

Neighbors Paper

A little paper big on community

Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut and beyond



4.24.17 On this slightly overcast, but still beautiful Monday, my wife Karen and I took a ride to West Thompson Lake in North Grosvernordale. The lake was created to control the Quinebaug River after the floods of 1955. The 200 acre lake is surrounded by 1857 acres of land, 1125 of them forested. The property is maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. After a three mile hike along the lake we were ready for lunch. We stopped at Deary Brothers/Mike's Stand in Putnam a short distance away. We were greeted by Mike Deary, whose family has owned the business for 80 years. He has run it for 50. At photo at left, Karen enjoys the view of the lake and at right Mike waits on Maura Burke of Danielson. Tom King photos.

Women Continue To Breathe Life Into Mansfield General Store

Twenty Years Ago...



I have always been attracted to the two story wood building on the corner of Storrs Road and Centre Street in Mansfield Center. Over the last 60 years, to my recollection, it's first floor has had only four occupants. Ann Robb operated her store there for 40 years, the first seven with her husband, Willard. Since then a pair of sisters operated a general store/ cafe and a gentleman sold estate sale items. The space stood empty for a year or two until recently when three women owned businesses took occupancy. I thought our readers might find interesting a reprint of the *Neighbors*, August 1997 front page, seen here. In the photo below, Ann Robb is standing at left with her grandson, Francis Storrs. Sitting at left is Michael Newman and my son, Noah King, from Ashford. In the photo at above right, is Trish Sullivan on the left and Jane Copeland, two of the new tenants. I wish them 'Good Luck!' T.K.



Submitted by Trish Sullivan and Jane Copeland

The Mansfield General Store has been through many incarnations. Established in 1863 many town folk have fond memories of the General Store from Mrs. Robb, stopping in for ice cream, sandwiches and antiques. The Moon and the Monocle, Unique Treasures by Trish and Tattoos By Amanda are three businesses owned by women with various backgrounds. They have come together to re-invent the historic building which includes a clothing boutique, artisan jewelry and tattoo studio.

The 'Shops at the Mansfield General Store' marries bohemian fashion, gift items, eclectic accessories and local art set off by old plank floors, ship-lap siding and oversized windows. A unique feature is the Do-It-Yourself Apothecary Bar where customers can create personalized lotions, scrubs, body spray and more.

In addition, the Shops offer a wide variety of classes and workshops led by local artisans, paint nights, jewelry workshops, succulent planting designs and meditation, all in a positive and creative space.

Trish, Jane and Amanda embrace this opportunity and welcome the community to stop in and say 'hello'!

Ann Robb Prepares to Retire

I found Ann Robb on a recent Saturday afternoon bent over a large chest freezer "defrosting" with hammer and screwdriver. Her Barrows and Burnham store in Mansfield Center has kept her busy for forty years. Now, at age eighty-two, Ann is preparing to retire.

Ann and her late husband, Willard, bought the Storrs Road building in May of 1957. One month later the Robbs bought a house in Mansfield Center and moved with their three daughters from Manchester.

As the only grocery store in the area, Barrows and Burnham was a very busy store for many years.

Ann's life changed dramatically in July, 1964 when her husband, Willard, died suddenly at age 53. Ann found herself alone to raise three daughters, run the grocery store and pay off two mortgages. Thirty-three years have gone by since Willard's untimely death. Ann's daughters have grown. Ann now watches her grandchildren grow when she can. She is still working six day weeks. Her gait is slowed by back problems but Ann is always ready with a cheerful greeting perched on her stool not far from the store's entrance.

Ann spends less time stocking shelves these days and more time doing what needs to be done as she prepares for retirement. Recently Ann had a difficult day spent throwing out very old records, some of them in her late husband's handwriting.

Ann isn't sure when she will put on her white work coat for the last time, but the day is not far off. Take a few minutes out of your busy day and stop in and chat with Ann. Wish a remarkable woman a long and healthy retirement. I know I will.

Article and photographs by Tom King.



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Willimantic’s Garden on the Bridge



Tom King photo

Unhealthy Health Care

By Loretta Wrobel

My family and I have had painful experiences with our healthcare system during the last month. Our mother has been terminally ill. Within a short period of time, we visited an urgent care facility, an ED (Emergency Department) in a fair-sized city, a rehabilitation center, and enrolled in Hospice. Sort of a crash course in how our system functions when you enter as an aging person with a variety of issues.

I recall having numerous conversations about health care in America. “In America, our healthcare is superior to that of other countries” is the frequent response I have heard. In other countries, you have to wait to get appointments, get treated, and have surgery, whereas in the United States, we have efficient, effective and timely care.

My recent experiences give me another view. Perhaps the healthcare system works until you get sick, old, or have an emergency. Let’s start with the Emergency Department (ED), known to the uninformed as “the ER.” A few years ago, we were in a minor car accident, and because my mother at the time was in her nineties, we visited the ED as a precaution. On that occasion, we waited for many hours for my mom to see a doctor, while she sat in a wheelchair, when the best place for her would have been her own bed. After a whiplash, the best treatment is not to sit in a wheelchair while your neck is unsupported.

Fast forward a couple of years to a few weeks ago, when my mom again entered the hallowed halls of the ED, following a visit to Urgent Care for pain management after a fall where she injured her tailbone. It was recommended that she proceed to the ED, due to some blood pressure issues and pain under her ribs. She remained in the ED all day, waiting for a scan that required a redo of the blood draw, as the first draw was not viable for testing. She had nothing to eat during this time, and finally got some nourishment around 9 PM. Later, in the early morning hours, she was admitted for IV drugs to treat pneumonia.

The hospital personnel apologized for the long wait. I know they were all trying, but somewhere along the line the system was not functioning. For a ninety-four-year-old to wait in an ED all day and have no food during that long wait is abusive. Obviously, my mother needed treatment, but was the ED the appropriate choice? It was the recommendation of the Urgent Care facility.

Is the problem an ageist one; we don’t have an appropriate facility as we are all young and healthy and don’t have complicated medical situations? We need to get this right, as many of us in America are living longer with complex health issues. We have wonderful medical advances to keep people alive longer, but how are we providing for this reality?

This is not a dismissal of a particular medical facility or hospital, but a serious questioning of the cracks and gaps that we will all experience if we live long enough.



I feel I have a decent knowledge of the healthcare field, as I worked for five years in a hospital as a pediatric social worker in the 1970’s. Alas, this recent tangle with the healthcare system with my geriatric mother leaves me reeling. I question how one negotiates our healthcare system if one has not had any insider knowledge of the medical maze?

When you are sick and vulnerable, it is challenging to make clear and reasonable decisions. When a loved one is in pain, you want some relief for them, but it is not so easy to know where that alleviation can be found. I totally accept that our medical knowledge is fabulous and we have made great strides in treatment and prolonging/ extending life. Have we made the same strides/advances in planning for death and dying and giving a respectful ending to the lives of our elders?

A major issue with my mother’s illness was that she was released from rehab during an upcoming holiday weekend, so there were breaks in hospice service due to vacations, time off and office closure. Death doesn’t look at the calendar when it beckons to us. As my parent’s status was fragile, she needed lots of homecare and devices for comfort. She did get the devices--delivery trucks were in and out of her street the day of and following her discharge from rehab. What we didn’t get is a supportive system to cushion the shock of our mother’s rapid change to 24-hour care.

These are situations that will occur more frequently as we all live longer with multiple health issues, medications, treatment options, and clever ways to extend our lives. Some of our parents and loved ones have no awareness of what can be done to extend life in today’s highly technological medical facilities.

I feel compelled to ask each of you to inform yourself and your loved ones of what can be done to our weakened bodies in the healthcare system. Check with those you are close to and be informed of their wishes and thoughts regarding their end of life options. My mother did not believe that aggressive pounding on chests still happened. She only wanted nonaggressive treatment. Her understanding of the medical codes was minimal. Therefore, she misunderstood what she initially agreed to when she entered the hospital. Fortunately, she had an informed healthcare proxy, and that potential calamity was avoided.

My purpose is not to scare or frighten. It is to encourage all to be prepared beforehand and ask many questions. Be like a well-trained boy scout or girl scout, and scout out the healthcare terrain.

We need to review our healthcare delivery and begin to understand that dying is a normal part of life. You can make this normal life process of dying easier by acquiring more knowledge and putting pressure on our delivery systems to provide for our changing aging populations.



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What’s In A Name?

Some Thoughts on American Democracy

By Mark Svetz

“Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears...” says Marc Antony in the opening of Act III, Scene II of William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. We know that Marc Antony was playing fast and loose with the facts when he spoke those words at Caesar’s funeral, but what I’m thinking about right now is how our own leaders refer to us. “Taxpayers, consumers, customers, lend me your ears...” is how a modern American president might begin a speech. In our case, we might not get the metaphor for listening; we might think the rascal really wants our ears!

I have learned to pay close attention to what our leaders call us because it reflects how they see us. How nice when Lyndon Johnson called us “My fellow Americans,” although that proved small comfort when we experienced what was so naively called “the Credibility Gap.” I was vaguely concerned in the 70s when I began to hear us referred to as *taxpayers*, rather than citizens, or residents or even neighbors, because it made me feel like a mark, not my name but the target of a scam. If I look again to English literature for a metaphor, the Sheriff of Nottingham comes to mind, seeing his neighbors as a sponge of sorts, from which to squeeze the last drop of money for the king. I liked citizen better, because I believe it refers to our rights and privileges under our government, rather than to our obligation to give them money. We are, after all, supposed to be the owners of this leaky ship of state, not simply the



fuel that keeps it floundering about the world. On the local level, it seems to me that taxpayer is a more reasonable designation, since the budget is the only aspect of our government we have any control over, and then it’s only yea or nay. Sometimes, I feel like the budget vote is the only time I ever get to say – in a way that is heard – how my town should be run. Free speech, the right to comment on how things are going, is one thing, but the right to vote yes or no, and to know that the majority will carry the day, is quite another. Voting on the budget is pretty thin gruel where democracy is concerned, but then again, it is increasingly true that our governments on all levels only speak the language of finance.

What we would need to have democracy, is conversation; we need to listen to each other before making some collective decisions about our fate as a nation. With that need for conversation in mind, I am thinking of how Soviet leaders – at least in the popular view – referred to each other and their fellow citizens as Comrade. In my mind, Comrade is a lot more conducive to conversations about democracy and equality than, oh say, customer.

I was appalled when George W. Bush and Rudolph Giuliani referred to us as “their American Consumers,” after the World Trade Towers were destroyed. And they put a fine point on the designation when they told us not to be afraid, but to go shopping. You see, like taxpayers, consumers are a source of revenue for our government. I am not speaking now of the tax on our purchases, but of the many corporations who sell us things and, more important, they also underwrite those who would become our leaders. Just as when they call us taxpayers, they are only

interested in our money when they call us consumers they are seeing us as assets, whose money they can corral for their corporate sponsors. Their patrons need us to consume more and more, even as our planet and our cultures need us to consume less.

Most shockingly, I read a comment by Donald Trump the other day, in which he referred to us as “customers.” This brings me to mind of the struggle being waged in our country over the privatization of the functions of our government: schools, prisons, the Social Security system, including Medicare. When they think of us as customers, we should remember the term “caveat emptor.” The thing about the corporations that sell us goods and services, is that they are only interested in making money, and when they have us locked in, they won’t care whether we’re satisfied. When our government gives away more and more of its functions as monopolies to corporations, those companies have less and less reason to care about our satisfaction.

What’s in a name? Plenty! I know I am unlikely to trust anyone who calls me or my fellow citizens “consumers,” or, worse still, “customers.” I think I will not really be satisfied until a candidate calls me “comrade,” or some other term that speaks of equality, respect and our shared mission as a nation of people, with desires, needs and responsibilities to each other.

Mark Svetz, now (mostly) retired, has been a journalist, activist, teacher and self-appointed knight errant in Willimantic for the last 45 years. You can read more of Mark’s writing at www.sarahwinterclothworks.com/writing.

Textile Duo ‘17

By Faith Kenton

The Windham Textile and History Museum (WTHM) in Willimantic, Ct. (www.millmuseum.org) invites you to attend our second annual textile-related events in June 2017 – TEXTILE DUO ‘17 On June 10th people interested in Quilting and Fiber Arts are invited to attend the museum show put on by Catherine Smith of Chaplin, and Joan Blade Johnson of Hampton. On June 17th, the museum will offer the “fuzzy” side of textiles, showing the crafts of Spin/Weave/Knit with Peggy Church as leader. Both Saturday hours are 10-4.

The Quilting and Fiber Arts Day June 10th will include a wall display of finished quilts called “Locally Inspired”. These quilts were created by area craftspeople, members of SAQA including a trunk show, or SAQACT and others. Martha Sielman, local author from Hebron, will discuss her book on Arts Quilts International – “Abstract and Geometric”. Shiela Rae Lutz will offer a solo quilt exhibit of her work. In addition, for the entire month of June beginning June 1st through June 30th, the museum offers the Invitational Fiber Art- Quilt Show hanging throughout the museum.

Other attractions on June 10th include a demonstration of Sashiko Stitching by Allison Wilbur and a conversation with Lois Palmer on the steps followed when appraising a quilt antique or new. Jamie Eves, executive director of the museum will talk on “Connecticut and the History of Early Sewing Machines” with a focus on the Singer model and its industrial ties to Connecticut. Pat Ferguson will discuss how to hang quilts and fiber art.

Quilt vendors will offer quilted hangings, fabric art pieces such as ice-dyed silk, fabric cuts, their own books, and quilting supplies from Stitch Chicks of Franklin. On June 17th, the focus shifts to the arts of spinning, weaving, knitting, felting. The day will include the chance to observe Chris Woolybuns shearing her angora rabbit, then spinning angora yarn. Deirdre from Still River Mill in Eastford will follow how her mill processes cashmere from the shearing



Sheep at Aries Crossing Farm, Lebanon. Faith Kenton photo.

to the yarn. You will hear from Shirkshire Farm, Conway MA, about growing plants for natural fiber dyeing. Ann Galonska will have live silkworms, and will take you through the procedures that results in silk. Terri Guerette from Broad Brook will be in period dress as a “spinster”, reenacting the early history of spinning. There will be an all-day process by a team of people called Fleece-to-Shawl. They start with a pile of fleece, clean it, card it, spin it, and weave on a pre-dressed loom resulting in a 6’ long 2’ wide natural fiber shawl.

Demonstrations offered – Pat McMullan, Ply Split Braiding. Herman Guerette, the techniques of tablet, or card, weaving. Stephanie Morton of Old Lyme, tartan weaving. Andrea Marshall, make and take wet felting. Round Hill Farm of Coventry will show two alpacas, Berkeley Nowosad of Lebanon two sheep.

Spin/Weave/Knit vendors will include local yarns from Woolworks in Putnam, the Ellyn Cooper line from Sprague, and Vivienne McGarry’s yarns from Haddam Neck. Still River Farm will offer a variety of fiber products, Round Hill Farm will have alpaca products, and Kris Wisniewski of Storrs will offer felted items.

The Museum has two handicapped-accessible buildings and large free public parking across Main Street. The donation fee each day is \$10 Adult, \$5 children. This donation includes a full tour of the museum’s two buildings. For more information, call Faith Kenton 860-456-0817 or email phiona8@sbcglobal.net.

Town by Town Movement

Fracking Waste Ban Gains Steam

By Kathy Demers

Prompted by concerned citizens and environmental organizations, a dozen towns in Connecticut have established ordinances to ban fracking waste – a mix of toxic chemicals, heavy metals, salts and radioactive waste that is generated during hydraulic fracking for natural gas and oil. Numerous studies have shown that these waste products can pollute soil, air and drinking water. The toxins present in this waste are known to cause serious health problems, including cancers, multiple organ damage, birth defects and embryo toxicity, neurological, reproductive and developmental problems. The contamination risks are long term, since radioactive materials, like Radium 226 which are naturally stored in the ground, come to the surface with fracking and have a half-life of 1600 years.

Ordinances banning the storage, disposal or use of fracking waste have already been passed in Andover, Ashford, Branford, Coventry, Hampton, Mansfield, Middletown, New London, Portland, Washington, Windham (including Willimantic), Windsor and Woodstock. Citizens in more than 40 other CT towns, including Eastford, Griswold, Hebron, Lebanon, Pomfret and Willington are working to move bans forward.

Residents in Willington and other local towns can learn more about the risks of toxic fracking waste and consider the benefits of establishing their own ordinances by attending “A Presentation for CT Towns on Fracking Waste Ban Ordinances” on Thursday, May 4th at 6:30 pm at Willington Public Library, 7 Ruby Road, Willington. Speaker Jennifer Siskind from Food & Water Watch (www.foodandwaterwatch.org) and members from Eastern Connecticut Green Action (<http://www.easternctgreenaction.com/>) will provide information. For more info about this event, contact Kathy Demers (860) 429-8384 or kdemers48@gmail.com.

