

# Neighbors

No. 231

September - October 2024

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8.15.2024. Faces in the crowd at Willimantic's Third Thursday Streetfest. All photos by Pete Polomski.

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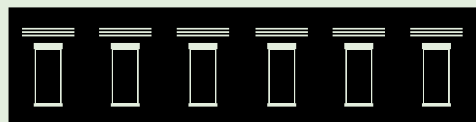
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# Cultivating gratitude

By Loretta Wrobel



I am dismayed to register how quickly I begin complaining and grumbling about all of the negative stuff that befalls us on a daily basis. It becomes a major challenge to stay upbeat in the midst of the continuous barrage of bad news. Climate catastrophes, wars, killings, and regular invasions of deadly species that threaten our health and our plants is a constant happening. Where is the good news? Where is the joy of the miracle of our existence? I often hear friends gloomy and depressed about how difficult it is to deal with the horrible crimes and injustices in our world. We are all suffering from shell shock.

As I was walking this morning, it occurred to me that I don't consistently express gratitude for the beauty that surrounds me. It is more familiar to stay in my head and rant about how my computer is not working, the latest bizarre crime, or the ceaseless wildfires and destructive hurricanes. I find it hard to pay attention to the birds singing, a text from a friend, or friendly waves from a neighbor. What a wakeup alarm to accept how mired I am in the pattern of focusing on what is not going well, and not noticing or being blocked from looking for what is breathtaking and poignant.

As a child we enter the world full of curiosity and keen interest in everything. As we live our lives, we become tainted with disappointments, pain at seeing the same issues coming up again and again. We tire of endless wars or that wars continue no matter how much we pray and work to bring peace and negotiation as a response to aggressions and conflicts. Why is it so laborious to employ our words and work with those we disagree with? Why must we respond with a knee jerk reaction to some hurt or perceived attack? Are we adults? Why not examine how to work together rather than eliminating anyone we disagree with or who thinks differently? Armed conflict and fights only create more problems, kill innocent people, and destroy the only planet we have. It seems that weapons are not an answer; they are a means of intensifying hatred and resentment and planting the seeds of yet another conflict.

When I am fixed on what is wrong, I can be blind to other realities. I didn't see the wondrous mushroom on my path. This amazing yellow orange mushroom flower growing dramatically on a tree stump displaying itself for me to enjoy. How many times did I charge by on my high impact exercise routine, missing the spectacle that would have enhanced my day, brightened my mood and opened me to a wealth of possibilities?

I am experimenting with cultivating gratitude and saying thank you for the miracles and gifts that shower me with pleasure and strength. The trick is to be open to receive. I know there is an ongoing parade of frightening and alarming events and situations that bombard us. We have such advanced technology that we can tune in to all that is happening in the entire world twenty-four hours a day! Our imperfect brains cannot digest this overwhelming amount of information and horror without reacting by withdrawing, numbing out or getting fiercely aggressive. Aggression and anger fires us up and allows us to falsely feel empowered. We will get and destroy the enemy.

Spend time with young children either in pre-school or kindergarten and you will see this in action. The child responds to a threat from another child with more aggression. Classroom teachers assume that by showing children how to act differently, they will be more civilized. When grown, they will display more control, be ready to engage in diplomatic behavior, and work towards a peaceful, mutually satisfying solution!!!

For me, by practicing ingesting the total package, including the magic and wonder that is always in front of me, I wish to train my brain and emotions to respond from a mature perspective. This requires much surveillance on my part, because my anger is a powerful emotion, especially when it feels like justifiable rage. Managing these emotions takes monitoring and vigilance. One also has to deal with the consequences of expressing the rage. Other people may not agree with me or appreciate my feelings. My body may not enjoy the stress and strain that all this puts on it.

It appeals to me to shift from taxing my body to avoiding stress and strain. I am on the hunt for good news and being thankful for all the rapture within my world. Opening my eyes and ears to absorb what is there if I choose to look. I still am stunned that I flew by that flamboyant fungus several times without even pausing to admire the beauty and entrancing colors. How could I have missed such a display? And me, someone who is so passionate about colors?

We see what we are programming ourselves to see. I realize how true and startling that simple statement is. What I know is I won't pass that inspiring plant again without saying "hello" and "good morning" and "thank you." What I also know is that it will bring a smile to my face. What better way to start the day? A smile can rectify and soften a huge amount of pain, sorrow and despair.

Laughing and not taking ourselves seriously can add to our capacity to tolerate all that we have to digest in our present world. No one gets away with having a life of ease without the rough bumpy roads we all must travel. There appear to be an endless supply of the challenges that continuously pull us down. Bringing our awareness to a sensitivity and respect for our own energy gas tank can help us cope with patience and compassion for ourself and others. We all know that we will have to cope with sad and painful situations and news, as life throws us curve balls all too frequently. They will come whether or not we are prepared.

My solution is to be as centered as I can be, and to savor the pleasant sensations--regardless how substantial or miniscule. A smile, chuckle, or nod of gratitude can so shift your day. Try it and discover for yourself!

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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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# From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

*"One of the biggest gems in the New England weather is the dazzling uncertainty of it."*

- Mark Twain

By C. Dennis Pierce

Chocolate, vanilla, cookie dough or strawberry? Everyone has their own favorite flavor of ice cream. Normally we don't think of ice cream as a Connecticut agricultural product. Most consumers usually purchase their ice cream while grocery shopping where stores not only offer a large variety of flavors but also brands that have a cult following such as Ben & Jerry's (as an aside note years ago I was working at Dartmouth and every Halloween evening; Ben would arrive and scoop B&J's ice cream for the Dartmouth student's dessert offering. Those were the days when B&J's were operating out of a renovated gas station in Burlington, Vermont).

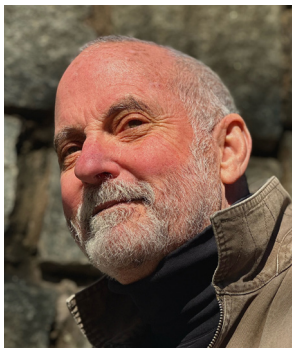
As far as this rich dessert goes you cannot call yourself a true Connecticut resident if you have not experienced the decadent ice cream offerings from the UConn Dairy Bar. Their selections are very popular with those that are visiting the area, maybe on a college tour or parents / grandparents bring the children / grandchildren to visit the farm animals and then top it off the trip with a creamy treat.

While Connecticut hosts a large farming industry did you know there is a limited number of dairy farms that still exist? Connecticut's dairy farms still represent a large part of the state's farmland. The Connecticut Milk Promotion Board shares that Connecticut currently host 87 dairy farms, 97% are family owned, providing an estimate of 2,000,000 glasses of milk.

In this month's column I wanted to feature those local Dairy Bars that offer premium ice cream produced locally that may be off the beaten path. I would suggest that if you have not tried them, you will be surprised on their unique offerings, flavors and genuine local product that each offers. To research this column, I traveled to each and tasted their chocolate ice cream. I have always said that if you fail at making chocolate ice cream, a standard in the industry, then you probably should seek out another line of work. I can say that the Dairy Bars that are listed here not only met my expectations but exceeded them. I believe everyone has a favorite flavor profile when tasting ice cream so I will not share my favorite and leave it up to you to explore.

We-Lik-It Farm is in Pomfret, Connecticut just a short trip down Route 44. It is at 728 Hampton Road in Pomfret Center. Family run ice cream business, the owner, Linda Rich started the dairy bar when she was a dairy farmer. The farm has been in business since 1886. They make their 16% premium ice cream in dozens of flavors that change with the seasons. With toppings and options like cones, dishes, fresh waffle cones, specialty sundaes, frappes, floats, and banana splits, there are many ways to savor the rich creaminess of fresh from the farm deliciousness. In addition to their dairy products their web site suggests other local products that the farm offers. Years ago, the Rich Family was one of the largest sugarhouses in CT. In 2013 they started tapping trees once more. They are proud to be able to offer a variety of pure Connecticut maple syrups, all locally produced and crafted to sweet maple perfection. In a small shop, adjacent to the service counter the farm also offers locally grown, beef and pork, that is USDA certified. On the family farm, their animals always receive humane treatment, from birth to processing. Their cattle are fed a vegetarian diet with access to green pastures and water at all times. You can count on their animals never receive growth hormones, animal by-products or steroids, and their cattle and pigs are grown locally in Connecticut.

Shady Glen Dairy Store is located at 840 Middle Turnpike East, Manchester, Connecticut. John and Bernice Rieg opened the first Shady Glen store near the



Manchester/Bolton town line in 1948. Shady Glen is locally famous for its homemade-style ice cream. In 1946, John and Bernice Rieg decided to expand their farm into making and selling ice cream. The University of Connecticut at the time had a strong program for helping farmers to diversify, and the Riegs worked with Leonard R. Dowd, Professor of Dairy Manufacturing in UConn's Department of Animal Industries, on their first formulas for their ice cream. Shady Glens hours are Monday – Thursday: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday – Saturday: 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sunday: 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Their phone number is: 860.649.4245 and their menu can be found at [places.singleplatform.com](http://places.singleplatform.com)

The Red Barn Stearns Farm Stand (road signage below), also known as the Red Barn Creamery, provides a wide selection of unique flavors of ice cream. They also offer the most unique combination of sundaes; milk shakes with a wide variety of toppings. When visiting you might be overwhelmed by all of the signage depicting the many options available but no worries, just select one that sounds amazing and come back another time to try out those that were not selected. The Red Barn is run by Jason and Renee Stearns. The creamery also provides local, native fruits and vegetables, local jams, pickles, maple syrup, and honey as well as meats and dairy products.

This well-appointed store is located behind the barn on 483 Browns Road in Mansfield and are open from 10:00am to 6:00pm. Their phone number is 860.382.2303.

This month's recipe should address the excess of vegetables from your garden or the many offerings at the local Farmer's Markets. In Italy, the Italians have a recipe called panzanella which is made to use up the end of the growing season ample produce. You can make the corn bread ahead of time. By adding mozzarella cheese or grilled chicken you can make this into a great light lunch.

## Cornbread Panzanella

Serves: 8  
Pre heat oven to 450 degrees  
Refrigerate serving plates

### Cornbread recipe:

Ingredients:  
2 cups of yellow cornmeal  
½ cup of all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon of baking powder  
1 teaspoon of baking soda  
¾ teaspoon of salt  
¾ cup of whole milk  
¾ cup of buttermilk ( you can substitute ¾ tablespoon of lemon juice or vinegar to ¾ cup of whole milk)  
7 tablespoons of butter, melted  
1 large egg, lightly beaten

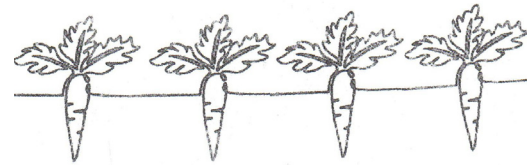
### Directions:

In large bowl combine cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.  
Stir in liquids to dry ingredients a little at a time.  
Add 6 tablespoons of melted butter to the mix. Hold back 1 tablespoon to grease 9 "pan.  
Add egg to mixture  
Pour mixture into pan and bake for 20 minutes. Check for doneness, ovens vary  
Remove from oven and cool.

### Salad

#### Ingredients:

1 red bell pepper, whole – see directions below for peppers  
1 yellow bell pepper, whole



3 tablespoons of red wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons of sherry vinegar  
Coarse salt and ground pepper  
¾ cup of olive oil  
6 ripe tomatoes, halved seeded and cut into 1-inch chunks (about 4 cups)  
1 small onion, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise  
½ cup kalamata olives, pitted and halved  
2 cucumbers, halved lengthwise and cut into ¼ inch thick slices  
½ cup of fresh basil leaves – lightly chopped  
½ cup of fresh mint leaves – lightly chopped  
½ cup of fresh parsley leaves – lightly chopped

### Salad directions:

Roast red and yellow peppers on grill or on burner of a gas stove. Hold with tongs. Or place of broiler rack in oven and turn until charred  
Transfer peppers to bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Set aside for 20 minutes.  
When peppers are cooled, remove the skins, stems, seeds and cut peppers into 1-inch squares.  
Cut cornbread into ¾ inch cubes and arrange them on a baking sheet  
In a 400-degree oven place cornbread cubes and cook until edges are lightly brown. Remove and let cool.  
In a small bowl, combine red wine and sherry vinegar slowly whisk in oil in a steady stream.  
In a large bowl add tomatoes, onion and olives. Add oil / vinegar mixture and let marinate for 15 minutes.  
Add roasted peppers, cucumbers, basil, mint and parsley and toss well  
Add cornbread and toss  
Add salt and ground pepper to taste  
Serve immediately on refrigerated plates

Tip of the month: This was shared from some local gardener that I thought I

would pass on:

Baking soda is a gardener's best friend: here are 10 clever uses in the garden.

1. Natural Fungicide: Mix baking soda with water and liquid soap to spray on plants and combat fungal diseases like powdery mildew.
2. Weed Killer: Directly apply baking soda on garden weeds to kill them without harming surrounding plants.
3. Pest Deterrent: A mixture of baking soda and flour can deter pests like cabbage worms and aphids when dusted on plants.
4. Soil Amendment: Baking soda can be used to neutralize overly acidic soil, improving the environment for plant growth.
5. Tomato Sweetener: Sprinkle baking soda around tomato plants to decrease soil acidity, resulting in sweeter tomatoes.
6. Compost Enhancer: Speed up the composting process by making the environment more alkaline with baking soda.
7. Odor Absorber: Neutralize odors in areas like compost bins by sprinkling baking soda.
8. Tool Cleaner: Clean gardening tools by scrubbing them with a baking soda paste to remove dirt and rust.
9. Seed Germination: Enhance seed germination by soaking seeds in a baking soda solution before planting.
10. Ant Repellent: Deter ants by creating barriers with baking soda around plants or ant trails.

## Upcoming locally grown event you don't want to miss: Willimantic Co-op, 25th Annual Downtown Country Fair – Sunday September 29th 11:00am to 4:00pm

And some final thoughts that I leave you with so that you may ponder on... "Things always fall into place. At the right time. Not always our time, but the right time."

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](mailto:Codfish53@Yahoo.com). Peas be with you. Come celebrate with me and remember, every day is a holiday, and every meal is a banquet. I'll save you a seat at the table!

Photos by the author.





# In Your Corner

By Pam Skelly

The theme of this article is Get Out The Vote – GOTV! The NAACP at the national, state and local levels promotes the power of the vote. The NAACP does NOT endorse any political party or candidate. A priority for the NAACP is to support policies aligned with its mission for civil rights and empowering citizens with their vote. As the late U.S. Rep. John Lewis said, “The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in a democracy.”

## Does Voting Matter? YES!

Here are five reasons to vote:

***In a democracy, you get a say in things that are important to you.***

Your vote holds elected officials accountable. It makes them listen to you and your concerns. If you don't like the job an elected official has done, use your vote to remove that official from office. Your vote is vital to them if they want their elected position.

## ***The policies decided by elected officials affect your life.***

Federal elections get more coverage than state and local elections, and they get the largest voter turnouts. State and local elections are very important because this is where what happens in your town, city and state is decided. These decisions will affect your daily life. Local elected officials create the laws determining policies on taxes, health and public safety, education, economic development. State elected officials are involved in legislation and regulation.

## ***You pay taxes.***

Your vote gives power to the people who will spend your tax money. Make sure that money is used in a responsible and efficient way by voting.

## ***Rights are not necessarily guaranteed.***

Voting is one of the many privileges of living in a democratic society. Lately we are seeing new attacks on voting equity including gerrymandering, voting restrictions, misinformation and election intimidation. Voting is an important right we must protect, and that begins by voting in elections at every level of government.

## ***You matter.***

Diverse voters bring diverse points of view on issues. Your vote matters – elections have been decided on a single vote. Your vote is important to our democracy.

## Very Brief Historical Perspective

In researching this article, I learned that the Constitution left it up to the states to determine who could vote. I had learned in high school that these initial voting laws typically favored white, wealthy men.

-Late 1770s, the voters were primarily white male landowners.

-Early 1800s, state legislatures began to limit the property requirement.

-In 1870, following the Civil War the 15th Amendment was ratified to ensure that people could not be denied the right to vote due to their race. Unfortunately many states used practices such as poll taxes and literacy tests to deliberately reduce the number of African American men.

-In 1920, women won the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th Amendment after decades of organizing and activism.

-In 1964, the 24th Amendment was ratified which prohibited states from requiring payment of a poll tax as a condition for voting in federal elections.

-In 1971, the 26th Amendment prohibited states and the federal government from using age as a reason to deny the vote to anyone 18 years of age and over. The movement to lower the voting age was popularized with the rise of student activism and the war in Vietnam, which was fought largely by young, 18-and-over draftees.

The efforts to get these amendments created and ratified required dedicated activists, many of whom paid for our right to vote with their lives. My quick summary does not do justice to their truly monumental efforts.

Voting is powerful and that's why those who were in power made it difficult to give the vote to those who might vote against them. Rather than working to build a greater tent to included the voices of a larger number of citizens, they built a fence around the tent to exclude their voices. Even now, some states are deliberately putting policies in place designed to suppress the vote of some, especially people of color and non-English speakers.

## Voter Registration

To vote in Connecticut, you must be registered to vote. Connecticut law does allow election day registration but it's much easier to do this earlier.

When you get a Connecticut Driver's license or identification card, you are asked if you want to register to vote. If you are unsure if you are registered to vote, you

only have to go to the online resources at MyVote.CT.gov where there is a database to check. You can also register online if you have the proper state identification.

## Additional important voter registration information:

Friday, October 18, 2024

-Deadline for voter registration by mail to be postmarked

-Deadline for voter registration at the DMV by close of business

-Deadline for voter registration online by 11:59 pm

-Deadline for voter registration in person by 8:00 pm

Same Day Voter Registration

-If you are not registered, but want to vote during the Early Voting period, you may register in person every day of Early Voting at the Early Voting location

-If you are not registered, but want to vote on Election Day, you may register in person on Election Day at your Election Day Registration site

## Absentee Ballot Question in Connecticut

This year all Connecticut residents do have a question on their ballots about Absentee Voting! “Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to permit the General Assembly to allow each voter to vote by absentee ballot?”

A “yes” vote supports authorizing our State Legislators to make absentee voting available to ALL eligible Connecticut voters for any reason.

