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A teal Porsche Cayenne is shown driving on a city street, with motion blur on the background buildings and street to convey a sense of speed. The car is positioned in the center-left of the frame, moving towards the right. The background features multi-story urban buildings in shades of grey and red, with power lines and a cloudy sky visible in the distance.

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Seasons' Greetings

Taking Advantage of Time



Ariana Rawls Fine

Time. As we move into winter, we are reminded every day how time is passing so quickly when our daylight hours dwindle to their annual low. No time to do chores or relax outdoors during the week after work. Barely any time for the kids to play outside after school. The afternoon rush hour drive is in darkness. While we truly appreciate the light we do have during the day and try to make the most of it, we can also make the best of it indoors in the evenings.

In the Travel article, we head out with great local ideas for hidden winter getaways around the state. On the flipside inside, if others were to peer into your windows, what story would your spaces tell and what can we do to change that perception, Kerri-Lee Mayland asks in our Home article. This time of the year is "Hallmark movie time" for many of us (including me), curled up with a blanket on the sofa; the twists, turns and love of Teresa Pelham Michaud's life sound like the script from one. Talking of movies and taking it easy, have fun making the comfort food recipes in our Delicious section for a meal before getting the popcorn ready for cinema time. And Kimberly Lucey Millen also offers simple things you can do this winter to maintain your wellbeing.

Not feeling like a movie? Grab the magazine, a cup of tea and read our other great articles. Dennis House looks back on 2025 in his annual Year in Review. He also divulges his heartfelt thoughts about the Whalers in Randy's Young observations about how the Carolina Hurricanes continue to celebrate our beloved hockey team in North Carolina. There is an Arts & Entertainment spotlight on journalist, columnist, humorist and radio host Colin McEnroe. Hamden's Rabbi Benjamin Scolnic observes how Hanukah celebrations have changed in Connecticut over the years. And Matt Dicks laments the woes of winter birthday sufferers in Final Thoughts.

Connect with us on social media to share the articles and other content! Have an amazing holiday season filled with love, laughter, food, rest and relaxation, family and friends, and so much more.

Warmly,

Ariana

Ariana Rawls Fine
Editor
Seasons Magazines



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– JIM TULLY

Winter

2025

SEASONS Magazines®

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Through the dedication and hard work of Dr. Dimitre Mirtchev and his team, Saint Francis Hospital's stroke center has become a regional leader in stroke care and recovery.

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Even though our beloved hockey team moved south to North Carolina many years ago, the Whalers' spirit and fans still live on with the Carolina Hurricanes.

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When the holiday frenzy is over, there are still plenty of hidden getaways and fun activities in Connecticut during wintertime.

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As we invite guests indoors, how does your space reflect you, your family and your story? Kerri-Lee Mayland reflects on wintertime and adding meaning and warmth.

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Journalist, columnist, humorist and radio host Colin McEnroe delves into his 50 years of interviewing, critiquing and covering Connecticut with Frank Rizzo.

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Now that winter darkness and cold temperatures have descended upon us, we can retreat to the familiarity of comfort food...with some new twists.

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Teresa Pelham Michaud's story sounds like the makings of a Hallmark movie with the beauty of life's twists, turns and sweetheart returns.

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Find simple ways to feel your best throughout the holidays and cold months ahead.

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With limited fun, interesting and outdoorsy options to celebrate winter birthdays, should we resent those born in the warmer months?

“WINTER IS THE TIME FOR COMFORT, FOR GOOD FOOD AND WARMTH, FOR A STILL LIGHT, FOR THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS.”

—Edith Sitwell





DR. DIMITRE MIRTCHEV:

Leading the Way in Stroke Care at Saint Francis Hospital

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

When Dimitre Mirtchev, M.D., first rotated through Saint Francis Hospital as a neurology resident at the University of Connecticut, he immediately sensed something different. “It felt like a friendly, collaborative place where people were truly passionate about their work,” he recalls. “That kind of environment is rare, and it’s what drew me back here after my training.” Today, Dr. Mirtchev is a vascular neurologist at Saint Francis Hospital, where he has been part of the team for the past seven years. In that time, Saint Francis has grown into one of the region’s leading stroke centers. It was recently recertified by The Joint Commission and is working toward its highest designation as a Comprehensive Stroke Center.

A JOURNEY BACK TO NEW ENGLAND

Dr. Mirtchev grew up in New York’s Westchester County and trained in neurology at UConn, before completing a fellowship in stroke and vascular neurology at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. But New England always called him back. “I love the Northeast: the seasons, especially fall and winter,” he says. “It’s one of the safest places to live, without natural disasters, and you’re never far from lakes, mountains, beaches

or big cities. Plus, my family and friends are here. Everything I value is close by.”

WHY STROKE CARE?

During his early training, Dr. Mirtchev found himself drawn to the field of stroke. “It’s a very hands-on specialty,” he explains. “I respond well to the urgency of it. When someone is having a stroke, every minute counts. Time is brain. You have to think quickly and act quickly; you can make a life-changing difference right there in the emergency room.”

Stroke remains a leading cause of disability, but advances in care have steadily improved outcomes. “When I first started, stroke was the third leading cause of death in the U.S. Now it’s the fifth,” he notes. “We’ve made strides thanks to new medications, devices, procedural techniques and nationwide initiatives that standardize stroke care. But there’s still a lot of room for improvement, and that’s what keeps me motivated.”

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

For Dr. Mirtchev, prevention is just as important as treatment. He is a strong advocate for community education, teaching people to recognize the warning signs of stroke using the B.E.F.A.S.T. acronym: Balance, Eyes, Face, Arm, Speech, Time. “Stroke



Dimitre Mirtchev, M.D. is a vascular neurologist at Saint Francis Hospital.

"The best way to treat stroke is to prevent it. Sleeping well, daily exercise and healthy eating as well as steering clear of illicit drugs, smoking and alcohol go a long way. Add in simple stress relievers like meditation or yoga, and you've got a recipe that can really make a difference."

—DR. MIRTCHEV

symptoms come on suddenly, so recognizing them right away and calling 911 can save a life," he emphasizes. "Unlike a heart attack, where chest pain is obvious, stroke signs and symptoms are frequently overlooked. That's why education is so critical." He says working with first responders in emergency medical services can make a big difference since they're the first line in recognition, assessing the severity of the stroke and getting patients to the right facility. He also emphasizes the importance of brain health: managing blood pressure; cholesterol; diabetes; and lifestyle factors like sleep, diet, exercise and stress.

"The best way to treat stroke is to prevent it," Dr. Mirtchev explains. "Sleeping well, daily exercise and healthy eating as well as steering clear of illicit drugs, smoking and alcohol go a long way. Add in simple stress relievers like meditation or yoga, and you've got a recipe that can really make a difference."

EXCELLENCE AT SAINT FRANCIS AND TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

At Saint Francis, patients benefit from a high-level neuro ICU, access to advanced neuro-interventional procedures and comprehensive post-stroke care. The hospital also offers tele-stroke services, allowing specialists like Dr. Mirtchev to consult with providers across Connecticut in real time, bringing expert care to patients in rural areas within minutes.


"Saint Francis has become a true hub for advanced neurological care," he continues. "We can handle everything from ischemic strokes and brain hemorrhages to aneurysms and other vascular conditions. There's no neurological emergency we can't treat here." Looking ahead,

the hospital's pursuit of Comprehensive Stroke Center designation will further solidify its role as a leader in stroke care. "It's about making sure every patient, no matter where they live, has access to the highest quality care possible," Dr. Mirtchev says.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

While prevention and early treatment are his primary focus, Dr. Mirtchev is also inspired by emerging innovations in post-stroke care. He points to promising work in artificial intelligence and neurotechnology, such as brain-computer interfaces, which may one day help paralyzed patients regain function.

"It's exciting to think that in the future we may be able to restore abilities we once thought were permanently lost," he concludes. "But until then, my passion is prevention and making sure people never need me in the first place."

For Dr. Mirtchev, the mission is clear: continue pushing stroke care forward; support patients and families through recovery; and ensure Saint Francis and Trinity Health Of New England remain at the forefront of compassionate, cutting-edge care. 

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.



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A Year in Review

By DENNIS HOUSE

Dominick Lombardi, a young man from Orange who joined the Department of Agriculture, sits down with Dennis House on This Week in Connecticut. Credit: Dennis House.

As the years 2025 comes to a close, it is difficult to comprehend we are now closer to 2050 than the year 2000. Time waits for no one and here we are a quarter century into the 21st century.

It is always hard to identify the biggest story of the year. '25 brought us a new president, a new Pope and several new leaders across Connecticut. The election of 2025 brought new mayors to Bristol, New Britain, Milford, Hamden and Torrington as well as new first selectmen in

several towns such as Ellington and Torrington. In November, Governor Lamont put the speculation to rest and announced he was indeed going to seek re-election and run for a third term. Ditto for Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz.

The new President was president before and Donald Trump tapped a few Connecticut people to join him in Washington; most notably, former WWE CEO Linda McMahon was named Secretary of Education. Dominick Lombardi, a 22-year-old from Orange, joined the Department of Agriculture and came on This Week in Connecticut

with Dennis House beaming with excitement about his first job out of college. Also beaming with joy in 2025 was this group of seminarians from the Archdiocese of Hartford led by Father Anthony Federico. They were at the Vatican for the conclave when Pope Leo was introduced to the world, the first American pope.

There were other new leaders we celebrated this year in Connecticut as new college presidents took over at Yale University, Connecticut College, Trinity College, University of New Haven, University of Hartford and Quinnipiac University.



Dennis House sits down with Gary Striewski of ESPN for an interview. Credit: Dennis House.



A group of Archdiocese of Hartford seminarians led by Father Anthony Federico traveled to the Vatican for the conclave when the first American pope was chosen. Credit: Father Anthony Federico.



Gov. Lamont stands with Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones as he is presented with the inaugural Connecticut Governor's Award of Excellence. Credit: Associated Press.

There were some cool moments in 2025 such as when Governor Lamont introduced the inaugural Connecticut Governor's Award of Excellence and presented it to Weston resident Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones. Another entertainment legend, Jane Fonda, came to Old Saybrook to receive the annual Spirit of Katherine Hepburn award. For me, one of my fun moments was interviewing Gary Striewski of ESPN! Keep an eye on him; he is a future legend.

Speaking of sports, the UConn women won their 12th NCAA title in April and the men's coach, Dan Hurley, came out with a new book. The state and city celebrated 50 years of the Hartford Whalers and Cinestudio at Trinity College hosted the world premiere of "The Whalers" documentary which I was honored to be featured in. And girls flag football is growing in popularity across the state. West Hartford started a league this year and many girls signed up!!

