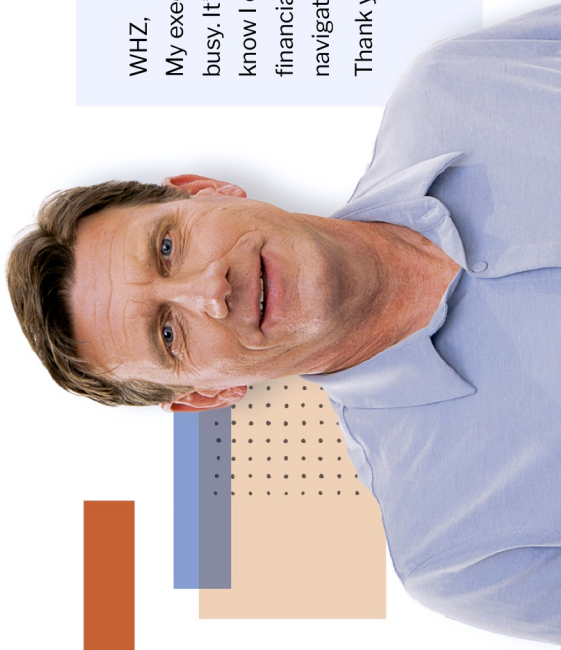


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Neighbors

No. 237

September - October 2025

FREE



After the Egg Shakers

I thought I saw a swan
Far away across the lake
Then when I got closer
I realized my mistake.

It was just a garbage bag
Caught along the shore
Like a swan, glowing white
Like there was before.

There are no swans here anymore
No stately families here
Passing silent all together
All have disappeared.

Egg shakers, are you happy now?
The mystic magic gone?
There's just a plastic garbage bag
Instead of a living swan.

Poem and artwork by Kathy LaVallee, North Windham

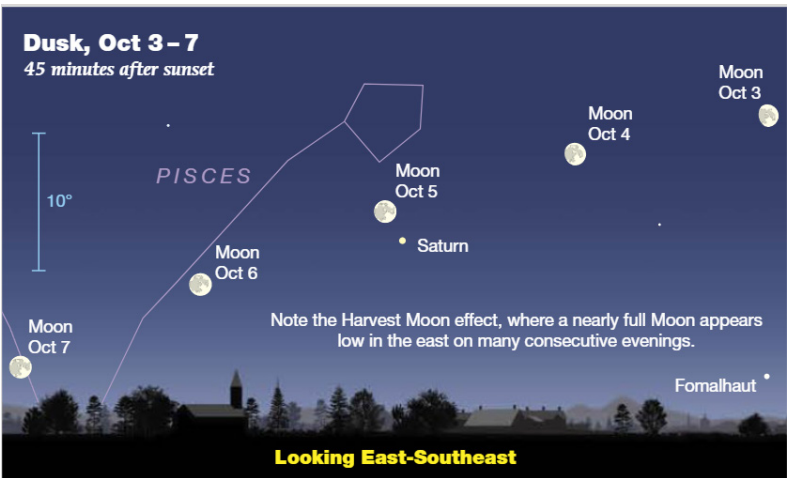
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Looking Up

The Cadence of Life and Silent Conversation

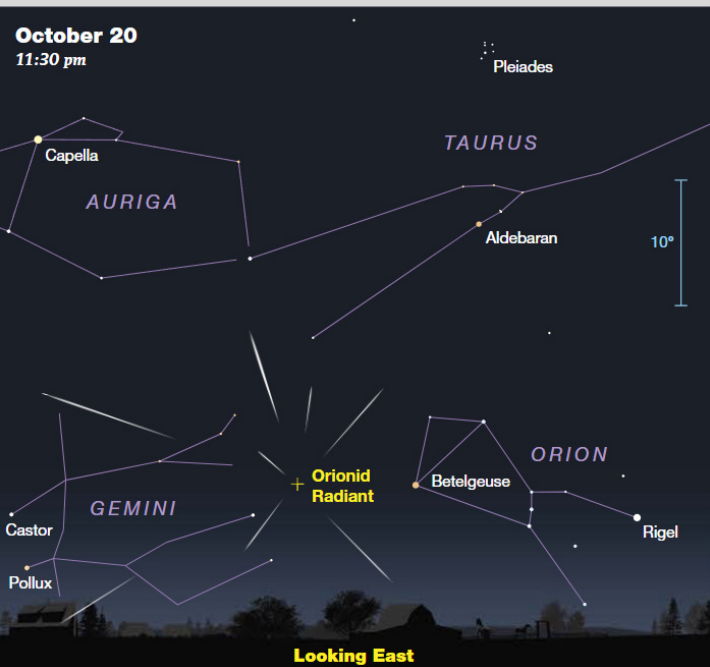
By Bob Grindle

It has been my immense good fortune to go through life enjoying music of virtually every kind...a mother who sang in the church choir as well as the supper clubs of London as she grew up in Europe, and a father listening to country-western, blues and Native American peyote music as he struggled to navigate a complicated youth on the plains of northeastern Oklahoma get all the credit. Seven brothers and sisters helped to add texture and depth, discovery and resilience and passion for our favorites as we argued what was best and explored what was new in music as it changed and grew through the 50's, 60's, 70's and beyond. I still can easily get lost in the reverie of dance or melody or poetry, perhaps it's the message or story of a particular piece...a passing comment in a conversation, maybe a clever riff in a live-music performance or an "oldie" playing on the radio, or just a randomly hatching memory from a long-ago filed away experience can cue up with crystal clarity a bit of living that got tucked away into a corner of the Soul...locked up behind a well-labeled door; safe from the erosion of neglect, forgetfulness, age or cynicism ...and indexed simply to rebound whenever you hear the music that connects it.



No need to struggle with these memories, they are safe, they are precious and it takes only a few notes to open the door.

Walking up the hill with Lin on this perfect August afternoon, our cadence is slower now after more than 50 years, as relaxed and natural as the pine needle carpeting of the path we walk. I smile to think of the very many thousands of bits of music stored behind an uncountable number of tiny doors along the hallways of our brain...they conceal every shade of sad and happy, anger and regret, hope and fear, excitement and dream, disappointment and resolve that each of our lives have cropped. Who knows when a few notes will suddenly recall and replay a mo-



ment long ago passed on the trails we travelled to get here. Sometimes these walks are filled with chatter and talk of the day's events and other times they are as silent as the night sky...I think that simple quiet togetherness is its own very special sort of conversation...

and...It is possible to escape the complications and challenges and Gordian tangles of our busy world for a time by slipping into the context of a simple nature walk—perhaps alone, or with someone we care about—and in this connection back to the fields and woodlands of nature to let the worries and bruises of modern living dissolve for the moment back into the cosmic material from which we are all formed...it is just as possible, though, on that same simple walk to reconnect with something of the child we once were and, despite a slowing pace and the need for longer breaks, the world is still...and always will be...filled with wonder, adventure and possibilities.

The skies of September and October promise plenty of opportunity to escape for a moment into a world that hasn't changed much since we were that younger version of ourselves chasing dreams and visions of tomorrow around the next corner. Labor Day morning opens with the inspirational sparkling cheerfully high in the 5:30 A.M. pre-dawn sky, and about equally spaced between Jupiter, above in Gemini, and Mercury below, just above the horizon—a binoculars will help spotting Mercury, but the trouble is worth it. A week later, the full moon of September rises very close to Saturn. This year's September full moon is the Corn Moon since only the full moon closest to the Fall equinox is called the Harvest Moon and this year (2025) the full moon of October 6/7 is the Harvest Moon.

The likely highlight of October's skies will be the Orionid meteor shower on the night of October 20-21 when there will be no Moon present to break up the dark of the skies or intrude on that special mood of being alone in a darkened theater...shivers all around...!



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**Saturday
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November 1st**



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**Saturday
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Loretta Wrobel

The Purpose of Neighbors:

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

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New Heroine - LILLY

By Loretta Wrobel

When times are challenging and the possibility of a better life is microscopic, I desperately need a dose of empowerment and positivity. I received a mega dose of that very potion at the River Room in Willimantic a short time ago. The River Room is located on Riverside Drive not far from WAIM. It is a comfortable cozy space for viewing performances and movies. I was privileged to attend a viewing of the documentary film *Lilly*, recently released in May.

The movie tells the story of Lilly Ledbetter, the valiant and undaunted warrior woman, who fought for equal pay for women. This lionhearted woman was a supervisor at a Goodyear Tire Plant in Alabama, and for 20 years was paid approximately half the salary of the men who were in similar management positions at the Goodyear Factory. She did not know this in the beginning, and when she discovered this injustice, Lilly attempted to object to this practice of underpaying women. She had always been an excellent worker and did a stellar job. She got great ratings but never was promoted up the hierarchy due to her gender. Lilly began working at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Plant in 1979, and nearly two decades later, she found an anonymous note in her locker, informing her of the discrepancy in pay between Ms. Ledbetter and her colleagues. She actually won her first lawsuit and was awarded four million bucks, which got reversed by the powers that were threatened by equal status for women!

With help from women lawyers, she took the case to the Supreme Court, and lost her case due to the length of time before she reported the injustice. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg reading of her dissent from the bench, was not usual protocol. And Justice Ginsburg continued to support this powerful fighter.

Lilly was not to be denied, and with the support of women activists and her husband, went to the legislators. She talked to many U.S. Congressmen, and succeeded in having the Equal Pay Act passed. In 2009 President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law (the first law he signed as President) and applauded her efforts. Even though she was successful in getting the equal pay for equal work law passed, she never received any money for the crime that was committed against her solely because she was a female. She died in 2004 at the age of 86. She was adored by feminists and was a poster child for AAUW (American Association of University Women).

The story of her struggle as told in the movie was inspiring and emotionally powerful. I was uplifted for days, following the viewing. It was encouraging to me to see how much one lone woman could achieve by staying true to her inner sense of justice and equality. This movie presented a role model for how to continue to fight for what is right, even if the odds feel insurmountable. The stamina to continue to move and push forward and not back down is a great lesson for me as I gaze around at the unequal realities of our present world.

People express their overwhelming dread of the direction our Country is taking with cruel treatment of immigrants, such as pulling green cards, removing parents and sending children to DCF. The horrifying difficulties for trans people being denied medical treatment and forced to resign from the military, often losing their benefits. The ongoing financial burden of working-class Americans, as prices zoom upward, especially for food and housing. Plus, the slashing of medical assistance from government programs is devastating to so many Americans. Increasing amounts of families and senior citizens are struggling to make ends meet.

People who are concerned about this growing trend of diminishing benefits for the average American need to see the impact that one stubborn southern woman had on the system. Lilly made a significant difference. It



was so energizing to see her story show us the power of perseverance and the importance of not letting the system intimidate and stop you.

Ms. Ledbetter had to endure a truck load of negative behavior from her coworkers, who did not feel good about having a woman doing a job traditionally held by men. Since she frequently outperformed male supervisors and was given high ratings on her job evaluations, she was a threat to their comfortable existence. They had a better opportunity to move ahead and get supervisory jobs and continue to move up the male patriarchal ladder. This one strong and determined gal believed she was qualified, and wanted a better life for herself and her family. She was willing to go the extra mile and to stay in the fight, even though she suffered many setbacks. She and her husband were elated when she won her first court case, and dismally



“Don't wait for someone else to come along and fix things. Take action and fight for what you deserve.”

LILLY LEDBETTER
1938-2024

deflated when the decision was overturned because of the many years of not filing a complaint. It was not taken into consideration that she was unaware of the pay differential until she received the note nearly 20 years after the she had begun working at nearly half the wage as her colleagues.

The fortitude and resilience that this brave pioneer demonstrated can be a paramount and glorious model of how to function when the system pulls you down. In hard times we need examples of successes and to witness the changes that can happen when we have a passion and a desire to not settle for less and not be intimidated by failures and the perceived assumption of total power.

When we look back as women on the herstory of the struggle for women’s suffrage, we understand that the fight is not always a quick win or immediate shift in attitudes and/or beliefs. Lilly’s story has a happy ending! However, it also leaves a sour taste, since she never received a settlement that awarded her compensation from her decades of being underpaid and mistreated. She did pave the way for others to benefit from her trials and pain. Lilly also had a supportive and understanding partner, which added to her ability to come back from defeat and crushing unfavorable decisions. She stuck to her unwavering truth that she deserved equal pay for doing her job. A simple reality, but often it is a difficult process to achieve, especially for women and minority groups.

What excites me is that we can make progress. It can take an excruciatingly long time and require tons of effort; however, the result of creating greater justice and fairness in our world, with equality dominating, is worth it to me. I trust you agree with me.

Watch *Lilly* yourself and make your own decision.

Deadlines:
November-December 2025:
Deadline: Thursday, October 16th.
Print date: Tuesday, October 21st.
January-February 2026:
Deadline: Thursday, December 11th.
Print date: Tuesday, December 16th.

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a little paper
big on community

From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

By Rebecca Toms

Once upon a time, there was a little girl in the woods who would follow her father around in late winter collecting maple sap from trees. During those cold winter days, they would boil the sap until it became syrup to enjoy throughout the year. She would watch as the magic of maple sugaring slowly created valuable memories that connected her to the land and her family.

This isn’t a fairy tale — it’s how Kelley Barber and Brian Murray, the founders of Forest Mill Farm, came to see maple syrup as a purpose for the 40 acres of woodland they rescued from development in Willington, Connecticut. Rooted in childhood wonder, a love for the outdoors, and a desire to preserve land, their story marries history and conservation.

When the parcel went up for sale as a proposed housing site, Kelley and Brian made a bold choice. They traded corporate careers for a sugarbush, bringing their skills as skills in technology and process improvement into this new venture. From the start, they committed to a sustainable maple syrup operation — measured not just in bottles, but in environmental care.

For them, sustainability means more than reducing carbon emissions. It’s about nurturing the small, vital corners of their woodland: habitats for birds and wildlife, native plants, and the unseen life in the soil. They remove invasive plants, encourage biodiversity, and protect the micro-ecosystems that call the forest home.

Their forest management supports more than sap production. Partnering with CT Audubon, they earned certification as an **Audubon Connecticut Bird-Friendly Maple producer**, ensuring practices that support songbirds and forest health. They harvest fallen trees for fuel and use reverse osmosis to cut boiling time and energy use, without compromising the amber sweetness of their syrup. All of this is essential as it takes at least 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.

They’ve also secured their land’s future through Connecticut’s PA 490 program, which protects it as forestland. Overlooking the Fenton River, the sugarbush provides vital habitat for deer, turkey, bobcats, and other wildlife while safeguarding watershed health. Even the farm’s name nods to history, honoring colonial-era mills that once lined the river.



Maple syrup isn’t their only harvest. Forest Mill Farm produces raw honey, managed with the same care as their sugarbush. They map their trees and tubing with geospatial technology for efficient infrastructure, reducing waste and extending the life of their system. Every step — tapping, boiling, bottling — ensures quality from start to finish.

They also think beyond the woods. Through the Connecticut Farm to School Program, Forest Mill Farm offers maple syrup delivery to schools statewide, making it easier for schools to sweeten meals without refined sugar. They’re also using solar power wherever they can, are transitioning syrup packaging to glass, and expanding their reach so more families can swap processed sweeteners for local alternatives.

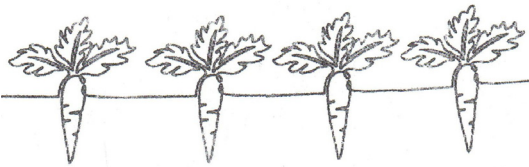


Brian Murray and Kelley Barber. Contributed photo.

It’s August — not the season most people think of maple syrup. But Kelley and Brian remind us that this local treasure fits right into summer meals. Why ship sugar from thousands of miles away when we can drizzle syrup or honey from just down the road? Using local sweeteners not only saves the energy used in cane sugar production and transport but also adds trace minerals and elements to our food.

Beyond syrup and honey, each summer they tend an organic “garden” of more than an acre of corn, tomatoes, squash, beans, and more. These are preserved through canning and freezing so that they have the freshest, most local ingredients that you could possibly want year-round. Anything that doesn’t get preserved? They go to neighbors and friends to richen their lives. Or if it’s past its prime, their flock of chickens help manage their seconds, to provide their home with rich healthy eggs.

When you buy from local maple producers like Forest Mill Farm, you’re not just buying sweetness — you’re supporting a cycle of conservation, community, and



care. You’re helping protect woodland, feed pollinators, support bird habitats, and keep traditions alive.

The next time you pour maple syrup over pancakes or stir it into iced tea, pause for a moment. Taste the layers of the story — of land rescued, wildlife sheltered, neighbors nourished, and a magic of the woods being kept alive through Kelley and Brian.

To bring some of this local sweetness into your summer meals, you can source so much of what you need by finding farms in the Grown ConNECTed Farm Fresh Food guide (www.grownconNECTed.org). If you can’t get to Forest Mill Farm, there are other great maple producers who still have plenty of syrup in our corner of the state. And to find the last of the local blueberries this summer, check around some of the amazing fruit farms for the perfect blueberry pie.

Maple Blueberry Pie

[adapted from (*I know...*) the maple from Canada Website]

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup quick-cooking rolled oats
- 1/2 cup almond powder
- 1 pinch of salt
- 4 cups local blueberries, fresh or frozen
- 1/4 cup local maple syrup
- 2 tbsp cornstarch
- 2 tbsp water
- Zest of 1 lemon, finely grated

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. In a bowl, use an electric mixer to blend the butter and maple syrup until creamy and white-beige in color. Add the flour, rolled oats, almond powder, and salt. Work ingredients in by hand or with a spoon.
2. Press dough into a 10 in pie pan to create an even layer on the bottom and sides. Place in the middle of the oven and bake for 15 minutes or until the crust is golden. Use a spoon to press the bottom and sides into shape as needed.
3. While crust is baking, put the blueberries and maple syrup into a saucepan and simmer over medium for 5 minutes.
4. Blend the cornstarch and water in a small bowl and then add to the berries and syrup. Add the lemon zest and then simmer on low heat for 2 – 3 minutes to thicken.
5. Pour the filling into the crust. Leave to cool on the counter and then refrigerate for at least two hours before you big in to get a good sliceable pie!

The Nightmare on Main Street - Willimantic, Connecticut

By Bev York

Nightmare on Main, the region’s largest haunted themed event, will return to the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum in Willimantic. The 2025 event is simply titled “Nightmares.” The dramatic scenes will be open on October 3rd and run through the 18th. Tours will leave every twenty minutes between 7:00 and 9:30. The event is cash only at the gate.

“Nightmares” will explore mostly true stories that have caused anxiety, terror, frightening dreams and sleepless nights. “Nightmares” themes will be based on a horrible railroad incidents, insanity, entrapment, evil spirits, disease, murder and death. The event is for teens and adults. Due to adult themes, the performance is

not recommended for people under age 12. A trick or treat event will be held at the Railroad Museum for young children on Saturday, Oct. 25.

The Nightmare on Main project is a group of volunteers who love to build sets, research and write scripts, wear costumes and act out creepy stories that happened more than a century ago. Each year there are returning actors and some new recruits who put on the theatrical skits. The money raised is given to a local nonprofit. Over \$55,000 has been raised that has benefitted the Mill Museum, the Eastern CT Veteran Community Center and the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum. This beneficiary of the Nightmare 2025 funds is the Railroad Museum which is an all-volunteer organization that preserves

eastern Connecticut’s railroad history located on the original site of the Columbia Junction freight yard. The museum collection includes locomotives and rolling stock, vintage railroad buildings and features a six-stall roundhouse. The Museum is open Saturdays from May through October and offers train rides on the third Saturday and at the Railroad Day event.

Nightmare on Main is in its eleventh season. Former themes included: Witches, Hauntings, Confinement, Ghost Towns, Halloween, Phobias, Villains, Monsters and more. The group was nominated for Best Attraction in 2023 by the CThauntedhouses.com. Last year a review in the Halloween advertising industry said the use of history- based stories is very unique and sets it apart from other haunted events.

The Nightmare shows will run Oct 3, 4,10,11, 17, 18. Visitors, twelve and up, should arrive between 7:00 and 9:30 p.m. Groups of 10 people will begin the guided tour every twenty minutes. Tickets are \$18 per person, cash at the gate. There are no on line ticket sales.

The event is rain or shine at the Railroad Museum which is located at 55 Bridge Street (just off Main Street) in Willimantic. Refreshments will be available. If interested in volunteering for acting or backstage call 860-944-4945. For more information see the facebook page at Nightmareon-Maintours.

An Open Letter to Jeff Bezos

By Delia Berlin

Dear Jeff,

Congratulations on your recent nuptials. I hope you have enjoyed your honeymoon and returned to work, because I really need your help. I wish I didn’t have to bother you, but I have a serious Amazon account problem and can’t reach any of the 1,556,000 employees at Amazon. This seems strange. More than a million of them live in the US. I’m sure that every one has at least one phone number and email, but I haven’t been able to locate any.

These days, I do not expect to make contact with actual people without proper AI screening for efficiency and streamlining. But unfortunately, the volume of calls and online inquiries has been so unusually high that even the chatbots have been unavailable. On one occasion, I did manage to have an online chat with “Jibin” but we were not able to communicate effectively. In spite of my detailed explanation of the problem, Jibin kept responding as if I needed to reset my password, which was not the case.

On that same occasion, after Jibin and I went around a circle a few times, “Chintalapudi” joined the chat. Oddly, Chintalapudi also wanted to help me reset my password. Both Jibin and Chintalapudi reassured me constantly that I had nothing to worry about because they would help me fix the problem. Both of them provided a link to click on for someone to call me back immediately. I hate to have nothing but bad news for you, but the link took me to an apologetic message explaining that “the callback service is currently unavailable” which neither Jibin nor Chintalapudi seemed to know.

Because of their unusual syntax and funny names, I assumed Jibin and Chintalapudi were chatbots, but I’m not sure. Who would name a child “Chintalapudi”? Then again, who would name a chatbot “Chintalapudi”? I can’t rely on that as a solid clue. But all my other attempts to contact a real customer services employee by any means available, have failed. Although you are no longer the CEO, I am counting on your clout as the largest Amazon shareholder to reach someone who can help me.

Here is a succinct description of my problem: I just got a new computer (soon, Microsoft will no longer support Windows 10 and my old laptop won’t handle Windows 11 – but that’s another story). My new device is very nice, fast, and easy to use. But in the transfer, I got signed out of my Amazon account. The trouble started when I needed to sign in to order something.

I’m sure you are already thinking, like Jibin and Chintalapudi, that I had a problem with my password. But I am one of those people who takes password management very seriously. I had my correct password at hand. Unfortunately, that was not enough: the “two-step verification” kicked in. Amazon sent me an email asking me to enter the one-time code texted to my phone ending in *777. Here is where things get messy: that phone number was a landline. It cannot receive text and, further, it is no longer in service.

I don’t want to sound too upset, but I must emphatically state that I had no part in the creation of this problem. I never set up two-step verification for my account. Had I done that, I would have never requested to do it via texts sent to a landline that would not receive them. But we can only move forward. Once the code was sent to that number, I was not given any alternative options. A complete description of the process that followed would go on forever, so please forgive me for summarizing it quite drastically.

I first tried to edit the phone number of my account. But to edit my account settings, I had to sign in. I tried to do it with email. Briefly, this describes what happened then: first, enter email; second, enter password; third, enter the one-time-code sent to your email; fourth, there was a problem, enter your email; fifth, repeat steps first to fourth forever. Sorry – I exaggerated: not forever – only for the rest of my life, which is too short to put up with this nonsense.

Finally, Amazon commands led me to take additional steps to fix a “corrupt” account. Steps I have taken, fixed I have not. I have, for example, succeeded to change the old phone number to my cell phone number. But when Amazon asked me to add an email to my account, they sent me a one-time code to verify the email. Then I got a message asking to use another email, because that one is in use. It is in use. It is my email. They just emailed me the code to verify it. Does the I in AI stand for intelligence? I can think of a more appropriate substitute.

Now, Jeff, I don’t want to hurt your feelings, but to be honest, I wouldn’t mind one tiny thing if I could



never ever shop at Amazon again. The main reason I need to fix this is that I am also an Amazon author. If you look at my Amazon author page, you can still see my books. But if you go to my Amazon account, it says I don’t have any books. The problem seems to be that my Amazon author page has to be linked to my email. But I can’t do this successfully because... you got it! That email is already in use!

Interestingly, Amazon has found no problem using my email to ask me for product reviews, or to send me numerous ads. However, when I write a review, I get a message explaining that since my account does not have an email, it is not authorized to post reviews. Didn’t they just use my email to request the review? I’m getting a little dizzy here.

In the absence of real people who could give me a hand, I would settle for a form to write down an explanation of my problem. But even that seems to be impossible. Before describing a problem one must choose from a category of problems among a list that doesn’t seem to include my very one. And an approximate choice leads to even more self-help pages of instructions that eventually take me to the same continuous loops. I could just shrug this off, but in the current situation I cannot check my book sales, royalty reports, download tax forms, or make any changes to my author page or publications. I am starting to get a little annoyed.

The only good news I can give you is that there have been no problems accepting my credit card. The lack of email and pesky two-step-verification codes do not seem to affect payment processing. I imagine this is important for Amazon. Which got me thinking... what happens with royalty payments when authors cannot access their accounts, die, or otherwise disappear? Most royalty payments are quite measly, but with millions and millions of titles, I’m sure they add up. After resolving my account problem, maybe you can spare a minute to tell me about that.

