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No. 232

November - December 2024

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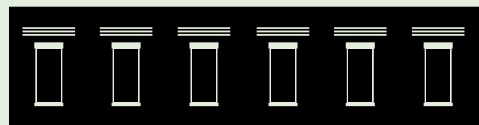


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Shedding My Leaves

By Loretta Wrobel



This autumn, while walking in the morning, I suddenly focused on the falling leaves twirling all around me. My first thought was how gracefully the leaves sailed to the earth, and I marveled at the array of red, yellow and orange leaves that sprinkled the air. My next image was of a tree standing void of its leaves all fall/winter. Was the tree mourning the loss of its brilliant leaves? When you imagine the countless numbers of leaves on a majestic tree such as a maple or beech, it represents a colossal pile of leaves. I have no idea the percentage of the leaves that adorn a tree, however I can imagine that it is significant.

My plant experts inform me that a plant's biological system has prepared for the leaf to fall, creating a seal over the attachment to the branch, which enables the leaf to let go and prevent the tree from losing valuable nutrients. What goes on for the tree, when as each year it begins the slow process of saying good bye to each one of its gorgeous green and then magically changing colored parts, to stand naked in the darkening sky with the oncoming cold and biting wind?

For me letting go is never a simple process and gets increasing painful as I experience more loss. One of the downers of living a long life is accruing losses. The longer you stay here, the more frequent the losses add up. When you start out, letting go is easy and exciting. You gain independence and learn that you no longer need others to help you function in the world. There is a small window where you gain, and letting go is satisfying. At some point you start noticing the losses. Perhaps the loss of a grandparent or a pet or a move that separates you from your friends and familiarity.

By the time you are a senior citizen, you are quite aware of changes that you mourn, such as loss of a dear friend or a medical issue with your body. As you ride the wave of longevity, you understand that daily losses will come into your home often. You savor each day with a mixture of sweetness and a touch of sadness. Sadness and grief are a part of life, and we are constantly taught about letting go with grace. I truly acknowledge that I am living with the reality of the temporary status of being in this body and being fully present. This understanding does not drag me to despair; however, it makes grief and mourning close partners to happiness and joy. We are frequently reminded of the reality of life that change is the only constant.

I recall with my pal, the tree, her letting go is also a sign of hope. There will be a spring to come that will result in new growth and another wonderful display of fresh new greenery that may end up being more magnificent than

the previous year. Hum. Does that knowledge make the tree dream bigger dreams and vision more vibrant colors in the future?

Can I welcome both loss and growth as a wakeup call of impermanency? Yes. There exists the pain of grief, but is it possible to teach myself to pay attention to welcoming and embracing whatever the new growth will be? I find it is a delicate balancing act, and we are given numerous opportunities to practice this skill as we travel our life path.

As humans we are conditioned to not dwell upon our losses, but pay attention to our gains and our accomplishments. Mourning is not seen as an essential and necessary element in our lives. Astonishing to me, because all of us experience loss throughout our lifetimes, and ultimately, we face the greatest loss-- death. It appears we get multiple chances to learn to navigate losses, leading up to losing all that is familiar to us when we enter our death transformation.

Can I use this viewpoint to accept and permit a tree to be my role model? To open to the letting go process and not stay holding on to what came before? It has been extremely challenging to adjust and lovingly accept that it takes longer than it used to for me to get ready to leave my house every day. I am aware that this is now my present truth. However, I still end of running behind, because I have a myth going on that tells me I can do it. Just push harder. When I adopt this perspective, I end up dropping stuff, forgetting things or not being able to locate the correct item I need for my journey.

This is easy to explain because I am reluctant to slow down and function more deliberately. It becomes a powerful distraction to avoid facing head-on that I am not as quick as I used to be and I have lost my speed and agility. If I pause to focus on this, the fear of loss of my vitality confronts me. How do I graciously embrace this loss and stand in my perceived weakened self?

Am I weakened or am I just different? Is the slowing down a new feature to give me time to develop more self-awareness and gratitude in my life? Why do I judge slow as a negative?

These questions may be the purpose of living a fruitful life. To be at a place in your existence where the mind is free to explore and cultivate your own spectacular existence. Is it selfish or is it wise? We are a species that has a well- developed brain. Are the latter years designed to provide spaces to entertain and nurture our creativity? If we keep going at top speed, we have no time to decipher these questions and explore our own existences.

Back to my teacher tree that possesses the profound ability to stand bare from fall through winter and wait. Perhaps it is not so important to try and make something happen. Just to stand in the elements and observe, to truly be in the moment, may be the pearl.

Being fully present to experience and stay in awareness. It may be attainable for me, or it may not be. Do I possess the capability, strength, and patience to follow my role model and give in and let go without resisting?

Neighbors
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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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Thomas A. King, member

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On our cover:
Sheep grazing at the Old Abington Burial Ground in Pomfret. Read Donna Dufresne's article on page 10. Photo by Michael Geigert.

Deadlines
January-February 2025:
Deadline: Thursday, December 12th.
Print date: Tuesday, December 17th.
March-April 2025:
Deadline: Thursday, February 13th.
Print date: Tuesday, February 18th.

Second Saturday Community Breakfast

Columbia Congregational Church
7:30am-10am Route 87 in the Parish Hall

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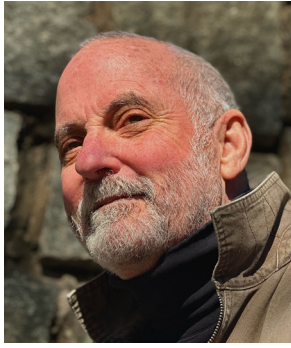
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From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

*"There is no real ending.
It's just the place where you stop the story."*
-Frank Herbert

By C. Dennis Pierce



The greatest challenges humans face throughout their lives are two: the challenge of where to start and the challenge of when to stop. In March of 2010 I authored my first column, "From The Gound Up - Buying Local In Connecticut". At that time, I was one of the Market Master's of the Storr's Farmer's Market and I wanted to share with readers of *Neighbors* the stories from all of the countless farmers and local providers who dedicate their lives in bringing their local offerings to the residents of Connecticut. In my first column I shared the story of *Four Mile Farm* in Old Lyme Connecticut. Nunzio Corsino and his wife Irene were raising chickens and Angus and Hereford steer. That was my first interview and definitely not my last.

In 2017 I wrote, "Since I have taken on this task of writing a column, I have met some amazing people that have a passion for bringing Connecticut Grown agricultural products to market. From vineyards to a distillery, from organic farms to flower growers, we are surrounded by a population of individuals that have built a connection to the land that makes up the Quiet Corner of Connecticut. These individuals have a direct connection to the land that we inhabit. By paying attention to the parcel that they tend it has taught them who they are, why they do what they do, and how to go about living on this earth. In some sense it is a romance, a partnership with the landscape, as they are surviving on it and living well."

Little did I know that in 2017 and when I began in 2010 that I would churn out a column pretty much every month until this final column in 2024. Sharing the stories were a labor of love. A few months ago, I told Tom, our Publisher / Editor that the November / December column would be my last. I have come to the conclusion that every ending is a beginning. I am not exactly sure what that means for me. I have several options. I recently purchased a greenhouse that came as a kit and it has to be erected before the snow falls. I have a trip overseas planned in April to visit my daughter and I may try my hand on some crafts that will carry me through the winter months.

When I first approached Tom, I surely did not realize that I would meet some amazing people that reside in the Quiet Corner. Mind you, these are not just regular people but individuals that committed themselves to a way of life that was once what our country was founded on. Over the years I saved most, if not all, of my articles so to prepare for this column I took it upon myself to list all of the featured farms, vineyards, and culinary craftsmen who used local ingredients. Looking over the many files I realized that it was a compilation of interviews, garden hints, farmer markets updates and just plain stuff that went from my thoughts to the keyboard and then to the page. While the following may look like some items are missing, I did not list those columns that were in the colder months when the farms laid dormant as they planned for their upcoming year. All columns had valuable information and also each column had some great recipes such as Butternut Squash & Kale Hand Pies to Ginger Marinated Tomatoes with Watermelon, Mozzarella Cheese, & Spicy Arugula. My kitchen experienced them all.

The following are a sample of the past columns (I am sure the list is not 100% accurate. Forgive me for those that I have overlooked) which feature farms / vineyards / CT growers / culinary craftsmen using local ingredients:

2010: Four Mile Farm – Old Lyme, La Petite French Bakery – Stafford Springs, Beltane Farms – Lebanon, Dondero Orchards – Glastonbury, Storrs & Ashford Farmer's Markets, Chaplin Farm – Chaplin, Cassidy Hill Vineyard – Coventry.
2011: Westford Hill Distillery – Westford, Wright's Orchard – Tolland, Sweet Acrea Farm-Mansfield.
2012: Blue Slope Farm & Museum- Franklin, Cranberry Hill Farm – Ashford, Connecticut Farmland Trust Annual

Celebration, Shundahai Farm – Mansfield, E.O. Smith FFA Plant Sale, Country Butcher – Tolland.
2013: Dragon's Blood Elixir Hot Sauce - Woodstock, River View Farm – Coventry, Buell's Orchard – Eastford, Pfalzgraf farm – Ashford,

Muddy Feet Farm – Ashford, Mansfield Farm – Mansfield,
2014: Shundahai Farm – Mansfield, Sweet Acre Farm – Hampton, Coventry Farmer's Market, Raspberry Knoll Farm – Windham, Blue Bird Hill Farm – Lebanon

2015: George Baily (maple syrup) – Mansfield, Willimantic Farmer's Market, Cloverleigh Farm C.S.A (then – Mansfield),

2016: Sweet Acre Farm – (then Mansfield), Cobblestone Farm - Mansfield, Fox Meadow Farm – Mansfield, One Tiny Acre Farm – Woodstock, Coventry Farmer's Market.

2017: Ghost Fawn Homestead – Willington, Cow Lick Farm – Willington, Barton Farms – (now Scotland), Birch Hill Farm –

Ashford, Willow Valley Farm – Willington, KD Crop Farm – Chaplin, Meadow

Stone Farm – Brooklyn, Fox Meadow Farm – Mansfield,

2018: Bats of Bedlam Maple Farm – Chaplin, Bright Acres Farm Sugar House – Hampton, Norman's Sugarhouse – Woodstock, Ellington Farmer's Market, Coventry Winter Farmer's Market, Windham Community – "Meet

Your Farmer" event featuring: Barton Farms, Cloverleigh Farms, Woodstock Sustainable Farms, Pinecroft Farms,

Seacoast Alpacas, The Framer's Cow, Blue Slope Meats & Cheese, Bedlam Homesteading, Raspberry Knoll Farm,

Mike's Fruit Stand, Shooks Apiaries, Willow Valley Farm, Cowlick Farm, New Boston Beef, Cobblestone Farm,

Pzalfsgraf Farm, Mountain Dairy, Brown Farm, Buell's Dragonfly Farm, UConn Spring Valley Student Farm,

Creamery Brook Bison, and Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm.

Willow Valley Farm – Ashford, Vineyard at Hillyland – Scotland, Willimantic Farmer's Market, Copper Hill Farm – Somers.

2019: Mountain Dairy Farm – Mansfield, Rivers Edge Sugar House – Ashford, Earth, Wind and Fire Farm – Ashford, Brown Farm – Scotland, Shook Apiaries – Windham, Varga Farm – Mansfield Center,

Heartstone Farm and Winery- Columbia, Cambera Farm – Columbia,

2020: *Mon Soleil Farm* - Union, Tobacco Farm – Lebanon, Organic Roots Farm – Hampton, Johnny Appleseed's Farm

– Ellington, Wrights Orchards and Dried Flower Farm – Tolland, 18TH Century Purity Farm at the Hall Homestead - Moosup, Buell's Orchard - Eastford, Creamery Brook Bison - Brooklyn, Raspberry Knoll Farm - Windham.

2021: Cloverleigh Farm – Columbia, Evan's Farm Stand – Lebanon, Everyday Harvest Farm – Mansfield, Bluebird Hill

Farm- Lebanon, Lebanon Fair, Brooklyn Fair, CLICK- Windham, Rivers Edge Sugar House – Ashford.

2022: Phoenix Farm – Cromwell, Forever Farm – Mansfield, Grow Windham, Spring Valley (Student) Farm-UConn,

Forest Legacy Program-Jack Collins- Chaplin, Coventry Farmers Market, Brooklyn Fair, BOTL Farm – Ashford, Russo

Roots – Canterbury,
2023: UConn Master Gardener Program, Fern Mill Farm – Mansfield, Tri-County Greenhouse, East Willow Farm –

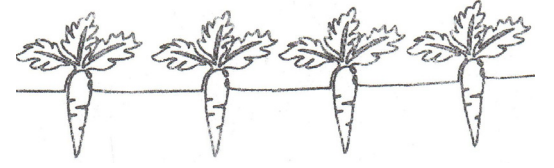
Columbia, Field Engineer Farm- Columbia, The Good Farm – Columbia, Collinswood Mushroom – Tolland
2024: Coventry Winter Market, Westview Farm – Woodstock, Foliota Farm – Mansfield Center, UConn's Extension Solid

Ground Program, Ellington's Farmer's Market, Red Barn- Mansfield, We Lik It – Pomfret, Shady Glen – Manchester.

This month's recipe features fall vegetables for you to prepare.

Baked Red Cabbage with Apples and Bacon

Serves: 8 - portions



Pre heat oven to 350 degrees

Ingredients:

1 medium (2 ½ pound) red cabbage

¼ pound of bacon

2 medium onions, thinly sliced

3 tart apples, peeled and cut in quarters and remove core, use apples such as Granny Smith (Crookes Orchard in Ashford has some great Granny Smith apples). Place apples in a bowl of water that has a little bit of vinegar in it so the apples will not brown.

1 tablespoon of sugar

6 tablespoons of cider vinegar

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Directions:

Peel off and discard the cabbage's outer leaves.

Cut the cabbage into quarters through the core.

Cut and discard the core.

Slice the cabbage sections thin as you can.

Slice bacon into ¼ inch strips. Cut bacon cross wise into 1 inch pieces.

Heat bacon in a heavy pan until they barely turn crispy.

Reserve 3 tablespoons of bacon fat.

Remove bacon and set aside.

Cook onions in bacon fat until they turn limp but not brown.

Add shredded cabbage and bacon to the onions and stir until cabbage turns limp.

Drain apples and thinly slice each of the quarters.

Toss the slices with the sugar and vinegar and gently add to the cabbage mixture.

Season with salt and pepper.

Add mixture to a glass or suitable baking pan cover and bake for 30 to 45 minutes

Do not bake in an aluminum, cast iron or tinned copper pot since cabbage will turn gray.

Serve and enjoy.

Tip of the month: I just purchased a peach tree from Stark Brother's nursery (www.starkbros.com). I was not having any luck when purchasing fruit trees locally. I also followed the instructions before planting and soaked the tree's roots for two hours in water before planting. I prepared a hole as instructed but I also cut a piece of plastic PVC pipe about two+ feet long, drilled holes in it around the base of the pipe and inserted it into the hole before placing the tree in the hole. I inserted the pipe at an angle. The purpose of the pipe was so I could add water into the pipe and the water would go right to the tree's roots. When planting the tree, I did a layer of compost, soil, compost, and soil again ending with the ground shaped like a well around the tree. If you have never planted a fruit tree, please be aware that when planting you should look at the base of the tree right above the roots and you will find a nub. **Do not plant this nub below ground.** This is the graft of the tree for the species you purchased. Now when I water, I add water to the inclined pipe and also to the well surrounding the tree.

Here are some closing thoughts that I would like to share. There is a trick to the 'graceful exit.' It begins with the vision to recognize when a job is over—and then you let it go. It means leaving what is over with knowing you made a difference in people's lives. It provides a sense of future, a belief that every exit line is an entry. In my first article Nunzio Corsino, from *Four Mile Farm* said to me, "There is an art in everything you do in life if you do it well". These were the words that were the essence of the mission that I set out to do as I put pen to paper for the last fourteen years.

As you go out for a walk or work outside take a moment to stop and observe all that is around you. I leave you with a quote by Henry David Thoreau: "Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth. If you have enjoyed reading or appreciated this column every month, please let Tom know. Peas be with you. Remember, every day is a holiday, and every meal is a banquet.

Ed. note: I cannot thank Dennis enough for all his work over the last 15 years. His articles will be sorely missed. I am hoping another neighbor will come forward and continue this important work Dennis began so many years ago.



Walk-In Clinic - Also Just Gone

By Bill Powers

Willimantic – May 22, 2024 - “1 Opens, 1 Closes: Urgent Care Movement in Town.

Hartford HealthCare will open a new GoHealth Urgent Care in downtown Willimantic later this year. The next clinic will open in the fall and accept walk-in patients with no required appointments. The urgent care will be open seven days a week with extended hours, giving patient’s easy access to immediate and comprehensive care. With the new urgent care opening in the fall, Hartford HealthCare officials decided to close the walk-in center at 1703 West Main Street in Willimantic. The final day of operation will be on Friday, May 31.”
Willimantic Chronicle

This past February I wrote the following in *Neighbors*: “First it was the loss of Intensive Care then Inpatient Maternity Services – What’s Next?” These services were “just GONE” somehow evaporated from Windham and Windham Community Memorial Hospital (WCMH). At the time, during a televised UConn Women’s basketball game, a message appeared in front of me that stated “Brought to you by Hartford HealthCare (HHC) – the future of health care.” I thought to myself “I hope the future has better things in store for Windham area’s healthcare from HHC than we have been witnessing – when will the HHC’s crushing big foot fall again? Clearly it seemed to be the WALK-IN Center aka “MED-EAST”.

Among the questions one could ask are: What in hell will folks do for URGENT CARE services until the new one is established in the fall? The answer from HHC’s Patient Relations Department is that they will provide you with a telephone number of a primary care provider who will consider adding you to their practice – a process that may take weeks. Researching “Go Health” in Connecticut, I found that they have several Urgent Care programs in the state that “partner” with Hartford Health Care – “partner” but nobody I talked with seems to know what “partner” actually means.

I Spoke with the Executive Office at WCMH, and the Medical Practice Office (who used to be responsible for the old walk-in clinic that now lies vacant), as well as the HHC Access Center referral line (multiple times) in order to get answers. This was all without luck. Folks were nice enough but no one knew anything about the old walk-in clinic or the new one scheduled to open “later this year”. This included executive offices in Hartford – who never got back to me. One suggestion was that patients could always go to the Emergency Department at WCMH. Wasn’t the establishment of walk-in clinics a big part of the reasoning to prevent that from happening? On a personal note, my insurance co-pay is 10 times greater if I go to the Emergency Department as opposed to a doctor’s office or a walk-in clinic.

No one could answer my questions about why the “MED-EAST” facility needed to be closed so abruptly or why there could not have been better coordination between the closure of one and the opening of the GOhealth facility? Is this another example of HHC’s disregard for the health care needs in our community? The Hartford Health Care decisions to diminish services for this area of the state whether our ICU service in 2015, the maternity service in recent years, creating a maternity dessert in our area or the loss of the walk-in clinic this past May, conceivably point to examples of structural racism. This should be thoroughly examined.

At this time, Mr. Ken Harrison, Marketing and Communications Manager, East Region for Hartford HealthCare tells me that a new Walk-in clinic is planned to be opened in early November at 1315 Main Street, in Willimantic, and will partner with Windham Community Memorial Hospital. While this is certainly good news for our community, it does not explain the six-month delay between the closing of the walk-in clinic located at 1703 West Main Street (see the photo of the deserted clinic) and the opening of the new facility sometime in the future.

Bill Powers is a former Hartford and Windham Public Schools teacher, hospital manager and administrator.

Vote for Peace

On Saturday, September 21st, World Peace Day was celebrated. I had called the news department at the Chronicle a few days prior and left the message that a group in Willimantic would be honoring this event, one day earlier, at the weekly vigil on the corner of Jackson/Main streets. I requested a possible reporter and/or photographer be sent. No answer. No follow up occurred, and I feel that this is pathetic for a ‘local newspaper’, one that I subscribe to.

It turns out that this neglect of the very concept of standing for peace is actually quite minor in light of the overall support for our country’s continued wars, and especially our provision of bombs, armaments, and weaponry for Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza.

We are about to vote in a presidential election in which **both** dominant political parties appear to be continuing the support for Israel’s heinous, barbaric actions against Palestinian civilians. These actions are not defending the State of Israel. They are isolating it. When 95% of American voters pull the lever for either Democratic or Republican candidates, they will all be indicating that they have no trouble voting for genocide, one of the ugliest moral actions conceivable to man. Don’t be a part of it!

I would like to point out that since we are in a State whose electoral college votes are guaranteed to go to the Dems, this means that you could actually make a peace vote without disrupting the outcome. It’s called voting your conscience. We are not even living in a country where the popular vote produces the winner (recall Hillary Clinton would have become president since she garnered almost 3 million more votes than Trump in 2016).

So again, I urge you to consider morality as you vote; somehow circumvent our rigged two-party system, where alternative voices are thwarted. Not voting is of course the worst choice. But I feel that voting for any presidential candidate that continues complicity with genocide is a vote against civilization itself. One real viable choice might be the Green Party, that strongly endorses repulsion of genocide and war in general, as well as long-term care for the Earth itself. This would show that you are an informed voter and an advocate for peace.

Bill Potvin, Willimantic

Discover Spiral Arts

By Daniela De Sousa

“What is Spiral Arts?” a passerby wonders while walking by this artsy downtown Willimantic storefront. Unlike most storefronts, this one may not be open extensive hours. The people working inside may be oblivious to the public. On first impression, the 750 Main Street establishment invites more questions than answers. But Spiral Arts is many things that build upon each other. Perhaps mainly, it is an art studio. The inspiring medium is ceramics. Ancient and versatile, ceramics is humble and sophisticated. Humble, because it is made mainly from clay and manual labor, both universally available. Sophisticated, because its full development also requires tools, machines, glazes, and kiln firings. These are difficult to acquire and organize on an individual basis, but accessible when shared by a group. Spiral Arts is a ceramics studio that builds community through the sharing of these resources.

Spiral Arts is also a school. Ceramic classes are offered in many formats, spanning the range from one-off workshops for beginners, to advanced specialty classes. For those already with knowledge and experience, studio membership is available, providing full access to facilities, use of tools, machines, and studio glazes, with expertly managed firings.

As the holidays near, it is important to know that Spiral Arts is also an art gallery and a gift store. Members can exhibit and offer their creations there, and everything the store sells is made on the premises by one of them. Buying a unique gift created by a local artisan assures that all the funds spent stay in the community. It also minimizes or eliminates environmental costs, such as packing and shipping.

Perhaps more importantly, Spiral Arts builds and expands a community of creators. Interested people of all backgrounds and ages can draw inspiration from each other and learn from each other. No individual artist studio can provide the level of personal growth and synergy that belonging to a community of creators can afford. For more information, please visit the store in person, or its website at www.spiralartsstudio.com.

