qualities of each voice into a vibrant, rich choral sound. We are based in Mansfield and sponsored by nonprofit, Consonare Choral Community.

We believe what makes our album special is that it invites listeners to draw their eyes up toward the heavens and out beyond the horizon to find meaning and is an honest representation of how our group of singers sound together, which is refreshing in the current rise in AI music creation.

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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).

CT greenhouse gas emissions up as climate change bills languish

CT Mirror. “As bills aimed at dealing with climate change struggle to get through the current legislative session, a new report showing that Connecticut is struggling with its greenhouse gas emissions may be providing

an extra push...In Connecticut, transportation emissions have increased sharply since 2020. In terms of percentages, transportation in Connecticut accounts for 42% of total emissions...On the other side of the ledger, there was a continued and sharp decline in emissions from the electric power sector; 2022 levels were 16% below 2021 levels and down 80% from their 1990 level. This drop is due to lower demand, much of it the result of increased amounts of rooftop solar as well as increasing amounts of renewable energy on the electric grid..The report pointed out that reductions in emissions “through improved fuel economy in motor vehicles have been almost entirely offset by increased emissions from driving more.”...“With just two weeks left in the 2024 legislative session, there are great opportunities available for our decision-makers to put these plans and resources in place to move Connecticut in the right direction...I hope they’ll take the steps necessary to pass legislation.”

CT town is first in state to go all in on electric school buses. And its app shows location.

Hartford Courant. “Starting in July, some Connecticut students will be boarding quiet school buses that emit no pollutants. The school district is the first in the state to go to an all-electric fleet, which it will accomplish in five years. “There was a really comprehensive referendum for our request for proposal that we put in Branford...The 2024-25 school year will have all new buses and vans, though just 13 of the 60 will be electrified this year. The rest will still be diesel-powered...The buses are coming from Zūm, a San Francisco company founded in 2018 by CEO Ritu Narayan. The company’s buses bring students to and from 4,000 schools from California to Massachusetts...“It’s expensive, but it’s better than anything else we had on the table...The overall impact on our transportation budget from this school year to next school year, it’s an 8% increase in our transportation line. But after a few years, that’s going to level out, and in public education budgets when you have high predictability what your budget is going to be for any predictable line, that’s helpful.”

Opinion: PURA’s Marissa Gillett — a leader and agent for change

CT Mirror. “Chairman Gillett’s leadership has not been welcomed by utilities. Gillett has followed PURA’s rules, taken a critical eye to the proposals of the utilities, and fought for Nutmeggers. What a novel concept! Avangrid tried to pressure Gillett into allowing excessive increases in rates — and by extension electric bills of Connecticut residents — and PURA responded by reprimanding Avangrid. In response to Gillett’s leadership, Avangrid started a political campaign against her and coerced other entities to do their bidding. Needless to say, utilities are not happy with Gillett.”

Eversource tells CT it’s pausing EV charging rebates. Company cites ‘uncertain’ CT regulatory decisions

Hartford Courant. “Eversource has informed the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority that “up-front funding of incentives for Residential, Commercial Level 2 and DC Fast charging programs” are suspended...until an adequate funding mechanism is provided to support the programs. “Continued participation in these programs could place critically needed capital resources at risk and hinder our ability to support electric operations that our customers rely on every day,” said Eversource Vice President of Distribution Rates and Regulatory Requirements Doug Horton in a statement...State Sen. Needleman, D-Essex, said, “How does

a company with an underlying profit of more than \$1.5 billion plead unfair treatment the day after Connecticut’s regulators gave them everything they requested?...Worse, they threatened the state of Connecticut, saying they will not fulfill their obligations to build out improvements to the electric grid necessary to support our policy goals,”... Needleman further said that if Eversource “does not want to make green energy investments in our grid, for which it receives full reimbursement and an additional profit on top of out-of-pocket costs, maybe we should consider a review of their franchise agreement, which allows them to operate as a monopoly with no competition.”

Opinion: Solar is CT’s path to lower energy costs

CT Mirror. “You might have heard the argument that Connecticut can’t afford more solar. That we already have some of the highest electricity costs in the nation, and more solar will further burden ratepayers. It’s time to bust that myth. What we can’t afford is continuing to burn fossil fuels for our energy. Renewable energy, and solar in particular, is actually the path to lower, more stable electric rates. And while the shift to renewables will require some up-front investment, we face a once-in-a-generation opportunity to take advantage of generous federal funding to make these investments at no extra cost. We can correct a litany of historical environmental injustices in the process. Today, the Connecticut General Assembly has a chance to help make this happen.”

Transmission study reaches some hopeful conclusions

CommonWealth Beacon. “For the first time, New England has a detailed analysis of the investment needed in our region’s energy infrastructure to ensure that clean energy will be able to reliably move around the region to power our homes and charge our vehicles...the study estimates the region will need to invest between \$16 billion and \$26 billion on transmission infrastructure over the next 26 years to ensure a reliable clean energy transition. These numbers may sound daunting, but they’d be spread out over multiple decades and are actually in line with annual averages for reliability investments over the past 20 years... There are paths for New England to achieve its goal of a future power system that use much more renewable energy and reduces carbon emissions. Not only can we get there, but we can do so with a transmission system that doesn’t look too different from the one we have today — and at a price that’s in line with our spending over the past two decades.”

Lamont: Removing disincentives could quadruple the number of solar panels on CT school rooftops.

CT Post. “I think we ought to have each and every one of our schools with more solar power,” Lamont said...“Think what that would do in terms of reducing our energy demand going forward, and saving our schools a lot of money that they can put right in the classroom.” Connecticut law now limits the amount of non-residential solar panels that can be installed each year in order to promote competition in the market and drive down prices...In order to boost solar production without raising the politically-sensitive caps, Lamont’s administration is seeking to take schools out from under the cap and place them in a separate solar-development program with new financial incentives...”

What good is an EV if you can’t charge it? Here’s the plan to build more chargers

Connecticut Public. “Finally, we made it to the promised land, a Tesla Supercharger, 16 ports, plenty of them open, working and fast. A year ago, it would have been no help to my non-Tesla, but now at this particular station, I could charge. That’s a sign of a huge shakeup in the world of EV chargers. Tesla’s network is starting to open to other drivers thanks to deals Tesla struck with the White House and with rival automakers like Ford. So the charger situation is getting better. Gradually, billions are going into building more chargers. And the best chargers on the road are opening up to more drivers. But are we there yet? Classic road trip question. And the answer is no, not yet.”

Is CT’s electric grid ready to handle more power?

CT Mirror. “...the move to widespread electrification is underway and we’re already adjusting without specific policies in many cases. “That doesn’t mean we don’t need policy signals, but I think that policy signals right now in the short run are not ... necessary...In the short run, we can accommodate a lot more renewables on the grid; we can accommodate more electric vehicles, we can accommodate more heat pumps, and we should not have too much of a problem...Stating that the grid is not ready as a reason

for not moving forward is a cop out.”...“It’s not a binary thing. It’s not a ‘the grid is not ready/the grid is ready...We certainly have lots of investments we need to continue to make on both the transmission and distribution side, and we need to do it in a coordinated fashion...We’re putting the pieces in place, but we’ve got to do it better and we’ve got to do it faster.”...All of this leads to bigger questions. If the grid isn’t ready to handle more power, how do you get it ready; and if it’s already moving to get ready, how do you get it to move faster? Turns out there are a lot of different answers.”

