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# Neighbors

No. 155 Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut and beyond



Members of EASTCONN's Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT) student dance company who will be performing on January 5th and 6th. See article on next page. Front row left to right: Theresse Weigand-Watkinson, Deborah Rolon, Alesha Copinger, Zoie Milhomme. Middle row left to right: Andrea Gutierrez-Valadez, Dineyshka Valdes-Alicea, Yasmine Aumaree. Back row left to right: Devin Beaudry, Deyscha Cardona, Hailie Brytowski. Contributed photo.



# Student Dance Company Showcase at Capitol Theater

Submitted by Kerry Markey

Willimantic, CT, Dec. 18, 2017 -- EASTCONN’s Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT) will present VS., the 2018 student dance company showcase on Fri. and Sat., Jan. 5 and 6, 2018, at 7 p.m., on the Capitol Theater’s main stage, 896 Main St., Willimantic. This family-friendly, annual dance performance is open to the public.

The evening will feature a variety of original solo, duet and group performances choreographed by student dance majors at ACT. ACT will also welcome special guest artist and ACT alumni Daniel Marinelli.

In preparing for VS., students reflected on forms of conflict to inspire their creative works. Through a range of dance genres, students will portray elements of conflict between man and the self, nature and the unknown. Several performances will incorporate 3D holographic images, a technology being used for the first time on the ACT stage and made possible through collaboration with ACT’s audio/visual department.

ACT students performing in VS. include seniors Devin Beaudry (Canterbury), Hailie Brytowski (Putnam), Alesha Coppinger (Colchester), Andrea Gutierrez-Valladez’s (Willimantic), Deborah Rolon (New London), Theresse Weigand-Watkinson (Norwich) and Dineyshka Valdes-Alicea’s (Willimantic). Juniors include Deysha Cardona (Windham), Yasmine Aumaree’s (Willimantic) and Zoie Milhomme (Putnam). Sophomores include Madison Nelson (Lebanon), Tiani Gardner (Norwich) and India Harper (New London).

Tickets are \$5 for ACT students and alumni, \$8 for seniors and students and \$10 for adults. Tickets may be reserved in advance by calling the Capitol Theater’s Main Office at 860-465-5636. The Capitol Theater Box Office is also open one hour before show time for walk-up ticket sales.

Learn more about ACT at [www.eastconn.org/act](http://www.eastconn.org/act). ACT is a public, performing arts magnet high school administered by EASTCONN. EASTCONN is a public, non-profit Regional Educational Service Center that has been serving the education needs of northeastern Connecticut schools and communities since 1980. [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org).

## WTG Auction Coming!!!

Submitted by Robin Rice

The Windham Theatre Guild is holding their annual giant indoor tag sale, Saturday, January 13th from 9am-1pm at the Burton Leavitt Theatre. But the guild needs your help!! Start spring cleaning early and donate any unwanted items you might have to the tag sale. No electronics, computers or exercise equipment, but clothing and shoes will be accepted. Drop off items to be sold on Saturday, January 6th from 9am-2pm and Sunday, January 7th from 11am-2pm at the Burton Leavitt Theatre, 779 Main Street, Willimantic. All proceeds benefit the Windham Theatre Guild. Convenient parking behind theater off Meadow Street. For more information call 423-2245.

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## Join the 2018 WTG Broadway Chorus

Submitted by Robin Rice

It’s that time of the year when Windham Theatre Guild Broadway Chorus is gearing up for another terrific concert. This year they have chosen music from 4 outstanding Broadway shows. The beautiful and sublime musical score of Jekyll and Hyde, will feature ‘Once Upon A Dream’, ‘A New Life’, ‘Someone Like You’, ‘Façade’ and more. Selections chosen from the current Broadway mega-hit Wicked include ‘One Short Day’, ‘The Wizard And I’, ‘For Good’, ‘Defying Gravity’, and more. Described as a ‘horror comedy rock musical’, the fun songs chosen from Little Shop Of Horrors include ‘Little Shop Of Horrors’, ‘Skid Row (Downtown)’, ‘Suddenly Seymour’, and ‘Don’t Feed The Plants’. And from the terrific Rodgers and Hammerstein musical classic South Pacific there’s ‘Bali Hai’, ‘A Wonderful Guy’, ‘There Is Nothing Like A Dame’, ‘Some Enchanted Evening’ and several other terrific songs. These shows have won many awards among them including ‘Best Musical’, ‘Best Original Score’, ‘Outstanding Musical’ and many more. There is no doubt that this show will delight both chorus members and audiences alike.

You can be a part of the great Broadway Chorus tradition at WTG. There are no try-outs to become a member of the chorus. All you need is the \$35 fee for the music (which you keep), the desire to have a great time singing, and be at least 15 years of age. Directors will be Larry Goodwin and Dan Pavone. Ken Clark will be the accompanist.

Rehearsals are on Tuesdays starting on January 9th from 7:00 to 9:00 at the St. Joseph Church Hall. Performances will be on April 27 & 28 at the Burton Leavitt Theatre. Come and join the fun.




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

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### COMING UP IN FEBRUARY!

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- 2/04: MARK & BEVERLY DAVIS (CLASSICAL GUITAR)
- 2/09: FILM SHOWING: ‘PINK FLOYD - THE WALL’ (R)
- 2/10: GRACIE DAY (INDIE)
- 2/13: EC-CHAP INFORMATION EXCHANGE MEETING
- 2/14: TALENT SHOWCASE (SHARE YOUR TALENT - CALL TO SIGN UP)
- 2/17: LISA MARTIN (FOLK)
- 2/20: DRUM CIRCLE WITH BOB BLOOM (3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH)
- 2/23: JEFF PRZECH WITH ASHLEE PARAIDIS (AMERICANA)
- 2/24: RAMBLIN’ DAN STEVENS (BLUES)

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# Finding a Role Model

By Loretta Wrobel

In these troubled times, I seek out role models to guide me in navigating through the roughness and uncertainty of our lives. Recently I attended Real Art Ways and watched the documentary “Jane.” The film contained early footage of Jane Goodall in the beginning of her career. This footage, showing her seeking out the elusive chimpanzees, was thought to be destroyed. Amazingly, it surfaced and all of us are privileged to witness the young twenty-plus-year-old fearless woman roaming the forest in Tanzania on a mission to find and study her beloved chimpanzees.

Jane was not a degreed scientist at the time. She was Dr. Louis Leakey’s secretary and he wanted someone unbiased to do research. Dr. Leakey was a renowned primatologist who saw in Jane a fresh mind, uncluttered by scientific training. She went to Africa, and the rest is herstory.

Ms. Goodall, at 83 years, feels she needs to share her wisdom with the world. She is reaching out to youth, as she wants them to connect to the natural world. Jane Goodall’s life shouts that it is possible to do work you are deeply committed to by following your passion. One youth shared that if she could go to Africa and study chimps, it was possible for him to follow his passion.

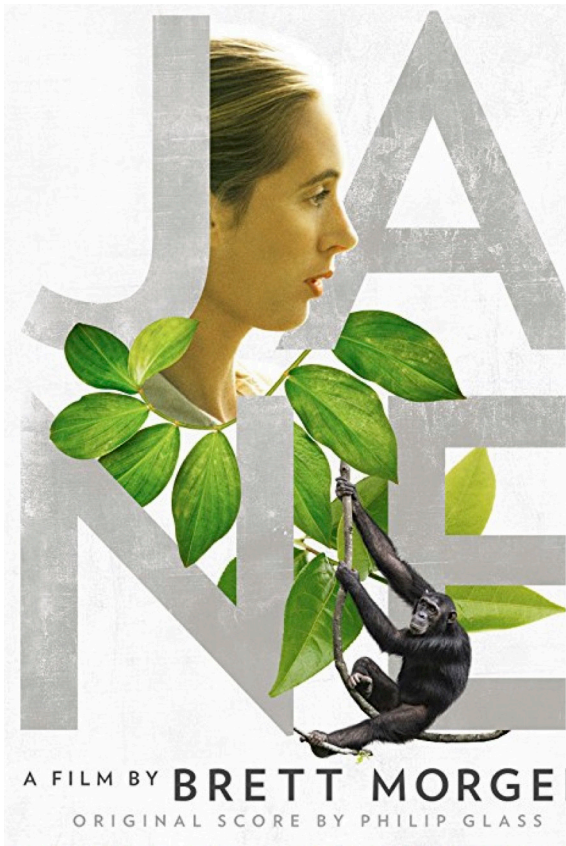
When Jane began her lifework on chimpanzees in the late 1950s and early 1960s, little was known about these primates, and it was most unusual for an untrained single female to go off into the wild alone. Jane states emphatically that she was the perfect researcher, as she was born loving animals and dreamed of living in the wilderness like Tarzan.

For me, Jane is such an inspiration to never give up, not let anything stand in your way and always be open to learning. She always credits her mom with being instrumental in allowing her to follow her path.

She acknowledges all the wisdom she gained from living with the chimpanzees, including how studying the chimp mother caring for her baby helped her when she raised her son. She proved to the world that chimpanzees feel emotions, have personalities, and make tools. She believes there is no sharp line between animals and humans.

When asked why she hasn’t retired, she replies that there is too much to do, and she feels compelled to share her wisdom before it is too late. She tells it like it is, puzzling over How is it possible that the most intelligent creature on earth is destroying the earth? Having lived in the forest, she witnessed the cycles of life and death. She viewed death daily in all species and also witnessed the newborns taking the place of the dead and continuing the cycle. Perhaps in our highly developed Western world, we are prevented and protected from the process of living and dying, and do not understand our role in the life cycle--being born, growing up, maturing, and then moving towards death. When we reside in a death phobic and death denying culture, this is understandable.

I love that this feminist pioneer is determined to use her time spreading the word and reaching out to young people. She has an international program called “Roots and Shoots,” which is in 140 countries. This program focuses on environmental and wildlife conservation. Every one



of these groups chooses their own project, and the only requirement is that the project makes the world better. The belief that every one of us matters is at the core of this organization. Jane comments that one person can’t make much of a difference, but thousands of one persons can cause monumental shifts. I would argue that one person can make a difference--just look at the knowledge and wealth of courage that she has imparted to our world.

The importance of looking to nature as teachers demonstrating ways to function is not lost on Ms. Goodall. She studied the intense caring that mother chimpanzees take in raising their offspring. The mothers demonstrate compassion and altruism. The young chimp has a long dependency, similar to the path that humans walk with their children. She also uncovered, sadly to her, that these apes can exhibit brutality and show warlike behaviors.

Jane Goodall is a stellar role model, as she maintains her commitment to being a messenger for the natural world. When asked how long she will be associated with chimpanzees, she calmly replies, “Until I die.” She broke all barriers when she walked into the Gombe National Park in Tanzania and carefully and respectfully sought out the chimpanzees who did not initially accept her invitations. They kept their distance but she persevered with patience and love. She was rewarded by winning their trust and acceptance. She did not push herself on them, but allowed them to come at their own pace. What a lesson this is for us in today’s world, where we want it all now or sooner!

Jane Goodall implores us to connect head with heart, and within that harmony, work to save/heal our planet.

My new year’s wish is that each of you finds your own role model, who encourages you to follow your path and be passionate and fearless in staying on that road, regardless of how challenging or difficult it is. May you find the courage and resolve to explore whatever pulls at your heart and do it with total attention.

## Carved Sign Completes Restoration

Submitted by Kevin Ring

With the restoration of Declaration of Independence signer Samuel Huntington’s birthplace now completed, a finishing touch was sought after.

A colonial tavern-style sign of continental blue emblazoned with carved, gold letters now proudly proclaims “Huntington Homestead Museum” was installed recently on the front lawn of the Scotland historical site.

The hand-carved creation, made by Frank Rivard of Lebanon, is truly a “sign of the times” for the Trust and the Homestead as we emerge from completion of a lengthy effort to fulfill our mission to preserve and restore the house and focus on the future.

The project was funded in part by a \$760 grant from The Last Green Valley, a Killingly-based non-profit



organization that promotes a 35-town national heritage corridor in eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts.

The balance of the funds for the sign was awarded by the Society of the Cincinnati, the nation’s oldest patri-

otic organization, founded in 1783 by officers of the Continental Army and their French counterparts who served together in the American Revolution. Its mission is to promote knowledge and appreciation of the achievement of American independence.



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# No, Sweet Judy Blue Eyes Didn’t Live in My House

By Jim McGaughey

This is how this thing got started: Last summer, my friend, Julie, told me that she had been told by our mutual friend, Ros, that a woman who used to live in my house, and who was, at one time, a member of our church, had told him that Judy Collins used to live in her house – which is now my house. Got it? You might have to read that again - it’s what lawyers call “hearsay upon hearsay”, and the chain of communication is a little complicated.

My first reaction was: No way. What would Judy Collins be doing in Mansfield, let alone living in my house? The next time I saw Ros, I asked him about it. He was not vouching for the story about my house – that’s just what he had been told. However, he did know for certain that Judy Collins had lived in Mansfield in the early 1960s. She had moved here when her husband had taken a position as a graduate assistant in the English Department at UCONN.

Skeptical but intrigued, I turned to the internet. My first stop, Wikipedia, was short on detail, and, I found out later, had a few things wrong. But, it did offer basic biographical information: Judith Marjorie Collins was born in Seattle in 1939, and spent her teen age years in Denver, where she showed considerable promise as a student of classical piano. Exposed to the work (and personalities) of various mid-western folk singers through her father’s radio show, and stirred by the songs of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, she ultimately abandoned Chopin and the piano in favor of the guitar and the simple, lyrical power of traditional ballads and folk songs. As her singing career progressed, she extended her artistic repertoire to include other genres, and ultimately began writing her own songs too. Initially, however, she was known simply as a “folk singer”, adding her sweet but then unschooled soprano to the folk revival of the late 50s and early 60s.

In the summer of 1958, at the age of 19, Judy married her high-school sweetheart, Peter Taylor. Their son, Clark, was born in January of the following year. To help make ends meet while her husband finished his undergraduate studies in Colorado, she began singing at local folk venues. Wikipedia confirmed Ros’ information about the move to Storrs, indicating that while she lived here she played and sang at local parties, and on “the student radio station” at UCONN. During the same period, she began to visit Greenwich Village, where she met the likes of Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger and Phil Ochs and became part of the coffee house scene. She also recorded her first album, Maid of Constant Sorrow, which was released in 1961, and began touring extensively, appearing in clubs and concert halls in cities around the country.

I found several other internet biographies that confirmed the Mansfield connection, but nothing on the web offered information about where in the Storrs area Judy had lived, or how long she stayed, Google found me a transcript from a 2009, Washington D.C. call-in radio show, where she was interviewed and sang a few songs. A caller had asked whether it was true, as his brother claimed, that she used to drive the school bus that took him and other kids, including her son, to the Coventry Day School. Judy replied that it wasn’t a school bus, but rather a Chevy Carryall (an early version of the Suburban), and that while she did some of the driving, her husband drove more often, as she was frequently away from home at singing gigs. She said she used to drive the same vehicle from Storrs to New York, “bouncing off the guardrails” on the Merritt Parkway, to sing at Gerdes Folk City in Greenwich Village.

After spending several hours on the internet, I realized that if I wanted to settle the question about my house, I needed a more advanced research strategy. So, I started asking around. My friend, Joan, told me she had listened to the books-on-tape version of Judy’s autobiog-



Judy Collins and Stephen Stills. Contributed photo.

raphy, “Sweet Judy Blue Eyes”, and that she recalled that it contained some references to Storrs. Judy Collins has written several auto-biographical books, as well as two novels. Her earlier writings focus on particular struggles she has had facing, and then growing through, a life-threatening addiction to alcohol and a lengthy bout with bulimia. She wrote one of her novels as a way of coping with the devastating loss of her son to suicide. “Sweet Judy Blue Eyes”, her most recent offering, tells the story of her life, her loves, and her career in music. The title is a play on the title of the song her one-time lover, Stephen Stills, wrote for her: “Suite, Judy Blue Eyes”. I bought the book and started reading. In an early chapter, Judy describes arriving in Storrs just before the start of the fall semester in 1960, and settling into a rented farm house with her husband and son. Initially, she gave no details regarding the location of the house, but did say it was painted red. Reading that, I began to entertain the possibility that, indeed, Judy Collins might have lived in my house. At one time, my house was painted red – a fact I discovered last year after removing some of the vinyl siding to repair rotted window sills.

A few pages later, however, my skepticism returned. Judy describes the house she lived in as being located close to the home of her farmer-landlords, and noted it was surrounded by lush, rolling hills. On summer nights, she said, the back yard came alive with magical displays of floating fireflies. This didn’t fit. My backyard slopes sharply downward toward a thick, bramble-filled wood, which, at its lowest point, is carpeted with skunk cabbage and spring-fed, soggy muck. On summer evenings, I am more apt to be assaulted by swarms of mosquitos than delighted by dancing fireflies. Yet, something in Judy’s description of those rolling hills made me think of another spot on the road that winds past my house; a place a little more than a mile to the west where, in the fullness of summer, lush, green pastures and fields of hay and corn gently rise and fall, bordered by stone walls and ancient oak trees. The road is twisty there, running close to an old, weathered barn and various smaller out-buildings. You have to slow down for the curve as you drive by - which is fine, because

you want to anyway. You want to linger over that scene: even in bleak winter, you cannot pass by without being struck by its simple, timeless beauty.

