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Seasons' Greetings



Ariana Rawls Fine

Fall. Autumn. Harvest. Pumpkin latte time. Maple syrup season.

All these names for one of the most beautiful periods of the year in New England. Yes, our summer activities have ended, the pools are closed and school is back in session. But fall — by any name — is a great time to get out, enjoy warm drinks, go to the myriads of fall and Halloween events, and hike amongst the colorful trees. I may miss being able to swim along our beautiful shoreline or in peaceful lakes but the beauty of fall and the plethora of things to do make the “cold” blow a soft one.

Ready to plan for fall activities before the snow “graces” us with its cold presence? Check out Frank Rizzo’s perennial Fall Arts Preview — chock full of concerts, musicals, plays, dance and music events — as well as his spotlight on celebrated animal trainer William Berloni and his search for the new Sandy for “Annie.”

While Randy Young looks outside to see how barns are being repurposed in novel ways, Kerri-Lee Mayland looks inside to how fireplaces become a focal point as weather turns colder. While we are still inside, our Delicious article is all about the magic of maple with a martini recipe to go along with the carrot side and scallop main dishes. Speaking of “magic,” Kerri-Lee spotlights the power of girlfriends in our lives. Try the Delicious recipes out for your next friends’ get-together!

Now let’s take a step outside again...this time with Connecticut’s Joshua Lamb, aka The Dart Traveler, as he photographs and uncovers stories, food and interesting experiences in two towns. Ready to get out of Connecticut this holiday season but not interested in the “most popular?” Anastasia Mills Healy offers three alternatives for your next vacation.

We are not done yet with the amazing lineup of articles. Broadcast journalist Nicole Nalepa delves into how life is a journey of changes in her Mostly Together podcast. For many of us who grew up and lived here, we remember seeing the late Denise D’Ascenzo on our TV news. Dennis House spotlights how her spirit and inspiring words continue with the foundation named after her.

May this gorgeous season and our articles inspire you!

Ariana

Ariana Rawls Fine
Editor
Seasons Magazines



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*We want to tell our
readers stories about the
interesting people and
places in our beautiful
state. It’s that simple.*

– JIM TULLY

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SEASONS Magazines®

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Health & Wellness

With advanced technology, Dr. Amrita Karambelkar and her team are helping Trinity Health Of New England pulmonology patients breathe easier with innovative airway stents.

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By following a dart's pinpointed destination, Joshua Lamb discovers the surprises, inspirations, food, fun and history each Connecticut town offers — next stops are Manchester and Madison.

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Looking for accessible, alternative destinations to popular vacation spots? Anastasia Mills Healy suggests going north to New Brunswick, south to St. Augustine or west to Canyon de Chelly.

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In his annual Fall Arts Preview, Frank Rizzo spotlights Connecticut's profusion of events and performing artists bringing autumn color to the stage.

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With the beauty of fall foliage along the shoreline, Saybrook Point Resort & Marina is a perfect home base to experience this season's drama, fun and serenity in Connecticut.

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As life changes and transitions, Nicole Nalepa explores her identity, motivation, reinvention and the 'mess of it all' in her Mostly Together podcast.

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Fireplaces draw us in. They can be the heart of the home as we gravitate to their warmth and light. So let's make the most of fireplace season.

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While there are far fewer farms dotting the New England landscape, property owners and farmers are repurposing farms and barns in creative ways.

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Feature

Girlfriends come into our lives in different ways and stages, supporting and helping us define ourselves and move forward in life. Kerri-Lee Mayland shines a light on the magic in that.

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Delicious

The sugar maple is a New England treasure, infusing itself into all things fall, including the amazing cocktail, appetizer and main dish recipes spotlighted here.

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Dennis House spotlights how the late Denise D'Ascenzo's words about being open, brave and kind live on through her foundation's support of the community.

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Fifty years after Bill Berloni found 'Sandy' at a dog pound for Goodspeed Opera House's 'Annie' and launched his career, he found a new 'Sandy' for the musical's anniversary production.

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Tailgating is a strange, hilarious culture fraught with suffering and joy, a time cooking and eating in sub-zero temps before heading into a stadium to freeze more.



“SING A SONG OF SEASONS!
SOMETHING BRIGHT IN ALL!
FLOWERS IN THE SUMMER,
FIRES IN THE FALL!”

—Robert Louis Stevenson House



Amrita Karambelkar, M.D.: Bringing the Future of Lung Care to Connecticut

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

When a patient suffers from a severely narrowed airway, even the simple act of breathing can become a daily struggle. For years, physicians relied on airway stents manufactured in standard shapes and sizes to help keep those airways open. While effective, they weren't always a perfect fit for everyone. Now, that is beginning to change. At Saint Francis Hospital, Amrita Karambelkar, M.D., assistant director of interventional pulmonology, is helping to bring a new generation of personalized treatment to Connecticut.

Using advanced imaging and 3-D printing, physicians can now create patient-specific airway stents designed to match an individual's unique anatomy. It's an innovation that has the potential to improve comfort, reduce complications and enhance long-term outcomes. "Patients' airways are much more complex structures than a simple tube," Dr. Karambelkar explains. "By designing a stent specifically for the patient's airway, we can minimize complications and provide a much better fit."

For Dr. Karambelkar, the procedure represents more than a techno-

logical milestone. It's another way she's helping patients breathe easier while bringing some of the most advanced pulmonary care available closer to home. The highly specialized stent procedure requires extensive training to place, adjust and remove the customized devices safely. In 2025, Dr. Karambelkar performed Connecticut's first patient-specific airway stent placement, marking an important milestone not only for Saint Francis Hospital, but for patients throughout the region. "It really feels like the future," she says. "I can bring an idea to our team and say, 'I think this patient needs a custom stent,' and have the full support to make it happen quickly. It's a testament that we're truly on the cutting edge at Trinity Health Of New England."

A PASSION FOR PULMONARY MEDICINE

Although she grew up in eastern Massachusetts, Dr. Karambelkar's medical training took her up and down the East Coast. She attended medical school in New York City before completing her residency in Atlanta, where she discovered that pulmonary and critical care medicine offered exactly the kind of career

she was looking for. "The lungs are such a vital organ, and pulmonary medicine really interfaces with every other discipline," she says. "People often need prompt care, and I liked being able to care for patients both in the hospital and in an outpatient setting."

During fellowship, mentors introduced her to advanced bronchoscopy, where minimally invasive procedures can diagnose and treat complex lung diseases. "I had wonderful mentors and physician colleagues I could learn from," states Dr. Karambelkar. "I really enjoyed doing procedures and then taking care of patients afterward." That interest eventually led her to complete the prestigious Harvard Combined Interventional Pulmonology Fellowship before joining Saint Francis Hospital.

TRAINING DURING AN UNPRECEDENTED TIME

Part of Dr. Karambelkar's fellowship and early career unfolded during the COVID-19 pandemic, when respiratory specialists found themselves on the front lines. "It was a difficult time to be training as a critical care physician," she explains. "But it also showed the impact we can have. We touched a lot of lives and improved



Amrita Karambelkar, M.D.,
assistant director of
interventional pulmonology
at Saint Francis Hospital

many more during that time.” The experience served to deepen her understanding of severe respiratory illness while reinforcing an important lesson. “I think overall it humbled all of us as providers in terms of how much we don’t know about the effects viral respiratory illnesses can have on people’s lungs.” Even today, she says, research continues to shape physicians’ understanding of long-term lung disease and recovery following the pandemic.

CHOOSING SAINT FRANCIS

For many physicians with advanced fellowship training, large academic medical centers are the expected destination. Dr. Karambelkar saw something different at Saint Francis. “What led me here was the hospital’s commitment to a community-based program, but with a lot of advanced technologies and resources,” she says. “It allowed me to practice all the parts of pulmonology I trained for while continuing to teach residents, participate in research and help grow new programs.” That combination of academic-level technology within a community hospital made Saint Francis the ideal place to build the kind of practice Dr. Karambelkar envisioned. She also found a collaborative culture that matched her own approach to patient care. “I was really impressed with how well the team works together,” continues Dr. Karambelkar, who works alongside thoracic surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, pulmonologists, radiologists, nurses and other specialists as part of the Thoracic Oncology Program. It provides coordinated care for a patient from diagnosis through treatment.

DETECTING CANCER BEFORE SYMPTOMS BEGIN

While advanced procedures often capture attention, Dr. Karambelkar believes one of the biggest opportunities to save lives begins long before patients ever need an operation. “The ultimate goal is to detect

lung cancer before any symptoms appear,” she says. “Unfortunately, symptoms often happen very late, when treatment options become much more limited.”