There was some big economic news in 2025, namely a \$10 billion contract with Sikorsky Aircraft to build 99 helicopters. According to Commissioner of Economic Development Dan O'Keefe, 42 aerospace companies across Connecticut will benefit.

There were milestones and notable passings in 2025. WTIC AM 1080 celebrated 100 years on the airwaves, news anchor Darren Kramer retired after 25 years at WTNH, legendary political reporter Mark Davis died at the age of 76, and iconic actor Robert Redford, who lived in Weston years ago, passed at 89.

As for 2026? We have a gubernatorial election, congressional elections and elections for the entire general assembly and constitutional officers. All the new mayors will be making changes in their communities. The United States of America will celebrate 250 years. Connecticut is one of the original thirteen colonies so expect celebrations across our great state. 🇺🇸

Dennis House has been covering the news in Connecticut for over 30 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.





Celebrating Hanukah in Connecticut

By RABBI BENJAMIN SCOLNIC

“... The idea that people of different faiths can respect each other’s beliefs and customs and continue to learn more about each other is the most important holiday celebration of all.”

—RABBI SCOLNIC

I’ve been teaching a class about Judaism at Southern Connecticut State University for 20 years. At the beginning of every semester, I ask the students what they know about Judaism. And every semester, several respond that the only thing they know about the religion is a little about Hanukah. They say that they’re not sure how to spell it (Chanukah, Hanukkah, etc.) and that they know while it comes at the same time of the year, it is not a “Jewish Christmas” but also does feature lights and presents. And how do they know this? One of the Jewish parents visited their elementary school class and talked about the holiday and brought “some really good pancakes.” Some even remember who that nice mother was.

This is a good way to start thinking about Hanukah in Connecticut. It’s wonderful to think about a school promoting understanding by inviting parents of a minority religion to explain their customs to all the students. Years later, it still may be the only thing they know about Judaism, but these college students have fond and positive associations.

Hanukah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucid Greeks. For a reason scholars still debate, the Seleucid king, Antiochos IV Epiphanes, started the first religious persecution in human history of a people worshipping their own religion in their own land. The victory won by a small group of Jews against a might army of an empire is the victory of freedom over tyranny.

Let’s think about the details the students remembered. Hanukah is an eight-day holiday that starts on a different secular date every year because the Jewish year is based on the lunar calendar rather than the solar one. Hanukah falls on the day 25 day of the Hebrew month Kislev, which usually occurs in late November or December.



Rabbi Theodore Gluck from Beth Israel Synagogue Center in Derby lights candles in 1958. Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Greater New Haven.

It's true that there are different spellings of Hanukkah due to difficulties in transliterating the Hebrew word into the Latin alphabet; some Hebrew sounds, like the guttural initial consonant (het), don't exist in English. The "ch" in Chanukah represents this sound, while the "h" in Hanukah provides a phonetic approximation, leading to variations like Hannukah and Chanukkah.

Why is Hanukkah celebrated for eight days? The usual answer is that the holiday lasts eight days to honor the miracle in which the oil in the Temple's meno-

rah burned for eight days, even though there was only enough for one day. The real answer is that it was based on the eight-day holiday of Sukkot, the Harvest Festival. The eight days symbolize hope and perseverance.

Where do the lights come in? While the traditional candelabrum, the menorah—which goes back the time of Moses a thousand years before these events—had seven branches, the special menorah for Hanukkah, called a hanukiah, has eight branches, one for each day. A candle on the ninth branch, called the

shamash, is used to light the others.

When you see homes and synagogues with Hanukkah lights, and homes and churches with Christmas lights, it's as if many of us are projecting light into the darkness of short days and winter nights; it's a sign of what makes the community great. It's nice to be able to celebrate and recognize in America that we're a society that we can express our faiths and that we can celebrate each other's faiths.

What were those pancakes they remembered? Popular Hanukkah foods include latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jelly-filled doughnuts), both fried in oil to symbolize the miracle of the oil.

What is the dreidel and how is it used? A dreidel is a four-sided spinning top with Hebrew letters on each side. It is used in a traditional Hanukkah game played with coins or candies. The dreidel features the letters Nun, Gimel, Hei and Shin, which stand for "Nes Gadol Haya Sham" ("A great miracle happened there"). Children often play with dreidels. Eight nights' worth of presents is a lot, but they are not on the large scale of Christmas giving. Many families have one night for books, another one for socks and others for small items.



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A photograph from Temple Beth Shalom in Hamden of their 1962 primary class Hanukkah assembly. Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Greater New Haven.





A Hanukkah party held at Orchard Street Shul in December 2008 in New Haven. Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Greater New Haven.

CELEBRATIONS

Is Hanukkah a major Jewish holiday? Hanukkah is considered a minor holiday in terms of religious significance, but it is widely celebrated and culturally important among Jewish communities. Special prayers and songs are recited to honor the holiday's history and themes. For many decades, communities have celebrated it publicly in Connecticut. Here are just a few of the celebrations our towns have had recently in the state.

In New Haven, there's a communal menorah lighting on New Haven Green. The first night lighting may include music, hot latkes, donuts, dreidels and even a laser light show. The Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven maintains a Hanukkah resources page, which in past years has listed candle lightings and the Greater New Haven Menorah Lighting & Parade.

In Fairfield, the town for the first time included a giant, 12-foot menorah in its holiday display, lit during its annual holiday ceremony.

In Darien, they've held a community menorah lighting in Grove Street Plaza, with crafts, treats and songs.

In Tolland, residents gathered for a menorah lighting on the fifth night of Hanukkah in a town green event.

In Trumbull, a menorah lighting ceremony is held in front of town hall, organized by Chabad Lubavitch of Southern Connecticut.

A well-known kosher grocery, The Crown Market in West Hartford, gears up for Hanukkah by baking sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts) and latkes, serving as a focal point for holiday food in the Jewish community.

THINGS TO DO

Attend a public menorah lighting: Many towns across Connecticut host public lightings at town greens, plazas and town halls.

Check with synagogues or Jewish community centers: They often have special Hanukkah events, such as candle lightings, concerts and children's programs.

Look at local Jewish Federation and Chabad websites: They frequently post event calendars in the weeks leading up to the holiday.

Enjoy the holiday foods: You can find latkes, sufganiyot and other fried foods in the community's kosher shops or local Jewish bakeries.

Join or watch holiday parades or walks: Some towns combine downtown small business involvement for the holidays (e.g., "village walk" events).

Be alert for exhibitions / light displays: Public menorahs and displays might be included in holiday lighting circuit events in your town.

Coming back to my students and their introduction to Hanukkah, there is an important lesson here. For all the lightings of menorahs on town greens and the parties in synagogues and Hebrew schools, the idea that people of different faiths can respect each other's beliefs and customs and continue to learn more about each other is the most important holiday celebration of all. ■

A rabbi, scholar and author, Rabbi Benjamin Scolnic has been the spiritual leader of Temple Beth Sholom, located in Hamden, Conn., since 1983.

Opposite page, left photo: A Beth Israel Synagogue Center member lights Hanukkah candles in 1958. Courtesy: Jewish Historical Society of Greater New Haven.



ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE MARKS ITS CENTENNIAL: 100 Years of Study, Prayer, Community and Service

Photos courtesy of Albertus Magnus College

When Albertus Magnus College opened its doors on September 24, 1925, Elenor Goode Sanders stood among the inaugural class on New Haven's Prospect Street. She couldn't have known then that her decision to attend New England's first Catholic residential liberal arts college for women would spark a century-long family legacy. Nor would she have known that, 100 years later, her granddaughter, Carolyn Behan '86, would help bring Albertus into its next century. Today, that granddaughter co-chairs the Albertus Magnus College Centennial Committee, which has been planning the anniversary celebrations.

"My grandmother was there on opening day," recalls Behan, executive director of college events. "She graduated in 1929, became a teacher and helped set a path that so many of us would follow."

INVESTING IN THE NEXT CENTURY OF TRANSFORMING LIVES

The Forever Albertus Centennial Campaign's goal to raise \$40 million is the most ambitious fundraising initiative in the college's history. The campaign began quietly in 2023. When efforts surpassed \$25 million, Albertus Magnus marked the momentous occasion by throwing a celebratory event in September for alumni, supporters and community leaders.

Albertus President Marc M. Camille, Ed.D., notes the campaign's significance in the college's efforts to continually invest in the Dominican Sisters of Peace's four pillars: study, prayer, community and service. "This campaign is not just for a new building," he says. "We're raising money for scholarship funds; endowment funds; programmatic support to invest in our faculty, staff and students; and capital projects."

Camille emphasizes that the campaign's priorities are rooted in giving students access to experiential

learning opportunities that connect academic study with today's workforce realities. Funds from the campaign will expand these opportunities by raising monetary support for study abroad, community-based projects and paid internships. For instance, the college plans to build on the success of its federally funded SAGE Scholars, a summer research program, which provides science students—many from underrepresented backgrounds—six weeks of immersive, faculty-guided research.

"Many of our students can't afford to take time away from work or family responsibilities," says Camille. "Philanthropy allows us to open those doors."

Emerging technologies are part of that vision, including a virtual reality learning experience. "For students who can't afford to travel abroad, this kind of virtual immersion can recreate that sense of discovery and connection," Camille shares. "It will be a game changer for our students."

The college's rapidly growing nursing program, launched less than three years ago, also benefits from donor support.

ONE FAMILY'S MULTIGENERATIONAL BOND WITH ALBERTUS MAGNUS

These successes represent Albertus Magnus' commitment to transform lives, which began when the Dominican Sisters of Peace established the college. At the time, only men had access to education, and so the congregation created Albertus Magnus for women's education.

Behan is aware of how much her family's legacy embodies Albertus Magnus' community impact. After her grandmother Elenor was part of the first graduating class in 1929, Elenor's sister, Mary Goode Rogan, graduated in 1936 and went on to Yale Law School; she was just one of four women to earn a law degree in 1938. Eventually, Mary served as a superior court judge until her retirement in 1990.

Behan's mother graduated from Albertus in 1955 as the first daughter of an alumna to do so, followed by Behan and her three nieces. "We've had a family member tied to Albertus in nearly every decade," Behan says. "It's part of who we are."

A WEEKEND OF MEMORIES AND MEANING

Her family's ties to the college were evident during the Centennial Celebration's opening weekend when Albertus Magnus announced it had raised \$25 million towards its \$40 million goal. Inside the Campus Center, easels displayed personal moments including photos of Behan's own family.

"There was a photo of my mom from the 1950s serving tea," Behan recalls. "She has dementia now, but she came to Founders Day and recognized herself right away. She could name everyone in the photo."

To experience these celebrations, guests first had to enter through what Behan calls an "experience tunnel," a walk-through timeline lined with oversized photographs from the 1920s through the 2020s that attendees connected with and reminisced about.