Natural gas utilities asking for illegal items in rate increase request, the I-Team finds

Eyewitness News 3. “...there’s much more beyond just the physical process of providing gas services Avangrid is asking you to pay for. Documents show between both CNG and SCG, Avangrid is asking for: \$21,000 for their board of directors to travel and eat. \$208,000 in investor relations fees. \$964,000 in money the utility companies will use to pay for memberships in various trade associations and research groups. Adding that up, that’s \$1.2 million dollars Avangrid is passing on to its customers...while these requests might be common in the industry, in Connecticut, they’re now illegal, after CT passed a new law, Public Act 23-102, last year...When asked why they are still asking for things that are illegal, Avangrid’s Ted Novicki says the company doesn’t believe they are wrong in asking for the \$1.2 million dollars in prohibited items we listed above, because they don’t think those parts of the law are constitutional.”

CT DOT urging car owners to drive less for May

Hartford Courant. “Private vehicles remain our state’s largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. This Earth Day, I encourage all residents to drive less and use greener alternatives to get to where they need to go,” said CT DOT Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto. “Whether someone is walking or riding a bike, taking a bus or train, or calling for a shared ride on new microtransit services, there are many ways to get around the state. This campaign encourages residents to try these options and help fight climate change.”

Top Shelf Gallery Show

Submitted by Janice Trecker

The May- June Show at the Top Shelf Gallery will be “Natural Beauty” featuring landscapes, florals and figurative pieces by Stacey Gendreau.

Gendreau was raised on a dairy farm in Ashford, and has retained a love for the outdoors, which she expresses in both painting and woodworking. She first came to love art through high school art and woodworking classes. Later she received a more formal education, first from Pat Donahue and later from Virginia O’Brien, both local artists.

Although she started out in acrylics, Gendreau now works mostly with oil on canvas and particularly enjoys painting the natural world. She works primarily from her own photographs, carefully considering the base colors and then building layer upon layer to capture images in a photo realistic style.

Gendreau worked for many years at both Windham and Backus Hospitals and has for 27 years been a volunteer EMT for Hampton and Chaplin. She sees attention to detail as key “whether in dealing with a medical emergency or creating a work of art”.

As emergency medicine is a high pressure job, she finds peace in art and nature.:“For me my small art studio is at times a place to focus on my art and other times a spiritual sanctuary. When in my studio, working on an art project, the stresses and worries of daily life can gradually fade into the background.”

Besides painting, Gendreau builds furniture to her own designs, using many traditional hand tools. She sees both her painting and her furniture as a way to connect to the natural world. “When I paint images of Native Americans and nature,” she says, “I feel a closer bond to Mother Earth, and a more harmonious way of living. Long walks alone in the woods ground me and allow me later on to feel one with the wood when working with it.”

The Top Shelf Gallery is at Fletcher Memorial Library, 257 Main Street, Hampton.



Solar Today - Honoring Earth Day Every Day

Greetings all,

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



Spring is here; another gentle reminder to please leave the leaves and grass for a short while.

Please wait as long as you can to do your spring lawn clean up. Ideally, you should wait until the nighttime temperatures are **consistently above 50 degrees F for at least 7 consecutive nights.**

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 along with critters small and large, all benefit greatly from this simple act of patience. To those of us who do wait... **THANK YOU!**

This month we are going to dive into Batteries!

How do batteries work, do you really need one to go solar and are they worth it?

Do you need a battery with a grid tied solar system?

The short answer is no. First I will explain how solar feeds your home and how net metering works. While the sun is shining and your solar panels are cranking during high production months, there's a good chance that you're producing more energy than what your home needs to run on. Here in CT, about 65 – 75% of what the solar panels produce through the year is captured from late spring until early fall. This is where net metering comes in. As your panels are cranking and your home usage is lower than what solar is producing, the excess energy goes through a net meter and is tracked by the utility company as credits on your bill. You get those accumulated/saved credits back at night and through the low winter solar production months.

Thanks to Net Metering, you do NOT need a battery to go solar if you are grid tied!

How does a battery work when the grid goes down?

Batteries, like solar, are installed behind the meter. Just like a generator, they are tied to the electrical system behind your main service panel. Solar Inverters (*the unit that changes DC energy collected by the solar panels to usable AC energy*) have a safety mechanism in them that protects your home and the grid when the power goes out. When the inverter loses grid power, the solar panels are still working but the inverter automatically stops sending power to your main electric panel unless you have a battery. If you have a battery, the battery automatically shuts off outbound power to the grid and still has an open channel to feed your home. Just like an automatic generator that comes on as soon as the grid goes down. This allows the system to power your home and prevents back-feeding the

grid. If you have a plug in generator and it's hooked up properly, you have to manually shut off the main service feed to disconnect from the grid and then your generator will just supply your home and not dangerously back-feed into the grid.

How long does a full battery supply power for?

There are many variables, including how many batteries you have, how many breakers are on the battery and how conservative the user is. Some of the better batteries will charge and discharge at the same time. This way you can use the battery while it is charging. Some batteries will only either charge or discharge at one time. This means that if you need power and the battery gets to a certain threshold, it will shut off from being usable by the home until it has reached a certain, near full charge state. This could be problematic if you need the battery and it's in an in-between stage! ALL batteries have a limited threshold of what they can hold and what the output is.

Scenario 1; you have a battery and the power goes out for a few hours or maybe 1-1/2 days. The battery kicks in and you're good!

Scenario 2; we have a 5 day snow storm with heavy cloud cover, your panels are covered in snow, the power has been out for the 5 days, you used all the juice in your battery after 2 days. *You may want to start your generator!*

Are batteries worth the cost?

Batteries cost up to \$20,000.00 and only have a 10 year warranty. You can possibly get a 30% federal tax credit (*chat w/your accountant about that*) and if you are one of the lucky ones and are on the Demand Response Program (*Energy Storage Solutions*), the utility "could" pay you back up to about \$6500.00 over 5 years. *Do the math!*

You can ONLY use the battery when the power goes out. It is not accessible for your daily use when grid power is operational. Batteries cannot back up more than a 20amp breaker, so some home furnaces and water heaters are off limits.

So, is a battery worth it or is it just a luxury? For some yes and for some, no. That's for each individual to decide!

If you, or anyone you know, would like to learn more about batteries or capturing the suns energy to power your home, please reach out to me directly.

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

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

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

NCCO Spring Concert

By Jane Anderson Vercelli,
NCCO president

The Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra is excited to present our spring concert, "Classic to Contemporary," playing an eclectic mix of music by composers from Handel to Abba, on Friday, May 31 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, June 2 at 2 p.m. Both concerts will be at Clark Memorial Chapel, Pomfret School, Pomfret. Admission is free; donations are welcome.

Under the baton of NCCO conductor Linda Tracy, the string orchestra will open with Libertango by Astor Piazzolla followed by the Impromptu for Strings by Jean Sibelius. Gabriel's Oboe by Ennio Morricone will feature Vanessa Pentz who double majored at Juilliard School of Music in oboe and piano and who now is a member of the NCCO cello section.