Jeff, you know how to reach me, but I remind you that the landline is no longer in service. I thank you in advance for your effort to help me with this. Please give my best to Jibin and Chintalapudi, who faithfully represent the image of Amazon to me.

All best,
Delia Berlin

CC: Congressman Larson, Senators Blumenthal and Murphy

First Ever Scarecrow Contest

Submitted by Andrea Kaye, Trustee Fletcher Memorial Library

Hampton, CT — Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church is excited to announce Hampton’s inaugural Scarecrow Contest, a fun and creative fundraiser coinciding with the annual Harvest Fest on Saturday, September 27th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The contest will take place on the Hampton Town Hall lawn, 164 Main Street, inviting residents of all ages to showcase their imaginative scarecrow creations. There are two divisions:

- Junior Division (ages 10-17)
- Adult Division (18 and older)

Cash prizes will be awarded for first and second place in each category. Participants are encouraged to let their creativity soar, as the theme is open to individual interpretation.

Entry Details:

Pre-registration is available at Fletcher Memorial Library (257 Main Street) during regular business hours, or on Friday, September 26th, from 3 to 6 p.m. at Hampton Town Hall (164 Main Street).

Entry fee: \$10 per scarecrow (cash only).
Stakes for scarecrow placement will be numbered and “pre-planted” at the Town Hall lawn.
Scarecrows must be anonymous with no advertising signage.

Participants can drop off their scarecrows either on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning to assemble on site.

Winners will be announced at 2 p.m. on Saturday, September 27th during the Harvest Fest.

For more information, please contact Fletcher Memorial Library at 860-455-1086.

Come celebrate fall and community spirit by creating a memorable scarecrow to brighten Hampton’s Harvest Fest!

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Arts on Main in Coventry

Submitted by Ruth O’Neil

Once again, Historic Coventry Village will be transformed into an arena of creativity as Coventry celebrates its annual Arts on Main Day, Saturday September 20 from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. In addition to art vendors, art exhibits, children’s activities, food trucks, a tour of sculptures by world renowned local sculptor David Hayes, a variety of musical, dance and spoken word entertainment for all ages is planned. This event, free to attend and open to the public, showcases the visual and performing arts, brings public attention to the historic part of Main Street and finds ways to support the local business community. The Town of Coventry, along with the Coventry Arts Guild, and Coventry Cares, Inc., have become a collaborative team planning this Day of Arts for the community.

The Coventry Arts Guild will host its Annual Members Art Show at the Booth & Dimock Library at 1134 Main St. The library will also feature a mini canvas painting activity free to all visitors. Final products can be taken home, or displayed at the library and picked-up at a later date.

Music will take place in the parking lot of the First Congregational Church, opening with members of the Coventry High School Jazz Band and including local musical groups, “RJ” and the Zeltones. Music will also take place at JDM Imports and will include local songwriter Gino LoRicco, latin and jazz group Mons de Rhumba and guitarist James Daniel.

For those interested in the spoken word, a Poet’s Corner, hosted by the Arts Guild, will occur at Mill Brook Place. Local writers will share excerpts from their works, including recitation of one acts plays. Members of the public are invited to join in. Artisans and crafts persons will have exhibits and wares for sale in the municipal parking lot at the 1153 Main location.

A dance performance by students of Coventry’s The Can-Dance Studio as well as a tai chi demonstration is also scheduled.

Throughout the event, First Congregational Church will be selling lunch fare and more for the crowds and holding a Craft show in the church community room. In addition, the non-profit organization, Coventry Cares, Inc. will host a Food Truck rally. The Red Lion Burger, Sundae Ice Cream, Taco La Rosa, The Portly Pig will be offering a variety of eats. Coventry Cares will also be selling Mums in the church parking lot.

Further down Main Street, entertainment for children (of all ages) will happen. An “Instrument Petting Zoo” coordinated by instructors and students from Coventry’s Song-a-Day Music center, will be set up for guests to have an up-close look at and try out various musical instruments. Visitors will also have a chance to become part of a spontaneous “On the Spot Jug Band” playing all kinds of rhythm instruments provided by the Music Center.

The Coventry Parks and Recreation Department will be offering more fun activities including face painting throughout the afternoon.

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

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

Shuttle buses will be available at Patriots Park, 124 Lake St.

Please visit the Facebook Page or CoventryArts-Guild.org for more details leading up to the event. Program subject to change. In the event of rain, activities will move to the Coventry High School. For further information, sponsorship opportunities, or ways to be involved, contact Megan Yanez at 860-742-4068.

My Horse Ride

From Animals by Carol Wheelock Hall

Oh how I loved to ride my steed.
It fulfilled my fantasies and needs.
I climbed into the saddle and held the reins,
I patted the horse’s smooth sides and mane.
A wave to my family, then off I went,
Up and down joyous trails, time well spent.
This vision I remember from my memory well,
Cherished thoughts of my horse on the carousel.
Up and down and around we’d go,
Me and my best horse, my favorite, you know.
The horse went high and then it went low,
And everyone’s face was all aglow.

Hands

By Carl Swartz
(Names have been changed to insure privacy)

Joan walked into my office, tears streaming down her face. A 35 year-old, divorced mother of three children under 5 years old, she found herself back in school with no real options or prospects.

She spoke in a halting tone of voice, she said, “You gave us a 3 page reaction paper and I don’t know how to start it or what to do.”

She burst into tears. “I shouldn’t be here. I’m too stupid to be in college; my father said I was stupid, that girls should stay at home and have babies. My ex-husband was an abusive man and told me repeatedly I was stupid.”

“Maybe I am stupid.”
She burst into tears again and started on her way out the door.

“Joan, stop.” “Please come back. Please sit down.”

“Now stop crying. Tell me, what’s the real problem?”

She replied, “I don’t know how to even start my paper.”

“OK, let’s begin by discussing the mechanics of the assignment outlined in the directions.”

Joan looked unsure and again on the verge of tears.

I held out my hands (palms up). “Joan, take my hands and please SQUEEZE THEM AS HARD AS YOU CAN; don’t worry, you won’t hurt me. “SQUEEZE AS HARD AS YOU CAN”. (and she did).

“Joan there’s strength in your hands and there’s strength in your intellect. I have been meeting people for over 20 years and believe me, -- you have the intellect and initiative to be successful.”

“Reach down and harvest that strength, exonerate yourself from the Lilliputians in your life. Break free of their strings.”

“Just like Gulliver,” she replied.
“Just like Gulliver”. (We both laughed.)

The next week she turned in a splendid five-page reaction paper.

The years came and went as they do. Then early one afternoon, a professional-looking woman walked into my office. She extended her two hands to me (palms up) and asked, “Do you remember me?”

“Joan it’s wonderful to see you. It’s been so long, how have you been?”

“After I got my Associates Degree here, I earned my Bachelor’s Degree in Library Science, met a wonderful man. We moved to D.C. where I got my Master’s Degree in Library Science and Information Technology from GW. I then got a job at The Library of Congress and worked my way up to Coordinator of the Research Science Department, where I am presently.”

We talked about her life and her children and how happy she was.

As she stood up to leave, she held out her hands (palms up) and I held out mine. Quietly, she whispered, “Thank you”.

(It was among the finest days of my life.

Another Lifetime

The rides and haunts fade into memory,
or actually lack of,
as time begins to consume me,
in all my parts.

Something as mundane,
as enjoyable travel,
to a usual location,
begins to be lost.

The memory of the route becomes confused.
The names of the roads, gone.
The communities traversed, vague.
Favorite landmarks, unattached.

In a way it is a joy,
for when I again travel the route,
it is become a new experience
to be wondered again and again.

Danny Nalven

Sharing

By Judy Davis

As I was growing up, I spent countless hours on the living room couch with my mom, Maureen Donnelly Davis. Every day, I would learn something new. There were times when she would show me a book on art (one of our favorites was Maxfield Parrish), or photography (Margaret Bourke – White); she read me poetry (my first book of poems was Robert Louis Stevenson’s “A Child’s Garden of Verses”); I learned Irish songs, when we sang along to The Clancey’s Brothers’ records; I shared her love of Broadway musicals, and I could sing all of the songs from “South Pacific” when I was six!

She read so many books to me, and took me to so many movies; she also introduced me to opera.

As I grew older, my friends wanted to meet my amazing mom. Although, my mom has been gone for nine years, friends still talk about how warm and welcoming she was.

When a rock is thrown into the water, dozens of ripples spread out.

My mom was like that, and I see how her heart and soul is reflected in her granddaughters, who loved their Nana.

They and myself, are Maureen Donnelly Davis’s greatest legacy.

The Peek-a-Boo Woodpecker

From *Animals* by Carol Wheelock Hall

As a little woodpecker, I don’t like those hummers.

Those gypsies come springtime and stay for the summer.

I, on the other wing, (now let’s be clear!),

I live in the back woods and come here all year!

I peck and get lots of bugs in old wood.

Around bushes and plants, I find seeds that are good.

I don’t mind the work to get a good meal,

but it’s hard to pass up a really good deal.

This place is a favorite...free food in this yard.

But for self-preservation, I must be on guard.

There is now one human sitting out on this deck, but today I feel brave, so what the heck!

I land on the deck post and with my brain think,

with that liquid bird feeder I’d get a good drink.

I do Peek-a-Boo at the post, no need for haste.

I need to be sure that my stay will be safe.

The hot afternoon sun is now fading away.

No threat is apparent, so I guess I will stay.

The human sits still, so my fear doesn’t grow, but my head keeps a-looking, going to and fro.

Finally, the nectar feeder is under my feet,

and I drink with delight and enjoy the sweet treat.

Now full and quite satisfied, I decide to fly away, but if the coast is clear, I’ll dine here another day.

neighbors
locally written
locally wread

Unsung Heroes of Soul: Charles Wright & The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band

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 Charles Wright & The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, whose leader described their music as “the middle ground between Otis Redding and James Brown.”

Charles Wright was born in Clarksdale, Mississippi, on April 6, 1940. By the early ‘50s, he was in Los Angeles, where he sang doo-wop with groups like the Turks, Twi-lighters, Shields, and Gallahads. He also worked briefly as an A&R (Artists and Repertoire) man at Del-Fi Records and was behind the 1961 hit, “Those Oldies But Goodies (Remind Me of You)” by Little Caesar & The Romans.

In 1962, he formed his own band, Charles Wright & The Wright Sounds. Its line-up included pianist Daryl Dragon, who later became one half of the Captain & Tennille. They played venues all over L.A., including a three-year gig (1965-68) at the Haunted House in Hollywood.

It was record producer Fred Smith, who owned Keymen Records, that came up with the name Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band. Smith produced a theme song for the Magnificent Montague, a disc jockey at KGfJ radio. It became so popular, Smith released it as a single under the title “Spreadin’ Honey.” Reportedly, the musicians who played on it included not only Wright but Bobby Womack and Leon Haywood.

After “Spreadin’ Honey” became a hit, the Magnificent Montague reissued it on Keymen’s MoSoul subsidiary as by the Soul Runners. As such, it was long assumed that the Soul Runners were an early incarnation of Watts 103rd Street. Charles Wright, however, insisted they were two different groups who had nothing to do with each other.

In 1966, Wright and James Carmichael worked as session players at the Nashville West recording studio. The group was discovered by comedian Bill Cosby, who needed a backing band for his next album, *Silver Throat*. Their association with Cosby got the group signed to Warner Brothers Records. They released their self-titled debut album in 1967. (It also became known as *Hot Heat & Sweet Groove*, after a subtitle on the rear cover.) Wright himself has disavowed this album as a true Watts 103rd Street project, insisting their next LP, *Together*, was really the band’s first album.

When Cosby went on tour, Wright was put in charge of assembling a Watts 103rd Street touring band. It included the musicians on *Hot Heat* but also featured the Wright Sounds. Creative disagreements led to Fred Smith selling his interest in the group to Wright, who got rid of the *Hot Heat* players and kept the Wright Sounds.

On May 18, 1968, the band recorded their live show at the Haunted House. This became the partial basis for their second album, *Together*, and produced the hit single, “Do Your Thing,” a sparse funk jam they ad-libbed on-stage. Their next LP, *Jungle Babe*, contained the doo-wop influenced ballad, “Love Land.” The singles from this album were the first to be credited to Charles Wright & The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band.

The title track from their third LP, *Express Yourself*, became their biggest hit, reaching #3 on the Soul chart and #12 pop in the fall of 1970. Wright was improvising the wrap-up to “Do Your Thing” onstage at Texas A&M when he ran out of things to say and so repeated the phrase “express yourself” over and over again. When the audience went nuts over it, Wright went back to his motel room and built a song around the phrase.

After the *You’re So Beautiful* album in 1971, the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band dissolved. Charles Wright went on to record four solo LPs. In 2007, he released *Finally Got It Wright*, his first album in 27 years. It included a re-recording of “Express Yourself.”

Wright described the Watts 103rd Street sound as “the middle ground between Otis Redding and James Brown.” It’s not hard to see why. Their music featured the razor-blade rhythms, horn bursts, and choked, scratchy guitar licks of mid ‘60s Brown, while Wright’s vocals split the difference between Redding and Sly Stone. As a songwriter, he simultaneously embraced hippie peace and love, Black pride, soul carnality, and dance fever.

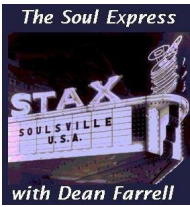
“Express Yourself” was sampled in 1988 by the rap group NWA. It also has turned up in film soundtracks and a number of TV ads. Meanwhile, “Do Your Thing” was used in the 1997 movie, *Boogie Nights*.



Charted singles:

- “Grits ‘N Corn Bread” (The Soul Runners, 1966) R&B #33
- “Spreadin’ Honey” (The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, 1967) R&B #44, Pop #73
- “Do Your Thing” (The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, 1969) R&B #12, Pop #11
- “Till You Get Enough” (The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, 1969) R&B #12, Pop #67
- “Must Be Your Thing” (The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, 1969) R&B #35, Pop #103
- “Love Land” (1970) R&B #23, Pop #16
- “Express Yourself” (1970) R&B #3, Pop #12
- “Solution for Pollution” (1971) Pop #96
- “Your Love (Means Everything to Me)” (1971) R&B #9, Pop #73
- “(Well I’m) Doin’ What Cums Naturally” (Charles Wright, 1973) R&B #27

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

Do What You Do

By Joe Pandolfo

Late summer, there’s still that soft edge where the daytime meets night. But clarity is coming. Like the silhouette of a thundercloud.

When a shower of heavy rain clears the air it wakes your senses, cleans your spirit. Start saying your farewell to summer daydreams.

After all, autumn is not far over the horizon. Soon it’ll be the season to know where you’re going, to do what you do, straight and certain as the strike of hawk.

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The 1800’s Bicycle Craze in Windham and Beyond

By Martin Moebus

When bicycles first burst onto the scene, towns everywhere joined the craze, and Willimantic was no different. Infused with enthusiasm and quirky escapades, the streets of this little city buzzed with pedals, gears, spirited riders and more than a few memorial mishaps. Social clubs brought community together organizing rides, events, and lively antics.

In 1818, the first “bike-like” machine, the dandy horse, was invented. With no pedals, no brakes, and limited steering, you pushed forward with your feet. You can imagine what happened when you went too fast down a hill! Next, the velocipede added foot pedals and primitive steering, but still no brakes. Penny-farthings had large front wheels making them difficult to get on and off and came with bragging rights for your injuries. Regardless of danger, people loved these machines and the bicycle craze began.

The safety bicycle, with two same size wheels debuted in 1885, again without brakes. John Dunlap invented an air filled tire to “prevent headaches” while riding on rough roads. Finally bike riders, or wheelman, as they would be called, had their beast.

Biking, Injuries, and Bike Cubs in Willimantic

The first person to ride a bike in Willimantic was Horace Adams in 1881. When a farmer saw him he reportedly said “By gosh! If that ain’t one of them darn bicycles I’ve heard on” (Willimantic Journal). Willimantic started three wheel clubs: The Thread City Cyclers, the Frog Wheel Club and “a club composed of ladies” with no reported name.

The Alert Hose Company of Willimantic, a fire company, sponsored a fair in 1892. The Thread City Cyclers joined in sponsoring bicycle races at the fair with prizes such as typewriters, sweaters, a shotgun, suits, shoes and even a Kodak camera. Bicycle clubs were a reason for social gatherings. In 1894 the Frog Wheel Club invited the mayor, city officials and the Thread City Cyclers to share in turtle soup from a 35 pound turtle. Visiting members of the American Wheelman Club got fifty cents off rooms at the Hotel Hooker if biking through town. The Thread City Cyclers even had a mascot for races – a bulldog named Billy who sported a red and white embroidered blanket and “opened his capacious mouth loudly whenever his club had occasion to shout, which was pretty often.”

Biking was also dangerous. Donald Best was riding his new bicycle and ran into a horse drawn wagon wrecking his bike and crushing his foot under the horse. On June 10, 1898 John W. Smith lost control of his bicycle in Willimantic on Mansfield Avenue (near Windham Hospital today) striking a pile of stones and spraining his right arm. Innocent bystanders were swept up in the biking chaos. The child of Honorius Caissee was knocked down by a bicycle causing a bad gash on his face near Schillers on Vermont Drive. The wheelman did not stop - an early example of a hit and run. Poor Mrs. Hiram Hawkins was stepping off of a street car when a speeding wheelman crashed into her causing her “pain and soreness.” In 1897 a new disease had struck – “bicycle hand” or swelling of the hand by gripping the handlebar too strongly.

Biking Crime

Professor Lombroso advanced a theory in 1900 that bicycles were bad for morals (Day 6/21/1900). These evil doing bike riders even had a name – scorchers. In New York, Teddy Roosevelt tried to get rid of them with a bike squad of police officers wearing yellow leggings and blue caps -possibly our first superheroes. In 1896 Willimantic passed a 10-mph limit on all streets except Union and Main where it would be 8 mph to control these scorchers. In the first local stolen bike incident, Harry Chapman leased a bike to Willimantic man Joseph Lyons. Lyons did not return it, so Chapman called the police. At about the same time, Joseph Bergeron called the police and asked for help in finding his stolen bike recently purchased for \$5.00. It turns out that Lyons sold his leased bike and then stole it back! Taking the 7 o’clock trolley to Baltic, Captain Richmond found Lyons working in a barber shop where he was arrested. He was fined \$25.15 but his boss floated

Lyons the fine money and he went back to work. Some say that crime does pay.

Bike Safety

You would think you would want a light to ride at night, but not wheelmen. While lanterns were a good idea, they wanted them on wagons and carriages too so refused to use them. H. E. Smith was arrested on Valley Street on Sept 29, 1899 for riding without a lantern. Bicycle bells would seem to be another good idea but no one knew how to use them. One wheelman came upon an elderly woman using the crosswalk and rang his bell “suddenly and violently” even though he was 30 feet away. The poor lady jumped and landed in a mud-puddle while the wheelman making a “broad and graceful curve, swinging wide of the “victim of his deviltry” and biked on. In 1892, Willimantic banned riding of bicycles on sidewalks on Main and Union streets.

Love on Wheels the Bicycle Musical

Bikes made their way into musical productions that the Windham Theater Guild would do well to “Take Note!”. On May 25-26, 1892 a theatrical performance called Love on Wheels by W. E. Palmer was performed in Willimantic. It was as terrible as it sounds. As word got ahead of time, no audience showed up and the actors did not get paid. Four days later in Portland, a “boozy female bicyclist” from the musical entertained the crowd by falling off her bike twenty times riding to the train station – apparently this was more amusing than the musical. The production was put out its misery in June when Palmer high tailed it out of Danbury by hiding in a cattle car. While not recorded for history, two plausible reasons are that he didn’t pay his crew again or the folks of Danbury saw the musical.

Bicycles and the Economy

The biking craze worried the horse and carriage trade. They feared that young men and woman would no longer hire horse and buggies to go riding together as they could bike for free. If no one rented carriages, stables would stop ordering them and manufacturers would go broke. They even worried about horses not getting exercise and becoming fat! (The Day July 31, 1895)

In 1896, A. B. Lincoln of Willimantic argued that the bicycle craze was ruining the economy. People weren’t buying pianos, tobacco, and clothing as they used to and instead purchasing bicycles. He strangely argued not to get rid of the bicycles but alcohol - reasoning that closing saloons would restore industries and return a billion dollars spent on rum to buying food, clothing, and other “comforts of life.”

The adventurous world of Professor Sweet

Future bike rider and regional ‘Evil Knievel’ Doctor Benoni Sweet began his daredevil career as a tight rope walker performing in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Locally, he tight walked across the Shetucket River in Norwich. Why was this daytime printer called Doctor? He developed a handy skill needed by any dare devil - setting broken bones.

In the Civil War, he enlisted in the Union army and was seen tight rope walking across Pennsylvania Ave in front of a crowd that even included Abe Lincoln. In 1862 he performed for a George Washington birthday

celebration, and again for his regiment before mustering out. I think that the rebels would have lost their resolve if he had performed his amazing feats during the Battle of Gettysburg!

Returning from the war Sweet took a bet to walk 100 miles in just 24 hours. Wearing a cardigan jacket, knee-breeches, elastic gaiters, a spangled belt, garters, and a white hat he walked back and forth from Providence to Phenix (West Warwick) Rhode Island, a distance of about 15 miles. Regrettably, he was unable to complete the challenge, stopping at 50 miles complaining that his legs were stiff.

Looking for an even bigger payoff he bet all comers \$5000.00 that he could ride his velocipede three thousand miles in thirty-seven days. His published route took him through Plainfield, Willimantic, Andover, then on to Hartford, and beyond. He even planned doing 150 miles in one stretch. After his failure walking, no one took him up on the bet. I have serious doubts ‘Mr. Stiff Legs’ would have finished anyway. Realizing he wasn’t making any money he gave up stunts and toured with a minstrel show but sadly missed out on the Love on Wheels debacle.

Local Farmer Charles Barrows

While the first recognizable eBikes were created in the 1990s, inventor and farmer Charles Barrows may have had the idea first in 1895. He invented an electric tricycle, claiming to carry three people, run 100 or perhaps



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even 500 miles. He build a small model and showed it off to about one hundred Windhamites in the hopes of raising money to build it locally. They didn’t believe him and given battery technology neither do I. Perhaps his biggest invention solved a problem that plagued Victorian men for years - keeping your moustache clean and dry when drinking coffee or tea. You see, moustache wax could melt from hot liquids and drip into your cup. Harvey Adams, an Englishman, had invented the moustache cup but what if you went out and didn’t have one? Barrows patented a moustache-protecting device that fit in your pocket and could be used with any glass or cup to keep your stache dry and safe! It was advertised across the country and even internationally and brought fame to this Willimantic designer. The STEM academy on Tuckey Road in Windham is named in his honor. Unfortunately, the school’s website makes no mention of him or his inventions including a patent for splitting wood, an electric railway car and a tricycle like horse carriage.

The new century brought the end of the bicycling craze. The Frog Wheel Club petered out in 1896. The Thread City Cyclers would become the last remaining bike club in the state transforming into a social club for parties, a little basketball, but alas, no bike riding. It fully disbanded in 1921. While Billy the bulldog is long gone, the Thread City cyclers of Willimantic have reformed and proudly carry on the town’s bicycling tradition. Here’s to hoping they keep pedaling strong!

Doing More Good By Serving Others

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

*Reverence for Life
affords me my fundamental
principle of morality, namely,
that good consists in main-
taining, assisting, and enhanc-
ing life and that to destroy,
harm, or to hinder life is evil.*
-Albert Schweitzer



I like Albert Schweitzer’s version of morality as he does not imbue ‘good’ and ‘evil’ with any intrinsic qualities, but rather measures them in relation to life and their abilities to either enhance or destroy it. As such, it helps to have a way of evaluating the last 8 months of international, national and even local changes, most of which I would not define as being good, if we apply his definition in terms of ‘maintaining, assisting, and enhancing life’. In fact, in most cases the changes would come under his idea of ‘evil’, in that they have either been designed to or have resulted in ‘harming and destroying life’. I would argue that this is because they are motivated by the value of capitalism – as in profit above all, not to mention the values of white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity and of course militarism, all of which again create harm for life, even as they enhance the economic power for some. Locally some of these ‘harming’ changes have brought cuts in federal grants to CT universities and non-profits, as well as ICE raids on our immigrant neighbors, creating for many feelings of insecurity, anxiety and even terror. Nationally, these listed issues have played out in even more drastic ways, as in draconian financial cuts to multiple Universities, greater ICE raids and abuses of human rights, as well as massive job losses for federal workers in D.C, and other places around the country. One example of massive job loss because of these ‘harming’ changes has involved those who worked for the former United States Aid for International Development Agency -USAID. The combination of job loss and indefinite leave include about 11,000+ people who have been left to scramble for their livelihoods, while USAID projects in 120 countries “aimed at fighting epidemics, educating children, providing clean water and supporting other areas of development” have been cancelled in ways that will have devastating results. These cuts were done in the supposed name of ‘government efficiency’ and ‘cost saving’, while at the same time calling for an “...increase defense spending by 13% to \$1 trillion... [including]... a “historic” \$175 billion investment to “fully secure the border,...” Ironically, cutting investment in social and economic development around the world, makes the world more unstable and encourages the use of military intervention, not to mention actually increases immigration, rather than reducing it. However, a military budget or a ‘fully secure border’ are always about profit for the corporations that make the equipment and are never about solving global instability, let alone the actual root causes of either. For in so many cases root causes of conflicts and immigration link to historically unequal access to land, water and ultimately food.