A “no” vote opposes any changes, keeping current language in the State Constitution that requires a voter to have a specific reason (from a list of 6) to request an absentee ballot.

Currently, Connecticut voters can request an absentee ballot only if they cannot make it to the polls on election day for a specific reason such as active military service, absence from town of residence during voting hours, sickness, physical disability, religious beliefs precluding secular activity on election day, or performance of duties as an election official at a different polling place.

The amendment would authorize the Connecticut State Legislature to provide for absentee voting for all eligible voters with no specific reason required.

## Voting for the General Election

A General Election is where all eligible voters elect candidates to office. In Connecticut, there is a general election every year. This year the General Election is November 5, 2024. The November ballot in Connecticut will have the federal and candidates listed first. Each Connecticut town has its own additional ballot choices because each town has its own group of candidates.

## Early Voting Days:

-October 21-31 from 10am - 6pm

-October 29 and 30 from 8am - 8pm

-November 1-3 from 10am - 6pm

Voting locations, both for early voting and on election day, are determined by your town or city. You can find out where to vote by looking up the information online at MyVote.CT.gov or your local district, or contact your local registrars to find out more about the voting location. Local governments are proud to show off high voting rates and encourage their community to participate in elections.

To find all you need to know about elections in Connecticut, visit MyVote.CT.gov or call 860-509-6200. To receive important election updates text VOTE to 860.321.4221.

## Getting Involved in the Election Process

The local registrar of voters in your town or city is always looking for community members to work on various positions for the election. Now that Connecticut has early voting, the registrars need even more people. Since I retired, I have worked the election polls when I have been available. I was pleasantly surprised to learn I was paid for the training hours before the election and hours on election day.

Sometimes I have heard people question the honesty and accuracy of our elections. As a participant in the process, I have been impressed with the integrity of those involved, no matter their political party.

## Get Out The Vote

Make your voting plan today. Now that you have the information you need, be sure that you not only vote, but encourage others. Make sure your family and friends are registered to vote and they have a ride to the polls if they cannot vote by absentee ballot.

If you also feel strongly about the right to vote in our country, please consider joining our Windham/Wilimantic NAACP branch. The annual membership is \$30, a reasonable price to help support justice and civil rights. Please visit our website at <https://windhamctnaacp.org/> to learn more. You can contact us at (860) 230-6911 or email at [info@windhamctnaacp.org](mailto:info@windhamctnaacp.org).

# Ashford Farmers Market



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# Windham's Cutest Dog

By Delia Berlin

Curly is Windham's cutest dog. He may also be the most expensive. But to address just one quality at a time, he is really the cutest, and not just because I say so. He proudly earned this title without any help from family or friends.



About two months ago, our neighbor Shirley Mustard asked me if I was planning to enter Curly in our town's Cutest Dog Contest. Shirley is a big fan of Curly. She has a large fenced-in yard sprinkled with rubber balls, which makes it Curly's favorite place to visit. When I say, "Let's go see Shirley!" he makes a beeline for her house, ready to fetch balls thrown off her deck. I had not heard anything about the contest, so Shirley sent me the information.

The contest was an incentive to renew dogs' town licenses early. People could send a picture of their up-to-date licensed dog to the town's Recreation Department. The pictures would be posted at the Senior Center, where visitors would vote for the cutest one. At the contest's deadline, the dog with the most votes would be declared the winner. The lucky dog would get a water bowl, a gift certificate for Mackey's, a special license tag, and the honor of having their picture displayed on the Jillson marquee for two weeks.

I renewed Curly's license and emailed his picture. Several members of our family, friends, and neighbors planned to go to the Senior Center to vote for him. But for one reason or another, none of us ever did. Yet, I cannot say that I was shocked when we got a phone call with the news of Curly's win. Of course, he only could have lost if the voting was rigged—just look at that face!

As I write this, Curly has been with us for six months and we have all settled into a happy routine. David and I still cannot believe that we ended up with such a lovable and loving dog. We think that Curly feels lucky too. From the start, we did everything we could to keep him comfortable, healthy, and entertained. He eats the best foods, has lots of toys, and a total of seven beds spread around the house and his outdoor pen. He also uses many miscellaneous amenities, such as dental health products, harnesses, raincoats, and jackets. Being the procurer of all these things, I had assumed that they would comprise a big portion of his associated expenses. It turns out that I was very wrong.

Because of his non-shedding breed, Curly requires grooming every five weeks. His first grooming was at Petco. Curly had been previously neglected and his coat was matted, so he had to be sheared very close to his skin. I went in with a large apricot-colored mini-poodle. And almost four hours later, I picked up a very tiny cream-colored one. Not only was his curly coat gone, but his drastic haircut had resulted in a sharp color change. Aesthetics aside, this may have been a good thing.

We had been told by Curly's adoption agency that he was about six years old. Estimating an adult dog's age is hard. Some clues, like tartar deposit on teeth, or the softness of foot pads, change with age but also depend on environmental conditions. When a dog is found as a stray, it is usually impossible to know their exact age. But it turns out that most apricot poodles "clear" their apricot coat at two years of age, turning cream. Only a minority of apricots have a "hold" gene that results in keeping that color for life. It is not until apricot poodles are two or three years old that they sport their final color. This is good news for Curly (and for us) because it indicates that he is much younger than we were told, likely just two to three years of age. His playfulness and youthful energy certainly support this theory.

While the Petco groomer was very nice and gentle with Curly, they work on several dogs at a time there. They have a system of working stations for each stage of the grooming process and, although they manage this safely, it results in very long appointments. For some, this may be a free dog-sitting bonus, but it bothered me, and probably Curly as well. I was fortunate to get a recommendation from a friend for a private groomer who takes only one or two hours. This groomer also happens to have a poodle herself, making her very familiar with the breed, which I find reassuring. Curly likes her and we already have seen

her four times. So, we can add grooming expenses to Curly's tab.

But the mother lode of Curly's budget has been vet care. Curly is a healthy dog, but he came to us with a terrible ear infection and a lame hind leg. We got him on a Saturday and by Monday morning we were already seeing the vet. Two visits (one for diagnosis and treatment, and another one for follow-up) took care of the ear issue. The leg problem was intermittent and nothing seemed wrong with it. I was told to watch it. Curly likes to have it massaged and I do that regularly. It has gotten better already. The vet also recommended starting him on a monthly tablet to prevent parasites, ticks and fleas.

At least some of the next vet appointments were needed more by me than by Curly. As I learn more about dogs in general, and Curly in particular, I become less alarmed by common or benign symptoms. But there has been a learning curve. I read about dogs from many sources, including a Tufts University monthly newsletter and a wholistic dog care publication. I also consult with friends and acquaintances who are experienced dog owners. But there is a lot to learn. Take, for example, vomit. If you prefer to avoid this subject, I suggest that you skip the next (long and juicy) paragraph.

Dogs vomit more often than people and, in many instances, it is not serious. I can now differentiate between several types of vomit. A common type is regurgitation: the dog eats too fast and, soon after, it all comes back up. In these cases, the dog is still hungry and does not act sick. A "slow bowl" (a dish with obstacles that forces the dog to eat more slowly) usually prevents this problem. Another type of vomit is morning retching: the dog refuses breakfast, acts a little sick, and vomits a foamy mucus. This usually indicates buildup of acid in the stomach, and it may be caused by going too long without eating. Since most dogs eat twice daily, feeding them dinner too early may be the culprit. Evenly spaced meals, or a nighttime snack, may prevent this problem. This happened to Curly once. I was ignorant, alarmed, and wanted him to be seen by the vet. Because his mucus had been pink, he took a short course of Prilosec. Finally, there is what I call "true vomit": the dog acts sick, refuses food, and throws up partly digested food eaten at least several hours before. Once, Curly ate something from the floor of a patio while we were distracted, and this situation followed. We were back at the vet, where he got subcutaneous fluids, an antinausea shot, and a prescription diet. Since we did not have much of a history for him, we also did bloodwork, which came out perfect. Despite all this, Curly took over a week to get better, and he got worse before he did, adding diarrhea to the mix. After another consultation, we added kaolin paste and probiotics, which finally got Curly back to his former self.

This last episode led to a sweet anecdote. Normally, Curly can go all night without relieving himself. But at the height of Curly's diarrhea spell, David and I were concerned. We had needed to take him outside very often all day, and walking him in the middle of the night was not an option because there were thunderstorms. I did not want to crate him either, while he was unwell. So, I spread out a "wee-wee pad" on the floor of the vestibule outside the bedroom. We had tried before to use this stop-gap method in inclement weather, but it had never worked—that pad just would not "inspire" Curly. Against all hope, I showed him the pad and told him that it was there if he needed it. Imagine my shock when I got up in the morning and saw that Curly had used the pad! Again, I put a pad out for the next two nights, worrying that he might expect it permanently. But as he got well, he no longer needed it, and once again he waited for his morning walk. Curly is constantly amazing us by how much he understands.

Although Curly has been well since that last flurry of veterinary interventions, I recently discovered that he was not immunized for leptospirosis. This potentially fatal infection can become prevalent with abundant rain, and it is easily transmitted via excretions from other dogs. Walking Curly around our dog-friendly neighborhood during a rainy summer really calls for this vaccine. Fortunately, the shot comes combined with the Lyme vaccine. Unfortunately, a booster is also needed a few weeks later. But what's a couple more visits to the vet, when I've already lost count? I only hope that Curly stays well. As he gets more consistently good care and I become more experienced, we should fall into a happier pattern of annual checkups and become fully able to enjoy his cuteness.



# Post-War in the City - Hartford, Connecticut Summer of 1945 - Happiness Returns

By Elli Sharpe

It was post-war and looking back I realize just how poor we were. My mother, father, brother and I lived in a one bedroom apartment and shared a bathroom with two other families...I never knew if someone would walk in on us, that could be a problem. Poor? The word had no meaning for me. My father was home from the war, my brother finally lived with us and I was as happy as a clam. I was five years old before I knew I had an older brother. He lived in Maine with my Grandfather until he was ten and I was eight. He came to live with us when my Grandfather died. I was sad when Grampy died but aside from that my world was perfect, my brother was my hero. Secrets buried so deep I never did learn why my brother didn't live with us until I was well into my adult years.

In the evening after supper dishes were done the parents sat out on the front stoop and talked of how they would change the world if they could while we kids wouldn't change a thing. It was evening bliss, parents blanketed in clouds of cigarette smoke, some drinking coffee, some drinking beer. Believe it or not one woman smoked a pipe and another a cigar and all with a story to tell.

We played street games...oblivious to the gossip of our parents, we heard it all at the clothesline. They talked about everything but the war, that was a no-no. Do kids play street games anymore? Tag, statue, hide and seek, kick the can, all played in the amber glow of the street lights. The street was our playground, our safe place, the place that became everything to us, fire hydrants opened for us on hot summer days, the place where we splashed through puddles and danced in the rain.

In spite of the changes those were the halcyon days of my childhood, things couldn't be better...the thoughts of an innocent child. A child who knew nothing of hardship.

Friendships that formed our world, a bond so strong it would last a lifetime. At the tender age of eight I met my first love. His name was Roland, he was my hero. Along with my brother he was the most important boy in my life. He was eleven and he protected me from the world. I was first introduced to courage by a red-haired boy named Raymond. He suffered polio when he was ten and wore braces. Braces that never stopped him, he ran, climbed trees and hopped fences with the best of us.

I loved living on Affleck Street even though we were so crowded. I loved my friends, I loved my friends parents and I loved playing in the streets until way after dark...but then we moved. It would be a good move, Mommy said. I would have my own room, we would have our own bathroom, no longer having to suffer the smell of strangers. I didn't care, I didn't want to move. Nobody asked me if I wanted to move, I would have said 'no.'

It was the move that left my carefree days of childhood behind and moved into the world of reality.

I traded sidewalks with grass, my roller skating days were over as was hopscotch. I played softball, there was ice skating on the pond down the road and I found my special friend, Lily, in the woods nearby. Lily was the tree I befriended shortly after the move. She was the comfort I found after being bullied in school, she held the swing I hung from her branches and allowed me to carve my initials in her bark. She listened to all my stories and hardships and never judged.

I made new friends and as all children do I adapted and found my corner of happiness once again.

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## Unsung Heroes of Soul:

## Jimmy Hughes and Oscar Toney, Jr.

By Dean Farrell

As host of "The Soul Express," I play the biggest names in 1960s and '70s-era soul music. I also mix in the many great soul artists who did not necessarily become household names but were no less talented. This month's column features two one-hit wonders from Alabama.

## Jimmy Hughes

In 1964, Jimmy Hughes wrote and recorded the first Southern soul number to go top twenty on the pop chart.

A cousin of Percy Sledge, he was born on February 3, 1938, in Leighton, Alabama. Like many Southern soul acts, Hughes got his start in gospel music, performing with a group called the Singing Clouds during his high school years.

In 1962, Hughes auditioned for Rick Hall at the FAME Studios in Florence, Alabama. Hall recorded Hughes on a song he (Hughes) had co-written with producer Quin Ivy, "I'm Qualified." The Philadelphia-based Gudyden label picked it up for national distribution, but it was not a hit. Hughes took to performing Rhythm & Blues songs in local clubs while keeping his day job at a rubber factory.



In early 1964, Hughes presented Hall with another original song, "Steal Away." (He had based it on the gospel number, "Steal Away to Jesus.") Recorded in one take, the ballad took off in the South and soon hit the national charts, making it the first Southern soul record to go top twenty in the pop market. (This was two years before Percy Sledge's "When a Man Loves a Woman.") "Steal Away" served as a prototype for later, more successful, soul acts like Johnnie Taylor and Al Green. It also landed FAME a distribution deal with the Chicago-based Vee Jay label. Hughes' debut album, also titled *Steal Away*, came out on Vee Jay in 1965.

Though "Steal Away" was Hughes' only major pop hit, his records continued to sell to the burgeoning soul market. With Atlantic now handling FAME's distribution, his 1966 release, "Neighbor, Neighbor," became a top five R&B smash. A year later, "Why Not Tonight" also went top five.

In 1968, Hughes signed with the Memphis-based Stax label, who issued his music on the Volt subsidiary. His debut for Volt, "I Like Everything About You," reached #21 on the R&B chart, but none of his subsequent releases did much. Frustrated by what he deemed Stax's lack of promotion, coupled with his weariness of touring and being away from his wife and children, Jimmy Hughes quit the music business in 1970. He underwent job retraining and found work with the government, making parts for nuclear power plants in the Tennessee River Valley. From then on, Hughes limited his singing to the church.

Allmusic.com states that Jimmy Hughes died in 1997. He was, in fact, alive as recently as 2009, when he told an interviewer, "I would like to see the person that's happier than what I am now. I'm really satisfied. I don't really have any desire to go back into [the music business]."

## Charted singles:

"Steal Away" (1964) R&B #2, Pop #17

"Try Me" (1964) Pop #65

"Neighbor, Neighbor" (1966) R&B #4, Pop #65

"I Worship the Ground You Walk On" (1966) R&B #25

"Why Not Tonight" (1967) R&B #5, Pop #90

"It Ain't What You Got" (1968) R&B #43

"I Like Everything About You" (1968) R&B #21

## Oscar Toney, Jr.

Oscar Toney, Jr.'s 1967 remake of "For Your Precious Love" took the nine-year-old doo-wop ballad straight to church.

He was born in Selma, Alabama, on May 26, 1939, and grew up in Columbus, Georgia. He developed his musical chops in church and, while in high school, sang with his own gospel group, the Sensational Melodies of Joy. Toney first recorded in 1957 as a member of a doo-wop group called the Searchers. Their debut single, "Yvonne" / "Little Wonder," came out on the tiny Max label and did nothing.

Toney later consulted Bobby Smith of Macon, Georgia. Smith had an arrangement with King Records, the independent powerhouse out of Cincinnati. A session there yielded two singles, both written by Toney. "Can It All Be Love" came out in 1964 to little fanfare, while "I Found True Love" was unissued until 1967.

Toney later met "Papa" Don Schroeder of Pensacola, Florida. Schroeder was a radio DJ who wanted to expand his business base. He had already produced recordings by Mighty Sam McClain, and had achieved tremendous success with James & Bobby Purify ("I'm Your Puppet," 1966). Schroeder signed Toney as part of the licensing deal he had made with Larry Uttal of Bell Records, and took the singer to Chips Moman's AGP studio.

They immediately struck pay dirt with "For Your Precious Love." The ethereal ballad had been a 1958 hit for Jerry Butler & The Impressions and was revived in 1963 by Garnet Mimms & The Enchanters. However, Toney's version was a literal revival. He spent the first half of the record preaching like a backwoods holy man before launching into the lyrics with a mature, baritone-driven delivery that was pure Southern church. Factor in the cymbals, snare drum, guitar arpeggio, strings and female chorus all bathed in echo, and the end result was both transcendent and otherworldly. The single quickly took off, reaching #4 on the Rhythm & Blues chart and #23 pop. (In 1972, Linda Jones would record her own version of "For Your Precious Love," based heavily on Toney's interpretation.)

After two follow-up singles, Bell released an LP on Toney titled (unsurprisingly) *For Your Precious Love*. In all, Bell put out seven singles on Oscar Toney, Jr., through 1968. At that point, Don Schroeder, to whom Toney was personally contracted, left the music business, freeing Toney to pursue other avenues. He signed with Phil Walden's new label, Capricorn. His first release, "Down on My Knees," came out in 1970. Capricorn put out three additional singles on Toney through 1972, but none of them had great commercial success.

When his contract with Walden expired in 1973, Toney flew to England, where he was a favorite of Contempo Records boss John Abbey. Toney signed with the label and, over the next two years, recorded six singles and an album. By the 1980s, Toney had stepped down from the secular side of the music business. He returned to the Deep South and performed gospel music exclusively. However, in 2000, Toney came out with two new albums of secular material: *Guilty of Loving You* and *Oscar Toney, Jr. Resurfaces!*

## Charted singles:

"For Your Precious Love" (1967) R&B #4, Pop #23

"Turn on Your Love Light" (1967) R&B #37, Pop #65

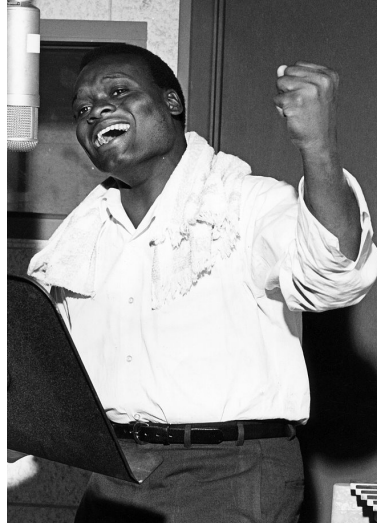
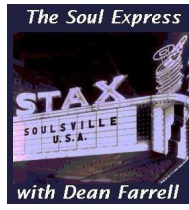
"Never Get Enough of Your Love" (1968) Pop #95

"Without Love (There Is Nothing)" (1968) R&B #47, Pop #90

Other noteworthy recordings by Oscar Toney, Jr., include "Any Day Now," "That's All I Want From You," "Unlucky Guy," "You Can Lead Your Woman to the Altar," "Down in Texas," "Until We Meet Again," "Just for You," and "A Love That Never Grows Old."