The Candlelight Convocation, a cherished annual tradition, held special significance during the college's centennial year. It symbolizes the passing of light and knowledge from the senior class to the incoming first-year students.



Sr. Thoma Swanson, O.P. receives her silk scarf from the Centennial Silks Collection, a vibrant and unique tribute to the college's first century, as part of Forever Albertus: The Centennial Campaign. The collection was inspired by the stained glass windows that Sr. Thoma Swanson, OP designed for the College's Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel.

A CENTENNIAL TO REMEMBER

One creative component was the Centennial Silks project, a multigenerational collaboration with an Albertus graduate and graphic designer Erin Molkenhuth '24. The final design was inspired by the stained-glass windows of the Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel, created decades earlier by Behan's former art professor, Sr. Thoma Swanson O.P. "The silks incorporated colors representing our four Dominican pillars," she says. "It became a symbolic piece of our identity."

The Centennial also included a meaningful sustainability project that reflects Albertus' commitment to social good. An American company that employs disadvantaged individuals in a supportive work environment converted old Albertus billboards into centennial tote bags.

The college plans to recreate these events when the Centennial closes in September 2026. "The opening was about reflection and pride," Behan says. "The closing will be about looking forward." The Centennial reflects something enduring. "The fact that we are thriving—evolving yet still guided by the same Dominican principles—is extraordinary."

[Learn more at albertus.edu/forever.](https://albertus.edu/forever)



Taken in the Tagliatela School of Business and Leadership on Founders' Day, this photo commemorates the College's 100th anniversary.



Player Jordan Staal. Credit: Josh Lavallee, Carolina Hurricanes.

HARTFORD AND RALEIGH: A Tale of Two Hockey Hubs

By RANDY B. YOUNG

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” Charles Dickens wrote in “A Tale of Two Cities.” “It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity...”

The beloved New England Whalers professional hockey franchise first played in the Hartford Civic Center Colosseum on January 11, 1975. Over the five decades since that night, it has certainly been the best and worst of times for both Hartford and Raleigh, N.C.

In April of 2025, Whalers fans hummed “Brass Bonanza” and celebrated a melancholic milestone:

the 28th anniversary of the news that the team would be leaving Connecticut for the warmer climate of Raleigh. It thrilled hockey fans who had migrated south and introduced the sport to new fans with the newly named Carolina Hurricanes team, but gutted the Whalers fan base to the core.

While North Carolinians naturally took to the speedy sport quickly, are Whalers fans now ‘Canes fans? It depends on who you ask.

“I never became a Hurricanes fan,” says longtime Whalers fan, Connecticut broadcaster and Emmy-

winning journalist Dennis House. “I don’t live in North Carolina. I have no connection to Raleigh. The Whalers were gone, and that was it.”

In an interview for the 2023 NBC Connecticut feature “Hartford Whalers: From Heartbeat to Heartbreak,” Whalers founder Howard Baldwin echoed House’s lament. “When you lost the Whalers, you lost the heart and soul, in my opinion, of the community...”

Conversely, Hartford Whaler Booster Club President Mark Anderson says that his allegiance now bridges the Hartford-Raleigh gap.

“There are a few (Hurricanes fans)—not many—but I’ll watch the Hurricanes over the Bruins or Rangers every time—I’ll watch as many games as time allows,” Anderson explains.

THE BEST OF TIMELINES

The New England Whalers were founded by Howard Baldwin in 1971 as part of the World Hockey Association (WHA), at first playing in Boston, then moving to Hartford in 1974. On January 18, 1978, fate played its hand. The Civic Center roof collapsed under the weight of heavy snow. When the roof was rebuilt, it added thousands of seats, meeting the NHL’s minimum capacity requirements.

The next year marked the beginning of the Whalers’ NHL campaigns and the debut of Peter Good’s still-popular logo in 1979. After a string of play-

off appearances, the Whalers became part of the fabric of Hartford before speculation arose related to the sale of the team to Richard Gordon in 1988 and Peter Karmanos, Jr. in 1994.

Karmanos’s confirmation of the Whalers’ move to a new arena and, presumably, solvency was a shock that reverberated all the way to Tobacco Road.

The team rebranded itself as the Carolina Hurricanes, forsaking the adored Whalers colors for the black-and-red of North Carolina State University Wolfpack basketball with whom the hockey team still shares the 19,722-seat arena in Raleigh.

Since 1997, the Carolina Hurricanes franchise has been largely successful and even won the 2006 NHL Championship. The Hurricanes struggled through the 2010 years until changing owners and hiring Ron Brind’Amour as head coach in 2018;

the ‘Canes have made the play-offs every year since.

A WHALE OF A RUN

During the heyday in the 1970’s and 1980’s, the Whalers put Connecticut on the map. Suddenly, “Hartford” was listed alongside hockey hubs like Detroit, New York or Chicago. Celebrities like Snoop Dog were sporting the Whalers brand. It was, surely, the best of times for Connecticut hockey fans.

“I’ve been a Whalers fan since I was a kid,” Anderson says. “I was nine years old. Our next-door neighbor had an extra ticket to go to a Whaler game on a Saturday night, and Hartford beat the Rangers in overtime. I was absolutely, positively hooked.”

The Whalers built relationships both on the ice and out in the community.

“When the team was here, you



Andrea Lamaro (left) and her daughters Katie and Emma show off their “vintage” Hartford spirit with Whalers garb with Stormy, at a Carolina Hurricanes watch party for the November 4, 2025 Madison Square Garden game versus the New York Rangers. Credit: Randy B. Young.

would see those guys at the CVS or picking up their suit at the cleaners,” Anderson recalls. “The Whalers were your neighbors.”

THE WORST OF TIMES...

When owner Walter O'Malley moved his Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles in 1958, journalist Ed Henry said that was, “dumping the guts and grit of Ebbets Field for the glitz and glamour of Hollywood.”

When Karmanos announced the Whalers' move to Raleigh, it lives in infamy, though it was not unexpected.

“It was very bitter,” House explains. “There are people who still hate Peter Karmanos to this day, but...the team was losing some money. It was tough to get a good TV deal here, and there just weren't enough people buying tickets.”

“I don't root for the Hurricanes,” House adds. “One of the things that Hartford has going for it is that so many grow up playing hockey, but a place like Tampa! Is there even a high school hockey team in all of Florida? Or in North Carolina?”

IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES?

It's one thing to endure an emotional parting in our lives. It's another thing to watch your former ex-partner do the tango with a different partner.

“It broke my heart when they left,” Anderson wistfully says. “I cried like a baby.”

Few players or personnel, with the notable exception of Ron Francis and longtime announcer Chuck Kaiton, survived the trip south, but those concessions were enough to retain some Hartford fans.

“My resentment lasted a year,” Anderson concedes, “but then they went to the Stanley Cup Final in 2002 (with



Top photo: Jordan Staal. Middle photo: Seth Jarvis. Bottom photo: Fans celebrating Whalers night at a Carolina Hurricanes game on February 20, 2025. Credit: Josh Lavallee, Carolina Hurricanes.

Ron Francis). They got me hooked all over again.”

Once in the PNC Arena (now the Lenovo Center), southern fans—and even some northern fans—rallied around Raleigh's only professional sports team in a college basketball mecca.

“I went to a game [in Raleigh] the night they retired Francis's jersey in 2006,” Anderson states. “It was the end

of January, 70 degrees and the tailgating was in full force. I cannot say enough about how nice the people were.”

After some lean years in Raleigh, Karmanos sold the team in 2018 to Tom Dunson, who vowed to honor the Whalers' fanbase. The ‘Canes began to wear Whalers throwback uniforms at various games and began selling Whalers merchandise at home games. Throwback Whalers nights have occurred each year since 2018. At present, the ‘Canes have amassed a 6-0-3 record when wearing Whalers uniforms and are 5-0-1 on designated Whalers Nights.

Hurricanes Vice President of Communications Michael Sundheim said that the ‘Canes planned to wear throwback Whaler uniforms at least three times over the 2025/26 season, including a special “Whalers Night” celebration on January 29, 2026.

“We've tried to kind of capture the spirit of things every year since we started doing that,” he says.

“Now you cannot watch a Hurricanes game and not see a Whalers jersey in the stands,” Anderson declares.

KEEPING HARTFORD'S HOCKEY HOPES “ON ICE”

Despite a string of play-off appearances over the past seven years, ‘Canes fans long to celebrate another Stanley Cup win in 2026, whichever uniform they're wearing. And fans in Connecticut are still devout in their hopes for a return of NHL hockey.

“Our Booster Club has between 50 and 75 members,” Anderson says. “We go to functions and march in Hartford's St. Patrick's Day parades. For a team that hasn't been around for almost 30 years, I think it's pretty good.”

Recent Connecticut political



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Fans at Lenovo Center. Credit: Josh Lavallee, Carolina Hurricanes.



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candidates have claimed to make the return of the Hartford Whalers a priority, even though Avon businessman Richard Gordon once famously said that he lost \$10 million a year when he owned the team in the '80's and '90's.

"I think we have to try," Baldwin puts forward. "Every team—not just Hartford—needs a billionaire...or three or four. I'm not the right guy, but I would be first in line to get season tickets."

"We'd have to have a new arena," Anderson says, "but we always hold the candle of hope that we might get a team here at some point."

"They've always been my team, here or there," Anderson says, all-in for the Hurricanes. And House applauds the Canes' nostalgic nods to Hartford: "Anything that celebrates the Whalers history is a positive." So, the tale of these two cities lives on in an awkward kinship, a patient longing and a mutual love of hockey.

Even if nothing changes fast, fans are still heartened by the Brooklyn Dodgers mantra...in the best and worst of times:

"Wait 'til next year..." 🗣️

A graduate of Dartmouth College, Randy B. Young worked in advertising in New England before relocating and working in communications for the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C. Recently retired, he is a freelance writer and photographer.



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Hidden Winter Getaways



Outdoor sauna at Mayflower Inn & Spa. Credit: Mayflower Inn & Spa, Auberge Collection.

By **Anastasia Mills Healy**

It's not surprising that Connecticut has a Christmas Movie Trail and inspired "Gilmore Girls." Our town greens, overlooked by colonial homes and steepled churches, are centered on gazebos and trees decorated for the holidays. You can shop for handcrafted items in picturesque downtowns and holiday craft fairs; visit a Christmas tree farm; meet Santa and reindeer; and experience the magic of the North Pole Express, The Nutcracker and The Hallelujah Chorus. But when the frenzy of the holidays is over, what is there to do in Connecticut in winter? How about sleeping in a treehouse and feeding goats on a farm, riding in a horse-drawn sleigh, driving a UTV on private country trails, or learning how to play polo in a heated indoor ring? Here are some ideas for winter fun in Connecticut.

