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Neighbors

No. 240

March - April 2026

FREE



Harvesting the Ordinary

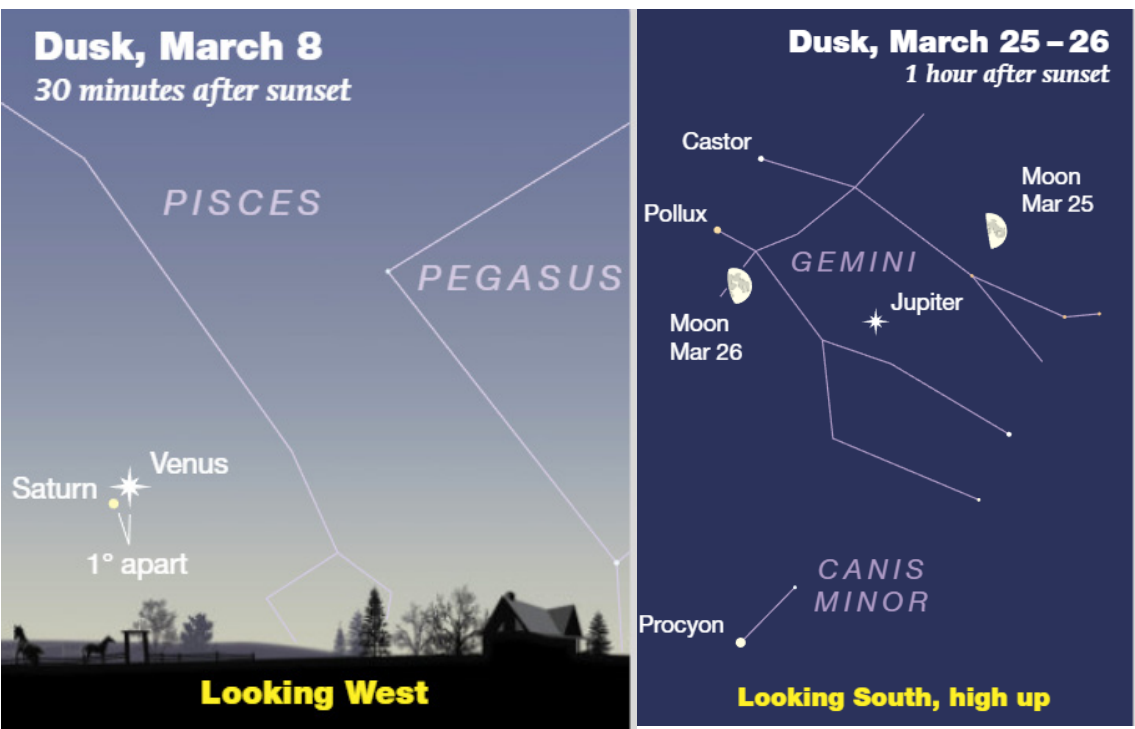
By Bob Grindle

We are all participants in our own sense of belonging...it doesn't just happen, that sense of being home...that deeply cathartic sigh of comfort and relief when you know you're welcome. Arriving at that special place...we make it happen when we begin to soften the boundaries of our own egos, set down our travelers' baggage and fully embrace where we are...rocky shores and all. I have become so completely comfortable with our small island of the world; with its cozy ancient landscapes of timeless rolling hills and glacially architected rivers and lakes, forests and forest edges so vibrant, and colorfully alive with variety of species...us included...and secret neighborhoods where the warming joy of discovery seems always just around the next bend on this high-field meandering, but well-travelled path, the only path I've ever known in life's journey. Was it a choice...were there roads, paths not taken...I really don't recall...or was it more like a child chasing fireflies on some great galactic playing field or playing pirates down by the river, and with each

captured magic lightning bug or treasure chest, a new door appeared, often the doors failed to open, but sometimes they did and we were off again on the elusive odyssey of growing up in a world that, as Robert Louis Stevenson observed, "...is so full of a number of things, I am sure we should all be as happy as kings."

But clearly we are not, and the magical forest-hidden vernal pools that were, just moments ago it seems, overflowing with the cosmic sleight-of-hand that is the wonder of new life are now playing hide-and-seek in a sort

of vernal real world where life appears...then fades in frosty shivers before playing a winter to spring peek-a-boo return in the gauzy haze of our ever-changing seasons... and this forest always at play reminds us that we each need to keep our mind focused on the world that surrounds us, and give ourselves up to our own particular neighborhood, looking at it through as many lenses as we can, and with each tiny kaleidoscopic shift inhale the sense of wonder, beauty, humility, affection and maybe even surprise mixed with a bit of humanity that can settle into our own personal hopes and dreams for dealing with a world that often feels as if it has a thorn in its foot.



Ours is an often dark and chaotic world, and we are all occasionally in need of a light to help us find the way...and sometimes the motivation to get back into the heavily trafficked lane of what needs to get done can be found by simply looking up into the vastness of all that lies beyond our small space vehicle Earth on its solitary sojourn across the Cosmos.

March arrives with a cargo compartment full of goodies...not only does Venus return to the night sky, bringing with her all the pleasures of brilliant light, but clocks jump forward an hour on the 8th ...stealing an hour of sleep perhaps, but also giving us an extra hour of daylight at the end of the day. And if human efforts to manipulate time and attitude aren't your thing, then perhaps the that moment of perfect balance—when day and night stand equal, and the Earth tilts towards the longer days of spring—that moment known as the vernal equinox, the start of spring, will get your own personal sap to start rising. It is worth noting the Scandinavian tradition for this seasonal shift is a time to honor renewal, growth, and our deep connection to nature's rhythms. This month's full Moon is the full Worm Moon of March 3rd...and I don't know about you, but at this point in THIS winter, the very thought of worms returning is cause for a sigh of relief, and just the image of a full Pink Moon on April 1st helps to get me there. And remember, those places that have no winter, also have no spring. Pity, that! Be well, and in this season when the sap rises in so many living things may you enjoy the almost limitless beauty that our neighborhood and our planet offers...completely free of charge.

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**Saturday
March 7th**

ELLIS PAUL
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**Saturday
March 21st**

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**Saturday
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**Saturday
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- 3rd Thursday -

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

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How Far Have We Come?

By Loretta Wrobel

I had the intense honor of attending a performance of *Suffs* at the Bushnell at the beginning of February. Prior to viewing this performance, I had heard of the musical and knew it had been performed in NYC since 2024 and received positive reviews. Plus, at the Bushnell showing, the lead actor who played Alice Paul grew up in the northeast corner of CT. Maya Kellerer gave a five-star performance and at the end of the show, I could only see her as Alice, not Maya!!!



The whole musical was strikingly well done and expertly performed. The casting was perfect and the music was beguiling. All the music was created by Shaina Taub, who also wrote the book and lyrics. It could only have been created by a woman! The show opened in 2024 in New York City and is now on a national tour. The Bushnell run was mostly sold out, and after attending the performance, I totally comprehend why it was playing to packed crowds. What a deeply poignant experience. At the end while clapping vigorously, I realized my eyes were teary.

The play focuses on women’s suffrage and features the leaders of the suffrage movement at the turn of the twenty century, the early 1900s. Alice Paul, who was a young radical at the time, goes head to toe with Carrie Chapman Catt, who was head of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Alice, who later became leader of the National Woman’s Party, believed in aggressive tactics such as marching in the streets, protesting, and standing up fiercely to the powers that be. On the other hand, Carrie felt the way to win suffrage for women was to go slow and work with the patriarchy.

Suffs tells the story of how these two women clashed, how they handled the complex racial issues that potentially could split the suffrage movement, and their ongoing inner battles. These courageous souls faced imprisonment, and disagreed about what political strategies to employ during the seven years before the nineteenth amendment passed in 1920. As in any successful movement, there are numerous personal struggles that arise as people who are passionate about their cause attempt to achieve acceptance of and shift the majority opinion to their viewpoints. Suffrage for women created a strong backlash, disapproval and negativity during the First World War. The suffrage women were accused of betraying their country, especially the silent protestors standing outside the White House.

The show is bold, powerful and shocking as we revisit how closed the thinking was about the status of women during that period before the passage of the nineteenth amendment. The ability of these radical feminists to be equal partners in running our country was questioned by the established patriarchy. I left the theatre elated about the energy, bravery and strong will of these early pioneers and role models. As I processed my experience, I started to question the progress women had made in the past one hundred plus years. This happened in 1920 and it is now 2026. How far have we come, I ask my sisters? I hear

Letters and Emails

To the Editor-

I wrote this at the request of Heather Cox Richardson who asked her readers to send her what we had done to resist in 2025.

This is a reflection on 2025 and my attempts to make our community a better place. I have daily resisted the pull to divide people into catagories of the good ones and the bad ones. I resist the rudeness around me. When I drive I stop at stop signs. I use my turn signal and stop to let someone in.

I use every opportunity to connect with the other people who cross my path. I have been practicing making meaningful conversation with everyone I have a transaction with. I choose to engage. I listen. I reach in. I notice.

I refuse to let Trump take up too much space in my life by ruminating about him. I refuse to hate humans. I work hard at this and it is hard.

I actively reach to find joy to help me not sink into despair. I am trying new things and meeting new people. I joined, at 72 years old, the Sr Women’s basketball association basketball practices. I am learning to play the game and am playing a team sport for the first time.

I am present in my body as I have trained to be. I smell the air, see the birds, mourn the animals hit by cars, and appreciate the dark, the stars, and the ever changing moon.

I choose present tactile interactive reality over digital reality as much as is possible.

friends talk about the upcoming elections in our country this fall. I listen to people talking about the poor chances that women face in any election that takes place in the present political climate. “Don’t run a female in 2026” is a familiar cry. Have we not proven our ability as women to make wise decisions? What is going on? Why and how has the patriarchy convinced some fairly smart people to not trust the strength and ability of females?

It is time to revisit the myth and belief that hold back and prevent the best and most talented people to be in charge, regardless of their sex. Add to that the color of their skin and/or sexual orientation. It is time to wake up and judge humans for what they can do, not for what they look like or who they relate to.

Watching this performance and being swept up in the reality of what is happening in our country (and the world) at this moment in history is a hard reality to swallow. As they sang in *Suffs*, we must commit to “keep marching.” This is not the time to sit back and rest in the myth of equality for all females. We must stand up and out for the fight to treat every person with dignity and fairness and compassion. Everyone needs to contribute their piece to the healthy and productive growth of our world. It is not only the male or those in power who can solve the tangled issues confronting us during these difficult and demanding times.

I was very gratified to look around the auditorium during the performance and see a variety of folks attending. Lots of younger women who appeared energized witnessing the musical. Both males and females were present in the audience, and they seemed interested and moved by the musical. It was uplifting to see the enthusiasm and appreciation for the show.

We need more wake-up calls in our totally confused and cruel world. Respect for differences and openness to sensible ways of solving issues. We need a protocol of discussing our differences without moving to threats and aggressive ultimatums. The concept of the bully wins needs to be abandoned. We want to operate from a sharing of our ideas/ beliefs and how to reach an understanding where all sides gain. All sides of the controversy must be represented and heard in order to devise a wise and workable solution that advances us in our own development.

The patriarchal concept of one person is right and has the solution doesn’t work for the multilevel issues confronting us as human beings on the planet in 2026. The old-fashioned view that the male has the answers and women just need to allow their males to take care of them is no longer a viable answer. Was it ever? Women don’t have all the answers and neither do men. Added to this is that men with lots of financial excess are not more important or smarter than other people. It is crucial to remember that money does not increase a person’s brain power. We all possess skill and talent, and a successful society can incorporate all the people and find ways to use everyone’s creative talents and innovative thinking. With a clearer acceptance of all contributions, we can go a very long way toward developing a more humane and prosperous society. Let’s roll up our sleeves and get marching!!!!

I sing for pleasure by myself and with others. I wrote a song called “The Earth is my Home”.

I attended the No Kings protest in Hartford, CT. I drove in from my small town 45 minutes away. We made signs and I interacted with the people at the protest.

I create beauty and harmony in my yard.

I feel that these things are insignificant and the important change will be made by others.

My heart feels differently. It is a battle to follow my heart.

Elizabeth Huebner, Willimantic, CT

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From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

Farmers You’ll Want to Know

By Rebecca Toms

The Know Your Farmer Fair (Saturday, March 28, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., at the Windham Community Center) has been happening every year in Windham for 11 years. In one form or another, it always shows up in *Neighbors*, reminding you to mark your calendar. We often write about community (because it’s about that) and food (yes, it’s about that too), but we don’t often talk about the process—about who makes this event happen. Every year, it’s a small group of committed people. This year, it’s Chelsea (CLiCK), Vania and Sydney (GROW Windham), Libby (Russo’s Roots), Jess (Willimantic Farmers Market), Ginger (Grown ConNECTed), Sarah (Willimantic Food Co-op), and Jess (Spring Valley Student Farm).

I’ve been fortunate to work with these folks over the years, and the “why” behind their commitment isn’t just “for the fun of it.” These behind-the-scenes planners are committed to building the kind of community they—and others they care about—want to live in. They believe a strong local food system that lifts up our farms plays a key role in that work.

Building community is part of the event on the day itself, but it also happens in the small actions behind the scenes. Hours are spent creating social media posts and graphics to spread the word and build excitement. Numerous meetings are held to ensure the venue is ready and the space can welcome the community. People travel from place to place to hand out flyers, put up posters, and speak on radio shows. This spreads awareness, but it also creates a space that feels welcoming—for farmers and for neighbors.

But what does a welcoming space look like for farmers?

Even though many people consider winter the “down time” for farms, that’s rarely the case. There are trainings, webinars, workshops, maintenance projects, animals to care for, crop plans and seedlings to start, winter markets to attend, and weather to navigate. Farmers might get a little more sleep, but their hours are still full.

So, to make an event like this welcoming for farmers—who are already juggling so much—it has to be worth their time. A good use of time might mean walking away with even one new customer. Someone who becomes a regular, who stops by weekly to stock up. Those small purchases add up. If a farmer gains enough steady customers, maybe they can reduce hours at a second job, invest in infrastructure that makes the work easier on their body, or hire an employee so they can occasionally step away from the farm.

The organizers understand this and want to create opportunities for farmers without adding to their workload. Perhaps farmers’ lives will become a little easier so they can spend less time on the computer or phone and more time producing food. That’s why it feels important to celebrate the people working behind the scenes to make it happen.

Their work doesn’t stop with farmers; they’re working to welcome you, too. When you feel welcome at a community event, you’re more likely to see yourself as part of what’s being built. At the Know Your Farmer Fair, you’re opening yourself to new possibilities—it’s a place to find quality products that, I would argue, make life better. At the same time, you’re not being asked to blindly support a local farm, but to wander, meet people, and find



the farm that excites you and fits your home.

You’re welcomed by the event being free, by making space for kids, by creating an atmosphere of celebration when you walk in, and by making it clear that anyone from any part of the community belongs there. Yes, there’s excitement about new customers for our farmers, but also an understanding that food is expensive, that you may be new to this and learning, or that you may grow much of your own food. This event is for those folks too—a place to start getting to know one another, sharing space, and celebrating together.

I didn’t interview anyone for this article or formally gather opinions; I’m simply sharing my perspective from being part of the event over the years. It feels right to celebrate these organizers, these farmers, and yes, even you who show up on March 28 in Windham. Our community is something we can choose to build—or step away from. I’m excited about this community, and this event that is building it, so I hope we can all meet there.

If you want to learn more about the Know Your Farmer Fair (and about other local farms in the region) check out the website for the event: GrownConNECTed.org/knowyourfarmerfair.



A contributed photo from last year’s event.

And of course, because we’re talking about community, I want to shout out another local farm recipe that you could *easily* make from ingredients from the Know Your Farmer Fair and that is a great crowd pleaser.

Deconstructed Egg Rolls from Lisa at Kindred Crossings Farm, Lebanon/Franklin

- Ingredients*
- 1¼ lb. ground pork (or beef)
 - 1 tsp. ground ginger
 - 1 tsp. granulated garlic
 - 1 tsp. granulated onion
 - 1 shredded medium carrot
 - half head of green cabbage (about 1¼ lb. shredded)
 - 1 tsp. fish sauce
 - 1 tsp. sesame oil
 - 1/3 cup coconut aminos (or soy sauce)

- Instructions*
1. Warm the frying pan over medium heat and add the meat, ginger, garlic, and onion.
 2. When it starts to cook, incorporate the shredded carrot and finishing cooking the meat fully.
 3. Add to the pan the rest of the ingredients (cabbage, fish sauce, sesame oil, and coconut aminos).
 4. Sauté over medium heat until the cabbage is wilted but not soft, so there is a bit of crunch to it. Plate with fresh scallions if desired.



Returning to Their Spring and Summer Homes

By Bill Powers

The Latitude for Windham, CT. is 41.704708 degrees N. In mid to late February these winged neighbors begin to return here to their spring and summer homes which include eastern Connecticut’s many lakes and ponds. They spend the winter months in the southern United States and Mexico. In my neighborhood they choose a lakeside residence amongst the cattails. Where I live, dense stands of cattails at the edge of the lake provide a desirable habitat for returning Red-winged Blackbirds to build their nests and raise their young. The cattails actually create a microhabitat and play a vital role for maintaining the health and diversity of wetlands. They also provide a place for nesting Red-winged Blackbirds.

My observations, over the last fifteen years for the first arriving male Red-winged Blackbirds at the lake at my Windham home have shown that the male birds arrive between February 15th and February 24th. They are called Red-winged Blackbirds because they are black and have prominent red and yellow patches on their wings. About six to seven weeks later, the Red-winged Blackbird females begin to arrive after their migration from the south. They join the males in and near the cattails, where they build their nests. The females are brown in color with deep streaks of white and can be easily mistaken for large sparrows. I have over the years often wondered: If the same birds or their offspring return to the same place where they successfully nested in previous years? The answer from scientists is yes. This species exhibits what is called “site fidelity” when a nesting site has in the past resulted in adequate resources and safe nesting conditions and the birds return.

When the males arrive, they begin to sing their clearly audible “kong-ka-ree” song. It is a welcome song to my ears after a long period of time (August-February) without. After they all have left their lakeside nesting area, the silence is deafening and I adjust somehow to missing their melodious calls for the next several months. For humans, as winter subsides, the Earth and air warms and the wonderous transformation to spring begins, getting outdoors more often to behold this natural transition is always welcomed and adds energy and warmth to one’s life.

Upon arrival the males begin to lay claim to a nesting territory and begin to squabble with other Red-winged males over territorial rights. Year after year there have been five males that establish nearby territories. Then they patently await the arrival of female companions while fiercely protecting their territorial cattail sectors. They continue to “guard” their territory until they leave the nesting area in the late summer when the new young and females have gone.

The male usually mates with more than one female, typically with five or more females that nest within the male’s territory. Males and females are very aggressive in the nesting territory and will fight off intruders including larger birds, muskrats, neighborhood cats, and myself if I get too close while paddling my kayak. Among the cattails, the females build their nests low to the water. Nests are bulky open cups near the water constructed with vegetation, grass, and mud. The nests are secured and lashed to the lower cattail stems. Females incubate the pale blue-green eggs for 10 to 12 days. Both parents feed the young who leave the nest 11- 14 days after they hatch.

As I write this, I am looking forward to hearing again the songs of the male Red-winged Blackbirds as they establish their territories, initiate their mating relationships and raise their young along with the Red-winged Blackbird females. Frequently we can hear at once the symphony of song created by four or five males as each declares his territorial claim along the edge of the lake in the cattails.

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

Working together to bring something new to Main Street, Willimantic

By Frances McGrath

I’m writing to tell you about a new venture I’m involved with and to invite you to join me. You might know me from my weekly column in *The Chronicle*. I love books. I love to read, I love to write, I love to collect, I love to thumb through and admire words and pictures. I love what books can do, bringing people together and giving us an occasion to share thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences. There isn’t much in the world more powerful than a great story. I know this from reading to young students during the day, and I know this from fruitful conversations with my book club in the evening. I know it from writing my own stories and finding ways to share them.

I launched Reframe: A Dry Spot in the winter of 2024 with the dream of establishing a sober community space. I stocked it and hoped to fund it with the sale of nonalcoholic drinks. It was located on North Street in downtown Willimantic. I have since vacated that location in hopes of finding a more appropriate spot for my vision, where Reframe could grow to its full potential. And I think I’ve found it.

Local hero Jean de Smet is the new owner of the Bench Shop building, at 786 Main Street in downtown Willimantic. Jean has a dream, too. She is working with community members to start a co-operative bookstore. A place where community members can gather and share stories and ideas, and find something new to read while they’re there. In January about 30 of us met in a community meeting. We sat on folding chairs in the barebones leftovers from the Bench Shop. We talked through goals and values, what we most want to see in the community, what we think Willimantic is really missing. A bookstore that could function as a space for author events, book clubs, open mic nights, game nights, film screenings, community service opportunities, music, tutoring, language classes, and more were some of the things we imagined.

A lot still has to be fleshed out with this concept. We are working in subcommittees to figure out how this

venture should be organized, where the books should come from, how we’ll fund it, who will be a part of it, and how exactly we will transform the former Bench Shop into something new and different. We would like to launch this summer with used books, but hope to grow into a bookstore stocked with the latest titles, so that when you hear of a new book you can get your hands on it right on your own Main Street.

It is my hope that Reframe finds its new home there. If you stopped into Reframe before its closing, you would have noticed how books were slowly taking over. For those are my two passions, and it is here that they could potentially come together: books and recovery. Books, reading, writing, the community surrounding books; all were, are, crucial to my recovery.

So if you have an interest in this venture, we’re inviting you to join the cause. We want it to be as inclusive of the community as possible, as democratic and equitable as we can be. So we’re even reaching out with regards to the name: what should we call this haven for the community, filled with books and a counter where you can grab something delicious to drink, to hear an author or take part in a book club or share a poem at open mic night. We have placed jars around town where you can submit your idea for a name- the community center, the library, the food co op- keep an eye out for a jar! We have also put up posters around town with a QR code. You can submit your name suggestion that way as well.

Now, we’re inviting you all to come to our next community-wide meeting, March 12th at 6:30pm at 786 Main Street, to vote for your favorite name, and to share more thoughts and ideas about what this bookstore can and should be.

Whether or not you’ve got a name in mind, join us on the 12th. We’d like to hear what you want to see. Let’s see what we can do together to make this community vision happen!

America 250 – Black Powder

By Bev York, Bevishistory.com

Before and during the American Revolution, eastern Connecticut was a hotbed of rebels that contributed to the war effort in many ways. When the General Assembly was not meeting, Governor Trumbull held hundreds of secret meetings of the Council of Safety in Lebanon. Their task was supplying and transporting food and ammunition for the troops. Hence our nickname- The Provision State!

There are some sayings that originated from the use of muskets popular in 18th c. America for both hunting and warfare. So, here is the whole story-the lock, stock and barrel- of black powder needed for the war.

In October, 1774, the British government prohibited the sale of gun powder to the colonies. In 1775, the General Assembly of the colony of Connecticut offered a 10- pound bounty (over \$2000 today) for every 100 pounds of saltpetre, a vital ingredient in black powder. They decreed that every town must set up a saltpetre works. And lastly, they promised a 30- pound bounty to the first powder mill that could produce 500 pounds of powder.

Saltpetre (potassium nitrate) is a product of the waste of man or beast. The process involves a heap of rotted manure fermenting with ash, hay, and leaves in a pit or pile and kept moist weekly with urine. In several months the saltpetre is rendered.

Three ingredients are needed to manufacture black powder: 75% saltpeter, 10% sulphur and 15% charcoal. The mixture is very carefully ground into powder and wrapped inside a cartridge paper until poured into the musket. It is also used in firing cannons.

The Assembly granted permission to Jedediah Elderkin and Nathaniel Wales, Jr., of Windham Center, to erect a powder mill at Willimantic



David Young’s Public House (privately owned) on Windham Road was built to service the workers and patrons of the Elderkin and Wales Gun Powder Factory in Willimantic. The 1775 powder mill (nonextant) was the first built in the colony of Connecticut to provide black powder for the American Revolution.

Falls. (near Windham Mills) In April, 1776, Adam Babcock purchased 200 pounds of gunpowder for his privateer (to raid British ships in Long Island Sound.) In May, a letter carried by Babcock’s negro man, Jack, authorized him to pick up 400 pounds of powder on the colony’s account. By May, the powder mill had produced 1000 pounds of powder. In July, the price was five shillings and fourpence per pound of powder. The General Assembly voted funds to build a stone powder magazine on the hillside.

Though Windham was the

first town to have a gun powder manufactory, other towns soon followed. Unfortunately, the powder mill blew up in December, 1777 killing twenty-two-year- old Roswell Moulton. The factory had to be rebuilt.

The only surviving structure is a brick building on Windham Road (private.) The Assembly granted a license to David Young to operate a “House of Public Entertainment,” that provided room and board for the workers and men delivering saltpetre and supplies to the mill or purchasing powder kegs. The transporting of explosive powder was hazardous on rocky or rutted roads.