With that image in mind, I kept reading. A little further on, Judy mentions that her landlords were named Scotttron. A quick search of the land records in the Town Clerk’s Office confirmed that no one by that name ever owned my house, or the property on which it stands. However, maps on file in the Clerk’s office showed that, at one time, people named Scotttron had, indeed, owned a farm very near that area with the beautiful view.

I then did what I should have done to start - checked with my neighbor, Winston, who, at age 96, knows all about who used to live where on our road. “No. Judy Collins didn’t live in your house,” he said quite definitively. He confirmed that the Scotttron’s farm was, indeed, located on the western leg of our road, and that they used to rent a house on their property to UCONN grad students – a house that the Scotttrons themselves moved into in their later years, downsizing from their bigger house. In the early 1970s, they subdivided some parcels along the road for house lots, and, some years later, sold the rest of their acreage to a developer of high-end homes. The original houses still survive, however. So, even though the neighborhood has changed, if Judy Collins were to return to the area today, she would recognize the winding old country road, the nearby rolling hills, and, set back from the road, the house she had once called home.

Sometimes, when you are looking for an answer to a particular question, you find other, unexpected things. By the time I had figured out that Judy Collins never lived in my house, I didn’t really care about that. (Even if the rumor had proven to be true, what was I going to do – put up a plaque next to my front door?) In addition to the biographical information, my internet research had pulled up quite a few black and white YouTube videos from Judy’s early performances. There were clips from the 1962 Newport Folk Festival and segments of the old CBS television show, “Hootenanny”. She sang some songs solo, others as duets or with small ensembles of other singers - Theo Bikel, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, Joan and Mimi Baez. She looked impossibly young. The YouTube menu also offered videos of other performers from that era: Bob Dylan, Odetta, Peter Paul and Mary, Leonard Cohen, and Harry Belafonte. I watched them all – dozens of them. The songs were about whaling ships and Irish rebels and mountain cabins and rye whiskey and hard times and young love – story songs with poetic lyrics and simple melodies that, through the art of those singers, connect across time with simple truths, and with a sense of our common humanity. One video led to another, and before long, those same singers began to appear in muted color, their hair longer, dressed in jeans and boots and fringe-covered vests. There were amplifiers and back-up bands. Genres blended as the music became more complex, and some of the messages became more political and generation-specific. I was listening to and reliving the 1960s, communing with my younger self, briefly transported back to that time in my life when the world seemed poised to enter a new era of peace and justice, and life was filled with endless possibilities. It was reassuring to know that I still respond to that music – that it still moves me as it did when I was a young teenager. But, listening to it, I couldn’t help but wonder: where have all the years between then and now gone?

Now pushing 80, Judy Collins is still performing, her voice as sweet as ever, kept in tune by constant training. Having survived and surmounted various life challenges – some inherited, some self-inflicted, some just randomly befalling her – she seems to have arrived at a good place. Good for her. I feel like I’m in a pretty good place too, even though it isn’t exactly the same place where she used to live.

## Make a Resolution to Care For, Enjoy and Pass on The Last Green Valley

Submitted by Francesca Kefalas

There may be only one resolution anyone needs to improve their mental and physical health: volunteering with The Last Green Valley! According to the Harvard Health Blog, evidence for the positive effects of volunteering on mental health is abundant, but a growing number of studies show volunteering can also have a positive effect on physical health!

Through The Last Green Valley’s Ranger Program and Water Quality Monitoring Program, individuals are trained to actively work towards caring for the National Heritage Corridor.

TLGV Rangers support the organization by presenting information at fairs and festivals, and conducting outreach programs throughout the National Heritage Corridor. TLGV Rangers are essential to articulating the mission, important work and membership benefits of joining TLGV – and they have fun doing it! Chief Ranger Bill Reid trains and supervises TLGV Rangers. The Ranger Program is sponsored by Savers Bank.

TLGV’s Water Quality Monitors help track the health of our streams, rivers, ponds and lakes. Whether you would like to monitor once a season, once a month, or once a week, we have an opportunity for

you. Training and equipment are provided. Jean Pillo is coordinator for The Last Green Valley Water Quality Monitoring Program, and she and her volunteers are helping to ensure the health of our watershed.

There are even more volunteer opportunities with TLGV. For more information, visit <http://thelastgreenvalley.org/join-tlgv/volunteers/> or call the office at 860-774-3300.

The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is the last stretch of dark night sky in the coastal sprawl between Boston and Washington, D.C. The Last Green Valley, Inc. works for you in the National Heritage Corridor. Together we can



care for it, enjoy it and pass it on!



Willimantic, Now and Then:

# It’s the People, Not the Bricks

By Mark Svetz

Everybody’s broke these days. People I talk to on the street, my friends and, the fact is, I’m feeling pretty badly bent, myself. Our governments – no surprise here – also seem to be broke. At the local, state and federal levels, we see deficits, higher taxes and defeated budgets. And yet, everybody’s building, bonding, buying equipment.

Now, there’s a lot here to talk about: Who’s in charge and whose interests are they serving? Why is it that we can’t hire teachers or buy books for our libraries, but we can build new schools, firehouses and senior centers? I understand all these things are needed, like new windows on my house, but can we afford them now?

But really, what I want to talk about is people. One of my first teaching jobs was in the old Nathan Hale Hotel, on Main Street in Willimantic. We had some tables and chairs, a chalk board, the lights worked and so did the bathroom. Shabby quarters for a new school, even if you count the marble floors in the bathroom! It was, despite its shabbiness, the best community school I have ever seen, because the people involved were intelligent, passionate and committed to the community.

In Windham, voters have just approved – by a slim margin – a bonding package for revisions to our high School that are anticipated to cost some \$100 million. I have no interest in revisiting that decision; the voters spoke and that works for me. What I’m thinking about now is that I read the articles in the paper, and I’m not really sure why we need a new school. There was a lot of talk about “supporting our children,” and “it’s almost 50 years old,” but very little about what exactly is wrong with the building. Basically, it seems our first response to any issue is to build something.

Windham has also decided to bond for a new senior center, to be built where the former Jillson movie houses were located, and for a band shell to be built on the Jillson Square Park in front of the senior center site. Many people are excited about all these projects. I think this a great location for the senior center, and we all love the music that blesses us here in Willimantic. The band shell also brings the town a donation of \$100,000 from David Foster, and town officials have said it may not need any local tax money in the end.

We need only look up the hill at Eastern to see there has been an enormous amount of construction in the last decade or more. A little farther up the hill, UCONN is undergoing its own “big dig” these days. And all of this at a time when Connecticut is threatening to reduce its commitment to Medicaid, leaving thousands with out health insurance they can afford, all because of the fiscal crisis we find ourselves it. We are undertaking extensive building projects at the same time we are deciding that some among us will lose their access to health care. The coexistence of these facts leads me to wonder who’s at the helm of our ship of state.

When I think about the quality of education we are providing for our children, bricks and mortar do not come to mind. In fact, it is my opinion that many of the educational problems at Windham are the result of spending too much money on things that don’t translate into better teaching and learning, like buildings and excessive administration. The real problem here is that the important things, like teaching positions and books, for example, seem to get short shrift in the budgeting process.



I had occasion to spend part of a school year as a student-teacher at Windham High in the ‘90s. The textbook for the history course I was assigned was more than 20 years old, and was called “Men and Nations.” Of course this was 20 years ago, but still, Men and Nations? These are the things that we should be thinking about when we consider support for our children’s education, not the bricks and tiles that make up a new school building.

There are many really good teachers and other professionals in our area schools. I have worked in Mansfield and Windham districts, and I know from my own experience of the many fine, dedicated and passionate people who work in those systems. I’m sure it’s the same in other districts. The thing I also remember from my time at Windham is that many of the teachers did not feel supported by their administration. In fact, this is true of so many of the teachers who are part of my community, they feel similarly unsupported in the districts where they work.

One of the factors in this lack of support for our children and teachers is the decade and more we have lived with policies like “No Child Left Behind,” with its emphasis on testing and blaming school districts, including teachers. No one has seen fit to make very many changes to this misguided and disastrous program, and the educational Yellow Brick Road it has led us down. Our leaders want us to believe all we need is a new building, when in fact what we need is leadership.

Of course, it is possible the real problem here is the money and power wielded by the construction industry. New buildings are good for that industry, and for the workers who get hired to build them, as well as for the elected officials who support these jobs. I just don’t know how wise it is to confuse all this with educating our children.

There is another aspect to all this building. The materials and equipment used to build a new building have disastrous environmental consequences. Disposal of building materials from demolition is filling available landfill space. We cannot stop building, but we can be more deliberate in our planning to avoid all but essential projects. It really is the responsible thing to do.

I work a few hours a week now at QVCC at Windham Regional Technical School, a building at least as old as Windham High, and I see several seemingly up-to-date computer labs and a “smart Board” in the media center. I know several of the teachers at Windham Tech, and they seem happy with their jobs. The school has a good reputation, from all I hear. It seems quality education here doesn’t need a new building, although I’m sure the staff would love it!

My hope for the New Year is that when we think about teaching and learning, or providing programs and services for seniors or any of the other activities we do together as humans in community, we think about people, and not just bricks and mortar. People, working together, using their passion, creativity, intelligence and empathy are what these services really need. I know from experience that those people can work miracles almost anywhere if they are given the support, encouragement and respect they deserve.

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](http://www.sarahwinterclothworks.com)



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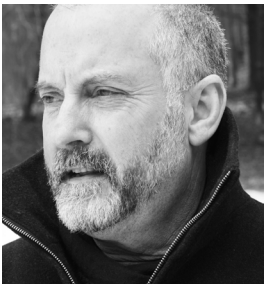
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# On Maple Syrup and Winter Markets

By C. Dennis Pierce

Maybe I am trying to hurry winter. Now that the Winter Solstice has passed, but right around the corner, in late February, the maple trees in Connecticut begin their sugar season. Ah, the taste of spring. The



production of maple syrup is the oldest agricultural enterprise in the United States. This true, locally grown product, places Connecticut as the 10th in maple syrup production in the United States. In the early spring sap is drawn from trees when the night temperatures are freezing and the days are warm and sunny. Farmers stop drawing sap from a tree when it begins to bud. When leaves appear on a tree, the tree’s sap becomes bitter. We relied on maple syrup in the early days. Maple syrup was the standard household sweetener in the United States until around 1875. Did you know that maple syrup is rich in calcium, which helps build strong bones and teeth. Maple syrup contains approximately 1/3 less carbohydrates than granulated sugar. Additionally, maple syrup is 100% fat free.

There are several local places that you can purchase maple syrup. Most winter farmers markets have a vendor that offers local syrup. Mansfield Supply, the local hardware store, also carries local syrup. However, if you want to go directly to the source there are several in Windham County.

Bats of Bedlam Maple Farm has been in business for 40 years. They are located on 101 Bedlam Rd in Chaplin and their contact information is 860.455.9200, email: bob\_dubos@charter.net.

Rich and Sandy Schenk run Bright Acres Farm Sugar House at 46 Old Kings Highway in Hampton. Visitors are welcome mid-February through March. They would ask that if you plan to visit please call ahead at 860.455.9654. Their contact is at Brightacresfarmsugarhouse.com.

In the Woodstock area, Richard and Avis Norman operate Norman’s Sugarhouse on 187 County Rd in Woodstock. Richard offers maple sugar products but also sells sugaring equipment and supplies. Contact info is r.norman@snet.net.

If you have ever passed through the scenic part of route 89 leading up to Ashford I am sure that you have seen the sign for River’s Edge Sugar House. The Proulx family, during sugaring season, invite visitors to watch the sugaring process and purchase some of their fine products. Their contact information is mapleone@sbsglobal.net or 860.429.1510.

Lastly, George Bailey, whose sugar house is off of Browns Road in Mansfield Center has a lot to brag about. George, who was featured in one of my earlier columns, has won several awards by entering his syrup in the Vermont Maple Syrup annual contest. Pretty good since the syrup came from our local trees and then beating those Vermonters.

So, maybe I should not rush winter too much since there still are opportunities to visit the local “winter” markets that have shifted their locations into warmer quarters.

The Coventry Market is open Sundays, through mid-March, 11 am to 2 pm at Coventry High School. They are geared up for another Winter season at the market featuring roasts, steaks, turkey, chicken, pies, produce, baked goods, cheeses, sweet and savory choices and more. Spice up your appetizers with sauces, tempt your sweet tooth with a large variety of delicious choices from local bakers and confectioners. Come explore the growers, producers and artisans of their market. Additional information can be found at <https://www.coventryfarmersmarket.org/>

The Ellington Market, which has grown in size this past year is located in their winter location at 11 Pinney Street. Their contact information can be located at [www.ellingtonfarmersmarket.com](http://www.ellingtonfarmersmarket.com). They are open on Saturdays from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. Their remaining winter dates are: January 6th and 20th, February 3rd and 17th and March 3rd and 17th.

Storrs Winter Farmers Market offers Mansfield and its neighbors access to fresh, locally-grown foods all through the winter. The Winter Market is open twice a month from December through April. The Market is held from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm in the Buchanan Auditorium in the Library. If you would like to find out who will be at Storrs Winter Farmers Market you can sign up at their website for their weekly emails at <https://www.storrsfarmersmarket.org/winter>. Remaining dates are: January 13 & 27, February 10 & 24, March 10 & 24, and April 7 & 21.

As a child, growing up in New Hampshire we did



Mansfield resident George Bailey in his sugar house. Dennis Pierce photo.

not own a lot of property. However, we were fortunate that our yard was lined with maple trees. While we did not do it every year, when we did, we would set up taps, check out how much syrup was in our pails and lastly smoke up my mother’s kitchen producing a meager pint of syrup.

Like many locally produced items I would say that children today do not know where the syrup that they put on their pancakes comes from. Here is an educational opportunity right at our doorstep. Too many times, when we do take the time to prepare a meal, we lose sight of the story that is behind the origin of our ingredients. Perhaps this year we should make an attempt to be selective, buy more local and appreciate the ingredients that are available to us.

Here is a simple recipe that you can make some upcoming Sunday morning. What can’t be liked when you mix the sweetness of maple syrup and the saltiness of bacon?

Maple Biscuits with Bacon  
Makes 6, biscuits

Ingredients:  
4 slices of bacon  
1 / 4 cup of local maple syrup  
1 ½ cups of all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons of baking powder  
½ teaspoons of baking soda  
½ teaspoon of salt  
4 tablespoons of unsalted very cold butter that is cut up in small pieces.  
¼ cup of buttermilk. If you do not have buttermilk on hand, for each cup of buttermilk, you can use 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or lemon juice plus enough milk to measure 1 cup. Stir, then let stand for 5 minutes.

Directions:  
Preheat oven to 425 degrees  
Line baking sheet with parchment or wax paper.  
Cook bacon until crisp.  
Save bacon fat and put it in a small container and place it in the freezer.  
Chop, cooked bacon into little bits. Put bits in a small bowl and cover with maple syrup.  
Mix flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl.  
Take solidified bacon fat (about 2 Tablespoons) and 4 tablespoons of chilled butter and add it to the flour mixture. Work butter/ fat mixture in with your fingers until it resembles coarse meal.  
Add bacon bits and syrup and blend in with a rubber spatula.  
Knead a few times to incorporate it into a dough  
Pat the mixture into a 1-inch thickness on a floured surface  
Cut dough into two-inch-wide biscuits.  
Place biscuits on pan and bake for 12 to 14 minutes.

Best wishes for the upcoming year. I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You’re doing things you’ve never have done before, and more importantly, you’re experiencing life to the fullest. Happy New Year.

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](mailto:Codfish53@yahoo.com). Peas be with you.

# Attacking Medicare

By Kevin Pratt

When does it become a thing to attack senior citizens and disabled individuals? Well it’s actually going to happen sometime in early 2018. Senior citizens and disabled individuals who are on state insurance a.k.a. title 19 are going to end up paying an insurance premium of \$135 a month. It will be directly taken out of individuals who receive Social Security or Social Security disability.

Three months ago I found out that we were supposed to get a 2% raise in Social Security starting in January 2018. So instead of getting \$931 a month I will be receiving \$950 a month. Unfortunately if the state decides that they are going to go after senior citizens and disabled individuals who receive Social Security and who are on or receive state insurance, I will not receive \$950 a month. The money will be directly taken out of my Social Security check which will bring the grand total to \$814 a month versus \$950 a month. Now you may be asking yourself where does this make any sense? Why is the government going after senior citizens and disabled individuals or anyone that receives disability on a monthly basis? Immediate response is that it doesn’t make any sense because if you are taxpayer the government already takes Medicare out of your taxes when you file every year. So the government or the state of Connecticut is essentially double dipping and hurting seniors and disabled individuals who rely on that state insurance and their money every month.

This may directly affect me because I may end up having to move to find a cheaper rent because taking \$135 a month out of my disability check I will have a hard time paying my bills and buying food to survive. Not to mention we may also end up having to pay a premium or co-pay on our prescriptions which is also going to affect senior citizen and disabled individuals or anyone who is on disability.

