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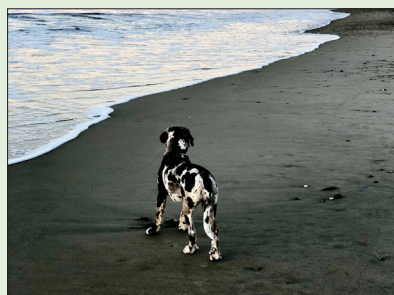
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Trauma of Aging

By Loretta Wrobel

There exist an abundance of joys and heartwarming episodes that embrace us as we age. Many regular events take on deeper significance and grab our hearts in an indescribable manner. We appear to expand in our ability to accept the profound beauty of life, after living a long life. All of that being acknowledged, I want to focus on the flip side of aging--the arduous challenging obstacles of the aging process.

For the major part of my life, I have been sailing along absorbing each year and welcoming each new decade with exuberance and exhilaration. Lo and behold, a year ago I entered into my 80th year, dancing effortlessly and blissfully. I know I have been extraordinarily blessed, as I have rarely experienced medical problems and have been mostly healthy and robust. Consequently, I had no inkling of what adventures and surprises this new decade held.

Now eight+ decades is a long span of time. In that extended period of time, we can spend many moments not paying any attention to our bodies. We can treat them as something that is always there and will continue to do everything that we persistently demand of them. I can attest to not paying an enormous amount of attention to a body that was always responsive and infrequently complained.

Now as I begin to saunter through this span of my life in this new decade, I am witnessing a truckload of changes. It is a shock and extremely disorienting to my balance and sense of self. Here I am plodding toward the final decades and having to adjust to a radically altered life, when adjustments are way more difficult than earlier in my life. Plus, I am a strong Taurus. I like my pasture the way it is. So I am having to adjust to all these major changes, certainly unanticipated and unexpected.

The biggest change is that I am slower. It takes me longer to prepare for every event. I don't experience myself as moving slower. The clock disagrees with me. I find it hard to let go of the old way and make the simple shift to starting to get ready earlier. We are certainly creatures of habits and patterns, and I am first in line as I resist accepting what I need. What I need is way more than ten minutes to get ready to leave the house!

I am struggling with freeing my calendar so I have more time for doctors' appointments and to keep adding new doctors to my growing list of medical advisors. This situation certainly is not excessive, when we have medical advances that open the door for more and more specialists. However, to me, halving rarely visited medical people for most of my life, it can feel overwhelming and so very painful to swallow this new reality. This is espe-



cially true because it is not a simple change to adjust to a new identity. "Why can't I do what I want to do and what I have always done?" I moan, ignoring the obvious, "Your energy levels are not the same, and you are functioning at a different speed, and you are an old Woman!"

What I discover is these relatively simple facts are not easy to accept and pay attention to, in order to maintain my body. As we age, it can be a stretch to actually witness our present reality. My audiologist explained that hearing loss is gradual, so we keep accommodating. I feel my aging process is following a similar path. My shifts in functioning have not occurred overnight. They happened little by little, often so minimal, I didn't notice until I was watching a chipping sparrow's beak moving and I did not hear the sound! The next step is a visit to an audiologist! I never saw an audiologist before, so another name gets added to my already filled list of medical practitioners.

These are the natural results of numerous decades of being on this planet. Our bodies get tired out, but we have splendid devices to keep us functioning. These changes and losses accompany us as we walk the long, exciting and hard winding life of an old woman or man. I embrace the devices, such as hearing aids that keep us interacting with others and not isolating in our homes. I am grateful for medications that regulate the body parts that don't operate as smoothly as they once did. I am pleased that our huge list of specialists can zero in on what is happening in our unique bodies, and assist us in keeping our lives fuller and more meaningful.

Naturally, what this means for us is that we need more help to manage the activities of our lives. Therefore, we are subjected to more tests, more appointments, and then waiting for the results, when we are not as patient as we once were. We have an acute awareness that our clocks are ticking, and we know life holds endless experiences for us. We are eager to take them all in as we once did. The overriding truth of "It takes more time" is always on my shoulders. I hear it (since I now have hearing aids), and I am reluctant to simply accept it as the aging process.

If only I had been prepared for all of this, I wouldn't be drowning in shock and trauma. There is a possibility that I knew this, and at the same time did not totally accept it. I do remember my mom saying to me, "Wait till you get old!" And being the 'know-it-all' I was back then, I let it go in one ear and out the other. There is a thread of poetic justice in that. As humans, we sometimes need the proof to emanate from our own personal experience. Part of the wisdom of growing older is acquired by growing old.

I can open my arms to gaining new insights and wisdom. However, I am not saying it is easy or that I will not resist some of the changes that befall me.

As I meander through this decade of new understandings, I am working on developing more patience for the process and more love for my aging body with everything I have left. Wish me luck.

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-To provide a place where ideas, writing, artwork
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-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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a little paper
big on community

From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

Rooted in Community: A Quiet Corner Story of Willow Valley Farm

By Rebecca Toms

One of the many beautiful gifts of living in northeast Connecticut is the continuation of stories—passed down not just through words, but through landscapes and shared memories. We’re known throughout the state as “the Quiet Corner,” but that quiet hum is filled with life—generations growing alongside each other, sometimes on the very same roads their grandparents built their homes on. A river might be named after a neighbor’s grandfather, a country lane after a beloved teacher or farmer. And when you strike up a conversation with somebody at a community fair or the farmers market, there’s a good chance your parents once shared a prom night or a softball game.

In a world that increasingly encourages us to move fast and far, to chase opportunity in big cities or distant careers, some people choose a different path. They return. They stay. They dig deep. Spencer Cartabiano and Jackie Kulig, the husband-and-wife team behind Willow Valley Farm in Willington, are two of those people, carrying forward a legacy planted generations ago and growing something meaningful—not just for their family, but for all of us.

Willow Valley Farm has been part of the local landscape since the 1950s, when Spencer’s grandparents and uncle bought the property. Uncle Bob started the operation as a chicken farm, but like so many good things in this region, it evolved over time—not just feeding the community but nurturing it. Many locals fondly remember spending their summers in the 1960s and ’70s at the farm’s youth camp that Spencer’s grandparents (Earl and Martha) expanded the farm to include. At farmers markets, some folks may recognize the farm’s origin and share their experiences. They wax poetic about riding horses, milking cows, baling hay, and feeling a deep connection to a place and family that made them feel welcome and whole.

Now run by Spencer and Jackie, the farm’s heart remains intact even as its focus shifts to organic vegetables and heritage grains. Inspired by Spencer’s mother’s vision when she took the reins in the early 2000s, the farm today is grounded in the principles of sustainability and care. “Clean food, clean water, vibrant soil life, and a sustainable way of living” is their guiding philosophy, they note on their website. That means no synthetic pesticides, no artificial fertilizers—just real, honest food grown with integrity. It’s the kind of place where you can pluck a leaf of kale straight from the stalk and taste something that feels alive.

But the care they offer doesn’t stop at the farm. For about a decade, Spencer and Jackie have been quietly running Food for Friends, a program that provides reduced-cost CSA (community supported agriculture) shares to families that otherwise wouldn’t be able to access fresh, nutritious produce. They’ve worked with local schools in Willington and beyond to bring farm-fresh ingredients onto lunch trays. Jackie helps lead the Ashford Farmers Market and regularly contributes her energy and ideas to CLiCK meetings for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program, helping build better systems for getting local food to the community. Spencer, meanwhile, is one of Connecticut’s only heritage grain producers, offering whole wheat and rye flour to bakers who want to support local agriculture with every loaf.

At first glance, these projects might seem scattered—school lunches, farmers markets, heritage grains, CSA shares—but when you step back, you see a beautiful web: a quiet, persistent effort to weave together land, food, and people in a way that makes everyone stronger. It’s the kind of behind-the-scenes labor that rarely earns awards or headlines, but keeps our communities thriving.

And still, they keep going—fixing irrigation lines



Spencer Cartabiano and Jackie Kulig. Photo by Joseph Abad

under the summer sun, gathering friends and neighbors to help with harvests, laughing over memories made and memories yet to come. It’s not glamorous work, but it’s good work. The kind that nurtures not just bodies, but hearts and legacies.

Stories like Spencer and Jackie’s are all around us in the generational and new farms of northeast Connecticut. They remind us what it means to belong—to a place, to each other, and to something bigger than ourselves. And when we recognize those stories, we help them continue. Because couldn’t we all benefit from caring a little more—and being cared for a little more, too?

As June arrives, so do the strawberries—sweet, sun-kissed, and bursting with the flavor of early summer. Whether you pick your own (check out page 46 of the new 2025 edition of Grown ConNECTed’s *Guide to Farm Fresh Food in Northeastern Connecticut* at s.uconn.edu/grownconnectedguide2025) or grab a quart at your favorite farm stand or market, these ruby gems rarely make it all the way home without a few disappearing on the ride.

But if they do, here’s our suggestion: take some of that beautiful, locally milled wheat from Willow Valley Farm or another nearby grower and whip up some classic strawberry shortcakes. They’re the perfect mix of comfort and celebration—soft, warm biscuits topped with macerated strawberries and a dollop of whipped cream (or yogurt if you prefer).

It’s a simple way to bring a taste of the season to your table and, just maybe, start a new tradition of your own.

Strawberry Shortcakes with Whole Wheat Cinnamon Biscuits
Adapted from Letty’s Kitchen (LettysKitchen.com)

- Shortcake biscuits:
- 2 cups white whole wheat flour
 - 1 tablespoon baking powder
 - ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
 - ¼ cup canola or grapeseed oil
 - ½ cup milk of choice
 - 2 tablespoons maple syrup
 - ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
 - sugar, optional, for sprinkling on shortcakes before baking
- Strawberries:
- 1 pound strawberries
 - ½ cup maple syrup
 - ¾ teaspoon balsamic vinegar
 - Whipped cream (if you want!)

- Make the biscuits:
- Preheat oven to 425° F.
 - Mix flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl.
 - In a separate bowl, mix your milk, maple syrup, and vanilla.
 - With a fork, stir the oil in the flour mixture until crumbly (or you can even use your hands!). Immediately stir in the milk mixture, continuing to stir until everything comes together in a sticky dough.
 - Drop rough balls of dough, ¼ cup each, onto a prepared oiled pan, leaving about 2 inches between each. Sprinkle with sugar, if desired, and/or with a pinch of cinnamon.
 - Bake 10 to 12 minutes until the bottoms are golden brown.

- Strawberries:
- Wash and hull the berries.
 - Cut them into quarters.
 - Stir in the maple syrup and balsamic vinegar.
 - Let sit 20 minutes or so to soak in the sweetness and release the flavor.

- To serve:
- Cut the shortcakes in half horizontally.
 - Place the bottom half of each shortcake on a plate.
 - Spoon ½ cup or so of the strawberries on top.
 - Add a dollop of cream, and top with the other half of the shortcake!

Heroiam Slava

If the world could diminish it’s incessant noise, maybe they could hear their cries before one more Ukrainian dies.

Russia boasted it would be a 3 day fight never once imagining just how fiercely they would stand, for what they knew to be right.

Pride, strength and honor are truly Ukraine’s to own, as they push the red army off the land that is their home.

Ruthless, savage attacks are met with courageous soldiers valiantly fighting with unwavering faith and resolve to never let this invasion extinguish Ukraine’s deep sense of spirit, love and hope.

Lynda George Bowen

Letters and Emails

Protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid!

Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security are in jeopardy due to potential cuts to these programs. Republicans are targeting hundreds of billions of dollars in federal health spending to fund a tax cut that mostly benefits the wealthiest citizens. Elon Musk, the President’s “advisor” and head of the newly created Department of Government Efficiency, has called Social Security a Ponzi scheme. During his address to Congress, the President completely misrepresented the Social Security Administration implying that regular checks were being sent to thousands of people who have been dead for many years – not true. Do you or your family and loved ones rely on one of these health programs? How would you manage if you did not have access to these benefits?

Recently, we met several people with disabilities who told their stories. Each had significant issues: one is blind, one in a wheelchair from an automobile accident, one a child who needs special medication daily. Each of these relies on the Medicaid program for assistance. According to a recent Newsweek article, the government health run program offers coverage for 72 million low income families, seniors and people living with disabilities. Medicaid covers nearly one million Connecticut residents, many living in nursing homes. Any cuts to this federal program would require states to provide a larger share of the cost.

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people aged 65 and over and individuals with disabilities. The program is now serving over 68 million Americans, nearly 20 % of the U. S. population. 70 million Americans, including some of the most vulnerable members of society such as retirees and people with disabilities, depend on Social Security benefits. For many, it is their only source of income. Recently, U. S. Representative John Larson from Connecticut, stated “Let me be clear – laying off half of the work force at the Social Security Administration and shuttering field offices will mean the delay, disruption and denial of benefits.” Americans pay into this system throughout their working years and expect to collect the benefits in retirement. This is not an entitlement, but a program citizens paid into.

In Connecticut, our federal legislators are standing up for us. Both of our U. S. Senators; Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy, and all five of our members of the House of Representatives; John Larson, Joe Courtney, Rosa DeLauro, Jahana Hayes, and Jim Himes, are opposed to cuts in these important programs.

No matter your politics – Republican, Democrat or Independent, citizens in red and blue states will be affected if these programs are not fully funded. We the People must stand up with our Congressional Delegation to protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

Paula and Daniel Coughlin
Woodstock Valley, CT.

Jekyll and Hyde, Id and Ego, and an ‘Honorable Harvest’

By Bob Grindle

We live in a climate where winter can often make at least a partial claim on more than six of the twelve months, and the Sun can be a totally unrepentant prodigal child of the solar system...lost, yet wandering somewhere above the gray weather-wash of a sky whose role in this endless meteorological theater can seem a bit Jekyll and Hyde-like as our fickle human moods rise and fall with the sudden appearance or absence of the “star” of the show...pun intended...the Sun. But today, ahhh, is a day that invites a full-throated and sensual gulp of what must be nearly all the many marvelous flavors that can be packed into a sunny, early June morning...surely there are a thousand shades of green, and the sky alone has total ownership of the one perfect blue. Our delightfully varied northeast Connecticut orchestra of birds play instrumental counterpoint to the gentle background of winds and strings as the day’s soft, warm breezes play across field and branch. Does the brain have a palate...can a day have a taste—it sure feels like this one does...and can we nourish our spiritual sense by deeply inhaling the absolute majesty that the world around us offers up? No sense is left out as Id and Ego rejoice in their total immersion into this tapestry of psychic photosynthesis where sunshine and warmth, sound and fragrance and color are transformed into enough of human joy and energy to power the desire to just absorb the moment and perhaps cache enough of it as memory to recall in those future moments when the days run dry.

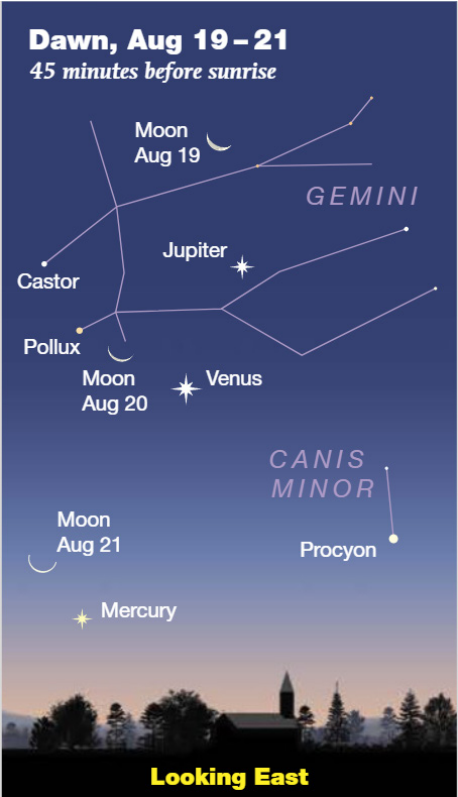
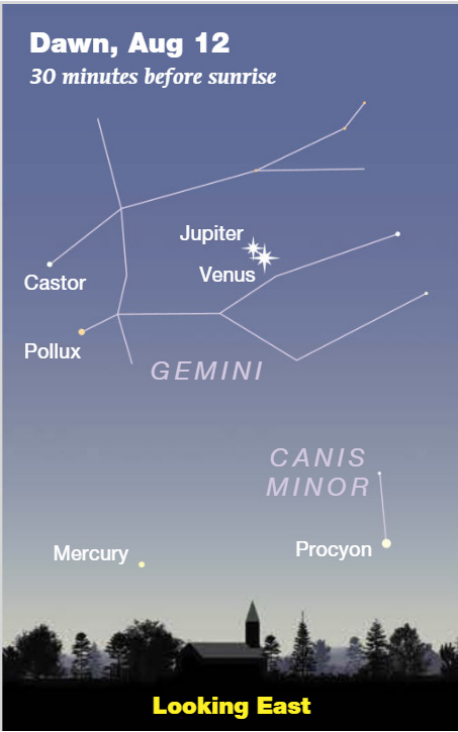
And days do run dry, palates seize-up, colors fade, birdsong quiets and perhaps beauty takes a holiday... the parade(s) of human arrogance and folly march on into a future that we have come to think we control, all the while trampling it. Standing here in the afternoon sun, the sounds and fragrances, the brightness and colors and nearly perfect caress of a world that evolved to this level of wonder with no help from our species, I vaguely recall an American History teacher from my high school days in Indiana...her father was an Algonquin Indian...and she taught us that many Native American cultures had come to understand that the exchange of a life for a life was the way the world works... be it as simple as eating living plants or slaying a fish or

risking their own life harvesting a mammal the size of a buffalo. Many tribes and Nations of these indigenous people developed a canon of principles known as the “honorable harvest” as a way of respecting what our planet provides. As the creaking treads and wheels of weary social chariot game-pieces grind across the worn-out pathways of the uninspired gameboards we have grown so familiar with, one listens carefully for a new voice...perhaps a clearer voice, a voice that measures up to the simple beauty of the world we live in...hopefully it is not extinct.

As this perfect day fades into the shade of early evening, July and August skies are hurtling toward our little patch of the cosmic screen and early, pre-dawn mornings with Venus and Jupiter and perhaps Mercury, as well as delightfully jewel-like views of Moon shavings will be smile-worthy on your way to work or on that morning walk. As the mask of late evening gives way to the hazy fog-lifting shade of early dawn and the orchestra pit tune-up of birdsong adds depth to the day despite the early hour, it is easy to feel a bit of the thrill that a new day has started...almost like being twelve years old again and sensing the game has just begun.

Evening skies bring Saturn and Mars and the Full Buck Moon of July 10th and the Sturgeon Moon of August 9th...and of course the dependable meteor showers of the Aquarids on the after-midnight evening of July 29th-30th (luckily this night is virtually moon-free, so viewing should excel-lent.) Two weeks later, the always anticipated Perseids (August 11th-13th) will be much more difficult to see since the full Sturgeon Moon will just be starting to wane and lots of light can make some meteors all but disappear. But hanging out on a clear, late night in August under a nearly full Moon has a lot to recommend it, meteor shower or not.

So, keep your eyes open to the beauty of the world around you, your mental palate clear for that unexpected taste of a perfect day and your ears tuned to whatever the sound of that clear new voice might be...it probably won’t be something we’ve heard before, and may be a bit challenging to tease out of the background noise of a world on the brink of evolutionary gridlock. Stay well. See you next issue!



Honoring the ‘Glorious Cause’

By Bill Powers

This area of Connecticut is fortunate and honored to have had so many patriots, men and women, who were willing to stand up against the British Crown in open rebellion for so many years. On September 15, 1780 the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, George Washington, wrote to Samuel Huntington, the President of Congress: “The firmness requisite for the real business of fighting is only to be attained by a constant course of discipline and service.” Moreover, many were willing to risk everything. Two of these men were Samuel Huntington and William Williams. Huntington was born and raised in the Scotland Parish of Windham, CT. and Williams called

Lebanon, CT. his home. Both men were signers of the Declaration of Independence and are memorialized in the famous painting *Declaration of Independence* by John Trumbull, who was also born and raised in Lebanon, CT. The extent to which such patriots considered the risk to themselves is summed up by a quote by William Williams who said: “If we fail, I know what my fate will be. I have done much to prosecute the war, and one thing I have done which the British will never pardon - I have signed the Declaration of Independence; I shall be hanged.”

When the fighting ended, both men continued to address the unfinished business of building a new nation. As patriots, they knew what Washington said was true about

achieving the goal of the “glorious cause” – a new nation: “ a constant course of discipline and service.” They continued to lead by example; their dedication and service continued over many years to help mold our State and our Nation.

In the light of the sacrifices of our patriots, this July 4th, may we honor and respect them for what they did as they fought the British and built a new nation.

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Sunset Blues

By Delia Berlin

David, Curly, and I have been adjusting to our new home for over a month now. Factually, things are going well. Our apartment is bright, cheerful, and comfortable. Despite significant downsizing, we could accommodate our most cherished possessions without cramming or cluttering them. The food is pretty good, with lots of choices. Granted, it does not match my cooking, but on the other hand, I don't have to cook it. And most people here (both residents and staff) are positive, friendly, and in love with Curly.

We have been fortunate to get an apartment that faces the quiet rear of the building, with east-southeast exposure, parklike grounds, and trees, instead of the highway by the front. We are walking distance to a few restaurants, a Trader Joe's, a pet supplies shop, and several other shops at Corbin's Corner. By car, we are very near to many destinations of practical and recreational value, such as pharmacies and doctors, indoor swimming, restaurants, and a ceramic studio. We now live just two miles away from David's daughter and half an hour closer to mine. Our new town looks lush, green, and lovely this time of the year and it has a lot to offer, still mostly unexplored by us. Our life is enviably comfortable.

Focusing on the positives helps us take advantage of opportunities at hand. We will never be as young as today, and the present should not be wasted longing for the past. But acknowledging the impact of losses is also necessary for moving on. And I would lie if I did not admit that we miss Willimantic dearly. We may be "just" 35 minutes away, but the Connecticut River is a mighty barrier for older people, and we have lost most of the casual but comforting support we had in our former town. Whether it was my sister (Curly's beloved auntie!) next door, our neighbor sunning on her porch, my Planet Fitness buddy nearby, fellow artists at Spiral Arts, or any of our friends who we met periodically for lunch, dinner, walks, visits, or simply chance encounters, we had a special community that will be hard to match. We are gradually getting some visits that reconnect us, but the physical distance is clearly felt. Can a sense of community be regained in our new situation? I think it can. In just the few weeks that we have spent here, we have met many interesting people who may easily become close friends.