Town bans have been initiated due to the uncertainty of what will happen at the state level. The State of Connecticut has a temporary ban on the import, storage,

disposal, and use of fracking waste from gas wells only. As soon as this summer, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is required to submit waste regulations for review, between July 1, 2017, and July 1, 2018. There is a bill in the state legislature, House Bill 6329, which could change state law and prevent DEEP from submitting regulations, but it is unknown if it will have enough support to pass this year. Though needed to pass, the bill has loopholes and is not as comprehensive as the Town ordinances, which ban all types of oil and gas drilling and extraction wastes.

Although no fracking for oil or natural gas is done in Connecticut, tanker trucks filled with waste products from the Marcellus Shale region of Pennsylvania could enter Connecticut if regulations are put in place. Fracking involves injecting millions of gallons of a toxic chemical solution underground at high pressure to crack rocks and release oil and natural gas. Contaminated fluids and solids, including naturally-occurring heavy metals and radioactive material stored in the fractured rocks, return to the surface and must be disposed of as waste. If DEEP regulations are established, fracking waste could come to Connecticut for storage, treatment, disposal and potentially be repurposed for construction fill, road de-icers and dust suppression. Citizens and environmental groups are concerned that DEEP will not have adequate resources to effectively monitor the contents, movement, storage, disposal, and use of fracking waste within the state, and that even regulations cannot prevent leakage and spills due to human error and equipment failures.

The Neighbors Paper
Black and white
And read all over!

Still Pickin’ Records Debut Album



Bob Coxx, Jim Sharpley and Myrna Riquier (left to right) performing as Still Pickin’.
Photo courtesy of Linda Orlomoski of Canterbury.

Submitted by Myrna Riquier

Still Pickin’, a country-western and bluegrass trio based in eastern Connecticut has just recorded its debut album. The performers are among the oldest musicians still actively working in Connecticut. The members are from Coventry, Mansfield and Chaplin.

The group has two lead vocalists: Bob Coxx, a life-long balladeer who worked many years with his dad, the renowned New England fiddler, Slim Coxx of Cowboy Caravan fame, a staple at Lake Compounce in Bristol, CT for several decades; and Jim Sharpley, former lead singer of the historic Texas swing group Jim Sharpley and the Sharpshooters. You will likely recall seeing Jim on your TV set during his previous career in broadcasting with Channel 8 WNHC-TV. Both Sharpley and Coxx are members of the Connecticut Country Music Hall of Fame. Myrna Riquier, the group’s songwriter, booking agent and most senior member, plays bass for the trio and will turn eighty-one this year.

The trio spent several months selecting material for their recent recording project, choosing songs for a very specific audience. Their music is not modern country, but traditional country-western. It features the classic songs of the genre’s pioneers. Since its beginning in 2009, Still Pickin’ has been a favorite of retired folks because they

play the early country music that seniors grew up listening to which is no longer available on the radio. Still Pickin’ to the rescue.


Another unusual aspect of this new album is that no visiting musicians sat in on the recording sessions. They did all the work themselves. Of special significance is that all of the lead instrument tracks on the project were performed by Jim Sharpley who plays numerous stringed instruments. Jim’s uniqueness is that he taught himself to play many instruments and most of them he started only after he had retired. He is certainly an inspiration to anyone facing retirement who may be pondering what they might do with their new windfall of time. Jim’s musical astuteness also landed him the additional task of being Producer for the CD project.

The Trio doesn’t perform in winter months but works steadily from May to late November and obviously they enjoy what they are doing for when asked how much fun could it possibly be to haul around equipment and drive all over the state to play music at their ages, the group was quick to respond that “We just love seeing the audience faces brighten up when we kick off a tune that they recall from a life-time ago. We can watch as they start trying to remember the lyrics to those old songs and soon they are singing right along with us. It doesn’t get any better than that”.


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What Are You Planting This Spring?

By C. Dennis Pierce

Stop at any garden center this time of the year, and you’ll find row upon row of fresh flowers and plants just waiting to be bought. Does your garden start with seeds or do you purchase plants? If you plant from seed you have already started either under grow lights or in front of a full sun window. If you’re like me and do a little of both you can appreciate two annual, local plant sales that occur in Mansfield each year. The Mansfield Garden Gate Club will hold this year’s sale at the Mansfield Public Library’s Buchanan Center on Saturday, May 20 beginning at 9:00am. Get there early since there is always a line. They always offer a great selection and reasonable prices. EO Smiths FFA’s plant sale is on Saturday May 20th and Saturday June 2nd. This sale’s proceeds goes back to the Future Farmers.

So what are you planting different this year? Heirloom tomatoes? Asparagus? For me it’s potatoes. In the past I have never had any luck growing potatoes. This summer I am planning on growing them in a vertical container. There are many options out there that you can find online such as in a barrel, commercial grow bags or you can build a neat box from either left over wood around the house or you can repurpose a pallet. The following is a neat video that explains a simple way to make stacked sections for your growing frame: <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=how+to+grow+potatoes+stacked+wooden+sections+tower&view=detail&mid=3AFF27EA934799403DC13AF-F27EA934799403DC1&FORM=VRDGAR>

The following will provide you with some great growing suggestions:
Seed potatoes aren’t really seeds at all. They are full-size potatoes that are allowed to start producing shoots in the potato eyes. You’ve probably seen this happen when you’ve stored potatoes in the kitchen for too long. Seed potatoes can be planted whole or cut into pieces, with each piece containing an eye or two (or three). Because potatoes can rot if the soil is too cool or wet, many people prefer to allow the cut pieces to callus over, by leaving them exposed overnight. Potatoes in our area can be planted in mid to late spring.
You may any of the methods listed above but when you do choose a sunny spot. Your container should have well-draining, loose soil, so that the roots and tubers can develop. Plant your seed potatoes in the bottom of a tall container. Put about 6 inches of soil in the bottom first, then spread out your seed potatoes. Keep adding soil as the plants get taller. The plants grow a couple of feet tall, but the size of the actual potatoes will vary widely with variety, from large baking types to tiny fingerlings.
Potatoes don’t like a particularly rich soil. If you have a good amount of organic matter the soil and the pH

Looking Up

Under Southern Skies

By Bob Grindle

A few days ago I met a young woman who grew up in Sydney, Australia. My first concern, after getting past her sigh-worthy and altogether charming accent, was to talk about the Southern skies that she takes for granted, much as we northerners take our Northern hemisphere skies as the “given.” We talked for a time, and as the conversation rambled through the magical world that is the bottom half of our planet—at least to my northern point of view—that part of my brain that occasionally gets distracted began to sort through memories of long-ago lessons about explorers that mapped the Southern hemisphere and stories and songs about the smallest of the 88 constellations, Crux, the Southern Cross: Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young sang a song about it; and Richard Rodger(of Rodgers and Hammerstein) wrote the Victory at Sea suite while reflecting on the loneliness of U.S. sailors in the southern Pacific theater of WWII and the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci, after whom both North America and South America are named, exploring and

mapping much of the Western hemisphere.
When I was an E-4, airman first class with the Us Air Force and stationed for a time in Southeast Asia, I was as aware of the Southern Cross as I now am of the Big Dipper. There were other priorities in my life, though, and I didn’t spend a lot of time reflecting on the connectedness of the Earth and Sky. So my conversation with someone living in Australia was a vicarious opportunity to recall things to which I probably should have been paying closer attention. In the early morning hours of our April skies here in Connecticut, I can look up at Cassiopeia in the south and, knowing that the Southern Cross is directly opposite the narcissistic queen of our northern sky, feel somewhat connected to someone in the southern hemisphere looking up at the sky... sort of astronomical Skyping.
There’s a lot to look for in the skies of May. On the evenings of May 6th,7th and 8th, as the Moon is waxing toward full and passing through the constellation Virgo toward Scorpius, at about 9 pm or so, Jupiter will be just a couple of degrees above Spica, and on the 7th of May, the nearly full Moon

is good, the potatoes should be happy. What they do rely on is a steady water supply. Water them at least an inch a week. You should expect to wait 2-4 months, for full size potatoes. The entire crop is ready to harvest once the tops of the plants die off. You can leave the potatoes in the ground for a few weeks longer, as long as the ground is not wet. Harvest carefully, by hand when growing in a container. Turn the soil over and search through for the treasures. Not feeling adventurous to grow your own? You can wait to the end of the season and buy them at one of the local farmer’s markets. And since you are probably as anxious as I am for the summer market season to begin, the summer market openings and hours are: the Ashford Market begins on Sunday, May 14th. 10:00am to 1:00pm. Storrs Market begins on Saturday, May 6th from 3:00pm to 6:00pm and the Coventry Market begins on Sunday, June 4th from 11:00am to 2:00pm.
So now that you might have an abundance of potatoes and other root vegetables try out the following recipe.

Root Vegetable Latkes
Makes 20 small Latkes, serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

3 cups of a mix of peeled and grated raw, potatoes, sweet potatoes, beets, carrots, parsnips, turnips or celery root
¼ onion, very thinly sliced or shredded
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon of cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon of baking powder
½ teaspoon of kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
Vegetable oil
Sour cream and applesauce to serve

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees. Line a baking sheet with paper towels.
Plates the grated vegetable and onion in a large bowl. Add the eggs, cornstarch, baking powder, salt and pepper and stir well.
Play a frying pan over medium-low to medium heat. Add enough oil to fill the pan ¼ to ½ inch deep. When the oil is hot, use a soup spoon to scoop up about 2 tablespoons of the mixture. Then take another spoon to press down on the mixture to make an oval patty. Slide patty into the oil. Continue to make patties about 6 at a time. Cook until crisp. Turn over to crisp both sides. About 4 minutes per side. Make sure oil is not too hot as patties will burn.

will be very near Jupiter. Grab your binoculars and, just like Galileo, you can clearly see Jupiter and, if you’re lucky, the four Galilean moons, Io, Europa, Gannymede and Callisto. The ever beautiful Venus rises in the East an hour or so before sunrise all month and later, around the 22nd or 23rd of May, if you have a great eastern view of the horizon, you might get a brief look at Mercury just before sunrise. Mercury is so close to the Sun that it is only visible just before sunrise or just after sunset, and then only when the skies are clear and the tiny planet is in the right sector of its orbit. Ah, the tribulations of skywatching.

In Native American lore, the May full Moon is known as the Flower Moon, a time when the plant and animal world is full of passion, fertility and abundance; and folklore tells that late at night even the flowers dance with the vitality of the season. It is a great time to get outside and enjoy this most marvelous of reasons for living in our region of the world. I sort of recall a line from a song in the musical Camelot,



Contributed photo

When cooked place latkes on prepared baking sheet and place in oven while you finish the rest. Season with salt and top with sour cream and applesauce and serve.
These can be a delicious appetizer or an accompaniment to a meal. As you start planning your summer outings take to opportunity to put the following note on your frig or on your kitchen calendar. A number of farmers in Willington are getting together on June 11th to hold the first annual “Willington Farm Tour”. Four (and possibly five) working farms in Willington are holding Open Houses on that day, to invite the community to come meet their farmers, see how their food is grown, and spend a day getting to know the agricultural riches of Willington. More details can be found at their Facebook page for the event is: www.facebook.com/willingtonfarmtour

Is it not interesting how we now are concerned about the heritage of our food? That is, who grows it and where does it come from? Recently I came upon an interesting quote from J.I. Rodale, the father of organic gardening, “One of these fine days, the public is going to wake up and will pay for eggs, meats, vegetables, etc., according to how they were produced.” You would think this quote is recent but actually it was from Rodale in May of 1942.

As always that’s for taking the time to read this column and maybe event try the recipe. If you have a suggestion or a farm or a local grower you would like featured in a future column drop me a line at Codfish53@Yahoo.com. Peas be with you.



The Southern Cross constellation

Contributed photo

The Lusty Month of May: “that lusty month when everyone goes blissfully astray.” Please do everyone try and get outside and enjoy the month and the skies, and have a safe and reflective Memorial Day holiday.

Bob Grindle is a Windham Hospital retiree and a student in the Astronomy Minor program at ECSU.

By Kaley Burns, ND

Spring is finally here and the gorgeous weather beckons. Unfortunately, an all too-common flare of seasonal allergies can hamper participation in outside activities. Trees, grasses, and weeds have bombarded the air with pollen, making it difficult to see, breathe, and enjoy the outdoors.

Background-

Allergies are the most common cause of nasal congestion and sinus pressure. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America defines “allergy” as an overreaction of the immune system to substances that usually cause no reaction in the majority of individuals.¹ Allergies are estimated to affect more than 50 million people in the United States, are the fifth-leading cause of chronic disease in all persons, and are the third-leading cause of chronic disease in children under the age of 18.¹

Allergic rhinitis refers to inflammation of the nasal passages, which can cause any number of annoying symptoms, including sneezing, watery eyes, nasal congestion, runny nose, and postnasal drip. Allergic rhinitis is caused by an immune-mediated response to tiny airborne substances called allergens. Essentially, what is normally a benign substance, is treated by the body as a foreign invader. The allergic reaction progression is prompted by the activation of inflammatory cells including mast cells, basophils and eosinophils. These cells produce substances, such as histamine and interleukins, which cause fluid to build up in the nares, instigating the itching, sneezing, and runny nose that allergy sufferers know so well. Over several hours, these substances activate other inflammatory cells that can cause more persistent symptoms. These complex series of chemical messages and reactions can cause an out-of-control situation every time someone is exposed to the allergen.

Allergens can appear in various forms: food, environment, animal dander, chemicals, lotions, medications, and even natural substances. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, allergic rhinitis affects approximately 20 percent of the population.² However, this is on the rise, affecting approximately 30% of adults and 40% of children in the United States.³ The risk of developing allergic rhinitis has been found to be higher in those who experience asthma or eczema and in individuals who have a significant family history of asthma.

When treating allergies and rhinitis it is important to identify the causative agents or any additional triggers and address these specifically. For example, individuals who have a reaction to dust or dust mites can use dust mite covers on their bedding to reduce dust mite exposure while they are sleeping and a HEPA filter in their bedroom to help reduce circulating dust from the air.

Conventional Approach-

Reducing exposure to the specific allergens and triggers in combination with pharmaceutical therapy is often the standard regimen. Decongestant medications may help to reduce the swelling in the nasal passages, ease the stuffiness and reduce sinus pressure. Decongestants are often combined with antihistamines in oral, over-the-counter allergy medications. These treatments are also available in the form of a nasal spray. It is important, however, not to use decongestant nose drops and sprays for an extended period of time because long-term use can lead to what is referred to as “rebound” congestion. Furthermore, oral decongestants may elevate blood pressure and therefore may not be appropriate for people with high blood pressure or certain cardiovascular conditions. It is always important to consult your medical professional before utilizing these medications.

Herbal therapies-

Many people reach for over-the-counter allergy medications, which can be effective in relieving symptoms but may often result in adverse effects. However, there are treatments beyond pharmaceuticals that can profoundly relieve symptoms and help to decrease frequency of allergic episodes. Herbal remedies offer a supportive solution while helping to eliminate symptoms, yield fewer adverse effects, and improve overall functioning of the body's immune mechanism.

Botanical therapies can enhance the quality of life for those experiencing seasonal allergies or hay fever. It is often recommended to begin herbal treatment for seasonal allergies six weeks before the season begins and continuing treatment throughout the season. The best way to address individual needs is to consult a naturopathic or integrative medical professional who has knowledge of the therapies presented in this article.

Euphrasia officinalis, or eyebright, is often used in acute mucous-related ailments of the eyes, nose, and ears because it is great at reducing congestion and secretions.⁴ Euphrasia is often used as an anti-inflammatory agent for hay fever, sinusitis, upper respiratory tract infections, and inflammation of the mucous membranes.

Curcuma longa, popularly referred to as turmeric, is widely known for its anti-inflammatory abilities. A recent study found that turmeric, as an anti-allergic agent, showed immune regulatory effects through balancing the immune system,⁵ making it useful to ameliorate immune-mediated allergic disorders such as food allergy, atopic dermatitis, and asthma.⁶

Achillea millefolium, also known as yarrow, is a valuable decongestant and expectorant. Achillea exhibits a drying effect and can improve cough symptoms and sinus infections by clearing sputum formation. Achillea is especially helpful with allergies where nasal secretions and watery eyes are caused by molds, dust, pollen and dander because of the anti-allergic capacity of its 82 active constituents.⁷

Urtica dioica, or stinging nettle, can sound daunting by name but carries powerful antihistamine and anti-inflammatory effects. The bioactive components identified in urtica dioica alleviate symptoms by acting to inhibit the pro-inflammatory pathways activated in allergic rhinitis.^{8,9} Furthermore, it has been found that urtica has the ability to reduce the amount of histamine the body produces in response to an allergen.

Nutrient supplementation-

In addition to botanical therapies, proper nutrient supplementation can further benefit the pathways and organ systems involved in the allergic response. Bioflavonoids, such as quercetin and hesperidin, are natural antihistamines and tremendously anti-allergenic.^{10,11} Bromelain and vitamin C can enhance the action of bioflavonoids and serve to stabilize the histamine response.¹⁰ These substances can be found in combination capsules or as nasal sprays to support healthy mucous membranes to prevent further discharge.

Other methods-

Steam inhalation, which involves combining steam and essential oils, such as eucalyptus, creates a potent treatment for the upper respiratory tract, nose and sinus conditions.