I understand the state of Connecticut is hurting as a whole because there are too many people on state insurance and they never restructured the whole system back in the mid-90s and early 2000’s. Originally title 19 or state insurance was supposed to be provided to senior citizens and disabled individuals that could not afford regular insurance either because of the cost or having a pre-existing condition. When they opened state insurance for everyone who didn’t have insurance or who couldn’t afford regular insurance it caused a major ripple affect.

I’m all for helping individuals who cannot afford regular insurance, but there are too many people out there who could either physically work or find other alternatives for insurance. A lot of people choose not to or keep their annual salaries under \$24,000 a year so they can maintain the insurance. My point is they needed to do some major reform back in the early 2000’s before it ever got to this point. If this ends up going through within the next couple months you are going to see senior citizens and disabled individuals being affected the most. A lot of them will not be able to afford to live and you’re going to see low income housing get overwhelmed because people had to move out of their current residence because people are being charged \$135 a month for that premium.

What the government has to do is offer us alternative insurance options so they can make it affordable for people to pay. The unfortunate part is everything always revolves around money and because it is not making any money off of senior citizens and disabled people there going to hit them where it hurts directly in their pocket. They need to come up with alternatives so people aren’t affected so drastically, but I don’t know what the correct answer is. You are never going to make everybody 100% happy. I just wish some of these politicians could understand how it affects smaller individuals or people who make less than \$20,000 a year.

I’ll take it one step further. I am a middle-aged man who has a college degree in communications but I have never been able to find my dream job, or any job, where companies and corporations except me as I am - a disabled guy with cerebral palsy in a wheelchair. So if you don’t think prejudices are out there, you would be wrong. I’m living proof of that.

## To all our contributors- Thank You!

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



# Toothpicks and 2 x 4s

By Marc Nee, LMFT

He sits on the couch in my office with his head in his hands saying “ I can’t believe she wants a divorce. I didn’t think things were that bad.” He didn’t see it coming. Unfortunately, in my experience as a Marriage and Family Therapist, I hear this far too often.

I inquire about how they’ve been getting along, their children, their sex life. “What sex life!?” he snorts, “I don’t get it, I go to work, take care of the house and yard, spend time with the kids. What the hell else does she want?”

“What do the two of you struggle with?” I ask. And so it begins...the reasons couples have trouble in their marriage are varied; money, child rearing, family, inattention, disrespect, anger issues, lack of support, no quality time, porn, sometimes infidelity, (but not as much as you’d think). Usually it’s a couple of things and always its tragic. As a therapist, the tragedy is that so often it could’ve been avoided if they had come in a couple of years before. That’s right, a couple of YEARS before. I’m going to guess that many women reading this article won’t be nearly as shocked by this revelation as the men, but that’s the point.

In my experience, when a woman finally says, “I’m done,” it’s the caboose of a train that started rolling a long time before. Usually over a period of many months, and even years, a woman has expressed her discontent about things. In desperation she’s repeated it so many times, that she’s been called a nag. When that didn’t work, she’s tried to influence his behavior by using various tools and techniques at her disposal, and maybe she’s even suggested couples therapy. Often these women report having gone to therapy themselves because of feeling hopeless to find a solution. All of this represents the proverbial train, passing car by car until finally, she gave up hope that things would change.

So she started figuring out how to secure a future for herself, and for her kids. Then when it’s all set up and lawyers are involved, she announces that she wants a divorce.

Unfortunately, this is about the time many men realize there’s a serious problem and start to pay attention. Her decision to leave is the engine that gets him willing to change. Sadly by then its often too late and he’s left scrambling to buy a ticket for a train that has already left the station.

While I try to avoid the pitfalls of generalizations, this scenario happens often enough that I felt it deserved a name. I call it “Toothpicks and 2x4’s.”

Why this phenomenon persists in an age of feminism is for smarter people than me. Maybe it’s a leftover of centuries of women having to walk cautiously to survive in a patriarchal society. Maybe it’s that woman follow their mothers lead on how to handle dad and his temper, or maybe it’s because of a woman’s need to keep a secure nest for her offspring and the serious financial implications of splitting with their spouse. Whatever the reason, it seems that many women have a strategy of trying to nudge their partners into changing. They use the toothpick method, being vague, implying, suggesting, poking and prodding their partner, hoping that enough pokes, enough hints, will get his attention and he will change. The problem with this strategy is that there are still many men holding fast to the model and ideals they watched their fathers live by, namely provide, protect and prosper.

For these men, things are reasonably simple- work hard, play by the rules, and protect your family. If you give them an occasional “Atta boy,” feed them well and sleep

with them once in a while they will be fairly content. If pressed about their upbringing, these men will admit that “Sure, mom used to nag dad” and “No, they weren’t particularly affectionate with each other, dad worked a lot and as a result was rather distant, but they raised a family and dad retired, and they stayed together for 50 years.” That’s good enough, right?

Given this paradigm, his spouses’ poking is seen as an annoyance, rather than a communication of an important problem for her. So he ignores it, or avoids it, never realizing his marriage is in serious trouble. Then his wife tries to get him to therapy- to talk about feelings? Expressing emotion is not going to be his strong suit so he’s already on the defensive, and then to do it in front of a therapist and his wife? He would rather cut his eyes out with a spoon. No, he thinks, things aren’t *that* bad. Since he is generally content, he assumes his spouse is as well; she’s just making a big deal out of nothing.

These situations don’t need a toothpick, they need a 2x4.

“Honey, I really wish you would talk to me/ You never listen to me” Toothpick

“Honey, I’m not happy in our marriage. If you are unwilling to work on it with me, I’m going to leave you...” 2x4

“I just can’t take this anymore” Toothpick

“ I am unwilling to live like this any longer, we need to get help or separate” 2x4

“Ugh, sometimes I wish I could just leave – go live on a desert island or something!” - Toothpick

“ I think we need to separate until you decide whether you’re willing to work on our relationship with me.” 2x4

“I really don’t want to argue in front of the kids” Toothpick

“ I don’t want our children thinking this is how partners treat each other. We need to fix this or end it.” 2x4

Hard to imagine? Painful? Scary? Yes. It’s why most people don’t do it. Or why they do it in the middle of an argument, or say it as a threat without following through. Telling your partner in a calm way your going to leave them is very hard...but not as hard as divorce. Is this a guarantee for success? No. But it’s a beginning.

The other issues don’t magically go away just because you’re willing to talk about them either. In my experience, both partners are responsible for the shape of the marriage and as a result, fixing the problems requires hard work on both sides as well, but it can be done as long as both partners are willing to put in the effort.


*Marc Nee is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. He and his wife, Carla Ricci LMFT,EMDR, CHt ,own and operate Inner Connections, LLC. They work with individuals, couples and families using a holistic approach and a variety of modalities to help clients navigate issues that are no longer serving them. To learn more www. inner-connections.net or call Marc 203-981-2239 or Carla 860-416-3814.*

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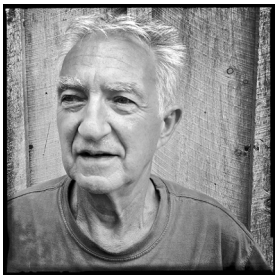
Balcony House in Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado.

Contributed photo.

# More National Park Adventures

By David Corsini

Last September I visited several national parks with my sister and brother-in-law, and last month in *Neighbors* I wrote about the first part of the trip. After five days in Arches and Canyonland in Utah, it was time for Donna, Bill and I to drive 150 miles to Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. We stopped at the Anasazi Heritage Center, a very modern museum with excellent videos and displays. While our visit provided an introduction to the ancient peoples from this area, our stay of two hours did not do justice to the information offered.



It was then onto Mesa Verde visitors center. Since park sponsored tours had to be arranged in person several days in advance, we did not have the time to sign up. But luckily, at our lodging we were able to sign on to a private tour. Our room in the lodge was a single room with two king-sized beds. As this was a two-night stay, there was limited unpacking of suitcases. At least our room had a balcony with a view and the lodge restaurant was good. In the morning we boarded a bus with a tour guide and about 25 other people. The group was reasonably small and the tour guide was entertaining. The highlight of the tour was a stop at Balcony House, one of the cliff dwellings for which Mesa Verde is famous. There was some anxiety associated with a visit to Balcony House as it: “requires moderate physical exertion ... and is not recommended for people with heart or breathing problems or those who are afraid of heights.” The visit required climbing an initial 32 foot ladder, crawling through a narrow tunnel, and climbing another ladder to exit.

I have an artificial heart valve, occasional asthma, and am not crazy about heights. I looked around at our group of mostly older adults, including several who didn’t look physically fit. I figured if these older, out-of-shape people were going to attempt the climb, and the ranger-guide was allowing them to go, I was going to go. The others were probably looking at me and thinking the same thing. Bill was eager, but Donna was hesitant. This is one time during the trip when I was happy that Delia was not along. She would have questioned my sanity.

The ladder was not a conventional ladder but best described as a climbing structure, with fat rungs, that was bolted to the stone cliff at a 45 degree angle. It was wide enough for two people to climb side by side. The tour guide had suggested that people not look down and instead focus through the rungs on the stone. After a very brief look over my shoulder, I studied the lichen on the rocks as I climbed. When we were on top, we were very high above the valley and I stayed away from the edge while the ranger gave her spiel. But then there was the narrow tunnel.

At the tunnel, I was behind Bill but in front of Bill was an overweight and out of shape man who was struggling in the entrance of the tunnel. When he lay down, the man pretty much filled the tunnel. Bill was helping the man by removing the camera case from his belt and urging him

to take his time and slither like a snake. I had visions of the man becoming stuck in the tunnel or worse and was worrying about having to back down the ladder we had climbed to get this far. But under Bill’s guidance, the man managed to wiggle his way through the tunnel. Then, pretty much on hands and knees, Bill and I easily made it through.

From the tour guide we learned that the Ancestral Pueblo People occupied Mesa Verde from about 600 AD to 1300 AD and the cliff dwellings were constructed only near the end of that period. Although the peoples who occupied this area left no written records, archaeologists have been able to learn a great deal about them and why they left. When first settled, this area had good soil, adequate water, moderate temperatures and abundant natural resources. The originally nomadic people developed technologies for construction and farming and many small communities emerged in the area. As the population increased and the natural resources were consumed, the people became more dependent on farming. They grew what came to be referred to as the three sisters: corn, squash, and beans. Their diet included wild animals and, when those became scarce, they ate turkeys that had been domesticated.

And then came a long period of drought and cold winters. This fact was determined by the study of tree rings. The increased population, decreased availability of wild food and other resources, the lack of water for farming, led to great stress and conflict between groups. Places like Balcony House clearly were built to be highly defensible. Archeologists have found evidence of warfare between villages and even indications of cannibalism. By the year 1300 this area was abandoned. People who lived originally in this area are the ancestors of current day Indians such as the Hopi.

When driving in Mesa Verde, one is struck by many acres of small trees and acres of 40 and 50-foot-tall dead tress. There were several major forest fires in this area from 1996 to 2003 and half of the park’s 52,485 acres were burned. The fires destroyed several rock art sites, but also revealed many prehistoric sites that had been covered by vegetation.

After two days in Mesa Verde, the plan was to drive to Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. Since Chaco Canyon is an International Dark Sky Park, we planned to stay into the evening to experience a spectacular night sky. We asked the rangers at Mesa Verde about the weather conditions at Chaco Canyon. Unfortunately, the weather forecast was certain for rain. Not only would overcast conditions prevent viewing the stars, the rangers told us that the road into the canyon was difficult to travel in rain. We were strongly advised not to try it.

Although we were disappointed to miss the experience of the sky in very dark conditions, in retrospect, it probably was for the best. Chaco Canyon was 150 miles away from our two final destinations: Hovenweep National Monument and Capital Reef National Park. We already had driven far and there was more driving ahead.

Hovenweep National Monument is a small park with some well preserved examples of early Pueblo architecture. There are particularly good examples of towers that were built as observation posts. We took a short hike

around the canyon and then it was off toward Capital Reef National Park. Since we had to cancel the lodging near Chaco Canyon, we had to find lodging. We found a cheap motel in Blanding, Utah and since the rooms were inexpensive, we decide to rent two so we could be a bit more relaxed. At this point of the trip, I was experiencing constipation and, I believe, Donna was dealing with digestive issues in the opposite direction.

When I have traveled in the past, I have sometimes experienced minor medical issues such as: diarrhea, trouble sleeping, toe problems, and breathing issues. So in addition to items for dental care, shampoo and shaving supplies, I carry Pepto-Bismol, aspirin of several dosages, cold medications, antacids, throat lozenges, Band-Aids, triple antibiotic ointment, an antifungal cream, a cream for eczema and Benadryl for allergic reactions or a snake bite. My traveling supplies include prescription sleep and asthma medications and two types of antibiotics-doxycycline in case of a tick bite, and amoxicillin to protect my artificial heart valve in case of infection. There is also Visine, tube bandage for protecting toes, nail file, nail clippers, and tweezers. But what I didn’t carry was anything for constipation. So for future travel I will now add Miralax to my traveling pharmacy.

From the motel in Blanding, it was off to the Whispering Sands Motel- 37 miles from Capital Reef National Park. The park is called Capital Reef because of two distinctive geological formations. First, the “reef” is in reference to a 100 mile barrier cliff that reveals 10,000 feet of many different sedimentary rock formations. These layers have been uplifted by geological forces and then subjected to a long period of erosion. This rock formation was a big barrier to travel for early explorers. The “capital” part of the park’s name is because of a huge Navajo Sandstone boulder that stands alone and reminds people of the national capital building.

We were getting tired at this point of the trip and did not take the eight-mile driving tour. But we took several hikes around the visitor’s center and on a path where we could view petroglyphs. This is also an area that Mormon settlers inhabited in the 1880’s and there were still some active orchards maintained from those early days. We left after lunch for the 230 mile drive back to Salt Lake City and our final motel.

The drive back to Salt Lake City on a Friday afternoon was difficult. Donna drove for over an hour and then I drove for a similar amount of time. Then Bill took over but soon got into bumper-to-bumper, six-lane traffic with still more than 30 miles to the airport. When we thought we were close to the airport, Bill exited the highway to get gas. We were uncertain of how far we still had to go and we were all a little tense. At one point it was not certain who would drive, who would ride and who would walk. Since Bill had driven over two hours in heavy traffic, I insisted that I take over the driving. Not many miles later, we found the last leg to the airport, which required difficult driving west into the sun. We were happy to turn the car in. We had driven 1480 miles. We were reminded that plans that look good on paper sometimes turn out to be more strenuous in the execution.

It was one more night in a motel and then the trip back home. Everything went smoothly on the flight, we found the car in the parking garage, and were home to Wilimantic after 8 PM. As we had not had eaten, we headed off with Delia for dinner. We stopped first at the Mainstreet Café, but that was full. We crossed the street to Cafeman-tic, and that also was full. But, happily, there was a table at another of our local favorites—the Oriental Café. We were pleased to see how active Willimantic was on a Saturday night!



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# The Pleasures of Staying Home

By Delia Berlin

Often, I feel like a certified bore. “Have you gone anywhere this summer?” Nope. “Any exciting trips planned?” Nada. But the truth is that, except for those brief awkward conversation moments, not traveling gives me nothing but peace and joy.



For a variety of reasons, I traveled quite a lot from an early age. Coming from a large family of modest means, airline travel was rarely within the reach of my parents when I was very young. But my father believed in “the future” and wanted us to experience flying. So, at times he would manage to book us all on short affordable flights, even for destinations more reasonably reached by car. And being the oldest child in the family, even before we started taking those commercial trips, he had taken me as a preschooler for short sightseeing flights on a pilot friend’s private plane.

My father also wanted us to experience sea travel. In my mid-teens our whole family embarked on the Anna C, an Italian cruise ship, small by today’s standards. This trip was a two-week summer excursion to Antarctica, hugging the Patagonia coast and visiting several glaciers. When our ship made the turn around Cape Horn in rough seas, it tilted so much that everything on the ship (including large furniture) slid to one side. I was having breakfast at a lounge with my baby brother, then two-years-old, and I lost him... Fortunately he slid all the way to the other side of the ship under a large table, which protected from being crushed by other items. We heard later that the ship had come very close to its “angle of no restitution” and that we had been very “lucky” – let’s just say that if we had been cats, at least one of our seven lives would have been used up.

Until I was 15 or 16, travel was associated with leisure. But after that my family moved abroad for work reasons, changing locations more than once. This started a period of several decades during which most of my travel was a necessary burden to stay connected with family and friends, then dispersed at great distances. Most of the usually happy associations that used to accompany trips started to diminish.

But when I became a parent, showing places and things to my daughter was important. So, once again, travel became exciting. And four years later, when I joined David, this renewed interest got reinforced. At that point, David was in his early forties and had never crossed the US border. He didn’t even have a passport. I had traveled so much and for so long that I found this almost incredible.

I don’t remember if I had to work at persuading David or if he agreed enthusiastically from the get-go, but within months of being together we were definitely going places. Over the years, we traveled within the US and Canada, visited many tropical islands and several countries in Europe, Central and South America. For decades, we took at least two trips per year, typically one with my daughter and one by ourselves. During the years that my daughter was in college I also took annual trips just with her, during her spring breaks.