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](http://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](mailto:soulexpress@gmail.com).



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# War Hero A Phony! My Suspicions about Israel Putnam and his wolf

By Martin Moebus

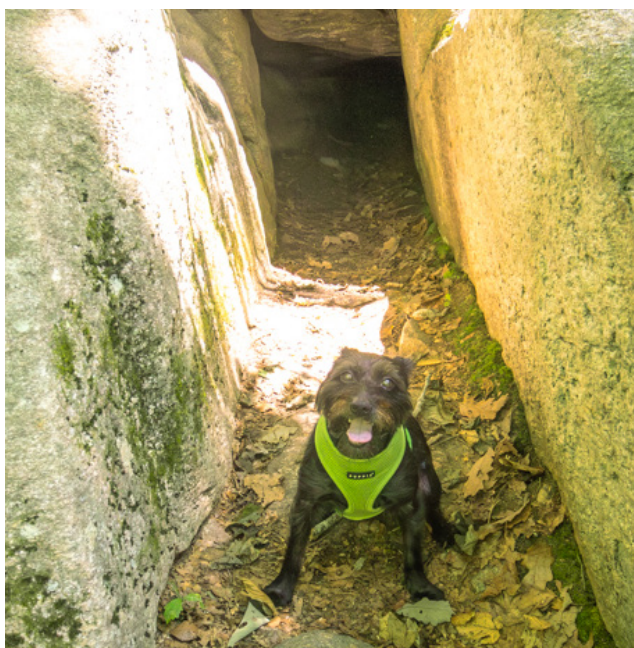
Israel Putnam's wolf story is fake, phony, and full of holes. Putnam didn't kill the last wolf in Connecticut and the big bad wolf wasn't particularly interested in Putnam either. It's time to take the Connecticut Hero of the Revolution down a notch or two! Let's look at the alleged story of the killing of the last wolf and the "evidence" for it.

## The alleged wolf story

The wolf story includes the account written down by David Humphreys forty-six years after it happened. Dave was Putnam's aide-de-camp during the Revolutionary War and was undoubtedly tortured with the tale many times during the campaign. He finally wrote it down from memory in 1788 when visiting George Washington, who was also tormented by this earworm of a story by Putnam. Here is an account of the event.

Israel Putnam was a happy farmer in Pomfret keeping busy building a house and barn, mending fences, planting and sowing and taking care of his flock of sheep and goats. For years, a she-wolf had her pups in Pomfret and would occasionally kill a sheep or a goat. The residents each year would kill all the pups but somehow could never kill the momma wolf. One night the she-wolf killed 70 of Putnam's goats and sheep and wounded many of the little lambs and kids. Putnam had had enough and joined with five neighbors who had also lost some sheep over the years to hunt and destroy this unwanted resident of Pomfret. They would pair up and track the wolf until she was done in. As the wolf had lost toes on a foot escaping from a trap she could easily be identified. (they probably ignored any wolf tracks that didn't match – wait this is the last wolf – oops)

Two of the neighbors, using bloodhounds, followed her to the Connecticut river where she for some reason turned around and went back to Pomfret. They followed, arriving back in Pomfret at 10:00 a.m. the next morning. The blood hounds drove the wolf into a den three miles from Putnam's house. A seventeen-year-old John Sharpe found the wolf in the den. The locals brought guns, straw, fire, and sulphur to attack the wolf. The fire and sulphur did nothing to drive her out. Dogs were sent in only to return wounded by the wolf. Twelve hours later at 10:00 p.m., Putnam finally shows up. What he was doing all day when his neighbors were playing with the wolf is not explained. He "takes charge" and orders his dog to enter the cave. His dog refuses. He then orders his slave Dick to enter and kill the wolf. He also refuses. (At least someone had some common sense here.) Putnam then decides he will enter the cave.



Author's dog Hadley at the wolf den.

He removes his coat and waistcoat, has a long rope tied to his leg, makes a birch bark torch and enters the cave traveling to the back of the cave where he sees her "glaring eye-balls, her teeth, and hears her growls." His friends quickly pull him back out, with his shirt flipping over his head but somehow holds onto the torch. With his gun in one hand, and the torch in the other, he goes back into the cave. (how he crawled in holding both a musket and torch is not recorded) He shoots the wolf and his friends again pull him out. (why his shirt doesn't flip over his head this time again is not recorded) He enters a third time holding the torch to her nose to ensure she is really dead (he didn't bring his gun this time so if he had missed on this last visit he was in trouble). Leaving the torch behind and taking hold of her head, he kicks his leg and his friends pull him with the now dead wolf out to much joy and merriment. What a wonderful hero story overflowing with exhilarating action! Let's probe the details:

## Was it really the last wolf?

The last wolf it may be, but the details in the story are something else entirely. Our ancestors killed many animals. Until 1700 there was an annual wolf hunt in Windham County so killing wolves was pretty common. In 1721, you could get paid 1 cent for every blackbird, and two cents for every squirrel, woodpecker, blue jay or rattlesnake killed. Reported last wolves include one in Ashford in 1735 by Joseph Russel, one in 1732 by Pembascus in Woodstock, and one in the Plainfield / Killingly area by Tom and Jeremy (no last names) around 1732. Putnam's wolf was killed in 1742 so it would have been the "last one" based on the date of the wolf's demise.

Let's talk biology. If I remember my high school biology, mammals, including wolves, need two to make babies. That year Putnam's wolf had cubs. Who was the father and where was he living? In time the wolves would have died out anyway since someone else must have killed the father of this last breeding pair.

Interestingly, no one talks about the "great" Peter Adams who in 1780 killed the last bear in Windham County – a much bigger animal and later on. With all these lasts, I would have been more impressed if Putnam had killed our last tick or last mosquito sparing future generations the misery caused by these pests.

## Tracking a wolf at night to Hartford

Two farmers allegedly tracked the wolf from Pomfret to the Connecticut river and back again. Assuming the wolf took a straight path she would have ended up in Great River Park in East Hartford. This is 42 miles one way or 84 miles round trip from the wolf den. At a walking speed this would have taken over 15 hours one way. For the wolf to arrive in the cave at 10:00 a.m. the next morning, she and the hunters would have had to leave Great River Park no later than 7:00 p.m. and travel in the dark through the woods, streams, and swamps. The farmers would also have had to follow the wolf, tracking her all through the night without losing her trail. Their whole trip must be started at 4 a.m. the previous morning assuming no bathroom or eating breaks to get to Great River Park and back on time for the 10:00 a.m. rendezvous. Their bloodhounds would also have to walk the 30 hours with no rest or refreshments before speedily leaving the farmers behind and chasing the wolf to its cave where John Sharpe would find it.

## Bloodhounds

If there were dogs to coax into the cave to kill a wolf it wasn't bloodhounds. According to Wikipedia, Bloodhounds did not come to the United States till 1888 – 146 years after the alleged wolf shooting.

## Wolves don't kill that many sheep and why the difficulty with the lambs?

Putnam claims the wolf killed 70 of his goats and sheep in one night as well as wounding many little lambs and kid goats. In 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife reports that just 114 sheep were killed by wolves in the states of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming combined. So, we are to believe that in one night, one wolf by herself killed half that many on just Putnam's farm? There must have been a lot of bleating and baaing going on during the attack. Why didn't Putnam wake up with all this killing and mayhem taking place?

Why the wolf who could easily kill grown goats and sheep had a hard time with the baby lambs and kids is also unexplained. Why the neighbor's livestock were left unharmed that night is similarly baffling. Are we to believe the wolf was just toying with Putnam by killing only his sheep that night? Did the wolf want revenge on Putnam for some ancient affront? Perhaps the wolf had a good-heart underneath and didn't want to harm the babies? Unlikely.

## One fat wolf

At most a female wolf weighs 120 lbs. An average sheep yields about 34 pounds of meat. Are we to believe that a 120 lb. wolf ate 70 sheep or about 2380 pounds of meat in one night, ran to Hartford and back – then squeezed into a narrow cave? How did Putnam pull the 2500 lb. wolf stuffed with meat out of cave?



The Israel Putnam Monument in Brooklyn, Connecticut. Wolf heads adorn the front and rear of monument.

## What happened to the wolf hunters and whose gun killed the wolf?

After tracking the wolf day and night, the two farmers seemed to have lost the trail when they got near home. John Sharpe, a local boy with the nickname "the boy hunter" tracked the wolf to its lair – in a single morning. Why after tracking a wolf for two days, they lost the wolf so close to home is unexplained. I would recommend to Putnam that he leave out the farmers in his tale as the story would be much shorter and the farmers didn't do anything anyway. Concerning the wolf gun, C. D. Mowry, a farmer in South Woodstock/Pomfret, recalled that Putnam did not even have a gun with him that night and had to borrow John Sharpe's the boy who found the wolf in the cave. This gun borrowing event would lead to the famous *Putnam Spoon Controversy* in later years, but that tale will have to be told at another time.

## What about Putnam's grave?

Even Putnam himself didn't appear to believe the tale. If you look closely at his monument today you will see two wolf heads on it – a testament to his not really killing the last wolf.

## Where does the wolf story come from?

I believe his story comes from his tavern owning days where the enterprising Putnam sought to sell more beer in his tavern. After the French and Indian War, Old Put opened a bar. He needed stories to entertain his guests. He was jealous of his second wife, Deborah, who had better stories than him which all the guests wanted to hear. For example, Deborah's first husband was related to Lion Gardner. In 1699 the pirate Captain Kidd had buried his treasure on Gardner's Island and Kidd told Lion where the treasure was. A great pirate treasure story trumped all of Putnam's war exploit stories of being captured by Indians. The bar patrons were interested in wolf stories which became more elaborate, exaggerated and embellished with each telling. He even decided to call the bar the General Wolfe Inn allegedly after his former commander but really named for his soon to be famous whopper of a tale!

Photos by the author.

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# The Rise of AI in Wealth Management: A Risk/Benefit Analysis

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



In today's rapidly evolving financial landscape, artificial intelligence (AI) is making waves across industries, and wealth management is no exception. Will AI replace human financial advisors?

It's very unlikely, for a variety of reasons. At WHZ, we're staying abreast of both the opportunities and risks that the use of AI in wealth management could pose, so that we can continue providing the best possible experience for our clients as the world evolves. Here's our take on the risk/benefit analysis of AI in wealth management thus far.

## Turbocharging Personalization

Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all financial advice. With AI, wealth managers can offer ever more tailored strategies that consider a client's unique financial situation, goals, and risk tolerance. Individual personalization built through long-term, real relationships has always been the cornerstone of our approach at WHZ through our "Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well" process. Now, AI-powered tools may provide a way to turbocharge those efforts by allowing advisors to analyze vast amounts of data to generate customized recommendations, in addition to the knowledge we gain through our personal relationships.

## Efficiency: Freeing Up Time for What Matters

Let's face it – no one became a financial advisor because they love paperwork. Our team loves what we do because it's incredibly rewarding to work one-on-one with our clients on a strategic financial plan and celebrate with them as they achieve the goals they've set forth all along the way.

But, there are only so many hours in a day, and the fact is that there are administrative and manual tasks that require our attention in order to keep the broader strategy in motion. AI is offering the potential to take over those routine tasks so that we can dedicate more of our time to what AI could never do: building relationships that provide the most meaningful "data" required to craft a truly personal financial strategy.

## Risk Management: Staying Ahead of the Curve

In the fast-paced world of finance, staying ahead of risks is crucial. This is where AI really shines. Machine learning algorithms can analyze market data in real-time, detecting potential risks and alerting advisors in near real time, allowing them to keep portfolios aligned with clients' risk profiles.

But it's not just about market risks. AI systems are also proving invaluable in regulatory compliance. They can monitor transactions and communications, flagging any suspicious activity for human review. It's like having a tireless compliance officer working around the clock.

## The Human Touch: Irreplaceable and Indispensable

While AI is transforming wealth management,

the human element remains critical. As WHZ's approach demonstrates, clients still crave the strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, and relationship-building that only human advisors can provide.

One of our clients, Ken Kaplan, shared about his experience working with our team, "We have absolute confidence in them and that takes any weight off of our shoulders. We really don't worry about our finances anymore, we let our team at WHZ worry about it because we know that they're proactive, they're doing everything they can to increase our portfolio and they're doing things the right way, and that's a great thing." \*

This kind of big-picture thinking and the ability to understand a client's full life context is something AI can't replicate. Building this level of trust also requires human interaction and empathy – qualities that are uniquely human.

## The Future As We See It: AI-Powered Efficiency Enabling An Enhanced Human Experience

Looking ahead, the most successful wealth management firms will likely be those that effectively combine AI capabilities with skilled and caring human advisors. It's not about man versus machine, but rather man and machine working in harmony.

In this model, AI will handle data analysis, scenario modeling, and routine tasks, freeing up valuable time for human advisors to develop creative strategies, build strong client relationships, provide support during market volatility, and offer nuanced advice that accounts for the full complexity of a client's life.

This fusion of human and artificial intelligence promises to deliver a new level of personalized, strategic wealth management. As we consider when and how to best integrate AI tools in our processes, one thing will never change – our focus on maintaining the strong human connections that set WHZ apart and underpin our goal of providing each of our clients with Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life. Learn more about our approach and schedule a complimentary consultation on our website, [whzwealth.com](http://whzwealth.com), or give us a call at (860) 928-2341.

\* This statement was provided 2/29/2024 by Ken Kaplan who is a client. This statement may not be representative of the experience of others and is not a guarantee of future performance or success. For additional reviews, search us wherever local businesses are reviewed.

*Authored by Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor Leisl L. Langevin, CFP® CDFIA®. Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret Street, Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Road, Tolland, CT 06084, 860.928.2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com> These materials are general in nature and do not address your specific situation. For your specific investment needs, please discuss your individual circumstances with your financial advisor. Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice, and nothing in the accompanying pages should be construed as specific tax or legal advice.*

## Nightmare on Main 2024: Unsettling Tales-Legend, Myth, Folklore

Submitted by Bev York

Nightmare on Main, celebrating its tenth anniversary, will present "Unsettling Tales- Legend, Myth, Folklore," in October. Nightmare on Main is a local group of volunteers who raise funds for charity by producing a haunted themed event. This year's production will be held at the Eastern Connecticut Veteran Community Center for three weekends in October.

The Nightmare committee strives to present creepy and haunting stories that have some historical basis usually from the 18th and 19th century. It is not the typical haunted house and the shows avoid blood and gore. But the researched stories share mysterious, unexplained and unsolved stories that are often chilling. This year's

show actually begins with the superstitious curses of Egypt and ends with the 'undead' in a nearby graveyard. Bev York, a Nightmare committee member, said the themes are different each year. We have presented Ghost Towns, Witches, Phobias, Monsters, Villains, Confinement and many others. The group does research, writes scripts, recruits community volunteers to make props, build sets and take acting roles. Nightmare on Main in 2022 won an award- Attraction of the Year from CT Haunted Houses.com. Over the years we have raised over \$60,000 for the benefit of the Mill Museum, Railroad Museum and now the Veteran Center.

The funds will be donated to the Veteran Community Center which holds a weekly coffeehouse for Veterans and provides counseling, socializ-

ing opportunities, a food commissary, clothing, backpacks and more. The Center is run by volunteers but raises money for operating expenses.

Nightmare on Main tours, on October 4, 5, 11, 12, 18 and 19, will start every twenty minutes between 7:00 to 9:40 p.m. The rain or shine event will be held at the Vet Center, 47 Crescent Street in Willimantic, is moderately scary and appropriate for ages 10+. Refreshments will be available. Tickets are on line at [Spooktober.org](http://Spooktober.org). at the America Museum starting in September. There are no refunds.

A very limited amount of tickets will be available at the door. Don't be disappointed so get your tickets on line. For more information see facebook or call Sandy at 860-944-4945.

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## Mansfield Fall Book Sale

The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library are holding their Fall Book Sale on Saturday, September 7 and Sunday, September 8. The sale will run from 9-4 on Saturday and 9-3 on Sunday. Please join us for this important sale that benefits the Mansfield Public Library and various library programs for both adults and children. The Book Sale will be held in the Buchanan Library and will feature children's books, adult fiction and non-fiction, puzzles/games and so much more. We hope to see you there.

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## On Deserts, Dust and Possible Climate Futures

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

Back in February I had the privilege to travel to Kenya in preparation of taking students there for two weeks August. That trip took place from Aug. 3-16th and now I am back home in Willimantic, looking back at my experiences. The first time we flew directly, travelling over much of Northern to Central Africa, but this time we took a cheaper option on Qatar Airways that had a stopover in Doha, the capital of Qatar. This was my first time in that region of the world and since it was daytime I was able to witness the vast amounts of sand that make up much of the Middle East. In response to this experience, I wrote notes as we flew and I am going to share them here, writing as it is once again raining here in CT, further feeding our lush and overly verdant garden and area. We here may wish for more sun and dry, especially this summer, but I would take rain, humidity and green any day over what I saw looking down from my airplane window as we flew the final 5 hours to Nairobi, Kenya's capital.