SPECIAL OVERNIGHTS

There are two accommodation options at Willington's family-run Blue Bird Farm, a working farm with babydoll sheep, goats, chickens and Daisy the miniature pig house pet. Guests are free to wander the 40-acre property on their own or learn about farm life on a tour. Choose The Barn Loft Two with two bedrooms separated by a living/dining room with a fireplace or climb the stairs to the Treehouse for a cozy space with one full loft bed and a living area with a fireplace and a sofa

bed. A less rustic but exponentially more expensive treehouse option can be found in Morris at Winvian Farm where 18 individually designed, decorated and themed cottages all have a fireplace.

Speaking of luxury, the Mayflower Inn & Spa in Washington is an elegant English country home-like property with 58 acres of grounds for snowshoeing and woodland walking. The big draw here is an extraordinary spa that, in addition to an indoor pool and many treatments and services, offers a unique four-person outdoor cedar sauna. Stay overnight to get the full experience or come for the day and book a facial, massage or spa package at The Retreat that will slough off dry winter skin and shake off any winter blues.

Near Mohawk and Catamount, Interlaken Inn in Lakeville is a cozy après ski spot with some accommodations that feature a fireplace or hot tub. Add onsite dining, movie screenings complete with reclining chairs and snacks, fitness and wellness classes, and a massage and you'll have a perfect mix of activity and relaxation.

INDOOR FUN

Many Connecticut residents aren't aware that the University of Connecticut's College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources has a Department of Animal Science that offers the public horseback riding lessons on the Storrs campus. Whether you'd



Parlor at Mayflower Inn & Spa. Credit: Mayflower Inn & Spa, Auberge Collection.



Students in the Department of Animal Science in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources participate in horse-related activities in the Horsebarn Hill Arena. June 11, 2025. Credit: Jason Sheldon/UConn Photo.



An equestrian horse riding class at the Horsebarn Hill Arena on Oct. 24, 2024. Credit: Peter Morenus/UConn photo/UConn Photo.

like to try dressage, hunt seat, polo, trail or Western, there are options for private and group lessons in a large, heated, indoor ring. Why not get the family together and learn polo?

A day in New Haven can be spent in any number of ways indoors from pizza sampling to wandering through Yale's world-class, free museums like the newly renovated Yale Center for British Art and Peabody Museum of Natural History. For something more active, kids and adults alike can find a suitable course at the It Adventure Ropes Course where smaller kids can navigate platforms three feet off the ground. Fearless adults and older kids can face challenges like swinging beams and zip around 56 feet in the air.

The casinos have more than enough to entertain you indoors for days. The largest multilevel indoor karting facility in the United States is "powered by" Mohegan Sun but located 20 minutes away in Montville. Anyone 58" and taller can race at Supercharged where there's also axe throwing, trampolines, and a ninja course where you can test your skills on 18 obstacles like a spinning log and battle beam. You can break a sweat just thinking about all the activities at Foxwoods. There's go karting, a golf simulator, arcade, bowling, escape room, pottery studio, retail outlets, spa and an impressive 308,000-square-foot museum in addition to gaming and live entertainment. The newly opened Great

Wolf Lodge adds an indoor water park to the fun.

Serious gamers might want to head south to Stamford to experience the new go kart-video game mash up called Kart Klash at RPM Raceway. In this unique go kart/VR experience, drivers race each other at 50 mph while collecting targets and activating power-ups. RPM Raceway also has an arcade, bowling alley, and virtual and augmented reality experiences.

A small group of friends or family will need to use their noggins and work together to solve riddles and puzzles in an escape room. There are many options across the state including Escapism in Southington, which has been voted the best in Connecticut for

two years running. Explore a jungle temple or haunted apartment or plan a robbery in these immersive experiences for ages 10+.

Another kind of treasure hunting is antiques shopping. Putnam's four-floor Antiques Marketplace can keep you busy for hours perusing seemingly every item imaginable from all time periods. Walk the aisles to find nostalgic toys, military memorabilia, costume jewelry, fine art and so much more. The town's other stores, restaurants and brewery complete a fun day out.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Eagle lovers should bring their binoculars to the Shepaug Eagle



KartKlash. Credit: RPM Raceway

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Shepaug Eagle View. Credit Beth Pelton.



Shepaug raptor demonstration. Credit: Beth Pelton.



Eagle over river. Credit: Beth Pelton.



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Observation Area at the Shepaug Dam in Southbury to observe one of New England's largest gatherings of wintering eagles. From December to March, bird watchers can make a free reservation and stand in a blind to observe eagles and other species like hawks that are attracted to this spot because the Shepaug Hydroelectric Station prevents the Housatonic River from freezing here.

You do want solid ice though if you'd like to try ice fishing. The Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection offers online and in-person ice fishing classes and lists places to try it like East Twin Lake in Salisbury and Middlefield's Lake Beseck.

As an alternative to downhill skiing and snowboarding, you can glide through the silent serenity of the

Farmington woods at Winding Trails Cross Country Ski Center. It offers equipment rentals and lessons. Its 12 miles of groomed trails are reserved for skiers, so you won't encounter hikers or dogs. The property's 350 acres also have areas for ice skating, sledding and tubing.

Another option for gliding through the snow is a sleigh ride around Lake Hayward in East Haddam. Allegra Farm has a remarkable collection of antique carriages and sleighs seen in "The Gilded Age," "The Greatest Showman" and many other Hollywood productions. Make an appointment to admire them at the on-site Horse Drawn Carriage and Sleigh Museum of New England and/or arrange a sleigh ride or carriage ride at the farm or elsewhere.

If your goal is less romance and

more adrenaline, hop on a UTV and off road through 1,000 acres of private trails in Canaan with Backyard Adventures UTV Tours. Anyone with a license can drive (if under 21, a parent must be in the same vehicle) and kids 5+ can be passengers. A guide leads the way on their own UTV and when there's snow, trails are tracked.

There is so much to do in Connecticut so have fun this winter indoors and outdoors! 🏠

Anastasia Mills Healy is a Greenwich-based travel writer and author of "100 Things to Do in Connecticut Before You Die" and "Secret Connecticut: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure."



AT HOME

with KERRI-LEE

WINDOWS INTO WINTER: What Our Homes Say About Us

By Kerri-Lee Mayland

*When the world grows quiet,
our homes begin to speak.*

There's something about winter evenings that stir our curiosity. When the sun slips away early and the air turns crisp, our eyes are drawn to the soft glow spilling from the windows of homes we pass. Maybe you've caught yourself glancing through one—just for a moment—wondering what life looks like on the other side of that glass. Why are we so fascinated by how others decorate their spaces and live within them?

The lake at dusk

Each year before my father-in-law, Don Mayland—the longtime Lake Keeper of Lake Wonoscopomuc—officially calls “ice in” for the season, my husband and I take one last kayak around the shoreline. We paddle close to the banks, where cottages and stately homes sit tucked into the landscape, their windows blinking like lanterns against the dusk. I can't help but imagine the lives unfolding inside: family dinners, music playing, dogs circling underfoot. Who lives there? What stories do those walls hold? Even the



“Homes are silent storytellers. And in winter, when the world quiets down, we just may find ourselves listening a little closer.”

paint on the window trim feels like a clue. Homes, after all, are silent storytellers. And in winter, when everything else grows still, we listen more closely.

When our homes talk back

That same curiosity follows us indoors. I once had a client laugh while choosing window treatments and say, “Add something above the window only—you can't take the blinds away!” Their neighbors, it turned out, already knew exactly which renovations they'd made simply from walking by before the blinds were drawn. It reminded me that our homes are always communicating—outward as much as inward—whether we mean for them to or not.

Maybe that's why, when the snow falls and the fire is on, so many of us find ourselves watching HGTV. We cozy up and follow couples in Chicago or Texas as they hunt for “the one,” or hold our breath as renovations spiral and somehow meet the reveal deadline. In the darker months, when we're tucked inside our own spaces, the way others live becomes entertainment, inspiration and, sometimes, a mirror.

What is your home saying about you?

When friends step inside, or when neighbors pass by your window at night, does your space reflect the story you want it to tell? Winter, with its slower pace and longer nights, offers the perfect time to listen and edit that story to add warmth, character and meaning.

Start where every story begins: at the entryway. A home's front door is its handshake. In these cold months, small gestures—lanterns glowing by the steps, a wreath of pine and berries, maybe an old sled or a pair of skates leaned just so—set the tone long before anyone crosses the threshold.



From there, consider what someone might glimpse through your windows. A softly lit lamp, a stack of books or a vase of winter branches creates a quiet vignette

that feels personal and real—not staged, but inviting.

Inside, layer in your history. A framed photo, a hand-stitched quilt or your child's painting proudly hung above the mantel are the details that make a house unmistakably yours.

Color tells your story, too. Try hues that warm and soothe: amber, sage, navy or deep burgundy. And don't underestimate the power of light: lamps on dimmers, sconces that cast a soft glow or candles flickering in the window. Light is emotional. It shapes how we gather, how we rest and how we feel.

Finally, let comfort lead the way. A basket of chunky throws by the sofa, a tea tray ready for wind-down time or a reading nook tucked beneath a window says you're home now. These details are more than decoration; they're the rhythm of your life, quietly reflected back.

The final glimpse

So, the next time you take an after-dinner walk and glance into a neighbor's glowing window—or paddle past a lakeside home not yet iced in—remember that your own home is speaking, too. In these dark, hushed months, our houses tell our stories. And if you'd rather keep yours a mystery, well, just be sure to pull those window coverings before dusk. ❄️

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A HALF CENTURY OF COVERING CONNECTICUT WITH WIT, CURIOSITY AND HEART

By FRANK RIZZO



Photo by Chion Wolf/Connecticut Public

For many, Colin McEnroe is the voice of Connecticut. The journalist, columnist, humorist and radio host would cringe at that statement, being famously self-deprecating and socially squirmy when receiving anything resembling a compliment. But that's how many of his friends, admirers and colleagues might describe him—at least for the sake of a grandiose lead graph in a profile that is sure to be short in credits, incidents and details of his professionally rich and peripatetic life.

For nearly 50 years, McEnroe has been engaging with newspaper, magazine and online readers as well as commercial and public radio listeners throughout the state with the sincerity of a trusted friend (albeit sometimes cranky, but brilliant). McEnroe's quick wit, chattering charm, and encyclopedic knowledge of the profound and the trivial also makes him Connecticut's go-to guy to emcee events, host gatherings or lead on-stage conversations. Over the years, those interviews on air, on stage and in print include such varied figures as Stephen King, Anthony Bourdain, Barack Obama, Joyce Carol Oates, Salman Rushdie, Kurt Vonnegut, Bob Woodward, Hal Holbrook, Alice Waters and Anita Hill,



McEnroe with Latanya Farrell at Watkinson School for the show's annual holiday special, 2024. Credit: Mark Mirko/Connecticut Public.