This brings me back to ways locally we can address root causes, such as access to food, which links to one ‘good’ thing that I know of which has come out of a ‘harming’ one. As readers who have followed my work will know, my wife and I co-created CLiCK 15 years ago, a food justice organization that has continued to grow and change in ways that are good, and which seek to help strengthen our local food system from the ground up by working directly with farmers, entrepreneurs and others. As evidence of this growth, CLiCK will be undergoing major renovations from CT Department of Agriculture grant so that we are better able to achieve these stated goals. Still, like many other non-profits CLiCK is losing access to many federal grants, just when we could further benefit from them to help with our next stage of growth. This is where we will be needing more input from our community, particularly those who can give (we welcome many modalities of giving) and who align with CLiCK’s food justice, sustainability and entrepreneurial values. In addition, the one ‘good’ thing that has impacted CLiCK recently has been our new Executive Director (ED), Kathryn Tanner Stahlberg, who was formerly employed with USAID. Our retiring ED Leigh Duffy did an amazing task of guiding and growing CLiCK for 6 years, but now we are once again so lucky with Kathryn, who brings a strong vision for how to guide CLiCK over the next few challenging years by taking her international experience and putting it into practice locally.

In the coming months we are planning several ways that Kathryn can host the community at CLiCK, as

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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

The Unspinning of a Yarn About Mansfield

“It is not worthwhile to try to keep history from repeating itself, for man’s character will always make the preventing of the repetitions impossible.” - Mark Train

By Bill Powers

Like today, especially today, there is much debate about free trade, protectionism and the role of tariffs - just as it was back in August of 1844. “Spinning a yarn” is a well-known idiom. It is about telling a fictitious tale, often one that can be difficult to believe. Who would have ever thought that back on August 7, 1844, a national economics and commerce weekly would spotlight Mansfield, Connecticut within its pages? And of all things, the article was about the “Destruction of American Industry.” There is a certain irony since Mansfield was widely known for its role in the nation’s silk industry and the spinning of silk yarn.

One young woman in Ohio didn’t believe what being said in *The Mercury and the Weekly Journal of Commerce* August 7, 1844, issue. That article claimed there was an “almost entire abandonment of the silk business in Mansfield (Conn.) as a proof that the domestic culture of silk in the Eastern States has been annihilated by Protection.” The article carried the headline: “Destruction of American Industry.”

If there is an equivalent to today’s “gone viral”, back then in 1844 it was a widely spread story that was extensively shared by the print media. In this case the story went from the weekly *Mercury* and was reprinted later in the *Summit Beacon* in Akron, Ohio and other papers, for instance, by the *New York Tribune* and the *Hartford Daily Courant*.

One young lady from Ohio had read the reprinted story in the Akron *Summit Beacon* and wrote a letter to that paper which contained a response from a letter she had also written to “Mr. Z. Storrs, an old and prominent citizen of that town [Mansfield] acquainted in the premises of the story for information, to get to the truth of the matter.” Her letter and his reply were published in the *Summit Beacon*.

So, a national weekly periodical about commerce with a particular view on Protectionism published a story. Subsequently, it was picked up by newspapers around the United States, and responded to by a young lady, who read it in an Ohio newspaper. Her response was reprinted in newspapers all over the country, including the *Hartford Daily Courant* (December 16, 1844).

The identity of the young woman may never be known, but the “prominent citizen” was Mr. Zalmon Storrs. He skillfully and thoroughly refuted the points made in the *Mercury* article. His rebuttal contained “facts as they exist” and were “sufficient to show that the statements of the *Mercury* are without foundation.”

The *Mercury* had suggested that domestic silk growers were intentionally and systematically reducing the production of silk by deliberately cutting down mulberry trees. By reducing the supply of domestically raised silk, manufacturers of silk products could demand higher prices with the increased price of imported silk as a result of tariffs. Mr. Storrs agreed that “the quantity of grown silk has been reduced compared to 20-30 years before” but rejected the idea that local producers of raw silk would sacrifice their local supply. He explained that the “severe cold winter of 1835-6 and the seasons since proved unusually destructive to the Mulberry in this region, and that the silk worms for some unknown reason had not been healthy.”

Evidence supports that there was NOT an “almost entire abandonment of the Silk business in Mansfield.” For instance, in Conantville, Max Pollock &Co. produced silk at its mill into the 1940s. A 1857 map showed the locations of seven silk factories in Mansfield. The Atwoodville Silk Mill operated until 1919.

Zalmon Storrs was a Yale graduate, Mansfield Centre’s Post Master, town selectman, state representative, probate judge and silk industry entrepreneur. “He operated a silk mill in Mansfield Hollow as early as 1833. Over the years the mill changed hands a number of times and others were built. Eventually a large complex developed which was known as the ‘Railroad Building’. Silk thread was last produced there by the Paisley Silk and Thread Co., founded in 1867.” (Mansfield Historical Society).

Bill Powers is a former Hartford and Windham Public Schools teacher.

Monsters in the Streets

By Bob Lorentson

I’m sure you’ve seen them. They’re hard to miss. All too often they block your view of everything except bumpers, grilles, and rocket launchers. OK, maybe I exaggerated there. I haven’t exactly seen any rocket launchers on those enormous pickup battletrucks that tailgate me like they want to get inside the electromagnetic field of my Prius, but I believe they have them. They’re probably just hidden by all the armor plating and anti-aircraft weaponry.

I drive a hybrid vehicle, which means that on good days I feel like I’m in one of those cars designated to be crushed at a monster truck rally, while legions of fans crush beer cans on their foreheads and cheer the carnage. (To my thinking, Carnage should be a Supervillain, but in this country it’s sponsored by Ford, Dodge, and Chevy.) I’m just trying to help save the planet. Maybe my kind needs to hold rallies too. We could, I don’t know, gather our eco-friendly vehicles in a circle and sing Kumbaya to the purr of our engines, for example. While recycling our beer cans and cheering our tiny carbon footprints, of course.

But it’s on the bad days that I feel like the planet is going to need much more than this to fight the Monsters. What we need, I think, is a superhero. One that is faster than a speeding Chevy Silverado, stronger than a turbo-charged Dodge Ram, and able to leap a GMC Sierra Ultimate in a single bound. One that will tirelessly (and fuel-efficiently) fly over the roads of America and come to the aid of threatened drivers like me, sucking Monster gas tanks dry and turning angry drivers into humble walkers. What we need, I think, is Responsible Man. Either that, or Greta (GT) Thunberg in a solar-powered cape.

Because America has spoken – not just in the voting booths, but on the streets. You can only make a private statement in a voting booth, but you can make a very public, gas-guzzling, macho-horsepower one of brute intimidation on the streets. Or in the pristine wilderness areas, if you prefer. Ever notice those TV commercials that show how you can enjoy nature by driving all-terrain, biosphere-busting behemoths all over it? Not even the deer and the antelope have a safe place to play anymore.

It used to be that a pickup truck identified you as a hard working independent farmer. The pickups were spartan and uncomfortable but sturdy and utilitarian vehicles that performed equally well with manure at the field or beer at the roadhouse. As long as they weren’t mixed up. They would no more be caught dead on the side of the highway than mingling with the air-conditioned fancy cars that paraded around like their exhaust didn’t stink. You wouldn’t think of driving your pickup to church on Sundays any more than you would use your sedan to transport whatever it is that hard working independent farmers transport. Things that come in bushels, I imagine.

But all that was before. Today’s Monster pickup battletrucks are more likely to self-identify as flag and gun-decaled suburban assault vehicles. They are luxurious and comfortable but paramilitary and strike force ready street sweeping juggernauts that can belch carbon and country music ‘till the cows either come home or drop dead from fright. They would no more be caught dead at a climate change rally than mingling with the minivans at an antique show. And most definitely they would never transport bushels of anything besides beer. Busch beer, most likely.

Today’s Monster pickup battletrucks make it aggressively clear that the road isn’t big enough for the two of us. Hoods tall enough and wide enough to make any cars in front of them look like small game fleeing for their lives. Enormous confrontational grilles designed to look like cyborg warthogs or demons from Hell. Side mirrors that can knock a bicyclist into the next time zone. Tires on steroids. Modified engines that run over emission standards so as to better ‘roll coal’ in the face of an asthmatic EV. Blacked-out windows to hide huge, killer, EV sniffing dogs.

I think I know why the Monsters are so angry. It’s the blind spots. Front, back, left, right – they have more blind spots than a politician with a petrochemical lobbyist in plain sight. These Monsters are so big they can’t even see things right in front of them – dogs, children, EVs, global warming – and so put us all at risk. Perhaps our streets, and indeed the whole world, would be a lot safer with better blind spot warning systems. Either that, or we should push for regulations that require every Monster to come equipped with a Greta Thunberg.

Windham Center’s Firefighters For 200 Years

By Bill Powers

Two hundred years ago, a group of Windham Center residents took it upon themselves to organize their own volunteer fire company and fire district. Afterall, when uncontrolled fire struck a growing village, due to the closeness of the buildings a fire could easily jump from building to building, the results could be devastating in terms of property destruction and human lives lost. The consequences were tragic for the families and individual victims. A well -trained fire company could place a fire under control and prevent its spread to other buildings and properties in the area.

A booklet published in 1885 and titled “A History of All the Fire Companies Ever Formed in Windham, Connecticut” by Windham County historian Allen B. Lincoln was printed by the Willimantic Chronicle. It gives details about how in 1825 the residents of Windham Center - one of the many new rural villages – organized one of eastern Connecticut’s earliest volunteer fire companies. The residents of Windham Center voted to form their own fire district. They drafted a set of bylaws and sent Dr. Chester Hunt, the village physician to Hartford to secure the approval of the State’s General Assembly.

“The nineteenth century saw the development of rural villages, as well as mill cities with clusters of houses, shops, and other central-place activities that funneled farm produce into the mill cities and villages to feed hundreds of new industrial workers.” At Windham Center “residents volunteered to join the 24-man Windham Center fire company. The Windham Center fire district erected an engine house and purchased a pumper engine, ladders, and hooks to keep in it. Men not horses pulled the engine. When historian Lincoln visited the Windham Center Fire department and engine years later in 1885, he described it, “the body is shaped like a miniature rectangular coal barge, in dimensions about 6 x 2 ½ feet at the top, and 5 x 2 ½ at the bottom, and a foot or more deep. The body is mounted on a pair of low wheels, calculated to bring about breast high, for easy working, the handles of the pump levers.” The pump was operated by four men.” “Other firefighters used buckets to continuously load water into the engine. A four- foot pipe with a nozzle protruded from the engine, to which firefighters could attach a 20-foot hose.” (Jamie Eves and Katherine Eves, “Fire and the Industrial Revolution,” the Windham Textile and History Museum Website, 2022.)

“By vigorously working it, it could be made to throw a half inch stream fifty of sixty feet in the air. Soon after the district purchased it, persons went up into the old Windham Center Congregational church belfry – since rebuilt – and the engine on trial threw a stream that sprinkled them in their high perch.” (Allen B. Lincoln, the Willimantic Chronicle 1885).

For two centuries our residents and neighbors in Windham Center have been volunteering to keep us safe and prosperous. Thank you to all of you both present and past for your unselfish accomplishments, your devotion to duty, your service at fire, EMS, and other types of emergencies, your hours of training, your courage, your willingness to work with others for the common good, your concern for others, your desire to help those in need, your compassion for others and your respect for the dignity of others, your willingness to risk your own life and limb to help others, that you value human life above all else, your willingness to stare danger in the face, your willingness to help the old, the sick, and the injured, and finally, the support of your families and their sacrifices that have allowed you to devote your time and energy to serve your community.

Your community thanks our firefighters who serve and have served with our undying gratitude.

Bill Powers is a former teacher who resides in Windham Center.

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Key Impacts of the Big, Beautiful Bill Act

By Laurence Hale,
AAMS®, CRPS®
Senior Partner & Chief
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President Trump’s One Big, Beautiful Bill officially passed in Congress and was signed by the president, which officially makes it the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). The extremely large and complex piece of legislation contains tax cuts for individuals and businesses, increases spending on defense and immigration enforcement, and cuts spending on “green businesses” and Medicaid. The law will give consultants and tax advisors topics to write about for years. For now, let’s look at some of the ways the OBBBA may directly affect your pocketbook.

Lower Taxes

The biggest thing the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act did was extend most of the tax breaks under the Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA), which was enacted during the first Trump administration and was set to expire at the end of this year. Had the OBBBA not become a law, individual and business tax rates would have jumped sharply.

The new law also provides some new individual tax benefits. Individuals working in qualified tipped occupations can deduct up to \$25,000 of tip income from their taxable income and individuals can deduct up to \$12,500 of their overtime pay from their taxable income (\$25,000 for those filing joint returns). Both deductions are available starting this year and continue through 2028. The deductions are available for individuals who earn up to \$150,000 a year (\$300,000 for joint filers) and phase out for those earning greater amounts.

In addition, consumers who purchase American-made cars can deduct up to \$10,000 of the interest paid on their auto loans annually from 2025 through 2028. The benefit phases out for individuals with a modified adjusted gross income of \$100,000 or more annually or joint filers who earn more than \$200,000.

Higher SALT Deduction

In a move appreciated by anyone living in a state with high taxes, the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act increases the cap on the deduction for state and local taxes (SALT) to \$40,000 for those filing taxes jointly and \$20,000 for those filing separately. That’s a nice increase from the \$10,000 cap placed on the deduction under Trump’s TCJA, but it’s still a far cry from the lack of any cap prior to the TCJA.

The deduction is only available to those who itemize their taxes. The deductible amount and income threshold each increase by 1% annually through 2029. And the maximum deduction available is gradually reduced for joint filers with modified adjusted gross income of more than \$500,000 (\$250,000 for separate filers.) Less advertised: The deduction, which is available this year, reverts back to the \$10,000 cap in 2030.

New Tax Benefits For The Young

Under the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act, parents receive a child tax credit of \$2,200 for each of their children, up from \$2,000 starting in 2025. There is no stated expiration date on this credit. The credit is permanently indexed to inflation and phases out for single filers making \$200,000 or more and joint filers making \$400,000 or more.

The OBBBA also creates Trump Accounts. The US government will place \$1,000 into an account created for any baby born in the US between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2028. Accounts can be opened for children born before and after those dates, they just won’t receive the seed money from Uncle Sam. Accounts can be opened for anyone up through the calendar year before they turn 18.

Parents, relatives, and friends can contribute up to \$5,000 a year in after-tax dollars to the account until the year before the child turns 18. Employers can contribute up to \$2,500 a year to an employee’s account or to the account of an employee’s dependent. The accounts will be invested in a low-cost fund that tracks the US stock market and can grow tax-deferred.

When the child turns 18, the account converts into a traditional IRA, and the beneficiary can withdraw funds at any time — with caveats. If they use the proceeds to

pay for college, buy a home, or start a business, they will pay a federal income tax on the amount withdrawn. If they pull money out for any other purpose before turning 59½, they’ll pay federal income tax and a 10% tax penalty on withdrawals. If the funds are withdrawn after the person hits 59½, the withdrawal will be taxed at the federal income tax rate. The tax implications are varied and complicated, so consider talking to your financial advisor about the pros and cons of making contributions to a Trump account. It’s expected that accounts will be available through banks or other financial institutions starting in 2026.

The One Big, Beautiful Bill Act also reduces government support of college finance. Under the Parent Plus student loan program, parents can only borrow \$20,000 per student per year for college and the total amount borrowed is limited to \$65,000 per student. Previously, parents were allowed to borrow an amount equal to their child’s cost of college. The change goes into effect on July 1, 2026.

The Grad Plus loan program, which provided loans to graduate students, will be shuttered as of the 2026-2027 school year. And, students who take out loans should be aware that income-driven repayment plans will no longer be available after July 1, 2026.

New Tax Benefits For The Old

Seniors receive new benefits under the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act, too. Couples who are 65 and older can deduct up to \$12,000 from their taxable income if they make less than \$150,000 annually. Accordingly, individuals can take a \$6,000 deduction if they earn less than \$75,000 annually. The deduction shrinks as income exceeds the noted levels. Again, less advertised is the fact that this deduction is only in effect from 2025 through 2028, unless it’s extended by Congress.

Trump did not eliminate the tax on Social Security, as he promised during the campaign. But the new senior tax break will go a long way toward offsetting the tax that most seniors pay on their Social Security benefits. Those who won’t benefit are the poorest seniors, who never pay taxes on their Social Security benefits, and the richest seniors, who won’t qualify for the tax break.

Understanding how the many moving parts of Trump’s One Big, Beautiful Bill Act will affect your financial plans is challenging. At WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors, we’re happy to help. Our “Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™” process includes regular portfolio reviews and strategic adjustments to keep you on track toward your goals. We’re committed to being your partner every step of the way as we provide you with “Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.” Contact us for a complimentary consultation at whzwealth.com or call (860) 928-2341.

Windham Mill Museum Quilt Exhibition

By Irene Barnard

The Windham Textile and History (aka Mill) Museum proudly announces the October opening of a new exhibition of quilts commemorating the rich traditions of African American culture. Sisters in Stitches Joined by the Cloth is a quilting guild founded in 1997. Their work celebrates the centuries-old history of quilting, connecting the artists to their ancestors and to each other; and preserving and passing on knowledge to future generations: www.sistersinstitches.org

The Mt. Holyoke College Art Museum earlier exhibited their stellar, painstaking work: https://artmuseum.mtholyoke.edu/wp-content/uploads/old_pdfs/re-member_us_exhibition_guide_2018_UA.pdf Quilters, fiber artists, art and crafts lovers, and first-time visitors alike will have a rare opportunity to see work including approximately 20 quilts by these Massachusetts and Connecticut quilters. This exhibition was conceptualized by Mill Museum colleague and friend, the late Ed Silverstein. This exhibit is mounted in appreciation of this distinguished career journalist’s devotion as a member of the museum board and of his community.

The exhibit will open October 4 at noon, followed by a reception at 2:30pm. The museum is open Saturday-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. Check the Museum website for further details: <https://millmuseum.org>

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How I Spent My Summer Vacation: 2025

By Jesse R. Clark

It has been quite the eventful summer. If you want summertime fun and creativity, Willimantic, CT is the place to be. I have had the privilege to go to the Poetry in the Park summer series put on by Curbstone Press, a local organization that promotes writings about social issues and multicultural points of views. I was lucky enough to know the founders Alexander ‘Sandy’ Taylor and Judy Doyle, who truly made Curbstone a cornerstone of the Willimantic/Windham community. I had entered poetry contests/festivals they had as a kid. In 2002, I had not only won first place, but I had my poem turned into a song and by State Troubadour Hugh Bloomingfeld (State Troubadour 1999-2000). Now, 23 years later, I gathered with members of the community to hear Hugh sing at the Poetry in the Park event where I read a poem. Located at the Julia de Burgos Park, at the corner of Curbstone Way and Jackson Street, it is an ideal place for you are still in nature, yet in the middle of town; you are surrounded by houses and neighbors, yet you hear the bustle of cars going from one place to the next. There is something very special about experiencing poetry, music and art outside, I find. Connecting to nature, you can really feel the spirit of the art being presented.

In June, my birthday fell on the same day as the Third Thursday Street Fest. Whenever that happens, I joke and say that it’s my birthday party and let everyone know that they are celebrating my birthday with me, thanking them for coming out. Here is a poem about how I spent my birthday:

A June Birthday

By Jesse R. Clark

*Oh, to celebrate a birthday in June!
A day spent breathing, relaxing,
moving, stretching at the ‘YONO’ yoga studio in Willimantic
while a new one-
‘The Mantra Room’ in South Windham-
celebrates their grand opening, as if a birthday present.
Two studios Two spaces Two opportunities
for community and peace.*

*In the evening is a street fest filled with community-
friends, music, creativity, life.
I visit people after stopping off at the library to drop
some books in the return bin-
Closed for Juneteenth.*

*All these events coming together in community celebra-
tion.
I dance to a brass band. I become one with it.
“I’m a brass band” as Shirley McClaine sang in Sweet
Charity.
Both of us filled with the spirit of the instruments
telling us how to move, working with our heart, body and
spirit.
We are capable of anything.
Unlike her, though, I am not a character in a Neil Simon
play
doomed to end his tale on a melancholy note.
I keep dancing, for I have been given the best birthday
gift.
A gift of experiencing a joyful, creative community
honoring the past and celebrating the present.*

Of course, the big thing that happens every summer is the Boom Box Parade, a parade that has been featured in Ripley’s Believe-it-or-Not, believe it or not! This parade is very meaningful to me because it was my grandmother’s idea. In 1986, the High School band was unable to perform for the Memorial Day Parade. My grandmother, Kathy Clark, was having drinks with some friends at the Victorian Lady(what is now the Tattoo Parlor on Main Street) as an idea was forming for having a different kind of parade, one where people march with boom boxes as marching band music played. My grandmother marched over to WILI, the local radio



An undated photo of the author.

station and talked to Colin Rice and Wanye Norman about this idea. They loved it, however, all of them agreed that there wouldn’t be enough time to get it ready and that Memorial Day isn’t really a time for a celebratory parade. Between interested community members and Wayne’s help, my grandmother, Kathy Clark, had a boom box parade celebrating America’s birthday. She knew that community is made up of individuals and this parade shows that. Its nickname is The People’s Parade, because it really is. If you want to know what this community is like, look at this parade. This parade has everything, fire breathers and circus acts, floats of local business with people dressed up in wacky make-up and costumes, Uncle Sams, Veterans for Peace, the local Police and Fire Department, the whole scene. We have everyone and everything. We even have fish heads- people dressed in giant paper mâché fishes talking about the important issues of the year from Ukraine and “Health Care for All” to the issues of ICE –

“Families Belong Together”. Once, there was a juggler on a unicycle in a tu-tu next to a guy with an umbrella being towed in a kayak. Another time, Scooby-Doo and the Mystery Machine was following people dressed up in historical garb from The Nathan Hale Homestead. Whether political or fun, it’s a chance for people to participate in self-expression in a group and have countless of people on the sidelines, excited to see the show.

On a personal level, this parade is my grandmother’s legacy. After the first ten years, my grandparents would lead the parade carrying a banner that says “This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land”. After she died from cancer in ‘03, some close friends were tasked with carrying that banner. In 2017, I was living with my cousin and I had told him that I wasn’t going to the parade that year. It was too hot and I didn’t feel like it. He was surprised I wasn’t even going, seeing how it’s a part of our family legacy, but he understood. Immediately after, I got a call from my grandparents’ friend, the one who now carries the banner. He said that his wife couldn’t make it and wanted to know if I could help him carry the banner. Instantly I went from not even attending to leading the way, carrying my grandparents’ banner. Since that year I have either been in the parade or watched it, for this parade is a celebration of community.

Always an activist in her own way, working at the local housing authority, my grandmother did what she could to support people of the community. My grandfather, Tony Clark, would always- as John Lewis put it- make ‘Good Trouble’ with his partner-in-crime, Mark Svetz, who also was there at the Victorian Lady the night the idea of the Boom Box Parade was conceived and wrote about it in his *Neighbors* article “The 4th in Willimantic – A Community on Parade” in 2013. So many people have their own stories to tell about how my grandfather and Mark helped Willimantic, most notably, creating the needle exchange program, making sure that if people are using, that they had access to clean needles, although it was technically illegal. Mark Svetz was a regular contributor to *Neighbors* and wrote about the relationship of him and my grandfather after his passing in 2009 in an article entitled “Tony Clark: 1933-2009 – Sing a Song of Friendship” He wrote: “At some point in the mid-80s... we started directing our madcap knight errantry to trying to fight some of the injustice we saw around us... (Tony) started his own (Veterans for Peace) vigil. He kept it up, spending hours around town or standing on Main Street... We walked to Hartford for a Housing rally... We filed a lawsuit against the town of Windham because they passed an anti-loitering ordinance we thought was wrong... We started a syringe exchange program in Willimantic in 1990. We had herd about this way of helping people avoid the growing threat of HIV infection associated with injection drug use... Tony and I just thought: ‘We can do that.’” I started writing for *Neighbors* in 2022 following Mark’s death in June. I was touched by all the articles he wrote and the impact he had on the communi-

ty through his actions along with those articles. I saw this as something I could do to keep his memory alive, keep the spirit of him and my grandparents alive, as he had done for my grandfather.