*brown, longing for feel, see, smell the green? How does the meaning of "nature" change when there is so little of what we understand it to incorporate? What role does so much ocean front, and even many lakes, play without the surrounding green? The water is the only diverging wet-scape, as opposed to landscape, scape- as another fully lit mushroom emergence city appears and again, I ask what does "nature" mean here? Are there birds and other creatures that give sound and life in these oil-made places? I know there are desert animals – like the Arabian Oryx (the logo for Qatar airways) and other such resilient beings- but do they enliven these cities or are the sounds of drilling and cooling the ones that accompany people's urban lives pushing all other life forms further out into sand?*

*Now, we are in total darkness, and I remember the 3 Abrahamic religions and their God who likes to speak to his people in the desert—perhaps because there are few other voices coming from trees and animal life—he is a jealous God, turning the verdant representations of his Pagan competitors (such as the ironically named "Christmas tree") to dust, just as his current followers are doing the same.*

*Is there less oxygen in the desert? Do its inhabitants breathe the oxygen from other places' trees, (and once their trees thinking historically), while we burn the oil from their wells? Is this a fair exchange—what will be the resulting sum of such an equation? Does such barren heat make you hallucinate—imagining we are being tempted by the Devil, seeing the kingdoms of the world from the highest of mountains—and deciding we will give into such a fate. Can oil do the same as such heat, bring on mass delusion to make us think we don't need nature, that we can live by sand and forgo the green? Devil you are winning, even as all the kingdoms your oil has erected will eventually sink back into the dunes from whence such oil came. Such oil can also fuel extensive drills, which bring up water from deep in the ground, but without new rains even massive ancient aquifers will one day run dry.*

*To make the rains return there must be trees—oil, concrete, glass and neon cannot grow a forest—but an inspired green vision can....*

Since writing this I have investigated how deserts can be reforested (which they can be as the Burkinabé farmer and [Right Livelihood Laureate Yacouba Sawado-go](#), demonstrated using traditional Zai techniques) and I have been pleasantly surprised to see Saudi Arabia has a plan to plant 10 million trees, thereby rehabilitating 74 million hectares. The goal is ...to restore vital ecological functions, improve air quality, reduce sandstorms, and much more and thus far they have planted 49 million trees and shrubs. They are using Cloud seeding, Liquid Nano Clay (LNC - turns the sand into a sponge-like fabric that retains water, thereby holding the nutrients much better), as well as other approaches to enhance the soil, create higher water retention, and work with native species. They are also pledging to invest in "renewables" (sun and wind are renewable- solar panels and windmills are not) to ensure their lead role in the future of energy production. I'm not going into a critique here, except to say that until we address reduction of consumption, we are nowhere near addressing the climate crisis. Instead, I will end by affirming the quote I love from the Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize winner, Dr. Wangari Maathai, who so wisely said "Until you dig a hole, you plant a tree, you water it and make it survive, you haven't done a thing. You are just talking." May the next time I fly over the Middle East, Dr Maathai's words and the Saudi Arabian vision of greening the desert, profoundly change what I / we see.

*Taking off and leaving Doha airport – more like a flashy, high-end mall that looks out to a dusty desert landscape, broken up by shiny mushroom like growths made up of skyscrapers and lights – I contemplate how 3" of rain a year can support so much human life. It is oil that is the new rain, making these flashing neon towers possible, spreading out into the endless sand and dust. It was 6:30 pm as the cloud ridden dull sand brown sky merged into the sand dunes that extended far into Saudi Arabia, until finally the sky finds a slow solace in becoming a purer color of black, bringing the scorching light of day (average Aug day temp is 110 F) to a still hot night close (average Aug night temp 88 F).*

*Such sights make me question how once desert Arab nomads become the culture that is seemingly now locked into artificial spaces, selling the commodities of the Western pallet (yet no doubt made in China)- turning the oil sands into sales. Turing rain into oil- the oil that will make the rain even less, that will take more of the planet's green away. They drill, ship, sell oil and the money flows back enabling them to build a self-contained cooled and commodified world, a sanctum of alienated consumption, sustained again by the same oil that heats their own regions, as well as the world. These are such strong contradictions, such challenging paradoxes. I wonder if what I am looking at is a climate future, where people (I will fortunately be dead) will live in self-contained cities surrounded by heat and dust, by fires and furnaces fueling nature's, our further demise. Will we grow all food in artificially generated light, grow meat in labs and never go outside, having turned outside into a place where life is no longer sustained? Will those who build such places be the only ones outside, dying in the heat as have so many migrant laborers in Qatar and elsewhere. Will nature be a neon light flashing green and oxygen come from a tank? This climate future vision – that is the world I currently see before my eye– will reinforce its own existence, the addict that consumes from the drive of desire, while killing the body that sustains its all-consuming idea / ideal.*

*What if instead of malls conscripted to the gods of consumption, fed by a black sea of ancient sunlight, they grew and built gardens- what if they used oil to make rain, instead of taking it away? Can oil be the balm if used outside of the profit motive, and focused on regreening what was in fact once a lush rain and tree rich land? Are those who are born into its dust ridden*

## 'Arts on Main' in Coventry

Submitted by Ruth O'Neil

Once again, Historic Coventry Village will be transformed into an arena of creativity as Coventry celebrates its annual Arts on Main Day, Saturday September 14 from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. In addition to art vendors, art exhibits, children's activities, food trucks, a tour of sculptures by world renowned local sculptor David Hayes, and more, a variety of musical, dance and spoken word entertainment for all ages is planned. This event showcases the visual and performing arts, brings public attention to the historic part of Main Street and finds ways to support the local business community. The Town of Coventry, along with the Coventry Arts Guild, and Coventry Cares, Inc., have become a collaborative team planning this Day of Arts for the community.

Located in the parking lot of the First Congregational Church, the Main stage starts with the Coventry Hill Billies...made up of local musicians that will showcase the music of 1930s Coventry songwriter Hank Keene. November Sound, an area trio, will follow on stage. The headline act, well known in the area, the Patty Tuite Band will continue the music until the end of the event. Also at the First Congregational Church, a dance performance will take place by students of Coventry's The Can-Dance Studio. Members of the Coventry High School Band will also provide music during the afternoon. Throughout the event, First Congregational Church will be selling hotdogs and more for the crowds. In addition, the non-profit organization, Coventry Cares, Inc. will host a Food Truck rally, including Twin Beaks Fried Chicken and Red Lion Burger, as well as a Mum sale at the same location.

Further down Main Street, a second stage located at "1153 Main Street" will be devoted to entertainment for children (of all ages). Visitors will have a chance to become part of an "On the Spot Jug Band" and Family Sing-a-Long playing all kinds of rhythm instruments coordinated by Coventry's Song-a-Day Music Center. An "Instrument Petting Zoo" also hosted by Song-a-Day Music instructors and students will be set up for guests to have an up-close look at and try out various musical instruments. The 1153 Main Street building will also be the site of a Farm and Garden exhibit sponsored by the Coventry Historical Society.

Music will also take place on the porch of the Coventry Arts and Antique shop on Main Street.

Coventry Park and Recreation and Human Services Department will be offering more fun activities including face painting throughout the afternoon.

Artisans and crafts persons will have exhibits and wares for sale in the municipal parking lot at the 1153 Main location.

The Coventry Arts Guild will host its Annual Members Art Show at the Booth & Dimock Library at 1134 Main St. Also featured at the library will be a Student Art Show along with a special hands-on activity provided by the library.

For those interested in the spoken word, a Poet's Corner, hosted by the Arts Guild, will occur inside Mill Brook Place located at 1267 Main St. Local writers will share excerpts from their works; members of the public are invited to do so also.

Main Street merchants and restaurants will be open, showcasing their specialties. The several antique and collectibles shops will be a particular draw.

Visitors may create Sidewalk chalk art up and down Main Street.

Arts On Main is free to attend and open to the public. Shuttle buses will be available at Patriots Park, 124 Lake St.

Please visit the Coventry Arts on Main Facebook Page or [CoventryArtsGuild.org](#) for more details leading up to the event. Program subject to change. In the event of rain, activities will move to the Coventry High School. For further information, sponsorship opportunities, or ways to be involved, contact Lesley Munshower at 860-742-4068.

### Deadlines

**November-December 2024:  
Deadline: Thursday, October 10th.  
Print date: Tuesday, October 15th.**

**January-February 2025:  
Deadline: Thursday, December 12th.  
Print date: Tuesday, December 17th.**



## Branches Free

By Carol Wheelock Hall

That single tree on yonder hill,  
It stands majestically and still.  
It stands alone, its branches free,  
Compared in ways of you and me:

Youth and springtime...the world to greet,  
Young and summer...life to meet,  
Mature in autumn, then to rest,  
Prepare for winter, we've done our best.

The joys and storms of life we've seen,  
With earth to love and live our dreams.  
We all attend the school of life,  
With days of both the sun and strife.

In the end we look above,  
With faith to meet a greater love,  
With hopes those from our branches free  
Will carry on our legacies.

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## Character Work, Character Play

By Jesse R. Clark

What an experience to enter a magical world,  
putting on costumes and make-up for a summer musical.  
Entering a new world, becoming a different character  
that is part of myself, and yet....

Through this costume I show a part of myself  
while showing someone else altogether.  
Transformative.

In the summer heat, I have this experience,  
exposed on a stage in front of my community.  
The time is coming when I will leave this magical summer experience  
and I go back into the real world,  
where I may do more acting than I ever did on the stage.  
That magical Burton Leavitt Theatre.  
But I know summer gives way to autumn...  
and the time will come again where I will don  
my make-up and costume,  
motivated by the chill in the air.  
The difference is I will choose the character  
and the real world would be my stage.

By putting on the make-up,  
I will show another side  
having fun once more  
until the time comes when I wipe off the make-up  
and don the mask I wear  
in the daylight.



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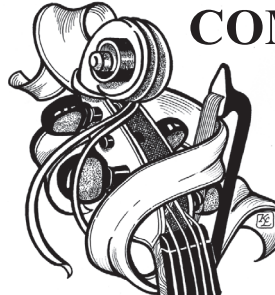
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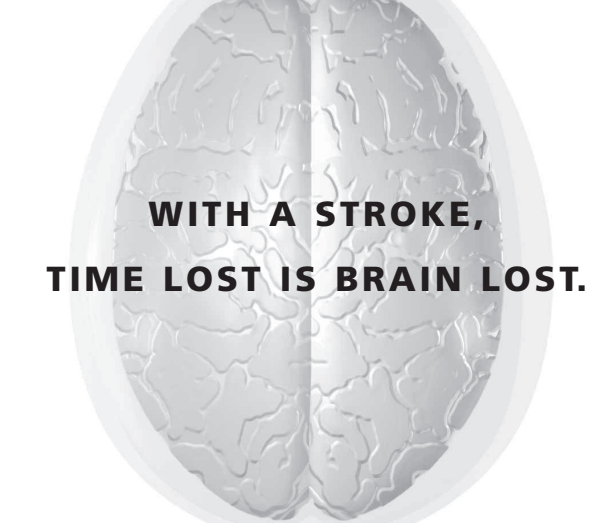


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Autumnal Thoughts of Life as a Stage and of Stages of Life

# FALL TUTORIAL

By Brian Karlsson Barnes

Fireflies danced across the evening stage of our Connecticut backyard in July.

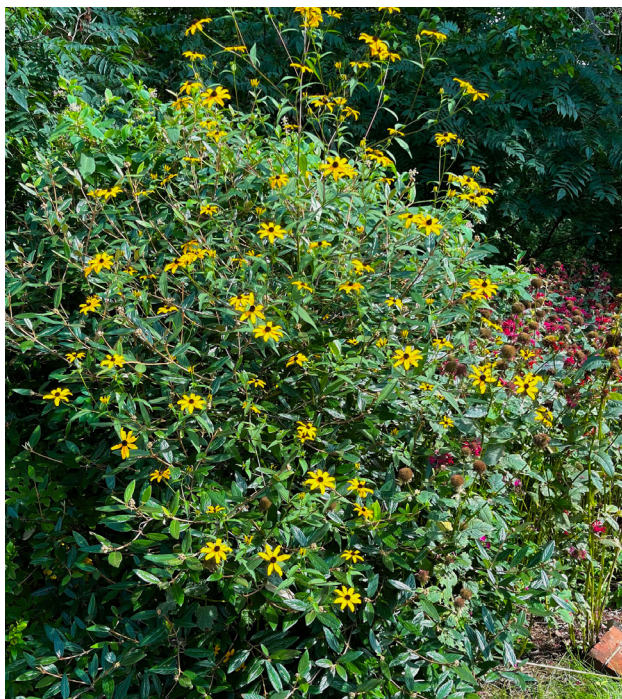
In a summer lull, I thought of life as a stage... of stages of life and of final acts, of putting the garden to bed. I thought of the value of wild things. **Queen Anne's Lace (Daucus carota**, aka wild carrot, naturalized in New England) and **Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria**, an invasive non-native plant) were peaking ornamentally in sunny barren wilds of the Quiet Corner.

And I thought about what is really important in the garden, and in life: **Integrity and Coexistence**. Weeds are especially valuable in the landscape, integral to the Web of Life, feeding bugs, birds, critters, and people. Nature always does the right thing and all people have value. All are interconnected, a part of nature, not apart, on the global stage.

Stage Right. Many enter life's stage from the political right, more conservative, family-focused, some more liberal as they learn of social responsibility beyond family, tribe and tribal thought, of coexistence. Exit Stage Left.

**"Something is happening and you don't know what it is. Do you, Mr. Jones?"**

Bob Dylan - *Ballad of a Thin Man*

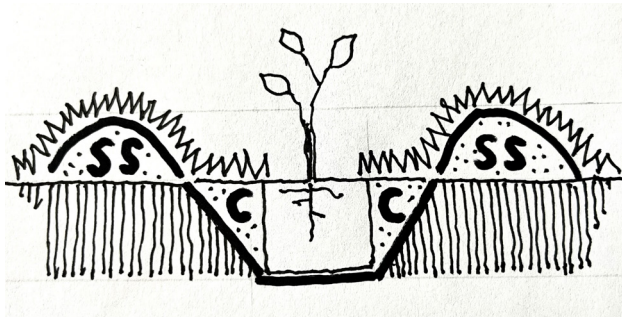


"Sunflowering" Viburnum

**FALL** Time to prepare for winter's dormancy -- and spring's rebirth. What plants have done well, what haven't? What needs to be nurtured or transplanted? Where can lawn be unmown to create a mini-meadow? What utility areas can be embellished? What sites can be prepared for next year?

Plants introduce concepts of style and design. My naturalistic style blends with wild edges, and welcomes weeds such as bright yellow **Goldenrod (Solidago)**. Style is yours, however, and yours alone. Herbaceous perennials were showcased in my summer tutorial; a winter tutorial will highlight showy woody plants. Whatever the style, careful planting with compost helps plants thrive, not simply survive.

**2-TO-3 RULE** Dig a Hole 2 to 3 times Wider than the container or ball-and-burlapped (B&B) root system. But no deeper. Remove soil as you build a wide soil saucer ('SS' in graphic) to hold water, efficiently moving soil only once to form a saucer. Amend the hole with compost



('C' in graphic). **Mulch 2 to 3 inches**. Later, the newly planted crown can be sheltered with mulch from the freeze/thaw, expand/contract damage of winter.

**FALL TUTORIAL** On Sunday afternoon,

September 29th, a hands-on planting tutorial will be at my wild gardens near Diana's Pool in Chaplin. Bonfire potluck. Herbaceous perennials were showcased in my summer tutorial; a winter tutorial will highlight showy woody plants. Text if interested.

**Bee Balm (Monarda)** did very well in 2024, crowding its neighbors and attracting buzzing bees, flies, butterflies and moths, and three hummingbirds; use mildew-resistant varieties. It forced a tall **Helianthus** to flower through a large spring-blooming **Prague Viburnum**, appearing to be a yellow sunflower shrub.

But the leaves of **'Midnight Marvel' Hibiscus** suffered insect damage again (third year; also on a Wellesley MA client's Hibiscus). Climate change brings more heat and humidity to Connecticut, and more insect damage. I sprayed more and more Neem. Enough. I will overwinter in a pot while I find it a new home, perhaps with better air circulation on the Cape.

Rabbits and a woodchuck ate low ornamentals as usual, even **Blueberry (Vaccinium**, several cultivars to promote pollination) with tasty fruit for birds (mine are at the Willimantic Co-op). To distract bunnies, I overseed the lawn with **White Clover (Trifolium repens**, self-fertilizes as it "fixes" nitrogen in the soil). They love the white flowers, so I mow high which is also better for the grass.



Ornamental grass embellishing utility area

Deer snacked higher on **Grapeleaf Anemone vitifolia 'Robustissima'**, **Lily (Lilium)** flower buds, and even **Kousa Dogwood (Benthamidia formerly Cornus)**. Deer are discouraged by human presence, however, and some gardeners mark their territory with urination. Discontinuous "deer-interruption-fences" can deter their tendency to follow the same path. As we used to say at Weston Nurseries in Hopkinton MA, there are lists of deer-resistant plants, but the deer don't read them.

**WATER** makes things grow. My ornamentals were well-watered during 2024's record heat (best in early morning), and performed well with many weeds that I also encourage, such as **Pokeberry (Phytolacca)** with red stems, dark berries that feed wildlife, and showy fall color. **Poison Ivy (Toxicodendron)** also grew well, the only plant I spray with a toxic chemical herbicide, carefully on a still day.



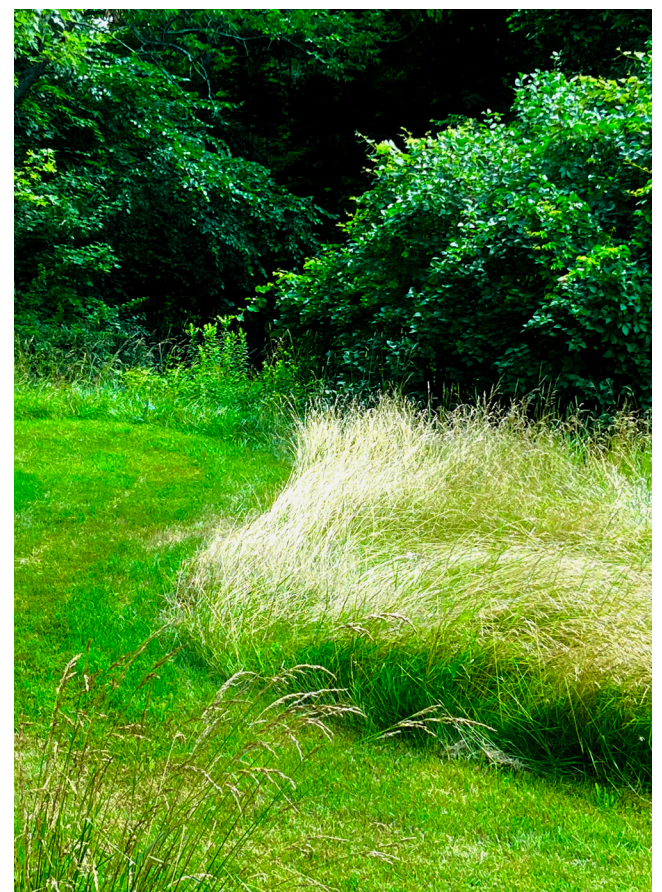
'Stargazer' Lilies

**WINTER** makes things slow. Deciduous leaves drop. Dormancy reduces development. Human activity lessens. This gardener overwinters patio plants indoors, shovels snow and feeds a wood stove, and plans for spring.