One day I realized that age, responsibilities, and the many changes brought on by 9/11, lowered the pleasure-pain ratio of traveling significantly. For me, it had become mostly pain. I realized that I didn’t enjoy leaving my home and my aging pets with strangers, to go through long security lines, to wait in crowded boarding areas, and to travel squeezed into tiny seats. I still had to travel to visit relatives who had become too old and frail to visit me, but I no longer looked forward to recreational trips.

Ironically, by then David had caught the bug and still wanted to experience more pleasure travel. Many of the trips he looked forward to were not on my bucket list, but there was no reason for him not to “enjoy” them, so to speak... I’m talking, for example, about citizen scientist nature trips catching snakes in the islands of the South China Sea, or birding excursions in remote uninhabited parts of Indonesia without potable water, electric power or telecommunications.

I am not particularly squeamish or phobic about snakes, insects, spiders or bats. But there are certain things that I will not put myself through willingly, and experiencing long and arduous travel conditions only to arrive to more misery is one of them. So, David has continued taking occasional solo trips, unencumbered by the urgency to keep me happy during his ordeals. When he calls me from somewhere far away in the midst one of these trips to tell me about his adventures, usually both of us end up equally relieved that I have stayed home.

Planes take longer now to reach destination than



when I was young, even if you still manage to find a direct flight, and the experience itself has changed quite drastically. In the 60s, flying was filled with glamour, peppered with small luxuries and pampering that were otherwise rare. Now, passengers feel more like cattle being herded to the slaughterhouse. Or perhaps even like suspects in a lineup who, at best, will be pushed forward like a nuisance. How could we have gone backwards like this?

One of the reasons may be the popularization of mass travel. Granted, long distance travel is a long way from being easily accessible to all, but it is now reasonably accessible to more people than ever. In order for it to be this way, standard commercial fares had to be reduced by cutting corners and packing people in tightly. My own traveling experiences may have gotten worse, but in exchange, for many others, air travel became reachable for the first time.

Traveling is expensive and it’s amazing how much you can save when you don’t. I’ve gotten used to investing these savings in our home to make it more pleasant and comfortable. Whether it’s a gas fireplace, landscaping or a commissioned radiator painting, I occasionally hear that we’ll never “get that money back” when we sell the house. But... I wouldn’t get any money back if I took a trip either, and at best I would only keep good memories in the end. By increasing the comforts of our home, we continue to enjoy them every day. In turn, this almost guarantees that our potential vacation accommodations will never match the comforts of our home.

Traveling is widely publicized as a noble and wisdom-building, horizon-expanding activity, particularly in retirement. But there is actually no moral imperative or good reason for traveling for leisure, particularly by plane. According the New York Times, if you take “one round-trip flight between New York and California... you’ve generated about 20 percent of the greenhouse gases that your car emits over an entire year.” (*Flying Is Bad for the Planet. You Can Help Make It Better.* Tatiana Schlossberg, July 27, 2017) The same article claims that “the aviation industry accounts for 11 percent of all transportation-related emissions in the United States.” Broadening our minds at this expense, for no purpose other than self-gratification, hardly looks like a noble pastime.

But not so fast: If you like to travel, you should be pleased to hear that you can find benefits too. For example, ecotourism can provide communities with incentives to preserve natural resources and alternative sources of income. Volunteering as a citizen scientist provides labor subsidies to research projects that may otherwise not be possible. And the experience of traveling to different places and learning about other cultures and environments leads to better appreciation and understanding of other peoples and ourselves.

Overall, I feel fortunate to have traveled as much in my youth. The places I’ve been to have made my life more meaningful and interesting. And difficult as travel is these days, I can’t say I’m done with it. My granddaughter is almost seven and already a seasoned traveler. I’m starting to think about a few more itineraries I would like to cover with her. But a few things, like elder care for both family and pets may have to get resolved first.

As you may see, some of us need to rationalize traveling and others need to justify staying home. For now, if you see me around town and feel the need for a conversation starter, please ask me where I have not been lately. I may have a lot to tell you.

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# Gandhi’s Comparative Religion

By P.K. Willey, Ph.D.

There is a saying in India: “It is a blessing to be born into a temple, but a curse to die in one.” All the World’s Great Faiths introduce young minds and hearts to the concept of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Supreme Consciousness, known by different titles. With differing prescriptions that arose out of time and place, each faith offers ethical and moral protection, a psychological/philosophical temple, whilst stabilizing society for peaceful functioning and operation.

Gandhi was brought up by his devout Mother Putlibai; surrounded by the piousness that saturates Indian culture. Yet, his education was through a British colonial school, which taught him nothing about the India he lived in, instead, everything about England. From this English perspective he understood that Indians were viewed as ‘ignorant superstitious idolators’. He had little understanding about his ‘roots’.

In his early days at law school in England (age 18) and during work in South Africa (age 24), Gandhi was befriended by many different religious people who sought to win the earnest and sweet young man to embrace their views exclusively. It was through Edwin Arnold’s poetic translations into English of the Bhagavad Gita, a Hindu Scripture, and the Light of Asia, about Lord Buddha, that some of the eternal gems in India’s spiritual treasure-chest began to dawn in Gandhi’s awareness. In answer to some who sought to convert him to their views, the young Gandhi gently said:

“I am a Hindu by birth. And yet I do not know much of Hinduism, and I know less of other religions. In fact, I do not know whom I am, and what is and what should be my belief. I intend to make a careful study of my own religion and as far as I can other religions as well.”

Gandhi studied; the intensity of his effort is humbling to review. Jail-time meant study-time. Most of his books were in English, many on Indian philosophy. In South African jails he was to read several hundred books on Indian thought. For a while he was a distributor of books on Esoteric Christianity. He visited a Trappist monastery, met with seers, teachers, thinkers, of all faiths possible. His mind stretched to ‘touch’ in Oneness. He looked for the principle of Truth, and ‘connected dots’ between the world’s great faiths, to ethical views of numerous thinkers, to many fields of inquiry. A book read on sociology by Spencer during 1903-04, gave Gandhi the principle of a ‘great unknowable’ which he found to be the same as Hindu concepts of ‘nothingness’.

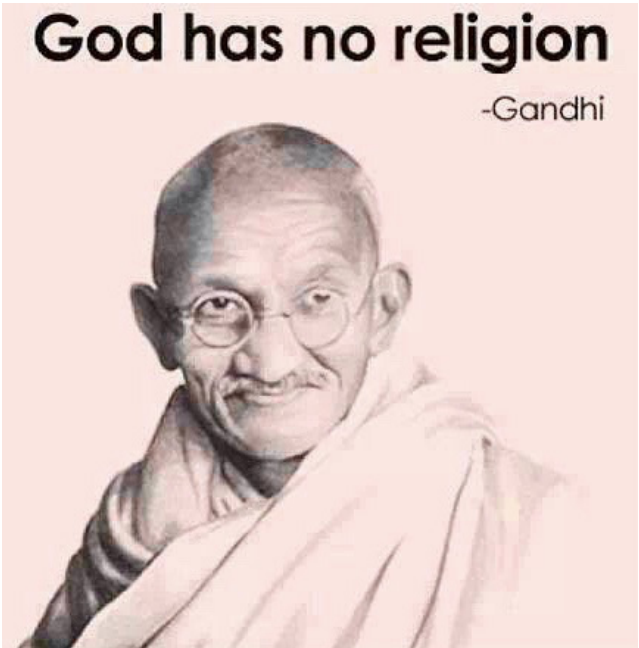
Later, Gandhi translated works which appealed to his spiritual sense into Indian languages, or made them available to the public through his newsletters, by chapters. Salter’s Ethical Religion was one, as was Thoreau’s essay on Civil Disobedience.

Gandhi soon saw all differing paths as within the infinite ocean of Sanathana Dharma; Eternal Righteousness, the psychological/social/philosophical way of being that the British called “Hindu-ism”. Although he was to eventually steadfastly identify himself as Hindu, he considered himself a religious reformer. Gandhi’s attitude towards Hindu-ism was part of his evolving emphasis on Swadeshi, self-reliance, working with what is local, where one is, rather than going afar to have one’s needs met, spiritual or temporal. Finding that Indian philosophy did embrace truth, he saw no need to leave it, only to reform and refine its understanding and message for human succor. He was cautious of discarding any of the tenets he found in Hinduism without trying to understand the principle behind them. He mined Indian thought and philosophy; meshed it with his life experience to create his own understanding, which looked entirely different in practice (but not in principle) to the ways that Hindu-ism was recognized ‘on the ground’.

During his final imprisonment (1944), he was given some books on the Bahá’í faith, by a Zoroastrian who had converted to it. Gandhi queried him as to why he had left Zoroastrianism. Gandhi said of the Bahá’ís “The Bahá’í Faith is a solace to humankind.”

It was his life-long, all consuming passion: to know and walk in harmony with the Lord of All. He saw that a life touched by the truth of the omni-omni-omni, would live outside the books, outside the temple one was born into. With his legally trained mind, he saw an inexorable Law pervading all life. “...He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect if He ever does. God to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in even the smallest act of His votary.”

Gandhi saw the necessity of developing his own awareness and advised others to seek to become cognizant of their ethical instinct. In a letter to a young nephew, he



wrote: “Spiritual progress is as essential as intellectual progress; so also development of the body. We often tend to forget this. Don’t you forget this.”

Gandhi used the ability to ‘pay attention’ as a power to direct his mind towards his ideals, his conscience. With attention—the utmost effort to marshal all his energy into a single focus—he gained concentration. Concentration became meditation. The development of awareness and practices to support that, appear to have become part of Gandhi’s nature. His methods melted his mind and heart into awe and a dawning perception of oneness with Creator and Creation. Gandhi found that Nature conspires to assist the process and advised a young ashram member: “He who acquires inner knowledge automatically turns inward.”

Gandhi often spent hours and days in a receptive or meditative mood, particularly before taking decisions which he felt were inspired by his ideals, such as Fasts and Satyagraha campaigns. Those were times of wordless contemplation that he could only do alone, with himself.

He saw the awakening to ethical life and instincts as a ‘spiritual sense.’

“The rose imparts its fragrance not in many ways but only one. Those who have not the sense of smell will miss it. You cannot feel the fragrance through the tongue or the ear or the skin. So may you not receive spirituality except through the spiritual sense. Hence have all religions recognized the necessity of that sense being awakened. It is a second birth. A man with intense spirituality may without speech or a gesture touch the hearts of millions who have never seen him and whom he has never seen.”

“God also is in us. We do not see the air in our body, but we have another physical sense with which we can feel it. Is it not an arrogant claim to lay down a law that there is nothing beyond the five senses? Who does not feel that there are mysteries impenetrable by reason?...the mystery of Creation and death is itself a living demonstration of the supernatural. It will be time enough to scoff at it when man has by his reason succeeded in creating life.

US Journalist William L. Shirer (1904 – 1993), described his personal visit with Gandhi thus:

“I count the days with Gandhi the most fruitful of my life. No other experience so shook me out of the rut of banal existence and opened my ordinary mind and spirit. Above all, he talked about Love, spiritual Love...He used to lecture me by saying ‘Love is God.’ He would say, “That’s the only God that I really recognize. Love equals God.”

Well that was difficult for me to get. But I got from him a different kind of religion. I could never go back, after two years in India, to my Presbyterian church as a worshiper. He taught me something that’s been wonderful in my life, what he called comparative religion. He was a devout Hindu. But the Hindu religion is very tolerant, much more tolerant than any of our religions or Islam. And he said “I take the best of all religions.”

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Rock ledge and hemlock trees at the new Edward R. Laby Preserve. Photo courtesy of the Wyndham Land Trust Inc.

## Preserving Family Land

Smithfield Donor Wanted Family Land Protected

Submitted by Marcy Dawley

The Wyndham Land Trust recently received a donation of 81 acres of forested land in East Killingly from Anna May Scanlon of Smithfield, RI. The property will be known as the Edward R. Laby Preserve in honor of her late son, who hunted on the land.

The land has been in Anna May’s family since her father acquired it in the 1950s from Turnquist Lumber in Foster. Anna May knew she wanted to protect it from development, but she wasn’t sure how.

“The Wyndham Land Trust was the answer to my question,” she explained. “I wanted to see it retained in its natural state. I didn’t want to sell it to just anybody, I wanted it to go to somebody who will preserve it. I’m the only one left in the family, and I’m glad to know that my wishes will be carried out.”

“I was greatly impressed by Mrs. Scanlon’s desire to see this large unfragmented forest preserved from the outset,” said land trust board member Steve Adams. “I walked the property this past summer and found it to be a beautiful and peaceful place in the eastern Killingly highlands adjacent to the Kentuck Ledges.

“A donation of this nature and magnitude is a win-win for all parties. The land trust is able to permanently preserve 81 acres of natural habitat, while the donor will receive a very nice tax benefit for years to come as a result of this generous charitable contribution.”

“The new preserve is part of a large forest interior extending east into Rhode Island and south into state forest,” said Land Manager Andy Rzeznikiewicz. “It’s a remote corner of Killingly, and Hermit Thrushes and Black-throated Green Warblers are two of the interesting, breeding forest birds known to inhabit this property.”

“We’re very grateful for the donation from Mrs. Scanlon,” said President, Mike St. Lawrence. This year has been incredibly productive for the Wyndham Land Trust. We acquired property in Killingly, Thompson, Woodstock, and Eastford in 2017 and increased the acreage of protected land by over 700 acres—a 25% increase. The amount of activity is unprecedented in the 42-year history of the land trust, and we expect it to continue into 2018.”

The Wyndham Land Trust now owns a total of 2951 acres across ten towns in northeast Connecticut. The land trust can be reached by emailing info@wyndham-landtrust.org or by calling (860) 963 2090. More information about their work is available from their web site at www.wyndhamlandtrust.org or from their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wyndhamlandtrust.

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# 5 Simple Steps for Establishing Goals

By James Zahansky, AWMA

It's a common myth that financial planning is only for people in a certain age group or income bracket.

But financial planning is helpful for people at all stages of their lives. After all, everyone has financial dreams and needs.

Financial planning will help you identify your goals and create a strategy for achieving them. But just how exactly do you set financial goals? And how far in the future can you realistically plan them?

Here are five steps to setting financial goals, and Planning Well so that you reach your destination.



## Step 1: Figure out what matters to you

Before creating a financial plan, you need to understand your goals. Of course, most of us want to save for retirement. And if you have children, you're likely thinking about a college savings plan. But do you want to buy a home within the next five years? Are you planning to buy a car at the end of this year?

It's important to think about your short-term goals, as well as those long-term, big-ticket items. Perhaps you want to finance a trip to Thailand, or take your parents out for an expensive dinner for their anniversary.

While recording your goals, make sure they are SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. A goal to save for that trip to Thailand can be made SMARTer with a detail-oriented eye. For instance, you could write: "Save \$2,000 total for the Thailand trip by putting \$115 monthly into my travel savings account over the next 18 months."

## Step 2: Prioritize

Goals needs to be prioritized and quantified. After you've pulled together all of your financial information and you've made a list of goals based on that data, you're ready to prioritize.

If you want to pay off credit card debt, establish an emergency fund, save for retirement, buy a new house, and also create an annual travel budget, all of that may not be possible right away. Thus, the need for prioritization.

Take your list of goals and number them based on your true interests, as earlier defined. Many financial advisors would advise their clients to start with three key measures of basic financial health: Retirement funding, emergency fund savings, and debt repayment. You don't have to approach these one at a time, but you can choose to work on goals simultaneously and "stack" goals by creating a progression of one goal to another. For instance, once you pay off your highest interest debt, you can start saving for a new car. Stacking can help motivate you through the more tedious goals so you can get to the exciting ones!

## Step 3: Create a realistic budget

In order to achieve your goals, you need a budget, one that takes all of your expenses into account. It is common that people may know their monthly expenses and overlook the rest. There are other things to take into ac-

count such as car insurance, taxes, other periodic expenses.

Financial planning startup LearnVest is known for its 50/20/30 Rule for budgeting, which specifies that no more than 50 percent of your income should go to essential living expenses (like housing, utilities, transportation, and groceries), no less than 20 percent should go to your financial priorities (such as retirement planning and an emergency fund), and no more than 30 percent should go toward your lifestyle (things like shopping, clothing, entertainment, fitness, and all the other frills in life).

Your budget should start with comprehensive look at your income and determine the best way to utilize that income on a monthly or weekly basis. Utilize LearnVest's 50/20/30 Rule, come up with your own framework, or plan a budget with an advisor.

## Step 4. Automate

After you've figured out your expenses, then you can figure out how much income you have left to put aside into savings and retirement. One strategy is to automatically deduct that percentage to go into a separate account.

In fact, you're best served by automating as much of your budget as possible so you're not relying on will-power or your memory to stay on track. Most banks and service providers have automated payment systems that you can use to completely automate your financial life. Setting up weekly or monthly payments will not only take off the mental burden and keep you on track, but will also help smooth out your cash flow. If you've ever forgotten a payment, you know that \$100 missed payment this month means a \$200 payment (plus a late fee) next month.


## Step 5: Check on your progress

Once you've made a plan, make sure you check in regularly so that you stay on track. Whether you've got an advisor or you're managing your plan on your own, you need to make sure you're staying the course, and be aware of under-utilizing your funds.