2026 is a great year to discover local and American history. We live in a region where famous and vital but unsung history actually happened. Residents should take advantage of our many historic sites and museums as well as special one-time reenactments and programs. So, “Keep your powder dry!” Meaning: Be prepared. (Origin: Damp powder doesn’t fire.)

For special events please check the web at America 250 or <https://ct250.org> Also for adult and family programs check the website bevishistory.com. It will be like a “Flash in the pan.” Meaning: Something which disappoints by being over too quickly. (Origin: gunpowder that flared up without firing the gun would be a ‘flash in the pan’.) Let’s celebrate 250 years of democracy. Happy Semi Quincentennial. Huzzah!

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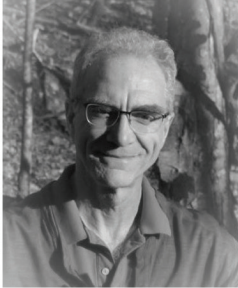
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Curb Your Fascism (and Imperialism)

By Jesse R. Clark

I love my Irish soul; it is very poetic and has the humor that comes from my ancestors, stemming from a millennium of oppression. After all, what is more ironic than living in a country plagued by British rule, having your own culture stripped from you, and finally being able to leave and go where you can celebrate your Irish culture and be your Irish self, only to find that this place of refuge, of sanctuary, is called “New England”?

I am also Apache and Mexican; my family from California lived there since California was Mexico and would still be if it wasn’t for the *manifest destiny* of the 1800s. So between my Mexican, Native American, and Irish heritage, I have the shared generational experience of other cultures trying to control and kill the native people of a land out of a thirst for greed and power that is part of our spirits. During America’s invasion of Mexico, there was the Saint Patrick’s Battalion, made up mainly of Irish immigrant soldiers who saw that this invasion was wrong and left their posts to go defend Mexico against America. They should have taken that *New England* name more seriously; after all, America was just taking a note from its imperialistic roots. But what made this military unit really special was that it wasn’t made up of just Irish immigrants, but also had German, Polish, and Swiss immigrants as well—all Catholic, like the Mexicans. This runs in my blood.

When We the People Willimantic was protesting U.S. imperialism and Joe Biden dropping bombs on Syria, Iraq, and Yemen back in 2021, I played my bodhrán (bore-rahn), saying, “May the drums we beat mock those that mock peace.” I also wrote a parody of the songs “The Wearing of the Green” and “The Rising of the Moon”:

I met with my friend the other day, almost grabbing each other’s hands
talking about what we are doing off in foreign lands.
It’s been quite a while that this has been going on,
but we’ve got a cruel history when it comes to the dropping o’ the bombs.
And come tell me then, I’ll listen, where the gathering is to be.
At the old spot on the corner known to you and me.
Play your drum for peace, wave your flag, now won’t ya come?
With your poster above your shoulders at the setting of the sun?
And a thousand cars were honking at the setting of the sun.

Our protests tend to look more like celebrations, with costumes and music and some scattered laughter and cheers. This is important, for a candle that runs on grief and outrage burns hot and quick, but one that adds joy and passion to the outrage can shine longer and can light other candles despite the icy winds trying to blow it out. The Disney/Pixar film *Monsters, Inc.* actually has this as its message when the monsters, after years of their world being powered by children’s screams, realize that children’s laughter creates more energy. Speaking of Disney, Mickey Mouse asked his girlfriend if she wanted her Coca-Cola on the rocks. She declined. I think we should respect her wishes and keep ice out of Minnie’s soda. And everywhere else.

We tend to enjoy comedians when it comes to politics because they see the B.S. from both sides of the aisle, but there has been an attack from the president against late-night comedians. They can’t be just no-talent hacks, otherwise why would he care? And why all of a sudden do you see actions being taken against them? Because now they are seen as a threat. If they weren’t, those in power wouldn’t care. But they know that people listen to these comedians and that through their “jokes,” they are a threat to their power. Comedienne “Moms” Mabley put it best: “You think you’re gonna hear some jokes, don’t ya? Well, Moms don’t know none. Moms don’t know no jokes, but I can tell you some facts.”

Over the past few years, I’ve started to wonder how the satirical newspaper *The Onion* can survive when the real headlines sound just as insane. Maybe it’s because the joke isn’t their fake news stories, but the fact that they are saying the truth. *The Shovel*—the Australian version of *The Onion*—had an article called “NRA Accidentally Forgets to Rise Up Against Tyrannical Government,” and ABC had an article called “National Guard Spreads 380 Cubic Tons of Mulch in Washington, DC” following deployment of the National Guard to Washington to “clean up crime.”

Last summer, seeing the irony and humor of protesting and inspired by Larry David’s view of the world, I created a new protest sign: “Curb Your Fascism.” Like the guy in 2017 who, as we protested on St. Patrick’s Day, yelled, “Go back to your own country!” Then there was the climate change rally with so many people attending that one had to circle the block for half an hour trying to find a parking spot. After hearing that two of the victims executed by ICE, Renee Good and Alex Pretti, were vilified by

the Trump administration, I could just see Larry David using his catchphrase as he made a public statement, saying that Renee and Alex were certainly not terrorists but were “Pretti, Pretti, Pretti Good.”

Of course, this administration doesn’t want you to believe what video evidence can clearly dispute. They are great at trying to pull Jedi mind tricks and saying that things didn’t happen as they did. The president even says that he never said certain things even when there is evidence of his actually saying them. In the Marx Brothers’ *Duck Soup*, Groucho plays the leader of a nation, and whereas most of satire comes from his character, the line I am reminded of comes from Chicolini (Chico), a spy posing as a peanut vendor who Groucho hires to be Secretary of War (wait...why does that title sound familiar?). Trying to settle and argument, Chicolini says: “Well, who are you going to believe, me or your own eyes?”

Unfortunately, when we disagree with anything real, we can say it’s AI, and anything that’s fake we can say is real. But that still doesn’t change the truth shown in multiple videos of the executions of Alex Pretti and Renee Good. And if you see the video of Pretti, a nurse trying to help someone being attacked by ICE agents, and you think that who was in the right is a matter of opinion, then may I remind you of the significance of the cross you wear so proudly around your neck? Who is more Christ-like, the nurse offering aid or the agent killing him? I only hope that if/when our state is next on Trump’s vendetta tour of blue states, and our cities and towns are being invaded by ICE or the National Guard, our neighbors can put their morality over their politics and side with us over this administration.

We must remember, this isn’t the first time Minneapolis had something like this happen. This winter seems to mirror the summer of 2020, for it was in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, that George Floyd was murdered by a police officer kneeling on his neck for nine minutes as he was saying “I can’t breathe” and calling out to his mother, sparking the Black Lives Matter movement to show that we have had enough. When some people hear “Black Lives Matter,” they shout back “All Lives Matter!” All lives *do* matter, but by saying that in *response* to “Black Lives Matter,” you are not hearing the pain and anger, or taking into account Blacks’ history, from slavery to the civil rights movement to modern times. Let me put it to you like this: You see a house on fire. You call the fire department. There are people protesting, saying, “All houses matter.” Well, all houses aren’t on fire. And yes, the police have just as much a right to live as everyone else, but when there is a pattern of Blacks being shot by police, people are going to notice. Alex Pretti and Renée Good were white, though, and ICE isn’t your local police; they are federal, with decreased training, and their job is to target people of color, specifically the color brown.

But it’s not hopeless. If it were, we wouldn’t be out there finding creative ways to protest, like writing “ICE OUT NOW” with food coloring on snow, and slogans in chalk up and down Main Street on Labor Day, along with “Tax the Rich” and “Love Thy Neighbor” on the Frog Bridge. In January, Bruce John had his 1960s Birthday Bash, which serves as a fundraiser for the No Freeze Shelters, now called Project HOPE. When we danced to him singing “For What It’s Worth,” the words hit all of us differently than they have in the past:

There’s a man with a gun over there
telling me I got to beware...
Step out of line, the man come and take you away.

I find hope in the fact that all the blue states our president’s enemies list can resist in unity, shouting the motto “Don’t Tread on Me!” Wait...

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I Am

By Judy Davis

I am the wind through my love of
all things Irish. I am the sun
which always shines on my heritage.
I am the stone tossed in the waters
of my ancestors.
My Irish life is a dream forged
from the strength of all who came
before; my joy runs wild and free.
I am of County Leitrim. I am of
the village of Mohill. I am of the
Donnelly clan.
I vow to be the vessel of all
stories. I vow to sing the rebel
songs.
I will laugh, and I will dance!



Portal to Imagination: Cost: 35 cents

By Steve Woron

Let me tell you about a quiet little earthquake that shook the comic book world circa 1978. It didn’t come from a boardroom. It came from a few drawing tables. Back then, making comics was a tough gig. The pay was low, the deadlines were insane—picture Lucy and Ethel in that chocolate factory, but instead of candies, it’s pages and pages of art. But man, did those artists love it. They were the unsung heroes, grinding out magic daily for the love of the craft.

And for what? So that for 35 cents, you could get a portal to another world. You couldn’t buy that much imagination for a quarter and a dime anywhere. A paperback cost ten times that. Buying a TV was a major investment. But for less than the price of a candy bar that would be gone in a minute, you got this.

Then, something shifted. The X-Men comic started changing the game. They began telling stories that weren’t just for kids anymore. They got complex, dramatic, they asked real questions—but never lost that superhero heart. Stories that spanned years. And the art? It exploded into these dense, imaginative pieces that today are museum-worthy. Their original pages now fetch a seven figure fortune, but that’s not the point.

The point is the people. Take this right here—the opening splash page to Uncanny X-Men #114. This is the work of John Byrne, with inks by Terry Austin. Legendary stuff then and now. A real turning point. But back then? It was just another page, born from twenty-odd combined hours of focus, coffee, and pure passion for storytelling.

Comics have come a long way since. And so have we, the readers. But every time you get lost in one of these pages, remember the folks who built that world for us, one meticulous line at a time starting from a pencil and a blank piece of paper. They were just doing what they loved, for 35 cents a copy, and they accidentally laid the groundwork for everything that followed—for stories so powerful they’d one day fuel billion-dollar films, shot-for-shot. Comic fans would wink at each other, this is the story arc from 1981, we were there when it originated.

From where I sit, that’s the real magic. These artists left it ALL right here on the page, an open invitation. Just waiting for you to pick it up, and get hooked.

Dorothy Moore

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 column is about Dorothy Moore, who gave Southern soul music its last major pop hit.

She was born in Jackson, Mississippi, on October 13, 1947. Her father sang with the famous gospel quintet, the Five Blind Boys of Mississippi. At age three, Moore’s mother realized that her toddler had singing talent, and bought her musical instruments and took her to gospel programs. By age five, Moore was singing with the New Stranger Home Baptist Choir and eventually became a soloist. She later sang in talent shows at the Alamo Theater, winning first prize numerous times.



R&B singer Dorothy Moore stands in front of her Mississippi Blues Trail marker on Jackson State University’s campus on May 25, 2022. Photo by Peggy Brown

After she graduated from high school in 1965, Moore attended Jackson State University and formed a group called the Poppies with two other female students. They recorded for Date Records, an Epic subsidiary, and reached #56 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 with “Lullaby of Love” in the spring of 1966. Moore subsequently recorded solo, but with little commercial success, for the Avco, GSF, and Chimneyville labels.

Her career didn’t really take off until Moore signed with Malaco Records in the mid-1970s and recorded “Misty Blue.” The heartbreak ballad had begun life in a 1966 recording by Wilma Burgess, who took it to #4 on the *Billboard* Country chart. The following year, Eddy Arnold’s version hit #2 Country and #57 pop. (It also charted in Canada.) The first soul version of “Misty Blue” was by Joe Simon, who cut the song in 1972.

It was Tommy Couch, the owner of Malaco, who thought “Misty Blue” was perfect for Dorothy Moore. Per the singer, “We did that record in one take. I recorded it just like I did any other. I didn’t say, ‘This is a hit.’ I never saw it coming.” Malaco shopped “Misty Blue” around to the major labels, none of whom picked it up for national distribution. So, Couch used the last of his cash reserves to press the single himself.

The risk paid off. “Misty Blue” became a solid smash, hitting #2 on the *Billboard* Soul chart and #3 pop in the spring of 1976. It was also the last Southern Soul record to peak that high as the beat-laden genres of Disco and Funk were taking over Black popular music.

In the early ‘80s, Moore took a hiatus from recording but returned in 1986 with a gospel album, *Givin’ It Straight to You*, on the Nashville-based Rejoice label. She then recorded two secular albums for Volt Records. By 1990, Moore was back on Malaco and had her final charted single, “All Night Blue.” She remained with Malaco until 2002, when she started her own label, Farish Street.



Dorothy Moore has received four Grammy nominations. She also serves on the National Advisory Board of the Mississippi Grammy Museum and has been inducted into the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame. In 2015, Moore was inducted into the Official Rhythm & Blues Music Hall of Fame in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

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

Charted singles:

- “Cry Like a Baby” (1973) R&B #79
- “We Can Love” (duet with King Floyd, 1975) R&B #76
- “For Old Time [sic] Sake” (1975) R&B #53
- “Misty Blue” (1976) R&B #2, Pop #3
- “Funny How Time Slips Away” (1976) R&B #7, Pop #58
- “I Believe You” (1977) R&B #5, Pop #27
- “We Should Really Be in Love (duet with Eddie Floyd, 1977) R&B #74
- “1-2-3 (You and Me)” (1978) R&B #93
- “Let the Music Play” (1978) R&B #50
- “Special Occasion” (1978) R&B #30
- “With Pen In Hand” (1978) R&B #12, Pop #101
- “(We Need More) Loving Time” (1979) R&B #81
- “Talk to Me / Every Beat in My Heart (Medley)” (1980) R&B #87
- “What’s Forever For” (1982) R&B #90
- “All Night Blue” (1991) R&B #75

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 archives many of his shows at <https://www.mixcloud.com/dean-fiora/>. His e-mail address is soulexpress@gmail.com

Pastor Releases ‘Anchored in God’

Submitted by Sheldon Stovall

Pastor Sheldon Stovall is pleased to announce the release of his newest faith-based devotional, *Anchored in God*, a powerful, healing-centered book created to support individuals navigating grief, loss, emotional pain, and mental health struggles through God’s Word.

Born from personal loss and spiritual resilience, this devotional offers daily

encouragement, scripture-based reflections, personal questions, affirmations, and practical exercises designed to restore hope, strengthen faith, and promote emotional wellness. Pastor Stovall’s writing bridges biblical truth with real-life healing, making this book a valuable resource for individuals, families, churches, and support groups.

This release continues Pastor Stovall’s mission through Team of Disciples

(TOD), a ministry dedicated to producing daily devotionals and Sunday school materials that uplift, empower, and guide readers into deeper spiritual and emotional restoration.

The book is now available on Amazon and other major retailers.

For interviews, review copies, or additional information, please contact: **Email:** pastorstovall2023@gmail.com **Website:** <https://www.amazon.com/author/pastorsheldonstovall>



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‘Fallingwater,’ designed by Frank Lloyd Wright at left. At right -’hoardes of people at Watkins Glen’. Photos by the author.

A Finger Lakes Foray

By Dennis Blanchette

Early in life I had to choose between honest arrogance and hypocritical humility. I chose the former and have seen no reason to change.

—Frank Lloyd Wright

“How about we meet my brother and his wife in Ohiopyle before we head up to the Finger Lakes?” Janet asked.

“What’s an Ohiopyle?” I replied.

“Place in Pennsylvania I went whitewater rafting when I was in college,” she said.

“Sounds good,” I said, still not sure if it was a river, a park, or something else.

It turns out that Ohiopyle is many things: a town with a population of 38, a state park, and a 19-foot-high waterfall on the Youghiogheny River. Ohiopyle claims to have the best whitewater in the country, but then every place with whitewater makes the same claim. The visitors’ center had no information on the etymology of the word, but further research indicated that it originates from a native American phrase meaning “it turns very white.”

The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) is a 150-mile multi-use gravel trail that connects Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Maryland, and 27 miles of it are in the park. Unfortunately, it rained most of the week, so indoor activities were needed. Fallingwater, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1935 as a summer home for the Kaufman family, owners of Pittsburgh’s largest department store, was only 10 minutes away from the campground. It consists of stacks of cantilevered concrete slabs hovering above Bear Run. It is gorgeous both inside and outside, and Wright’s genius is evident. But like many geniuses, he was not a nice man, forcing his drafters to perform menial chores such as grocery shopping and chopping vegetables. Despite his prolific output he was always broke, often unable to pay his tab at the local grocery store. And he had some bad luck and trouble as well. His first marriage produced six children but ended due to his affair with Martha Borthwick, the wife of a client. Martha, her two children, and several others were killed at Wright’s Taliesin estate in Wisconsin by his hatchet-wielding handyman, who then set the place on fire. Wright’s second wife, Miriam, was an artist and morphine addict. They broke up after four years, but she refused to grant him a divorce. Undeterred, he began a relationship with the dancer Olgivanna Hinzenberg, pretending that she was his maid. That fooled no one, and the immorality (this was in the 1920s) upset the townspeople. Wright was arrested in Minnesota for violating the Mann Act, which made it a federal crime to transport women across state lines for immoral purposes.

After a week of rain, the sun came out as we headed for the Finger Lakes, a group of eleven long, narrow lakes located in New York. Cayuga and Seneca Lakes are among the deepest in the United States, at 435 and 618 feet, respectively. Though none of the lakes’ widths exceed 3.5 miles, Seneca Lake is 38 miles long, roughly the distance from Thompson to Norwich. It covers 43,343 acres, which is eight times larger than Connecticut’s largest impoundment, Candlewood Lake.

The brochures and maps of the area all had lists of the top 10 waterfalls, of which I am not usually a big fan. They make good destinations for a hike, but it is a singular event—you hike there, take a picture, and hike out. Thus, I approached Buttermilk Falls with minimal excitement. We parked and found that Buttermilk Falls was

conveniently placed directly opposite the parking lot. No hiking required. But we came to hike, so we headed upriver past Buttermilk Falls towards Lake Treman, passing at least 15 more waterfalls on the mile-long trail. Essentially the entire section of river was one long cascade, and my attitude toward waterfalls began to soften. Lake Treman was impounded by a beautiful stone dam that is 36 feet tall and reminiscent of the work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), although there were no signs to confirm that.

On Friday we journeyed to Seneca Lake to hike the Gorge Trail at Watkins Glen, hoping to avoid the weekend crowds, but it was already more crowded than a weed store giving away free samples. We elbowed our way up the Gorge Trail, passing Central Cascade, Frowning Cliff, and Rainbow Falls to Jacob’s Ladder. The waterfalls had minimal flow because of the drought, and it was like going to the zoo and finding out that all the animals were gone.

Watkins Glen is also the home of the Watkins Glen International automobile racetrack, which hosted the Summer Jam, a massive music festival held on July 28, 1973, featuring the Grateful Dead, the Allman Brothers Band, and The Band. A total 150,000 tickets were sold (at \$10 apiece) but an estimated 600,000 people showed up, essentially getting in for free, and making it one of the largest gatherings in U.S. history at the time.

That afternoon we hiked to Taughannock Falls, the tallest single-drop cascade east of the Rocky Mountains. At 215 feet tall, it is three stories higher than Niagara Falls. The riverbed is solid rock, and the water level was so low we were able to walk on the riverbed a good portion of the way up to the falls. It was a unique experience, providing unobstructed views of the peregrine falcons soaring on the thermals. The falls were impressive and we tried to imagine their beauty in full flow, but it was like trying to imagine fireworks from the sound of the explosions.

The next day we decided to take a break from gorges and falls and drove to Ithaca to bike around Cornell University. But we soon got distracted by the gorges on the campus. Later that day we went into the Town of Ithaca, where we successfully ignored the gorges in favor of wandering around Ithaca Commons, a four-block pedestrian section of downtown. There was no place to get a drink, which was just as well because there were no public bathrooms. Many of the stores were closed or out of business. I sat on the edge of a concrete planter full of dying plants and litter, for lack of a better place to sit. A young man was trying to sell weed with a patter that would make a carnival barker jealous, and the missionaries were peddling their religion to anyone who accidentally made eye contact. A sad and gloomy vibe, like an incontinent man in a nursing home waiting for something to happen, pervaded the area.

The next day we took our kayaks to Cayuta Lake, a small pond southwest of Cayuga Lake, but it was blowing a gale, so we headed over to more sheltered Catharine Creek. It was a highly braided, marshy area, the perfect place to explore in kayaks. But about 50 feet from the boat launch I became trapped in the mud, like a tiger in a tar pit, unable to reach open water. Scoring 0 for 2, we went to Cayuga Lake and paddled south toward Ithaca. A rainbow of boats passed us on their way toward the Ithaca marinas and dockside restaurants while hundreds of cormorants roosted in the trees, silent sentinels and masters of their domain.

The last day of the trip was a journey to Robert H. Treman State Park to hike up to Lucifer Falls. The river runs in a deep V-shaped valley with stone cliffs, in shades of white, gray, and yellow, towering over it on both sides. The Gorge Trail along the river was carved out of the steep rocky walls by the CCC in the 1930s. There are stone arches, stone benches, stone retaining walls,

and stone overlooks. The stone retaining wall caps are as flat and seamless as the slate on a pool table. Where the grade becomes too steep for walking, flights of stairs were constructed, many with 30 steps or more. Thinking how a group of 17- to 28-year-old men with picks and shovels managed this feat is like trying to conceive of infinity or a website with no ads. Returning to the car via the Rim Trail, we discovered the river disgorging in a multi-plume plunge, over a yellow dome-shaped rock outcropping, into a wide swimming hole with a beautiful sandy beach. We had inadvertently saved the best of this trip for last.

The Finger Lakes region covers roughly 5,000 square miles and, in a week, we had only managed to cover about 72 square miles. And in our effort to enjoy the sunny days and observe the physical beauty, we gave short shrift to the region’s history. The area played a significant role in the temperance movement, the women’s suffrage movement, and the abolition of slavery. The region is home to the Ontario County Courthouse, where Susan B. Anthony was put on trial for voting in 1872. Carry Nation was notorious for attacking taverns with a hatchet. Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s house is preserved at the Women’s Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls. Mark Twain wrote many of his greatest books during his summers in Elmira, New York, just south of Seneca Lake, where his grave is also located.

Whether it was arrogance or ignorance I’m not sure, but attempting to tour this area in six days was like trying to eat an elephant in one sitting with chopsticks. The trip was really just a foray, a scouting mission for many future trips.

Dennis R. Blanchette is a retired environmental engineer. His travel blog, Derelicting about with D. R., can be found at www.dennisblanchette.com.

The Legacy of Joshua Uncas

Submitted by Martin Moebus

The Windham Historical Society invites you to commemorate the legacy of Joshua Uncas. Join us in commemorating the 350th anniversary of a pivotal moment in Windham County history. On May 15 from 5:00-7:00 PM at the Jillson House in Willimantic, we will honor the legacy of Joshua Attawanhood Uncas, son of Mohegan Sachem Uncas, whose land grant established what would become Windham County.

This Sesquicentennial celebration brings together local leaders, historians, and community members for an evening of recognition. Through talks we’ll explore how Joshua’s gift shaped the settlement and development of our region. Discover the story of a Native American leader whose decision 350 years ago continues to resonate today.

All are welcome to attend this free public program celebrating our shared heritage.

To all our contributors- Thank You!

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

Saucha: Cleanliness and the Practice of Spring Renewal

Submitted by Kris Jones

In yoga philosophy, Saucha is the first of the Niyamas — the observances that guide how we care for ourselves and our inner world. Often translated as cleanliness or purity, Saucha invites us to tend not only to our physical environment, but also to our thoughts, habits, and energetic space.

Spring is a natural time to explore this practice. As the earth begins to thaw and new life emerges, we’re reminded that renewal doesn’t happen through force — it happens through clearing space. Just as soil must be softened before seeds can take root, we too benefit from gentle cleansing that makes room for growth.

Saucha isn’t about perfection or rigid rules. In yoga, cleanliness is not about striving for an ideal state — it’s about creating conditions that support clarity, ease, and well-being.

On a physical level, Saucha can look like caring for our bodies and living spaces in ways that feel supportive rather than overwhelming. This might include mindful movement, nourishing food, hydration, or simply keeping a space where you practice yoga clear and intentional.

On a subtler level, Saucha asks us to notice what we’re carrying internally. What thoughts, habits, or emotional residues linger long after they’ve stopped serving us? Spring offers a compassionate invitation to release what feels heavy, stale, or misaligned.

Nature models Saucha beautifully in this season. Melting snow clears the ground, rains wash away debris, and longer days invite movement and fresh air. Our bodies and nervous systems often mirror this shift. We feel drawn to open windows, stretch more, and reset routines. This doesn’t mean doing more — it means doing things differently, with intention.

In our yoga practice, Saucha shows up as presence and care. We clean our mats not just for hygiene, but as ritual

— a way of arriving fully. We choose movements and breath patterns that support balance and circulation rather than depletion. Gentle twists, heart-opening postures, and mindful flows help release stagnation, while restorative moments offer integration and nervous system support.