Hydrotherapy, or the use of water in various forms and in various temperatures can produce different effects on different system of the body and is widely used to improve immunity and circulation.

Proper hydration is essential to any level of health. Dehydration has many adverse effects on the body. During allergy season, not being properly hydrated may lead to more frequent and more intense allergy symptoms.

Tolle causam (treat the cause) – considering the role of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract-

In naturopathic medicine, we often discuss intestinal permeability in relation to the immune system and allergies. While there is still need for more clinical research to confirm this, we do know that food sensitivities and intolerances can result in inflammation along the gut mucosa, decreasing the integrity of the intestinal lining. Substances can, therefore, pass from the gut into the bloodstream, where the immune system will create a reaction to these agents. The use of mucilaginous herbs can help soothe digestive inflammation. Some herbs to consider are *Althaea officinalis* (marshmallow), *Ulmus fulva* (slippery elm), *Glycyrrhiza glabra* (licorice). The balancing of gut flora could be the topic of an entire article because it is so vast and complex. However, simply working to restore the human microflora *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium bifidum* is an easy place to begin restoring balance.

Conclusion-

Naturopathic medicine has many tools to help with symptoms of seasonal and everyday allergies. Most importantly, naturopathic physicians look deeper to the cause and evaluate the whole person to deliver individualized care. Whenever possible, it is best to avoid an offending allergen. When avoidance is not possible, it is recommended to institute some level of supportive influence, and often the key is to remember the power of healing the GI tract.

Kaley Burns, ND is a licensed naturopathic physician at the Connecticut Natural Health Specialists in Manchester, Connecticut. She is a member of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians and the American Medical Women's Association. Dr. Burns is accepting new patients and accepts most major health insurances. 860-533-0179.

The deadline
for the June issue of
The Neighbors Paper
is Friday, May 19th.

Trials and Tribulations of an Artist

By David Corsini

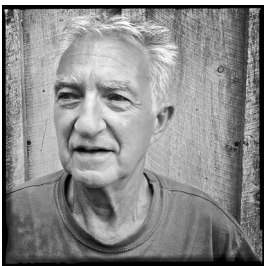
March 9th was a very windy day. Although the temperature was in the 50s, the wind was a harbinger of snow promised during the night. The wind had blown many leaves into the small goldfish pond that is a focus of wildlife activity in our backyard. In the afternoon I used a net to skim leaves off the pond before they could sink and decompose. The goldfish did not want more leaves. The assemblages around the pond were standing well.

I am an artist who makes several kinds of assemblages. One kind is intended for outside display in gardens. Around our goldfish pond we had placed four of these that had previously been displayed on our property in Windham Center. In addition, these assemblages had withstood wind, rain, snow, ice and sun for 3 ½ years in Willimantic. But later in the day on March 9th I looked out toward the pond to see, to my dismay, that one of them had been toppled by the wind. I had not expected this because this piece had a very heavy base and the five elements did not have the types of surfaces to be caught by the wind. The Kingston Trio may call the wind Mariah, but I call it a pain in the butt.

This was not the first time that wind had toppled one of my creations. In fact, I had devoted considerable time to experimenting with different ways to stabilize my assemblages against the wind. I had used old automobile tires with rims as bases, embedded bases in poured cement, and fastened others to sheets of plywood. Some of these strategies had not been aesthetically pleasing, some had required too much work, and others had made the pieces difficult to move. In recent years, my favored strategy has been using old brake rotors as bases for the assemblages –the larger and heavier the brake rotor the better. I am grateful to Jeff Landon at Landon Tire for allowing me to obtain “the pick of the litter” from his brake repair workplace.

My garden assemblages are composed of three elements: base, stems, and heads. The brake rotors, especially those from trucks, are ideal bases because they are heavy to begin with and contain holes. In some of the holes I insert four inch bolts. These bolts are then used as points to attach “stems.” The stems are made from pieces of electrical conduit. Electrical conduit is ½ inch metal tubing that comes in ten foot lengths and is easy to cut, bend and paint. One end of a piece of conduit is put onto one of the bolts sticking up from the rotor. To the other end of the conduit various heads are attached. The heads are often seen as “flower-type” elements. When the flowers are made from old hubcaps or old silver-plated dishes, there are lots of surfaces for the wind to catch.

I do not use all the holes in the brake rotors for bolts. I leave several open holes as places through which pieces of rebar can be hammered to pin the brake rotor to the ground. When I am diligent in pinning the brake rotor,



the assemblages will usually stand up to the wind. But sometimes I don’t pin the assemblage with rebar because I think the brake rotor is heavy enough and the particular “flower heads” wind resistant. This assumption is sometimes wrong.

The assemblage that had been toppled by the wind on March 9th had a very heavy brake rotor as a base and five “heads” were metal pieces without significant surfaces for wind to catch. But the wind had another idea. I went out to inspect the damage. Happily, the metal wheel-type heads with small glass pieces had not broken. One head had become detached, but it was fixable. It turns out that I had placed the assemblage on a rock so there was no way I could have anchored the base with rebar. It had been ok for 3 ½ years, even through blizzard-like conditions. This is probably not the last time I will under-estimate natural forces.

In years past I would become upset by similar events because of what had happened with the assemblage and because I had not been diligent. But over time I have become more accepting of these events and have managed to maintain a degree of tranquility after they happen. I have gained respect for the powers of nature and taken the failures as a challenge to do better in setting up the assemblages in the first place. In addition, since I am the artist, I can usually fix what has been broken or substitute a new element.

With respect to the piece that had fallen, I took the detached element to my studio with the intent to reapply epoxy to the pieces that had come apart. The hole into which new epoxy would be applied needed to be cleaned of the old epoxy. I attempted to clean the hole with my drill. When drilling, the part, an ornate metal piece that used to grace the top of a wood stove, fell apart. A step backwards rather than a step forward. Other times when things

like this have happened, I have had to throw the piece away and look for something else. Luckily, this time the piece was fixable.

Inside of the piece that had come apart there were a paper wasp nest and a spider’s nest. As I poked around trying to remove the spider nest, a medium sized, black spider dropped to the table and then repelled to the floor. There are plenty of places in my studio for a spider to set up shop, so I wished it well. Later a different, much smaller species of spider emerged and headed off across the table. Thus was revealed two little advertised facts about my outside assemblages: they attract spiders and, when there is a piece of metal with an opening, wasps are likely to nest within. With a little epoxy the piece was fixed and the assemblage could be resurrected.

Issues involved with outside display of assemblages are more worrying to me when I sell them. The assemblages for outside display that I offer for sale during Artist’s Open Studio in November and December are constructed to come apart for moving. That is, the “flower” heads screw off from the “stems” and the stems easily detach from the bolts in the brake rotor. Over the years



I have found that an assemblage is most prone to disassemble when it is moved. For this reason, when I sell an assemblage, I prefer to deliver it and install it. At least I will be assured that the piece survives the installation stage.

With assemblages intended for outside display, wind is not the only issue. Rain, snow, ice, sun, heat and cold are also forces that work on pieces that are displayed outside. Over time, the patina of the flower elements will “evolve”. Some evolve in interesting ways and some in ways not so interesting. Sometimes glue has been used, and over time, the glue may fail. However, because the heads screw on and off, these elements can be reconditioned or changed.

And it is not only the weather that impacts outside assemblages. Some of my pieces have been damaged by what could be considered “acts of God.” Falling tree limbs have wrecked two and another was toppled when my friend Jock backed into it while on his riding mower. I am not sure the latter would be considered an “act of God.”

People who buy a piece of art typically expect it to last for a long time. But when the piece of art is for outdoor display, people’s expectation for longevity needs to be amended. I am not sure how to prepare potential buyers. One approach could be to offer potential buyers the possibility of buying a service contract: 1-year, 2-year, etc. Another approach I have been contemplating is to develop a brochure discussing various philosophical principles of impermanence, an awareness of constant change and the importance of living with and enjoying the art in the moment. Perhaps I should sell only to Buddhists or Stoics or those who promise to read up on those philosophies.

For the time being, I will continue to give people who purchase one of my pieces my business card and urge them to call if there is a problem. Some people have called and I have always been happy to help.

CT Poet Laureate at Arts Center East

Submitted by Pegi Deitz Shea

VERNON – Connecticut Poet Laureate, Rennie McQuilkin, will read from his two latest volumes of poetry at Arts Center East, joined by poet Joan Seliger Sidney. The event will take place Sunday, May 7, 2:00, at 709 Hartford Turnpike. The reading is part of “Poetry Rocks,” a new quarterly series which is open to the public.

Rennie McQuilkin is the Poet Laureate of Connecticut and the author of fourteen poetry collections. His two latest books are A Quorum of Saints and North of Eden. His work has appeared in The Atlantic, Poetry, The Southern Review, The Yale Review, The Hudson Review, The American Scholar, Crazyhorse, and elsewhere. He has received numerous awards for his work, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Connecticut Center for the Book. In 2010, his volume of new and selected poems, The Weathering, was awarded the Connecticut

Book Award. For nine years he directed the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival, which he co-founded at Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, Connecticut. With his wife, the artist Sarah McQuilkin, he lives in Simsbury, CT, where he is the local poet laureate. For more information, please go to www.AntrimHouse.com.

The poetry reading will also feature Joan Seliger Sidney, granddaughter of Holocaust victims and daughter of Holocaust survivors, who writes with passion about her forebears and her Jewish culture. Her poetry also tackles her own challenge of making peace and living well with secondary-progressive Multiple Sclerosis. Despite her wheelchair, she embraces life fully by swimming, skiing and horseback riding. Her books include Body of Diminishing Motion, The Way the Past Comes



Back and Bereft and Blessed. Her work has appeared in highly regarded anthologies and journals including Michigan Quarterly Review, Caduceus and Jewish Currents. She has received numerous grants from organizations such as the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, CT Commission on the Arts, and the Vermont Studio Center. A writing teacher at the university level both here and abroad, Joan is Writer-in-Residence at UCONN’s Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life. She lives in Storrs with her husband Stuart and enjoys her growing family of children and grandchildren. For more information, please go to <http://www.joanseligersidney.org>.

The opening reader will be Joyce Hida, an award-winning poet attending Rockville High School.

“Listeners are in for a treat,” said Poetry Rocks Coordinator, Pegi Deitz Shea. “I first heard and saw Rennie McQuilkin read in 1987 shortly after I moved to Connecticut. His work reveals deep insight into human nature, and he delivers his nuanced lines with wit and charm. His introductions to the poems are entertaining, and often moving. Joan’s poems probe her family’s

haunting by the Holocaust, coupled with a fierce survival urge. Her work about living with illness also encompasses the losses of friends. But listeners and readers will learn from her how illness can heighten every emotion including joy.”

According to ACE Director Joan Sonnanburg, “Poetry Rocks” broadens ACE’s reach to include the literary arts. ACE is inviting the public into its galleries all year to write poetry or stories inspired by exhibit pieces. (This literary response to art is called Ekphrastic writing.) Check the ACE calendar soon for a writing workshop to learn about and try this technique.

Rennie McQuilkin’s performance is co-sponsored by The Vernon Arts Council. For more information about the poetry series, please call Pegi Deitz Shea at 860-878-7016, or email pegideitzshea@aol.com.

Arts Center East is a non-profit organization committed to enriching lives and enhancing economic development by bringing the arts to the diverse community east of the river through education, events, exhibits and performances. ACE is at 709 Hartford Turnpike. (Rte. 30), Vernon CT. www.artscentereast.org (860) 971-8222.

Roger’s Dress

By Delia Berlin

I don’t like to disappoint. So, if you started reading this story suspecting that it may involve some version of a transvestite fantasy, please move on now. Because what I call Roger’s dress is not a dress worn by Roger, but rather a dress that Roger gave me. And this fact won’t lead to any kinky revelations either: My husband knows all about it. Although Roger’s wife, and probably Roger himself, don’t even suspect it. Let me explain.

It was the day after Thanksgiving, when many artists in northeast Connecticut start holding their annual Open Studio weekends. Lacking big plans for the day, I decided to swing by Moulton Court, Willimantic, where several artists (including my husband David Corsini) have studios. For a while, I browsed local art that included encaustics, hand-made musical instruments, woodwork, sculpture and assemblages. I made a couple of purchases and left.

I was about half-way home when I decided to swing by the mall to get an item for my five-year-old granddaughter. She wanted a “dolly and me” nightgown, which is a nightgown plus its miniature replica, to be worn by a favorite doll. I worried that if I waited much longer these popular items would run out.

Not being much of a shopper, I walked into Kohl’s and found what I wanted very quickly. Serendipitously, with the girls’ nightgowns, there was a single sweater dress in my size that someone had left behind, out of place. I liked it and grabbed it too.

Just then, I noticed a huge mob by the rear corner of the store and asked someone what was going on. I was told that nothing was going on – that was the line. Incredible, I had to ask: “You mean the line to pay?” – Yes, it was, after all, Black Friday.

I realized then that in 41 years in eastern Connecticut, I had never shopped on Black Friday before. Seeing a line that wrapped around the entire store was unbelievable. Almost immediately I thought about putting my two items back and going home empty-handed, but knowing that my granddaughter’s nightgown was the only one in her size and would soon disappear encouraged me to test the speed of the line.

I’m not the chatty type in these situations, but truly shocked by the size of the crowd, I shared my amazement with the man in front of me. He was more experienced and had come prepared to wait, but expressed frustration at not finding the potholders that his wife had asked him for. Knowing where potholders might be, I pointed him in the right direction while offering to hold his cart and place in line. He found what he needed and was grateful when he returned.

Since we were no longer complete strangers, we started talking. We shared about an hour of small talk and deep conversation that left me feeling that I know so very little and yet so much about this man. Among other



things, we talked about the bilingual books that I write, and about his grandchildren, and about his siblings in the south, where he hoped he and his wife may move one day. Tangentially, I learned his name was Roger.

But more movingly, he told me a story about a devastating insurgent attack his unit suffered while he was serving in Iraq. He was in charge of the unit, but for some reason, he was away from the site of the explosion at the time and learned about it remotely. There were many casualties with horrible injuries, and a limited number of helicopters. He had to make life-and-death decisions about who would be flown and who would be transported by land. He made these decisions solely based on the types of injuries, not the identities of his soldiers, which was the only fair way.

Upon return, he learned that a young female soldier he admired for her artistic talent and ambition had been one of the fatalities. Gravely injured internally and transported by land, she hadn’t made it. Many years later, it was obvious that this loss still haunted him. It seemed to me that he would have gladly given his life for hers, on account of her youth and dreams.

His generosity showed once again, if less magnanimously, when we reached the end of the line. As they called us to separate cashiers, he thanked me for our conversation and quickly handed me a coupon. I was reluctant to accept it, but there was no time for discussion without holding up the line.

I don’t even know what kind of coupon Roger gave me, but it must have been beefy, because I paid very little for my lot. In fact, by my calculation, the sweater dress was free. And that’s how the dress got its name, and why I think Roger gave it to me. And I never even

got a chance to thank him.

Strangely, I don’t remember much about the stories that I may have told Roger that day. Our national election was still fresh in all our minds, but neither one of us made any reference to it and we didn’t discuss any politics. But time flew by as we shared those few snapshots of our lives.

Having lived in eastern Connecticut for most of my adult life, it still amazes me how often I find myself surrounded by strangers. We rarely interact, except for the occasional hellos and thank-yous. We are so trained to avoid and distrust “the stranger” that it almost seems imprudent to engage in this type of conversation. Yet, most of us are quicker to post even revealing comments on Facebook or Twitter.

Our brains have evolved to assess trustworthiness. In person, we can judge body language, facial expressions, voice intonation, and many contextual variables like age, gender and socioeconomic status. Online, we can easily be deceived, but yet we are less guarded.

Perhaps it’s not a bad idea to follow the “think globally, act locally” advice more often in our human interactions. Who knows how many stories we miss, how many gems we leave undiscovered by walking around in our bubbles. So, next time there is a long line at the store, check who’s there and make the best of it. You may even get a free dress.



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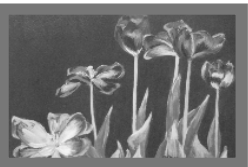
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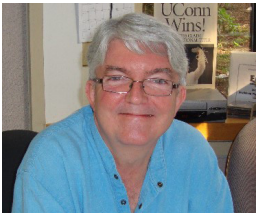
The Willi Ride Along is Underway—Come Aboard!



Contributed photos

By John Murphy

This series is about the locally-based electronic media channels and programs in our region—radio, TV, cable and web-based. They reflect many different experiences of life with a wide variety of social, political and cultural perspectives. Local news coverage is limited and these community channels offer a great opportunity to connect and learn. Here we go...



A Fusion of Public Access TV, Local Radio and Neighbors—a Traveling Community Conversation

The “Willimantic Ride Alongs” are recorded on WRTD buses in our region with passengers who accept our invitation to share their feelings, thoughts and ideas with you. About why they ride, how important mass transit is in our region, what’s the best thing about living here, what’s our #1 challenge to face. And so on!

We will talk about the many challenges facing all of us, how people are affected in their personal and everyday lives, and we will try to stay positive and focus on finding solutions and methods for working together locally.