Financial is not a one-and-done solution, but rather a base plan that should be reviewed and updated periodically. Financial plans should be revisited annually with a financial advisor, or anytime you've had a big life event. After weddings, graduations, or any other major event, reassessing your budget may be important.

*Presented by James Zahansky, AWMA, researched by BBVA Compass Bancshares, Inc. - Copyright 2017. Weiss & Hale Financial Principal/Managing Partner and Chief Goal Strategist, Jim Zahansky offers securities and advisory services through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser along with Principal/Managing Partner, Laurence Hale, AAMS, CRPS and Partner Jim Weiss, AAMS, RLP. They practice at 697 Pomfret Street, Pomfret Center, CT 06259, 860.928.2341.*

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T. King, Publisher



# Ashford School Students Participate in Character Building Opportunities

Written by the Ashford School Class of 2018

Imagine yourself being hoisted up in the air by a group of people that you have never really gotten to know. Imagine allowing yourself to fall backwards off the third step of a ladder knowing they are the only thing breaking your fall. As you fall, you feel nothing on the way down. The moment your group breaks your fall, relief is your only emotion that is expressible, besides your voice chanting “Again! Again!” in excitement. Welcome to Ashford School’s W.I.N.G.S program. At W.I.N.G.S. students must face a series of challenges with group members where there is no such thing as failure. W.I.N.G.S. shows participants that the result of effort is succeeding and that as long as you put effort into your goal, you have truly accomplished the challenge.

Seventh and eighth graders of Ashford school get to go to The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp to participate in W.I.N.G.S. every fall. This program was created by Mrs. Martha Hardisty, who was a P.E. and health teacher at Ashford School until her retirement in 2014. Some part of W.I.N.G.S. spans almost every grade at Ashford School and ends with the seventh and eighth graders taking a trip to The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford. W.I.N.G.S. stands for Winning Innovations for Nurturing Growth in Students, and is a significant part of our character education work at Ashford School. Younger students participate in SOAR, a character education program embedded into health classes, and most grades also enjoy a day of group work and problem solving as well. Because Ashford School is a pre-k through eighth grade building, we have the opportunity to interact with other grades. For example, the first and second grades’ S.W.I.N.G.S. (Small W.I.N.G.S.) is run by eighth graders. High School students return to Ashford School to facilitate W.I.N.G.S. for students in grades three through five! Sixth graders travel to the June Norcross Scout Camp for W.I.N.G.S, Jr. Seventh graders spend one day at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, and eighth graders go for two days and one night! W.I.N.G.S. is a huge part of who we are at Ashford School.

What The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp does is incredible. Founded in 1988, it was created by Paul Newman, an actor, race car driver, activist, and philanthropist, and offers year-round programming onsite and across the Northeast. The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp was named that because of one of the movies Paul Newman acted in, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. This movie inspired the look of the camp and also was an inspiration for the name of the camp. The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp looks like an old western town, and the cabins look like log cabins. The camp is for children with serious illnesses, and it has the services that these children need onsite. The camp has staff that stays overnight with the campers, and additional living quarters for children that need things overnight or every few hours. Paul Newman’s vision was to open this camp for children so every child could have the experience of being at summer camp.

At camp, there are more than 25 amazing buildings that each have a rich history. Some of these buildings include the cabins, the theater, the dining hall, the tree house, the gym, the infirmary and the arts & craft building. The cabins, which are designed to look old and rustic, were actually very modern, and were built in 1987 and 1988. Each cabin is in one of five different color units: yellow, green, blue, red and purple. When we stayed there at night, we noticed that the cabins are heated and air conditioned. There were also hot showers available to use after a long day of running around. Eighth grade boys went into a set of yellow cabins and the girls went into a set of green cabins. When you walk into the cabins, you come across a small, but comforting, living room with a yellow or green couch on the right and a table in the center. Polished wooden walls surrounded the living room and there were wooden doors planted in the wall. We all put our backpacks and lunchboxes on top of the table. Then we all rushed into our bedrooms. Four bunks were placed on each corner of the room. A couch sat right across from the huge wooden door and there were two single beds in between the bunks. As our excitement grew even more, we walked into the bathrooms where we could see another door straight ahead and four sinks to the right. In between the sinks and the door was another room for the showers. We opened the door and found the toilet squeezed into a tiny room. Our chaperones had another room to the left of the living room which had two bunks and another bathroom. After we examined the cabins and found them to be very comforting, we could

not wait to continue our day and come back at night to sleepover. Time in the cabins allowed for some of the groups to talk about what they accomplished in that day. In the green cabins, girls had fun spilling secrets and sharing giggles. In one of the green cabins, a game of Truth or Dare took place, which involved teachers and lots of dares! In the yellow cabins, boys dropped their stuff and ran outside to play a game of soccer. Boys also told jokes and scared each other during the middle of the night despite chaperones’ efforts to keep them quiet. Everyone ended up staying awake past 11, including the chaperones! Overall, all boys and girls of Ashford School enjoyed their stay in The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp’s cabins.

Another amazing building is the theater! It is not a huge building, but it is comfortable. In the morning of the first day, we gathered here to watch the welcome video, and at night we watched a performance by Looking-In Theater. Inside, it is designed to look like an old-west theater.

Other buildings include the dining hall, the tree-house, the gym, and the arts & crafts building. The dining hall is where kids meet to talk and obviously you eat there too. When we were there we had lunch, dinner, and breakfast in this cool silo-shaped building. Volunteers from our families prepared our food and also cleaned up after us. We



Ashford School eighth graders participate in the W.I.N.G.S. program. Cont. photo.

really appreciate everyone who created nutritious meals of tacos, pancakes, soup & sandwiches. We felt well-fed and ready to take on the challenges of W.I.N.G.S. The tree-house was built in 2003. It is a decent-sized tree house with a couple of ramps leading up to the house. This allows for children in wheelchairs to experience what it’s like to be in the treetops! As you are going up the ramp, there are little drums you can drum on. The gym is one of the most fun buildings at the camp and a great place to go to after a long day. There is an arcade upstairs and on the same level as the gym there are more arcade games like skee ball, ice ball, and Pacman. There are also couches and pool tables. The couches are great for relaxing with friends. (Music was playing, and it really made it better!) Several of us played basketball on the full sized court, and we got to play a game of teachers versus students. It was really fun to play with a group of people on a nice court. The gym was a nice place to unwind after a long day of work and fun. We understand that Paul Newman himself frequented this building! The arts and crafts building is not just an arts and crafts building! There is also a cooking area and a woodshop. Some of us enjoyed the arts & craft building during our free time. The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp is a very special place and it is a privilege that is in our town. It is also special that we are the only school that goes there.

So, what do we do at W.I.N.G.S? At W.I.N.G.S. the students do mind-challenging, trust-building, and teamwork-building exercises. Each exercise requires teamwork, and most exercises are different than one another. During the second day, when there are only eighth graders at the camp, each group does a Trust Fall with the group members who feel comfortable doing so. The Trust Fall is what

most students remember from their trip to the camp.

During W.I.N.G.S., the eighth graders did ten team building activities including Stepping Stones, The Journey, Ring Race Planning, Ring Race, Knights Around the Table, Trust Fall, Toxic Transfer, Spider Web, A-Frame, and Slack Line. Stepping Stones required us to use small felt squares to try and get across a path. This seems easy, but we couldn’t lose human contact with the squares, and we didn’t have enough of them for everyone in the group to have one, which made it challenging. The Journey had several tight ropes tied around trees with various ropes around them. Our whole group could only be on two sections at a time. This required us to squeeze together! Ring race planning required us to pick who would do what activities in the Ring Race, but we were not told what the activities were! We only knew the title of the activity and if it would be a physical activity or a mental activity! Knights Around the Table Required us to try and get our group completely around a sturdy table without touching the ground. This was a super hard activity. The A-Frame was a frame made out of wood. It was about twelve feet tall, and ropes attached to the top. The group had to figure out a way to walk the A from point A to point B, with someone standing in the middle of the A. The person in the middle had to

have complete faith in the group and trust that they wouldn’t let you fall! Slack Line was a loose rope that reached from one tree to another; it was tied to one tree but not to the other. We had to get our whole group from tree to tree. Toxic Transfer was a small block with hooks on it; several small ropes were attached to the block. We had to pick up a bucket full of sand and water using the contraption, and get it from point A to point B. We could only hold the very end on the strings and every group member had to hold a string. It required us to move through obstacles. Spider Web was a large web made of rope, tied between two trees. Using only one section of the spider web per person, we had to get our whole group from one side to the other.

Out of all the activities at WINGS, the Trust Fall was one of the most memorable activities for everyone. It taught us to trust our peers and everyone who did the Trust Fall walked off with a smile. The big fall encouraged kids to get out of their comfort zone and trust more people. The activity begins with students, under adult supervision, climbing 3 steps on a ladder. The group, along with the adults, go behind the student and put their arms out with shoulders back and knees bent. A teacher or activity leader stays with the student and counts off when the student should fall. After the count off, the student falls into the group’s arms and lays flat until they are ready to stand up. Students were not required to participate in the Trust Fall and some students choose not to for their own reasons. Others tried it just for fun or to see what it felt like.

The next level to the Trust Fall is the fourth step, which is more challenging than the last one. Once you’re on the fourth rung you have the choice to do the “runaway fall,” one second of free falling or both falls. In the runaway fall your group runs away from the ladder and hides from your sight, and then they rush back to catch you when the leader commands the group to return. The total time for the fall is 20 seconds (10 to run away and 10 to rush back.). Most people agree that the fourth step was “really fun and challenging.” (The whole 8th grade participated this year, which hasn’t happened in several years.)

Something that helps us prepare for W.I.N.G.S. is Flight School, which we have every week during our last period block. Our W.I.N.G.S group was made up of the students in our Flight Group. Flight school prepares us for the real world because in FLIGHT, we learn to communicate with others and problem solve together. We work with people that we generally don’t work with because our Flight group is designed that way! You might assume that most people won’t get along, however as people work together, they become better at collaboration. A single Flight class is loaded with fun, challenging activities; we work together as group to finish the challenges.

At W.I.N.G.S., the eighth graders were hesitant to work with each other at first. As we went through W.I.N.G.S., we grew closer as a school community. At the beginning we struggled to be kind with one another, but at the end of it all we all came together. We compromised and started working together as a problem solving team.

When we come into Flight class we have time to chat with friends. After we settle into our circle group, we like to start off with highs and lows of the day or how you are feeling from 1-5. We know that we are in a safe, enclosed space and everything can be shared without it getting out. We listen to each other respectfully, and also agree and disagree with each other. After we talk about



# The Times They Are A-Changing-Again and Again; Are Our Moral Compasses Up To The Challenge? (Part 1)

By Len Krimerman

## Classical or Modern; Traditional or Avant-Garde?

Decades ago when I was an undergraduate, I spent a good bit of time in our student union’s “music room”. This was a small humble space with a turntable and a large cabinet full of LP vinyls. It also had a daily sign-in sheet on which you could choose what album you wanted to hear as you pretended to “study” for exams and such. At that time in my life, I cherished the Baroque composers – Bach, Vivaldi, Mozart, Handel, etc., as did many of my fellow music room companions. And for about two semesters, our musical compass held sway: at almost any point in the day or evening, the music room would be playing one or the other Baroque or 19th century composition.

Slowly, and then swiftly, however, the list began to change, and other “modernist” composers such as Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, Phillip Glass, John Cage, George Gershwin, and Duke Ellington began to replace the classical ones. Annoyed by this, I boycotted our music room for a while, but eventually returned — there was no other way to listen to music together with other music lovers, while attempting to fulfill reading or writing course assignments.

My experience, of course, is not singular. Much the same rejection and reinvention of tradition can be found in literature (try reading James Joyce’s Ulysses), in the visual arts (compare Rembrandt with Picasso), in science (Einstein’s space-time goes well beyond Newton’s laws of motion), and in technology (artificial Intelligence is now set to displace most human labor and traditional “work”). Wikipedia puts the point in this way:

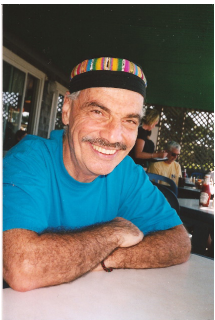
*Modernism, in general, includes the activities and creations of those who felt the traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, philosophy, social organization, activities of daily life, and even the sciences, were becoming ill-fitted to their tasks and outdated in the new economic, social, and political environment of an emerging fully industrialized world. The poet Ezra Pound’s 1934 injunction to “Make it new!” was the touchstone of the movement’s approach towards what it saw as the now obsolete culture of the past.*

This clash between “modernist” and “traditional” perspectives, of what’s new and what’s old, is often confusing and unsettling. Can we honor or combine both? Will tomorrow only displace what’s new today? Tough questions, but even these do not go far enough; they overlook a

our day, we get the information about the activity that we would be doing on that day. After we know what we are going to be doing, we brainstorm solutions to put to action. We try out the ideas that we came up with and solve the problem at hand. It may take awhile to successfully complete the activity, but we always end up getting it done. If we finished early we are allowed to do the task again to see if we complete it in a shorter time. Or the Flight School leader gives us another challenge to add to the activity. This is exactly how the activities are run at W.I.N.G.S. We follow a problem-solving plan similar to the Engineering Design Process, which focuses on making mistakes and learning from them. Our activity leaders review the steps to problem solving with us: Identify the problem, Brainstorm possible solutions, evaluate them, pick one, try it out, re-evaluate. W.I.N.G.S. isn’t about finishing every activity successfully; sometimes success means we did our best and grew as a group.

One of the things that we students loved at W.I.N.G.S. was “Looking in the Theater,” our evening program. “Looking in Theater” demonstrates real life experiences in play form to show what goes on in many middle schools and high schools. Some of the plays involved topics like alcohol abuse, rape, bullying, suicide and eating disorders. The reason these plays were reenacted was for middle schoolers to explore their own opinions about these difficult topics. It also helps parents/guardians to be aware of what some middle schoolers experience in school and in their social lives. After the actors performed a few skits, they sat on the edge of the stage and took questions from the audience. The actors stayed in character and fielded questions about the decisions they had made in the skits. Ashford students were intrigued by this amazing, impactful presentation.

W.I.N.G.S. is an amazing activity that the students



further and crucial complexity. Eurocentric or Whole Earth?

The problem is that all of the shifts and transitions just identified are “Eurocentric”, and fail to recognize most of the Earth’s populations and cultures, whether traditional or contemporary. Thus, in addition to “classical” vs. “leading edge” within our own culture, we have more and more begun to hear of conflicts between “Western” and “non-Western” cultures, as well as the need to respect Asian, African, indigenous, and trans-cultural identities.

In their remarkable book, *Toward Psychologies of Liberation*, Mary Watkins and Helene Shulman introduce the provocative notions of “nomadic consciousness” and “nomadic identities”, notions that are largely absent from Western psychologies, but common in the cultures most beset by Western colonization. These authors contend that fixed and singular identities such as *American* or *farmer* or *professor* or *white woman* “breed polarized perceptions of self and others”, whereas a complex, self-critical, and nomadic identity helps generate “distance from all cultural identities, a restless opposition to all orthodoxies – both those of the colonizer and those of the colonized”.

They provide a story to support their non-Eurocentric perspective:

*Moslem and Jewish parents of Palestinian and Israeli children killed in conflicts have created the Parents Forum. Rather than split across religious, national, or ethnic identifications, these parents have reached out to each other based on their experiences of loss. From this common experience and their differences they are able to host together successful community forums aimed at peace building. The implication of their alliance for others caught in the conflict is that if those who paid the ultimate price of losing a child at the hands of the “enemy” can talk with each other, so can the rest.*

## Rethinking Our Moral Compass (leading us to PART 2)

How, though, do we apply any of this to ourselves, and in particular to how we distinguish right from wrong, how we treat – and judge – others and our own self? Does our current moral compass, in light of the myriad of changes around us, need to be rethought, renewed, redirected? Might it be leading us to fallible decisions and judgments?

These difficult questions, I think, are worth considering, even if we don’t reach decisive or final answers to them. They, and the (moral) maxim below, will be the focus of Part 2, to appear in next month’s article.

“Traveler, there is no path; we make the path with our footprints.” (A. Machado)

of Ashford School are lucky to be a part of. For over twenty five years, Ashford School students have participated in W.I.N.G.S., and many remember it as the best thing they ever did at Ashford. Thank you to everyone who makes it possible!

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## The Neighbors Paper Black and White And Read All Over!!!



By EC-CHAP

Welcome to 2018!

The start of another year symbolically represents a time for new beginnings. It's a line we cross every 365 days when we reset the clock – perhaps reflect on the previous year, think a little differently, wish to strengthen relationships, and maybe try to improve upon the past... Regardless of tax or fiscal year designations, the beginning of the calendar as we know it seems to trump how we *feel* about what we do – and drives an internal assessment of our accomplishments.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, it has officially been one year, three months, and eighteen days since the Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) was incorporated and received its 501.c.3 nonprofit status as an independent member-based all volunteer cultural organization. Over the last 475-days, EC-CHAP has evolved to provide oversight of the performing arts and film programming at The Packing House; management and direction of the Gardiner Hall Jr Historical Museum; coordination and execution of our quarterly “First Sunday at The Mill Works” community outreach efforts; and development of a unique “Artist In Residence” (AIR) program to support a visual arts initiative.