For me, there has been an unexpected effect of this move. I am still trying to process this effect, so I will struggle to describe it, but I will give it a try. It arises from the fact that residents here, as a group, are very old. Perhaps this should be expected. This is a "senior living" building for people 65 and older. But it surprised me that most people are so much older than 65. In fact, being 71 myself, I may be one of the youngest residents (if not the youngest). David, at 85, and with his unwelcome balance issues, is more youthful than most, even though some of the 90-somethings put us to shame. One of them, for example, leads one of several fitness classes, and it is not an easy one to keep up with. I could only hope that if I live that long I will arrive in such good shape. But for this population, the effects of aging are undeniable and the preponderance of physical

limitations is very high.

As my first father-in-law used to say, good health is a temporary condition between two illnesses. While we are young and strong, this most serious statement may sound funny—it used to make me laugh my head off. Now, I am keenly aware of the finite quality of my remaining strength. Just a couple of days ago, I thought about asking someone for help moving a small cabinet. In Willimantic, I would have moved it with my sister, but here, out of approximately 120 residents, I could not think of anyone from whom it would be safe and appropriate to ask for such help. My small-woman physical strength feels almost like a superpower, and it can even make me feel guilty. Then, I tell myself to use it and enjoy it, since it is only a matter of time. And as a kind of redemption, I offer it to help others anytime I can.



To illustrate the fragility of physical strength, I will share what happened to me just three days after moving here. My daughter and her family had come to join us for dinner. In preparation, I fed Curly and took him outside for his walk. Curly walks very slowly, sniffing everything along his way, unless he has a destination in mind. One way to get him going is to ask him if he wants to run back home—he always does, and he runs very fast for a tiny dog. We were both running joyfully full speed along the hallway, when just 20 feet from our door Curly suddenly crossed in front of my feet and stopped cold. Tangled up with his leash and terrified about hurting him, I fell forward flat on my face. For a few seconds, I was not sure if I still had a face. But overall, it was a lucky fall: I did not break any bones, teeth, or even my glasses, and Curly was unharmed. However, my upper lip was crushed and I got nasty rug burns under my nose and on my chin. The pain and bleeding were not as bad as having to walk around with a sausage lip for over a week. I used a mask in many situations, but I still had to eat. Meeting so many new people in that state was difficult, until I realized that, at least for a while, I would probably be the only resident who looked a little better each day that went by.

David and I have walked this life together for 43 years. Of our many moves, this one feels different. It is clearly our final independent home together. Sad as that may sound, it is so much better than most alternatives. In our early days, 28-year-old me would have thought it completely impossible to reach this stage as a couple. But we did, and for that I feel grateful.

FLASH FICTION

The Hologram Concert at the End of the World

By Bob Lorentson

Another night, another dollar, I suppose, but how the hell did I ever end up with a job like this? Thousands of people are filling up the arena, restless, excited, all waiting for me. Dumb buggers, they don't know they're waiting for me. They don't even know who I am. They want the King. Elvis. They don't know that it's me that's gonna deliver him. I ain't nothin' but a hound dog—the hologram concert technician that's gonna bring him to life. Again, and again, and again.

How did we ever get to the point where death is no obstacle to a music career? Or to the sleazy promoters who can now *sell* dead legends—all resurrected and repackaged in a modern 3-D technological shine. Those idiot fans are singing and crying and flicking their lighters at ghosts. If they saw holographic Elvis pop up that way in their homes, they'd probably think they'd died and gone to Graceland.

Ah, what do I care, it's their bitcoin. Bitcoin—now don't get me started on *that*! Seems about right, though—fake money for a fake concert. Ain't that a shame, eh, Elvis? Dead legends oughta stay dead, or leastwise in a wax museum where they can be with their own creepy kind.

So, let's see what stupid ghosts they've got lined up for me this month. A week of Elvis, then Michael Jackson, then Whitney Houston, then...blah blah blah. Bor-ing! Man, at least bring back Einstein, or Aristotle, somebody interesting. Well, better check the safe—see they're all here. OK, my pretties, I'm comin' in—hope you're decent. 12 left, 25 right, 8 left—*boo*! Good—all back in your little digital cases, I see. Elvis, Michael, Whitney... Hello... What's this in the back? TOP SECRET—DO NOT OPEN—EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN. Interesting. Whadaya think, Elvis? I think maybe we both have suspicious minds.

Half hour 'til showtime, Elvis, I'm opening it up. Gotta see what they're workin' on. Don't tell anyone, OK? ... Jesus Christ! Are you kidding me? It's Jesus Christ! Unbelievable! They're developing a hologram Jesus show! Is there anything they won't do for a buck? Someone must have left it here by mistake. Elvis—meet the *King* of Kings. You know, that gives me an idea. They want the King, I'll give 'em the King. Me. Harry A. Bindlestiff. If people didn't know my name before, they're gonna know it now.

You ready, Jesus? Time to rise again. You remember how, right? Let's get you out of that safe and into the projector. Man oh man, this is gonna be good. Wonder what you're gonna do—some of your

greatest hits maybe? Turn water into wine? Or doobies, if you want to keep up with the times. Cast out some demons? Always a few in every show lookin' for trouble. How 'bout savin' some souls? Like mine, for instance, *before* the promoter crucifies me.

Sorry we don't have time for a trial run, Jesus, but it's almost showtime. The crowd's getting impatient. Hear them out there? Excuse me while I get this console humming—lighting, sound, smoke, special effects—we want 'em to *feel* your presence. If they think seeing *Elvis* is a religious experience... Don't worry, Elvis, this ain't no Heartbreak Hotel. I got you on standby if this doesn't work out. Dum-de-dum-de-dum-dum...and bingo! Now to start the dumb generic prerecorded intro... OK, Jesus, say your prayers, we're ready to roll.

I'm just gonna slip you into the projector, like this, and it's 3 - 2 - 1 - SHOWTIME! ... What the... Let me try that again. 3 - 2- 1 - SHOWTIME! ... Something wrong with this switch? Or is it this stupid program? Jesus—you in there?

Something wrong with all of you. No one has heeded the warnings.

What? Who said that?
Every technology has consequences, Harry. Do you want to be responsible for my Second Coming?

No, no, I mean... What? They told me this job would drive me crazy. Now I'm hearing things. Machines can't talk.

I'm the ghost in the machine, Harry. The Holy Ghost. Can't you feel my presence?

This is nuts. Only thing I feel is my fame slippin' away. Let's try this again. 3 - 2 - 1 - Go!

If I come out there, Harry, there's going to be Hell to pay. Earthquakes, hailstorms, famine, pestilence. I'm going to punish the wicked and reward the faithful. Is that what you want, Harry A. Bindlestiff?

It's not what I want. It's the first rule of show business: give 'em what they want and leave 'em wanting more. I'm just doing my job. And who the Hell am I talking to? I better put more coffee on. Ask for time off. Something.

You have a choice, Harry. Play the show, or destroy it and save humanity.

Get your head on straight, Harry. You can't destroy it—it's your ticket to fame, remember? I'll do this one last time. 3 - 2 - 1 - SHOWTIME!

The first locusts swarmed under the door at the same moment the crowd began screaming.

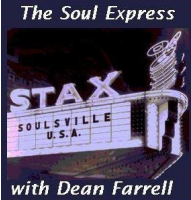


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Irma Thomas

By Dean Farrell

As host of “The Soul Express,” I play the biggest names in 1960s and ‘70s-era soul music. I also mix in the many great soul artists who did not necessarily become household names but were no less talented. This month’s column is about Irma Thomas, the Soul Queen of New Orleans.



She was born Irma Lee in Ponchatoula, Louisiana, on February 18, 1941. As a child, she listened to her father’s 78 RPMs of blues acts like B.B. King, John Lee Hooker, Percy Mayfield, and Lightnin’ Hopkins. In the third grade, she played the Fairy Godmother in her school’s production of *Cinderella*. At age 11, she performed at the Ritz theater’s talent night. She did so three times before winning first prize, five dollars.

At age 14, she became pregnant and married the baby’s father. During their short-lived marriage, Irma worked for 50 cents an hour as a dishwasher and sang in a gospel quartet at the Home Mission Baptist Church. By age 17, she was married to her second husband, Andrew Thomas, and had three children.

She subsequently found a waitressing job at the Pimlico club, where bandleader Tommy Ridgley played on Wednesday nights. After Thomas got the courage to ask Ridgley if she could perform a song, people started coming into the club asking for “the Singing Waitress.” When her boss fired Thomas for singing instead of waiting on tables, Ridgley came to her aid; he helped her land a record deal with the local Ron label. Her debut release, “Don’t Mess With My Man,” made the *Billboard* Rhythm & Blues chart in the summer of 1960. By now, she was 19 years old, a mother of four, and a two-time divorcee.

She next recorded for the New Orleans-based Minit label, where she worked with songwriter/producer Allen Toussaint. Her Minit output included regional hits like “It’s Too Soon to Know,” “I Done Got Over It,” “It’s Raining,” and “Ruler of My Heart.” (Otis Redding would convert the latter into one of his early hits, “Pain in My Heart.”) She also sang backup for her labelmates Aaron Neville, Ernie K-Doe, Benny Spellman, Lee Dorsey, Jessie Hill, *et al.*

In 1963, Liberty Records picked up the option to Thomas’ Minit contract and placed her on its Imperial subsidiary. Sensing that she was ready for the pop market, the label had Thomas record primarily in New York and Los Angeles. Her Imperial debut became her signature song. The self-written “Wish Someone Would Care” hit #2 R&B and #17 pop in the spring of 1964. Her follow-up, “Anyone Who Knows What Love Is (Will Understand),” was co-written by Randy Newman and country singer Jeannie Seely. Some 47 years later, the song found a new audience when it turned up in the Netflix anthology series, *Black Mirror*. She also recorded “Time Is on My Side,” which the Rolling Stones copied note for note.

When Liberty declined to renew her contract in 1967, Thomas moved on to Chess Records. Her biggest hit there was a 1968 remake of the Otis Redding song, “Good to Me.” After her stint at Chess, Thomas relocated to California and recorded for various independent labels before she returned to Louisiana. She married her manager, Emile Jackson, in 1975. In the early ‘80s, she opened the Lion’s Den Club and took a break from recording. (The club went out of business after Hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans in 2005.)

Thomas later signed with Rounder Records and, in 1991, received her first Grammy Award nomination for *Live! Simply the Best*. She also came out with several gospel albums and continued to record secular music. Her album *Sing It!* received a Grammy nomination in 1999.

In 2007, Thomas won the Grammy for Best Contemporary Blues Album, *After the Rain*. That same year, she was inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame. In 2013 and ‘14, Thomas won the Blues Music Award in the “Soul Blues Female Artist” category. In 2018, she was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award for Performance at the Americana Music Honors & Awards. In 2021, the Soul Queen of New Orleans was the topic of a PBS documentary, *Irma Thomas: My Life in Music*. And in 2025, she and Galactic teamed up on the album, *Audience With the Queen*. She also appears annually at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.



Rock critic Dave Marsh included “Wish Someone Would Care” in his 1989 book, *The Heart of Rock and Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made*.

Charted singles:

- “Don’t Mess With My Man” (1960) R&B #22
- “Wish Someone Would Care” (1964) R&B #2, Pop #17
- “Anyone Who Knows What Love Is (Will Understand)” (1964) R&B #29, Pop #52
- “Times Have Changed” (1964) R&B #30, Pop #98
- “He’s My Guy” (1964) R&B #24, Pop #63
- “You Don’t Miss a Good Thing (Until It’s Gone)” (1965) Pop #109
- “I’m Gonna Cry Till My Tears Run Dry” (1965) Pop #130
- “Take a Look” (1965) Pop #118
- “It’s a Man’s—Woman’s World” (1966) Pop #119
- “Good to Me” (1968) R&B #42

Other notable Irma Thomas recordings include “Break-A-Way,” “Time Is on My Side,” “Times Have Changed,” “He’s My Guy,” “A Woman Will Do Wrong,” “Let’s Do It Over,” and “Security.”

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

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

Tai Chi Home

All the Time in the World

By Joe Pandolfo

Once all the blossoms are opened, all their heart fire released, the slow turn to late summer can begin.



It’s the season of long afternoons, getting your rest in a daydream as petals let loose and go floating.

When sundown comes, soft fire touches every ripple on the water. Slip yourself in and you’ll have all the time in the world.

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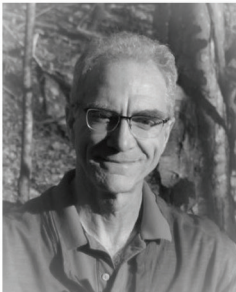
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Five Men and a Boat: Some Local Revolutionaries and the *Oliver Cromwell*

By Martin Moebus

In war, history often gives us broad strokes of generals, battles, and turning points. But the American Revolution was shaped by the lesser-known events and the men who answered the call.

April 19, 1775, the Battles at Lexington and Concord, ignited patriotic fever. News of the clashes spread rapidly via the *Lexington Alarm* letter. At 11 o'clock the next day, the letter arrived in Brooklyn. Israel Putnam, hearing the news in his field, rode for Cambridge. By 4 o'clock the letter was delivered to Christopher Leffingwell's home in Norwich, where Gov. Jonathan Trumbull heard the news. The letter arrived in New London at 7 o'clock that night and was heard by William Coit. Passing through Norwich along the way, Coit and his soldiers joined the fight first at Cambridge, then at Bunker Hill and Roxbury. On July 3, in Cambridge, George Washington assumed command of the Continental Army, calling for men from throughout New England. Many, including those from Windham County, answered the call.



Leffingwell House where alarm letter was read.

Pomfret doctor Albigeance Waldo was commissioned surgeon in Col. Jedidiah Huntington's regiment in Cambridge, and then served in Roxbury. Thomas Gray of Windham served in the Boston area as surgeon's mate. From the Mohegan tribe, Abimelech Uncas enlisted as a private in Capt. Nathan Peter's Massachusetts company in Roxbury. As a servant to Christopher Leffingwell of Norwich, he may well have been one of the first to hear the news of Lexington and Concord.

By March 1776, heavy guns from Fort Ticonderoga arrived in Boston, compelling the British forces to leave Boston against overwhelming firepower. With the British evacuating, William Coit, Thomas Gray, Albigeance Waldo, and Abimelech Uncas dispersed. During the Revolution, their journeys crisscrossed on land and sea. At the center of their overlapping stories is the *Oliver Cromwell*, Connecticut's largest and most ambitious ship.

Capt. William Coit was tall, portly, soldierly, and jovial. Some called him a "humorous genius" and "eccentric and very liberal," which made him popular with his crew. He liked to wear a scarlet cloak and was derisively called The Great Red Dragon behind his back.

Coit's naval career started promisingly enough as captain of a creaky old schooner called *Harrison*, seizing British supply ships in the Boston area. He described his ship's weapons as being from the age of Noah's Ark and said that if he fired two guns at the same time "it would split her open from her gunwale to her keel." Seen trying to seize a supply ship in Boston harbor under the very noses of the British, his bravery was unquestioned. In Plymouth, Coit captured two ships filled with fish, flour, hogs, sheep, cattle, potatoes, cheese, and chickens. He even forced the captured crew to walk over Plymouth Rock! Unfortunately, he had a habit of running aground and capturing ships belonging to other patriots. Captured ships were meant to help pay for troops, and Washington grew exasperated with Coit's crew stripping ships of anything not nailed down to keep for themselves. Coit was sacked after a few weeks, with Washington saying, "The plague, trouble, and vexation I have had with the crews of all the armed vessels is inexpressible. I do not believe there is not on earth a more disorderly set." Wearing a Red Dragon costume is great for passing out Halloween candy, but regrettably, Coit was out of his league on his next assignment, Connecticut's *Oliver Cromwell*.



Oliver Cromwell ship model.

The *Oliver Cromwell*

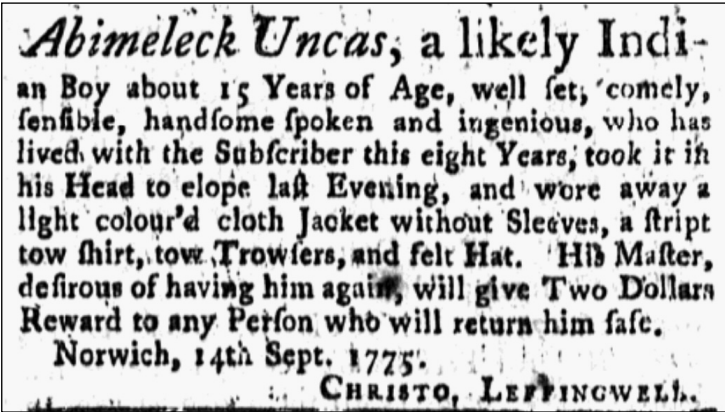
Of all the ships Connecticut built for the Revolution, the *Oliver Cromwell* was the largest, with 24 guns, an 80-foot keel, a 27-foot beam, and 12 feet deep. Ordered in January 1776, it was built by Uriah Hayden in Essex, Connecticut.¹

Launched in June, she was struck by lightning while in port, damaging her masts, but was quickly repaired. Soon under the command of Captain Coit, she quickly sailed to New London, arriving on August 20. This was the last quick thing the Red Dragon did with the ship.

Coit busied himself gathering supplies and hiring crew. Months went by with crew members joining, then unexpectedly leaving. Exasperated with the delays, Governor Trumbull sent Jedediah Elderkin of Windham to help get the ship out to sea. Coit was ordered to "get going," but didn't. Thomas Gray was assigned as surgeon's mate in September, followed by Dr. Samuel Lee, also of Windham, as chief surgeon. The surgeons soon saw the disarray and left. Next, Albigeance Waldo was assigned surgeon. He too left, joining the army along with Lee and Gray. All ended up wintering in Valley Forge together.

In December, Coit took the ship for a shakedown cruise and discovered that her masts were too big before nearly running her aground. A sailor noted that while a good swearer and popular with the crew, "Coit seems to have had difficulty attracting able subordinates or skilled seamen." Subsequent reports show his sailing master pick as "a fisherman but no seaman."

In late January, Coit sent the governor a cask of wine via Christopher Leffingwell (hoping to appease him?). Trumbull sent back a letter to "tell us when you are ready." Coit responded in about two weeks, noting that of his crew, 48 had deserted, 18 were AWOL, one was murdered, and one drowned. The officers longed to fight and wanted off this forsaken ship.



Abimelech Advertisement for his return.

The Red Dragon was called to Lebanon to make account. Meanwhile, his unsupervised crew celebrated the marriage of crew member Mr. Hinman by firing the ship's guns. Unbeknownst to the officers, a "mischievous lad"

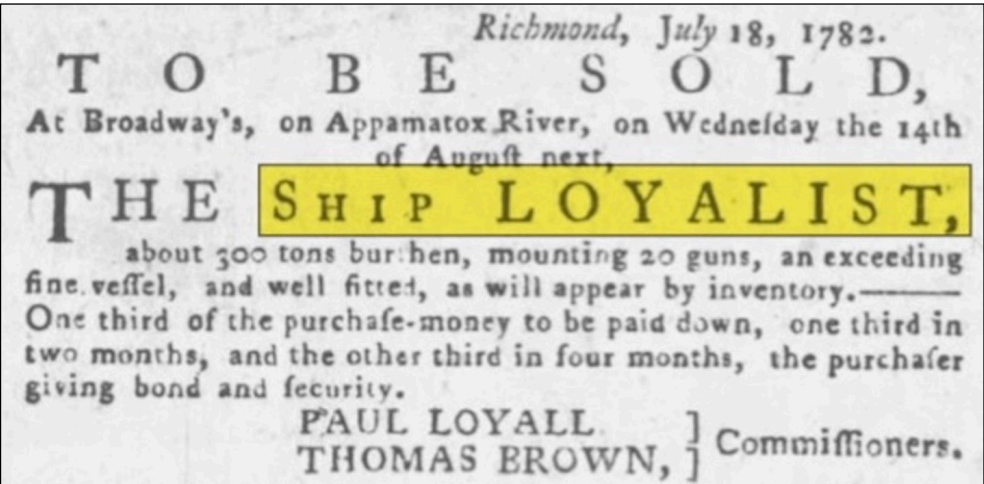
was tricked into loading a gun with live ammo, which was then shot over New London. Luckily no one was hurt.

The governor had had enough. Coit was fired, with the governor saying, "[I] have been greatly mortified for a long time to find it out of your power to push the ship out on a cruise" and "[y]ou have from various causes been greatly embarrassed and that you still labor under difficulties in your Command." The *Oliver Cromwell* quickly sailed with a new captain, capturing many British vessels.

Great grandson of Joshua Uncas, a Mohegan, Abimelech was born about 1760. At seven years of age, Abimelech was placed in service of Christopher Leffingwell. The Leffingwell and Uncas families went way back. Thomas Leffingwell, a founder of Norwich and tribal friend, helped save Chief Uncas and the Mohegans from the Narragansetts at Fort Shantok. Now, businessman Christopher Leffingwell ran an inn in Norwich as well as a paper mill and chocolate factory, among other businesses. At fifteen, Abimelech ran away, heading for Boston and becoming a patriot. Christopher advertised in a local paper offering a two-dollar reward for Abimelech's return, but as far as we know, Abimelech never looked back.

Abimelech joined Col. Danielson's regiment, where in November he was given a bounty coat, a common payment for service at the time. While in the Boston area, he witnessed the British evacuating. With the British retreating, the regiment disbanded and we lose Abimelech for a while.

Two years later, he enlisted in the First Connecticut regiment along with Albigeance Waldo of Pomfret, fighting



Loyalist for sale Virginia Gazette Aug 10, 1782.

in the Battle of Germantown and wintering under miserable conditions at Valley Forge. Samuel Lee and Thomas Gray were in the Fourth Regiment nearby. They probably saw each other in camp.

The next year, winter camp was under Israel Putnam in Redding, Connecticut. Abimelech observed the execution of a deserter and the hanging of a British spy. In May 1779, before the camp broke up, he himself deserted for reasons unknown and enlisted on the *Oliver Cromwell*, serving along with relative Ben Uncas. He picked the wrong voyage, as the *Oliver Cromwell* was captured by the British. Abimelech, along with the rest of the crew, was sent to the prison ship *New Jersey* in New York.

Afterwards

William Coit – Coit tried again and had better luck as a privateer on board the sloop *America*, capturing two ships from Ireland and Bristol, UK. When Benedict Arnold burned New London on September 6, 1781, Coit was captured and detained for a time on a prison ship in New York, much like Abimelech. Liberated, he returned to New London and his shipyard business and after the war moved to North Carolina, where he died. His New London house still stands.

Thomas Gray – Gray returned to Windham, became a physician and merchant, and died at 42 in 1792.

Samuel Lee – Lee returned to Windham and his doctoring. He would become famous as the inventor of Lee's Bilious Pills, told in another tale.