We recorded our first rides on Wednesday April 5 on the Downtown Willimantic Route. Just a test run, if you will, to see how everything worked with our equipment and how people would respond. Some folks were shy of course, but some were open to sharing—thank you! We were able to successfully confirm that we had developed a simple and effective way to capture people’s stories. I want to do these en Espanol as well!

An article about the origins and background for this campaign appeared in the last issue. Here’s the link: <https://neighbors.pageflip.site/publications/NeighborsPaper#page/10> Take a look and please consider joining us for a ride! Or check back to watch some of the stories.

The schedule of recording dates and locations will be posted on this project’s band-new (and under construction) Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/willimanticridealongs/> A sincere thank you to everyone who has visited so far and liked and contacted me. I appreciate it! Much more is coming as the rides continue.

The first videos are being edited as this issue goes to press and will be posted on the Facebook page and YouTube. Follow this campaign on local radio every Tuesday 12–3 pm on The Pan American Express on WECS Radio at 90.1 FM and on the web at www.wecsfm.com. Studios at Eastern Connecticut State University. Listener call-ins are encouraged.



Three Community Media Resources for Our Region

A great deal of programming about the spectrum of local life in our region is available throughout the year. Watch, listen and read—and let us know you are out there. Connect for cooperative action!

WECS Radio at Eastern Connecticut State University
A 24/7 team of student and community program producers
Eastern sports coverage
90.1 FM and www.wecsfm.com
My weekly series The Pan American Express, a music fusion from across the Americas and local talk
Tuesdays 12—3 pm and guests are invited! Contact me at john@humanartsmedia.com

Neighbors Newspaper/Magazine
Monthly print version distributed throughout 22-town

region in the Quiet Corner
Available online in color at www.neighborspaper.com with full archive
Contact Tom King, Owner/Publisher, as neighborspaper@yahoo.com
Send calendar/event listings to “Attention Dagmar Noll” in Subject Line
My column from last month’s issue, introducing the Willi Ride Alongs is online at: <https://neighbors.pageflip.site/publications/NeighborsPaper#page/10>

Charter Public Access TV Channel 192/NE Connecticut Area/North Windham Studio

- For 24/7 on-demand access to CTV192 programs on the Internet:
1. Go to the website = www.ctv192.com
 2. Open the Programming Tab and select “watch programs.”
 3. When you open you will see a display listing current shows.
 4. Make your selections based on program title, topic or date and enjoy!
 5. My series is On the Homefront, online and Tuesdays 2:30 pm, Thursdays 8:00 pm and Saturdays 2:00 pm.

Remember the Charter Public Access Channel moved from channel 14 to channel 192. Make it a “favorite” on your cable channel remote control and take a ride with community TV—it’s free and worth every cent.

So that’s it for this issue. Thanks for reading and for staying in touch with all of us at *Neighbors*.

John Murphy
john@humanartsmedia.com
860-377-7166
Co-Producer of Pan American Express on WECS 90.1 FM on Tuesdays from 12—3 PM
Producer/Host of On the Homefront on Charter Public Access Channel 192

Our Community Calendar

Compiled By Dagmar Noll

Calendar begins here and continues through paper.

May 1, Monday
Painting: Flip Flops a Family, 6:00p.m. - 8:00p.m. Art-making fundraiser for the North Windham School PTO. Windham Center Fire Department, 18 Windham Center Rd, Windham. Tickets: www.paintsipfun.com

May 3, Wednesday
Politics: Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. Tanya Rhodes Smith is speaker, with tables from local groups offering local civic and political opportunities. Hosted by the Northeast CT chapter of the League of Women Voters. Bellingham Auditorium, Windham Town Hall, Main Street, Willimantic.

May 4, Thursday
Environment: Fracking Waste Risks, 6:30p.m. Learn to protect our health, water

and property values through State and Town bans. Willington Public Library, 7 Ruby Road. Info: 860-429-8384

May 6, Saturday
Tag Sale: Annual Pomfret Town Wide Tag Sale, 7:00a.m. ~50 tag sale locations throughout town. Maps sold at 7am at Pomfret Community School, 20 Pomfret Street, and Christ Church, 527 Pomfret Street, Pomfret. Info: martha@majilly.com 860-974-1583 www.visitpomfret.com
Books: Used Book Sale & Tag Sale, 7:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. Fundraiser for the Pomfret Public Library at Pomfret Scheool Community School Cafeteria, 20 Pomfret Street, Pomfret.
Skill Share: Urban Growers Workshop: Protect & Improve Water Quality, 10:00a.m. - 12:30p.m. Free. Philip Lauer Park, 625 Jackson St, Willimantic. Info: 860-423-4524 info@growwindham.org
History: Hysterical Historicals, 1:00p.m. Informal show and tell about local history. Bring your mementos. Windham Textile

& History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org

Live Music: “Prom Night for Grown-Ups” with Kate Callahan (Folk). 7:30pm. Part of the Acoustic Artist Series. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Tickets \$12.00 online / \$15.00 door. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F” (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us.

May 7, Sunday
Community Food: Willimantic Lions Pancake Breakfast & Plant Sale, 7:30a.m. - 11:00a.m. \$5-7. Willimantic Elks Club, 198 Summit Street, Willimantic.
Hiking: Long Distance Guided Hike, 12:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. Free. 5-7 miles. Friendly dogs welcome. Goodwin Forest 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Nature: Brave Beauties of Spring: Connecticut’s Early Wildflowers, 3:00p.m. - 4:30p.m. Free. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton.

Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Live Music: Ralph White, 3:00p.m. - 6:00p.m. From the Texas Music Hall of Fame. Willimantic Records, 744 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: www.willimanticrecords.com
Live Music: Amy Gallatin & Still Waters, 4:00p.m. \$20. Bread Box Folk Theater, 220 Valley Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-429-4220 www.breadboxfolk.org
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Non-sectarian, Buddhist-style sitting and walking meditations, teaching and sharing. Info: 860-450-1464 dmangum617@gmail.com

May 8, Monday
Film: America Divided, 7:00p.m. Free. 46 Spring Hill Road, Storrs. Info: 860-428-4846 “Second Monday Film Series” on Facebook.

May 9, Tuesday
Live Music: Quiet Corner Fiddlers, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Yantic River Inn, 270 Town St, Norwich. Info: qcf.webs.com b.schreiber@snet.net

Are We Watching a Rhyme of the 1960s?

“History doesn’t repeat, but it does rhyme.” Mark Twain

By Len Krimerman

Something incredible happened to me last month: a friend I’d totally lost contact with for decades suddenly and mysteriously resurfaced, alive and well. I’ll call him “Ammon”, not his real name; we were comrades during the marvelous 1960s, when I spent seven years teaching in New Orleans. Since then I had tried over and again to find and reconnect with him, always unsuccessfully.



Ammon moved from New Orleans to Vermont in the late ‘60s, and then, to escape the draft, to Europe. We corresponded for a short while when he lived and worked on a farm in Austria, and even less when he moved to West Germany. After that, when I settled into five decades in the Quiet Corner, it was if he had fallen off the earth, or flown to Mars.

Fast forward 50 years(!) till last month, when I received an email telling me someone had posted a response to a brief online memoir of my deviant early days. Yes, it was Ammon, writing from Sweden, happily thankful he had found me alive, telling me, in beautiful detail, how his life had turned out, e.g., about his travels to a remote Chinese village to spend time with a family he had befriended in Stockholm, and requesting that I fill in the blanks of my own life during those five decades we had remained out of touch.

There’s lots more I could say about this magical and unlikely reunion of two friends, and maybe I’ll get into that in a subsequent article. For now, it’s pushed me to reflect on the separate, very divergent paths of life taken by Ammon and myself. We shared so many activist convictions and escapades, but we wound up on opposite and very distant shores of the Atlantic Ocean: he rejecting US citizenship and a life of activism in this country, me remaining here hoping to somehow contribute to democratic and humane change in the country we had previously shared.

Was I mistaken in my hopes for a better, more inclusive, less racist, and less war-prone America? Was Ammon wiser in abandoning that path and this country, for a life in a very different and more egalitarian society?

In addition, Ammon’s very welcome reappearance arrived just as I and millions of others had become convinced that the bumbling Trumpkin was “not my President”. Even more important, for me at least, I had also started to doubt whether most Americans really cared about or wanted to help shape a peace-loving and inclusive democracy. Surely, Ammon, among hundreds of thousands of other war resisters, had similar doubts five decades ago! *History may not be repeating, but it certainly had begun to rhyme.*

But he was 25 years old then, and I am now more than three times that, not an ideal age to migrate to a largely unknown land with its own language and culture. Eventually, a bit of research and my own pessimistic feelings about American democracy, led me to an intriguing quote from the brilliant Indian writer Arundhati Roy:

If protesting against having a nuclear bomb implanted in my brain is anti-Hindu and anti-national, then I secede. I hereby declare myself an independent, mobile republic. I am a citizen of the earth. I own no territory. I have no flag.

Arundhati Roy is not alone in this notion of seceding from one’s country, and belonging instead to the whole Planet. Eugene Debs, famously a conscientious objector against WWI, put it well:

Capitalists wars for capitalist conquest and capitalist plunder must be fought by the capitalists themselves so far as I am concerned, and upon that question, there can be no compromise...I have no country to fight for; my country is the earth; I am a citizen of the world.

Why not become conscientious objectors like Roy and Debs, and refuse to support — actively resist — the hate, bigotry, addiction to war (53% of the national budget) of what must be seen as the USA’s Global Empire (USAGE)? As is well known, President Dwight Eisenhower, a Republican and a five star general during WW2, called this “empire” the Military-Industrial Complex, and in 1961, as he retired from the Presidency, gave a speech warning of its dangers:

...we must guard against the acquisition of unwar-

anted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

Should we then abandon ship and head for Canada, Mexico, Europe, or South America? Would a would-be citizen of the world, a conscientious objector and insurgent resister who remained at home, have much of a chance to undermine this pernicious USAGE, or to revive hope for grass-rooted American democracy??

There is, I think, another option here, one between citizen of the earth secession and compliance with the USAGE. I call it “*separation*”, and it is common within European countries – Belgium, Spain, Scotland, Switzerland, and others. These countries all contain discordant or disaffected groups that persistently demand, and in some cases, have exercised, genuine authority over their own priorities and policies. We speak of “separatist movements”; e.g., of Scots from England, Catalonians and Basques from Spain.

This separatist option I’m drawn to requires those of us who oppose the undemocratic, non-inclusive, and war prone USAGE *to go beyond both street-based protest and expat flight, to insurgency.* To demand – *no, construct* – our own form(s) of self-directed governance. Not to *take over* the current regime, but to *take power away* from it.

But what might this actually look like in our current and unique USA situation, and how could it possibly be attained (that’s the more difficult question)? I’ll have a go at both of these good questions next month, but in the interim, I’d love to learn what anyone out there is thinking or feeling about the issues this article has raised. Feedback is very welcome, even more so, your own ideas. You can send them to me at lenmvgeo@sbcglobal.net.

Len Krimerman lives, works, dances, and dreams in rural eastern Connecticut, and has helped build bridges between the many varieties of grassroots democracy over the past five decades. In this, he has invariably been mentored by his amazing Grassroots Economic Organizing (geo.coop) colleagues, by the imagination and support of his lifelong partner, Marian Vitali, and by the courageous activism of so many of his students and community partners. Marian and Len are now engaged in helping develop the Windham Hour Exchange, a community barter initiative in and around Willimantic, CT.

Memorial Day Weekend Tag Sale

By Bob Grindle

The Hampton Democratic Town Committee’s first community tag sale in 2016 was rather successful. So, we’ve decided to do it again. The proceeds will be divided between the Hampton Emergency Fuel Fund, the Hampton Congregational Church Community Food Bank and supporting Democratic causes and candidates. The primary focus of our tag sale is to Spring-clean our attics, garages, basements, barns, sheds and random shadowy alcoves of all that “stuff” we’ve accrued.

Hampton Hill Garage on Rt. 6 has graciously allowed us to use their driveway to set up on Saturday, May 27th, from 9 am till 3 pm. Coffee is free, and some baked goods will be available for a small donation. Last year’s tag sale included nearly everything but a kitchen sink-- there were even some live plants. There were plenty of Route 6 drop-ins and what we didn’t sell was donated to the DAR continuous tag sale. Conversation was abundant, the weather was perfect and sales were brisk, so we hope for another successful sale to help fund our targeted causes.

If you would like to contribute items that have been tucked into the ‘less-traveled’ lanes of your life please contact Bob Grindle at rgrindle1209@gmail.com or 860-455-0096, or any other member of the Democratic Town Committee. Hope to see you and many of our friends and neighbors...rain or shine.

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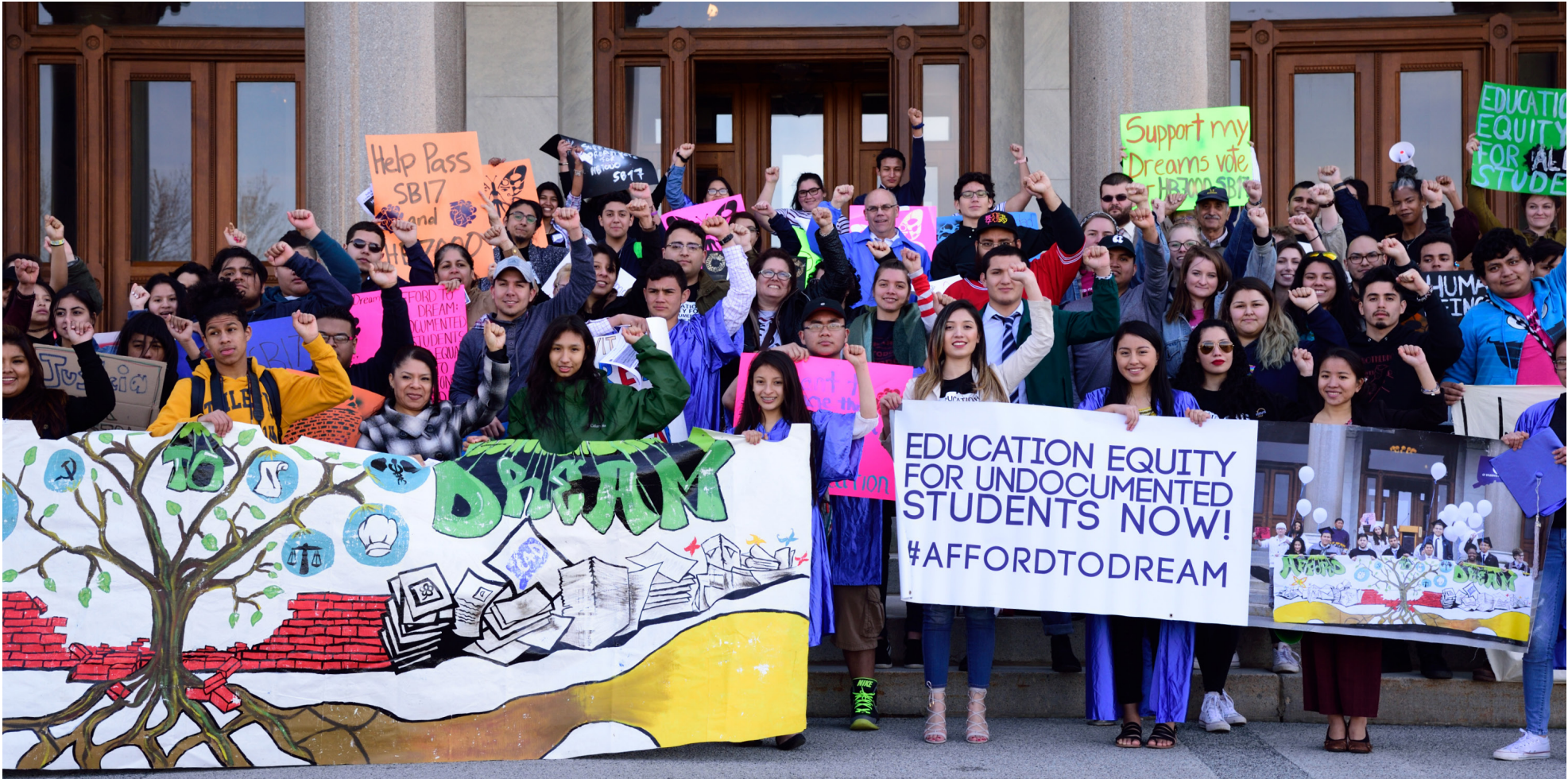
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Supporters march and rally to demand justice in higher education for undocumented students with legislation that equalizes access to student-generated funds: State Capitol, Hartford, Connecticut. Contributed photo.

AffordToDream: Justice For Undocumented Students!

By Kristin Fortier

On Thursday, April 13th I had the honor of joining over 100 students and allies in Hartford for a Day of Action at the Connecticut State Capitol to demand that our Connecticut legislature, once and for all, pass legislation guaranteeing access to Institutional Aid that undocumented students pay into, but are not eligible to apply for (HB7000 and SB17: An Act Equalizing Access to Student Generated Aid). Student after student, undocumented and from high schools around the state, stood in the bitter cold wind on the steps of the Capitol to describe their dreams of a higher education and hopes to be able to afford one. Undocumented college students spoke beside them with heart, fearlessness and resolve about how they would continue to fight until this legislation passes, and persist on behalf of the undocumented students who feel they must live in the shadows without hope for a college education.