Off the mat, Saucha might look like setting boundaries, clearing one small space, having an honest conversation, or creating room in your schedule for rest and breath. It is not about fixing yourself — it’s about honoring what’s ready to be released and trusting that what remains is enough.

This season of renewal also gives us a chance to celebrate the people who help create clarity and consistency in our shared space.



Yoga instructor Lauren Rodriguez and student Jesse Clark. Contributed photo.

A special thank you and congratulations to Jesse Clark, who just celebrated his **100th class at The Mantra Room**. Jesse’s dedication to showing up — class after class — is a living example of Saucha in action: caring for the body, tending the mind, and committing to growth through steady practice. His presence helps keep our community grounded, intentional, and inspired.

As you move through spring, consider:

- What feels heavy or stagnant right now?
- What small act of cleansing would feel supportive rather than overwhelming?
- Where can I create more space — physically, mentally, or energetically?
- What do I want to invite in once that space is cleared?

At The Mantra Room, we honor Saucha as a practice of care, not control. This spring, we invite you to move gently, clear intentionally, and trust in the wisdom of renewal — together.

At Hampton’s Fletcher Memorial Library

Submitted by Janice Trecker

Scott Rhoades exhibit

The Top Shelf Gallery’s March - April show, New England and Beyond, landscape and genre acrylics by Scott Rhoades, opens Saturday March 7 at 1 p.m. with an artist’s reception and demonstration. The precisely-done paintings feature New England farmland, the Maine wilderness and some animal subjects.

This is Rhoades’ second show at the Top Shelf Gallery, having displayed well received paintings in 2022. Since that appearance, he has continued to show widely and, unusually for most of our artists, has appeared in several national publications. These include entry into several Richardson International 75 books, the Blanche Ames National Art Exhibition booklet, The Best of Acrylic in Artists Magazine, and the cover of Ribbons, a poetry journal.

A retired art teacher, Rhoades has been painting since he took his first art course as a junior in college. After graduating from Eastern Connecticut State University in 1973, Rhoades earned his Master’s degree in Art Education from Central Connecticut State University.

Although he continued painting, his main focus became his 35 year teaching career in Coventry, Connecticut. During that time, 400 of his K-8 students had drawings published in The Chronicle, and his school mural program was nationally

recognized. He feels honored to have been able to experiment with and be creative with his 6000 students.

Rhoades retired from teaching in 2010, built an art studio in his back yard and since then has produced hundreds of paintings, including a number of commissioned works. Most of the commissioned paintings consists of pets and homes.

He continues to draw inspiration from regional rural life but also enjoys finding new locals and subjects. Baxter State Park in the northern Maine wilderness is a place he has visited most years since 1982. The preserved natural wilderness, with its moose, mountains and the waterways present an unlimited array of painting subject matter.

Rhoades takes many reference photos on his trips, using the photos as a basis for the award-winning acrylic on-Masonite paintings that appear in shows like The Blanche Ames National Juried Art Exhibition, The Mystic Museum of Art, The Northeast Fine Arts Exhibition in Ware Massachusetts, the West Hartford Art Leagues’s Ct+6 Exhibitions, Lyme Art Association exhibits, and Arts Center East shows in Vernon, CT.

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

An Introduction to AI
Hampton resident Jamie Boss will present An Introduction to AI, a

non-technical examination of the structure, uses, and potential consequences of artificial intelligence, Saturday March 28 at 1 p.m. at Fletcher Memorial Library. The free program is designed to answer basic questions about the nature and operations of the popular ChatGPT and to suggest every day life applications for artificial intelligence.

Boss has a long history with advanced technology. A robotic instructor for Unimation Robotics in Danbury, Connecticut in the 1980s, he has subsequently been a technical instructor for many other corporations, as well as the owner of Technical Concepts. This was a full-service video production company based in Milford, Connecticut, specializing in technical training videos.

More recently he has been deeply involved with artificial intelligence, writing ten books on AI over the last two years. The most recent of these, A Conversation with ChatGPT, will be available for purchase at his talk. He is currently teaching Introduction to AI, AI for Seniors, and AI for Small Businesses at EastConn in Hampton. Boss’s presentation will cover such questions as how ChatGPT forms answers, whether AI can be trusted, and why it can appear to be alive. On a more practical level, the program will consider the simplest way to use AI and explore how the average person can make use of the technology. Fletcher Memorial Library is at 257 Main Street, Hampton CT. Info: 860 455 1086. www.fletchermemoriallibrary.org.

Tai Chi Home

Up and Out

By Joe Pandolfo



Of all the seasons that turn in a year, Spring is the miraculous one. How-ever deep the roots slept in the grip of winter, beneath however many blankets of snow, they’ll wake and begin stirring when the earth starts tipping back toward the sun.

Centuries of natural wisdom led the Taoists to recognize Hare and Dragon as hosts of what we call March and April. The Hare has a bright eye like Mercury peeking over the horizon, and embodies energy on the move like thunder waking up the Spring fields. The inner and outer fire of Dragon’s eye carries all the energy of swirling Spring wind.

This is the season of the first growth, the inner spark of new fire, on its way upward and outward to grow into some magnificent crown. The season is in you, too. Notice it, how it feels. It’s a miracle and a thing to nurture. A new year is awake and there’s some new thing you’re ready to reach upward and outward to, ready to grow into.



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Dear Reader-
Please consider contributing to *Neighbors*-
Write an article about a person you admire or a local program you believe is important. Take a photo of a friend, loved one or pet. Write a poem or a piece of flash fiction. These pages would be full of press releases without submissions from local residents who care about each other and their community.

T. King, Publisher

Part One: Not all who wander are lost...

June Garden Tour *ultra*

By Brian Karlson-Barnes

Saturday, June 13th & Sunday, June 14th
The 2026 Connecticut Art and Garden Tour

(see *artgardenct.com*) is on the west side of the *Quiet Corner* in the **Willimantic** and **Natchaug River** valleys. The free tour is Storrs-centric, eccentric fun. This preview offers more fun touring. *Buy Local!*



Connecticut’s *Quiet Corner* actually has *Three* watersheds from the edge of Hartford east to Rhode Island. Third is the eastside’s **Quinebaug River**, an affluent valley with beautiful gardens, where a self-guided tour of its *Grand Gardens* is offered July 25th in counter-point to the June *liberal-artsy* Art and Garden Tour (See May/June Neighbors for **July Tour *ultra***).

This preview offers other westside attractions during *America’s 250th Celebration*. The entire *Quiet Corner* is a feast of farms, gardens, natural wonders and wanders, and of Connecticut’s colonial history in the *American Industrial Revolution*. Not all who wander are lost...

SOUTHWEST Many Art and Garden tours are in the SW quadrant of the *Quiet Corner* where Chaplin, Mansfield, and Windham’s City of Willimantic offer many side tours:

Airline Bike Trail From Willimantic, the Airline runs diagonally NE across the *Quiet Corner* from the SW to the NE in Thompson. A 50-mile linear state park, it was once an elite elevated rail service cutting an hour off the coastal train trip from NYC to Boston. In **1891**, the *New*



England Limited began serving new luxury Pullman cars, white with gold trim, luminescent at twilight. The legendary *Ghost Train* shortened the trip, but as trains became too heavy for the flimsy trestles, ended in **1902**.The *Ghost Train* only lasted a decade as a railway, but continues as a dedicated bikeway.

Storied **Diana’s Pool** in the rocky Natchaug River. Story goes, a spurned, distraught Diana leapt to her death under a full moon, and when the moon is full, you can still hear her weeping softly over the water... while the pristine

river from virgin forests cascades over small falls into the 15-foot pool on the northeast side of Route 198. NO swimming but rock ledges line the popular daytime spot. No lifeguards and limited parking. Chaplin

Garden on the Bridge with a gorgeous granite bridge and *pre-Civil War* mill buildings. Willimantic had a notable granite bridge *50 years* before the less-remarkable concrete spans at its inspiration in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts (the spans, however, allowed deep roots at grade). Windham Bridge dates to **1857** and the bustling village of Willimantic Falls, a sparsely populated, narrow ravine in western Windham.*Cotton Created Willimantic!* In **1820**, it was “scrub oak forest” with pre-industrial saw and grist mills, a few farms, a tavern and two turnpikes. The Willimantic River dropped through a gorge of steep hills, nearly 100 feet in less than a mile to provide waterpower for milling. A turnpike connected the mill village to a port city 15 miles away, Norwich at the head of the Thames River, thus to distant cotton fields in America’s *Deep South*.Willimantic’s *Garden on the Bridge* was inspired by the **1908 Bridge of Flowers** in Shelburne Falls MA, built to carry freight over the Deerfield River. But the advent of trucking bankrupted the railroad by **1927** and the bridge was unused until the *Shelburne Falls Women’s Club* took charge with vision and 80 yards of loam in April **1929**, six months before the Wall Street Crash. Now a floriferous bridge with a restaurant at one end.In **2006**, the *Windham Garden Club* installed the original planting design. It needed attention after twenty years and **2025** is the final year of a five-year restoration plan.



Gurleyville Grist Mill preserved on Fenton River (flows to Hollow) near Storrs. Mansfield **Mansfield Hollow Dam & Lake** with wooded trails to boat launch. Three clean rivers feed the lake, but NO swimming. Gas-engine boats pollute the water anyway. Mansfield

NORTHWEST Some Art and Garden tours are in the Corner’s NW quadrant where Ashford, Eastford, Storrs and sparcely-settled Union offer other touring attractions:

Bigelow Hollow State Park Headwaters of the pristine **Natchaug** with tributary **Bigelow Brook** flowing south through 75% forest cover (see below). The *Quiet Corner*’s healthiest watershed is due to state cooperation and conservation agreement between eight watershed towns -- Ashford, Chaplin, Eastford, Mansfield, Union, Willington (west of QC but drains east), Windham/Willimantic, and western Woodstock. The Hollow is in 3,400 forested acres, one of the largest unbroken woods in Connecticut. The 516-acre state park is in Union.

Yale, Nipmuk & Natchaug Forests extend south from Union to Chaplin.

UCONN’s New City with shopping in Storrs. Mansfield-**FUN DAY Sunday 2 May Tour / Field Day** at the *Windham Water Works* (WWW) South of Storrs on Route 195, Contact: Maura.robie@comcast.net

NEXT ISSUE **May/June Neighbors** will preview the **Quiet Corner Garden Club Tour** with natural and other attractions -- *food!* -- for all three river valleys in the Quiet Corner on July 25th .

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Master gardener/designer/writer, Chaplin CT



A Day in the Life 2026

Photo and article by George Jacobi

Up at three AM on January 3, one of my bad nights, with the Super Wolf Moon glowing so brightly through the shades that I just have to look. The snow is that neon blue color, decorated with gold glitter. Black tree trunk shadows crisscross the yard; it’s easy to see the sinuous dark line of the brook down below. The moon is titanium white.

Lying awake, I was thinking that I treasure the opportunity to be active in Joshua’s Trust, just like I treasure this view. And that looking at America’s 2026 schedule, I think this feels like it might be a consequential year. It’s the 250th anniversary of 1776, and possibly a moon mission, followed by the mid-term elections.

I wake again at six – to war. Trump has attacked Venezuela.

In late January, thoughts turn to Martin Luther King, Jr. and thus to peaceful positive activism. Somebody once said, “*You’re either an activist or an inactivist.*” Together in Joshua’s Trust, we get a lot done. We now conserve more than 5000 acres of wildlands, giving nature the chance to adapt to the coming storms. That’s a good reason for all of us to treasure the Trust. “*Occasionally in life one develops a conviction so precious and meaningful that he will stand on it till the end*”, said Martin. My Joshua’s Trust stewardship work is one of the things in life I’m most proud of. So, here’s to Sam Dodd and Isabelle Atwood, David Hankins, Dorothy Goodwin and Rudy Favretti and the rest who made a commitment and acted, began this organization.

I was an activist at UConn at that same time, the late ‘60s. It wasn’t hard to protest when if you left school, you would be drafted to fight in an unwinnable immoral war. My only regret is that I didn’t get arrested. I knew it wouldn’t have made a difference, but it would have to me. The whole university went on strike in 1970 after Kent State’s students were killed that May. Finals were cancelled. In a decidedly non-activist move, a bunch of us hitchhiked to Martha’s Vineyard for the week and caroused.

This afternoon, two does are sleeping near the brook in plain sight. They don’t even get up when I dump the compost and say hello in my bad pronunciation of deer speech. Coyotes ran and played down there on New Year’s Eve. I can’t walk by my sliding glass door without looking out, for fear of missing something. In winter with its bare trees, one can see things that may have been hidden before, things that may have been mere guesses.

One thing I see is that consequential year looming, one in which we will need joy and confidence for the days to come. “*We must walk in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future.*” Martin again. “*Join with the Earth and each other...join together as many and diverse expressions of the loving mystery, for the healing of the Earth and the renewal of all life.*”

Since its beginnings, many people have donated or sold land to Joshua’s Trust and many more have volunteered. “*Be a bush if you can’t be a tree. If you can’t be a highway, be a trail*”: more MLK. I’m a trail, and I think I’m a pretty good trail. I was a conservation property steward for a decade. I’ve led a bunch of hikes and done what I could to increase enthusiasm for local conservation. I write for the newsletter and the blog. Do the same for Trout Unlimited. The nature stuff is my sphere. You can act too, truly. We’d love to turn you on. Be an activist in your chosen arena.

Today slips away. Late afternoon turns to dusk, and one last fiery orange jet contrail crosses the western sky. The wind has laid down; snow is melting into the aquifer for next summer’s fulfillment. Birds and squirrels have gone home. Night falls quietly. Tomorrow is a chance to start again.

Evolution Gone Wild (*Absurdus animalium*)

By Bob Lorentson

There is always a risk to evolving. Some animals excel at it, some struggle at it, and some think they know better and end up ruining it for everyone. With this in mind, here are some animals that would have made Darwin choke on his finches:

The Beerkat (*Suricata bacchanalian*)

Description:
A modern mongoose relative that forsakes communal burrows for brew pubs.
Behavior:
Has been known to augment its insect diet with pretzels, popcorn, and a refreshingly light Pilsner. Known for its upright sentry posture, the beerkat is always on the alert for happy hours.
Interesting Facts:
While it is true that beerkats are immune to the venom of scorpions and snakes, give them a couple of double IPAs and they'll be slurring their alarm calls and hanging out with rock hyraxes before you know it. A recent scientific study found that the murder rate among beerkats is around 20%, by far the highest rate in the animal kingdom. While the study neglected to mention whether alcohol is a factor, it is still probably best to stay away from pubs frequented by beerkats.

The Bactrian Scamel (*Camelus mountebank*)

Description:
A camel that tries to seduce others with its magnificent humps, which everyone knows are really silicone implants.
Notorious scamel of the Silk Road. Could con a merchant out of his silk underwear.
Behavior:
Can often be seen posing in Mongolia's Secret catalogs.
Drinks up to 57 liters of water at a time, which helps it survive such extreme conditions as deserts and casting couches.
Interesting Facts:
While the domestic Bactrian scamel was long used as a pack animal by traditional money launderers and Nigerian princes, the wild scamels have evolved to become adept at sophisticated phishing expeditions, crypto investment frauds, and multi-level marketing schemes.

The Commode Dragon (*Varanus john*)

Description:
A deadly cross between a Komodo dragon and an Asian water monitor that inhabits your bathroom until a low-flow toilet is installed.
Has 60 razor-sharp teeth, a venomous bite, and an ambush predator's instincts for hiding in the tub or behind the magazine stand.
Behavior:
Eats just one meal a month, after which it regurgitates undigested hair, teeth, and bones in a pellet. Good for getting rid of annoying guests, pollsters, and Jehovah's Witnesses.
Interesting Facts:
In the bestselling *A Practical Guide for Living with a Commode Dragon*, tip no. 1 states: "For God's sake, keep the temperature cold! It may be a man-eating reptile, but it's a cold-blooded man-eating reptile that is most active at temperatures above 70 degrees."

Tip no. 2 states: "Do not attempt to change the bathroom décor. Remember, this is a living dinosaur that does not adapt to change quickly."

The Riddlesnake (*Crotalus inscrutable*)

Description:
A pit viper whose riddles come from a dangerous combination of gallstones, miasma, and nihilism.
Behavior:
Immobilizes victims with difficult riddles before striking.
On the plus side, its riddles activate both the left and right brain and trigger dopamine rewards. On the con side, they kill you just when you think you have them solved.
Interesting Facts:
Ironically, the riddlesnake seems to especially target those who claim to have just discovered the meaning of life.
There are over thirty species of riddlesnakes, including the enigmasnake, the puzzlesnake, and the co-nundrumsnake. Most scientists believe the punsnake is not a true riddlesnake, and further, should be shot on sight to prevent it from spreading.

The Splurgeon (*Acipenser non compos mentis*)

Description:
A primitive, long-lived fish that first appeared in the Cretaceous Period and has completely wasted its evolutionary head start.
Has a mouth as wide as its head, which is never a good look on a species with a big appetite but a limited intellect.
Behavior:
Overspends on everything in a futile effort to overcome its bottom-feeder reputation.
Is easily exploited by more advanced fish and caviar merchants.
Interesting Facts:
Has been called by ichthyology professor Richard Sutor of Princeton University "a remarkably ugly fish," and "very similar in appearance to Professor Chadwick."

Bob Lorentson is a local writer and retired environmental scientist. His latest book is *The Carousel of Beliefs*.

The Gurleyville Gristmill Wants You!

Submitted by Christine Acebo

The Gurleyville Grist Mill, located on the beautiful Fenton River, offers a unique opportunity to observe rural 19th century gristmill technology. It contains a complete system of preserved milling equipment. This is not a restoration; here visitors see the equipment as it was operated over many decades and to the middle of the 20th century. <https://joshuastrust.org/gurleyville-gristmill/>

Volunteer Guides are available to provide tours on Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. beginning in mid-May and ending in mid-October. Interested in becoming a Volunteer Guide or serving on the Gristmill oversight committee at Joshua's Trust? Please email administration@joshuastrust.org!



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Black History through the Generations

By Pamela Skelly

On Saturday, February 14, Patricia Wilson Pheanious, JD, MSW, presented “Living Black History: Finding Lost Family and Honoring a Local Tuskegee Airman” at the Buchanan Auditorium of the Mansfield Public Library. Pat is a Connecticut native, an E.O. Smith High School and UConn graduate, and has served as commissioner of social services (1999–2007) and state representative (2018–2022). The event was co-hosted by our Windham/Willimantic NAACP Branch, the Gary Ralls NAACP Youth Council, and the Mansfield Human Rights Commission. Attended by over 70 people, this presentation highlighted the importance of local Black history and the power that comes from understanding your family ancestry.

I hated studying history—because the only place I came up in it was the Civil War ... where my ancestors were depicted slaving in the cotton field or fiddling and dancing in the sun. When we studied slavery, I was the visual representation of a slave. Not much to feel good about.

—Pat Wilson Pheanious

Pat knew her father was a pilot in World War II as a member of the famous Tuskegee Airmen, but she knew very little about her ancestors. In 2017 she was contacted by Dennis Culliton, a middle school teacher, who traced her father’s ancestors after their arrival from Africa to the United States. These ancestors began their lives together as enslaved people in Guilford, Connecticut. Pat learned that her family had been in Connecticut since before the Revolutionary War. In fact, one of her ancestors fought for the Continental Army. More research revealed fascinating facts that reshaped her life—Pat can document 11 generations of her family in this country!

When my real history was restored, I learned for the first time about who my forebears were and what they did. It had a profound effect on me.

That day I think I found a missing piece of my soul.

I learned that yes, my ancestors had been enslaved—but right here in Connecticut. And, during those years of enslavement, family members: became a “slave king” and “factotum”; fought as a freedman in the Revolutionary War; were carpenters, fiddlers, farmers and spinners; and have been memorialized in biographies and memoirs. Some became literate, owned and passed property on to their families. Some became ministers—one of whom mounted a movement to find homes in Africa for former slaves. And, ALL of this before the Civil War began!

—Pat Wilson Pheanious

Culliton discovered this information when he was researching for a curriculum that teaches students how to research and honor people enslaved in the United States, which later became the Witness Stones Project™. Pat became board chair in 2019 when the Project was incorporated and became the project’s executive director in 2024.

I have learned my triumphs in life were built on the trauma that my ancestors endured. And, that the challenges overcome by each generation make them stronger—providing a foundation for the future. My forebearers’ hard lives prepared me to succeed, and I owe that success to them.

—Pat Wilson Pheanious

Witness Stones recently joined the Historic New England organization as the educational component of Stopping Stones, a national effort to uncover forgotten stories, connect descendants, highlight local restorative justice efforts, and encourage community installation of artistic memorial stones in locations where enslaved people built our country’s wealth. Pat now directs the Stopping Stones program at Historic New England.

a little paper
big on community

Both Stopping Stones and the Witness Stones were inspired by Germany’s *Stolpersteine* project, which honors the memory of victims of the Holocaust. This shared foundation of place-based remembrance and public education makes our union a natural fit. Our combined efforts will ensure that the lives and legacies of enslaved people are recognized, remembered, and taught to future generations.

—Witness Stones Project (<https://witnessstonesproject.org/history/>)

The Witness Stones are the educational component, and a curriculum with a guide and resources is available. The Witness Stones program is developed to be used with students and has a curriculum that encompasses history and language arts, as well as forms of artistic expression. The students use primary and secondary sources to find information about their local community. Especially in the northern states, slavery has been written out of most history books, but these documents and references prove its existence.

The Witness Stones curriculum expects students to apply the Five Themes of Slavery to understand the primary and secondary documents. These themes are:

1. *Dehumanization*. The process of stripping enslaved individuals of their identity, treating them as property (chattel) rather than human beings to justify the system.
2. *Treatment of the Enslaved*. The daily lived reality, including harsh labor, violence, malnutrition, and the constant threat of separation from family.
3. *Paternalism*. The false justification used by enslavers, acting as “guardians” who claimed to care for enslaved people, to disguise the brutal reality of coercion and exploitation.
4. *Economics of Slavery*. The understanding of enslaved people as capital, labor, and a driving force for economic growth and wealth accumulation.
5. *Agency and Resistance*. The active ways enslaved people fought back, including maintaining families, practicing their culture, running away, sabotaging work, and revolting.

A few months ago, I attended a conference at Eastern Connecticut State University about researching Black history in the Revolutionary Era. One historian remarked that when researching primary sources, you see documents that are disturbing because of their brutality. She explained that the first time she came across a bill of sale for a person, she needed to walk away from the task for a bit because of the emotional impact. We have learned about the inhumane practice intellectually, but seeing the primary source document, we are confronted with the horrifying reality. Our nation must acknowledge this past if we are to understand how to create a better future.

Our Black History Committee, subcommittee of the Education Committee, is collecting stories from local Black and brown community members. Our plan is to conduct interviews and then share them with the community through our webpage. Each family story is unique, yet common elements exist because ultimately families are about love and the future. We all can learn from our personal histories and the histories of our neighbors. We also want to show others how they can research to learn more about their own ancestors.

Discovering my family had me more mindful of the millions of family histories that were lost—and that are still “missing.”

I am just one of millions—Black, white, and of every color—whose rich histories are waiting to be claimed. Some easier to trace and verify than others!

—Pat Wilson Pheanious

If you also feel strongly about civil rights and justice in our country, please consider joining our Windham/Willimantic NAACP branch. Members 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 us at info@windhamctnaacp.org. You can also check out our Facebook page, Windham Willimantic CT NAACP.

Willimantic’s Textile and History Museum Reopens with Unmentionables Exhibit

By Irene Barnard

The Willimantic Textile and History Museum (Mill Museum) is now open with its new exhibition - Unmentionables: Undergarments of the 19th Century and the Women Who Wore Them. This exhibit is the first curated by new Senior Curator Quinlan Kearney, who previously volunteered in the Museum archives while earning degrees in history, and library sciences and archive management.



It showcases 19th century women’s undergarments, the various pieces, and how they were put together under an everyday outfit. The numerous undergarments women were expected to wear in this era could be cumbersome, especially by modern standards. Both garments and wearers were expected to maintain a certain level of decorum and sensuality while also being relatively practical.

The exhibit also highlights the differences between undergarments worn by the middle and working classes. Which items were considered necessary and which were too impractical for working class women?

Sharing the renovated main exhibition hall, the Bev York Room, with Unmentionables is the Museum’s must-see permanent exhibition, Thread City: The Rise and Fall of the Connecticut Textile Industry. Museum historian Jamie Eves researched, curated, designed and installed what he calls a “discovery” exhibit. Visitors can take a trip through time, following the course of local textile production through each of five sections, from industry origins to its decline: through preindustrial textile production, the Industrial Revolution, labor history, mill cities and towns, to deindustrialization.

Thread City offers a broad overview of the textile industry’s profound influence on Connecticut, and both introduction and context for the Museum’s other installations. The exhibit’s more than 100 artifacts come entirely from the Museum collection, including a working 18th-century barn loom reassembled and restored by volunteers. Eves emphasized that they are connected by the stories they tell. QR codes will be added to link visitors to online activities, the Museum’s online catalog and other objects, and other museums’ websites that tell similar stories. The exhibit examines the textile industry’s complex legacy through the lens of a local town, Willimantic, showing the rise and fall of industrial Connecticut, inextricably linked with the state’s identity.