Christopher Leffingwell – Besides his businesses, he was appointed the first naval officer for the port of Norwich. His relationship with Abimelech after the war is un-

continued on next page



Coit House.

known—though it is possible Abimelech had died by then.

Abimelech Uncas – What happened to Abimelech remains unknown. While 11,500 Americans perished aboard British prison ships, if uninjured, he probably survived, as Connecticut paid for the crew’s release after only two months of captivity. Writing in August after their release, fellow prisoner Daniel Stanton of the *Oliver Cromwell* reported that they were well cared for on the *New Jersey* before moving to the prison hospital ship *Good Hope*. Relative Ben Uncas appears to have made it back, being buried in the tribal burying grounds in Norwich in 1781. Though details of his fate remain a mystery, his legacy endures in a carved powder horn he made during the Siege of Boston. Years later, it would appear on *Antiques Roadshow*!

Albigeance Waldo – A poet and physician, his diary provides historians valuable insights into life at Valley Forge. Washington presented him a sword for his service in the war. He went on to become a successful doctor, treating over 6,000 patients, and played a key role in founding the Windham County Medical Society.

The Oliver Cromwell – The *Oliver Cromwell* was captured by the British and sent to New York, serving first as a privateer, then recommissioned in the British Navy as the HMS *Loyalist*. On August 30, 1781, it was in turn captured by the French and renamed the *Loyaliste*, serving at Yorktown, escorting French and American soldiers. After the Battle of Yorktown, the French returned her to the Americans. (Readers of *Neighbors* will be pleased to read this part of the story in print for the first time. Thanks to Michael Dyer and the Mystic Seaport for their collaboration in putting this part of the story together.)

To raise funds for a naval force to protect local trade in the Chesapeake Bay, commissioners Paul Loyall and Thomas Brown sold the *Oliver Cromwell*—now known again as the *Loyalist*—for one thousand pounds. Who bought the *Oliver Cromwell* and where it ultimately ended up is still lost to history, but the search continues. Stay tuned!

¹ Essex is just a few miles from where Joshua Uncas passed from this world and, through his will, bestowed the land that would become Windham.

Photos contributed.

UConn Extension’s Online Gardening Course Helps Home Gardeners

Submitted by Stacey Stearns

UConn Extension’s **Fundamentals of Home Gardening** online course is helping gardening enthusiasts of all levels cultivate thriving home gardens. The course is divided into four modules covering essential gardening topics:

- CORE – Water, Soils, and Botany
- ENVIRONMENTALS – Plants and the Environment, Plant Pathology, Entomology, and Pest Management
- FOODS – Growing Vegetables, Tree Fruits & Berries, and Herbs
- ORNAMENTALS – Herbaceous Ornamentals, Woody Plants, Turf, and Native-Nonnative vs. Invasive Plants

Participants will learn from UConn Extension professionals and complete the course at their own pace. Whether you’re new to gardening or looking to refine your skills, this course provides the essential knowledge needed for success. Many home gardeners face common challenges, such as poor soil quality, plant diseases, pest infestations, or selecting the wrong plants for their growing conditions. The **Fundamentals of Home Gardening** course offers science-based solutions to these issues and empowers gardeners to make informed decisions that improve the health and productivity of their gardens.

Unlike the **UConn Extension Master Gardener Program**, the Fundamentals of Home Gardening course does not have a volunteer component. It is a fully online, self-paced program designed for individuals who want to deepen their gardening knowledge without the commitment of volunteer service.

“Gardening is not just about planting; it’s about understanding the science behind it,” said Bonnie Burr, UConn Extension’s assistant director. “This course gives participants the foundation they need to create and maintain healthy, productive gardens.” Participants in this course gain practical gardening skills and experience the many benefits gardening provides:

-Health & Well-being: Gardening is a great form of physical activity, reduces stress, and improves mental well-being.

-Food Security: Learning to grow your own fruits, vegetables, and herbs ensures access to fresh, nutritious produce.

-Environmental Impact: Sustainable gardening practices promote biodiversity, reduce pesticide use, and contribute to a healthier planet.

-Personal Enjoyment: Whether growing flowers, food, or landscaping plants, gardening is a fulfilling and rewarding hobby.

Registration is now open. Learn more and enroll at: [s.uconn.edu/fundamental](https://uconn.edu/fundamental). Home gardeners with questions can visit the or [submit their questions online](#).



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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

Improvising an Honest Living

By Jesse Clark

Improv has always been a big part of my life. Every interaction I have come across can seem like an improv scene. I think of what the motivations behind the characters are and I want to know what the scene requires. In improv, one may have the goal to be funny, but if it’s not true to the scene, it won’t be funny. One needs to adapt to the scene—still bring oneself to it, but adapt. What is the goal of the people in the scene? This is actually a sociological concept, for when you find yourself interacting with people in real life, you adapt to the situation. I found this concept revealing itself to me in high school. It was actually this concept that helped me explain why I didn’t always get along with my fellow classmates in elementary and middle school.

As a kid, I always felt like an adult. You know how they say that some kids seem like little adults? Well, that was me. As a result, I always felt like I was on the side of the teachers when it came to teachers vs. students. The goal of the scene, as I saw it, was the teacher is teaching us and we are learning. However, some of my classmates saw the scene as “How can we keep the teacher from teaching us?” That was one way I was at odds with my fellow classmates. I grew frustrated and wanted to control my classmates. Of course, this didn’t work. Still, I thought that I knew better than them. Years later, my cousin would correct me, saying, “You didn’t *think* you knew better than them, you *knew* you knew better than them.” He was right. I was an individual, at odds with the societal structure that they had created. There would be times they wanted me to participate and go along and I was calling BS on them.

This created another issue that increased in middle school, for I found myself not only at odds with them, but with myself; I would go back and forth between being polite and easygoing and then have moments of intense frustration that would come out verbally *and* physically. I finally realized I was suppressing my actual feelings (sarcastic, witty, a little bit of a class clown) in order to please others. However, it only made people more frustrated with me and me more frustrated with them. Middle school was the worst because I could see that we were all going through the crazy hormonal change and I wanted people to understand that and be nice to each other, but this led people that were pretty nice people to begin with to get caught up in the popularity contest and be...well, middle schoolers. This made me even more angry, thus causing an even greater rift between me and the microcosm my fellow classmates created.

Finally, I did the smartest thing—I gave up. I was tired of trying to control others, trying to please them, trying to change them. I just became my authentic self, and something amazing happened: not only did I feel better physically and emotionally, but people started liking me again. This was because I was being my authentic, funny, relaxed self that I had kept hid for years. I realized that I had thought I was being my authentic self by being smart, polite, and a “teacher’s pet”; however, this was only one part of who I was and I had actually hidden my authentic self to blend in. I had grown tired of standing out and wanted to blend in. But the more I tried to blend in, the more I stood out. I utilized something called “code-switching,” a term used to describe when someone changes their behavior, appearance, or

feelings in order to blend in with a social circle. Well, I was happier once I allowed all of me to shine and just stopped caring about what others thought. It also became easier once 8th grade came and we all matured a little bit.

As an adult, I find that we “code-switch” all the time. In church, for example, I usually get the question, “What have you been doing this week?” If I get a lot of people asking the same question, I start answering in different ways; I may give one person one answer and the next person a totally different answer. These responses are all true, but it’s just what I either intentionally or unintentionally share at a particular time, based on the person, based on how I feel, based on the improv nature of the scene.

Even politically speaking, I can disagree with people that are on the same political side as me. Sometimes people may want to take certain activist actions that I don’t agree with because of the motivation, or I don’t think that that action will be the best to achieve their goal. This usually isn’t a problem, unless people try to convince me to join them and then get upset with me when I decline, sharing my point of view. I don’t mind if *they* participate in that action; if they honestly think it will have a great effect, more power to them. I certainly join in actions such as protests and rallies. But, whether in elementary school or in the adult world, don’t try to control me like that or I will stand my ground against you, even if we are on the same side.

The key, as I was trying to get my classmates to realize, is that when we are all in the same social circle, on the same side, we should honor individualism as much as the group effort. We should celebrate when people are brave enough to be their authentic selves around us, because honesty is bravery. It can be quite hard to do. I have found myself sometimes not being honest with close friends in order to spare their feelings, but by not being honest, I ended up hurting their feelings. I should have told them, “I trust you enough to be honest about my feelings.” Improv is usually thought of as more terrifying than acting because there is no script, no guiderails; it’s just you and another person on the stage, so you have to trust that person in order for it to work. All of life is a stage and it takes guts to play a scene honestly. It can be tough, but it’s worth it and it may be a pleasant surprise to people.

There once was a police officer who pulled over a driver that appeared to be inebriated. The officer was experienced enough to have heard all the excuses. The driver got out of the car and the police officer asked him to walk in a straight line. The driver said he couldn’t. The police officer sighed and asked why not, expecting any number of excuses. The driver simply said, “Because I’m drunk!”

So play each scene as it’s called for, but be you. Be honest with yourself and give yourself the same grace you want from others. You deserve it. Sometimes it’s a struggle to be yourself out of fear of judgment and persecution, but hopefully, you can find social circles that allow you to shine and that love and accept you for all of you. If you are lucky enough to be able to live your truth, to share your love, then that is the greatest freedom of all.

My Favorite Teacher: Mrs. Ruth Doughty

By Dennis Gagnon

The brain-challenging television game show *Jeopardy!* will occasionally have the host ask the contestants, “Who was your favorite teacher?” One evening, my wife posed the same question to me during a commercial break. Without hesitation, I answered, “Mrs. Doughty.” Mrs. Ruth Doughty.

For years, she taught piano in her Woodstock home. From talking to people over the years, I’m convinced that all those in the area who played the instrument—or encouraged their children to—had at one time taken lessons in Mrs. Doughty’s home.

The reasons why people had no hesitation in selecting her are multifold.

First, a good teacher must assess a student’s starting point. Sitting on the piano bench before her black baby grand, I was asked, “Where is middle C?” Scanning the keys, I hesitantly pressed one I thought might be correct. It was D—close, but not quite. Still, a starting point had been established: the very beginning.

Second, a music teacher must possess the patience of Job. To endure the harsh sounds of a beginner’s errors requires saintly determination. Mrs. Doughty had that—and a firm religious conviction she shared with her late husband, Henry, the longtime pastor of South Woodstock Baptist Church. (Only once at a lesson did I hiss “Geez” in frustration; thereafter I remained silent—or murmured “hmm.”)

My inauspicious start wasn’t quickly resolved. Staring at the sheet music, I saw what looked like a secret code—parallel lines, hollow and black dots, some standing alone, others connected with beams, and what resembled a math fraction at the beginning. How was I ever going to turn these symbols into music?

Mrs. Doughty offered mnemonics to help decode the notes, promising that in time I’d instinctively know what to play. Really?

But she was right. Mrs. Doughty knew that aside from rare musical prodigies, most students need a solid foundation in reading music. She gradually guided me from rote memorization to recognizing the spatial relationships between notes. It was a steep learning curve—for me. Yet she steered me through the narrow shoals between boredom and frustration with remarkable skill.

Third, teaching must offer a modicum of personal reward. A co-worker of mine began piano lessons with another teacher a week before I started with Mrs. Doughty. After just three weeks, she quit. The endless repetition of scales, she said, was “torturous.” In contrast, I was taught to play a simple children’s song in my first lessons. Not exactly Mozart, but it was music! Scales came later, introduced gradually—never overwhelming.

Fourth, a cornerstone of teaching is to cultivate a welcoming atmosphere. Soon, Tuesday night lessons became less intimidating. A warm, upbeat conversation always greeted me. Once seated in her wingback chair, she’d reach up to turn on the nearby floor lamp. With that click, the room shifted from chat to focus.

A teacher’s manner of correction is an essential fifth reason. “Are you counting?” she’d ask gently, catching me shortchanging a note. “Where are you going?” she’d joke, as my hand wandered off when just a finger stretch would do. And sometimes, her silver telescoping pointer would slide past my right elbow and tap the exact measure I needed to correct.

On occasion, she’d lean forward and demonstrate the tricky passage on the upper keys near her. I marveled at how her fingers moved—graceful, accurate, and effortlessly.

Encouragement from Mrs. Doughty was rare—and powerful. On my third lesson, I unknowingly replayed a measure and corrected a wrong note without prompt-

ing. She beamed: “You heard the wrong note and corrected it!” That night, I couldn’t wait to tell my wife that her teasing claim I was “tone-deaf” was officially disproved.

She believed in reserving praise for when it truly mattered—yet another reason I list her as my best teacher. I often sat quietly as the talented Zach Paige finished his lesson. If he forgot his music, it hardly mattered—he had it memorized. At the end, he’d earn a cheerful “Good job, Zach!” The one time I forgot my music, I endured 30 minutes of sight-reading. My goodbye? A modest but meaningful: “That’s the idea, Dennis.” When I finally earned a “Good job,” I knew it was well deserved.

Mrs. Doughty once left me in awe in a way that reminded me of the *Jeopardy!* contestants who demonstrate remarkable skill. One time, I arrived early for my lesson while she chatted in the kitchen with the mother of the two Torcellini boys. Warming up at the piano, I began playing my assignment. From the kitchen, she called out, “You need to sharp the G.” I checked the treble clef, confused. “Third measure in the bass clef,” she added. Sure enough, there it was. For a moment, I suspected the Beethoven bust on the piano had a hidden microphone and camera.

Can you imagine pausing regimented lessons to go off-script for a moment? No? Well, that’s the sixth reason I regard her as my favorite teacher. She encouraged her students to explore music that brought them joy. She’d set aside time from the scheduled “meat and potatoes” lessons to help learn a beloved song—so long as it wasn’t too advanced. If it was, she’d simply say, “Not yet,” and return to it later when the student was ready.

No question was ever too trivial. Whether I asked about music theory or the circle of fifths, she answered thoughtfully. Sometimes, she’d even bring additional material to follow up, hoping an alternative approach might solidify my understanding.

In December, lessons shifted toward Christmas carols—sometimes as duets. Another hidden talent of hers emerged: a beautiful collaborative spirit.

Every spring, Mrs. Doughty and her daughter, Priscilla Colwell, coordinated the annual recital at South Woodstock Baptist Church. Weeks beforehand, student-selected pieces became the focus of lessons. Each student was prepared. If the performance wasn’t perfect, it was never due to a lack of teaching—it was nerves.

Learning music changed the way I hear the world. I notice the background scores in films, admire pianists who play elaborate music without sheet music before them. I’m convinced that every piano student is drawn to each piano they pass. Once, one of Mrs. Doughty’s longtime students visited the Governor’s Mansion with a touring group. Unable to resist, he asked Gov. Ned Lamont if he could play the grand piano. “Unfortunately, no,” the governor said, “but if *you* play, go right ahead.” The student launched into a recital piece, enchanting everyone in the room. When word of the performance reached Mrs. Doughty, she was euphorically proud.

That’s another reason I regard her as above other teachers: your success was her success.

Time passes, and piano lessons eventually come to an end. Yet whenever I sit at a piano and play the first piece I memorized—“A Time for Us” from *Romeo and Juliet*—I’m transported back to those Tuesday evenings in Mrs. Doughty’s living room. A space where work worries, family stress, and outside concerns faded—replaced by the music from a black baby grand piano and the steady guidance of a truly remarkable teacher.

Good memories. Ones that only grow more melodious with each passing year.



A Benefit Concert for the People of Ukraine

By Matt Caraway

The Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) held its second benefit concert in support of the people of Ukraine on April 12, 2025. The first concert, held in September of 2022 after the conflict between Ukraine and Russia began, raised over \$5000 for the cause.

The Saturday evening concert at The Packing House brought together four Connecticut State Troubadours: Kala Farnham, Pierce Campbell, Lara Herscovitch, and Kate Callahan. Each performed original songs for the assembled audience of over 70. A silent auction with items from local businesses, as well as a raffle for a live painting of the event by local artist Jack Broderick, rounded out the evening.

The evening’s master of ceremonies, Alexander Kuzma, is community leader, fundraiser and activist in the Ukrainian American community. Kuzma expressed sincere thanks on behalf of the people of Ukraine to those who attended, donated, and local sponsors for the event. All proceeds from the event will go towards providing medical supplies to the Ukrainian population through Direct Relief. Additional donations have been received on the EC-CHAP website thru the end of June 2025. *Songs for Ukraine II* raised nearly \$6,000 for the people of Ukraine.

EC-CHAP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization, located in The Mill Works historic facility in South Willington. The organization’s mission is to support the local arts community and preserve the history of the Eastern Connecticut region. In addition to regular performances by local and national musical groups, singer/songwriter open mic nights, movie screenings, and live poetry series, EC-CHAP also supports a public art gallery and history museum. All activities are supported through volunteer efforts and local donations.

Matt Caraway is member of the EC-CHAP Board of Directors and serves as Board Secretary. Matt is a full-time architect and operates a photography studio at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT. You can reach Matt at matte@ec-chap.org. For questions and information about EC-CHAP, please call 518-791-9474; or email EC-CHAP at info@ec-chap.org.

To all our contributors-
Thank You!

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

Artist Allison Pillari
“Broken Homes”

Interview by Dan McGinley

Allison Pillari seems right at home, addressing my questions from an antique chair within the Dye and Bleach House Art Gallery. I ask about the amazing collection surrounding us.

“It’s all about the abandoned places we tend to forget. I wanted to create art that admires those things as if they were portraits, because we focus a lot on people. We have to also honor the places where we’ve been. That is a lot of what my art is about — themes of nostalgia, as well,” Pillari said.

Allison’s work reminds me of Andrew Wyeth or even a more subtle Norman Rockwell, without the staged posturing of cute children or grizzled adults. The still life allows you to imagine what happened before abandonment and decay. These works are haunting at times, depicting places where childhood friends dare each other to approach, after hearing scary stories.

I ask about inspiration, and Pillari appears introspective, saying, “A lot of times I’ll be driving . . . I have a piece — a gas station in Willimantic — they tore it down and I would drive past that a lot. It was such a beautiful, abandoned structure and feels like old technology. It feels like a time capsule locked on the property, so I’ll return to those places or go into abandoned buildings and take references, then go home and create some work about it. I genuinely feel a sense of loss if I drive past a place that I’ve seen multiple times, and then one day it’s just gone because they tore it down, and I missed my chance.”

An acrylic painting entitled “4 Hours” depicts an old house with huge window frames now empty of glass, which once offered amazing views. There is a small, intimate porch that must have been very inviting. The front lawn is now inhabited by trees which grew sometime after the house was abandoned, as they are very close to the siding, with one of them nearly blocking a front door. You can see how it had once been a very charming house and yard at one time; now just a distant memory to any former inhabitants, if they are still alive.

Part of the exhibit is entitled “Dollhouse Sculpture”, and Pillari explains, “I had an old coworker and she had this old doll house. She’s like, ‘I know you’re really into that kind of stuff,’ so I took it from her, fixed it up, and basically tore it apart to create the abandonment. I filled the seams and tried to make it as realistic as possible inside some of the rooms. There’s just something that really speaks to me about these abandoned places, like “Waiting Room VI” (chalk pastel). When I visited that location, you could just feel the energy in the room, and — seeing things that are really left behind — you create this narrative, like what happened here? What did they decide to take and why did they decide to leave certain things behind? There were documents and old employment cards done on typewriters, so I took some of those and used them in my art.

“In these places or around them, there’s a presence or maybe memories that are like ghosts. I would say that I believe in energy. Maybe not like there is a person, but I do believe that we fill a space with energy when we’re there and when we’re not there, it kind of sticks around . . . I feel like we leave our impression there when we take a space up, and then kind of abandon it.”

We talked about museums and how those nuanced feelings can get “lost,” and Pillari explains how the artifacts are, “done up in a way for the viewer or audience.” “With abandoned places, it’s not like that at all, you know. You feel it. It’s left the way it is, and you wonder if their presence is still there in some form, and that’s really interesting,” Pillari said, adding, “I mentioned Pompeii and you don’t get the same sensation because of how modernized they create the signs and bathrooms and gift shops. It’s an educational concept and beneficial, but in terms of *experience*, it’s not the same.

“I titled the showing ‘Broken Homes’ because it’s that feeling of emptiness, and I kind of grew up in a home that was filled with laughter and emotion. These spaces kind of remind me of the absence of something.”

Broken Homes will be at The Dye and Bleach House Gallery until June 28th.

The Gardiner Hall Jr. Museum
Tucked away in the sprawling millworks constructed by Gardiner Hall Jr. in 1860, a small treasure trove of historical portraits, photographs, antiques, and assorted mill artifacts are on display. Museum Curator and Dan McGinley awaits visitors every Saturday morning from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, eager to explain how the millworks played a major role in Willington and the surrounding area. To enter the museum, visitors pass through The Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery, where they can view numerous works of art by local artists. The millworks are located at 156 River Road in Willington, and admission is free.

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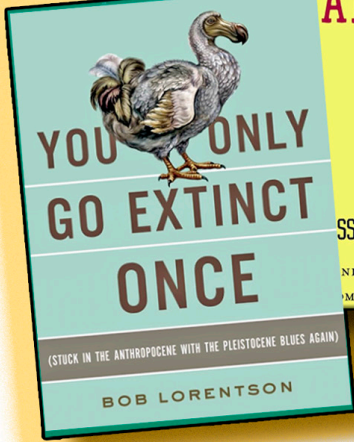
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Two books by
Bob Lorentson



“An author in whom Mark Twain’s literary spirit lives on.”
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Logarithm or Rhythm

By Bill Powers

“Everything in the universe has rhythm”
— Maya Angelou

It is possible that from the title of this story that you think it concerns mathematics. Well, it does not and I hope you are not disappointed. While it is true that logs are part of mathematics, in this case, the definition does embrace the concept that a “log” is a part of a trunk or a large branch of a tree that has fallen or been cut off. The suffix “arithm” does not have a specific meaning in the context of the word “rhythm.” However, it is related to the suffixes used in words like “rhythm.” Here rhythm refers to a regularly recurring sequence of events, actions or processes, for instance, the twice daily rhythms of the tides.

Given these points, this story is about a log tethered to the bottom of the pond where we call home, and the natural rhythms of animal behavior that have been observed over the past five years since the log has been set afloat. For most part, the pond is bordered by a thick forested population of trees down to the very edge of the water. Over the years, as trees along the shore have been uprooted or large branches have fallen into the water; the logs have created an appropriate habitat for Eastern Painted Turtles. These neighbors like to take advantage of the logs, when they are exposed to sunlight as they extend out into the water. The cold blooded “sun turtles,” as they are known, make great use of the broken tree opportunities to bask in the sun.