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Please Err on the Safe Side

By Delia Berlin



It is difficult to write this because I do not know the context in which it will be read. It is now about a month before our next national election, but most *Neighbors* readers will not see this until after it happens. What world will we be living in? We do not know. One candidate will get at least 270 electoral votes. Presumably, that candidate will be declared the official winner and competitors will concede. At least that is the way it used to be when facts were agreed upon by most. Polls are indicating that this will be a very close election. These polls' margin of error is often bigger than the polling difference between candidates, which means that the uncertainty is too big to predict a given outcome.

Fortunately, polls are not the only early indicators of election outcomes. Fundraising totals, the number and type of voting registrations, and ticket endorsements provide some indications too. But humans seem to be extraordinarily bad at measuring even simple things, let alone estimating chances of future events that depend on innumerable variables.

I am often frustrated and dismayed when I observe people taking basic measures. They rarely show any awareness of potential errors, or even respect for accuracy. In some cases, that may not matter much. But in others, it causes serious problems that can range from waste of resources to loss of life.

I could provide many past personal examples, but to name just a few from my own history: a kitchen counter upon arrival was 4" too short; a set of built-in cupboards did not fit the intended space; and a medication was dispensed at twice the recommended dose by weight. It is not difficult to see the importance of reducing measurement errors.

Understanding a measurement's error is as important as the measurement itself. The margin of error provides information about the possible variation around the measure. And this, in turn, should inform our course of action.

For example, if during a doctor's visit a patient weighs five pounds less than on a recent visit, we cannot know if the weight loss is significant without knowing the margin of error. If the office weighs patients with their clothing and shoes on, the weight easily may be in error by five pounds. Someone in winter clothing and

heavy boots could weigh five pounds more than when they are dressed in shorts, T-shirt, and flip-flops. Weights taken this way should be considered as being "plus or minus" five pounds. There is nothing wrong with that, as long as it is acknowledged, so the patient is not put through a battery of tests to investigate a meaningless loss of weight.

And how about blood pressure readings? You sit on a chair in front of a big sign that explains step-by-step how to take a blood pressure reading correctly. Someone comes in and takes your blood pressure, failing every single step of the posted correct procedure. You are already fuming, and sure enough, your blood pressure is high. Long-term medication may be considered based on these readings. Sound familiar?

What constitutes a reasonable margin of error depends on the situation. For example, in the case of the mismeasured kitchen counter, an error of ¼" for the length would have been acceptable. Trying for more precision than necessary would be wasteful. But these measurement intricacies and considerations pale in comparison to the complexity of polling. Estimating the chances of complex events is infinitely more complicated than reading lines on a scale.

Poll results can be sharply affected by many things, including but not limited to what questions are asked, how they are formulated, who they are directed to, and at what precise time in the race they are posed. Further, how are voters sampled and reached? For example, internet polls will reach completely different voters than landline polls. And in environments as polarized as ours is now, some voters may refuse to answer, or even lie, and it cannot be assumed that these voters are of equally distributed persuasions. Small subtleties can affect poll results dramatically, and the margin of error can only be estimated, using assumptions that can easily be wrong.

Perhaps this explains why we read so many polling results that are completely impossible to comprehend. For example, we may hear that a majority of voters believe that a particular candidate is mentally unfit to be president, but at the same time another poll finds that the same candidate is better trusted to handle the economy. What? When things do not make sense, we can only hope that it is because of bad polling and not weird voters.

I will end this with best wishes to all. We will find out the outcome of the election soon, and I can only hope we get it right. There is really no room for error this time.

Shop Local This Holiday Season!

Submitted by Chris McNaboe

As the holiday season approaches, we invite you to celebrate and support our vibrant local businesses. There's no better way to find unique gifts, enjoy delicious food, and connect with our community than by shopping local!

Stone Row Kitchen and Bar is the perfect place to kick off your week. Join us for **All Night Happy Hour on Tuesdays**, featuring a \$10 kitchen menu. Don't miss **\$1 Oyster Night on Wednesdays** and our special **Burger and Beer Deal on Thursdays**. Plus, enjoy **half-off wine bottles on Sundays** and happy hour specials until 6 PM on weekdays!

Swing by **Jewels Vern Jewelers** at 723 Main St. for a delightful shopping experience. On **Small Business Saturday**, enjoy homemade baked goods and hot beverages while browsing their selection of one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces and the latest designs. Live music by local musicians will make for a festive atmosphere!

Mark your calendars for the **Makers Market and Vintage Bazaar on December 14** from 10 AM to 3 PM at the Windham Theater Guild. Discover talented local craftspeople showcasing their unique creations—perfect for those special gifts.

Join us for the **Jingle Bar Pub Crawl on December 12** from 5 to 8 PM, starting at Kerri Gallery. Enjoy festive samples of holiday spirits and bites from our local pubs as we revel in the season together! Event-Bright will have the details.

If you're looking for something truly special, consider getting a unique tattoo from **Eminence Inc.** for yourself or a friend, or treat yourself to a delightful **Cupcake for Later** with a variety of flavors to choose from.

Nostalgia never gets old at **The Bench Shop!** Stop by to check out their fun tie-dye collection that brings back the spirit of the 70s.

Spiral Arts will be open for retail and hosting for Artists Open Studios of Northeastern CT November 29, 30, December 1, 7, and 8, from 10am to 6pm.

-We have locally made ceramic art and functional ware.

-We offer gift certificates for classes and workshops.

-During Shop Local initiatives we'll have a raffle and special sales to promote and fundraise our annual Empty Bowls event in April 2025

-Artists will be doing demonstrations and giving tours of our facilities. regular retail hours through December are

Wednesday through Sunday 12pm -6pm.

For more information go to www.spiralartsstudio.com or find us on Instagram or facebook #spiralartsstudio

Need a quick bite? Grab a delicious egg sandwich at **Egg and Cheese** to recharge before continuing your shopping adventures.

For those who appreciate specialty items, **Bliss Marketplace** offers a fantastic selection, including vintage records and unique reincarnation plants that make great gifts for plant lovers.

And don't miss **Trigo Woodfire Pizza** on **November 30**, where they'll debut a special holiday pizza and cocktail to kick off for our local shopping season.

For those looking to unwind, **Willimantic Brewing Co** Steinday on Sundays and Wednesdays get 23oz pours for a pint price in your Willibrew steins. **Happy Hours Tue-Fri: 3 to 5 & Tue-Sun: Last Kitchen Hour.**

Bring in a receipt from a local business from November 29th-December 16th and receive 10% off your check, some restrictions apply.

Order from our seasonal or holiday menus for your parties or events, customizable to suit your needs and can include fresh beer and cocktails too. Contact us at wbc@willibrew.com or call 860-423-6777

For truly unique gifts, visit **Kerri Gallery**, where you'll find an assortment of new items, including stuffed animals, handmade bags, designer vases, and delightful alpaca goods from South America. Opening Celebration for GIFTED November 29th 5-7pm

After a day of shopping, relax with a coffee at **Grounded Coffee**. Enjoy fresh baked goods and catch up with friends returning home for the holidays. Or get revived with a Yoga class or relax and Float at **YONO** on Church St.

If you're in the mood for something cooler, **Paula and Jane's Boba Cafe** offers an array of delicious, one-of-a-kind drinks that are sure to satisfy.

And then sit back and catch the show at the Windham Theatre Guild **EVERY CHRISTMAS STORY EVER TOLD (AND THEN SOME!)** December 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 2024 at 7:30 PM and December 8 & 15, 2024 at 2 PM

This holiday season, let's come together to support our local businesses and find those perfect gifts. Shop local, enjoy our community, and create lasting memories!

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Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Linda Jones and Lorraine Ellison

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 acts about whom I found only scant information.

LINDA JONES

Linda Jones was born in Newark, New Jersey, on December 14, 1944. She started singing at age six with her family gospel group, the Jones Singers. Her debut single, "Lonely Teardrops," came out on Cub Records in 1963 under the name Linda Lane. Subsequently, Jones met producer George Kerr, who, from 1964-65, produced commercially unsuccessful singles on her for both the Atco and Blue Cat labels.

In 1967, Kerr took Jones to Loma Records. Her debut release for the company proved her biggest hit. The haunting ballad "Hypnotized" climbed to #4 R&B and #21 pop. It also became the title track of Jones' debut LP.

After two additional singles did well with the Black audience, Jones found herself without a label when Loma closed its doors in late 1968.

She signed with the Philadelphia-based Neptune Records, owned by the songwriting-production team of Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. Two singles, which Kerr produced, made some noise on the R&B chart before Jones moved on to the Turbo label out of New Jersey in 1971.

On her new label, Jones enjoyed her biggest hit in four years with a powerful, gospel-drenched remake of the 1958 Jerry Butler & The Impressions doo-wop hit, "For Your Precious Love." Half preached and half sung, Jones based her version on the 1967 recording by soul singer Oscar Toney, Jr. The song's R&B chart success spawned an identically titled album, of which critic Robert Christgau wrote the following:

"Jones isn't too long on artistry—she likes to dispense with formality and just start at the climax, throwing her emotions and her high notes all over material like 'Dancing in the Street' and 'I Can't Make It Alone.' Pretty amazing, in its way, and definitely recommended to people who always get out of their cars to look at waterfalls and strange rock formations."

On March 14, 1972, Linda Jones, a diabetic, was resting at her mother's house following a national tour. There, she went into insulin shock and passed away at age 27.

All Platinum, the parent company of Turbo, released three posthumous albums on Jones. In 2008, her daughter, Terry Jones, co-produced an album with her mother's vocals on it. One of its tracks, "Baby I Know," received a Grammy nomination. That same year, the state of New Jersey honored her by proclaiming December 14th "Linda Jones Day" in Newark.

Charted singles:

"Hypnotized" (1967) R&B #4, Pop #21
 "What've I Done (To Make You Mad)" (1967) R&B #8, Pop #61
 "Give My Love a Try" (1968) R&B #34, Pop #93
 "I'll Be Sweeter Tomorrow" (1970) R&B #45
 "That's When I'll Stop Loving You" (1970) R&B #47
 "Stay With Me Forever" (1971) R&B #47

"Not on the Outside" (1972) R&B #32
 "Your Precious Love" (1972) R&B #15, Pop #74

LORRAINE ELLISON

Lorraine Ellison recorded her biggest hit at a session meant for Frank Sinatra.

She was born Marybelle Luraine Ellison in Philadelphia on March 17, 1931. Like many soul artists, she got her start in gospel music. In Ellison's case, she belonged to the Golden Chords, the Slyvania Singers, and the Ellison Singers. It was with the latter group that she recorded her first two singles, "In the Upper Room" / "He's Holding Me" (1962) and "Open Up Your Heart" / "This Is the Day" (1963).

By 1964, Ellison had switched to soul music. She signed with Mercury Records and made the Rhythm & Blues chart with 1965's "I Dig You Baby." After a second, unsuccessful Mercury release, Ellison moved on to Loma, the R&B subsidiary of Warner Brothers. When Frank Sinatra canceled a recording session at the last minute, leaving an orchestra with nothing to do, producer Jerry Ragovoy called on Ellison to do the session instead. The resulting single, "Stay With Me," featured a crescendo-laden, melismatic performance that rendered Ragovoy, the recording engineer, and the full orchestra awestruck.

"Stay With Me" peaked at #11 on the *Billboard* R&B chart and topped out at #64 pop. Its relative lack of success had nothing to do with the quality of the single. Rather, it was due to Warner Brothers being a pop label that did not know how to market to the Black audience. That also accounts for just one more of Ellison's subsequent releases doing anything on the charts, despite many fine recordings. (Janis Joplin was impressed enough with Ellison's "Try Just a Little Bit Harder" that she recorded her own version.)

Ellison wrote a number of her own songs and had some of her works recorded by other artists—including Jerry Butler, Garnet Mimms, Howard Tate, and Dee Dee Warwick. She also co-wrote some songs with her manager (and later husband) Sam Bell, who sang with Mimms' group, the Enchanters.

Twice married and using the surname Gonzalez-Keys, Ellison eventually left the music business to take care of her ailing mother. She continued to sing, but only in church. Lorraine Ellison, 51, died of ovarian cancer on January 31, 1983.

Rock critic Dave Marsh included "Stay With Me" in his 1989 book, *The Heart of Rock and Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made*.

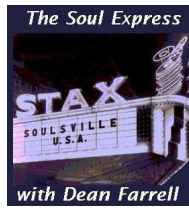
Charted singles:

"I Dig You Baby" (1965) R&B #22, Pop #103
 "Stay With Me" (1966) R&B #11, Pop #64
 "A Good Love" (1966) Pop #131
 "Heart Be Still" (1967) R&B #43, Pop #89

Other notable recordings by Lorraine Ellison include "No Matter How It All Turns Out," "I Want to Be Loved," "Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)," and "Only Your Love."

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

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



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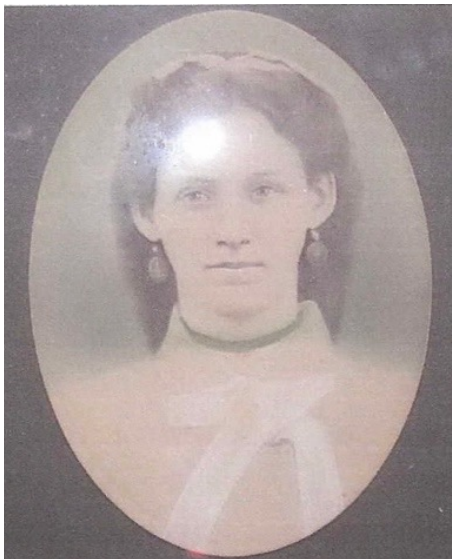
The Great Putnam Spoon Controversy of 1891

By Martin Moebus

Revolutionary War hero, leader in the French and Indian War, legendary wolf killer—Israel Putnam looms large in the Quiet Corner. Since his death, numerous objects linked to him, sometimes dubiously, have been handed down through the generations. The wolf den where he shot the wolf (see my article in the September–October *Neighbors*) is now a state park. His original powder horn resides in the Historic Deerfield Museum. Likewise, his original grave carving is in our state capitol and the sign from his tavern is in the collection of the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History. Our state owns *two* Putnam plows from the time he left one behind when he went to Bunker Hill—one in the Hartford Armory and another “original” plow in Putnam Memorial State Park. Either Putnam did some fancy two-legged cultivating or the State of Connecticut needs to figure out which one is authentic. From time to time, artifacts surface with unprovable legitimacy. In 1886, a Dr. Francis Fairfield even claimed that he had Mrs. Ellithorpe’s blue and pearl-white teapot from which Putnam took his tea in Stafford, Connecticut, on his way to Bunker Hill!

The Putnam Phalanx and the Willimantic Coronet Band

Putnam artifacts have been given out to historical figures at important events. Major Horace Goodwin led a group called the Putnam Phalanx for many years. The Phalanx was first formed to escort our governor Thomas H. Seymour around. Why Seymour needed to be escorted around is not recorded. The Phalanx wore military uniforms, drilled, and marched, but never actually fought. Basically, they were a traveling social club with a dress code.



Ellen Sophia Shaw, George's wife and teller of the wolf gun tale

Thinking of the great time to be had wearing their uniforms, in June 1860 the Putnam Phalanx planned a getaway trip to Putnam's grave to pay their respects to the Revolutionary War hero and wolf slayer. One hundred ninety Putnam “Phalanxers” departed Hartford, traveling by train to Willimantic, where they were joined by the dreaded Willimantic Coronet Band. The Willimantic Coronet Band were made up of the foremost business, trade, and professional people in town. Community leaders they may have been, but they were a rowdy bunch of dreadful musicians with tight purse strings. They dedicated all their time to drafting constitutions, creating by-laws, and electing officials rather than practicing on their instruments, which explains their musical ineptitude. The only real musician of the group was their leader, Thomas Rollinson, who quit after four years when instead of receiving his pay, he was given a silver tea set. Leaderless, the band soon disbanded.

Anyway, the boisterous group of Putnam Phalanxers and rowdy Willimantic Coronet Band members arrived in Brooklyn to the jubilant delight of the residents. Following numerous speeches, the playing of ear-grating tunes, and the eating of “strawberries and cream and a variety of other delicacies,” the Putnam Phalanx returned to Hartford, dropping the Coronet Band back in Willimantic, much to everyone's relief.

The One and Only Putnam Torch

During all the speech-making, Major Goodwin was presented with the “actual” Putnam torch from a Mr. Ash, who claimed to have found it in the wolf cave as a boy—56 years after Putnam left it behind after his encounter with the wolf. Mr. Ash supposed the torch was genuine, being that the cave was full of snakes and no one but him would have entered the cave in the 56 years since Putnam died. No one questioned why no snakes were mentioned in the wolf story, nor why Mr. Ash was the only resident without a snake phobia. The fact that a wooden torch likely would have rotted after 56 years in a damp cave did nothing to diminish Mr. Ash's enthusiasm for its authenticity.

After Major Goodwin died, the torch passed on to his wife. Mrs. Goodwin continued to believe it was the real torch because she knew of no one else who claimed to have one. She took pride in displaying it every chance she got, including at the Centennial Exposition in Phila-

delphia in 1876. In 1884 she created a gavel for the future president Grover Cleveland. This gavel included pieces of Putnam's torch, along with a fragment of the Charter Oak, some marble from Julius Caesar's palace, wood from Lincoln's log cabin, and a piece from the tomb of George Washington. Her house must have felt like a museum. In 1893 she again had the torch displayed, this time at the Chicago World's Fair, alongside a gun claimed by some to be the famous Putnam wolf gun—perhaps the biggest, most controversial and mysterious object from Israel Putnam's life.

The Putnam Wolf Gun

As you will recall from *Neighbors*' September–October edition, a local boy, John Sharpe, nicknamed “the boy hunter,” found the wolf in the cave. John Sharpe's dogs trapped the wolf in its den. Unlike Putnam's dog, John's dog, Vader, listened when told to enter the cave. Vader returned with his jaw cut by the wolf. Afterwards, valiant Vader lay by the mouth of the cave, guarding it until Putnam showed up. Putnam forgot his gun, so he borrowed John Sharpe's “queen's arm” musket.

What afterwards became of the famous wolf gun is still subject to dispute. Many wolf guns show up through the ages. In 1862, Mr. Samuel Mallery of Central Falls, Rhode Island, gave a Putnam wolf gun to the editor of the *Pawtucket Gazette*. Mr. Mallery apparently had it for many years. In 1870, J. McWhinnie reported that an unnamed lady in Central Falls had the wolf gun, which was bought by her husband in Connecticut many years ago. Another wolf gun was claimed to have passed down through the generations of the Sharpe family. In 1876, a George F. Tylor exhibited a Putnam wolf gun at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Claiming to have the one and only wolf gun, though, is fraught with peril and would entangle Mr. George

E. Shaw in the infamous Putnam Spoon controversy.

Ed and George Shaw—Watchmakers and Jewelry Merchants

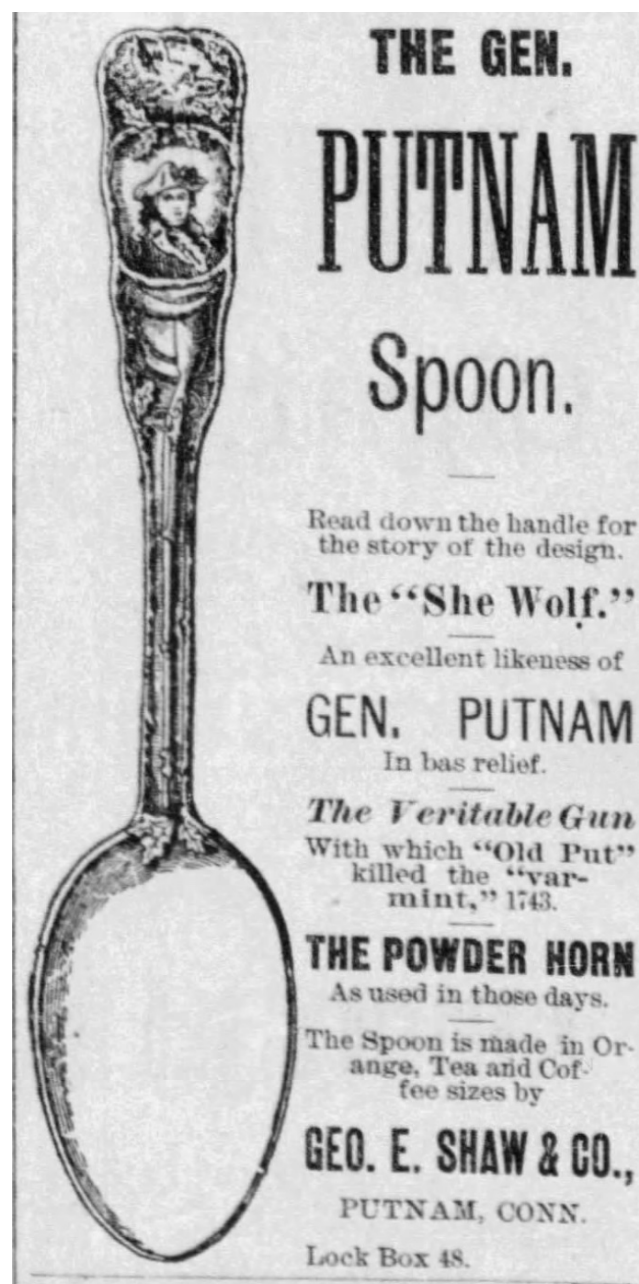
Ed Shaw ran a jewelry store and made quality watches and clocks in Thompson, Connecticut, before moving his operations to Putnam—named after, you guessed it, Israel Putnam. His nephew, George Shaw, joined Uncle Ed in the jewelry business. (As an aside, Ed married Hannah Glover Larned, the half-sister of Ellen Larned, the famous historian of Windham County.)

In 1874, George married Ellen S. Sharpe—a descendant of John Sharpe, the boy hunter and original owner of the wolf gun. No doubt George heard the family story about the “real” Putnam wolf gun through the years. He believed the tale and dreamed of profiting from the family story.

In 1876, Ed Shaw visited the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and subsequently died. It is not known whether he laid eyes on the Tylor wolf gun or Mrs. Goodwin's torch prior to his death or if he warned George that the family heirloom might be a fake. With his uncle's passing, George took over the jewelry business. By 1891 he had concocted a get-rich-quick scheme that could not fail—or so he thought.

The Spoon Collecting Craze

Souvenir spoon collecting became a popular hobby for Americans in the late 1800s. Galt & Bros. created the first collectible spoon in America, featuring George Washington. People went gaga over the spoon, and spoon collecting was born. Why collecting metal spoons became popular instead of cooking, traveling, or even bicycling is strange, but it did. The Chicago World's Fair in 1893 kindled the craze to a feverish pitch as more than 27 million visitors visited the Fair and demanded spoons as mementos of their trip.



