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Seasons' Greetings



Ariana Rawls Fine

Falling Back to Spring Forward

"There is something so special in the early leaves drifting from the trees—as if we are all to be allowed a chance to peel, to refresh, to start again." ~ Ruth Ahmed

Although many of us in Connecticut don't quite get the modern need for Daylight Savings Time, we are nonetheless faced with falling back with our clocks on the first weekend of November. In this edition, we have our own version of, "fall back, spring

forward." With the upcoming presidential election influencing our future four years and more, Dennis House reminisces about when past U.S. Presidents traveled through Connecticut. Our Did You Know...? nostalgia feature from Erik Ofgang digs into the past about a witch, beer and apples. And we have more apples for you! We are bringing back one of our most popular Delicious articles...about apples, of course. Remember to tag us if you make and share one of the recipes!

Frank Rizzo lends his opinion again in his annual fall arts preview of the best of the classics and new arts and entertainment in our state this autumn. In our Pets section, Renee Dinino visits a cat café in Glastonbury where you can grab a coffee while looking at and potentially adopting a new cat companion. Kerri-Lee Mayland explores how small spaces can be designed to have big impacts while Matt Dicks asks why our children seem to have lost their Halloween drive.

On a more serious note, we are "springing forward" to get help for our Connecticut veterans and kids in features with resources and information. Caitlin Houston focuses on bullying, what it is and what can be done as we recognize October's designation as National Bullying Prevention Month. While we recognize veterans on Veteran's Day on November 11, what about the rest of the year? What are we doing in Connecticut—beyond the VA, VFWs and governmental assistance—to help those who fought for our freedom? There are some amazing people doing amazing things to assist them physically, financially, emotionally and mentally.

Happy fall!

Ariana

Ariana Rawls Fine
Editor
Seasons Magazines



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Creative Director
Stacy Wright Murray

Editor
Ariana Rawls Fine

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Doreen Chudoba

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We want to tell our readers stories about the interesting people and places in our beautiful state. It's that simple. — JIM TULLY

Autumn

2024

Page 4
Innovations in Healthcare
At Women's Center for Motion and Performance, UConn Health takes a multidisciplinary tactic to orthopedic care to help women of all ages and abilities stay active.

Page 10
Parenting
With October being National Bullying Prevention Month, Caitlin Houston focuses on how to recognize, report and do something about bullying with our children.

Page 14
Health & Wellness
Dr. Christina Metcalf and her team incorporate breast cancer information, screening and treatment in one place at Trinity Health Of New England's Comprehensive Women's Health Center.

Page 19
Arts & Entertainment
Get ready to see what local theater, music and dance venues are presenting this fall in Frank Rizzo's highly anticipated annual fall entertainment preview.

Page 28
Home
Kerri-Lee Mayland introduces interesting ideas to design small spaces to appear larger and have bigger personalities.

Page 32
Feature
While we nationally recognize veterans on November 11, there are dedicated nonprofits and programs around Connecticut that provide resources for local veterans throughout the year.

Page 36
Feature
Although it is not considered a battleground state now, Dennis House recalls visits to Connecticut from past U.S. Presidents.

Page 40
Nostalgia
This Did You Know...?
This article tells the true tale of a "bewitched" beer as well as delving into the story behind Micah Rood and his haunted apples.

Page 46
Delicious
The ever-classic New England staple, apples, make a return to the Delicious section with this popular article from our Fall 2015 edition.

Page 52
Health & Wellness
With many locations in the U.S. experiencing nursing shortages, Albertus Magnus College is addressing the need with a new nursing program.

Page 54
Pets
Renee Dinino introduces a cat café where you can relax and sip on a coffee while getting to meet and greet cats up for adoption.

Page 63
Final Thoughts
Matt Dicks asks what has happened to our children as they bore quickly from doing the Halloween trick-or-treating and dressing up with imagination.

"AUTUMN ...
THE YEAR'S LAST,
LOVELIEST SMILE."

— William Cullen Bryant





Keeping Women Active and Healthy

Kayla Callanan, Dr. Katherine Coyner and Dr. Allison Schafer lead the Women's Center for Motion and Performance at UConn Health. Credit: Tina Encarnacion/UConn Health.

Written by STEVEN BLACKBURN

Women seeking to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle, regardless of age and athletic aptitude, can benefit from the combined expertise of the specialties that make up the Women's Center for Motion and Performance. It is a new center of excellence at UConn Health that's renowned for its specialized care of women with musculoskeletal conditions.

These coordinated services help each patient overcome her unique challenges, preserve motion, enhance performance and achieve their health goals during a time when there are less than two dozen establishments that provide such programs in the entirety of the U.S.

The Women's Center for Motion and Performance streamlines the patient experience by triaging patients to ensure they are seeing the right providers, and those providers closely collaborate. Co-directors Katherine J. Coyner, M.D., MBA, and Allison M. Schafer, D.O., receive patient referrals from the center's nurse navigator, Kayla Callanan.

"The triage part of the process is very important because Kayla can make preliminary assessments of which of us doctors these patients need to see and puts that on our radar when she assigns

them to us. So, when we have that first appointment with them, we can provide more expedited, tailored care," says Dr. Coyner, who performs orthopedic surgery. "Kayla makes sure our patients feel engaged and empowered to obtain the health they desire."

CONNECTING PATIENTS WITH THE RIGHT PROVIDERS AND REDUCING WAIT TIMES

To demonstrate how triaging helps UConn Health provide what too many institutions can't give their patients, Dr. Coyner explained how her team's treatment of hip dysplasia has greatly improved under the Women's Center for Motion and Performance care model. "Women with hip dysplasia don't usually need surgery at first. But before we got Kayla, they would usually get scheduled to see me because of my area of expertise when they should be seeing Dr. Schafer for ultrasound-guided injections and musculoskeletal ultrasound," says Dr. Coyner.

Although there are many acute injuries that require more immediate surgical intervention, many musculoskeletal conditions do not. As Dr. Schafer notes, such conditions are often treated in isolation from other medical conditions. "But what is becoming more and more evident in the literature is the strong link between

UConn HEALTH



Physical therapist Karen Wojcik works with a patient as part of the Women's Center for Motion and Performance at UConn Health. Credit: Tina Encarnacion/UConn Health.

pain perception and mental health,” she says. “We are aiming to address this in routine screening for mental health conditions and expedited referral to psychology should we identify issues that will prohibit recovery.”

In addition, many conditions are related to nutrition, whether it be a patient being underweight or overweight. UConn Health now has the resources to better help support women with their nutrition and lifestyle.

When such referrals occur, patients can usually see these other providers sooner rather than later, reducing wait times between consultations considerably.

“We in surgery historically didn’t refer patients to someone like a nutritionist or anyone in sports psychology,” adds Dr. Coyner. “But now we are. The center is making us think in broader terms beyond surgery to deliver better care.”

WHY A FOCUS ON WOMEN MATTERS

The center’s name highlights that this triaged system serves patients who identify as women. Dr. Coyner explains, “We strive to provide healthcare solutions tailored to the unique needs of women, acknowledging the differences in anatomical structure and physical demands between genders.”

Drs. Coyner and Schafer, both women and former college athletes, deliver tailored care that aligns with the center’s mission to embrace and promote diversity in musculoskeletal care.

Additionally, Callanan, the nurse navigator and a former bedside nurse, brings valuable experience from her 18 years as a gymnast, having dealt with similar injuries to those the center now specializes in treating.

“It had always been our desire to give back to those within the female community who want to stay active and create an environment where they feel supported,” says Dr. Coyner. “With the group that we’ve assembled, we really can accommodate all patients and have a comfort level that patients are going to feel well supported here.”

AN ARRAY OF MEDICAL DISCIPLINES AND SPECIALTIES

A significant amount of effort went into

INCLUDED SERVICES AND DEPARTMENTS

Physical therapy

Neurology

Osteoporosis and bone health

Internal medicine, specifically lifestyle medicine

Psychology and behavioral health

Nutritional services

identifying and integrating the right providers at UConn Health into the center, an initiative that wouldn’t have been possible if those involved weren’t passionate about it. “Our goal for the center has always been to provide comprehensive, collaborative care across multiple specialties in women’s musculoskeletal health,” says Dr. Schafer. “We’ve partnered with physical therapy, neurology, internal medicine, endocrinology, lifestyle medicine, and psychology. Together, we offer a well-rounded approach to support women in achieving optimal health.

“What’s great is that we’re all truly working together,” Dr. Schafer says. “Rather than patients feeling like they see one doctor while another is unaware of their care, we’ve created a collaborative system that delivers a seamless, cohesive care plan for our patients.”

PROVIDING THE SAME SPECIALIZED CARE FOR ALL WOMEN BEYOND THE HUSKIES

The center’s current programming is essentially an extension of the specialized, tailored services that Drs. Coyner and Schafer already have been providing for UConn student-athletes as part of the Orthopedics & Sports Medicine program (spotlighted in Seasons Magazines’ Summer 2023 issue). But they emphasize that these services are also available to any women who want to resume an active lifestyle and benefit from these specialized exercises and prescriptions.

“Understanding our patients’ needs and goals takes time, but it allows us to

develop specialized treatment plans that truly fit their situation. In some cases, they don’t need full physical therapy, but rather tailored exercise prescriptions they can do at home,” says Dr. Schafer. “Even if their knee or shoulder pain is mild, we focus on addressing their concerns to help them feel confident about returning to activity.”

While the center treats both athletes and non-athletes, its strong connection to the Orthopedics & Sports Medicine program fosters a unique sense of community. “Patients love knowing they’re part of the same system as well-known athletes and receiving care from the same providers,” says Dr. Coyner. “It’s about women empowering women, sharing the same journey and supporting one another. That sense of connection and strength is incredibly powerful.”

EMPOWERING WOMEN OUTSIDE OF A CLINIC SETTING

As a growing center of excellence in New England, the center has been focused on expanding its reach across the region. Recently, they participated in the UConn Health Half Marathon, bringing along a large sign that read, “I Am Active Because...” Women in the marathon were encouraged to write their own answers, creating a powerful collage of shared motivation. This inspiring display now hangs in Callanan’s office. “Our goal is to empower women to prioritize their health and explore personalized care options together,” says Dr. Coyner. “That sign was a way of reflecting that message.”

The Women’s Center for Motion and Performance has expanded its approach to care while deepening its commitment to helping women achieve their health goals.

“Your journey to better health starts with a single step, and we invite you to explore the personalized care we offer, Dr. Coyner says. “Together, we can support you in reaching your full potential and making your well-being a top priority.”

Steven Blackburn is a freelance writer with more than 10 years of journalism experience in various fields, including U.S. education and Connecticut community interest stories. He lives in Winsted.



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BEYOND THE SURFACE:

Understanding Bullying

By CAITLIN HOUSTON

Imagine this scenario: your near-sighted second grade daughter needs glasses. She excitedly chooses a pair of blue frames because everyone loves the color blue. As she skips off to school, you feel a sense of joy and pride in her enthusiasm for her newest accessory. At the end of the day, she arrives home not wearing her glasses, claiming she accidentally left them at school. By the end of the week, the glasses are still missing, and your bright, spirited daughter is sullen and gray. What's happened to your child? Where are her glasses? After a long chat, you learn a classmate nicknamed her Four Eyes, stole her glasses and encouraged others to taunt her for not being able to see the board.

One may think the definition of bullying is simple: a child is intentionally mean to another child. However, bullying is a bit more complex. Dan Olweus, the "founding father" of research on bully/victims in schools, created a widely accepted definition of bullying. Olweus delineates bullying as involving three criteria: repetitiveness, intentional harm-doing and a power imbalance favoring the perpetrator.

Negative interactions between children can be perceived as bullying behaviors. Children have bad days, get jealous, feel left out and more, and may react to those feelings. Simply disliking someone is not an act of bullying, nor is excluding someone from a game if there are too many players. Arguments, disagreement and occasionally being teased are not uncommon exchanges amongst children. But when does a child's behavior cross the line into bullying territory?

How do we teach our child to recognize and report bullying?