Our featured performers are former NCCO conductor Dylan Lomangino who will play viola with violinist Dustin Rood in the Passaca-

glia by Johan Halvorsen on a theme by Handel. Dylan joined NCCO in 2014 as assistant conductor while he was a viola student at the University of Connecticut. He became conductor in 2016, leading the orchestra through our winter 2023 concert.

The spring concert will close with the rousing sea shanty, "Wellerman," selections from Mama Mia by Abba and Freedom by Jon Batiste.

Our conductor, Linda Tracy, is a NCCO violinist who was a choral music teacher for 34 years in the Windham and Tolland public schools. She earned a B.S. in Music Education with a concentration in voice from the University of Connecticut and an M.S. in Music Education from Central Connecticut State University.

She is the creator and artistic director of the a cappella choral ensemble, *Take Note!*, which is based in Mansfield Center. Performing benefit concerts for the past 20 years, *Take Note!* has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for those in need in eastern Connecticut.

As musical director and choral director for several years for the Windham Theatre Guild in Willimantic, Linda directed the Guild's Adult Broadway Chorus and Classic Chorale as well as the pit orchestra in many of their musical productions.

She was also the creator and director of the Capitol Theatre Summer Chorus in Willimantic for many years.

Since retiring from teaching in 2018, Linda has played trombone in the Windham Concert Band and violin in NCCO. Linda has also tapped into her love of the visual arts, becoming a pastel artist and published illustrator. Her paintings are featured in the book, "*A Pagan's Path to Meditation: 10 Meditations for Yoga and Nature Lovers*," by Willington resident Val Rogers.

Questions? Call NCCO president Jane Vercelli at 860 428-4633 or write janevercelli@gmail.com.

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

In previous articles I have written about the drastic changes that are occurring in the automotive industry. I should say anything that burns fossil fuels. The highway construction site that you drive by will most likely have computer controlled plus emission complaint equipment. California emission standards have raised the cost to the consumer and of doing business in California. Some states including ours are looking into adopting these standards. This means vehicles or equipment that do not meet these standards will have to be sold or replaced.

The cost of repairing your vehicle has risen steadily over the years. For a licensed repair facility just to open the doors there has also been a steady increase of operating costs. This brings us to another problem. For years people have worked on their own vehicles and helped family and friends with theirs. This did not really affect licensed repair facilities. Today, however, we have unlicensed repair facilities in back yards. Let us look at one that is located in our area. He does not just have a one or two bay garage, but multiple bays. Each bay has a lift and equipment. There is no liability, warranty, or recourse for the person who has their vehicle worked on here. There is nothing you can do if there is an issue with a repair. The town does not receive tax money for the services they offer. The state does not receive revenue that a licensed repair facility has to pay just to operate a business in our town and state. This person also has a regular job that is a union occupation. I wonder if he would feel the same way we feel if someone was affecting his job or business.

The high-tech world has changed the cost of living. The cost of owning and maintaining today's vehicle must be treated like an investment. Simple oil changes can help you extend the life of your vehicle. The motor vehicle has always had part failure and needed regular maintenance. I would suggest creating some sort of regular maintenance program for your vehicle. The repair facility that changes your oil usually includes a visual inspection of the vehicle. This can help you plan for future repairs. The fable of the ant and the grasshopper comes to mind. The ant was always prepared and a very hard worker, the grasshopper on the other hand, was a fun-loving guy who was never proactive. He got left out in the cold! Are you an ant or a grasshopper? (you can google this story if you cannot remember it)

The last thing I would like to write about is the closing of National Speed Center in Manchester. This business has been serving the public for 5 decades. Owned and operated by Dan Burnham and Jay Adams, this was a great place to get specialty parts. If they did not have it on the shelf, they would get it for you. Dan and Jay have decided to retire and they certainly have earned it. I will miss their service and dedication. I wish them a wonderful retirement and thank them for all the times they helped me find the parts I needed over the years.

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

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Song-A-Day Scholarship

Submitted by Ruth O'Neil

The Song-a-Day Music Fund is pleased to offer Its Annual Scholarship to a Graduating Senior Pursuing further study in Music.

This scholarship is open to all students graduating from an area secondary school who are planning on further study in music following graduation. Homeschooled students are welcome to apply. Deadline to Submit an application is June 15, 2024.

This year the scholarship is in the amount of \$250. The Scholarship Recipient will be announced on or about July 15, 2024.

To obtain an application, contact scholarship@songadaymusic.com or call 860-742-6878.

The Song-a-Day Music Fund is operated by the Song-a-Day Music Center and is committed to supporting practicing and emerging musicians. 2024 is the 15th year that the Song-a-Day Music Center has offered such a scholarship.

For more information on, or to make a contribution to the scholarship or the Song-a-Day Music fund contact the:

Song-a-Day Music Center
2809 Boston Tpke. (Rte. 44)
Coventry, CT 06238
860-742-6878
www.songadaymusic.com
Ruth O'Neil, Director

Rebels of the Revolution

Submitted by Diane Nadeau

The Partnership for the Arts, Culture, History and Tourism for the Greater Windham Region is proud to announce its "Rebels of the Revolution" series that provides an opportunity for people in our area to meet some of the most famous and influential American Revolution heroes. Each month for six events, on the first Saturday at 1:00 pm, local museums and cultural organizations will host a session about one of these local heroes, with re-enactors enthusiastically portraying them.

"This is a great way to prepare for our upcoming 250th year anniversary of the founding of our country," said Bev York, Museum Curator for the America Museum. "So many people don't know how important our region's part was in the forming of our nation. Our local patriots influenced not only our decision to enter into a war with England for our independence, but they also influenced the outcome of the war and two of them signed the Declaration of Independence."

The series started on April 6 at the Mill Museum in Willimantic. This was a joint presentation with the Windham Theatre Guild and featured local author Michael Westerfield presenting information on "Israel Putnam: America's First Folk Hero. Those who attended were introduced to General Putnam himself, portrayed by Ken Noll from the Windham Theatre Guild, and learned of his many brave and harrowing experiences leading local revolutionaries as Washington's senior general at Bunker Hill and other battles. He was the patriot who reputedly ordered his men not to "fire until you see the whites of their eyes!"

All of the programs are open to the public at no cost. Upcoming events include:

- May 4, Colonel Samuel Huntington
- June 1, Captain Nathan Hale
- August 3, Colonel Thomas Knowlton
- September 7, Colonel Eliphalet Dyer and Colonel Jedediah Elderkin
- October 5, the Rebels of Lebanon and Jonathan Trumbull Jr.

For more information on the series please contact us at windhamhistoricalsocietyct@gmail.com. All the events are listed on facebook and on www.AmericaMuseum.org including directions.

The Partnership for the Arts, Culture, History and Tourism is a program of the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce Foundation and has a mission to promote, support, celebrate the arts, history and culture of Windham Region and to foster a positive sense of community and connectiveness thus spurring tourism and economic development in the region.