Putnam Spoon advertisement of the day

George Shaw was not going to miss out. He created the Putnam Spoon, with a likeness of Israel Putnam in a cocked hat and military uniform. Above him, the head of the last Connecticut wolf. Below, an exact likeness of the “queen's arm” gun that Putnam used to kill the wolf. Oak and laurel leaves completed the decorations. George fancied he had a killer angle, as his wife's family owned the “real” Putnam wolf gun. No one would be able to resist a spoon modeled on the real Putnam gun! His spoon didn't include the real powder horn or real wolf head, but no one complained.

The Start of the Putnam Spoon Controversy

On April 29, 1891, a *Hartford Courant* reporter wrote that George Shaw was traveling to New York to pick up the Putnam wolf gun owned by Hezekiah Sharpe—cousin of George's wife, Ellen—which was to be used as a “facsimile” on the ornamentation of the new General Putnam Spoon. Apparently, using the “real” Putnam gun on the spoon would increase its allure.

The article drew the attention of Arthur R. Thompson, another reporter at the *Courant*. In May, Thompson wrote a long article pointing out that the gun in question could not be the true wolf gun and that in fact no one knew what really happened to the original. “It is hoped, therefore, that in making his souvenir spoons, the Putnam jeweler will not fall into the error of representing the facsimiles of the old musket to be facsimiles of Putnam's wolf-slayer,” he wrote. George Shaw responded with his own article justifying his position that the gun was the real deal. Articles flew back and forth. Members of the Sharpe family and even strangers weighed in for and against the pedigree of Shaw's Putnam wolf gun. The public was on edge. Who had the real wolf gun? Nature itself made its opinion known. During a freak lightning storm on June 8, two balls of fire/lightning traveled the length of George's store. No one was hurt, but George ignored the celestial sign.

Fireball or no, George Shaw would birth the Putnam Spoon. It was offered for sale, protected by a trade patent from others wishing to make a wolf spoon in its likeness. In 1893, George Shaw took his Putnam Spoon to the Chicago World's Fair in high spirits. Inside the Fair, in the Connecticut Pavilion, a “Putnam Gun,” along with Mrs. Goodwin's old torch, were waiting to meet him.

In the years ahead, George Shaw became a successful businessman, selling sewing machines, pianos, organs, and even Victrola talking machines before becoming a leader in bicycle sales. He even became an optometrist. But he will always be remembered by me as the driving force behind the Great Putnam Spoon Controversy of 1891.



Arthur Thompson, exposor of the ‘fake’ gun

Navigating the Financial Impact of a Serious Diagnosis: Strategies for Peace of Mind

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



As we observe Breast Cancer Awareness Month, it is an important reminder to reflect not only on prevention and early detection of breast cancer, but also on the broader impacts that a cancer diagnosis of any kind, or a diagnosis of any serious illness, can have.

While the physical and emotional toll is of course most impactful, the financial implications can also be overwhelming, adding additional stress at an already difficult time. But with some advance planning, you can be prepared to better navigate these challenges so that you can focus on your health and healing.

The Financial Toll of Serious Illness

A cancer diagnosis often brings a perfect storm of increased expenses and reduced income. Treatment costs can be astronomical even for those with health insurance, with high deductibles, copays, and out-of-pocket maximums quickly adding up. One study found that cancer patients are over 2.5 times more likely to file for bankruptcy than those without cancer.

At the same time, patients may need to reduce work hours or stop working altogether during treatment, leading to lost wages. Family members providing care may also face reduced income. The combination of higher costs and lower earnings can rapidly deplete savings and lead to mounting debt.

Beyond the direct medical expenses, patients often face many other costs:

- Transportation to frequent medical appointments
- Childcare during treatments
- Special dietary needs
- Home health care
- Medical equipment and supplies
- Alternative treatments not covered by insurance
- All of these can add significant financial strain during an already stressful time.

Strategies for Financial Planning

While the financial impact of a serious diagnosis can be daunting, there are several strategies that can help:

1. Understand your insurance coverage: Carefully review your health insurance policy to understand what is and is not covered, as well as your out-of-pocket responsibilities. Consider adding supplemental insurance if needed.
2. Explore financial assistance programs: Many hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and nonprofit organizations offer financial assistance for medical treatments and medications. Social workers or patient navigators at your treatment center can often help identify resources.
3. Negotiate medical bills: Do not be afraid to ask about discounts or payment plans for large medical bills. Many providers will work with patients on more manageable payment terms.
4. Consider disability insurance: If you are still working, short-term or long-term disability insurance can help replace lost income during treatment and recovery.
5. Organize your finances: Get your financial documents in order, including insurance policies, bank accounts, investments, etc. Consider granting power of attorney to a trusted family member

in case you become unable to manage finances yourself.

6. Seek professional help: A financial advisor experienced in dealing with serious illness can help create a comprehensive strategy for managing expenses and protecting assets.
7. Look into clinical trials: Participating in a clinical trial may provide access to cutting-edge treatments at reduced or no cost.

Planning Ahead: Healthcare Considerations for Retirees

For those approaching retirement, the possibility of future health challenges makes it especially important to factor healthcare into any relocation plans. While many retirees dream of moving to idyllic small towns or beachfront communities, it is crucial to consider the local healthcare infrastructure.

Some key factors to evaluate include:

- Proximity to high-quality hospitals and specialists
- Availability of cancer treatment centers
- Access to clinical trials
- Insurance options and costs in the new location
- Availability of in-home care services
- Transportation options for medical appointments

A serious diagnosis like cancer often requires frequent appointments with various specialists. Living in an area with robust medical resources can make treatment much more manageable and reduce travel-related expenses and stress.

Additionally, being near family or having a strong local support system is invaluable when facing health challenges. The practical and emotional support of loved ones can make a world of difference during difficult times.

Key Takeaways

Taking steps now to shore up your insurance coverage, build an emergency fund, and understand your employee benefits can provide greater peace of mind and financial stability should health challenges arise. For those nearing retirement, carefully evaluating potential locations through the lens of healthcare access and costs is an essential part of planning for a secure future.

While we hope to never face a cancer diagnosis or other serious illness, being financially prepared can ease some of the burdens and allow patients and their families to focus on what matters most - healing and supporting one another through difficult times. At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we are here to help ensure you have the best plan for long-term care and all your financial needs, giving you "Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life." Visit our website at www.whzwealth.com to schedule your **complimentary consultation** or give us a call at (860) 928-2341.

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Coventry Winter Farmers' Market

Celebrating its 10th year, the Coventry Winter Farmers' Market (CWFM) takes place indoors at Coventry High School, 78 Ripley Hill Road, Coventry, Sundays 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The 2024-2025 season kicks off November 3, 2024, and runs through March 9, 2025 (excluding December 1, Thanksgiving weekend).

Check out our website (www.CoventryWinterFarmersMarket.com) for more information and to sign up for our newsletter to stay up-to-date on our weekly vendor lineup and special events. And follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Join the winter market fun — can't wait to see you there!

Recognizing Veterans in Ashford

In recognition of Veteran's Day, Monday, November 11, 2024, the Town of Ashford will be joined by the abutting towns of Eastford, Mansfield, Union and Willington on Saturday, November 9, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. to honor our Korean War veterans. Recognized dates of service range from 6/27/1950 to 1/31/1955.

Our Korean War veteran recognition ceremony will be held at the Ashford Veteran's Memorial located at the entrance to Pompey Hollow Park on Route 44 (across from Cumberland Farms) beginning at 11:00 a.m. with a reception following at the Ashford Senior Center.

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Lambscaping the Old Abington Burial Ground

By Donna Dufresne



Despite periods of neglect during the last two hundred years, the Old Abington Burial Ground has remained a gem in the community. Those who grew up in Pomfret Village may recall Memorial Day celebrations and the diligent placement of flags on the graves of veterans, and it seems that every generation has had its champion who has organized a cleaning and restoration project.

The small Colonial graveyard, nestled on the edge of a valley speckled with Black Angus cattle, cradles the bones of sixty-one Revolutionary soldiers. The remarkable headstones, chiseled by some of New England's famous carvers, give us a glimpse of American history through a local lens and beckon us to dig deeper into the past. Farmers and their silk-spinning wives; soldiers who fought with the 11th Regiment in Lexington; someone who drowned in the millpond; a minister's son who died of smallpox; and the unmarked graves of those whose stories we cannot tell all rest together in hallowed and forgotten ground. They invite us to remember and reflect upon what it means to be an American in this pivotal moment as we approach the country's 250th anniversary.

The ¾-acre plot, then known as the Burying Place, was deeded to the Parish of Abington by James Ingalls in 1765. The burial ground welcomed its neighbors whether they were members of the church or not. It provided a resting place for the outlanders who lived on the edges of Canterbury (now Hampton and Brooklyn) and Ashford (now Eastford). The Abington Congregational Church and the burial ground were more convenient for those living just within Pomfret's southern and western boundaries.

Like many Colonial burial grounds, the Old Abington faded from view as newer and more spacious cemeteries emerged in the nineteenth century. When living descendants dwindled, visitors were reduced to those who came for the rituals of holiday wreathes and memorial flags, and the occasional historian or genealogist. In the old days, local farmers grazed cattle and sheep in and around the yard, keeping it relatively tidy. But as lawnmowers replaced animals, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the integrity of the burials. Old headstones are easily damaged by mowing, and broken and displaced stones are stacked along the walls.

Although the Abington Congregational Church owns the burial ground, limited funds have prohibited regular maintenance. They are not alone. Churches, municipalities, and private associations everywhere are faced with the sad reality that they cannot afford the upkeep of inactive burial grounds. The endowments of nineteenth-century philanthropists have either run dry or cannot compete with twenty-first-century labor costs. But the final nail in this coffin is the fact that volunteering and community engagement have given way to social media and other distractions.

For nearly two and a half centuries, the burial ground has been periodically revived by church and community members who have led attempts at mowing, clearing brush, and restoring headstones. Photos taken before the 1950 restoration show the yard overgrown with milkweed and goldenrod. But nature has always reclaimed the land with a vengeance. Finding an economical solution to maintaining the land while protecting its historic integrity is a daunting task. That remained true until recently, when a flock of sheep came to the rescue.

Stacey Jimenez of Pomfret has long been interested in the growing trends of solar grazing, silvopasture, and using sheep to manage difficult landscapes. She has raised the critically endangered Gulf Coast Native sheep on her farm since 2021 and is engaged in conservation efforts for the heritage breed. The diminutive size of Gulf Coast Natives makes them perfect for transporting to local burial grounds, solar farms, and other landscapes needing a cut and trim. Jimenez, a fiber artist, uses their fine wool in her homespun dyed yarn and other products which she sells at local farmers markets and craft fairs.

Gulf Coast Native sheep arrived on this continent with the Spaniards five hundred years ago. Like many heritage breeds they are ideal landscapers, bred initially to forage on their own. Being a homestead breed, they were used in the Spanish colonies for wool, meat, and their rich milk. But more importantly, their ability to forage and resistance to parasites made them highly adaptable to multiple habitats and required minimal maintenance compared to domestic sheep. (They are adaptive to the hot and humid Gulf Coast of Florida and Southeastern United States, yet hardy enough for the New England climate.) It is this same adaptability that makes them ideal as an ecological landscaping solution. They help to control invasives while regenerating native plant species, and their small stature makes them an eco-friendly solution for managing environmentally sensitive landscapes and historic settings such as burial grounds.

In September, while preparing for a Walktober tour and workshop at the Old Abington Burial Ground presented by the Pomfret Historical Society, I realized that the yard was severely overgrown and would require some heavy mowing and trimming. In addition, the eighteenth-century headstones that were now lost in a tangle of grass and fallen branches required restoration and cleaning. There was no funding available, and the rugged terrain makes it inaccessible for most equipment. We had to do some creative problem solving. Fortunately, I remembered a conversation I had with my neighbor, Stacey Jimenez, who had been contemplating contracting her sheep for grazing in environmentally sensitive areas. It seemed like grazing sheep in the burial ground would be a perfect solution for cleaning up the yard while protecting and preserving its historic integrity.

Thanks to some generous donations from several people in the neighborhood, we were able to help Stacey procure the portable fencing and solar charger for the pilot project. It sometimes takes a village to get things done, and the village of Abington has a long history of banding together to rescue the Old Abington Burial Ground from nature's course. The abutting landowner, Wayne Grenier, chipped in with some mowing to give the sheep a head start, and Stacey raked and trimmed while watching over her flock. Now, the sheep continue to forage within their fenced-in plots. A pastoral scene befitting bucolic Abington, and a job well done.

For more information about Gulf Coast Native sheep conservation and starter flocks, contact Stacey Jimenez at EasyAcresGnomestead@gmail.com.

Pomfret Historical Society welcomes new members. For information about programs and workshops, visit our website at <https://pomfret-historical-society.org/>; for upcoming events and more information about Old Abington Burial Ground, contact program director Donna Dufresne at windsong@snet.net.

Photo by Michael Geigert.

1911

By Judy Davis

I am the last of my family to leave Ireland. I am the oldest daughter, and on my way from our home in Mohill to join my three sisters in New York City. Two years ago, my parents took the girls over the sea to the big city. I stayed behind in Ireland to sell our home.

Now, I am in the lowest section of the ship. I had been scared to leave, and even more scared to board.

My berth is next to another, and another. All of us women listening to the sounds of water beating against the hull.

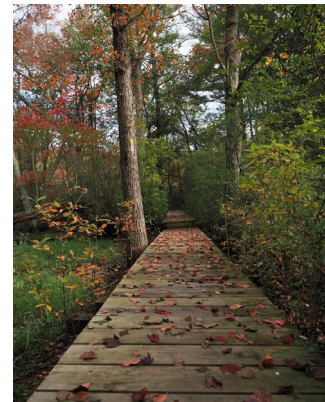
As sad and afraid as I feel, I cannot wait to see my sisters again. I will soon be working side by side with them at the factory they work at. We will all be together, walking arm in arm to sew at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory.

To live and work in New York City! Our lives will never be the same.

Your IRA Gift Amplified

Submitted by Michelle Poudrette and Marie Cantino, Joshua's Trust

November and December are quieter months for Joshua's Trust, with fewer walks and events. For many of us it is also a time to consider what donations we want to make before the end of the year. Many nonprofits are seeing decreased donations due to changes in the tax code that have worked against charitable giving. One way for seniors to make donations tax-deductible, without the need for an itemized return, is to give money from an IRA. Qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) allow individuals who are 70 1/2 years old or older to donate up to \$100,000 to qualified charities directly from a taxable IRA. If you are 73 or older, and will need to make Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from your IRAs, you can donate part or all of that RMD to a qualified charity and avoid paying income tax on the amount donated. Before making your charitable gift, *please consult, as needed, with your financial, legal and other advisors.* **Note that a generous donor has offered to donate \$500 to match every IRA distribution of \$500 or more made to Joshua's Trust.** You can potentially double your impact! That's a big win for wland conservation.



Bradley Buchanan boardwalk

Meanwhile, whether you donate or not, you can join us outdoors at the events listed below (check our website for walks or events that might be added in December):

Contemplative Walk at Joshua's Trust Whetten Woods
11/2/24, 10:00-11:30 AM

Join us for a guided walk, stopping for contemplative reflections along the way. We will meet at the Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center in Storrs Center (23 Royce Circle, Storrs, CT 06268). Be sure to visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

Walk at Utley Hill Preserve in Columbia 11/29/24, 10 AM-12 PM

Join us at Utley Hill Preserve in Columbia, CT for a beautiful post-Thanksgiving, 2.5 mile wilderness walk. We will meet at the Columbia Recreation Park at 60 Hennequin Rd. After you pull into the Park, take the first right just before the tennis courts and follow the road until you see the trail kiosk. Be sure to visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

In Your Corner

By Pam Skelly

In the city of Springfield, Illinois in 1908, a deadly race riot broke out, including lynchings which were commonplace at that time. Yes, the same city that celebrates the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln and the same city where Haitian immigrants are being falsely accused of eating pets. Horrified by the race riot, a group of white liberals issued a call for a meeting to discuss racial justice. About 60 people signed the call, seven of whom were African American including W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell. The NAACP was born on February 12, 1909, the centennial of Lincoln's birth.

NAACP stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The term "Colored" had been a respectful way to refer to non-white people but now it is an antiquated term that we've replaced with African American or Black or Brown. Although the term may have changed, the basic purpose of the organization has not. I was born in the 1950s and attended high school in the 1970s, when "politically correctness" was coined. My belief is that if we must use a label to describe someone's characteristic, it should be the label preferred by the individual to whom we are addressing. I never use the offensive N-word, no matter the last letter, because the term was used to dehumanize people during the time my beliefs and values were developed. Some, especially youths, may have a different opinion but I don't agree.

The NAACP has a vision and vision, as well as a theory of change. From National's website (<https://naacp.org>):

-Our Vision: We envision an inclusive community rooted in liberation where all persons can exercise their civil and human rights without discrimination.

-Our mission: Our mission is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.

-Theory of Change: We are committed to a world without racism where Black people enjoy equitable opportunities in thriving communities. Our work is rooted in racial equity, civic engagement, and supportive policies and institutions for all marginalized people.

Among the NAACP's earliest priorities was to put an end to lynching. In 1918 the NAACP supported a federal bill which would have punished those who participated in or failed to prosecute lynch mobs. Though the U.S. House of Representatives passed the bill, a Senate filibuster defeated it for good in 1922. Despite repeated opportunities in years to follow, Congress never passed any antilynching legislation. The decrease of incidents of lynching was credited to the NAACP report "Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1919" and the public debate that followed. The Emmett Till Antilynching Act is a United States federal law which defines lynching as a federal hate crime, increasing the maximum penalty to 30 years imprisonment for several hate crime offenses. It was signed into law on March 29, 2022 by President Joe Biden. I am outraged personally and embarrassed for our nation that it took until 2022 to pass an antilynching act!

The National NAACP is divided into regions and Connecticut is in Region #2, Northeast. Our local community is represented by our Windham/Willimantic Branch. Youth in our community can join our Gary Ralls Youth Council. The NAACP is also represented in our higher education communities with the Eastern Connecticut State University Chapter and the University of Connecticut Chapter.

Locally, the Windham/Willimantic Branch was established in the early 1980's to address racial inequities in our region. Unfortunately the branch became inactive until 2015. Mrs. Jackie Owens, Past President of the Norwich Branch, along with members Barbara Billups, Chris Gregory and others, reactivated the branch in Willimantic at the Calvary Baptist Church. Community residents were invited to informational sessions and, in 2016, the branch acquired the 50 members needed to reactivate the branch.

In 2017, newly reactivated and with the approval from the National Office of NAACP and from State Conference President Scot X. Esdaile, the first Installation of Officers to the Windham/Willimantic branch took place on January 15, 2017.

Excerpts from Scot X. Esdaile's Letter to the Windham-Willimantic NAACP Branch at the 2017 Freedom Fund Dinner:

"On behalf of all the Members across the State of Connecticut, we extend sincere thanks and congratulations to President Leah Ralls, the Executive Committee, Volunteers, and all the Sponsors. You all have exemplified a

true commitment to excellence and the CT NAACP State Conference would like to acknowledge your steadfast dedication to the entire community.

The Windham/Willimantic NAACP is one of the Hardest Working Branches in the State of Connecticut with a rich heritage that is respected statewide and across this Nation.

Over a Century ago our Forefathers decided to put their lives on the line to fight for Freedom, Justice and Equality. Please continue to stand with the NAACP as we continue to fight today against Police Brutality, Racial Profiling, Poor Housing, Joblessness and Poverty. We have much more work to do. Please get more involved, and please continue to support the work of the NAACP."

Currently our branch has over 150 members from various towns throughout northeastern Connecticut who are passionately committed to the mission and vision of the NAACP. When the NAACP was established, members who lived in the South could encounter problems if it was known that they were in the NAACP. In order to protect their members, the NAACP member list is confidential, only known to the secretary and assistant secretary.

We hold our meetings on the third Saturday of the month, usually on Zoom. All members are encouraged to participate in meetings, on committees and at events. Our meetings follow an agenda, encourage discussion and use Robert's Rules of Order for motions and voting. We are here to support anyone experiencing injustice, no matter their skin color. We are NOT a politically partisan organization but we do support policies that promote civil rights and justice. For example, we would encourage you to vote "Yes" in favor of the no-excuse absentee voting which is on November's ballot. Making it easier for a legally registered voter to cast their ballot benefits the voters and all political parties from our perspective.

We have the following standing committees:

- Membership and Fundraising
- Legal Redress
- Environmental Justice
- Education and Dream Big
- Community Engagement
- Political Action
- Health Care
- Digital Information

We are an integral part of this northeast corner of Connecticut. You will see and hear us in the Willimantic Boom Box Parade. We often collaborate with other groups such as Windham United to Save Our Health Care, a coalition of groups addressing our local health care desert. At Willimantic's Third Thursdays and at the Willimantic Food Coop's Country Fair, you will see our table staffed with members ready to answer questions and share information.

The goal is to be proactive by promoting equity and justice through thoughtful policies and practices. When we are unable to move forward this way, we need to cause "good trouble," in other words, a willingness to confront and challenge unjust systems.. We organized protests after George Floyd's death and support the Black Lives Matter movement. Our environmental justice committee has protested for clean environmental legislation as well as attended local town councils with clean energy proposals.

We have fun together too! In October, we held a Learn to Paint and Comedy Night fundraising event at the Elks Club in Willimantic. Using templates of the raised fist, we used acrylic paint on canvas to create unique works of art. Often associated with the black power movement, the raised fist has a long history as a global symbol of solidarity and the fight against oppression. Then we enjoyed a pizza dinner and transitioned to an evening with three comedians. Learning, creating, and laughing together is how we build a healthy community.

My intention was to share the history of the NAACP nationally and locally and answer these questions: Why was the NAACP established? What is the organization's purpose? How can you participate in this important work? Hopefully I accomplished this task.

If you also feel strongly about civil rights and justice, please consider joining our Windham/Willimantic NAACP branch. The basic adult annual membership is \$30 which is a reasonable price. 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.

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Traditional Music in Connecticut's Last Green Valley

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

Peaceful Dreams

By Jesse R. Clark

September 21st was the International Day of Peace. This got me thinking about peace. There are four levels of peace: Inner Peace, Local Peace, National Peace, and Global Peace. The last two may seem impossible and may well be out of our control, but that's why we start with Inner and Local. It's about us finding peace within ourselves. If we don't have that, we don't have peace when interacting with others. Do what you can to create peace in your own life and let it ripple out to the rest of the world. The quest for peace on a larger scale means nothing if you have to sacrifice your own. Like Tom Paxton sang, *"My own life is all I can hope to control. Oh, let my life be lived for the good, good of my soul. Let it bring peace, sweet peace. Peace will come. Let it begin with me."*

But...that brings us to another question. If our life is all we can hope to control, how do we find that peace, that joy, that purpose? For several years I have been thinking about what my overall career path is. God has blessed me with several talents and I want to be able to use them in the way He wants—definitely not bury them. However, as with all God's plans for us, the path hasn't been a direct, clear one. But bit by bit, I've been reprioritizing my activities, letting go of what no longer serves me to open my heart and mind to other opportunities God has laid before me. Each job, each experience, has been not only useful but necessary in order for me to continue moving forward.