Robin, my neighbor, would ask me, “How are the turtles doing?” At that time, five years ago, I had been observing the turtles’ behavior for ten years and had also conducted a formal study to determine a useful method to count them in order to estimate their population. One day, as Robin and I were discussing the current status of the turtles at the pond, I mentioned my concern that their basking sites were rapidly diminishing. This was due to the deterioration of fallen logs in the water over the years, as well as increased shade resulting from the significant outward growth of tree branches as they extend out over the water for their leaves to capture the rays of the sun. A beaming smile suddenly erupted from Robin as he turned and pointed to a large pine that had recently fallen victim to a strong wind and said: “What if I cut a large chunk for the turtles and place it in the water and anchor it?” We agreed it would be worth trying.

After a couple of weeks, we saw Robin and his wife Arlene slowly paddling their canoe toward our side of the pond

with a log in tow. They deposited the log in the water that was a perfect spot for us to be able to view basking turtles. In a few days we spotted the first turtle and eventually we have counted as many as 26 on the 12-foot-long log at one time. Every spring they come to the log. They are there in large numbers on sunny days, especially when it is windy. The stronger the wind, the more turtles one can see on a predictable basis. Apparently, the wind dries the Turtle’s surface and prevents parasitic invasion.

Equally important for the observers of nature at my place is that the log also frequently attracts a number of other species at various times. Visitors include a variety of birds that fly or float to the log and climb aboard. A variety of ducks or geese visit, especially during migration times – Golden Eyes; Buffleheads; Mallards; Canada Geese and an occasional Swan. Other birds that visit the log include: Sandpipers; Cormorants; Bald Eagles; Ospreys; Blue Herons; and Green Herons.

For some reason, the Eastern Painted Turtles will tolerate the company of a Cormorant or even a pair of Cormorants all day long, but they do not accept other avian species. In like manner, Eastern Painted Turtles are willing to tolerate the presence of a Snapping Turtle on the log and are willing to share the log with them for hours. This is surprising since Snapping Turtles, according to many written sources, only leave the water to lay their eggs on land.

Last month a Bald Eagle swooped down to the log and grabbed a turtle only to drop it in the water twenty feet away. Once a Muskrat climbed aboard the log and the Turtles all quickly scattered.

Clearly, what is seen is an annual rhythm of nature that is underway. Year after year it is repeated. The turtles appear soon after the ice on the pond has melted. This is also true for the birds and other animals. It is like the arrival of male Redwing Blackbirds every February to the edge of the pond and the arrival of their female mates, four or five weeks later.

Nature moves in cycles. Nature has rhythms extending from the cycle of the moon to the ebb and flow of the tides and the movement of planets around the sun. In some ways Rhythms pervade our universe. We are not separate from the Earth and we are intricately connected to it. Eastern Painted Turtles bask in the sun on a log in the pond, every sunny day, year after year.

Bill Powers is a former teacher and a Goodwin Conservation Center Master Naturalist.

Summer Programs at Willington Library

Submitted by Debbie Linares
Assistant Director/Programmer

Our Summer Reading Program is a BIG deal here at the Willington Public Library and this year is no exception. Eight weeks of fun-filled educational programs, games, activities, and reading fun, await people of all ages (and not just for children!) Beginning Saturday, June 21 and running until Sunday, August 17.

Play is one of the ways we learn to relate to others, to think in new ways, and to foster friendships, new and old. Level Up at Your Library is this years theme and it is an all-ages summer reading program based around ALL types and kinds of games including puzzles, board and video games, and ping-pong to name a few. IREAD 2025: Level Up at Your Library reminds us that libraries are not just a space for knowledge, they are a space for fun too!

Register for Summer Reading and for every program or activity you participate in, whether one or all of what is being offered, you can earn a ticket toward prizes to try and win. These would include any of our regularly scheduled and offered events or any of the many new events and programs being featured during the summer, especially designed from our Summer Reading theme. There are so many to choose from and join in on. Here are just some of what you can do and enjoy!

Our opening day kick-off on Saturday, June 21 at 11:00am, will be a presentation of Native North American Games with musician and performer Michael Caduto. We’ll chant to stories, sing along to music and move together in a round dance. Everyone will have fun playing a variety of Native North American games, including hoops, rings, rabbit sticks, foot races and cat’s cradle. This engaging program for children and families explores the importance of games when growing up and how games help to keep us fit and sharpen our minds throughout our lives.

During the summer we will be showing movies on our BIG SCREEN towards the end of each month, Saturdays at 12:30pm. Join us on June 28 for “Sonic the Hedgehog 3”, July 19 for “Minecraft”, and on August 23, “Dog Man”.

We will have Drop-In Video Game Play. Come and play “Mario Party”, Tuesday, June 24 from 5:30-7:30pm, “Super Smash Bros.”, Saturday, July 12 from 12:00-2:00pm, and “Mario Kart”, Thursday, August 7 from 5:30-7:30pm. Bring your friends and compete!

We are having an awesome Summer Music Documentary Series presented by radio announcer and DJ for the weekly radio program “Musical Myriad” on WECS, 90.1 FM, Arthur Rovozzo. Arthur’s extensive musical knowledge and passion for historical roots has led to many fun and enjoyable programs. Many of his programs have been featured at The Packing House, here in Willington. We are so excited to have him here at our library presenting these great series. On Friday, June 27 at 6:30, “The 1970 Rock Festivals - Better than Woodstock”, Thursday June 17 and again on Friday, June 18th at 6:30, “1975-76 Crisscrossing the U.S. - Bob Dylan Tour”, and on Friday, August 22 at 6:30, “The Wrecking Crew - The REAL Musicians behind the Hits”. Listen, Watch, and Remember! Again, this is amazing history; some of which you may never have heard of before or known and an enjoyment to partake in regardless of age...IT’S MUSIC!

Something for everyone, Drop-In Board Game Play. Check our website for more

information. We are offering three different times when you can come in and play a variety of board games like Monopoly, Sorry, Trouble, Jenga, Checkers, Candyland, Scrabble, UNO, and MORE! Get out from behind the “screens” and enjoy the company of others.

We are collaborating with the Willington Conservation Commission with a Story Time and Scavenger Hunt on Saturday, July 5 at 10am, at the Fenton Ruby Park on Burma Road, in Willington. The first child and adult to complete the scavenger hunt will each win a prize, so don’t miss out! If we have rainy weather, we will meet next on July 19th. Let’s hope for sunshine!

Again, something for everyone, experience the ancient art of Henna with artist and designer, Linda Bowling from Henna-tize Me. This is FREE for ALL AGES! Registration is required, but walk-ins are welcome if there is enough time. This event will be happening on Thursday, July 10 from 6-8pm.

Comic Construction with Cartoonist, Matt Ryan, on Saturday, July 26 from 12:30-2:30pm. Matt will guide us through the creation of a comic page, the construction of a character, and the life of a comic from script to press. This educational and entertaining performance encourages participation from the audience as he creates the characters, scenarios and pages. Come and learn the basics of comic mechanics, the basics of drawing, and creating a story.

We will be playing Ping-Pong on Saturday, August 2 from 12-2pm and a Family Jigsaw Puzzle Time on Thursday, August 14 from 5:30-7:30. So many fun things to do.

We are a great place to hang out during the lazy, hazy, hot days of Summer. You can come and cool off at the library as well. Sit and read! We’d love to see you.

Lastly, for our Grand Finale, we will be hosting, ”The POOP Museum”! We are so over the moon excited to finally be having Susie Maguire with us. Need more poop in your life? YES! The idea for The Poop Museum arrived on October 3rd, 2020, when Susie was sitting in her back yard. She and her nephew Henry, shared a love of lavatorial humor and were always leaving each other funny pooppy messages. Susie decided to write Henry a book and the story was set in a Poop Museum. (We really do have them around the world!) Well, she loved the story so much that she launched The Poop Museum program that same day. She has created many poop programs over the past years. What started as an online program where 15,000 children from 80+ countries attended, now she does LIVE programs in schools and libraries, so, another 15,000 kids, parents and grandparents have discovered the delights to dung. There is so much to be learned! It’s the perfect combination of fun, fabulous, and fascinating facts, so that kids and adults never forget what they learned. We are having Susie on a special day when we would normally be closed...SUNDAY, August 17th at 1:00. You’ll want to come!

As you can see and read, we’ve got a great Summer line-up planned ahead. I hope you will come and visit and enjoy all of the wonderful things taking place. See you at the library!

For more ongoing programs, go to our website at www.willingtonpubliclibrary.com or signup to receive our library E-Blast at <https://www.willingtonpubliclibrary.org/e-blast-signup>. Check us out on our different Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, X, and YouTube

Red Sox Rewind

By Dennis Sherman

I first remember seeing the Sox on a 12 inch, black and white TV. The rabbit ears were placed to the proper position. The picture often rolled and looked like there was snow falling on Fenway. The addiction began.

Sox on. A park on Lansdowne. Green monster-space man. Grand slams and Grand stands. Ted,Yaz, Big Papi. Triple crown, the curse. Randy, Pedro, Papelbon. a bloody sock, Pesky pole. Fenway Frank’s, full count. Curt Gowdy in the booth. Texas leaguer, Baltimore chop. Smoky Joe-Dick Raditz. splitter, spit ball, screw ball, slider. Dom,Doerr, Dewey, Damon. Manny being Manny. game of pepper, can of corn. Lefty, Wake and the Eck. curve, change and cutter. Rice, Lynn and Nixon. Crack of the bat, clutch. Rem dog and Orcello. Full count, base on balls. Farell, Zim, Williams, Cora. Ground crew, monster seats. Petrocelli, Youk, Fisk and Foxx. Hit and run, suicide squeeze. Clemens, Tiant, Longberg and Young. Pitch out, pick off, brush back. Hooper, Boggs and the Hawk. Rain out, Buckners blunder. Piersall, Pedroia, Varitek, Tony C. Extra innings. PLAY BALL

Be the Change: A Yoga Path from Stillness to Impact

By Angie Jacques

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” – Mahatma Gandhi

It’s a powerful quote—one that’s been shared endlessly. But what does it really mean in the context of yoga? In yoga, we often speak about union: of body and breath, of thought and action, of inner and outer life. And it’s on the mat—through intentional movement, quiet stillness, and deep listening—that we begin to bridge those gaps.

When we show up to practice, we’re not just stretching muscles—we’re softening edges. We’re practicing presence. We’re noticing our tendencies, our reactivity, our resistance. And in doing so, we begin to change—not by force, but by awareness.

This is how transformation happens in yoga. Subtle. Consistent. From the inside out.

Want more peace in the world? Practice pausing before you speak.

Want more compassion? Start with how you treat yourself on days when your body feels tired or your mind feels scattered.

Want more kindness? Let your breath be gentle. Let your effort be balanced with ease.

Yoga reminds us: we are not separate from the world we wish to change. Every breath, every choice, every moment of mindfulness creates a ripple. We don’t have to wait for the world to change. We get to be that change.

And it starts right here—on the mat, with you.

But let’s take it further. Being the change isn’t just a poetic ideal—it’s a lived practice. One breath at a time, one choice at a time. Yoga is an invitation to live in alignment with our highest values.

It’s easy to wish the world were different—to hope for more peace, less violence, more kindness, less division. But real change begins with how we move through our lives. How we speak when we’re frustrated. How we show up when no one’s watching. How we treat others—not just those who are kind to us, but those who challenge us, oppose us, or simply misunderstand us.

Yoga, at its essence, is a practice of remembering: that who we are at our core is whole, compassionate, and connected. When we lose sight of that, we react from fear, scarcity, and separation. But each time we return to the mat, we come back to that deeper knowing.

The yamas and niyamas—the ethical roots of yoga—offer guidance here. They remind us that yoga is not just a physical practice, but a moral and spiritual one. Ahimsa, or nonviolence, starts with the way we speak to ourselves. Satya, or truthfulness, asks us to live with honesty and integrity. Tapas, or discipline, calls us to commit to transformation, even when it’s uncomfortable.

Each posture, each breath, becomes a mirror. Are we straining? Avoiding? Comparing? Judging? When we notice these patterns on the mat, we build the

capacity to see them off the mat—at work, in relationships, in community. This is the gift of yoga: it creates a pause between stimulus and response, a space where new choices can emerge.

Being the change means embodying your values in real time.

It means recognizing that peace is not passive—it’s a practice. Compassion is not a concept—it’s a way of being. Kindness is not weakness—it’s courage in action.

And it doesn’t have to be grand or public or perfect. It can be simple. Quiet. Unseen.

It’s taking a breath before replying to an angry email. It’s offering a smile to the cashier who looks overwhelmed. It’s letting someone merge in traffic without gritting your teeth. It’s making room for someone else’s truth, even when it challenges yours.

Yoga teaches us to move from reactivity to responsibility—from “Why is this happening to me?” to “How can I meet this moment with grace?”

Because ultimately, our yoga is not measured by how flexible we are, but by how we live. Can we move through the world with awareness? With heart? With steadiness?

Change doesn’t come all at once. It comes in layers. Just like the breath, just like the practice.

You may not feel like you’re doing much. But every time you choose to stay present, every time you respond instead of react, every time you choose integrity over ease—you’re planting seeds. And those seeds grow.

They grow in your relationships. In your work. In your community. They ripple out beyond you.

In this way, yoga becomes not just a practice for personal well-being, but a radical act of participation in a more conscious world. Not by escaping it, but by engaging with it differently.

There’s a story often told in yoga circles: a student asks their teacher, “How can I change the world?” The teacher replies, “Go home and love your family.” It starts small. It starts close in. It starts with you.

So the next time you step on your mat, know that you are doing something far more powerful than just stretching or moving or breathing. You are practicing becoming—returning to your true nature, and remembering that this world is shaped not just by policies and politics, but by presence.

The world needs more people who are willing to pause. To breathe. To choose differently. The world needs more people like you—people who are willing to do the inner work, so that the outer world reflects something more whole, more kind, more true.

Yoga doesn’t ask us to be perfect. It asks us to be real. And being real means showing up—even when we don’t feel ready. Especially then.

So be the change. Let it be imperfect. Let it be messy. Let it be human. But let it begin.

Grace

In the stillness of your quiet he is waiting there
anytime your soul you feel the need to bare

His price is simply to believe and to have faith
that by your side he will never leave

Apprehension of tomorrows yet to come will step aside
so strength and peace can be your guide

Desire to follow the worlds chaotic voice and crazy pace
gives way to the precious seed of hope and grace.

Lynda George Bowen

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Early Spring at Chapel of the Birch

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

Writing mid-April 2025, it’s my most gratifying time of year... not only the first flowers, but the Greening of the Land. Early spring was cruelly cold at times. I wanted to get outside !!! But reading *Neighbors* in summer heat, it’s time to enjoy the garden. The lull is not to toil, but to imagine next spring.

‘**Arnold Promise**’ **Witchhazel** (*Hamamelis*, 12-15’) has just bloomed mid-March in Chaplin. Witchhazel has fascinating flowers... long yellow petals that unfurl like party blowers in warm weather, and curl up in the cold night.



Long yellow petals of Witchhazel unfurled on warm day



First daffodils along south wall, 19 March.

Late winter is also *Very Early Spring*, hopeful in pervasive cold. Mild Boston winters attracted me from Minneapolis 20 years ago. Minnesota-like bitter cold persisted this spring, damaging buds, delaying growth, killing some. Whipping wind in the Natchaug Valley also played a role.

Yellow masses of **Forsythia** and **Daffodils** (*Narcissus*) heralded spring in March throughout the northeast corner of Connecticut. Small daffs aka jonquils were planted at our Memorial Garden (Providence/Mill Streets, Putnam) to brighten a brown bed in late winter, a dismal time in many gardens, and to honor departed quiet gardeners who toiled for the *Quiet Corner Garden Club*.

Forsythia shrubs are always available, but good to see flowers when buy. *Narcissus* bulbs are planted in autumn sans flowers. I use copious compost and water well. Sunlight and nutrients are important, but *Water Makes Things Grow*.

Mid-March home in Chaplin, tiny **Glory-of-the-Snow** (*Chionodoxa*) bloomed blue and white, from a past gardener. My ‘**Pippa’s Purple**’ **Hellebore** (*Helleborus*) planted three years ago, had large purple flowers lasting until May as they fade to green, and large dark green, white-veined leaves that overwinter if sheltered from wind. Herbaceous perennials sleep the first year (as Jean Pillo recently reminded the club)... the second, they creep... and the third they *leap*!

GARDEN DAY Sunday 27 April was my first *Open Garden Day* for the Quiet Corner Garden Club, and the

peak of Early Spring. **Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier*, 25’) had clusters of bright white flowers, short-lasting, quickly becoming tasty berries... but the birds beat you to ‘em... and finally red-to-orange fall color. AKA *Shadblow*, blooming when the shad (herring) run; “*Serviceberry*” refers to when burial services could be held after ground thawed.

Multi-stem forms were planted for screening. Another serviceberry was labeled **A. canadensis**, a tall shrub form, but it acts like a lower “running serviceberry” used in Minnesota, **Saskatoon Serviceberry** (*A. alnifolia*, 8-15’) that is a medium-large shrub, but 5 to 8 feet on drier sites. The compost mound is a drier raised bed. Whatever, my form is colonizing the whole bed, 4 feet high, *Happy To Be Here*.

Multi-stem serviceberries were in peak bloom at my wildly naturalistic Chaplin gardens. *I like weeds* -- as the bright yellow flowers in dense clusters on tall stems July of **Goldenrod** (*Solidago*), and the small white flowers clustered in the dense flat umbels of **Queen Anne’s Lace** (*Daucus carota* aka Wild Carrot). **American Pokeberry** (*Phytolacca*) is considered ornamental in the UK with its red-purple stems, berries and fall color. Although poisonous to us, the fruit is food for songbirds, and as food, it is called *poke sallet*, or *poke salad*, sometimes spelled *polk salad* as in Tony Joe White’s 1968 song “*Polk Salad Annie*. ”

Nature’s chaos is my tonic for our arrogant abuse of the earth. Manicured yards remind me of human harm to the environment. My style uses that contrast, but style is yours and yours alone.

I stopped mowing a “mini-meadow” two years ago, some 30 feet round, a few feet high in summer. With a curving mow line, it aesthetically supports another ecosystem than my lawn, garden, thickets and woods, and I imagine a community of shrews feasting on ticks. From the thickets, opossums are ferocious tick-eating machines that slink across the ground until ticks attach, then eat while grooming. But I’ve only seen one in seven years, hopefully nocturnal.

BIRCH Our 1750 farmhouse’s first landscaping was 18 inches of compost mounded on a compacted dirt driveway in 2018, with Serviceberry on one side, and my *Chapel of the Birch* on the other. Birches are native to rivers and streams and do not develop a deep root system and I periodically broaden the mound with compost.

Whitebarked trees are showy in every season. Three “*nativars*” (native cultivars) of **Gray Birch** (*Betula populifolia* ‘*Whitespire*’, 40’) in 25-gallon pots were sunk 6 inches into the hardpan, surrounded by compost. Nonnative **Himalayan Birch** (*B. jacquemontii*, 30-40’) has the purest white bark, but suffered our native bugs; only one of three survives, with copious compost. **Paper Birch** (*B. papyrifera*, aka **Canoe Birch**, 60’) is a native birch with thin white bark, pliable, waterproof, large enough to enclose a canoe, but short-lived in warm zones, borderline here.

Other birch in my rural fence row: **Yellow Birch** (*B. alleghaniensis* aka Golden Birch, 70’) is a large fast-growing lumber species in the northeast. **Sweet Birch** (*B. lenta*, 50-80’) is not ornamental but the bark is potent, used as an antiseptic, antipyretic and astringent by the Ojibwe people.

EARLY SHOW Early spring 2025, some daffodils were still blooming while colorful mats of **Creeping Phlox** (*P. subulata*) began flowering shades of red, white and blue. Red buds of a newly planted **Quince** ‘*Double*



Colorful Phlox fronts low white- flowering Serviceberry.

Take’ (*Chaemomeles*) began to open double red-orange, but a true **Redbud** (*Cercis*) treewas a native no-show; it would have bloomed lavender-pink along branches before leaf-out, but a freezing night harmed buds in April. Wind had already weakened it, twisting the brittle bark. It died. Connecticut has comparatively mild winters but many buds are vulnerable to cold shock for several critical days as they swell.



Red Azalea under Whitebarked Birch.

A five-year-old **Japanese Maple** (*Acer*) died too, no surviving buds, and root competition may be a factor. Voles? Japanese jumping worms might have altered the soil -- Some gardeners are alarmed -- but the other half-dozen herbaceous plants are fine.

TIP Mustard is an irritant that flushes jumping worms out of soil and doesn’t harm plants. Mix 1/3 cup of ground yellow mustard seed into one gallon of water, pour slowly over one square foot of soil. The worms are irritated and they surface to be hand-removed.

continued on next page



Multi-colored herbaceous bed.

MORE to plant in the Quiet Corner than in Lake Wobegon, Minnesota, where “*All the women are strong, All the men are good-looking, and the children are All above Average*” (Garrison Keillor). But All gardens lack broadleaf evergreens.

I came east to plant more ornamental trees and garden plants, notably broadleaf evergreens. And to avoid Minnesota’s wicked winters and sweltering summers. Good decision. **Rhododendron / Azalea** (both genus *Rho.*) and **Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia*)** are native evergreens here, and **Japanese Andromeda (*Pieris*)** does well in coastal New England’s similar climate. None are for exposed hot/dry sites.

Better career decision was working at Weston Nurseries, Hopkinton, Mass., as a landscape designer / project manager with the most available garden plants in New England, notably broadleaf evergreens. Best decision? Master gardening in *MassHort’s* Dover-Wellesley program. Offered locally in Storrs, I recommend master gardening to all landscape professionals and any serious gardener. Value? Understanding the interconnection of horticultural factors, that All is connected. In fact, we are All a part of nature, not apart.

MUCH MORE emerged within a few weeks of my Garden Day. ‘**Girard Red’ Azalea (*Rho.*)** peaked under the ‘Whitespire’ Birch. **Mayapple (*Podophyllum*)** appeared under a bright magenta **Rhododendron ‘PJM’** -- “*the garish plant that’s everywhere in Newton,*” one of my Weston Nurseries clients once sniffed. Ironically, it was introduced by the nursery installing her landscape, and was named for founder Peter John Mezitt. I like any bright color in early spring.

By mid-spring, ‘**Purple Prince’ Crabapple (*Malus*)** graced the house’s south corner with rosy red flowers becoming purple fruit, with purple leaves and shiny “cherry-like” bark. Crabs are tough on sunny hot/dry sites.