The Lung Cancer Screening Program at Saint Francis offers annual low-dose CT scans for eligible patients with a history of smoking, allowing physicians to identify suspicious lung nodules when they are still small and highly treatable. Since its launch, the program has completed more than 2,000 lung cancer screenings and continues to grow. More than half of the lung cancers it has detected were diagnosed at Stage I, compared with approximately 16 percent nationally, giving many patients access to treatment when their disease is still highly curable. “There is still a lot of education and awareness that needs to happen,” Dr. Karambelkar says. “We want people to understand that screening is preventive care. The earlier we find something, the more options we have.”

ENSURING NO ONE FALLS THROUGH THE CRACKS

Not every lung nodule is discovered during a scheduled screening exam. Many are found unexpectedly during imaging performed for another reason. As director of Saint Francis Hospital’s Lung Nodule Program, Dr. Karambelkar oversees a coordinated process that reviews these incidental findings and helps ensure patients receive the follow-up they need. “It helps make sure that no patient falls through the cracks,” she states. By combining advanced technology with multidisciplinary review, the program supports primary care physicians while making sure potentially concerning findings receive the attention they need. “Primary care physicians have an enormous amount of responsibility and shouldn’t be the only line of defense,” says Dr. Karambelkar. “Across the country, we’re moving toward formalized programs with

dedicated personnel so these patients are identified and followed appropriately.”

LOOKING TOWARD WHAT’S NEXT

Dr. Karambelkar believes interventional pulmonology is entering one of its most exciting eras. Advances in robotic bronchoscopy continue to improve physicians’ ability to diagnose lung disease earlier, while emerging therapies may eventually allow some early-stage tumors to be treated without surgery. “We’ve made tremendous strides in changing outcomes for lung cancer,” she says. “People often think about someone they knew years ago who had a poor prognosis. Today, because of those enhanced screenings, if we catch lung cancer at Stage I, the success rates are dramatically different.”

For Dr. Karambelkar, the most meaningful advancement isn’t simply developing new technology, it’s ensuring patients throughout Connecticut have access to it. “I think it’s very important to convey that when patients have disease or illness, they’re not geographically limited,” she concludes. “They don’t need to go to Boston or New York for that care. We want people to know they can receive the best personalized, most technologically advanced treatment right here in their own community.” ■

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. Connect on Instagram @kimlucey.

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



We Make Lung Cancer Screening Easy

Lung cancer commonly affects people who are or have been heavy smokers. Trinity Health Of New England is here to help break old habits and give way to a healthier future.

If you have a significant history of smoking and meet age guidelines, talk with your health care provider about a lung cancer screening.

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One Man's Adventures in Connecticut

By JOSHUA LAMB
Photography by JOSHUA LAMB PHOTOGRAPHY

Peering down toward the Hartford skyline
from Case Mountain in Manchester.



Bridge and waterfall at Case Mountain in Manchester.

MANCHESTER: WHERE CONNECTICUT STARTED TO SURPRISE ME

Long before I started throwing darts at a map to randomly choose my next destination, I spent weekends chasing photographs wherever curiosity led me. One autumn afternoon, that search brought me to Manchester, and I left with far more than a collection of photos.

Case Mountain was my first stop. Like many Connecticut residents, I had driven past Manchester countless times without even noticing something like this existed here. The trail starts with the sound of rushing water. There's this beautiful little waterfall that not a lot of people know about at the beginning of the trail.

Then the trail climbs steadily through the forest. I remember this being early fall because I wanted to come back when foliage was changing colors and it's still something that's on my bucket list. It was a fairly easy trail, and it led me to something incredible. At the top, it opens to wide views stretching toward Hartford. It was one of those moments that I had to pull my camera

out to take a photo. Hartford looked distant in my photo, but this was one of those secret views that locals probably try keeping to themselves.

As I continued exploring, I remembered something else that has now become a frequent hobby of mine. It was the beginning of my geocaching adventure. Searching for a hidden container among the trees added an unexpected sense of adventure to an already memorable hike. It changed the way I looked at trails and from then on, every hike held the possibility of finding something hidden just beyond the next corner.

By the time we finished hiking, we had earned dinner. A short drive brought us to Mulberry Street Pizza, where I ordered the Italian Job — this pizza is a combination of lemon cream sauce, prosciutto, caramelized onions, fresh basil and Romano cheese that I still think about today...and have ordered it many times since. During our visit, the owner shared a simple tip that I've never forgotten: order a small pizza if you want the best char on the crust. It's over a year later and I still do this. Mulberry Street was what actually started my adventure to try all the top New Haven style pizza spots among

Connecticut. Since this stop, I have visited over 10 popular destinations, including my first stops at Sally's, Frank Pepe's and Modern Apizza — also known as the holy trinity of pizza.

The warm welcome at Mulberry Street mattered just as much as the meal. Our kids were treated like regulars, and the relaxed atmosphere made it feel less like stopping at a restaurant and more like visiting friends after a day outdoors.

Looking back, Manchester became one of the first places where everything clicked. Hiking led to photography. Photography led to exploration. Exploration led to discovering great local food. I realized I had spent years overlooking places that were practically in my own backyard.





That realization eventually became the inspiration for *The Dart Traveler*. But before there was a series, there was simply a fall afternoon in Manchester that reminded me how rewarding it can be to explore somewhere you thought you already knew.

MADISON: CONNECTICUT'S BEACH TOWN THAT FEELS DIFFERENT IN FALL

Most people think of Madison as a summer destination. Beaches, ice cream and busy sidewalks define the shoreline for much of the season. Visit in the fall, however, and you'll discover an entirely different town.

Before *The Dart Traveler* became a regular part of my life, I often spent

weekends searching Connecticut for places to photograph. One autumn morning, that search led me to Madison, where I expected little more than coastal scenery. Instead, I found one of the most peaceful days I've spent along the Connecticut shoreline.

I started the day flying my drone at sunrise. As the morning light spread across the coastline, it revealed the marshes surrounding Madison. I remember thinking I had overlooked one of Connecticut's most beautiful landscapes. That morning began a fascination with photographing Connecticut's coastal marshes that continues today.

My plan was to explore Hammonasset Beach State Park, but I quickly learned that visiting in the off-season

requires a little more research. The main entrance was closed, yet several nearby trailheads remained open, allowing visitors to park and walk through the campground to the beach. Even the restrooms were open. It was a good reminder that a closed gate doesn't always mean a destination is inaccessible.

The walk itself was unforgettable. Moss-covered rocks lined the shoreline, gentle waves rolled onto the sand and there were very few people anywhere in sight. Without the summer crowds, the Connecticut shoreline felt completely different. Along the trail near one of the closed park buildings, we spotted a raccoon trapped inside a dumpster. After contacting state



Drone photo of marsh at Hammonasset Beach State Park.



One of the park buildings at Hammonasset Beach State Park.

“Tucked away from Madison’s better-known shoreline, East Wharf Beach was quiet, peaceful and exactly the kind of place I love discovering.”

.....



officials, they arrived to safely rescue it. It wasn’t something I expected to encounter that morning, but it’s one of those unexpected travel memories that has stayed with me. I still have video footage of it today.

By the time we finished exploring, we were ready for breakfast. Christy’s Madison was busy despite it being fall; the pancakes lived up to their reputation. While we ate, our waitress shared a recommendation that never would have appeared on any travel itinerary: East Wharf Beach.

That local tip ended up becoming the highlight of the day.

Tucked away from Madison’s better-known shoreline, East Wharf Beach was quiet, peaceful and exactly the kind of place I love discovering. My kids immediately fell in love with fishing there while I wandered the shore-



Moss-covered rocks line the shoreline in Madison.

line with my camera. The calm water, the silence and the feeling of having the beach almost to ourselves made it hard to leave.

Looking back, Madison helped shape the way I travel today. It made me want

to always get advice from the locals. It broke me out of my shell of avoiding people. Before I ever let a dart choose my next destination, I was already discovering that some of Connecticut’s best adventures happen in the places — and seasons — we’re most likely to overlook. 📌

Joshua Lamb is the creator of The Dart Traveler, a Connecticut-based travel series where a dart decides the next destination. Through cinematic storytelling, photography and local history, he explores hidden gems, small towns, restaurants and unique experiences across New England, inspiring people to discover places they might otherwise overlook.

In 2025:
56,681 patients
 served
424,313 patient visits
65,913 prescriptions
 dispensed



Child & Family Guidance Expanding Impact for Youth and Families



Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center's (CS-HHC) highly regarded Child & Family Guidance (CFG) program begins a new chapter this fall with a move to the Connecticut Center for Arts and Technology's (ConnCAT) new ConneCTion Center in New Haven, expanding access to behavioral health services for children and families in the region and beyond.