I will write love poems to you

I look at you now from a distance
Not caught in the moment
Of reactions and defenses
And I see you in all your complications
In tenderness
In force
In all the energies that became you
That dwindle now
To Who

I will write love poems to you
Poems of love
Never spoken
Always felt

And who can really say
All the many of one
All of you
From youth
Through all time
Even now
The essence of you holds
My heart

In all the moments that
Could have been
That fell short
That became secrets
That flowed into and through
Joy

And though we are forever
These moments slip through
Our fingered thoughts
I linger in what was
I cling to the you I see in
memories

Chamele

May Events in our Neighborhood

Submitted by Bev York

May 3 Paint Party Night to paint "Poppies" (First Friday 6:30 p.m.) Paints and canvas supplied, BYO refreshments, \$20 pp sponsored by Windham Arts, Veterans Community Center, 47 Crescent Street, Willimantic. Registration by Thursday info@windhamarts.org

May 1 through June 27 Art Exhibit « Splash, Water, Water Everywhere!» featuring painted Umbrellas, and paintings and photographs of Puddles, Rivers, the Sea, and more. in the Coffee Break Gallery. Meet some of the Artists on Monday, May 13 from 5 to 6:30. Gallery open Tuesday through Thursday from 9 to 5. The Windham Arts Coffee Break Gallery at Eastern CT Veteran Community Center, 47 Crescent Street, Willimantic.

May 9 Liber TEA "I Never Knew My Father" A program about "War Orphans" whose soldier parent didn't survive. 5:30 p.m. Veteran Center, 47 Crescent Street, Willimantic. Refreshments served. Sponsored by the America Museum. Donations appreciated.

Jillson House

May 24 Tavern Night at Jillson House. Learn about Katherine Hepburn and what she liked to eat and drink. 5:30 Suggested donation is \$10. The Jillson Museum is located at 627 Main Street, Willimantic.

*Senior Living/Senior Moments
The Last But Not Least Generation
The Graduating Seniors (Elders) Passing The Torch To The Younger Generation*

*Written By A Poet, That Didn't Even Know It
Senior Advocate*

Our Time has come, The Elders Said
Not to just speak of other things
But rather let us spread our wings
Not to just support and fund all other things.

With the coming of this Spring
Let's "Fund The Elders"- now that we are the King (& Queen)

It is that simple; no need to ping.
As we age we have really begun to sing!

With our knowledge and our grace
We are aging quickly and
Hoping to stay in place.
But find ourselves in such great haste.
Struggling to find housing that suits our taste.

We desire a Center
Hoping that we can just mentor
Coming into a common ground
Helping to guide our Town
To make decisions sound
To put their focus on our requests
This would be the very best.

Perhaps a Center of perfect design
We all could "celebrate", perhaps a glass of wine?

Let our voices be heard
As strong as that of a singing bird
We shouldn't have to fight like some kind of nerd.

Perhaps a Tribute to all still living
To thank us for all that we have given
Even consider a place of Assisted Living.

They say it is never too late
But understand we can't just wait.

Judith Lovdal

Withdrawn

Hidden away in some place
No one dares to find
Recluses share secrets without a sound
Foraging for things that defy touch

while making sense of nothingness and self loathing

Where are these enigmatic voyagers?

Lost only to those daring enough to search beyond belief

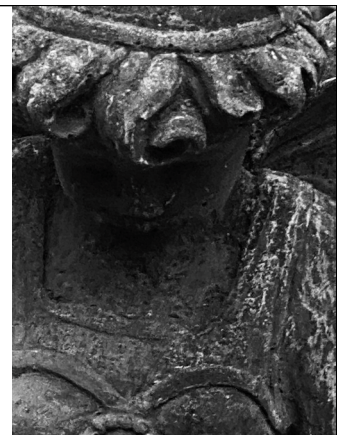
Tortured and tormented and tattered they seek

only the refuge of their lost fullness

Look diligently in the crevices of blighted absences

There, in darkness waiting, am I

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.



THE 10TH ANNUAL TRAIL RUN

COME AND ENJOY GOODWIN STATE FOREST

Sunday, June 2, 2024 9:00am

Registration is open

Registration Fee;\$25; SeniorFee \$20; (age 50+); Youth Fee \$15
(Under Age 17)

Registration Fee is Non-Refundable - Cash or Check- Make Checks
Payable to:FGF/CFPA and Mailed to 23 Potter Rd, Hampton, CT
06247.

Registration - Should someone want to register for the Run they can
obtain a hardcopy of the Registration form or register on line with
Webscorer from the Friends of Goodwin State Forest at [https://www.
friendsofgoodwinforest.org/](https://www.friendsofgoodwinforest.org/)

There is no registration day of race and all Registrations must be
received by May 31st. Questions? Please contact Bill via e-mail at
WHMARS@cox.net or hard-copy to Bill's attention at the Goodwin
Conservation Center at address above. AND Tee Shirts are available.
Please check colors, sizes, cost at [https://www.friendsofgoodwinfor-
est.org/](https://www.friendsofgoodwinforest.org/)

Hi. I'm Ted. I'm 27. It's 2024. This is a story you'll want to hear.

By Chamele

The first time I saw her was at the grocery store. She was standing in the pasta aisle checking out the different sauces. Wow. She was beautiful. I couldn't stop looking at her. Not too tall. Chunky, not fat. Curvey. Sandy wavy hair. You wanted to touch it. And when she turned her head a bit, she had hot red lipstick. Wow. Then someone bumped into me. An old lady. We went through our apologies and when I looked back she was gone. I hurried around the store looking for her, then I saw her heading out the door. I dropped my groceries and followed. Gone again. How could I lose her so quickly. Then I saw her get into a car. Not just any car. It was a pristine classic Rolls. Wow. She drove off. I jump in my VW and followed.

I know. I know what you're thinking. Stalker. I just couldn't lose her. I never felt like that before. I kept a conversation with myself as I tried not to follow too close. It went... fool... Has your life come to this?.... stalker!!.... and then when I thought of her I kept on driving.

She turned up 74. Then left on Zaicek, right, left and we were on a dirt road. Nothing but woods. She's going to see me, I thought. I saw her pull into a short driveway in front of a huge red house close to the road. I slowed down but didn't stop. Watched her get out of the car and walk inside. I drove a little up the road then turned around and drove back. All quiet. No mailbox with a name. Not knowing what to do I went home.

When I thought about how to see her again I figured I'd be at the grocery store at the same time on the same day of the week. Maybe I'd get lucky. First week, no. Second week, no third, no. Fourth, there she was. How could nobody else, I mean any other guy not notice how beautiful this woman was. They should be falling all over themselves when she was around. I was. One of the workers pushed a huge dolly of boxed goods in front of me. He started opening boxes to restock the shelves. I walked around him but she was gone. Again...?

I rushed around the store and found her again heading out the door. I followed, the stalker that I was becoming. I watched her get into her pristine car and drive off. You know I followed. Same route. Same house. I drove by and turned around. Tried to find some way to know who she was. Nothing. I went home.

A month later there she was in the pasta aisle. Whole thing happened again. Someone inadvertently blocked my way and she was leaving the store, into her car driving to that house. And me like a puppy dog, a little creepy, following.

As I passed by I watched her head toward the house, But this time she turned toward me, stopped and stared. I panicked, kept driving. My heart thumping. Stalker!!! I pulled over far ahead and waited till I could calm down. Ah, the road had no access but the way I came, so that meant I had to turn around and go back by the house. Boy, she noticed me. Yikes, you get what you ask for, Stalker. Drove back past the house, All quiet. Went home, collapsed on the couch and then proceeded to blast myself for a couple of hours.