Admission: \$10.00; Seniors (60+) / Kids (5-17) / Students: \$7.00; Kids under 5 and Members: Free.
Hours: Sat.-Sun. 10am-4pm. 411 Main Street, Willimantic, CT, 06226. (860) 456-2178. Facebook, Instagram (@millmuseum.org); website: <https://millmuseum.org>

A Seventh Year for Poets at Large

Submitted by Karen Warinsky

Poets at Large will present spoken word/poetry events at The Vanilla Bean Café, 450 Deerfield Road, in Pomfret, CT as it begins a seventh year. PAL Coordinator Karen Warinsky said, “Due to the generosity of our sponsors this year, we will be able to present these readings free of charge. We pay featured readers a small stipend for their time and travel. Our featured poets bring their books to sell, so we are hoping patrons will be generous in supporting the poets by buying their books. Donations are also welcome. Besides these events at The Vanilla Bean, we also plan to hold some events at a few other venues in CT and MA in 2026 and will announce those later.” Vanilla Bean events are on Saturday nights and begin at 7 p.m.

Reading at The Vanilla Bean for the winter/spring season will be Christopher Reilley and Carla Schwartz (3/21), Joshua M. Stewart and Doug Anderson (4/18), Jim Finnegan and Irena Kaci (5/16) and Sarah Gagne Wheeler and Laura DiCaronimo (6/20).

Poets at Large is a project of Windham Arts. All events are ADA compliant and are recommended for ages 16 and up. These readings are sponsored in part by Linemaster Switch, WHZ Financial Advisors, bankHometown, The Putnam Area Foundation and Charter Oak FCU. Contact karen.warinsky@gmail.com to sign up for the open mic. 5-minute max as time allows.

Doikayt; or, Here-ness

By Shomriel Sherman

February 1st was many things: Imbolc, the Gaelic festival marking the beginning of spring; the night of the full moon known by some as the Snow Moon; and Erev Tu B'Shvat, the start of the new year for trees, when their sap begins to rise. It was also a day in which I was blessed to gather my dear ones together, inviting people to help me seed intention in my new home.

In Yiddish there is the word doikayt, which in its most basic English translation means, simply, “here-ness.” The implications of this small word, however, are vast. Although I don’t have the linguistic or cognitive ability at this point in my life to expound on these meanings, I have many more touchpoints for understanding:

- what is beginning to rise in me in this new place, recently moving to Willimantic after having been nourished by it from afar for several years;
- the artist Wendy Elisheva Somerson’s image of doikayt: a monarch butterfly perched atop a milkweed plant, accompanied by the words “We nourish where we land”;
- the Abacus Corvus print of trees surrounding a circle of boulders, tracks emanating from each stone into the center, where the words “You Belong” are etched into the earth;
- an encaustic piece by Gabrielle Zane with the precious, much-needed reminder “No need to be lonely”;
- a print by Cherese Mathews asking, “Can you bury your prayer stick into the ground that you stand on? Can you put roots down and trust that this is where you belong? All you need is right here”;
- the words channeled by the prophet Jeremiah, learned somewhere along the way in my mixed Jewish-Christian upbringing: “Thus says the Lord...to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce... Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

In this new home, now more than ever, I have a thrumming desire for robust networks of community care as things get ever more chaotic, unpredictable, and perilous out there. I want to be a part of this: discovering it where it already exists, helping to strengthen it, reminding others (and myself!) that we are not alone, we are right where we belong, and, through slowing down, listening, and then attending to what is needed, things will begin to shift.



As a good friend said recently, “It’s choppy seas, and I’m buoyed.” This is the reality: It will be some time, and likely not within our lifetimes, before the seas are calm. How to make of ourselves and our places seaworthy vessels? How to collect and care for the seeds, prepare the gardens that will nourish our children’s children’s children, our neighbors’ children’s children’s children, after the floodwaters subside?

I started writing this on the evening of the blizzard. I see how much the nature of our work (in this case, the work of shoveling) is impacted not only by its distribution across multiple bodies but also by the presence of people invested in this place as a long-term home. I

see how the intense and persistent dysregulation accompanying each of my moves makes me not want to do this again anytime soon—I’m getting too old for this shit!—which in turn makes me want to deeply invest my resources in making home here, making here home. As I lean more into the realities of disability, I’m learning I can’t go it alone, but within community so much more is possible.

So, I am here, learning new relationships within a new place, new dances of giving and receiving, carrying and asking for help in the carrying. And as Sage C.R.’s writing for this month of Shevat in the 5786 Dreaming the World to Come calendar says: “We belong to this garden. We are rooted

here, gathered with purpose. Each of us brings our own beauty, strength, and story of survival. ...Ask yourself: Where is the soil that’s ready for something beautiful to grow?”

Here. Always right here. In gratitude for this soil, this garden, and the shared work of cultivation.



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Two Years at the Mill—Part One

By Martin Moebus

Over the years, artists like J. Alden Weir and Andrew Wyeth have depicted our mills in romantic sketches, transforming places of industry into evocations of nostalgia. Yet beneath these images lie deeper stories, shaped by the people and machinery that define these places. What stories remain hidden beneath the layers of art and time?

American Thread

Welcome to American Thread, once a pioneering force and rising star in industrial America. Founded in 1854 by Austin Dunham and Lawson Ives as the Willimantic Linen Company, the business initially produced linen cloth before shifting to the manufacture of thread. By 1879, it was filling 120,000 spools per day with thread of over 1,200 different types. Dunham and Ives constructed four mills, numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, using stone from the excavation of dams and raceways and from a quarry in Willimantic. When sales declined in the 1890s, the founders sought a buyer and soon found one: the English Sewing Company, a foreign conglomerate of fourteen English firms eager to acquire the Willimantic Linen Company along with thirteen other New England mills.

In 1898, the Willimantic Linen Company was sold, along with the other mills, to the English Sewing Company, marking the beginning of the American Thread Company (ATCO). The mill expanded, adding Mills 5 and 6, along with a dyehouse, warehouse, and boiler building for power.

There was a secret Scottish connection to this transaction: The J&P Coats Company of Paisley, Scotland, sought to dominate the American and English thread markets by acquiring mills in both the United States and England. Unbeknownst to the public, Coats had taken control of the English Sewing Company, turning his rival into a front for his own expansion, including the mills that made up American Thread.



Worker with spinning frame. Photo from The Mill Museum / Windham Textile and History Museum

Innovation, Changes, and Efficiency at American Thread

Back in 1879, the mill employed about 1,000 workers, and water power generated 1,500 horsepower to drive the factories. The Willimantic mills were places of innovation; they were the first to use electric arc lighting. Mill No. 4, over two football fields in size, was the first factory in the world designed to be illuminated by electricity. It was soon powered by a Thomas Edison lighting system. Those first experiments with electric lighting were powered by water.

American Thread bound together the fabric of the community. Wages sustained local shops, as shopkeepers eagerly awaited mill paydays. Who can still recall the phrase “Shops Open to 9” for Main Street businesses, a legacy of the millworker’s purchasing power? The mills drew immigrants from across the globe, and workers lived in mill housing and in the local communities while filling schools, packing churches, and driving the local economy.

In the 1950s, the Willimantic mills struggled with higher costs compared to southern plants. In February 1952, E. B. Shaw, general manager at American Thread, sent all 2,000 employees a letter warning them that the Willimantic plant must reduce cost and increase efficiency to compete with southern mills. He noted that it cost about \$1.5 million a year more to run the mill in Willimantic than to run one in the South. As a cautionary example, Shaw pointed to the closure of the Holyoke mills, where work was being relocated elsewhere. Profitability and productivity were ever present in the thinking of American Thread’s

management, shaping the labor of the men and women who worked the mills.

Over 87 years, many changes occurred at American Thread in Willimantic and among the men and women who worked there. We will examine a few of these changes, and the men who brought about these transformations.

Little known fact: By the 1930s, the American Thread Company was helping to manufacture baseballs, producing a durable red cotton thread that secured the cowhide cover and withstood the rigors of play.

The Fifties

The 1950s continued the mill’s spirit of progress. Chemists developed new dyes that became the colored threads used in countless garments. The mill’s power source changed from waterpower and coal to steam, then finally to oil-fired electric plants, supplemented with power from utilities.

While many stories have been told about the men and women who operated the mill, few capture the experiences of those who made the mills run—the skilled tradesmen. American Thread employed plumbers, carpenters, millwrights, machinists, mechanics, welders, chemists, printers, fixers, electricians, and many others.

Our story takes place during two years of American Thread history, 1952–1954. Relying on the memories of my father, Gerhart Moebus, a worker at the mill, along with resources from the Mill Museum and additional research, I have pieced together some of this history.

We shall follow the day shift of electricians around the mill—Jack Brennan, Henry Messier, Gerhart Moebus, Bryant Greene, and Charles Burdick, chief electrician at American Thread, as they worked in the mill during this brief, yet remarkable moment in time.

What Was the Electrician’s Job?

Management focused on one priority: profit. Every manager at the mill worked to keep costs down and produce high-quality thread as cheaply as possible. Safety was considered the workers’ responsibility, not the mill’s.

The main job of an electrician is to keep the production line running and quickly repairing any issues. In 1952, the ground floor of Mill Number 5 specialized in the waxed linen thread used for sewing shoe soles. Built in 1899, the mill still had old mechanical power systems, with overhead driveshafts powering the machines (“frames”) via leather belts dropping down from pulley wheels on the shaft above. Frames are used in spinning thread to twist fibers into a strong, continuous strand of thread.

Workers tended the frames, keeping a keen eye for spindles that needed attention. The thrum of the belts filled the air, punctuated by the occasional snap of a stray thread. Each day in the mill, the workers caught the subtle, earthy aroma of waxed linen, along with the faint tang of lingering oil, as heavy wooden pushcarts, about five feet long with eight-inch castor wheels, rolled and rattled across the floors, carrying thread along its production run.

Vat Dyeing

A new process for dyeing thread was adopted. With stainless-steel tanks, up to 2,000 pounds of cotton could be dyed in a single batch. This highly technical process required precise control of temperature, pressure, pH, and chemical concentrations to achieve the desired color. The work environment, being hot and humid, was tough on both the electrical systems and the people operating and maintaining them, including our electricians.

Pumps and electrical connections for vat control were installed beneath the vats. Circuits used Micarta junction boards—solid blocks made from layers of cloth



Mill 1 and Stone Bridge today (photo by author)

impregnated with resin. Originally developed by Westinghouse, Micarta had excellent insulating properties and was once a favored material in factories and even aircraft. Nicknamed “the steel of the plastic industry,” it was prized for its strength, durability, and resistance to wear, and is still used today for items like knife handles.

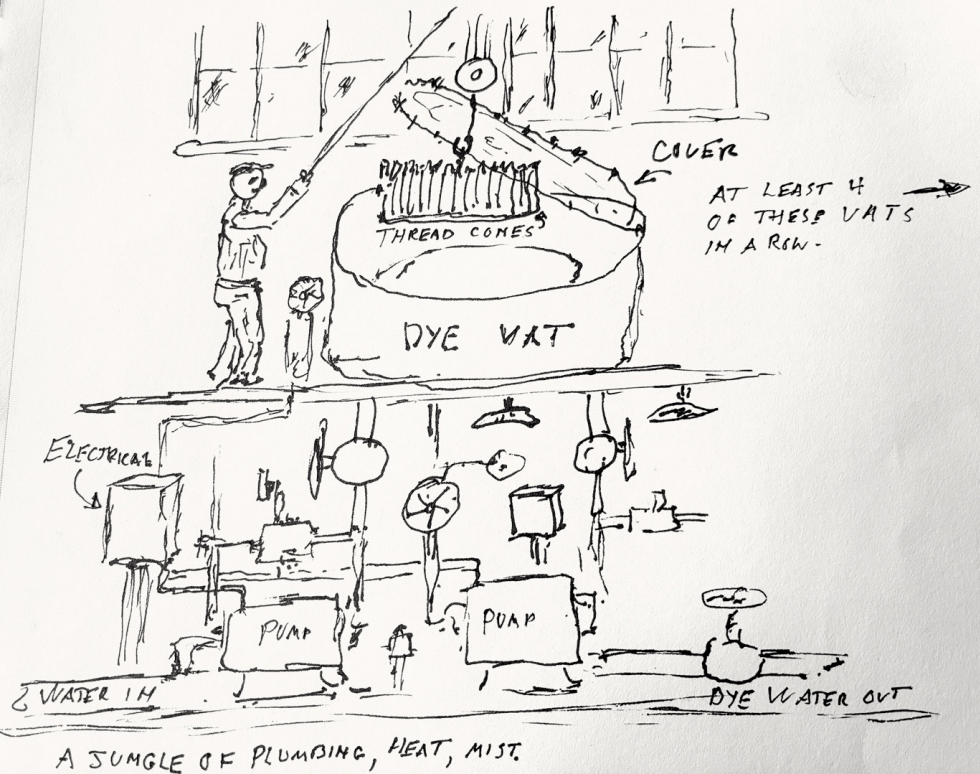
Micarta did have one drawback: over time, it absorbed moisture. When it became saturated, electrical circuits shorted out, compelling electricians to replace the boards underneath the hot vats. To cut costs, the mill ran old Micarta boards through an oven to dry them out for reuse. The boards were weighed during drying to determine when they had lost enough moisture to be returned to service.

Colors of Shifting Hues

As the electricians and plumbers worked below the vats to keep them going, chemists were busy producing the colors for the thread. The chemists kept thread colors consistent over batches as well as creating new shades. In the 1950s the chemists were developing lines of new polymer threads.

The dyehouse was a three-story building, with the coloring vats on the ground floor and the chemistry department above.

One day, alarm bells went off when the chemists discovered that the dyed threads were not coming out in the intended shades. The cause was unclear, and urgency grew as the colors were needed on the production floor.



Dye Vat at American Thread Drawing by Gerhart Moebus

The problem lingered for some time, adding pressure to the team, until the surprising culprit was identified. American Thread owned a fleet of bright yellow trucks, which were often parked outside the dyehouse windows. A chemist realized that the reflected yellow light subtly distorted the lab’s lighting. As chemists mixed the colors by eye, the change in lighting affected how they perceived and mixed the dyes. Installing light-blocking shades resolved the issue.

Crocus the Commutator?

Yes, electricians had to crocus the commutator. Crocus cloth is a nonconducting, fine-grade abrasive cloth coated with iron oxide that electricians use to polish the commutator segments of the generator. A commutator is the rotary switch in a generator that reverses the direction of current flow. When generator commutators become dirty, they may spark, arc, overheat, become noisy, or otherwise not perform correctly. There were many generators continued on next page



Weir painting of stone bridge “U.S. Thread Company Mills, Willimantic, Connecticut” National Gallery of Art

in the mill, including the large generator that was powered by the river in Mill 5. Commutator segments were polished with the motor running!

Repairs

Stopping the frames cost money. For repairs, ladders were stored on the walls of every mill building, each fitted with sharp steel spurs at the base that were jammed into the wooden floor. In Mill 5, with electrical power overhead, electricians leaned their wooden ladders against rotating shafts to access the wiring and junction boxes running at 550 volts. As they climbed, the ladders swayed with the

motion of the spinning shaft. Meanwhile, frame operators continued their work below, walking the length of the machines, tending spindles, and passing under the electricians suspended above. Today, this wouldn’t pass an OSHA inspection!

Setting Up New Production Runs

Another vital electrician job included installing electrical systems, including cable runs for new thread production lines. After the mills in Fall River shut down, much old material was brought down to American Thread, including wire cables, lighting, and anything

Save the Date - ‘Have A Heart’ Event

Submitted by Lorraine Reeder

The staff and board of directors of the Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG) are excited to announce preparations are underway for their 25th annual Have A Heart fundraising event. This milestone event will be held on Friday, May 1, 2026, 6:00-9:00 PM, at the Mansion at Bald Hill in Woodstock.

In addition to the festivities fans of this event have come to love and cherish—such as an abundance of silent auction items and eight live auction experiences—this year’s event will also feature an additional tier of raffle items. “While we want to keep the

elements of success of past events, we’re trying to keep things fresh,” explained Chelsea French, TEEG’s Resource Director.

Ticket prices will remain at \$35 per person and include generous appetizers as well as lots of fun in the elegant environment of the Mansion Banquet Hall. They will be available for online purchase on the TEEG website beginning March 15.

In order to keep ticket prices affordable, the TEEG Board of Directors is soliciting sponsorship opportunities beginning at \$100; donations to the silent auction and raffles will also be gratefully accepted. Please contact Chelsea French at 860-923-3458

during business hours or via email at chelseaf@teegonline.org to donate or get more information.

TEEG is a 501(c)3 social service agency serving critical needs of low-income individuals and families in the towns of Pomfret, Woodstock, and Thompson, with food insecurity as a cornerstone of its mission. Since its founding in 1988, TEEG has developed and expanded its programming to include both emergency and ongoing food assistance—including holiday meals—benefits navigation, youth programs, and personalized case coordination. For more information about the work of the organization, please visit www.teegonline.org.

else that would be useful. Because the new cables were easier to work with, the electricians preferred them over the old Fall River cables, which were badly kinked from use. But chief electrician Charlie Burdick insisted on using the old wire cables to save money, saying, “Copper doesn’t wear out.” Electrons traveled just as well in the old cables as in the new ones.

Danger in the Mills

A new member to the electrician team, Gerhart Moebus got his job in 1952 after an electrician was killed while repairing an elevator. One day a year later, we find Gerhart working in Mill 5, climbing a ladder over the running shafts to add some of those old, worn cables needed for the next production run. As he reaches the top of the ladder, he notices an electrical box cover partially open where it should be closed—probably due to the vibration of rolling carts above. He shuts it with the back of his hand and begins running cable for the changeover—that old cable from Fall River that Mr. Burdick was so fond of.

Using his arm to steady himself high on the ladder, he leans into that old exposed cable run. He doesn’t notice the bare end of a wire that had been left unsecured years earlier by some long-gone electrician. The wire is live—humming with 550 volts. On its own, it is harmless—a hot wire needs a ground to complete a circuit. But danger waits, like a viper coiling to strike the moment flesh completes the circuit.

As Gerhart strips the new wire, the vibrations from a rumbling cart on the floor above open the electrical box cover again, this time slamming it into his head. With a new electric path established, the bare copper viper strikes and completes the circuit through Gerhart’s body. Five hundred and fifty volts from the water-powered Mill 5 generator rip through him in an instant, seizing every muscle at once. His arms lock, his grip fails, and all motor control vanishes. Suspended high above the running shafts, he dangles helplessly from the ladder, unable to move, unable to cry out. With his legs weakening, he slumps forward, breaking the grip of the viper’s circuit, and falls into unconsciousness. Another electrician nearby, Henry Messier, calls out, “Are you alright?” There is no response.

What happened next? Will Gerhart live to crocus a commutator another day? The conclusion will be told in “Two Years at the Mill—Part Two,” in the next edition of *Neighbors*. Stay tuned!

Save the Date!



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Finding the Full Etymology of the Word “Mug” in Bulgaria

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

The places we travel to are not always regionally popular or predictable. Case in point is that I am writing this at the Sofia airport in Bulgaria, a place that was certainly not on my bucket list. However, I have a brother who lives in Israel, and if you happen to live there and have a passion for skiing, as well as a limited budget, the Rila mountains in Bulgaria and their ski resorts are a logical choice. Having decided to travel with his three sons, all of whom also like to ski, my brother then invited me. I too am a skier and, given the political situation in Israel, as well as financial limitations, I had not seen any of them for over three years, so my answer was an unconditional yes.



My knowledge of Bulgaria is limited, so I am consulting the online oracle to offer a brief overview of the land and its people. Bulgaria is located in Southeast Europe, with the Black Sea to the east, Turkey to the southeast, Greece to the south, North Macedonia to the southwest, Serbia to the northwest, and Romania to the north. It has been part of many different empires and kingdoms, such as the Persian, the Odrysian, the Macedonian, the Celtic, the Roman, and the Hellenistic, as well as periods under Bulgarian, Byzantine, and Ottoman rulers, and then, of course, the Russian communism influenced by Stalin, finally becoming a free republic with elections in 1989, joining the EU in 2007, and finally switching to the euro this year. Thus, it’s culturally a very rich mix. The Bulgarian language is a subgroup of the South Slavic languages, using the 30-letter version of the Cyrillic alphabet developed in the First Bulgarian Empire during the ninth and tenth centuries.

Arriving at the Sofia airport and going by van up into the Rila mountains, I observed some of this multifaceted history: for example, socialist architecture, featuring large apartment buildings of gray concrete lacking any aesthetic finesse, overlapping with capitalist billboards selling the promise of prosperity and progress, as well as

large glass buildings supplying consumer items or their digital versions. These juxtapositions speak to a significant class divide that gave parts of the journey to Borovets, the ski resort, the feel of Old Europe mixed with aspects of the Global South, represented by villages of small concrete houses with slate roofs, shabby roadside restaurants that have seen better days, garbage on the sides of the roads, crumbling bridges, and overgrown monuments representing a past of presumed grandeur. Despite all this, I also saw the beauty of the land.

The ski resort was a strange mix: more like a Florida beach party town than what I think of as a ski resort, with a high number of soulless luxury hotels overpowering older, smaller hotels in the Ottoman style, which was popular in Bulgaria up to the early 1900s. The hotel we stayed in was one such building built in 1904, nestled on the edge of the magnificent conifer forest that for me defined the area, with trees towering up to 100 feet. Much of the resort is made up of restaurants serving American/British food (lots of Brits go there to ski), bars with discounted shots, and karaoke every night, as well as small shops and wooden, alpine-style shacks selling everything from gloves and Russian-themed, fake-fur hats to plastic sleds and pieces of Bulgarian folk art.

It was in one such shop that I found the mug collection (see photo) that inspired the title of this piece. Just as I did with the land and its people, I will give a brief overview of the etymology of the word “mug.” According to the website Wordorigins.org, “mug” was first used in English in the 1400s, meaning a dry measure, in particular a measure of salt. By the early 1500s it was used to refer to large pieces of crockery, and by the mid-1600s it was used for a large drinking vessel with a handle. Then, in the eighteenth century, “mug” was used as slang for a person’s face. One theory is that drinking vessels at the time had grotesque faces carved on them, while another possibility is that the Scots word “murgeon,” meaning grimace, is a source for “mug.” Either way, the linking of the vessel with the human face was sealed, evolving into terms such as “mug shot” and the slang verb used by boxers to mean hitting one’s opponent in the face. And from that came the verb meaning to rob, as in “to be mugged,” as well as the noun “mugger.”

Which brings me to the ugly (in many meanings of the word) “mugs” on the mugs. As is evident from the photo, the mugs in the shop featured only males, most of whom are current world leaders with authoritarian politics. What particularly caught my attention was that our own president’s mug was on the same shelf as Putin, Kim Jong Un, Netanyahu, Nicolae Ceausescu, and of course Stalin, and was nestled near none other than the Godfather and Al Capone.

This mixture of real leaders and fictional ones, communist and capitalist, all on mugs for 4.5 euros (\$5 and change) in a souvenir shop, made me question what differences exist in terms of not only their practices, but also how they are perceived. And the answer I came to is that any cultural or political differences are overridden by their unifying representation of both real and symbolic power. In other words, what unites them all is the extent to which they can and do “mug” entire groups of people, either by war, structural oppression, systemic theft and abuse, and lies and deceit, all while augmenting their power and wealth, as well as that of their supporters.

Another question that came to mind is who would buy such mugs, and for whom? For in taking up significant shelf space in a small shop, they must sell well, meaning skiers and snowboarders in the winter and mountain bikers and hikers in the summer must buy them, otherwise they would not be for sale. Which brings me to another complexity, and that is that the climate in Bulgaria, like nearly everywhere in the world, is warming, making it snow less, and Trump, Putin, and Netanyahu could hardly be doing less to address climate change, with war on vulnerable people and consequently on the entire planet being their top causes.

I see these mugs on mugs in a souvenir shop in a ski resort lacking snow as just as contradictory and challenging as the history of Bulgaria itself. In the end, it comes down to the comment of a friend I shared the photo with: “What a way to spoil a beverage!” I would go further and say “what a way to spoil a planet” if we leave it in the hands of these grotesque authoritarian male “muggers”! Whose mug is on *your* mug?

At Willimantic’s Burton Leavitt Theatre

Submitted by Michelle Baughman

The Burton Leavitt Theatre Presents Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* Directed by J. Michael Spencer
[February 27](#) & 28, March 5 – 7, 13 & 14, 2026 at [7:00 pm](#) [March 1](#) & 8, 2026 at [2:00 pm](#)
Adults \$22 Students/Seniors \$17 UCONN/ECSU/QVCC Students \$15 Children under 12 \$13

The Importance of Being Earnest follows two upper-class Victorian gentlemen, Jack and Algernon, who lead double lives by inventing fictitious alter egos to escape from their social responsibilities and pursue pleasure. Jack pretends to be an unreliable brother named Ernest to get away to London, while Algernon

“Bunburies” by inventing an invalid friend to visit the country. The story becomes tangled when Jack proposes to Gwendolen, who only wants to marry someone named Ernest, and when Algernon, posing as Ernest, falls for Jack’s ward, Cecily. Mistaken identities, outrageous coincidences, and general hilarity ensue.