We are grateful to all those who have attended and supported our programs and performances. It is only through your ongoing support that we can continue to offer programming to our local and regional communities. Our long-term success is not without challenges. Securing new funding sources, expanding knowledge and expertise, growing membership, volunteer acquisition, and establishing unique partnerships represent continuous and ongoing efforts.

EC-CHAP represents *your* cultural organization serving Eastern Connecticut. To better serve *you*, we need *your feedback* – we need to understand what interests and expectations you are seeking from EC-CHAP. Over the next few months, we will focus on soliciting your input through various channels. First we suggest that you join our mailing list so we may keep you informed of news and programming. You can subscribe by visiting The Packing House home page ([www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us)) or signing up at our events.

We encourage you to share your thoughts with us any way you feel comfortable. You can:

- 1) Contact us through our website at: [www.ec-chap.org](http://www.ec-chap.org);
- 2) Email us at: [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org);
- 3) Snail mail us at: EC-CHAP, 156 River Road, Suite 2106-A, Willington, CT 06279;
- 4) Phone us at: 518-791-9474;
- 5) Attend one of our monthly ‘Information Exchange Meetings’;
- 6) Visit us during museum hours on Tuesdays between 9:30-11:30am;
- 7) Call to schedule to visit at a time that is convenient for you.

Our schedule for January introduces two new programs to The Packing House: A monthly “Drum Circle” and a “Special Local Artist Performance Program”. EC-CHAP will be offering a monthly Drum Circle series led by master drummer Bob Bloom beginning **January 16<sup>th</sup>**. These circles will take place every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month through May from 7:30pm to 9:15pm.

On Friday, **January 26<sup>th</sup>**, EC-CHAP will be featuring our *Special Local Artist Performance Program* with a concert by Ed Smith & Friends. This inaugural performance is rescheduled from its original date last fall (September 8<sup>th</sup>).

This month, EC-CHAP will be holding our monthly “**Information Exchange Meeting**” on **Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm** in The Packing House. If you're interested in learning more about EC-CHAP and how you can become involved, please join us. This is a great opportunity for you to share your feedback and expectations for *your* cultural center. Refreshments provided.

Don't forget about our “**Talent Showcase**” on **Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>** and every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. 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). It's free and it's fun! We recommend calling 518-791-9474 in advance to get on the schedule, although you can sign up at the door if you wish (time permitting). If you're not performing, no problem – come and experience a variety of regional artists. Doors open at 6:30pm and performances begin at 7:00pm.

We encourage you to visit our website at [www.ec-chap.org](http://www.ec-chap.org) or [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us) for additional program details, ‘soundbites’, videos, and artist bios.

The members of the EC-CHAP Board wish you and yours a Happy and Healthy New Year!

### JANUARY PERFORMANCES AND FILM SHOWINGS

#### EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series:

**Seat Of Our Pants** (Folk/Bluegrass). Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm



This local quartet will have you dancing in the aisles! Their songs are both heartfelt and humorous; and their harmonies and unique array of instruments (fiddle, cajon, bass, and various other stringed instruments) will provide an acoustic experience for which you'll want a 2<sup>nd</sup> helping! Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$12.00 Advance (online) / \$15.00 Door.

**Lexi Weege & The Wondertwins** (Indie). Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm



Lexi Weege & The Wondertwins (Tom and AJ Del Negro) join forces to create a live jazz experience like no other. The three friends take inspiration from the music of the hot jazz age and craft beautiful three part harmonies to create a sound all their own. Having just released their debut album, “*Marigold*” this past summer, Weege & The Wondertwins have been taking New England by storm. Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$12.00 Advance (online) / \$15.00 Door.

#### EC-CHAP's Jazz Series:

**Claudia Schmidt with Miro Sprague** (Jazz). Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm

Join us for Claudia and Miro's debut appearance at The Packing House! Claudia Schmidt has been creating and performing music audiences all over the world for almost 45 years, delighting them with her craft as well as

her love of performing. Though she is known primarily for her presence in the folk world, she has been steadily raising her profile in the jazz realm as well, mostly in the Midwest, where she has been based for a few decades. Her multi-octave voice is a perfect instrument for jazz, be it ballad or be bop. Many original compositions join the standard jazz repertoire, with blues and spoken word woven into the mix as well.

Miro Sprague is a jazz pianist, composer, and bandleader known for his dynamic performance style and inspiring creativity. He leads his own trio and quintet and is a member of the cooperative septet “Holophonor.” Miro has toured the nationally and internationally and has performed with Wayne Shorter, Matt Wilson, Greg Osby, Jerry Bergonzi, Reggie Workman, Adam Cruz and Linda Oh, among others. He is also a skilled vocal accompanist and has been the pianist of choice for renowned vocalist Karrin Allyson since late 2015. Claudia and Miro will be celebrating the release of their CD, a winter themed collection called “*Hark the Dark*”. Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$15.00 Advance (online) / \$20.00 Door. Special student pricing \$10.00 at the door (with valid I.D).

#### EC-CHAP Friday Night Film Series:

“*Calle 54*” (PG). Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm

This documentary, released 2000 by Miramax Films and directed by Fernando Trueba, features a behind-the-scenes look into the music of many of the premier contemporary Latin musicians. Doors open at 7:00pm / Showing at 7:30pm. Suggested donation \$5.00.

“*Calle 54*” stands with the “*Buena Vista Social Club*” as a landmark musical tribute” - Rolling Stone

“A Magnificent Film! Dazzling performances! It will open you to a thrilling new world.” - The Wall Street Journal

#### EC-CHAP Special Local Artist Performance Program:

**Ed Smith & Friends** (Alternative). Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm

EC-CHAP is proud to provide opportunities for local artists to share their unique work and talent. Our winter season at The Packing House includes a new “Special Local Artist Performance Program”. Specific performances that comprise this program typically evolve from our Talent Showcase series (the 2nd Wednesday of the month) and quarterly “First Sundays”.

Join us for an interesting evening of original music and spoken word. Ed will be joined by his band Presuminati as well as two members of the Drone Orchestra. Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$8.00 Advance (online) / \$10.00 Door.

**EC-CHAP Drum Circle with Bob Bloom**. Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays)

Beginning January 16<sup>th</sup>, EC-CHAP will offer an interactive Drum Circle experience with master drummer Bob Bloom. Bob's percussion experience extends nearly two decades serving as a faculty assistant to Dr. Babatunde Olatunji for his “Language of the Drums” courses at The Omega Institute, Rowe Conference Center, and Kripalu Institute for Yoga and Health. Bob has drummed and sang as a performance member of Olatunji's internationally renowned African music and dance company, “Drums of Passion” in concerts at venues including Lincoln Center, The Washington Monument, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Jorgenson Hall.

Drum circles will be offered every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Bring your favorite hand drums. No drums? No problem! Your heart and hands can enjoy the djembes, doumbeks, tubanos, and bongos from the colorful cargo that Bob is trucking to the circles. Doors 7:00pm / Drumming begins at 7:30pm. \$10.00 at the door (drum at four circles and the fifth is free). *continued on next page*





# Prewitt Project Findings #1

By PK Willey

Dr. Charles Prewitt, Mansfield resident, former atom bomb chemist, later peace activist, ECSU Science Professor, cherished by many of us, is entering his 100<sup>th</sup> year. A project on his life, begun decades ago, has been resumed, its scope widened to include his extended family, to examine and demonstrate a new framework for qualitative research using Earth Ethics with a Gandhian ‘compass’.

Context is everything. The findings have thus far made it surprisingly clear that in 100 years, we have had no time for the popular misconception of a human *evolution*. Biologically, there has been no time to evolve, to adapt. Socially, we are barely coping with the inundating flood. What we have is a *civilizational upheaval*, brought about by stark greed and even evil intentions behind much, not all, of industrialization and its effect on the ‘human material’. And we are not alone, the process of churning the planet into profits, down to our very organs, is global.

To gain our bearings, to proceed as wisely as possible, is the task of the hour. This takes pausing,



Virginia A. Stewart Prewitt (1916-2007). History proves it really does take a village to raise a child. Cont. photo.

thinking, reflecting, comparing, and rubbing with conscience. In this effort, views and perspectives of people along the way may shed some light.

Here is a snippet, found on a yellowed, frayed, clipping, without date or newspaper name. Given the context, it concerns Charlie’s beloved late wife, Virginia A. Stewart Prewitt (1916-2007), during her high-school years, which would place it in the early 1930’s. She grew up in Stanton, Powell County, KY, and was the first

person in the county, and a young lady at that, to ever attend college.

“*Powell County Debate Team Wins from Henry Clay*”  
“The Powell county High School affirmative debating team met the negative team of Henry Clay High School at Lexington on Monday afternoon of this week and defeated them.

“The question was, ‘Resolved, that at least one half of all state and local revenues should be derived from sources other than tangible property.’

“The pupils who represented Powell county in this debate were Virginia Stewart, Paul Gordon and Shelton Ware. This is the third successive win for the affirmative team. On Thursday night of this week they will meet Berea Academy in the auditorium of the high school at Stanton. Berea Adademy usually has a good debating team and we are expecting a hard fight for the home team.”

Heres the rub – with all our ‘progress’ could our high-schoolers debate this now? Would an eager *local* community fill an auditorium to hear their words?

## TICKETS, RESERVATIONS, CANCELLATIONS, AND CONTACT

Tickets for all shows and program registrations can be purchased online at [www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming](http://www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming) or at the door. Check our website frequently for new additions. Unless otherwise specified, doors open 30-minutes prior to show time.

Table reservations and cabaret seating available. Unless specified otherwise, all performances will feature **Bring Your Own Beverage & Food “BYOB&F”**™ - wine & beer ONLY (I.D.s Required). Snacks and soft drinks will also be available. 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. If you’re feeling sassy, SPECIFICALLY ask for

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Program cancellations will be listed on The Packing House website ([www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming](http://www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming)). Cancellations will also be listed on the **News 3** website ([www.wfsb.com](http://www.wfsb.com)) and **News 8** website ([www.wtnh.com](http://www.wtnh.com)).

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](mailto:info@thepackinghouse.us)) or EC-CHAP ([info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org)).

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# Let It All Go

By Grace Preli



Stepping into the New Year is as much about taking on new and exciting endeavors, as it is about letting go of those things in our lives that no longer serve us. The new seed can’t be sowed if the old plant is still rotting in it’s place. A new tree can’t bud out if the leaves don’t first turn color and fall. We can’t properly move forward if we’re still clutching the past. There are so many ‘things’ that we, collectively and individually are still carting around and hanging onto.

My new year starts with the Winter Solstice. Tuning in to the cycles of the earth and the rhythms of nature have long felt more nurturing and supportive than following along with the calendar year. It just feels so good to me. The metaphor of nature, of a growing plant or the life cycle of a tree supports me, encourages me, and validates my own individual, human experience. I’m buoyed by the knowledge that all is cyclical. When I can easily observe this in nature, I feel peace and security in my own cycles.

What can we let go of in preparation for our new cycle of growth? What can die, be composted or be turned into fuel for our future endeavors? How many things are you and I and we as a collective dragging around? How much dead weight are we carrying? This weight, these things, can be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. They can be big or small, they can be things we’ve held on to for lifetimes or for only one season. What sort of experiences, relationships, paradigms, ways of being and operating, thought patterns, processes, people, things, traumas, worries, goals, dreams, illusions, ideas and chatter needs to go? The answer: anything that no longer serves and everything that is no longer beneficial or no longer benevolent.

Maybe this looks like a specific person, or maybe it looks like the way in which you interact with a specific person. Maybe the person needs to go entirely and the cords need to be cut, or maybe the relationship needs to be tweaked and changed to suit the new now. It could be a negative thought pattern, or a harmful process. It could be an old pair of shoes, or an idea that’s fizzled and burned out or a trauma that’s been held on to for far too long. Whatever it may be, the process of letting go, of stepping away requires attention and honor. It needs to be done away with in a way that honors you and ‘it’ (whatever ‘it’ is). Let it all go, let it all die.

Now I’m not saying that this is easy (but I’m not saying that it’s hard either), I just feel that this takes a bit of effort and it takes presence and honesty and it takes looking at the things that you or I (or we as a collective) don’t want to look at sometimes. But if we really want to move on from things, and if we really want to turn all of these decaying patterns and experiences and people and thoughts into fodder for our new growth and creations, then we must truly and finally let these things die. We have to let it all go, actually go, not kind-of go, or half-assed go, but thanks-(object/person/way of being/thought pattern)-I-love-you-but-you-no-longer-serve-me go.

I know that we all collectively could do with some digging deep, some introspection. We all know deep down what we’ve got to do and what we have to let go of, it’s just a matter of doing it. If I can see all the ways I and others perpetuate and give life to the things that no longer serve, then I know other people can sense these things within themselves and others too. I could tell you what you’ve got to let go of, but I think you already know. Actually I KNOW you already know. We ALL know. We all have a sense of what no longer serves us. We all sense it, and yet we still perpetuate this cycle of powerlessness and year after year we drag the same things around.

So! How do you let something go? How do you let what needs to die, die? Often times the body is really good at telling you what it needs. Usually, if you listen closely and tune-in to yourself and your situation, you can be guided to what you need to do to let something go. Maybe this looks like working with a professional, or maybe it looks like writing, speaking, singing, playing or dancing it all out. Maybe it looks like donating things or burning things or giving things away. It could take the shape of a phone call or a letter or it might look like crying or laughing or some nice ice cream or some childhood photographs. Whatever YOU need to do to let go of what YOU need to let go of, do it. It’s going to look differently for everybody.

I can’t remember when, but I can remember the feeling of a commitment I made to myself a long time ago. I remember journaling something out and saying to myself “enough is enough” and I gave myself permission to only do something for as long as it served me, for as long as it

was benevolent and beneficial and kind. In that moment I committed to live this way, to constantly re-evaluate what my life looks like and feels like so that I can best serve my life and my life can best serve me. Am I unkind to myself sometimes? Heck yes! Do I hang onto a way of being for a little bit longer than necessary sometimes? Of course! But every single time, in every single moment of the day I feel the echo of my commitment to myself... is this serving me? Is this kind? Is this benevolent to all?

Long ago, a few beautiful and choice words came to me in a moment of profound release and healing and afterward I began using them all the time. They are “Thank you. I love you. I forgive you. Please forgive me. We are one.” These words don’t always come in this order. Sometimes it’s only a “thank you” and an “I love you.” Sometimes I throw in a “Thank you for your service”, or a “Thank you for serving me”, whatever feels right and feels needed in the moment. These phrases are potent in any combination and help me to consistently and constantly ground myself. These words help me give thanks for everything and anything in my life and they help me move through my day with kindness for myself and others. They echo inside me when I need patience, or when I am sad and saying goodbye to someone I love. They come out, loud and clear when I lay to rest some way of being that no longer fits me. They have been spoken out loud to many, and uttered internally to most. They help me to let go of things with finality and with love, they help me to heal and grow and change.

I learned much later when I shared these words with a friend that they are also, coincidentally, a distillation of a Hawaiian practice of reconciliation and forgiveness called Ho’oponopono, exactly the process I had been using them for, for all these years! The full process can be distilled to the repetition of the phrases “I love you, I forgive you, please forgive me, thank you” as a sort of mantra in order to seek forgiveness, cut cords and facilitate a release. I would encourage anyone to read further about the process of Ho’oponopono and the man behind it’s popularity, Dr. Ihaleakala Hew Len.

The opportunity for change is endless, our chances to grow or release or heal or move forward are infinite. We can process daily that which no longer serves us. This time of year helps us in our process by helping us find alignment between ourselves and our experience and the natural rhythms of nature. This is a potent time for releasing anything that no longer serves. It’s my faith that when we as individuals work with ourselves and our ‘dead weight’ we begin to shape and shift the collective. We can’t ask anyone, society as a whole, or a specific other individual to do what WE are unwilling to do ourselves. If we put love into our journeys and our lives, we can’t help but to facilitate the same in our communities. Here’s to me and my process, here’s to you and your process and here’s to our collective process! Here’s to many releases and many new beginnings, happy Solstice and happy New Year to all!!

*Ed. note: Writer mini ‘Autobio.’: Grace Preli is a creative and spunky 22 year old. She is, among other things, a painter, a writer, a creator and a healer. She is inspired daily by people and their individual and collective journeys. For her, each day is a chance to grow, change, love, respect and create with herself and our world, a beautiful, kind and gentle place.*

# It’s Only Squirrels

By Angela Hawkins Fichter

Years ago when my husband and I lived in Burlington, CT a friend of ours complained bitterly to us what a nuisance squirrels were around his home. He was flooded with them, he said. He went so far as to buy a Have-a-Heart trap and catch dozens of them. He then drove to Canton, which abuts Burlington, and let them go. To his astonishment he would soon be inundated with them again. He could not understand how they reappeared so quickly, nor could he figure out why there more of them than before. It got worse and worse. This was back in the 1970’s when people didn’t have personal computers with email, Facebook or Google, nor did they have surveillance cameras around their home. He bought another Have-a-Heart trap and captured each succeeding invasion of squirrels and drove them to Canton for release.