America is in a winter of spiritual discontent that threatens democracy, but will recover in a spring-like rebirth. Winter is a time for recovery and rejuvenation. Nature is a tonic for partisan politics, but walking woods and seeking solace in gardens is not enough.

**VOTE** for integrity and coexistence.

Brian Karlsson Barnes, master gardener / designer, Chaplin, Connecticut  
 KB garden design briankarlssonbarnes@gmail.com  
 Text 617.957.6611 (preferred)



Reduced mowing creates mini-meadow



Looking Up

# A Simple Composition

By Bob Grindle

It is one of those times...the end of a long and nearly perfect August day, when skies don't get any bluer and Joni Mitchell's image of "feather canyons everywhere" is the perfect cloud topping on this dessert of a moment...a gentle cooling breeze lends a hint of magic to the atmospheric warmth and radiant brushstrokes of nasturtium and dahlia, of begonia and daylily, of morning glory and marigold, to say nothing of the intoxicating clove scent of the nearly feral patches of phlox, caress my senses and whisper into my very being simply that no other place, real or imagined, could be more pleasant than right here; right now. After more than 50 years of working with nature's organic palette and learning to compromise with her primordial wisdom my wife Linda and I like to tap the pause button occasionally and simply soak up and enjoy all the richness of life in the landscape around us... we will sit beneath an over-arching Kousa dogwood that we planted decades ago and start new or continue old conversations that might very well have begun shortly after we first met in 1971 at Petersen's ice cream and coffee shop in West Hartford. But as the planet turns, spreading shade on Clark hill, the dark growing deeper, and the low drone of our voices drifting across the yard, it is as if some infra-red optics shine on the retina of our shared memories...have our past dreams of a future together really become the present(?) ...has what began as a thrill ride of promises so many years ago actually matured into the quiet and simple composition that has become a half-century long partnership feeling as rooted and sturdy as the lush, glacial, often very wet hillside we landed on, here in Hampton and Chaplin?



Predawn mornings in September and October, the soft glow of the zodiacal should be visible from most dark locations about 2 hours before sunrise. Look toward the east for a tall hazy pyramid of soft light. *Photographer's notes: Using a wide-angle 12-mm lens I was able to include both the zodiacal light cone (left) and the Milky Way (right) on October 7, 2022. The pink color at left is a faint aurora. The light cone tilts steeply upward before dawn in fall and at dusk in spring. Notice that the zodiacal light is considerably brighter nearer the horizon, where it outshines the Milky Way. Bob King*

sunrise and in the spring just after sunset...but the truly interesting thing about the zodiacal light is that the dust that causes it is most likely from dust storms on Mars!

As I frequently mention in pieces I write for *Neighbors*, don't wait for the big events...the eclipses, meteor showers, comets and northern lights, like blockbuster movies or Broadway hits, will get plenty of coverage and have people standing in line...they are fun and certainly memorable, but by looking up often and including the sky over our head as part of the world we live in we all discover myriad events that become much more personal and special because we discovered them by surprise...a shooting star that we didn't expect, an alignment that is only special because of the mood we're in or a sense of the vastness of this world we live in. As the equinox on September 22<sup>nd</sup> welcomes autumn and says farewell to summer be sure to spend plenty of time outside enjoying our lovely piece of this almost unutterably beautiful planet Earth.

The evening has grown seriously dark; it is time to close up the chicken coop against nighttime marauders; pick up the cockatiel that flew into our lives from the surrounding woods a dozen years ago and head back to the house. A single light in the office offers a warm contrast to the dark silhouette of the house and the rose-petal soft breeze stirs a leafy conversation in branch and bough as we walk this path of ten million footsteps...this blue-skyed beauty of a summer day has officially dissolved into night...the small population of native brown bats that roost in the ancient white pines down by the pond and were, just moments ago, tracing crazily and playfully across this early August gray-purple skyscape, have faded, then disappeared into the gathering darkness as the Sun set below that point on the horizon where light can refract into twilight, and night became the dominant player as the cosmic stage manager set the mood in our northeastern Connecticut outdoor theater. It is at moments like this, as day flows into night, patient witness to the eternal ebb and flow of the immutable order of the Universe, and despite the deceptive simplicity of being a solitary observer in a theater seat at the edge of a small garden in our molecularly tiny patch of mother Earth, that I often feel my connection to the day's events combine with my involuntary imagination and swiftly reimagine the perch from which I see the world... instantly transported to a time before human knowledge had become too great for a single mind to grasp, perhaps, or a time when courage didn't seem to be retreating from the battlefronts of truth...was there such a time?...is memory a reliable resource?

From our timeworn path back toward the house I look up to see Vega twinkling almost straight overhead, Saturn shining to the southeast and the Moon rising low in the east and I am reminded that there are no battlefronts of truth in the Cosmos, there is only the always astonishing Cosmos. During the final week of August, peaking in September and continuing through most of October, a couple of hours before dawn, say about 4 a.m. if you're up that early, look to the east...if you are lucky enough to live where skies are reasonably dark, there's a chance you might see the zodiacal light. It's a hazy pyramid of light caused by sunlight reflecting off of dust particles between the Earth and the Sun...in the autumn it's just before

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# Holistic Economic Development in Willington

By Ernest E. Bleinberger

*Editor's note:* The author of this article is a principal of Strategy 5 Consulting, an urban economics firm based in Andover, Mass.

Willington is looking its future straight in the eye and taking steps to ensure the sustainability and prosperity of the community through the proactive process of creating an Economic Development Strategic Plan. Not only that, they are taking a holistic approach that balances diverse community values and interests with a broad view and understanding of the economic ecosystem involved. The goal is to support and expand the existing portfolio of businesses, integrate new projects that meet “appropriate development” thresholds associated with the Town’s adopted Plan of Conservation and Development (PoCD), and to expand relationships that can benefit the effort. All this while solving for an improving fiscal and budgetary bottom line that will serve the community moving forward.

The work is being conducted under the auspices of the Town of Willington Economic Development Commission and their advisors, my firm Strategy 5 Consulting. The team is involving the residents, business owners and operators, property owners, interest groups, and regional players in an open discussion, and has a first public event planned for Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup>—an Economic Development Open House. This opportunity for the general public to interact on a variety of topics will be held at the Willington Library from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Interested members of the public are encouraged to drop by for a few minutes or to stay for the full program, which will include roundtable discussions on a variety of market sectors, conceptual mapping, and other interactive opportunities.

“We are excited about the strategic planning underway and look forward to an inclusive process that helps to generate support and excitement moving forward,” said Matt Clark, chairman of the EDC, in an interview with me. “We want to respect the community’s values, and to cherish the natural and other resources that make Willington a great place to live and work. We are also focused on bolstering the economics of the Town, including the attraction of new businesses, job creation, spending by visitors, and support for the fiscal bottom line.”

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is an implementation action of the PoCD and will serve to yield tangible results including a series of recurring economic and fiscal benefits. We are formulating a strategic plan that is based on an understanding and valuation of Willington’s resources, including its human capital. The team wants to interact closely with the community to leverage the Town’s unique character and diverse assets to attract private sector capital investment, create sustainable and synergistic development projects, and penetrate markets that may have been underestimated in the past. This is all part of the holistic approach to economic development that I believe is necessary in Willington and have found so productive around the nation over time.

What is the market potential from which Willington may draw economic development support? Traditional markets that support the Town’s largest business concerns (FedEx, the TA Travel Center, and Love’s Travel Stop) need to be given proper consideration in the economic planning process. Over time, there has been an emphasis on trucking, warehousing and distribution, fuel and vehicle service, and other businesses that are tied to I-84, which registers about 18 million vehicles a year passing east and west through the Town boundaries. These businesses are critical contributors to the Town’s economic base, particularly its tax base, and we want to acknowledge that. At the same time, there are viable market sectors such as the life sciences, commercial and professional services, hospitality and lodging, tourism and subsectors such as heritage tourism; agriculture, including microfarming and home-based enterprises, as well as commercial operations; the renewable energy market in various forms; destination and specialty retail; restaurants/food and beverage; and residential markets that may offer a number of opportunities.

Another market, while not exactly overlooked but perhaps not fully appreciated, is associated with the University of Connecticut. UConn is an economic engine with linkages that literally stretch around the globe. With more than 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students and about 5,000 faculty and staff located at the Main Campus alone, the demographic importance of the University is not lost on surrounding communities like Storrs/Mansfield (which hosts the institution), Tolland, Ashford, and of course, Willington. Indeed, many of the Town’s residents

have a past or current affiliation with UConn, and local businesses benefit from UConn-driven spending and other economic exchanges. Parents, family members, friends, and professional and academic visitors from around the world are also drawn to the area, providing a source of demand for hotel rooms, restaurants, and other business activity.

The economic potential represented by UConn extends far beyond the demand for housing, goods, and services generated by students, faculty, staff, and others. It encompasses manifold institutional, public, and private sector interests in global economic sectors like health and medicine, agricultural and environmental science, information and computing technology, advanced materials, research and development, and a myriad of other disciplines and areas of interface with economies around the world.

Today, companies can locate almost anywhere, unless they require deepwater shipping access, a heavy industrial environment, direct access to airport runway infrastructure, or other physical attributes necessary for large-scale operations. On the other hand, a high-tech scientific instrument manufacturer, advanced materials research and development firm, healthcare institution, medical device manufacturer, IT or other technology company, can locate almost anywhere—as long as the location suits its principals, investors, staff, and workforce.

The Willington Economic Development Strategic Plan will also recognize the value of natural resource conservation and preservation of open space, historic and cultural resources, and the importance of maintaining Willington’s unique character. When economic development is being discussed, people don’t necessarily think about the value that these elements contribute to the monetized environment. In other words, Willington’s array of small rivers, streams, meadows, pastures, and large stands of trees all add value to the homes, farms, and other investments that dominate the majority of Town land. The trick is in finding a balance between these sometime competing forces.

Willington has to face the realities of certain constraints as well, including the lack of public water and sewer facilities that would typically be required to serve most large projects. Also, terrain and other topographical challenges can limit different development types. Vehicular, pedestrian, and support access also factor into the equation.

As work on the Economic Development Strategic Plan progresses, the team will be formulating detailed recommendations and implementation action steps based on further market analysis, economic and fiscal impact analysis, a funding and finance strategy, and additional public outreach. Conceptual Development Programs (CDPs), or prototypical projects, will help further define opportunities for capital investment, business development and operation, and assurance that the sustainable and prosperous future envisioned by the Plan is consistent with the people’s voice in the process.

For more information, contact Ernest Bleinberger, principal, Strategy 5 Consulting, at [eb@strategy5.net](mailto:eb@strategy5.net).

**Willington Economic Development  
Open House  
Saturday, September 7  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Willington Public Library**

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IGA and other local markets.

Frequent our farmers markets.

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



## ‘ACE OF ACES’

By Bill Powers

Alfred Leonardi first moved to our area from Massachusetts to work at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft. There for seven years, he worked with fuel cells. During that time with much encouragement from his supervisor, Alfred enrolled at the Eastern Connecticut State University where he received a Bachelor’s Degree in History and then a Master’s Degree in Education. He went on to teach history for 14 years for Windham Public Schools, and then started his own company Nova Game Designs. Together with his late wife Lynda, they raised their family in Columbia, CT.

Alfred had always loved board games, both playing them and then designing them. He also loves history and decided to put his historical knowledge to work for him. And so, in 1980 his game “*Ace of Aces*” was first published. The game represents World War I fighter aircraft – ‘German’ and ‘Allied’ and immediately became successful. *Ace of Aces* won the Charles S. Roberts Award for “Gamers Choice of 1980.” At the 1993 Origins Awards, *Ace of Aces* was inducted into the Product Hall of Fame. In June of 2012, a Kickstarter project was initiated to reprint the game with Alfred’s permission and cooperation. The game was successfully republished 10 years ago. In February of this year a successful project to update the graphics and release a new set of books was launched.

*Ace of Aces* is “An innovative 1-on-1 (two-player) aircraft combat game that simulates a dog fight between WW I. aircraft. Each player has a book with pictures of what they see out of their plane’s cockpit. Each player selects a maneuver (bank left, barrel roll, etc.) and tells their opponent a page number to turn to. This new page, when cross-indexed with the maneuver made, gives the page number that shows the results of the chosen maneuver. The object of the game is to get your opponent in your sights and shoot them down.” - *BoardGameGuru*

Alfred, currently lives in Windham, Connecticut. If you know him, I’m sure you will agree that he has many other interesting stories to tell.

Bill Powers is a former Hartford and Windham Public Schools.

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

“All you need is love.”  
-John Lennon



# Does Joshua's Trust Ever Sell Property?

By Karen Zimmer, Vice President  
 Reprinted from the Summer 2023 Joshua's Trust News

The mission statement for JT includes the words "to permanently protect and maintain the land and preserve the heritage of northeastern Connecticut for the benefit and well-being of present and future generations." We take our responsibility to protect land seriously. There are a few situations that may seem contrary to this promise.

1. Occasionally someone donates or bequeaths a house or a piece of land with the written permission that we may sell the property and use the proceeds to further our mission. In fact, our new Tower Hill Preserve in Chaplin was given to us with the written permission that the Trust could sell the house and up to five acres, which we did. The proceeds from the sale of the house will be used to further our land stewardship and protection efforts.

2. We protect conservation land by either owning and stewarding the land ourselves, or by holding the deed for a conservation easement on privately owned property. When we hold a conservation easement, the land is owned by someone else, while the easement places specific restrictions on the property that help maintain the conservation value of the land. Such restrictions often include prohibitions such as not subdividing the land or putting additional buildings on the land. Joshua's Trust monitors every easement property at least annually, to ensure that the restrictions are adhered to. Since the land is privately owned, it may be sold to another private owner, and the conditions of the conservation restriction remain with the land. These properties are marked with medallions like those used to mark our preserves. If you look closely, the medallions specify whether the property is a "preserve" (owned by us), or a "conservation easement" owned by a private land owner. Property that is privately owned with a conservation easement is not open to the public and you may sometimes see "for sale" signs posted on such land. We do not sell our preserves, and we work very hard to make sure that we defend all the land that we promise to protect.

We at Joshua's Trust invite you to visit and enjoy our preserves at one or more of the fall events listed below.

### Gurleyville Gristmill Tours

Every Sunday from 1:00-5:00 PM Through October 13  
 Stone Mill Road, Mansfield, CT

The Gurleyville Gristmill offers a unique opportunity to observe rural 19<sup>th</sup> century technology. Visitors can see the equipment as it was operated for over 100 years, until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Be sure to visit <https://joshuas-trust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

### Wednesday Walk at Madeline Regan Preserve

9/4/24 9:00-10:30 AM  
 1274 Tolland Stage Road, Tolland, CT

Join us for a one-mile hike through this beautiful, 29-acre preserve in Tolland. We'll walk a section of the Old CT Path before ascending the Esker Trail where glacial activity left behind kettle holes teeming with life. Be sure to visit <https://joshuas-trust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

### Herp Walk with the CT Museum of Natural History

09/07/24 10:00-12:00  
 Allanach Wolf Woodlands, 164 Back Road, Windham, CT

Join UConn herpetologist Dr. Susan Herrick to search for hidden herpetofauna, including frogs, salamanders, snakes and more. REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Go to <https://csmnh.uconn.edu/programs>. to register and get details,

updates and cancellations.

### Gentle Yoga on the Lawn with Carole Tyler, Yoga Instructor

09/21/2024, 9:00-10:00 AM  
 Atwood Farm, 624 Wormwood Hill Road, Mansfield Center, CT

Join us for a morning yoga session at Atwood Farm. Bring a mat or blanket. All ages are welcome to this free event. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Be sure to visit <https://joshuas-trust.org/events/> for registration, details, updates and cancellations.

### Introduction to Forest Bathing with Certified Guide, Beth Reel

09/22/24 10:00-11:30  
 Allanach Wolf Woodlands, 164 Back Road, Windham, CT

The research-based practice of forest bathing, or Shinrin-yoku as it is known in Japan, will help you reduce stress and find calm and peace in nature. Please bring your raincoat and water-resistant shoes if it is a damp day. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Be sure to visit <https://joshuas-trust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

### Ramble in the Woods - Thoreau-Style

10/5/24 10:00-11:30  
 Harvey Preserve, Federal Rd (between #68 & 74), Chaplin, CT

Join naturalist Deb Field for a ramble through Joshua's Trust Harvey Preserve. The approximately 1 mile trail meanders through wooded swamp, upland forest, and along unique geological features and is reminiscent of Brister's Hill, one of Henry David Thoreau's regular rambles between Walden Pond and Concord. Sturdy shoes, water & bug spray recommended. Be sure to visit <https://joshuas-trust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations

### Cider Pressing at Atwood Farm

10/5/24 2:00-4:00 PM  
 Atwood Farm 624 Wormwood Hill Road, Mansfield Center, CT

Join us for a traditional cider pressing at Atwood Farm. Take a tour of the farm's heirloom orchard and historic buildings, including the large barn, blacksmith's shop, weaver's cottage, and other outbuildings. Peggy Church will also be on site to demonstrate the art of weaving and spinning in the Weaver's Cottage. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended. Be sure to visit <https://joshuas-trust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations

### Walk and Read with Joshua's Trust

10/20/24, 1:00-2:30 PM  
 Bradley-Buchanan Woods, 54 Warrenville Road, Mansfield Center, CT

Bring the kids for a 1-1.5 mile activity walk, followed by a book reading. Visit <https://joshuas-trust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

## Willimantic Records

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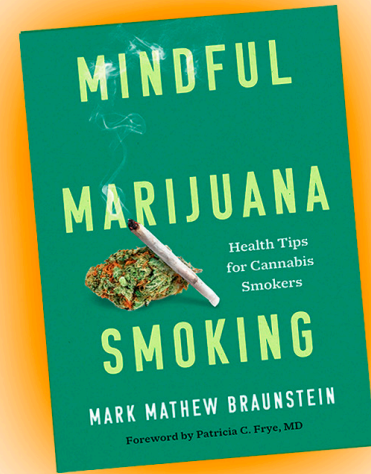
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## Contra Dance

First Friday of each month  
 Patriots Park Lodge, 172 Lake Street, Coventry, CT  
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 Partner not required, all dances taught  
 Live Band & Caller See: [HCDance.org](http://HCDance.org)  
 Questions: Dennis at [knowdj@frontier.net](mailto:knowdj@frontier.net)

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.