As parents, we have a protective instinct to keep our children healthy, happy and safeguarded from the tough parts of life. However, it becomes increasingly difficult to protect our children as they enter the school age-years. Kids become vulnerable to adopting new behaviors or inappropriate language from their school peers. Innocently enough, many young children don't know these actions and words are unacceptable.

It's important to begin an ongoing conversation about bullying with your child at a young age. Start by asking your child these questions and working through the answers together.

What do you think is the difference between bullying and teasing?

Bullying is being mean to another kid over and over again. Bullying can be emotional and physical. It often includes:

- repeated teasing, name-calling, intimidation, or sexual or racist remarks;
- talking about hurting someone;
- spreading rumors;
- leaving kids out on purpose; and
- attacking someone by hitting them or yelling at them.

Does bullying always happen in person?

Bullying does not always happen in person. Cyberbullying happens online or through text messages or emails. It can be anonymous. It includes posting rumors on social media, sharing embarrassing pictures or videos, and making fake profiles or websites.

Do you ever see other kids at your

school being bullied? If so, how does it make you feel? What do you do about it?

There are many resources for teaching your children how to keep themselves and others safe from bullying. StopBullying.gov has cartoon videos for kids about important topics such as treating others with respect and what to do if you are bullied. A quick search at your public library website will reveal countless children's books telling stories about bullies.

A staggering 46% of middle and high schoolers who were bullied at school in 2019-2020 said they notified a teacher or another adult about it (U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2019). Kids don't report bullying for a number of reasons: humiliation, fear of backlash, feelings of hopelessness or isolation. Teaching your child to not be a bystander to bullying is crucial.

What do you do when your child is the bully?

There is nothing more dreadful than an unsolicited phone call from the principal. No one wants to believe their child is a bully, but it happens and should be taken seriously. Take a deep breath, sit down with your child and tell them you love them no matter what. Then ask for their side of the story.

Bullies often adopt the behavior from their environment. Sometimes bullying is a reaction from being bullied by others as a way to regain their power. According to a 2015 study of children involved in bullying acts (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4386584), children may bully to impress their peers or because

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL
BULLYING PREVENTION
MONTH. **ONE OUT OF
EVERY FIVE (20.2%)
STUDENTS REPORT
BEING BULLIED.**



they hold an inherent disdain for someone who is perceived as “different” than themselves.

The Glorification of Bullying in Media

“You can’t sit with us!”

Where do children learn bullying behaviors? One of the easiest places to start is the television. One can spend hours watching countless movies and TV about a protagonist dealing with a bully at school. Oftentimes, the bully is portrayed as less of a villain and more of an idealization of who the protagonist aspires to be. It’s high school hazing in “Dazed and Confused,” the hierarchical dynamic of the popular crowd in “Mean Girls” and an overwhelming desire to fit in in “Diary of a Wimpy Kid.” When a generation grows up watching bullies portrayed by some of the most enigmatic and beautiful characters, it’s no wonder some children want to emulate their behaviors.

Note: In July 2002, the Connecticut legislature passed a law, Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222d (C.G.S. 10-222d), directing all public school districts to develop and implement a bullying policy. Every school and school district office must have a copy of this policy readily available. 📄

Take Action for Parents:

- Stop Bullying: stopbullying.gov
- National Bullying Prevention Center: pacer.org/bullying/nbpm

Sources:

- “Bullying and the Abuse of Power” (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10112998)
- “Perspectives on Bullying Among Children Who Present to the Emergency Department With Behavioral Misconduct” (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4386584)

Caitlin Houston, a mother of three, is the blogger behind the Caitlin Houston Blog, an authentic life and style site established in 2008. She covers motherhood, mental health, New England living, style and family travel. She is also a co-host of Room 4 Four, a podcast with frank discussions about everything from parenting fails to maintaining identity as a wife and mother. Listen to Room 4 Four’s Episode 10 about bullying: room4four.com/ep10-addressing-true-bullying-with-our-kids.

Bridging Gaps in Care with MHC's Mental Health Concierge Program

By JENNIFER GUHL

For individuals with or without insurance, securing timely and suitable mental health services can be a daunting process. Many can become overwhelmed by the process, from difficulty finding the appropriate resources to sorting through various mental health professionals to find the right one to meet their needs.

Some individuals may live in one of the many provider deserts throughout Connecticut, forcing them to drive far distances for care. Medicaid rates are also very low within the state, with a recent study showing that Connecticut pays 50% less than surrounding states like Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey—on top of private providers not accepting Medicaid pay. Connecticut has also not kept up with inflation in the rates they currently offer.

That's why Mental Health Connecticut developed the Mental Health Concierge program, a collaborative approach to securing care, including therapy, complete case management services and assistance for individuals and caregivers. The program strives to bridge the gap by connecting individuals to comprehensive support services, helping them navigate the complexities of the mental health system confidently, and ensuring they receive the high-quality care they deserve.

The program is modeled after Mental Health Waiver Services, a group of services provided by the state of Connecticut for individuals with severe mental health conditions.


Mental Health Concierge offers flexible in-person and telehealth therapy, case management and in-home support for individuals ages 18+ throughout Connecticut, with or without insurance. By offering a virtual option like telehealth, the program removes barriers related to travel that may limit a person's ability to receive the services they need. Services can also be provided at home, making it easier for those with travel limitations due to limited public transportation options or no personal vehicle.

Mental Health Connecticut's Connecticut-based team is familiar with the services available within various communities throughout the state, as opposed to online services like BetterHelp, where you're possibly engaging with someone out of state who lacks the local knowledge to provide appropriate recommendations. After a thorough assessment, team members can recommend services by Mental Health Connecticut or make outside referrals to match you with the proper care.

Mental Health Connecticut also operates in collaboration with DMHAS, a transitional program

for children coming out of the DCF system that protects abused or neglected children. Taking place when the child turns 18, this transition can be difficult; a program like Mental Health Concierge can assist in navigating the complexities of that.

Services are offered at competitive rates; Mental Health Connecticut will provide invoices to bill insurance and can consider a sliding scale when appropriate. The sliding scale is available thanks to generous individuals, grantors, and organizations supporting Mental Health Connecticut. The organization's 2024 end-of-year appeal Winter Wellness with MHC (mhconn.org/winter-wellness-with-mhc) will support the Mental Health Concierge sliding scale.

The program's flexibility makes it well suited to support a variety of cases, from supporting individuals looking for therapy to assisting individuals with a severe mental health condition. It can also provide services that may not meet medical necessity but are critical for people's quality of life and functioning, like assisting someone with agoraphobia who may need someone to go grocery shopping with them. The program could also benefit young adults aging out of services or losing coverage under a parent's insurance plan. 

For more information about Mental Health Concierge and to contact the Mental Health Connecticut team, visit mhconn.org/our-services/mental-health-concierge.

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CHRISTINA METCALF, M.D.:

Empowering Women to Take Control of Their Health

By **KIM LUCEY MILLEN** / *Photography by* **STAN GODLEWSKI**

As a mom of four plus a new puppy, Christina Metcalf, M.D., division director of breast surgery at Saint Francis Hospital, knows very well the energy many women put into keeping a household running in order. Unfortunately, as a doctor, she's also seen many cases of women putting their own health on the backburner while they work so hard to take care of everyone else. "Women's health is important, and often overlooked," says Dr. Metcalf. "We work every day to empower women to know their personal risks, so they can be proactive and take control of their health. In particular, breast cancer is very treatable if caught early. It's been a very rewarding part of my career to help women through that journey to remission and recovery."

FINDING HER WAY TO TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

Dr. Metcalf is from the East Coast, growing up in New Jersey, with schooling and training around the area. She completed her general surgery residency in Philadelphia, and surgical oncology fellowships at the NIH/National Cancer Institute Surgical Branch and Virginia Commonwealth University. Her first job brought her up to Connecticut to work at UConn Health for 12 years. Last year, she had the opportunity to make the switch over to Saint Francis to help lead the Karl J. Krapek, Sr. Comprehensive

Women's Health Center; she says she's found it to be a great fit.

"The program at Saint Francis has such a great reputation. I jumped at the chance to come lead the program and help expand it even further," states Dr. Metcalf. "Having the opportunity to work more closely with the community, particularly with patients in need, has been very fulfilling for me professionally. And, personally, Connecticut is just a beautiful state, and a great place to raise my two daughters and two stepdaughters. I love that you can find anything you want to do here or nearby in New England."

PREVENTION

Dr. Metcalf says great strides have been made in detecting breast cancer, particularly in the genetic testing for assessing risk. "It used to be that we could only test for a couple of genes, but now we've identified at least 40 that might relate to breast cancer risk," says Dr. Metcalf. "At the same time, insurance coverage has also expanded for those tests in the past 10 years. In many cases, out-of-pocket costs used to total more than \$3,000, and now they're closer to \$250."

But she says genetics only play a small role in assessing risk, as many breast cancers are not related to a gene. In some cases, personal history that can't be changed plays a factor: when the patient got their first period, had their first child, whether or not they breastfed, and whether their breast tissue is dense. Other factors are things that patients can take charge of, such as being active, exercising regularly to get your heart rate up at least three times a week for 30 minutes or more, maintaining a normal weight



Christina
Metcalf, M.D.



Trinity Health
Of New England
Medical Group

Christina Metcalf, M.D.,
Division Director of Breast
Surgery at Saint Francis
Hospital

(particularly after menopause), not smoking, and limiting alcohol. Dr. Metcalf says that for many people, the cancer outlook comes down to a combination of all of these factors.

SCREENING AND TREATMENT, ALL IN ONE PLACE

The patient comes first at the Comprehensive Women's Health Center in Hartford. Breast imaging is located right across the hall from Dr. Metcalf. If any abnormalities are detected in patient screenings, doctors can coordinate closely with radiology to get them in quickly. Patients also get same-day mammogram results.

"Sometimes the waiting can be worse than the test itself," says Dr. Metcalf. "Patients leave here with results in hand, cutting the stress out of that part of the process."

Genetic counselors are available for testing and risk assessment. A high-risk program with a medical oncologist is available for additional risk assessment and access to risk reducing medications. And gynecologic oncologists work in the center as well, making it possible to treat the whole woman in one location. Of course, that blends well with Trinity Health Of New England's core value of treating the whole patient: body, mind and spirit. "It really is amazing," says Dr. Metcalf. "I think this center is a testament to the fact that we are focused on women's health here, and we're doing our best to make it as seamless of a process as possible."

FIGHTING BREAST CANCER

Doctors say one in eight women in the U.S. is expected to develop breast cancer over her lifetime. Researchers are constantly learning more about the best ways to treat breast cancer once it's found. "We've learned more about certain

sub-types and what these cancers respond to best," says Dr. Metcalf. "Immunotherapy in addition to chemotherapy can be very effective for some types of cancer."

She says the center has access to clinical trials to help enroll patients and explore that process further. If surgery is the best option, Dr. Metcalf says lots of ground has been covered there as well. Earlier this year Saint Francis unveiled its adoption of Elucent's EnVisio® surgical navigation system and SmartClip® Technology. "This one is a game-changer," says Dr. Metcalf. She explains that the new technology is a huge improvement for surgeons removing cancerous tumors during lumpectomies. A doctor implants a wireless SmartClip Soft Tissue marker before surgery, allowing them to pinpoint and mark the location of cancerous tissue that needs to be removed, without disrupting healthy tissue. "It's much more accurate for the doctor, and much more comfortable for the patient," says Dr. Metcalf. "Technology like this is a win-win for everyone involved."

ENSURING EQUITABLE CARE

Dr. Metcalf believes one of the greatest barriers to women finding the right care is understanding what they need to do. Guidelines around mammograms have been changing, and people don't always understand their personal risk factors, family history and what markers are significant for breast health. Also, many times women in underserved populations have trouble just getting childcare and transportation to make it to an appointment. Dr. Metcalf says she's proud to work at a place that offers resources to help with those factors, to ensure no woman misses out on taking control of her health. In addition, Saint Francis hosts annual "Pink Link" events

every October, which provide free mammograms to underinsured and uninsured members of the community. The program, which launched in 2012, has provided more than 400 free mammograms for local women in the last five years.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

With such great strides already made in breast cancer research, Dr. Metcalf says the future is bright for treatment. "My hope is that I'll be out of business one day," she says. "The ideal goal is a world without breast cancer. We just never know what research is going to be the magic ticket to figure it out."