CFG's skilled, dedicated and compassionate behavioral health providers and support staff offer state-of-the-art, holistic care to address the physical, emotional and social aspects of patients' well-being, serving children and teens ages 2 to 18 with:

- individual, group and family therapy;
- psychiatric evaluations;
- medication management;
- case management;
- crisis intervention; and
- substance abuse treatment and intervention.

The comprehensive CFG program helps youth, and the families who love them, navigate the way forward. A year ago, there were more than 18,000 patient visits to CFG, by individuals from 81 Connecticut communities.

"These days, so many kids are facing peer pressure and life challenges that make daily life difficult for them," explains Michael R. Taylor, CS-HHC's president and CEO.

"Our focus is on smoothing their path and helping them sustain their progress."

A parent in one family describes their CFG experience: "It helps us to help them cope with the things they're going through. I've seen a huge change in the way my children view life now."

Across the street from ConnCAT is the Q House, home to a CS-HHC pediatric practice, allowing families to access behavioral health and pediatric services in close proximity, highlighting CS-HHC's integrated care model. Program enhancements will include the ability to serve more patients, increase case management capabilities, and provide more privacy for patient care and greater access to wraparound services.

"We use every tool at our disposal, every treatment available, to help our patients," emphasizes Dr. Ece Tek, CS-HHC's chief medical officer of Mental Health and Addiction Services. "We aim to achieve measurable improvement and true wellness."

GROWING QUALITY SCHOOL-BASED HEALTHCARE



CS-HHC's School-Based Health Centers have increased the number of school locations in New Haven, Hamden and West Haven in recent years from nine to 22. Each provides easy access to medical and behavioral healthcare and

helps students to adopt healthier behaviors at an earlier age. The number of on-site clinicians has increased to support this growth, sustaining continuity of care and service quality. The front-line medical and behavioral health providers have been described as individuals who really care about what they're doing, with the goal of making sure the kids receive quality care. And they do.



SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH, A \$50,000 MATCHING GRANT

Philanthropist LindyLee Gold, who serves as board chair of the CSHHC Foundation, points out that the new Child & Family Guidance setting helps create a welcoming environment for families seeking care.

"Here and across the street, people are walking into community buildings that serve a wide variety of people," Gold says. "There is no stigma attached to ConnCAT. It's a joyous place to be, and easy access to our integrated behavioral health services can truly be life changing."

Gold, through the Amour Propre Fund, is contributing \$50,000 to support the relocation effort and is encouraging others to contribute, with donations to be matched dollar-for-dollar. She hopes community members will recognize the impact of their contributions, underscoring that, "no amount is too small."

cornellscott.org/donate



CSHHC Foundation Board Chair LindyLee Gold

INCREASING NATIONAL DISTINCTION AND RECOGNITION

CS-HHC recently earned three distinctions from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in their 2026 Community Health Quality Recognition cycle.

The first National Quality Leader - Heart Health award in CS-HHC's history. It is HRSA's highest national recognition within a specific clinical area.

A Silver Health Center Quality Leader award for the second consecutive cycle, reflecting performance at or above national benchmarks across a majority of HRSA's clinical quality measures.

Advancing Health Information Technology recognition for the sixth consecutive annual cycle, acknowledging CS-HHC's sustained use of health information technology to support high-quality, coordinated patient care.

"This recognition reflects our culture of safety, quality, and patient-centeredness," says Dr. Michael Couturie, CS-HHC's chief medical officer of Medical and Dental Services, "and our commitment to healthcare delivery systems that prioritize value, compassion and sustainability."



Dr. Michael Couturie and Dr. Ece Tek



The CSHHC Foundation, established in 2022, supports Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center to promote the health and well-being of the communities it serves and to Bridge the Gap in Community Healthcare. The Foundation exists to receive gifts for CS-HHC to expand services that will help serve its patients holistically and meet their increasing needs.



St. Augustine from the water.
Photo courtesy of St. Augustine,
Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB.

FRESH ALTERNATIVES
TO POPULAR VACATION SPOTS

Pick a Direction and Get Ready for a Memorable Trip

By ANASTASIA MILLS HEALY





St. Augustine's Lightner Museum was once the Gilded Age Alcazar Hotel. Photo courtesy of St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB.

Many Connecticut travelers follow familiar routes: south to Florida's glamorous Palm Beach, north to Quebec's celebrated cities or west to Arizona's iconic Grand Canyon. Here we suggest alternatives with fewer crowds and deeper connections to local culture. In St. Augustine, Gilded Age grandeur meets 460 years of American history. Head to New Brunswick rather than Quebec to discover French Acadian culture, rugged coastlines and some of North America's best seafood. Or swap the Grand Canyon's crowds for the quiet majesty of Canyon de Chelly, where Navajo still live today among the ancient cliff dwellings of their ancestors.>>

ST. AUGUSTINE INSTEAD OF PALM BEACH

Before Henry Flagler built what became The Breakers in Palm Beach, the Standard Oil partner lured America's Gilded Age elite to the Spanish Renaissance showstopper Ponce de León Hotel in St. Augustine, transforming it into a fashionable winter playground. With luxuries like electricity (installed by Flagler's friend Thomas Edison) and Tiffany windows, the hotel launched Florida's tourism industry in 1888. Although it's now Flagler College (which gives excellent tours), some remnants of Flagler's resort empire are public, like the Casa Monica Resort & Spa, which is still a luxury hotel.

St. Augustine's tourism appeal remains strong with an attractive downtown packed with boutiques, restaurants and attractions. Plus, this small city of 15,000 is surrounded by 42 miles of Atlantic beaches and 71 golf courses. Visitors can explore the Pirate and Treasure Museum and the original Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museum; join a ghost tour; sample locally produced wine, spirits and chocolate; and take a sunset cruise on the lookout for dolphins. Food has become another reason to visit with the Michelin Guide recently recognizing several area restaurants.

More than anything else though, St. Augustine is known for its extraordinary history. Ponce de León landed in 1513 at what is now the Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park and Pedro Menéndez de Avilés founded America's oldest continuously inhabited European settlement in 1565-55 years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. A visual reminder of early Spanish occupation is the massive waterfront Castillo de San Marcos fort that has guarded the city for more than three centuries.

We in Connecticut have been taught that there were 13 American colonies but there were actually 15. The other two were East Florida and West Florida. In fact, at the start of the American Revolution, Britain had 33 colonies stretching from Nova Scotia to Grenada, and East Florida was important as the geographic center.

St. Augustine also has important Black history sites. We think of the Underground Railroad going from south to north, but the first instance was south to further south. In Spanish-owned Florida, formerly enslaved people could earn their freedom by fighting for the Spanish. Fort Mose was the first sanctioned free Black settlement, established in 1738. Lincolnville, founded in 1866 by formerly enslaved people, preserves important chapters of the Civil Rights Movement.

More information: floridashistoriccoast.com

NEW BRUNSWICK INSTEAD OF QUEBEC

Canada's only officially bilingual province — Quebec's official language is solely French — New Brunswick is a lesser-known Maritime Province. There are 17 U.S.-New Brunswick border crossings, a favorable exchange rate and 3,000 miles of coastline, so it's surprising that New Brunswick hasn't been overrun by Americans.

Its Acadian Peninsula is known for French Acadian culture, lobster and lighthouses. When this region became British in the 18th century, the Acadians, who were originally from France, were violently banished if they didn't swear allegiance to the English monarchy. They settled most notably in Louisiana, where we know them as Cajuns.

New Brunswick is the planet's second-largest exporter of live lobster. In the cute town of Shediac, which is the self-proclaimed world capital of lobster, you can take



Shippigan Lighthouse.
Credit: New Brunswick Tourism.



Revelers celebrating Acadian Day in Caraquet.
Photo by Anastasia Mills Healy.



The Bictouche Dunes boardwalk runs between the beach and wetlands. Photo by Anastasia Mills Healy.



Irving Eco-centre, la Dune de Bouctouche.
Credit: New Brunswick Tourism.



A tasting at Le Fils Du Roy with owner Sebastian Roy (left). Credit: New Brunswick Tourism.



Docents bring the past to life at the Historic Acadian Village. Photo by Anastasia Mills Healy.



A sightseeing cruise on the Miramichi River.
Photo by Anastasia Mills Healy.



Live music in Caraquet. Credit: New Brunswick Tourism.

a selfie with a 35-foot lobster and tuck into a just-caught crustacean on a Shediac Bay Cruise.

Heading up the coast, stretch your legs on the beautiful boardwalk above the Bouctouche dunes at the Irving Eco-Centre, visit the Acadian cultural village Pays de la Sagouine and go salmon fishing on the Miramichi River.

It makes sense that a region so focused on sea life has a terrific aquarium, the New Brunswick Aquarium, in Shippagan. Down the road, stay in one of the five climate-controlled domes — each with its own hot tub — that dot the Cielo Maritime Glamping property. Here, The Hub attracts locals with regionally sourced food; it's on Chemin des Huîtres' "Oysters Route."