I, too, demand their right to equality and back them. These young people are my friends, my community members, and the very people that will be our future leaders when I am long gone. Their lives matter to me, and I want to live in a world that values every human and upholds everyone’s right to a good education of their choosing. I support them in having the futures they want for themselves. We have only to gain from backing all our CT youth in their journeys. If we do not pass this, we would be turning our backs on future scholars that could solve problems facing our state, our environment or our residents. Any one of these bright young leaders could discover a much-needed medical cure, bring a new invention into being, or move us toward a society that is more just and equitable for all. For four years, they have made their way to the Capitol and been denied. I do not accept this lack of vision and inequality from our state legislators. We can no longer keep students from this stepping-stone of funds. We need now more than ever to stand up and do right by them.

How does it work? Institutional Aid is a student-generated fund that colleges set aside from tuition revenue in order to be used as need-based aid to support

students with demonstrated financial need. Institutional Aid is funded by tuition dollars that all students pay-- it’s not tax or state-funded. CT state colleges & universities are required to set aside a percentage of tuition revenue for this aid. There is nothing in the CT regulations that bar immigrant students from having access; the barrier is technical one. Public Colleges and Universities choose to use the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) in order to demonstrate a student need. Undocumented students cannot fill out the FAFSA form. However, schools do not have to use FAFSA to demonstrate student financial need. States around the country as diverse as Texas, California, Minnesota, Washington and New Mexico have alternative ways for students to demonstrate financial need.

If students contribute to Institutional Aid through their tuition, and it has no pull on taxpayer money and no fiscal note to the state of CT, then these students should have equal accessibility to this pool of money, just like any other student paying for college! As a result of lack of funding opportunities for undocumented students, many cannot afford to go to college and pursue their dreams. Those dreams are often dashed when faced with insurmountable obstacles of lack of assistance.

The non-partisan Institute on Taxation Policy estimates that undocumented individuals in Connecticut currently pay over \$136 million in taxes. And according to the RAND Corporation (objective Research and Analysis), a college degree raises average lifetime tax contribution by \$68,000. In the long term, the higher incomes of these students will lead to increased tax revenues and lower expenditures on state health and welfare programs. Financial aid for undocumented students is an investment in the future of Connecticut.

Our youth and their allies across the Northeast Corner of CT are seeking to pass bills HB7000 and SB17 this legislative session that would grant access to Institutional Aid at colleges and universities across CT. A fair application process must be implemented that allows ALL Connecticut in-state resident students who contribute to student-generated institutional aid to have access to it

regardless of immigration status.

How can you help? Add your voice to theirs today! CALL a legislator and ask them to support these bills. SHARE this Call to Action with your friends, organizations and on social media.

- 1) These legislators need to hear from us:
Rep. Pat Boyd (Brooklyn, Eastford, Pomfret, Union Woodstock) 1-860-240-8585
Rep. Tony Guglielmo (Hampton, Pomfret, Union, Willington, Eastford, Chaplin, Ashford, Woodstock) 1-800-842-1421
Rep. Tim Ackert (Columbia, Tolland, Vernon, Coventry) 1-860-240-8700
Rep. Danny Rovero (Killingly, Putnam, Thompson) 1-860-240-8585

- 2) Sample script! “Hello, I’m calling to leave a message for Rep. _____”
“My name is _____, I’m a [student at _____ OR resident of town/city] I’m calling Representative _____ to express my support for HB7000 and SB17: An Act Equalizing Access to Student Generated Aid. These proposals will equalize access to student-generated, institutional aid at CT public colleges and Universities to all CT’s students regardless of their immigration status. Institutional financial aid is funded by tuition revenue, undocumented students pay into this fund and should have access to it like all other students. This money takes nothing from taxpayers. I urge the (Representative OR Senator) to support HB7000/SB17.”

Read more at <http://www.ct4adream.org>. Thank you for joining me in standing up for justice and equality in CT!

Kristin Fortier is a member of Windham Area Progressive Action <https://www.facebook.com/groups/605845072957103/>

May 10, Wednesday
Singing: Folksing, 6:30p.m. - 7:45p.m. Everyone welcome, instruments, too. Fletcher Memorial Library, Main St, Hampton. Info: 860-455-1086 Jamie@hotstringsguitar.com or fletchermemoriallibrary@gmail.com.

May 11, Thursday
Nature: History, Biology, and Control of the Gypsy Moth, 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. Free. With Master Naturalist Brad Robinson. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Talent Showcase: Come share your talents! 7:00pm. 2nd Thursday of the month. Open to all ages. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Free Admission. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F” (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Call in

advance to sign-up (recommended) or sign-in at the door (time permitting). 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us.

May 12, Friday
Live Music Carla Ulbrich - Comedic Singer/Songwriter (Musical Comedy). 7:30pm. Part of the Acoustic Artist Series. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Tickets \$12.00 online / \$15.00 door. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F” (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us.

May 13, Saturday
History: 325th Multi-Era Muster, 10:00a.m. Mark Windham’s 325th anniversary with a multi-era muster, from 1675 to WWII, including artisans, kids activities, vendors

and live music. Jillson Square, Willimantic. Info: www.windhamhistory.org
Community Food: Ashford Farmers Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. Pompey Hollow Park, Rt. 44, Ashford.
Music: Instrument Petting Zoo, 1:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. Free. Demonstrations. Learn about care, use, and rent-to-own. Song-A-Day Music Center, 2809 Boston Turnpike, Coventry. Info: 860-742-6878 www.coventryartsguild.org
Kids: Raptor Event, 1:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. Free. Live birds. Families with children over 5 welcome. Info: 860-455-1086 www.fletchermemoriallibrary.org
Author: Mis Memorias Mis Raices, by Fernando Ponce Laspina, 2:00p.m. The author shares his life story, from a New York gang to college professor and boxing coach in the South Bronx. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street,

Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org

May 14, Sunday
Textiles: Timeless Art by Dyllis 10:00a.m. - 4:00p.m. Final day of exhibit and end of bidding for 10 outfits in the silent auction. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org
History: 325th Multi-Era Muster, through 1:00p.m. (See 5/13)
Live Music: Sebastians, 4:00p.m. The Friends of Music at Emanuel present a program of music by J.S. Bach and his contemporaries by these NYC-based performers at Emanuel Lutheran Church, 60 Church St, Manchester. Pre-concert alk on the musical offering. Reception follows.
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha

Connecticut’s Defective Voter Registration System

By Chuck Morgan

Connecticut has a magnificent edifice of voting procedures: 16 chapters of laws, 32 election commission rulings, and 169 towns’ voting ordinances and officials. Additionally, the Secretary of State promotes voting, registers 2.4 million voters, maintains lists, publishes a 114 page voting procedures manual, and trains officials. A conservative cost estimate for the secretary of state, elections commission, and towns is about \$21 million, (\$8.64 per voter).

So, is voting integrity worth \$21 million? Yes. Voting credibility and integrity is a bedrock for democracy. Do Connecticut’s voting procedures inspire credibility and integrity? Absolutely not. Why? Because the voter registration process is a foundation of sand under the system. To understand why, examine the voter registration process. Throughout history democracies have struggled with the question of who should to vote. Connecticut law says that to vote, one must be a U.S. Citizen, 18 or over, reside in a CT town, be mentally competent, and not serving felony confinement or parole.

U.S. citizenship is the critical requirement for CT voting. This is as it should be. But in practice CT’s citizenship requirement is defective, because proof of citizenship is based only on a sworn statement that one is a citizen. Specifically, one has only to answer a question on CT Form ED-671 S, “Are You a U.S. Citizen”, by checking “Yes” or “No”. Falsely swearing to this question is punishable by a maximum of 5 years imprisonment and a \$5000 fine.

Now, consider illegal aliens. According to the Federation For American Immigration Reform, approximately 120,000 illegal aliens live in CT, probably most in urban centers like Hartford, or sanctuary cities like New Haven and Windham. They already risk criminal penalties for illegal entry. How many illegal aliens would risk additional imprisonment and fines to register to vote? I don’t know, and nor does anyone else. However, there is no question that illegal alien registration does occur, as evidenced by a recent Texas case.

What are the benefits and risks to CT illegal aliens by registering to vote? A benefit, in towns where illegal aliens are concentrated, is political power to make laws to make life easier for them to live there. Examples of such assistance are a resident ID card from the town, or immunity from being questioned about citizenship status in almost all situations. Political power also causes social acceptance and legitimization of illegal aliens through such devices as the sanctuary cities which welcome them.

On the other hand, what is the risk to CT illegal aliens registering to vote? The risk is being caught, going to prison, and being fined. For those willing to take the risk, benefits outweigh risk because the chance of getting caught is low. This is because the policies of the state and Windham welcome illegal aliens, and neither routinely investigates for fraudulent voter registration.

It’s a sorry situation. What can be done?
In the short term, nothing, because it’s politics and the “powers that be”.

In the medium term, one solution is to strengthen defective voter registration procedures to bring them up to the standard of a DMV ID card. The DMV ID card requires, in addition to a yes or no answer to the question “Are you a U.S. citizen?”, also a certified birth certificate, valid passport, one of various U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service documents, citizenship or naturalization certificates, or Permanent Resident Cards. Plus, one other type of specified identification is required. Unlike the voter registration form, there is no option to self certify citizenship. Proof must be furnished.

On the other hand, to register to vote, one must only submit the ED-671 S form. As far as I can determine, no documentation is required to be submitted with the form. An applicant can even register online . The Secretary of the State website states that registering on line requires a DMV ID. However the site seems to offer an option to continue registering even if one does not have a such an ID. I could find nothing on the secretary of state website about what is their standard for accepting an applicant’s claim to citizenship. Therefore, the best course for an illegal alien is simply to fill out the form and mail it in to avoid questions.

Voter registration and DMV ID cards should all have the same standard for proof of citizenship as DMV driver cards, because all can have an impact on voter registration. Yet, voter registration has no standard of proof of citizenship. Also, they should all have the the same penalties for false swearing. Fraudulently claiming to be a citizen on the DMV ID application is a Class A misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of one year in prison and a fine, while the same offense on the voter registration application is a felony with a maximum of 5 years in prison and a \$5000 fine. They should all have the same penalty: 5 years in prison and \$5000.

Governor Dannel Malloy, Secretary of State Denise Merrill, our legislators Susan Johnson and Mae Flexor, and Windham’s Town Council all have an opportunity, and a duty, to work to raise voter registration proof of citizenship to the standards of the DMV ID; to raise the false swearing penalty for both to 5 years in prison and \$5000 fine; and to stop using devices like sanctuary cities to enable illegal aliens to register to vote. They will then place the interests of citizens ahead of illegal aliens. What’s wrong with that?

Of course the long term solution to our defective voter registration mess is to vote out of office those politicians who place the interests of illegal aliens ahead of citizens. This fall Windham voters will judge how well several on our town council prioritize illegal aliens versus citizens. Similarly in 2018 they will judge the governor, secretary of state, and our local legislators.

Music Instrument ‘Petting Zoo’

Submitted by Ruth O’Neil

Come have a close up look at and even try out all the musical instruments you have always wanted at a Music Instrument ‘Petting Zoo’ to be held on Saturday, May 13, 2017, from 1pm-3pm at the Song-a-Day Music Center in Coventry. Musical instruments of all types will be available for hands-on inspection. Students and instructors from Song-a-Day Music will be present for demonstrations and to answer questions about playing. The event is particularly designed for students considering joining their school band program in the upcoming school year. Information will be provided regarding the instrument rental program with which Song-a-Day offers. Percussion, strings, woodwind and brass instruments will be on display as well as key-boards.

The afternoon event is sponsored by the Coventry Arts Guild. Committed to promoting visual, performing and literary arts in the community, the Coventry Arts Guild, a non-profit organization, was formed in 2015. This event is free and open to the public, although donations, the proceeds of which are to benefit the Guild, will be accepted. Future events for the Guild include workshops and the second annual Arts in the Park Festival, scheduled for Saturday, September 9, 2017.

For more information on the Petting Zoo, call 860-742-6878. For more information on the Coventry Arts Guild, including information on being involved with the Arts in the Parks Festival, visit www.coventryartsguild.org.

Organic Land Care Workshop Series

Submitted by Virginia Walton,
Mansfield Recycling Coordinator


The Town of Mansfield is offering a series of free workshops focused on landscaping techniques that support a healthy environment around our homes. Residents from other communities are welcome to attend. To pre-register for some or all of the workshops, call 860-429-3333 or e-mail waltonvd@mansfieldct.org.

Backyard Composting
Saturday, May 6, 2017, 10 am - 11 am
Town Hall Council Chamber
Pre-register by May 3, 2017. Learn about the inner workings of a compost pile and how it is an integral part of organic land care. This workshop will help you get started or improve what you already have going. Presented by Virginia Walton, Mansfield Recycling Coordinator.

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Parameters of the Ideal of Trusteeship

By P.K. Willey, Ph.D.

Trusteeship, along with (#17) Swadeshi or Made-in-One’s-Own-Country, is another great pillar that Gandhi evolved for economic reform as India withdrew from British Colonial economics. The ideal of trusteeship lies in the basic understanding that permeated Gandhi’s awareness: “Everything belongs to God and is from God. Therefore it is for his people as a whole, not for a particular individual. When an individual has more than his proportionate portion he becomes a trustee of that portion for God’s people.”

Gandhi was moved with compassion for the intense physical suffering and desperate need he saw around him, crying out in speeches, “I am witness, eye-witness, of millions of human beings who have not even so much as a piece of cloth!” As such, he saw that to have excess private possessions when others were in such dire need of them was a denial of the basic unity that we all share.

We are also trustees for our own talents and gifts. Gandhi noted: “Talents of all kinds are a trust and must be utilized for the benefit of society. The individual has no right to live unto himself. Indeed it is impossible to live unto oneself. We fully live unto ourselves when we live unto society.”

The ideal of trusteeship therefore includes our talents, our intelligence—all our capacities for positive service and input to family, community, country, the interdependent stream of life. They are gifts from the Creation, for itself, of which we are indivisible. Gandhi knew the ideal of trusteeship was backed by truth. “My theory of trusteeship is no make-shift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it.”

Gandhi’s thinking on trusteeship evolved through exposure to occidental influences including democracy, Thoreau, Mills, Marx, Ruskin, Tolstoy, MacSweeney, and Jesus Christ. From India’s philosophical treasure-chest, Gandhi found trusteeship in his interpretation of Hindu scripture:

“The trusteeship theory is not unilateral, and does not in the least imply superiority of the trustee. It is, as I have shown, a perfectly mutual affair, and each believes that his own interest is best safeguarded by safeguarding the interest of the other. `May you propitiate the gods and may the gods propitiate you, and may you reach the highest good by this mutual propitiation,’ says the Bhagavad Gita. There is no separate species called gods in the universe, but all, who have the power of production and will work for the community using that power, are gods—laborers no less than the capitalists.”

The basic problems human beings face on the planet: food, clothing, shelter, environmental destruction or spoilage; arise out of the glaring inequity between the rich and poor. Through trusteeship, Gandhi opened the door to harmony within the individual to reform themselves; particularly those who, consciously and unconsciously, had a hand in the creation of great poverty and human suffering through exploitation. He stated plain facts: “The well-to-do live on the poor. There is no other way. What is then their duty?” “Immediately we realize that we have nothing of our own, that all we have is held in trust for those in greater need, we have to spend it like misers.”

“Economic progress’ as it is being held out by media, actively undermines practical human progress. Gandhi saw careful societal regulation was necessary for all people to be included: “Hence the ancient ideal has been the limitation of activities promoting wealth. This does not put an end to all material ambition. We should still have, as we have always had, in our midst people who make the pursuit of wealth their aim in life. But we have always recognized that it is a fall from the ideal...That you cannot serve God and Mammon is an economic truth of the highest value. We have to make our choice.”

Increasingly, those who have riches and can feel their shared humanity, are recognizing their embarrassing

and actually outrageous position in the face of grave human inequity and suffering on a global level. Many are seeking to put their wealth into service for the poor and suffering. Yet, philanthropy, giving as one pleases out of one’s excesses, is not trusteeship. Trusteeship demands a complete change of heart. Gandhi noted: “As soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its benefit, then purity enters into his earnings and there is Ahimsa in his venture. Moreover, if mens’ minds turn towards this way of life, there will come about a peaceful revolution in society, and that without any bitterness.”

Trusteeship is not only about money, personal resources, our individual talents, intelligence and thoughts.

Gandhi saw the exercise of trusteeship as a fundamental law that reflected Nature’s own perfect economic system, which try as we might, we cannot escape from; he ardently hoped it would receive wide acceptance in India. “We may utilize the gifts of nature just as we choose, but in her books the debits are always equal to the credits. There is no balance in either column. This law is not invalidated by the fact

that men raise bigger crops by mechanizing agriculture and using artificial fertilizers, and similarly increase the industrial output. This only means a transformation of natural energy. Try as we might, the balance is always nil.”