## Christian Science Midweek Testimony Meeting

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## Tai Chi Home

### A Hundred Old Songs

By Joe Pandolfo



The sun at the end of a September afternoon is magic... a ley line of energy reaching across the lake. It draws you in like a candle, and draws out the sun-down melodies of the birds in boughs along the shore.

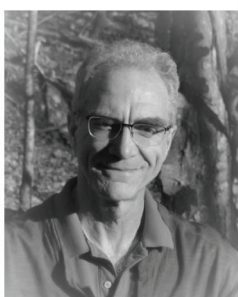
This is the season that reminds us of time. Around the glow of any moment, glimmers appear of what's to come, of what came behind. The melodies of a hundred old songs about the end of summer ripple over the surface of your memory, then sink and fold beneath.

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# EASTCONN Head Start Programs Enrolling for 2024-2025 School Year

Submitted by Jennifer Snyder

NORTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT - EASTCONN is now accepting applications for its Head Start and Early Head Start programs for the 2024-2025 school year. These federally funded programs offer comprehensive early childhood education and family support services to eligible families in Windham and Tolland counties.

#### Program Highlights:

- Early Head Start: Serves pregnant women and children from birth to age 3
- Head Start: Serves children ages 3-5
- Center-based and home-based options available
- Locations in Putnam, Killingly, Danielson, Moosup, and surrounding areas
- Focus on child development, education, health, nutrition, and family support

#### Long-Term Benefits:

- Improved economic stability in adulthood
- Enhanced physical health throughout life
- Increased parental education and employment
- Stronger family environments

EASTCONN's programs feature highly qualified staff, small class sizes, low child-to-staff ratios, and strong parent engagement. Income guidelines apply.

Families interested in enrolling or learning more about EASTCONN's Head Start and Early Head Start programs can call Kimberly Mansfield, EASTCONN Director Head Start and Early Head Start, at (860) 455-1580 or visit [www.eastconn.org/headstart](http://www.eastconn.org/headstart).

Invest in your child's future today with EASTCONN Head Start and Early Head Start.  
PARA PUBLICACIÓN INMEDIATA  
Contacto: Michael Hamad  
[mhamad@eastconn.org](mailto:mhamad@eastconn.org)  
860-455-1506 x3315

EASTCONN Head Start y Early Head Start ahora inscribiendo para el año escolar 2024-2025

NORESTE DE CONNECTICUT - EASTCONN está aceptando solicitudes para sus programas Head Start y Early Head Start para el año escolar 2024-2025. Estos programas financiados por el gobierno federal ofrecen servicios integrales de educación infantil temprana y apoyo familiar a familias elegibles en los condados de Windham y Tolland.

#### Aspectos destacados del programa:

- Early Head Start: Atiende a mujeres embarazadas y niños desde el nacimiento hasta los 3 años
- Head Start: Atiende a niños de 3 a 5 años
- Opciones disponibles en centros y en el hogar
- Ubicaciones en Putnam, Killingly, Danielson, Moosup y áreas circundantes
- Enfoque en el desarrollo infantil, educación, salud, nutrición y apoyo familiar

#### Beneficios a largo plazo:

- Mejor estabilidad económica en la edad adulta
- Mejora de la salud física a lo largo de la vida
- Aumento de la educación y el empleo de los padres
- Entornos familiares más sólidos

Los programas de EASTCONN cuentan con personal altamente calificado, clases pequeñas, baja proporción de niños por personal y una fuerte participación de los padres. Se aplican pautas de ingresos.

Las familias interesadas en inscribirse o obtener más información sobre los programas Head Start y Early Head Start de EASTCONN pueden llamar a Kimberly Mansfield, Directora de Head Start y Early Head Start de EASTCONN, al (860) 455-1580 o visitar [www.eastconn.org/headstart](http://www.eastconn.org/headstart).

Invierta hoy en el futuro de su hijo con EASTCONN Head Start y Early Head Start.



Linda and Art.

Contributed photo.

## Lebanon Historical Society's Outdoor Antique Show

Submitted by Grace Sayles

It's a tradition, fall colors, antiques, chowder and pie all enjoyed outside on the historic Lebanon Green as the Lebanon Historical Society celebrates 56 years of its outdoor antique show.

For more than half a century, rain or shine, antique dealers and collectors gather on the Green in Lebanon, CT. Once a common sight in Connecticut towns, outdoor antique shows are now almost gone from the landscape. The show on the Lebanon Green offers a bit of nostalgia for everyone. Now in its 57<sup>th</sup> year, the Lebanon Historical Society's Outdoor Antique Show is open 9:00 to 3:00 on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup> 2024.

Up to 60 dealers will offer antiques and high-quality collectibles to buyers who come from around the state and through-out southern New England. The event started in 1966 as a money-making effort to fund Society programs and, eventually, to help pay for the land needed to build a Museum. Today, the Antique Show is still the Historical Society's largest and most important fund raising event with proceeds supporting school programs, exhibits and historical presentations.

Some dealers have been participating for many years, but new-to-the-field dealers are added every year. Visitors can expect to find everything from 19<sup>th</sup> century furniture to vintage tools and from traditional pottery to textiles, glassware and jewelry.

For the \$8 admission fee visitors can spend the day wandering the field, talking with dealers and finding a bargain. Lunch and snacks are available for purchase all day including home-made chowders, sandwiches as well as grilled burgers and dogs and end it all with a slice of home-made pie!

Parking is free and the event goes on rain or shine.

For more information contact the Lebanon Historical Society 860-642-6579 / [museum@historyoflebanon.org](mailto:museum@historyoflebanon.org) or visit us on the web at [www.historyoflebanon.org](http://www.historyoflebanon.org).

Dealer spaces still available. \$90 for a 20' x 24' space. Call 860-423-8876 or 860-642-6579.



## The Green Cremation: A Sustainable Choice

Submitted by Thomas Tierney

As a society, we are increasingly aware of the impact our choices have on the environment, even when it comes to our final farewells. Traditional burial and cremation methods, while rooted in tradition, carry significant environmental footprints. The Green Cremation, located in Manchester, Connecticut, offers a sustainable alternative that honors both loved ones and the planet: Alkaline Hydrolysis, also known as Water Cremation.

Alkaline Hydrolysis is an innovative and environmentally friendly process that uses water, heat, and an alkaline solution to accelerate the natural decomposition of the body. This method, which mimics the natural process of decomposition, is gentler and less energy-intensive than flame-based cremation. The result is the same as traditional cremation—cremated remains—but the process itself is far more sustainable.

Here's how it works: The body is placed in a stainless steel chamber, where a solution of water and potassium hydroxide is gently circulated. The combination of heat and the alkaline solution breaks down the body's tissues, leaving behind bone fragments and a sterile liquid. The bone fragments are then dried and processed into a fine, white powder, which is returned to the family in an urn, just as with traditional cremation.

One of the key benefits of Alkaline Hydrolysis is its reduced environmental impact. Traditional cremation relies on fossil fuels and releases carbon dioxide and other pollutants into the atmosphere. In contrast, Water Cremation uses up to 90% less energy and produces no harmful emissions. It also eliminates the need for caskets, embalming fluids, and burial vaults, which further reduces the ecological footprint.

Alkaline Hydrolysis has gained significant recognition in recent years, notably being chosen by prominent individuals and institutions for its environmental benefits. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, sought out this form of disposition, reflecting his lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship. Furthermore, renowned institutions like The Mayo Clinic and UCLA Medical School utilize Alkaline Hydrolysis for individuals who have opted to donate their bodies to scientific research. These examples highlight the growing acceptance and credibility of this method.

At The Green Cremation, we believe that every family should have the option to choose a more environmentally responsible method for their loved one's final disposition. We are proud to be the first facility in Connecticut, as well as the surrounding states of New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, to offer this service. Whether you are located in Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, or anywhere in between, The Green Cremation is here to serve you.

We understand that the decision to choose Water Cremation may be influenced by a variety of factors, including religious beliefs, cultural practices, or simply a desire to minimize environmental impact. That's why we offer our services directly to families who wish to work with us in Manchester. However, we also recognize that many families have established relationships with their local funeral homes. If you prefer, we are more than happy to collaborate with your local funeral director to ensure that Alkaline Hydrolysis is available to you as part of your funeral arrangements.

Choosing The Green Cremation is about more than just selecting a method of disposition; it's about making a conscious decision to honor your loved one in a way that reflects their values and their commitment to the environment. We are here to support you every step of the way, providing compassionate care, expert guidance, and a service that aligns with your desire for sustainability. For more information about Alkaline Hydrolysis and how The Green Cremation can assist your family, please don't hesitate to contact us at (860) 649-1222 or email us at [thegreencremation@gmail.com](mailto:thegreencremation@gmail.com). Whether you work directly with us or through your local funeral home, we are dedicated to providing a dignified, eco-friendly option for your loved one's final journey.

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# News from Hampton's Fletcher Memorial Library

Submitted by Janice Trecker

## Hampton Harvest Festival

Fletcher Memorial Library hosts The Hampton Harvest Festival, September 21, 9 am- 3 p.m., on the lawn between the community center and the town hall at 164 Main Street. In case of rain, the event will move to the Hampton Elementary School at 380 Main Street.

The festival, which is the library's main fundraiser, will feature a variety of vendors and many hand grown and handmade products from the town of Hampton. The Hampton Fire Department will have the grill set up for burgers and hot dogs, and there will be displays by other community organizations and local entrepreneurs.

The offerings will include fresh produce and other agricultural products, baked goods, gift baskets, and local crafts and art work. There will be face painting and games for the children, along with the traditional hay rides, corn hole game, and a display of farm animals, including rabbits and goats. Admission is free and both sites offer plenty of free parking. Information: 860 455 1086.



'Barn Shadows' by Alice Kuzel.

## Music at the Fletch

The final concert of Fletcher Memorial library's Music at the Fletch season features Mark and Beverly Davis in a free concert. The Duo will perform music for two guitars and for guitar and mandolin, Wednesday, September 18, from 6 - 7 p.m. in the library function room.

They will perform contemporary and classical pieces, including works by J.S. Bach, Vivaldi, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Milan Tesar, as well as arrangements of British folk songs.

Hampton resident Mark Davis started the Bach in the Garden weekly series of al fresco classical guitar concerts in the summer of 2021. He is one of a very few professional musicians who concertize on both the classical guitar and mandolin, and, incidentally, he plays a mean electric guitar as well.

He and Beverly Davis have played together since 2001, performing in New England and appearing in international festivals, including Eurofestival Zupfmusik in Germany, Mandolines de Lunel in France, Ciudad de Cristal in Spain, FAME in Australia, and the 46<sup>th</sup> Festival Internacional de Plectro La Rioja in Spain.

They also perform with the Providence Mandolin Orchestra, the New American Mandolin Ensemble, and The Hampton Trio. The Trio made a well received appearance at The Fletch last summer.

The Duo's CD 'Ayres and Dances for Two Guitars' will be available for purchase (\$10) after the concert and is also available for download at: <https://markandbeverlydavis.bandcamp.com/releases>

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

## September- October Show at Top Shelf Gallery

The September-October show at the Top Shelf Gallery will feature acrylic paintings by Susan Graseck and charcoal and chalk pastel drawings by Alice Kuzel. The show will officially open Wednesday, September 11, from 5:30 -6:30 p.m. with an artists' reception.

Susan Graseck is an award-winning painter who has exhibited extensively in both Connecticut and Rhode

Island. She produces atmospheric landscapes inspired by a lifetime love of coastal and country settings, as well as strongly geometric studies of buildings. She credits her grandmother, who took her on painting excursions as a child, with her introduction to watercolor and her initial interest in art and considers herself fortunate to have grown up "with expanses of land and sea as my frames of reference."

"I paint largely from memories and experiences," says Graseck, who describes herself as neither strictly a realist nor an abstractionist. She adds, "It is the lines, planes, and blocks of color that interest me, whether I'm painting

barns, bridges, houses or landscapes."

Graseck retired six years ago from her position as the founding director of a national educational non-profit based at Brown University, a position she held for thirty years. In her words, she has "never looked back." She is most at home in her Pomfret studio.

Alice Kuzel works in charcoal and chalk pastel, sometimes combining both mediums, and says that she gathers her inspiration primarily from her own travel and photography. A number of her works were inspired by a trip to Japan, and some of her handsome drawings have a definite Japanese vibe, despite being drawn rather than brushed.

"My love of books, art and education were fostered at an early age by my family," says Kuzel who majored in English at ECSU, received a Master's in education, and spent the summer of 2011 as a Fellow at the Connecticut Writing Project. "I began to enjoy drawing in college," Kuzel says, "recognizing the peace I found doing it. More recently, 'I've taken time to do it.'"

In her day jobs, Kuzel has combined her educational and artistic interests. She is a museum educator at Old Sturbridge Village, and she and her husband own a home remodeling company.

## 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  
Call or text Joe Pandolfo: 959-444-3979

## At the Ashford Senior Center

**Tai Chi - Tuesday & Friday 9:30-10:30am**  
\$15 per month for one day/wk; \$25 for two  
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Contact the Center at 860-487-5122  
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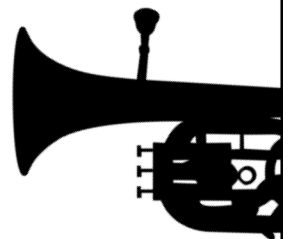
**July 26**  
Rehearsal and  
Concert with the  
Babcock Summer  
Youth Band,  
Ashford, CT

**August 17**  
Union's Old Home  
Day, Union, CT

**September 15**  
Ashford Family Day,  
Tremko Lane,  
Ashford, CT

*The Babcock Cornet Band was founded in Ashford, CT in 1862 and is the oldest continuously-running independent community band in the United States, with roots dating back to April of 1775.*

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# Free App Can Teach Emotional Regulation Skills

By Michelle Baughman



Emotional regulation is a person's ability to recognize what they are feeling and to be able to respond to or manage their feelings before their emotions influence their behavior in ways that social norms deem inappropriate. Everyone struggles with emotional regulation from time to time, but neurodivergent individuals can be particularly challenged by this important executive functioning skill.

There are many factors that contribute to why this is so difficult for neurodivergent individuals, ranging from environmental factors (particularly when sensory challenges are present), to lack of natural social supports (due to other people not affording them compassion, or simply a paucity of trusted friends and confidants), to characteristics inherent to their neurodivergence (such as deficits in social learning abilities, executive functioning challenges, "over excitabilities" or intensity, and alexithymia).

Even a person's upbringing and natural temperament can play a role in poor emotional regulation skills. For example, if one is a particularly sensitive individual and was raised in a family that demonstrated their intolerance for displays of emotion by shaming or punishing the person whenever they had an emotional outburst instead of offering comfort, the individual would most likely have internalized shame and developed a poor self-image that would cause them undue anxiety and overwhelm every time they feel strong emotions because they learned to equate emotions with lack of safety. This would, in turn, cause the person to suppress whatever they are feeling, and this coupled with the added anxiety could result in explosive outbursts that seem out of context and confusing and terrifying for everyone else around them. Which in turn, most likely would result in being ostracized, which further decreases natural supports and increases anxiety further (because humans are social creatures, and have evolved to feel safety in groups, and danger in isolation). Additionally, this scenario leads to a myriad of health issues later in life (suppressed anger is linked to heart disease and high blood pressure issues), and poor health is also a source of anxiety. So, poor emotional regulation can become a self-destructive catch-22.

Another factor that plays into why neurodivergent individuals have poor emotional regulation skills is because it is something that is not specifically taught, and because neurodivergent individuals typically have social learning deficits, they need to be specifically taught. Emotional Regulation Skills are not a part of pre-school or kindergarten "curriculum." It is something that is considered a "school readiness skill," which means that it is expected that parents have taught it as part of the child's upbringing. But parenting styles and skills vary widely, as does individual parent's maturity levels. Some of these factors, like an authoritarian style or parental immaturity, are less conducive to modeling and teaching good emotional regulation skills than others.

There are two forms of neurodivergence that are often overlooked and unsupported (due to lack of understanding or misunderstandings about them). These are Giftedness and 2E (Twice Exceptionality). "Twice Exceptional" is a term that refers to a neurodivergent individual who has gifted intelligence plus one or more other neurodivergent conditions. *For example, the diagnosis formerly called Asperger Syndrome was given to autistic individuals who had average or higher than average intelligence (and the diagnosis of autism was differentiated to only include autistic individuals with lower than average intelligence. This all changed with the DSM-V, which did away with the Asperger Syndrome Diagnosis). Many individuals diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome who had much higher-than-average intelligence would also be 2E. Gifted and 2E individuals have a unique cognitive and emotional development, and various environments will impact their behaviors and reactions due to their unique neurology that makes them exquisitely sensitive and intense individuals. "Over Excitabilities" (OEs) is a term used to describe the increased neurological stimulation that is characteristic (but not limited to) the gifted & 2E population. There are five OEs: Psychomotor, Sensual, Intellectual, Imagination, and Emotional. The Emotional Over Excitability makes emotional regulation particularly challenging for this population.*

Many neurodivergent individuals have alexithymia, which means that they have difficulty identifying what they are feeling. This poses a challenge for traditional methods of teaching emotional regulation because one of the first steps in being able to regulate one's emotions is

to identify what one is feeling.