August 15 is Acadian Day, which is more important than Christmas to many Acadians. Communities mark the occasion with fireworks, live music, parades and family gatherings. One of the largest celebrations is in Caraquet — a town of 4,237 — where 25,000 people joyfully gather. While here, seek out Carrefour de la Mer, a boardwalk with restaurants, and the Quai des Artistes, scenically situated in

an oceanfront marina.

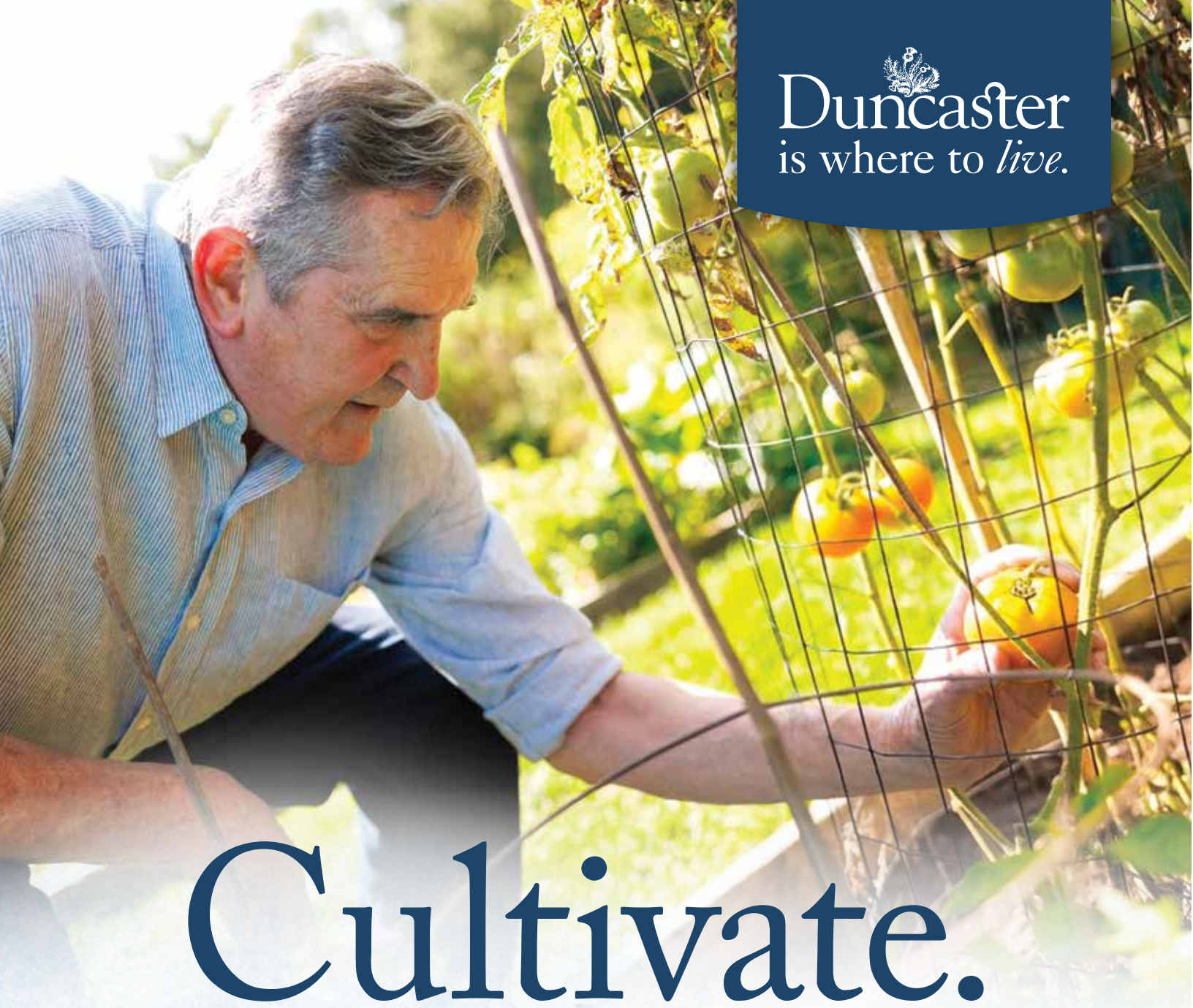
Near Caraquet, the Historic Acadian Village in Bertrand is an outstanding open-air museum. Every year, 30,000 people travel to Le Fils du Roy in the sleepy residential neighborhood of Petit-Paquetville to sample international award-winning, small-batch spirits.

More information: tourismnewbrunswick.ca

CANYON DE CHELLY INSTEAD OF THE GRAND CANYON

Three-and-a-half hours to the east of the Grand Canyon, Canyon de Chelly (pronounced "shay") makes up for what it lacks in comparable size with deep culture and serenity.

Wholly within the Navajo Nation, Canyon de Chelly is not a spectacle to be peered at through crowds from above and crossed off a bucket list. Instead, it is a natural wonder that has been sacred to and inhabited by Indigenous people for millennia.



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“Canyon de Chelly should be considered as well for its red ochre majesty and 5,000 years of human history.”

Tseyi Overlook from the South Rim Trail. Credit: NPS.

Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings are carved into the canyon walls. Navajo still live in this ancient place where homes, farms and orchards dot the canyon floor and families continue to raise crops and livestock. Navajo guides lead tours into otherwise inaccessible areas, sharing history, cultural traditions and what life is like here today.

It is possible to visit Canyon de Chelly without a guide as the park has two rim drives with 10 overlooks and one public hiking trail. The only trail not requiring a guide or permit is the 2.5-mile round trip White House Trail, which leads from the south rim 600 feet down to the canyon floor (and then up again), and gives an outstanding view of cliff dwellings and petroglyphs. If you're driving the south rim route, make sure to stop at the most notable scenic overlook: Spider Rock, an 800-foot stone spire.

Canyon de Chelly is a national monument run in partnership between the U.S. government and the Navajo Nation. Entry is free but there are fees for tours. What is immediately obvious to people who have been to both parks is the reduced crowds at Canyon de Chelly, which receives nearly 200 percent fewer visitors than the Grand Canyon. Of course, the Grand Canyon is a stunning wonder of the world, but Canyon de Chelly should be considered as well for its red ochre majesty and 5,000 years of human history.

*More information: nps.gov/cach
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.” Connect on Facebook and Instagram @stashastravels.*



Yucca Cave Overlook from the North Rim Drive. Credit: NPS.



View of the White House ruin from the South Rim Trail of Canyon de Chelly. Credit: NPS.

FALL ARTS PREVIEW

By FRANK RIZZO

Summer's over, alas, and yeah, we're bracing ourselves for the onslaught of nastiness surrounding the mid-term elections. But don't despair. Keep your heads up, your hopes higher and when you need some additional uplift, just look at what's ahead entertainment-wise this fall in Connecticut.

From "The Wiz" to "Hell's Kitchen," from Sting to Graham Nash, from Samara Joy to Mt. Joy, Connecticut has a cornucopia-full of performing artists that will add even more color to our autumn foliage. The range is enormous and covers all regions of the state so get your calendars out and get ready to circle some prime dates. >>>



Ailey II Jada Ammons
Photo Credit: Nir Arieli.

FALL ARTS PREVIEW



Go to 'hell'

The hit Broadway musical on tour is now called “**Alicia Keys’ Hell’s Kitchen**” — and why not, since the singer-songwriter composed the score for the musical’s story, which was based on her own life growing up in Manhattan. The tour of the Tony Award-winning show lands at The Bushnell’s **Mortensen Hall** (hartfordhall.net) in Hartford December 8 to 16. Fans of Broadway star Cheyenne Jackson can catch him in concert with his “The Guy From That Thing” show. Jackson is a popular draw for anyone who loves Broadway and sexy male crooners. There is one more can’t-miss event; the hysterical Broadway comedy “Oh, Mary!” will prepare to launch its national tour with performances September 19 to 23.

Nobody beats ‘The Wiz’

Early October has two terrific shows at the **Shubert Theatre** (shubert.com) in New Haven: one that will make your heart soar and the other that will make your sides split with laughter. First up from October 1 to 4 is the national tour of the latest Broadway revival of “**The Wiz**.” The 1975 musical — an African American take on the “The Wizard of Oz” — has

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The cast of “Mystic Pizza”
Photo Credit: Evan Zimmerman.

a first-rate score of funk, pop, R&B, soul, gospel and rock that will have audiences, yes, easing down the road. Then on October 5, David Sedaris, a humorist who has a unique and irreverent point of view, will share his latest twisty and very funny stories.