The ideal of trusteeship is seen in our attitude, Gandhi called for responsibility via self-restraint: “I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day-to-day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world.”

An anecdote which took place during one of Gandhi’s imprisonments demonstrates how his inner contemplation of trusteeship was affecting all his actions:

One day, in the Yeravda Jail, Gandhi noticed that one of his associates from the ashram, Kaka Kalekar was in the habit of breaking off whole little branches of the neem tree even if he needed only four or five leaves. Gandhi said to him: “This is himsa [violence]. Others might not be able to understand, but you can. Even these four leaves should be plucked by us humbly, with due apologies to the tree. You break off whole twigs or branches.” “..And then,” recalls Kaka Kalekar, “we stopped getting datuns (neem or babul twigs used as tooth brushes) from outside. I said, `Bapu-ji, this place abounds in neem trees. I will make a nice fresh datun for you every morning.’ Bapu agreed. The next day I brought a datun, pounded one end of it into a soft brush and gave it to Bapu. After using it, he said, `Now cut off the used bit of the datun and pound the end into a brush again.’

“I was surprised. I asked, `But why? We can get a fresh one every day.’

“I know we can,” said Bapu, “`But that does not mean we should. We do not have the right. We must not fling away a datun until it becomes too dry to be used.””

Gandhi deeply respected each person’s individual liberty. Through trusteeship he was striving for equitable distribution of resources through a change in the hearts and minds of people. When the will of the majority is activated towards trusteeship, society will change. He said:

“I hold that it is better for [man] to live by the exercise of his will [rather than the imposed will of the state]. I also believe that men are capable of developing their will to an extent that will reduce exploitation to a minimum. I look upon an increase of the power of the State with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress. We know of so many cases where men have adopted trusteeship, but none where the State has really lived for the poor.”

Difficulties in the observance of trusteeship will follow in # 19.

325 Trees/Shrubs Project

Submitted by Faith Kenton

In most New England towns, there is a Main Street. A Church Street. A North Street, South Street etc. There are streets named for an early resident. Streets (avenues or roads, really) are named for the next town they go to. Streets are named for the oldest business on that street or for a remarkable event that happened there. Street names can change from one length to the next. Street names can be changed for sentimental or political reasons even though residents will use whichever one they like, official or not. And in most New England towns, the older streets are likely to be named for trees.

In Willimantic, there exists Elm Street, Pine Street, Beech Street, Chestnut Street, Oak Street, Quercus Avenue (“quercus” being the Latin for “oak”), Maple Street, Birch Street, Walnut Street, for instance. These trees were the native foundation of the New England scene. In early postcards and photos, trees like these lined the streets, sheltered the cemeteries, shaded the churches, schools, and the houses, marked the borders between farm ownership or house lots, even town lines. In most places now, these trees have been removed for houses, highways and road widening, sidewalks, more schools, more businesses, bigger lawns, playgrounds and recreational areas, gravel pits, and a plethora more of reasons all valid and undeniable. Is there room left for trees?

In honor of Windham’s 325 Anniversary, Faith Kenton and others have proposed a 325 Trees/Shrubs Project to plant 325 trees and shrubs in Willimantic over the next two or three years. Willimantic is already designated a Wildlife Habitat City through the efforts of Pam Wright and others, only the second in the state. The Trees/Shrubs Project aims to further several goals, one of which is providing habitat-friendly plants for our part of the biosphere’s creatures. Other goals are to help improve air quality and appearance, provide cooling shade for our school playgrounds, parks, and city streets, and work as a community planning for/ paying for/ planting strong trees and shrubs of the kind that represent New England.

This project has the support of the Town Council, Public Works, the Recreation Department, the Garden Club of Windham, and the the Superintendent of Schools. Everyone is invited to participate in planning for/paying for/planting .Little League, Willi Softball, church auxiliaries, school PTO’s, fraternal organizations, non-profits, Windham High Whippets, Youth soccer, college clubs - everyone.

We also have an Honorary Committee of local people with “deep roots” in the community who support the project. These names include Laura Potvin, Lucille Caisse Curland, Helen Card, Shirley Mustard, Mooney and Karen Haddad, and Yolanda Negron.

A 3-5 gallon good quality shrub estimated cost is \$50. A tree large enough to be safe from lawn mowers can be \$150 and more. Funding is from donations, grants, sponsorships, business support. You may send your tax-deductible donations to the Garden Club of Windham Box 773, Willimantic Ct. 06226. Please put “325 Trees/Shrubs” on the memo line. There are two levels of donation. Every donor’s name of \$25-\$99 will be included in a Donor Register including the opportunity to name a person or pet, or a personal milestone, that you donated in honor of.

In addition to our 325 logo by Andrea Wisniewski, we also have a beautiful Tree of Life painted on canvas by local artist Maggie Kendis (pictured). This painting will show a donor’s name painted on a leaf of the tree (\$100-\$300), a branch of the tree (\$301-\$999), or the main trunk of the tree (\$1,000 or more). The highest contributing donor will receive the Tree of Life painting to keep with our deepest gratitude.

This is the beginning season of the project. We invite people to join it, to share their knowledge, their checkbook, their muscle when planting time comes. For further information, you can look at the Facebook page Willimantic Wildlife Habitat, call the Recreation Dept 860-465-3046, or Faith Kenton at 860-456-0817.



Aunt Evie’s Attic – Part 3

By Jim McGaughey

Many years ago, I agreed to serve as executor of my Aunt Evelyn’s estate. After she died last year, I found myself spending considerable time sorting through the things stowed in her attic – a process that started me on a journey through nearly 200 years of history. Previously, I described discovering photographs, letters and other memorabilia reflecting my grandfather’s service as an Army doctor in WW I, and my father’s service as a Navy doctor at the end of WW II. But, that wasn’t all I discovered.

Back in the attic, I found an old-fashion leather valise which Grandma had carefully packed with documents, letters and other memorabilia she had gathered from her childhood home, the same Pennsylvania farm where she and her infant son (my Dad) had awaited Grandpa’s return from the Army during WW I. Mapleton, as the farm was known, had been owned by one or another member of Grandma’s family since the early 1800s. After her mother passed away in 1931, Grandma had encouraged her father, a kindly Quaker gentleman named Wilmer Cox, to write down some of the stories he had told her about his youth.

Her father’s narrative, handwritten on lined paper, had been carefully folded and placed in the valise. In it, he told of marching in torch-light parades to support the candidacy of Abraham Lincoln, both in 1860 and in 1864. He even remembered the words of the songs that were sung while he marched. He also remembered playing a game called “corner ball” with other boys. Initially, I thought corner ball must have been similar to baseball, but from his description, it seems to have been more like contemporary dodge-ball. Dad remembers visiting Mapleton as a young boy, and accompanying his grandfather as he led his crew through the daily operations of milking, gathering eggs, and feeding the farm animals. He told me that his Grandfather Cox was very gentle with all the farm animals, speaking to them with the same traditional “thee” and “thy” that he habitually used to address his human companions. He arose each morning before anyone else was stirring, hitched a team to a wagon, and retrieved the milk cans that held the previous day’s milking from the spring house where they had been placed for cooling. He then drove to the railroad station in nearby Malvern, where the milk would be shipped to markets in Philadelphia.

The valise held other treasures: correspondence between various Cox ancestors, some of which dated from the early 1800s; the letters that Grandma’s father and mother had exchanged while they were courting; and their marriage license, issued in 1877 at Philadelphia City Hall. At the very bottom of the valise, beneath the other correspondence, I found six slightly yellowed envelopes, each addressed to Elizabeth Roberts – my Grandma’s maternal grandmother. Post-marked in Washington D.C. and dated in 1863 and 1864, the letters inside began “Dear Cousin Eliza,”. They had been written by Private James Bell, a soldier in the Union Army.

Later research indicated that Private Bell was 20 years old in May, 1861, when he was mustered into service as a member of Company K, 26th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment. As an element of the Third Corps of the Army of the Potomac, the 26th Pennsylvania fought in some of the most famous battles of the Civil War: George McClellan’s failed Peninsular Campaign, and the Battles of Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania. I suspect that Private Bell was among those wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg, where his regiment, and, indeed, the entire Third Corps sustained heavy casualties. While I can find no official records to verify that suspicion, one of his letters, dated several months after that battle, refers to being allowed to return to duty with his unit after having been examined by a doctor at the Judiciary Square Military Hospital in Washington, where he had apparently been convalescing.

Private Bell’s letters to Cousin Eliza make few references to the particular battles in which he had fought, although one letter, written after the Battle of the Wilderness, describes the confusion and anxiety he and others had experienced during that encounter, and the relief they all felt when a planned bayonet charge had been called off.

Invariably, he asked for news from home, and in one letter, for his cousin’s advice regarding whether he should re-enlist at the end of his three-year commitment. He was apparently weighing the substantial re-enlistment bonus he would receive against the continuing hardships he would endure if he remained in the field as a soldier. Using vernacular expressions and, occasionally, some creative spelling, he described various aspects of camp life, discussed his views on courage and cowardice, and told of the great joy he felt while attending prayer meetings with fellow Methodists. Unlike some of his comrades, he reported feeling little fear of death in battle, as he had come to know Jesus, and knew that He was waiting on the other side. However, he did express frustration over the stupidity of some of the things his Company was ordered to do - like wading into the Rapidan River at a location that was obviously too deep to ford, only to be ordered back to the bank, their uniforms dripping wet, to shiver in the cold air and attempt to dry their equipment while awaiting the arrival of pontoon bridges.

Wondering what became of him, I searched for information about the 26th Pennsylvania on the internet. The official regimental roster cryptically reports that Private James T. Bell, of Chester Co. Pennsylvania, died on May 15, 1864, of wounds received at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia. Had he lived another four weeks, he would have found himself back in Philadelphia, accompanying his regiment as it received a lavish reception as it was formally mustered out of service. Those who had joined the 26th Pennsylvania after its initial formation in 1861, and who still had time left on their enlistments, were reassigned to a different regiment, along with those original members who chose to collect their bonuses and re-enlist.

Evie’s attic was full of such evocative artifacts. Of course, it also held a fair amount of disposable junk: broken toasters; dusty, torn lamp shades; cracked mirrors, old alarm clocks; and, enough cheap, vintage luggage to open a suitcase museum. But, there was so much good stuff intermingled with all that, that I needed to be careful. Each item seemed worthy of a look and some research. I wound up spending far more time sorting through the contents of the attic than I did on more traditional executor’s tasks such as paying bills, gathering assets and completing an inventory. I didn’t mind.

The things in that attic represented connections with history and ancestors; the remnants of lifetimes passed in strife and hope and love. Finding them stirred-up feelings - feelings that temporarily overrode the need to just get on with it. I couldn’t help it. Whenever I started to look through that stuff, I would remember the faces and the voices of my grandparents and Aunt Evie, and even my own parents, as they read to me and played with me in the backyard and fixed me snacks when I was small. I found myself thinking about what it must have been like for them when they were young, how they undoubtedly treasured memories of their parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles and cousins too – people whose faces and voices I could only imagine. I thought about the places where they lived and went to school; the dreams they had dreamed; the uncertainties they faced; the momentous events they lived through; the work they did as busy, responsible adults; their struggles and triumphs and contributions and losses; the things that brought them pain and the things that brought them solace. I thought a lot about what they meant to each other, and to me, and about the threads that connect us across the generations.

I don’t know why, 40 years ago, Evie chose me to be her executor. But I will always be grateful that she did.



The author’s great grandfather, Wilmer B. Cox. Contributed photo.



Letters from Private James Bell, a Civil War soldier, to his cousin, Eliza Roberts, the author’s great, great grandmother. Photo by Samuel McGaughey.

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By EC-CHAP

The Eastern Connecticut Center for History Art, and Performance, “EC-CHAP” for short, is a 501.c.3 member-based non-profit organization representing an important cultural resource serving communities and visitors to Eastern Connecticut and beyond. The Center’s purpose is to bring a heightened awareness to the significance of local history and historic preservation; provide an appreciation for the visual arts through education, creation and display; and offer performance events and opportunities for creative expression in music, film, dance, literature, and theater. EC-CHAP operates the Gardiner Hall Jr. Museum at The Mill Works and hosts all performances in The Packing House.

Please join us for an Information Exchange Meeting on Tuesday, May 16th, 7:00pm at The Packing House to learn more about our organization, membership benefits, and how you can become involved!

EC-CHAP is proud to present the following performances and events for the month of April. Please check www.thepackinghouse.us for changes and additions.

“Talent Showcase” – 2nd Thursdays

Our Talent Showcase is designed as a platform for local and regional performers to share their talent. Showcases are scheduled on the 2nd Thursday of the month from September through June. Admission is free and open to the general public.

Musicians, film makers, puppeteers, dancers, poets, comedians, and creative artists of all ages are invited to perform at The Packing House. Here is an opportunity to showcase your work in an intimate historic venue before a live audience. Test ideas and concepts and solicit feedback. PA / sound reinforcement (up to 3-mics) provided. Invite EVERYONE!

We strongly recommend that those interested in performing call to register in advance (518-791-9474). Performers may also sign in at the door before the show (time permitting). This month’s Showcase is on Thursday, May 11th. Doors open at 6:30pm with the show beginning at 7:00pm.

EC-CHAP ‘Workshop & Lecture Series’

EC-CHAP is pleased to provide a series of lectures, classes, and workshops that address the diverse interests and needs of our local and regional communities. We encourage you to write to us with topics of interest that we can explore for new program development. This month it is our pleasure to offer a Literature Workshop delivered by local author and EC-CHAP member, Felix Giordano.

“Self-Publish Your Book in the Digital Age” - Felix Giordano Thursday, May 18th:

Have you written the perfect novel, memoir, historical fiction, or non-fiction book? Are you also having difficulty engaging a traditional agent or publisher for your work? Today, writers have self-publishing opportunities that were non-existent years ago. Learn how you can self-publish your book with Amazon and reach readers across the globe all from the comfort of your own home.



Topics to be covered are creating a publisher name, website domain, establishing accounts with Create Space and Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), building a professional looking title page, copyright page, dynamic cover, ordering an ISBN number and bar code, registering your work with the U.S. Copyright Office, applying for a Library of Congress Preassigned Control Number, uploading your manuscripts to Amazon and Kindle, and selecting Amazon royalty, payment, and marketing options.

We strongly recommend registering in advance (www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming). Along with your paid registration you will receive a Writer’s Workbook and an autographed copy of the author’s most recent novel, “The Killing Zone”.

Please join us for this hands-on informative workshop packed with valuable and practical guidance on how you can self-publish your work. Doors 12:30pm / Workshop 1:00-3:00pm. Advance Registration \$30.00 (online) / \$35.00 Door.

For those unable to participate during the afternoon hours, this identical two-hour workshop will also be offered in the evening Tuesday, June 6th, from 7:00pm - 9:00pm.

Please check our website for any program changes or cancellations: www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming.

About the Author:

Instructor: Felix F. Giordano is the successful self-published, award winning, internationally best-selling author of the Jim Buchanan Novels Series. His first two books, Montana Harvest (2015) and Mystery at Little Bitterroot (2016) have achieved more than 1.1 million Kindle Edition Normalized Pages Read and have sold more than 4,000 copies. His most recent novel, The Killing Zone (2017) was just published this April. His books are available on Amazon in paperback, Kindle, and Audible versions.

EC-CHAP ‘Acoustic Artist Series’

The Acoustic Artist Series includes programming with focus on acoustic instrumentation and vocals. Upcoming concerts for May include:

“Prom Night for Grown-Ups” with Kate Callahan (Folk). Saturday, May 6th:

On this special night at The Packing House, all are welcome for Kate Callahan’s heartfelt folk songs, familiar favorites, and a chance to dance or dress-up if you care to! It’s “Prom Night” for grown-ups. We’ll also have a photo station available to make memories of the night!

Kate Callahan is Connecticut’s 16th State Troubadour. Connecticut is one of the only states in the nation that honors a singer-songwriter with a formal position. She will serve as the ambassador of song for two years. Kate is a beloved singer-songwriter in her home state where she’s emerged as an award-winning artist.

The Hartford Courant named her a Woman of Character in 2005, when she received an award at the historic Bushnell Theater, meeting and sharing the stage with Jane Fonda. She took home the Best Singer-Songwriter award at the Connecticut Music Awards in 2013, Featured Artist of the Year by the Greater Hartford Arts Council in 2014, was a nominee for Best Songwriter of the Year at the New England Music Awards in 2014-15. Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$12.00 Advance (online) / \$15.00 Door.



Carla Ulbrich - Comedic Singer/Songwriter (Musical Comedy). Friday, May 12th:

Carla Ulbrich is a comical singer-songwriter from Clemson, South Carolina, currently living in New Jersey (in the lovely town of Exit 10).

Her songs address topics such as wedgies, Waffle House, Klingons, and how rich she would be if she had the copyright on the ‘F’ Word. She cites her biggest musical influences as Sesame Street, camp songs, and cat food commercials.