This is a time that feels stressful and depressing for a lot of people. There have been a lot of protests talking about “No Kings” and “Hands Off” concerned about the increasing fascism and authoritarianism. On June 14th, we had a 3,000 people in Willimantic for the “No Kings” rally. That is three times larger than the “Black Lives Matter” rally we had after George Floyd was murdered. In July, the John Lewis national rally coincided with the Third Thursday Street Fest, so some of us after the rally marched with our signs through the festival. I am grateful that we are able to do stuff like that because it’s important. There are so many issues going on these days, that is why I also use the Boom Box Parade to express my feelings *for different situations*. One year I had a “Peace America” sign marching with the Veterans for Peace group, another, I had a sign referring to my pro-freedom, pro-choice sentiments following the overturning of Roe V. Wade. That was the year Mark Svetz died, so I also had a sign honoring my grandparents and him: “Thank You Kathy Clark, Tony Clark, Mark Svetz.” This year, following the passages of “The Big Beautiful Bill”, I sobbed at what that bill means for the people of this country. However, it made me more determined to march in the parade. Sure enough, it was just what I needed. I marched behind a giant Bread-And-Puppet style Lady Liberty with a sign read “Curb Your Fascism”, playing some of the marching band/circus like music from *Curb Your Enthusiasm* lightening the mood, while still upset. It made me feel better, even if I was the only one who could hear the music. The best way to describe it is through a poem I wrote before the parade that I was fortunate enough to read at the Poetry in the Park open mic in July following Hugh Bloomingfeld’s performance, which itself was a gift of a reunion of my poetry, Curbstone and Hugh:

July 4th, 2025

By Jesse R. Clark

*I weep for America today. I weep not just for those weep-
ing,
but I weep for those who don’t see that there is anything
wrong.
I shall march in the people’s parade, the boom box pa-
rade,
created by my grandmother in 1986,
my family’s legacy.
But my march will be one of anger, of grief, of love and a
little bit of hope.
Hope in community, hope in change.
But filled with grief,
wishing my grandparents could be still in their prime,
marching next to me,
for they would if they could.*

*When people ask why I am so positive and hopeful and
loving,
it’s because that’s all I’ve got.
When the true, awful, reality sinks in,
I can still celebrate the new sun,
friendships,
nature,
and those seeds of hope.*

*But make no mistake,
under that positivity, under that hope, under that love,
is anger, pain, and grief.
I continue working, but now...
I weep for you, America,
Not as a country,
but as a people.*

At the end of *Sweet Charity*, her fiancé says he can’t marry her. She sits in Central Park, depressed wondering what will happen in her life. Some young hippies carrying followers come over and smile, offering her mes-sages of love. She takes a minute and then gets up, going about the park, smiling at people, saying ‘Good morning’ and continues with her life. Still clearly upset, not knowing what life has in store, but hopeful and determined to find joy and love in community.

I still miss my grandparents, but looking at Willimantic, I know that the breath of my grandparents’ spirits is still in the air, blowing throughout the town and between all the communities and connections, there still is some hope, even when we need to take the time to feel the anger, grief and pain. Keep Art Alive. Keep Creativity Alive. Keep Community History and Spirit Alive. Keep Alive.

Dr. Keneth Noll as General Israel Putnam

Submitted by Julie Engelke

The Willington Historical Society presents Dr. Kenneth Noll as Major General Israel Putnam on September 13th at 2 pm on the Town Green in Willington at the intersection of Rts 74, 320 and Jared Sparks Road in Willington. The Old Town Hall will be available in case of inclement weather.


Dr. Noll is a Professor Emeritus of microbiology at UCONN and for many years has portrayed Charles Darwin and Charles Dickens in libraries, museums, schools, community events and universities. He has recently begun to portray Israel Putnam as a man of the people who showed dedication to noble causes and bravery in dangerous situations.

General Putnam will be portrayed as the beloved, honorable farmer and patriot that he was. We will learn of his life on the farm, his time as a tavern keeper, his role in the French and Indian War as well as his service as second in command to General Washington in the Revolutionary War.

Please join us for this entertaining and educational event. Folks are welcome to dress in period costumes and please bring a chair or blanket for the Green.

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Country Garden Style?

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

STYLE is yours and yours alone. Aesthetics are subjective -- not right nor wrong -- but it takes courage to be unconventional in suburban estates. Less so in Connecticut’s Quiet Corner with fewer neighbors, more woods and glorious weeds.

As a master gardener / designer and garden consultant, I often offer advice. Now, however, I want to give Permission. Permission to reduce your lawn. Permission to tolerate -- perhaps enjoy -- some weeds. Permission to Coexist with the Earth and its interconnected Web of Life.

TOUR Sunday 27 July was an unconventional MIDSUMMER GARDEN DAY for the Quiet Corner Garden Club at an old farmhouse in Chaplin, Connecticut. Rains parted for Nancy Etheir (Eastford) and Noreene Stehlik (Woodstock Valley), fellow “Westies” from the quiet side, the watersheds of the Willimantic and Natchaug Rivers where I espouse a country garden style. Less lawn. More weeds.

Not an expansive garden landscape, I only “cultivate” a naturalistic half-acre of our two-acres. The rest is wild thicket and woods. Age gives me permission to work less, and I welcome weeds like **Goldenrod** (*Solidago*), **Pokeberry** (*Phytolacca*) and Victorian favorite **Queen Anne’s Lace** (*Daucus*). Like my 7-foot **Mullein** (*Verbascum*). Water Makes Things Grow !!!

My wild gardens are not the stuff of manicured garden tours. Nature’s chaos is my tonic for human harm to the environment. That’s me. Style is yours and yours alone.

Midsummer has the most bloom of our temperate growing seasons in Connecticut. I like small spaces with unexpected perennials on my loosely gardened half-acre in Chaplin. A **Mexican Sunflower** (*Tithonia*) leans bright yellow against the blue house in solidarity with Ukraine. Evergreen **Christmas Fern** (*Polystichum*) and **Prickly Pear Cactus** (*Opuntia*) hide along the old stone walk from the mailbox where white **Shasta Daisy** (*Leucanthemum*) blooms. On the other side of the driveway under the whitebarked **Himalayan Birch** (*Betula*), **Sweet Fern** (*Comptonia*) is not a fern at all, but a low-growing shrub with fern-like leaves, sweetly fragrant when crushed. I plant showy **Dahlia** blooms in a pot with **Amarylis** leaves that feed the winter-blooming bulb.

Soft yellow **Coreopsis ‘Moonbeam’** blooms along the road with a bright orange cultivar of **Purple Coneflower** (*Echinacea*). Orange masses of **Daylily** (*Hemerocallis*) brighten the front of the house and roads throughout the Quiet Corner, the common daylily (H. fulva that blooms better in shade than cultivars) on July 4th when Monarch butterflies are in the orange Milkweed (Asclepius).

Birds, bees and butterflies are attracted to **Lilies** (*Lilium*) and **Roses** (*Rosa*) well into August. A hummingbird pair was in my red-purple Bee Balm (Monarda) by mid-July. Multi-colored **Clematis** and **Hydrangea** both like heads in the sun, and feet in the shade with ample moisture. **Geranium ‘Rozanne’** is a blue-purple blooming groundcover that scrambles up the rose, lilies and the **Cardinal Flower** (*Lobelia*) that finally flowered a brilliant red in late July. Much happens in two weeks.

Purple-pink **Blazing Stars** (*Liatris*) was just planted in the mini-meadow, a prairie plant tribute to the Midwest where less than one percent of grassland remains. The Eastern Deciduous Forest -- perhaps the most diverse woods in the world -- stretches from the East Coast west to Minnesota where I lived for thirty years at the edge of the Prairie.



Hydrangea



Lilies and roses

DESIGN Conventional horticultural design offers what most clients want:

- Horticultural interest in every season, including winter;
- Layered pattern with lower plants in front, a showy tree at corners;
- Manicured grounds with an edged weedless lawn.

Color is foremost in floral interest plus colorful and variegated leaves. Subtle elements of design are Leaf Texture, Form and Scale, Rhythm and Flow, (Mystery) and Surprise! Whimsy brings smiles. Style is yours and yours alone.

Scale determines maintenance. Plant what you can handle. Watch closely to monitor plant health, and to enjoy for your own health. Breathe. Observe. Of our two acres, I only maintain a naturalistic half-acre with the simple farmhouse, its lawn, garden and mown paths. Another half-acre of trees buffers a neighbor, and an acre of wild woods stretches back some 500-feet toward Diana’s Pool in the Natchaug River.

Visit arboreta, botanical gardens and woods with a field guide / camera app. Learn from history, like Fletcher Steele’s birch-lined steps at **Naumkeag** in the Berkshires. Symmetry reflects the formal facades of many historic New England homes. Roadtrip ??? Continuing north to the Mohawk Trail, the **Bridge of Flowers** is a botanical delight in Shelburne Falls MA, inspiring Willimantic’s **Garden on the Bridge** at the edge of the Quiet Corner. Copy what you like, right plant in the right place. Style is yours and yours alone.

September is a good time to plant, even October in southern New England, allowing root development before winter rigors. I use copious compost; a kelp drench stimulates roots. Topdress with compost saucers to hold water while roots establish. I mulch with shredded pine bark to conserve moisture, suppress competing weeds and prevent soil heaving in winter’s freeze-thaw cycles. Cover crowns of new and tender plants with mulch in late fall; uncover in spring after threat of frost. I water emerging growth as soon as my outside spigot is on. To thrive, not simply survive.

As a landscape designer / project manager at Weston Nurseries in Hopkinton MA, many customers – about 70 at peak in an 8-month season

-- wanted conventional plantings. Not much time to know a client’s needs and desires, nor to evolve a landscape. The nursery business wanted projects planted quickly, on to the next. Best timing was planning in winter to plant in spring.

Before snow, draw / sketch a base map with existing land use and vegetation. How is your land used? Screening needed? Research trees and shrubs to fit spaces. Or proceed ad hoc in spring, a few shrubs here, a tree there, flowering perennials where you walk and sit. Lay garden hoses to mark flowing bed lines, easy to mow. Reverse curves add drama.

Independent now, I know clients and their evolving gardens better, but WN had the greatest vari-

ety of plants in New England, some introduced by the Mezitt family, such as the industry standard **Rhododendron ‘PJM’** (for Peter John Mezitt), a hardy evergreen shrub with bright clusters of lavender-pink flowers in spring. I’m planting ‘PJM Elite’ in the club’s Memorial Garden (that I steward in Putnam CT) to replace a distressed **Japanese Andromeda** (*Pieris*). PJM Elite has larger flowers, more vigorous growth, and thrives in acidic, well-drained soil, part-shade to part-sun. The Memorial Garden is a tough site; wind and water are limiting factors. The Rhododendron should be tougher than Andromeda.

My *Wild Naturalism* juxtaposes formal and informal elements for contrast and transition to the wild beyond. I prefer dense naturalistic asymmetry and don’t want to see everything at once, but that’s not *better* than formal symmetry with space between each plant. Style is yours and yours alone.



7 foot Mullein

GAIA In Greek mythology, Gaia was *Goddess of the Earth*. Gaia philosophy considers how humanity and other organisms on our life-giving planet co-regulate the biosphere to promote habitability. *The Gaia Hypothesis* (1970) by UK chemist James Lovelock observed that planet lifeforms and their environment can act like a single self-regulating system. Homeostasis is the tendency toward a stable equilibrium between interdependent elements, as aided by physiology in our bodies. The Gaia system adds the atmosphere and near-surface rocks and soil, the terrestrial crust. Earth’s biosphere does act as a self-organizing system keeping

its systems in an equilibrium conducive to life; when atmospheric carbon dioxide levels rise, plants grow better and remove more CO2 from the air. Humanity has already radically altered the Earth’s atmosphere. Hot!

Outside the bounds of science, speculative versions of Gaia contend that the Earth is sentient, conscious and intelligent. Some versions of Gaia theory are more spiritual, rooted in Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence, the 7th Principle of Unitarian Universalism. Native American religions viewed Earth as a Whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

“We come and go but the land will always be here”
- Willa Cather, O Pioneers!

LAWN Do you need an iconic American Lawn of thirsty **Bluegrass** (*Poa*)? Do you need so much? Overseed with *Fescue*, the narrow-bladed high and low grasses that are more tolerant of foot traffic, shade and drought, and once the traditional New England lawn. Seed with **White Clover** (*Trifolium*) for a lower-maintenance lawn that:

- Distracts rabbits from ornamentals,
 - Attracts Beneficial Insects to reduce pesticides,
 - Reduces Fertilizer by “fixing” Nitrogen in soil,
- and is
- Drought-tolerant to reduce watering.

Mowing high in summer is better for bunnies, clover and the grass. My partner would be happy with more lawn if I mowed my mini-meadow, so I plant colorful Blazing Stars in the mounds of grass, and evangelize the ecological layers of life. “Shrews eat ticks,” I implore. We at least agree on eradicating **Poison Ivy** (*Toxicodendron*).

Our lawn is reduced to grass rooms and paths around the small meadow. Less work than groundcovers. Meadows feed the Web of Life. Whatever the reasoning, coexisting with the land is easier than controlling it.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Master gardener / designer, Chaplin CT
Quiet Corner Garden Club member
Briankarlssonbarnes@gmail.com

Photos by author.



Clematis and Kalmia



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Sarah McQuaid
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**Amy Gallatin & The Hot Flashes
Christmas Show**
4:00 pm ~ \$20



Reflections on Scotland

“Hope is nature’s provision for saving the human mind from shrieking lunacy.” Gordon MacCreagh

By D. R. Blanchette

Inspired by Eric Weiner’s book *Geography of Genius* I had hoped for years to visit Edinburgh, Scotland. Janet was just as hopeful of visiting the Julian Alps of Slovenia. Covid intervened with our plans and with time running out we decided to combine the trips into a single transatlantic flight. When we told people we were going to Scotland and Slovenia, most reactions were minimal because most people have never heard of Slovenia. Or if they have, they have no idea where it is. Or that it used to be part of Yugoslavia. Or that it is the newest country in the European Union. The few that were aware of Slovenia invariably told us “You know those two places are not near each other.”

Scotland is the same size as Maine but for a brief period of maybe 50 years, Scotland in general and Edinburgh in particular, ruled the western intellect according to Weiner. Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns, Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle, Adam Smith, David Hume, James Hutton, Joseph Black, and Dugald Stewart are a few of the luminaries that come to mind. There were so many monuments and statues of famous people that you couldn’t throw a plate of haggis without hitting one. Scotland wasn’t called the “Athens of the North” for nothing.

After breakfast we set out to explore Edinburgh. Turning a corner, Edinburgh Castle suddenly hove into view, looming over the city like King Kong over the Empire State Building. It was the birthplace of the city 1300 years ago and was both a hilltop fort and home for royalty. It was a Tuesday morning, but the crowds were immense. Castle tours were sold out for the day so we walked The Royal Mile, a cobblestone street which extends from Edinburgh Castle, where the royalty used to live, down to the less drafty Palace of Holyroodhouse, where they currently live.

Edinburgh Castle surprises twice, once when viewed from the outside and then again when viewed from the inside, because much of the castle is still intact. We spent hours exploring its sites: St Margaret’s Chapel, the oldest building in Edinburgh; Mons Meg, the giant siege cannon from the 1400s that could hurl a 70-pound stone 2.2 miles; the prisons, the Dog Cemetery, and The Great Hall, with its massive collection of spears, Lochaber axes, cavalry swords and pikes. We gazed briefly into the black abyss of the Fore Well but not long enough for it to gaze back at us. The longest line was to see the Scottish Crown Jewels, but we decided that nobody’s family jewels are worth a two hour wait. So, we got ice cream instead and looked at the magnificent views of the city.

The next morning, a short walk led to Arthurs Seat, an 822’ tall remnant of an extinct volcano at the eastern edge of the city, that has spectacular views of the Firth of Forth. The summit, crawling with hikers, looked like a recently disturbed anthill. It is said the Scottish like

to walk, but this was over the top. At lunch our waiter recommended a visit to Calton Hill, to see the giant unfinished replica of the Parthenon, which she mocked severely and we later found out was known as Edinburgh’s Disgrace. But it had great views of the city.

After sunny days in a row, a rare event for Edinburgh, it was time to depart for the Highlands, which meant it was time to face the adventure of driving on the left side of the road. After we filled out all the forms that we had previously filled out on line, the rental agent asked, “Do you want to buy the 24-hour service policy?” “No thanks,” I responded. “Our roads are narrow. The biggest problem here is flat tires.” “We can change a tire.” “The cars don’t have spares.” It was a Hobson’s choice so we bought it.



Stress levels were low because Rick Steves said driving here is wonderful – once you remember to stay on the left and master the roundabouts. There was plenty of opportunity to master the roundabouts because they are more numerous than scotch distilleries. Remembering to stay on the left is easy. Staying too far left is the problem. The roads are narrow and there is no shoulder, only a curb or a ditch. After hitting the curb several times and hearing screams of terror from the passenger seat whenever I came too close to the ditch, stress levels were off the chart and I was glad we bought the 24 hour service policy.

The city of Fort William, located in The Great Glen section of the Highlands, has shops, restaurants, and an excellent museum, but not much else. Its proximity to everything else makes it an excellent place to sleep. It took an hour of driving up and down Belford Road to find our Airbnb which was located on a street that does not

exist, with an address Google would not recognize. The apartment had a view of the street and we wondered why there were hordes of backpackers traipsing by on the sidewalk below. After lunch, a short walk brought us to a couple of stone walls, all that is left of the original Fort Williams of Outlander fame. (The gruesome Outlander torture scenes were actually filmed in Blackness Castle near Edinburgh.)

The next adventure was a visit to *Glencoe* [valley]. The guidebook said “it is one of Scotland’s most inspiring places, a beautiful mountain valley between velvety-green conical peaks, their flanks streaked by cascades of rock and scree.” It was therefore overrun by tourists. A narrow, two-lane road traverses the valley and with bumper-to-bumper traffic and pull offs packed with people taking selfies, it reminded me of Yosemite Valley on a warm Saturday in July.



To escape the crowds, we decided to hike the Devil’s Staircase Trail. Janet turned where the sign said “parking area” but there was none in sight, only a gravel area that looked like it had been recently bombed. She squeezed the car between a jagged rock and a massive mudhole, as we discussed what they did with all the admission and parking fees that weren’t being spent on infrastructure repairs.

The Devil’s Staircase is part of the West Highland Way, a 96-mile footpath stretching from just north of Glasgow to Fort William. It ends at a statue of a man with sore feet in Gordon Square in the center of Fort William. Which explained the parade of backpackers on the sidewalk in front of our apartment.

Tickets for the Jacobite Steam Train, aka Hogwarts Express, were sold out for weeks so we did the next best thing and drove to Glenfinnan to get a picture of it crossing the Glenfinnan Viaduct. The longest concrete railway bridge in Scotland, its construction was overseen by Sir Robert ‘Concrete Bob’ McAlpine in the late 1800s. Unfortunately, everyone else who could not get a ticket had the same idea and parking spaces were harder to find than a Scotsman in a kilt. (Sign in the West Highland Museum: “Kilt (noun) What happened to the last person who called it a skirt”).

The third and final destination, the Town of Aberfoyle, is known as the Gateway to Trossachs National Park. The top of Conic Hill was almost as crowded as Arthur’s Seat, but it had fantastic views of Loch Lomond. A 20-kilometer bike ride on the Aqueduct Trail, had almost no views at all. We hiked up Doon Hill to look for the fairies that imprisoned Reverend Kirk’s soul for revealing their secrets in his 1691 book *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies*. The solitary pine tree that supposedly contains a doorway to the underground fairy queen’s palace was still there, but no fairies were in sight.

We hiked 4 miles up to Lime Craig [rock, cliff or crag] for spectacular views over the *Carse* [low-lying fertile land] of Stirling. Finally, the first statue of a woman appeared. It was dedicated to the 6000 members of the Women’s Timber Corps, aka “Lumber Jills”, who worked in the woodlands during World War II while the men were away fighting. We saw our reflections in the woods and later found out that it was the art exhibit “Vestige” by artist Rob Mulholland. Consisting of 6 male and female figures made of polished stainless steel placed randomly in the woods, it had a deep and significant meaning that I no longer remember.

The Highlands are littered with castles, battlefields, and monuments from the centuries of power struggles between the Highlanders and the *Sassenachs* [English person; lowland Scot]. Six days was not nearly enough time to absorb the history of this area. Would six weeks be enough I wondered? Six months? The flight to Slovenia left the next day, but I departed with the hope of returning someday.

Dennis is a retired civil engineer. Pictures of this journey can be found at www.dennisblanchette.com.

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In Your Corner

Healthcare in Crisis

By Pamela Skelly

When I expressed my concern about the current state of political affairs to a friend the other day, she asked me, “But is it really affecting you?” I know this friend feels both sides are too extreme so she avoids any politics but I did give her a list of topics. In this article, I decided to concentrate on healthcare because, especially in rural communities, we are experiencing a healthcare desert. Our local hospital closed its Maternity Ward and its Intensive Care Unit a few years ago, without following proper policy. Also other medical services aren’t available locally any longer. My daughter needs to see an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist several times a year and we need to travel over a half hour to the southeast side of Tolland for the closest practice.

The NAACP believes that to make effective long-term change, we need to address community needs directly through our branch committees and to support existing organizations already doing this good work. Brenda Buchbinder, RN is the chair of our Healthcare Committee and active with the “Windham United to Save Our Healthcare” coalition. I’ve asked Brenda to share her expertise for this article.

Question: Why did Windham Hospital close its Maternity Ward?

Hartford Healthcare DBA (Doing Business As) Windham Hospital opted to downsize our critical care hospital to a short term acute care hospital long before the June 2020 pandemic timed closure of our 87 year old maternity unit. There was no investment in keeping the unit open and instead began outsourcing childbirth down the 18 mile farm path to Backus as these were their corporate plans starting in 2012. The Backus Center for Healthy Birthing was established, and now they have 2 NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) beds. A lack of transparency and collaboration with the medical staff and the community were the norm for the corporation. I wonder why Windham Hospital is the only Hartford Healthcare Hospital (HHC) to be downsized like this. In July 2022, the Office of Health Strategy (OHS) in CT denied the closure of the maternity unit due to unmet public health benchmarks. Two months later, Hartford Healthcare did a full corporate second appeal to close it for good. Fifteen months of closed door sessions between OHS and HHC yielded the Guidehouse Study for the feasibility of a Windham Birthing Center. The study was seriously flawed and biased toward the corporate financial needs. Fathers and support relatives were kept out of the study, then Guidehouse drafted the study ignoring the 16 group coalition, Windham United to Save Our Healthcare at the results phase. The monolingual English presentation excluded Spanish speakers, charts and graphs made up ¾ of the hour, and Zoom participants had no opportunity to speak. The HHC suits attended in assurance of the permanent closure.

Question: What options do women have for childbirth?
A maternal health clinic remains at Windham Hospital where pre and post natal care can be arranged Monday through Friday, 8am to 4pm. There is no coverage for evenings and weekends. Only one Windham County Hospital remains, Day Kimball in Putnam, CT, which is over 25 miles of back roads. Manchester Hospital is more than 16 miles to the west on Route 6, aptly named “suicide six” due to the number of fatalities. The only other HHC Hospital is Backus, 18 miles down Rte 32 South to Norwich. Three ambulance deaths have been noted: in the first, an oncoming driver was killed by the ambulance; in the second, the EMT on board was killed in an impact crash; and in the third, a pregnant EMT who was on board, lost her baby in her being thrown against the walls of the ambulance. In some cases, women will opt to stay home with a doula and or midwife for a homebirth but even then there may be a need for medical services only provided at a hospital. The Healthy Beginnings program at Windham Hospital no longer is open. With a population of over 50% women of color, the maternal morbidity and mortality rates are higher. This adds increased risk to our mothers and newborns. When there are no local ambulances left, fire departments will make a call for mutual assistance from nearby towns, adding additional wait times for the arduous trip to Backus.

Question: Why did Windham Hospital close its Intensive Care Unit?

In 2015, Hartford Healthcare DBA Windham Hospital opted to close its ICU, and replace it with a smaller PCU, Progressive Care Unit. A large gathering of medical staff, legislators and community members held a resistance rally

that fell on deaf ears.

In 2023, the PCU was closed 306 days and the lack of willing staff was the rationale given. No OB-GYN will work without an ICU or NICU. Liability risks skyrocket and Mansfield OB-GYN paid HHC to leave their relationship with Windham Hospital. Specialists were outsourced as well as the idea of not having an ICU, which makes it untenable to work at Windham Hospital. For instance, gestational diabetes is no longer cared for at Windham Hospital and rides to Backus are needed for that care.

Question: Have other healthcare services disappeared in our community?

We still have an emergency room at Windham Hospital and it serves as a triage for accidents and crisis situations. It can be guessed that this acute care hospital status eliminated all critical care services outside of the emergency room. Most recently, the fire department has been instructed to not bring any women in labor to Windham Hospital but to head down to Backus directly. Parking lot births, side of the road births and ambulance births often result with added risks. Simple births make up 80% of all deliveries, meaning the mother and infant are stable and need observation for about an hour or so, and then can go home, which is the birthing center model. It is the 20% of all childbirth who are complicated and need more medical intervention. No transparency nor statistics are available to measure the safety and sustainability of outsourcing Windham area births regarding medical outcome, C-section rates, preemies, maternal and or neonatal death, and behavioral health outcomes.

Question: How will the new policies and other changes at the National Health and Human Services affect us?

We are seeing the closures of rural hospitals and community run hospitals throughout the nation. Women’s health choices are harmed by the current federal measures limiting a woman’s choice for family planning, prenatal care, childbirth or abortion options, and followup for up to a year or more, when postpartum depression, OCD, bipolar and psychosis, risks for coronary and pulmonary risks, and risks for suicide, drug use/overdose risks and risks for intimate partner violence all increase. We have the policies of a third world country at a time when our research and sciences have been crippled.

Question: How will Medicaid be impacted by the new legislation?

Medicaid is most often the insurance covering childbirth and pre and post natal care in the Windham communities. Kicking a certain percentage of Medicaid beneficiaries off the program will cause harm to women and their families. The lack of vaccine research and work requirements will provide additional barriers.

Question: How will Medicare be impacted by the new legislation?

Same story for cutting the number of people covered by Medicare/social security. Childbearing women who are on Medicare and Medicaid will have double losses as they are on those insurances for behavioral and medical health risks. Programs that were a lifeline for our community are a thing of the past. Tax brakes for the rich come from taking basic entitlements from the most vulnerable. This is unacceptable and we need to fight back.