Starring:

Algernon Moncrieff – J. Blaise DiModugno
John Worthing – Marcevan Costanzo
Lady Bracknell – John Higley
Gwendolen Fairfax – Ava R. Molnar
Cecily Cardew – Abby Duell
Canon Chasuble – Geoff Fleming
Lane/Merriman – Tom Goodin
Miss Prism – Tricia Montes

Take Note! In Concert

Submitted by Carrie Morse

The acclaimed a cappella ensemble Take Note! will perform a concert to benefit the First Congregational Church of South Windsor Capital Fund. Donations will be accepted at the door. The concert will take place on Sunday, March 22, 2026, at 3:00 PM in the church sanctuary and will feature songs in a variety of musical styles, including jazz, traditional, and multicultural.

For more information, visit [www.firstchurchsw.org](#) or [www.take-note.org](#).

Take Note! is a 20+-voice group, under the direction of Linda Tracy, and is comprised of select, talented local singers from diverse backgrounds. A nonprofit

organization based in Mansfield, CT, the group has performed without charge to the benefit of other local nonprofit organizations. The Take Note! mission statement speaks to the spirit of the group: “Through performances in support of charitable endeavors, we are raising voices, raising spirits, raising hope.”

First Congregational Church of South Windsor is an open and affirming church welcoming all who enter, regardless of where you are on life’s journey. You are welcome here at First Church.

Why Some Investors Aren’t Loving Their Financial Advisors Any Longer — and What They’re Switching To Instead

By James Zahansky, AWMA® Senior Partner & Chief Strategist



Why Some Investors Aren’t Loving Their Financial Advisors Any Longer — and What They’re Switching To Instead

For decades, the typical financial advisor relationship followed a familiar pattern: periodic performance reviews, portfolio updates, and a heavy emphasis on market returns. For a long time, that was enough for many people. We’ve never considered it enough at WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors and today, many investors don’t either.

The financial lives of individuals and families have become more complex, and many advisors simply haven’t kept pace. Here’s where many financial advisory and wealth management firms may be falling short, and what you as a client should be looking for instead.

Performance Alone Is No Longer the Value Proposition

Across the industry, we are seeing a meaningful shift. More financial planning and wealth management clients are questioning the value they receive. And increasingly, many are choosing to look elsewhere for financial guidance. Some are looking to AI-driven platforms. Many are seeking out financial advisors and wealth managers that will deliver more depth, clarity, and partnership. This isn’t about impatience or unrealistic expectations — it’s about evolution.

Markets are more transparent than ever. Clients can see benchmarks, index returns, and market commentary in real time. When an advisor’s value is framed almost exclusively around “beating the market,” disappointment is almost inevitable.

Clients today understand that markets are cyclical and largely uncontrollable. What frustrates them is not short-term volatility; it’s the absence of proactive planning, context, and strategy when markets move. Advisors who lead every conversation with performance numbers without tying them back to personal goals, risk tolerance, and long-term outcomes are missing one of the items that clients care about most.

Today’s investors want to know: How does this impact my life, my plans, and my confidence about the future? They also want their advisors to care about and strategize for those things as much as they care about returns.

That requires something that bread-and-butter periodic meetings or even AI can ever provide – the foundation of a truly personal relationship combined with real-life experience, up-to-the-minute knowledge and the ability to strategize on the go based not only on what’s happening in the markets, but what’s happening in the client’s life and how all those pieces combine to inform the best strategy for them.

One-Dimensional Advice in a Multi-Dimensional World

Financial decisions no longer live in silos. Taxes, estate planning, retirement income, business succession, charitable giving, and family dynamics are deeply interconnected. Yet many advisors still operate transactionally — managing investments in isolation while leaving clients to coordinate the rest on their own.

This creates friction and fatigue. Clients don’t want to act as the project manager of their own financial lives, translating advice between advisors, CPAs, and attorneys. When advisors fail to integrate these elements into a cohesive strategy, clients may feel unsupported — even if the portfolio itself is performing reasonably well.

The advisors gaining loyalty today are those who think holistically and collaborate seamlessly across disciplines. At WHZ, we pride ourselves on the fact that this has been our approach since day one.

A Lack of Proactive Communication

Another common source of dissatisfaction is silence, especially during periods of uncertainty. Clients are quick to notice when communication is reactive rather than intentional. Waiting for a client to call with concerns, or

limiting outreach to scheduled review meetings, sends the wrong message.

In contrast, proactive advisors anticipate questions, explain changes before they become problems, and reach out consistently with perspective, not panic. Trust isn’t built by avoiding difficult conversations. It’s built by addressing them early and clearly.

For example, at WHZ we provide our clients with a monthly newsletter containing timely and valuable articles, as well as a monthly market update that includes insight into how we’re positioning portfolios in response. In addition to that we send regular communications that are specific to clients’ interests and needs and we ensure that meetings happen whenever they’re needed, not just on a set schedule.

The Relationship Feels Transactional, Not Personal

Perhaps the most important reason clients leave is emotional, not technical. Many eventually realize they don’t feel truly known by their advisor. When advice feels generic, meetings feel rushed, or conversations fail to evolve as life changes, clients begin to question whether their advisor is really invested in them — or just managing accounts. This is especially true during major transitions such as retirement, inheritance, divorce, or the sale of a business.

What Clients Are Switching To

When clients leave, they aren’t just leaving something behind; they’re moving toward something better suited to their situation. Increasingly, investors may seek advisors who offer:

- A clearly defined planning process, not just investment management
- Proactive, transparent communication
- Integrated tax, estate, and retirement planning
- A team-based approach that provides continuity and depth
- A relationship grounded in trust, education, and long-term partnership

In short, they want confidence — not just competence. At WHZ, we believe this shift is both healthy and overdue. Clients deserve more than portfolio oversight; they deserve a strategic partner who helps them make informed decisions, navigate complexity, and move forward with clarity at every stage of life.

That is why our approach centers on comprehensive planning through our “Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.™” strategic process, as well as collaborative teams and a long-term relationship built on understanding, not transactions. When clients feel heard, informed, and supported, the relationship stops being about markets — and starts being about living well.

If you’ve been questioning whether your current advisory relationship truly serves you, that question alone may be your answer. If you’re ready for a more thoughtful, proactive financial partnership, we invite you to connect with our team to see how we can help you create a strategy that provides “Absolute Confidence. Unwavering Partnership. For Life.” Contact us for a complimentary consultation at whzwealth.com or call (860) 928-2341.

Authored by WHZ Wealth Advisor James Zahansky. AI may have been used in the research and initial drafting of this piece. These materials are general in nature and do not address your specific situation. For your specific investment needs, please discuss your individual circumstances with your financial advisor. WHZ Strategic Wealth Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice, and nothing in the accompanying pages should be construed as specific tax or legal advice. Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret Street, Pomfret Center, CT 06259 and 392-A Merrow Road, Tolland, CT 06084, 860.928.2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com>.

Creating Space in a Noisy World

By Angie Jacques, Owner/Practitioner
YONO yoga & Meditation, Quiet Corner Float

We live in a world that rarely stops talking. Notifications, conversations, headlines, expectations, and the constant inner commentary follow us from the moment we wake up until we fall asleep, sometimes even into our dreams. While the volume may feel uniquely modern, the experience of a noisy mind is not new.

Thousands of years ago, the Yoga Sutras named this restlessness chitta vritti—the fluctuations of the mind. Long before smartphones and social media, people were already grappling with mental chatter, distraction, worry, and overthinking. Yoga did not arise because the mind was ever calm; it arose because it wasn’t.

Yoga offers something quietly radical in response: space.

Not silence. Not emptiness. But space—enough room to breathe, to feel, and to notice without immediately reacting. Many people hesitate to try yoga because they believe they need to be flexible, fit, calm, or somehow “ready.” Others feel an underlying fear: I won’t fit in. I’ll do it wrong. I don’t belong there.

These thoughts, too, are part of the noise.

The truth is, every person who has ever stepped onto a mat took that same first step. They answered a gentle but persistent call—to feel better, to move differently, to relate to themselves with more care. No one arrives already knowing how to quiet the mind or move the body with ease. Yoga is the practice of learning, not the reward for having already figured it out.

When we slow the body down, the mind often gets louder at first. This can feel uncomfortable or even scary. But it’s not a sign of failure—it’s a sign that we’ve stopped distracting ourselves long enough to listen. Yoga doesn’t ask us to shut the mind off; it teaches us how to stop being pulled around by it.

Over time, through breath, movement, and stillness, we learn that we don’t have to engage every thought. We don’t have to solve everything right now. The noise may remain, but our relationship to it changes.

Yoga isn’t about escaping life or becoming someone new. It’s about creating space within what already is—and having the courage to begin.

Tai Chi Classes for Health and Balance

Windham Senior Center:
Mon, Wed 10-11a; & Wed, Fri 9-10a
Call or text Sarah Winter: 860-931-8636

Ashford Knowlton Hall Tue, Fri 9:30-10:30a
Coventry Senior Center: Wed 9:30-10:30a
Lebanon Senior Center: Tue 4-5p, Thu 6:30-7:30p
Lebanon Library: Thu 5-6p
Storrs Friends Meetinghouse: Sat 8:30-9:30a

Call or text Joe Pandolfo: 959-444-3979



Seeking Museum Curator

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

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

To learn more please email: info@ec-chap.org or call: **518.791.9474**.

WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG

156 River Road, Suite 2106A, Willington, CT 06279 | 518.791.9474 | info@ec-chap.org

The Neighbors Live & Local Calendar

Compiled by Jesse R. Clark

Saturday, February 21st

Live Music: Acoustic Artist Series: Singer / Songwriter Jenna Nichols (Indie/Folk). The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington, CT. Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm. New York Based singer/songwriter Jenna Nicholls will return to The Packing House stage with her original music and fresh lyrics! Last year Jenna blew us away with her unique style and we are fortunate to have the opportunity to have her join us once again. For tickets and info visit: www.thepackinghouse.us; Questions? Call 518-791-9474.

Sunday, February 22nd

Live Music: Simon Brogie & The XLTs / Jean Baptist will be playing at The Bread Box at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 220 Valley Street, Willimantic CT at 4:00 pm. Tickets are available at <https://events.humanitix.com/copy-of-bread-box-theater-spring-2026-music-series/tickets>

Friday, February 27th

Theater: The Windham Theater Guild/ Burton Leavitt Theatre at 779 Main St Main Street, Willimantic, will put on *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 7:00 pm(Doors open at 6:30). Adults \$22; Students/Seniors \$17; UCONN/ ECSU/QVCC Students \$15; Children under 12 \$13. For more info or to purchase tickets, go to [windhamtheatre-guild.org/ tickets/](http://windhamtheatre-guild.org/tickets/) or call 860-423-2245.

Saturday, February 28th

Theater: *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 7:00 pm(-doors open at 6:30)(*See 2/27*)

Sunday, March 1st

Theater: *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 2:00 pm(-doors open at 1:30)(*See 2/27*)

Tuesday, March 3rd

Historical Event: “Meet Ben Franklin” will be at Saxton B. Little Library, Columbia at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 4th

Historical Event: “Women of the American Revolution” will be at Canterbury Historical Society, Community Center, 1 Municipal Drive at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 5th

Theater: *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 7:00 pm(-doors open at 6:30)(*See 2/27*)

Friday, March 6th

Theater: *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 7:00 pm(-doors open at 6:30)(*See 2/27*)

Live Music: The Willimantic Winter Blues Fest will be at Willimantic Elks Club Lodge #1311 at Pleasant St, Willimantic 7:00-10:00 pm. Doors open at 6. Featuring Otis & The Hurricanes and The Brandt Taylor Band. For more info/tickets, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-willimantic-winter-blues-fest-tickets-1983198213242?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl>

Saturday, March 7th

Theater: *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 7:00 pm(-doors open at 6:30)(*See 2/27*)

Live Music: Acoustic Artist Series: An Evening with Singer / Songwriter Ellis Paul (Folk). The Live Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington, CT. Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm. We are pleased to present Ellis Paul ‘s debut performance at The Packing House! This seasoned Boston based singer songwriter has wowed folks for more than three decades. Ellis combines his multi-instrumental talents with original lyrics and storytelling to engage his audience. With a captivating performance and 22 albums to his name, this is a show not to miss! For tickets and info visit: www.thepackinghouse.us; Questions? Call 518-791-9474.

Live Music: The Paul Gabriel Blues Band will perform at The River Room, 50 Riverside Drive, Willimantic from 7:30-9:30 pm. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Ticket info available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-paul-gabriel-blues-band-a-willimantic-winter-blues-fest-event-tickets-1983219225089?aff=oddtcreator>

Sunday, March 8th

Theater: *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 2:00 pm(-doors open at 1:30)(*See 2/27*)

Monday, March 9th

Film: The Second Monday Film Series presents *Missing*, a movie about an American journalist and filmmaker that goes missing during the ’73 fascist coup d’etat of Chile, at the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse 46 Spring Road, Storrs at 7:00 pm. Donations accepted. Check out Second Monday Film Series on Facebook for more info.

Thursday, March 12th

Historical Event: “Women of the American Revolution” will be at Brooklyn Historical Society, Trinity Episcopal Church Parish House at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, March 13th

Theater: *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 7:00 pm(-doors open at 6:30)(*See 2/27*)

Poetry: Poet’s Corner Poetry Open Mic. Free. Booth & Dimock Library, 1134 Main St., Coventry 7:00. Go to <https://coventryartsguild.org/poets-corner-open-mic.html> for more info.

Yoga: A Yoga Nidra: Deep Rest and Renewal practice will be held at The Mantra Room at Brooks Bend Plaza, 661 Windham Road, Windham from 6:00-7:30. \$30. Go to <https://www.mantraroomct.com/events/nidra-with-amanda-2-5dybb> for more info.

Saturday, March 14th

Theater: *The Importance of Being Earnest* at 7:00 pm(-doors open at 6:30)(*See 2/27*)

Live Music: The Nick Biello Quartet will play jazz music while Painter, Amanda Roy paints at The River Room, 50 Riverside Drive, Willimantic from 7:30-9:30 pm. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Ticket info available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nick-biello-quartet-painter-aman-da-roy-tickets-1982809504604?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery-&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl> or check out <https://riverroomwilli.com/>

Sunday, March 15th

Activism/Art: “Art in Action: A Community Art Building Collaborative” will have their monthly meeting. Contact artinactionwillimantic@gmail.com to learn more.

Saturday, March 21st

Yoga: *108 Sun Salutations to Celebrate the Spring Equinox:* Come to YONO Yoga Studio, 59 Church Street Willimantic from 1:00-3:00 pm to do 108 Sun Salutations! You don’t have to do them all, but it’s a great way to welcome spring! \$25 Check out <https://yonowillimantic.com/event/108-sun-salutations-to-celebrate-the-spring-equinox/> for more info.

Live Music: Special Program: The Patty Tuite Band (Blues / Indie). The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington, CT. Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm. We are excited to have The Patty Tuite Band return to The Packing House this season! This local/regional band with award winning musician, Patty Tuite at the helm, has been turning heads in our area with a blues vibe that just doesn’t quit. It’s a pleasure to have these exceptional artists grace our stage! For tickets and info visit: www.thepackinghouse.us; Questions? Call 518-791-9474.

Sunday, March 22nd

Historical Event: “John Trumbull-Painter of the American Revolution” will be at Mill Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic at 4:00 p.m. Free, funded by Pageau Trust.

Wednesday, March 25th

Historical Program: Tavern Night: Jane Austen. ‘Meet’ Jane Austen at the Jillson House Museum. 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. \$10. Go to <https://www.jillsonhousemuseum.com/event-details-registration/tavern-night-with-jane-austen>

Thursday, March 26th

Film: Moulton Lava Cinema Celebrates American Labor in Struggle for Justice: *Salt of the Earth* about a Mexican-American miner strike in the 1950s. \$10 Donation. Free Popcorn. Doors open at 6, movie at 6:30. 31 Moulton Court, Willimantic

Saturday, March 28th

Activism: “No Kings” Rally in Killingly outside Killingly Commons and across from Owen Bell Park(Route 395, exit 41) from noon-2:00.

Activism: “No Kings” Rally on Main Street, Willimantic by the Frog Bridge from 3:00-5:00 pm.

Tuesday, March 31st

Historical Event: “Women of the Revolution” will be at Mansfield Public Library at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 1st

Yoga: Full Moon Workshop: Practice, Reflection & Candle Ritual with Haley will be held at The Mantra Room at Brooks Bend Plaza, 661 Windham Road, Windham from 5:30-7:30 pm. \$35. Go to <https://www.mantraroomct.com/events/full-moon-1> for more info.

Friday, April 10th

Poetry: Poet’s Corner Poetry Open Mic. Free. Booth & Dimock Library, 1134 Main St., Coventry 7:00. Go to <https://coventryartsguild.org/poets-corner-open-mic.html> for more info.

Saturday, April 11th

Historical Event: “Sons of Liberty in Windham County” will be at the Putnam Public Library at 1:00 p.m.

Monday, April 13th

Film: The Second Monday Film Series will show *Faces of the Enemy: Justifying the Inhumanity of War*, a documentary about how soldiers can dehumanize others in war, at the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse 46 Spring Road, Storrs at 7:00 pm. Donations accepted. Check out Second Monday Film Series on Facebook for more info.

Saturday, April 18th

Live Music: Acoustic Artist Series: SIRS Y (Indie / Rock-Pop). The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington, CT. Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm. We are pleased to host SIRS Y for the very first time at The Packing House! Melanie & Rich bring lots of soul and loads of heart to the stage. Hailing from my part of the world in Upstate NY, we can’t wait to get them in front of you! Please join us for an evening of great music, storytelling, nerdy jokes, laughter and tears. For tickets and info visit: www.thepackinghouse.us; Questions? Call 518-791-9474.

Sunday, April 19th

Activism/Art: “Art in Action: A Community Art Building Collaborative” will have their monthly meeting. Contact artinactionwillimantic@gmail.com to learn more.

Wednesday, April 22nd

Historical Program: Tavern Night: Jack Dawson from *Titanic*. ‘Meet’ Jack Dawson from *Titanic* at the Jillson House Museum. 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. \$10. Go to <https://www.jillsonhousemuseum.com/event-details-registration/tavern-night-with-jack-dawson-from-titanic>

Thursday, April 23rd

Film: Moulton Lava Cinema Celebrates American Labor in Struggle for Justice: *Killer of Sheep* about the daily life of a slaughterhouse worker in Watts, LA in the late 70s. \$10 Donation. Free Popcorn. Doors open at 6, movie at 6:30. 31 Moulton Court, Willimantic.

Friday, April 24th

Theater: The Windham Theater Guild’s Broadway Chorus will be performing at the Burton Leavitt Theatre at 779 Main St Main Street, Willimantic at 7:30(doors open at 7:00). Go to <https://windhamtheatre.guild.org> or call (860) 423-2245 for more info.

Saturday, April 25th:

Theater: The Windham Theater Guild’s Broadway Chorus(*see 4/24*).

Live Music: Special Program: EC-CHAP and The Connecticut Blues Society Proudly Present an Evening of Dancing Blues! The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington, CT. Doors 7:00pm / Performance 7:30pm. Please join us for this Blues Party featuring two Connecticut-based bands: Ryan Hartt & The Blue Hearts and The Kingpins. Bring your listening ears and your dancing shoes! These folks will have you on your feet and wanting more! For tickets and info visit: www.thepackinghouse.us; Questions? Call 518-791-9474.

Sunday, April 26th

Historical Program: “What People used for Money before the Revolution- Colonial Currency” by Dr. Peter Jones, will be held at the Mill Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic at 4:00 p.m. Free.

Planning for the Future of Your Land: An Introduction to Land Conservation and Estate Planning

Submitted by Cassidy Plaud

The Last Green Valley, Inc. is excited to offer a new series of Zoom webinars on the topic of land conservation and estate planning. Are you a landowner with an interest in better management and conservation of your family lands but don’t know where to start? We have three Zoom sessions scheduled to help you start thinking about your land’s legacy and how to start the process of land conservation and stewardship. This series is targeted at landowners who may be interested in conservation but do not know where to start.

Thursday, February 26 from 6:30-8 PM: Where to Start?
Setting goals for your land: conservation or stewardship? What are common problems for heirs if you don’t plan and how to start family conversations.

Thursday, March 26 from 6:30-8 PM: What You Can Do Right Now
Saving on property taxes and available funding programs. How working with a forester can benefit you and your land.

Thursday, April 23 from 6:30-8 PM: Conservation-Based Estate Planning
What makes your land special? Mechanics of a conservation transaction: finding the right legal tool and land trust partner.

If you’re interested in attending one, two or all three sessions, please email Cassidy@tlgv.org to register for this free webinar series!

Thank you to our co-sponsors:
Avalonia Land Conservancy, Connecticut DEEP, Connecticut Land Conservation Council, Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, Eastern Connecticut Forest Landowners Association, Joshuas Trust, Naturally Natchaug, New England Forestry Foundation, Opacum Land Trust, Wyndham Land Trust, and Yale Forests.

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

The month of January was time for my annual physical with my Primary Care doctor. I have seen him for years and we always compare his practice to our repair business. The months of December and January saw lots of flu, viruses, and CoVid running rampant. I had one of those nasty viruses for more than 3 weeks. It was not fun. I asked my doctor if he thought mold might have something to do with all this sickness. His answer was very short and to the point, he said, “It doesn’t help.” Mold can cause an allergic reaction by the body. It may make you sneeze, cough, give you a sore throat, give you a headache or a migraine, and a constant runny nose.

This brings me to this month’s car care article. At least 95% of the vehicles that we service and open the hood on have some sort of debris in their cowl. Why you might ask is this important to keep this area clean? Leaves, nuts, pine needles, and yes mice remnants and droppings build up in this area. This debris becomes wet and rots and it produces mold. The cowl area has drains on both sides. These drains can become plugged over time if they are not cleaned. So, any water stays in the cowl. The fresh air that comes into your vehicle comes through the cowl and if so, equipped the cabin air filter. This maintenance should be based on the environment the vehicle is in. If parked outside under trees this area should be checked regularly. Even garage kept vehicles should be checked regularly because mice are known to inhabit garages.

Mold can also be found inside your vehicle. The coffee that spilled, milk, fruit cores, and left-over fast-food wrappers and run-away French fries all can help to be a breeding ground for mold. Weather Tech or equal floor mats can stop some of this problem helping to keep your carpet dry. The air conditioner evaporator is inside the car and should be cleaned once a year. If the drains are plugged water can end up on the floor of the vehicle. The evaporator works as a dehumidifier to remove moisture in the cabin. The water you see on the ground is coming from working evaporator drains when you shut the car down in the summer.

The vehicles of years ago had cowl fresh air vents. The carpet on the floor of today’s vehicles used to be rubber mats. Those vehicles did not have air conditioning systems until the mid-1950’s. The phrase bare bones on a vehicle comes from these old basic cars. I hope some of the suggestions in this article can make a healthier driving environment for you.

On another note, the last couple of months we have had customers asking about vehicle insurance. I am going to share what one customer experienced with vehicle insurance. The age and mileage play a large part of some of these policies. Once you reach the limit the policy is cancelled and the money you paid out is not returned even if you never used the insurance. The use of used parts maybe another example used by the insurance company to deny coverage. I personally feel that instead of buying vehicle insurance policies you may be better off to open a bank account and put the money that you would have paid to an insurance company in that account. It will add up quickly with interest if you stick with it and you will have the money you need to pay for your repair bills. Remember if something seems too good to be true it probably is!!

Drive safe and happy motoring!

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

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Mazda Gets Some Air(E)

By Bill Heald

There’s a lot to be said about avoiding excess when it’s really not necessary. For example, if you needed to cross a pond, it might make more sense to use a rowboat instead of an ocean liner. In the world of automobiles, a lot of drivers have realized the utility of an SUV is not limited to a larger vehicle but is now obtainable in a much smaller ride. As a matter of fact, the compact has become the most popular class in the sea of crossover Sport Utilities, and every manufacturer has a representative in their inventory to please customers.

Naturally, Mazda has jumped right into this fray, and today we look at the 2026 CX-30 2.5 Turbo Aire Edition. The Aire is a special trim version that offers a lot of great equipment without going off the deep end with excessive gadgetry. That said, it has a full boat of functional, safety and tech equipment. Being a Mazda, it is engineered with the Jinba Ittai philosophy (Horse and rider as one), as well as as SKYACTIV technology that “boosts performance, economy and performance” and comes into play in every aspect of the car’s driving experience.