Frequently heard on Dr. Demento, Pandora and SiriusXM’s Laugh USA Channel, Carla has played all over the US: The Kerrville, Florida, and Falcon Ridge Festivals, Avalon Nude Folk Festival, Club Med, Eddie’s Attic, Bluebird Café, MENSA, NY Funny Songs Festival. Most impressively, she has opened for Twiggy the Water Skiing Squirrel and was an extra in the movie “Sharknado 2.” “Totally Average Woman” is Carla’s 6th CD. Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$12.00 Advance (online) / \$15.00 Door.



Belle of the Fall in concert (Indie/Folk). Saturday, May 20th:

Back for their fourth appearance at The Packing House, Belle of the Fall continues to demonstrate a thoughtful approach to song writing and performance. Their unique sound, sweet harmonies, and musicianship differentiates these artists from many.



Tracy Walton - 2014 and 2015 New England Music Award nominee Best Male Performer. An accomplished bassist and songwriter who has written for Alfred Books and taught at the National Guitar Workshop. Tracy is a Taylor guitar artist (upright bass, vocals, drums).

Julia Autumn Ford - CT Music Award Nominee Best New Artist 2014 and Song of the Year 2015. Her debut solo album has gained her well deserved attention as a singer of rare talent. “It’s almost freakish how good she sings. I watched her and it was hard to process that it was actually coming out of her mouth.” Joe Micheleni, River City Extension (lead singer, acoustic guitar, yukitar, occasional melodic).

“Acoustic folk duo Belle Of The Fall has proven that musical soul mates do in fact exist.” (Vents Magazine) Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$12.00 Advance (online) / \$15.00 Door.

EC-CHAP ‘Film Series’

EC-CHAP offers a number of full length artistic films, shorts, documentaries, and original film screenings from local and regional filmmakers. Our next film...

“The Artist” (PG-13). Friday, May 19th:

The Artist (2011), is a french film directed by Michel Hazanavicius starring french actors Jean Dujardin and Bérénice Bejo. The film also stars John Goodman, James Cromwell, and Penelope Ann Miller.

The film’s setting is Hollywood 1927. George Valentin (Jean Dujardin) is a silent movie superstar, and the advent of the talkies will sound the death knell for his career and see him fall into oblivion. For young extra Peppy Miller (Berenice Bejo), it seems the sky’s the limit - major movie stardom awaits. The Artist tells the story of their interlinked destinies. (The Weinstein Company)

The Artist won five Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Costume Design, and Best Original Score. It was also the first French film to win Best Picture, and the first mainly silent film to win since 1927’s Wings won at the 1st Academy Awards in 1929.

“Here is one of the most entertaining films in many a moon, a film that charms because of its story, its performances and because of the sly way it plays with being silent and black and white.” (Roger Ebert)

Suggested donation \$5.00. Cabaret and group seating available. Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm.

Tickets, Reservations, Cancellations, Discounts and Contact

Tickets for all shows can be purchased online at www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming or at the door. Table reservations and cabaret seating available. Unless specified otherwise, all events will feature Bring Your Own Beverage & Food “BYOB&F”™ - wine & beer ONLY (I.D.s Required). Snacks and soft drinks will also be available. Doors open 30-minutes prior to show time.

You can also bring your paid ticket to Willington Pizza House (or WP Too) for eat-in or take-out the night of the show and receive 15% off your meal purchase. Ask for “The Packing House” pizza special! (visit our website for the secret recipe).

Program additions, changes, and cancellations will be listed on The Packing House website (www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming).

Did you know that The Packing House is available to rent for your event? Whether it’s a business meeting, a creative project, or a private function, we can support your needs in our historic setting. Call anytime for details.

The Packing House is located at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Parking is located onsite and across the street. For questions, program or rental information and table reservations, please call 518-791-9474. Email The Packing House (info@thepackinghouse.us) or EC-CHAP (info@ec-chap.org).

Of Borders, Banners and...

By E.J. Smith

The problem that has always been with us. Territory. Land. Property. Self and other. Even in pre-industrial society, boundaries have coincided with identity in profound ways. Consider the use of a forming of a tribe’s name to mean ‘the people’, those outside not being a part of ‘the people’. But as exclusive as this sounds, there has never been such a heavy connotation to the meaning of ‘non-native’ as there is today in the parlance of current proceedings over immigration.

First, let it be said that the concept of ‘native’ is entirely political, being as it is a means of referencing people’s identity according to the timing of their arrival at a particular geographic point. ‘Nativism’ is a term referring to white people who regard their establishing themselves on these shores as original acts of membership to ‘legitimate society’, put forward with the same solemnity of purpose as the declamations of a preacher full of shock and awe over his particular creation myth. An axiom of post Native American presence has been to glorify and mystify the arrival of European whites from Plymouth Rock onward, thereafter accepting, eventually and with hesitation, subsequent waves of immigrants, more quickly as they are richer and whiter, more slowly or not at all, the poorer and darker.

All of this while ignoring what would appear to be the logical consistency of the ‘nativist’ argument. By this measure, the Native Americans would have the sole responsibility of determining what land and what resources are to be used by whom and to what end. But they have already been shoved, nearly to extermination, by today’s proponents of ‘nativism’. And then there is the tidily delusional pronouncements of the likes of Ben Carson, concluding that Blacks brought here in chains came ‘seeking a better life’, thus rolling that experience of genocide into the one all-embracing parade of freedom-seeking flag-wavers through the ages.

The problems raised by immigration go much deeper than the fatuous grounds on which immigration policies have been crafted throughout the life of this country. They hearken back to the dictates of nationalism itself, or more specifically, national chauvinism (which, in a country such as this, dominating so much of the world politically, militarily, and economically, amounts to much the same thing). The idea that people belong to the country they live in is very old, perhaps as old as class society, as evidenced by such literature as ‘The Apology’, a dialogue in which Plato has Socrates say that he must conform to the laws of the land because he is a child of Athens and is therefore beholden, as would be a child to a parent.

With the advent of the modern bourgeois nation- states, then further, of colonialism and present day imperialism, the premium placed upon national identity has become magnified in order to set enormous social forces in motion, and not to the good. The 911 attack, regardless of its origins, was most significant in establishing a political climate of permanent war, one that required the routine demonization of non-citizens, especially those coming from the middle east (where our economic interests tend to coincide with our will to unleash war) and Mexico (where our economic interests coincide with our will to unleash hate, especially against the undocumented).

Since 2001, it has become normalized to spread war in whatever part of the Middle East the US government feels its interests are threatened. Accompanying these moves is always an especially vicious backlash against the foreign-born, especially those who look, to the superficial inspection of bigots, as being from ‘one of those countries’. The war against immigrants has not proven popular with the US population as a whole, among whom many have good reasons to distrust the calls, today, of mass deportation and assaults upon the immigrant community. On the other hand, many of the well-meaning opponents of such policies often bear illusions about a ‘good’ patriotism, one that does not need to defile the character of other national cultures to prove its own national worth. Insidious to this perspective is the idea that when push comes to shove, the people in one’s country are more important than those in other countries; hence, the ability to gaze with sanguine indifference upon the ruined lives of other countries’ people (even up to this moment, with the threatened use of nuclear weapons against North Korea), while reacting with righteous horror to the loss of one or several of ‘our own’ in a mad shooting at a school or office.

Now, when the chaos of world events hurl many possible, terrifying scenarios at us, providing little



reassurance that our counterparts in other countries are anything like us, may also desire peace, are not, after all, our enemies- especially now is it important to stop clinging so doggedly to the national banner, to let go of the holy grail of secure borders, and to embrace, instead, the ideals of world community, common ground with the vast majority of humanity, and the insist that we have more in common with the oppressed within our borders and around the world than we do with the so-called leaders who would like us to feel at one with their cause,- which is only more of the same: war, poverty, and despair. As locally as the towns we live in, much is to be done to confront to anti-immigrant fervor and brutal round-ups of undocumented immigrants. To stand with them is to reclaim one’s humanity, no longer blinded by borders, banners, and.... bullshit!

I encourage people who are one with the sentiments expressed here to check out the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance (CIRA) and Windham Area Progressive Action (WAPA). The actions of ICE have already resulted in arrests and scheduled deportations in this first hundred days of the Trump administration, and are bound to continue.

The views of this writer to not necessarily reflect the views of members of either of these organizations, unless one of those members is me.

New Curator at Hall Museum

Submitted by EC-CHAP

The Board of the Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) is pleased to announce the appointment of Pamm Summers as the new Curator of the Gardiner Hall Jr. Museum at The Mill Works! Pamm has recently returned back to Connecticut after residing in Bethesda, MD for over 30-years.



Pamm received her Bachelor’s of Fine Arts degree in painting from Arcadia University and worked as a faux painter on commercial and residential projects in the Washington, DC area. She has been teaching preschool for the past 16 years prior to her return to Connecticut.

Over the years, Pamm developed a passion for history, specifically associated with the Civil War period. Her experience and expertise as a fine artist, educator, and her historical interests make her a tremendous asset to EC-CHAP.

The Gardiner Hall Jr. Museum is located in Suite 2106-A at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT. The Mill Works facility, original home of the Gardiner Hall Jr. Company, was listed on the CT Register of Historic Places in 2014. The objective of this permanent installation is to examine the historical impact and contributions its founder and company had on the Town of Willington and its residents over a period of more than one hundred years. This collection provides an opportunity to learn about the technical innovations, production methods, and the application of unique management practices that shaped the local area.

The museum is open to the public on Wednesday mornings from 9:30am to 11:30am, as well as by appointment and during local events. Once at the primary exterior entrance of The Mill Works (“1860 – 1916” in the granite marker above the door), press Intercom Station button #17 to access the museum.

EC-CHAP is seeking original photographs, equipment, artifacts, and any physical items associated with the Gardiner Hall Jr. Company, its founders, employees, and customers. Items that are donated or loaned to the museum will be identified by the donor’s name, and included on display and in any print materials created for the museum. In addition, the EC-CHAP is also interested in conducting interviews with folks that may have worked for or had a relationship with the Hall Company.

If you possess any related items, have knowledge of any, or are interested in sharing thoughts or reflections about the Hall Company, please contact: Pamm Summers, Gardiner Hall Jr Museum, (301) 500-8403 or email Curator@GardinerHallJrMuseum.org.

Save The Date: Sunday, June 4, 2017, 12:00pm – 5:00pm ~ Summer “First Sunday at The Mill Works”. EC-CHAP will host its quarterly Community Event including live performances in The Packing House, Gardiner Hall Jr. Museum, open artist studios, refreshments, and more! Free to the general public. Visit www.ec-chap.org for details or call 518-791-9474.



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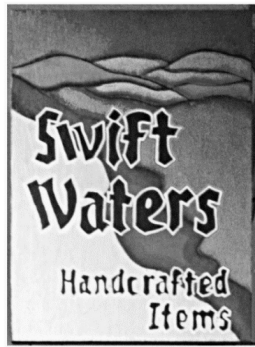


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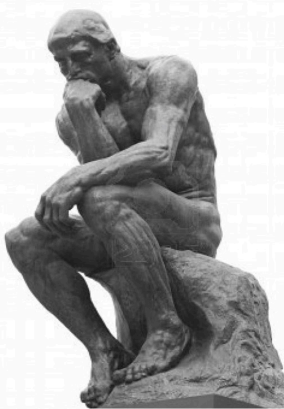
The Think and Do Club Wants You!

Submitted by Edmund Smith

What is the Think and Do Club? We are a group of folks who get together every week to talk philosophy. From these talks, some pretty cool thoughts happen. These, as thoughts often do, may turn into some pretty interesting, different behavior, from person life style choices to decisions to go forth and change the world.

What kind of things do we talk about?

To date, we have discussed such wide-ranging topics as global warming, evolution, the nature of consciousness, the political economy of banking, the origins of the universe, and racism. We have also begun to explore the formal branches of philosophy, such as metaphysics and epistemology. But we are not limited to any one discipline



or topic, because life itself... philosophical! So join us!

We meet monthly. Please contact us for next date and site. Thank you.

Like us at <https://www.facebook.com/CTThinkAndDo/?fref=ts>

Contact us at
mediamonds2006@gmail.com
860-895-7413



Come Volunteer
at the Sanctuary!

Each week, dozens of volunteers from all over Connecticut assist us in providing care to the deserving animals at our Sanctuary in Ashford. We hope you will consider getting involved as a Sanctuary volunteer.

Visit our OurCompanions.org for full job descriptions and volunteer requirements or call us at 860-242-9999.

The Illusion of Separateness

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe. John Muir

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

The Tree: A long long time ago when the world was a forest of tall strong oak trees whose roots held together the core of the earth, whose trunks created the space for life to emerge and whose branches and leaves made the music of the sky, a single acorn fell far beyond the distance of its brothers and sisters. This single acorn when it fell hit a rock in a certain way that made it bounce and roll and bounce and roll, taking it further from the tree of its origin than any other acorn before. When it finally came to rest, the oak forest from where it had been born was far from sight and since it still couldn't yet see it had no way to know that it was one of many. Winter came and covered the acorn and there it slept under a blanket of dark comforting snow. Then one day when the warm sun came and melted the snow and also brought the spring rains, its hard shell began to moisten and from that moistness a movement emerged. This movement came from within the acorn itself in a way that it hadn't known before and although without the rain, without the warmth it wouldn't be feeling such energy it was not to know that what happened within came from with-out. Slowly then this energy increased and from the acorn a single sprout grew that knew, as acorns do, to go downward into the earth and then another sprout grew that also knew, as acorns do, to go up to the sky. With the increasing warmth of the sun and the increasing damp of the rains this acorn fully emerged from its shell and became a sprout and then a sapling oak tree. Yet as it looked about, it was too small to see from whence it had rolled and instead began to think of itself as the only oak tree. In fact, in its sapling understanding it decide that if there were no other trees around like it then it must be The Tree and as such it must be uniquely special and the reason for which the ground and the sky were made. These thoughts comforted the sapling in that as much as it liked being The Tree, it also would at times imagine that there were others like it and that these others could act as family and friends. Yet, if there were such others then it would no longer be The Tree and this also made it insecure. And so the sapling grew as the summer heat increased and enough rains kept it well fed. Then the heat crested and began to dissipate and the sapling, now with many small leave, could feel a new chill in the air. This chill called to the leaves and invited them to fly off the sapling before landing back to the ground where they would feed and comfort The Tree in preparation for the coming cold. One of these leaves decided to let go in an especially strong autumn breeze and as it did the breeze took it up up, up, into the air and from there it saw far into the distance, further than The Tree itself could see.



What it saw shocked and alarmed it – a world of trees so much bigger than The Tree from whence it had grown, leaves so much bigger and greener than itself—it knew it had to share this news. To do so the leaf guided its landing right next to The Tree and then fluttered out the knowledge of all it had seen. “Other trees? Bigger than me? No longer ‘The Tree’? Not alone?” mumbled The Tree with mixed feelings of excitement and threat. “I must send another leaf to further investigate!” And so it did with the next strong autumn breeze another leaf now beginning to change its color flew up, up, and this time landed over by the edge of the world’s oak forest , next to a big old oak tree.

“Ahh, there you are leaf of our sapling tree” said the old oak mother tree. “We have been looking forward to your return as we knew you would grow. We made sure we shared the sun, and sent the rains and fed the earth to make the conditions right for you. You knew you weren’t alone didn’t you?” At this question the leaf could feel the autumn breeze again and in folding up with new feelings of love was once again taken up into the sky guiding itself to be blown back to its little sapling. “The Tree...we are not. We have always been part of the whole...we have only grown because they have shared with us...” . To this news The Tree shook as it remembered that first feeling of energy pushing from within when it first broke open and began to grow. Yet now from hearing this news, The Tree also realized that it had not only pushed from within itself but had also been pulled from without. “I have never been alone!”, The Tree uttered out loud, understanding for the first time in every cell of its being that it was in fact not ‘The Tree’ but rather a Communi-Tree—an individual , yes, but no longer, as it had once believed, alone. Anon

In these first 100 days of President’s Trump’s [45] administration there has been a flurry of utterances, threats and actions that all speak to the multifaceted illusions of separateness. There are 45’s illusions that he is a self-made individual still representing his personal, familial and economic interests, as opposed to being what he swore to be, a ‘servant of the people’. There are the illusions that the United States is separate from the rest of the world and that ‘America can make itself great [again]’ at the expense of other people of other countries and of the planet. There is the illusion that cutting corporate taxes while also cutting the means to regulate corporations and the means to help those socially, economically, and environmentally exploited by those same corporations, will somehow produce benefits for all, as promised during his campaign. There is the illusion that military spending, build up and threats will result in peace, when authentic peace, in fact, requires diplomacy and relationship building that can nurture mutual trust and understanding. In all these ways, and many more, I see 45 as the little sapling in the story above, in that his mind-set is formed by the ego-centered illusion of ‘separateness’ which breeds arrogance, intolerance and hubris on the one hand and fear, insecurity and immaturity

What we found was that we were in a quiet woodsy and sparsely residential area being lead by a friendly and happy-to-see-you woman down a wide path leading to various-sized cages under and around various-sized trees. Mary-Beth was explaining in detail the what, why, and how of the whole site process, from medical rehabilitation to housing to feeding to visiting with her “flock” of friendly, curious and, occasionally, loudly squawking residents. We learned that 90% of the average 60 birds per year brought in have been hit by vehicles, that injured birds go into a small “rehab” temperature-controlled barn, that some birds prefer either male or female handlers, that an animal rehab center must be registered and approved by State agencies, that some raptors are migratory and some are not and that some birds like to play with children’s toys. In addition, we found out that in addition to people doing site chores, persons who would like to provide “bird foster homes” and, especially, volunteers who have flexible schedules and an interest in learning how to give an educational presentation are all needed.