The Windham United to Save Our Healthcare coalition reached out to Attorney General Tong’s office and his office has created a Public Inquiry file set for Windham area reports of health hardships and adverse outcomes in response to loss of medical services in our area. You should call 860-808-5318 to report your complaint and reference the Public Inquiry number, PI2502838.

Before this administration, our less densely populated community was already losing important local healthcare such as the hospital maternity and intensive care wards, as well as local specialists. Our health care system is being dismantled by the current administration causing further negative impact to all communities nationwide. Now is the time to take action and let our elected leaders know that healthcare is a priority!

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.



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News from Hampton

Submitted by Janice Trecker

Fletcher Memorial Library hosts The Hampton Harvest Festival, Saturday, September 27 from 10 am-3 p.m., on the lawn between the community center and the town hall at 164 Main Street. In case of rain, the event will move to the Hampton Elementary School at 380 Main Street.

The festival, which is the library’s main fundraiser, will feature a variety of vendors and many hand grown and handmade products from the Hampton area. Vendors include Rural Heritage Arts, Hampton Gazette, Pebble Brook Farm, Full Moon Farm, Bright Acres Farm, The Hampton Historical & Antiquarian Society, Good Medicine Therapeutic Massage, Bedecked & Beadazzled, HC Woodturning, and the Hampton Conservation Commission.

As always, the event will feature a line up of treats and refreshments, complete with a bake sale. There will also be a lemonade stand; Our Lady of Lourdes will offer coffee and apple crisp, and The Hampton Fire Department will have the grill set up for burgers and hot dogs.

Other offerings will include fresh produce and other agricultural products, and local crafts and art work. Weather permitting, there will be face painting and games for the children, along with the traditional hay rides, corn hole game, and a display of farm rabbits and goats. Music, sponsored by the Hampton Recreation Commission, will be provided by trumpeter Joe Coombs (10-12) and by bagpipers Heather Nunn, Benjamin Elzertman and Emily Nunn. (12:30-1:30). All are members of the Manchester Pipe Band.

Admission is free and both sites offer plenty of free parking. Information: 860 455 1086.

Besides the main event on Saturday, the festival weekend offers another opportunity for family fun. Our Lady of Lourdes is sponsoring a Scarecrow contest with cash prizes for both the adult and junior divisions. The contest will be held on the Town Hall lawn from Friday the 26th through Sunday the 28th with judging on Saturday the 27th. Join in for a \$10 donation and pre-register at the Fletcher Memorial Library during library opening hours.

The October show at the Top Shelf Gallery is Recent Work by Hampton painter Janice Trecker. The show, which includes a variety of figurative acrylic paintings on masonite as well as some digital drawings, will open with a reception and artist’s demonstration on Saturday, October 4, from 1-2 p.m..

The Top Shelf Gallery is at Fletcher Memorial Library, 257 Main Street, Hampton. Info: 860 455 1086 / www.fletchermemoriallibrary.org.

This seasons’ Music at the Fletch closes out with a free concert, Bach in the Garden, Wednesday September 17 at 5:00 PM in the library’s butterfly garden. Classical guitarist Mark Davis will perform Baroque, classical and modern compositions for the guitar. He will be joined by Beverly Davis for some guitar duets in a program including works by Bach and the Uruguayan composer G. Santorsola.

Popular for a Reason



By Bill Heald

When driving around in Connecticut (as in most places), you often notice the same vehicles over and over again. After a while it becomes clear which autos really have a following among the driving population, and when this trend goes on year after year it could just be that the machine in question really fits the New England lifestyle and handles transportation chores quite well. One of these cars is the Subaru Crosstrek, which can be seen everywhere from grocery store parking lots to local parks (often with a kayak on top) to forest service trails. When the season is right, you’ll also spot them at ski resorts all over northern New England. So reviewing a 2025 model may just drive home why it’s found a home in so many drive-ways in our neck of the woods. To that end, we landed a 2025 Crosstrek Limited (next to the top in the 5 trim lines available for the vehicle). Like all that wear the Subaru brand, it’s armed with 4-cylinder Boxer engine along with what they call Symmetrical All Wheel Drive. In our case, the engine is a 2.5-Liter Non-turbocharged Horizontally-Op-posed Four teamed with a Lineartronic Continuously Variable Automatic transmission with an 8-speed manual mode. This engine puts out 182 horsepower at 5,800 RPM, and 178 lb.-ft of torque at 3,700 RPM.

A turbocharged version of this engine can be found in other Subarus, but the Crosstrek gets a normally aspired version and it gets the job done very efficiently. The Lineartronic Constantly Variable transmission feels very similar to a conventional Automatic at lower speeds, and generally feels better than conventional CVTs (which many have found to be noisy and slow to respond). Like nearly all Subarus there’s an X-Mode setting for particularly messy conditions like deep mud, snow, etc. While no muscle car, overall drivetrain response is good and the car is very sure-footed in slippery situations. More impressive in my view is the suspension, which even though this is an affordable compact has the refinement and compliance of a more upscale vehicle.



Inside there’s more room than you might expect given the exterior dimensions. The Limited’s leather upholstery is both comfortable and durable, and the front buckets are heated. The rear seats have good room for two adults, provided they don’t play center for professional basketball teams. With the rear seats upright there’s 19.9 cubic feet of cargo room, which expands to 54.7 with the rear seats folded. Subaru rates the Crosstrek to tow a 1,500 lb. trailer.

The latest high-tech safety features include Subaru’s Eyesight Driver Assist System that includes Advance Adaptive Cruise Control with Lane Centering Assist, Reverse Automatic Braking and Automatic Emergency Steering. Overall the Crosstrek gets a full-5-Star rating from NHTSA. The 2025 Subaru Crosstrek Limited is EPA rated 27 city/33 highway and we saw 27.7 MPG in a week of mixed driving. Base price is \$31,510 and with options our sticker came to \$33,086. www.subaru.com

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

Last month’s article was on the topic of maintenance and the different options open to the owner when having routine services done. This month we are going to talk about the different facilities that are out there to maintain the vehicle you drive.

Before we start I’d like to make a quick comparison. The time was the mid 60’s and the first fast food places were popping up. The idea of big business was to sell it cheap, quick and with high volume. This same idea has been applied to the motor vehicle repair facilities of large chain or franchise businesses. The one thing that has been forgotten is that once you eat a hamburger it’s gone; finished, no other service is required. It’s cheap, quick and you can sell a heck of a lot of them. The high tech vehicle of today requires more than a quick oil change. These facilities do a ten point vehicle check, vacuum the car, and change the oil and filter in 13 minutes. The thing that sticks out to me is the oil filter for \$1.89 on the receipt. What a bargain, or was it? The oil filter like other accessories has changed too. The 1997 Geo Prism that was serviced takes a 2 stage oil filter and its list price varies from \$6.82 to \$11.30. These prices are based on top of the line oil filters. I would like to cut open that \$1.89 oil filter and see what quality the filter really has. The point I am trying to make is that this service was done in 13 minutes which is amazing. The oil filter was definitely low priced (I hate using the word cheap) and I’m sure they do quite a few vehicles a day. This all sounds very familiar, quick, cheap, and high volume. This is one option you can take in maintaining your vehicle.

The small corner gas station that used to service vehicles has just about vanished. This is really a shame because many people purchased their gas, tires and accessories from a person that knew them and their car or truck. This person also appreciated your business and showed it by giving you the best service he or she could. The corner gas station has been replaced by the independent repair facility. These places need your business and appreciate you giving them a chance to service your vehicle. The owners of these places try to give you a quality product and service to match. The independent repairer seldom falls into the category of quick, cheap, and high volume.

The new vehicle dealership is your last option for regular maintenance. The product line is usually original equipment and service is done by a factory trained technician. The independent usually has ASE certified technicians and uses original part replacement or equivalent to original part standards. The dealer uses a mileage to maintenance system. This means that the manufacturer suggests that certain maintenance be performed at a certain mileage. The independent repairer uses the same system. The dealer’s pricing is somewhat higher due to operating costs and overhead. So basically the dealership and the independent repairer address vehicle maintenance the same way. I’m not for overpaying for service, but quality takes time and is never the cheapest avenue.

The motor vehicle industry is constantly changing. This makes it hard for any repairer to stay current with the equipment and the knowledge to repair such vehicles. The problem with this constant change is that the price for maintaining your vehicle goes up and so do the operating expenses.

I wrote this article in November of 2005. The only change that has happened in the past 20 years is that people are keeping their vehicles longer because of price increases on replacement vehicles. This means you will need major repairs on your current vehicle if you choose to keep it longer. The repair facility you use can help you when major repairs are in your best interest or when it is time for a replacement vehicle.

I hope this has helped you to better understand the different types of repair facilities that you can choose from and how they function. Until our next issue...Enjoy the end of summer and Happy Motoring!!

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

Fish Tales and Frog Legs

By Dennis Sherman

The other day my son and I sat along the lake-shore discussing family and fishing. He asked if there were always fishermen in the branches of our family tree and I replied yes. I then started to tell him of some of my observations as a youth and the memories which live in my mind.

I began with my dad. One of my earliest remembrances of him was the time he built a wooden boat in our cellar. it was his greatest pride and biggest source of enjoyment. He would show it to friends, relatives, and any visitors to the house. Uncles to insurance men would comment on its look and workmanship. The boat took almost a winter’s worth of work to complete and was ready when the opening day of the season began to approach.

The night before the season started my dad and uncle were in the process of loading the care for the big morning ahead. Their next task was placing the boat onto the new roof racks on the family car. Quickly they went down to the basement but were sometime in their return. By a matter of inches, the boat could not be coaxed out of the cellar door. They tried every angle and position imaginable. Larry, Curly and Moe never had such a time. Finally modifications were made to the boat which left it lacing in floatability. The next day they fished from shore and came home grumpy and empty handed.

During the following week the boat was re-constructed and repaired. Dad was pleased once more. Saturday came and the fishermen were off once again. I can remember them bringing home a stringer full of trout that afternoon and many others followed in the future. As I recall, each fish was considered a good catch and had a tale behind it. The story always included the anglers, their technique, the fish’s unmatched fight and the difficult landing. As time passed the story and fish grew even bigger.

There were times dad returned home fishless. Although he lacked his limit in fish he did have an abundance of excuses. He often blamed the fellow he took with him - claiming he was bad luck or a jinx. Other times he would blame my mother for not making enough sandwiches, forgetting the mustard or not putting enough sugar in the coffee. Although he might blame the weather-being too winder or too sunny. Other fishermen were often to blame because they ruined the fishing for everyone else.

My son and I continued our discussion of our fish heritage, which led me to the experiences of his great grandfather. He took me fishing quite often, not because it was his grandfatherly duty, but because we enjoyed being with each other. He was a bottom fisherman. He would bring along a couple of poles, sinkers, hooks and a can of nightcrawlers. The lines would be baited and what seemed to be a pound of lead attached about a foot above the hook. “Watch out” he would yell as the weight and bait were launched out into the river. there would be a great splash. At first I thought the object was to bop the fish over the head, and when the stunned fish floated by, you were to grab it. But Granddad told me the weight was necessary to keep the bait from catching the current and drifting away.

The poles were placed on forked sticks, which he taught me to make from branches, using an old pocket knife. Then we sat on the river bank and waited for tugs. Between the tugs on our lines, I often got restless. Granddad would notice my fidgeting and would send me off to search for bullfrogs.

When I would return with one frog in hand, his eyes would light up and he would hop up from his fishing position, then do a little dance along the river bank. Frog legs were his favorite dish! Grandma did not like to see him coming home with legs in his hands and would alway make a face to show her displeasure. But I should still batter and bread them for supper. I was a little leery of eating them at first, but soon learned of their sapid taste and looked forward to the next catch. This pleased my Grandfather very much and Grandma would make another face.

Granddad has been gone for many years. Still, each spring when the bullfrogs are croaking, I sit with my bullfrog lines weighted to the river bottom. I can still picture my grandfather dancing along the river bank alongside a happy little boy standing next to him with a frog in hand. Time fishing with family is priceless and the memories keep the fishing legacies alive.

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A Burning Need

By Alex DiMauro-D’Amico, Joshua’s Trust Stewardship Coordinator

Versions of this article have appeared in the Wolfden Magazine and the Joshua’s Trust Newsletter

Public perception, when it comes to forest fires, is pretty complicated. Typically, any fire burning outdoors--and outside of our fire pit--is seen as a hazard and its effects are seen as destructive. Smokey Bear is partially responsible for this view, but more notably, our own actions to suppress wildfires over the last century have caused us to forget that fire is actually a natural process that our native plants have adapted to since the glaciers retreated. Prescribed fire, when done correctly, can actually mitigate catastrophic wildfires while also helping to maintain wildlife habitat by promoting healthy and diverse native vegetation.

Generally speaking, it can be challenging to convince people that intentionally setting fires is beneficial when most of the flames we see in the news are scorching natural areas, climbing up 200 foot tall trees, decimating entire towns, and costing individuals as well as local, state and federal agencies many millions of dollars to extinguish and recover from. The lens through which we view fire on the landscape has been getting more and more hazy as natural spaces continue to shrink, as humans increasingly move into fire-prone areas, and as many regions become more vulnerable due to shifting weather patterns.

Just as damaging hurricanes and tornadoes are called disturbances in forestry parlance, a natural fire (typically started by lightning), is also a type of disturbance. However, from a natural disturbance standpoint, a fire should not incinerate every living thing in its path. When we observe scorching hot, million-acre fires in California, they are burning so aggressively largely due to the volume and density of natural fuel that has accumulated. It has accumulated because wildfires have been suppressed for the last hundred years.

Before widespread settlement and the consequent efforts invested in fire suppression, fires burned regularly through much of North America, including Connecticut. This was part of a natural and ecologically beneficial cycle to which plants had adapted but that has since been largely disrupted because of our growing population density and development patterns. In times past, portions of the Connecticut landscape were a lot more open, due, in part, to the presence of fires. Lightning strikes started many of these fires, but not all of them. Connecticut’s Indigenous People used fire as a forest and land management tool to encourage the growth of nut-producing trees like oak and chestnut, as well as to improve hunting and travel.

Research has shown that fire can be used as a simple and effective tool for maintaining open grassland habitats, habitats that are vitally important for a variety of bird species including bobolink, savannah sparrows, upland sandpipers, eastern meadowlarks, and grasshopper sparrows, as well as many insects, amphibians, and mammals. In grasslands, fire can help remove the accumulated thatch and promote the growth of native grasses and plants while inhibiting the encroachment of woody plants as well as invasive plants, such as barberry and bittersweet, that would otherwise overtake the area.

Over a period of time, the absence of fire in (once) open areas can result in a pattern or cycle of growth called mesophication. Areas of fire-adapted plants that were once in the open become overgrown by more fire-sensitive plant and tree species because of a lack of fire. As the fire-sensitive plants grow--and then outgrow--fire resistant plants, they create a closed canopy that becomes much harder to ignite and burn due to increased shade and moisture in the understory. With mesophication, fire-adapted plants that are less shade-tolerant will disappear along with the habitat supporting the fauna that depend on those species. Prescribed fire also serves as a valuable tool for wildfire mitigation in the face of climate change. As our climate warms, wildfires are predicted to become more prevalent in this part of the country. Last fall, over 100 wildfires burned in Connecticut. By intentionally and proactively burning fire-prone areas, flammable fuels will not be available to burn at the mercy of a wildfire when weather conditions may be more extreme. Controlled burns are carefully conducted under conditions that allow for a safe, low-intensity fire. Recently Joshua’s Trust completed its first prescribed fire at the H.E. Preston Nature Sanctuary in Hampton, in collaboration with the Norcross Wildlife Foundation of Massachusetts, with the objective of promoting more fire resistant native plants and killing some of the invasive barberry.



Whether started naturally or by humans, fire can be a disaster. Controlled burns provide a way to diminish the risk of runaway fires and the damage they can cause when they happen. By embracing controlled burning as a practical management tool and recognizing its ecological benefits, people can improve and restore habitat while reducing the threat that wildfire poses to both our forests and our communities.

Joshua’s Trust early fall 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.

Nature Magnified at Joshua’s Trust Allanach-Wolf Woodlands
September 27, 2025, 10:00 am -12:00 pm
Allanach-Wolf Woodlands 164 Back Road, Windham, CT

Join us on a fun, family-friendly, micro exploration of Allanach-Wolf Woodlands in Windham, We’ll stop by the pollinator meadow and follow the path around Lake Marie to take a close look at the tiny world of mushrooms, mosses, ferns and more through a small handheld magnifier (loupe). This will be a leisurely walk through some tall grass with minor roots and rocks. Loupes will be provided. Registration is required. Be sure to visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for registration, details, updates and cancellations.

Cider Pressing at Joshua’s Trust Atwood Farm
October 4, 2025, 1:30-4:00 pm
Atwood Farm 624 Wormwood Hill Road, Mansfield Center, CT

Join us for a traditional cider pressing and see a demonstration of blacksmithing techniques at Atwood Farm. Take a tour of the farm’s heirloom orchard and historic buildings, including the large barn, blacksmith’s shop, weaver’s cot-

Cost Basis of Happiness

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

I will consider your offer.
A high position, some would say,
Is reflected in the rate of pay.
But on the road it would be a pity,
Living out of a suitcase city to city.
Yes, there’s sites to see away from home,
But not so much fun to go alone.
The treatment would be A-Ok.
Do costs out-weigh that rate of pay?
Oh how I’d miss the human touch
Of those I love so very much.
Each work-day I’d smile and hide the gloom
That later could invade my hotel room.
Vices eventually might call, so now I will say,
My happiness has value over that rate of pay.
Thank you for the opportunity but I decline the offer.

tage, and other outbuildings. There will also be a demonstration of weaving and spinning in the Weaver’s Cottage. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended. Will be cancelled by rain. Be sure to visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for details, updates and cancellations.

Nature Walk at Joshua’s Trust Tinkerville Preserve
October. 18, 2025, 9:00-11:00 am
Tinkerville Brook Preserve, 135 Armitage Road, Ashford, CT

Join us for an exploration of Joshua’s Trust’s Tinkerville Preserve in Ashford. This 1.7 mile trail parallels Tinkerville Brook, ending at Bissonette Pond. There are several marsh and swamp views, some excellent ledges, and the remains of old mill foundations. We’ll have the possibility to see migratory songbirds or waterfowl. The trail is easy to moderate. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. Sturdy shoes, hiking poles and binoculars are recommended. Rain will cancel. Pre-registration is required. For more information contact Deb Field: 860-208-5459 (leave a message) or dcfieldview@gmail.com. Be sure to visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for registration, details, updates and cancellations.

Guided Hike at Joshua’s Trust Tower Hill Preserve
October 25 202, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Tower Hill Preserve Between 96 & 154 Tower Hill Road, Chaplin, CT

Join us for an exploration of Joshua’s Trust’s Tower Hill Preserve. Enjoy historic rock walls and the beautiful fall foliage along this 1.3-mile trail in Chaplin, CT. This will be a leisurely walk through the woods with some stops along the way to admire the scenery. The terrain is varied with some rocks and roots, and some minor hills along the way. Appropriate hiking gear and water is recommended. For more information contact Deb Field: 860-208-5459 (leave a message) or dcfieldview@gmail.com. Be sure to visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for registration, details, updates and cancellations. **14 person cap.**



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CT Green Energy News

Submitted by Peter Millman

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

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

With an eye on soaring consumer electric bills, CT officials want more oversight of utility projects
New Haven Register. “United States Sen. Richard Blumenthal on Monday called for federal utility regulators to step up their mandated role in overseeing the need for and construction of local energy transmission projects that might foist unnecessary costs on Connecticut consumers — who pay some of the highest electric bills in the nation...”[FERC] is exercising virtually no oversight or scrutiny of transmission projects that utilities undertake at the cost, ultimately, of consumers,” he said. “The staggering fact about these transmission projects is that since 2016, less than 10 years ago, when there were \$58 million of these transmission projects planned or under construct, the amount has risen now to about \$1.2 billion. ‘That means higher prices for consumers. FERC, essentially, is a captive of the industry.’ “

A heat wave hit New England’s grid. Clean energy saved the day. Canary Media. “As temperatures across New England soared above 100 degrees Fahrenheit in recent weeks, solar panels and batteries helped keep air conditioners running while reducing fossil-fuel generation and likely saving consumers more than \$20 million...On June 24, behind-the-meter solar made up as much as 22% of the power being used in New England at any given time, according to the Acadia Center. At 3:40 p.m., total demand peaked at 28.5 GW, of which 4.4 GW was met by solar installed by homeowners, businesses, and other institutions. As wholesale power prices surpassed \$1,000 per megawatt-hour, this avoided consumption from the grid saved consumers at least \$8.2 million...” Plus: Batteries are playing a bigger role in keeping the lights on during New England heat waves

CT stands to lose millions if EPA kills ‘Solar for All’ program. CT Mirror. “A reported plan by the Trump administration to take back \$7 billion in grant money from a nationwide solar program for low-income and disadvantaged communities called Solar For All would put an end to several clean energy projects in Connecticut... 60 entities in 49 states that had been awarded grants could receive termination letters from the Environmental Protection Agency as soon as this week...’If federal support is withdrawn, states like Connecticut could be forced to halt or delay shovel-ready projects that are prepared to cut costs, clean the air, and make our grid more resilient...It would come at a time of record energy prices, rising electricity demand, and growing strain on households and infrastructure.’ ” Plus: Tariffs, economic turmoil behind decision to pull large battery-storage facility from CT

Lamont doubles down on natural gas after signing two climate-related bills. CT Mirror. “Within minutes of signing legislation on Tuesday that pledged to put Connecticut on a path toward reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, Gov. Ned Lamont flipped the script by reiterating his support for one of climate advocates’ chief causes of concern: an expansion of pipelines carrying fracked natural gas...The juxtaposition between the governor’s praise of the climate legislation and his embrace of natural gas was jarring for several of the advocates who have fought for years against the expansion of gas pipelines. They argue pipelines can leak potent methane gases, and increase dependency on fossil fuel power plants, making it harder for the state to fulfill its promise to slash emissions.”

Opinion: Let’s be clear CT. Natural gas is not green or clean. Hartford Courant. “Governor Lamont again championed natural gas, saying “It makes a difference to replace oil-based furnaces with gas,” and that he’s “working with all the players” about getting “gas up from Pennsylvania. What we’ve got to do as a state is make sure we stay green and clean.” Let’s be clear. Natural gas is not green or clean, and natural gas pipelines and compressor stations are definitely not green or clean. Natural gas is mainly methane, which is a strong greenhouse gas; Connecticut can’t reach

its greenhouse gas target by releasing more of it using natural gas. Heat pumps that heat and cool should replace oil furnaces.”

Innovative Charging Pilot Planned For CT. EV Club of CT. “Lamppost chargers have some real benefits. In urban areas, retrofitting streetlamps can solve for space constraints without interfering with pedestrians. They can also remove the dangerous temptation for residents to run extension cords from their home and over the sidewalk, which has been known to happen. They are easy to install and may take as little as one hour and cost a fraction of what a standalone charger might cost. Retrofitting a lamp-post takes advantage of existing electrical infrastructure, so it is an easier lift for the utilities as well. Also, as cities switch out older, inefficient streetlamp bulbs for LEDs, it leaves more available power that can be used for charging or other applications.”

Two more New Haven schools to go solar. CT Mirror. “Two New Haven schools will soon be partly powered by solar panels. They join a growing list of schools in the district that are embracing renewable energy...[and] will be the first in New Haven to have solar panel parking canopies...”When the federal government has really been backtracking, New Haven continues to take the lead.” The new panels are expected to save the schools more than a million dollars in operating costs over the next 20 years.”

Could CT see more nuclear energy sites? State creates funding for communities to explore option Connecticut Public. “For decades, Connecticut banned new nuclear energy facilities, but lawmakers recently modified that moratorium in Senate Bill 4, potentially paving the way for new reactors. The law creates a funding program for cities and towns to explore the possibility of building a new nuclear power plant, but would require a community vote before construction could begin.”

Former massive CT landfill targeted to become source for revenue and energy. The idea is spreading. Hartford Courant. “Bloomfield-based CTEC Solar is planning a 14-acre solar farm on Hartford’s former landfill along I-91, a deal that’s projected to yield a few million dollars to the city over the next 20 years. The agreement is the latest in a series of arrangements where Connecticut cities and towns are leasing closed landfills to solar energy companies. Just last fall, Verogy completed a 2.5-acre solar project at Middletown’s capped landfill, a project expected to generate more than a million kilowatts hours of clean energy a year. Danbury, Bethel, Deep River, East Haven, Groton and Montville either plan to or have completed similar facilities.”

New electric buses coming to CT campus complete with ‘charging ports’ and ‘bike racks’. Hartford Courant. “The University of Connecticut’s Storrs campus is receiving a pair of new electric buses, according to a statement...“The two new buses were previewed on campus in fall 2024, and are joining the fleet now that the charging infrastructure has been installed.”...Each bus will get about 150-180 miles in the winter and 200-220 miles in the summer per charge, according to UConn...’The event marks a milestone in the state’s work to advance the use of clean energy in public transportation, and another step in UConn’s work toward achieving climate neutrality on its campuses by 2030 and net carbon zero by 2040...’ “

Can Solar and Geothermal Energy Help a Church and Its Neighbors Wean Off Fossil Fuels? Inside Climate News. “The solar—or “heaven”—portion of the project would retrofit the 19th-century granite church with solar panels and batteries. The updates would provide uninterrupted heating and cooling, lighting, phone charging, internet access and cooking capacity for nearby residents to ride out future heat waves or storms. The “earth” part of the proposal calls for a roughly mile-and-a-quarter geothermal loop connecting the church to 20 other buildings, including public housing, museums, condos, commercial space and Salem’s City Hall.”