Our CX-30 Aire Edition came standard (as all CX-30s do) with i-ACTIV AWD, which came in very handy during the snowy weather we’ve experienced the last couple of months. Our inline 4-cylinder mill was designated as part of the SKYACTIV-G family of engines, in this case displacing 2.5 liters and boasting Turbocharging and Advanced Direct Fuel Injection. Horsepower is rated at 227, however if you desire more ponies under the bonnet buy Premium fuel and the horsepower jumps to 250. It’s a Mazda thing. This power is channeled through a SKYACTIV (of course) 6-speed Automatic transmission, which has a manual shifting mode using the console shifter. This is a very satisfying powertrain, with good power and a refined smoothness not all compact SUVs possess.



The iACTIV AWD system worked well in about 4” of snow but anything deeper than that would require more snow-oriented tires than the ones it wore out of the factory. The handling is quite good for a little SUV, and while firm the ride quality is pretty much mid-pack in the compact class.

Interior room is good up front, but the rear (while adequate) isn’t as good as a lot of the competition. The rear seats also lack both map lights and usb-c ports, which is surprising. Cargo room is 20 cubic feet with the rear seats up; 45 when they’re folded. Seat comfort is very accommodating in the front while a tad flatter in the rear.

The Aire Edition has white leatherette-trimmed seating, and overall cabin workmanship is quite good. All in all the CX-30 is a good choice in the class, and has all the unique Mazda qualities that has made the brand a favorite. Over a week of testing we got 22 MPG, and the MSRP came to \$37,240. mazdausa.com

My Father’s Hands

By Colin Browne

I have my father’s hands. I didn’t notice it growing up—not when they reached across the dinner table for the salt, not when they steadied my bicycle seat, not even when they pointed out constellations in the night sky as if he were uncovering ancient truths. But now, when I catch my reflection in a window or lace my fingers together in thought, I see his hands looking back at me.

His hands were brown from hours in the sun, the kind of tan earned through repetition rather than leisure. They held the memory of every summer day spent on a ladder painting the house, every weekend afternoon pushing a lawnmower across uneven ground. The backs of them were dappled with a constellation of age spots—quiet markers of time that he never mentioned but never hid. Blue veins rose like a highway map beneath the skin, thin routes that carried decades of labor, patience, and unspoken tenderness.

These were hands that knew motion. They threw a baseball with a confidence I mistook for ease, the ball arcing through the air like a promise I never doubted he would keep. They shoveled New England snow before sunrise, carving paths through drifts so deep they swallowed the boots of smaller men. In winter’s bitter silence, I remember him leaning on the handle of the shovel for a breath, steam rising from his jacket, his hands reddened but steady. They were tools, yes, but they were also anchors.

And every Sunday, those hands came together—sometimes clasped in prayer, sometimes resting calmly on the steering wheel as we drove to church, sometimes folded over one another in a gesture that said he trusted the quiet more than the noise. It was in those moments that I learned something about strength: that it isn’t only measured in what hands can lift or build or endure, but also in how gently they can hold the things that matter.

Now I notice the small ways I carry him with me. The way my knuckles rise when I grip a pen. The way my palms darken in the summer, no matter how little time I think I’ve spent outside. The way the veins along the backs of my hands have begun to stand out, faint but insistent. I used to think inheritance was limited to stories and photographs, but sometimes it is written into the body itself, a quiet lineage that appears when we least expect it.

I have my father’s hands. And though they are not doing the same work he once did, I recognize them all the same—these hands that remember the feel of a baseball, the weight of a shovel, the stillness of a Sunday morning. In them I see not just the shape of who he was, but the outline of who I am becoming.

John Anton Clark



Classic Americana

March 28th - Downtown Coffee Shop, Meriden, CT 11:00am-1:00 pm
March 29th - Priam Vineyards, Colchester, CT 2:00-5:00pm
April 11th - Hilltop Restaurant, Willington CT 6:30-9:30 pm
jantonclown@gmail.com

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).

New England Turns to Oil During Deep Freeze, Lawmakers Disagree on Fix CT Examiner. “State Sen. Ryan Fazio, a Greenwich Republican and candidate for governor, blamed Democratic leaders for blocking natural gas pipeline expansion...State Sen. Norman Needleman, D-Essex, blamed the Trump administration’s interference with offshore wind generation...[PACE’s Bernard] Pelletier advocated for a long-term energy strategy built around a series of smaller solutions that could lessen dependence on oil even in emergencies. Offshore wind could generate more electricity during the windy winter months; energy efficiency improvements in buildings could reduce energy consumption; utility-scale batteries and vehicle-to-grid technology could allow grid operators to tap into stored energy during emergencies; and demand response programs could pay manufacturers to reschedule production or adjust their consumption during peak demand periods.” Plus: 4 Lessons New England’s Grid Can Learn From Last Week’s Winter Storm

Wind power would cut New England’s risk of an energy blackout, study says Connecticut Public. “Offshore wind projects off New England can substantially reduce the region’s risk of a demand-based energy blackout, according to a new study. The report...examines last winter’s actual wind speeds to determine how much energy they could produce. If two wind farms off the coast of Massachusetts, Vineyard Wind and Revolution Wind, had been fully operational last winter, they would have reduced the risk of a demand-based power outage in New England by 55 percent...’ And if you think about the shipments of [liquefied natural gas] that we often need to turn to in the winter, you can see how these could replace those shipments...”

Ryan Fazio campaign policy pitch promises cheaper electricity CT Mirror. “Republican gubernatorial candidate Ryan Fazio outlined plans Monday to lower the high cost of electricity, asserting that Connecticut’s longstanding efforts to promote carbon-free energy have burdened ratepayers without mitigating climate change...A six-point plan Fazio released and his answers to questions about climate change put him in sync with President Donald Trump, albeit employing rhetoric less heated than that of the president, who has called climate change “a hoax” and a “con job” as he rolled back clean air standards and ordered halts on off-shore wind projects...“Ryan Fazio’s proposal isn’t a serious solution, it’s a collection of reckless ideas that would destabilize our energy grid and drive up costs,” [Roberto Alves, the Democratic state chair] said.”

The Trump administration favors natural gas. What does that mean for CT? CT Mirror. “But a lot of the gas is not destined for use here. Much of the Trump administration’s motive for boosting production is to sell it to other countries — especially European countries trying to stop using Russian gas. They’ve been willing to pay relatively high prices, which gas producers certainly like. If U.S. buyers want some of that gas, in order to be competitive they would to have to match those European prices. Even if you strip out the costs of liquefying it and transporting it to Europe, U.S. buyers would still face higher prices for natural gas, which seems to leave them stuck between a rock and a hard place.”

What’s driving up Maine’s energy bills? Natural gas. Canary Media. “...the factor that most influences power costs in Maine is the volatility of natural gas prices, the report finds. Maine is part of the six-state New England grid, which gets more than half its electricity from gas-burning power plants. Roughly 80% of the time, natural gas is the marginal generation resource — that is, it is the most expensive power source, which sets the price for all the energy flowing onto the grid at that moment. ‘Natural gas is almost always what is setting the price here in New England.’...Natural gas market trends suggest the fuel is only going to get more expensive...”

State Begins Public Debate on Nuclear Energy, With Little Opposition So Far CT Examiner. “State officials launched a public debate this week about the advantages of expanding nuclear energy in Connecticut as a first step toward encouraging towns to host new capacity, in what could mark a reversal after decades of stagnation in the sector nationwide. Wednesday’s workshop drew a largely receptive audience, with only one critical voice among the participants. The workshop was intended to engage residents in discussions about nuclear benefits and concerns, with the goal of implementing next year a program of grants and loans for towns interested in welcoming new advanced reactors.”

Rare Win for Renewable Energy: Trump Administration Funds Geothermal Network Expansion Inside Climate News. “The U.S. Department of Energy has approved an \$8.6 million grant that will allow the nation’s first utility-led geothermal heating and cooling network to double in size. Gas and electric utility Eversource Energy completed the first phase of its geothermal network in Framingham, Massachusetts, in 2024. Eversource is a co-recipient of the award along with the city of Framingham and HEET, a Boston-based nonprofit that focuses on geothermal energy and is the lead recipient of the funding. Geothermal networks are widely considered among the most energy-efficient ways to heat and cool buildings.”

‘Simplify Solar’ National Campaign Aims to Make Residential Rooftop Solar More Affordable Between the Lines. “Simplify Solar is a campaign organized by Third Act national all across the country. And it’s based on the premise that rooftop residential solar is two to three times as expensive in the United States as it is in Germany, some European countries and Australia. And the major reason for this is what they call the soft costs, which are the permitting costs. In Australia, you can get a permit within a day for a simple rooftop solar installation. In the U.S., it can take weeks, months or more. And so those delays incur costs for the homeowner...” Plus: Lamont proposes streamlined solar permitting system

In Brookfield, opposition to natural gas project crosses party lines CT Mirror. “Expanding natural gas infrastructure is a centerpiece of President Donald Trump’s agenda to lower energy costs and boost the fossil fuel industry. He has referred to Democrats opposed to such projects as “anti-energy zealots.” But political support for gas pipelines has run into powerful local opposition in a relatively conservative community in Connecticut, where residents are leading a campaign to block a \$272 million buildout of the Iroquois Gas Transmission System.” Also from the CT Mirror: PODCAST: How a proposed natural gas pipeline in CT cuts across typical partisan politics

Community solar projects continue to grow in CT. The aim is to bring down rising energy costs Hartford Courant. “As energy bills continue to provide sticker shock for many Connecticut residents, some are seeing solar credits being applied to their billing statements without even having any solar panels attached to their homes. Connecticut’s Shared Clean Energy Facilities Program allows residents to reap the benefits of solar who are not eligible to install solar panels themselves...The idea is to add 260 megawatts of locally generated, renewable and low carbon energy to the electric grid over the next eight years through large scale solar projects. Both of the state’s largest energy suppliers, Eversource and United Illuminating, participate in the program...The program utilizes a community solar model with subscribers receiving monthly bill credits for up to 20 years, reducing energy costs at no expense to participants. “

Work can again resume on Revolution Wind, judge orders in blow to Trump CT Mirror. “A federal judge ruled again Monday that work may resume on the offshore Revolution Wind project, despite the Trump administration’s efforts to halt construction for the second time. U.S. District Court Judge Royce Lamberth said in a ruling from the bench Monday that evidence provided by the federal government — which cited the potential impacts large wind farms can have on military radar — was not sufficient to justify its decision to suddenly stop work on a project that was years in the making and had undergone extensive reviews by defense officials...”

Battery farms are coming to CT. Here’s what they do — and why they’re sparking debate CT Insider. “Along with solar and wind projects, battery energy storage facilities — or battery farms — are becoming a big part of the state’s push to cut energy costs and curb greenhouse gas emissions. More battery farm proposals are popping up across Connecticut, promising a more resilient grid and cleaner environment. But they have also prompted safety

concerns in some Connecticut towns...the biggest concern is safety: lithium batteries can overheat and trigger a “thermal runaway” — a chain reaction that can cause a fire to burn intensely for long stretches...Industry advocates argue such fires are extremely rare, noting how battery systems are designed with extensive safety features, undergo rigorous testing and are constantly monitored. Its operators, they say, also work with policymakers and first responders to promote safety.”

8 multifamily housing properties in Connecticut will be assisted in going Solar Power World. “The Connecticut Green Bank announced that eight affordable multifamily housing properties are moving forward as the first round of projects under the Solar Marketplace Assistance Program Plus (Solar MAP+), which makes it easier for affordable multifamily housing providers to access renewable energy and battery storage. When completed, the eight solar energy projects will collectively deliver approximately 2.4 MW of clean energy to 473 residential units — providing property owners with an average of approximately \$569,000 in energy cost savings over the lifetime of the panels, while saving tenants, on average, more than \$350 annually in energy costs.”

Which Dealerships Are EV friendly EV Club of CT. “There are 251 automotive dealerships in the state and, no, we don’t personally know anywhere near all of them. So we began using CHEAPR rebates as a proxy for EV-friendliness, and based on anecdotal feedback, it has proven useful. Though the CT dealership association states on its website that, “Our industry strongly supports promoting and enhancing the electric vehicle market in Connecticut,” the fact is that some dealerships do a great job while others don’t seem to know how to spell EV. The hope was that over time the performance would even out. That hasn’t happened.”

Are Utilities Gouging Customers? Maybe Elsewhere, They say, but not in Connecticut CT Examiner. “The argument, presented in Ellis’ paper, is that while the nationwide average return on equity for utilities in 2023 was 9.6%, the market average return was just 6.7% — a huge difference if applied to large scale new investments in the grid. And, Ellis argues, that still represents an excess of profits for utilities, given that they are among the least risky industries with stable regulated revenues. Ellis said their returns should actually be below 6%.”

Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp News

Submitted by Elaine Nelson

Think spring! Here’s what’s happening at camp in March and April:
Wednesday, March 3, 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Floral Design Night at the lodge. \$65 per person gets you a beautiful floral centerpiece to take home and an evening of fun! Proceeds go towards the Jim Logee Campership Fund. Preregistration required. Call 860-974-1122 or go to ww-w.4hcampct.org for a registration link.
Ragged Hill Woods Environmental Science Programs. For Pre-K to 5th grade students- Wednesdays and Grade 6 – 8 students on Tuesdays. March 3 & 4 Erosion, March 10 & 11 Baking, March 17 & 18 Rockets, March 24 & 25 Nesting Animals. All at 4:30 PM. \$20 per session. Call 860-974-1122 or e mail raggedhillwodds@gmail.com to register.
Sunday, March 15 from 2-4 PM. Visit the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp Open House 326 Taft Pond Rd, Pomfret, CT. Meet the director & other camp staff, take a camp tour, registration materials available. Call 860-974-3379 for questions.
From April 15 through April 28 We will be accepting donations for the 72nd annual Windham County 4-H Auction & Tag Sale to be held on May 1 & 2, 2026. Donations may be dropped off during those dates at the lower level back entrance of the lodge, 326 Taft Pond Rd, Pomfret from 9 – 5 PM Mon, Weds and Friday, 9AM to 7 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 9 – 2 on Saturdays. Antiques and gently used household goods, furniture, toys, electronics, tools, books, decorative items, etc. will be welcomed during open hours. We do not accept donations of clothing, textbooks, magazines or encyclopedias. For further donation assistance, call the office at 860-974-3379.
Sunday, April 18 from 10 AM – 2 PM. Visit the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp Open House 326 Taft Pond Rd, Pomfret, CT. Meet the director & other camp staff, take a camp tour, registration materials available. Call 860-974-3379 for questions or check out the website ww-w.4hcampct.org anytime for registration materials.

326 Taft Pond Rd, Pomfret Center, (860) 974-1122
www.4hcampct.org

Solar Today - Honoring Earth Day, every day

By John Boiano

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

Is there snow on your solar panels?



Due to the amount of snow and locked in cold we’ve had lately, I’ve been receiving calls on what to do about all of the snow on solar panels. In a typical milder snow and deep freeze conditions, snow usually clears pretty quickly off of solar panels on its own. Some roofs with low pitches and shade clear more slowly than those with a steeper pitch and direct sunlight. Due to the freezing temperatures we’ve been having, the snow has been sticking/clinging to the panels a little longer. **My first words of advice are to be patient** because it will always take care of itself over time. The dark tempered glass will heat up even with snow on them and will eventually melt and/or slide off the panels. If you are going to make a move and clear the snow yourself, here are a few tips for doing it in a way that protects the panels, yourself and your property.

It’s worth re-iterating to Be Patient and let nature takes it course. **My professional advice is to leave it alone or hire a professional!** You also take a risk of damaging that panels which would void your warranty. If you decide to help it out a little and take action into your own hands, STAY OUT OF THE WAY of snow coming off your panels! It is heavy and condenses like an avalanche once it hits the ground or you. DO NOT get caught under the landslide of snow!

Use a soft roof rake from the ground to clear panels, avoiding metal tools to prevent damage. Safety is priority; DO NOT climb on slippery roofs or your solar panels! I personally like a Sno Joe roof rake with a cut piece of rubber hose duct taped to the bottom of the leading edge. Don’t use the ones with that plastic sheet on it. Often times just clearing a bottom section of a foot or two will help facilitate the rest to come off in a day or two.

Key Winter Care Strategies and Re-cap:

Let Nature Work: Panels are designed to heat up and shed snow, particularly at angles of 30 to 45 degrees.

Safe Removal Tools: Use specialized soft-bristled roof rakes or brooms to prevent scratching the glass.

Clear Shading: Remove heavy, wet snow that blocks light, as it can stop production, but prioritize clearing just enough to allow the sun to melt the rest.

Safety First: Never climb on a snowy roof or solar panels. Work from the ground level.

The “new” pre-paid PPA that offers a Federal Tax Credit discount to homeowners.

Last month I mentioned that I was going to write about the benefits of the new Franklin Battery and how the technology differs from some of the other top tier manufacturers. Well, I’m going to switch that up a little and instead share about the new Pre-Paid HALO PPPA (Power Purchase Agreement) works since this is a financing game changer where homeowners who prefer ownership will still directly benefit from the Federal ITC tax credit.

Last month I mentioned that *The federal solar tax credit hasn’t disappeared—it’s shifted.*

And it has! I also mentioned that while the residential credit is scheduled to sunset, a **separate commercial tax credit (Section 48E)** will remain available for **third-party-owned residential solar systems**, including leases and Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), through **December 31, 2027.**

On the simple side, this is how it works:

How the HALO/Prepaid PPA Works

Upfront Payment: Instead of a \$0-down monthly contract, you make a single upfront payment, often financed via a loan, to purchase electricity at a heavily discounted rate.

Third-Party Ownership (TPO): A third party (e.g., HDM Capital) owns, installs, and maintains the system for the first 6 years.

Tax Credit Utilization: Because the provider owns the system, they claim the 48E federal solar tax credit (which is not available to homeowners for direct purchase after 2025) and pass these savings to you through a lower upfront cost.

Ownership Transfer: After approximately 6 years (the tax credit recapture period), ownership of the solar system is transferred to you, usually at no additional cost.

No Monthly Payments: After the initial payment, you have no further obligations to the solar provider, though you may still pay the utility for grid power if the panels do not produce the same amount of energy that the home uses. Each home has a different scenario. A Solar Professional can help you with this calculation.

Why the Prepaid PPA Works

Maximizes Tax Credits: Homeowners benefit from the commercial tax credit passed onto them through the lower initial cost of the Pre-Paid PPA.

Lower Overall Cost: By prepaying, you avoid the compounding annual price escalators (often 2.99%) found in traditional PPAs, leading to a much lower total cost of energy.

Eliminates Performance Risk: For the first 6 years, the financing company maintains the system. If it underperforms, they owe you.

Faster Ownership: Unlike traditional leases that rarely end in ownership, this model offers a guaranteed, short-term path to owning the equipment, usually within 6 years.

Again, this is a game changer and it is VERY different then a “traditional” 25 year pre-paid PPA that does not honor the upfront discount of the Commercial Federal Tax Credit!

I am finding that this program is working out in favor of homeowners who are interested in ownership. Aligning with a HELOC has also been very beneficial for them.

With that said, I am also helping homeowners transition to solar with a traditional Lease. Each has its benefits over staying with utility purchased electricity!

A Personal Promise

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

An informed homeowner is an empowered homeowner.

I’m now offering a consulting service:

For a small fee, I will 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 a smart move, but financially strategic for you!

If you or someone you know is exploring solar or just wants a no-pressure consultation, I’d love to help. I strive to help bring clarity and honesty to the solar industry.

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

Thanks for reading and let’s make every day Earth Day!
John Boiano 860-798-5692john@zensolar.net
www.zensolar.net

FOR SOME, FEELING
LEFT OUT
LASTS MORE THAN A MOMENT.

WE CAN CHANGE THAT.

We’ve all had moments where we’ve felt we didn’t belong. But for people who moved to this country, that feeling lasts more than a moment. Together, we can build a better community.
Learn how at [BelongingBeginsWithUs.org](#)

**BELONGING
BEGINS WITH**

US

ad
COUNCIL

Joshua’s Trust Spring Calendar

Submitted by Melica Stinnett

Join us! Joshua’s Trust offers events and programs that are free and open to all, but programs marked with * require registration. For location details, program registration, and up-to-date information, visit: <https://joshuastrust.org/events/>

Exploring Nature Through the Senses*

Drawing Workshop Heather Bunnell, E.O. Smith Art Teacher

Saturday, March 28 | 10:00–12:00pm

Explore nature through art at Atwood Farm! We will have paper and pencils and erasers (or bring your own). This activity is for families of children ages 10 and up.

A Watershed’s Delight at Tinkerville Brook Preserve*

Guided Hike with Kathy Demers & Barbara Scott

Saturday, April 11 | 10:00–12:00pm

Tinkerville Brook Preserve in Ashford is a watershed’s best friend! Community members of all ages are invited on a leisurely hike through this remarkable 42-acre woodland. Learn about how Tinkerville’s Brook Preserve’s healthy and intact ecosystem contributes to the flow of clean, cold water from the brook to the greater Natchaug watershed beyond.



Joshua’s Trust Annual Meeting*

With Guest Speaker Professor Robert (Thor) Thorson

Saturday, April 18 | 4:00-6:00pm

Joshua’s Trust Members in good standing are invited to join Joshua’s Trust staff, Board of Trustees, and friends to celebrate our 60th year of accomplishments in conservation.

Earth Day Walk: Commemorating Two Revolutions in Lebanon, CT*

Guided Hike with Professor Robert (Thor) Thorson

Wednesday, April 22 | 10:00–12:00pm

Joshua’s Trust Annual Earth Day Walk will take place at two sites near each other in Lebanon, CT. First, we will briefly commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution at the War Office near the southwest corner of the Town Green. Then we will take a short drive to Joshua’s Trust Pigeon Swamp Preserve for a trail walk to an overlook at Big Pond.

History Walk at Mason’s Mill & Fish’s Woods Preserve*

Guided Hike with Altina Waller

May (Please check website for updated details)

Join historian Altina Waller for a guided local history walk at Mason’s Mill and the adjacent newly-acquired Fish’s Woods Preserve. This History Walk will explore the importance of water-powered mills in daily life preceding the American Revolution and their industrial transformation afterwards. Learn about how John Mason, the eccentric owner of Mason’s Mill, confronted that transformation made a historically significant impact on Connecticut history.

Maypole Celebration

Saturday, May 2 | 2:00–4:00

Atwood Farm | All are welcome!

Contemplative Walks*

with Debbie Pallatto

Saturday, May 9 | 11:00–12:30

Sunday, May 31 | 2:00–3:00

Saturday, July 11 | 10:00–11:00

Sunday, September 13 | 1:00–2:00

Visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for more details

Regional Community Media & Arts News

By John Murphy

Hey everyone, I hope you stayed warm and dry as this wicked winter passes. Wow.

I had the good fortune to spend some time in Brasil in January but my return home to the Quiet Corner was brutal. Raking the roof to prevent ice dams was a joy, I know we all felt that pain. Nevertheless as the song wisely advises, *You Must Believe in Spring!* I am ready, I hope you are!

A few things to catch up with regarding media and the *On the Homefront* media series:

- 1. Media Warfare News—*Project 2025* Versus *Evil Geniuses*
- 2. Connecticut Arts Alliance News—Assets for Artists
- 3. Recent guests and issues explored in the *On the Homefront* series

MEDIA WARFARE NEWS PROJECT 2025 VS EVIL GENIUSES

The times they are a changin’ and they are not normal. In the midst of our nation’s declining behavior and function, domestically and internationally, the world is looking at us and scratching its head (or laughing) and watching as we fail our own tests for managing a stable government. We are taking our unique historical success for granted and that is always dangerous.

Whatever your political flavor, our national system of dialogue and governance is not working well, and our precious democracy has been infected by extreme self-interest and short-term thinking. Our love and devotion to individual freedom have been stolen by people with a new toolbox and a different vision that can change the future for all of us. There is no loyal opposition that is united behind higher principles—there are only friends and enemies, or victims and witnesses.

For me there is no Deep State that exists as a separate “entity” apart from our major political parties. Elected (and unelected) members of both national parties and their implanted proxies that stay in positions for many years, from election to election, are the unchanging Deep State that survives every effort at constraint or control.

We all need to find a way to stay positive, as our country is suffering from a potent winter mixture of fear, anger, hope, and faith. Our national conversation is disappearing in a shower of bullhorns, fireworks, and arguments that go nowhere 24/7 on nonstop screens with a kaleidoscope of talking heads sharing opinions and very little facts most of the time. The national media dance of illusion, delusion, and confusion with little constraint is killing the news as we know it. Or knew it.

In this new media and mental environment, and in consideration of the good, bad, and ugly that looms before all of us, I am working on something new to share with you in the coming year. It will be an ongoing exploration and comparison of two significant recent publications that define and explain the history and roots of the core debates at our foundation. They explain and reflect the polarities behind the pressure and arguments that energize the historic forces at play today:

-*Project 2025, the Mandate for Leadership*: The Conservative Promise, by the Heritage Foundation

-*Evil Geniuses: The Unmaking of America* (A Recent History) by journalist Kurt Anderson.

This new series begins in March. If have read either of these books and would like to contribute to this exploration and discussion just contact me by email. It would be great to hear from many of you with different points of view on these two powerful publications.