The How We Feel App circumvents this challenge because it starts with identifying the level of energy one is feeling. There are four quadrants to choose from: Low energy pleasant, Low energy unpleasant, High energy pleasant, High energy unpleasant, once you choose the quadrant that most accurately describes how you feel, it opens up into a variety of feelings that you can choose from and gives a definition of each one. (You can choose more than one emotion by simply clicking on the Add an emotion button. I really appreciate this feature because I personally find that part of my difficulty in naming my feelings is that they are complex; I feel more than one feeling at a time). Next the app will prompt you to add a journal entry. (Research has showed that journaling is an effective means of helping to regulate one's emotions). You can also record where you were, who you were with, and what you were doing when you felt that emotion, as well as other pertinent data like the number of hours of sleep and exercise that you have had. The app tracks all the data so that you can analyze it later. The app offers several ways (and graphs) to analyze and recognize patterns in your moods across time (day, week, month) and what you were doing or who you were with. This is particularly useful for neurodivergent individuals because we tend not to be able to recognize toxic people in our lives, and the patterns that this app reveals can help to identify them. Another great feature of the How We feel app is the tools. There are several videos that offer helpful psychoeducation that can promote healthy habits like learning mindfulness meditation, breathing techniques, healthy distractions, reframing, and stretches or other somatic movements that promote good health. It also has a motivational quote feature and prompts to encourage creativity. There seems to be an AI component to the app too, because if you are registering too many High energy unpleasant feelings, the app will prompt you with a video to watch that can help you out of your funk. The most helpful feature of the app is that you can share how you are feeling with your friends or loved ones (you send them the link) because research has shown that people who share their emotions with others tend to be happier and experience better well-being. Sharing feelings with others builds real life natural supports, which is something neurodivergent folks are challenged with because of social anxiety, not being comfortable with or knowing how to effectively initiate conversations, or executive functioning challenges that make it difficult to put their ideas into action. (I have often thought about calling someone to check in with them, and then gotten distracted and forgot to follow through). Also, when one is feeling down, it is even harder to reach out to someone. But because this app lets your friends see when you are feeling down, they might reach out to you. The free app can be downloaded at: [www.https://howwefeel.org](http://www.https://howwefeel.org)

*Michelle M. Baughman is a late-in-life diagnosed adult on the autism spectrum, an autism advocate serving on the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities, a parent of a twice-exceptional child, and a trauma-informed AANE Certified Coach who provides intensive, highly individualized coaching to individuals with neurodivergent conditions. Michelle ascribes to the Neurodiversity paradigm and writes to help debunk the general misconceptions surrounding these conditions in order to change the negative cultural narrative about them, and to help neurodivergent individuals live their best lives.*



Share Curiosity.  
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# Seeds of Change

By Bob Lorentson

Nothing raises the spirits of a gardener more than the release of the new year's seed packets. For some, that's all they'll ever raise. But every spring, seeds of hope grow into flowers and vegetables of joy in a gardener's head, replacing the weeds and assorted varmints that took up residence there in the previous season. It is a transformation that mostly reveals the limits of a gardener's memory.

For many years, it was also a transformation that would not be possible were it not for the little plant hardiness zone map on the back of the seed packets that shows gardeners where those seeds can be safely planted. In a perfect world, this hardiness map would not be necessary, but it's a sad fact of gardening that most gardeners are born with bougainvillea dreams in a pachysandra climate. Stay in your zone, the map seems to say, and everything will be alright. Of course, anyone who actually hears it say this should probably either cut back on the liquid fertilizer, or stop believing in a perfect world.

Anyone who even believes in a safe zone these days is living in a dream world, and should probably resort to more drastic measures to remove the weeds and varmints from their heads. The climate is changing, and those seeds of hope are changing their zones faster than the fossil fuel industry can change the narrative.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) shocked the gardening world by revising the plant hardiness zone map of the U.S. Only the plants were not surprised. The new map shows that most regions have moved a half zone, or 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit, warmer. I moved from zone 6a to zone 6b myself, and am now so close to zone 7 that I can practically see the climate change deniers tripping over the kudzu as they run from the reality that's taking us ever closer to the Twilight Zone. Not even THEIR imaginations can grow in THAT zone.

Devastating droughts, Biblical floods, megafires, extreme heat events, an ominous sea level rise, and enough ungodly storms to make an Act of God look like a disappearing act are the norm now. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration even has a billion dollar disaster mapping tool that makes the U.S.D.A.'s hardiness map look like a disaster zone. Carbon emissions are still rising, and scientists recently reported that Earth briefly passed the dreaded milestone of having an average global temperature that is more than two degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels. Not to be outdone, politicians have called for a curb on scientist emissions.

It's getting so you can't find a zone where humans can grow safely anymore. Or a home insurance policy you can afford. Even Las Vegas oddsmakers will take your bet on the chance of tornadoes in Maine, hurricanes in Nevada, or humans on Earth. Which is why I think it's past time for a Gardener Hardiness Zone Map. One that doesn't make gardeners feel like they'll need the Federal Emergency Management Act to intervene every year they plant a garden. In the meantime, I wonder how many of us could cram into Montana?

Gardeners have not been this worried since the Sun Gods and the Rain Gods demanded sacrifices to prevent droughts and floods from destroying the first gardens. Those early civilizations sacrificed a lot to keep people fed. What is modern civilization prepared to sacrifice?

(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)*.)



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## The Field Day

By Carol Wheelock Hall

I remember the field day in Mytown, USA,  
So come with me now to relive that day.  
Trucked-in, set up, and the awnings were raised.  
The locals arrived, carnies earned their pays.

It was a yearly event planned and out of our norm,  
With fair weather ordered; we couldn't have a storm.  
Kids had a hot dog, and spun sugar on a cone,  
While oldsters were drawn to the popping of corn.

There were games of chance and men rang the bell.  
If you were in the market, there was something to sell.  
It's fun for all ages the colorful posters would tell  
With the new fangled rides and the old carousel.

I recall a parade of fire trucks from all surrounding towns,  
And marching bands, horses, and of course the clowns.  
There were families, people young and old on the fair grounds  
And they stayed 'til fireworks dazzled. Oh the sounds!

Perhaps you remember your town's holidays.  
Those memories shared, you couldn't replace,  
By the sights, the sounds, the smells, and tastes,  
And when smiles of joy came to many a face.

## 'Layover'

By Jolene Munch Cardoza

There is nothing gluten-free in the Starbucks line  
except marshmallow dream bars,  
sugar-coated chewy treats  
made with gelatin  
from the hooves of horses.

So I'm in the air with a protein bar  
and the box of Junior Mints  
I thought I was being slick by  
buying with the airline voucher.

But as it turns out, my purchase  
of deodorant, chocolates, and the  
thin swabs of cotton  
that the airline bought on my behalf  
ended up losing me five dollars of credit.

I would have been happy with the hot shower,  
following the warm bubble bath soak  
fragranced by white tea leaves and jasmine,  
a tiny two-blade razor doing an adequate job  
over my sensitive skin.

But the only feminine antiperspirant  
available to me carries the scent of baby powder,  
an aversion formed in my youth  
to the small white sticky mountain that  
rolls on reminiscent of empty cribs and changing tables.

I have no pajamas, no toothbrush,  
just a tablespoon of toothpaste  
and a sample size sleeve of shaving cream.  
I am lucky to open a bar of soap.  
Where my luggage has landed is anyone's guess.

I fell asleep thinking about ducklings  
who give their feathers for downy bedding,  
their quiet sacrifice surrounding me  
as I lay comforted by their warmth.

This is an unexpected stay, six miles from the runway  
and though I requested an early wake-up call,  
the sun was the only greeting that I received,  
but for the bustling family chirping at each other next door.

It's a quick car ride to a train ride to a plane ride to the next destination  
before home.  
Later I will dine without my seatbelt buckled, without a bouncing tray table or  
the gargle of announcements and gate changes and whirling noise of  
loud motors and burbling babies.

Alas, the dark chocolate quinoa crisps  
with their delicate hint of sea salt  
is a fine accompaniment to my  
low-maintenance Sunday brunch  
held 30 thousand feet in the air.

And as I slowly sip the bubbles  
of my ice cold ginger ale,  
I see your face pass by  
in the Mickey Mouse clouds.

– Jolene Munch Cardoza



## Killer

My life was a total mess. The neighbor had kittens. Guess I needed a service cat. He helped a lot and got along with the other cats.

The vet thought he was vicious because of his name. I named him 'Killer' because he had killer whale markings.

Photo and text by Diane Rutherford of Coventry.

A family of four (a man, a woman, and two children) are walking along a dirt path in a lush green forest. They are all looking upwards with expressions of wonder and joy. Overlaid on the image is a white banner with the text "MAKE THE FOREST PART OF YOUR STORY" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the image, there is a block of text and logos.

Remember the last time your family visited the forest? It's a place of wonder and imagination for the whole family—where stories come to life. And it's closer than you think. Sounds like it's time to plan your next visit. Make the forest part of your story today at a local park near you or find one at [DiscoverTheForest.org](http://DiscoverTheForest.org).

**DISCOVER**the**FOREST**.org

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A close-up, slightly angled view of a white paper bag, likely a coffee bag, with the words "BEST IF USED." printed on it in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The bag is the central focus, with a soft shadow cast to the right.

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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).

## Climate change and the young generations: Their anxiety is real

**CT Mirror.** *"But what climate activist young people told The Connecticut Mirror over and over — and Davino and other professionals said they hear it too — is frustration and anxiety that older generations have decided climate change is a problem younger people should solve. They frequently say that aside from the pressure it puts on them, by the time they're old enough to actually have an impact on policies and actions, it will be too late..." Kids are hearing the ice caps are gonna melt; the sea levels are gonna rise; we're gonna expect more strange weather events. They've already seen these catastrophic events on the news and are expecting more, and that's a kind of anticipatory anxiety that is unprecedented, really," she said. "But it's not a mental illness...It's not something to treat away," ...Instead, it's a mental health issue, the kind he might see in kids with anxieties around bullying or their parents breaking up."* Plus: PODCAST: CT's young generations face growing climate anxiety

## Why are Customers Paying Higher Rates for Electricity? Democrats, Republicans Differ.

**CT Examiner.** *"Higher electricity bills in August prompted a round of finger-pointing between Democrats and Republicans in the state legislature...Matt Lesser, a Democrat, took to X over the weekend to place blame for higher energy costs on a 2019 agreement with Dominion Energy locking in price guarantees for electricity purchased from Millstone Nuclear Power Plant. And he recalled that it had been an initiative promoted by the Republicans..." I fought against the agreement and I lost that fight. But what's surprising to me are the Republican members of the legislature who claim this is not what drives the increase. It may or may not be a good idea, but we need to be honest about it."* State Sen. Ryan Fazio, R-Greenwich, in a reply on X, pinned the blame on a state moratorium on shutting off service to non-paying customers. *"Millstone is in part responsible for the public benefits charge going up, but it's not responsible for the overall bill going up," ...[Senator] Needleman rejected some of the Republican lawmakers' proposals..." What bothers me is that Millstone was a Republican issue...Now they're blaming poor people for the shut-off moratorium. I find it disgusting. I find it reprehensible."*

## Republicans Call For Special Session On Energy Policy

**CT News Junkie.** *"A few dozen Republican members of the House and Senate held a news conference at the Legislative Office Building on Thursday to call for a special session on energy policy following the arrival of the latest round of electricity bills in their constituents' mailboxes. With people complaining that their bills had gone way up and in some cases nearly doubled, Senate Minority Leader Stephen Harding, House Minority Leader Vincent Candelora, and their party's two ranking members on the Energy and Technology Committee blamed Democrats for the rate hike...[But] about 77% of the \$800 million represents the cost of keeping the Millstone nuclear power plant running under an agreement requiring the state to buy electricity from the plant at a flat rate of 5 cents per kwh for 10 years. The deal was brokered by Republicans in 2017 but also got some needed votes from Democrats in both chambers to pass."*

## Electricity Rates Set to Hike Again, Funding EV Charger Rebate

**CT Examiner.** *"After days of intense debate following a recent electricity bill hike, Connecticut residents' costs are set to rise again in September after regulators approved a new rate increase to cover an electric vehicle rebate program. The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority voted unanimously on Wednesday to hike the public benefits part of the rate by nearly 10% for Eversource and 9% for United Illuminating. The decision approves*

*the utilities' request to start recouping costs from the electric vehicle charger discount program this year, despite regulators' push to delay cost recovery until 2025. The disagreement over this issue led to the program's suspension last June...The total rate increase will be around 1.7% for customers of both companies, which will represent an increase of between \$3 and \$4 per month for an average customer consuming 700 kilowatts per hour."*

## A CT solar farm has sheep grazing under its photovoltaic panels; Here's why it could become more common

**Hartford Business.** *"This is the business of agrivoltaics — collocating agriculture with solar panel fields that are now popping up around Connecticut and across the country. Cohen says, particularly in densely settled states like Connecticut, it's an innovation that's beneficial to farms...Before she partnered with Verogy to develop the solar grazing business, Cohen had just 20 sheep, which she kept mostly for showing and training herding dogs. But the agrivoltaics option has allowed her to expand her flock to currently more than 85 animals. She believes she could expand to up to 250 within the next five years."*

## City Unveils First Electric Trash Truck

**New Haven Independent.** *"New Haven trash, meet the 2024 Battle Motors LET 2 EV. That's Connecticut's first ever electric garbage and recycling truck, which is slated to take to the streets of New Haven starting Wednesday morning...The new electric-powered refuse and recycling truck is the first of its kind in the state, and only second to Boston's in New England...The city projects an estimated \$15,000 dollars in savings on diesel and a minimum of \$11,500 in savings on the truck's physical maintenance. While the average diesel truck demands between \$15,000 and \$30,000 dollars a year, an electric truck requires \$3,500. Multiply that by the new electric truck's expected 15-year lifespan, officials said, and the savings on diesel and maintenance yield a full return on investment for the city...heavy duty vehicles, even though they're only 5 percent of the vehicles on the road in Connecticut, contribute more than half of the smog-forming air pollution..."*

## Opinion: Offshore wind is an important step toward sustainability

**CT Mirror.** *"Offshore wind's growing presence across the Eastern Seaboard has put fossil fuel interests on the defense. Research by Brown University has uncovered dark ties between seemingly local wind opposition and seasoned fossil fuel interest groups and climate-denying think tanks. The connections between New England groups and major donors like the Charles Koch Foundation and the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association point to a coordinated effort to obstruct clean energy region-wide."*

## CT attorney general files lawsuit against Sunrun, alleging deceptive and unlawful sales tactics

**Connecticut Public.** *"Connecticut has filed a consumer protection lawsuit against solar panel company Sunrun and several businesses that market or install its panels. State Attorney General William Tong said in one instance, a pair of salespeople forged a homeowner's signature and impersonated that person's voice. Tong said salespeople allegedly signed the homeowner up for a solar panel contract, even though the person had rejected the offer...Homeowners were also allegedly put into long-term solar panel contracts without their full consent, and solar systems were sometimes installed that did not work...customers should always review contracts before signing and not give into high-pressure sales tactics. 'Always make sure that you know what you're getting into...Pay attention — not just to the price, but also the length, the term that you're committed to.' "*

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

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

# Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

The question I am posing for this month is: Do you listen to your car or truck when it talks to you? All mechanical failures will give the driver some type of warning if you pay attention to your vehicle. The most common question asked when you bring your car in for service is: Did you hear anything before you had this breakdown? The most common answer is No or Oh yeah it's been making a noise for some time now. The noise you hear can sometimes be just a small repair if addressed promptly or if it is let go it can escalate into a much larger and more expensive repair.

I'd like to share a couple of examples we've encountered over the years. The first one was a vehicle that was transported off the interstate to our shop. The owner stated that he had lost power. (The vehicle did not run.) We started the inspection and found that the vehicle had a burning smell from underneath. Raising the car on our lift we found oil that was coming from a large hole in the engine block. The driver stated that he heard nothing before losing power. How could you not hear something that would create a large hole in the engine block? To create a hole this large it should have sounded like an M80 going off in the engine compartment.

The next break down was actually driven into our facility. The vehicle had smoke coming from the right front wheel. We inspected the vehicle and found that the right front hub bearing had failed. The grease seal was torn and the leaking grease from the bearing was starting to burn on the brake pads. The failure of a hub bearing starts by making some sort of rumbling noise. As the bearing fails it creates play in the steering wheel. When the bearing reaches this point your brake pedal will be lower. This occurs because your disc brake caliper piston will extend farther to take up the bearing play.

These two examples are to the extreme side. I'd like to say that most of our customers are very much aware of what their vehicles are telling them. This makes our job of diagnosing the problem easier and in most cases keeps the repair price down. So the next time you hear or feel something different in your vehicle, stop and have your repair facility go for a ride with you or at least listen to your noise.

Until next month, HAPPY MOTORING!

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

## Willington Historical Society

Special Presentation  
September 11, 2024 at 7 pm.  
"100 Years of the Trunk"  
presented by Paul Norton

Willington Town Office Building at 40 Old Farms Road in Willington.

The Society is pleased to present a special program featuring a variety of trunks from the 18th and 19th centuries from the collection of Paul Norton. Paul has been in the antiques trade for over 40 years. He started by salvaging a family trunk when he was 9 years old and today collects sample trunks and overbuilt industrial age examples made from 1880 to 1910. These trunks were made from legacy trunk firms including Crouch and Fitzgerald, H.C. Faber and Letheroid. he recently supplied over 30 nineteenth century trunks to a HBO miniseries. Paul specializes in trunk hardware, locks and restoring trunks for his personal collection. He will bring hardware exhibits and select trunks for our viewing. Trunks were used for personal travel as well as in industry. As 18th and 19th century travel modes evolved, so did trunks in styles, size and materials used in fabrication, travel trunks were adjusted to best suit travelers and their belongings.

Please join us for this free event. Bring along your curiosity, questions, and pictures of your own treasures to share. Everyone is welcome. This promises to be a unique evening of working history.



# Solar Today - Honoring Earth Day Every Day

By John Boiano

Greetings all,

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



**Thank you** for the overflow of comments and calls from last month's article on the New Noria Home Hydro unit! It's wonderful and exciting to see that home hydro units are now considered a valid alternative and addition to residential and commercial solar arrays.

**Reminder - Fall is around the corner, please Leave the Leaves!** I won't go into my usual in-depth commentary of the importance of leaving the leaves verses the damage that continually removing them does to the eco-system, air, noise, land and critters. If you're curious, please do a google search to be educated on the topic.

This article will focus on two topics that I am also very passionate about: Solar Recycling and the Solar Energy Industry Associations (SEIA) move towards consumer protection.

## Solar Recycling:

I've been asked a bit in the past and recently more often about what happens to solar panels as they age out. China and parts of Europe are about 20 years ahead of the US with the previous mass deployment of solar panels and now currently, the recycling of the panels. They have been working on mass recycling as they are seeing an influx of panels that are now aging out from being installed so many years ago.