COLIN MCENROE



With Senator Chris Murphy, 2025. Credit: Mark Mirko/Connecticut Public.

to name just a few of the thousand or two he's done over the decades.

Besides covering celebrities, state and national politics, current events, and pop culture, his WNPR shows also embrace the easily overlooked minutiae of life: zippers, ringtones, snacks, VHS recorders, handshakes and more.

To some, McEnroe is an empathetic interviewer, a pithy social critic and perceptive commentator. Others love him for his humorous takes on subjects serious and silly. To critics, he's a curmudgeon, lefty and smarty-pants.

"People may have this perception of him of always having to be the smartest person in the room," says Robyn Doyon-Aitken, WNPR's deputy director of audio storytelling and talk shows. "Very often he is the smartest person in the room, although he doesn't think so. He'll tell you his broad knowledge of things is 'only an inch deep.' But it's at least a foot." (Alec Baldwin called McEnroe "the Orson Welles of Public Radio.")

Sitting in to watch a broadcast of McEnroe's eponymous weekday 1 p.m. program from WNPR's Hartford studios, producers Lily Tyson and Jonathan McNicol and technical producer Dylan Reyes are on the other

side of the glass. Later in the week, he would be doing a show on the Nobel Peace Prize, but this was Monday; it was the weekly "Ask or Tell Me Anything" program. Listeners called in on a wide range of topics as McEnroe kept conversations lively with his signature asides and digressions. "You've given me a lot to think about," he says to one caller, adding, "though I'm not sure I'm going to enjoy thinking about it."

A CURIOUS MIND

McEnroe seemed to have been a thinker from the start. He grew up in West Hartford and attended Kingswood-Oxford School. There, he was greatly influenced by a teacher who had a stunning breadth of knowledge on a multitude of subjects. "I thought, 'That's what it's like to be educated,' so that idea of knowing something about a lot of things started early," adds McEnroe.

Unsure of his future path, he knew as editor of his high school newspaper he had an ease in writing and figured, "I'm probably going to be spending the rest of my life doing tap-tap-tap on my manual Smith-Corona."

Writing was perhaps also in his DNA. His father was playwright Robert E. McEnroe, who had several Broadway works produced. The 1948 "The Silver Whistle" play, which was made into the 1951 "Mr. Belvedere Rings the Bell" film starring Clifton Webb, and the short-lived 1961 "Donnybrook" musical. But because of frustrations with his career, his father later turned to real estate. He wrote about his father and their relationship in his frank and touching 2003 memoir, "My Father's Footsteps."

"You know how a lot of fathers want you to go in the family business? He was the opposite, telling me [becoming a writer] is not a good thing to do. So, I struggled with that for a while."

When McEnroe arrived at Yale in the early 1970s, he had no idea what his trajectory would be. "I was an American studies major, which is the major when you don't know what your major is." It turned out, he says, to be good preparation for his later careers.

He began working for The Hartford Courant in 1976 as a summer intern. There he admired and was mentored by another polymath, Malcolm Johnson, the longtime arts writer and theater critic. At the newspaper, McEnroe was

a reporter, feature writer, critic, serial novelist and, most notably, columnist.

RADIO DAYS

In 1992, a column critical of the conservative direction talk radio was heading led to him being a guest host at two Hartford radio stations: WPOP and WTIC. “At the end of each shift, I was offered a job, which is funny because my whole take was that it was this bad medium full of jerks appealing to the worst instincts of a human being. To learn that I was a natural at it was somewhat disconcerting.”

There were growing pains for the newbie host in this new communications medium. “What helped was that I didn’t sound like anyone else. People perhaps looked past certain things because it seemed original and, with my sort-of-liberal politics, hardly anybody else was talking that way.”

His initial radio persona was an awkward fit. “They paid me to be a smart, reasonably well-informed brat, though they didn’t use that word. They wanted you to be ‘vivid.’ When you work in that kind of talk-radio environment, they keep wanting you to ‘push the envelope’ until one day you push too far, and then they fire you.”

When his show was cancelled and replaced by provocative therapist Dr. Laura, listeners and media figures protested. McEnroe eventually got a new gig at the station co-hosting an afternoon program. That show ran until 2008’s economic collapse when stations were cutting costs, “and those with centrist-left views were just gone.”

WNPR COMES CALL-IN

For years, McEnroe also had a thriving freelance writing career with book collections of his essays; a stint as a

playwright at the Ivoryton Playhouse; university teaching and speaking gigs; and stories for publications such as Cosmopolitan, Metropolitan Home, Bicycling, Men’s Health, Forbes, The New York Times and the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.

He didn’t have to wait long before joining WNPR, the state’s public radio station, which was more simpatico with McEnroe’s personal style and sensibilities.

“I discovered nothing I did on commercial radio would work here,” he states. “It’s different in a million ways. For one, this is a producer’s medium and whoever is producing has a lot to do with the show.”

McEnroe also adapted to a more tempered tone while retaining his quirks and curiosity. Besides serious and semi-serious programs, there were also off-beat topics which he brands under “the Department of Bad Ideas” banner. “The last time we did a show

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What was the program that elicited the most response from listeners?

Quite recently, my interview with Timothy Snyder sort of went viral. It probably has more to do with Tim than with me. But you can see that the YouTube of the audio (youtube.com/watch?v=tXdfumSUyII)—which is not how the show is heavily consumed usually—has 75,000 views.

Who was the person you were most intimidated to interview?

[English playwright Tom] Stoppard. Nobody even is a close second. We did the episode live in the lobby of the Studio Hotel. I was so nervous. Then the tablet with the rundown—our vague outline for the show—crashed. When Stoppard walked in, I was at the front desk, where they were trying to help me pull up the rundown; I think it made him think he was being interviewed by a bell boy or something. The interview limped along and then I asked him a question about a connection between “Tumblers” and “The Hard Problem” (a play which had not yet been staged). He was startled and said, “I have not mentioned that to anybody until now.” His whole demeanor changed. He started calling me “mein host,” which seemed to be a positive thing.

What was one of your most emotional moments of the show?

In 2021, my son was very sick. [Partner] Kathleen was very sick. Both hospitalized. I wasn’t sure either one of them would

survive. I was experiencing emotions every day that were new and strange to me. So, I decided to do a show on grief, which was both a good and a terrible idea. About ten minutes in, I started crying. And the person on the air with me was Nelba Marquez-Greene, who gracefully reassembled me. She was/is amazing.

Worst (or as you refer to it, “most difficult”) print and radio interview?

Foolishly, I thought I could interview Brian Wilson on the air while I was at WTIC. Brian is one of my household gods. Of course, he was famously impaired and/or checked out in a way that made it hard to get responsive answers. I was crestfallen. But apparently not so crestfallen that I didn’t try it again a few years later, with the same results. But there was a special vibe around doing that with an audience who knew me. I had shared the context. Many of them had heard the first try. They were kind of rooting for me and cringing when it went badly. In its own way, it turned into its own little event that we all shared. Failure is often more interesting and compelling than success.

The person you want(ed) to interview but couldn’t or haven’t?

I’m pretty much over wanting to interview super-famous folks. It never quite works interviewing people you worship. I want to interview somebody who wants to talk about something interesting and who is interesting about that something.

just to see if we could have a show on a strange subject. It was one about towels, which actually turned out to be okay. Another was on toast...or was it toasters?” The one on spoons? Not his finest, he admits.

“But I also remember we did a show about whistling, taking it from so many angles—and it was great. If my name was Ira Glass, I’d be done for the week after that show. But I have to do another show the next day and the day after that.”

At 71, and with the demands of his time both personally and professionally unabated, McEnroe’s has recalibrated his schedule. With Monday for call-ins and Friday’s “The Nose” featuring guests who schmooze on pop culture, he now has just three weekly shows to prepare for his deep dives. “There are times when it takes a toll,” he says of his present life, “but it’s hard to do something else.”

BEING CONNECTICONIC

When asked if McEnroe is his generation’s Bob Steele, the legendary Connecticut radio host who was on the air for more than 60 years, Doyon-Aitken, says, “that comes up sometimes. But he’s not the next Bob Steele—or anyone else—because he is so who he is. There’s no one else like him. But I do think Colin is a Connecticut icon.”

As for legacy, McEnroe says he is only focused on what’s in front of him. “I’m not thinking about the 25 or 50-year arc of a career. Though at times I feel like I’m the ‘Oldest Confederate Widow,’” quickly adding, “I’m joking.”

A friend recently remarked to him: “You almost have to wonder whether you would feel that you were Colin McEnroe if you weren’t doing this.”

“When he said that I thought, ‘How sharper than a serpent’s tooth!’” he adds laughing, quoting from “King Lear.” “This is the kind of job that takes over your life, and I like that. I like it more than I would if I was just trying to be Colin McEnroe, the person. So yeah, its fine.” ■

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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DELICIOUS

Favorite Winter Comfort Foods

FROM YOUR FAVORITE CONNECTICUT CHEFS



By AMY S. WHITE

As New England's winter darkness and chilling temperatures creep back in, there's nothing quite as satisfying as retreating to the familiar embrace of comfort food. This season is an invitation to slow down and cozy up to meals that warm our bodies and nurture our souls. Most comfort food recipes have been handed down for generations. They involve more preparation and effort than the lighter foods of summer. They take time to cook. They are more

than just fuel; they are rituals of memory, tradition and mindfulness. Several chefs share their unique versions of favorite comfort food recipes: pot pie, but with a Connecticut twist; an elevated Nana's meatloaf; shepherd's pie the British way; porchetta made with pork belly; and apple crisp for dessert. Preheat the oven and light a fire in the fireplace; if you don't have one, turn on the TV to that fireplace channel. And, above all, indulge. It just might make your winter feel a little bit cozier, one comforting bite at a time. ❧

Connecticut Shoreline Chowder Pot Pie

Recipe courtesy of Chef Chantee Fraser, Sweetz Visionz Personal Chef Services

Servings: 2

Chef Chantee Fraser is a seasoned chef with over a decade of experience in high-end kitchens and as a personal chef. With her Guyanese heritage, she brings a blend of flavors and cultural influence to her cooking, creating approachable, seasonal recipes that home cooks can make with confidence. Her philosophy is that great food should be flavorful, beautiful and achievable—without overwhelming the cook. In her business Sweetz Visionz Personal Chef Services, she offers personal chef services, cooking classes and recipe development focused on seasonal, fresh ingredients. Infused with her Guyanese roots, her work celebrates vibrant flavors, bold spices and accessible techniques, making every meal a memorable experience. Her recipe is for Connecticut Shoreline Chowder Pot Pie, a comfort food favorite that highlights our state's bounty of seafood.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon butter
½ small onion, diced
1 celery rib, diced
½ carrot, diced
1 small potato, peeled and diced
1 cup seafood or chicken stock
½ cup milk or light cream
½ can chopped clams (about 3 ounces)
4 ounces white fish (cod, haddock, or

pollock), cut into small pieces
½ cup frozen corn or peas
½ teaspoon dried thyme (or a pinch if using fresh)
1 sheet of store-bought puff pastry (thawed)
1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions:

For the filling:

In a small skillet, melt the butter and sauté the onion, celery and carrot until soft. Add the potato and stock, then simmer 8-10 minutes until tender. Stir in the milk, clams (with juice), fish, corn/peas and thyme. Cook gently until fish is opaque, around 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Assemble and bake:

Spoon the filling into two small oven-safe bowls or ramekins. Top with the puff pastry, pressing the edges lightly, then brush with the egg. Cut a small slit for steam. Bake at 400°F for 20-25 minutes until pastry is golden.