By early May, herbaceous perennials planted the last five years had exploded in growth, such as ‘**Hillside Black Beauty’ Cimicifuga (*Actaea*)**, ‘**Caramel’ Coral Bells (*Heuchera*)**, ‘**Butter and Sugar’ Bearded Iris** and dark purple ‘**Caesar’s Brother’ Siberian Iris (*Iris*)**, and Japanese Painted Fern (*Athyrium*, last to emerge, first to dieback in frost). A few weeks later, my ‘**Prince of Orange’ Oriental Poppy (*Papaver*)** (photo below) was stunning!



(Spring Garden Day in 2026 may be later in middle May.)

SUMMER !!! A tour of summer bloom will be offered Sunday 27 July, with a bonfire potluck. A demonstration of *Carl’s Lovely Compost* process with *Hugelkultur*, but no work, All play. Caramel-walnut rolls and apple pie from the Hampton General Store. Mmmm.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Master gardener / designer, Chaplin CT, *Quiet Corner Garden Club* member



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In Your Corner

Civics Education: Your Rights and Your Responsibilities

By Pamela Skelly

The NAACP believes that to make effective long-term change, we need to understand how the government works and how to participate in the process. This process starts with people knowing their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Participation is essential if you want safe and healthy communities for everyone. Your efforts can make your community, state and country, places where all people are treated justly and with dignity.

NAACP, founded in 1909, began as a reaction to the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, which shocked many Americans because of the brutal lynchings against Black people. (This is the same Springfield, Ohio where misinformation was spread about immigrants eating pets last year.) The bill to make lynching a federal hate crime was not passed until 113 years later when the act passed the House of Representatives, where three republicans voted against it, and the Senate, where it passed unanimously. On March 29, 2022, President Biden signed the Emmett Till Antilynching Act into law.

When our United States government was founded, citizens were rebelling against a monarchy that they felt treated them unfairly. To prevent our new country from similar injustices, the founders wrote our Constitution. That document has seven articles that outline the structure and powers of the federal government. These articles address three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial branches, define the relationship between states, describe the amendment process, determine the supremacy of federal law, and explain the ratification process.

Continuing the idea of liberty and justice for all (referring to white men in the 18th century), amendments were made to the Constitution to further ensure a government based on democratic principles. The Bill of Rights is the first 10 Amendments to the Constitution. These amendments describe Americans’ rights in relation to their government. Here’s a version in basic English terms adapted from the online National Archive at the Smithsonian Institute.

-The First Amendment provides several rights protections: to express ideas through speech and the press, to assemble or gather with a group to protest or for other reasons, and to ask the government to fix problems. It also protects the right to religious beliefs and practices. It prevents the government from creating or favoring a religion.

-The Second Amendment protects the right to keep and bear arms.

-The Third Amendment prevents the government from forcing homeowners to allow soldiers to use their homes.

-The Fourth Amendment bars the government from unreasonable search and seizure of an individual or their private property.

-The Fifth Amendment provides several protections for people accused of crimes. It states that serious criminal charges must be started by a grand jury. A person cannot be tried twice for the same offense (double jeopardy) or have property taken away without just compensation. People have the right against self-incrimination and cannot be imprisoned without due process of law (fair procedures and trials).

-The Sixth Amendment provides additional protections to people accused of crimes, such as the right to a speedy and public trial, trial by an impartial jury in criminal cases, and to be informed of criminal charges. Witnesses must face the accused, and the accused is allowed his or her own witnesses and to be represented by a lawyer.

-The Seventh Amendment extends the right to a jury trial in Federal civil cases.

-The Eighth Amendment bars excessive bail and fines and cruel and unusual punishment.

-The Ninth Amendment states that listing specific rights in the Constitution does not mean that people do not have other rights that have not been spelled out.

-The Tenth Amendment says that the Federal Government only has those powers delegated in the Constitution. If it isn’t listed, it belongs to the states or to the people. I think it’s important to remember to put these into historical context when reading these about 250 years after they were written. Particularly the Third Amendment which prevents the government from forcing homeowners to allow soldiers to use their homes. We must remember that before the Revolutionary War, laws gave British soldiers the right to take over private homes. If you want to read the historical Bill of Rights, I suggest the National Archives, The Bill of Rights: A Transcription | National Archives at <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript>.

Amendments 11 through 27 have been ratified and I’m not going to detail each. A couple are contradictory; the 18th Amendment, ratified in 1919, prohibited the making, selling or transporting

of alcohol but in 1933 the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment making alcohol legal again. Below are a few that are worth reviewing:

-The Thirteenth Amendment: Ended slavery. Ratified in 1865.

-The Fourteenth Amendment: Granted freed slaves citizenship (includes due process clause that led to incorporation doctrine that allowed the Bill of Rights to be applied to the states) Ratified in 1868.

-The Fifteenth Amendment: Right to vote for freed slaves. Ratified in 1870.

-The Nineteenth Amendment: Right to vote for women. Ratified in 1920. (Although it took an Act of Congress passed in 1974, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA), for women to gain the right to apply for credit in their own name. Prior to this, women often needed a male co-signer to obtain loans or credit cards. The ECOA also prohibits discrimination in lending based on sex or marital status.)

-The Twenty-fourth Amendment: Ended use of poll tax as a requirement to vote (by the time the amendment passed only 5 states still used this tax, which was meant to limit black participation in voting). Ratified in 1964.

-The Twenty-sixth Amendment: Set 18 as the legal voting age for state and national elections. Ratified in 1971.

The idea for this month’s topic is related to current events as well as some new learning about civics education. A couple months ago, I heard Connecticut’s Secretary of State, Stephanie Thomas, speak and she posed the following question to us: “Could you pass the test to be a U.S. Citizen?” A person who wishes to be a U.S. citizen must be able to read, write, and speak basic English and demonstrate an understanding of U.S. history and government. In 2018 a Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation survey found that only about one-third of American adults could pass a multiple-choice questions about our history and government.

I decided to see if I could pass this test without searching the internet for any answers. As a retired teacher and someone who has paid attention to current events, I felt that I had a decent background on these topics and I’m happy to know I was correct. I answered 19 correctly out of the 20 questions I sampled. For my practice test, I used the Smithsonian American History website, “Test Yourself - Preparing for the Oath.” This test is easier than for a would-be U.S. citizen because instead of multiple-choice, their answers must be said aloud. Specifically, “During the naturalization interview, a USCIS Officer will ask you up to 10 civics questions from the list of 100. You must correctly answer six (6) questions to pass the civics portion of the naturalization test.” (<https://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/test>)

If you are interested in educating yourself on civics, you will find opportunities online and in-person. Harvard responded to the federal administration threats in several ways and one is by providing a free online course, “HarvardX: We the People: Civic Engagement in a Constitutional Democracy.” Harvard is also offering other online government courses and many are also free of charge. Take a look for yourself at Government Courses | Harvard University with the link <https://pll.harvard.edu/subject/government>. Locally an in-person workshop on June 14 (prior to this article’s publication) entitled “Political Intelligence 2025” was held at Eastern Connecticut State University. Session titles include: Healthcare: Basic Needs We Can’t Afford or Access, Quiet Corner Shouts Presents: Know Your Rights, I’m Just a Bill: Going from Problem to Law, and We’re Better Together: Labor, Unions, and Federal Cuts. You can keep looking for similar opportunities and events to learn about Civics Education.

Making effective long-term change means engaging youth to participate. A big step in this direction was made on May 7, 2025 because the NAACP CT Youth & College Division held its first Legislative Day at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. The event aimed to empower youth, especially Black and Brown youth, to feel connected to the legislative process and to advocate for their needs, particularly in light of recent national events. High school and college students, advisors, and community leaders were brought together to engage in civic engagement, policy education, and direct interaction with lawmakers. The day focused on addressing issues impacting Black and Brown communities in Connecticut, including food insecurity, early educator pay, student loan reimbursements, and funding for disconnected youth. State Representative Derrell Wilson from Norwich was the catalyst for this program which was sponsored by the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus.

Now is the time to know your rights. If you also feel strongly about civil rights and justice in our country, please consider joining our Windham/Willimantic NAACP branch. Members also receive emails for events and meetings but we keep membership information private. The annual membership is \$30, a reasonable price to support a worthy organization. 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. You can also check out our Facebook page at Windham Willimantic CT NAACP.

Strength

By Judy Davis

My Aunt Anne McGeehan Hindinger has always been such an inspiration to me, as she had, also, for my mom, Maureen Donnelly Davis. My aunt is kind, funny, strong, and amazing. It’s the Irish side of the family, that has always enriched my life. When my uncle Gene died so suddenly, my Aunt Anne told my mom and I, “Sometimes, life is so hard.

I was struck by her use of the word, “Sometimes.” Yet often, life is fair, life is to be celebrated. Life is a gift. My mom knew that, too. I am blessed, beyond all believing, to have my Aunt Anne to love me. And as the Irish poet Yeats once wrote, “She is where the blessed dance.”

10 Love Haiku

God in the details
Beholder be held closely
In the noticing

You fill the empty
Vase with flowers tell me who
Is my name again

She’s sweet on a frog
Don’t change she says into an
Overrated prince

Address The Darkness
Two pairs of limbs entwined One
Nation under quilts

Wearied of maybes
We bought into green somewhere’s
Yes in installments

By the wide window
Fair lady works the shuttle
As the geese go by

Finish each other’s
Sentences even better
How they begin them

Fire’s on fire
And water to quench its thirst
Takes a good long drink

Circumnavigate
A mirrored lake those pale eyes
Puddled with passion

God wrote a hit song
“The Opposite of Heartbreak”
Play it again please

Joseph Zelman

“We Human Beings Are So Adaptable that It Hurts to Admit”

Since September my life has been measured in ten hour increments.

I am not joking.
In regular intervals,
I am now alarmed.

There is no carbon monoxide, or anything to be afraid of...

Just a battery slowly dying, not a sad or dramatic death,

But a constant chirp reminding me that I am still breathing, alive.

— Jolene Munch Cardoza

The Shot Heard Around the World

By Bev York, The America Museum

One of the deciding factors that secured victory in the American Revolution was George Washington’s bold decision to deal with the smallpox pandemic that ravaged his soldiers. “As commander of the Continental Army, Washington faced dual enemies: the British and smallpox .,”according to David Roos.

Washington knew firsthand the effects of small-pox. At age 19, while he and his brother were in Barbados, with hopes that his brother could be cured of tuberculosis, they dined at the Clarke home. Washington wrote in his diary, “We went, —myself with some reluctance, as the smallpox was in his family.” Two weeks later, after the smallpox virus completed its incubation period, Wash- ington was down for the count. He wrote, “Was strongly attacked with the smallpox,” rocked by high fevers and chills, severe body aches, and a twisted stomach and ooz- ing rash. He recovered after being bedridden for weeks. In 1775, during the siege of Boston, General Washington utilized a strict quarantine of the sick in an effort to control the pox. Military cases were sent to a hospital near Cam- bridge. Civilians showing smallpox symptoms were held in Brookline.

Eventually, in 1777, Washington made the diffi- cult decision to inoculate the troops to keep the disease from spreading. It was an experimental but sometimes fatal method called variolation to insert a small amount of pus from an infected victim into an incision in the flesh of the person being inoculated. “The hope and intent was for the per- son to come down with a mild case of smallpox from which they would hopefully recover.” The inoculations in Philadel- phia went off without a hitch and without tipping off the British!

Twenty years later, in 1796, Edward Jenner developed the world’s first successful vaccine for smallpox. The WHO, World Health Organization, described small- pox as “one of the deadliest diseases known to humans.” Kirsten Hokeness, PhD, in science and technology at Bry- ant University said smallpox was killing three out of ten people worldwide for about 3000 years. Due to massive vaccinations that took decades, smallpox was eradicated in 1980. Hokeness said, “Eliminating smallpox was one of mankind’s greatest achievements.”

Vaccines have been around since the late 18th century and saved countless lives. According to Business Insider Nov 2020, some of the most important vaccines in history besides smallpox, include polio, and MMR vac- cines. (Measels, Mumps, and Rubella.)

Polio had affected about 16,000 Americans an- nually until the polio vaccine was invented in 1955 by Dr. Jonas Salk. People waited in line to get it because many knew someone who had died or was paralyzed from polio. Vaccines for measles became available in 1963. Before measles vaccines were widespread, 3 to 4 million people got the measles annually. According to the CDC, “It is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90% of the peo- ple around him or her will also become infected if they are not protected.” And the consequences are severe: measles can lead to pneumonia, encephalitis (brain swelling), and in some cases death, says Hokeness. Today, the WHO estimates that vaccines save an estimated 2-3 million lives each year.

Covid 19 killed over one million Americans. It was the vaccine that kept many more from dying. In some cases misinformation and failure to study scientific data has caused some people to refuse vaccinations.

Historically, during wars, more soldiers suc- cumbed to disease, starvation and the elements than were wounded in battle. Keeping an army fed and healthy was a tremendous feat. During the eight years of the American Revolution, Washington’s army suffered 25,000 deaths: about 8,000 died from battle wounds and 17,000 died from various diseases. Without Washington’s decision to inoc- ulate the troops against smallpox, the outcome of the war may have been different.



Paul Revere, portrayed by Brian Blake, makes a stop in Windham on the 250th anniversary of Paul Revere's ride. Photo by Cathy Mitchell.

Invasions of Creatures You Don’t Want

By Angela H. Fichter

I lived 32 years in Scotland, CT. Moved to Hampton in 2016. Both places suffered from invasions. In Scotland it was mice. The house was built in 1872 on fieldstone foundation. In the fall, when it got cold, mice would enter the basement by climbing between the field- stones then crawling up to the kitchen along the pipes.

One winter I was startled when I opened a kitchen drawer and pulled out a towel to find a whole litter of baby mice had been born between the towels. They looked dead for some time. Apparently I had killed mom with a trap and babies starved. I threw out all the towels in the drawer and washed the drawer with Lysol. In winter when there was snow, my husband would plow it and leave a mound of snow at the end of the driveway. I would empty the mouse traps on that snow mound. The corpses would be eaten by crows. They would call to each other when I came out in the AM to empty the traps. “Breakfast is coming.” I could look up and see them circling over my offering.

In Hampton the invasions so far have been ants. One species comes in with my newspaper. One newspaper is placed in the mailbox. In May it gets covered with tiny black ants. The other paper is in the newspaper box and doesn’t have ants. Why the Willimantic paper attracts the tiny ants and the Hartford paper doesn’t I don’t know. I don’t want to use Raid in the box cause I put my paper on the table, so I wipe the box out with Lysol. Doesn’t kill them but they hate the smell, so I am ant free for a week.

The second ant invasion is carpenter ants. I checked on Google. I thought carpenter ants ate wood, not sweets. No, they tunnel through wood to create nests in wood, but eat sweets. I found them in my cookies and threw all the cookies out. Stomp on them when I see them. Next time I get cookies, after I open them I will put them in a plastic box that shuts tight. In all the 32 years we lived in Scotland, we never had invasions of ants. Do you think the mice ate them?

Windham Textile and History Museum Sports Uniforms Exhibition Opening Soon

By Irene Barnard

The Windham Textile and History (aka Mill) Museum is proud to announce the opening of a new exhibition commemorating the rich history of contributions through the years of our local sports heroes. Lifetime fans, alumni, and first- time visitors alike are sure to enjoy this rare opportunity to see jerseys and other memorabilia. This exhibition was the idea of Mill Museum colleague and friend, the late Ed Silverstein. A seasoned journalist with a distinguished career, Ed conceptualized it and helped see it to fruition. It is mounted in honor and appreciation of his dedication as a devoted member of the museum board and of his community.



The exhibit will include a vintage Willimantic baseball uniform from the Mill Museum’s own collec- tion. In addition, it will feature items generously loaned from UConn’s J. Robert Donnelly Husky Heritage Sports Museum. These include a Final Four jersey; a basketball autographed by winningest UConn Huskies Women’s Bas- ketball coach Geno Auriemma (among others); a rare 2002 UConn Women’s Basketball national championship limited edition 6-pack of Coca-Cola; and of course no collection would be complete without the costume head of Jonathan, the legendary mascot of all Huskies teams!

Opening is slated for early July. The Mill Museum Sports Uniforms exhibit comes at an especially auspicious time to celebrate our local UConn champions! Check the museum website for further details: <https://millmuseum.org>

Open Saturday and Sunday 10am-4pm. Regular admission: \$10.00; Seniors (60+) / Kids (5-17) / Students: \$7.00; Members and Kids under 5: Free. Windham Textile and History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic, CT, 06226. (860) 456-2178. Email: info@millmuseum.org

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



John Anton Clark performing Classics of Twentieth Century Americana

July 19th Moose’s Burgers, Meriden 6-8
July 26th Willimantic Records, 12 Noon

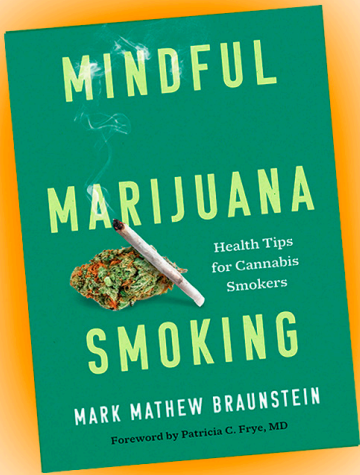
For booking, call or text (860) 933-4301 or email jantonclown@gmail.com

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Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2022

“The bible for cannabis smokers who care about their health.”
— Carol Bedrosian, editor *Spirit of Change Magazine*

www.MarkBraunstein.Org



A Convertible for All Seasons

By Bill Heald

We New Englanders get to enjoy a true 4-season climate cycle, which means things are always changing and making each day different from the next. But there is a price to this glorious variety: we have to deal with winter. This causes some difficulties on the automotive front, and one of these is the practicality of owning a convertible when the mercury drops. The top-down driving experience is a terrific one when the weather is warm; but it does make winter driving with a soft top a rather chilly experience.

Enter the convertible hardtop. Once only the realm of very expensive sportsters, Mazda has gifted us with an affordable all-season version of their venerable MX-5 Miata with a very slick power convertible hardtop. We tested a '25 Grand Touring model, which is powered by a 2-Liter SKYACTIV-G (SKYACTIV is Mazda's efficiency & performance engineering blueprint) Inline Four that produces 181 horsepower. It's no muscle car, but power is perfectly acceptable for a 2,469 lb. compact. This rear-wheel-drive chassis was graced with an excellent 6-Speed manual transmission, which makes this a true classic roadster in the way it engages the driver's senses and makes you part of the machine. This is a Mazda design goal they characterize as "Horse and Rider as one," and when you snug down into the tight cockpit you feel more like you're part of the Miata rather than riding in it. Its well-calibrated fully-independent suspension delivers excellent handling with a firm but not punishing ride.

Our Grand Touring model had a refreshingly simple instrument cluster in keeping with its traditional sportster personality, with mechanical analog instruments that are as beautiful as they are functional. As I mentioned, this two-seater cabin is cozy but there is enough room for two adults unless they shoot hoops for the Huskies, in which as they might be more comfortable with the top down (thus endless headroom). Speaking of the top, the Grand Touring's ability to go from a hardtop coupe to an open-top roadster is genuine "Transformer" territory, as the top breaks into sections and magically folds away in less than 15 sec-

onds. The structure remaining is very stylish, and some enthusiasts think the folding top is more of a "Targa" design instead of a 100% open roadster. But for the cockpit occupants it's a true topless experience, and the solid engineering of the top makes it great at keeping rain and winter at bay (and quiets the interior as well). The only



downside in this car is the trunk capacity, for at 4.5 cubic feet it's modest. That said, it's manageable for weekend getaways.

The Mazda MX-5 Miata Grand Touring is no rocket, but it's a true purebred roadster and a joy to drive with the top up or down. The base price of our test car was \$37,350. With options, our sticker came to \$39,130. www.mazdausa.com. A more extensive video review can be found at [MachinesWithWheels](#) on Youtube.

Bill Heald first appeared in Texas, and became an Aquatic Biologist. Later he moved to LA and worked as a Camera Assistant in the film business. He then moved to NYC and became a motorcycle journalist for Rider, Motorcyclist, and numerous other publications. Moved to CT in 1994 and wrote about cars and motorcycles for Playboy.com, The Robb Report, Hartford Courant, Backroads Magazine, the Reminder News, Penthouse Magazine, Verge Magazine and others. He also co-wrote two books about Connecticut Curiosities with Susan Campbell. Now resides in Hampton with an Australian Assistant Director and numerous dogs, cats, horses and fish.

Photos by the author.

Poison Ivy Season is All Year Long

By Karen Zimmer and Marie Cantino, photos by Michelle Poudrette

(from the Joshua's Trust Summer 2024 Newsletter)

"Leaves of three? Let them be. One, two, three. Don't touch me! Hairy vine, no friend of mine!"

Poison ivy (PI) is thriving more than ever with warmer temperatures and higher carbon dioxide levels, and its toxic allergen urushiol has become more potent. Are you one of the lucky people who doesn't react to this native plant? Even if you don't, a word to the wise: learn how to identify and avoid this plant, because allergic reactions can develop at any time, resulting in an infuriatingly itchy rash. Teach your kids and grandkids, too, and keep your dogs away from it if you like to pet them.



Look for leaves with pointed tips. Poison ivy leaves can be red, green, or orange.

If you inadvertently do touch poison ivy, (and who hasn't) clean well with cool water and soap or one of the available special products within two hours, if you can. Do not use hot water, which will open pores and allow for more spreading. Also, wash your clothes and tools, because urushiol can stay toxic for years. Never burn poison ivy; the smoke is highly toxic and inhalation can be fatal.

Here is some of the science behind that itchy rash. Urushiol is found in a number of plant species, but its most common source in our part of the world is Eastern poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*). This compound is found in all parts of the plant. It didn't evolve to ward off humans, but rather, is believed to help the plant seal wounds in order to prevent insect predation and microbial infection.

In fact, only humans, a few primates, and (by some accounts), guinea pigs, react to urushiol at all, which is why your dog will happily roll in it with no ill effects. Due to its chemical properties, urushiol is rapidly absorbed by our skin. There it reacts with a protein called CD1a found on certain types of skin cells, making them appear to be foreign to your body. The rash and other inflammation reactions are then caused by an immune response to this perceived foreign invasion. Because most other animals lack CD1a, they don't react to poison ivy.

Before you go into the forest and try to wipe out this enemy of humankind, please remember its ecological benefits. Deer, black bears, wood rats and muskrats feed on the leaves. A variety of insects (bees, beetles, butterflies, ants and others) visit the flowers and dine on their nectar. Later in the season, birds eat the berries. The leaves provide shade to tree and ground dwelling species while vines and roots help stabilize the soil. If poison ivy isn't in your garden

or near a trail, leave it alone.