Got a text, my friend Dan was coming over to borrow my jumper cables. When he walked in, I blurted the whole story out. He never even got a chance to sit down, but when I finished he fell into the recliner. He didn't say anything for a while. Would start to say something then stop and think. Finally....

"Teddy," he started slowly. "I know you, man. You know lots of women. For you to follow one around like this...It's...well...What?" he stared at me trying to figure it all out.

"I just...can't get her out of my head."

He nodded. Took a breath. "Look, maybe we need to go about this another way so you don't get arrested for stalking. What house is it? If we get an address, we can get a name. We both know a lot of people. Maybe someone knows her and we can get you a proper intro."

"Yeah."

"Where's the house?"

I told him. "You take 74 then Zaicek then a right and then a left. It's a dirt road. The house is not too far up on the left. I looked for a number. No luck."

"Huh. Well, you know I'm a substitute deliverer at the post office. I don't remember that house, that road. There's a cut off around there, but I don't remember a road."

"It's dirt."

"Well, I got a few minutes, let's take a quick drive."

"Okay."

"We'll take my car."

"Okay."

So we followed the Route 74, Zaicek, right... couldn't find the road. Where I thought it should be was just a pull off, then woods. We drove back and forth a couple of times.

"This has to be it."

Dan pulled over. "Well, looks like some kind of trail. Let's see where it goes. We hiked for about 5 minutes. Me really thinking that my mind was cracking. Then I pushed away some branches and saw an old foundation. We walked over and looked around.

Then Dan asked, "What color was the house?"

"Red," I answered.

He pulled a board out of the debris. It was a faded red. We both looked at each other.

"Look, I saw a house not a wreck. This seems the right place but maybe I was so caught up I...must be confused."

Dan threw the board back on the debris pile. "Let's swing by the post office. Deb is working. She'll know the house."

"Okay." I started to feel a little better.

"I don't know that house," she said. "I don't know that road." She took a moment and processed the house I described and the location I thought it was. Then she stopped. "That's the ...are you guys punking me?"

"What?" Dan said.

"That house, at least the one you're supposedly describing, is at the town hall."

"What?" my turn.

"Look guys, I don't have time for these games. I got to get back to work. Dan call me if you want to go see Betty's band Friday." And then she turned and went out back.

We were really confused. At least I was. "What did she mean, it was at the town hall?"

Dan shrugged his shoulders. Looked at his watch. "They're still open. Let's go see."

To the town hall.

Sara was working. We told her about the house and that Deb told us to come here.

"Sure," she said. "I know that house."

I exhaled. Finally.

"It's on the wall around the corner."

What?

Dan and I looked at each other and walked around the corner.

And there it was. On the wall. A painting of the house.

Sara walked up behind us. "That's a painting by internationally known painter Gretta Swift. We were lucky to get it. Cool huh?" Someone walked in and Sara went back to her desk.

Dan and I stared at the painting.

"That's the house." I said. "And her car." We both leaned in to get a better view.

Dan pointed over to a corner of the painting. "And isn't that your car?"

"Whoa."

Then Dan pointed to the plaque on the wall. His eyes were pretty big.

I read the plaque. My breath catching.

Painting by Gretta Swift
1932
Entitled
The Red House on Lipps Road

Tai Chi Classes for Health and 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: Wed 12:30-1:30

Coventry Senior Center: Wed 9:30-10:30a

Lebanon Senior Center: Tue 4-5p, Thu 6:30-7:30p

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FLASH FICTION

Happy Mother's Day

To the mothers of all children:
I must say thank you
not only on this day
but for all that you do

You taught and you cared
right from the start.
The choices you made
came right from the heart.

Your style is your own
so special and true—
your heart opened wide
as your children be by your side

You have taken the time
to allow them to grow.
The guidance you gave them
and the patience you showed

They may not say,
and they try not to show,
that the love that you have given
has allowed them to grow

No matter the challenge
in good times and bad,
you stood by their side
never wondering why you were there.

You may think
your work might be done.
Let me assure you:
it has just begun.

Happy Mother's Day


By Jeanne Esterquest

WINDHAM/WILLIMANTIC NAACP
ANNUAL FREEDOM FUND EVENT

A Vote for Democracy

GET OUT THE VOTE

Guest Speaker:
Secretary of State
Stephanie Thomas



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Regional Community Media & Arts News

Greetings everyone, I hope the Solar Eclipse treated you well—what a great reminder of our place in the Universe! It has been a very busy month with a lot to share so I will get right to it:

1. Grant award news from The Cultural Coalition—110 Grants for \$2.8 Million to the eastern region
2. The *On the Homefront* series adds a second radio station in our region on May 23—WICH AM/FM
3. Local radio at WILI AM/FM is blowing up its weekday talk and information programming



ties/\$5,000
Woodstock Historical Society/\$6,100

Tolland County (eastern CT region)—9 Grants/\$58,500

Coventry

Coventry Arts Guild/\$5,500
Coventry Historical Society/\$6,400
Museum of Connecticut Glass/\$5,200
Windham Area Arts Collaborative/David Hayes Art Foundation/\$9,400

Mansfield

Consonare Choral Community/\$6,000
Mansfield Historical Society/\$8,400

Stafford

Stafford Historical Society/\$5,400

Willington

Eastern Connecticut Center for History Art and Performance/\$6,800
Willington Historical Society/\$5,400

TALK RADIO IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT IS EXPANDING TWO STATIONS FOR *ON THE HOMEFRONT* MORE LOCAL PROGRAMS FOR WILI

On Thursday May 23, 2024 at 5 pm, the *On the Homefront* series will begin broadcasts on a second radio station to extend our coverage from the Windham/ Quiet Corner region of the northeast to Norwich and New London in the southeast. With significant reach into the three counties of eastern Connecticut—

Tolland, Windham, and New London—we hope to reach an increasing number of the ½ million people who live in more than 40 towns across the region. Connecting local radio with YouTube and mobile channels will make it easier than ever to join us.



WICH-94.5
Personality Radio FM
1310AM

-Wednesdays from 5-6 pm on WILI AM 1400 and 95.3 digital FM/Willimantic

-Thursdays from 5-6 pm on WICH AM 1310/FM 94.5/Norwich/New London

For the coming months our priorities will include:

1. Continuing full coverage of the arts community in all its forms across the region.
2. The increasing impacts of recent structural and financial changes to the system of health care delivery.
3. The growing imbalance of our housing market economy and the growth of tenant unions.
4. Direct support for live music in all venues across the region—interviews, tour info, websites.
5. Local and regional governance and development challenges.

Our base of operations and production will continue at WILI in Willimantic, but story coverage and guests will be regionwide. Both radio stations are part of the Hall Communications group serving Connecticut.

Meet a few of our recent guests in the radio house!

Daniela de Sousa from Spiral Arts sponsored a wildly successful *Empty Bowls* fundraiser for the Covenant Soup Kitchen on April 24. Great weather, great turnout, great soup, the love of our community was flowing!



From a series of features about the newly formed Latino Chamber of Commerce of Windham with VP Luis Morale Torres and a business member Tamara Riera from Jaysys Food Truck.



WILI Expands Local Talk Radio Service! Now on Monday through Friday from 4-6 pm

MONDAY

4-5 pm/My Three with Steve Everett, Columbia First Selectman.