Tip: For extra Connecticut flavor, add a small splash of sherry or fold in crumbled smoked bacon.



Shepherd's Pie

Scott Riley, owner of Cambridge House Brew Pub in Granby, focuses on the history and his recipe for the classic comfort food known as shepherd's pie. He explains that it originated in the United Kingdom with the lamb version named shepherd's pie and the beef version called cottage pie. Historically, cottagers had access to beef while shepherds obviously had easier access to lamb. As a result, each had their own unique dish with its own unique name. At the Cambridge House Brew Pub, they make it with tender lamb shank chunks, colorful vegetables and creamy mashed potatoes which are cooked on the stovetop and finished under the broiler for a melt-in-your-mouth experience meat and potatoes fans will adore. This comforting dish is ready in just over an hour, and it's perfect for chilly weather and a warming fire. He also adds that home cooks should not be daunted by the long list of ingredients; they should keep in mind that this one recipe includes entrée, veggies and potatoes all in one hearty meal.

Lamb Shank Shepherd's Pie with Red Wine Gravy

*Recipe courtesy of Scott Riley, owner of
Cambridge House Brew Pub, Granby*

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

2 lamb shanks ($\frac{3}{4}$ -1 pound each)
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons cooking oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and quartered
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups carrots, diced
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup onion, diced
1 tablespoon garlic, minced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red wine
4 tablespoons salted butter, divided
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 cup peas (fresh or frozen)
2 tablespoons tarragon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy cream
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons kosher salt, divided
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided

Directions:

Note: Shepherd's pie is basically a casserole with two layers: a layer of lamb stew and a layer of mashed potatoes. Each must be prepared separately, then assembled.

First, marinate the lamb by mixing the Worcestershire sauce, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of the salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of the black pepper together, and drizzling that mixture over the lamb shanks. Let the lamb marinate while you chop the vegetables. Sprinkle the lamb shanks with an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt and brown them in a Dutch oven on all sides. Pour in the remaining marinade, cooking oil and water. Cover the Dutch oven and cook over low heat until the lamb reaches a temperature of 200°F, about 30 minutes. Remove the shanks and set aside to cool.

Meanwhile, cover the potatoes with water and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and bring to a boil, cooking them until they are fork tender. Remove the meat from the shank bone, cut into bite-sized pieces and set aside. If any marrow remains in the bone, scrape it out and add it back to the Dutch oven. Add the chopped onions and sliced carrots to the Dutch oven with another $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt. Cook them until they are almost cooked through, then add the garlic and cook one more minute. Remove the vegetables to a mixing bowl and set aside.

Add the red wine to the Dutch oven and deglaze the pan, scraping up the browned bits in the bottom with a wooden spoon. Add two tablespoons of butter, swirl to melt and then whisk in the flour. Cook two to three minutes, whisking until smooth. Lower the heat and simmer to thicken. Add the lamb, carrots and onions pieces back into the Dutch oven with the gravy while gently stirring in the tarragon and peas. Add any additional salt and pepper to taste. Keep the stew mixture warm over low heat and preheat the broiler. Mash the cooked potatoes with a hand masher or mixer. Add the heavy cream, and remaining two tablespoons butter, combine well then add salt and pepper to taste. Gently heat the mashed potatoes to evaporate excess water, but not too much. Transfer the vegetable and meat mixture to a casserole dish then spread the potatoes in an even layer on top, smoothing them out as best as you can or create a fun design. Broil the shepherd's pie, uncovered, until the potatoes turn golden brown, rotating the dish to cook evenly. Allow the dish to rest for a few minutes to cool slightly and allow the gravy to thicken.



Porchetta

Dave Emmons has been working in professional kitchens for over three decades. After getting his start in Nevada casinos in 1991, he went to culinary school in Austin, Texas, graduating in 1995 and spending 18 years honing his craft in the city's top fine dining restaurants. In 2011, he relocated to New England and launched the Lucky Taco food truck, which became a local favorite in Hartford, earning the title of Best Food Truck for three years in a row. A brick-and-mortar Lucky Taco followed in Manchester, which was open from 2014 until 2022. Now, Emmons is preparing to debut his newest venture, an old-school sandwich shop, opening soon in Wethersfield. Focused on products sourced from local farms and purveyors, the shop reflects his passion for scratch cooking, regional flavors and community-driven dining. For now, he shares with us his comfort food favorite: pork belly porchetta with gremolata.

Pork Belly Porchetta with Gremolata

Recipe courtesy of Chef David Emmons

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

3 pound pork belly, bone out, with loin attached (a good butcher or Italian market would have this)
2 sprigs rosemary
Zest of one lemon
1 tablespoon fennel pollen or toasted ground fennel seed
1 tablespoon red chili flakes
½ bunch parsley, stems removed and chopped
1 tablespoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt

Directions:

Lay the pork belly out flat, trim to an even rectangle and open the loin up by butterflying it. Score the pork belly in a crisscross pattern. In a bowl, mix together the rosemary, lemon zest, fennel pollen, chili flakes, chopped

parsley and salt. Rub the herb and spice mix into the meat. Close the loin up and roll the belly into a cylinder. Score the skin on the top in a criss-cross pattern. Truss the roast with butcher twine starting in the middle and working outwards to the ends, tying tightly as there will be some expansion in the oven. Place the pork on a sheet pan with a rack and dry in the refrigerator for 24 hours (this will make the skin super crispy when cooked). When it is time to cook it, first take it out of the refrigerator and bring it to room temperature (about an hour). In the meantime, preheat oven to 445°F. Cook for 45 minutes or until skin is crispy and looks like amber glass. Lower the oven temp to 285°F and cook for an additional three hours or until the internal temp reaches 200°F on a meat thermometer. Remove the porchetta from the oven and allow it to rest for 20 minutes. Slice and serve topped with gremolata (see below) alongside optional sides.

Chef's note: Emmons likes to serve his porchetta with polenta and broccoli rabe.



Gremolata:

Ingredients:

½ bunch parsley, roughly chopped
Zest of one lemon
2 cloves garlic, grated grate
Juice of ½ lemon
Kosher salt, to taste
Olive oil, to taste

Directions:

Mix together the parsley, lemon zest and garlic. Add the lemon juice and season with salt. Spread the sliced porchetta with the gremolata and drizzle with olive oil.

Apple Crisp

Chef Lindsay Penev is the executive chef at Black Rock Coffeehouse and Kitchen in Fairfield. When she thinks of comfort food, she is thinking of rustic, aromatic foods that have both nutritional and soothing properties. Her Fairfield County apple crisp, which she calls her heart on a plate, fits the bill perfectly. Having grown up surrounded by apple orchards, she says baking those local apples with cinnamon and brown sugar isn't just about dessert, but about celebrating the state we call home, family dinners with warm plates passed around the table, the smell of baked apples filling the air and the comfort of knowing you belong.



Fairfield County Apple Crisp

*Recipe courtesy of Chef Lindsay Penev,
Black Rock Coffeehouse and Kitchen, Fairfield*

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

For the filling:

6-7 medium apples (about 2½ pounds), preferably a mix of Honeycrisp, McIntosh and Cortland from Fairfield County
2 tablespoons lemon juice
½ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup light brown sugar, packed
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
Pinch of salt

For the topping:

1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
¾ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup light brown sugar, packed
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 stick (½ cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into small cubes

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x13-inch baking dish. Prepare the apples by peeling, coring and then slicing them into ¼-inch wedges. Toss the apples with the lemon juice, sugars, flour, spices and salt until they are evenly coated. Spread the apple mixture evenly in the prepared baking dish. In a large bowl, mix the oats, flour, sugars, cinnamon and salt. Cut in the cold butter one cube at a time until the mixture forms coarse crumbs, about the size of peas. Sprinkle the topping evenly over the apples. Bake on a center rack uncovered for 45-50 minutes, until the

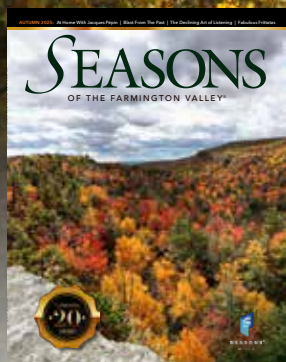
topping is golden brown and the filling is bubbling around the edges. Cool slightly before serving with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or a dollop of whipped cream.

Chef's notes: Apple variety matters!

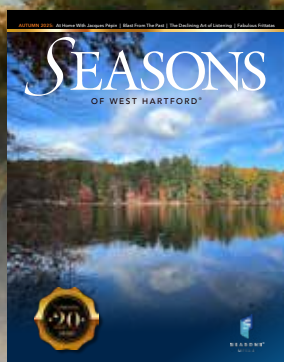
Fairfield County's local orchards often have Honeycrisp, McIntosh and Cortland varieties, which hold up beautifully when baked. The mix creates a balance of sweetness, tartness and texture.

This recipe can be made ahead by assembling the filling separately from the topping the night before, then refrigerate and bake when ready. Stir in ½ cup of chopped walnuts or pecans into the topping for a nutty twist.





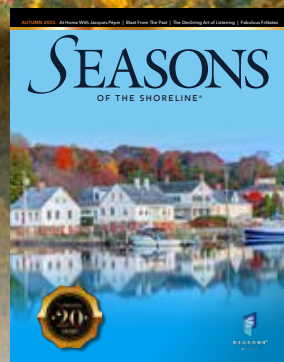
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Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center (CS-HHC) is driven by dedication, impactful community partnerships, experienced professional staff and a passion to provide exemplary healthcare. They continue to achieve breakthroughs and reach milestones, benefitting tens of thousands of patients annually, including many who might otherwise be unable to access quality healthcare.

A nationally recognized innovator, their medical professionals have implemented strategies that integrate the latest technology to improve patient care. Services are provided to adults and children across primary and specialty medical services and comprehensive behavioral health.