The difficult part has been figuring out what path, what choices, are the right ones. The beautiful news is that God has always made it so that when I take the time to think about my choices, which path I need to take, my heart glows and tears come to my eyes as my joyful spirit shines with love. To quote an Elvis song from one of his movies, *"When your heart gets restless, time to move along. When your heart gets weary, time to sing a song. But when a dream is calling you, there's just one thing that you can do. You got to follow that dream wherever that dream may lead. You got to follow that dream to find the love you need."* Finding your dreams, like they say about life, really is a journey, not a destination, and with every step I'm taking now, I'm learning and growing spiritually and actually getting paid for it.

This year I have been blessed with a job working at the Connecticut Renaissance Faire. This job has been such a blessing, filling my spirit with gratitude and joy. I feel so alive. Being on the Lebanon fairgrounds, surrounded by the trees absorbing the changing of the seasons—that part alone lifts my spirits. I know our church has a juice booth there, so some of you may be familiar with serving there. For those who aren't, it really is a special place, and having the Renaissance Faire there brings out a deeper level of spirituality in me. Hearing the Celtic music that I grew up listening to with my family, being transported to this other world with people who feel the cultural spirit of that place, that time—it really is magical.

What I love about it the most, though, is all the people who work there. There are performers—musicians, jugglers, fire-eaters, comic storytellers—all these people who have worked hard at their craft and are so passionate about it. You can just feel the joy they have in performing. The vendors with their hand-crafted products are very special. Their job is creating what they design, pouring their love, devotion, and time into it. Everyone there is part of a

community filled with people sharing their talents, and I am learning from them. They are inspiring me, letting me share my own creativity while still completing my duties.

A great source of the joy I have been feeling is the changes of the seasons. The way I describe it, it's not so much that I like Fall more than Spring, but that I like September better than March. The autumnal equinox has been a source of joy, peace, and inspiration for me. The perfect balance of day and night, the harvest season, and still being able to enjoy the sounds of the frogs at night. The paradox of being inspired by the chill in the air while also slowing down creates a mental and spiritual balance in life. Being inspired to take on a lot of tasks, while slowing down to make sure each task is done with mindfulness and care. Working in the garden, cleaning the house, even just sitting on the porch enjoying the moment, thinking of all the possible things one can do. True happiness, true peace, is being motivated to do a lot of things while being content with still staying in the moment.



There is a quote that goes, "Wherever you are, that's where you're supposed to be." Sometimes that place may not be where I would like it to be, but I am there for a reason. That's why I love taking time to listen to God, for He knows what's in my heart even better than I do. The Faire is a beautiful, magical realm, a place where the reality of my past blends with the possibilities of what could be. What joys can I experience here? What talents lie inside me? What is it that is sparking this joyful spirit in me to come out? Being surrounded by a community of people with lively, creative, open spirits—that is a place where I want to stay. You hear about the kids who run away and join the circus; these adults grew up and joined the Faire. No matter where I go, I want to be around that kind of magic, blending the reality of the world with the divine imagination to create new possibilities.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'* I know that there are a lot of horrible things going on in this world that seem too much to even think about, much less try to fix. But the peace we all apparently want, that peace that every religion apparently stands for, comes from each one of us following our own path, our own heart, finding ways to blend the reality with the possibilities through local community. "Think Globally, Act Locally." Don't worry if it's enough, or what other people think *your* life should look like. Follow that calling in your heart. That's what I'm going to do. God will lead me to magical places that I thought only existed beyond our wildest dreams, for He has dreams for us, and, trusting and following the path He made for us, we can make those dreams come true. And maybe if we all do that, we will be one step closer to that magical, global community, filled with as much peace and joy as I have been feeling.

Photo of the author was contributed.

Consider Cutting a Break for Neurodivergent Folks This Holiday Season

By Michelle Baughman

Holidays are extra-stressful times for individuals with neurodivergent conditions like autism and ADHD. This is largely due to the mismatch between the ways in which neurotypical people like to celebrate the season and the challenges inherent in having neurodivergent conditions.

For example, many of us have sensory sensitivities that make it very difficult to contend with the hype and commercialism of this time of year. Businesses and private homeowners alike adorn their homes and stores with bright colorful lights. Christmas music is played continuously everywhere one goes. Many stores stock up on strong-smelling cinnamon decorations or scented candles, and department store employees squirt unsuspecting shoppers with potent perfumes and colognes which they are trying to hawk to passersby. Crowded stores and long checkout lines offend our proprioceptive, interoceptive, and olfactory senses and intrude upon our somatic-emotional interpersonal boundaries, causing our autonomic nervous system (ANS) to go into hyperarousal. The uncomfortable sensations of a hyperaroused ANS include racing heart rate, dry throat, shallow breathing, increased body temperature, and tunnel vision. In other words, PANIC! It takes all our cognitive resources to regulate our emotions and suppress the impulse to fight or flee. Then, to top it all off, navigating busy parking lots demands even more cognitive functioning and emotional regulation from an already overtaxed nervous system.

Even if all this retail store hype can be successfully avoided by shopping online, there is still extra pressure from family, friends, and co-workers to live up to the social expectations and to keep up the traditions of the season. Even on an average day, navigating social situations involves a great deal more cognitive energy for us than it does for neurotypicals, and it leaves us feeling exhausted and drained. (I explained this in detail in an article that can be found at <https://www.autismwellness-foundation.org/post/why-autistic-friendships-should-not-be-measured-by-neurotypical-standards/>.) But during the holidays there are so many more social obligations, and they are compacted into a few weeks, so that we do not get an opportunity to recover from one before we have to attend to the next one. There are office parties at work, church bazaars and cookie exchanges, kids' school concerts to attend, holiday gatherings with friends and neighbors, relatives to visit (which often includes the added stress of traveling), or, alternatively, hosting gatherings oneself.

Hosting includes a whole other whirlwind of cognitive demands, nervous system bombardments, and energy expenditures because it means planning menus and shopping for ingredients (which are areas of executive dysfunction for us), the work of extra cooking and cleaning (which exposes us to even more sensory stimulation from the smells of cooking food and cleaning supplies, the noise of vacuum cleaning, and the heat of a hot kitchen), and the cognitive demands of the multi-tasking that is so essential to meal preparation. (Multi-tasking requires working memory, which is another area of executive dysfunction for us.)

Holidays also mean a departure from predictable routines. Routines are often a source of comfort to neurodivergent folks. Indeed, it is the very fact that we have something predictable to count upon that allows us to cope! And this disruption in routine is everywhere during the holiday season. Visiting house guests cause changes at home. On the job, workload and schedules often change to accommodate

co-workers' vacation time. Grocery stores rearrange aisles, so shopping becomes more challenging. Extra traffic at this time of year makes commute times longer. Even the time we look forward to, winding down at the end of the day to watch TV, is affected because regularly scheduled programs are replaced by special holiday shows. The frustration and disappointment caused by these changes is a source of internal stimulation that adds to the sensory overload and takes more effort to regulate our emotions.

Neurotypical (NT) people can take all of this in stride because their nervous systems are quite different from ours. NT brains do not register as much, nor as intense, environmental and internal stimuli as neurodivergent (ND) brains do. To illustrate this point, think of two motorcyclists on a hot, buggy day: NT brains are like the motorcyclist who wears a helmet with a face shield, and ND brains are like the motorcyclist who does not wear one. In this analogy, the bugs are the sensory stimuli. If you have ever been hit in the face by a bug while speeding along on a motorcycle, you will understand how intensely painful and distracting it is! Wearing a helmet with a face shield allows the first motorcyclist to enjoy the experience pain-free and distraction-free, reaching her destination whole and intact, and with energy and composure to go about her day. However, the motorcyclist who does not have the benefit of wearing a helmet with a face shield arrives at her destination disheveled, with welts on her face and bugs in her hair and eyes (and perhaps having swallowed a few bugs along the way). She is in pain and frustrated, already reaching her threshold of tolerance and on the verge of losing her composure. She is not in any condition to carry on with her day... unless, of course, she is given a break to tend to her wounds, clean herself up, and rest and recuperate—in other words, given the time and space to do what she needs to do to take care of herself, without the unhelpful criticisms, judgments, bullying, and unfavorable comparisons that NTs often subject NDs to.

Some of the ways in which ND individuals get bullied are when they are badgered about being "rude" for wearing noise-cancelling headphones to help minimize sensory stimuli, or being "unsociable" when we need to withdraw from the noise and chaos in order to rest, recuperate, and self-regulate and let our brain process all the sensory stimuli. NDs are often bullied and shamed by unenlightened family members who make comments about "lack of discipline" or "spoiling" or "indulging poor behavior" when they think we are not responding in ways that they think are appropriate because they do not understand our limitations. Their brains, after all, are like the motorcyclist who wore the helmet with the face shield, and they assume that everyone is like them; they are completely unaware of all the extra stimuli our nervous systems are bombarded with, so they have no patience or compassion for us. Then there is the most dismissive and disrespectful thing an NT can possibly say: "Oh, well, everybody is a little autistic, so buck up, buttercup!"

One thing ND folks of all ages are very good at is recognizing patterns. When we recognize the patterns of this bullying behavior every holiday season, we are demotivated to put forth any extra effort, and instead become proponents of "boycotting Christmas." So, if you want your ND loved ones to participate in holiday festivities and traditions, you need to cut them a break!

Michelle Baughman is a late-in-life diagnosed adult on the autism spectrum, an advocate, an educator, and a trauma-informed AANE-certified life coach for individuals with neurodivergent conditions.

Evolve Responsibly

By Bob Lorentson

While humans technically belong to the Class of animals we call mammals, many have no class, and some believe they're in a class by themselves. Others simply don't like to be categorized. Additionally, it's not hard to see why other mammals in good standing might reasonably object to any such relationship on the grounds that humans have sorely abused their taxonomic privileges. No other mammal has ever even thought about taking the keys to the Kingdom, crowning itself King, and acting like all other animals exist only for their amusement. Nobody awarded any humans that I know Best in Class.

All mammals are supposed to have evolved with certain characteristics in common, but you know as well as I do how that goes. Rules were made to be broken. Or at least stretched to the point of believability.

The females of all mammals, for instance, are supposed to feed their young with milk from modified and enlarged sweat glands. This may be nothing more than a passing fad. Human females are enlarging these glands to never-before seen proportions, solely for decorative reasons, and to watch males drive off the road. And what exactly are we to make of the males of some other species, like the Dayak fruit bat, or the Bismarck flying fox, who lactate and nurse their young. There's no telling where things could end up if these behaviors catch on.

Scientists also say that having hair or fur is another exclusive characteristic of all mammals. As if this was something to brag about. Are whales, dolphins, naked mole rats, and bald humans any less of a mammal because their hair deserted them? And why would some humans be breeding hairless animals like Sphynx cats and American hairless terriers, while others are breeding sheep with so much wool that they would overheat and die if they weren't sheared often? Clearly some mammals are conflicted about this requirement.

Also unique to mammals is the presence of three bones in the middle ear, for reasons best understood by zoologists and satirists. These bones are variably called the incus, the malleus, and the stapes, or the hammer, anvil, and stirrup, and are thought to be responsible for headaches, quiet hours, and murderous impulses. Two bones would have been plenty.

The fourth and final requirement to be a mammal is that you have a single-boned lower jaw. I'll bet you're checking your jaw right now to see where you stand. Single-boned lower jaws evolved to help mammals cut, chew, and grind their food, probably after too many animals were choking to death trying to swallow woolly mammoths whole. Scientists say evolution is great like that, but it didn't do much for the woolly mammoths, did it?

Of course, there are other requirements to being a mammal, but they're not as exclusive as you might think, if you care about that sort of thing. Being a mammal might mean that you have an endothermic metabolism, but so do birds, and they don't care what you think about them. Birds aren't so far removed from dinosaurs to get a big head about it. Some mammals I know would do well to learn such humility.

Also like birds, all mammals have four-chambered hearts instead of the two that suffice for reptiles, amphibians, and fish. This evolutionary innovation allowed for greater sustained physical activity, and made it easier for many to hunt for food in the trash can, at the bird feeder, or in the refrigerator. While it's frightening to think of modern humans with two-chambered hearts even managing to get off the couch for a beer, it's equally unnerving to think of reptiles and amphibians with four-chambered hearts congregating around the refrigerator. But in evolution, more heart means more energy to keep the lesser-evolved animals in their place.

All mammals, and mammals alone, except, for some reason, elephants, kangaroos, and manatees, are diphyodontic. I won't tell if you won't.

You may be wondering by now why I haven't brought up the issue of a mammal's complex brain. Look around you as you go about your daily activities. This appears to be largely a matter of perspective.

As you can see, mammals are not as special as you might have thought. There's really not a lot that separates mammals from other animals. Sure, we humans like to believe that we're special, and evolved faster, further, and better than other animals, but this shouldn't be a race to the finish, should it? So why are we driving other animals to extinction then, when eliminating the competition will likely finish us all? If we don't start learning how to evolve responsibly, we deserve to be kicked out of Class.

Good mammals don't let other animals go extinct. Nevertheless, in the mammal class alone, out of the 5,487 species of mammals in the world today, 1,141 species are considered endangered. That's twenty percent, enough to know that extinction isn't bluffing. If you are a mammal reading this, you should be worried. You may already know some of your classmates who are threatened in this manner. If you recognize any of them in the following pages, have empathy for them. Remember, the same mammals you meet on the way up the evolutionary ladder, you might meet on the way down.

Bob Lorentson is a local writer and the author of You Only Go Extinct Once (Stuck in the Anthropocene with the Pleistocene Blues Again).

Read the Neighbors paper on your desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Go to neighborspaper.com for link to current and past editions. All in beautiful COLOR!

Holiday Artist Market November 16th and 17th

The very popular Ashford Area Arts Council's "Holiday Artist Market" event is in its 8th year. The Knowlton Hall will feature a room full of local artisans both days. You'll be able to start your holiday shopping and get to see what our talented community of artists and craftsmen has been creating over the past year. So much variety and all of it inspired, well-made, beautiful, and unique. There's something for everyone! Let's shop local and support our arts community.

Also available for purchase at the entrance to the event will be an anthology of poetry and short stories written by a local writers' group, Font 'n Pen.

COVENTRY CHILI FEST

Submitted by: Paul Manzone

The Coventry Chili Fest is back for another year. Sponsored by the Coventry Lions Club, the Chili Fest will take place on Saturday Nov.2 from 12-2pm at Coventry HS. Prizes will be awarded. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and student ID, and free for age 6 and under. Information will be available on the Lions' Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CoventryLionsClub> or the Lions Club of Coventry website. New chili cookers are welcome to the competition.

St. Philip's Christmas Craft Fair

On Saturday, November 30, 2024 St. Philip's Church on Rte. 44 in Ashford, CT will be holding their annual Christmas Craft Fair from 9:00 -3:00. Forty crafters will be there for your Christmas shopping. There will be a bake sale sponsored by the parishioners. Soup, sandwiches and pirogues will be available from the kitchen including breakfast sandwiches. There will also be raffle items on display. Admission is free.

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THE FALL GARDEN

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

Blue mounds of **New England Aster** (*A. noviangliae*) were billowing with yellow centers, quite summery before fall color fully arrived in eastern Connecticut. The long-blooming Asters nonetheless announced my fall garden on Cross Road the last Sunday in September.

Nothing grand, a few ornamental plantings around a circa 1750 farmhouse, one of the earliest built in Chaplin at the southwestern end of Connecticut's rural Quiet Corner... five miles from Willimantic, the eastern edge of what New Yorkers consider civilization, of urbanized Connecticut.



Brown-eyed Susan in Viburnum.

Settlement in the less-accessible coastal highlands became the less-developed *Quiet Corner*, some 400 square miles, the dark stretch of land before the lights of Massachusetts when flying to Boston at night. Known as the *Last Green Valley* of the lowlands' Shetucket River (where Willimantic and Natchaug merge), the highlands are the *Last Dark Valleys* of the Willimantic, Natchaug and Quinebaug Rivers. All converge as the Thames River where 19th century steamboats docked in Norwich with bales of Southern cotton for Willimantic mills.

Some members of the *Quiet Corner Garden Club* came to my fall tutorial which became a potluck social around the bonfire. Some work was done! A large hardy **Hibiscus** with continual aphid damage was replaced by a compact thornless **Quince** (*Chaenomeles*) '**Double Take**' with large orange camellia-like flowers in early spring by my sidedoor. Wake up!



Mound of blue Aster.

SIDEDOOR plantings merge my doorway and nearby driveway, utilities and wonderful weeds. At my doorway breathing beauty. The blue New England Asters! Elegant yellow **Goldenrod** (*Solidago*) is everywhere and rumored to enrich soil with Nitrogen.

Coexistence is less manicured, and less work. However, more screening was needed along the busy street. Three 12 to 15' multi-stem **Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier*) have been planted in the arrival area with spring flower and birds eating berries in summer; where Aster now mounds in the multi-stems. Not tall as birch, but more

dense. Branching is still green the end of September, no fall color yet, but **Se-dum 'Autumn Fire'** blooms dark pink by the mailbox. White **Shasta Daisy** (*Leucanthemum*) and **Montauk Daisy** (*Nipponanthemum*), soft yellow **Thread-leaf Coreopsis 'Moonbeam'** and blue **Garden Sage** (*Salvia*) offer flowers into fall.

A tall **Beach Rose** (*Rosa rugosa*) '**Hansa**') grows robustly in summer, popping up densely along the road, a good screen with purple-red flowers, now persistent red hips. Nearby are spring-flowering **Azaleas** (*Rhododendron*) and an '**Arnold Promise**' **Witchhazel** (*Hamamelis*) that blooms late winter.

Less of a screen, very slow growing, is a '**Blood-good**' **Japanese Maple** (*Acer*) with stunning bright red fall color near mounding blue Aster beside the shed. At the other side of the shed is **Redtwig Dogwood** (*Benthamidia*, formerly *Cornus*), **Chokeberry** (*Aronia*) '**Brilliantissima**' and a large arching ornamental grass, *Miscanthus* '**Morning Light**'.

FENCE ROW to the right has a 7' screen of three **Redtwig Dogwood** shrubs among trees planted in the last six years. Notably five species of now 12 to 30' **Birch** (*Betula*): four natives, '**Whitespire**' (cultivar of **Gray Birch**), **Paper, Sweet** and **Yellow Birch**; and one nonnative vulnerable to native bugs, **Himalayan Birch** with the purest white bark. I treat with compost and kelp. White-barked birch are colorful year-round. Flowering perennials are underplanted, such as **Iris**, **Garden Sage**, **Milkweed** (*Asclepias*) and now-blooming **Black-eyed Susan** (*Rudbeckia*) and **Roses** needing more sun as the shrubs mature.

A young **Southern Magnolia** (*M. grandiflora*), aka **Bull Bay** was acquired at a Connecticut College plant sale a few years ago in New London. Now 4' and topdressed with compost, it has yet to flower -- as at Arnold Arboretum in Boston with showy white, lemon-citronella-scented flowers up to 12 inches wide. Lustrous leaves are evergreen in the southeastern U.S., native north to Virginia. Climate change pushes its range north toward New England.

A **Leyland Cypress** (*Cupressus*, a true cypress) lurks evergreenly behind the woodpile.

BACK PATIO plantings are the showiest in September and closest to the hose. Water Makes Things Grow! A tall **Rudbeckia** volunteered in 2024 through a **Prague Viburnum**, a complete surprise! The 6' "**Brown-eyed Susan**" peaked golden yellow with brown discs in September.

Variegated Iris are instructive for watering. Three plants are in different locations and one at the edge of a wet area near the basement sump-pump's outlet is *much* larger.

At the end of September, the patio is graced by many colorful herbaceous perennials, hardy and tender. Blue **Geranium** climbs into a deep yellow **Floribunda Rose** (*Rosa*) '**True Friendship**' that reblooms with deadheading. **Hydrangea 'Eclipse'** isn't blooming cranberry purple in its container, but its dark purple leaves are an effective contrast:

-Anemone vitifolia '**Robustissima**' – Hundreds of pink flowers which bees love.

-Begonia in container (winters inside) – Tender, floriferous orange-red & yellow.

-Geranium '**Roxanne**' – Hardy, very vigorous blue-flowering groundcover.

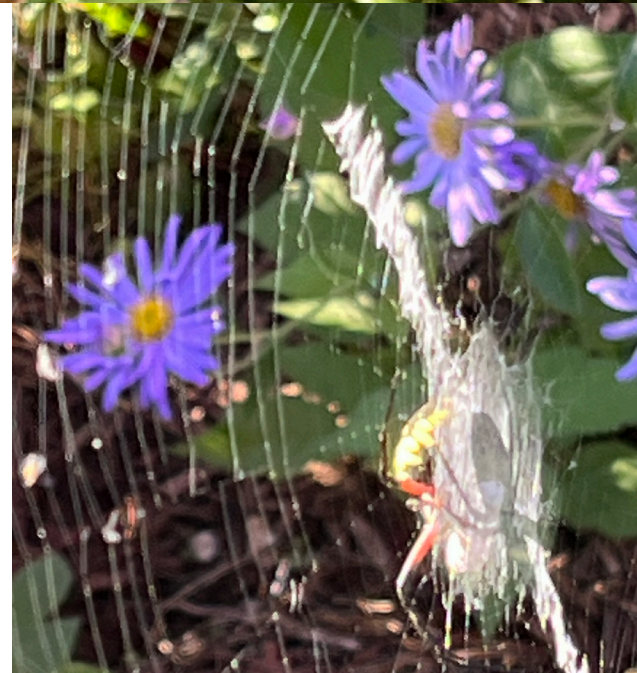


Photo at top: Bee at Anemone. Above: Spooky zig-zag spider in Aster.



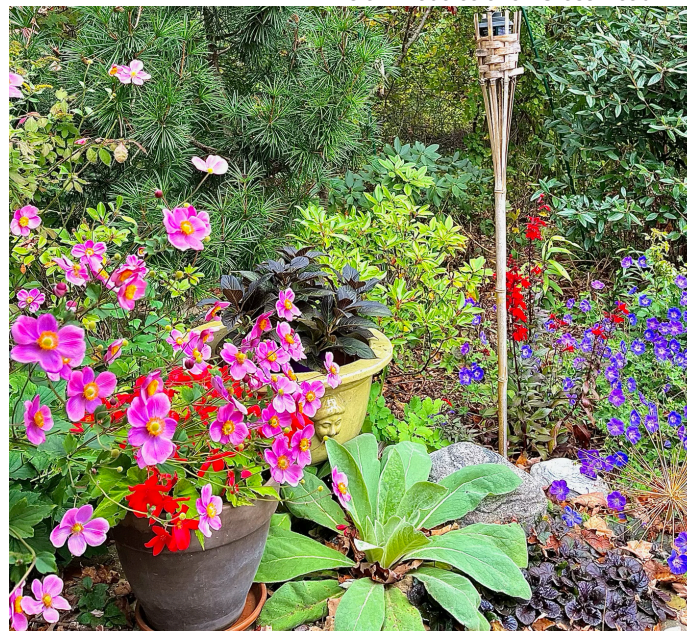
-Lobelia / Cardinal Flower – Brilliant cardinal red with adequate moisture.