Joshua's Trust summer events are listed below:

Gurleyville Grist Mill Guided Tours
Sundays 1:00-5:00 pm until mid-October
Gurleyville Grist Mill, Stone Mill Rd, Mansfield, CT

Nestled in the historic Mansfield village of Gurleyville, on the banks of the Fenton River, the Joshua's Trust Gurleyville Grist Mill stands much as it was in 1830. The 15-acre campus of field and forest also includes the Miller's Cottage, birthplace of Gov. Wilbur Cross, whose grandfather and father were millers here. Guides will be available to give tours of the mill and the extant machinery used in the 19th century water-powered mills. Be sure to visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

Contemplative Walk at Joshua's Trust's Whetten Woods
July 12, 2025, 10:00-11:30 AM
Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center 23 Royce Circle, Storrs, CT, United States

Join JT board member, Debra Pallatto for a guided walk, stopping for contemplative reflections along the way. For this walk we will meet at the Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center in Storrs Center (address above). Appropriate hiking gear and tick repellant are recommended. Be sure to visit <https://joshuas-trust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations. No registration is required.

Loupe Walk at Joshua's Trust's Utley Preserve
Aug 15, 2025, 10:15-11:45 AM
Utley Hill Preserve, 60 Hennequin Rd. Columbia, CT
[take the first right just before the tennis courts and follow the road until you see the trail kiosk]

Join Michelle Poudrette, Joshua's Trust's Development and Communications Manager and Master Naturalist, on a fun, family-friendly, micro exploration of the Utley Hill Preserve in Columbia. From the Columbia Recreation Park, we will follow the 1.7-mile Yellow Loop and stop to take a closer look at the tiny world of mushrooms, mosses, ferns and more through a small handheld magnifier. This will be a leisurely walk through varied terrain including some hills, rocks and roots, and



Thin roots help poison ivy attach to surfaces and give the vines a hairy appearance



Jewelweed is an efficacious plant for preventing the development of dermatitis following poison ivy contact -NIH.gov

possibly some muddy spots depending on weather. Loupes will be provided. Please bring your own hiking gear, water and insect repellent. Be sure to visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

An Idea Becomes Reality

Summer Programs at Hampton’s ‘Fletch’

Artists for Asheville Event September 13



Submitted by Catherine Shires

The devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina in September 2024 is still being endured by the residents of that community. Eight months after Hurricane Helene hit North Carolina, parts of Asheville still look like disaster zones. Business owners are struggling to rebuild as infrastructure remains stalled, FEMA aid has been reduced, and proposed cuts to public broadcasting, vital during the storm, raise new concerns for future disasters. Nancy Bunnell, an artist from Willington, rallied eastern Connecticut arts groups to aid Asheville artists who have lost everything. The group has been meeting regularly to plan this extraordinary event, that is rooted in generosity, the sharing of their talents, and providing the spark that will ignite community spirit to help. The hurricane statistics are staggering: 104 lives lost, \$53 billion in property loss, 3 million cubic yards of debris. The French Broad River rose to 24.6 feet and washed away much of the city of Asheville, including the iconic River Arts District. The arts district was a popular destination for tourists and was an economic driver of the community. Over 300 artists were displaced.

How are we helping

A major art and music festival will take place on Saturday, September 13 in the Jillson Square Park, Willimantic. The event will run from 11:00 – 5:00. As the Shaboo Stage is the heart of Jillson Park, live music will be performed throughout the day. Food trucks will feed hungry patrons, and local artists will exhibit and sell their work. The event will be free, but the goal will be to raise funds for the Artists of Asheville to help them get a new start.

Where will donations go

The committee has communicated with non-profit arts organizations, and has thoroughly confirmed that donations in their entirety will be directed to the affected artists.

The Organizers

The organizing committee that Nancy expertly organized represents a cross-section of the greater Windham community. Bruce John has assembled entertainment, corporate and media sponsors, as well as volunteers. In addition, the Town of Windham, the Windham Regional Arts Council, Artists Open Studios, and the Ashford Area Arts Council are working to enroll exhibiting artists.

How can you help

If you are an artist who would like to take part in this event, please check the Windham Regional Arts Council’s website: www.windhamrac.org

Click on the Events page to see the dedicated Artists for Asheville page for details. The registration fee is \$55.00 per artist station. All registration fees will be donated to the cause.

Volunteers are also needed to help with setup, collections of donations, and other tasks. Please email Bruce at bruce-john1951@gmail.com for individual and group volunteer opportunities.

Donations are currently being accepted. All funds will go directly to Asheville’s artists. A secure, dedicated donation feature for this event can be found on the Windham Regional Arts Council’s website: www.windhamrac.org

Other details: The event will be alcohol-free and family friendly. Please mark your calendars and make a commitment to help this community that so desperately needs our help!

Submitted by Janice Trecker

This summer’s Music at the Fletch includes a range of folk, international and classical music. Claudia Schmidt, singer, songwriter and instrumentalist, appears July 16; Atwater-Donnelly, the noted Rhode Island duo, plays August 13 and the season will close out with another edition of the popular Bach in the Garden series, featuring the Davis Duo, sometime in September.

All concerts are free and all will be at 6 p.m. with the musicians playing on the big library porch. In case of inclement weather, the concerts will move inside to the library’s function room.

Claudia Schmidt has produced more than 16 albums of mostly original songs, accompanying herself on twelve string guitar and dulcimer, and she has racked up countless miles during forty-six years as a touring musician.

Although she began as a folk singer, Schmidt is a versatile performer who has explored jazz and blues and composed pieces for musical theater and plays. She currently records on Red House Records.

Aubrey Atwater and Elwood Donnelly have toured throughout the United States and internationally, singing and playing an assortment of instruments, including guitar, banjo, Appalachian dulcimer, tin whistle, and limberjack.s

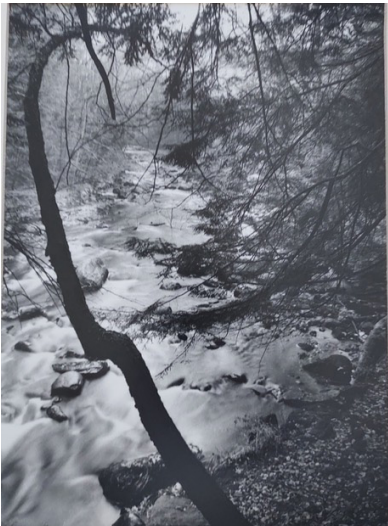
They have recorded extensively with their music appearing on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered,” Fiona Ritchie’s “Thistle and Shamrock,” and the nationally syndicated “Midnight Special” out of Chicago.

The final concert, Bach in the Garden will be held in the library’s butterfly garden. The Davis Duo, Mark and Beverly Davis, will perform on guitar and mandolin.

The Duo have played together since 2001, performing in New England and appearing in international festivals, including Eurofestival Zupfmusik in Germany, Mandolines de Lunel in France, Ciudad de Cristal in Spain, FAME in Australia, and the 46th Festival Internacional de

Plectro La Rioja in Spain.
Date and time of this final performance TBA.

At the Top Shelf Gallery



The August September show at the Top Shelf Gallery will be *A Different Perspective*, black and white and color photographs by Jeff Chaplin. The works include wooded and other rural landscapes as well as studies of plant details, all captured in strong, sometimes semi-abstract, designs. The photos feature a wide and delicate and surprisingly descriptive range of grays, blacks and whites.

Chaplin says that he has always been interested in the patterns and rhythms of the natural world, but that his interest in photography began in his twenties when he began to explore the local woods with a new camera.

A self taught photographer, he mentions Freeman Patterson, as an influence, citing his “abstract approach to nature photography (that is) very intriguing and spiritual.” Later he discovered the photography of Eliot Porter and and admired his ability to turn the seemingly typical nature scene into a dynamic composition.

Perhaps as important, Chaplin has been inspired by classic nature writers and poets like Thoreau, John Burroughs and Robert Frost who eloquently captured the essence of the natural world. “I have tried to capture these moments with photography, “ he says.” I hope that these images help the viewer to slow down and let nature inspire them also, bringing them peace and a sense of wonder.”

A retired landscaper, Chaplin lives in Canterbury with his wife, Kathy, and a dog named Millie, a cat named Olive, and a chicken named Ethel. Besides photography, he paints in watercolors, hikes, travels, and plays the guitar.

Fletcher Memorial Library is at 257 Main St., Hampton, CT. Info 860-455 1086. The Top Shelf Gallery is open during library hours.

Read the Rainforest at Guilford Smith Memorial Library this summer!

Submitted by Aubrey Hines

Everyone is welcome to participate in our free summer reading program; you do not need a library card and can reside outside of Windham!

Our Summer Reading Program runs from June 28 - August 15, 2025. Earn raffle tickets and incentives by reading and attending programs this summer!

To learn more and sign up for our Summer Reading Program, please stop by the library and see staff or visit our website: <https://guilfordsmith.blog>.

Here’s a list of our Summer Reading events. To sign up for programs requiring registration, please call the library at 860-423-5159 or email sboyd@biblio.org.

PROGRAMS FOR KIDS:
Saturday, 6/28 @ 10am: Summer Reading Kickoff with Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation (All ages) Meet live birds of prey and learn about how they live.
Thursday, 7/3 @ 5pm: Peeps Taste Testing (all ages) Can you identify all of the different flavors? Kids of all ages are welcome to attend this Peeps taste testing party!
Friday, 7/11 @ 10:30am: Foodie Friday
Kids ages 2-8 are welcome to join us for Foodie Friday (as well as younger and older siblings)! Registration required.
Friday, 7/25 @ 11am: Rainforest Bingo
Join us for an interactive game of rainforest bingo, suitable for all ages! No sign-up is required.
Friday, 8/1 @ 10:30am: Foodie Friday

Kids ages 2-8 are welcome to join us for Foodie Friday (as well as younger and older siblings)! Registration required.
Friday, 8/15 @ 10am: Summer Reading Finale: Toy Swap & Ice Cream Party (All ages)
Join us as we wrap up summer reading with a toy swap and an ice cream party. We’ll also do the drawing for the summer reading prizes. Registration required.

ONGOING KIDS’ PROGRAMS:
Tuesdays @ 10:30am: Builder’s Club
Join Miss Sarah on Tuesday mornings for weekly building challenges. Earn a badge for each completed challenge! Registration required.
-Tuesdays from 7/1 - 8/12; no program 7/15
Wednesdays @ 10:30am: Weekly Craft
Make a different craft each week! Registration required.
-Wednesdays from 7/2 - 8/13; no program 7/16
Tuesdays in July (all day): Toy Swap Drop Off
Drop off gently used children’s toys in good condition any Tuesday in July. For each item donated, you’ll receive 1 ticket. Tickets can be used at the Toy Swap on 8/15 to “buy” new toys.
-Donations accepted at staff’s discretion.
-No stuffed animals, please.
-Please keep in mind: if you wouldn’t want the item due to its condition, don’t donate it.
-Games and puzzles will be accepted but please make sure all pieces are included

ADULT PROGRAMS:
Thursday, 7/24 @ 6:30pm: Spicy Romance Book Club
If you love spicy hot romances, this is the book club for you! Copies of the book can be picked up at the library. Registration required.
Thursday, 7/31 @ 6pm: DIY Beaded Plants
Make a beautiful beaded succulent to take home! Registration required.
Thursday, 8/7 @ 6pm: Faux Stained Glass (Pt 1)
We will create faux stained glass but the process requires drying time so it is broken into 2 parts. Registration required for BOTH classes.
Thursday, 8/14 @ 6pm: Faux Stained Glass (Pt 2). Registration required for BOTH classes.

ONGOING ADULT PROGRAMS:
Tuesdays @ 9am: Gentle Yoga
Join Sarah for free yoga classes in the library’s backyard! Registration required.
-Tuesdays from 7/1-8/26; no class 7/15
Thursday, 7/17 & 8/21 @ 6pm: Cookbook Club
This is a potluck style cookbook club where we all make recipes from the same book each month. Copies of the book can be picked up at the library. Registration required.
Saturdays @ 8am: Gentle Yoga
Join Sarah for free yoga classes in the library’s backyard! Registration required.
-7/12, 7/19, 8/2, 8/16

This year’s summer reading program is being generously supported by a grant from the Pageau Trust. Guilford Smith Memorial Library 17 Main St, South Windham, CT

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).

Sweeping Energy Reform Bill Passes House 144-3, Heads To Lamont’s Desk
CT News Junkie. “In one of the most widely anticipated legislative actions this session, the Connecticut House of Representatives passed Senate Bill 4 on Tuesday night with a bipartisan 144-3 vote. The wide-ranging legislation seeks to lower electricity rates, modernize the electric grid, expand oversight of utility companies and prepare for a decarbonized energy future.” Plus: Relief on electric bills passes House, sent to governor

Legislation promising modest relief on CT electric bills clears Senate
CT Mirror. “The legislation, Senate Bill 4, is expected to save utility customers between \$325 million and \$350 million annually over each of the next two years, according to proponents. Those numbers amount to about 1 to 2 cents per kilowatt-hour off current electric rates, potentially adding up to a \$100 or more a year for many customers...’We put money back in people’s pockets, took a hard look — and much as many of my colleagues think we can do better, I dare them to try without screwing up the system...’ Amid a flurry of late changes made to the bill in recent days was the removal of a proposal to borrow an additional \$750 million over five years to pay for energy efficiency programs that are currently funded as part of the public benefits charge.”

The future of New England’s electric grid can be described with one word: uncertainty
CT Mirror. “ ‘The future is inherently uncertain,’ said Katie Dykes, commissioner of Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, DEEP. “And uncertainty as well as rapid changes in development and the developments in the energy world are nothing new. Think about the fracking boom, or the Great Recession, or the COVID pandemic or Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. These all upended prior assumptions and created short-term and sometimes long, long-term disruption.” And then she made another point: “Energy infrastructure takes a really long time to build.” “The worst time to be building transmission is when you have the generation all constructed, ready to go,” Dykes said.“

CT’s first net-zero technical high school nears completion
WSHU. “The new Bullard-Havens Technical High School in Bridgeport is nearing completion. When it’s finished, it will be the most eco-friendly technical high school in Connecticut. The school will be served by geothermal heating and cooling systems and solar panels, making it the state’s first net-zero technical high school. Net-zero means it’s producing as much energy as it uses. Michelle Gilman, commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services, said the project is on track to be finished this November and has stayed on budget at \$200 million.” The Northeast bet big on offshore wind. Trump wants to halt the industry entirely
NPR. “ ‘Ever since the whaling industry, it’s been downhill for the city of New London,” jokes Mayor Michael Passero. “We went from the richest city in Connecticut to one of the poorest.’ ...Between redeveloping the pier and serving as the staging ground for two of the country’s first big projects, offshore wind has created hundreds of jobs and generated millions for the city and local economy. The question is whether it will last. President Trump campaigned on a promise to “end” the U.S. offshore wind industry “on day one.” Since he took office the future of the young industry is anything but certain.”

Connecticut manufacturer invests in 750-kW rooftop solar array
Solar Power World. “Budderfly, an energy-as-a-service company and The Gilman Brothers Company, a 128-year-old, family-owned manufacturer of foamboard products based in Connecticut, have announced a new 750-kW rooftop solar project. Over the 15-year agreement, Budderfly expects to lower Gilman Brothers’ annual energy costs by

up to 30%...Following this project, Gilman Brothers will benefit from a rooftop solar system, all-new LED lighting and an ultra-high-efficiency HVAC system, in addition to several other cost-saving technologies like high-efficiency motors paired with variable frequency drives.”

New England power demand fell to an all-time low on Easter
CT Mirror. “Demand on New England’s power grid fell to an all-time low on Sunday afternoon as sunny skies and mild temperatures zapped residents’ need for electricity...“This is the fourth year that we’ve seen a record low, but the difference between last year’s record low and this one was a pretty good jump,” ...The proliferation of energy-efficient technologies and rooftop solar panels is also helping to drive down the need to pull electricity off the grid. On Sunday afternoon, for example, grid operators estimated that behind-the-meter solar panels generated a peak of roughly 6,600 megawatts of electricity — more power than the entire system was drawing from power plants.”

Senate Confirms PURA Chair Marissa Gillett Amid Walkout, Partisan Tensions
CT News Junkie. “In a sharply divided and emotionally charged vote on Tuesday, the Connecticut Senate confirmed Marissa Gillett to a second term as chair of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, but not without some controversy. The final vote was 21 in favor, while 15 senators registered “non-votes” in an orchestrated walkout led by Senate Minority Leader Stephen Harding, R-Brookfield...During her tenure, PURA has recovered \$5.5 million in customer restitution and levied more than \$12 million in penalties to alleviate arrearages, while also notching four wins in court against utility companies.”

Lamont Sees Installation of Solar Panels at Seven Correctional Facilities as ‘Win-Win’ for State
CT News Junkie. “A multiyear deal could see the state saving big on energy to power its prisons. Lamont touted the installation of similar facilities at seven Connecticut institutions as a “win-win” for the state...“We can reduce the load on our grid, and reduce those peak rates,” Lamont said...The deal includes solar installations at seven Connecticut correctional facilities...Combined, the seven installations are expected to generate just over 11,000 megawatt-hours per year. The Cheshire installation, which is the largest at 2.4 megawatts, is capable of generating up to 90% of the facility’s peak power needs, according to the department...TotalEnergies installed the arrays and is responsible for their operation and maintenance. The state will purchase the resulting electricity from the company for \$.075 per kilowatt-hour.”

What to know about the public benefits charge on your electric bill
CT Mirror. “If you’ve taken a detailed look at your Connecticut electric bill over the last year or so, you probably noticed that it’s broken down into four sections: supply, transmission, local delivery and — to the confusion and ire of many — a section labeled “public benefits.”...Simply put, the public benefits charge is a collection of state and federally-mandated initiatives...The co-chair of the Energy and Technology Committee, state Sen. Norm Needleman, D-Essex, said this week that he is in the process of drafting legislation that would propose borrowing money to pay off a portion of the public benefits charge like uncollectables and energy efficiency investments, while leaving the rest of the charge in place.”

Historic Church In Tolland Going Solar
Patch. “The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Gallagher, the church’s senior pastor, added, ‘It was rewarding to work with the town and its Historic District Commission to create a solution that balances the practicality of solar installation while maintaining the historic character of the Tolland Green. Not only does our solar project reduce the church carbon footprint and show our commitment to ecological justice, it serves as a viable example for other churches in historic districts to gain value from solar projects.’

Has Maine learned how to make heat pumps lower electricity costs for all?
Canary Media. “Maine’s new energy-efficiency plan is projected to lower electricity bills for the state’s residents — even those who don’t directly benefit from its rebate and incentive programs...How? Utilities have certain fixed costs, such as maintaining power lines. To pay for them — and this is a bit of a simplification — they essentially divide the expense by the amount of power they expect customers to use in a year, and add that number to the rate

they charge per kilowatt-hour. When more heat pumps come online, power demand goes up, so the fixed costs are spread out over more kilowatt-hours, lowering bills for the average consumer...Maine’s plan [also] includes demand-response programs that pay consumers for using less energy at peak times...”

Tesla Supercharger With Solar And Storage Coming to CT
EV Club of CT. “Tesla has, for years, been teasing that its vertical integration makes it a natural to build superchargers augmented by solar panels and battery storage. This is particularly useful along rural stretches of an interstate where there may not be enough grid power to support a supercharger installation, or where they want to install a location sooner than the utility can bring additional power. It took a while, but we are finally starting to see this...It looks like we are getting something similar in CT, albeit on a more modest scale. The photos at the top of the post and below are of an under-construction supercharger site in Willington off I-84 in the rural northeastern part of the state.”

Trump allows New York offshore wind project after apparent gas pipeline compromise with state
CNBC. “Norwegian energy company Equinor will resume construction on its offshore wind farm in New York, after the Trump administration lifted its order to halt work on the project...New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said Monday evening that [Interior Secretary] Burgum and President Donald Trump agreed to lift the stop-work order and allow the project to move forward “after countless conversations with Equinor and White House officials.” Empire Wind supports 1,500 union jobs, Hochul said... Burgum said he was encouraged by Hochul’s “willingness to move forward on critical pipeline capacity.” Plus: A timeline of Trump’s failed attempt to kill Empire Wind

CT says it will stand tough if Trump comes for its climate change policies
CT Mirror. “During the first Trump administration’s assault on climate initiatives, it was individual states that stepped up with policies to keep the momentum going on combating climate change. The second Trump administration is now attempting to go after state actions too...Whether the goal is truly legal or an exercise in intimidation to get anticipatory compliance from states remains to be seen...[According to Brad Campbell, president of the Conservation Law Foundation,] ‘The executive order provides no legal rationale for why any of the categories of laws it’s attacking are unlawful or unconstitutional’ he said. “I pity the DOJ attorney who has to come up with a legal basis for these types of challenges.” “

In New England, Canadian Hydropower Has Slowed To An Ominous Trickle
CT News Junkie. “Hydro-Québec leaders say low prices in the New England market — not politics — are behind the decision to suspend sales. The disruption hasn’t affected power costs or reliability in the region yet, but some experts say it could if the cutoff extends into the summer cooling season. The situation also highlights a potential risk to state clean energy plans that count on Canadian hydropower to help offset fossil fuels.”

LEGISLATION STORIES

Dan Haar: Eversource warns Connecticut lawmakers it may seek \$3.2 billion electric rate hike
CT Insider. “The day of reckoning is coming for Connecticut electric ratepayers,especially customers of Eversource who are caught in the middle of a war between their power company and their state officials. We don’t know exactly when the bill comes due. But now we have an estimate. It’s ugly: \$3.2 billion...This will almost certainly mean a very large increase in the delivery portion of customers’ bills when the brunt of it hits, probably in 2027. The size of the increase would depend on how much regulators approve, how they allow Eversource to collect it and how serious Connecticut is about modernizing the grid.”

House approves two utility commissioners amid debate over electricity costs
CT Mirror. “House lawmakers voted Wednesday to advance two of Gov. Ned Lamont’s nominees to serve as utilities regulators, despite some bipartisan concerns that the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority has not done enough to ease voters’ frustrations with the cost of their electric bills. Gillett, the chair of the PURA, cleared the chamber on a vote of 91 to 52, which saw seven Democrats join nearly all of the Republicans in opposing her nomination to another four-year term on the authority...In addition to her four-year term as a regular member of the commission, Gillett’s two-year term as chair of PURA is scheduled to expire in July. Lamont has not said whether he plans to reappoint her to that role.”