Impressive progress and care

Quality primary care is more than just filling a prescription. It requires compassion, persistence, and a commitment to community that ensures everyone has access to and receives the care they need. Beyond the numbers, there are people: a patient who found support in their hardest moment, a provider who refused to give up and a team that changed lives. That is at the core of the CS-HHC in men's and women's health, pediatrics, geriatrics, dentistry and other departments.



"We are determined to sustain the caliber of care that is making a life-changing difference in the lives of our neighbors, their families and our entire community," says Michael R. Taylor, president and CEO. "Our resolve will not diminish. With your support, we will continue to impact lives in meaningful and enduring ways."

2025 saw the opening of the Recovery & Wellness Center to respond in a coordinated, comprehensive way to individuals grappling with substance use challenges. It expands a continuum

of care campus alongside CS-HHC's South Central Rehabilitation Center in New Haven.

Where future medical professionals turn for foundational learning

CS-HHC has continually deepened its role as a trusted medical home and starting point for future leaders in healthcare. They have established relationships with Yale University, Southern Connecticut State University, University of Saint Joseph, Albertus Magnus College, Porter & Chester Institute, and numerous healthcare organizations, including the New Haven Department of Health and Yale New Haven Health.

Responding to an unprecedented crisis

Two-thirds of CS-HHC's nearly 60,000 patients are low income, relying on Medicaid for healthcare. In recent years, residents from 167 of Connecticut's 169 towns have turned to CS-HHC for medical and behavioral health services.

To respond locally, the Cornell Scott Hill Health Center Foundation has established the Patient Access Fund to receive unrestricted donations to help subsidize care for the people projected to lose their health insurance coverage and



Nathan Jones' journey began as a CS-HHC patient and continues as a board member. "As my health improved, my CS-HHC doctor suggested I join the board, which I did. I'm committed to learning every aspect of the organization: operations and processes in addition to the expectations, concerns and needs of the people who receive care. Before I can speak on behalf of our patients, I need to know their experience. I'm proud to be part of an organization that stands firmly on its founding mission and vision to provide compassionate care, accessible to all."

prescription benefits due to changing federal policies.

"Our community must support the continued quality healthcare services that our patients have a right to expect; which we are determined to provide. Contributions to our Patient Access Fund will provide a brightly shining beacon of hope for people in need of healthcare services," says Foundation Chair LindyLee Gold.



The "HeART of Healing" to better health

"HeART of Healing" Arts Initiative's goal is to curate works of art as a vessel to health and sustained wellbeing for the CS-HHC patient and staff community. Since its launch in 2020, the project has selected nearly two dozen artists, predominantly local, to create or provide artworks to enhance the health center walls that are soothing, engaging and therapeutic. It has been extended to a virtual web gallery, which includes artists highlighting their personal healing journeys through art.

Award-winning healthcare

CS-HHC's dedicated staff of over 700 people earned recognition from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration in 2025 with three Community Health Quality Recognition awards. The awards recognize CS-HHC for delivering excellent outcomes, controlling per patient costs, securely sharing clinical information and deepening patient engagement through digital innovation. CS-HHC ranks in the top 10% of 1,500 community health centers nationwide.



"In 2008, I lost my job and my health insurance. I have type 1 diabetes and, at that time, I couldn't even make an appointment with my doctor, who I had been seeing for 10 years! I was in a real health and personal crisis. Cornell Scott was the only healthcare organization that I could make an appointment with." In appreciation of the care he received, nearly two decades later, Charlie O'Connell, now the CEO of a health/fitness company he launched, proudly serves on CS-HHC's board of directors.

Learn more at cornellscott.org.
Support the Patient Access Fund at cornellscott.org/donate.

A Hallmark Movie Featuring Slightly Old Folks

By TERESA PELHAM MICHAUD

As soon as I turned 16, I got myself a driver's license and a job at Sophia's Pizzeria. I wasn't trained at all for my \$3.37 an hour job in the kitchen. On day two, I was given a ticket to prepare a pizza "with everything." I'd already successfully made several orders and didn't give much thought to sprinkling the same amount of each topping onto this pizza as I had when I'd made a pepperoni and mushroom. The result was the pie was sent back because it was uncooked in the middle.

The next day, I got a call from Geissler's Supermarket, the other place to which I'd applied a few weeks earlier. All the cool kids worked there, so I jumped at the chance to leave the hot pizza kitchen for the air-conditioned meat department. I learned how to identify all the cuts of meat and how to wrap packages in cellophane like a pro. The two butchers I worked with were harmless but said all sorts of inappropriate things in my presence. But it was 1984, so everyone just thought they were funny, not creepy.

A guy named Danny worked as a bagger at Geissler's. He tried in vain to straighten his curly brown hair by wearing a baseball cap backwards over his wet hair. He was two years older than me and lived in the next town; these were two qualities that made him irresistible to me.

Conrad and Jimmy, the ridiculous butchers, teased me incessantly about my crush on Danny. They'd let me know if he was about to walk past our window and would send me out with some random chore just so I'd have a chance to talk to him. As a lifelong professional flirt, I quickly got a date with this mysterious older guy.

Danny picked me up in a red Ford EXP. Although I have no recollection of where we went, I do remember that I spent the earlier part of the day at the beach with my friends and had a horrible sunburn. (Shockingly, I've now had more spots cut or frozen off my body than I can count.) I'm not sure what I would have done if he'd touched my bright pink shoulders.

I don't remember much beyond these details. Did we go out just once? Ten times? No clue. We dated again a few years later for over a year, but it was evidently not meant to be. We went our separate ways, got married to other people and had three kids each.



Teresa and Danny's class pictures from 1984.



Teresa and Danny attending a My Morning Jacket concert at Red Rocks Amphitheater in Colorado.

Navigating my way through life after the end of a 23-year marriage and the sale of a house, I messaged Danny on Facebook with questions about interest rates and home inspections. He's a mortgage guy and I needed a house. He was supportive and helpful. I was certainly not planning to have a relationship with him.

But sometimes love happens when you're not looking for it. We've been together for 11 years now and married for two. It's got the makings of a Hallmark movie (except he's not a rugged rancher and I'm not a fashionable city girl with an important job): high school sweethearts reconnect after decades apart.

Having both lived in Connecticut for over 50 years, we embarked on an adventure last year and moved from Farmington to a town in rural Maine with no stoplight. It is home to a fraction of the population of the town we had just moved from. Our new one-story home is very different

If your car gets stuck in the snow, there's no sense in calling a tow truck since pretty much everyone here is willing to stop and help.

from the 125-year-old Farmington house. It was charmingly situated on busy Main Street at a stoplight that seemed to encourage drivers to express their feelings directly outside my bedroom window.

It now feels perfect, but this move was a tough decision. I had lived in a dozen places throughout my life, but never more than 45 minutes away from friends and family. This

would be a big change for me, a social butterfly. It would be a piece of cake for Danny, who would be happier planting corn and digging up potatoes than he would be watching football with the guys. I'm the only friend he needs, he says. He definitely had some convincing to do before I agreed to relocate.

We had technically started our move north back in 2018. Perhaps looking for a way to prove to me that he was serious about building a life together, Danny proposed that we buy a small getaway property which we could rent out a few weekends a month to cover its expenses. I had to admit it was a pretty good idea.

Housing prices and mortgage rates were reasonable in 2018, so we had lots of options and not much competition. A tiny cabin in Parsonsfield in Maine popped up on Zillow. The price was good, it was on a river, and it was under four hours away from our home in Farmington. By lunchtime, we had made an offer.

As we began spending time each month in this rural farming town, we started to appreciate its beauty and slower pace. Rivers and lakes and mountains are everywhere. Most people have chickens, so we can get eggs so fresh they're still warm. I can go to the post office in my pajamas and nobody cares.

New Englanders across the board are not known for their friendliness but we make friends while sitting on our front porch and out at bars and restaurants. If your car gets stuck in the snow, there's no sense in calling a tow truck since pretty much everyone here is willing to stop and help. That, plus the most stunning night skies I'd ever seen, led us to consider living here full time. But would I actually move out of the only state I've ever called home?

When a piece of land on a former

apple orchard by a lake in the same town as our cabin went on the market, we quickly bought it and hired a builder. Neither of us had any idea what we were doing, but it was an adventure we wanted to tackle together. Just a few months later, ground was broken, as was my right arm from embracing our new climate by ice skating. And then, with my arm in a cast, I was hit with a diagnosis of a fast-growing type of breast cancer that required surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation. Didn't see that one coming, did you?

And that's where the rubber meets the road. During a year with more lows than highs, Danny showed up for me in a way I didn't think was possible. Not exactly Hallmark movie material, but that's real life. He made me laugh, made me go to all of my appointments and made me eat. I'm

quite possibly the only person who gained weight while doing chemo.

We had made plans to go to the cabin one chilly Friday, but obstacle after obstacle kept popping up. I'd go to a procedure and then would immediately be sent to another one. Everyone really seemed to want to poke me. That pretty much sums up cancer treatment: getting poked. Exhausted but unwilling to give in, I insisted we still drive north. Around midnight, we took a detour and showed up at the construction site to find that our walls were up! In total darkness and silence, we stood in what would be our kitchen, staring at the stars above—more stars than I'd ever seen. The building project became a welcome distraction from the “nonsense” invading my body.

And now here we are, living in a town where we are outsiders trying



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to blend in. Posing as locals. My flannel collection has multiplied. I can carry on a conversation about loons and lupine with the best of them. Sometimes I can drive to a destination without GPS, which is a challenge since many Maine roads look identical and have few landmarks. The quirks of this town make it both quaint and difficult. On the one hand, there's no Target or CVS in sight. On the other hand, there's no Target or CVS in sight.

Because everything is an hour away, a doctor's appointment also means a Costco run, getting my nails done or oil changed, and discovering a new brewery. Maine is second only to Vermont in the number of breweries per capita (plus second in number of lighthouses and first in wild blueberries and lobster),

so there's always something new to discover. We've found that life is better when you can look at a task as less of a chore and more of an adventure. My inflatable paddleboard lives in my trunk during the warmer months, replaced by snowshoes during the winter.

I memorized my wedding vows while paddleboarding around those little islands near L.L. Bean in Freeport and then recited them the next day when we eloped in Boothbay Harbor. I vowed not to get upset when Danny wakes me up to see the family of deer in our yard. He vowed to be cool with me needing to go somewhere warm when spring refuses to begin.

A slower, simpler life might not be for everyone, and sometimes I do crave life beyond our orchard.

But there's something sweet about hearing the horses and goats across the road as they begin to stir each morning while we sip our coffee and decide where the day will take us.

It feels like our love story just restarted now that we're living in a place that's novel to both of us. Every time we find something new, we discover it together. Now there's some serious Hallmark movie material. 📺

Teresa Pelham Michaud is a writer and children's book author, including "Roxy's Forever Home." Her goal is to share her books and message about dog rescue with as many elementary school students as possible.