-Tricyrtis / Toad Lily -- Small subtle orchid-like white and purple flowers.

A surprising evergreen is the 12' **Japanese Umbrella Pine** (*Sciadopitys*) at the patio's corner with its whorls of needles. Moved from a Cambridge MA client's shady yard five years ago where it only survived. Now it thrives among spring-blooming **Rhododendron** and early-summer's **Mountain Laurel** (*Kalmia*), under a 20' **Staghorn Sumac** (*Rhus*) with harbinger red-purple fall color as I sit.

My eyes are drawn by the curve of the unmown mini-meadow into the darker woods beyond. Muffled road roar retreats and the silence is deafening.

Photo at left: Blue hardy Geranium climbs into yellow floribunda Rosa. Below: Patio color on Cross Road.



Postscript: The planting tutorial may be repeated in spring 2025.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, master gardening in Chaplin CT. Photos by the author.

Looking Up

The Mouse Across the Field and Saint Mom

By Bob Grindle

Occasionally my brain rebels at the downhill shushing pace of life in a world whose priorities can feel as if they have been curated during a firework's grand finale, and it starts gasping for something fresh...unable to fully catch its breath in this mind-numbing Gordian tangle of societal loose threads. So often it is the interloping event, intruding noisily into our lives...someone else's algorithm scrawled onto our day's to-do list...and we allow something that should be of no more consequence than the background noise in our lives to push out the small, and usually quiet moments of living that can be so crucial to a sense of well-being. The freshly hung out to dry wash, that is so seldom seen fluttering on clotheslines anymore, adds a recognizably gentle and oddly textural musical note of counterpoint to the steady, and barely perceptible exhale of the uphill spruces on this cool and breezy, cloudless and perfectly blue early October afternoon as it crafts its way into our senses. It warms our heart as quickly as it chills our skin and comes to rest deep in that part of each of us where no one else is allowed to go.

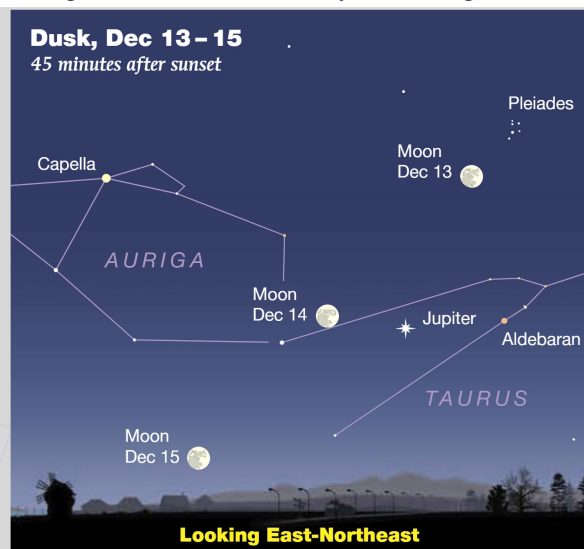
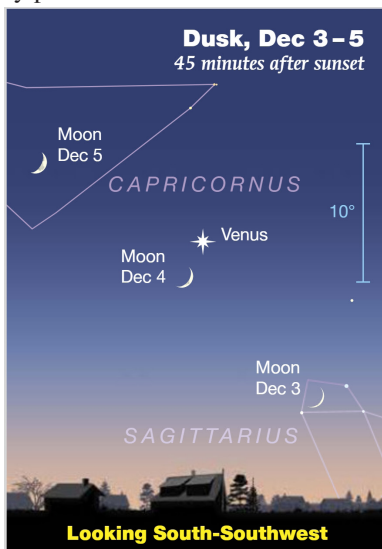
We somehow permitted what is simple, easy to understand and personally doable to be usurped by our modern fixation on a Talladega pace that privileges the bucket list over the harvest basket. More than 2,500 years ago Confucius noted that: "Life is really simple, but we insist on complicating it," so clearly the problem is not new and still awaits a workable solution. I don't mean to wallow in a sort of slavish return to the good old days reverie, but I am reminded of a story of a story I read several years ago about a retired history teacher who laboriously raked the leaves in her back yard each fall...turning down the help that was offered by family members who were concerned for her health. She would rake all of the leaves into long, seemingly randomly placed windrows before finally carting them off to a compost pile at the edge of the yard. When a leaf blower was purchased as a labor saving gift for her birthday—no doubt a thoughtful gesture of love and concern for her well-being—and she never used it, her explanation was the long winding rows of leaves represented famous tactical battle lines in wars throughout the history classes she had taught and recreating them in the process of raking the fallen leaves helped to keep her mind engaged and made her feel as if she was still in the classroom preparing lessons for her students. I wonder if there is an algorithm to select for such random and irrational, but warmly human behavior?

Yes, we are a complicated and difficult to predict the actions of species of almost unimaginable promise. We have had a huge and frequently negative impact on our planet, yet standing here in the cool, grey early October afternoon, watching the autumn leaves fall and looking at the shambles I have made of what had been a secure, quiet and cozy retreat of a tiny home tucked under the logs at the bottom of one of the woodpiles we are using for the coming winter, I smile as the mother field mouse scurries away with her cargo of five or six dime-size babies. She will do what she must do for the brood to survive, not unlike her ancestors...who struggled along for millions of years until the dinosaurs disappeared and then prospered and spread with amazing success. There are fleeting moments when I think of our own species as the dinosaur of the day, perfectly evolved to prosper in our present environment, yet equally vulnerable if we just keep trampling about. We don't have the same excuse as the hapless reptiles, though we are perfectly capable of preparing for the coming changes whatever form they may take. Albert Einstein once quipped that "Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former."

As October winds down and our New England weather takes a noticeable turn toward the season of rawness and long north shadows of the post-autumn equinox, I am reflecting on how many warmly comfortable reasons there have recently been for simply looking up...a random visit to the Pomfret recreation park on route 97 yielded



a surprise visit by Damn Yankee Balloons inflating and launching hot air balloons on a Sunday early in October and some fairly spectacular Northern lights last week made staying up later than usual worth the loss of sleep. So, as Orion rises slowly into its usual prominent spot high and center in the late autumn sky; the full Beaver and Moons of November and December wax and wane and form delightful pairings with Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars, allow yourself to be drawn out of your own cozy retreat and under the scattered herds of clouds that graze across the immense fields of the night sky. As your imagination begins to feed on this fantasy of moonlight and



starlight in the tropospheric darkness, sitting on the deck at home; lying in a field or on a rooftop; walking in the park or on an errand or even better along the beach; outside on break at work; camping down by the river or perhaps just parked for the moment someplace where the mood is right, there is something in each one of us that soundlessly ignites to refresh our connection to the universe. As the ancient mariners studied the night skies, charting their way home watching the same Moon, planet and stars perhaps they felt this same unfathomable tug from the depths of our shared humanity.

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Regional Community Media & Arts News

A U.S. ELECTION STORM WARNING

Greetings everyone! A few personal thoughts to begin, about our beloved media and the health of the nation at this historic time.

1. Cinematic Reflections and A Warning for the U.S. Elections at the Brink
2. Planning for the first Eastern Connecticut Music Culture Activation Conference in Spring 2025



We have compromised our core process of dialogue and information sharing and debating to find solutions and resolve problems together. The loyal opposition is extinct, our ignorance of the other point of view only gives us new enemies. This foundation has been damaged significantly by the failure of our media to do its job. Beyond making money, that is. There is more to this technology than making money, and right now our nation needs intelligent and honest mass communication.

MEGALOPOLIS, THE RESTORED CALIGULA, AND A STORM WARNING

This issue of *Neighbors* will come out just before the elections, and whatever your values or political flavor, all of us will have a big mess to clean up, at every level—local, state, and federal. Whether you voted or not.

Two recent film releases provide excellent opportunities for reflection on our history and our future just before we vote. Together they provide a storm warning and a vision that connects our present political and social challenges to the rich history of human failure and what makes us fail.

I want to offer my congratulations to Francis Ford Coppola on his excellent fable, *Megalopolis*. A very dense, layered vision of the conflict between the manifestation of fundamental ideas and values about what makes a civilization. Truly a big screen experience but on a large home TV you will still get the nonverbal visual messages. I know it is currently being reported as a box office disaster, but I believe in the future it will be regarded as a powerful predictor and canary in the coal mine for our country at a time that sadly parallels the Fall of Rome of under *Caligula*.

As a lifelong cinema devotee I confess that I did see the original *Caligula* in 1979, and it was as over the top as you read. How cow! I wish I could unsee some of the images, but I understood part of the original intention of the film was to show you the truth in a way that you could NOT look away. How low did Rome go? Why?

Gore Vidal's original script focused on the personal internal journey of Caligula as he fell so deeply into madness. Troubled as he was, for good reasons, he did not start out that way. Others took over the film and instead presented him as a madman from the start, just going even more insane with outrageous behaviors, and they added wild pornography scenes after they had officially stopped filming.

The new restoration, called The Ultimate Cut, shows new previously unseen footage from 96 hours that were archived when the original came out. *None of the original 1979 footage is shown and the very hardcore porn and violence in the original have been removed.* Malcolm McDowell recently said that he is very happy that his original vision of Caligula, showing the depth and range of the descent into madness, is now intact for all to see as a whole, one of his greatest roles. Footage with Helen Mirren, Peter O'Toole, and John Gielgud has been extended to show much more of their characters in the storyline. They were all surprised (horrified) by what happened to their original performances. In other words, a new film has been created, challenging, but maybe worth a look! However flawed, it speaks to our morality as we move into the 21st century A.D.

Both films together are fantastic preparation for a fresh look at how the quality of life is going today in the U.S., and this brings me to our elections. Our nation today ping pongs between the worlds in these vastly different films.

It is almost over, the longest and most expensive and embarrassing election in our history! The past insanity has nothing on 2024—we have people in our Congress (at least one) with security clearances who believe the government controls the weather! For fuck's sake! What will people think of our collective mental breakdown in the next decade? (Any aliens monitoring our civilization right now will take a pass on us and try again later.)

Whatever some may think of its weaknesses, our precious and sacred election process, something truly unique in human history, has been turned into a media shitshow of embarrassing and degrading behavior and speech. The media fiddles 24/7 and makes its money covering the horse races while Rome burns. Do you have to see the smoke to know something is wrong?

The media owners have crossed the lines of industry responsibility and accountability, and their employees, who know it, are powerless to force change without risking their jobs or careers. Due to nonstop lobbying and changes in law the power of the public to impact on this crisis has been minimized. Talk about rigged games!

Facts and real news are lost in the talking head fueled firewalls of professional journalism and out-of-control social media masturbation and intentional abuse. By accident or partisan design, attempts at sharing the truth are buried in endless waves of opinion and prediction, but not facts. With all good intentions how do you make sense of the kaleidoscope? Do you find yourself spending too much time in the *same* media silos?

At the local level, where we live and see each other face-to-face, this breakdown plays out at various times in the form of government dysfunction, failure to lead and demand results, lack of transparency, and complacency with the status quo. Lack of adequate or proper news coverage compromises the important linkage needed on both sides between government and local citizens.

After the elections we need to pick up the fragments from our arguments and make peace to save our process and the nonviolent peaceful future of governance for our country. Local media is smaller scale and more accessible and perfect for this!

EASTERN CONNECTICUT MUSIC CULTURE ACTIVATION CONFERENCE

Good news! Heads up if you like live music! A big gathering is coming in Spring 2025.

As part of the community service of *On the Homefront*, I am developing a plan for an *Eastern Connecticut Music Culture Activation Conference* (working title) in spring 2025, probably in April.

The target audience is musicians of all kinds, venue operators, booking agents and union reps, related media writers, music educators, what is left of good retail, music instrument stores, and recording studio managers. The intention is to discuss and create a regional collaboration to support and promote live and recorded original music in Connecticut in all its expressions. I want this effort to include content in Spanish (or bi-lingual) to bridge the cultural and economic divides and use the power and joy of music itself as the glue.

The dynamics of survival in music are everyone's private struggle -- the theme here is unity in action at all levels to make the most of what we have now to support the creation of music, grow audiences, protect, and preserve music spaces, and expand resources for the future.

The goals are to co-create an intentional, consciously re-designed music/culture/space/media web of all partners in collaboration in their respective roles and functions. Doing what we do now in a more comprehensively organized and efficient way. Using the resources we have now in a more open and shared modality beyond individual interest to love for music as the starting point.

Much more on this in the next issue. In the meantime, this project is still cooking—if you are involved in music in some way and your efforts connect to one of the categories mentioned above, please reach out to me now, when you read this. I can keep you informed of developments and perhaps you could participate in some way.

And right now, for the best in local music: WILI has a wonderful show on Fridays at 4 pm called *Homegrown*, and it focuses each week on local musicians and bands. See below for more WILI info.

Matt Rugar is the producer and if you want to be a guest use email = matt.rugar@gmail.com. For a full archive of programs go to the YouTube playlist link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgpHwaCnfeKpkj6ZJxwWPF-02P8LUdiu7R>

ON THE HOMEFRONT CONTINUES LOCAL SERVICE



Matt Rugar WILI Producer of 'Homegrown.'

The *On the Homefront* series is now operating as an integrated media hub for community service on all local platforms on a 24/7 basis—radio, YouTube, podcasts, public access TV, Neighbors (print), streaming and mobile.

-Flagship originating broadcasts will continue in Willimantic at WILI AM 1400 and 95.3 FM on Wednesdays from 5:00-6:00 pm.

-WICH Radio 94.5 FM and 1310 AM on Fridays from 11:00 am to 12 noon. Covering Norwich and New London, rounding out our three-county coverage area.

-WILI YouTube Channel for all Monday-Friday local talk shows—available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@wiliradio7000>. Each program has its own playlist with all the shows. Search on "WILI Radio" and subscribe!

-The *On the Homefront* audio podcast archive is available 24/7. Subscribe to get every new program!

<https://www.wili.com/on-the-homefront-podcast/>
-Archive of my media/arts columns in *Neighbors* at: www.neighborspaper.com and:

<http://neighborspaper.com/category/back-issues/our-writers/john-murphy/>

-Channel 192 at Spectrum Public Access TV. *On the Homefront* is featured Tuesdays at 5:30 pm and Fridays at 8:00 pm. Check out the other unique shows!



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

Always keep the faith,

John Murphy
john@humanartsmedia.com

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

“Ode to the Season of Joy”

By Jane Anderson Vercelli, NCCO President

The Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra is excited to present a concert featuring a creative arrangement of Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” in honor of the 200th anniversary of Beethoven’s 1824 completion of his Ninth Symphony which features the Ode to Joy in the final movement.

The concerts will be held on Friday, Nov. 22 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 24 at 2 p.m., at Clark Memorial Chapel, Pomfret School, Pomfret; Admission is free and donations are welcomed.

Under the direction of conductor Linda Rondeau Tracy, the orchestra will perform the “Fantasia on Greensleeves” by Vaughan Williams, with a flute duet performed by Joan D’Auria from the Willimantic Orchestra, and Lisa Peeling who also plays cello with NCCO. The audience (and especially “trekkies”) will also enjoy Ms. D’Auria’s flute solo in “The Inner Light” from Star Wars composed by Jay Chattaway.

The opening number is a lovely musical depiction of the seasons of life in “Colors of Home” by Alan Lee Silva. Another relatively short and satisfying selection in the program is “Parade of Stars”, based on “Rigaudon” by Andre Campra.

The concert also features Three Dances from Handel’s “Water Music”, “Danza in G” by Vivaldi and a lyrical arrangement of a Brahms Waltz.

The finale will be the 10-minute seasonal classic, “A Christmas Festival”, by the late Leroy Anderson who made his home in Connecticut for much of his life. This piece, composed by Anderson at the request of Arthur Fiedler for the Boston Pops in 1950, is an arrangement of familiar Christmas carols and songs including Joy to the World, Deck the Halls, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Good King Wenceslas, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, The First Noel, Silent Night, Jingle Bells and O, Come All Ye Faithful.

Since NCCO was founded in 2012, the orchestra has grown and now includes musicians from many towns throughout eastern Connecticut. We perform two concerts per year, one in the winter and one in the spring. In the summer we regroup as an ensemble consisting of about half the musicians and meet once a week to play lighter music.

To donate to NCCO, send your check to NCCO Treasurer Saul Ahola, 88 Butts Road, Woodstock, CT 06281 Questions? Call NCCO President Jane Anderson Vercelli at 860 428-4633 or write janevercelli@gmail.com



Willington Events

Special Presentation by Andrew Noone

Co-Sponsored by the Willington Historical Society and The Willington Public Library

Andrew Noone, noted author, teacher and historian, will be at the Willington Public Library on November 14th at 6:30 pm. He will be presenting his book “Bathsheba Spooner, A Revolutionary Murder Conspiracy”. Bathsheba Spooner was the first woman executed in the Revolutionary time and lived in the Worcester area. This story contains elements of war, lust, romance, adultery, thievery, slapstick criminality and social elites. Please join us for this unusual part of our history. The Library is located at 7 Ruby Road, Willington, phone 860-429-3854. The event is free and light snacks will be served.

Willington Historical Society presents Sarah Sportman

December 4, 2024, 6:30 pm at Willington Public Library

Archaeology at the 17th-Century Hollister Site, Glastonbury, Connecticut

Since 2015, the Office of State Archaeology has been conducting research excavations at the Lt. John Hollister Site, a large, well-preserved 17th-century farm complex on the Connecticut River in Glastonbury. The work was initiated by the late State Archaeologist Brian Jones as a public archaeology project and continues today. Using a combination of remote sensing techniques and archaeological survey and excavation, the buried remains of houses, outbuildings, and numerous other cultural features have been identified. When first established around 1650, the Hollister Site was on the Connecticut frontier, in an area where the wealthy residents of Wethersfield owned large farms that were often managed by tenants. The Hollister site tells the stories of two families: the Gilberts, who were tenant farmers (1651-1663) and the Hollisters, who eventually settled on the property and operated it as a prosperous farm in the latter part of the 17th century (1667-1710). Archaeological materials recovered and analyzed to date help us understand the daily lives of these families who were among Connecticut’s earliest European settlers. The materials shed light on their food, labor, material possessions, and their multifaceted relationships with their Indigenous neighbors. Continuing research at the site will help to clarify the complex social, political, and economic worlds of 17th-century Connecticut.

Join us at the Willington Public Library at 7 Ruby Road, Willington for this engrossing presentation. The event is free and light refreshments will be served.

The Northeast Connecticut Community Orchestra presents an



Celebrate the 200th Anniversary of Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy”

Dance with Handel and Vivaldi and Brahms

Sing along with Leroy Anderson’s “A Christmas Festival”

At Clark Chapel, Pomfret School (on Rt.44)

Friday, November 22, at 7 pm
Sunday, November 24, at 2 pm

Admission Free • Donations Welcome



To all our contributors-
Thank you!

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

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
Drop-in \$5

Programs not limited to Ashford residents.
Contact the Center at 860-487-5122
25 Tremko Lane, Ashford

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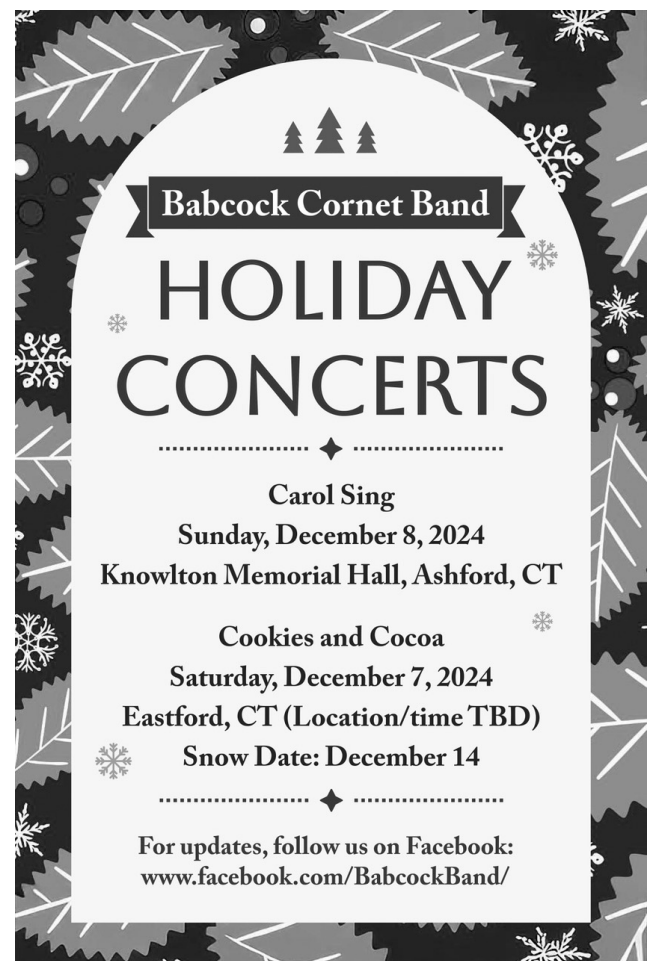
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Vegan Food Snob Mini-Guide to Restaurants in the Quiet Corner

By Mark Mathew Braunstein

Call me a food snob. Most restaurant dishes are overloaded with salt, refined sugar, and motor grade oil, so for nourishing food I grow some myself and prepare most of it at home. Nevertheless, socializing with friends at restaurants does provide a more enjoyable dining experience than sitting home alone eating raw sprouts. So being both indulgently decadent and gratefully affluent, I do eat at restaurants.

And call me a vegan food snob. I prefer to dine only at eateries that placate finicky vegans by identifying their dishes with the word Vegan right on their menus. By vegan, I don't mean industrialized and chemicalized mock meats designed for meat eaters who wish they didn't eat meat and for vegans who wish they did. Hence this a mini-guide is intended for omnivores, vegans, and anyone who prefers to eat real food.

Danielson:

Heirloom Food Company

Griswold:

Mei's Kitchen

Mansfield Center:

Fenton River Grill

Willimantic:

Trigo Wood Fired Pizza

Willimantic Food Co-op

HEIRLOOM FOOD COMPANY

in Danielson

www.EatHeirloomFood.com

Food here is fresh, whole grain, often organic, often local, and mostly (not all) vegan. Quote: "At Heirloom all of our recipes begin vegan. That means, with the exception of two items (tuna and turkey), everything at Heirloom can be ordered vegan. All of our soups, baked goods and prepared foods are always made vegan." For cheese, you can choose either cow cheese or vegan cheese.