Those big improvements made in blood tests for different markers may end up being the key. She believes that someday doctors will be able to know through a blood test which patients will get cancer and prevent it from happening through medications and treatments before the cancer shows up. "I wouldn't mind retiring someday, and never having to treat another patient with breast cancer," Dr. Metcalf reflects, not afraid to dream.

For more information about the Comprehensive Women's Health Center at Saint Francis, including how to schedule an appointment, visit TrinityHealthOfNE.org/CWHC. 📍

Kimberly Lucey Millen is a freelance journalist with more than two decades of experience in both print and broadcast media. She lives in New England with her husband and son, exploring all that each of the four seasons has to offer.

Stan Godlewski is an editorial, corporate and healthcare photographer based in Connecticut and working primarily between Boston and New York City.



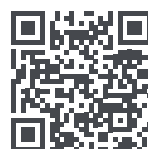
Prevention is Power: Your Mammogram Can't Wait

Early detection of breast cancer is important. Mammograms are safe, fast, and easier than you may think. If you or someone you love is concerned about breast disease, Saint Francis Hospital offers comprehensive resources for screening, diagnosis and treatment for cysts, lumps, breast pain and breast cancer.

**For scheduling information, please scan the QR code
or visit TrinityHealthOfNE.org/Power**



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FALL ARTS PREVIEW

By FRANK RIZZO

Feeling unnerved during these anxious days? We hear you. But, every once in a while, you might need a little escape from the headlines—at least for a few hours—and just have a bit of fun. This autumn, there's a wide range of performing arts attractions in Connecticut that beckon us off our living room—and perhaps our psychiatrist's—couches and straight towards the joys of live entertainment. Here are just a few of the highlights that earn our vote. >>>

FALL ARTS PREVIEW



Roman Banks as 'MJ' and the cast of the MJ First National Tour. Photo by Matthew Murphy, MurphyMade.

“M.J.” The Bushnell, Hartford Dec. 10 to 15

This Broadway bio-musical (still going strong in New York) smartly focuses on the years before things got too weird, icky and accusatory for the great mono-gloved one, Michael Jackson. This dance-filled show focuses on just the music and moves, and that’s just fine for his fans. And yes, Bubbles is mentioned (but thankfully does not appear).

Itzhak Perlman in Recital Palace Theatre, Waterbury Oct. 19

I’ll just say it. Perlman is the greatest violinist of his generation — and, at 79, still dazzles. The Israeli American violist, conductor

and educator won 16 Grammy Awards, including a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and four Emmy Awards. He’s played before queens, kings, presidents and kids. He is as rare and as great as the Stradivarius he plays. He’s also a mensch. To hear him perform live with such technique and heart is an experience I wish on everyone.

“Tina” Shubert Theatre, New Haven Oct. 24 to 27

Move over Michael Jackson, here comes another musical powerhouse that was celebrated on Broadway, too, with a show of her own. Tina Turner’s story gets the full musical bio treatment—bells, whistles and powerhouse

spike heels—and featuring three performers playing the legendary singer over the different stages of her incredible life and career.

“A Christmas Story” Goodspeed Opera House, East Haddam Nov. 1 to Dec. 29

Based on the little holiday film that gradually became a Christmas classic, this musical about little Ralphie Parker’s quest in the ‘40s for an official Red Ryder toy BB gun for Christmas is a charmer. It also features an easy-on-the-ears score from the Tony Award and Oscar-winning songwriting team of Benj Pasek and Justin Paul (Broadway’s “Dear Evan Hansen,” and the films “La La Land” and “The Greatest Showman”).



Karis Anderson as Tina in the 'Tina' musical. Photo by Manuel Harlan.

Todd Rundgren
Ridgefield Playhouse
Oct. 14

Hello, it's him. Rundgren's Me/We 2024 Tour stops off in Connecticut, which gives old and new fans a rare chance to appreciate the American songwriter, video pioneer, producer, recording artist, computer software developer, conceptualist and interactive artist. Anything else? Oh yes, the 76-year-old performer is also a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee.

Rickie Lee Jones
The Kate, Old Saybrook
Oct. 16

Chuck E. is not the only one in love with this iconoclastic singer/songwriter/musician. The two-time

Grammy winner's musical styles include rock, R&B, pop, soul and jazz, all with her own unique and eclectic interpretation. In 1980, she won a Grammy for Best New Artist and she's proved over the decades that she is here to stay.

"Fever Dreams"
TheaterWorks Hartford
Oct. 3 to Nov. 3

A steamy, decades-long affair. A remote cabin. An unexpected visitor. What could go wrong? Especially when Jeffrey Lieber's new thriller of a play is subtitled: "Of Animals on the Verge of Extinction." Lieber certainly knows his way around suspense and mystery. He is also co-creator of the hit "Lost" television series.



'Fever Dreams,' which is playing at TheaterWorks Hartford.

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"
Hartford Stage
Oct. 10 to Nov. 3

We're of two minds whether to see this clever adaptation by Jeffrey Hatcher of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novella, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll

FALL ARTS PREVIEW



Samara Joy. Photography by AB+DM.

and Mr. Hyde.” A psychological thriller about double identities, Hatcher reimagines the thriller for the stage, just as she did last year with “Dial ‘M’ for Murder” at Westport Playhouse. And during the Halloween season, too.

“The 39 Steps” Westport Country Playhouse Oct. 22 to Nov. 9

I’m sure Alfred Hitchcock had no idea that his classic suspense film would be turned into a theatrical tour de force for a quartet of loopy actors playing all the roles. This

show was a surprising delight when it was on Broadway; no doubt it will again be presented here with the same breakneck speed and imaginative staging.

“Nuncrackers: The Nonsense Christmas Musical” Center Stage Theatre, Shelton Dec. 6 to 15

Long before “Oh, Mary!” Dan Goggin created a wonderful world of stupid with his disorder of nuns. Those loopy sisters are at it again,

this time about their latest holiday show, sure to break a habit or two along the way, bless ‘em.

The 4th Annual Halloween Costume Party Webster, Hartford Oct. 26

It wouldn’t be a proper fall arts preview without highlighting at least one Halloween event among the scores that no doubt will abound. This one’s a killer: an awesome costume party with music by DJ Doo Wop alongside DJ CLO 456. Now, what to wear?

Johnny Mathis The Palace, Stamford Sept. 28

Chances are it’s the voice you hear in your head when the name of this legendary recording artist is mentioned. It’s a silky, seductive and sensational tenor wafting over the American songbook. Mathis—one of the last greats of his era—returns to Connecticut, just two days shy of his 89th birthday.

“Macbeth in Stride” Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven Dec. 5 to 14

Yale Rep joins three other theaters in presenting this new piece written and performed by Obie Award-winner Whitney White, with choreography by the very in demand Raja Feather Kelly. White follows the arc of Lady Macbeth as reimagined as an ambitious 21st century Black woman. She also brings a setlist of original pop, rock, gospel and R&B bangers. Sounds like she’s our kind of queen.

“Ain’t No Mo” Yale School of Drama’s University Theatre New Haven Oct. 19 to 25

This was one of my favorite post-pandemic Broadway plays in which playwright Jordan E.



John McLarnon and Anna Russell-Martin in Goodspeed's 'No Love Songs.' Photography by Tommy Ga-Ken Wan.

Cooper posits: What if all Black Americans were issued a government-funded one-way ticket to the continent of Africa? This part-satire/part-sketch comedy, which has plenty of laughter and bite, is presented entirely by students from the noteworthy drama grad school. Kemar Jewel directs. I can't wait it to get on board this flight.

**Bob the Drag Queen and "This Is Wild" World Tour
College Street Music Hall,
New Haven
Oct. 13**

He was born Christopher Delmar Caldwell; his stage name is Caldwell Tidicue, but we love him most as Bob the Drag Queen, one of the most memorable and talented stars to emerge from the world—make that universe—of RuPaul's Drag Race now-global series. He also made an impressive mark in HBO's "We're Here" series. Bob is the drag mother of Miz Cracker, drag sister to Monét X Change and drag hero to me.

**"She Loves Me"
New Haven's Long Wharf Theatre
at The Lab, Hamden
Nov. 30 to Dec. 15**

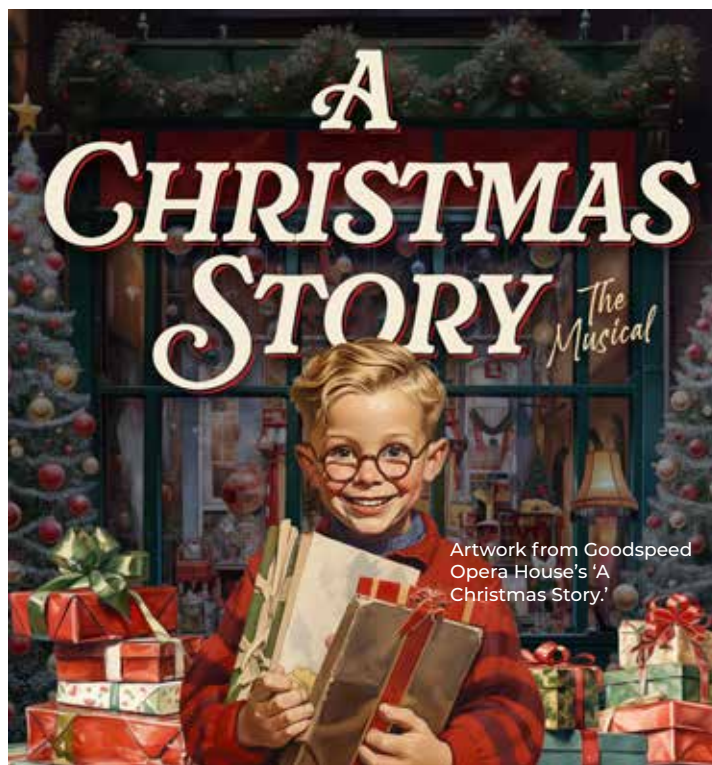
I'm biased here because this is one of my all-time favorite musicals, a delicate valentine of a show set in 1934 Budapest, with charming and melodious songs by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick. The musical is, in a way, a love letter to love letters—in a world way before texting. (What will today's romantics have to hold in their future?) I can't wait to see what the itinerant Long Wharf Theatre does with the production, staged by its artistic director Jacob G. Padron, and transforming The Lab into a performance space.

**Duran Duran
Mohegan Sun Arena
Oct. 25**

In the '80s, I covered rock and pop shows in Connecticut, and few were more fun than this English band with the highly moussed hair and the infectious melodies and rhythms such as "Hungry Like a Wolf" and "Rio." For those who want a trip back in those glorious MTV times, this certainly fills that new wave bill.



Hilary Clinton in Hilary Clinton Live. Photography by Annie Leibovitz.



Artwork from Goodspeed Opera House's 'A Christmas Story.'

FALL ARTS PREVIEW



Paula Poundstone.
Photography by
Shannon Greer.

Steve Martin and Martin Short: The Dukes of Funnytown **Foxwoods** **Nov. 15**

There's Martin and Lewis, Laurel and Hardy, and now Martin and Short, funny buddies who decide to take their real and surreal relationship on the road again. Just thinking about their last hysterically funny tour together, well, I'm laughing already.

"Jersey Boys" **A Contemporary Theatre,** **Ridgefield** **Oct. 17 to Nov. 10**

This musical re-invented the jukebox musical. The show is structured as four "seasons," each narrated by a different member of the band who gives his own perspective on its history and music. Tunes include "Big Girls Don't Cry," "Sherry," "My Eyes Adored You," "Stay," "Can't Take My Eyes Off You," "Walk Like A Man," "Who Loves You," "Working My Way Back to You," "Rag Doll"—are you singing along yet? Fans are sure to say, "Oh, what a night."