The Neighbors Paper
Locally Written
Locally Wread



CONNECTICUT ARTS ALLIANCE
A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR
THE ARTS
[<https://ctartsalliance.org/>]

As this issue goes to press the Alliance reminded me that the Connecticut Legislature is in session with at least three bills that could have real impacts on the *arts community* and the *arts economy* in our state. I encourage you to follow these and other possible bills and contact you local officials with comments and support. Letters are important to legislators, and they collectively contribute to the decision process, so try your best! I was honored to serve on the Alliance Board for several years and members visit the program during the year.

SB 02- An Act Supporting Local Commerce
What it does: This bill proposes eliminating sales tax for utilities for companies under \$10 million gross revenue. It also proposes using 1% of the meals tax for the following purposes: 1) 50% to be deposited in the Tourism Fund (this is the fund that funds our entire sector) 2) 50% paid to municipalities where the tax was sourced.

SB 55- An Act Dedicating The Additional Sales Tax on Meals for Certain Purposes
What it does: Proposes using 1% of the meals tax for the following purposes: 1) 50% to be deposited in the Tourism Fund (this is the fund that funds the arts sector) 2) 25% paid to municipalities where the tax was sourced 3) 25% dedicated to supporting free school lunches.

HB 5039- An Act Requiring Transparency and Additional Oversight of the Distribution of Certain Legislatively Directed Funds
What it Does: Outlines several suggestions on oversight over Legislatively Directed Funds (aka earmarks or line items)

One more thing. The *CT Office of the Arts* works with regional partners to support *Assets for Artists* professional development workshops that are available for free to artists of all disciplines in Connecticut. There are several workshops in March and April that are available at this link: <https://www.assetsforartists.org/>

ON THE HOMEFRONT—RECENT GUESTS [FROM WILI RADIO YOUTUBE CHANNEL]



On January 28, NAACP members Rodney Alexander (L) and Amin Ramadan (R) discuss health care challenges in our region, difficulty communicating with officials, and plans for a spring fundraiser. They lead off the program and the link = https://youtu.be/-qDiYzk3oE4?si=hnyjHjU-IB_SMj3rF Facebook page has info.



On February 4, Kathryn Stahlberg (R) and Chelsea Cherrier (L) talk about CLiCK, Commercially Licensed Cooperative Kitchen and its support for new food business startups, training, community agriculture, and the regional food economy. Program link = https://youtu.be/JjXG6z-pnyos?si=Pv_7xLXMFfwMnJX5. (at 23:17) and more information at: www.clickwillimantic.com



On February 4 Dr. Karim Ismaili, ECSU President reviewed current challenges to higher education and the liberal arts in the state and nationally, free speech on campus, and the launch of the Small Business Center. Karim begins at :35 and the program link = <https://youtu.be/eWAcTMFsczw?si=JxWVe8UpKi8ERDkp>



February 11 cast members Ava Molner (R), Blaise Di-Modungo (C) and Geoff Fleming (L) preview the Guild’s production of Oscar Wilde’s classic *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Website for info and tickets: www.wind-hamthetreguild.org. Program link at 16:45 = <https://youtu.be/QgKDP9EKWS4?si=60ZEr1KRpZCG3jNN>



On January 21, Kia Baird from the Coalition, our Designated Regional Service Organization, previewed events, new programs, training workshops, and funding opportunities for our region. She leads off at :50 and the link = <https://youtu.be/eWAcTMFsczw?si=JxWVe8UpKi8ERDkp>



On February 11, Karen Warinsky previewed the seventh season of *Poets at Large*, a spoken word/poetry series at The Vanilla Bean in Pomfret. Featured writer Sean F. Forbes shared his poems and discussed teaching poetry at UConn and Yale. They begin at 44:46 at program link = <https://youtu.be/QgKDP9EKWS4?si=kGD1vUX6lIYFIIFE>



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

-Flagship originating broadcasts will continue in Willimantic at WILI AM 1400 and 95.3 FM on Wednesday from 5:05-6:00 pm.

continued on next page

An Exciting New Resource on YouTube in June

By Michelle M. Baughman

Doug Blecher is the creator of the Autism Stories podcast, which has produced 435 episodes since 2018. The show helps autistic individuals live their best lives by interviewing autistic people and others in the autism community who share their experiences, stories, and advice, because (as the tagline of the show says) autistic people are the true experts of the autistic experience.

Blecher recently announced, “After years of hearing from so many incredible guests, I’ve come to realize that it’s time to bring the Autism Stories mission to a new level. I’m excited to announce that I am expanding the podcast into a YouTube variety show, one that will not only continue to share the powerful stories of autistic people, but also highlight the creativity, artistry, and talents that often go unrecognized.”

The new Autism Stories YouTube show that Doug created and will be hosting has a heartfelt mission: to educate, entertain, and raise awareness about the rich and diverse experiences of autistic individuals. Doug and every single member of the show’s writing team are autistic. “This ensures that each episode is rooted in real-life experience and authenticity,” Doug explains.

The variety show will be a platform where autistic voices are not only heard but celebrated. Through personal interviews and creative performances—music, poetry, and other forms of expression—the show will showcase the many facets of autistic life. It will also have humor and skits, all designed to reflect and share the unique aspects of autistic culture in an entertaining and positive way.

The core mission is simple but powerful:

Educate the public about the wide range of experiences that come with being autistic, shedding light on how autism impacts daily life, relationships, and personal growth.

Amplify autistic voices, providing a rare space for individuals to share their stories, struggles, and triumphs in a world where their experiences are too often overlooked.

Celebrate autistic talent by showcasing performances and creative works that highlight the incredible skills, artistry, and ingenuity within the autistic community.

Foster understanding by breaking down stereotypes and promoting awareness about neurodiversity and inclusion, encouraging a more compassionate and inclusive society.

Doug proudly declares, “The You-

Tube show is a project that has been years in the making. As I have been the host and creator of the Autism Stories podcast for the past six years and 400-plus episodes, I’ve had the privilege of interviewing autistic individuals from all walks of life, sharing their personal stories, insights, and experiences in a way that amplifies their voices and helps to build understanding about autism. Through the podcast, we’ve addressed everything from the challenges of navigating a neurotypical world to the unique strengths and talents that many autistic individuals possess.”

The YouTube show will be a vibrant, multifaceted space where autistic voices take center stage. The goal is to create a show that not only educates but also celebrates the diverse talents and experiences within the autistic community. By elevating autistic voices in both personal and creative contexts, Doug and his team hope to challenge stereotypes, promote understanding, and foster a greater sense of belonging for all autistic people.

Blecher is particularly excited about this new endeavor because it will provide an opportunity to reach an even larger audience—one that can engage with and learn from the autistic community in a more dynamic and interactive way. “By moving to YouTube, we will have the ability to offer a visually engaging experience that allows us to showcase talent and creativity in a way that a podcast simply cannot,” he says.

The new YouTube show will remain true to the heart of the original Autism Stories podcast, with a commitment to authenticity, inclusion, and empowerment. “As always, the voices and experiences of autistic individuals will be at the forefront of everything we do,” Doug explains, “and I’m thrilled to continue this journey with the goal of further changing perceptions and building a more inclusive world.”

You will have to wait until June 2026 to see the new YouTube show, but you can listen to the podcast in the meantime at: <https://www.youtube.com/@AutismPersonalCoach>

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

News from the Willington Public Library

Submitted by Debbie Linares
Assistant Director/Programmer

Winter can be more of a quieter time here at the library. We have a lot more “passive” programs that go on where people of all ages can enjoy what is offered at their own leisure and time. We are already well into the year and Spring will soon be here and with it some great programming. Here’s what’s ahead...

The Willington Public Library is excited to announce that they are the recipient of a new 3D printing system thanks to a fund-raising initiative project, led by E.O. Smith High School senior, Abdurahman Pelletier. This addition will give Willington residents access to cutting-edge tools for creativity, innovation, and hands-on learning. Mr. Pelletier will offer introductory workshops on 3D printing, helping patrons explore design, engineering, and problem-solving in an accessible and engaging way. We are so grateful to Abdurahman and everyone who made this possible.

We’ve got a most SPECIAL program coming on SUNDAY, March 1st at 1:00 PM. Come see “MUSH with Sophia, the Sled Dog”...and her human!

2025 was the 100th Anniversary of the 1925 Diphtheria Epidemic Serum Run! Remember Balto (watch the movie here on Saturday, March 28) and Togo and the many heroic huskies and mushers who carried life-saving anti-toxin to the town of Nome, Alaska? Want to learn more? Musher, Karen Land, will cover these subjects and more when she and Sophia, the Alaskan husky visit the Willington Public Library!

Land is a writer, public speaker, and three-time participant in the 1000-mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race as well as many other sprint and endurance races in Alaska, Canada, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Maine. Since 2000, Land has traveled to nearly every state with her dog sled, mushing gear, Arctic clothing, and beloved dogs, giving over a thousand presentations! www.stringofdogs.com This will surely be amazing!

This program is being sponsored by CT Humanities and the Friends of Willington Public Library. As a gift, a free book, “MUSH! Sled Dogs of the Iditarod“ will be given to the first 24 families to attend, compliments of CT Humanities and Book Voyagers.

We’re excited to have an artisan to teach us the art of Pysanky Eggs. Discover the art of making Pysanky, a traditional Ukrainian egg decorating technique. Pysanky are made from real eggshells, decorated with a batik method using a stylus, hot wax, and

dyes. Participants will learn about the history and symbolism behind classic Pysanky patterns while also experimenting with their own styles, creating works of art that make unique ornaments and gifts.

There is a fee of \$5 per participant, to help cover special use of the Willington Hill Fire House Hall at 24 Old River Road, in Willington, where we will be holding this event on Thursday evening, March 12, at 6:30 pm. The class will run for approximately two hours. This class is open to adults and teens. Space is limited, so register today! Warning: Dye can stain clothing so don’t wear your nicest shirt AND this craft does involve the use of a flame!

The Natchaug Watershed Advisory Project and Eastern CT Conservation District is presenting a 3-part workshop series on: Ecological Landscaping & Green Infrastructure. On Thursday, March 12, from 5:00-6:30 pm, join in on Session 2: Meadow Design, Installation, & Maintenance will be held at the library.

This is an intermediate workshop focused on meadow design, installation, and long-term maintenance, with discussion on how they can reduce stormwater runoff, protect water quality and benefit pollinators. This is a free program but registration is required. Register at...eventbrite.com/cc/ecological-landscaping-gree-infrastructure-4809178

In addition to our Adult Book Club that meets on the first Thursday of every month, we are introducing, Read, Watch, Discuss! This is a special, Book-to-Film Book Club featuring “Wuthering Heights”, on Thursday, March 19, at 6:30 pm. If you are planning to read one of the greatest English novels ever written, in preparation for the new upcoming movie, join us and share your thoughts on both pieces of work. For its first showing, Hang IT!, which is a new art project to create gallery space in Northeast Connecticut libraries, in association with the Windham Regional Art Council, are presenting the “Art Now-Art Show”. This is a sneak preview into the “Art and Garden Tour” outdoor Spring show (June 13-14), now in its 10th year. The exhibit will run from March 5-27, with a special reception taking place on Saturday, March 7th from 1-3 pm. See how our Community Room is transformed into a beautiful Art Gallery, featuring such artists as Nancy Bunnell, Mary Noonan, Julie Beckman, Leanne Peters, Aline Hoffman, Scott Rhodes, and Barbara Timberman. Art work will be available to view during the library’s regular scheduled open hours.

We still have a good number of FREE Young Adult, and Adult books that were left over from our Friend’s Book Sale for the taking.

-WILI YouTube Channel for all Monday-Friday local talk shows—available at: <https://www.youtube.com/@wiliradio7000>. Each program has its own playlist with all the shows. Search on “WILI Radio” and subscribe!
-The *On the Homefront* audio podcast archive is available 24/7. Subscribe to get every new program! <https://www.wili.com/on-the-homefront-podcast/>
-Programs are also available on Spectrum Public Access TV CTV192. The full schedule for all programs is available online at www.ctv192.org. You can also learn about media training opportunities to build skills for personal or professional work.
-Archive of my media/arts columns in *Neighbors* at: www.neighborspaper.com
Thanks for reading *Neighbors* and for listening to or watching *On the Homefront*. I appreciate your interest and support for local media wherever you find it—and I hope you will stay connected with this project and join me in the studio when you have news to share!
Always keep the faith,
John Murphy
john@humanartsmedia.com

News from Coventry’s Second Congregational Church

Submitted by The Rev. Dr. Debbie Pallatto, Pastor

The Second Congregational Church of Coventry, UCC, (Open and Affirming) invites you to visit Noah’s Closet, the shop where kids come first! We offer gently used items including children’s clothing (sizes 0-8), shoes, books, puzzles, toys, games, learning materials, children’s furniture and décor. Noah’s is open every Tuesday, 9:00-11:00 a.m. and every Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. We are located in our Community House next to the church and parking is available in front of the shop. Our volunteer staff looks forward to welcoming you!

Second Church is a community church where we offer monthly take-out dinners, a holiday fair, concerts, intergenerational events, a fitness class, a community tag sale, and a book club. We also support our town’s food bank and partner with Windham Area Interfaith Ministry (W.A.I.M.) and other local, non-profits.

A Concert You Won’t Want to Miss: “Give Peace a Chance” Sunday, March 15th, 3:00 p.m. Admission Free (Donations appreciated).

A Spring Celebration of Hope, Love, and Peace.
A Brilliant Musician who moves the Heart.
An afternoon of Music, Inspiration, and Joy!

Music Directors at Second Church, Jason Castonguay and Ronald Hughes, will present a special Spring Concert featuring celebrated concert artist, Jason Castonguay. Known coast to coast since winning the first “Connecticut Idol” competition with TV’s “American Idol”, Jason brings extraordinary artistry to every performance. Blind since birth and a CCSU graduate of Music Performance and Computer Technology, Jason captivates audiences of all ages with music that inspires and uplifts. All are welcome!
Second Church is located at 1746 Boston Tpk (Rt. 44) in Coventry, CT

An Urgent Update on the Situation in Gaza

Submitted by the Northeast Connecticut Gaza Peace Group

Many people believe that Israel’s assault on Gaza, widely considered a genocide,¹ ended in October 2025 when a U.S.-brokered “ceasefire” went into effect. In fact, despite the ceasefire announced October 10 between the elected government of Palestine (Hamas) and the government of Israel, Israel has continued its onslaught in a modified form, with violations occurring almost immediately² and continuing since.³ The horrific devastation that Israel continues to impose upon the Palestinian people is heavily supported by U.S. military aid to Israel for “defense.”⁴ It is worth noting that these funds are tax dollars that could have been spent constructively on humanitarian aid to Gaza or on needs that are severely underfunded in the United States, including in our own state of Connecticut.

The Northeast Connecticut Gaza Peace Group calls for the U.S. government to end its unconditional support of the Israeli government’s continued extreme violence against the Palestinian people. We urge you to take action, as described below, to support the survival of the Palestinian people and their right to live in their own homeland with peace and justice.

Why Israel’s Actions Have Been Condemned as “Genocide”

More than two years ago, on January 26, 2024, the United Nations International Court of Justice ruled that the charge of genocide against the Israeli government was plausible and should not be dismissed, and that the case should proceed for ongoing litigation.⁵ On February 26, 2024, the preeminent human rights organization Amnesty International issued a report finding that the Israeli government was committing genocide in Gaza.⁶ Human Rights Watch made the same finding the same week.⁷ Both organizations found that the Israeli government was systematically starving the people of Gaza by cutting off food aid, water, and electricity and by bombing and military occupation, and was using U.S. weapons to inflict massive death and destruction on the civilian population of Gaza. On March 25, 2024, Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, issued a comprehensive report, finding unequivocally that the Israeli government had crossed the “threshold” and was actively committing genocide in Gaza.⁸

From October 7, 2023, to January 26, 2026, 71,746 people have been confirmed killed by Israel in Gaza, with 141,719 injured.⁹ Those killed included 12,500 women, 20,179 children, 1,701 medical workers, and 260 journalists; 463 died due to starvation.¹⁰

Violations of the Ceasefire

The cease-fire has been termed a masquerade.¹¹ During the roughly 100 days between October 10, 2025 (when the current ceasefire agreement was established), and January 20, 2026, Israel violated the ceasefire agree-

ment at least 1,300 times, through the continuation of attacks by air, artillery, and direct shootings, the Government Media Office in Gaza reports.¹² That amounts to an average of 13 violations *per day*. Since the ceasefire took effect, Israeli attacks have killed at least 488 Palestinians and injured 1,350, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.¹³ In the first month of the “ceasefire” alone, Israel destroyed more than 1,500 buildings in areas of Gaza that are under its control, satellite images reviewed by BBC Verify show.¹⁴ Entire neighborhoods have been leveled.¹⁵

Definitions of Antisemitism

Antisemitism is defined as hostility toward or discrimination against Jewish people as a religious or racial group, whereas Zionism is a movement that emerged in late nineteenth-century Europe which primarily seeks to establish and support a Jewish homeland, where Jewish people are in control as opposed to being the minority in some other country, through the colonization of Palestine, a region which roughly corresponds to the Land of Israel in the Jewish religion. Palestine is a land where Palestinian people have resided for centuries. Not everybody who supports the idea of a Jewish state supports the idea of further displacing Palestinians.

more territory and destroying homes and markets that lay between the official border and the new line.¹⁷

All the Excuses Are Gone

Israel supporters claim that Israel is still defending itself against an attack that took place over two years ago, but the disproportionate casualties, plus Israel’s numerous ceasefire violations, give lie to that argument. Some also claim that opposing Israel’s actions can only stem from antisemitism, but the findings of widely respected impartial international bodies cannot be easily dismissed, not to mention Jewish organizations¹⁸ that oppose these actions in Gaza. (See Box 1 for definitions of antisemitism and Zionism.) Even the argument that Israel was fighting to get back the captives taken by Hamas in 2023 has no weight, given that the remaining captives were released in October 2025.

The U.S. government provides a significant amount of support to Israel’s war of terror against the Palestinian people. The current memorandum of understanding for U.S. aid to Israel requires that it be spent on purchases of U.S. defense equipment, defense services, and military training. Funds are legally restricted and cannot be used for the direct funding of domestic healthcare operations.¹⁹

It is interesting to note that Israeli settlers on native Palestinian land enjoy free universal healthcare, which is paid for by Israel’s payroll taxes and “general tax

In signing the ceasefire, Israel agreed to give Gaza gradually back to the Palestinians. However, the implementation of this clause has had the opposite effect. Israel has declared more than half of Gaza a “no civilians zone” and created a policy of shooting on sight anyone who crosses a (poorly demarcated) border line.¹⁶ In the months since the ceasefire, the Israeli army is reported to have moved the line even further into Gaza, seizing even

Examples of Better Uses of U.S. Tax Dollars

There are multiple alternative, constructive uses for tax dollars currently supporting Israeli genocide. For example, the \$17.9 billion in military aid given to Israel in 2024 could provide:

- free or low-cost healthcare for 6,228,253 U.S. children for one year,
- the salaries of 195,440 elementary school teachers,
- cancellation of loan debt for 473,707 students,
- or
- free groceries for one month for 37,664,253 families.

How would this look in Connecticut? The \$325,388,376 Connecticut taxpayers spent on arming Israel in 2024 could pay for:

- free or low-cost healthcare for 113,217 children for one year,
- the salaries of 3,552 elementary school teachers,
- cancellation of loan debt for 8,611 students, or
- free groceries for one month for 684,667 families.

revenue.”²⁰ By contrast, in the United States in 2023 an estimated 26 million people (8 percent of the population) lacked health insurance.²¹ Our tax money spent on genocide could be put to positive use instead. (See Box 2 for examples.)

What You Can Do

The situation in Gaza is dire. We encourage you to take action. Some examples of actions you might wish to undertake are below.

National:

- Ask your congressional representative in Washington to co-sponsor HR3565 (a bill to put controls on the ability of the president to send arms to Israel without congressional approval). On your computer, search for HR3565 to find the text of the bill; search on house.gov if you don’t have your congressional rep’s name and phone number.
- Ask your senators Chris Murphy (202-224-4041) and Richard Blumenthal (202-224-2823) to introduce companion legislation for HR3565 in the Senate.
- Tell senators Murphy and Blumenthal to stop arming Israel.
- Lobby your congressional representative and senators to support all efforts to get humanitarian aid into Gaza.

International:

- Donate to relief agencies. (Many humanitarian organizations are currently banned by Israel from operating in Gaza. Current information indicates that the organizations listed below are able to operate at this time.) Both links below have buttons for donating.

-Doctors Without Borders: “Addressing Frequently Asked Questions and Allegations about Doctors Without Borders’ Work in Gaza,” Jan. 30, 2026, <https://doctorswithoutborders-apac.org/en/news/addressing-frequently-asked-questions-allegations-doctors-without-borders-work-gaza/>.
-World Central Kitchen: “One Million Hot Meals a Day: World Central Kitchen Reaches Major Milestone in Gaza,” Feb. 11, 2026, <https://wck.org/news/one-million-hot-meals-a-day-in-gaza-strong/>.

- Further sources of information:
- Doctors Against Genocide webinars: <https://doctor-sagainstgenocide.org/events/>.
- Jewish Voice for Peace: <https://www.jewishvoicefor-peace.org/>.
- Jewish Voice for Peace

New Haven – to receive their weekly update, fill out the form here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScK-o0fDkRriJlxCFhTf5PheEhK16Z9ZfBKjl_Job9ZaxGEbmw/viewform?c=0&w=1&pli=1/

To find out more about the Northeast Connecticut Gaza Peace Group, or to obtain references for material in this article, contact us at nectgpg@palestinct.com.

My Discourse on Wants and Needs

By Carol Wheelock Hall

NEEDS

Like all creatures in life certain things are necessary for life to be sustained. For the best outcome people should be mindful when making decisions. They need to know that there is a difference between “want” and “need”. All of us know that every creature on this planet needs air to breathe, food and water, shelter from weather, and sleep; these are physical needs for survival. For us humans we can expand on these needs to say clean air and water, nutritious foods, proper clothing and warmth in our homes, and some time to relax besides sleep time.

Mental wellness depends on the needs of human connections, feelings of belonging, purpose, self worth, and feelings of safety and security. Communities have formed groups to help humans, such as with governments, churches, schools, police, and fire. Fund-raising, donations and our taxes pay for these services. As mankind has grown we are no longer self-sufficient in this country. So that requires additional needs to be met to procure the needed goods such as food, clothing, tools, equipment, sources of power and transportation, etc. Ca-ching, ca-ching... all of this requires a source of income: jobs and money. These are basic needs now for Americans. That’s what progress has given us.

WANTS

Wants are totally different and it’s best if children learn this fact early in life from their elders. While it is appropriate to give children some of their wants, if a parent is able, they need to know the difference. Wants are the extras that cost additional money. As adults if a person gives in to too many wants, then they may be unable to pay for all of their needs. People need to get a grip on reality and use common sense with purchases. And in most situations they should not expect someone else to bail them out from their responsibilities when they have become overextended with debt from purchases or loans.

Wants are not necessary, or requirements for a person’s survival needs, but some people get in financial trouble when their wants exceed what can be generated by hard work and income. Nicer clothes, spa treatments, better furniture and cars, etc. all fall into “unnecessary for life” category. They may increase one’s quality of life at the time, but they don’t always bring more happiness. Sometimes the simple things of life are the best. Some of that “extra” money would be better if set aside planning for education, emergencies, and retirement, but let’s not go into those topics! Just know the difference between needs and wants and be wise.

The Dashing and Daring Thomas Grosvenor

By Donna Dufresne

Lt. Thomas Grosvenor of Pomfret is depicted in battle in the John Trumbull painting *The Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775*. Standing at the far right of the painting and wounded by a musket ball which has passed through his right hand, our local hero is seen brandishing a sword with his left, having wrapped his cravat (neckerchief) around his wound. He is accompanied by an enslaved man holding his musket, presumably the family servant who accompanied Grosvenor to fight in the Revolutionary War.¹



Thomas Grosvenor was Pomfret's most eligible bachelor when he was forever immortalized as a dashing 30-year-old in Trumbull's 1786 painting of the battle at Breed's Hill which took place on June 17, 1775. It is no wonder that Anne Flore Millet, Marquise de Bréhan, a French aristocrat and portraitist, commissioned Trumbull in 1797 to sketch a closer snapshot in oil of Grosvenor from the original painting. With his aquiline nose and delicate features, Grosvenor looks like the dandiest of the Three Musketeers in his rakishly tilted hat topped with a giant ostrich plume.² He was likely a heartthrob among the ladies. During the bicentennial celebration in 1976, the second painting of Grosvenor became a commemorative postage stamp which inspired an ongoing quest to identify the man of African descent by his side, whose name we still do not know for certain.