Open until 5pm, Heirloom serves breakfast and lunch. The soups are always thick and luscious. The sandwiches are tall and meticulously crafted. To truly appreciate their contents, I eat with a fork and drill down layer by layer. The salads are wholesome and large, with many add-ons to make them even larger. My two favorite add-ons are the thinly sliced Tempeh and the Mock Chick Salad.

The person who takes your order often also prepares it, so waitstaff are fully knowledgeable about all the ingredients. Three idyllic eating areas complement the food. (Even the parking lot is idyllic.) Its interior hosts many booth-like nooks that provide an intimate dining experience. The patio and the shaded deck overlooking Main Street both offer outdoor dining. Exotic plants sometimes from nearby Logee's Greenhouse (worth your visit!) decorate both indoors and outdoors. During summer, the outdoor plants are especially bountiful. As are the plant-based foods.

One mile off I-395, this café is especially worth visiting around Halloween when a few blocks south of it Davis Park is occupied by an army of homemade scarecrows.

MEI'S KITCHEN in Griswold

www.MeisKitch3n.com

First, an advisory. Asian-American restaurants are no more a safe haven for vegans than any other ethnic eatery. Often you will find fish and other sea animals listed as menu items in their "vegetarian" sections. Unlisted ingredients in sauces can include furtive fish, clandestine clam, or covert oyster. For instance, fish swim in the sauces of all Thai-American restaurants. Both a cultural divide and a language barrier separate American vegans from Asian-American waitstaff.

Mei's, however, is different. Mei's passes both my sniff and taste tests. Its extensive "vegetarian" menu not only is truly all vegetarian, but also all vegan. (Its menu heralds the 21st century, but its vocabulary is still stuck in the 20th.) While the veg menu largely consists of mock meats made from either soy protein or wheat gluten, there's also a plentiful array of wholesome vegetables, with or without tofu.

Chinese-American eateries typically serve sugary-sweet red sauces or clam- or oyster-based brown sauc-

es. My tender palate prefers the brown sauces, of course here minus the clam and oyster. Among those, I recommend the Mixed Vegetables (with or without Tofu) and the Triple Green. Note that Triple Green appears in the printed menu's Veg section, but among the online menu's Healthy Specials, which include many vegan dishes, too.

For one-dollar more, Mei's offers brown rice, not white. The nutritional difference between brown and white is slight. But both for the restaurant that serves it and for the diner who orders it, choosing brown rice is a social statement advocating nutrition over convention. While brown rice is simple to prepare, it is easy to ruin. Mei's brown rice is perfect, and always packed to the brim. All entrées, too, are packed to the brim, enough for two portions.

Mei's hosts a spacious dining area, but you serve yourself, so you might as well do takeout. When you're driving northbound on I-395, Mei's is a quick stop off of Exit 22. Driving southbound requires a few extra turns. Incidentally, Mei (pronounced "May") is a sweetheart.



FENTON RIVER GRILL in Mansfield Center

www.FentonRiverGrill.com

The printed menu and online PDF (not the web-pages) clearly mark with a V the Vegetarian (not necessarily Vegan) dishes. The Brussels Sprouts, for instance, lack a V for a good reason. They are made with fish sauce, standard for Thai but not American restaurants. When checking the online menus, be sure to view the extensive daily specials, lunch specials and dinner specials listed separately.

Its outstanding Vegan dish is Curry Vegan Shepherd's Pie. It is unique, even among vegan shepherd pies. *Connecticut Magazine* recognized its exceptional qualities, so highlighted it and even included its recipe in its July 2021 issue:

www.CtInsider.com/connecticutmagazine/food-drink/article/RECIPE-This-vegan-shepherd-s-pie-is-a-17046214.php

The spacious and picturesque interior is matched by its spacious and airy outdoor patio. There must be something in the water that is outdoorsy because Mansfield is also home to the Mansfield Drive-In, one of only two remaining drive-in movie theatres in Connecticut.

TRIGO WOOD FIRED PIZZA in Willimantic

www.TrigoKitchen.com

It's been said that an alcoholic can find booze even in a desert. Can a vegan find a full meal even in Willimantic? With the closure in 2023 of the all-vegetarian café, Not Only Juice (NOJ), Willimantic has lacked a full-time eatery catering to vegans. Offering the option of pizza with house-made vegan cheese, Trigo may yet become a vegan haven.

For vegans and omnivores alike, Trigo is a fun and friendly place to eat. Its attentive and informative waitstaff are super friendly, in fact even other customers are super friendly. Beyond pizza, its food menu is brief, but

it also offers a unique and delicately flavored house-made hummus. The crudités that accompany it, too, are unique, including white daikon radish. For me, the hummus was the main attraction. But for most people the pizza with cow cheese will be the main event. Its house-made vegan cheese is a treat. While I typically shun white flour, on the plus side its white flour crust is crisp and thin, so the white flour is minimal.

The postmodernist interior décor is inviting. The sturdy wooden tables are noteworthy, but the teeny tiny plastic schoolroom chairs are suitable only for leprechauns. Trigo is new, so the furnishings may still be only transitional. Maybe someday the uncomfortable chairs will be returned to that dumpster behind the local junior high school from which they may have been rummaged.

"Trigo" is Spanish for Wheat. (Wheat's binomial Latin genus name is *Triticum*.) Ironically, Trigo offers a wheat-free pizza crust, for a surcharge. Surcharge or not, I dream of the day when it will offer its vegan cheese pizza with whole wheat crust.

My food fantasies are best summarized in two mantras. Delicious *and* Nutritious.

WILLIMANTIC FOOD CO-OP in, you guessed it, Willimantic
www.WillimanticFood.coop

Willimantic Foods Coop is a blessing. The glorious and colorful produce section that greets you when you first enter is enhanced by the warmth and community of the staff and the other shoppers. The Co-op offers the best quality and widest variety of local and organic produce in all of Connecticut, and every day, not just on delivery days. In addition, it's open every day until 8pm.

Not quite an eatery, Willi Co-op does provide casual seating where you can imbibe in prepared foods from the fridge unit next to the coffee bar next to the seating area. Those prepared foods include my favorite of all store-bought hummus, Yalla Vermont hummus delivered from a vegetarian café in Brattleboro (not to be confused with Yalla hummus from Fairfield, CT), and desserts and entrées delivered from Shayna B's, an all-vegan and gluten-free café in Westbrook, CT. The Co-op has long-term plans to open an inhouse kitchen to offer its own takeout items, at which time it indeed will qualify as an eatery.

For 30 years, all food except for the dog and cat food sold in the Co-op was vegetarian. In 2005, membership voted on whether to allow the coop to sell meat, but meat was defeated. Then in 2010, while promoting the myth of "humane meat" (more accurately, "less inhumane meat") and by way of a pre-order buying club, meat was voted into office. The meat locker initially was sequestered in the back of the store, where few could be reminded of the Co-op's fall from innocence. But by 2014, meat began being sold openly in a freezer for all to view.

Nowadays its proportion of meat items remains smaller than at other food stores, so vegan coop members have learned to accept the reality of meat at the Co-op the same as more widely in our larger society. Same as I can hold dear my friends who eat meat, I still hold dear the Willi Co-op.

If by chance you have never been to Willimantic, you now have two reasons for visiting. The other reason is to view the Frog Bridge, the subject of the cover story of the June 2024 issue of *Neighbors*.

Mark Mathew Braunstein, a vegan since 1970, is the author of *Microgreen Garden*, *Sprout Garden*, and the first book to espouse veganism, *Radical Vegetarianism*. First published in 1981, *Rad Veg* was revised and republished in 2010 by Lantern Books. For a free PDF of the revised *Rad Veg*, contact the author at www.MarkBraunstein.Org

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Locally Written
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The Last American Vampire

Edwin Brown was wasting away for the better part of two years,
Thin and weak he struggled to breathe consumption was what was feared.

He sought a cure in the Colorado air and the healing mineral waters
But the trip only offered homesickness, no wondrous healing powers.

It had taken the lives of his sisters and mother
Now it seemed the Brown family would soon lose another.

The wave of this sickness left the doctor to wonder
The cause the townspeople thought, was—6 feet under.

In a desperate attempt to save Brown's life, they were soon on a mission,
They turned to supernatural and widespread superstition.

The deceased were undead, caught between heaven and hell—
Sucking the life out of Edwin, they would break the cursed spell.

They exhumed the bodies of Mary and Mother Brown
They opened the caskets but only bones were found

They went to the crypt to check Mercy's coffin
She could not be buried until the earth softened.

They stood by and watched as the coffin lid lifted
They all gasped in terror, Mercy Brown's body had shifted.

Her face was flush, blood in her veins, liver and heart
A sign she was undead, they were right from the start.

They cut out her heart and lungs to be burned
To guarantee that the undead Mercy Brown not return.

They gathered firewood and kindled a bonfire
Cremating her heart and her lungs on the pyre.

They gathered the ashes and concocted a brew
Edwin consumed it but died on May 2, 1892.

Mercy's heartless body was buried in Chestnut Hill Cemetery
Where under a weathered tombstone she now rests.

A Found poem arranged by Claudia Lebel
Inspired by: UPDATED:SEP 25, 2018ORIGINAL:OCT 31, 2014
The Last American Vampire
The grisly vampire hysteria that gripped a New England town in 1892
sounds like a Halloween legend, but it is a true tale of the macabre.
CHRISTOPHER KLEIN <https://www.history.com/news/the-last-american-vampire>

Elizabeth Shaw 1726-1745

By Claudia Lebel

Come, take a walk with me
Down Windham's Plains Road,
Over to Gallows Hill
Where the winding river flows.

It's often very foggy
Along the tree-shrouded vale,
And sometimes there appears
More than mist upon the trail.

It was there in December of 1745
Betsy Shaw was hanged
Till she was no longer alive.

A poor simple-minded girl,
She was only nineteen
Considered just a burden,
Another mouth to feed.

Unmarried and with child,
Facing daily taunts and scorn,
She waited out the months,
Until the baby boy was born.

She gave birth in the woods,
Then hid him under a ledge.
Betsy murdered her baby
Her father would allege.

She was arrested, jailed, found guilty,
By 16 angry men.
They drove her to the gallows
Sitting on her own coffin.

An immense crowd of spectators
Gathered at the site.
"Oh Jesus, have mercy upon my soul!"
She prayed with all her might.

Betsy walks along Plains Road
On cold days in November.
Perhaps her restless spirit wants
The townspeople to remember.

Windham Tech Class of 1975 Reunion

We are looking for graduates of the
Windham Tech Class of 1975 who would
like to celebrate our 50th year Class
Reunion!

If interested, please email Kevin Massey
at kevin.massey@cox.net
for more information.

We are currently planning for a fall 2025
event (September/October) and would
love all of our former classmates
and teachers along with their spouses/
significant others to join us for the evening.

For those who are on Facebook check
out our group page titled "Windham
Tech Alumni Class of 1975."

Join us for Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Day Service

10 am - 11 am
Christian Science Church
870 Main Street
Willimantic

All are welcome!

Service includes:

Hymns • Prayer • Lesson-Sermon
Expressions of Gratitude
No Collection Taken

Letters and Emails

Many men show their affection by actions, not by flowers or cards. My parents were married fifty years and ended only by death. My Dad showed his affection by making sure Mother and their offspring had a solid house. Home bills paid. Heat and good food. Family rides and activities. Family get-togethers with relatives and friends. Today there is little to no family get-togethers. Today we live at such a rapid life pace. The computer and cell phone are part to blame. A solid marriage and family last forever.

James P. Balkus, Windham Center



HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR
Saturday November 2nd
10 AM to 3 PM
Columbia Congregational Church
325 Route 87
Crafts Bake Sale Corn Chowder
Take-a-Chance Baskets





Holiday Artist Market
Holiday Artist Market - November 16th and 17th
The very popular Ashford Area Arts Council's "Holiday Artist Market" event is in its 8th year. The Knowlton Hall will feature a room full of local artisans both days. You'll be able to start your holiday shopping and get to see what our talented community of artists and craftsmen has been creating over the past year. So much variety and all of it inspired, well-made, beautiful, and unique. There's something for everyone! Let's shop local and support our arts community.
Also available for purchase at the entrance to the event will be an anthology of poetry and short stories written by a local writers' group, Font 'n Pen.

Tai Chi Home

Clear-Eyed

By Joe Pandolfo

At the peak of autumn the glow in the trees has a way of spreading as the days get shorter. Leaves have revealed their true colors, the minerals in them bare in the warm sun.

With sundown coming you can see the essence in things, sense that it's time to mind the most important things. With the change of a season, traditions say, it's time to look back clear-eyed at the path you've walked, take a lesson there, choose your next step like aiming an arrow.

Time does its turning. That warm glow of autumn leaves and late afternoon will cool and sink into a twilight sky. One by one the stars will press through, whispering that winter is coming.



Contra Dance

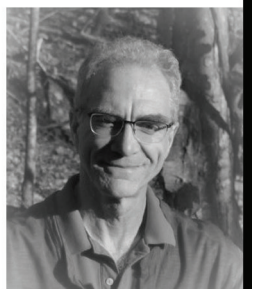
First Friday of each month
Patriots Park Lodge, 172 Lake Street, Coventry, CT
7:30 - 10:30 p.m. Introductory session at 7:15
Partner not required, all dances taught
Live Band & Caller See: HCDance.org
Questions: Dennis at knowdj@frontier.net

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.

JOE PANDOLFO
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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).

Opinion: The real cause of high electricity bills in CT RATES

Hartford Courant. "Rarely do angry people in large numbers make good decisions. Good decisions are even more rare when that anger is harnessed by demagogues to divert attention from the problem and substitute a convenient scapegoat. But that's what's currently happening with Connecticut electric bills. Utility customers who saw significant increases in their bills this July are understandably upset. However, legislators and utility executives who are misleading the public about the cause of that increase to further a political agenda should be ashamed of themselves. While Eversource's rates rose about four percent from June, they are lower today than they were 14 months ago."

Healey, Lamont eyeing possible nuclear/wind deal

CommonWealth Beacon. "Govs. Maura Healey of Massachusetts and Ned Lamont of Connecticut are considering a major energy deal, with Healey signaling that she might agree to purchase power from the Millstone nuclear power plant in Connecticut if in return Connecticut buys a chunk of the output of the proposed Vineyard Wind 2 wind farm off the coast of Martha's Vineyard...What set the discussions in motion was a lengthy offshore wind procurement conducted jointly by Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island that ended last week with only Massachusetts and Rhode Island making procurements. Connecticut took a pass, leaving the fate of Vineyard Wind 2 unclear – Massachusetts agreed to purchase 800 megawatts of the Vineyard Wind 2 project but the remaining 400 megawatts were unclaimed. Why Connecticut didn't purchase the remaining 400 megawatts was unclear, but it appears likely the price of the power was too high for Lamont and Democrats in the Connecticut legislature at a time when electricity ratepayers in Connecticut have seen their bills skyrocket, largely because of charges associated with Millstone." Plus: Will offshore wind really drive electric bills down?

Opinion: CT leaders must address gas system 'death spiral'

CT Mirror. "Connecticut suffers from some of the highest electricity rates in the country, and these challenges need to be addressed urgently. But the conversation in the state about how to combat the growing cost of energy for households and businesses has so far been incomplete, focusing on only one half of the equation. Left entirely undiscussed: the gas utility sector and looming crisis of affordable heat...households and businesses are moving away from the direct use of gas, either for cost, comfort, climate, health, or safety reasons. The state's natural gas utilities risk diminishing customer enrollment and demand per customer, spread over the same – or growing – infrastructure costs. This lethal confluence of trends is bound to send gas bills skyrocketing. Called the "gas utility death spiral," this process will hit vulnerable communities (e.g. renters, low-income residents, fixed-income seniors) the hardest... If legislators and the governor are serious about lowering energy costs for residents and businesses, they have to contain spending on the gas pipeline system just as directly as they confront them on the electric side of the ledger."

How 'virtual power plants' help reduce peak power demand in New England

Connecticut Public. "On the hottest afternoons this summer, when residents across New England cranked their air conditioners, something noteworthy happened. Thousands of internet-connected thermostats, home solar panels and battery systems were called into action to help reduce the strain on the electric grid. Welcome to the age of "virtual power plants," or VPPs...Together, [in some instances] these assets shaved peak energy demand by 375 megawatts, which is roughly equivalent to adding a medium-sized natural gas power plant to the grid... 'We're only just at the beginning of this...a lot more of these resources that can be deployed, [and] there's a lot of potential here for even deeper reductions in peak demand as more customers adopt these technologies.' "

The Northeast's first self-driving car test track and research facility planned for UConn

CT Insider. "...the Depot Campus [in Mansfield] could see a renaissance as the new home to a planned test driving track for autonomous vehicles and research facility for high-tech transportation planning. It would be the first of its kind not only in Connecticut, but in the entire Northeast. UConn is working with a company to build a multi-million dollar "smart city" and research lab, which would allow companies and researchers to collaborate on emerging vehicle technologies and concepts."

Advocates hope utility's winter heat pump rate discount becomes model for Massachusetts utilities

Energy News Network. "Unitil will begin offering a lower wintertime electricity rate next year to customers with heat pumps, which is expected to make the high-efficiency, low-emission furnace alternatives more affordable. Residents with heat pumps in four Massachusetts towns will soon pay hundreds of dollars less for their electricity over the winter...State regulators in June approved a plan by utility Unitil to lower the distribution portion of the electric rate from November to April for customers who use heat pumps, the first time this pricing structure will be used in the state...In New England, electric load on the grid is generally much lower in the winter, when people turn off their air conditioners and switch over to gas or oil heating. That means that the grid, built to accommodate summer's peak demand, has plenty of capacity for the added load of new heat pumps coming online — no new infrastructure needs to be built to handle this demand (for now, at least)."

Fairfield Embraces Bulk Energy Purchases, Pushes Legislature for Change in Law

CT Examiner. "...on Monday night the town of Fairfield debated tackling another factor driving the high consumer cost of electricity — the cost of generation. The Representative Town Meeting unanimously approved a motion on Monday night to press state legislators to allow towns to adopt a community power model, also known as community energy aggregation, in which they could act as energy purchasers for residential and commercial customers...such a model could lower costs through bulk electricity purchases while meeting renewable energy goals...But first, a change in state law would be needed to allow purchases for the entire town...Some 10 states have adopted this model. Among them are Massachusetts, which pioneered the approach in 1997, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, which was the most recent to launch it in 2023.

Opponents of proposed Brookfield gas compressor expansion bolstered by new study on health risks

NewsTimes. "Bolstered by new research outlining the potential dangers of the project, town and state officials are engaged in an all out effort to pull the plug on plans to expand a natural gas compressor station located near many homes and just 1,900 feet from Whisconier Middle School. The expansion would result in increased emissions of and exposure of local residents to toxins, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides...The study says the facility "should be over a mile away from residents...But in the Brookfield facility, there's hundreds of residents that live within a half a mile of the facility...Brookfield needs Gov. Ned Lamont and state Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Katie Dykes to take a stand against the expansion, he said. "They're ultimately the decision-makers in the final permit needed for this project and they should reject the permit..."

Dan Haar: Connecticut electric rates rise again Sept. 1, but your fall bills will go way down

New Haven Register. "In September: Even with the higher rates, an average Eversource customer can expect to pay \$236. That's because in most Septembers, electric use declines. Your average October bill, even with the latest increase, would total just \$169 at Eversource. Yes, that's still higher than the bills for each of those months in 2023, by a few dollars. Rates for generation are down at Eversource and rates for public benefits are up...Bottom line for now: Your likely payments will decline in the fall. If you're saying, "Wait a minute, that's only because I'm using less juice," I ask you: Did you scream and fret in July when your bill shot up, mostly because you used so much more? Admit it, you did. Therefore it's worth calming down a bit when you see lower bills as the leaves start to drop."



Klezmer Music in Willimantic

Submitted by Sheila Amdur

On Sunday, November 11 at 3 pm., TEMPLE BNAI ISRAEL, 383 Jackson St., Willimantic, is hosting the Klezmenschen, an Eastern Connecticut musical group who perform a joyful music that also reflects a vanished world in songs that bring you to laughter through tears. The musical program will commemorate Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass) which occurred on November 9-10, 1938, when thousands of Jewish homes and shops were vandalized and destroyed, and thousands were sent to concentration camps. It is regarded symbolically as the dark beginning of the Holocaust.

What is Klezmer music? Remember the wedding dances in Fiddler on the Roof? The clarinet solos of Benny Goodman, the trumpet of Ziggy Elman? Or today's young musicians who mix Afro-pop and hip-hop with Eastern European melodies in the ultimate fusion? All these and more are Klezmer.

The Klezmenschen of Eastern Connecticut, led by Roz Etra on accordion and keyboard, have been playing together for over 15 years, with a varying line-up of musicians. Klezmenschen's regulars include Dr. Mickey Weiss on clarinet; Mickey is the founder of Project Oceanology at Avery Point. Some of the other musicians include Pawtucket's Barry Greenhalgh on fiddle, Atty. Martin Rutchik of Mystic on drums, Greg Kupfer on trumpet, and Norwich residents John Listorti, on bass clarinet and other reeds, and Dr. Faye Ringel on keyboard and vocals. Sometimes they are joined by world-famous tuba player Gary Buttery, Coast Guard Band, retired. Klezmenschen perform "Jewish jazz" arrangements of traditional Klezmer melodies, songs from the Yiddish Theater, and Israeli dance tunes and folksongs. Sponsored by the Hochberg Holocaust and Human Rights Committee, the public is invited to join us in remembering our past with music by Klezmenschen. Come and partake of the joy and gladness to all who listen to their music.

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Solar Today - Honoring Earth Day Every Day

Greetings all,

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



This article will highlight how Solar Net Metering benefits your grid tied solar system.

But first some friendly information on the importance of leaving your leaves. The small creatures that roam your land will appreciate you greatly!

From The National Wildlife Federation:

Traditionally, leaf removal has entailed three steps: Rake leaves (or blast them with a blower) into piles, transfer the piles to bags and place the bags out to be hauled off to a landfill. Yet, increasingly, conservationists say these actions not only harm the environment but rob your garden and land of nutrients while destroying wildlife habitat. The alternative? "Let fallen leaves stay on your property," says National Wildlife Federation Naturalist David Mizejewski.

Leaves in Landfills "JB – I know that only a small portion of us in the area take our leaves to landfills/transfer stations"

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, leaves and other yard debris account for more than 13 percent of the nation's solid waste—a whopping 33 million tons a year. Without enough oxygen to decompose, this organic matter releases the greenhouse gas methane, says Joe Lamp'l, author of *The Green Gardener's Guide*. In fact, solid-waste landfills are the largest U.S. source of man-made methane—and that's aside from the carbon dioxide generated by gas-powered blowers and trucks used in leaf disposal.