Historic Home Project



Billy Matthews: Manager (left), Christopher O'Flaherty, Owner (right)

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A woman with blonde hair tied back is running on a snowy path. She is wearing a maroon long-sleeved athletic jacket, black leggings, grey socks, and black running shoes. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows snow-covered trees and a brick wall.

FEATURE

WINTER WELLNESS: Simple Ways to Feel Your Best All Season

By KIMBERLY LUCEY MILLEN

When the temperatures drop and the days get shorter, it's easy to slip into hibernation mode. But winter doesn't have to mean slowing down completely. It's actually a great time to refocus on the basics of wellness. With a little planning and a few mindful habits, you can stay healthy, happy and energized all season long.

SUPPORT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

As a fitness instructor, Nicole "NikkiFitness" Glor is used to being on the move, whether it's leading a class at Old Greenwich Yoga, or creating a new workout video on the beach in Mexico. But she started noticing her energy waning on cloudy days in autumn and increasingly getting worse as the calendar flipped into winter.

"I definitely noticed my motivation drop, not just to work out, but to do anything," says Glor. She's not alone, says Dr. Emily Mellen, a clinical psychologist at Tufts Medical Center in Boston. Shorter days and less sunlight can take a toll on mood, a phenomenon many people know as the "winter blues." "Less sunlight can throw off our circadian rhythms and affect how we feel," she explains. "It's a one-two punch with the physical lack of light and the behavioral changes that come with spending more time indoors."

Dr. Mellen says small, intentional choices can make a big difference. "We can't make it sunnier or warmer, but we can focus on what's within our control, like maintaining a routine, moving our bodies or getting even a few minutes of daylight each day." That might mean bundling up to walk to your favorite coffee shop instead of hopping in the car, taking the dog for a brisk walk or just standing on your porch with a cup of coffee. "You don't need to be outside for hours," she says. "But avoiding isolation and getting a little fresh air can boost your mood."

Dr. Mellen adds that if seasonal sadness becomes severe or persistent, it's important to reach out for help. "If you're trying these strategies but still feel really down or anxious, talk to your primary care provider or a therapist," she says. "Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is real. You're not making it up." Glor says she ended up getting diagnosed with SAD and now uses a sun lamp to help manage her seasonal symptoms.

STAY ACTIVE INDOORS AND OUTDOORS

Movement is one of the best mood-boosters, especially during the darker months. But it's also one of the hardest habits to maintain when it's gray and freezing outside. "When I have low energy, I turn to my sun lamp or some sunshine whenever I can, or



I'll stream a yoga or HIIT class to get those endorphins flowing," says Glor.

To make winter workouts easier, she advocates for removing as many barriers as possible. "I sleep in my workout clothes so I can't talk myself out of exercising in the morning. I also set my thermostat to warm up before I get out of bed. It's a small thing, but it makes a big difference on cold mornings."

She also recommends finding accountability and enjoyment to help keep that exercise consistent. "Workout buddies are huge. It's easy to let yourself down, but not a friend. Instead of meeting for drinks, meet for yoga. That's my happy hour." If you prefer to move solo, try streaming fitness videos, dancing around your kitchen, or taking a walk or hike when the weather allows. Check out a winter sport like ice skating, skiing, snowshoeing or even sledding with the kids. "Just 20 minutes a day can help keep your energy up and your spirits lifted," Glor explains. "Once you finish, your mood improves, you sleep better and everything just feels easier."

Dr. Ryan Kane agrees, saying that movement is essential in winter. He is a primary care physician at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston and a researcher with The Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy. "Physical activity has profound effects on both mental and physical health," he states. "It doesn't have to be complicated or outdoors. Even simple bodyweight exercises, chair yoga or resistance bands at home can help. We recommend aiming for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, about 20 to 30 minutes a day. Group classes are great too because socializing adds accountability and improves longevity."

HYDRATION IN THE DRY WINTER AIR

Cold weather and indoor heating can leave your skin and body parched. "You might not feel as thirsty in winter, but your body still needs plenty of fluids," says Dr. Kane. "Go for about two liters, or 64 ounces, of water a day. Being hydrated helps your immune system, digestion and energy." If plain water doesn't appeal, try warming things up by sipping herbal tea, lemon water or bone broth throughout the day. Dr. Kane also recommends pairing hydration with fiber-rich foods. "Water and fiber work together to keep your digestive system moving and support healthy gut bacteria," he adds.

NOURISH WITH IMMUNE-BOOSTING WINTER FOODS

Winter produce can be surprisingly vibrant and nutrient-packed if you know where to look. "Even though we think of winter as a time without much fresh produce, there are plenty of local and seasonal options," Dr. Kane recommends. "Kale, brussels sprouts, cranberries, garlic, sweet potatoes and citrus fruits are all great choices." He suggests checking out seasonalfoodguide.org to see what's available in your area. "Support local farms and farmers' markets when you can, but frozen fruits and veggies are just as good as fresh, as long as you watch for added sodium." Health advocates recommend adding ginger and turmeric for their anti-inflammatory benefits. Also, don't sleep on soups and stews; they're comforting, hydrating and an easy way to sneak in extra veggies.

REST AND RECOVERY

Winter naturally invites rest, so lean into it. Experts say recovery

isn't laziness, but rather how you recharge to take on the season's demands. "Historically we were more sedentary and tucked away in the winter months due to the natural cycles of the world," says Dr. Kane. "Sleep is essential to immune health and mood. Most adults need seven to nine hours a night, though slightly less can be okay for older adults. Try to keep regular bedtimes and wake-up times. Since it gets dark earlier, it's a great opportunity to go to bed early to get more rest and sneak in a morning activity."

Make time for indoor activities that bring you joy: reading, journaling, cooking or connecting with friends. Dr. Mellen encourages embracing the cozy side of the season to help focus on mental health. "Maybe your way of embracing the winter is by creating a warm ambience inside, whether that's by lighting your fireplace or turning your TV to the Netflix version," she says. "If we reframe it as a time for restoration rather than restriction, we start to feel more balanced."

THE TAKEAWAY

Winter wellness doesn't require an overhaul, just small, sustainable habits. Move a little every day. Hydrate and eat seasonally. Get some light. Rest well. Connect with people. Set attainable goals to help make winter not just something you survive, but a time of year you may even learn to enjoy. ■

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.

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The Seasonal Injustice of Birthdays

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

Itrudge through slush in my winter boots. I'm walking across the parking lot to the AMC Theater. My wife is trudging to my left. My kids are trudging to my right. We're going to watch some middling comedy that will appease my entire family, which is to say, not me.

Compromise is awful.

It's especially awful on this day, because today should not be about compromise, but I have no choice. It's February 15. The dead of the New England winter. Choices are limited unless you enjoy riding a swing to the top of a mountain and

flinging yourself off the edge with fiberglass strapped to your feet. No, thank you.

I was once told by an avid skier to never try skiing. He said, "It's like cocaine. It's addictive, expensive, and you will eventually get hurt. Sounds about right. Also, it looks like a nightmare to me. Far away, frigid, and skiers who keep all their ski tags on their coats like braggy little badges of honor make me think the skiing community is not my kind of people.

There are other winter sports, of course. Ice skating. Hockey. Curling. No, thank you. Also cold

and dumb. Fun to watch. Awful to play. Winter sports are not my bag.

So instead, I make my way across this parking lot to this so-so movie to celebrate this day. My day. It doesn't feel like my day at all.

Almost four months from now, on May 30, everything will be different. The world will be my son's oyster, and he will take full advantage of it. The grass and trees will be green. T-shirts and shorts will replace mittens and long underwear. Maybe we'll attend a minor league baseball game or play golf or go railfanning, where we sit

on a train platform as he records and photographs trains. It's his latest thing. It's awful.

Or we might go fishing or spend the day at the beach. Maybe we'll go to the park for a hike or rent an enormous, inflatable water slide for the backyard—the kind you see in county fairs.

Why the disparity between choices? It's simple. I have a middle-of-February birthday, and Charlie has a late May, almost summer birthday. What a jerk.

The rest of my family also suffers with winter birthdays. My wife and daughter both have January birthdays, which are as poorly placed as mine, except that my birthday often gets swamped by Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day, too; it makes party planning precarious. Half of my friends go away for the long weekend, and the other half have Valentine's Day plans.

But Charlie? May 30? Nothing is happening on May 30 except warm weather, bright sunshine and a million options. It's a birthday that wants and needs to be celebrated. It deserves to be celebrated. No winter coats. No boots. No staring at gray skies and ice-covered driveways. Charlie is not limited to compromised movie selections, sad trips to the bowling alley or dinner on an evening when it's already getting dark at 4:00 in the afternoon.

I'm so jealous. He can play minigolf and eat ice cream and still have hours more to celebrate.

February 15 has about 10.5 hours of daylight. May 30 has more than 15. Charlie gets almost five additional hours of sunlight on his birthday than I do. Such a jerk.

Summer birthday people are the worst. Warm-weather birthday people of any kind are terrible

If your birthday is within shouting distance of Christmas, you should petition to have your birthday moved to a different day. I can begin to imagine celebrating my birthday alongside a Christmas tree, stockings and post-Christmas bliss. No worse day exists for a birthday.

people. They have no idea how good their lives are.

I have a friend whose birthday is December 26, which I suspect is worse than mine. Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day are minor holidays. Christmas is a monster. If your birthday is within shouting distance of Christmas, you should petition to have your birthday moved to a different day. I can begin to imagine celebrating my birthday alongside a Christmas tree, stockings and post-Christmas bliss. No worse day exists for a birthday.

My father-in-law's birthday is December 31, which is also a terrible time weather-wise, and he has the unique position of spoiling New Year's Eve parties by insisting that we celebrate on his actual birthday. Thankfully, he has never made that request. He probably knows that winter

birthdays are terrible already. Why make everyone else miserable? Still, it must be lousy to share your birthday with the birth of a new year.

The only slightly enjoyable winter birthday is February 29 as a leap year baby. It's still cold, dark and sad, but you get to at least choose your birthday every three years: February 28 or March 1. And you can make all those jokes wherein you divide your age by four and claim to be far younger than you really are. It's not much—almost nothing—but in the winter, a little bit can be a lot.

So once again, I celebrate my birthday with my beloved family indoors, doing something that is only fine if I'm lucky. We'll eat some ice cream cake—my favorite food—but the below-freezing temperature outside will sap even some of that joy from the perfection of ice cream layered with chocolate crunchies and that unknowable frozen glaze on top.

I'll eat it, of course. Maybe two or three pieces. And I'll like it, too, because it's an ice cream cake. But I know in my heart and mind that I'd like it even more in May, when my son celebrates his own birthday, probably with all-weather cupcakes, a stupid sponge cake or maybe even a pie. He's the worst. ❧

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