No anchovies, please

A musical with Connecticut roots — kind of — comes to Waterbury's **Palace Theatre** (palacetheaterct.org). “**Mystic Pizza**” is a musical based on the 1988 rom-com film, which was shot and set in Mystic, and launched the career of Julia Roberts. The show centers on three working-class girls who navigate the complexities of life, love and family in a small-town pizza joint serving everyone from the townies to the privileged country club set. The touring show plays October 2 to 4.

More than potatoes

Samuel D. Hunter has made most of his career exploring his home turf of Idaho. His latest work is “**Little Bear Ridge Road**,” which was recently nominated for a Tony Award for outstanding new play. Following its off-location successes with “Circus Fire” and “Sweeney Todd,” **TheaterWorks Hartford** (twhartford.org) fans return to its Pearl Street



Cheyenne Jackson
Photo Credit: Jenny Anderson.

FALL ARTS PREVIEW



Sting 3.0
Photo Credit: Carter B. Smith.

stage with this play about a razor-tongued aunt and her long-estranged gay nephew navigating their new relationship. The production runs from October 8 to November 8.

The original 'Lost Boy'

It seems that **Hartford Stage** (hartfordstage.org) is on a bloody good run. Following this summer's "Sweeney Todd," the theater will next sink its teeth (sorry) into the American premiere of Morgan Lloyd's new adaptation of Bram Stoker's "**Dracula**." The London hit was praised for its nerve-shredding



David Sedaris
Photo Credit: Ingrid Christie.

tension and striking contemporary lens, stripping the legendary myth to its psychological core. Sounds like a perfect pre-Halloween treat. The production runs from October 9 to November 1.

A legendary session

It already looks like a million-dollar hit. West Hartford's **Playhouse on Park** (playhouseonpark.org) has already extended its fall production of the rock and roll musical "**Million Dollar Quartet**" from September 24 to now November 2. The musical tells the real-life tale when Elvis Presley,



The Cowsills. Photo Credit: Danny Clinch.

Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins were brought together on a December evening in 1956 at Sun Records. The result? One of the greatest jam sessions of all time. The tunes? Oh, how about a score of chart-topping hits, like “Blue Suede Shoes,” “Fever,” “Walk the Line” and “Great Balls of Fire,” for starters. Toes tapping yet?

Coming full circle

Need another recording session? Well, this one is also a kind of a homecoming. August Wilson’s **“Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom”** returns to New Haven’s **Yale Repertory Theatre** (yalerep.org) where the play had its world premiere in 1982. This work began Wilson’s relationship with the “Rep” and its artistic director Lloyd Richards. It also was a high-profile launch of Wilson’s 10-play, decade-by-decade cycle chronicling the 20th century African American experience. Set in a Chicago recording studio in 1920s with real-life blues singer Ma Rainey recording her latest song, the play explores issues of race, art,

religion and the exploitation of Black recording artists by white producers. The production runs from October 2 to 24.

A historic return

Has it really been 50 years since the world premiere of the musical **“Annie”** at the **Goodspeed Opera House** (goodspeed.org) in East Haddam? The musical went on to become a Broadway and worldwide phenomenon — and a bonanza for the nonprofit theater. Goodspeed Musicals notes the special anniversary with a greatly anticipated revival. It even has famed animal trainer Bill Berloni — who began his career with “Annie” in 1976 — returning to find the latest pound dog to star as Annie’s pooch Sandy. The show runs from October 30 to December 27. Goodspeed continues the tradition of premiering musicals with “The Snow Goose,” based on the beloved novel by Paul Gallico, which is now running through October 18.

Happy feet

Dance lovers can catch **“Ailey II –**

The Next Generation of Dance” at the **Westport Country Playhouse** (westportplayhouse.org) on September 24. Early-career dance talent — both as exciting performers and as emerging choreographers — are featured in a company whose history goes back decades. Francesca Harper sits at the helm in her sixth season as artistic director of the young company from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, bringing fresh perspectives to Ailey’s legacy, while nurturing new creative talent.

Norm!

Want to catch Broadway stars performing in an intimate setting? Following on the heels of such Tony-licious stars as Matt Doyle and Beth Leavel is Emmy, Grammy, Tony and SAG Award nominee **Norm Lewis**, (“Porgy and Bess,” “The Phantom of the Opera,” TV’s “Scandal”) performing at the 75-seat **Legacy Theatre** (legacytheatre.org) in the Stony Creek section of Branford on October 25.

FALL ARTS PREVIEW



Maya Drake as Ali with the cast of "*Hell's Kitchen*."
Photo Credit: Marc J. Franklin.

Not forgotten, dramatically

More than 11,000 women served in some capacity during the Vietnam war. Shirley Lauro's "**A Piece of My Heart**" — which plays at **Ivoryton Playhouse** (ivorytonplayhouse.org) in Essex October 1 to 25 — is a poignant drama. It follows the true stories of six women — nurses, a Red Cross volunteer and an entertainer — who served in Vietnam. Their stories and their music are powerful and remind us of the human cost of war and the scars that still remain.

The famous singers you've never heard of

Singer-songwriter Barry Manilow spent years working on his musical "**Harmony**" and it finally it opened on Broadway a few years back. I saw it and it was terrific, though short-lived. It's a richly melodic — and yes,

harmonic — show telling of the true story of the Comedian Harmonists, a groundbreaking six-man vocal group that rose from obscurity in 1920s Berlin to become one of the world's most celebrated musical acts — only to be torn apart as the shadow of the Third Reich closed in. Westport's **Music Theatre of Connecticut** (musictheatreopfct.com) presents its production running September 11 to 27.

Where is thy sting?

Want to hear Sting more intimately? His **Sting 3.0** tour — his long-running concert series launched in 2024 and continuing through this year — is built around a stripped-down trio format (with Dominic Miller and Chris Maas). Songs from his The Police era ("Roxanne," "Every Breath You Take," "Message in a Bottle") as well as his solo hits ("Fields of Gold," "Englishman in New York") are re-imagined in a

more personal and rhythm-driven way. It's less a nostalgia show and more like a modern reinterpretation of his entire catalog. The tour will stop at Wallingford's **Toyota Oakdale Theatre** (toyotaoakdaletheatre.com) on November 9.

Reggaeton's king

Don Omar, Puerto Rican reggaeton pioneer, singer and performer — widely considered one of the key architects of the genre's global rise in the 2000s — brings his arena tour to Hartford's **People's Bank Arena** (peoplesbankarena.com) on September 27. Omar's shows aren't so much concerts as high-energy reggaeton productions. This legacy tour highlights Omar's role in shaping reggaeton from its early underground era into a global mainstream genre.

Family reunion, kind of

The real-life inspiration behind the hit television series “The Partridge Family” were The Cowsills — teen siblings Bill, Bob, Barry, John, Susan and Paul in tandem with mom Barbara — who were from Newport, R.I. They were one of the biggest pop acts of the late ‘60s, scoring a series of hits with their gorgeous harmonies and sunny melodies, including “The Rain, the Park and Other Things,” “Indian Lake,” “Hair,” and the theme song for the TV show “Love, American Style.” “**The Cowsills Trio Show**” plays September 22 at **Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center** (theKate.org) in Old Saybrook.

Eurovision meets Disney

English singer, songwriter and actress **Freya Skye** first gained international attention at the Junior Eurovision

Song Contest 2022 with her song “Lose My Head,” winning the online public vote. Then the teen became a Disney-signed recording artist and Disney TV/film actress, making her film debut in “Zombies 4: Dawn of the Vampires.” (She’ll reprise her role as Nova Bright in “Zombies 5” in 2027.) Now she’s on tour singing songs from her latest EP and will be at the **Hartford HealthCare Amphitheatre** (hartfordhealthcareamp.com) on October 9.

Linger awhile more

Joy abounds, especially when the sublime **Samara Joy** sings. The young artist has emerged as one of the great singers of the 2020s. She earned praise for her 2021 debut solo album. The next year, she won a Grammy not only for best jazz vocal album, but as best new artist — the first time a traditional jazz singer has won that category. “A

Joyful Holiday” last year earned her a few more Grammy awards. Her latest Verve album, “Portrait,” showcases the intimate, soulful chemistry she’s developed with her touring band. She and her septet will be at the **Ridgefield Playhouse** (ridgefieldplayhouse.org) on September 20.

Yet more joy

The breakout single “Astrovan” in 2017, which spread widely on streaming platforms, launched the touring career of **Mt. Joy**, the American indie rock/indie folk band. Its touring life continues and the group will be performing on September 22 at the **Westville Music Bowl** (westvillemusicbowl.com) in New Haven. The group’s live shows are known for their energetic, extended performances that often lean into jam-band territory so be prepared to get in the groove.

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Graham Nash
Photo Credit: Misti Layne.