Baye & Asa in "4/2/3" **Quick Center at Fairfield University** **Nov. 13**

I love dance and I'm intrigued by this company that creates movement art projects, directed and choreographed by Amadi "Baye" Washington and Sam "Asa" Pratt, NYC pals since the first grade. With a background in hip-hop and African dance, the duo's unique styles are entirely their own. "4/2/3" focuses on the impacts of climate change using the Riddle of the Sphinx as a symbolic structure. Dance Magazine named them among its "25 to Watch." I'm definitely watching.

"Alabama Story" **Ivoryton Playhouse, Essex** **Oct. 3 to 20**

With all the book banning going on, especially in certain states, it seems like déjà vu with this prescient play set in 1959 Alabama when a children's book about a black rabbit marrying a white rabbit stirs passions. Inspired by true events, the play features the character of Garth Williams, famous for his illustrations of E.B.

White's "Stuart Little," "Charlotte's Web" and Laura Ingalls Wilder's "Little House on the Prairie." Will true bunny love prevail?

Sabrina Carpenter **XL Center in Hartford** **Oct. 2**

Sabrina first gained recognition for starring in the Disney Channel series "Girl Meets World." Then barely a teenager, she released her debut single, followed by many more singles and albums. Now 25, Sabrina is singing a slightly different tune—that of a young woman and getting plenty of exposure, opening for Taylor Swift with the Eras Tour. Connecticut fans so doubt will be saying, "Please, Please, Please."

"Amahl and the Night Visitors" **Madison Lyric Stage** **Dec. 14 and 15**

For this company's first holiday presentation, it turns to Gian Carlo Menotti's family classic (and one not seen much lately). It tells the tale of three kings' compelling journey and their encounter with a shepherd boy. So come all ye faithful. Trivia: It was the first opera commissioned especially for television—in 1951!

Paula Poundstone **Garde Arts Center** **New London** **Oct. 4**

I've loved Paula for decades but really admired her quick wit on NPR's "Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me." I'm sure she'll weigh in on topics of humor, old and new, and with a month before the election, perhaps something about that, too, d'ja think?

"The Shark Is Broken" **Playhouse on Park, West Hartford** **Oct. 2 to 20**

What was it like for Steven Spielberg to make "Jaws," which



Rickie Lee Jones.
Photography by
Vivian Wang.

launched the summer blockbuster tradition? Writers Ian Shaw and Joseph Nixon imagine that it wasn't a walk on the beach. They would be right because Shaw—son of Robert Shaw, one of the film's stars—was there. The result is a comedy that features characters based on Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfuss, Shaw and, of course, "Bruce" the shark. The play premiered in London and last year played Broadway.

**Samara Joy with "A Joyful Holiday"
Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on the UConn campus, Storrs
Dec. 14**

Jazz vocalist Samara Joy was only 23 when her second "Linger Awhile" album was awarded Best Jazz Vocal Album at the 2023 Grammy Awards. She also won the prize for Best New Artist—a rarity for a jazz artist in this category.

She also went on to win a Grammy for the Best Jazz Performance. Get tickets early. She packed them in when she played the International Festival of Arts & Ideas in June.

**"Irving Berlin's White Christmas"
Music Theatre of Connecticut in Norwalk
Dec. 5 to 22**

We loved the show when this reimagined stage show based on the classic 1954 film premiered at Goodspeed Musicals before moving on to Broadway. What better time to visit this old holiday friend—and then there's the title songs, too.

**"No Love Songs"
Goodspeed's Norma Terris Theatre in Chester
Sept. 27 to Oct. 20**

It's always exciting to see a new musical get developed at Goodspeed's second stage and

this one comes from the Edinburgh Festival. Kyle Falconer (lead singer of The View) supplies the music of a story about a mother overwhelmed by postnatal depression, just as her musician partner gets a big break and hits the road. It's inspired by co-writer Laura Wilde's own experience. The 70-minute chamber musical features songs from Kyle's solo album "No Love Songs For Laura." Sounds fresh, young and cool.

Frank Rizzo is a freelance journalist who writes for Variety, The New York Times, American Theatre, Connecticut Magazine, and other periodicals and outlets, including ShowRiz.com. He lives in New Haven and New York City. Follow Frank at ShowRiz@Twitter.

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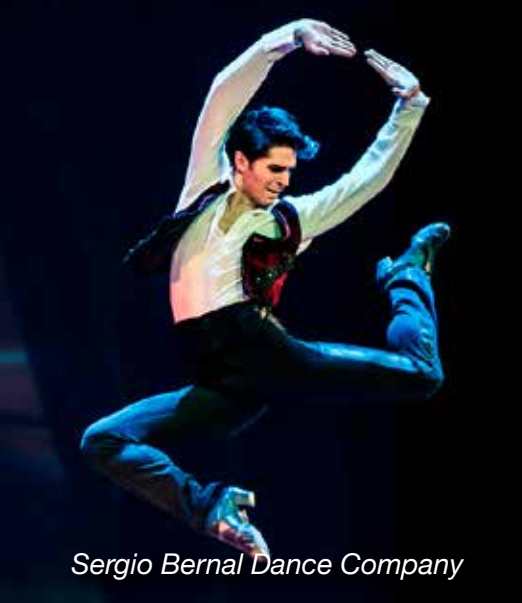
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Sat, Nov 11, 8 pm (\$36-56)

American Ballet Theatre Studio Company

Fri, Nov 17, 8 pm (\$36-39)

Messiah Sing

Thu, Nov 30, 8 pm (Free)

MacMaster & Leahy

Sun, Dec 3, 3 pm (\$36-46)

Holiday Pops

Fri, Dec 8, 8 pm (\$76-91)

Note: All artists, events, dates, programs and policies are subject to change.



AT HOME

with KERRI-LEE

How to Decorate “Big” When Your Space Isn’t

By Kerri-Lee Mayland

Happy fall! Has it been an eventful start to the season for you too? After a summer packed with travels near and far, going back to school at my house has been hectic. My son just started his freshman year at The College of the Holy Cross (go ‘saders!) so moving him into his dorm in the Bay State has had me focusing on small spaces and how to maximize them.

From Massachusetts to Miami, small-space inspiration was already at work thanks to an extended stay in Miami. My daughter was dancing at Miami City Ballet this summer, so we found a cute studio rental with big condo vibes to call our home away from home. It felt exactly like that, thanks to the careful design of our host, Sindia Borrás. Born in Switzerland, she brought her European style to several small Miami spaces she purchased, not only to rent but also to have available when her own family came to visit.

“I created each studio with its own identity and personality, hoping that each traveler that opens the front door is wowed and finds their temporary apartment to be a small haven to relax and feel at home,” says Sindia. Trips to Paris, Tulum and her time living in New York City led to her stylish but functional space-saving designs. With the weather cooling, we will be spending more time indoors; now is the perfect time to learn how to make the most of your spaces, too.

Embrace Larger Furniture Pieces

Scale is everything, and this is something Sindia plays with a bit. “The size of the pieces is very important and, as I was searching for furniture, it almost felt like I had to work in reverse: starting with the dimensions instead of the look,” adds Sindia. In some cases, she found herself going bigger instead of smaller for good reasons. Contrary to popular belief, using larger furniture pieces in a tiny space makes the space feel more expansive by anchoring the room and creating a sense of openness. Sindia went all in on a large couch in one of her studios, while in another she felt a dining table would have been too crowded. Instead, she compensated with a generous waterfall countertop island usually found in grand kitchens.

(Photos of a large couch in a Manhattan apartment, a large countertop in a Tulum space)

Play with Color

Light shades aren’t always “right” in small spaces. You can go dark, too. It might seem counterintuitive, but dark hues can add depth and dimension to a room, making it appear larger. Don’t shy away from coating an accent wall in a deep, rich color or incorporating dark-shaded furniture and accessories because it will provide contrast while enhancing the room’s overall spaciousness. On the other hand, if lighter colors are your safe zone, then really lean into that. Use light paint on everything—the ceiling, trim, baseboard and walls—and monochromatically make your room feel more expansive. You can even use varying shades





and textures of the same hue to create a seamless flow and eliminate visual breaks. Sindia uses tamarind paint to capture the chic lofts she saw during her time living in New York, and how it provides openness and unity.

Optimize Your Windows

Natural light is a key element in making a room feel bigger; there are easy ways to optimize it. Use sheer curtains or blinds that can be fully drawn back, or hang curtains above the window to let all the light in. This will create the illusion of taller windows and higher ceilings. Sindia noticed the way the windows in one of

her studios captured not only the natural lighting but also the vegetation outside.

“What struck me when I first entered the space was the fact that windows were overlooking palm trees as if the lush leaves had been framed inside of my apartment.” Inspired by a trip to Tulum, Sindia added macramé drapery for a bit of privacy that wouldn’t block any of the light or view outside.

Keep It Simple

While maximalism is intoxicating for many wanting to share all their collected wares, a minimalist



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Photo by Lam Nguyen Photography

Room 4 Four is a podcast where four friends come together, not as experts, but as real women. The hosts, who share 14 kids between them, talk about it all – from careers and family life to self-care, mental health or getting older and parenting in an ever changing world.



“This isn’t about being the cool moms, it’s about being the regular ones.”



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approach often works best in small spaces. This is where you might want to fight the over-accessorizing urge and, instead, make sure each piece has a purpose and a place. If it doesn't contribute to the overall design scheme, maybe rethink the item and consider moving it out entirely. By keeping the decor streamlined, you allow the room to breathe and feel more open. Aim for a well-edited collection of a few accessories; too many small pieces will make the room feel cluttered and the pieces unappreciated.

Reflective Surfaces

Mirrors brilliantly create the illusion of space. In her studios, Sindia incorporates large, full-length floor mirrors and leans them up against a wall. Not only is this functional, but it also essentially adds another “window” to the space. You can also position it opposite a window to reflect the light while giving the impression of an extended area where there is none. Or opt for reflective pieces like lacquer, mirrored furniture or even reflective decor elements to amplify the brightness and openness of a room.

Multi-functional Furniture and Storage Solutions

If you want a spacious feeling in any space, clutter is the enemy. In



a small space, it is a deal-breaker. Seek out multifunctional furniture that looks good and helps store things to keep the room tidy. You don't need everything on display all the time. Use coffee tables with storage compartments or under-table baskets to stash items away. Consoles, side tables or sofa tables are helpful to tuck away poufs that can be pulled out for additional seating and neatly put back in place to be decorative when not in use. Or skip the coffee table altogether and cluster ottomans and poufs with trays for seating



and table function, like a place to put a drink or the remote.

The Right Rug

Break up the “one-room feel” of a studio by visually showing there is more than one thing happening there with a rug. Get the size right as going too small will defeat the purpose and make your floor look patchy. Determine your floor plan first, and then decide which areas will benefit from a rug for coziness but also for a visual interpretation of what that part of the room is supposed to be. I loved the bold harlequin rug Sindia used to show where the living room begins and ends. Going too small would have made the space feel choppy and cramped.

Make Up for Space with Special Finishes

In a small kitchen, you might be able to splurge on an expensive stone for your small countertop or high-end small appliances. But if you don't blow the budget on upscale items, you can at least get dimension, depth and layers by using various materials that have different finishes. When it comes to lighting, make a statement.

“I tried compensating small spaces with textures, details and dimension, like the molding, ceiling medallions, wood beams, limewash paint and elaborate lighting fixtures,” says Sindia.

Ready to Try It?

One of the best places to get inspiration any time of the year is from places you've been and things you've seen. Inspiration is everywhere; harness it using some of these small space design guidelines, no matter the size of wherever you call home.

xx *Sindia*

Veterans Day and Beyond: Helping Those Who Have Defended Us

By ARIANA RAWLS FINE

November 11 is one day during the year set aside to recognize and thank our U.S. Armed Forces veterans. But what about all the other days of the year? Veterans face challenges when they return to civilian life, many for years or a lifetime afterward. How do we, especially here in Connecticut, help those who have helped us? How do we as a community step up to augment the efforts of the U.S. Veterans Administration and government programs as well as the local and state chapters of Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legions and other national organizations? There are multiple local organizations making a difference by lending physical, emotional and mental support. Whether we donate money, our vehicles, our time or our skills, there are ways we can help these organizations doing such great work in our state for those who have defended our country.