I went solar 14 years ago in the "early adopter" days. The US industry really went into high gear with residential and commercial deployment of panels about 8 - 10 years ago. Panels have a life cycle of about 30 to 40 years. Here in the states, we are just starting to see an uptick in aged out panels. We have about 10 years to go before we see a huge influx of old panels that we will have to be recycled. With that said, this is a current day hot topic, and it is NOT being ignored.

You see, there is not only a recognized environmental responsibility, but also a chance to make money with picking apart and selling off the different materials involved with the panels.

**On the cutting edge** here in the states, SOLARCYCLE in Odessa Texas is America's most advanced solar recycling company! Not only is it using a state-of-the-art recycling process that they created, the entire facility is being powered by old solar panels from decommissioned utility-scale solar farms and residential installations nationwide. Locally, the Green Bank has recently been in the news for making some headway with addressing recycling solar panels and batteries. *More news to come on this topic soon.*

## Consumer protection for residential solar customers:

**FINALLY!** - the solar industry is becoming as fed up as

I have been over the past 3 or so years with fraudulent and mis-leading solar salespeople, online ads and companies who condone this behavior. It boggles my mind that a homeowner can get 3 or 6 quotes with very little consistency or thorough explanation for what each company offers. If a potential customer has received numerous quotes, they should ALL be sharing the same information. I've been in the industry for 13 years and it baffles me that homeowners are baffled. Well, actually not because I know and write about this often. I'm overjoyed that something is finally being addressed Nationally on this topic. **The industry is re-righting itself again.**

You may have read about the recent local CT legal trouble SunRun is in and the bankruptcy by the very large SunPower Corp.? None of which was a surprise to me. Both instances are due to

their business models which include some of the scenarios I wrote above. BTW - *if you do have a salesperson show up at your door, make sure they show you their CT State License (HIS). Not a badge, their personal CT HIS license AND their driver's license. Take a picture of it.*

I'm sure you've read some of my past articles that were 100% dedicated to this hot topic. A lot of the industries integrity has gone out the window and I am overjoyed to see that the SEIA is finally stepping in to implement two much needed **standards that promote consumer protection**. The new standards are designed to ensure transparent, ethical solar sales practices and to raise the bar for safety and durability of residential rooftop solar and storage installations.

## From SEIA:

*"These groundbreaking standards reflect the solar and storage industry's commitment to ensuring every customer has a great experience going solar," said SEIA president and CEO Abigail Ross Hopper. "We've heard customers loud and clear about what they want to see from the solar industry. Going solar with a SEIA-certified installer will give customers the confidence they need to make the best decision for their family."*

**Standard 401:** Outlines training for solar salespeople, establish ethical sales practices and ensure all customers have a thorough understanding of the process, costs and terms. This also adds transparency and a standard for which all solar and storage salespeople will act. A certified third party will evaluate whether the individual and/or company has met the requirements.

**Standard 201:** Addresses install quality. A lot of solar that is sold locally is sold by sales agents that work for out of state companies. They come in, make some sales and then put outposts on solar insider pages to see who can install the job! Oftentimes it is to the lowest bidder. It's messy. S-201 will implement more trustworthy install quality guidelines.

Again, I am overjoyed to see the Solar Industry addressing bad actors and is pushing for new standards for consumer protection!

*If you, or anyone you know, would like to learn more about capturing the suns energy or Hydro Electric technology to power your home, please reach out.*

## 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

# Where to find the Neighbors paper

## Ashford

Terry's Transmissions  
Ashford Spirit Shoppe  
Ashford Post Office  
Hope and Wellness

## Bolton

Bolton Post Office  
Subway-Bolton Notch

## Brooklyn

Brooklyn Post Office  
Baker's Dozen Coffee Shop  
Salem Village

## Chaplin

Chaplin Post Office  
Blondies Restaurant

## Columbia

Columbia Post Office

## Coventry

Highland Park Market  
Meadowbrook Spirits  
Subway  
Song-A-Day Music  
eyeTrade

## Eastford

Eastford Post Office

## Ellington/Crystal Lake

3 J's Deli

## Hampton

Hampton Post Office  
Organic Roots Farm  
Hampton General Store

## Lebanon

Lebanon Post Office  
Market on the Green

## Mansfield/Storrs

All Subway shops  
Storrs Post Office  
Starbucks  
Liberty Bank  
Chang's Garden

## Mansfield Center

East Brook Mall

## Mansfield Depot

Thompson's Store

## North Windham

Bagel One  
Subway  
No. Windham Post Office

## Pomfret

Weiss, Hale & Zahansky  
Vanilla Bean Restaurant  
Pomfret Post Office  
Baker's Dozen Coffee Shop

## Putnam

Subway  
Putnam Post Office

## Scotland

Scotland Post Office

## South Windham

Bob's Windham IGA  
Landon Tire  
So. Windham Post Office

## Stafford

Stafford Coffee Company  
Subway  
Stafford Post Office  
Stafford Cidery  
Stafford Library  
Mill Pond Store

## Tolland

Birch Mountain Pottery  
Subway  
Tolland Post Office  
Parker Place

## Willington

Franc Motors  
Willington Pizza I & II  
Willington Post Office  
Willington Library  
Willington Senior Center  
The Packing House

## Windham/Willimantic

Willimantic Food Co-op  
Design Center East  
Schiller's  
CAD Marshall Framing  
Clothespin Laundromat  
Main Street Cafe  
That Breakfast Place  
All Subways  
Super Washing Well  
Elm Package Store  
A1 Service Station  
Blondie's Restaurant

## Windham Center

Windham Post Office

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

## Seeking Museum Curator

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

EC-CHAP is seeking a Curator / Director to oversee the **Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum**. This volunteer leadership position will work with a small team of volunteers, to assist in expanding the collection of artifacts; develop meaningful and relevant historical programming; and support EC-CHAP's **Framework for Raising Historical Awareness**.

To learn more please email: [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org) or call: 518.791.9474.

**WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG**

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



# The Planet Press

Happy Fall!

Nº7

September & October — 2024

The.Planet.Press.Contact@gmail.com  
Email

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Instagram

Cameron Yanicky  
Writer, Designer, Editor



## The Planet Press Mission

We strive to build a resilient community through accurate, and engaging environmental news. Our mission is to illuminate issues affecting Connecticut, fostering positive change through informed dialogue. We value diverse voices and aim to preserve Connecticut's natural beauty for future generations.



**We're Looking For Stories!**

Submit your environmental related stories, poems, and photos:  
[the.planet.press.contact@gmail.com](mailto:the.planet.press.contact@gmail.com)

## Investments for Better Poultry

A \$3.34 million USDA-NIFA Organic Agriculture Research and Extension grant, led by UConn researcher Abhinav Upadhyay, an assistant professor of animal science in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR), will leverage advanced scientific expertise to tackle critical challenges.

The grant targets several key areas to improve the safety, efficiency, and economic sustainability of organic poultry farming.

Organic poultry farming is a growing segment of U.S. agriculture that emphasizes animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and high-quality products and has gained considerable popularity in recent years.

## Grant Targets Meat Quality

A new \$650,000 grant, led by two faculty members from the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR) at UConn, will explore how a joint dietary supplement can enhance meat quality in cattle with hypertension.

The grant will explore whether Vitamin E can help prevent the rapid discoloration of meat from cattle with high pulmonary arterial pressure (PAP).

Steaks from cattle with hypertension discolored two days earlier than those from cattle with normal blood pressure. Although discoloration isn't a perfect measure of freshness, it is still unappealing to consumers.

With this grant, the research team will administer Vitamin E supplements to cattle. As an antioxidant, Vitamin E directly counteracts the oxidative processes that lead to meat discoloration.

## A Hurricane That Lands in Florida Knocks Out Power in Vermont

Although landlocked Vermont may not seem like a likely target for hurricanes, recent significant storms have shown that it is not immune to their impact.

Hurricane Debby landed as a Category 1 storm in Florida on August 5. However, its lingering winds later caused power outages for nearly 25,000 people in Vermont.

Last month, Hurricane Beryl hit Texas and traveled across the country, eventually bringing over 6 inches of rain to Vermont, almost 2,000 miles of Houston, which resulted in severe flooding.

While states along the Gulf

Coast often face the worst of hurricanes, storms that enter the U.S. from the south can still have significant impacts as they move inland and northward. Beryl and Debby illustrate how hurricanes can cause severe damage and flooding even after being downgraded to tropical storms or depressions.

These destructive storms emerged during an unusually active hurricane season, fueled by extreme heat in the Atlantic Ocean and a shift to La Niña in the Pacific Ocean, which creates optimal conditions for cyclones.

## CT Winter Heating Grants May Increase by \$410 per Household

Under a plan developed by Gov. Ned Lamont's administration and approved Tuesday by three legislative committees, low-income Connecticut households could receive an additional \$410 in heating assistance this winter compared to last year.

However, the projected \$1,760 maximum assistance for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program remains \$560 per household less than the aid provided in the winter of 2022-23 and \$1,220 below the top grants from 2020-21. This has led advocates to once again urge state officials to increase funding.

Legislators and Lamont supported struggling public colleges and universities, social services, child care, and mental health programs this fiscal year with nearly \$700 million in temporary funds, which will not be available in the next budget cycle.

Households with incomes at or below 60% of the state medi-

an income (\$87,511 for a family of four) would qualify for one of six "basic" grants ranging from \$180 to \$530, depending on income levels. Additionally, households could apply for up to three "crisis" benefits, each valued at \$410, with the availability of these grants also depending on earnings.

Advocates point out that the new maximum benefit of \$1,760 per household is significantly lower than the \$2,980 ceiling available in 2020-21. The \$4,825 peak in the 2021-22 program was an anomaly, as it was bolstered by federal pandemic grants to assist families coping with the end of enhanced federal unemployment benefits and tax credits, which were provided during the peak of the coronavirus outbreak.

However, the maximum benefit decreased to \$2,320 in 2022-23 and \$1,350 last winter.

## NOAA Releases Fall Weather Predictions

According to the Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), following this record-breaking hot summer, most parts of the country will likely experience a hotter-than-average fall.

The seasonal outlook indicates that every state is at least partially likely to experience hotter-than-average temperatures

between September and November. The Four Corners states and New England have the highest chances (60% to 70%) of an unseasonably warm fall.

The only exception in the continental U.S. is a narrow section of the West Coast, which has roughly equal chances of experiencing a warmer-than-average fall, a cooler-than-average fall, or typical fall temperatures.

## The Reason Behind Your High Power Bill

You're not alone if your utility bill leaves you puzzled and anxious every month as it claims hundreds. Electricity prices consistently rise across the United States, with no relief in sight.

Why are our electricity bills becoming so costly? Energy prices have been steadily increasing nationwide for over a decade. While the latest consumer price index shows inflation falling below 3 percent for the first time since 2021, electricity prices continue to rise at a stubborn 4.9 percent. However, there isn't a single reason for the ongoing increase in electricity costs across different areas.

The factors driving rising energy costs are diverse, interconnected, and complex. Inflation, increased energy demands, fluctuating natural gas prices, extreme weather, and the shift to renewable energy all play a role.

Constructing wind, solar, and battery infrastructure is costly, and integrating these new clean energy sources into the grid is complex. Instead of investing in these long-term cost-saving solutions, many utilities focus on fos-

sil fuels and existing infrastructure to maintain grid reliability.

For instance, PJM, a utility company serving areas from the mid-Atlantic to the Great Lakes, recently favored natural gas over renewables in its annual capacity auction. This auction, where the company secures the electricity needed for the coming year, is expected to increase prices for its customers significantly.

The U.S. electric grid is a tangled network of thousands of local utilities, many for-profit entities governed by complex policies and regulations. When you factor in inflation, increasing energy demand, fluctuating fuel prices, and extreme weather, it becomes clearer why your electricity bill keeps rising.





## A Quick Overview of Tropical Storm Watches and Warnings

**P**reparedness is of paramount importance when storm seasons kick into high gear. Supplies are the first thing many people think of when preparing for storms, and rightfully so. But it's equally important that people in areas vulnerable to certain storms learn to distinguish between storm watches and storm warnings. The National Weather Service (NWS) offers the following breakdown to help people understand what makes a storm watch different from a storm warning.

✳ **Hurricane watch:** The National Hurricane Center (NHC) is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association/NWS division responsible for tracking and predicting tropical weather systems. When the NHC issues a hurricane watch, hurricane conditions, defined as sustained winds of 74 miles per hour or greater, are possible within the area where the watch is issued. The NWS notes it may not be safe to prepare for a hurricane once winds reach tropical storm force, so the NHC issues hurricane watches 48 hours before it anticipates the arrival of such winds.

✳ **Hurricane Warning:** A hurricane warning is issued 36 hours before tropical storm-force winds

(sustained winds of 74 miles per hour or greater).

✳ **Tropical storm watch:** A tropical storm watch is declared when sustained winds between 39 and 73 miles per hour are possible within a specified area. A tropical storm watch indicates such winds are possible within 48 hours.

✳ **Tropical storm warning:** A tropical storm warning is issued when sustained winds between 39 and 73 miles per hour are expected within a specified area within 36 hours.

✳ **Storm surge watch:** A storm surge watch is issued when there is a possibility of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland from the shoreline within a specified area. The storm surge watch is generally issued within 48 hours of the expected arrival of such conditions.

✳ **Storm surge warning:** A storm surge warning indicates the danger of life-threatening inundation from rising water moving inland from the shoreline within a specified area within 36 hours.

Storm watches and warnings are issued to help people prepare for the potential arrival of serious storms that could prove dangerous and deadly. More information is available at [weather.gov/safety/hurricane](http://weather.gov/safety/hurricane)

## The Autumnal Equinox

**E**ach September, the Northern Hemisphere experiences the autumnal equinox, which marks the official beginning of fall. In the Southern Hemisphere, spring is arriving at this time.

There are two equinoxes each year, the vernal and the autumnal (March and September, respectively). Shortly after the autumnal equinox, days begin getting shorter, and the nights get longer. The autumnal equinox always occurs between September 21 and September 24. In 2024, the autumnal equinox takes place on September 22.

The word equinox is from the Latin "aequi," meaning "equal," and "nox" or "night." That means that during each equinox the hours of day and night are nearly equal in length across the planet. During the equinox, the closest part of the Earth to the sun is the equator, explains History.com. That helps make night and day equal in length.

According to the Farmer's Almanac, the Autumnal Equinox on September 22, 2024, arrives at 8:43 a.m. EDT.

## Support Rural Economies

**R**ural communities have faced many unique challenges since 2007. For example, a 2019 study published in Rural Sociology found that 46 percent of remote rural counties were depopulating, while just 6 percent of metropolitan counties were facing population losses.

Reviving rural communities does more than help those who call those communities home. Thriving rural communities can ensure access to fresh foods for people in both rural and urban areas, thus keeping costs down. Thriving rural communities also can reduce reliance on government assistance programs. With

access to well-paying jobs, more people in rural communities can live above the poverty line. That's a significant benefit, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that roughly 85 percent of counties combatting persistent poverty are rural.

Buying local, whether the farm is on the outskirts of the metropolitan area you call home or elsewhere in your own country, provides some much-needed economic stimulation to rural communities.

## EPA Takes Urgent Measures to Ban Hazardous Pesticide

**F**or the first time in 40 years, the Environmental Protection Agency has issued an emergency ban on a pesticide associated with severe health risks to fetuses.

A recent emergency order targets dimethyl tetrachloroterephthalate (DCPA), a weedkiller used on crops like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and onions.

Exposure to this pesticide, particularly among pregnant farmworkers, can alter fetal thyroid hormone levels, which are associated with low birth weight, impaired brain development, reduced IQ, and compromised motor skills later in life.

An EPA official stated that the pesticide DCPA poses a risk to fetuses and "needs to be removed

from the market immediately."

The European Union banned DCPA in 2009, but the EPA has been slower in responding, which has frustrated some environmental and public health advocates.

DCPA has been used in the United States since the late 1950s. After application, it can persist in the soil and contaminate subsequent crops, including broccoli, cilantro, green onions, kale, and mustard greens.

In 2017, the Agriculture Department detected DCPA residue on nearly 60% of the kale samples it tested, as well as on many samples of collard greens and mustard greens.

In April, the EPA alerted farmworkers to the dangers of DCPA, announcing plans to take

emergency action 'as quickly as possible.' The emergency order temporarily suspended all DCPA registrations under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

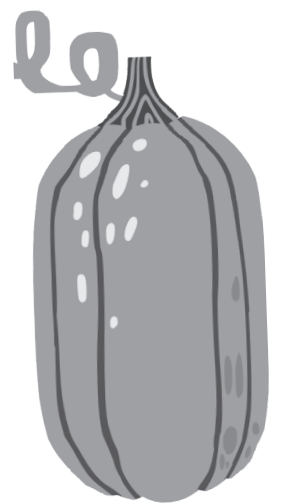
The agency intends to permanently revoke these registrations within the next 90 days.

The emergency order issued temporarily suspends all DCPA registrations under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. The agency intends to permanently revoke these registrations within the next 90 days.

## Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

By William Shakespeare

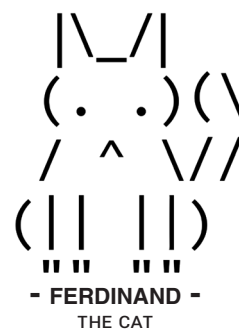


## Flower of the Month September

### Dahlia



The myth of the **Dahlia** originates with the Aztecs, who believed it aided the Earth Goddess in giving birth to her son. They symbolize elegance, creativity, positivity, and growth. They also represent inner strength, likely due to the plant's resilience in harsh conditions.



## Ferdinand's Flower Patch

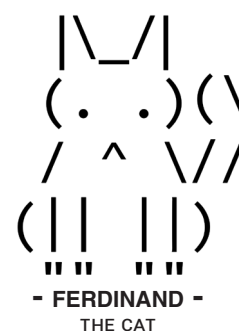


## Flower of the Month October

### Celosia



In ancient religions, **Celosia's** flame-like flowers were used in worship rituals and mourning ceremonies. Today, Mexican churches adorn altars, shrines, and graves with **celosia**, especially during Day of the Dead celebrations.



## Ferdinand's Flower Patch







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Bentetu            Drumming About You with Bob Bloom

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Música de:

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Bentetu            Drumming About You with Bob Bloom