Not so far away

Another kind of music is celebrated in the musical “**Beautiful: The Carole King Musical**” running from September 22 to October 22 at **A Contemporary Theatre** (actofct.org) in Ridgefield. The jukebox musical, which had a five-year run on Broadway, depicts King’s songwriting career from her hiring at Aldon Music in 1958 to her debut performance in 1971, and includes her marriage to collaborator Gerry Goffin and their friendships with collaborators Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil.

The perfect strum

Could the ukulele finally be getting it’s due? **Jake Shimabukuro** thinks so. After all, the ukulele virtuoso has pushed the instrument far beyond its traditional boundaries and has collaborated with such musical legends as

Bette Midler, Yo-Yo Ma and Jimmy Buffett. (His jaw-dropping rendition of George Harrison’s “While my Guitar Gently Weeps” went viral.) He returns to the **Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts** (jorgensen.uconn.edu) on the UConn campus in Storrs on October 10. (Leis are optional.)

That signature grrrrrowl

Tom Jones — make that Sir Tom Jones — brings his throaty baritone and trunk-load of hits (“It’s Not Unusual,” “What’s New Pussycat,” “Delilah,” “She’s A Lady,” “Green Green Grass of Home”) from his six-decade-long, 100-million-records career to **Foxwoods’ Premier Theater** (foxwoods.com) on September 27. The New York Times called the Welsh superstar “a musical shapeshifter...with a voice as husky as it was pretty,” noting his

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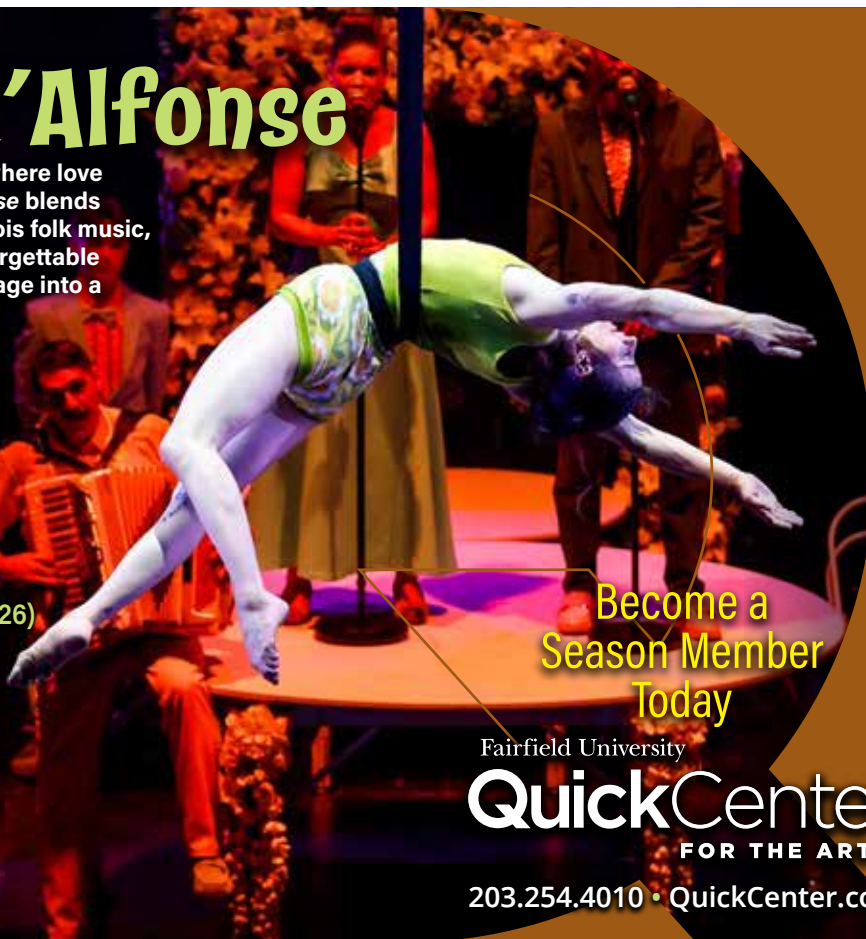
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Rush tickets

When drummer Neil Peart died in 2020, the hard/progressive rock group **Rush**, formed in 1968 in Toronto, looked like it was *finis*. But Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson recently reunited to reform the group, known for its virtuoso musicianship and smart lyrics. Its Fifty Something Tour, celebrating more than a half-century of the band's music — while honoring Peart's legacy, arrives at **Mohegan Sun Arena** (mohegansun.com) on October 30 and November 1. The men will be joined by Anika Nilles on drums and Loren Gold on keyboards and no doubt playing "Tom Sawyer," "Limelight" and "The Spirit of Radio," a few of its most popular songs.

Generational rock mix

Musical reunion tours fill the fall and New Haven's **College Street Music Hall** (collegestreetmusic hall.com) has one great gathering of stars from the '60s and '80s: the English group and MTV fixture **The Fixx** ("One Thing Leads to Another"), **Colin Blunstone** (lead singer of The Zombies, think "Time of the Season") and **Peter Asher** on September 26. Asher was half of the British Invasion duo Peter & Gordon ("A World Without Love"), but his greatest impact came later as a Grammy-winning record producer and manager. (Bet the backstage stories are something.)

Details of a life remembered

Multiple Obie Award-winning theater artist Ain Gordon and composer-writer Josh Quillen will bring their extraordinary theater-music work "**Relics and Their Humans**" to Fairfield University's **Quick Center for the Arts** (quickcenter.fairfield.edu) on November 13 and 14. The show is a theatrical and musical journey to the Quillen family home in Dover, Ohio. It covers a three-year odyssey of caregiving following a diagnosis of ALS for Josh's father, Jerry. As The New York Times' Ben Brantley

wrote: "Gordon haunts the margins of history...conjuring the sort of distant lives that don't make it into textbooks, processed into oblivion by what he calls history's 'ruthless editing machine.'"

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Killer comics

Stars from the wildly popular live podcast "Kill Tony" hit the road and arrive with "**Killers of 'Kill Tony'**" at Stamford's **Palace Theatre** (palacetheaterct.org) on October 23. The show is a standup lineup featuring fan favorites from one of the top live podcasts in the world. This gathering showcases the diverse talent pool of comedians — David Lucas, Martin Phillips, Ahren Belisle and David Jolly — who have enlivened the podcast with their wit, humor and unique comedic styles.

Randy Travis redux

Randy Travis is one of country music's biggest stars but, in 2013, he suffered a massive stroke. Technology has

helped him release new music using carefully supervised AI recreations of his voice. "**The Randy Travis: The More Life Tour**" features Travis and James Dupré, his co-star in "The Price." Travis' long-time touring band will rejoin Travis on the road for the first time since 2013. Their show, which will play October 1 at **Garde Arts Center** (gardearts.org) in New London, will consist of Dupré and the band performing all 16 of Travis' hits. Travis will make a special appearance, engaging with the audience and taking part in the show, though not singing.

More close harmonies

Think Woodstock, Laurel Canyon and the Summer of Love and **Graham Nash** will be one of the legendary figures that will come to mind. First with The Hollies, then with Crosby, Stills and Nash ("Marrakesh Express," "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes"), then with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young ("Our House," "Ohio"), Nash has also had an impressive solo career. The two-time inductee of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame returns to Connecticut in concert on September 20 at Torrington's **Warner Theatre** (warnertheatre.org).

Good rap

R&B / hip-hop singer-rapper **Bryson Tiller** returns to large-scale touring behind new music and the 10-year legacy of TRAPSOUL for a stop at Hartford's **Meadows Music Theatre** (meadowsmusictheatre.com) on September 23. The rapper and R&B singer from Louisville, Ky. has had quite the career trajectory. His career began with a 2011 mixtape, followed in 2014 by a single "Don't," which was recorded in his living room. That became a surprise online success leading to his 2015 debut album which earned him the first of his four Grammy Award nominations. 🎧

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](https://twitter.com/ShowRiz) on Twitter.

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*The Lenard Chamber Music Series is made possible through the Lenard Chamber Music Endowment. Thanks to the Lenard Endowment, UConn students, non-UConn students, and youth under 18 are invited to attend all chamber events for free.

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

SAYBROOK POINT RESORT & MARINA

The Beauty of Old Saybrook in the Fall: It Lingers Longer Here

By KERRI-LEE MAYLAND



There is something wonderfully reluctant about fall in Old Saybrook.

While autumn begins announcing itself inland with chilly mornings and hillsides turning brilliant shades of red, orange and gold, along the Connecticut shoreline, summer seems to negotiate for a little more time. The days remain surprisingly warm, boats are still moving through the harbor, and there is often enough sunshine to make an outdoor lunch feel like a perfectly reasonable idea well into September.

That lingering quality may be one of the greatest pleasures of fall at Saybrook Point Resort & Marina.