For gardeners, turning leaves into solid waste is wasteful. "Fallen leaves offer a double benefit," Mizejewski says. "Leaves form a natural mulch that helps suppress weeds and fertilizes the soil as it breaks down. Why spend money on mulch and fertilizer when you can make your own?"

Removing leaves also eliminates vital wildlife habitat. Critters ranging from turtles and toads to birds, mammals and invertebrates rely on leaf litter for food, shelter and nesting material. Many moth and butterfly caterpillars overwinter in fallen leaves before emerging in spring.

Need one more reason to leave the leaves? "The less time you spend raking leaves," Mizejewski says, "the more time you'll have to enjoy the gorgeous fall weather and the wildlife that visits your garden."

Every Little Bit Helps: What should you do with all those fallen leaves you're not sending to the landfill? Here are some tips:

- Let leaves stay where they fall. They won't hurt your lawn if you chop them with a mulching mower.
- Rake leaves off the lawn to use as mulch in garden beds. For finer-textured mulch, shred them first.
- Let leaf piles decompose; the resulting leaf mold can be used as a soil amendment to improve structure and water retention.
- Make compost: Combine fallen leaves ("brown material") with grass clippings and other "green

material" and keep moist and well mixed. You'll have nutrient-rich compost to add to your garden next spring.

-Still too many leaves? Share them with neighbors, friends, schools and others. Some communities will pick up leaves and make compost to sell or give away.

-Build a brush shelter. Along with branches, sticks and stems, leaves can be used to make brush piles that shelter native wildlife.

I hope you join me in leaving the leaves!

How you benefit from a grid-tied, net metered solar system.

When you go solar, the last couple of steps before your system software can be activated is to have a final town inspection and the electrical meter changed out to a Net Meter. After the Inspection is approved, here in CT, it's up to your local inspector to submit the final paperwork to Eversource. Once they're notified, you are put in que for a technician to come to your home and replace your current electric meter with a Solar Net Meter. This meter tracks excess solar production as Net Metered Credits. This will also change how your monthly bills look.

Here's how it works:

When solar is installed at your home (or business), the electricity generated by the system is used to power your home in real-time. There are many times of the day, especially from late spring to early fall that solar systems produce quite a bit more energy than a home is using at that particular time of solar production. When excess energy is being produced, the net meter runs backwards and monetary credits are accumulated on your electric bill. When you need that energy back at night and during the winter months, you get to use those monetary credits to pay for the electricity your home is using. If you run out of stored credits, you would then purchase the energy from the utility company or a pre-arranged (by you) third party supplier. When you use your stored credits, there are NO delivery charges. If you buy supply side energy from the grid, all of the "normal" delivery charges and multipliers will apply, just as it was before the net meter was installed. If your roof space allows, a solar system that is designed to offset 100% of your current usage and is sized so your system overproduces through late spring to early fall. In this scenario, the only charge you should get from the Utility, is the monthly set service fees.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to learn more about capturing the sun's 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

Pomfret

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

Bolton

Bolton Post Office
Subway-Bolton Notch

Putnam

Subway
Putnam Post Office

Brooklyn

Brooklyn Post Office
Baker's Dozen Coffee Shop
Salem Village

Scotland

Scotland Post Office

South Windham

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

Chaplin

Chaplin Post Office
Blondies Restaurant

Stafford

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

Columbia

Columbia Post Office

Coventry

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

Tolland

Birch Mountain Pottery
Subway
Tolland Post Office
Parker Place

Eastford

Eastford Post Office

Willington

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

Hampton

Hampton Post Office
Organic Roots Farm
Hampton General Store

Windham/Willimantic

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

Lebanon

Lebanon Post Office
Market on the Green

Mansfield/Storrs

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

Windham Center

Windham Post Office

Mansfield Center

East Brook Mall

Mansfield Depot

Thompson's Store

North Windham

Bagel One
Subway
No. Windham Post Office

Support our local farmers.
You and your family will eat better.
Our community will be healthier.
Look for locally sourced produce when you dine.
Shop at the Willimantic Food Co-op, Bob's IGA and other local markets.
Frequent our farmers markets.
Winter markets will be open soon.
To find a farmers market close to you visit the CT Department of Agriculture website for a link to markets.

**Share Curiosity.
Read Together.**

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Wildflower Honey
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860-786-8670

"All you need is love."
-John Lennon

By Tom Woron

The number 1565. What is the meaning of it? Is it a year gone by? Yeah, 1565 was a year long before our time but it wasn't especially noteworthy. 1565 is the number of a mystery, a mystery supposedly solved but maybe not so. Perhaps additional information will jolt some readers into suddenly knowing the significance of the number 1565. Here it is: Little Miss 1565.

Now does that sound familiar? For most of you the mystery began well before your time but perhaps you read about it or heard of it from older persons.

Thursday July 6, 1944 was a hot, humid day in Hartford, Connecticut. World War II was still raging a month after D-Day. The local news was that the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus was coming to town and was scheduled to perform two shows on July 5th, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. However the trains carrying the circus ran late so when it arrived in Hartford in the late afternoon of July 5th, the evening circus was performed but the scheduled afternoon performance was cancelled.

A superstition in the circus world has it that a missed performance meant extremely bad luck to come!

The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus was performed inside a huge tent referred to as the big top that was set up in a field on Barbour Street in Hartford's north end. The tent measured 450 feet long by 200 feet wide with 15 foot high walls at the sides and the roof being 48 feet high at its highest point. The big top could seat 9,000 spectators around the three circus rings.

People came from all around in the miserably hot, humid weather to attend the July 6th show which was scheduled to begin at 2:15 in the afternoon. The performance began on time and was attended by mostly women and children. The number in attendance was believed to be around 7,000.

The big top had been coated with a paraffin wax that was mixed with gasoline to make it waterproof. This indeed made the tent canvas waterproof, however it also made it very.... You guessed it!

After a circus performance involving lions, tigers and other big cats, the Flying Wallendas, a daredevil group famous for tightrope walking began their performance. That was when a small fire was first noticed in the southwest end of the tent. However it didn't take long for the fire to spread due to the tent's gasoline soaked paraffin coating.

Upon becoming aware of the fire, the circus band leader instructed the band to play a song that was meant as a signal to the circus employees that there was trouble. Once realizing the emergency, the circus ringmaster began to speak to the crowd in an attempt to get everyone to leave in an orderly manner. He could not be heard. The fire shorted out the power to his microphone. As more of the big top became engulfed in flames, panic ensued.

There was a large main entrance/exit to the tent and eight other smaller exits. When the fire was in its early stages some circus staff attempted to douse it with buckets of water to no avail. The fire spread rapidly and soon the whole tent was in flames. Many spectators remained in their seats believing that the fire would quickly be extinguished and did not attempt to leave until it was too late. Hysteria soon reigned. Unfortunately some of the alternate exits were blocked by circus wagons and at least two exits were blocked by steel animal chutes that were being used to bring the circus's big cats in and out of the tent. People desperate to get out could not get over the chutes. In the panic many people ran around hysterically inside the burning tent looking for their loved ones while others were trampled in the bedlam. Some who made it outside safely actually went back inside as the tent burned to search for family members. Although most of the spectators made it out of the burning tent, many were trapped and caught up in the confusion and chaos inside. The flaming tent collapsed on those still inside. While the exact number is not known it is believed that around 168 persons perished in what was to become known as the Hartford Circus Fire. In Hartford and in circus history July 6, 1944 is known as "the day the clowns cried."

The Hartford Armory was set up as a makeshift morgue with the bodies, in many cases just charred remains, of the victims of the fire set on cots displayed for family members and relatives to identify and claim them. Many sets of remains could only be identified by a piece of jewelry, a shred of clothing or footwear that was worn by the victim. It was a very somber scene in the Armory with the eerie silence occasionally pierced by cries of anguish from someone who just identified their loved one's remains.



Among the sets of remains laid out at the Armory was the body of a little blond girl that looked to be about six years old. The body of the girl was in really good condition compared to many other sets of remains. It was initially thought that she should be easily recognized and claimed by her family or relatives. A number assigned to her body at the Armory was 1565. Strangely enough, even though the girl's body was in good shape and should have been easily recognizable, many people viewed the body but moved on. No one ever claimed the girl as family even after photos of her body were published nationwide. Her identity remained unknown for a long time perhaps even still unknown to this day.

Known only as Little Miss 1565, the unidentified little girl was buried in nearby Northwood Cemetery where other victims of the Circus Fire were also buried.

Two police officers, Sgt. Thomas Barber and Sgt. Edward Lowe who investigated the case of Little Miss 1565 spent the rest of their lives trying to identify her. They even decorated the grave of the unidentified girl with flowers each year until their deaths.

In 1987 someone left a note on Little Miss 1565's gravestone that stated that her name was Sarah Graham and that her date of birth was July 6, 1938. Notes on nearby gravestones said that Sarah's twin brother and other relatives were buried there. A few years earlier the widow of Sgt. Lowe announced that her husband had indeed identified the unknown child and contacted the family, however they requested no publicity.

The mystery of Little Miss 1565 appeared to be solved in 1991 when an arson investigator, Rick Davey, established that the body of Little Miss 1565 was that of 8 year old Eleanor Emily Cook from Massachusetts. This was in spite of the fact that Eleanor's aunt and uncle viewed the body of #1565 in 1944 but did not identify or claim it. Eleanor's older brother, Donald Cook had contacted authorities in 1955 insisting that Little Miss 1565 was his sister but nobody followed up and looked into that possibility. Donald later worked with Rick Davey in his investigation of the case and they concluded that Little Miss 1565 was indeed Eleanor. With this conclusion the body of Little Miss 1565 was exhumed and re-buried in Southamton, MA next to the grave of Edward Cook, Eleanor's younger brother who also perished in the Hartford Circus Fire. Case closed? Maybe not!

Eleanor Cook's mother, Mrs. Mildred Corintha Parsons Cook was seriously injured in the fire. When shown a photograph of Little Miss 1565, Mrs. Cook, without hesitation stated that the girl in the photo was not her daughter, a belief she held until her death in 1997. Mrs. Cook believed that one of two bodies of children that were burned beyond recognition was that of Eleanor. She was too traumatized by the event to pursue the matter later on. The photo of Little Miss 1565 was published in newspapers all over at the time but no one in the Cook family recognized her.

Author Stewart O'Nan, who published a book about the Hartford Circus Fire, clearly states that Little Miss 1565 is not Eleanor Cook. To back up his assertion, O'Nan first points out that Little Miss 1565 was blonde while Eleanor Cook was brunette. He also argues that the shapes of the faces of the two girls as well as their heights and weights were very different. To further his argument that Little Miss 1565 is not Eleanor Cook, O'Nan points out that dental records for Eleanor did not match Little Miss 1565. O'Nan and some investigators think that what might have happened was that another family erroneously identified and claimed Eleanor's body as their own child so Eleanor is possibly buried somewhere under a different child's name.

There were other victims who died in the circus fire that were never identified. Stewart O'Nan believes that Eleanor Cook could actually be buried in the grave of victim number 1503. Since the 1991 conclusion that Little Miss 1565 is Eleanor Cook, some members of the Cook family have questioned whether or not the girl buried in Southamton, MA next to Edward Cook is actually Eleanor. Along with Stewart O'Nan, other investigators into the case also believe that Eleanor Cook's body was never identified and certainly is not that of Little Miss 1565.

We recently had the 80th anniversary of the Hartford Circus Fire. Whatever happened, the mystery of Little Miss 1565 continues.



23rd Annual

Hampton Tracker Organ Concert

Hampton Congregational Church, 263 Main St., Hampton has announced that Aaron Patterson will be this year's artist to play the church's 1836 Dennison-Smith Tracker Organ. A native of Philadelphia, Aaron was a student of renowned concert organist Paul Jacobs and received his master's degree at the Julliard School of Music in NYC where he was a proud recipient of a Kovner Fellowship. Mr. Patterson won first place both at the 2017 Albert Schweitzer Organ Competition and the 2016 West Chester University International Organ Competition. He has been a recipient of the Pogorzelski-Yankee Memorial Scholarship from the American Guild of Organists and the Bart Pitman Memorial Music Scholarship from the Delaware Valley Music Club. His performance venues include the Wannamaker Grand Court, where he is an assistant organist; Boardwalk Hall at Atlantic City and Philadelphia's noted performance hall... the Kimmel Center. He is director of music at Cresheim Valley Church in Philadelphia.

The concert will be held at the church on Sunday, October 20th at 4 p.m. Refreshments will follow in the church hall. There will be a free will offering.

WAIM Walk for Warmth!

Submitted by **Kristin Fortier**

Winter is coming, rental and energy prices are skyrocketing. Many in our community will continue to struggle to stay housed and manage their heating costs. This year is the 32nd Annual WAIM Walk for Warmth, in which we are fundraising to meet the basic needs of our neighbors while keeping them safely housed and warm this winter! You can help make a difference as we come together as a community to reach our goal of \$50,000! These funds will help ensure that our neighbors are not left out in the cold when facing emergency financial insecurity.

Please join us for the Walk for Warmth at:

The First Congregational Church

199 Valley Street, Willimantic, CT
Sunday, November 24th, 2024; 12pm-4pm

Registration 12:30pm

Interfaith Thanksgiving service at 1:30 pm

Walk for Warmth starts at 2:15 pm

Refreshments to follow!

To register online at <https://www.runreg.com/waim-walk-for-warmth>

For more information you can also go to <https://waimct.org/walk-for-warmth/>

You are invited to join walkers as we gather at the First Congregational Church on the 24th or walk at your own time and place as a 'virtual' walker.

[While there, you can register as an individual, join a team that has already registered, or create your own team. You can also register in-person the day of at 12:30 pm!]

If you wish not to walk, but to make a donation; checks should be addressed to "WAIM WFW" and mailed to WAIM, PO Box 221, Willimantic, CT 06226.

If you would like to volunteer or sign up to bring refreshments, please contact:

Kristin Fortier

volunteeradmin@waimct.org

860-456-7270 x105

An Alphabet of Gratitude

By Carol Wheelock Hall

Another day to enjoy life	Nature's plants and animals
Brains to survive and create	Open smiles and laughter
Children, grands, and great-grands	Pondering and knowing
Dogs and cats as pets	Questions solved
Evening's and morning's quietness	Reasonable prices
Freedom from want	Summer-like weather
Good people. Good deeds	Truthfulness
Home sweet home	Uplifting thoughts
Incidents of learning	Vacations
Jobs that paid the bills	Wellness and warmth
Kindnesses shown	Xs and Os on messages
Love and marriage	Yards and homes maintained
Moms and dads who care	Zest in life

May all your needs be met.

Wishing Everyone Happy Holidays



Jean de Smet and two unnamed volunteers at the garden.

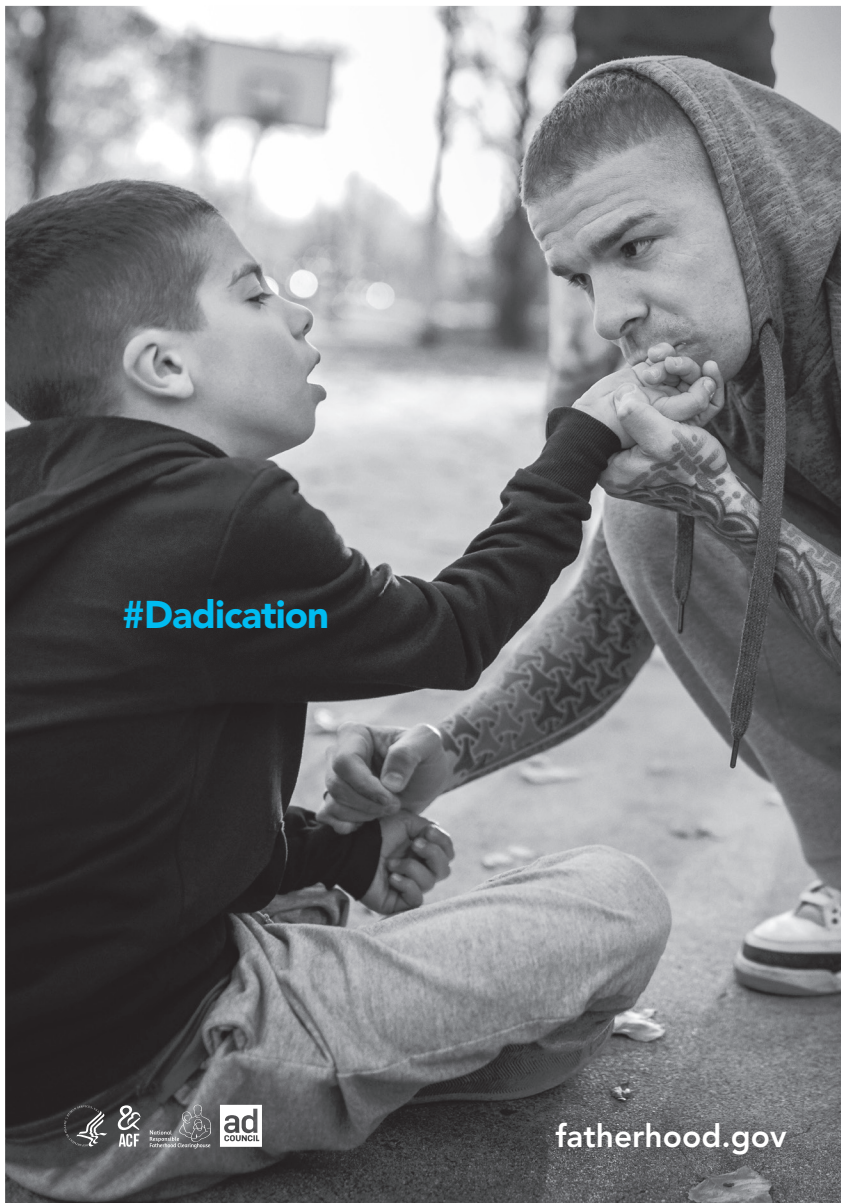
Contributed photo.

Friends and Lovers

By Bruce Spaman

I wander out to gaze upon a full moon
 A moon so bright I see my own shadow
 And my breath on this cold night
 I wonder who might be sharing this moon with me
 My mind wanders to friends and lovers
 So few are both
 A beautiful woman with long dark hair quietly enters my mind
 Soft and sweet, and soon disappears
 Full moons fade away and return again like dreams
 Tugging at my heartstrings
 Winter is now replacing spring
 There will always be full moons and memories.

Read the Neighbors paper on your desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Go to neighborspaper.com for link to current and past editions. All in beautiful COLOR!



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Jillson House Museum Refurbishes Garden

Submitted by Diane Nadeau

With the generous support of the Last Green Valley, Jillson House Museum and their dedicated volunteers completed a complete renovation of the garden adjacent to their historic home. The museum applied for a grant to clean up the overgrown area and plant it with a combination of pollinating plants, herbs, flowers and greenery.

"Without the support of the LGV this area would have continued to be an eye sore for all of our visitors. We are now an official visitor center for the East Coast Greenway and we wanted our guests to have a good impression of not only the museum but also our community. This grant made such a difference for us," said Rachel Valiere, President of the Jillson House Museum and

Windham Historical Society.

Amazing volunteers did all the work. They included our Hospitality Representative, David Fenn, Nathan Jackson, Jean Desmet, Erin Malgioglio, Devin Reese and Lisa Novack. The area had to be dug out, weeds and vines removed, landscape fabric and mulch laid and then new plants planted. The garden will be the center of some of the museum's programming including one on herbal remedies.

Please stop by to see the new garden and take a free tour of the museum and our current exhibit, "Made in Windham, Patents and Inventions that Changed the World." The museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 am-4:00 pm. For more information please email windhamhistoricalsocietyct@gmail.com.

Be prepared, not scared.

Considering the number of disasters that have occurred in the past decade, chances are you'll experience some sort of emergency. Between school, sports and other activities, chances are you won't be with your kids when it happens.

Ready.gov/kids has the tools to make preparing easy and even fun, so your kids can feel...

Prepared, not scared.

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

Can you believe that this is October 2024 already and Halloween is almost here? Another thing that is almost here or already may be here are the new 2025 vehicles. The CEO of Ford Motor Company has stated that the American driver should scale down to smaller vehicles and plan shorter trips. This sounds like full electric cars and trucks to me. The electric vehicle (EV) has its place, but like a pair of shoes one size does not fit all. The ads on TV show EV's from small to even large diesel trucks with full electric power. The hybrid vehicle is a great compromise for the transition to the electric vehicle. It provides the ease of a regular gas-powered vehicle with a step toward the EV.

The hybrid vehicle weighs a lot less than an electric vehicle. It's track record is proven for the most part to have a life expectancy of between 100,000 and 200,000 miles if it is maintained properly and regularly. There is no limit on travel and there are an array of sizes and models available. Most hybrids get great gas mileage with plenty of power and room. The brakes, tires, and suspension are virtually the same as a non-hybrid vehicle. There are even models that are plug in hybrids if you want to pay a bit more. Promoting the hybrid vehicle would help ease the consumer into a full electric vehicle and avoid the sticker shock of an EV. Currently the average cost of an EV is around \$55,000+. The average cost of a hybrid is around \$42,000 with a plug in costing slightly more. It would seem to me that the change isn't just coming, it's already here. The politicians are working to mandate the changes and many do not have a clue that mandating something that sounds good on paper could bring a bad public reaction in reality. I have heard many people say they would never spend the money to own an EV.

I love the motor vehicle and have spent 50+ years of my life repairing them. I own a 1967 classic Camaro that I find puts me in a different place and time when I'm driving it. The time was much simpler. We socialized in person, not electronically. A man's word and handshake meant something. We didn't think of bad mouthing someone because it meant you might meet that person face to face. The electric vehicle like the cell phone will change our lives forever. Only time will tell of the outcome.

At the beginning of this article, I said it was October already, and the winter months are coming very soon. So, it is time to prepare your vehicle for the harsh elements of the changing season. The vehicle's tires, wipers, washer fluid, and a survival kit is a good place to start preparing. The winter months mean a full tank of gas or diesel and having your electric vehicle fully charged if you own one. With roads being closed due to an accident or poor conditions you do not want to get caught in traffic unprepared. Please drive defensively and be sure to slow down when conditions warrant it, the other drivers out there may not. Stay safe!!!!

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

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AND** 

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Christmas in Coventry

Submitted by Ruth O'Neil

Coventry's Christmas in the Village will be held on this year on Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024, from 12 noon to 4 P.M. This annual town event brings community members and businesses together to welcome the holiday season. The activities will culminate with the annual town tree lighting celebration which will take place at **4:30 P.M.** After enjoying an abundance of holiday happenings throughout the village area earlier in the day, community members and visitors can gather together in front of the First Congregational Church to share in this long standing tradition. Students from the Coventry High School Choral and Band program will provide songs of the season. Santa will lead the tree lighting, having been escorted down Main Street by the Coventry Fire Departments' Torchlight Holiday Parade. Fire trucks and other vehicles from the towns' fire department will be adorned in holiday lights and decorations.