5-5:30 pm/Ravings & Cravings – Ruth Hartunian Alumbaugh, about the eastern CT food scene.

5:30-6 pm/Connecticut East – Brian Scott Smith covers eastern CT entertainment, town, and other events.

TUESDAY

4-5 pm/Program still in development with new host.

5-5:30 pm/Hometown Threads – Keith C. Rice puts the radio spotlight on local entrepreneurs with an in-person interview with historic family businesses.

5:30 – 6 pm/The Neighborhood – Former Windham Mayor Ernie Eldridge and Anita Sebestyan discuss Windham History and how it relates to current projects and events with local guests.

WEDNESDAY

4-5 PM/Garden Talk with Lisa Napolitano & Len Giddix.

5-6 PM/On the Homefront – John Murphy with weekly community conversations about the arts economy, regional culture, nonprofit news and events, local government issues, health care, and tenant unions.

THURSDAY

4-5 pm/The Republic Forum with Jeff Veins & Tom White.

5-6 pm/Your Body, Your Mind on this Journey called Life – Steven Acevedo on Nutrition & Health topics.

FRIDAY

4-5 PM/Homegrown—the regional live music scene with Matt Rupar.

Friday 5-6 pm/Let's Talk About It: Susan Johnson & Dennis O'Brien on politics and government.

WILI YouTube Channel for all Monday-Friday local talk shows—all programs below are available here: <https://www.youtube.com/@wiliradio7000>. Each program has its own playlist with all the shows. Search on “WILI Radio” and subscribe!

The *On the Homefront* audio podcast archive is available 24/7. Subscribe to get every new program!
<https://www.wili.com/on-the-homefront-podcast/>

As always, thanks for reading *Neighbors* and for listening to or watching *On the Homefront*. I appreciate your interest and support for local media wherever you find it—and I hope you will stay connected with this project and join me in the studio when you have news to share!

Always keep the faith,

John Murphy
john@humanartsmedia.com



CULTURAL COALITION

serving southeastern & northeastern CT

The Cultural Coalition serving southeastern and northeastern Connecticut is the Connecticut Office of the Arts Designated Regional Service Organization (DRSO) serving 42 towns across our region. A wide range of useful information and resources are available for artists and arts groups at their website www.culturesect.org.

You can register in their database to receive mailings and newsletters to keep you informed of training and grant opportunities. Their website today shared wonderful news about a round of arts grants for the Quiet Corner:

CT Humanities Announces \$16 Million in Grant Awards—110 Grants for \$2.8 Million to eastern CT

CT Humanities provides general operating support grants to help the state's museums, cultural, humanities, and arts organizations maintain and grow their ability to serve their community and the public, connect K-12 teachers and students to strong humanities and arts content, and improve their information technology and digital infrastructure.

110 Grants were awarded to eastern Connecticut for \$2,788,900 (in the 42 towns served by the Cultural Coalition). It was very sweet to notice that many award winners have been guests on our WILI Radio program and we look forward to sharing stories about your good work in the coming year. Looking back over recent years it is becoming clear that the post-Covid arts economy in our region is growing and in recovery mode!
Congratulations and bravo!

Windham County--23 Grants/\$137,900

Ashford

Windham Arts Organization/Ashford Arts Council/\$5,000

Brooklyn

Col. Daniel Putnam Association/\$8,600

Canterbury

Canterbury Historical Society/\$5,200

Prudence Crandall Museum/CT State Historic Preservation Office/\$5,000

The Finnish American Heritage Society/\$6,000

Coventry

Windham Area Arts Collaborative/David Hayes Art Foundation/\$9,400

Eastford

Eastford Historical Society/\$5,200

Killingly

Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society/\$5,300

Pomfret

Community Cultural Committee of Northeast Connecticut/\$5,500

Performing Arts of Northeast Connecticut/\$7,700

Pomfret Historical Society/\$5,400

Scotland

Governor Samuel Huntington Trust/\$5,600

Thompson

The Thompson Historical Society/\$5,700

Windham

Connecticut Eastern Chapter National Railway Historical Society/\$6,600

Storyline/\$5,100

Willimantic Public Art/\$5,400

Windham Arts/\$8,500

Windham Preservation/\$5,100

Windham Regional Arts Council/\$5,500

Windham Textile and History Museum/\$8,800

Woodstock

Chamberlin Mill /\$6,100

Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra/\$5,500
Society for the Preservation of New England Antiqui-



Bicycling in Connecticut (Part 3)

Article and photos by Dean Farrell

Last year, I wrote a two-part essay about the various bike paths I've explored in our state. I've since ridden more and thought I would bring them to your attention.

Larkin State Park Trail. This 10.8-mile path runs through Naugatuck, Middlebury, Oxford, and Southbury. To get to the Route 63 trailhead in Naugatuck from the parking area, I had to walk my bike up a steep, rocky incline. I was huffing and puffing and sweating before my ride even began.

The path itself is made of dirt and is loaded with stones. It also features many dips and slopes as you cross the various roads. And it's not all that scenic! As such, I can only recommend this trail to those looking for an intense workout.

Southwick Rail Trail/Columbia Greenway. This paved path is a continuation of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, which I covered in "Bicycling in Connecticut, Part 2" (May 2023 *Neighbors*). You'll pick it up on Phelps Road in West Suffield and take it about nine miles into Massachusetts, through Southwick and Westfield. At the state line, you'll see the remnants of the old New Haven to Northampton Canal.

The Massachusetts end goes from the Southwick Rail Trail (due south of Shaker Road) to the Westfield River Esplanade. You'll go through downtown Westfield and pass farm fields and the Little River. Much of the trail is elevated, following the old New York/New Haven/Hartford Railroad. The section between Main Street and the Westfield River offers exceptional views of the town and its surrounding landscape. This is one of America's only elevated urban rail trails!

Vernon Rails-to-Trails (Hop River State Park Rockville Spur). This four-mile stone-dust trail begins on Warren Avenue in Vernon. However, you'll want to park 0.2 miles away at the Rails-to-Trails lot on Church Street. It was once a railroad depot but is now a trailhead, which dedicated volunteers maintain scrupulously. It's also an outdoor museum with numerous plaques that tell of local railroad history. (Among the facts I learned: the Rockville Spur was built in 1863 to serve the area's lucrative textile industry.) You also will see the remnants of a

roundhouse, and other railroad-based artifacts.

The spur begins at the intersection of Church and Phoenix Streets. A signpost marks the start of the path, and there are quarter-mile markers the rest of the way. Before long, you'll be in a scenic wooded area. Your first crossing, about .25 miles down, is at Maple Avenue. As there is a crosswalk but no signals, I recommend walking your bike across it.



Soon, you'll cross the bridge over the Tankerhoosen River. Look upriver (through the ubiquitous trees) and you'll see Tankerhoosen Lake, one of the river's seven ponds. It's worth getting off your bike and taking

in this fine example of nature's beauty.

After that, you'll be at the Interstate 84 underpass. In the space between tunnels, you'll feast your eyes on a colorful, dazzling mural painted by local artists and schoolkids.

The next intersection crosses Route 30 (Hartford Turnpike). Depending on traffic, it may take some time before you're able to cross. Again, you'll want to dismount and walk across this very busy stretch of road. The path continues through the woods, and has unmarked side paths leading to it from nearby houses. Clearly, the spur is popular with the locals!