Set where the Connecticut River meets Long Island Sound, the resort offers an ideal home base for experiencing the shoreline after the height of summer has passed. September brings warm afternoons, crisp evenings and a quieter pace, while October introduces the full drama of New England foliage against the water. The combination is quintessentially Connecticut: changing leaves, salt air, blue water and sunsets that seem to linger a little longer themselves.

It is also a season when Old Saybrook becomes easier to appreciate at an unhurried pace.

Take a walk along the waterfront or borrow one of the resort's bicycles and head out to explore town. With fewer summer crowds, there is time to notice the details that can be lost during the busier months: leaves reflected on the wa-

ter, boats making their way through the marina, the changing light across Long Island Sound and the particular quiet that settles over the shoreline as summer visitors head home.

Back at the resort, the experience becomes more about settling in.

Many accommodations feature fireplaces, creating an inviting retreat when the temperature drops after sunset. Recently renovated guest rooms combine contemporary comforts with the relaxed coastal character that suits a shoreline escape, while the resort's guesthouses offer additional space and privacy for those looking for a more elevated getaway.

"If you're looking to make your getaway even more memorable, reserve Butler Service," says Casey Parmelee, director of rooms. "This personalized, white-glove experience takes the planning off your plate, with a dedicated butler curating seasonal activities and thoughtful details so you can relax and enjoy."

The idea fits the season. Fall at the Connecticut shoreline is less about an itinerary and more about having the time to enjoy one.

For golfers, autumn may be the ideal time to play. Temperatures are comfortable, the summer humidity has eased and the surrounding landscape begins its annual transformation. Saybrook Point's Stay & Play package pairs an overnight stay with a round of golf and cart at Fox Hopyard Golf Club, its private-club golf partner, along with a \$50

resort credit per guest. It is an easy option for a couple's escape, a weekend with friends or a midweek excuse to step away for a few days.

And after a day on the course, there is no better reason to trade golf shoes for a robe.

Fall is an especially natural time to focus on restoration. After months of sunshine, saltwater and outdoor living, skin can use some attention, while the shorter days seem to encourage a slower approach to self-care. The Spa at Saybrook Point offers facials, massage and body treatments, with qualifying treatments providing access to amenities that include indoor and outdoor saltwater pools, a whirlpool, sauna and steam room.

"Fall is the perfect season to slow down and focus on self-care," says Spa Manager Rachel Serrano. "Whether it's a Hydrating Rose Wrap, a rejuvenating peel or a relaxing CBD Massage, our treatments are designed to help guests unwind, recharge and feel their best. At Saybrook Point Resort & Marina, we offer an experience that benefits both mind and body, creating a true escape from the demands of everyday life."

Then there is the food, which becomes an experience of its own as the season changes.

At Fresh Salt, the waterfront setting is almost as much a part of the meal as what arrives on the plate. The restaurant focuses on fresh, locally inspired ingredients from land and sea, with New England favorites such as clam chowder alongside other coastal dishes. Early fall may still offer an opportunity to dine outside on a warm afternoon, while later in the season invites a more intimate experience indoors, lingering over lunch, dinner or a glass of wine as the waterfront changes with the light.

For an after-dinner drink, the Choo Choo Lounge offers an entirely different atmosphere. Located on the lobby level,



the cozy bar pays tribute to Old Saybrook's railroad history while offering craft cocktails, food and live entertainment. It is the sort of place that makes sense on a cool autumn evening, when there is no reason to hurry back out into the night.

And this fall, Saybrook Point is adding an unexpected bit of holiday magic to the season with its limited-time "Christmas in October" suite.

The experience brings the warmth and nostalgia of a classic New England Christmas to the shoreline ahead of the traditional holiday rush, with seasonal décor, twinkling lights and waterfront touches. For some guests, it may simply be a playful escape from the calendar. For others, it could become the beginning of a new tradition: celebrating the holidays early, when there is still time to actually enjoy them.

That may ultimately be the appeal of Old Saybrook in autumn.

You do not have to fill every hour. Walk along the water. Take a bike into town. Play a round of golf. Spend an afternoon at the spa. Browse local shops and galleries. Order a bowl of chowder. Sit with a cocktail and watch the sunset. Let dinner run long. Wake up without an alarm.

There is a particular luxury in having nowhere else you need to be.

At Saybrook Point, fall arrives gradually, almost reluctantly, bringing with it cooler evenings and spectacular color without completely surrendering the pleasures of summer. The water remains inviting, the boats continue to pass through the marina and the shoreline takes on an entirely new character.

Summer may be officially over, but at Saybrook Point Resort & Marina, it seems to linger just a little longer. ■



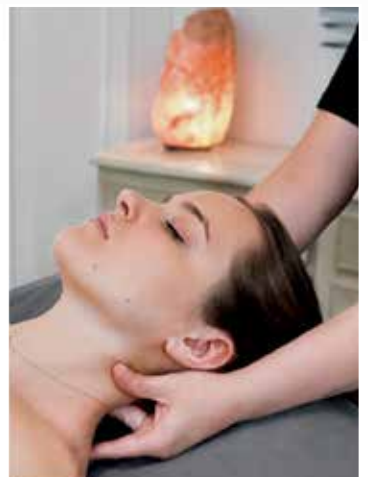


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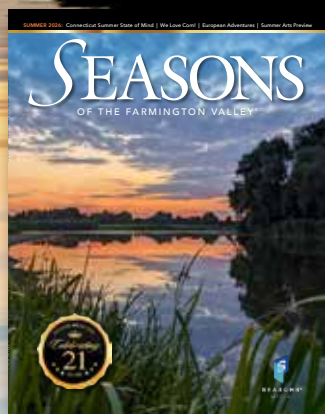


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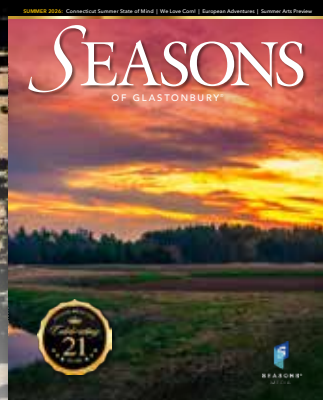


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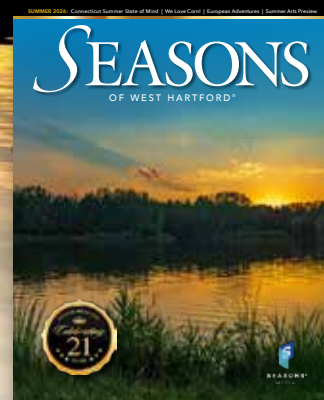
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My ‘Mostly Together’ Moment

By NICOLE NALEPA



Credit: Andrew Balise.

Last September, I went through a major career transition after more than 15 years in local TV news — a career that was centered on telling other people’s stories. Suddenly, I found myself sitting at my dining room table asking myself big questions. Who am I now that I’m no longer doing what I had allowed to define me for so long? What parts of my life are no longer serving me? What should I carry with me into the next season? To my surprise, I realized I was doing much better than I expected as I tried to answer them.

Honestly, now that I’m a year removed from that old life, I truly don’t know how I did it. I was experiencing burnout at a rapid pace long before I became a mom of two. Another comment I heard often after my departure was the cliché: “Now you’ll have more time with your kids.” While there is truth to that, they’re in school now, and I was about to have more “me” time for the first time in almost two decades! There was

a freedom I was starting to feel again, similar to the feeling you have upon graduating...only with a husband, two kids and a dog.

It didn’t take me long to understand what a gift it was to be in this position. I was committed to making the most of this transitional period. Was there grief associated with the process? Yes. After spending so many years in a fast-paced career built on no sleep and pure adrenaline the idea of that being removed from my life felt daunting. That was when I had to turn inward to understand that reinvention doesn’t necessarily mean starting over. I was proud of the life and career I worked hard for, but I was finally able to admit to myself that there were parts I had really wanted to change.

This gift of time forced me to reckon with my identity and ambition in a way I may not have made room for before. I’ve learned that even though the wind can quickly change direction, you can still return to parts of yourself that may have drifted out to sea.

That led me to start my new show with a title that described how I’ve

always felt: Mostly Together. I realized I wasn’t the only one who felt that way. For years, I’d been an avid podcast listener. What I loved about this format was that you had more time than you did in a live interview. I’ve always been fascinated with the person underneath the title and what they’ve learned. Once I was no longer working in TV news, I realized how much I missed having a dedicated space for those conversations.

Now, just months in, I am awestruck by the response and the community of guests I’ve been building. It has brought me such joy when viewers and listeners tell me they feel less alone after learning about my guests’ unexpected turns. It’s important to understand that we will all experience an inflection point in our lives. Mostly Together is about figuring out who you’re becoming, even when you don’t have everything perfectly together.