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

More holiday activities will be held at the Booth and Dimock Library, including a Youth Art Show coordinated by the Coventry Arts Guild and the library. The Coventry Arts Guild will also be hosting a Silent Art Auction featuring creations by its members.

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

Coordinated by the Coventry Parks and Recreation Department, a Youth Vendor Market will take place at the Patriots' Park Lodge In addition, a special mail station and mailbox is to be set up where, children are encouraged to drop off or write letters they have written to Santa. A make and take holiday craft will be available for guests to create.

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

Coinciding with Christmas in the Village is the multi-day Eastern Connecticut event, Artists' Open Studio. Two Main Street studios, Timberman Studio and Maple Brook Studio will be open to the public as part of the Artists' Open Studio along with four other Coventry studios that are participating. Visit aosct.org for more information on these and all the artists involved with Artists' Open Studio.

Christmas in the Village, originally known as "An Old Fashioned Christmas in Coventry Village began in 2004 by the Coventry Village Improvement Society, which turned its organization over to the Lions Club in 2007. This is the 20th year for the event.

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



Memories of Visiting the Farm

By Carol Wheelock Hall

Some of us older people may worry that with all the technological advances nowadays that the young people of today might be missing something. There used to be many small farms across this country, and many people of my age will have memories of yesteryear when someone in their family had a farm. Many may have lived near a farm. Many did the hard work on a farm. A few years ago during a travel trip, my husband and I drove by the land where my grandparents and uncle once had a small dairy farm in New York State. As a child I had delightful times visiting that farm. Other than the layout of the land I hardly recognized the place of my memories.

I can remember the small herd of cows being rounded up and herded into the barn twice a day for milking. Each cow dutifully went into her favorite stall and was rewarded with grain and hay. In my mind's eye I see the inside of the barn. There was a straw-bedded pen for calves and a horse stall. There was a huge spring water cistern, a big grain box, and a ladder to go up to the hay loft. At milking time the barn cats would swarm to get a warm bowl of milk poured out by Grandpa. The cats would hide their litters up in the hay loft, and they would routinely earn their keep by controlling the abundant field mouse population. But now there were no cows in a barnyard or grazing in the pasture.

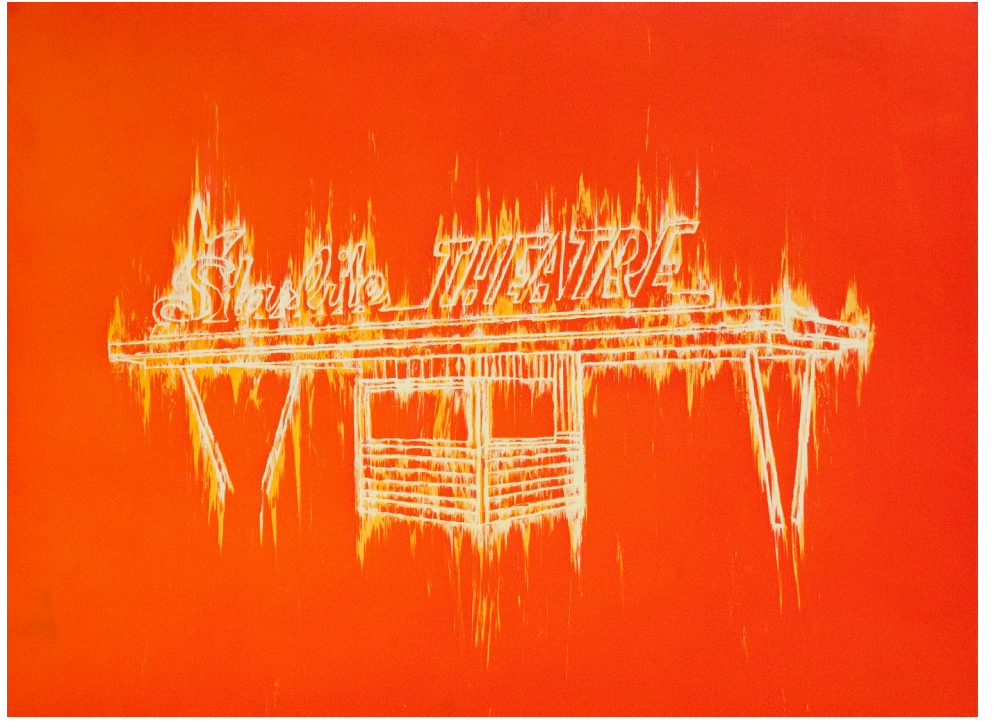
As we slowly drove by I could see that there was no barn left standing. Probably the foundation was still there behind and under the overgrown foliage. Perhaps the barn-wood had been salvaged for paneling in someone's new home years ago. And there was no field of hay to be cut, baled, lifted onto the hay wagon, and then put up in the barn. There was no rusty old farm truck to take filled milk cans into town for processing. There was no milk house, tool shed, chicken coup, smokehouse, or outhouse. I guess some of that's called progress.

The simple farmhouse I had visited as a child was no more. The woodshed which was at the back door and had held stacks of wood for the potbelly stove in the parlor was gone. It was the home where my caring Grandma had kept busy all day doing all the household duties and where Grandpa said grace at the table each mealtime. The house was now very different with major additions and it surely had modern renovations inside. The makeover was needed for today's living. After all...it was 70 years ago when I stayed there!

But alas, I have the memories of love and carefree childhood days on that farm of my Mom's parents. Those were delightful summer days of looking for kittens, naming the cows, and petting the old work horse in the barn. Those were days of taking turns with my cousin on the swing under the apple tree, and of us splashing in the creek that ran through a pasture. Hopefully today's children will have some great memories of their youth, even if very different from mine. I surely have wonderful and lasting memories of visiting the farm.



David Huffman (American, b. 1963) *Basketball Pyramid*, 2007, color aquatint, spit bite, sugar lift, soft ground, and hard ground etching, 37 1/2" x 45".



Gary Simmons. *Starelite Theater*.

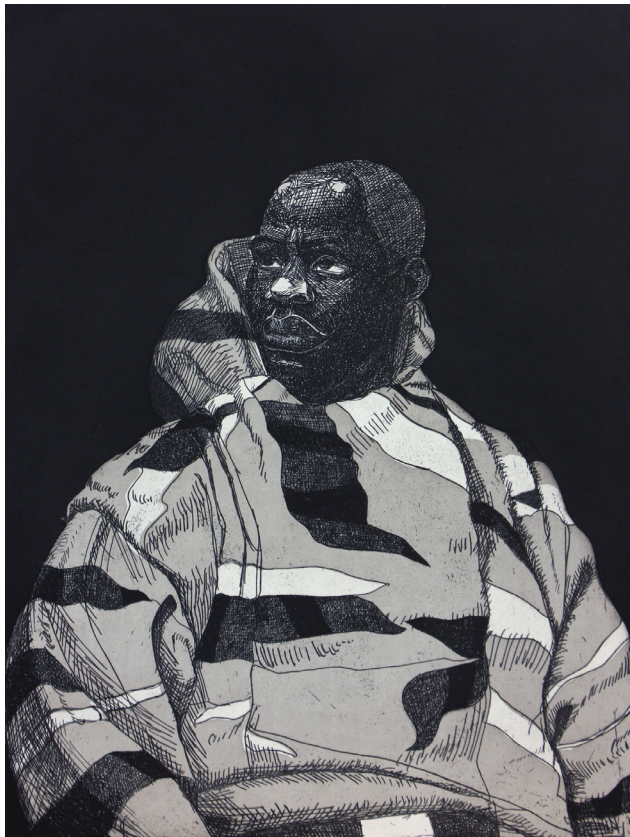
Lyman Allyn Exhibition Features Works by African American Artists

Submitted by Rebecca Dawson,
Director of Communications

New London – There is no singular way to address the conversation of race and representation in contemporary art. *Personal to Political: Celebrating the African American Artists of Paulson Fontaine Press* presents the unique vision and personal narratives of African American artists from across the country. Channeling the poetics of the human experience, this exhibition reflects on history, identity, personal stories, and spiritual inspiration. With 46 fine art prints by 17 different artists and a large-scale basketball pyramid installation by Berkeley artist David Huffman, this exhibition presents a powerful array of figurative and abstract art. It is on view Oct. 13, 2024 — Jan. 5, 2025.

Personal to Political highlights the work of African American artists who are reshaping the world of contemporary art. Included are works by Martin Puryear, known globally for his elegant abstract sculptural forms; San Francisco Bay Area artist Lava Thomas, who considers themes of social justice and female subjectivity; and Lonnie Holley, a self-taught artist and prodigious mixed-media master; as well as art by Kerry James Marshall, Gary Simmons, and Radcliffe Bailey. Abstract quilts by Alabama's celebrated Gee's Bend quilters, including Loretta and Essie Pettway and Louisiana and Mary Lee Bendolph, have been adapted into prints, creating dynamic graphic art from the group's work in traditional textiles.

The fine art prints in this exhibition were produced at Paulson Fontaine Press in Berkeley, California, an artistic hub known for amplifying important, often underrepresented, voices in the visual arts. In 1997, after hearing the painter Kerry James Marshall speak of the need for more Black voices and artwork in museums and art institutions, press co-founder Pam Paulson realized there was work to be done. For over 25 years, Paulson Fontaine Press has worked with a diverse group of artists, collaborating and experimenting with different processes and materials to bring new art and artists to a wider range of audiences.



Kerry James Marshall. *Untitled (Handsome Young Man)*.

Collectively, the artists in *Personal to Political* confront the personal and public significance of past and current events while working in a variety of media. The artists have taken aesthetic action in making this work, and it reminds us that we can all take action. Artists featured in the exhibition are as follows: Edgar Arceneaux, Radcliffe Bailey, McArthur Binion, Woody De Othello, Gee's Bend Quilters (Louisiana Bendolph, Mary Lee Bendolph, Loretta Bennett, Essie Bendolph Pettway, Loretta Pettway), Lonnie Holley, David Huffman, Samuel Levi Jones, Kerry James Marshall, Martin Puryear, William Scott, Gary Simmons, and Lava Thomas.

Related programming includes a Gallery Talk with Lyman Allyn curator Tanya Pohrt on Wednesday, Nov. 13 at 5:30 pm. Members are \$10, and non-members are \$15. More information will be available on lymanallyn.org.

Personal to Political: Celebrating the African American Artists of Paulson Fontaine Press was organized by Bedford Gallery at the Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA. This exhibition has been made possible with support from an anonymous foundation. Funding has also been provided by the Connecticut State Legislature, and is administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of the Arts.

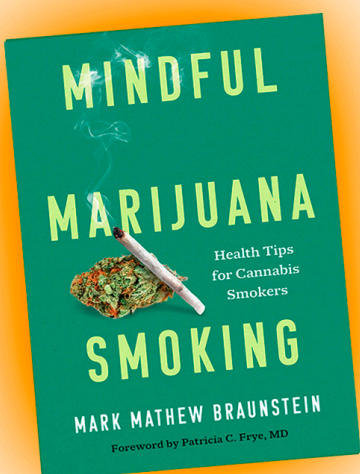
For more information or to request images, please contact Rebecca Dawson by email at dawson@lymanallyn.org.

About Lyman Allyn Art Museum

Lyman Allyn Art Museum welcomes visitors from New London, southeastern Connecticut and all over the world. Established in 1926 with a gift from Harriet Allyn in memory of her seafaring father, the Museum opened the doors of its beautiful neoclassical building surrounded by 12 acres of green space in 1932. Today it presents several changing exhibitions each year and houses a fascinating collection of over 19,000 objects from ancient times to the present, including art from Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, with particularly strong collections of American paintings, decorative arts and Victorian toys and doll houses.

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

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UCONN Professor Helps to Discover An Unusual Algae With Potential

“There may be implications for coral conservation, maybe even to medicine in healing or tissue regeneration, but right now, we still know very little,” Says Senjie Lin, a professor and researcher from the Department of Marine Sciences at UConn.

Lin's lab focuses on the genomics of marine organisms such as diatoms and dinoflagellates. *H. opuntia* is the first green algae they have sequenced. Lin and his team wanted to explore the species' genome to uncover how and why it developed its distinctive traits.

According to Lin, the cactus-shaped algae are remarkable for several reasons. They consist of single cells containing multiple nuclei and are unusually large for single-celled organisms, growing up to a foot in length.

These algae thrive in tropical marine ecosystems, where they play a crucial role in reef-building, though in a different way than corals.

In their study of *H. opuntia*, the researchers found that its genome lacks the gene responsible for an essential protein that helps organize cellular contents before division. This discovery sheds light on intriguing questions, such as how *H. opuntia* grows into unusually large cells with multiple nuclei.

The researchers next examined the algae's ability to process calcium from the environment into calcium carbonate, which it does in a completely different manner from organisms like bivalves or corals.

“In most cases, calcification occurs within the cell of organisms, but these guys don't do that. They calcify outside the cell where they form a structure that is like a little pocket called the intertricular space, where the calcification

happens.”

Lin explains that this pocket represents a remarkable and particularly valuable adaptation, especially in the context of today's oceans.

As atmospheric CO2 levels rise, more carbon is absorbed by the ocean, increasing its acidity. This shift in pH, combined with warming waters, creates challenging conditions for calcification, posing a threat to coral reefs globally.



Will la Niña Arrive Before Winter?

If La Niña conditions develop in time for winter, they typically result in a wetter, cooler season in the northern U.S. and a drier, milder winter in the southern regions.

Over the past few months, water temperatures in the central Pacific Ocean have remained close to long-term average levels, showing little of the cooling typically associated with the onset of La Niña. A La Niña is identified when water temperatures fall at least 0.5 degrees Celsius (0.9 degrees Fahrenheit) below the long-term average.

However, with only a weak La Niña anticipated, its impact may be less significant. If neutral conditions persist, the jet stream will have fewer disruptions, allowing regional patterns to dominate local weather.

Making long-range seasonal forecasts is challenging, but winter predictions' accuracy has improved.

New forecasting techniques that use artificial intelligence and machine learning enhance winter forecasts. However, predicting weather over three months remains difficult.

Connecticut Opts Out of Offshore Wind

Billed as New England's largest and most innovative offshore wind project, the collaboration between Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island aimed to secure the best efficiencies and prices for substantial new offshore wind capacity.

However, Connecticut was notably absent when the projects chosen from the March solicitation were announced a few days after Labor Day. A short statement from the state Department

of Energy and Environmental Protection congratulated the other states and simply stated: “The evaluation of project bids remains underway in Connecticut and we will announce a final decision in our solicitation at a future date.”

Governor Ned Lamont explained to The Connecticut Mirror that his hesitation to commit to new offshore wind projects stems from the high costs, which would further increase the state's

What to Expect for Winter in CT

Based on the latest outlook for December, January, and February 2024-25, Connecticut is expected to experience warmer-than-average temperatures this winter.

The updated winter outlook released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center balances the chances of above-normal precipitation in Connecticut.

The outlook indicates that the likelihood of above-normal temperatures in Connecticut ranges from 50 percent to 60 percent. Additionally, a small portion of the northwesternmost part of the state is expected to receive slightly more rainfall than usual.

Temperatures across much of the Northeast and New England are anticipated to be above average along the Eastern Seaboard. Additionally, above-normal precipitation is expected in many areas of the region.

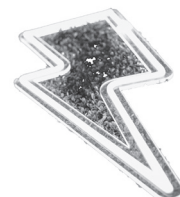


DEEP and CFPA on Fall Hiking Opportunities & Tips

“Connecticut's fall foliage season is always stunning,” said Katie Dykes, Commissioner of DEEP. “The crisp weather and vibrant colors are a treat, and the Passport to the Parks Program makes it easier for residents to decide to go for a quick hike or catch a view of the foliage without having to worry about paying an entrance fee. Our interactive Fall

Foliage Report indicates when foliage color typically peaks in each part of the state. We encourage leaf-peepers and hikers to visit ctparks.com to help plan your trips to State Forests and Parks near you or across the state, especially as some of the most popular parks can reach capacity on weekends. It's also important for folks to be mindful of precautions they should take to ensure a fun and safe experience on the trail.”

“Connecticut's forests, parks, and trails are incredible resources year-round,” said Andy Bicking, Executive Director of Connecticut Forest & Park Association. “The beautiful Fall foliage provides an extra incentive to explore them now. Whether you're with friends, family, or enjoying a quiet walk alone, it's always important to be prepared. Our interactive map of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails System is another great tool for planning your leaf-peeping hikes.”



Winter Bird Spotting

Although some Connecticut birds migrate south for the winter, plenty remain to observe.

Connecticut beaches, popular with residents in the summer, often become winter hotspots for birds.

According to the Smithsonian Institution, species like ducks can thrive in colder climates thanks to a countercurrent heat exchange system in their veins and arteries, which warms cold blood with warm blood.

Wildlife Impacted by Hurricanes

Wildlife in hurricane regions have faced a tumultuous journey as large areas of the southern United States recover from two hurricanes that left millions without power, and claimed hundreds of lives. Ecologists and biologists are striving to assess the storms' impact on wildlife.

Helene disrupted the migration of over 100 million birds passing through Alabama and caused floods that killed thousands of North Carolina's hellbender salamanders.

It is highly likely that some of Florida's beloved manatees have been trapped or stranded by the hurricanes.

Some animals have taken advantage of the destruction. North Carolina's black bears have been scavenging through damaged buildings in search of newly accessible food. However, far more animals have been killed or displaced.

"In the area of the Gulf of Mexico, this is like the peak of intense movement," for migrating birds, said Andrew Farnsworth, a visiting scientist and migration ecologist at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York.

Farnsworth estimates that between 150 and 275 species, including magnolia warblers, green herons, American redstarts, Baltimore orioles, and Swainson's thrushes, were migrating during the hurricanes.

The coming season is a great time to spot seabirds, waterfowl, owls, birds of prey, perching birds, and more!

Some spots to consider checking out include Broad Brook Mill Pond, Southport Beach, Seaside Park, Sherwood Island State Park, Milford Point, Hammonasset Beach State Park, Long Beach, Enders Island Sea Chapel, Sherwood Island State Park, Hanover Pond, and Cove Island Park.

Britain Phased Out Coal

The last coal power plant in Britain shut down in October, marking the end of over 140 years of coal-powered electricity and demonstrating that major economies can transition away from the most polluting fossil fuel.

Britain still relies on coal for steel production, which contributes 2 percent of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions, experts believe the country's shift away from coal-powered electricity provides valuable lessons for other nations looking to phase it out.

Before global warming became a concern, experts had already demonstrated that burning coal posed severe health and environmental risks.

Coal plants pollute the air, contribute to acid rain, and release mercury, contaminating soil and water. In Britain, the London Great Smog of 1952 likely caused up to 12,000 deaths, leading to a government crackdown on the widespread use of coal for home heating.

Britain is among the first and largest countries to transition away from coal, relying significantly on wind and solar energy. Portugal has also made this shift but is smaller and less industrialized. Germany has made efforts in this direction, yet it still generates approximately a quarter of its power from coal and does not intend to phase it out until 2038 entirely.

Actions Anyone Can Take to Safeguard Local Wildlife

One of the many alluring features of spending time in the great outdoors is the opportunity to experience local wildlife. Unfortunately, wildlife is being threatened in many parts of the world as the human population increases and spreads to regions that historically have not been home to large numbers of humans.

Numerous local, national, and international environmental organizations are dedicated to protecting local wildlife. However, such organizations can always use a helping hand, and the following are some simple steps anyone can take to protect local wildlife.

Sign up for local trash pickups. Environment America reports that scientists have found plastic fragments in hundreds of species. For example, researchers found such fragments in 44 percent of all seabird species. Local park and beach cleanups

can help reduce that figure and make these beloved spaces look even better. Signing up for park or beach clean-ups also provides a great reason to get outdoors.

Make an effort to cut back on your energy consumption. This effective approach can benefit local wildlife and animal lovers' bottom lines. The Animal Welfare Institute notes that many power plants rely on fossil fuels, the extraction of which can be harmful to local habitats. That ultimately and adversely affects local wildlife. Reducing energy consumption can cut back on the need to extract fossil fuels, and it can also lead to lower energy bills for consumers.

Support eco-friendly legislation. Legislators fighting to protect local wildlife need all the help they can get. Individuals can lend a hand by supporting legislators working to maintain local habitats so wildlife can continue to

thrive. Share information about political issues related to local wildlife via social media and volunteer to help local politicians and nonprofit organizations spread the word about the importance of protecting the species that call your region home.

Do not get too close to wildlife. The beauty of wildlife can be hard to resist, but the AWI urges animal lovers to keep their distance from animals they see in the wild. Do not handle young animals found in the wild, no matter how vulnerable they appear, as the AWI notes that it is not uncommon for mothers to leave their young alone for long periods while they forage for food.

Wildlife faces an uncertain future in many parts of the world. Individuals can do their part to protect wildlife and ensure their long-term survival.

Where to Volunteer and Donate To Victims of the Hurricanes

All Hands and Hearts has received overwhelming interest from volunteers for October and November but may need volunteers afterward.

The American Red Cross is seeking volunteers to serve in shelters and meet disaster-caused needs.

The St. Bernard Project, or SBP, will take volunteers in the

months ahead. You can get involved by reaching out to volunteer@sbpusa.org.

Volunteer Florida tracks volunteer opportunities across the state of Florida.

World Central Kitchen is working in locations throughout Florida to provide survivors with water and free hot meals.

Direct Relief is supplying emergency medical aid and providing financial support to local medical centers.

Americares is supporting its 110 partner clinics in affected areas.

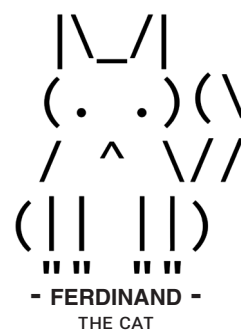


Photo submitted by a reader

Flower of the Month November Ghost Orchid



A rare, ethereal flower known for its delicate white blooms that seem to "hover" in the air, as it lacks visible leaves and stems. Found primarily in Florida's swamps and parts of the Caribbean, it's often associated with mystery, rarity, and beauty that thrives in the most hidden and unexpected places.



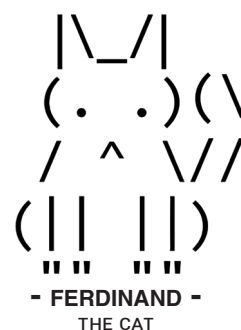
Ferdinand's Flower Patch



Flower of the Month December Poinsettia



With its vibrant red and green foliage, this plant is iconic during the holiday season and symbolizes goodwill and success. Poinsettias are often used in festive decorations and arrangements, bringing warmth and cheer to homes during winter.



Ferdinand's Flower Patch



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The photos above were taken by Max Ruecki of Storrs. Max is studying photography at Manchester Community College.

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