Opinion: There can be a brighter future for Connecticut farmland. Hartford Courant. “Let’s be honest: the greatest threat to farmland in our state is not solar energy. It’s unchecked development and rising land prices that force farmers to sell. I’ve seen productive fields turn into subdivisions, parking lots, and fulfillment centers, never to grow another crop or raise another animal. That loss is permanent. Solar panels, by contrast, are temporary and removable. With good stewardship, these projects can help keep land in agricultural production for the next generation, allowing families like mine to keep farming.”

My Journey to Open a Yoga Studio

By Kris Jones

As I sat here eating my bowl of cheerios with bananas cut up and the sun shining on my face early this summer morning, I wonder how my yoga journey really started. After all, a journey means “the act of travelling from one place to another, especially when they are far apart”. Then I realized that my journey was more of a spiritual one. I’m bewildered I traveled sixty-two years to reach my destination.

My journey starts with a few thought-provoking questions. “Am I enough”? How do we know if we are enough? How does it feel when we think we are not enough? I think back to when I was a child. My mind was clear, and worries were few. For the most part, life was good. Then around middle school I learned that I may not have been enough. Kids were mean, parents got divorced and my self esteem plummeted. In retrospect, I learned to deal with and developed some coping skills that I would carry into adulthood. Once in adulthood, Married life, divorced life and helping to raise five children would offer the question of “am I enough?” almost daily. What does it feel like to think you’re not enough? It can feel like you are breaking into tiny pieces even though you know you need to find a way to cope.

Life’s journey has a funny way of bringing you full circle. Fast forward to around age 56. I’m remarried; all the kids are now adults with children of their own. I’m running a small business in construction. Life is extremely busy, and my facade was happy. However, I was in desperate need of rediscovering who I am as a person. I need to just be. I need to quiet all the chatter in my head. Now I know that what I was searching for was to become grounded in my own being; grounded with the universe. After joining a gym, walking, running, reading etc. I decided to try Yoga. I started off slowly at a yoga studio in Willimantic called YONO. It was there that I found the stillness I was looking for. I was so excited to hear nothing. I could just be. This was my time for me. I always made sure I arrived early, left my phone in the car and connected with the peace I felt in this space. I looked forward to Haley’s readings before class. Angie would remind us to leave any hitchhikers outside (intruding thoughts). This really was my time. I discovered that I AM ENOUGH!

I loved yoga so much, I turned a small shed into a yoga studio at my house. I still spend time there with my two Great Danes, Sonny and Vinnie. We are one with the universe on quiet, sunny, breezy days. Through the many windows I would often ponder, “How can I share this feeling of wholeness with others”? I imagined a beautiful space full of quiet, peacefulness, and welcoming to all. The visual was earth tones of course with only a pop of color. In my head I saw people walking in with yoga mats and smiling faces. They were happy to be part of this space. We would create a community. We would care about each other and know that we were ENOUGH.

One day I saw a “FOR RENT” sign in a space in the same plaza as my construction business. I passed the sign for about a month or so. One Monday morning I said to my Husband, “Oh by the way Kev, I’m opening a yoga studio”. He just looked at me and said with a smile “OK”. He knew this was a dream of mine that the opportunity to fulfil had arrived. The timing was right.

The Mantra Room opened on June 19th, 2025. The Mantra Room is completed and welcomes all. We share our practice through our extensive class offerings and fabulous workshops. New to Yoga? Our yoga teachers are experienced and will meet you exactly where you’re at in your yoga practice. Strength training at a local gym? We invite you to try our BROGA class to work on flexibility. BROGA is designed for men’s specific flexibility needs. I invite you to inquire about the Mantra Room, I would love to offer first-time visitors a free class so you can feel the vibe too! www.mantraroomct.com New Yogis Welcome! YOU ARE ENOUGH!

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Lebanon Senior Center: Tue 4-5p, Thu 6:30-7:30p
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Solar at a Crossroads: Why the Time to Act is Now



Greetings friends,

Since my last article, much has changed—and unfortunately, not all for the better. A recent bill has been passed that, in my view, moves us in the wrong direction. It’s discouraging, especially when I look at the progress many other nations have made by embracing solar and wind as the best alternatives for both humanity and the planet. Countries across Europe, Asia, and beyond are not only cutting emissions, but also creating jobs, saving households money, and protecting the environment. Their success demonstrates what’s possible. Yet here at home, we’ve hit a quite a challenge.

When I first entered the solar industry 14 years ago as a sales manager at SolarCity, I made myself a promise. I imagined a day when my daughter would tell her grandchildren about their great-grandfather. I hoped she would say he had been a pioneer, someone who dedicated much of his life to helping society transition from oil and gas to solar energy. That vision has been my driving force, and each time I shared it—with my family, with customers, or with friends—it was never just words. It came with a tear in my eye, a reflection of the deep passion I feel for this mission.

Those are a few of the reasons why today feels so difficult. The shift away from clean energy incentives is not just a hiccup; it’s a deliberate distraction fueled by greed and political power. It’s not only disheartening—it’s sickening. Yet, I believe this detour is temporary. The momentum for renewable energy is simply too strong. At some point, we’ll return to the path we should be on. My hope is that it happens sooner rather than later.

So, where does that leave us today? And more importantly—what does it mean for you if you’ve been considering solar?

The short answer is simple: **if you’ve been thinking about going solar, now is the time.**

I’m not someone who usually leans on urgency to make a point. For more than a decade, my approach has always been education first. I want homeowners to understand their options and decide for themselves when the right time is to make the leap. But right now, circumstances demand urgency.

Here’s why: the **30% federal tax credit for solar ownership expires on December 31, 2025.** That’s a hard stop—no extensions, no wiggle room.

Leases will still be around in 2026 and beyond, and I’ll cover them in more detail in future articles. But if ownership is your goal, and you want to capture that 30% credit, the clock is ticking.

Why Time Matters More Than Ever

It’s not enough to simply sign a contract before the deadline. The law requires that your solar system be **commissioned—connected and fully turned on—by December 31, 2025.**

That’s where timing becomes critical. From the day you sign a contract to the day your system is operational, the process usually takes 60 to 120 days. Anyone promising dramatically faster timelines should be taken with a grain of salt—or three.

Here’s how it typically works:

- After installation, your system is physically ready to generate power, often within just a couple of days.
- But you can’t flip the switch until your town completes its final inspection.
- Once approved, your inspector notifies Eversource, which must then come out and swap your traditional electric meter for a solar net meter.
- That net meter allows your system to track both the power you generate and the excess energy you send back to the grid for credits. Only then do you receive PTO—Permission to Operate.

Sometimes Eversource moves quickly, within days. Other times it takes weeks. Recently, we’ve seen improvement, but it’s never guaranteed. All of this means that as we approach late 2025 (like right now!), solar companies need

to start telling homeowners, “We’re cutting it close.” If they don’t tell you that, don’t trust it.

Ownership After the Tax Credit

Is solar ownership still worth it after the tax credit ends? For many, the answer will still be yes—but with a longer return on investment. Today, a good solar site with a cash or loan purchase typically pays itself back in 6.5 to 7 years. After the credit expires, that ROI stretches to 10 or 11 years.

Whether that makes sense depends on your motivation. Are you planning to stay in your home long-term? Do you want the value of a solar system factored into your home’s resale price? These considerations will matter more after 2025. I’ll share a deeper dive into this calculation in a future article.

What About Leasing?

Leasing deserves its own spotlight, and I’ll dedicate a full article or two to it soon. For now, here’s the key point: leases will continue beyond 2025, and the options are becoming increasingly attractive. In fact, I expect leasing to take a much more prominent role in solar sales moving forward.

For the moment, however, ownership customers are being prioritized to ensure their systems are installed and activated before the December 31, 2025 deadline. Lease customers may find themselves pushed further back in the queue until that wave passes.

Final Thoughts

We’re in a critical moment for solar energy here in Connecticut and across the nation. I won’t sugarcoat it—the loss of the federal tax credit is a step backward, and it reflects misplaced priorities at a time when we can least afford them. But that doesn’t mean hope is lost.

Each homeowner who chooses solar today is still making a difference—for their household, for their community, and for the environment. If you’ve been waiting for the “right moment,” this is it. The federal incentive is still in place, the installation timelines are manageable, and the long-term benefits remain as strong as ever.

I’ve always believed that history will look back on this period as the Solar Revolution. Despite setbacks, the momentum continues. And when my daughter tells those stories to her grandchildren one day, I still hope she’ll say that her great-grandfather did everything he could to help guide the way.

The time to act is now.

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 for you. 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 just wants a no-pressure, no commitment consultation, I’d love to help. Let’s bring some clarity (and honesty) to this industry.

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

Thanks for reading and let’s make every day Earth Day!
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Band Instrument Rentals & Supplies

Neurodivergent Individuals Experience Unique Challenges Coping with Heartbreak

By Michelle Baughman

Psychologist Guy Winch, TED Talk speaker and Author of [How To Fix A Broken Heart](#) talks about treating heartbreak with the same respect and concern as we would have for treating a broken arm. Folks with a broken limb would not be expected to resume regular daily activities immediately, yet people experiencing heartbreak (from the loss of a beloved pet or from a relationship break-up) are expected to continue functioning in their normal lives despite the emotional pain that they feel. He says that heartbreak effects the brain and behaviors in unexpected ways: Lowering one’s ability to reason, problem solve, think creatively, and function at their best. It is interesting to note that Winch is not necessarily considering neurodivergent people, he is talking about the general population (allistic individuals).

Due to sensory differences, Neurodivergent people experience more intense emotions than allistic people. This contributes to the challenges we have with regulating emotions as well as our entire nervous systems. Likewise, the deep, intense, all-encompassing interests that are characteristic of neurodivergence (i.e.: “special interests”) which provides a dopamine-deficient brain with a regular source of dopamine that helps to keep the nervous systems regulated is not just limited to favorite subject matters; a love interest can become a neurodivergent person’s special interest. Additionally, ND folks propensity to perseverate (thinking about the person all the time, looking forward to seeing them again, or remembering moments spent with them, making plans for the future, etc.) provides more and more “dopamine hits,” creating a reward-feedback loop that essentially makes the ND person “addicted” to the relationship. (This phenomenon probably gave rise to books like [Women Who Love Too Much](#), but the phenomenon is not limited to just women). Due to this perseveration reward-feedback looping ND folks, both male and female, can fall in love fast and hard.

So, when the romance breaks up and the love interest becomes unavailable, the ND person’s brain reacts similarly to experiencing a drug addiction withdrawal. (The Hewie Louis’s song “I Need A New Drug” is spot on for this scenario)!

In Winch’s book he says that the experiences of the loss of a beloved pet or the loss of a relationship break-up are accompanied with severe grief responses. Yet society does not deem them as important as the loss from the death of a close relative or the loss from a formal divorce. So people experiencing these losses are deprived of the recognition, support and compassion that is afforded to people experiencing the types of loss that society deems more important.

There are other unique challenges neurodivergent individuals have that make coping with and overcoming break-ups more difficult: Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) is a condition that is characterized by extreme emotional sensitivity to real or perceived criticism or rejection that is often associated with ADHD and autism, but it can also occur independently from these conditions. Its symptoms include intense emotional pain in response to perceived rejection, overreaction to criticism or failure, feelings of worthlessness or shame, and difficulty in relationships due to fear of rejection. RSD can cause out-sized anger, or rage, reactions Our alternatively, or crying jags that, if not well managed, and if re-regulation skills are not in place, could potentially alienate the person from their support network, or land them in legal trouble, or result in job loss or expulsion from school. For more info: <https://youtu.be/TMBIe-W6XJI?si=pSvKnLyH0q3jBa1y>

Limerence is another phenomenon that ND folks can be prone to more so than allistic folks. Limerence is a mental state of infatuation and idealization, even when reciprocation of the feeling is uncertain. It is characterized by intrusive thoughts, idealization, and feelings of ecstasy and despair (depending on whether one’s feelings are reciprocated or not). There is much discussion in online autistic spaces about limerence after being dumped by a boyfriend or girlfriend with suicidal ideation. So, your heart-broken neurodivergent loved one needs extra love and support when they are going through a break-up. It is very important to remind them of their value and worth, and to remind them that this pain will not last forever.

The idealization factor of limerence also makes it difficult for the neurodivergent individual to move on after a breakup, because they spend a lot of time in a mental metamorphosis of their loved one’s characteristics, where their mind tricks them into remembering things

continued on page 22

Upside-Down Atheism

By Conrad McIntire Jr.

I noticed Dean Farrell’s ‘Letters and Emails’ in the July/August issue of “*Neighbors*” in response to Jesse R. Clark’s article in the May/June paper “The Freedom of Upside-Down Thinking”. He identifies himself as an atheist and starts a tirade against Clark for saying “people who aren’t Christians shouldn’t say “Jesus Christ!” or “God damn it! Especially if you’re an atheist.”

I assumed there had to be more than this that set off Farrell and having not seeing Clark’s article and assuming it must have been a Christian article I dug it up to read. I was astonished to find it had nothing to do with anything Christian, and the paragraph Farrell pulled out of a long article was the shortest one that Clark wrote! He was writing strictly regarding a logical observation and he was absolutely logically correct.

Now what actuality motivates Farrell to waste his time like this, concerning what he thinks is a non-being, is a bit puzzling and upside- down thinking in itself. Is he using satire? (I will be pleased to engage in a little as well). What motivates his atheism? From my experience, with numerous atheists I have engage with over the years, in most cases it has nothing to do with an intellectual argument to support atheism (there aren’t any) but it emotional. Atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel confesses that his atheism is without a doubt influenced by his desires and fear religion when he stated “I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy of the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It is not just that I don’t believe in God and naturally hope on right in my belief. Is that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God I don’t want the universe to be like that!”

I suspect Farrell’s attitude is in line with Nagel, so he jumps at the first chance he gets and uses this as a launch pad for what he wants to trade for in exchange for being a more logical person and not using offensive words. So, let’s look at them.

In a nutshell he appears to want an atheist country. His demands would be to remove “ in God we Trust” from our currency, (I suppose if he wanted to be true to his beliefs he could stop using the currency or move to another country that does not mention God on its currency it). He wants “Under God” removed from the Pledge of Allegiance, the government to cease of officially recognize religious holidays (I assume he enjoys the days off however), and he wants Congress to no longer open in prayer. Seems he would like to get rid of the Founding Fathers and start over again.

Let’s call time out here for a minute and look at the Founding Fathers, what ideology were they building this country on that made it the most successful country in the world? The phrase “Founding Fathers is a proper noun, and it refers to a specific group: the delegates to the Constitutional Convention. There were other important players not in attendance, but these 55 made up the core. How did they feel about God? Among the delegates were 28 Episcopalians, 8 Presbyterians, 7 Congregationalists, 2 Lutherans, 2 Dutch Reformed, 2 Methodists, 2 Roman Catholics, 3 Deists and one unknown. The convention took place at a time when church membership usually entailed sworn adherence to strict doctrinal creeds. So, we see that 51 of the 55 members of the Constitutional Convention, 93% of the most influential group of men shaping the political underpinnings of our nation -were Christians, and none were atheists. (Deists believe in God).

Michelle M. Baughman continued from page 21

better than they actually were, and forgetting about the bad parts of the relationship. The only thing this does is make the loss more painful. So, the best way to support your broken-hearted neurodivergent loved one is to gently give them a “reality check” by reminding them of how things actually were. The pull of this phenomenon is so strong that Winch likens it to a drug addiction: “As compelling as that urge is to take that trip down memory lane, every text you send, every second that you spend stalking your ex on social media, you are just feeding your addiction and deepening your emotional pain and complicating your recovery.” Winch says Recovering from heartbreak starts with a decision, a determination to move on when our mind is keeping us stuck: “Getting over heartbreak is not a journey, it is a fight. And your reason is your strongest weapon. There is no break-up explanation that is going to feel satisfying. No rationale can take away the pain you feel. So, don’t search for one. Just accept the one you were offered or make up one yourself and put the question o rest because you need that closure to resist the addiction. You must be willing to let go. To accept that it is over. Otherwise, you mind will feed on your hope and set you back. Hope can be incred-

The second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence states:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” (Farrell must have missed this on his list)

Regarding the Constitution, our second president John Adams stated “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

Farrell, should thank God, that we did not end up like the former Soviet Union, China in North Korea nations that are built on atheist philosophy.

He complains that Bible thumpers whined about prosecution because not everyone was to practice their faith. (who is whining here?)

He demands that “...annoying Christians no longer knock on my door...” I suggest he just put up a sign –‘I am an atheist, nobody is home. (in his view it works for the universe so why no his house?)

Moving on, Farrell has deep concern about the 10 Commandments being displayed in courthouses or in classrooms. This is something I really want to address in detail. Even if I was an atheist, I could see benefits of posting the 10 Commandments especially in schools.

Has the secular dismissal of God, and the promotion of atheistic worldviews, been, beneficial to the health of young people? Absolutely not! There is a significant mental health crisis among young people. Approximately 700,000 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 attempted suicide in the past year, data from the 2023 youth risk behavior survey indicates that 9% of high school students grades 9 to 12 attempted suicide. These numbers are likely underestimated as not all suicide attempts are reported or result in medical attention.

What about bullying? Nearly one third of youth are bullied at least once a month. Six out of 10 American teens witnessed bulling at least once a day. The children in grades 6 to 10 nearly one in six or 3.2 million victims of bullying each year, and 3.7 million kids are bullies.

What about STD’s? Around 10 million STD’s take place when young adults between the ages of 15 and 24. It’s reported that 25% of sexually active teenagers will have one before graduating high school.

What percentage of school students have used drugs and alcohol? A quick online showed that 36.8 have misused an illicit drug at least once by the 12th grade.

What about gun violence, crime, and youth in gangs! Over 30 years ago Bill Clinton said during his presidency about the rising crime rates among youth “We have to be concerned that in both our cities and rural areas, the value of human life has cheapened. To many children killing children with weapons of destruction.”

That the Christian Biblical worldview can aid in a solution here is obvious to any objective thinker. Ideals have consequences! The worldview of despair, birthed on the philosophy and ideology of Darwin, Freud, Sanger, Russell, Satre, Marx, Nietzsche, etc., has brought us to this breakdown.

Atheist Bertrand Russell put it well. “That man is the product of clauses that had no prevision of the end they were achieving. That his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves, his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms. That no fire, no heroism, is, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave. That all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, is designed to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of

man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins.”

The modern day “pope’ of atheism, Richard Dawkins, whom I dealt with in my article several years ago in ‘Neighbors’ titled “The Dawkins Delusion - A Reply to Radical Atheism and the Denial of God” (read at: *engag-etoreason.org is*) just as bleak. He says the universe has no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.” Atheist ethicist Kai Nielsen recognizes what this means to any idea of morality when he stated “we have not been able to show that reason requires the moral point of view... Reason doesn’t decide here. The picture I paint for you is not a pleasant one. Reflecting on it depresses me... pure practical reason, even with a good knowledge of the facts, will not take you to morality.” Dostoevsky said “if God didn’t exist everything would be permissible.” Philosopher JL Mackey believed that objective morals could not be justified by evolutionary theory, it could not possibly exist without “ an all powerful God to create them” since Mackey is an atheist, he concludes that ethics are illusionary and merely “useful fiction”.

In this absurdity and meaningless life created by atheism logic, is there any wonder that philosopher Albert Camas stated the only real philosophical question is suicide?

I would like to suggest that a return to Judeo-Christian roots that this country was founded on is what needed to give meaning and purpose and direction for our young people. Would posting the 10 commandments be a positive reminder to youth of simple basic moral laws? Do not steal, do not lie, honor your parents, etc.. Why would atheist care about the ones related to God (if he doesn’t exist), when a moral code is what so many young people need today? I would think the good outweighs any negative even if I was an atheist!

I be willing to take another route if it makes people like Farrell less fearful.

How about if we post the Sermon on the Mount? Robert Coles, Psychology professor at Harvard University, pointed out that all the teachings and ethics over the last 2000 years are simply footnotes on Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps the most brilliant discourse on ethics ever given. You complain because this is “religion”? I disagree, this is history and we can present it as such, as you would with Plato, Aristotle, etc..

There is a huge hole in so many people who are searching for real significant, purpose, and meaning. Atheism offers nothing but “useful fiction”. I submit that God is big enough to fill this empty vacuum. He created you in his image, which bestows upon humanit intrinsic value. Not only is he big enough, but in Christian terms He is near enough to! “The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on Him in truth. (Psalm 145:18)

Conrad McIntire Jr. directs -Engage to Reason -which promotes civil conversations on colleges, coffee-houses, and in the “marketplace” engaging various worldview. You can learn more by going to: Engagetoreason.org

Conrad is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers, The Evangelical Philosophical Society, and International Society of Christian Apologetics. He is the author of “LET US REASON TOGETHER - Christianity vs Atheism: Which Has the Evidence of Science, Logic and History?”, available on Amazon. - He welcomes comments and invitations to meet to engage in meaningful conversations. He can be reach at caresipeter315@aol.com

Scotland Farmers Market

Wednesdays 2:30-5:30
Through October 15th
39 Devotion Rd., Scotland

Willington Senior Center Blood Drive

-with the American Red Cross-

A Blood Drive in honor of long time community volunteer Betty Robertson will be held on Saturday, October 4, 2025 from 9am to 2pm at the Willington Senior Center located at 20 Senior Way, Willington. For an appt. please visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767 and enter “WillingtonCt”.

The Man Who Saved Your Life

By Tom Woron

“A man once saved your life,” I said to a person in a small group not too long ago. I’m not sure how the subject came up.

“What do you mean? My life was never in danger where I needed to be saved by someone,” came the surprised reply.

“Oh yes it was. You were saved by a man back in 1983.” Now pointing to some listeners in my audience I proceeded to say, “and you were too, so were you, and you and you.” Then pointing toward the outside I continued, “and everybody in existence in the world today was saved by this man.”

“How could that be?” another person asked. “I wasn’t even alive in 1983, I was born in 1994.” My comeback was loaded and ready to fire. “But your parents were alive in 1983, weren’t they? They certainly had to be if they had you in 1994.” “Yes, but what does that have to do with me being saved?”

A hand raised from a young person in her teens and I acknowledged her. She stated her thought. I felt like a professor lecturing at a university but this was just a workplace group on morning coffee break.

“My father was born in 1985 and my mother in 1986. Are you saying that they were somehow saved a couple of years before they were even born? I’m confused.”

“Yes, exactly! Your grandparents were saved in 1983 by this one man and so they lived to bring your parents into the world and then you came along later. “Well then, tell us. Who is this man? And how did he save what sounds like all of humanity?”

In 1922 a group of revolutionaries who had taken control of the world’s largest country, Russia, established the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) with a communist government and themselves as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Communism is a political system that establishes the state as the owner of everything with basic freedoms such as free speech strictly forbidden. The author of communist doctrine, Karl Marx, taught that in order for communism to survive and flourish, democracy must be destroyed. This was always seen as a threat by the United States which was founded on the belief in individual freedoms.

During the latter part of the Second World War, the Red Army of the Soviet Union drove invading Germans all the way back west until they captured the German capital of Berlin. In doing so the Soviet forces overran many countries of Eastern Europe. Soviet leader Josef Stalin had no intention of freeing those countries from Soviet military domination after the war. The Soviets proceeded to install communist governments in all of them. Germany was divided into two countries, East and West Germany with communists ruling East Germany. What resulted was a state of confrontation as the United States and its western European allies feared that the Soviets planned to spread communism throughout all of Europe and eventually the entire world.

After the end of the Second World War, the fear in the West of communism spreading and aiming to eventually take over the entire world seemed very real. In the far east China was taken over by communists, communist ruled North Korea invaded non-communist South Korea and the French were fighting communist revolutionaries in their colony of French Indochina.

The world changed forever in 1945 when the United States developed atomic bombs of which just one could destroy a whole city. Two were used against Imperial Japan and World War II came to an end. The scope of warfare had been brought to a new and terribly dangerous level with the development of nuclear weapons.

The United States had a monopoly on atomic weapons for a few years after World War II. However the world was in for a shock when in 1949 the Soviet Union successfully tested an atomic bomb. Suddenly the world was thrust into an unprecedented and most perilous situation with the two most powerful countries, each with an ideology that opposed the other’s, in possession of the most horribly destructive weapons that mankind ever developed.

Would the Soviets use atomic weapons to help advance communism? Would the United States use them to stop the spread of communism? A large scale conflict between two rival superpowers using nuclear weapons would certainly spread dangerous radiation around much of the world, perhaps even the entire world. Worst case scenario: An uninhabitable earth due to widespread radiation and the end of the human race.

After the Soviets developed their atomic bomb there began a nuclear arms race between the United States

and the Soviet Union. Bigger and more powerful nuclear weapons, many times more destructive than those used in 1945, were developed by both sides. Thus began what was known as the Cold War.