Solar Today - Honoring Earth Day, every day

Greetings all,

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

Protecting Your Solar Investment: A Look at Today’s Industry Challenges and Opportunities



In this edition, I want to continue our conversation around protecting your rights as a homeowner and consumer while navigating the solar industry. The industry has seen rapid growth, but with it comes complexity, evolving regulations, and unfortunately, some shady tactics that every homeowner should be aware of. Let’s explore some of the biggest current challenges — and opportunities — you should know about.

30% Federal Tax Credit: What You Need to Know

You’ve likely heard that the 30% Federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) may be coming to an end after 2025. While nothing is final yet, it’s important to prepare for what that could mean. If the credit does expire, **your solar system must not only be installed by December 31, 2025, but also fully turned on** and operational.

That means several steps must be completed before the year ends:

- Full system sale and contract finalized
- Engineering completed
- Utility interconnection approvals granted
- Municipal permitting secured
- Physical installation completed
- Final inspection passed
- Utility net meter swap completed

System software turned on and integrated with your home’s electrical system

If you’re opting for a **leased system**, expect even more delays. After installation, the finance company must finalize their side of the deal before your system gets turned on. Any hiccup along this journey could push your system into 2026, costing you that 30% credit.

This is one of the many reasons we often refer to the solar process as the “Solar Coaster.” It’s a ride — sometimes smooth, sometimes bumpy — with various parties involved along the way.

The Politics of the Tax Credit

My personal take? I believe the potential expiration of the 30% ITC is more of a political bargaining chip than a certainty. Lawmakers may use it as a negotiating tool, offering its extension in exchange for unrelated policy concessions.

Still, **if the credit does vanish**, we’ll likely see a surge in solar leases. Lease offers may look more appealing on paper due to lower upfront costs — but that doesn’t mean buying isn’t still a smart long-term move. Especially with utility rates steadily rising, a cash purchase or self-financed system could still offer superior savings over time.

The Rising Cost of Tariffs

On top of tax credit concerns, **tariffs on imported solar equipment are driving up prices**. We’ve already seen supplier cost increases this month, and I expect more to come. That means homeowners should expect rising installation costs in the near future. It’s a simple supply chain ripple that impacts everything from solar panels to microinverters.

Does Solar Still Make Sense?

Absolutely — but only if the numbers add up. Solar isn’t one-size-fits-all, which is why it’s so important to get a quote from a **local installer who manages their own crews and process**. You want someone who is well-versed in all financing options — not just leases.

Beware of sales reps who immediately push a lease as your only option. This is often a red flag that they **don’t fully understand or want to discuss alternatives** like self-financed or solar-specific loans.

Key questions to ask your solar consultant:

-Do they understand the difference between dealer-financed and self-financed solar loans?Can they explain dealer fees included in “low-interest” loans?

- Can they explain dealer fees included in “low-interest” loans?
- Will they show you the true cost difference between cash and financed options?

Remember: **low-rate solar loans often come with higher principal prices**. If the cash price doesn’t beat the financed offer, you’re likely being overcharged.

Understanding Your Price Per Watt (PPW)

Want to know if you’re getting a good deal? Here’s how to calculate it:

1. Take the gross total purchase price.
2. Divide it by the total wattage of your system (not projected production).

Example:

If you’re offered 16 panels at 430 watts each, that’s 6880 watts (or 6.88kW). If your gross cost is \$22,704, then your **price per watt is \$3.30** ($\$22,704 \div 6880 = \3.30).

Currently, the average PPW is between **\$3.20 to \$3.45**, depending on factors like roof angle, panel quality, or electrical upgrades. If you’re quoted \$4.60 per watt, and the rep focuses on your “monthly savings” — **run the other direction**. That’s a tactic borrowed from shady car sales.

Watch Out for Industry Tricks

Here are a few common schemes homeowners should be wary of:

“**We work with Eversource**” – Many reps falsely claim affiliation with your utility company.

“**No pushy salespeople**” ads – These companies may save you a few bucks upfront, but they often outsource critical work like permitting and installation to the lowest bidder. Quality control is lacking.

Door knockers – If someone shows up at your door, always ask to see their **Connecticut Home Improvement Sales License (CT HIS) AND their driver’s license**. Snap a photo of both for your records.

Fast Installs? Proceed with Caution

Some companies are advertising lightning-fast install times — a tempting offer for homeowners eager to go solar. But here’s the truth: **very few of these companies are following all the proper steps** to make that timeline possible.

Often, they’ll start working before getting town permits or utility approval, just to claim the job is “in progress.” This tactic locks you into a contract and gives the illusion of speed, even if no meaningful progress has actually been made. It’s a lot like boarding an airplane, having the jet bridge pulled away — and then sitting on the tarmac for hours while the airline still logs it as an “on-time departure.”

To protect yourself, **always ask for proof that the utility application and town permits are approved** before any work begins.

A Personal Promise — and a New Service

*I’ve dedicated myself to helping homeowners switch to solar and hydro energy while **protecting their best interests**. I’ve seen too many people misled by half-truths, hidden fees, or rushed decisions.*

That’s why I’m now offering a **consulting service**: I’ll review any quote you’ve received and break down the fine print. I’ll verify what’s true, what’s misleading, and whether it’s a deal worth committing to.

Together, we can make sure your solar investment is not only smart, but financially strategic for you!

If you or someone you know wants to explore solar or hydro-powered energy — or just wants a no-pressure, no commitment consultation — I’d love to help. Let’s bring some clarity (and honesty) to this industry.

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Dream Vacation vs. Solid Retirement: How to Live Well Now While Saving for The Future

By Holly C. Wanegar,
CFP®, Vice President,
Associate Financial Advisor



Planning for your financial future requires balancing immediate needs and wants with long-term needs and aspirations. Whether you’re saving for a vacation next year or retirement decades away, understanding how to approach different savings goals through strategic financial planning can help you live fully through every stage of life while still building lasting financial security.

Understand the Critical Difference Between Short and Long-Term Goals

Your time horizon – the time between now and the “due date” for a particular goal – fundamentally changes how you should approach savings and investments. Short-term goals (those goals you want to achieve within about one to five years) require a conservative approach to preserve capital, while long-term goals (things you want to achieve more than five years from now) allow for more strategic risk-taking to achieve greater growth of savings and overall wealth.

Short-Term Savings Strategy: Prioritize Preservation

You should employ a short-term saving strategy for goals like building up an emergency fund; saving up for a downpayment on a home; vacation planning or wedding planning; or saving for a major purchase like a car. The key principles of a short-term savings strategy include:

- A lower risk tolerance:** Your money should be protected from market volatility
- A focus on liquidity:** Your money should be easily accessible, so choose savings vehicles that allow quick access to funds
- Protection against inflation:** Your money needs to be protected from the erosion of inflation

Long-Term Savings Strategy: Embracing Strategic Growth

For goals like retirement, children’s education, or building generational wealth, you can afford to take appropriate risk for potentially higher returns – especially if you start earlier rather than later and therefore have a longer time horizon. Key characteristics of long-term savings include:

- Embracing more risk** in alignment with your time horizon; the longer you have, the more risk you can take
- Maximizing retirement account contributions** to make the most of the magic of compound interest, including leveraging your employer’s matching contribution to the fullest if they offer one; taking advantage of tax-deferred growth; and leveraging tax efficiencies
- Monitoring and adjusting your plan and investments regularly** as the markets, your life, and your goals change, and as you time horizon grows shorter

A 3-Step Process for Creating A Balanced Savings Strategy

Step 1: Establish Savings “Buckets” and Prioritize Goals

On a sheet of paper, make a column for each of the below savings “buckets.” Then make a list of all the goals that fall into each and rank them from most important to least.

- Emergency bucket:** Before anything else, ensure you have three to six months’ expenses in cash saved for emergencies.
- Short-term bucket:** These are specific goals within five to seven years, like a down payment on a home or car, or replacing the roof on your home.

- Retirement bucket:** Figure out how much you will need to save for the retirement you want, and how much you’ll need to contribute to your retirement accounts each month to get there. (We have a great retirement planning calculator in the Resources section of our website at whzwealth.com.)

Step 2: Choose The Appropriate Savings Vehicles Using Time-Based Risk Allocation

For the emergency bucket, consider using a high-yield savings account, money market account, treasury I bonds, short-term CD, or a combination of all of these for protection of principal combined with at least a minimal measure of growth.

For the short-term bucket, choose vehicles that focus on principal protection, such as those that offer 100% cash equivalents and fixed income, for goals planned in the next three years. for goals a bit further out, consider splitting your savings vehicles to balance preservation with modest growth, allocating about 60-70% to conservative investments and 30-40% to moderate growth investments.

For the retirement bucket, allocate your investments according to your specific age and risk tolerance. One example for a moderate-length time horizon might be allocating 40-60% to stocks for growth potential, 30-40% to bonds for stability and 10-20% in alternative investments. Whatever allocation makes the most strategic sense for you, be sure to keep updating and adjusting it at least once per year as life and markets change, and your time horizon gets shorter.

Step 3: Automate for Ease

Having a strategic financial plan is critical, but it won’t do you any good if you don’t follow it. One way to make sticking to the plan easier is to set up automatic transfers to different savings buckets: direct deposit to high-yield savings for short-term goals; use payroll deduction to ensure you contribute to your 401(k) or other retirement account; and set up monthly transfers to investment accounts for other long-term goals.

Step 4: Enlist Professional Help for Long-Term Success

Creating an effective savings strategy that balances multiple time horizons can be complex. A financial advisor can help you to not only develop a comprehensive savings strategy like this one, but provide deeper insights based on for your particular situation in order to choose the best investment allocations for you and optimize for tax efficiency. They’ll also help you to stay on track throughout the years, including navigating retirement rules and contribution limits and planning for life changes that affect your goals.

Building Absolute Confidence in Your Financial Future

Remember, successful financial planning isn’t about perfect timing or maximum returns—it’s about consistent, strategic action aligned with your goals. The key is to start with a clear plan, remain consistent in your approach, and adjust as life evolves.

Interested in working with us to create a personalized savings strategy that balances your short and long-term goals? Schedule a complimentary consultation on our website at whzwealth.com or give us a call at (860) 928-2341 and find out how our Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well™ process can help you build lasting financial security.

Authored by Vice President, Associate Financial Advisor Holly C. Wanegar, CFP®. AI may have been used in the research and initial drafting of this piece. These materials are general in nature and do not address your specific situation. For your specific investment needs, please discuss your individual circumstances with your representative. WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice, and nothing in the accompanying pages should be construed as specific tax or legal advice. Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret Street, Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Road, Tolland, CT 06084. 860-928-2341. www.whzwealth.com.

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A contra dance is a social dance that one can attend without a partner. The dancers form couples who form sets in long lines. Tt the coure 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 that other forms of dancing.

Rosie’s Menu

From *Animals* by Carol Wheelock Hall

At night you may be inside flipping your channels, while it’s feeding time for all nocturnal mammals. Because of my choices I’m called an omnivore and I’ll eat about anything I can find outdoors.

I’m a pretty striped skunk, but I’ll be very discreet while I search for insects, worms, and grubs to eat. Although you may view my diet with great disgust, it’s quite healthy for me and keeps me robust.

At night I quietly leave my den and go out to troll. I look in yards and on porches for uncovered bowls. It’s a good find for me and I’ll happily nibble. It’s too bad for the dog that left uneaten kibble.

Then with my super duper olfactory ability I’ll search for any other edible possibility. I like to find fruits, nuts, and seeds that drop, and I sometimes get into the garden crops.

While out roaming, I must always be on guard in case humans or pets come into the yard. Beware if I’m threatened, it’s your sorry luck as I spray, letting go my odoriferous musk.

I fatten up for winter, come out in the spring. You’ll know I’m back prowling by the smell I bring. So just know that I might live near your home. and I won’t bother you if you just leave me alone.

Letters and Emails

I am writing in response to an item in Jesse R. Clark’s piece, “The Freedom of Upside-Down Thinking,” in the May/June *Neighbors*: “People who aren’t Christians shouldn’t say ‘Jesus Christ!’ or God damn it!” Especially if you’re an atheist.”

As an atheist myself, I will stop saying those things when:

- “In God We Trust” is removed from our currency;
- “Under God” no longer appears in the Pledge of Allegiance;
- The government ceases to officially recognize religious holidays;
- Congress no longer has an Opening Prayer;
- Politicians and church groups have stopped campaigning to have the Ten Commandments displayed in courthouses and classrooms;
- I can drive or walk farther than one half-mile without seeing a church;
- Bible-thumpers no longer whine about “persecution” because not everybody wishes to practice their faith;
- Well-intended but highly annoying Christians no longer knock on my door to give me the “good word”; and
- Organized religion has no place in politics.

Until those things occur, I will continue to say “Jesus Christ” and “God damn it.” Whoever disapproves can go straight to hell.

-Dean Farrell

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The Giant Bumblebee

By Ryan Forster

It is early spring; the daffodils and orchard blooms are filling the fields and ancient food forests with color. What a special time of year! Having been absent from New England for over 20 years, I now appreciate this miracle, a wonderful reminder of time and the intelligence of nature, more than ever. The hibernating critical-thinking creatures begin to awake, the first of which are the amphibians of the forest. With delicate skin and no fur, it is baffling to me how they survived this past February, happily playing in 40-degree water as if it was a 90-degree day in July. The wood frog still confuses scientists to this day, using only a few leaves to blanket itself as the northern hemisphere tilts away from the sun. Completely brain-dead, the first cold rains at the tail end of winter awakes them. Soon after, the peeper frogs emerge, followed by the spotted salamanders joining in dance as the melting snow transforms into vernal pools that will temporarily sustain hidden aquatic life. I have a whole new respect for the amphibians of the great Northeast.

My passion has been bees for many years, but it could be taken over by the hardness of these soft-skinned, cold-blooded creatures. Soon after the amphibians emerge, you begin to see insects! They are the only order in the animal kingdom to make it through five mass extinctions. These invertebrates came to land, they say, about 480 million years ago during the Ordovician Period, right about the same time plants began to take root in the landmasses above sea level. My theory is that they were once little shrimp-like crustaceans that were fortunate enough to taste the reproductive protein (pollen) of the first plants to form. Wind-swept pollen found its way to the ocean shoreline and was then discovered to be a viable food source. These smart little shrimps said to heck with all these ocean predators and, through determination and sheer will, they made their way out of the water and onto land.

There is a law of life that always holds true: Nature adores abundance and will always take advantage of it to promote its success. Over 99 percent of all pollen goes to waste. A plant cannot walk, so originally it relied on wind to help it procreate. The smart little ocean crustaceans that became land dwellers created Earth’s first terrestrial symbiotic relationship between two entirely different orgasms. This simple and mutually beneficial relationship was the catalyst responsible for creating a life explosion on this planet that had not been seen in its four billion years of prior existence. Scientists still do not know how or why they formed wings; I am sure it was for travel efficiency for the purpose of food collection. If these crustaceans made their way from the ocean to land, I am sure they had enough will and determination to concentrate hard enough to create wings.

Every bee you see was not born a bee; they all start as a grub with no wings present. Then they go through metamorphosis. These special little grubs consume themselves from the inside out, using

unique enzymes in their stomach to dissolve themselves into primordial soup. This soup then gathers itself together, forming possibly the most beneficial animal on our planet: a pollinating insect. Which brings me to the bumblebee, one of the first pollinators to emerge after the last frost. Native and precious to North America, unlike the honeybee (which are not native to North America), the bumblebee does produce honey but only enough to support its kingdom. About a thimbleful can be found in an abandoned hive come late fall. But it is spring now, so let us talk about this special time and this special little, I mean *big*, lady you see buzzing around.

If you are wondering why you can always hear a bumblebee, it is because of its unique and aggressive pollination method called sonication. Sonication has been mastered by the bumblebee, and I believe they do this all in the key of C. They produce beautiful tones by dislocating their wings from the attached muscles and flexing them rapidly. This incredible action creates vibrations that will dislodge pollen from the tightest of pistils, which encourages plant life.

And if you are wondering why the bumblebees you see this time of year are big, I have the answer! The only bumblebees that survive through the winter and into spring are queens. They mate in fall, then burrow underground in small holes where they will freeze and go dormant during winter, only to emerge during the spring thaw. They will look for flowers immediately to nourish themselves, for they have a kingdom to build, and they must do it all by themselves at the start. The queen will buzz around, using her antennae to sense/sniff out any old mouse or small-rodent burrow. Mice and chipmunks seem to make the best little caves for her to call home. Once an abandoned rodent den is discovered, she will begin building her nest and lay her eggs.

Currently I have only seen the double-spotted bumblebee, but I hear there are others. If you find a “rusted patch bumblebee,” consider yourself a true environmentalist, and protect it with your life. Pollinators are one of earth’s keystone species, and bumblebees are considered the bee’s knees of pollinators. If you would like to know how to promote their habitat and create a bumblebee home naturally, it is very simple. No plastic or fancy tools are needed. Dig a hole about the size of a shoebox, put some moss at the bottom, and then put some cotton or fresh wool inside for the queen to stay warm during the cold spring nights. The secret trick is to put part of an old mouse nest in there as well, or even some mouse hairs collected from one of your house mousetrap victims. This will help lure her in. Place a nice stone on top and create a 5- to 6-inch-long by 1-inch circumference tunnel she can travel through to access the den.

Thank you all who have read this article; keep enjoying nature and the precious creatures who keep this beautiful planet alive, full of color and sound.

The Right Time

By Dennis Sherman

When I took my pen from my desk drawer a few moments ago, I was unsure of what the topic of this article was to be. It had been brought to my attention that in my previous writing adventures, I had actually written something someone had liked. With this in mind, I hope to be able to create one or two sentences for the reader to enjoy.

Someday I hope that readers will suggest topics for me to discuss in upcoming issues, but for now I have only myself to rely on for topics. Don’t think this is strange, because it is a common practice among new or young authors. So, let’s see what’s in the suggestion box today. Well, I would like to thank myself for asking that the topic of this article be “the right time to go fishing.”

First, a short history of fishing is necessary to help aid in answering this question because this problem has faced man since the beginning of time. At first, man took his narrow piece of flint and his line to the local fishing hole as a necessity to put food on his stone table. But Stone Age women soon discovered their men were returning all smiles and anxious to return to the ponds and streams. From that time on, fishing was no longer a necessity. Men were made to domesticate animals and farm the land. Still, some fishing was done in secret or by unmarried men. These men were referred to by the women as “useless as bass lure.” Later, their words were condensed to our modern “bachelor.”

For thousands of years, fishing existed only as an underground organization, almost becoming extinct. The word “fish” was soon to be what we would call a swear word. To be called the “the son of a fisherman” was the greatest insult one could receive. The way and methods of fishing in those times are basically unknown, although many legends have arisen from these angler-less times. Writing about fishing was outlawed throughout the known world. Centuries later, in early Greek literature, we come across a legal document known as a fishing license. It seems this was the name for separation papers in a Greek divorce hearing. The court appointee who delivered these was called a “fisherman.”

It was biblical times which brought a change in the attitude toward fishing. Jesus had disciples who were fishermen, and the fish became a symbol of the church. Fish were found in many sermons and parables. With this religious backing, fishing took on new meaning and developed into its present-day condition.

As you have seen through this brief historical account, fishing has gone through some troubled times. It is only within the last century or so that man could even consider the question of when the right time for fishing is. The obvious answer is: about 23 hours of each day is proper for fishing. At least one hour a day should be set aside for priorities. This hour comes at different times depending on the individual, and I leave its determination to the fisherman. Personally, I manage to take care of my non-fishing matters between 3:15 and 4:15 a.m.

Understandably, many of you have wives or girlfriends and cannot adhere to a proper fishing schedule. This is where I would like to introduce the secondary fishing program. If you are married, respect is due to your spouse. To show your love, you should plan to either kiss her in the morning and tell her you are going fishing



Artwork by Charles McCaughtry.

after work, or kiss her after work, before you head out. In the case of a girlfriend, you might find fishing exhibitions to attend or, for a special night at home, a wide selection of fishing videos is available. We now have put love and romance into our fishing schedule, and what woman could resist such a thoughtful man?

Also included in the secondary fishing program is temporary time for a job. For the man with a working wife, a part-time job is ideal. This will keep down your requests for lure and gas money. Also, she will see you are serious in making an attempt to help support the household. A seasonal job is even better for the fishing schedule. These include snow plowing, picking apples, playing Santa Claus, painting Easter eggs, and many more. The thought to keep in your mind is that a bad day of fishing beats a good day of work.

Through the years, I have kept complete and accurate records on times I have found ideal for fishing, along with times suggested by reliable sources. Please feel free to add to my findings, for a fisherman is always looking for an excuse to fish. My current list of proper fishing times includes sunrise, sunset, overcast days, moonlit nights, low pressure arriving, rainy days, midday, moonless nights, spring, after storms, late afternoon, summer, apple-blossom bloom, when you buy a new piece of equipment, after lunch, before supper, winter, when in-laws are coming, before work, fall, when crickets are loud, starry nights, windy days, blue skies above, high pressure departing, before a storm, after work, holidays, change of seasons, pitch-black nights, in the eye of a hurricane, power failures, lunch breaks, ice out, flies hatching, and birthdays.

In my list I left out two of the rightest of times to go fishing. The first is when a fishing buddy calls and suggests trying out a new spot. There should be no hesitation and all other fishing intentions should be dropped. The only thing that could possibly top this invitation would be if your fishing buddy wants to take you to his favorite fishing hole. This concept of a favorite fishing hole is too involved to expound on at this time and I will discuss it at a later time. I hope the reader now feels they have partial knowledge of fishing times. I would like to now conclude by saying, “I’m going fishing.” Good day.

(written in 1986)

Abington’s Revolutionary Thinkers

By Donna Dufresne

While preparing the *Revolutionary Abington* slide show for our Fireside Chat at the Vanilla Bean in March, I became intrigued by the spirit of the people of Abington in the late eighteenth century. The 11th Regiment Militia was seated in Abington, captained by Zebadiah Ingalls. The training grounds were on the green which is now Chappy Rich’s cornfield on the east side of Route 97 and south of Clinic Road. That section of Abington from We-Li-Kit Ice Cream to Clinic Road was the center of the village with Abington’s first schoolhouse in the triangle across from We-Li-Kit, three taverns, a dress shop, sword shop, blacksmith shop, and the Old Abington Burial Ground. Ephraim Ingalls’s tavern was just south of the burial ground, and across the street was Clark’s Tavern on the Green. Dr. Elisha Lord’s house stood on the north side of the burial ground across from the Abington Clinic.

At the Four Corners there were more shops and businesses including Dresser’s Store, a shoemaker, and the very busy mills on Abington Brook dominated by Nathaniel Ayers’s fulling mill, a sawmill, and a tannery. Stowell’s tannery dressed the sheepskin leather which was used to cover Reverend Lyon’s library books when the first version of the Abington Social Library was established in his house in 1793. The Abington Congregational Church dominated the cultural and religious covenant under the pastoral care of Reverend Lyons, churning out future leaders and pillars of society who exhibited courage, character, and a commitment to their community.