Building Entrepreneurship Skills and Businesses

The **Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans** program (ccei.uconn.edu/ebv), or EBV, offers experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management to



post-9/11 veterans and military spouses. “EBV not only gives the veterans a purpose; it can save their lives. Oftentimes, they get out of the service, and they are just out there. Their comradery is gone, and they need a sense of purpose. EBV gives them something to do for the duration of the program, as well as support for the preliminary or continuing stages of their business,” states EBV’s program manager, Nicholas Martinelli, MBA, M.Ed. (U.S. Army Ret.).

The University of Connecticut’s School of Business (UConn), in partnership with Syracuse University’s D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families, has been offering it since 2010, graduating 270 veterans and military spouses. Founded at Syracuse University in 2007, the program can be found in other universities, including Texas A&M, UCLA, Louisiana State University, Saint

Joseph’s University, Wright State University and the University of Missouri. The goal is to provide practical training, tools and skills to veterans to foster new idea creation and growth, and support turning the

After In memory of EBV’s founding director, The Michael Joseph Zacchea Veterans Impact Award was presented to Sean Manning, EBV ’11, and founder of the White Birch Armory. Credit: Defining Studios.







Veterans work with a horse during a Veterans Equine Therapeutic Services activity. Credit: Veterans Equine Therapeutic Services.

ideas into businesses and/or products. In addition, the UConn program coordinates faculty, students, alumni and others to help veterans with the physical, psychological and/or social challenges they may face. A future goal is to expand to provide the veteran entrepreneurship program to those retiring from long-term military service.

The program is broken down into three phases: a 30-day online curriculum about business fundamentals and research; a nine-day residency with UConn faculty and guest business executive lecturers teaching workshops and courses, and a business showcase and awards ceremony; and a national component managed by Syracuse University's D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families providing technical assistance, access to a mentor and resource network, marketing assistance, and more. For the UConn program, there are also three grants giving thousands of dollars to several winning ideas from the program participants.

Work Vessels for Veterans (WVFFV) offers adaptive and other vital equipment and services to injured veterans as they launch small businesses, farming endeavors or new careers. "Our mission since 2008 is to award equipment to America's injured veterans who want to start a business," says Hon. Catherine W. Cook, WVFFV's executive director and a former state senator. "Frankly, we have found no other nonprofit that is solely dedicated to outfitting veterans for self-

employment. In 16 years, WVFFV has awarded over 3,900 injured veterans in all 50 states plus the U.S. Virgin Islands with equipment valued at \$4 million for their start-up businesses."

The Connecticut-based national organization (workvesselsforveterans.org) has helped launch over 725 new businesses. One recent recipient was Uncasville's USMC Sgt. Christopher D. Connelly, who was awarded specialized equipment for his new CMB Circuits LLC business to offer circuit board manufacturing and repairs to government agencies and corporations.

Growing Interest for Farmer Veterans

There is a local program that helps veterans and others plant the seeds of their farming dream. **Connecticut Veteran Grown** (ctveterangrown.org), a 3-year program offering veterans assistance with marketing and other resources, is funded through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration and administered by Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc. (CT RC&D). The latter, an environmental and agricultural program nonprofit founded in 1968, worked with Connecticut Farmer Veteran Coalition to establish the CT Veteran Farmer Resource Hub, job training, and other networking and financial assistance to help veterans seeking an agricultural career as they transition to civilian life.

"When we say, 'Served then, still

-serving now,' we're talking about those Connecticut farmer veterans who show up every day to address our state's growing need for locally sourced, sustainable agriculture," says Sarah Layton, the agricultural programs coordinator for CT RC&D (ctrcd.org), which is based out of Haddam. "Their unique skill set, discipline and resilience make them well-suited for the challenges of farming, especially in a state that has seen an increase in periods of drought, flooding events and other intense storms due to our changing climate. The CT Veteran Grown initiative... was established to promote the Homegrown by Heroes brand as well as provide invaluable resources and direct assistance to boost the success of Connecticut's farmer veterans."

One of the 2024 awardees for the Agricultural Enhancement Grant, a matching grant program in Connecticut for agricultural projects, is the **Farmer Veteran Coalition**. It will enable the organization to hold individual consultations with prospective veterans interested in agricultural endeavors, and current farmer veterans hoping to expand operations, services and/or goods. In addition, it helps with registering a farm business, obtaining permits and grant writing. The grant is funded through the State of Connecticut Agricultural Viability Grant Program.

Going to the Animals

Well-trained animals offer emotional and physical healing and help



After losing the companionship of his older dog, former submariner Tony found Ivy through Pets for Patriots, Inc. and Norfolk SPCA's companion pet adoption program for military veterans, which waives fees for adoption and offers 10 percent off fees at the onsite veterinary clinic. Credit: Pets for Patriots, Inc.

for people needing a wide spectrum of support, including veterans dealing with the psychological repercussions of PTSD and service-related traumas as well as physical injuries.

Understanding that pets offer veterans daily purpose, optimism and more, **Pets for Patriots, Inc.** (petsforpatriots.org) supports military veterans and their companion pets. They can offer help with affordable pet wellness care, food, moving or travelling with pets, training, adopting out a pet, and much more. They also provide resources for service and emotional support animals, as well as organizing foster care if military members are deploying or veterans are in a hardship situation. The organization works with various Animal Welfare Society shelters throughout the state for adoptions.

Veterans Equine Therapeutic Services (vetsct.org), or V.E.T.S., enables veterans to experience therapeutic healing with horse-related activities with the nonprofit's skilled instructors and trained volunteers in Gales Ferry.

“As the executive director of Veterans Equine Therapeutic Services, I’ve witnessed firsthand how the bond between veterans and our horses goes far beyond traditional therapy,” says Thor Torgersen, VETS CT’s co-founder, board president and lead instructor. “There’s a quiet wisdom in the horses’ presence—a way they teach us life lessons that no other form of therapy can replicate. Whether it’s through the meditative practice of archery, the grounding experience of outdoor skills, or the



Connecticut Veteran Grown works with farming business owners like Stephen Thompson (above left), owner of Thy Neighbors Farm in Torrington, and Ryan Winiarski (above right), owner of Priam Vineyards in Colchester. Credit: Lisa Nichols, Bread & Beast Photography.



This veteran's house was part of a 5-state House of Heroes project in Carmi, Ill. Credit: Carol May and Dennis Buden.

sense of community found in sharing a meal, each of these elements helps veterans reconnect with themselves and discover a better path forward. Our mission is not just to heal, but to guide veterans toward a deeper understanding of themselves, offering them the tools to lead a more meaningful life.”

Therapy dogs can provide so much support to veterans. The Norwich-based **Veterans Helping Veterans** (vhvct.org) is one such organization. In addition to donations, the nonprofit has a summer golf tournament and other events to raise funds to bring the canines to those who need them.

Donating for a Good Cause

When community members donate a car, truck, boat, camper or motorcycle to **Vehicles For Veterans** (vehiclesforveterans.org/connecticut), the tax-deductible vehicle donation funds everyday housing, transportation and food needs for disabled veterans and other veteran programs. The nonprofit tows from anywhere in Connecticut for free. The vehicle is recycled, reused to build new vehicles or auctioned off.

Donations of household items, tools, clothes and other small things through **Vietnam Veterans of America's** (VVA) Pickup Please service (pickupplease.org/connecticut) permits the organization to collect and sell items to provide assistance to veterans. In addition, with events such as Chapter 120 of Greater Connecticut's annual Stand Down, which happens in Rocky Hill, VVA shares free

services and information from federal and state agencies and businesses. The community also contributes, volunteering time or services, such as beauty school hairdressers giving haircuts or nursing students checking blood pressure. Connecticut food banks offer additional food items while other volunteers collect winter wear for those in need. There are three others in the state: Chapter 251 in Milford, Chapter 270 in Niantic and Chapter 484 in East Haven.

Drawing Them Out: Utilizing Art to Combat Trauma

On a state level, **Mental Health Connecticut** offers the Art of Wellbeing for Veterans and Their Families in partnership with **Homes for the Brave** (homesforthebrave.org) in Bridgeport. The grant-funded project includes several 8-week, trauma-informed workshops for veterans and their families (for ages 16 and over) utilizing drawing, writing, movement, drumming and other creative expression ways to explore using art as a healing tool. It is funded in part by Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network, a National Endowment and U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs initiative.

Providing Legal Aid When Needed

When low-income veterans are faced with legal issues for which they need representation, **Connecticut Veterans Legal Center's** (CVLC) **Pro Bono Attorney Network** (ctveteranslegal.org/

probono) can step up to offer free legal help, information and referrals to those dealing with homelessness, mental health issues and substance abuse recovery. The attorneys have donated their time in hundreds of legal cases as part of a medical-legal partnership model with Veterans Administration Hospitals (VA) and other providers.

“While there are a lot of wonderful state and federal programs and protections for veterans in Connecticut, sometimes you need an advocate to get the benefits you've earned,” says CVLC's executive director, Alison Weir, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. (retired). “Helping veterans get compensation for their injuries, avoid eviction or connect to VA healthcare is life-changing work, not just for our clients, but for our entire team. Some of our clients have gone from living in their cars to having a steady income and a host of supportive services, greatly improving their standard of living.”

Lending a Helping Hand

Wounded veterans returning to civilian life can face issues navigating their homes with their new physical challenges. **Homes For Our Troops** (HFOT) is a national organization that has built nearly 400 homes with several initiatives in Connecticut (hfootusa.org/building-homes/veteran-home-building-projects/ct). The nonprofit donates and builds custom homes for severely injured post-9/11 veterans, specially adapted to their individual needs and injuries with more than three dozen accessibility adaptations available. The home of one Connecticut-based veteran, Marine Corporal Roger Rua,

was finished in the beginning of 2023. He suffered a traumatic brain injury and spine, femur and sternum fractures from a detonated improvised explosive device in Afghanistan. The home adaptations he received enable him to carry his two children, safely maneuver independently, and avoid fall risks posed by stairs and thresholds.

Based out of Glastonbury, **American Warrior** (americanwarrior.org) has worked with thousands of veterans since 2007 with financial assistance, healthcare, support services, home maintenance, wheelchair and medical equipment, and educational and skills opportunities. The impetus to start the nonprofit was catapulted by founder Christopher Coutu when he didn't see World War II veterans visiting the World War II Memorial. That drive to help them see the site while they were still alive motivated him to start American Warrior. The organization hosts activities and honoring events for armed service and National Guard members and veterans. In partnership with companies and other organizations, American Warrior sponsors veteran families during the holidays, including active-duty military personnel and veterans. Individuals and families can also sponsor a veteran (americanwarrior.org/event/seasonal-holiday-military-family-sponsorship).

Located in Bristol, **Veterans Strong Community Center** (vetstronginc.org) assists veterans, active-duty members and their families with resources. For certain towns, the Veterans Logistics Fund is available for fuel payment assistance. One of its initiatives, the annual Holiday Happenings Secret Santa, enables community members to "adopt" more than a hundred veterans and families with "hero bags." For Valentines Day, the nonprofit has given out more than 1,000 this year. Veterans Strong Community Center also partners Connecticut Department of Labor to encourage veteran employment.

Community Renewal Team, Inc. (crtct.org), a designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties, is a nonprofit

provider of human services in Connecticut. One of their programs, Veterans Crossing, is a transitional housing facility in East Hartford where homeless male veterans get support with work, life skills and housing. In addition, they have housing support services for veterans and their families.

With over 15 chapters in Connecticut, **Disabled American Veterans (DAV)** aids veterans and their families navigate the disability benefits they are entitled to, whether it is related to health care, disability, employment, education or other things. Nationwide in 2023 alone, DAV (dav.org) represented veterans, helping them access over \$28 billion in benefits.



A happy veteran rides down his new ramp from House of Heroes, enabling him to now get out of his home safely. Credit: Carol May and Dennis Buden.