Military Record³

Grosvenor gained military rank throughout the war. Initially, he was recruited as lieutenant into Pomfret's third regiment under Col. Israel Putnam. Armed and ready at a moment's notice, he marched with the Minutemen and followed Putnam to Cambridge. On June 16, 1775, he was drafted to march with Thomas Knowlton (Ashford) and his Connecticut troops, who were later known as Knowlton's Rangers. They assembled at Breed's Hill and waited. Grosvenor was one of the first to fire when the British attacked. In a recount of the battle in a letter to Daniel Putnam (Israel's son), Grosvenor described how he picked off five British soldiers in rapid fire with his musket as though he were on a fox hunt. He was not the only member of the family who enjoyed fox hunting. His younger cousin Ebenezer recounted his joy in chasing a fox on horseback in a letter to his future wife, Elizabeth Putnam (Daniel's daughter) in 1812. The open, rolling hills of Pomfret may have been riddled with foxes, but they were no match for our equestrian forebears.

Thomas Grosvenor maintained a steady climb in rank for the duration of the war. He was promoted to captain on January 1, 1776, in Colonel Durkee's regiment and later advanced to the rank of major in the Continental Army on January 1, 1777. In March of 1778 he became lieutenant colonel of his regiment and in July of 1779 was promoted to the office of general health inspector of the Connecticut Division until December of 1781. In May of 1782 he was made lieutenant colonel commandant of the 1st Connecticut Regiment, where he remained on the Hudson until his retirement at the end of the war. After an exemplary military career in the Revolutionary War, Grosvenor returned to his law office in Pomfret and a life of civic duty.

Life in Pomfret⁴

Born in 1744, Thomas Grosvenor did not fall far from the family tree. His father, John Grosvenor (1711–1804), was captain of the militia in Pomfret and fought in the French and Indian War from 1755 to 1757. John was with Israel Putnam in the expedition to Crown Point led by Lt. Eliphalet Dyer. John's grandmother Esther Grosvenor was the venerable pioneer from Roxbury, Massachusetts, who came to Pomfret as a widow with five of her adult sons and her daughter, Susanna, to settle in the Mashamoquet Purchase on land her husband had acquired before he died. She served as midwife and doctor in the early days of the settlement, still a wilderness, and built three houses, one of which is the Sabin House, still standing on Route 97.

John had married Hannah Dresser of Thompson in 1733 and settled into life as a farmer on a large estate while attending to his civic duty as selectman (four times) and justice of the peace (for three years). He was a delegate to the General Assembly in 1755 and 1763. In 1781, at age 70, he was chairman of a meeting to collect clothing for the Continental Army. He also served on the Committee of Safety. John Grosvenor died in 1804 at age 93.

When Thomas Grosvenor returned to Pomfret



John Trumbull's painting *The Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775*.

in 1783, he resumed his law practice. Having graduated from Yale in 1765, he hung his shingle at his law office and home on the Norwich Worcester Turnpike, where he practiced law for 10 years before the Lexington Call. The original Thomas Grosvenor House was supposedly in the vicinity of the Wiggins House, known more recently as Martha's Herbarry.⁵

Now in his forties, he got down to the business of finding a wife and starting a family. He bought 110 acres from his father for 500 pounds in 1783. It was described as the same land John had bought in 1744 from Rebecca Hamlet and known as the Hamlet Place, containing a barn but no other buildings. It adjoined the lands of Isaac Sharp, Isaac Sabin, and Amos Grosvenor and appears to have included the land between Route 97 and Pomfret Street where Rectory School now stands.

Thomas married Ann Mumford, the daughter of Peter and Abigail Mumford of Newport, in 1785. She was 20 years younger than him. Their children were Thomas Mumford Grosvenor (1786–1867), Peter I (1787–1791), Ann (1789–1856), Peter II (1794–1859), John Henry (1796–1848), and Hannah (1799–1865). Young Peter, who died at age four, is buried in the North Cemetery near his siblings Thomas and Ann, the Mumfords (his grandparents), and the descendants of the Eldredge and Goodhue families.

The two oldest sons, Thomas Jr. and Maj. Peter Grosvenor, emigrated with their wives and children to Ohio in 1838. Neither John Henry nor Ann Grosvenor appear to have married. However, Hannah married Edward Eldredge in 1822. Edward, born in Brooklyn, Connecticut, worked for the Merchant Bank of Boston, whose largest client was the government of Brazil. Hannah and Edward lived in Bahia, Brazil, for the first seven years of their marriage, and their first two children were born there. They returned to Boston when Edward was promoted to president of the bank. In 1830, they bought the Thomas Grosvenor estate from Hannah's brother, John Henry, a lawyer in New York City. They kept their property in Boston and apparently used the Thomas Grosvenor farm as a summer home until Edward's retirement.

Thomas Grosvenor had begun building his "mansion house" (now the administration building at Rectory School) after George Washington paid him a visit in 1789. It was completed in 1792. The raising of the roof beam was a festive occasion with food, drink, and dancing, and included several Native Americans who regularly visited Grosvenor. One young Mohegan man danced upon the highest roof beam to the delight of his audience. Thomas Grosvenor was known to be a friend of local Native people who frequented his house. Like Israel Putnam, he received visitors from far and wide who had fought with him and against him in the Revolutionary War.

His marriage to Ann Mumford tied Thomas Grosvenor to Newport society. His young wife would have had her hands full with toddlers running around the house, visitors of all sorts, parties, and entertaining the ladies of Pomfret while her husband climbed the political ladder. She likely brought enslaved servants with her, as the Mumfords were connected to the merchant and trans-Atlantic slave trade in Newport. As their family and his career grew,

Thomas and Ann Grosvenor were part of the prequel of the Gilded Age that was ushered into Pomfret by their grandchildren in the mid-nineteenth century.

Lawyer, Jurist, and State Representative⁶

Like many of his peers and fellow soldiers in the Revolutionary War, Thomas Grosvenor was committed to building the new republic after the war. He was an ardent Federalist, believing in a strong, centralized national government to fix the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and counteract the chaos of discontent and "mob rule" brewing in the poorer classes that also fought for the American cause. True to his roots in the British gentry, Grosvenor advocated for a loose constitutional interpretation and believed the well-educated elite should govern. As a Federalist, he promoted a strong economy through commerce (banking and manufacturing) and national unity, with the goal of establishing America as a respected world power.

A jurist and a statesman, Grosvenor was engaged in local governance as well as the state legislature. His signature and orders appear in Pomfret's probate records from about 1785 to 1815, giving us a snapshot of his role as probate judge for nearly 30 years. Orders for distribution of property, wills, and the administrations of estates were overseen by Grosvenor and recorded by his clerks in several volumes found in the Pomfret Town Hall. Grosvenor was also a representative of the General Assembly from 1789 to 1793 and served on the Governor's Council from 1794 to 1801. From 1804 to 1815, he held the office of chief justice for the Windham County Court of Common Pleas.

Among his most treasured honors was a diploma issued by George Washington inducting him as a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, which was founded in 1783 as an exclusive fraternity of Continental Army officers. Originally intended to provide camaraderie for the veteran officers of the Revolutionary War and support for the wounded and their widows, the Society stirred such political controversy with its heredity clause that the Connecticut chapter closed by 1804. For some of the officers and many of the ordinary soldiers who fought for liberty and equality, the Society of the Cincinnati had become an elitist social club which excluded the majority of veterans yet invited the firstborn sons of ancestral officers to become members in perpetuity whether they were part of the military or not. It ruffled the feathers of John Adams, who wrote from Paris, "The formation of the Society is the first step taken to deface the beauty of our temple of liberty."

Benjamin Franklin called the society "the Cincinnati Chevaliers." It was a sentiment shared by citizens throughout the country in the quaking tremors and aftermath of an unresolved revolution. The new Americans would not exchange one form of tyranny for another and certainly would not be extinguished due to their class. Due to his wealth and status, the gripes of ordinary people may not have been on Thomas Grosvenor's radar. Each generation has its blind spot when it comes to empathy for others. On the other hand, Grosvenor, son of Pomfret pioneers, Revolutionary War hero, justice, and statesman, was busy rolling up the sleeves on that puffy shirt depicted in the Trumbull painting, trying to build a new nation.

Notes

1. *The Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775*, John Trumbull, 1786, Yale University Art Gallery, <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/41>
2. *Lieutenant Thomas Grosvenor (1744–1825) and His Negro Servant*, John Trumbull, c. 1797, Yale Center for British Art, <https://interactive.britishart.yale.edu/slavery-and-portraiture/299/lieutenant-thomas-grosvenor-1744-1825-and-his-negro-servant>
3. "Thomas Grosvenor, Revolutionary Soldier, Jurist," USGenWeb Project, <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~ct-ctollan/records/vitalrecords/encyclopedia/thomasgrosvenor.html>; Susan Jewett Griggs, *Folklore and Firesides in Pomfret, Hampton and Vicinity* (Abington, CT, 1950), p. 37; Thomas Grosvenor family tree, WikiTree, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Grosvenor-53>
4. FamilySearch.org; John Grosvenor family tree, WikiTree, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Grosvenor-420>; Pomfret Vital Records, Land Records, and Probate Records, Pomfret Town Hall; Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/72471394/person/302176411538/facts>
5. Griggs, p. 41.
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The Planet Press

Spring is coming!!!

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March and April — 2026

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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 many future generations to come.

What's for Spring

Since the last issue, Punxsutawney Phil in Pennsylvania saw his shadow, signaling six more weeks of winter. However, New Englanders tired of snow may still see relief ahead. The Old Farmer's Almanac's Spring 2026 Weather Forecast projects a warmer spring for the Northeast, with drier, milder conditions expected as the season progresses.

The forecast calls for a warmer-than-average spring in the Northeast, with temperatures about 3°F above normal, particularly in May. Rainfall across New England is expected to be below average, meaning fewer rainy days overall. After a snowy January, the almanac also predicts no significant spring snowfall. Spring is expected to continue until the summer solstice on June 21st at 4:24 a.m. ET.



Source: Cape Cod Times (2026, February). *Spring 2026 to be 'warmer than usual,' Old Farmer's Almanac says*

Before & After

Before the snow melts, there is plenty to appreciate on an outdoor walk. Surprisingly, some may argue that Connecticut's shoreline is the place to be year-round. Raymond Goldfield wrote a piece at Only in Your State about how to enjoy Bluff Point through winter hiking. This caught my attention, and I thought it was worth sharing. The

article is linked in my sources at the end of the article.

Once all this snow is gone, though, there are plenty of resources to inform you about outdoor events year-round. ctwoodlands.org is worth checking out for one.

Source: Only In Your State (2025, December). *This Scenic Connecticut Trail Is Even Better in the Winter*

Annual Eesmarks Registration Now Open

Connecticut students are invited to enter the 21st annual Energize Connecticut eesmarks Student Contest, which encourages K–12 students to explore energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability through creative projects. Registration is open now and closes on March 20th. Student projects must be submitted by March 27. Students will complete grade-level-appropriate prompts that show how energy-saving ideas can

make a difference. Projects can include posters, poems, stories, letters, comic strips, social media posts, and other creative formats depending on grade level. More information and registration details are available at EnergizeCT.com/student-contest. The contest is sponsored by Energize Connecticut partners Eversource and Avangrid, Inc., subsidiaries United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas, and Connecticut Natural Gas.

Local Train Wreck

It is unfortunate to report that a train derailment with notable environmental impacts occurred near UConn in Mansfield. Here is a brief breakdown of the timeline:

- A 43-car train derailed in Mansfield at about 9:08 a.m. on February 5th, with 13 cars leaving the tracks, including six carrying liquefied propane. Four of the propane cars partially entered the Willimantic River, prompting a large emergency response, a shelter-in-place order for some nearby residents, and the closure of Route 32 between Route 44E and Route 75 as cleanup operations continue. Mansfield Fire Chief Roache said more than 100 responders were on scene and would work through the night.
- One of the damaged cars, carrying cooking grease, ruptured, releasing about 2,500 gallons of animal fat into the river.
- A shelter-in-place order was issued for residents within a half-mile of 1090 Stafford Road due to concerns about a possible gas leak, though officials later said that no leak had been detected.
- State police reported no injuries; the train's conductor and engineer were on board at the time of the derailment.
- Reports from NBC CT on February 12th state that the cleanup is still underway. At the time of their report, the town manager stated they were about halfway through offloading the liquid gas from the crash site. They also reported that the derailment location was on farmland.

Sources: NBC Connecticut (2026, February). *Environmental issues following train derailment in Mansfield*
CT Mirror (2026, February). *Environmental issues following train derailment in Mansfield*

Today

By Billy Collins

If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze

that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house

and unlatch the door to the canary's cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its jamb,

a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with peonies

seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking

a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,

releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage

so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting

into this larger dome of blue and white,
well, today is just that kind of day.



Birds on The Web

are being finalized, providing valuable insights and deepening understanding for ornithologists and enthusiasts alike. The project reflects four years of data collection by nearly 1,000 volunteers who surveyed locations throughout Connecticut.

Volunteers were asked to spend at least 20 hours monitoring breeding activity within assigned survey blocks, documenting signs

such as active nests, birds carrying nesting materials or food, removal of fecal sacs from nests, and males repeatedly singing in the same area, which are indicators of breeding behavior. All this over the course of four years! Happy bird watching!

Source: CT Public (2026, January). *Updated CT Bird Atlas notes raptor resurgence, but paints 'dire' picture of other bird populations*

People Speak Up About a Superfund

Vermont and New York. However, previous efforts in Connecticut have faced opposition, and related laws are being challenged in federal court.

The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation estimates sea levels in Long Island Sound could rise to 20 inches by 2050, and protecting coastal communities with measures such as seawalls could cost at least \$5.3 billion by 2040. The state is also warming: Connecti-

cut's average temperature in 2024 exceeded its long-term average of about 50°F, with 23 days reaching 90°F or higher and total hot days about 52% above the historical average.

Source: CT Public (2026, January). *Could CT legislators force polluters to pay for climate change?*

The Trump administration has announced efforts to remove the federal government’s main legal basis for regulating greenhouse gases by directing the Environmental Protection Agency to revoke its longstanding finding that climate change endangers human health and the environment, referred to as the endangerment finding.

Without this “endangerment finding,” the EPA would no longer be able to set limits on carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse-gas emissions from power plants, vehicles, and gas and oil operations. The move reverses nearly 17 years of policy, during which administrations of both parties used the finding to support climate-pollution regulations.

The rollback is expected to

eliminate existing emission limits and could increase U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions in the coming decades.

The Environmental Defense Fund estimates the change could raise national emissions by about 10% over the next 30 years, potentially leading to tens of thousands of additional premature deaths and tens of millions more asthma attacks by 2055.

In rescinding the finding, the administration argued that the Clean Air Act allows regulation only of pollution that causes direct harm to Americans near the source of the emissions.

Meanwhile, Connecticut, sometimes called the “tailpipe of the nation”, continues to face poor air quality due to in-state vehicle emissions, pollution drifting from other regions, and periodic

wildfire smoke from Canada. In the American Lung Association’s latest State of the Air report, the state received an F grade for particle pollution.

Source:
The New York Times (2026, February). *Trump Administration Erases the Government’s Power to Fight Climate Change*

While nitrogen-based fertilizers are essential for crop growth, excess nitrogen often runs off into waterways, triggering harmful algal blooms and contaminating drinking water. Nitrogen pollution is a

major challenge for agriculture. I have seen smaller-scale examples firsthand, as the local lake in Coventry deals with algae summer after summer.

At UConn, Avishesh Neupane, an assistant extension professor of soil science in UConn’s College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, tested whether adding manganese to soil could reduce nitrogen losses. His lab study is the first to directly examine manganese’s role in nitrogen cycling under real-world agricultural conditions.

With his team, they found that adding manganese reduced soil plant-available nitrogen levels, particularly nitrate and ammonium. As these readily usable nitrogen forms decreased, nitrous oxide emissions dropped significantly, and nitrate concentrations did too, which reduces the risk of nitrate leaching into waterways.

However, excessive manganese can damage plant growth, making it important to identify the appropriate application rate. Additional research is needed to determine the optimal amount of manganese that can reduce nitrogen pollution without negatively affecting crops.

Sustainable School Food Study

A study at UConn examined local food sourcing in Connecticut schools. It was led by Ellen Shanley, lecturer and director of the dietetics program, and Professor Valerie Duffy, both a part of UConn’s Department of Allied Health Sciences within the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources. Surveying 55 public school food service directors, the study found that 98% of schools reported sometimes or always purchasing locally grown produce, and 91% reported purchasing local dairy products.

The researchers noted that sourcing food locally supports regional farmers and reduces transportation-related carbon emissions, making it an important component of school food sustainability efforts. It was reported that 58% of schools serve

plant-based meals at least once a month, typically using beans as a protein source, which has a significantly lower carbon footprint than meat.

Many of these local purchasing efforts are supported by the Farm to School Program, and the study found that 60% of the surveyed schools participate in farm-to-school activities.

This shift encourages partnerships with local farmers and creates opportunities for nutrition education programs, including the USDA’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

There are additional findings in the article worth reading; the information on how to find them is included in my sources below.

Source:
UConn Today (2026, February). *Study Highlights Food Sustainability Initiatives in CT Schools*

For the first time in history, a country has recognized the legal rights of an insect species. In Peru, municipalities in Satipo and Nauta have approved ordinances granting native stingless bees, and the habitats they depend on, legal status as subjects with rights to exist, thrive, and be represented in court.

The local ordinances outline rights similar to a bill of rights for the bees, including the right to maintain healthy populations, live in clean and intact habitats, sustain natural ecological cycles, prosper, and receive legal protection if their survival is threatened by deforestation, pollution, or development.

Under the new rules, companies, government agencies, or individuals that damage bee colonies can be sued on the bees’

behalf, and courts must consider harm to the species and the surrounding ecosystem, not just human losses.

This effort highlights the critical role of pollinators, but also prompts a broader question: What other parts of nature should also be given legal protection?

Source:
EcoNews (2026, February). *For the first time in global legal history, a country has recognized the legal rights of insects, and it is the stingless bees of the Peruvian Amazon that are taking the first step toward a new model of coexistence between nature and the law*

Source:
UConn Today (2026, January). *Manganese Helps Reduce Agricultural Nitrogen Pollution in Air, Water*

Looking Forward with Fuel

At the time this is being printed, everyone has heat and power on their minds. It is freezing most days. How will Connecticut keep us warm?

If it isn’t obvious already, going forward, the Trump administration has made clear it is not on board with sustainable energy sources. Especially clear after the announcement and subsequent legal battle over five offshore wind projects under construction, including Connecticut’s Revolution Wind. Which has since resumed construction.

Soon after that announcement last year, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum stated on Fox News: “We have a solution in New England right there, which is natural gas

from Pennsylvania.”

So, what’s there to know about this “solution”? Many common beliefs about natural gas are inaccurate, such as the state in which it occurs naturally. Advocates now propose renaming it to emphasize its primary component: methane. Underground, natural gas typically contains about 60–90% methane, while processed gas delivered through pipelines to New England is usually around 90% or more methane.

In terms of cost, the latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that natural gas prices rose sharply in 2025, even as production increased.

Source:
CT Mirror (2026, January). *The Trump administration favors natural gas. What does that mean for CT?*

Eel Grass Lives On

Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) is a vital native seagrass in Long Island Sound that provides essential habitat, stores carbon, reduces shoreline erosion, and serves as a nursery for fish and bay scallops.

Its meadows also support commercial fisheries that contribute to the regional economy. About 90 percent of eelgrass was lost over the past century due to poor water quality and rising temperatures, but restoration efforts are underway, including projects

that use clams to help anchor new seeds. Now, after decades of decline, eelgrass in Long Island Sound may be making a comeback. A new mapping survey published last October shows that overall eelgrass coverage increased between 2017 and 2024. Researchers at the University of Rhode Island say the recovery reflects improvements in water quality, creating better conditions for eelgrass and other aquatic life, and marking a positive step for a habitat that filters pollutants, supports marine ecosystems, and helps combat climate change.

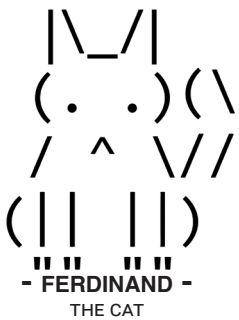
Source:
CT Insider (2026, January). *Long Island Sound’s eelgrass, water quality rebounding after decades of decline, survey shows*

Flower of the Month March



Skunk Cabbage

Skunk cabbage is one of the first signs of spring in Connecticut wetlands, often appearing in March while snow is still melting. Its purple hood hides a bright yellow flower spike that actually produces heat, helping the plant bloom in cold weather. Within a few weeks, large green leaves spread across wet areas, making skunk cabbage an easy-to-spot early-spring plant.



Ferdinand's Flower Patch

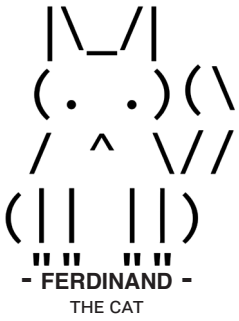


Flower of the Month April



Wild Columbine

Wild columbine begins blooming across Connecticut in late April, adding one of the first bursts of bright color to the various landscapes. Its distinctive red-and-yellow, bell-shaped flowers hang downward and are especially attractive to returning hummingbirds and early pollinators. Because it thrives in many natural habitats and is easy to spot once you know its shape, wild columbine is a cheerful sign that spring is fully underway across the state.



Ferdinand's Flower Patch



EELGRASS

You look familiar



AMERICAN EEL

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Willington... Just for You
North Star Church
of Jesus Christ



Bible Based Only
We Follow Jesus... Not the Crowd



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Every Sunday at 10:00A
NSCJC.org

Bible Study - Grief Counseling

Lyman Allyn Exhibition Showcases
the Powerful Photography of Dorothea Lange

Submitted by Rebecca Dawson, Director of Communications

The Lyman Allyn Art Museum is pleased to announce the opening of DOROTHEA LANGE: Life Work, on view Feb. 21 – May 3, 2026. Featuring 50 remarkable photographs, this exhibition traces Lange's dynamic life and career, including many of her renowned images of the Great Depression.

Best known for her powerful images of displaced families and migrant workers, Lange captured the human toll of economic hardship with sensitivity and empathy. Her photographs have become icons of American cultural history, documenting the suffering of the Great Depression and the striking landscapes of the 1930s Dust Bowl era.

In addition to her renowned Depression-era work, the exhibition highlights lesser-known aspects of Lange's career, including images of her family life, artistic collaborations with photographers such as Ansel Adams, and projects undertaken during her travels throughout the 1940s, '50s, and early '60s.

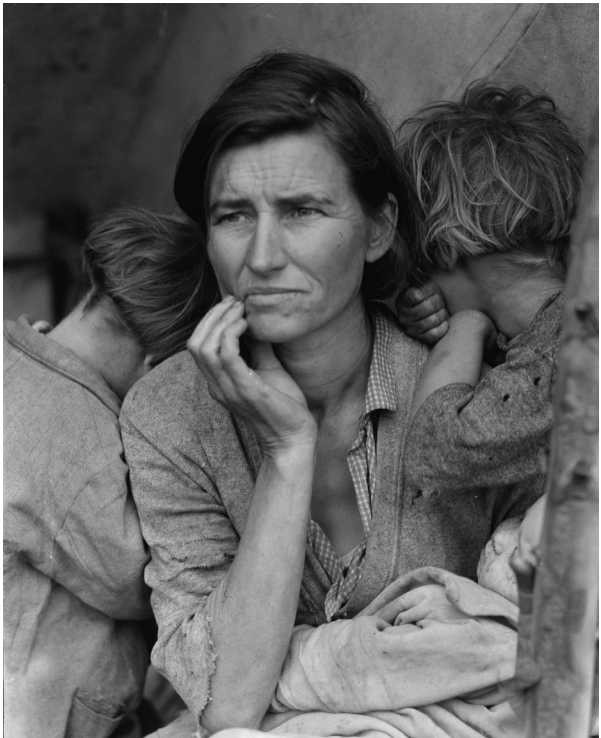
Lange began her photography career in San Francisco, operating a successful portrait studio from 1919 until the mid-1930s. In 1933, she first documented the breadlines and the hardship visible in the streets. The circulation of Lange's street photographs led to her employment with the Resettlement Administration and then the Farm Security Administration (FSA), documenting the struggles of farm workers in rural America. Lange's compelling work raised public awareness of the dire need for federal assistance, garnering support for congressional funding of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs.

All works in the exhibition are drawn from the private collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg. The exhibition has been organized by art2art Circulating Exhibitions.

Related programming includes a screening of Dorothea Lange: Grab a Hunk of Lightning, followed by a virtual conversation with Dyanna Taylor, Lange's granddaughter, on Saturday, Mar. 21 from 1 – 4 p.m. Members are \$5, and non-members are \$10. More information will be available on lymanallyn.org.

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

This exhibition has been made possible with support from an anonymous foundation; and by the Connecticut State Legislature, administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of the Arts.



About Lyman Allyn Art Museum

Lyman Allyn Art Museum welcomes visitors from New London, southeastern Connecticut and all over the world. Established in 1926 with a gift from Harriet Allyn in memory of her seafaring father, the Museum opened the doors of its beautiful neoclassical building surrounded by 12 acres of green space in 1932. Today it presents several changing exhibitions each year and houses a fascinating collection of over 20,000 objects from ancient times to the present, including art from Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, with particularly strong collections of American paintings, decorative arts and Victorian toys and doll houses.

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

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