The Cold War was the state of confrontation between the United States with its western allies (the Free West Bloc) and the Soviet Union along with its communist governed allies (the Communist East Bloc) in which each side sought to advance their rival ideologies without engaging in warfare directly with each other. The Cold War lasted for decades during which time both sides tried to advance their ideologies through proxy wars. Proxy wars are localized conflicts in which outside powers supported one or the other of the opposing sides in the conflict in order to advance their political ideology. In the background of these proxy wars, however, was an ever constant fear that one of these localized conflicts could escalate into a full scale nuclear war between the superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union.

For a while the only way to deliver a nuclear weapon in warfare was to have it carried by an airplane. Eventually intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) were developed by both sides. The ICBMs could be fitted with nuclear warheads and be launched to the other side of the world. The United States with its allies and the Soviet Union with its allies were all within range of the other side’s ICBMs.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union took the stance that they would not be the first one to launch a nuclear attack on the other. However, neither side trusted the other’s word. Both sides had to be on guard at all times under the assumption that the other would launch a nuclear attack first.

During the Cold War decades of the 1950s and the 1960s tensions were very high between the East Bloc and the West Bloc. Fear ruled the days. There were several proxy wars in the world with the U.S. and the Soviets each supporting their favored side. Revolts against the communist governments of Hungary and Czechoslovakia in eastern Europe were crushed by the Soviet military. More ominously there was one extremely dangerous time, the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, during which it appeared that the United States and the Soviet Union were about to engage in warfare directly with each other. It could have led to a nuclear holocaust.

Tensions between the East and West Blocs eased somewhat in the 1970s. The easing of tensions was not to last however. At the end of 1979 Soviet military forces invaded Afghanistan in southwest Asia. In 1981 a staunch anti-communist, Ronald Reagan, became president of the United States. New proxy wars erupted around the world. A new era of dangerous tensions began. The Soviets viewed President Reagan as a gung-ho cowboy who probably wouldn’t hesitate to launch an attack on the Soviet Union, possibly even a nuclear attack.

In the 1980s both sides in the Cold War had satellites in orbit above the earth. These satellites kept a watch on what the other side was doing militarily. More importantly they could detect the launching of ICBMs from the opposing side.

In September 1983 the United States and much of the world were very angry with the Soviet Union. The reason: on September 1st a Korean Airlines passenger plane with 269 people aboard accidentally strayed into Soviet airspace. A Soviet fighter jet shot it down killing all aboard. Tensions flared to very dangerous levels. Earlier in the year, in a March 1983 speech, President Reagan called the Soviet Union an “evil empire” and “the focus of evil in the modern world.” The Soviets wouldn’t have been at all surprised if President Reagan decided to attack.

Outside of the Soviet capitol of Moscow there was a bunker known as the Serpukhov-15 bunker. Inside this bunker was the command center, where there was a computer system, that controlled the Soviet early warning satellites that were in orbit to detect any possible ICBMs that might be launched toward the Soviet Union from the United States. On September 26, 1983 it appeared that the Soviet satellites detected just that.

On that date the Soviet early warning satellites detected five flashes above the tops of clouds over the United States. From the look of it, it certainly appeared that ICBMs from the United States were launched toward the Soviet Union.

Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Petrov of the Soviet Air Defense Forces was the duty officer at the Serpukhov-15 bunker. Petrov’s strict orders were to immediately report incoming missiles to his superiors should any ever be detected. With a satellite warning system seeming to indicate that missiles from the U.S. were on the way to the Soviet Union, Petrov decided to disobey orders and not report to his superiors.

Lt. Col. Petrov had been told that a nuclear attack from the United States would be “all out” meaning that hundreds of missiles would probably be launched. The warning system seemed to indicate five missiles launched from the United States. The reason Petrov did not contact

his superiors was that he trusted his inner intuition believing that five missiles was not an all out attack on the Soviet Union. Though he wasn’t certain that there were not ICBMs coming toward the Soviet Union, Petrov felt that there must be a malfunction in the warning system that erroneously detected missile launches from the U.S. He was right. In trusting his gut instinct that there was an error, Stanislav Petrov is now often credited with being “the man who saved the world.”

Had Lt. Col. Petrov contacted his superiors right away with a report that American ICBMs were in flight on the way to the Soviet Union, they might not have taken time to analyze the situation and very possibly would have ordered an all out Soviet retaliatory nuclear attack on the United States. Had that happened, then the United States would really have launched many ICBM’s toward the Soviet Union. The worst case scenario mentioned earlier could very well have become reality.

It was later determined that an unusual angle of sunlight on high altitude clouds above North Dakota and the position of the Soviet satellites in their orbit caused the satellites to pick up reflections off of the clouds, reflections that looked like missile launches. Lt. Col. Petrov knowing that the Soviet missile launch detection system was new, felt it was certainly possible that it could malfunction. After minutes of delay, there was no confirmation of incoming missiles from Soviet ground radar. Petrov chose not to report incoming missiles to his superiors who had the power to immediately order a retaliatory attack on the United States. It’s a good thing he was the one on duty to make a decision. Some of Stanislav Petrov’s fellow military men later stated that they would have immediately notified their superiors of incoming missiles had they been on duty in the bunker at the time of the erroneous warning.

When my co-workers and I were returning to work, I could see that “Oh My God!” look on some faces.

“Wow!” I heard one person say. “The world was that close to . . .”

“Yeah, apparently one man saved it,” replied another person.

Three months before the Serpukhov-15 bunker incident, the Australian band Men At Work released its hit song “It’s a Mistake.”

The Serpukhov-15 incident was unknown to the public for years. In a bit of irony, later that same year, in November, a TV movie, “The Day After,” a movie about an actual (obviously fictional) nuclear war between the East and West Blocs, aired and was viewed by millions.

Your assignments: Google and watch the video for “It’s a Mistake.” Also for a feel of the 1980s Cold War atmosphere listen to Sting’s 1985 song “Russians.” More importantly watch the attack scene of “The Day After.” This may give an idea of what Lt. Col. Stanislav Petrov averted by trusting his gut feeling that what the Soviet missile warning system seemingly detected on September 26, 1983 was really a malfunction and therefore a false alarm.

Watercolor Workshops in Coventry

Submitted by Justin Trzaskos

Discover the Magic of Watercolor with artist Irina Trzaskos and the Coventry Arts Guild. Step into a world of color, creativity, and inspiration! Join us for a relaxing and immersive watercolor workshops at the beautifully restored Mill Brook Place, nestled in the heart of Historic Coventry Village.

This beginner-friendly workshops are designed for anyone ages 11+ looking to explore the gentle, flowing beauty of watercolor in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Whether you’re a total beginner or looking to refresh your skills, this is the perfect opportunity to unwind, create, and connect.

What to Expect:
Hands-on guidance in watercolor techniques
A peaceful, inspiring setting in a historic mill building
Baked goods & refreshments to enjoy
All materials provided - just bring your creativity!
Registration:
To sign up follow the link: <https://coventryartsguild.org/watercolor-workshops.html>
or email Tim via info@coventryartsguild.org
for any questions about the workshop - please email Irina via trzaskosirina@gmail.com

When:
September 27 and November 25, 2025,10AM-1PM
Where:Mill Brook Place (1267 Main St, Coventry)
Cost:
\$30 for Arts Guild Members, \$50 for non-members.
A 2025 Coventry Arts Guild membership will be included for non-members as a special promotion.
Your membership privileges can be applied to future Coventry Arts Guild workshops and events in 2025.

The Neighbors Local and Live Calendar

Tuesday, August 26th
Live Music/Fundraiser: Bonnie Raitt will be at the Mohegan sun from 7:30-11:30 pm for a fundraiser for CliCK. See the poster in this paper with QR code or go to <https://www.clickwillimantic.com/es/detalles-y-registro/bonnie-raitt-at-mohegan-sun>

Monday, September 1st
Activism/Rally: “Workers Over Billionaires” Labor Day protest. Jilson Square, corner of Main Street and Jackson, Willimantic. 3:00-4:00 pm. Also, weekly rallies there Fridays 5:00-6:00 pm. Check out “We The People Willimantic” on Facebook.

Saturday, September 6th
Live Music: The Amp on the Flower Bridge in Willimantic will have Jim Stahr playing from 5:00-6:00 pm. The event is free. For more info, check out www.gardenclubofwindhamct.org/the-garden-on-the-bridge

Sunday, September 7th
Yoga Fundraiser: YONO’s 7th Annual Yogamantic will be at Jilson Square, Willimantic from 10:00-11:15 am. Come enjoy some outdoors yoga. The Fundraiser will consist of a donation of either a non-perishable food item for food pantries or donation of cleaning supplies and food for animal shelters. For more info, check out yonowillimantic.com
Live Music Fundraiser: The Jazz in the Garden Fundraiser for the Windham Free Library will be held at Fox Hall, 80 Windham Center Road, Windham Center from 3:00-6:00 pm. Tickets cost \$70. For more info, check out jazz-in-the-garden.square.site

Wednesday, September 10th
Live Music: “Songwriter Showcase” at The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington from 6:30-9:00 pm. Donations Accepted.

Thursday, September 11th
Historical Program: The Liber Tea Program- *200 Years of the Erie Canal* will be held at the Veterans Center on 47 Cresent St, Willimantic at 5:00 pm. Donations are appreciated. For more info, check out americamuseum.org/events
Historical Program: *Outhouses and their role in the American Revolution* w/ Bev York will be held at the Canterbury Historical Society at Canterbury Town Hall(1 Municipal Drive) at 7:00 pm. The program is free.

Saturday, September 13th
Live Music: The Amp on the Flower Bridge in Willimantic will have Rusty Macha playing from 5:00-6:00 pm. The event is free. For more info, check out www.gardenclubofwindhamct.org/the-garden-on-the-bridge

Thursday, September 18th
Festival: Third Thursday is back on Main Street, Willimantic. Filled with musical acts and vendors, this is a free family-friendly event. For more info, go to <https://www.willimanticstreetfest.com/index.htm>
Poetry: “Dye & Bleach House Poetry Series” at 156 River Road, Willington. 6:30-8:30 pm. Donations accepted.

Friday, September 19th
Theater: The Windham Theater Guild on Main Street, Willimantic, will perform *Dial M for Murder* at 7:30 pm(Doors open at 7:00). Adults \$22, Students/Seniors, \$17 UCONN/ECSU/QVCC Students \$15, Children under 12 \$13. For more info or to purchase tickets, go to windhamtheatreguild.org/tickets/ or call 860-423-2245

Saturday, September 20th
Theater: *Dial M For Murder* at 7:30(Doors open at 7:00)(See 9/19)
Live Music: Frank Viele - Singer/songwriter, Acoustic/Americana will be playing at The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington from 7:30-10:30 pm. Doors open at 7:00. Tickets are \$20.00 in Advance (ONLINE) / \$25.00 at the door. For more info, check out thepackinghouse.us/upcoming/2025/09/20-acoustic-artist-series-frank-viele
Art: Opening Reception: “As Real As It Gets”, Photography and photo collage exhibit by Steve Veilleux at The Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery 156 River Road, Willington. 6pm. Exhibit on Display: September 20 - November 15, 2025

Sunday, September 21st
Theater: *Dial M For Murder* at 2:00 pm(Doors open at 1:30)(See 9/19)
Activism/Art: “Art in Action: A Community Art Building Collaborative” will have their monthly meeting. Contact artinactionwillimantic@gmail.com to learn more.

Wednesday, September 24th
Historical Program: Tavern Night-Amelia Earheart. Meet Amelia Earheart as you learn about her and enjoy her favorite food and beverage. At the Jilson House Museum. 5:00 pm. \$10. Go to jillsonhousemuseum.com/event-details-registration/tavern-night-with-amelia-earhart for tickets.

Thursday, September 24th
Arts/Poetry: Poetry in the Park Summer Series continues with Penelope Pelizzon performing at 6:00 pm at the Julia De Burgos Park at the corner of Curbstone Way & Jackson Street. For more information, check out Poetry in the Park on Facebook.

Thursday, September 25th
Theater: *Dial M For Murder* at 7:30 pm(Doors open at 7:00)(See 9/19)

Friday, September 26th
Theater: *Dial M For Murder* at 7:30 pm(Doors open at 7:00)(See 9/19)
Saturday, September 27th
Theater: *Dial M For Murder* at 7:30 pm(Doors open at 7:00)(See 9/19)
Live Music: The Greg Abate Quartet will be playing at The Packing House as part of their Jazz Series at 156 River Road, Willington from 7:30-9:30. Tickets are \$25.00 in Advance (ONLINE) / \$30.00 at the door. For more info, check out thepackinghouse.us/upcoming/2025/09/27-greg-abate-quartet

Sunday, September 28th
Theater: *Dial M For Murder* at 2:00 pm (Doors open at 1:30)(See 9/19)
Life Music/Fundraiser: *A Local Toast to Click’s First 10 years- A Farm and Food Truck Fundraiser* at Westford Hill Distillery from 4:00-7:00 pm _Music, food trucks, toasts and much celebration! Check out: <https://www.facebook.com/WestfordHillDistillers/> and CliCK’s Webstie for details.

Thursday, October 2nd
Paranormal: *Messages From Heaven with Psychic Medium Rebecca Anne LoCierco* will be at the Windham Theater Guild on Main Street, Willimantic at 7:00 pm(doors open at 6:30). Tickets are \$30.00/\$32.35 online. For tickets, or more info, go to windhamtheatreguild.org/tickets/ or call 860-423-2245

Friday, October 3rd
Historical Haunted Tour: Nightmare on Main: *Nightmares* will be at the CT Railroad Museum, 55 Bridge St, Willimantic. It’s an outdoors event. Arrive 7:00-9:30 pm. Tours every 20 minutes. Ages 12 and up. \$18 per person- Cash Only
Pay at the Gate. For more info, check out ‘nightmareonmaintours’ on Facebook.

Saturday, October 4th
Historical Haunted Tour: Nightmare on Main: *Nightmares*(see 10/3)

Sunday, October 5th
Live Music: Ordinary Elephant / Gail Wade will be performing at The Bread Box, 220 Valley St, Willimantic at 4:00 pm. Ticket information available at events.humanitix.com/fall-2025-music-series/tickets.
Wednesday, October 8th
Historical Program: Meet Ben Franklin w/ Bev York at the Andover Public Library, 355 Route 6, Andover at 6pm. Free. Go to Facebook: Andover Public Library- Events for more details.
Live Music: “Songwriter Showcase” at The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington from 6:30-9:00 pm. Donations Accepted.

Thursday, October 9th
Historical Program: Liber Tea Program- Dr. Rose’s Sanitarium in South Windam at the Veteran’s Center, 47 Cresent St, Willimantic at 5:00 pm. Donations appreciated. For more info, go to americamuseum.org/events

Friday, October 10th
Historical Haunted Tour: Nightmare on Main: *Nightmares*(see 10/3)
Saturday, October 11th
Historical Haunted Tour: Nightmare on Main: *Nightmares*(see 10/3)

Thursday, October 16th
Poetry: “Dye & Bleach House Poetry Series” at 156 River Road, Willington. 6:30-8:30 pm. Donations accepted.

Friday, October 17th
Theater: *The Rocky Horror Show* will be performed at the Windham Theater Guild at 8:00. Go to windhamtheatreguild.org/the-rocky-horror-show-2025/ for ticket info.
Historical Haunted Tour: Nightmare on Main: *Nightmares*(see 10/3)
Film: Friday Film Night: Bob Marley will be shown at The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington. 7:00-9:00 pm. Suggested Donation of \$5.00.

Saturday, October 18th
Historical Haunted Tour: Nightmare on Main: *Nightmares*(see 10/3)
Theater: *The Rocky Horror Show* will be performed at the Windham Theater Guild at 7:00 and again at 11:00. Go to windhamtheatreguild.org/the-rocky-horror-show-2025/ for ticket info.

Sunday, October 19th
Live Music: Lucy Kaplansky will be performing at The Bread Box, 220 Valley St, Willimantic at 4:00 pm. Ticket information available at events.humanitix.com/fall-2025-music-series/tickets.
Activism/Art: “Art in Action: A Community Art Building Collaborative” will have their monthly meeting. Contact artinactionwillimantic@gmail.com to learn more.

Wednesday, October 22nd
Historical Program: Tavern Night- R.L Stien. ‘Meet’ “Goosebumps” writer, R.L Stien you learn about him and enjoy her favorite food and beverage. At the Jilson House Museum. 5:00 pm. \$10. Go to jillsonhousemuseum.com/event-details-registration/tavern-night-with-amelia-earhart for tickets.
Historical Program: “Death and Burial Practices of Early New England” w/ Bev York will be at Douglas Library of Hebron at 6:30pm. Free. Visit douglaslibrary.org for more info.

Saturday, October 25th
Live Theater: The Don Juans - Grammy Award Winning Songwriters. Acoustic Folk- will be playing at The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington from 7:30-10:30pm. Doors open at 7. Tickets are \$30.00 in Advance (ONLINE) / 35.00 at the door. For more info, check out thepackinghouse.us/upcoming/2025/10/25-the-don-juans

Sunday October 26th
Historical Program: Walktober - Cemetery Walk of Windham Center Cemetery, 219 Windham Center Rd, Windham Center. 1:00 pm. Free. Raindate Sunday, November 2nd.

Wednesday, October 29th
Historical Program: “Prison Ships in the American Revolution” at Plainfield Senior Center, 482 Norwich Rd, Plainfield. 6:30 pm. Free.

Friday, October 31st
Film: Friday Film Night: Bonnie Raitt will be shown at The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington. 7-9 pm. Suggested Donation of \$5.00.

10 Lamentations for 2025

Man hung from a tree
And in the churches they sing
“It makes me tremble”

No questioning why
In the firestorm’s blank mouth
The whirlwind reaps us

Drowning in blue tears
Lifeguard chair faces away
Better learn to swim

In private prisons
Cage em cheap and with straight face
Call it industry

This is what I saw
Under American flags
A tilted outhouse

Down the one track mind
Caboose on the gravy train
Looks backward with scorn

Nation of chickens
Fox promises low priced eggs
Watch the feathers fly

Who changed your diapers
Misogyny 101
You’re a self made man

The flight is over
El Salvador the Saviour’s
Open arms await

A flock of starlings
Flew a long way for God’s food
Heal our migrant hearts

Joseph Zelman

Children’s Book Fair

Submitted by Bob Hasenfratz

The 5th Annual Eastern Connecticut Children’s Book Fair will take place on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 10 am to 2 pm at the Willimantic Senior/Community Center in Jillson Square. The Friends of the Willimantic Public Library, sponsor of this event along with the Willimantic Public Library, will be giving away free books and hosting literacy activities, crafts, and storytelling. This year several notable children’s and young adult book authors from Connecticut will be reading from their works and signing copies of their books. In addition, the program also features a live puppet show. Books by the guest authors will also be available for purchase from Barnes and Noble at UConn. This year the featured authors are Kyle Lukoff, Janice Hechter, Barbara McClintock, Janae Marks, Cindy Rodriguez, and Sylvia Cruden. Following is information from their websites.

The program this year will also feature a live puppet show by Pumpernickel Puppets. For over forty years the Pumpernickel Puppets have captivated audiences of all ages with humorous and colorful adaptations of classic folk and fairy tales. John McDonough and his puppets present over two hundred fifty shows a year at schools, libraries and private parties throughout the New England area. The Pumpernickel Puppets have had the honor of appearing at The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, The Center for Puppetry Arts, Atlanta, GA and the prestigious International Festival of Puppetry sponsored by the Jim Henson Foundation in New York.

News and Notes from the Willington Library

Submitted by Debbie Linares, Assistant Director/Programmer, Willington Public Library

After 50 years of dedicated service to the Willington Public Library, Kathleen (Kathy) Lisiewski is officially retiring from the library on September 4th, 2025. The library will be hosting a celebration and recognition of Kathy’s many years of service on her last official day. We invite patrons, friends, family, and dignitaries to join library staff between the hours of 11am and 4pm, to wish Kathy well in her retirement and thank her for all she’s done in support of Willington Public Library. Kathy is not going away entirely, as she will continue volunteering with the library after her retirement, but she will be greatly missed by staff and the countless number of neighbors and patrons who have visited the library over the years.”



Kathleen (Kathy) Lisiewski. Contributed photo.

Our Summer Reading Program is over. Where did those eight weeks go? What a busy time of year it was here at the library. We had so many fun and educational programs offered. It was a great time had by all. Thank you to all who participated.

Check out our newest StoryWalk. Featuring... “Outside in” by Deborah Underwood
A StoryWalk is a book that has been dismembered, laminated and presented page by page along an outdoor path to promote reading and exercise. StoryWalk provides an innovative and delightful way for children (and adults) to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time. “The StoryWalk Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library”. Our StoryWalk is on the left hand side of the building, (when facing the front of the building) and up on the grass, along the tree line. It is open to the public at all time for your enjoyment and pleasure.

Ongoing, is our Adult Book Club, which meets every first Thursday afternoon of the month at 3:30pm. September 1st read is “At Risk” by Stella Rimington and October 5th will be “The Book Club for troublesome Women” by Marie Bostwick.
Books are available at the library a month prior to their meeting, for those who would like to take part. There is no need for registering ahead of time, just drop in.

Something NEW, Poet-Tea. Every first Thursday evening of the month (September 4th and October 2nd) at 6:30pm, those interested in reading others or their own poetry, gather to share and discuss this art form of language. Let the magic unfold as you read, snack, sip, or just come to listen, and bond over beautiful words and thoughts.

Twice a month, on either a Tuesday and Thursday evening at 6:30pm (September 9 & 25 and October 7 & 23), we offer Sound Healing Mediations with Instructor Edie Jemiola, who uses crystal alchemy bowls and voice to bring patrons on a stress-reducing and rejuvenating guided meditation journey. These classes are for adults. You may bring a yoga mat, pillows, blanket, or lounging chair. Please bring and use whatever makes you feel most comfortable. You may call the library to register for the dates you would like to attend. Walk-ins are always welcomed. There is a \$10 suggested donation for this program.

September offers another new venture in programming here at the library...Take-Out Dinner & Movie Night Series. Classics presented by Arthur Rovozzo, host of WECS Radio 90.1 FM - Musical Myriad. Saturdays at 6:30pm, in our Community Room on the BIG screen. We will not only view these movies but we will be led on a journey to discover interesting facts about the different facets with the making of the films and history about the actors, as well as the producers. Here comes the fun part! While we enjoy learning interesting and fascinating facts, participants will feast on their “Bring Your Own Take-Out” (BYOTO). FOODS that is! Each movie will have it’s own food theme to help make the experience more immersible. I know, what a great and different idea! So, with that in mind, on Saturday, September 13th...”Enter the Dragon” - rated R starring legendary martial artist, Bruce Lee with bring your

own Chinese type food. Then, on Saturday, September 27th...”The Brides of Dracula” starring actor Peter Cushing...with bring your own pizza (red/blood, get it?!)

Halloween Rocks! A BUBBLE Comedy and Music Show with Mr. Matt from “Turtle Dance Music”... for ALL AGES! Join in on Saturday, October 25, at 10:30am. Bring your friends, family, and neighbors! Why is this so special? This is a Sensory/Autism-Friendly Show! The Bubble, Comedy and Music Show: Halloween Rocks! engages children with comedy, singing, the Itsy-Bitsy Spider, bats, goblins, ghouls, music technology and a monster mash dance party for the kids! You’ll be “howling” with laughter! The show is crafted to be inclusive for children of all abilities and a great time for parents and caregivers. Each song in the show is accompanied by hands-on, visual and sensory experiences designed to help kids learn and have fun at the same time. Mr. Matt will be coming to us from Baltimore, Maryland, where he lives with his family. He has two graduate degrees in Developmental Models of Autism Intervention and Early Childhood Development. He studied at New York

University’s Tisch School of the Arts. Please check him out on YouTube, to discover all of his many talents and to see all the fun he brings, wherever he performs. He is soooo amazing!

Mark your calendar! Looking ahead to ”Par-toons”: Caricatures by Don Landgren, on Saturday, November 8th, at 12:30pm. For two hours, Don will draw a B & W caricature of yourself and for a donation fee of only \$5.00. What a great gift this would make to give someone. Registration is required for this event. First come, first to be “drawn”. Yes, walk-ins are welcome, if time allows.

Nancy Cooke Bunnell, an experienced, creative art teacher will be offering another one of her beautiful art classes. This one will be entitled “I am getting on my imaginary plane and traveling to foreign places...Italy, the Caribbeans, and Africa!” This is a six-week course for children ages 5 to 12 years. The classes will be held on Tuesday mornings, 11:00am -12:00pm beginning September 23, continuing on to the 30th, October 7, 28, November 4, and ending on the 18th. There is a cost for this program, \$60 plus a \$10 materials fee. If two children attend from the same family, there is a break in the cost and each child would be \$50 plus the \$10 materials fee per child. A portion of the fee will be donated to the library. Kids will have fun experimenting with multi-media, drawing, and painting. This is a great Homeschooler’s program!

The Willington Public Library is also excited to announce it has been awarded a grant for \$400 from the Pilcrow Foundation’s Children’s Book Project, which was matched by the Friends of Willington Public Library providing the library with 33 brand new children’s books worth approximately \$600. Additionally, the library was selected for two sponsor grants through the Pilcrow Foundation for 37 additional titles, bringing the grand total to 70 new children’s books worth over \$1,300 in retail value. How great is this!

Many thanks go out to our Friends of Willington Public Library!