Organizations such as Goodwill work with veterans within the community, including **Goodwill of Western & Northern Connecticut**, which helped coordinate housing, occupational training, employment searching and more for over 35 veterans in Fairfield County who were on the verge of being homeless in 2023. The effort was because of the 3-year grant Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program.

While the national organization celebrates its 25th anniversary in

January 2025, the Hamden-based Connecticut chapter (HOHCT) of **House of Heroes** (hohct.org) was launched in 2012. It works with disabled, fixed-income, or physically or financially challenged veterans who own and occupy their own home but who need assistance with home repairs. The public can help by making tax-deductible donations; for instance, a \$100 donation will help purchase a sink, while \$150 can buy a window. Minor repairs and other home improvement projects are performed by volunteers with all levels of skills and licensed craftsmen. Companies and organizations can work with HOHCT, like CareFree HomePros with its donation of a handicapped bathroom to help a veteran's spouse. In the fall of 2023, Sikorsky volunteers also gave their time and skills to repair two veterans' homes. HOHCT's goal is work on 50 home projects each year in the state.

Continuing to Honor Veterans Throughout the Year

"It is not just November 11; it's all year round," says Martinelli about the UConn EBV program. "If anyone wants to get involved, serve as mentors or presenters, collaborate in our network to help later on, or more, please reach out. It is important to understand that it shows veterans in a bad spot that there is hope. It will allow them to pursue their dreams, and it is free. It is life-changing and lifesaving."

"Serving veterans is a passion of dedication for those who have served our country sacrificially. We can think of no greater honor than helping a deserving veteran stay safely in their own home!" says Carol May, executive director of House of Heroes CT.

Whether helping with one of these organizations or others found in Connecticut, giving back enables us to serve those who have served for us. To our veterans and active-duty members, thank you for your service. 🇺🇸

Reflecting on Connecticut's Place on the Campaign Trail

By DENNIS HOUSE



Our great state is many things, but a battleground state is not among them. If you are eager to see presidential candidates visiting diners, shaking hands at the gates of a factory and holding rallies, you'll need to relocate to Michigan, North Carolina, Arizona, or one of a handful of states that could either go Democrat or Republican and play a crucial role in who will be the next president.

Connecticut is now considered a reliable, blue Democratic state, which means Kamala Harris and Donald

Trump won't be coming to here to campaign—though a trip to “visit an ATM” isn't out of the question. More on that later.

I love covering presidential campaigns and following them as soon as they begin. I find the primary process entertaining yet deeply flawed. I enjoy the drama over the “veepstakes” and the conventions. My biggest convention memories come from 2000 when there were Connecticut connections to both tickets. I was assigned to cover the candidates in Los Angeles and Philadelphia that year. That was the year Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman was the Democrats' vice-presidential candidate and New Haven-born George W. Bush was

the GOP standard bearer. He remains the only president born in our state, though he lost Connecticut badly that year.

The Democrats have now carried Connecticut for the past eight presidential elections, and not even one was close. Before that, the Republicans' Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan (twice) and George H.W. Bush won Connecticut in the 1970s and 1980s, all by somewhat comfortable margins. Kennedy, Johnson and Humphrey won the three races of the 1960s, but Republicans Thomas Dewey and Dwight Eisenhower won the three before that. Democrat Franklin Roosevelt took the prior three. Incidentally, in 1932 during the Great



 Neil Vigdor
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@DennisHouseWFSB reels in
the big one, gets
#DonaldTrump interview
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8/13/16, 8:19 PM from Fairfield, CT

Depression, Connecticut was one of only six states to reject Roosevelt and choose to stay with the very unpopular Herbert Hoover, who is often blamed for the worst economic period in American history.

Back to our lack of battleground status. It has been a while since Connecticut attracted candidates from both political parties to fight for votes here. 1988 comes to mind when Vice President George Bush, a Republican, and the Democratic nominee for president, Michael Dukakis, campaigned here. Bush had Connecticut roots having grown up in Greenwich. His father was a U.S. Senator from our state, and he went to Yale. Bush went on to carry Connecticut that November, but it was the last time the state went red.

I've been asked if I have ever interviewed this year's nominees; the answer is yes and almost.

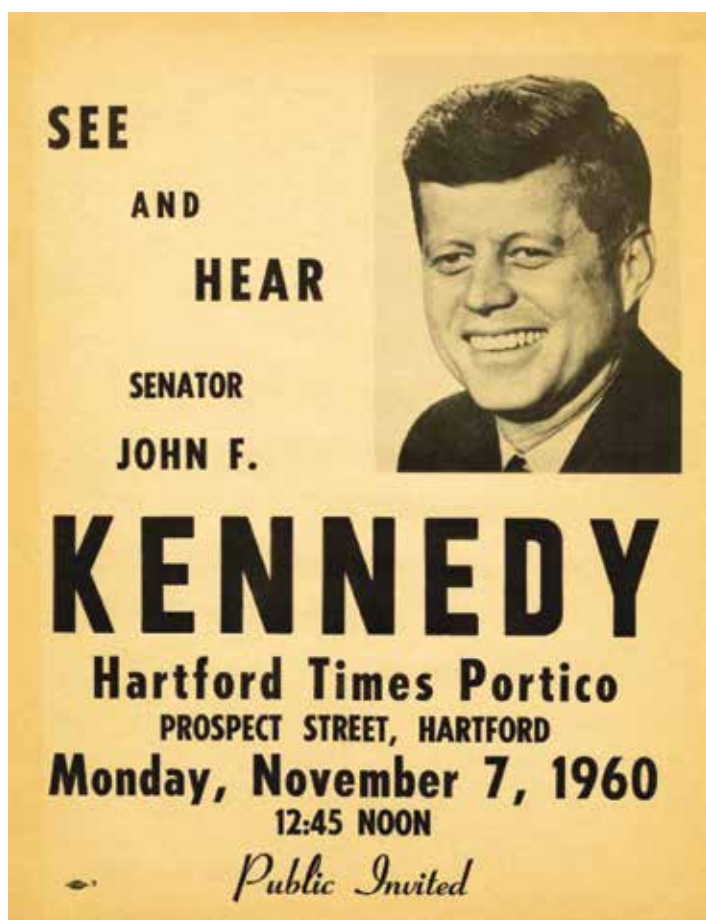
In 2016, former President Donald Trump believed he could recapture Connecticut for the GOP. I got a call from Trump's campaign about 9 a.m. on Saturday that I'd been selected to have an exclusive interview with the Republican nominee at a late summer



**QUICK
QUIZ**

**Q: WHICH PRESIDENTS CARRIED CONNECTICUT
THREE ELECTIONS IN A ROW?**

Answer on page 39



Advertisement for a speech to be given by Senator John F. Kennedy at the Hartford Times Portico on November 7, 1960. Credit: Gift of Lynn Ferrari to Connecticut Museum of Culture and History.

campaign stop at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield. I called my station, they called in crews and I headed back to Connecticut from vacation. As the Secret Service requires, we had to get there hours in advance; we did and then continued waiting for nearly 4 hours. There were also dignitaries and people waiting to meet and get a picture with Trump. I made small talk with Linda McMahon before I was whisked off to my designated waiting area where we waited and waited. With our interview scheduled for 7:30 p.m., a campaign staffer came in and informed us about 7 p.m. that the interview and the campaign visit had been cancelled with no explanation. I was told they would make it up to me with an interview later when Trump was in White

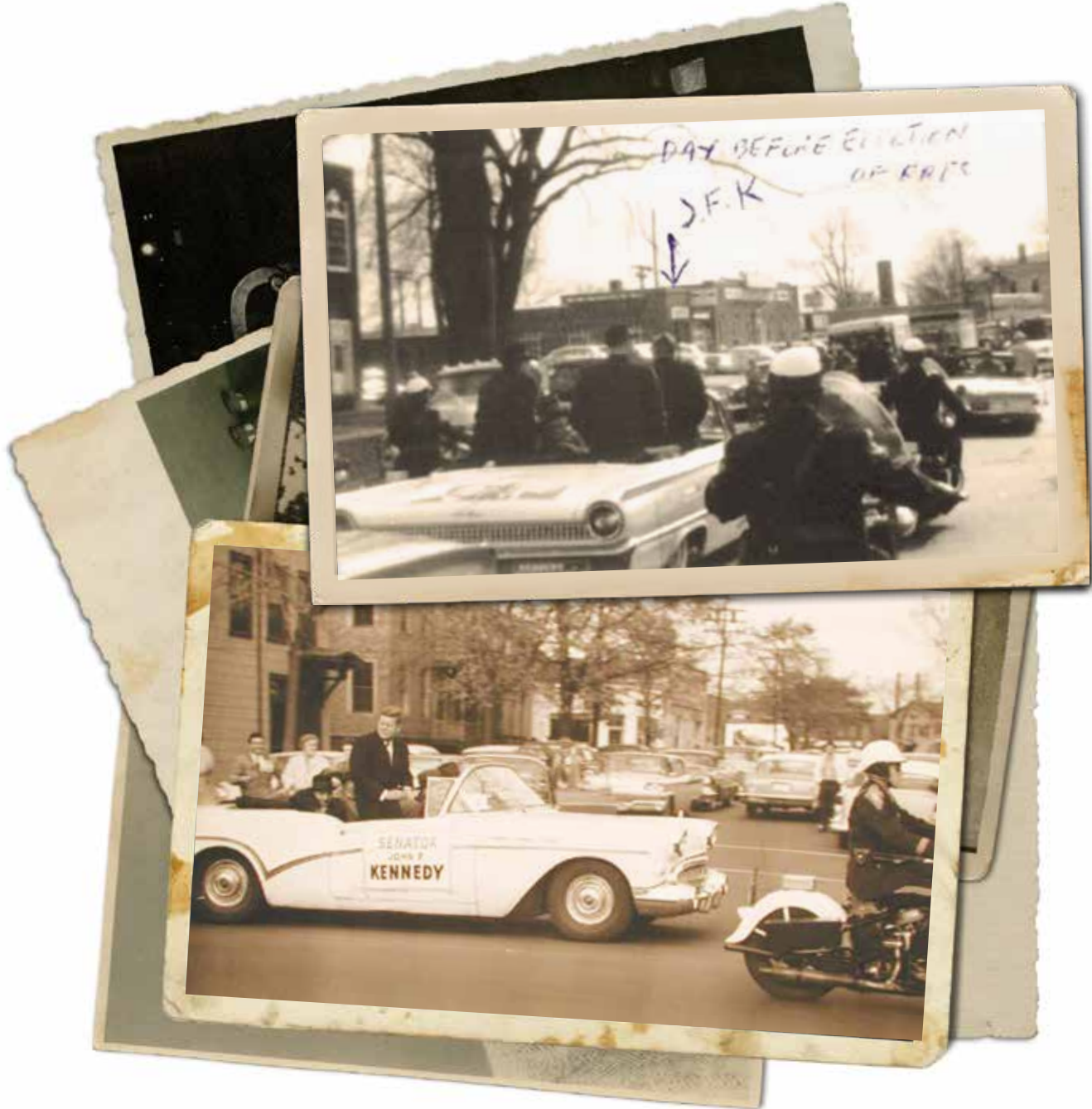
House...which never happened. He lost Connecticut to Hillary Clinton that November.

I have interviewed Vice President Kamala Harris twice. The first time was in West Haven during the COVID-19 epidemic when I was issued this White House mask that made me look like Donald Duck. The second time was at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain where the Vice President was less rushed; we had a few moments to chat off the record. In both cases, the waiting time before the interviews was much shorter but under similar conditions to the almost Trump interview. You had to arrive early, go through security checkpoints and more. The interviews with Harris were limited to under five minutes each

time, which is about what I was expecting with Trump.