One day he was looking out of his front window and saw a man parked in front of his house who was taking a large Have-a-Heart trap out of his minivan. The stranger set it at the curb and opened the door. Lots of squirrels ran out. Our friend tore out of his house and asked Mr. Stranger what he thought he was doing. Mr. Stranger looked sheepishly at our friend and said he was trying to get rid of the enormous number of squirrels that were overtaking his yard and neighborhood. Our friend asked where he lived. Canton was the answer. Our friend then asked for his address, and when told he burst into laughter and confessed to Stranger that he was bringing squirrels to Canton to exactly that place to evict them from his Burlington yard. The men swapped names and phone numbers. They became friends and made a promise to never evacuate squirrels to each other’s addresses again.

That’s as much as our friend told us at first. I did see him still use the Have-a-Heart trap for squirrels. So I wondered about it, but didn’t dare ask. He had told us that his new friend and he like to go in the wild now and again. I thought, what if they really were in a new business where they caught squirrels and met with each other to release them at the homes of people who had insulted or annoyed them, i.e. enemies? One day with a joking sort of voice I suggested to him that he might be in a business like that. He smiled back at me and asked if I could keep a secret. Of course, I said (figuring I only had to not give out his name or address). His descriptive admission of sin wowed me. He and his new friend indeed did have a partnership where they caught squirrels and released them at the homes of the enemies of those who bought their services. Doesn’t sound so awful, does it? How about if 100 squirrels were released into your garden, by the birdfeeder, and beneath your eaves? I asked him if they were ever caught. He whispered, yes, but only once, and it was by the police. Didn’t you get arrested I asked? Well, he said, the cop started to arrest us for breach of peace, but then stopped and made us an offer. He said he could give us merely a warning if we would agree to give him one year of free, secret, monthly squirrel deliveries to his enemies. Naturally we said yes. After all, it’s only squirrels.

Recently one of my appliances broke. When the appliance repairer came to my home for the repair, he complained about the number of squirrels around his house. Where do you live, I asked. Danielson, he said. So I told him the story of the Burlington/Canton squirrels. He got a very serious look and said he was now going to install his wildlife trail cameras around his house with a couple pointed to the street. He was beaming with joy. What makes you so happy, I asked? I’ve used a Have-a-Heart trap to catch skunks and then released them, he grinned. No one better release squirrels on me. He will be sorry.

Should I warn that Burlington friend?

## Our Community Calendar

**Compiled By Dagmar Noll**

*Ed. note: Calendar begins here and continues through the issue.*

**January 1, Monday**

**Hiking:** First Day Hike, 12:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. Launch your outdoor exercise program with this guided hike. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov

**New Year’s:** First Night Bonfire, 6:00p.m. - 8:00p.m. Jillson Square, Willimantic. BYO hot cocoa and marshmallows.

**January 2, Tuesday**

**Hiking:** Wolf Moon Night Hike,

7:30p.m. - 8:30p.m. Guided moonlit hike at Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 jasper.sha@ct.gov

**January 3, Wednesday**

**Skill Share:** Djembe Drumming Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. Authentic West African Rhythms, all ages, all levels. Drum provided if needed. BENCH SHOP, 786 Main St, Willimantic. Info: 860-423-8331

**January 6, Saturday**

**Skill Share:** Distaff Day, 10:00a.m. - 2:00p.m. Bring your spinning wheel or other fiber project and a lunch, and spin with friends. Windham Textile

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

**Celebration:** Three King’s Day, 11:00a.m. - 2:00p.m. Music and food at Windham High School, 355 High Street, Willimantic.

**Live Music:** Seat of Our Pants (Folk/Blues), 7:00p.m. Tickets \$12.00 online / \$15.00 door. Part of the EC-CHAP Acoustic Artist Series. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Snacks and soft drinks available.

“BYOB&F”™ (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us

**Dancing:** Quiet Corner Contra Dance,



# LGBTQ+ Medicine: Why It Matters

By Dr. AJ Eckert, DO

Queer. Trans. Gay. Bisexual. Gender Non-conforming. Fluid.

Seems like new terms for sexual identity and gender orientation are cropping up every day. LGBTQ+ people have a higher profile in public discourse across a wider range of issues than ever before. We live in an exciting time, when people are freer than-possibly- ever to express themselves as who they are.

So-why does it matter? What is this alphabet soup of LGBTQAI-add-whatever-else-fits all about?

LGBTQ+ is an umbrella term used to describe all sexual and gender minorities. LGBTQ+ people come from different races, ethnicities, ages, social classes, and places. Some people are out; others are not. You cannot tell if someone is LGBTQ+ just by looking at them. They are part of every community and live throughout the United States, in all states and counties, as shown by the latest U.S. Census.

Everyone wants to feel accepted and included. And, as a doctor, it is my duty to provide equitable care to everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, orientation, religion and politics. A primary care provider-your PCP-is there to support you as you navigate life. Beliefs around gender can and often do touch upon many aspects of life. These beliefs can manifest many areas, ranging from reactions toward the clothing individuals wear, to the pronouns used during clinical assessments.

It is important for providers to demonstrate sensitivity to all clients, regardless of perceived gender. LGBTQ+ individuals face the same health risks as larger society, and have additional health disparities that need to be urgently addressed. These disparities are the effect of factors such as history, stigma, laws and policies, demographic factors, and barriers to patient-centered care.

Learning the terminology that defines sexual and gender minorities is a step in ending LGBTQ+ invisibility, so-let’s review some basic terms.

Gender is different from sex. Sex is determined by chromosomes and anatomy. Gender is determined by a person’s sense, belief, and ultimate expression of self. Sexual Orientation, or Attraction, is a person’s emotional, sexual, and/or relational attraction to others. This is usually classified as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. It is an internal identity-only you know your own for sure. This may be different from

Sexual Behavior, or who you choose to have sex with.

Identity develops as a result of complex interactions between an individual and their environment.

Sexual Identity is the label you choose to call yourself in order to tell others what you want them to understand about your sexual orientation (i.e., straight, gay, bi, lesbian, etc.). It can be reflective of your sexual attraction and sexual behavior, or not.

Thus, questions such as, “are you gay or straight?” are not that simple! Behavior does not equal identity, does not equal orientation.

Gender Identity is a person’s internal sense or awareness of being male, female, or something else. Gender identity is internal, and not necessarily visible to others.

Gender Expression is how a person represents or expresses their gender identity to others, through appearance and behavior.

Gender Role is that part of behavior that is influenced by society’s expectation of what is gender-appropriate.

Gender Non-Conforming is a term for a person whose gender expression is different from what society expects related to that person’s perceived gender. Gender Non-Cornforming may apply to any person not following traditional gender roles.

Genderqueer is a person who may not entirely identify as either male or female. Their gender identity does not fit neatly into either male or female categories.

Transgender, or trans\* is a term for a person whose gender identity most closely matches the other gender.

Trans-woman refers to a person who was assigned male at birth and lives and/or identifies as a woman.

Trans-man refers to a person who was assigned female at birth and lives and/or identifies as a man.

Transition is a term used to describe the period during which a transgender person begins to express their gender identity. This can involve changing one’s name and/or gender designation on legal documents and/or medical intervention, etc.

Coming Out is the process through which a person identifies, acknowledges, and decides to share info about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity with others.

A significant population of patients in the United

States identifies as LGBTQ+. It is tough to communicate the experience of growing up in heteronormative society. We live in a culture where male/female partnerships are the norm; a world in which blockbuster romantic comedies are always between members of the opposite sex. The world can seem aggressively straight to those who are...not. This leads to the development of comorbidities in LGBTQ+ people, such as depression, anxiety, trauma, abuse, eating disorders, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicidality.

Many LGBTQ+ adults live in poverty, and many homeless youths are LGBTQ+-identified. LGBTQ+ persons may be more hesitant to participate in rituals that are normal to the rest, such as going to the doctor, for fear of “outing” themselves and/or being ridiculed, and/or getting a negative response.

And there is still plenty to fear. Indiana SB 101, a bill passed in 2015 by Mike Pence, allows discrimination against LGBTQ+ people if their identity is against the providers’ religious beliefs. Mississippi HB 1523 allows a provider to refuse to serve LGBTQ+ people. Over 175 anti-LGBTQ+ laws, including 44 anti-trans\* laws, were passed in February 2016 alone. Ted Cruz has stated that gay marriage is the greatest threat to religious freedom in American history.

Mainstream health institutions are still mostly not safe spaces for trans\* people. Electronic Medical Records are constructed around a gender binary, not allowing for those who do not identify and were not born as male or female. Doctors have refused to treat LGBTQ+ patients; hospitals have refused rights to same-sex partners. Being transgender is still considered a psychiatric illness-classified as Gender Identity Disorder-in the DSM.

In 2009, Lambda Legal surveyed 4,916 LGBTQ+ people across the United States. Over 50% of LGBTQ+ people and 70% of trans\* and gender nonconforming patients reported discrimination in healthcare, being refused healthcare, medical providers refusing to touch them, healthcare professionals using harsh or abusive language, providers blaming patients for their health status, or healthcare professionals being rough or abusive.

Here’s the good: 70% of Americans support LGBT nondiscrimination legislation. We have the support of corporate America, as evidence by the HRC (Human Rights Campaign) Index, Out and Equal in the Workplace. LGBTQ+ issues were not even a salient issue in the 2016 Republican primary, as opposed to in 2004 and 2006, when conservatives ran on platforms opposing same-sex marriage. In 2014, Medicare/Medicaid started to cover trans\* care.


There is still a dearth of health information for and about queer populations. As recently as 2009, only 0.21% of publications related to human health included an LGBTQ+-related keyword, as indexed in PubMed. For the most part, the LGBTQ+ community is invisible in the scope of medicine and social welfare. Health care access, especially in rural areas, is notoriously poor for LGBTQ+-identified individuals. LGBTQ+ persons are less likely to be insured than others of similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Many insurance plans specifically exclude trans\* care from coverage.

So, let’s change that. LGBTQ+ health care needs are not a “fringe” interest. The latest estimate is that 1.4 million adults in the United States identify as trans\*. Children as young as 2 years old may experience gender dysphoria, or an incongruence between their assigned gender and their experienced and expressed gender. My vision for the near future is that every doctor will be fluent in LGBTQ+ care and needs of the community. Now, more than ever, it is important for us to cultivate love and understanding.


At Collaborative Natural Health Partners, we offer integrative LGBTQ+ care. Healthcare is about the whole person. You have the right to be heard and understood by your provider; to be fairly evaluated for treatment and referrals; to access an equal standard of care as any other patient; to, if appropriate, be given access to gender-affirming hormone therapy. We respect your sense of self and agency, and take the time to ensure that we are providing the most comprehensive and holistic care possible.

So-do ask, and do tell. Talk to your healthcare providers about being LGBTQ+. Your conversation with your doctor is private and protected by HIPAA. Finding a provider that you are comfortable with is essential to your all-around health and wellness.


*Dr. AJ Eckert, DO is an osteopathic doctor at Collaborative Natural Health Partners, LLC, specializing in LGBTQ health and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine. She is accepting new patients and is an in-network provider for most major health insurance companies. Please visit [ctnaturalhealth.com](http://ctnaturalhealth.com) or call 860-533-0179 for more information.*



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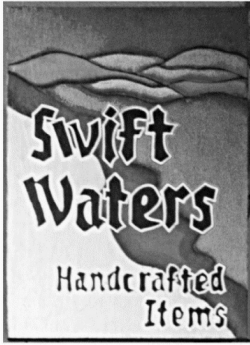
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Without your submissions of writing, poetry, artwork and photographs, this paper would not exist. T. King, Publisher

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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](mailto:mediamonds2006@gmail.com)/860-895-7413



# Mental Health Therapy within the Geography of the Health Care Industry, Part 2

By Edmund J. Smith

‘It’s not our diseases that will kill us, it’s our beliefs’  
-Rachel Naomi Remen

‘Life is movement’  
- Aristotle



The mind-body problem, as it applies to health, has been one that has continued to haunt modern medicine, precisely because its focus, its relentless advances in disclosing the minutiae of our bodies, has found itself further removed from preventive and holistic measures with each new pharmaceutical patent. This position, upheld so staunchly by a medical industry whose approach to healing is mediated by profit, has been challenged in recent decades by many, including such pioneers as Andrew Weil, MD, Dr. Dean Ornish, as well as Professor Jon Kabot-Zinn have propounded the vital connection of mind and body. Affirming this connection is to assert that what happens in the mind is inextricably linked to the body and visa versa.

The dichotomy of mind-body, known to many philosophy students as famously discussed by the 17th century thinker Descartes, is a model that harkens back to even earlier times. Though not a problem for the indigenous of the world, the objectification of material reality, coupled with a belief in the greater status accorded to mind ( or variously, spirit), has influenced western civilization by ‘demoting’ the body as ‘merely material’, while elevating mind as both superior and independent of the body.

This dichotomy, seemingly a hair-splitting exercise for folks with lots of time on their hands, is in fact at the core of both our mental health crisis and our health crisis generally. In what follows, I hope to bring to life how that plays out in these two branches of health care. I will lead with the one I am trained in, in psychotherapy. My work, which has put me in contact with many populations, has most recently put me in touch of the chronically ill. It is altogether understandable that in many of these cases, chronic physical illness is pared with anxiety, depression, trauma, and other mental health issues.

Many of the people who have come to see me as a therapist, especially in recent years, are people who have been ravaged by both physical and mental illness. Here I will illustrate how un-mysterious is the link between these two human conditions. Let’s assume a person comes in for therapy and they are in chronic pain. Often I have seen people who, from a life of exacting manual labor, and/ or poor diet and exercise, and/or physical mishaps, have developed arthritis and other inflammatory conditions, such as degenerative disc disease- in short, they are in pain a good deal of the time. Bearing pain like that on a daily basis engenders mental health issues such as those described above. It is not surprising this is so, but the consequences in ongoing well being may be severe.

One of the hallmarks of depression is the feeling of hopelessness. Behaviorally, a persistent sense of hopelessness will restrict activity in ways that would otherwise treat the depression as well as the medical condition that is feeding it. So how, exactly, will this translate into a worsened prognosis? The client feels discouraged from doing exercise because it is associated with further discomfort, so it is avoided. Because it is avoided, the healthful benefits are missed and the body becomes more prone to debilitating disease. What is partially to blame is the perception that exercise is largely the province of the fit. Additionally, many of my clients have negative associations with movement as a pursuit because of the unpleasant experiences in physical therapy. When a client tells me that they can’t do exercise, I often challenge that belief by asking them to lift an arm or a leg. The fixed idea that there is a restricted realm called ‘exercise’ and that the rest of movement is compulsory is an unfortunate byproduct of living in a consumer culture, dedicated to making life more about engagement with machines than with one’s own body. Yet to move, especially in ways that represent celebrations of the body, such as dance, martial arts, or even walking, confers amazing benefits on the body that in turn will alter a mood.

Following the case of the depressed person with chronic pain, beyond the problem with movement as self-care, there is the problem of passivity about the host of activities that have the potential of healing the body. Having community, be it family or social life beyond, is known to have a palliative effect on depression. But it is also a holistic activity. From others we receive empathic listening (hopefully!), but we may also receive assistance in important life tasks, such as transportation, finances,

recreation, and that practice that used to represent to evils of yuppiedom, ‘networking’. In the course of some time spent among positive people, any or all of these needs could be met. To find oneself taking up a task that involves interaction with people-or with animals, for that matter!- is a way of asserting oneself as both a person of value and as a physical being deserving of wellness. The give and take of affection, to be held in positive regard, is proof to the ego that one is in fact lovable, and therefore of value.

How does this impact the issue of pain and wellness? It is common knowledge in medicine that excessive stress produces a hormone called cortisol, also found in fight and flight modes. In a recent Psychology Today article, the author Christopher Bergland, outlines the dangers of remaining in a state of severe stress regularly: Chronic stress and elevated cortisol levels also increase risk for depression, mental illness, and lower life expectancy. This week, two separate studies were published in Science linking elevated cortisol levels as a potential trigger for mental illness and decreased resilience — especially in adolescence.

Cortisol is released in response to fear or stress by the adrenal glands as part of the fight-or-flight mechanism. The fight-or-flight mechanism is part of the general adaptation syndrome defined in 1936 by Canadian biochemist Hans Selye of McGill University in Montreal. He published his revolutionary findings in a simple seventy-four-line article in Nature, in which he defined two types of “stress”: eustress (good stress) and distress (bad stress). (The opposite effect is achieved by endorphins, which will be discussed shortly)

The super-loading of the individual with stress, compiled from the legacy of past trauma and the ongoing issues of living within a distressed environment (unemployment, family/relationship problems, legal problems, media violence, unsafe life conditions, etc.) create a downward spiral in which the mood piece attaches to physical problems- a kind of sad merry-go-round of these components. In the midst of all of this, it is both imperative and exceedingly difficult to reclaim one’s body. Ultimately, finding what one can do in this regard is infinitely more important than recounting the ways in which one is limited or impaired.