One special moment occurred after we had looked in and around the many cages, notably talking with a black vulture named “Stevie Ray”. (As a fan, may I suggest looking up and listening to Stevie



on the other. A perfect illustration of this plight is from an interview on Fox News Sunday when 45 was asked about his cuts to the EPA and who, as a result, “would protect the environment”. 45 replied “We can leave a little bit but we can’t destroy businesses”, illustrating the extent of his illusion as to our inseparability from ‘the environment’ – just like The Tree’s inseparability from the sun, from the rains, from the soil, and from the other Oak trees. Of course 45 isn’t ‘alone’ in his illusions –it is endemic to our culture and forms the ‘dis-ease’ from which we all, as products of this culture, suffer. In fact, in my Sustainable Societies class I have been teaching this semester, we came to an end of the semester conclusion that the cure of this ‘dis-ease’ that is ravaging ourselves, as well as others / other species, hence the planet, is to love oneself not for anything one does or has but rather merely because one IS. But then one student asked “How does one actually do this?” I wrote this question on the board but chose to not reply in words, hoping that she would see the answer in the means. In other words, what we were doing then and had been doing all semester as a class, was the praxis of creating connections in order to dispel the illusion of separateness— seeing ourselves not as ‘The Trees’ but as Communi-Trees. Until we make this shift in our perception of who we really are, our society will continue to birth nemeses that despite our desperate claims, do not come from outside but are unequivocally from within. No walls, no bans, no laws can keep our nemeses away. For as Walt Kelly wrote for a 1970 anti-pollution Earth Day poster, to which we can apply to 45 and all his illusions, no, **our** illusions, that “we have met the enemy and he is us”. But I would like to now propose that in seeing through the illusion of separateness we can collectively create a more powerful saying that “we have met the saviors and they are us” and in so doing we will be love.



Ray Vaughn.) We were standing in the center area listening to Mary-Beth answer our many questions and, for a minute the air was not filled with loud bird calls. We looked around and most of the birds were quietly perched next to the screening of their respective cages and all were intently and what appeared curiously watching and listening to us. It was truly a strange and “magical” experience.

OF NOTE: Fletcher Memorial Library in Hampton will be hosting Mary-Beth and several of her raptors on Saturday, May 13th, from 1:00 – 2:00 pm. May 13th is “International Migratory Bird Day”, and she will be speaking and answering questions of habitat, migration, and all things raptor. Families with children over 5 years old are welcome. This event is free to the public. Donated goods needed by the facility will be gratefully accepted. A full list of items needed by Horizon Wings is provided on the website www.horizonwings.org

Regal Raptors To Visit Hampton

By Roger Burten

Often we read in the news that another type of animal is on the verge of extinction, never to be seen again in the wild on our small planet, Earth. When we read further, we see the reasons for this situation are mainly climate conditions are changing due to increased chemicals on the ground and harmful gases in the air, human activity and construction is expanding and, thus, limiting and eradicating natural environments, and poachers are illegally killing endangered animals for profit. Therefore, it is encouraging, rewarding and, sometimes, inspiring whenever we find a group, an organization, or an individual sufficiently alarmed about these above-mentioned facts to actively do something large or small to help preserve and maintain our natural Earth for us all to appreciate.

Such an organization can be found in Ashford, aptly named Horizon Wings. It is a non-profit wildlife rehabilitation and education center, specializing in mending broken wings and assisting abandoned babies of a group of birds called raptors. If you’ve ever looked skyward and marveled at the slow, circling, majestic swooping and gliding of a bird in flight, and seen it dive precipitously and rapidly to the ground, quickly flying again with something grasped

in its claws, you’ve seen a raptor. These birds of prey include hawks, eagles, ravens, vultures, falcons, kestrels and owls, all of which come in a variety of colors and sizes.

As stated on its website ([www. HorizonWings.org](http://www.HorizonWings.org)), Horizon Wings’ mission is “to rehabilitate birds of prey for release into the wild in order to maintain their population, and to educate the community and enhance its awareness of the environment.....to reach people of all ages and create the desire in them to help preserve our natural world.” Horizon Wings was formed by Mary-Beth Kaeser, a 20-year veterinarian assistant, who in 2001 saw the need to protect birds of prey for all of us to appreciate and experience in nature. Besides tending to resident birds, Mary-Beth and a few volunteer helpers travel throughout New England to conduct talks and give educational presentations for schools, companies and organizations. All of these endeavors are accomplished through donations, whether they be money, bird food, supplies or time and energy.

In the online directions to Horizon Wings, it says, “take a very sharp right turn”, which we did, only to discover that there wasn’t a big flashing sign, a costumed energetic guy waving a banner advertising the name or a service, or a 16-foot tall elaborately painted or carved entrance gate.

Art & Culture: Are they really important?

Submitted by EC-CHAP

We’re hearing a lot of buzz these days about funding cuts to arts and cultural organizations on the National level. The President’s initial budget document, America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again, appears to propose the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

They say “a picture is worth a thousand words.” NY Times writer Graham Bowley attempts to illustrate visually the magnitude of funding cuts to these agencies against federal spending with a series of dots configured in multiple rows. Bowley states that the combined cuts to those cultural organizations represents 1 dot in the matrix of 5,202 (if our character count in MS-Word is accurate). NY Times, March 16, 2017

Not sure you saw it, but last Sunday, April 23, the Cover Story on CBS Sunday Morning, was entitled “For art’s sake: When funding the NEA is in jeopardy.” Erin Moriarty reports on the potential impact to “Appalshop” (short for Appalachian Community Film Workshop), a non-profit arts center in a small mining community in Letcher County Kentucky. Despite the loss of thousands of mining jobs in the area, this small cultural organization has been bringing new life and economic development to its community for over 48 years. Appalshop exists largely because of federal funding; and is now, along with the community in which it resides, potentially facing tough times ahead...

There is a growing body of research that explores the positive economic impact resulting from art and culture at the national, state, and local levels. “In Connecticut, the state agency charged with fostering the health of the creative economy is the Office of the Arts, which is located in the Department of Economic and Community Development” (DECD).

In February, four members from EC-CHAP attended the “Connecticut Arts Day” sponsored by the Office of the Arts. The day was filled with performances, presentations, panel discussions, and opportunities to meet other individuals with similar creative passions. The annual event was coordinated by the Director of Culture, Kristina Newman-Scott and her staff. Having participated in the day’s events and having the opportunity to briefly meet Kristina, it quickly became evident that she’s the “real deal.” She is a humble, knowledgeable, energetic, experienced, supportive professional and systems thinker who understands how the all pieces work together... That is how the business and creative worlds can come together resulting in synergistic outcomes that are greater than the sum of the parts.

Ok. We touched on the funding concern at the national level; the increasing awareness and impact art and culture plays on economic development; the role of the CT Office of the Arts and the leadership and support provided by the Director of Culture. What about support at the local level?

We also had the opportunity to meet and speak with Erin Stewart, Mayor of the City of New Britain. Mayor Stewart, the youngest Mayor in the City’s history, possesses a results-driven leadership style, demonstrating expertise in economic development and collaborative solutions. Mayor Stewart understands the significance of

the arts and the need to integrate cultural experiences into the fabric of her community. She is certainly a municipal leader who “gets it.” Through her support and collaboration with the New Britain Commission on the Arts, they have established the “Art in the Heart of the City” program and seek opportunities to highlight culture wherever possible.

So why is EC-CHAP writing about this stuff? Well... it’s because we believe support of the arts and culture is critical to sustaining the quality of life as we know it. We’re not a political organization, though we have observed and experienced local political artifacts. EC-CHAP (Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance) is a newly formed 501.c.3 non-profit member-based cultural organization exclusively comprised of volunteers. We face the same ups and downs and challenges that such groups encounter. What we do understand is that it does take a village... We extend our sincere gratitude to all the folks who continue to join us for performances at The Packing House, and to those artists and performers who dream the same dream.

Today, we are literally only six months young. We currently receive neither federal nor state funding, however our future plans include such funding streams. Our Governing Board consists of six Directors, and we continue to grow our membership base. The Center’s purpose is to bring a heightened awareness to the significance of local history and historic preservation; provide an appreciation for the visual arts through education, creation and display; and offer performance events and opportunities for creative expression in music, film, dance, literature, and theater.

We are seeking the involvement of other individuals and organizations that share the same passion and understanding of the importance and lasting effects art and culture have on local communities. Our vision, with the support of friends, patrons, local businesses, and community leaders, is to become one of Connecticut’s premiere cultural institutions.

To learn how you can become involved and join us on this creative journey, please visit our website www.ec-chap.org; call 518-791-9474; or attend one of our informational meetings scheduled for May 16th and June 15th, 7:00pm, at The Packing House, 156 River Road, Willington, CT.

EC-CHAP operates the Gardiner Hall Jr. Museum at The Mill Works and hosts all performance and events at The Packing House.

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Troop 21 Brightens Easter for Others

By John D. Ryan

Scouts help to serve Easter dinner to the intellectually disabled.

PUTNAM, CONN. – Boy Scouts take an oath “to help other people at all times.” Scouts from Troop 21 in Putnam put their oath into practice recently, when they volunteered to help to serve Easter ham dinners to 61 clients of Putnam’s John Dempsey Center. The annual dinner was hosted by the Albert J. Breault V.F.W. Post 1523 on Providence Street¹ the Sunday before Easter. Troop 21 has waited tables at the post’s event, as well as at a similar dinner at Thanksgiving, for more than 15 years.

Operated by the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services, the Dempsey Center provides services to people with intellectual disabilities. V.F.W. Easter Dinner Chairman Charles L. Mahoney, of Putnam, looks forward to seeing Troop 21 every year.

“The Scouts do a great job for the people we’re serving,” Mahoney said. “They’re well trained and they’re happy to be here. It makes a big difference for us.”

Chartered to St. Mary Church of the Visitation in Putnam, Troop 21 is open to any boy aged 11 to 17. Scouts do not have to be Catholic or be members of the church. Troop 21 Scoutmaster Peter A. Lombardo² of Putnam noted that a Boy Scout troop’s operations are run by the boys, with the adults overseeing transportation and making sure everyone is healthy and safe.

“Scouting helps to build character and leadership in young men,” Lombardo said. “We show boys they can have self confidence and do things they wouldn’t otherwise challenge themselves to do. We’d love to have more Scouts in our troop and show them the fun we have.”

Among other activities, Troop 21 started its year with an August fishing trip, followed by a hike up Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire, a science and technology program for Scouts at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, a winter camping and ice fishing trip and a successful food drive for local, needy people.

The Scoutmaster said there’s more to come before Troop 21 spends a week at Scout camp in July, with Scouts preparing for a shotgun-shooting trip, a Paw Sox game in Pawtucket and a river rafting weekend.

For information about joining Troop 21, send an email to Troop21Putnam@gmail.com



Troop 21 Scout Damien-Michael Jacques carries four of the ham dinners he’s about to serve to Dempsey Center clients at the annual Dempsey Center Easter Dinner, hosted by the Albert J. Breault V.F.W. Post 1523, of Putnam. The Putnam Boy Scout troop has waited tables at the event for more than 15 years. Photo: John D. Ryan

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Meditation, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Non-sectarian, Buddhist-style sitting and walking meditations, teaching and sharing. Info: 860-450-1464 dmangum617@gmail.com

May 16, Tuesday
EC-CHAP Informational Exchange Meeting. 7:00pm. Eastern CT Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) . The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Discuss EC-CHAP mission, membership, and program / support opportunities. Refreshments provided. Information: 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us.

May 17, Wednesday
Hike: Senior Walk, 12:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. Easy to moderate walks. Not just for seniors! Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov

May 18, Thursday
Hike: Senior Walk, 12:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. Easy to moderate walks. Not just for seniors! Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Festival: 3rd Thursday Street Festival, 6:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. Main Street, Willimantic closes for food, music and fun! Info: www.willimanticstreetfest.com
Nature: Seminar on Invasive Aquatic Plants, 7:00p.m. Ashford Town Hall, Rt. 44, Ashford.
Literature Workshop: "Self-Publish Your Book in the Digital Age" – Felix Giordano. 1:00-3:00pm. Part of the EC-CHAP Workshop & Lecture Series. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Advance registration strongly recommended. Advance registration (online) \$30.00 / Registration at the door \$35.00. Info and reservations call: 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us.

May 19, Friday
Skill Share: Spring Workshop in Scientific Illustration, 1:00p.m. - 4:00a.m. Learn to draw insects and plants. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Nature: Nature Immersion: The Art of the Sit Spot, 10:00a.m. - 11:30a.m. Discover the lost art of the Sit Spot. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Singing: Sing! Quiet Corner Song Swap, 7:00p.m. Vanilla Bean Cafe, 240 Deerfield Road, Pomfret
Film Showing: "The Artist" (PG-13).

7:30pm. Part of the EC-CHAP Film Series. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Suggested donation \$5.00. Snacks and soft drinks available. "BYOB&F" (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us.

May 20, Saturday
Skill Share: Gardeners Roundtable, 10:00a.m. - 11:30a.m. Workshop for experienced gardeners to share best practices and pitfalls. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Kids: Touch-A-Truck Event, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. Free. Interact with different vehicles and machines at Willington Public Library, 7 Ruby Rd, Willington. Info: dlinares@willingtonpubliclibrary.org 860-429-3854 www.willingtonpubliclibrary.org
History: Museum Lyceum: Trains & Railroads in Willimantic, 4:00p.m. By Peter Roos. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org
Live Music: Belle of the Fall in Concert (Indie/Folk). 7:30pm. Part of the Acoustic Artist Series. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Tickets \$12.00 online / \$15.00 door. Snacks and soft drinks available. "BYOB&F" (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us.

May 21, Sunday
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Non-sectarian, Buddhist-style sitting and walking meditations, teaching and sharing. Info: 860-450-1464 dmangum617@gmail.com
Skill Share: Spring Foraging, 10:00a.m. - 12:30a.m. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Community Food: Ashford Farmers Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. (See 5/14)
Nature: World of Painted Turtles, 2:00p.m. - 3:30p.m. Learn about CT's most abundant turtles. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov

May 24, Wednesday
Book Club: Goodwin Book Club: "A Walk in the Woods", by Bill Bryson, 3:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Please come to the club having read the book assigned. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter

Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov

May 25, Thursday
Skill Share: CARE Fishing Class 101, 6:30p.m. - 7:30p.m. Learn the basics of fishing. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov

May 27, Saturday
Tag Sale: Democratic Town Committee Community Tag Sale, 9:00a.m. - 3:00p.m. Hampton Hill Garage, Rt. 6, Hampton. Info: 860-455-0096 rgrindle1209@gmail.com
Skill Share: Urban Growers Workshop: Composting, 10:00a.m. - 12:30p.m. Free. Philip Lauer Park, 625 Jackson St, Willimantic. Info: 860-423-4524 info@growwindham.org
Skill Share: Spinning, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Register: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org
History: Mill of the Month goes to New London & Groton, 1:00p.m. Carpool from Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Register: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org
History: Connecticut's Naturalist: Edwin Way Teale, 7:00p.m. - 8:00p.m. Presentation on natural history writer and long-time Hampton resident. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov

May 28, Sunday
Community Food: Ashford Farmers Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.
Hiking: Let's Go Geocaching, 1:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Non-sectarian, Buddhist-style sitting and walking meditations, teaching and sharing. Info: 860-450-1464 dmangum617@gmail.com

May 31, Wednesday
Nature: Rodents & Small Mammals, 12:00p.m. - 2:30p.m. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 Register: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov

Tolland EMT Publishes Novel



Benjamin Thomas and his dog, Aurora. Contributed photo.

Jack Be Quick (Owl Hollow Press; May 9, 2017) brings together a nuanced, tortured anti-hero in the vein of a Gillian Flynn character, macabre Jack the Ripper detail, and a thrilling pace, creating a novel that starts fast and doesn't lose steam through the final page.

Tolland resident Benjamin Thomas has spent years in the medical field, working as an EMT and Emergency Room Technician, exposing him to the speed and upheaval of healthcare's unplanned areas. After completing an MFA at Albertus Magnus College, Thomas takes his poetic narrative and high-paced career experience to create a dark tale filled with Ripper lore, drug addiction, medical drama, love, and loss. He is masterful with language, creating vivid scenes and layered characters.

After suffering debilitating, on-the-job injuries, paramedic Noah McKeen is tormented and controlled by the little white pills prescribed to help him through the pain of losing full mobility, his confidence, and the only woman he's ever loved.

McKeen is drawn into cycles of substance abuse and ambition, making him complex, likeable, and wholly absorbing as a character. Woven with intricate details, beautiful language, emotional torment, and a plot that grabs the reader and doesn't let go.

Article submitted by Owl Hollow Press.



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