I'll close with my first "interview" with a president, actually a former one. In 1990, I was an anchor in Rockford, Ill., and was assigned to cover former President Ronald Reagan's visit to his boyhood home in Dixon, Ill., which had been transformed into a museum. We were told there would be no interviews and the property was cordoned off and surrounded by police and Secret Service. My gut told me to leave the phalanx of media in front of the house and instead camp out at the back of the house. I figured Reagan would want to see his childhood backyard. My hunch paid off. Reagan came out the back door. It was just my photographer and me, along with a network pool camera. I asked the great communicator about three questions as I walked alongside him. My boss was thrilled that we were the only station to get a comment from a man who rarely gave interviews.

How do we get Connecticut to become a battleground state again? I think a start would be an earlier primary date. Remember in 2008 when Barack Obama came to the XL Center in Hartford? It was February 4 and the eve of the Super Tuesday primaries. In recent cycles, the Connecticut primary has been in April, long after most of the candidates have dropped out. Is there any hope for presidential candidate visits this fall? Unlikely. President Joe Biden beat Trump by 20 points in 2020. There are no polls indicating Trump is even remotely close to



Top: Senator John F. Kennedy's motorcade in Hartford, Conn., in 1960. Credit: Connecticut Museum of Culture and History. Bottom: Photograph of President John F. Kennedy in New Haven in 1960. Credit: Gift of Steven B. Alderman to Connecticut Museum of Culture and History.

Vice President Harris in our state this year. It is possible both could fly in and out for a well-heeled fundraiser. Candidates often use Connecticut as an ATM and come in without any public appearances and leave with a haul of donations to spend in battleground states.

In the meantime, I'll leave you with a memory from 1960 when thousands packed Prospect Street in Hartford when John Kennedy came to Connecticut for

an election eve campaign stop. Connecticut was a battleground state then and Kennedy flipped Connecticut Democrat. 🗳️

Dennis House has been covering the news in Connecticut for 31 years. He can be seen weeknights at 6 and 11 p.m. on WTNH and at 10 p.m. on WCTX. He also hosts "This Week in Connecticut" Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.

QUICK QUIZ

ANSWER:
Franklin Roosevelt
and Grover
Cleveland

A vibrant, painterly illustration of a rural landscape. In the upper right, a hot air balloon with rainbow-colored stripes floats in the sky. Below it, a stream flows through a lush green valley. On the left, a woman in a white dress stands amidst dense foliage, holding a bouquet of red flowers. In the background, a wooden barn and a house are visible on a hillside. The overall scene is bright and detailed, with a focus on natural elements and a small human figure.

**DID YOU
KNOW ?**

Haunted Apples and Bewitched Beer

By Erik Ofgang

Connecticut's history is fascinating. From aerospace to Indigenous history, the state and its people have played an important—if sometimes overlooked role in New England, U.S. and global history. In honor of Halloween and autumn, here are two tales. The first is, as hard as it is to believe, completely true; the second is folklore with some disturbing real-life inspirations.



Bewitched Beer

To understand just how tragically comic the witch hunt scares of colonial Connecticut were, you need look no further than the story of Elizabeth Goodman. Goodman, who was sometimes called Godman as well, was an unmarried woman without close relatives. She worked and lived in the household of Stephen Goodyear, the deputy governor of New Haven in the mid-1650s. In the summer of 1653, a neighbor complained that Goodwin bewitched some of the neighbor's chickens and caused them to die of worms. This strange accusation led to Goodman's imprisonment and trial—but things would soon get much stranger.

During the trial, others came forward accusing Goodman of witchcraft. Among them was an accusation from a reverend that she had bewitched his beer. According to the reverend, during the summer she had come by his house and asked if she could have some of his freshly brewed beer. He refused to give her some of his fresh batch but did offer her some he had previously brewed. Goodman didn't want the other beer and walked off muttering to herself. The next day the reverend's beer had soured. He concluded that Goodman had placed some type of curse on it.

"The Goodman case shows us that women in early Connecticut could even be blamed in the guise of witchcraft for a batch of beer souring, or chickens dying and filled with worms," says Beth Caruso, author of "One of Windsor," a historical novel about Connecticut and America's first witch hanging. The court didn't sentence Goodman to death but put her on the colonial equivalent of probation. Goodman was lucky. "She could have lost her life for these seemingly trivial things," Caruso says.

Connecticut's witch scares lasted between 1647 and 1663. During that time, 34 people in the Connecticut and New Haven colonies were indicted for witchcraft and 11 were executed. Most of these witch hunt victims were women.

"These women were outside gender norms for their time," states Caruso. "Their accusations were largely based in misogyny. They were childless troublemakers who people did not like."

Goodman and the other accused witches in Connecticut were pardoned last year thanks to Caruso and other Connecticut witch hunt victim advocates who lobbied for years to have Connecticut officially clear the names of these wrongfully accused individuals. Despite the exonerations and all the progress society has made since Goodman's time, Caruso stresses that misogyny against women—particularly childless women—continues today. "We still have many lessons to learn from the Connecticut witch trials and many hurdles to get past before misogyny loosens its ugly grip upon society." ❧

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A Haunted Apple Story with A Hint of Truth

One of folklorest Stephen Gencarella's favorite Connecticut legends is the story of Micah Rood and his haunted apples. Gencarella, a Connecticut resident and professor of folklore at the University of Massachusetts Amherst investigated the legend for his book "Spooky Trails and Tall Tales Connecticut: Hiking the State's Legends, Hauntings, and History." Tracing the origins of the story down through the years, he found the seeds of a true story that is in many ways much grimmer and more disturbing than the better-known legends. Before we get to its real-world inspiration, here is the legend. There are, of course, different versions of the tale but the main one goes more or less like this.

In the mid-1700s, there was a Franklin farmer named Micah Rood. We don't know much about him other than that he hated the French because his father was killed by them during the French Indian War. As the war was still raging, a foreign-born peddler visited Rood's farm. Rood believed this man was a French spy. Because of this and due to his hatred of the French, he murdered the man and buried him under an apple tree on his farm. The next year the apple tree's blossoms were red instead of white. More disturbingly, the fruit of the tree had changed. Now, when Rood bit into each and every apple, he found a red speck in the center of its flesh. As these strange apples arrived, so too did a letter from friends of the peddler asking if anyone has seen him. The letter revealed that he

was German and not French. Consumed by guilt over the awful thing he had done, Rood hanged himself from his now-cursed apple tree.

While researching this story, Gencarella learned that it has been told for more than 200 years in and around Franklin. There was a real Micah Rood who lived in what is modern-day Franklin in the late 1600s and early 1700s, and he had a farm. But he was not guilty of a crime, though according to Gencarella, there is a plausible reason he was "chosen as a character for a grim and shocking fantasy." The reason was his father, Thomas Rood, who was convicted of incest and executed in 1672—the only official execution for this crime in what would become the United States.

But this isn't the only kernel of truth in the tale. By the 1800s, there is documentation in eastern Connecticut of a popular apple variety called the "Mike Apple," which did in fact have red flecks or specks. One theory is that over time the apple's original name "Micah" became "Mike." Gencarella isn't certain. "It is entirely plausible that the real Micah Rood developed such an apple on his farm," he notes. "It is just as possible that a different farmer developed the variety, and its appearance inspired or coincided with a local legend."

Erik Ofgang is a Connecticut freelance writer and author. He has written for The New York Times, Smithsonian magazine, The Atlantic, The Washington Post and Forbes as well as appeared on the History Channel's "Food That Built America." He teaches writing in WCSU's MFA Program.

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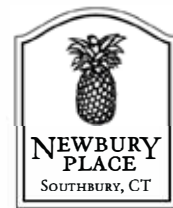


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Apple Enchantment

After heading to a local orchard to pick your own apples, bring your stash home and make a rustic recipe that taps the fruit's flavor

Perfect for a date or family outing, picking apples at a local orchard (see www.pickyourown.org/CT.htm for a list of possibilities) is a classic fall excursion with a delicious end game. After returning home with your haul, perhaps with a few pieces of hay stuck to your jeans from the tractor ride out to the trees, you can embark on a second adventure. Head to the kitchen and make a sweet or savory dish that celebrates autumn's favorite fruit.

Most families have a cherished apple pie recipe, so instead I focused on three alternative ways to use apples – in pancakes (a great way to get your kids to eat fruit), in soup (employing savory autumn classics, parsnips and cardamom) and in a dessert (a rustic take on pie, where the filling takes center stage).

As apples come in all different flavors and textures, I've recommended an apple type for each recipe. Feel free to substitute your favorite variety if it fulfills the needs of the recipe. When baking, select firm and slightly tart apples, such as Cortland, Empire, Gala, Golden Delicious or Honey Crisp, as they hold up to heat and can withstand added sugar in a recipe. For cooking, Granny Smith, Braeburn, Cortland, Macoun, Fuji and McIntosh are great because they are slightly softer, will break down quicker and provide a smoother texture. 



Written and Photographed by Alycia Chrosniak



SWEET STACK: Topped with chopped apples and maple syrup, apple pancakes are the ideal fall repast.



HOT AND SAVORY:
A swirl of cream and chives accents the tawny tone of apple parsnip soup.

APPLE PARSNIP SOUP

Tear a loaf of ciabatta into large pieces and char over a fire or a gas burner. Bread is the perfect dipping vehicle for this savory soup. Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 pound parsnips, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 medium onion, diced
- ½ teaspoon cardamom
- 2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and diced
- 4 garlic cloves, sliced
- 4 cups chicken stock
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup cream
- Chives, chopped

Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the diced parsnips and cook for 5 minutes until slightly softened.

Add the celery, onion and cardamom and cook for an additional 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the apples and garlic and cook for another 5 minutes until the apples are softened.

Add the stock and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for about 20 minutes until all the ingredients are very soft. Remove from heat and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Blend the mixture with an immersion blender or in a traditional blender until smooth.

Divide between 4 to 6 bowls. Take a teaspoon of cream and drizzle on top of each bowl. Garnish with chopped chives and serve.



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APPLE PANCAKES

Don't overmix the batter. Overmixing can develop the gluten in the flour and make your pancakes chewy instead of fluffy. Lumps are okay. Serves 4

Pancakes:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar, optional
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- 1 ½ cups milk
- 1 cup grated Granny Smith apples (about 2 apples)
- Butter for cooking, or use canola or vegetable oil

Apple Topping:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 Golden Delicious apples, peeled, cored and diced
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- Maple syrup

Heat a griddle over medium-low heat.

In a bowl, mix together the dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, mix together the eggs and milk. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients. Stir just enough to combine; don't worry if there are a few lumps.

Place a teaspoon or so of butter on the griddle. When the butter foam has subsided, ladle batter onto the griddle. Flip pancakes after bubbles rise to the top and the bottom is golden brown, approximately 2-4 minutes. Adjust the heat as needed. Cook the second side until lightly brown.

While you make the pancakes, in a separate skillet, add the diced apples, and butter. Sprinkle the brown sugar and cinnamon on top and stir and cook until the apples are soft.

Garnish pancakes with the apple topping and maple syrup.

APPLE GALETTE

For a sweet, golden crust, sprinkle the outer edges of the dough with sugar before placing in the oven to bake. Serves 6-8

For the dough:

- 1 ½ cups flour
- 3 teaspoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 stick + 2 tablespoons unsalted cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 1/3 cup ice water

For the filling:

- 4 to 5 Golden Delicious apples
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- Zest and juice of ½ lemon

In a food processor, combine the flour, sugar, salt and butter and process for about 5 seconds. Pour in the ice water and process for 10 to 15 more seconds until it just begins to come together. Transfer the pastry to your work surface and knead it into a disc. Wrap it in plastic wrap and refrigerate until chilled.

Peel, core and quarter the apples and slice them ¼-inch thick. Mix the pieces together in a bowl with the sugar, cinnamon and lemon juice and zest.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the pastry to approximately a 12-inch circle and transfer to a baking sheet. Leaving a 1-inch border, arrange the apple slices in a circle with the layers slightly overlapping. Dot the apples with the pieces of butter and fold the pastry edge up over the apples to form a 1-inch border.

Bake the galette for about 50 minutes, until the pastry is golden and crispy all over. Serve warm or at room temperature.

NEW CLASSIC: A galette is a sophisticated alternative to traditional apple pie.