Going back to earlier example of raising an arm and leg. There is a sense in which doing these simple movement can remain trivial. To move a limb, just to show range of motion, or to show that it can be moved- that is what takes place in a doctor’s office or in a physical therapy consult. To move a limb mindfully, slowly, deliberately: that is the better part of Hatha Yoga. This is what that movement achieves: it causes focus on the body, rather than extraneous events of the past or future. That in itself is stress-reducing. It requires work, to move without initial momentum, but slowly and steadily. It is a form of weight lifting, and you are the weight! The work demands oxygen, which stimulates deeper, fuller breathing and also exercises the heart muscle, making it more resilient, and thus efficient. Oxygenation of the blood is vital for all bodily processes. Another, critical function of mindful exercise is the production of endorphins, the body’s natural pain killer and anti-depressant.

This is well illustrated in a passage from Web MD: (<https://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/exercise-depression#1-2>):

What Are the Psychological Benefits of Exercise With Depression?

Improved self-esteem is a key psychological benefit of regular physical activity. When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins. These endorphins interact with the receptors in your brain that reduce your perception of pain.

Endorphins also trigger a positive feeling in the body, similar to that of morphine. For example, the feeling that follows a run or workout is often described as “euphoric.” That feeling, known as a “runner’s high,” can be accompanied by a positive and energizing outlook on life.

So what we see encapsulated in this passage is information that both addresses the issues of pain (which, by the way, is the body’s report of inflammation) and depression (the mind’s perception of hopelessness).

The thing that is golden about the ‘movement prescription’ is that is can be offered by a regular MD or by a mental health professional, and the same benefits are made available. Once the incentive to movement is taken up, there are a myriad of paths to this practice, ranging from low cost yoga classes to free youtube videos. In keeping with the profound importance of movement, I will conclude with the familiar adage of Lao Tzu: ‘The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step’.

Calendar continued

7:30p.m. \$5-10. Called dancing by Ron Blechner with Don Foster & Donal Sheets. Begins with lesson, regular dance begins at 8:00p.m. Soft-soled shoes. Alcohol-, tobacco-, and fragrance-free. 172 Lake St, Coventry. Info: 484-844-5203 [dcannell.dm@gmail.com](mailto:dcannell.dm@gmail.com)

**January 7, Sunday**

**Hiking:** Long Distance Guided Hike, 12:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. Free. 5-7 mile hike. Friendly dogs welcome. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Live Music:** Headroom, Bong Wish, Flaherty/Rowden Duo and the Shrinnirs 3:00p.m. - 6:00p.m. Willimantic Records, 744 Main Street (entrance and parking at rear of building). Info: [www.willimanticrecords.com](http://www.willimanticrecords.com)  
**Meditation:** Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Non-sectarian, Buddhist-style sitting and walking meditations, teaching and sharing. Knight House, ECSU. Info: 860-450-1464 [dmangum617@gmail.com](mailto:dmangum617@gmail.com)

**January 10, Wednesday**

**The Arts:** “Talent Showcase” – Come share your talents! 7:00pm. 2nd Wednesday of the month. Free and open to all ages. 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). The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. 518-791-9474. [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us)  
**Skill Share:** Djembe Drumming Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (See 1/3)

**January 13, Saturday**

**Lecture:** Mapping Invasive Species in the Connecticut Forest Understory Using Drones, 10:00a.m. - 11:00a.m. Nancy Marek from UCONN talks about whether an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle equipped with a sensor can be used to map invasive shrubs. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Lecture:** Treasures of the Forest: A Study of Local Terrestrial Orchids, 1:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. Learn about Connecticut’s 70 species of terrestrial orchids. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Sustainable Building:** The EcoHouse: Tour of a Sustainable Home, 3:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Tour a local home with solar, geothermal, and landscape features. Meet at 152 Cedar Swamp Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)

**January 14, Sunday**

**Skill Share:** The Apiary Series: Starting your Hive, 2:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. Learn how to start from the very beginning with your hive. First of a yearlong serieson keeping bees. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Meditation:** Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. (See 1/7)

**January 16, Tuesday**

**Skill Share:** Your Drum Circle, 7:30p.m. - 9:15 p.m. \$10. BYO djembe, conga or bongos, or use one of Bob Bloom’s hand drums. The Packing House, 156 River Rd, Willington. Info: 518-791-9474 [info@ec-chap.org](mailto:info@ec-chap.org) [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us)

**January 17, Wednesday**

**Hiking:** Senior Walk, 10:00a.m. - 12:30p.m. Free. Easy walk not just for seniors. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Community Forum:** Exciting ideas for sustainable energy art project in Downtown Willimantic, 6:30p.m. - 8:30p.m. Free. Snacks. Johnson Room, ECSU Library. Info: [www.landartgenerator.org/lagi-willimantic.html](http://www.landartgenerator.org/lagi-willimantic.html)  
**Arts:** EC-CHAP Information Exchange Meeting, 7:00p.m. Eastern CT Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP). Discuss EC-CHAP mission, membership, and program/support opportunities. Refreshments provided. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Info: 518-791-9474. [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us)  
**Skill Share:** Djembe Drumming Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (See 1/3)

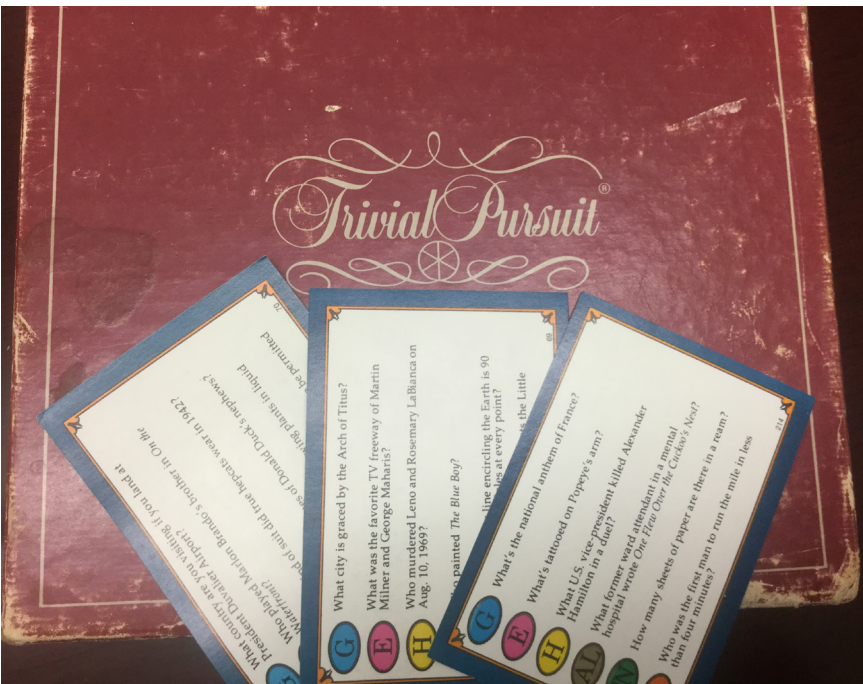
**January 18, Thursday**  
**Hiking:** Senior Walk, 12:00p.m. - 2:30p.m. Free. Easy walk not just for seniors. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)



# Happy New Year from the Gardiner Hall Jr Museum!

By Pamm Summers

It’s time to ring in the New Year at The Mill Works in Willington. Instead of giving news about the museum I’d like to write about our work in progress for The Packing House which includes our game night. Game Night has been in development for the past few months and taken longer than expected to get to the point where we are ready to take it for a test drive. Our original idea was to have a Trivia Game night and the concern here was that there are many Trivia games in the area and how could we make ours stand apart. Well, with brainstorming and research we think we’ve come up with a very unique slant on Trivia! Without giving our clever ideas away we think our version of Trivia will add a whole new dimension to the “same old, same old”. And importantly we would like feedback, suggestions and even criticism from those who would be willing to come out and test it for us! I will send out an email to our followers and try to get several teams together to test out our new and improved Trivia game. If you are one of the lucky email recipients please try to



come and have an hour of fun with us at The Packing House!

First Sunday, on December 3, was a festive way to ring in the holiday season. We had many visitors to the museum, including a reporter from the Courant who wrote a very nice article about our Mill! Our next First Sunday

is scheduled on March 4th, I’ll keep the public informed so you can stop in for a visit. Check our performance schedule in the paper and set a date to come on out and listen to good music, take in a film, bring your beer or wine and don’t forget some food to enjoy during the show! Hope to see you soon!

### January 19, Friday

**Film:** “Calle 54” (G). Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Part of the EC-CHAP Friday Night Film Series. Join us for this annual Holiday Tradition! Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F”TM (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Suggested donation \$5.00. Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us).

### January 20, Saturday

**Skill Share:** Winter Tree ID for Beginners, 10:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. Classroom and outdoor learning. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**March:** Second Annual Women’s March, 1:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. CT State Capitol, 300 Capitol Ave, Hartford. [Actionnetwork.org/events/womens-march-connecticut-second-annual-marching-on](http://Actionnetwork.org/events/womens-march-connecticut-second-annual-marching-on)  
**Nature:** Black Bears in Connecticut, 2:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. Learn about black bears in Connecticut. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Live Music:** Claudia Schmidt with Miro Sprague (Jazz), 7:00p.m. Tickets \$15.00 online / \$20.00 door. Part of the EC-CHAP Jazz Series. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F”TM (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us)  
**Ball:** Snowball, 8:00p.m. - midnight. Mill Museum fundraiser. Hors d’oeuvres, cash bar, silent auction, black tie optional, big band music. Betty Tipton Room, ECSU. Reservations required: 860-428-7573

### January 21, Sunday

**Meditation:** Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. (See 1/7)

### January 24, Wednesday

**Skill Share:** Djembe Drumming Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (See 1/3)

### January 26, Friday

**Live Entertainment:** Ed Smith & Friends (Alternative), 7:00p.m. Tickets \$8.00 online / \$10.00 door. Special local artist program. Original music and spoken word. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F”TM (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us)

### January 27, 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. Register: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Nature:** Living in Harmony with Mother Earth: East

Direction, 1:00p.m. - 2:30p.m. Mohegan tribal member Chris Harris “Turtle” returns for a in-depth look at living in harmony with Mother Earth. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Register: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Live Music:** Lexie Weege and The Wondertwins (Indie), 7:00p.m. Tickets \$12.00 online / \$15.00 door. Part of the EC-CHAP Acoustic Atist Series. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F”TM (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. [www.thepackinghouse.us](http://www.thepackinghouse.us)

### January 28, Sunday

**Hiking:** Long Distance Guided Hike, 12:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. Free. 5-7 mile hike. Friendly dogs welcome. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)  
**Skill Share:** How Permaculture Practices Can Benefit Your Yard and Garden, 1:00p.m. - 2:30p.m. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Register: 860-455-9534 [jasper.sha@ct.gov](mailto:jasper.sha@ct.gov)



### Love Animals?

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](http://OurCompanions.org) for full job descriptions and volunteer requirements or call us at 860-242-9999.*

## The Neighbors Paper

### A little paper big on community

**Meditation:** Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. (See 1/7)

### January 31, Wednesday

**Skill Share:** Djembe Drumming Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (See 1/3)

Dear Reader-

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

T. King, Publisher



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# Hope and Wellness Center and Salon

Hope and Wellness is a complete wellness and salon facility specializing in a variety of services. We are here for your mind, body and spirit to help aid in a healthier and more peaceful way of life. Please come try our gentle care in a warm inviting environment.

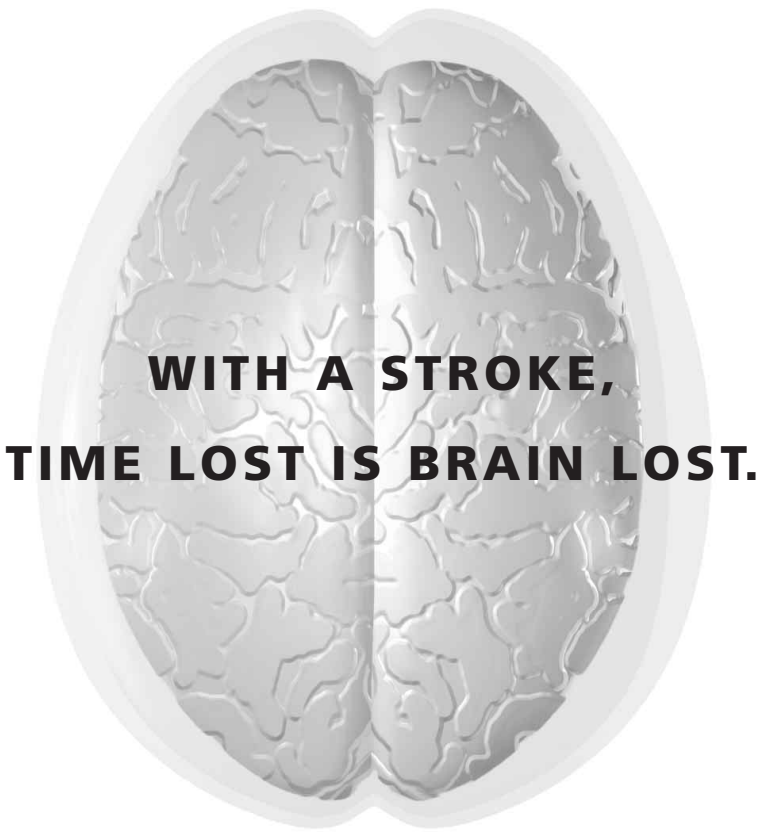
Full Service Salon • Reflexology • Massage • Reiki  
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If you suddenly have or see any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately:  
Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body • Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding • Difficulty seeing in one or both eyes • Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination • Severe headache with no known cause

Learn more at [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org) or 1-888-4-STROKE.



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Made possible in part by a generous grant from The Bugher Foundation.



## Where to find The Neighbors Paper

**Ashford**  
Ashford Spirit Shoppe  
Wooden Spoon Rest.  
Terry's Transmissions  
Ashford Post Office  
Babcock Library  
KSK Market  
Hope & Wellness

**Bolton**  
Bolton Post Office  
Subway-Bolton Notch

**Chaplin**  
Chaplin Post Office  
Zlotnick's Conv. Store  
Pine Acres Restaurant

**Columbia**  
Saxon Library  
Columbia Post Office

**Coventry**  
Highland Park Market  
Meadowbrook Spirits  
Coventry Laundromat  
Subway  
Booth and Dimock Library  
Song-A-Day Music

**Eastford**  
Eastford Post Office  
Coriander  
Basto Flooring

**Hampton**  
Hampton Post Office  
Hampton Library

**Lebanon**  
Green Store

**Mansfield/Storrs**  
Holiday Spirits  
Bagel Zone  
D & D Auto Repair  
Storrs Post Office  
Mansfield Senior Center

All Subway shops  
Starbucks  
People's Bank  
Storrs Comm. Laundry  
UConn Bookstore (2)  
UConn Student Union  
Tony's Garage

**Mansfield Center**  
Mansfield Library  
East Brook Mall  
HST Realty  
Lawrence Real Estate  
Mansfield OB/GYN

**Mansfield Depot**  
Thompson's Store

**North Windham**  
Bagel One  
Subway  
No. Windham P.O

**Pomfret**  
Vanilla Bean Restaurant  
Pomfret Post Office  
Baker's Dozen  
Weiss & Hale

**Putnam**  
Antiques Marketplace  
Putnam Library  
Subway  
Putnam Post Office  
Ben's Beans

**Scotland**  
Scotland Library  
Scotland Post Office  
Scotland General Store

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

**Stafford**  
Middle Ground Cafe  
Subway

**Tolland**  
Birch Mountain Pottery  
Subway  
Tolland Library  
Tolland Post Office

**Willington**  
Willington Pizza  
Willington Post Office  
Willington Library  
Key Bank  
The Packing House  
Franc Motors

**Windham/Willimantic**  
Clothespin Laundromat  
Schiller's  
Willimantic Food Co-op  
Willimantic Pharmacy  
Main Street Cafe  
Design Center East  
That Breakfast Place  
All Subways  
Super Washing Well  
Willimantic Public Library  
Windham Senior Center  
Elm Package Store  
Not Only Juice  
Windham Eye Group  
Willimantic Records  
Grounded Coffee Shop  
CAD Marshall Framing

**Windham Center**  
Windham Post Office

**Woodstock**  
Hot Strings Guitar Shop  
Woodstock Antiques & Arts

**Knowlton Memorial Hall**  
25 Pompey Hollow Road, Rt. 44  
Ashford, CT

Date: **Wednesday, January 24, 2018**  
Snow date: 1/29/2018  
Time: **7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**  
Refreshments: 6:30 p.m.

Do you love your farm or forest land?  
Have you come to recognize how special and important it is in our fast developing state? Have you thought about ensuring that some or all of it stays farm and/or forest land, permanently? If so, this workshop is for you.



## Protecting Family Farms & Forests

Contact person: 860-617-7022

### Workshop Agenda

- 6:30 p.m. Sign-In and Refreshments
- 7:00 p.m. What is a Conservation Easement?  
MassConn Regional Conservation Fund
- 7:30 p.m. Forest Legacy Grant Program
- 8:00 p.m. New Forestland Conservation Grant  
for Southern New England
- 8:30 p.m. Farmland Conservation
- 9:00 p.m. ADJOURN

**There is no charge** to attend this workshop.

Brought to you by:

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### Directions:

The Knowlton Memorial Hall is located on Route 44, just west of the junction with Route 89 in Ashford, Connecticut. Parking is adjacent to the building at the Ashford Town Hall. The Auditorium is on the first floor of Knowlton Memorial Hall.