Congratulations are in order for our Friends who back in June, received the Friends of Connecticut Libraries “2025 FOCL Group Award” for their outstanding contribution in keeping this group alive and well! Our Friends group was in jeopardy of dismantling until four women stepped up to take the reins and do the work. I don’t know if you are aware, but without the Friends, the library would not have programming or many other benefits they provide on a as-needed basis. We are truly grateful for all their time, hard work, and dedication. They are in great need of your support. If you would like to volunteer and be a part of a most worthy cause and get to work with some amazing people for a great reason, this is for you. Please contact... willingtonfriendsofthelibrary@gmail.com. We need YOU! Thank you!

One last shout-out for our Friends, they are looking for Vendors for their Holiday Craft Fair, Saturday, December 6, from 9:00am to 4:00pm. For more information and an application form, go to their website...Friends of the Willington Public Library or contact them at their email listed above.

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

Neighbors 25 Over the Counter Meds and the Elderly: Watch Out!

By Angela H. Fichter

You think that over the counter meds mean no trouble, no side effects. Think again if you are elderly. This summer I got a head cold. It’s been years since I had one. I reached into the cabinet where I keep my vitamins and meds and found the head cold med I like. It was so old that the expiration date printed on the bottle had long passed. So I got a new one and took it. It was good for clearing the sinuses of mucus, coughing, sinus headache, sore throat and more. What was wrong? My vision got blurry. I have wet macular degeneration, which some old people get. My eye chart from my eye doctor has a grid on it of many close vertical lines crossed by many horizontal lines. At the bottom it says call your eye doctor if the lines become wavy. Well, they were wavy. I called the doc’s office and was told to come right in. Called a neighbor to drive me in. She came over and drove me. Once there I had all kinds of eye tests, including pictures of inside of eye by retina. Doctor looked in my eye with instrument. He dictated to clerk: no blood. He then asked me if I was taking any new meds. I said I had had a head cold and was taking the XXX cold medicine. That’s it he said. That med clears up the moisture in your sinuses, but also your eyes, so if you have wet macular degeneration, it makes things wavy. Go home and put eye drops in your eye that lubricate or hydrate your eye for one day. What a relief, I was not bleeding at the retina, I just dried out and could relubricate the eye. My neighbor and I walked out of the doctor’s office and Boom! A big lightening bolt and thunder clap, and the rain came down all of a sudden in buckets. We were parked 50 feet away. We were drenched by the time we got to the car.

When I got home, I got a call from a friend who recommended another over the counter cold med. I got that and took it, and got an awful stomach ache from it. Turns out it was full of lemon. I have acid reflux. I don’t drink orange juice anymore. I can eat a small orange or small tomato with no problem, but orange juice or spaghetti sauce causes pain because of acid reflux. I challenge you to find an old person that does not have acid reflux. Maybe we need special over the counter meds for old people, or warnings in large print for the possible side effects for old people.

Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp News

Submitted by Elaine Nelson

As our summer camp program ends, we move on to concentrating on our Ragged Hill Woods environmental science program offerings. We are excited to announce the appointment of Alyssa Harvey as our new full time Senior Program Coordinator. Alyssa will be helping with curriculum development, teaching, social media and recruitment. Alyssa worked with our Summer Camp Program for many years before taking the last two summers off to pursue other educational and career opportunities. We are thrilled that she will be bringing her expertise, love of children and the outdoors to our programs.

We are also pleased to announce that the Chelsea Groton Foundation recently awarded Ragged Hill Woods \$3,500 to help with program expansion. Program expansion includes increased staffing, supplies and providing fee support to help more students attend programs. We are very grateful for this grant support. Our fall series of Wednesday programs (4:30 – 5:30 PM) will be held on September 10, 17, 24 and October 1, 15 and 22. Check out our website www.4hcampct.org (environmental program tab) for more details to sign up for one program or the series or call the office for more details or to register by phone.

On October 18th we will be holding our 4th annual **Fall Extravaganza** from 2 – 4 PM. In the midst of teen week-end, teens help to decorate the cabins on the trick or treat trail and are on hand to run games, hand out candy and happily give tours to visitors at this fun event. Admission is \$5 per person ages 2 and up. Your admission fee will allow you to enjoy s’mores and hot chocolate at the fire pit by the pond.. The donut eating contest is always a hit. We will have other games to keep our visitors occupied and some sweet treats will be for sale. Children 2 and up can also go on the trick-or-treat trail and get an early start on their Halloween candy collection. No worries about traffic or walking around in the dark. It is the perfect time to break in this year’s costume and take some great photos.

Proceeds benefit the Health Center Renovation. This is a great family event and it is a good chance to check out our camp facilities, enjoy the fall foliage and meet some of our staff. As the song says “See you in September” and hopefully October too!

The Planet Press

Fall is Coming!

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September and October — 2025

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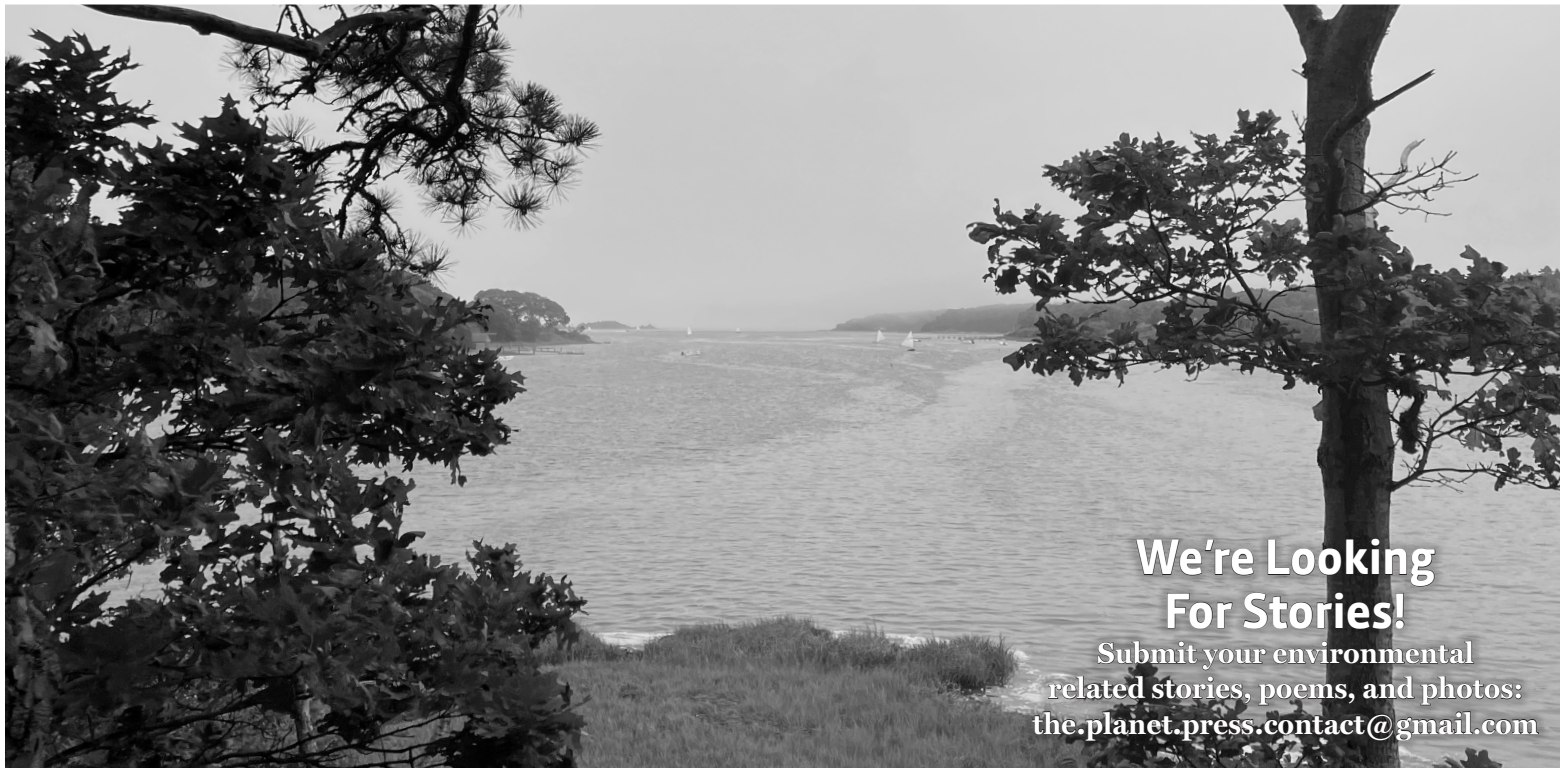
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The Planet Press Mission

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.

News, Articles, and Opinions Impacting Connecticut and Our Planet



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Moons of The Season

The night sky's putting on a show this fall. On September 7, the full "Corn Moon" will slip into Earth's shadow and glow a deep, eerie red during a rare total lunar eclipse. Then, just a month later, on October 6-7, the "Hunter's Moon" will rise bright enough to light up the whole evening.

What is Ozone Season?

Connecticut ranks among the states with the poorest air quality in the nation, recording 23 days in 2024 when ozone pollution surpassed federal health standards. Vulnerable populations, such as children, older adults, and individuals with respiratory illnesses, face the most significant health risks. In early May, DEEP kicked off its 2025 ozone forecasting season, which will monitor air quality through September. Residents are urged to sign up for air quality alerts and take part in awareness efforts like the EPA's School Flag Program before it ends.

Sustainability & Resiliency Week

Governor Lamont is kicking off Connecticut's second annual Sustainability and Resiliency Week, starting September 28 through October 4, 2025. All week long, state agencies and partners will host virtual, hybrid, and in-person events on everything from clean transportation and bus electrification to federal funding opportunities and nature-based climate solutions. It's a chance to see how Connecticut is working to protect its economy, natural resources, and communities, while making the state more adaptable for the future. Check out the full lineup of events and join the conversation. Visit the CT.gov Sustainability portal, where you can find the event schedule, register for sessions, and sign up for updates.

How to Handle Hydrilla (Maybe)

In the latest news of Hydrilla's harm on the Connecticut River, in early August, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced plans to proceed with using diquat and other chemical herbicides to target a highly invasive strain of hydrilla in the river.

The dye studies began in 2023, when Army Corps research scientists used dyes to track water flow in hydrilla-infested areas. The goal was to identify which herbicides, and in what concentrations, could be applied without harming native wildlife. Using those findings, the Army Corps began applying herbicides, including diquat, at five sites along the river last summer. Although this initiative is part of a years-long study on the effectiveness of herbicides in controlling hydrilla, it quickly drew attention on social media, where posts, often filled with inaccuracies and conspiracy theories, questioned the government's motives.

Much of the online focus centered on one specific chemical in the plan: diquat dibromide. The proposal had already sparked controversy earlier in the summer, when the Army Corps first suggested expanding herbicide use at 12 sites along the river's lower reaches.

Besides hydrilla, the Connecticut River is plagued by water chestnut, curly-leaf pondweed, fanwort, and several invasive milfoils. Water chestnut forms floating mats with sharp seed pods, while pondweed and fanwort spread quickly and clog waterways. Milfoils create dense tangles that crowd out native plants and reduce oxygen. Together, these invasives disrupt the river's ecosystem and interfere with boating, fishing, and other recreation.

Source:
CT Mirror (2025, August). Officials say viral video is pushing 'inaccurate' claims about hydrilla spraying in CT

Summer Rain Recap

The final whole month of summer kicked off hot and dry. Officials warn that the state's already abnormally dry conditions could slip into moderate drought if the weather doesn't shift soon. So far, less than an inch of rain has fallen statewide in August.

August's hot temperatures and strong sunshine typically drive up evaporation rates, and wind can make things even worse, especially in already dry areas. Rainfall has been scarce this summer: just 1.66 inches fell in June, 5.17 inches in July, and only 0.11 inches so far this August. The U.S. Drought Monitor now lists much of Connecticut's southern shoreline as "abnormally dry".

That's a sharp contrast to last August, when heavy rains triggered flash flooding and rescues in Fairfield County. Towns like Seymour and Oxford saw historic damage, with Oxford getting 14 inches of rain in a single day, a 1,000-year storm, officials said. This summer looks very different: instead of flooding, Connecticut

could see arid weather stretch into September. The state is still feeling the effects of last year's devastating wildfire season. The Hawthorne Fire in Berlin burned more than 100 acres, one of the state's largest in decades. Already this month, two brush fires have been reported in Westport and Durham, according to DEEP's Wildland Fire Reporting System.

Fall 2025 is expected to be cooler and drier than usual, which could lead to especially vibrant foliage. Leaves will start turning in late September, with peak color in early to mid-October in northern areas and late October along the coast. While the season should be mostly crisp and clear, forecasters warn of occasional intense storms early on, lingering hurricane activity into November, and even a chance of early snow in higher elevations.

Source:
Hartford Courant (2025, August). CT is experiencing a hot and abnormally dry August. What that could mean.

Tick, Air, and Fire

Much of environmental news is upsetting; unfortunately, this article will be no different. Starting, we have an arachnid that Connecticut residents are unfortunately far too familiar with. Ticks from overseas are making their way into the U.S. by riding along with international travelers, according to a new study published in early August. Researchers documented seven nonnative tick species arriving in Connecticut between 2019 and 2023, carried from countries including Belize, Costa Rica, Germany, Guatemala, Poland, Scotland, and Tanzania. "We're seeing a growing risk of invasive ticks entering the U.S.," said Goudarz Molaei, a medical entomologist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and one of the study's authors. He noted that accidental introductions of nonnative species appear to be increasing.

The concern is that these arrivals could add to the already rising number of tick-borne pathogens nationwide, raising disease risks for people across the country. Ticks of many kinds have been thriving in recent decades, including species that first appeared in the U.S. from abroad, such as the Asian longhorned tick. These tiny bloodsuckers aren't spreading in big numbers yet, but it's still a good reminder to check yourself for ticks after outdoor trips, especially abroad.

Meanwhile, in the skies, Connecticut's air quality hasn't been excellent either. As mentioned in another article, the state logged 23 days in 2024 when ozone pollution broke federal health limits. While wildfire smoke is sending air quality alerts across neighboring states this week, Connecticut counties are in the clear for now after earlier alerts from DEEP.

Let's finish off with some slightly less upsetting news: a new study from UConn's School of Medicine shows that using HEPA air filters at home can significantly lower systolic blood pressure in adults with elevated readings. The findings suggest that air purifiers may help reduce heart risks for people regularly exposed to traffic pollution. Fine particulate matter, a key component of air pollution, is closely linked to cardiovascular disease. Those living near busy roads often breathe in high levels of these particles from vehicle emissions, tire wear, and brake dust. Because these tiny pollutants can seep indoors, they may raise the risk of hypertension, a significant factor in heart disease.



ASIAN LONGHORNED TICK
Haemaphysalis longicornis

Sources:
Yale School of Public Health (2025, August). Rare exotic tick species identified in Connecticut

UConn Today (2025, August). Air Purifiers May Reduce Heart Risks for People Exposed to Traffic Pollution

Redemption Fraud?

Governor Lamont signed a bill over the summer to keep out-of-state traffickers from cashing in on Connecticut's bottle refund. Still, there's no solid proof that this kind of large-scale fraud is happening.

There's no real way to track how many out-of-state bottles are cashed in here since most distributors don't mark their containers by state. That means it's impossible to know which bottles were bought in Connecticut and which ones weren't.

The new law sets a cap of 5,000 bottles per person per day and requires redemption centers

to record the name, driver's license, and license plate for anyone bringing in more than 2,500 bottles. It also puts \$2 million from the state's General Fund toward enforcing bottle redemption rules.

And when bottles bought in Connecticut go unredeemed, the leftover deposits are split between distributors and the state. In the last fiscal year, that added up to more than \$42 million in revenue for Connecticut.

Source:
Hartford Courant (2025, July). CT has a problem with unreturned bottles. Or not. Here's what is new and what it costs us.

Our Forest’s Birds

Connecticut’s forests play a crucial role in supporting wildlife and people alike. Surveys show that the state’s woodlands act as a nursery for around 70 species of neotropical migratory birds. While some of these birds are still common, many have seen long-term population declines. Covering 1.8 million acres, Connecticut’s forests also help clean the air and water, offer recreational opportunities, boost property values, and contribute to the economy. Managing these woodlands isn’t easy. About 85% of forests are privately owned, often in large tracts with hundreds of individual landowners,

and uninterrupted forest blocks are becoming increasingly rare. Connecticut’s dense population, the fourth highest in the U.S., has grown 3.3% between 2000 and 2009, adding to forest fragmentation. Other challenges include a lack of age diversity among trees and invasive plant species, both of which can hurt wildlife habitat and ecosystem health. Increasing active forest management is key to keeping these woodlands healthy for birds, people, and future generations.

Source: Northern Woodlands Magazine (2015, January). The Place You Call Home A Guide to Caring for Your Land in Connecticut

Birds of Early Fall

September brings the first flashes of fall color, hints of orange showing through the green. It’s also a busy month for birds. Nighthawks sweep across the sky in loose evening flocks near rivers, while bluebirds gather in small groups, feeding, bathing, and even scouting out nesting spots for next spring. Early to mid-September is prime time to spot migrating warblers, often traveling in mixed flocks. Later in the month, hairy woodpeckers switch up their menu to include more fruit, even poison ivy berries, and catbirds gorge themselves on whatever berries they can find before heading south to spend the winter from the Gulf Coast to Costa Rica. In October, as the air cools, animals start preparing for winter. Crows stash acorns, and many more birds move on. Warbler migration peaks, but stragglers linger, along with flickers, phoebes, and indigo buntings. By mid-month, cold-hardy yellow-rumped warblers can still be seen feeding on the white ber-

ries of gray dogwood. Around this time, red maples hit peak color, Once migrating flocks depart, abandoned bird nests may be claimed by mice as cozy winter pantries. By late October, look for sparrows, chipping, fox, song, white-crowned, and white-throated, now easier to spot as the leaves come down and they scour the ground for seeds.



CONNECTICUT WARBLER
Oporornis agilis

Source: Northern Woodlands Magazine (2015, January). The Place You Call Home A Guide to Caring for Your Land in Connecticut

Science of Beautiful CT Leaves

As September arrives in Connecticut, you may notice the first hints of orange, red, and yellow. This vibrant display is the result of a chemical process in the leaves. During the growing season, chlorophyll, the green pigment in leaves, dominates because it’s essential for photosynthesis, the process that converts sunlight into energy. As daylight shortens and temperatures drop in the fall, chlorophyll production slows and eventually stops, letting other pigments in the leaf become visible. Carotenoids, which produce yellow and orange tones, are present in leaves all summer but are usually masked by the intense green of chlorophyll. In Connecticut, species like birch, hickory, and certain maples show yellow shades thanks to these pigments. Meanwhile, red and purple colors come from anthocyanins, which are produced in the fall in response to bright sunlight and sugar concentration in the leaves. Sugar-rich species like red maples and sugar maples often put on a unique, intense red display along Connecticut’s landscape.

Weather plays a significant role in the vibrancy of color. Connecticut’s cool nights and sunny days, especially in September and October, help break down chlorophyll while boosting anthocyanin production. Drought or overly rainy summers, however, can dull the colors or cause leaves to fall early. That’s why some years, towns like Litchfield and Kent in northwest Connecticut see blazing, vivid foliage, while other years the colors are softer and more muted along the shoreline. Finally, soil type and tree health also influence the palette. Acidic soils can enhance red tones, while neutral soils may produce more yellows and oranges. Healthy trees produce the richest colors, so local forest management and conservation efforts indirectly affect how spectacular Connecticut’s autumn looks each year. For residents and visitors alike, understanding this science adds a deeper appreciation for the seasonal beauty that makes the state famous for its fall foliage.

Source: Connecticut Public (2024, October 11). Outside Inbox: What’s the Science Behind Spectacular Fall Foliage?

How Are the Cows?

With the heat and periodical wildfire-induced haziness on everyone’s mind, you might wonder how Connecticut’s cows are holding up. At UConn, researchers are looking at ways to keep cattle healthier while also reducing methane emissions. Elias Uddin, assistant professor of animal nutrition, is studying how adjusting what cows eat can lower the methane they produce, a greenhouse gas all ruminants generate, but in amounts that can be influenced by diet. Meanwhile, Pedram Rezamand, professor and head of the animal science

department, is exploring how wildfire smoke affects dairy cows, building on events in the Pacific Northwest. His team, working with the University of Idaho, is investigating how fine particulate matter from smoke can enter cows’ bloodstream, impact immune function, and temporarily reduce milk production. Using specialized smoke chambers, researchers can control exposure levels to study precisely how inhaling wildfire smoke affects cows at different life stages. The goal: understand the risks and develop strategies to protect dairy herds in a warming, wildfire-prone world.



Source: UConn Today (2025, August). Bad Gas

Hunting

September and October bring a wide range of hunting opportunities in Connecticut, from archery season for deer and turkey to small game and waterfowl hunting in certain zones. Dates and rules vary depending on the species and location, so hunters should check CT.gov for the latest details. Hunting plays an important role in keeping wildlife populations, especially deer, in balance, helping to prevent overgrazing, habitat damage, and the spread of disease. License and permit fees also provide vital funding for state conservation programs and habitat restoration projects.

Farm Fresh Market

The Farm Fresh Market at UConn is a must-visit this fall before the season ends! Open to the public every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fairfield Way near the Homer Babbidge Library, the market is run by students from the Spring Valley Student Farm. You’ll find fresh, seasonal produce, autumn flowers, and baked goods from the UConn Bakery. Don’t miss your chance to enjoy local fall flavors before the market wraps up for the season on October 30th.

Let USDA Find You a Market

Looking to support local farms this fall? Check out the USDA Local Food Directories: National Farmers Market Directory to find farmers’ markets across Connecticut. The directory makes it easy to locate fresh, seasonal produce, baked goods, and other local treats. Perfect to plan your next market visit!

Flower of the Month September

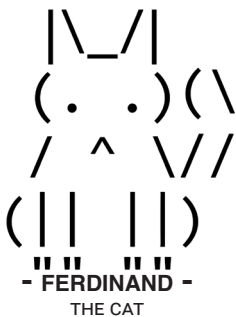


Follow the Instagram! @Ferdinands_Flower_Patch

Flower of the Month October



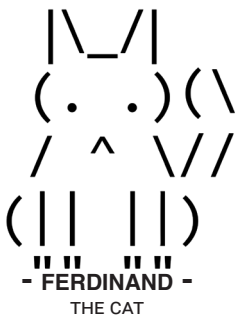
Goldenrod brightens Connecticut each September with tall stems of yellow flowers. Though often blamed for fall allergies (the real culprit is usually ragweed), it’s an important late-season food source for bees and butterflies and a sure sign that autumn has arrived.



Ferdinand’s Flower Patch



Asters bloom through October in Connecticut, covering fields and roadsides with purple, blue, and pink star-shaped flowers. They’re a late-season favorite for migrating birds looking for seeds and add a soft, colorful backdrop to chilly autumn days.



Ferdinand’s Flower Patch



What’s for Harvest?

Apples

Apple season is in full swing in Connecticut, with orchards like Lyman, Rogers, and the revived Hickory Hill offering pick-your-own varieties through mid-November. Visitors can enjoy Honeycrisp, McIntosh, and Cortland apples, cider, donuts, and farm festivals like the Southington Apple Harvest Festival (Oct. 3–5 & 10–12) and Glastonbury’s three-day celebration with music, a 5K, and vendors.

Garlic

All flavors continue with garlic at the Connecticut Garlic & Harvest Festival (Oct. 11–12, Bethlehem Fairgrounds), one of New England’s largest food festivals, featuring 250+ vendors, live music, and family rides.

The Fall Harvest

In general, Connecticut’s fall harvest brings apples, pumpkins, squash, pears, cranberries, and hearty vegetables like potatoes, beets, and Brussels sprouts.



Pumpkins

Pumpkin fun is everywhere: the Seymour Pumpkin Festival (September), Prospect Pumpkin Festival (Oct. 11), and Plainville PumpkinFest offer parades, live music, crafts, and local vendors. The CT Trolley Museum Pumpkin Patch in East Windsor adds hayrides, face painting, and a chicken barbecue, while Milford’s festival in mid-October features entertainment and haunted trails.

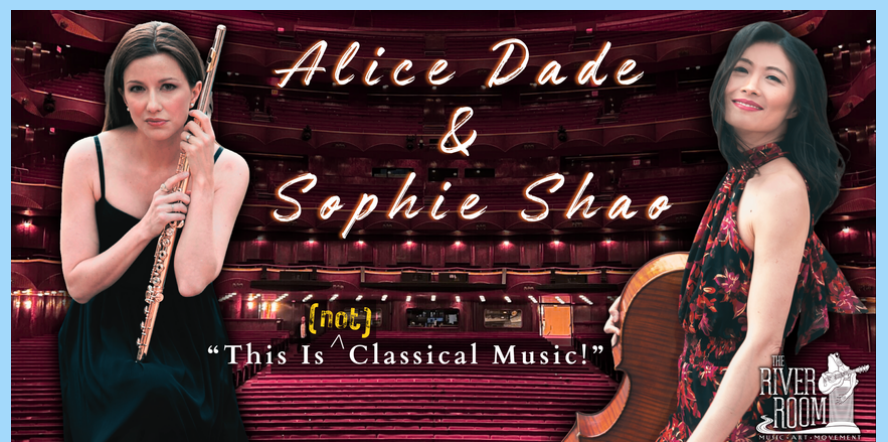
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TUE, SEPT 9 - OPEN MIC #5



SAT, SEPT 27 - GRUPO BORIKEN



FRI, SEPT 12 - DENISE REIS TRIO



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