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Addressing Nurse Shortages with New Albertus Magnus Program

By ALIX BOYLE

To help address a statewide and national nursing shortage, Albertus Magnus College in New Haven launched a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree beginning in the fall of 2024.

“Our program is student-focused and personalized with small class sizes,” says Dr. Cynthia Jeffrey, associate professor and program director. “Albertus is founded in the Dominican tradition with the pillars of prayer, study, community and service. That’s what nursing is all about.”

The first group accepted into the new nursing degree program has only 13 students and represents the diversity of the nursing profession itself. Five students are traditional, coming to Albertus straight out of high school. Some are transfer students. There is one male student, and the rest are female. The age range is from 19 to 48, with some older students having experience as licensed practical nurses.

“We are the most diverse Catholic college in New England and our first cohort reflects that,” Jeffrey says. There are Latinx students, African American, white and Asian. The college has an enrollment of



Cynthia Jeffrey, Ed.D., M.S.N., R.N.
Director of Nursing Programs
Albertus Magnus College

about 1,300 students across the undergraduate, accelerated adult undergraduate and 12 graduate programs.

In addition, Albertus will also offer a Licensed Practical Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, the first of its kind in the state. It is accepting applications for the first cohort that will begin in January.

The plan going forward is to accept

up to 52 students each year for nursing. Most classes have fewer than 20 students and never more than 26.

As a brand-new program, nursing students will have the opportunity to work with the latest technology. Albertus has purchased a variety of lifelike nursing manikins to give students the experience of treating “patients” in a safe learning environment. In the skills lab, students will learn to take blood pressures and insert Foley catheters on mid-fidelity manikins in a hospital bed with a working headwall, just like in a hospital or other healthcare setting. In the simulation lab, students will work with four very lifelike high-fidelity manikins: male, pediatric, newborn and a birthing mom.

“Studies find that the more lifelike the simulation is, the more the students learn,” Jeffrey states. “It’s a safe environment. We have cameras and film everything. We can play back the experience and let the students look and see what they would do differently next time.”

Each member of the nursing faculty has worked in the profession for at least 20 years. They bring their years of experience to the students. Albertus

has formed partnerships with top healthcare organizations in the area to give the students hands-on clinical experience that will prepare them for the workforce. The organizations include Connecticut Hospice, Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, Griffin Health, Mary Wade Home, Sage Healthcare and Yale New Haven Health System.

Jeffrey has worked in many areas of the nursing field, including coronary care, telemetry, hospice and home care. She has taught in associate degree, bachelor's degree and master's degree

nursing programs, as well as in a licensed practical nurse program. She has worked as a nurse for 25 years and has been teaching for 12 years.

A significant number of registered nurses will retire in the next two years, both in Connecticut and across the U.S., Jeffrey says. Programs to create new nurses are crucial. "We have nowhere near what will be needed to deal with the shortage."

This summer, high school students interested in nursing attended a two-day camp at Albertus where they

received training and a certificate in CPR and first aid. They listened to guest speakers talk about the nursing profession and toured Gaylord Specialty Healthcare. Classes like this help create a nursing pipeline.


Once students are enrolled in college, they can join the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program during intersession (the period between first and second semester).

"We partnered with Gaylord Specialty Healthcare to offer a CNA course for pre-nursing students," Jeffrey says. "The students are actually talking to patients and giving a little care. It's a huge advantage. They can get a part-time job as a certified nursing assistant."

Students take prerequisites freshman year and can apply to the nursing program as long as they have a 3.0 GPA. Generous scholarships are available.

In addition to a personalized nursing education, students are required to take classes in liberal arts where they will gain skills in critical thinking, decision-making ethics and compassionate care.

For Jeffrey, the most rewarding part of leading the new BSN program at Albertus is being able to witness the transformative journey of its students. "I have already had the pleasure of doing this with our pre-nursing students who will be starting their nursing courses this fall. Being able to see them grow from eager, aspiring student nurses into confident, competent professionals who are ready to make a meaningful impact in the healthcare field will be incredibly fulfilling. I am particularly proud of our innovative curriculum, which not only equips students with the necessary clinical skills but also emphasizes holistic patient care, clinical judgment and ethical leadership," Jeffrey says.

She adds, "Additionally, the opportunity to collaborate with a dedicated team of faculty and staff, all working towards the common goal of student success, is truly inspiring. It's a privilege to be a part of shaping the future of nursing education at Albertus Magnus College." 



The first nursing class at Albertus Magnus College receives the blessing of the hands.

Coffee, Cats and Companions: Marcie's Angels Cat Cafe

Written by RENEE DININO / photos courtesy of MARCIE'S ANGELS CAT CAFE

Who wouldn't want nine lives, especially if all of them included visits to Marcie's Angels Cat Café, located in Glastonbury, Conn. "Our mission is simple: to provide a safe, clean and comfortable space for people to enjoy the company of our adorable cats." This is an incredible meeting place for humans and felines and the opportunity to meet your purr-fect companion, support local cat rescue Protectors of Animals, and enjoy delicious beverages and treats! You may even book a reading with their spiritualist for past cat lives!

The cafe was named in honor of Marcie, owner Beth Drazaks' beloved cat. This is a place where her memory will continuously be showcased and help create new bonds with people and pets like the one shared between Drazaks and Marcie.

"She was my first adult fur baby. I mean I had cats while growing up, but she was like my first adult baby to me before my human kids. She would go everywhere with me, to work, to events, everywhere. Marcie was an alpha calico cat who didn't always love other people, but she always loved me," according to Drazaks.

When Drazaks was in her 20's, she became obsessed with the idea of opening a rescue with a twist. The idea was to open a spot where people could come in, socialize, potentially adopt and keep the cats entertained.

"It's therapeutic too; college students use it during exam time to relax. When people need a break from work or a stressful situation, they come, pet a cat or just sit in the room. We have yoga with cats and many events to promote mental health and wellbeing. Everyone says they're so calm after their session, we





Visitors love cuddling with the cats and, when supervised, the kids enjoy it as well. Although it's debatable who enjoys what more, giving a toy or playing with the toy are both fun.



Cats and kittens enjoy free roam in their special area while you enjoy your treats outside the visiting room in the cafe. The cats are practicing their best mind-meld skills to bring them a treat!

often say we should take their blood pressure at the start of their visit and at the end!" says Drazaks.

Located in Glastonbury and open four days a week, you can visit marciesangelscatcafe.com for times and enjoy the cafe and treats during business hours without reservations and enjoy three large viewing windows to watch the cats at play. But if you want to interact with the cats, you must reserve your spot. You can go online, fill out the waiver to reserve your spot and time. The cost is \$15 for 50 minutes. If you should find your "fur-ever" friend, Protectors of Animals handles all the adoptions.

Protectors of Animals is a 501c3 animal rescue who has been a trusted voice in animal advocacy since 1975. They are a no-kill animal shelter and rescue here in Connecticut and you can find out more by visiting them at poainc.org.

The cafe opened in August of 2024 after a year and a half of research and renovations. This is a lifelong wish for Drazaks and "my pre-retirement passion project," she says.

Ultimately, the goal is to get as many cats into their forever homes, educate the public on cats and their unique qualities, and give them a loving and safe foster home until their adoption.

Marcie's Angels Cat Cafe is fully responsible for the care of the cats while they are at the café. If you would like to help, there is a link to their Amazon Wish List and a Venmo account online you can donate to. You can also find them on social media on Facebook and Instagram where you can see a listing of their upcoming events and pictures of all the furry residents.

One thing of note Drazaks would like to share with the public is, "never give up on your dreams, nothing is too big or too far out of reach; be prepared to fall in love when you come visit. So, make those reservations." 🐾

Renee DiNino is a radio and TV host, blogger, podcaster, public speaker and animal advocate. Connect on Facebook @reneedinino, Instagram @reneedinino and Twitter @myctcommunity.



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HALLOWEEN EDITION:

What Has Happened to Our Children?

By **MATTHEW DICKS** / Illustrated By **SEAN WANG**

My son is dressed like Marty McFly from “Back to the Future.” Orange vest. Jean jacket. Flannel shirt. The vest is doing a lot of work.

My daughter is dressed like a character from a fairly obscure show called “The Owl House.” In my mind, she looks like she always does: pants, shirt, knit cap. Nothing special at all. She’ll spend the night explaining to people about who she is and will likely be annoyed every time.

These children are bizarre. One is dressed up like a character from a movie nearly four decades old. The other is dressed up like a character no one has heard of

before. What is wrong with these kids?

I’d be happy to purchase them a mask of any kind. Vampire teeth. Fake muscles. Plastic swords and battle axes. I’d cut holes in a sheet to transform them into ghosts if they wanted. Instead, they dress like human beings.

But this isn’t the worst part. It gets more egregious. Around 8 p.m., after visiting a dozen homes, one of them will turn to me and say, “I’m done. We can go home.” Then the other one will agree.

With half a bag of candy and at least an hour left before Halloween ends, they will call it a night and ask to return home. No matter how much urging, cajoling

and ridiculing I do, they will ignore me.

I know this because I've been dealing with it for years. These children—who can't keep Cheerios off the floor and only warn me that we're running out of milk after we've run out of milk—refuse to press on into the night and collect as much candy as humanly possible because of stupidity like sleep, homework and being well rested for the next day. It makes no sense.

Two years ago, I finally took a stand. When Clara said, "One more house and then we're done," at 7:52 p.m., I stood atop a rock on the corner of two streets and said, "You listen to me. You only get so many Halloweens in your life. There are only so many nights like this when you can dress up in creepy costumes, bang on doors and demand candy. Time is fleeting, people. The end is coming. Let us suck the marrow of life tonight and get as much candy as possible."

They weren't wearing creepy costumes that year, either, of course. Both were dressed as characters from the TV show "Stranger Things," which means they were dressed like ordinary kids.

Clara and Charlie listened to my oration that night, nodded at the appropriate moments and even smiled. They seemed genuinely moved. I felt like I had finally landed my message and made a difference. But when I finished speaking, Clara said, "Are you finished? We need to go to school tomorrow. We shouldn't stay out too late."

"Yup," Charlie said. "Let's head home. Sorry, Pops."

Something terrible has happened

to this generation of children. When I tell my kids stories about egging teacher's homes, stealing candy from children much smaller than me, running from the police, getting caught by the police and toilet-papering front lawns, they think I'm a monster. They genuinely believe

"You only get so many Halloweens in your life... Time is fleeting, people."

that I was a criminal. When I tell them about plastic masks affixed to my head by elastic bands that tangled in my hair and created rainforest-like environments between the mask and my face, they think I was living in the Dark Ages.

How can kids be so smart and so dumb at the same time?

They each have only a handful of years left before trick-or-treating passes them by. No one warned me as a kid about the fleeting nature of childhood, but even then, I felt the years rolling by faster than I wanted. But try as I might to warn them today, my warning falls on deaf ears. Painfully responsible ears. The ears

of children who are afraid to break laws, violate norms, take risks and generate mayhem.

I loved mayhem as a kid. I still do.

My children are like responsible, boring adults who worry about sleep and parking restrictions and being on time but still can't fold a load of laundry, feed a hungry cat or turn off a damn light. Somehow, my children have become the kind of kids I despised when I was a child. I'm raising kids who I would've bullied at every opportunity when I was their age. I've failed miserably as a parent.

I know it's too late for them. Too late for Clara or Charlie to embrace the joys of danger and mayhem. So all I can hope for—because I'm spiteful—is that when they have children someday—my grandchildren—I hope those kids shave their heads for Halloween, superglue horns to their skulls, cut holes in their best bedsheets, and dress up like devils and ghosts. I hope they sneak out of the house with three dozen eggs and 19 rolls of toilet paper and return home well after midnight, dragging half a ton of candy, looking breathless, disheveled and happy. ❧

*Matthew Dicks is an elementary school teacher, bestselling novelist and a record 55-time Moth Story SLAM champion. His latest books are *Twenty-one Truths About Love* and *The Other Mother*.*

*Sean Wang, an MIT architecture graduate, is author of the sci-fi graphic novel series, *Runners*. Learn more at seanwang.com.*



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