When you're 3.25 miles in (at West Street), the path narrows into little more than a swath in the grass as you enter a residential neighborhood. One half-mile later, you're back in the woods and the path becomes wide again. It ends suddenly at an earthen mound on an old bridge abutment. There, you have the option of descending the path to Vernon Avenue, though you'll need to watch out for loose soil. Or you can just turn back.

Windsor Locks Canal Trail. This 5.4-mile paved path begins at the Windsor Locks Canal & State Park, located behind the Montgomery Mill apartments on Bridge Street (Route 140). The asphalt is badly in need of repaving, which makes for a bumpy ride. You also have to look out for the ubiquitous, and sometimes belligerent, geese—not to mention their, um, droppings. However, the scenery atones for these obstacles.

As you proceed north along the path, the canal lays to your west while the Connecticut River is east of you. The trail's isolated location between the two bodies of water, coupled with its copious vegetation, makes it ideal for spotting wildlife. There is also a bald eagle's aerie, which I had never seen along a bike path before.

As you approach the Suffield towpath, you likely will encounter fishermen doing their thing. Just remember, it's a multi-use trail that we all need to share. It once ended on Canal Road in Suffield, but now extends another mile or so over the CT 190 bridge to Enfield.

Spring Poppies Paint Party

Sunday, May 19th from 2pm – 5 pm

Hampton Town Hall Community Room

Paint, create and blossom! Unleash your inner artist as you paint the beauty of poppies with friends and fellow art enthusiasts. Fun for all ages, and no experience necessary. Sponsored by the Hampton Recreation Commission, this event includes a 14x14 sized canvas, everything needed to create a painting and take home. There will be light snacks and refreshments. Tickets are \$30.00 per painter. To book and pay for your spots go to PaintWithPammy.com. Hampton residents can save \$10.00 per painter by paying at the Hampton Town Hall during regular business hours. Questions? call Andrea at 203-506-3567.

Willington Seniors, Inc.
is holding a fundraising

TAG SALE

Indoor and Outdoor
MAY 18th

9am to 3 pm

20 Senior Way, Willington Ct.

Fantastic array of items!
Food and beverages available

Still a few vendor sites available
Call 429-8321 for information

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Rain or Shine

Trash, Trinkets and Treasures

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The Planet Press

No 4

May — 2024

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Writer, Designer, Editor



The Planet Press Mission

We are dedicated to fostering a resilient and informed community by delivering timely, accurate, and engaging environmental news. Driven by the belief that a well-informed community is a powerful force for positive change, our mission is to illuminate the environmental news and issues that impact Northeastern Connecticut. We are committed to providing a platform for diverse voices. Together with our readers, we aspire to create a community united in its dedication to preserving the natural beauty of Connecticut, ensuring that our region remains a vibrant and resilient place for generations to come.

Solar Nano Devices

By employing nanoscale antennas, Brian Willis, a researcher at UConn, gathers untapped segments of sunlight, extends solar energy utilization, and enhances the affordability of clean and environmentally friendly energy.

Lamont's Illegal Cuts

Despite publicly advocating for a statewide initiative to plant more conifers, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont faced accusations from angry neighbors and other sources alleging that thousands of trees and bushes were unlawfully chopped behind his Greenwich residence. According to CT Insider's report on Tuesday, he received a citation for removing over 180 trees within a protected wetland area, purportedly to enhance the view of a pond from his \$7.6 million residence.

Wood Frog Evolution

A study published in Ecology and Evolution, led by Rick Relyea, Ph.D., a professor of biological sciences and the David M. Darrin Senior Endowed Chair at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, reveals the discovery of a frog species that underwent evolution within just 25 years. Surprisingly, the driving force behind this adaptation was

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Photo by Eugene Zelenko

salt. "In our study, the highest salt concentration was found in a wetland adjacent to a parking lot that's been there for 25 years, where the salt concentrations are nearly 100 times higher than in pristine wetlands. We found that over the course of just 10 generations, these wood frogs evolved a much higher salt tolerance," said Relyea.

Conservation Is Working

In a groundbreaking study published in the journal Science, researchers from numerous institutions examined 665 trials of conservation measures spanning various countries, oceans, and species types, some dating as far back as 1890. They discovered that these efforts positively impacted two-thirds of the cases, marking the first comprehensive analysis of its kind.

Hot Summer

The recent NWS forecast issued last month indicates that numerous regions across the US, including New England, are expected to experience above-average temperatures from June to August.

UConn's Sustainability Plan

The recently released UConn Sustainability Action Plan outlines precise steps to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, conserve resources, integrate sustainability into UConn's academic and research endeavors, promote equity and engagement, and foster partnerships and innovation to tackle sustainability issues.

All About Mowing in May

Lawns, covering a staggering 40 million acres across the United States, represent 2% of our land—a vast expanse of irrigated crops. However, the traditional upkeep of lawns, involving a cycle of mowing, raking, fertilizing, weeding, chemical treatments, and watering, exacts a heavy toll on our time, finances, and resources, not to mention the environment.

Despite these investments, lawns offer minimal advantages to wildlife and frequently pose harm. Typically consisting of grass alone, they lack floral provisions and nesting spots crucial for bees, often subjecting them to pesticides detrimental to their well-being and other invertebrates.

The onset of the growing season is a crucial period for recently emerged native bees searching for nourishment. Access to floral resources can be challenging, particularly in urban and suburban areas. Allowing your lawn to grow longer and encouraging flower blossoms can offer nectar and pollen, aiding in the well-being of your bee neighbors. The ini-

tiative known as No Mow May, initially championed by the UK-based organization Plantlife, has now found resonance in North America. No Mow May encourages abstaining from lawn mowing throughout May, fostering the blossoming of flowers that support early-season pollinators. This period, spanning late winter to early spring, typically witnesses a scarcity of floral resources.

The start of the growing season is a critical time for hungry, newly emerged native bees. Floral resources may be hard to find, especially in urban and suburban landscapes. By allowing it to grow longer and letting flowers bloom, your lawn can provide nectar and pollen to help your bee neighbors thrive.

You don't need to go an entire month without mowing. Mowing every two or three weeks can increase flower blooms and feed hungry bees.

My Lawn?

At times, it varies based on your lawn. Lawns comprised solely of turfgrass offer minimal to no resources for pollinators. However, lawns incorporating low-growing

flowering plants like dandelions can supply nectar and pollen to various pollinators. Lawns mowed at taller heights (over 3 inches) and less frequently generally host more flowering plants, fostering a broader range of pollinators and other insects. Yet, allowing your lawn to grow unattended and then cutting more than one-third of its height in one mow can cause stress to both the turfgrass plants and the mower.

Introduce flowering plants to the mix to enhance your lawn's appeal to pollinators. Incorporating low-growing varieties such as Dutch White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), and Creeping Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) will diversify the floral landscape of your yard while enduring mowing and foot traffic.

Another option is to deliberately cultivate a bee-friendly lawn. These low-maintenance lawns are intentionally seeded and tended with flowering plants to nourish pollinators.

The Plastic Problem

Recently, talks of a treaty to cap global plastic production resumed in Ottawa. Thousands of negotiators and observers from most of the world's nations are convening in the Canadian city to draft a treaty to halt the swiftly intensifying issue of plastic pollution.