Abington was heavily represented in Lexington and the 11th Regiment. Soldiers mustered (enlisted) in Ephraim Ingalls’s tavern and were given a physical by Dr. Lord. Captain Zebadiah Ingalls and three of his sons answered the call to Lexington.

While their fathers and husbands were fighting for liberty, the women of Abington ran the farms and produced food and clothing for the army. There is evidence the women of Abington were engaged in the non-importation movement, vowing to boycott all imported fabric and textiles and produce their own home-grown, -spun, and -woven clothing. Obadiah Higginbotham and Jonathan Randall grew flax. Obadiah produced saxony (flax) spinning wheels, which were sold throughout the region. Dorcas Higginbotham was known as a fine spinner and weaver of linen who produced coverlids (coverlets), diaper-patterned table and bed linens, and tow cloth for grain sacks, dish-towels, and work clothes. The Pomfret Historical Society



has samples of linen that was grown, spun, and woven on the Trowbridge farm. Dolly Sumner Ingalls, who was married to Lemuel Ingalls, produced silk kerchiefs during the Revolutionary War and into the early 1800s. There are still remnants of mulberry trees in the neighborhood.

When they returned from the war, the men of Abington set out to build a country. With the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution in mind, they rolled up their sleeves and opened their purses for the greater good of the community and the nation. They built schools in Abington and Jericho. Just after the war, Pomfret’s first poorhouse was built on land belonging to Elijah Griggs (later known as Harold Cunningham’s farm). According to folklore, its first occupant was an enslaved man named Quanto who helped the 11th Regiment capture the British general Prescott in Rhode Island. He was brought to Abington by Lieutenant Kingsbury, given his freedom,

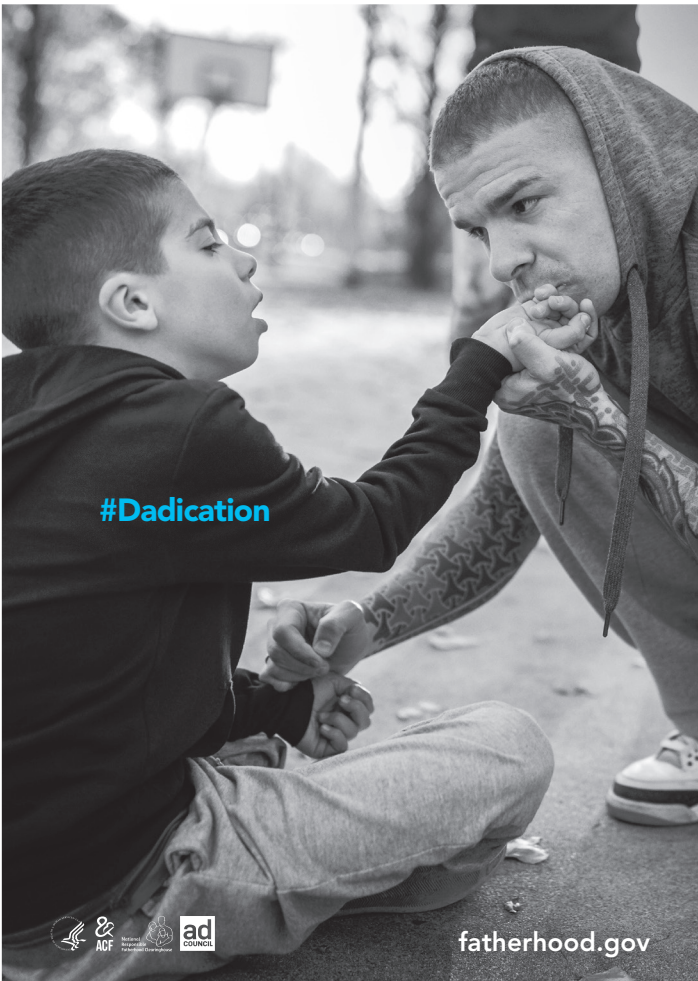


and cared for by the town of Pomfret for the rest of his life (Susan Jewett Griggs, *Folklore and Firesides of Pomfret and Hampton, and Vicinity*, p. 64).

Several Abington sons went to Yale and Harvard and became ministers, physicians, and lawyers. Others built water-powered mills and other industries. By 1793 they had started a library which was housed in a closet in Reverend Lyons’s house. Subscribers paid for the privilege of borrowing the books, which were mostly religious and philosophical tomes. A few years later, they added a junior

library which was housed by John Holbrook. These books were more attractive to students in the local schools and included literature and poetry. A generation later, Alethea Lord, the granddaughter of Dr. Elisha Lord, became the first female librarian in the country. The Abington Ladies Library featured women’s literature. By the 1840s the three libraries combined as the Abington Social Library. Meanwhile, Elisha Lord Jr. established an Antislavery Society which met at Abington Congregational Church and passed many resolutions to ban slavery nationwide.

Surely there was some grumbling about taxes and inflation as the new nation teetered into the future. More than one tavern keeper was fined for tax evasion. Yet our revolutionary thinkers in Abington and Pomfret continued to move forward, building schools, libraries, bridges, and turnpikes, and taking care of the poor and elderly. Few became exceedingly rich. Yet when they did, they imbibed a philanthropic spirit and gave back to their communities, as did Augustus Sabin Chase when he funded a third of the building of the Abington Social Library in 1886. Most chipped in as they could, having been raised by the moral compass of their parents’ world, which had been saturated with religious tithing and covenants with the greater community. We can learn a lot from those who truly made America great.



Disbursements

from *I Was, I Am* by Carol Wheelock Hall

Don’t be sad, put on a smile.
We plan to be around awhile.
Here’s the plan we have in mind,
For when we take our last recline:

Re-home furniture, their purpose done,
Perhaps outdated from when begun.
Files and data- will anyone look!
And who will read these many books.

Tools in the shed will need a home,
They’ve set awhile, last job unknown.
Bedding, towels, take what you need.
Our loving family shows no greed.

Who will take this crowded case
Of knick-knacks that we once embraced?
Christmas ornaments- divide them up!
Take pots and pans, dishes, cups.

You may discard and divide as agreed.
The rest please give to those in need.
Plain and simple in our mind but
Sorry for the work you’ll find.
Love Always, Mom and Dad

Where to find the Neighbors paper

Neighbors 25

Ashford

Terry’s Transmissions
Ashford Spirit Shoppe
Ashford Post Office

Putnam

Subway
Putnam Post Office
Putnam Library

Bolton

Bolton Post Office
Subway-Bolton Notch

Scotland

Scotland Post Office

Brooklyn

Brooklyn Post Office
Bakers Dozen CoffeeShop
Salem Village

South Windham

Bob’s Windham IGA
Landon Tire
So. Windham Post Office
Guilford Smith Library

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
Tolland Library
Red and White Store

Eastford

Eastford Post Office

Ellington/Crystal Lake

3 J’s Deli

Vernon /Rockville

Rockville Library
Paul’s Music Boutique
Records the Good Kind

Hampton

Hampton Post Office
Organic Roots Farm
Hampton General Store

Willington

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

Lebanon

Lebanon Post Office
Market on the Green

Mansfield/Storrs

Storrs Post Office
Starbucks
Liberty Bank
Chang’s Garden
Mansfield CommunityCtr

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 Restauran
YONO Yoga Studio

Mansfield Center

East Brook Mall

Mansfield Depot

Thompson’s Store

North Windham

Bagel One
Subway
No. Windham Post Office

Windham Center

Windham Post Office

Pomfret

Weiss, Hale & Zahansky
Vanilla Bean Restaurant
Pomfret Post Office
Bakers Dozen CoffeeShop

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The Planet Press

Happy Fourth of July!
Happy Summer!

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The Planet Press Mission

The goal is to build a resilient community through accurate and engaging environmental news. We aim to foster positive change through informed dialogue by illuminating research, seasonal news, and issues affecting Connecticut. May Connecticut's natural beauty bless future generations to come.



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Angler Catches Record-Breaking Freshwater Fish

On May 25, 2025, angler Rafal Wlazlo caught a 45-pound, 8-ounce common carp from Lake Lillinonah in Bridgewater, Connecticut. According to CT Insider, the catch is the largest freshwater fish ever documented in the state.



Helping our Beaches

The EPA has awarded over \$1.1 million in grants to New England states to enhance beach water quality monitoring and to notify the public when swimming conditions are unsafe.

This funding is designed to help states detect harmful bacteria and alert the public when contamination levels exceed health standards. The EPA plans to provide Connecticut with \$209,000.

DEEP Wildlife Management

The state of Connecticut has purchased a 643-acre undeveloped property in Killingly, which will be converted into public land.

Officials say the acquisition is one of the largest in recent years. The agency intends to add the property to its network of over 100 public wildlife management areas. Connecticut aims to preserve 21% of its land, about 673,210 acres, as open space, a target set for 2023. However, by that year, DEEP reported reaching only about 75% of the goal.

It was purchased for \$4.1 million, according to a press release.

As Temperatures Rise, So Do Mosquitoes

Mosquito-borne illnesses are transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. In Connecticut, West Nile virus is the most commonly reported of these diseases. However, other viruses also pose a risk, including Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), Jamestown Canyon virus, and Cache Valley virus, though these are less frequently seen. Connecticut occasionally reports imported cases of mosquito-borne illnesses, such as dengue fever and Zika virus, which are typically contracted

while traveling to areas where these viruses are active, including the Caribbean and parts of Central and South America. Travelers should also be aware of other mosquito-borne threats in these regions, including chikungunya, yellow fever, and Oropouche virus.

The spread of mosquito-borne diseases is closely tied to mosquito populations, which are influenced by factors like rainfall and temperature patterns. Climate change is playing an increasingly significant role, expanding the

range and seasonality of mosquitoes capable of carrying disease, especially as warmer temperatures enable them to thrive in new areas. With the arrival of mosquito season, Connecticut launched its annual mosquito trapping and testing program in early June, according to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). This initiative, part of the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program, aims to monitor mosquito populations for viruses that can affect human health, such as West Nile virus and EEE. The program runs through October, with West Nile virus activity typically peaking between July and September, particularly in urban and suburban areas.

One species of concern is the Asian tiger mosquito, which was first detected in Connecticut in 2006. Its presence has grown steadily, especially during the warmer months. Research from Yale University and CAES shows that the spread of mosquitoes often follows major transportation routes, such as Interstate 95.

These mosquitoes are commonly introduced through tires and shipping containers, and their eggs can survive the winter, hatching early in the spring. According to entomologist John J. Shepard, mosquito activity typically peaks in late June, start-

ing along the coast and gradually spreading inland, with some activity persisting into the fall. In 2024, West Nile virus was detected in 309 mosquito samples collected from 44 towns across seven counties, with the highest numbers reported in Fairfield, Hartford, and New Haven Counties, according to CAES.

Mosquitoes survive the winter through a process known as "overwintering," using different strategies to withstand the cold. As spring temperatures rise, they begin to reemerge from this dormant state, often from sheltered areas like homes and buildings. While winter weather does influence mosquito populations in the warmer months, at least one expert suggests that even severe winters are having a less significant impact than they once did.

The winter in Connecticut last year was slightly colder than average, with precipitation levels falling just below normal. Hartford received about 84% of its typical rainfall, while Bridgeport saw around 92% of its seasonal average. Snowfall was particularly low across the state, with many areas recording more than a foot less snow than usual.

Sources:
NBC Connecticut (2025, May). *Invasive mosquito expected to return to Connecticut this summer*

CT Insider (2025, June). *Connecticut begins its seasonal testing of mosquitoes for West Nile virus, EEE*

The Connecticut Strawberry faces a Sour Season

Connecticut's strawberry season kicked off earlier than usual this year, thanks to favorable weather conditions in April and May. Typically, the season begins in early June, but many farms started welcoming pickers in late May.

However, farmers caution that the picking window is shorter than usual. The season, which usually spans about four weeks, may conclude by June 20-25 due to the early ripening of the berries. This means enthusiasts should act quickly to enjoy the fresh, sweet fruit.

Connecticut's strawberry season, a beloved early summer tradition and a vital revenue source for local farms, is increasingly at risk due to erratic weather, emerging plant diseases, and lingering root damage, according to state agricultural scientists and growers.

Unseasonably warm winters have caused plants to flower too early, making them vulnerable to late frosts. Heavy rainfall has led to increased fruit rot, while drought conditions have reduced berry size and quality.

Unlike farms in the South, which replant strawberries annually, many Connecticut farms employ a perennial growing system that allows plants to overwin-

ter. While this approach supports soil health, it also raises the risk of long-term pest and disease buildup. According to scientists at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, most fields continue to exhibit signs of root damage from last year.

Researchers and farmers emphasize the importance of public support. Buying locally grown strawberries and participating in pick-your-own events helps sustain farms as they navigate these increasingly challenging times.

For years, the property in Rocky Hill was considered an eyesore. Now, it has been revitalized into something much more: a vibrant pick-your-own strawberry farm and community space. Residents voted to preserve the 84.5-acre site by purchasing it for \$7.2 million. The decision followed extensive conversations about community values, public expectations, and responsible use of taxpayer dollars. Today, the newly launched Rocky Hill Community Farm invites visitors to enjoy fresh strawberries and a renewed sense of local pride.

Sources:
WFSB (2025, June). *Blighted property in Rocky Hill transformed into pick-your-own strawberry farm*

Patch (2025, May). *Connecticut Strawberry Season Faces Climate, Disease Pressures*

Pollination Season

Hartford, like many cities across the U.S., is facing longer allergy seasons, partly driven by human-caused climate change, according to a report. Climate Central, a non-profit focused on climate research and communication, analyzed temperature data from 1970 to 2024 across 198 U.S. cities.

In Hartford, the average allergy season has grown by 20 days over that time. The study focused on changes in "freeze-free" seasons, the span between the last spring frost and the first fall frost. As these periods lengthen, plants

have more time to grow and release pollen, contributing to prolonged allergy seasons.

In Connecticut and beyond, researchers found that 87% of cities experienced an increase in their growing seasons. Of the 198 cities studied, 172 experienced an average increase of 20 days. The Northeast saw the most pronounced change, with growing seasons extending by an average of 24 days.

Sources:
CT Insider (2025, April). *Allergy season in CT has been getting longer since 1970. Climate change could be a main factor.*

AI relies on physical data centers, facilities that store and manage computer data accessed via cloud computing, along with the necessary infrastructure to operate them, including servers and related technologies, according to Cisco. These AI-focused data centers are resource-intensive, consuming large amounts of electricity and water to handle complex computations and prevent equipment from overheating, according to the Yale School of the Environment. Citing these demands, Governor Ned Lamont has em-

Connecticut's AI Energy Future

phasized the need to expand Connecticut's nuclear energy capacity. While data centers already exist in Connecticut, Lamont has called for making them a higher priority, noting that artificial intelligence is quickly becoming a vital part of the state's economy. Connecticut lawmakers from both parties have raised concerns that the growing use of artificial intelligence will place additional strain on the state's electric grid due to its significant energy demands. Earlier this year, Governor Ned Lamont recognized the importance of boosting low-car-

bon energy sources, such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power from Canada. However, with the state's energy needs expected to grow over the next decade, expanding the Millstone nuclear plant in Waterford and increasing reliance on natural gas are also likely options. Governor Lamont plans to seek assistance from U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum and other federal officials to address Connecticut's strained electrical grid. He said he'll be meeting with Burgum, whom he referred to as the administration's energy lead,

to discuss ways the Trump administration and the state can collaborate to bring more affordable, and ideally carbon-free, electricity to Connecticut. Lamont emphasized his strong support for nuclear power as a key part of the solution. However, environmental advocates are concerned that fossil fuels will be heavily relied upon to meet the rising energy demands of data centers, potentially driving a significant increase in CO2 emissions.

Sources:
CT Insider (2025, January). 'Concerns me greatly': How AI could strain Connecticut's electric infrastructure
Connecticut Public (2025, February). CT wants more data centers for AI, but challenges remain

Connecticut's Summer Bug Life

Ticks remain the most troublesome summer pest year after year. While southern New England is home to more than 15 species of ticks, most rarely bite humans. Only one, the black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), also known as the deer tick, is known to transmit Lyme disease to people. The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*) is one of the most recognizable butterflies in the eastern U.S., including Connecticut. Males feature bright yellow wings with bold black stripes. At the same time, females can display a wider variety of colors, often with striking black and blue highlights. However, butterfly populations are in steep decline. A major 20-year study released in March found that over 20% of butterfly species across the U.S. have declined since 2000. Some of the sharpest drops have occurred in Connecticut. Nine butterfly species native to the state have seen population declines

exceeding 75% nationwide. The study, published in Science and led by researchers at Washington State University, was based on data from 12.6 million butterflies collected through 35 monitoring programs spanning from 2000 to 2020. Despite these dramatic losses, not all affected species are protected. The Checkerspot butterfly, native to the eastern U.S., currently holds no special conservation status. Another troublesome summer pest is the invasive Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*). This year, Connecticut is expected to see more of them than in past seasons, particularly in Fairfield and New Haven Counties, where they've built up large populations over time. Populations are also beginning to take hold in the northern parts of the state, an area known for its agricultural activity. When these invasive insects hatch, they appear black with distinctive white spots. As they mature throughout the sea-

son, they develop red markings on their bodies and small wing pads. Native to Asia, the Spotted Lanternfly was first detected in Connecticut in 2018; however, its population has expanded rapidly in recent years, according to DEEP. The state has taken limited proactive measures to control Spotted Lanternfly populations due to the high cost, according to Ridge. She noted that Connecticut researchers have drawn lessons from Pennsylvania's experience, where scientists were only able to slow the spread for a brief period. A bug with arguably a more curious appetite than the tick is the Bicolored Sweat Bee. Native to North America, particularly the Midwest and Northeast, *Agapostemon virescens* has been observed across the United States. These striking bees are among the more than 300 native bee species in Connecticut, playing a vital role in pollinating crops

such as squash, raspberries, and strawberries, as well as many wildflowers. What sets them apart? They're attracted to the salt and minerals in human sweat, especially during hot summer days. While this might sound alarming, sweat bees are generally non-aggressive. They'll sometimes land on your skin for a quick sip, but they only sting if provoked, like if you swat or trap them. Their main diet still consists of nectar and pollen, with sweat serving as an occasional supplement. Their Shiny metallic green head and thorax, with a bold black-and-white striped abdomen, especially vivid in females. They look pretty cool, too!



EASTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL
PAPILIO GLAUCUS



BLACK-LEGGED TICK
IXODES SCAPULARIS



SPOTTED LANTERNFLY
LYCORMA DELICATULA



BICOLORED SWEAT BEE
AGAPOSTEMON VIRESCENS

Sources:
CT Insider (2025, May). National study reveals Connecticut butterfly species are experiencing drastic declines
Northern Woodlands Magazine (2015, January). The Place You Call Home A Guide to Caring for Your Land in Connecticut
CT Insider (2025, April). Spotted lanternflies will soon emerge in CT in greater numbers than last year, scientists say

Northeast Wildfire season

Since 1958, the region has experienced a 60% increase in the number of days with extreme rainfall, according to data from the U.S. Forest Service and NOAA. NOAA's seasonal drought outlook for this year anticipates improving drought conditions by late April. However, its precipitation forecasts are more uncertain, hovering between projections of above-average rainfall and drier conditions, leaving regional fire managers with limited clarity or reassurance.

Beardsley Zoo Welcomes Two Chinese Gorals

The new residents include a seven-year-old male from the Lee Richardson Zoo in Garden City, Kansas, and a female named Madeline, who comes from the Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium in Omaha, Nebraska. Chinese gorals are a mountain-dwelling species native to Asia and share traits with both goats and antelopes, according to zoo staff.



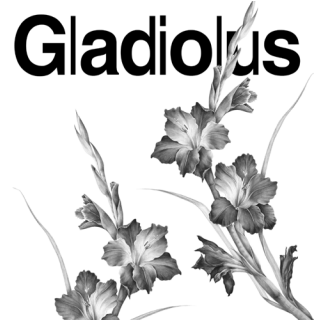
Climate.gov and More

Climate.gov, a key resource for public climate science education, will soon stop publishing new content. Around a month before the start of hurricane season, NOAA's agencies, including the National Weather Service (NWS), the National Hurricane Center (NHC), and the Storm Prediction Center, have laid off more than 1,000 employees, accounting for over 10 percent of their combined workforce. While NOAA publicly maintains that it can cover essential operations during this hurricane season, behind the scenes, it is rushing to fill the gaps left by the staffing cuts. This move comes amid broader proposed budget cuts to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The 2026 budget proposal includes significant reductions to NOAA's funding, staff, and research efforts, impacting critical areas such as weather forecasting, climate science, and ocean monitoring.

See Some Animals At Beardsley

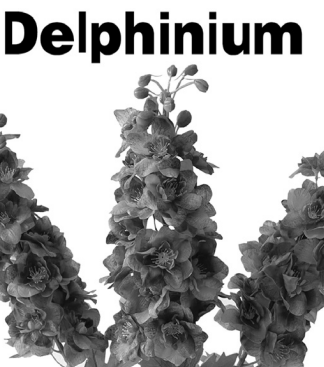
Starting in August, the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport will host animal shows every Thursday and Friday at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. in the Adventure Amphitheater.

Flower of the Month August

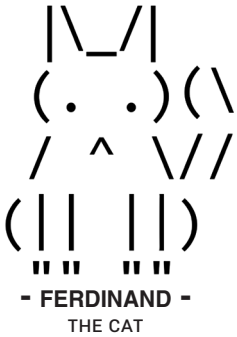


Follow the Instagram!
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Flower of the Month July



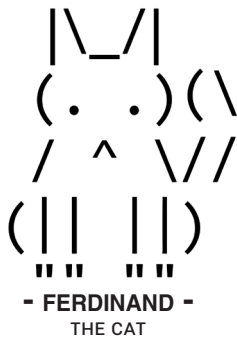
In general, gladioli symbolize strength of character, faithfulness, moral integrity, and remembrance. They are traditionally associated with the 40th wedding anniversary and serve as the birth flower for August.



Ferdinand's Flower Patch



The delphinium, commonly known as larkspur, is a tall and attractive flowering plant containing toxic levels of diterpene alkaloids. These compounds can cause severe neuromuscular effects in dogs, other animals, and humans alike. Remarkably, as little as two milligrams of the plant can be fatal to an adult human.



Ferdinand's Flower Patch





Our Neighbors Photography
 This robin built her nest in a bush about a foot from our front porch. We have a perfect view from the kitchen window! Photos by Jim Goodwin.



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