Leading this initiative are African nations that have taken pioneering steps in eliminating single-use plastics, which constitute the majority of plastic pollu-

tion. Nearly thirty-six countries across the African continent have implemented bans on different types of single-use plastics and packaging.

Prior to the most recent round of discussions, European researchers released a database containing over 16,000 chemicals that plastics may contain. These chemicals have numerous connections to cancer risks and harm to the human immune system.

As reported by the United Na-

tions Environment Programme, the world's oceans, rivers, and lakes receive the equivalent of 2,000 garbage trucks worth of plastic waste every day. Consequently, individuals are increasingly exposed to inhaling, ingesting, and drinking minuscule plastic particles.

Dorm Waste Doomed to Dumpsters

College students frequently find themselves with surplus furniture, dorm decorations, and unused school supplies as the school year draws close. Regrettably, a considerable portion of these items often need to be discarded.

Due to the fluidity of college students' living arrangements, they frequently find the need to discard furniture and supplies that are no longer required as their circumstances evolve from year to year.

According to Planet Aid, the average college student generates approximately 640 pounds of waste each year, with a notable increase occurring towards the end of the semester.

According to Tufts University, there is a notable surge in solid waste production on college campuses nationwide, particularly during the months of May and June, when students leave behind an average of 230 tons of waste.

Students attending schools far from home may also seek to

dispose of impractical or costly belongings to pack or ship. Regrettably, many of these items end up in landfills rather than being recycled, donated, or resold. Most waste generated by college students occurs during the end-of-year rush to vacate dorms.

To make matters worse, in all 50 states, engaging in unauthorized trash diving can lead to trespassing charges, as all businesses and private residences are deemed private property. This means it will be genuinely wasted,

and other students, such as those who have to stay year-round, cannot utilize this 100% off-yard sale.

The University of Connecticut has established guidelines for recycling items on campus. Since the initiation of a mixed recycling program in 2009, nearly all recyclable materials can be placed in any recycling container. However, this protocol has yet to be implemented at their regional campuses.



Recent Environmental Regulation Changes Show New Road

The Biden administration's decision to impose strict regulations on pollution from coal-fired power plants at the end of April marked a significant policy change. This is yet another abrupt shift in the trajectory of environmental regulation in the United States.

Over the past decade, environmental regulations, in particular, have been subject to a cycle of repeal and replacement, causing significant uncertainty and instability.

New Power Plant Rules

The Biden administration has taken decisive steps to phase out coal as a primary source of electricity in America, implementing four significant regulations aimed at reducing harmful emissions and addressing climate change from coal-fired power plants, among the nation's most polluting energy sources.

Permits for Power Lines

The administration finished a regulation expediting federal permits for large-scale transmission lines as part of a broader effort to enhance the scope of America's

electrical grids.

Shielding Alaskan Wilderness

The Biden administration extended federal safeguards to encompass millions of acres of pristine Alaskan wilderness, prohibiting oil, gas, and mining activities in some of the most untouched areas in the nation.

Coal-Burning Power Plants

The administration solidified the last pillar of its strategy to address climate change: a regulation mandating that the nation's coal-fired power plants significantly reduce or eliminate the greenhouse gas emissions they emit into the atmosphere or face closure.



Data from the state's annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, released April 25th, reveals a significant uptick in GHG emissions, the primary driver of climate change. They rose 6% from 2020 to 2021 and 7% over the two years from 2020 to 2022, mirroring a similar trend observed in the recent federal inventory released by the Environmental Protection Agency.

In Connecticut, there has been a significant rise in transportation emissions since 2020. Between 2021 and 2022, they surged by 4%, standing just 1% below transportation emissions in 1990, a key benchmark outlined in the state's Global Warming Solutions Act.

Transportation emissions in Connecticut represent a notable 42% of the total emissions, significantly higher than the national average of 28%. Moreover, they surpass the combined emissions of the following two sectors— heating in residential and commercial buildings— which stand at 21% and 13% respectively. Emissions in both of these sectors also saw an increase in 2021 and 2022.

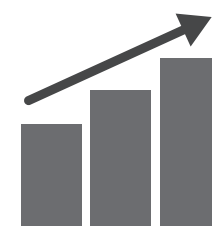
The state successfully achieved

its 2020 goal of reducing economy-wide GHG emissions by 10% from 1990 levels.

However, it has regressed since then and is significantly off-track to reach its next milestone — aiming to be 45% below 2001 levels by 2030.

In Connecticut, initiatives addressing the primary contributor — transportation emissions — have faced repeated obstacles from state legislators. The latest unsuccessful endeavor involved adopting stringent California standards for cars and light-duty trucks, aiming to phase out the purchase of new gasoline motor vehicles by 2035 and establish zero-emission criteria for heavy-duty vehicles.

Currently, the state adheres to less stringent federal standards, with the only legislation on this issue in the current session focusing on revising and coordinating programs and infrastructure for zero-emission vehicles.



Connecticut's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Rise

Understanding What Climate Change Means for Today

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in weather patterns and temperatures, according to the United Nations Climate Action. NASA says the loss of sea ice, melting glaciers and ice sheets, rising sea levels, and more intense heat waves are already occurring. Additional notable and evident effects of climate change include:

- There is less snowpack in mountain ranges and polar regions.
- When snow is present, it melts faster.
- Permafrost is melting, releasing methane. This powerful greenhouse gas rises into the atmosphere and compounds the problem of climate change.
- Sea ice in the Arctic Ocean and around the North Pole is melting faster. Data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) indicates that the amount of ice covering the Arctic Ocean has diminished by more than 40 percent since the

start of the satellite era in 1979.

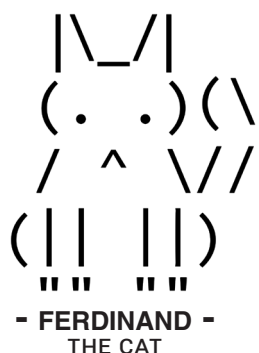
- Tropical storms have become more severe due to warmer ocean water temperatures.
- Sea levels are rising, threatening coastal communities and ecosystems. The NOAA reports that, in 2022, the global average sea level set a new record high of 101.2 mm, four inches above 1993 levels.
- In many coastal locations around the United States, the rate of sea level rise is even higher than the global average due to erosion, soil and groundwater pumping, and subsidence.
- High-tide flooding is now between 300 and 900 percent more frequent than 50 years ago.
- The ocean stores most excess heat from rising global temperatures, contributing to measurable shelf retreat and stress on marine life.

The more individuals understand global climate change, the more they can do to help combat it.

Flower of the Month May Hawthorn



Hawthorns are deciduous shrubs featuring simple leaves, typically with toothed or lobed edges. Their clusters of white or pink flowers give way to small, apple-like pomes in hues ranging from red to orange and even to blue or black. While the taste and texture of these fruits can differ, they are edible and occasionally employed in herbal remedies.





Church Street, Willimantic.

Photo by Ingrid Treiss.

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4.26.2024. I saw this beautiful hawk quite close-up where I live. It flies low, going after little birds hiding in the bushes. I think it's a Northern Harrier.
Artwork and caption by Kathy LaVallee of North Windham.

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