Let me be clear though. You don’t have to leave your career to know this feeling. Whatever season you find yourself in, perhaps this is an invitation to get to know yourself better. That way you’ll be able to recognize what you want to carry with you into the next chapter. 📌

Nicole Nalepa is a veteran broadcast journalist and former TV news anchor with more than 15 years of experience telling stories and connecting with audiences. She is the host and creator of Mostly Together, a podcast exploring identity, ambition, reinvention and the messy in-between seasons of life.





FLORAL



GEOMETRIC

FAR LEFT:

A large-scale floral tile transforms the wall into a focal point, pairing traditional pattern with a distinctly modern point of view.

LEFT: Precisely scaled geometry brings movement and structure, while its woven effect adds texture and warmth.



CHECKERBOARD

ABOVE: A time-honored checkerboard layout gains new depth through subtle tonal contrast and a natural stone-inspired finish.

RIGHT: A tailored plaid brings architectural rhythm to the wall; classic in character, yet fresh for today's interiors.



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AT HOME

with KERRI-LEE

Make the Hearth the Heart of Your Home

Written and Photographed By Kerri-Lee Mayland

One of my favorite smells in the world is burning wood. There is something about that first wood fire of the season mixed with crisp New England air that feels like fall's own potpourri. It's nostalgic. It makes me think of chilly evenings, Sunday dinners, sweaters pulled out of storage and everyone coming inside a little earlier as the days grow shorter.

Even just looking at a fireplace can spark that feeling. Fireplaces have always had a way of drawing us in. Long before we had televisions hanging above them, the hearth really was the heart of the home — a source of warmth, light, food and gathering. And while we may not depend on our fireplaces in quite the same way today, I think we still instinctively gravitate toward them.

So, fireplace season is here. Let's make the most of it.

If you have a working wood-burning fireplace, use it! Once it has been properly inspected and cleaned as needed, bring in the wood, find a beautiful basket for the logs and put those fireplace tools where you can actually reach them. A fireplace doesn't need to look pristine. In fact, I like it better when it looks as though someone lights a fire there.



Fall is also a great time to rearrange the room around your fireplace. Angle a favorite chair toward it. Pull an ottoman closer. Bring out the throws and pile them into a basket. Add a little table for a cup of tea or glass of wine. Suddenly, you have a place

that practically begs you to sit down and stay awhile.

And then, of course, there is the mantel.

We love decorating our mantels in New England, especially as the seasons change. But fall decorating doesn't have to mean covering every available inch with orange pumpkins.

Start with what you already have. A favorite painting or mirror can be the anchor. Add candlesticks, pottery, a few branches clipped from outside, perhaps some tiny pumpkins or gourds. I love a mantel that feels collected and slightly imperfect — as though it evolved with the season rather than arrived in one giant shopping bag.

But what if your house doesn't have a fireplace? Fake it.





One of my favorite tricks is finding an old mantel at an antique store, flea market or architectural salvage shop and using it purely as decoration. A beautiful old mantel instantly adds architecture, history and character to a room, even if there isn't a chimney anywhere in sight.

And don't forget that the space underneath is just as much of a design opportunity as the mantel itself. Place a large basket beneath it and fill it with logs. You may never burn a single one, but you'll still get that wonderful visual warmth and texture.

Or fill the space with an enormous arrangement of dried hydrangeas from summer. This is one of my favorites. By fall, those bright summer blooms have faded into beautiful, muted greens, dusty pinks and creams. Pile them generously into an old basket, crock or oversized vessel and suddenly you have this gorgeous, romantic focal point.

You could even turn the space into a tiny library. Tuck a small bookshelf beneath the mantel or stack favorite books inside. Add a chair nearby, and you've created a charming little reading corner around a fireplace that doesn't actually exist.

And if you want more than the illusion of warmth, electric

fireplaces have come a long way. There are beautiful options now that can be inserted into an existing nonworking fireplace or incorporated into a new mantel. You get the glow and movement of flames, plus actual heat, without needing a chimney. For apartments, newer homes or rooms where adding a traditional fireplace simply isn't practical, they can completely change the atmosphere.

Because fireplace season isn't really just about fire. It's about creating a reason to gather. To turn off a few lights, pull up a chair and settle in. It's about the glow, the warmth and that unmistakable feeling that fall has arrived.

Whether your fireplace burns wood, runs on electricity or is simply an old, thrifted mantel filled with hydrangeas and imagination, give it a little attention this season.

Make the hearth the heart of your home.

And then do something wonderfully old-fashioned: sit beside it and enjoy it. ■

Kerri-lee
KK



FEATURE



Photos courtesy of Auerfarm.



Photos courtesy of Auerfarm.



Photos courtesy of Auerfarm.





EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Written by **RANDY B. YOUNG**

When astronomers gaze through their telescopes on a clear night, they're seeing history. Because

distant starlight often travels millions of years to reach our eyes, we're seeing stars as they once were. And every star tells a story.

Take a Sunday drive along the bucolic backroads of our Nutmeg State and you'll see history as well. Every age-old barn or farmstead tells a story — often a story of survival.

As the state continues to move away from its agrarian roots, farmers and property owners are repurposing farms and “barn-chic” farm structures in innovative ways.

If these barns could talk...

Farms were once ubiquitous in Connecticut, when industry began to supplant agriculture, the official Connecticut Tourism website (ctvisit.com) says.

“With each barn lost, another piece of the state’s rich agricultural history disappears,” wrote James Sexton, Ph.D., an architectural historian at Yale University and author of “Survey Narrative of the Connecticut Barn” (2005) for the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation (connecticutbarns.org/state-register).

Farmers’ struggles with competition, Americans’ changing diets and the growth of agribusiness has contributed to the decline of Connecticut’s farms, Sexton wrote. “Some barns, however, are being preserved through adaptive re-use,” he noted, though restorations and facelifts must consider the building, zoning and operational restrictions, as

well as oppositional neighbors.

Here, then, are just a few creative ways they have stared down extinction, adapted and prospered.

Farming, from the ground up...

At Auerfarm in Bloomfield, they aren’t sowing cash crops, they’re growing farmers through their 4-H Education Center, where visitors can explore trails, gardens, animal barns and educational opportunities, the farm’s website (auerfarm.org) states.

“The farm was owned by Beatrice Fox Auerbach, so if you’re familiar with Hartford, you know G. Fox and Company,” says Erica Fearn, Auerfarm’s executive director, noting that Beatrice was the granddaughter of the founder and would later become president.

She came to manage the 230-acre property for the next 40 years after her husband died. In the 1970s, the 120-acre Education Center was deeded to the nonprofit Connecticut 4-H Development Fund.

Fearn explains that the working farm is essentially a classroom, hosting several school programs during the school year, numerous school field trips and summer camps. “Visitors are also welcome and can tour around the farm and orchard,” she says. “We’re also part of Farm Stay USA, an Airbnb platform. You can do a farm tour or even work on the farm to help out.”

Upcoming events include their October 4 Fall Festival and Santa on the Farm in Christmas season. Currently, Auerfarm produces blueberries, hay, maple syrup, honey and a tangible love for the land.



Photos courtesy of Allen Hill Farm.



Photos courtesy of Allen Hill Farm.

Good news comes in 'trees'

Located in historic Brooklyn, the Allen Hill Farm was purchased in 1891. Though the property was a dairy farm until 1963, the family converted the property to a choose-and-cut Christmas tree farm in 1980. Later, it became an event venue overlooking Christmas trees and the Quinebaug River.

"We're now 350 acres, because we've added to it, but we've had it since 1891," says Allen Hill co-owner Charles Langevin. "There's a shortage [of tree farms] in Connecticut, and we're among the largest."

Though "trees are our roots," Allen Hill Farm (allenhillfarm.com) says, the family has "branched out" to host events.

"Modern amenities, seating for 150 guests and a new catering area make it the ideal location for your wedding or special event," the website states.

Langevin says the notion of

hosting weddings and events emerged organically. "People asked us to use the barn for their own personal weddings before we even thought of the idea. Then we saw the potential."

And while weddings and events don't come with a free Christmas tree, Langevin says there are plenty of familiar faces around December. "We've had couples come back for [Christmas] trees after their nuptials, and some have even brought their children back."

Grin and beer it...

At Norbrook Farms Brewery in Colebrook, "wheels are turning," many of them on off-road cycling trails stitched across the landscape. The property offers almost as many ways to build a thirst as it does ways to quench it.

Co-owner John Auclair says he bought the 472-acre property in 2016 and made the decision to put a farm brewery here, but recreation options

were soon to follow, including disc golf, mountain biking and hiking trails. Norbrook Farms Brewery offers beer flights, a full kitchen, a patio and an event space.

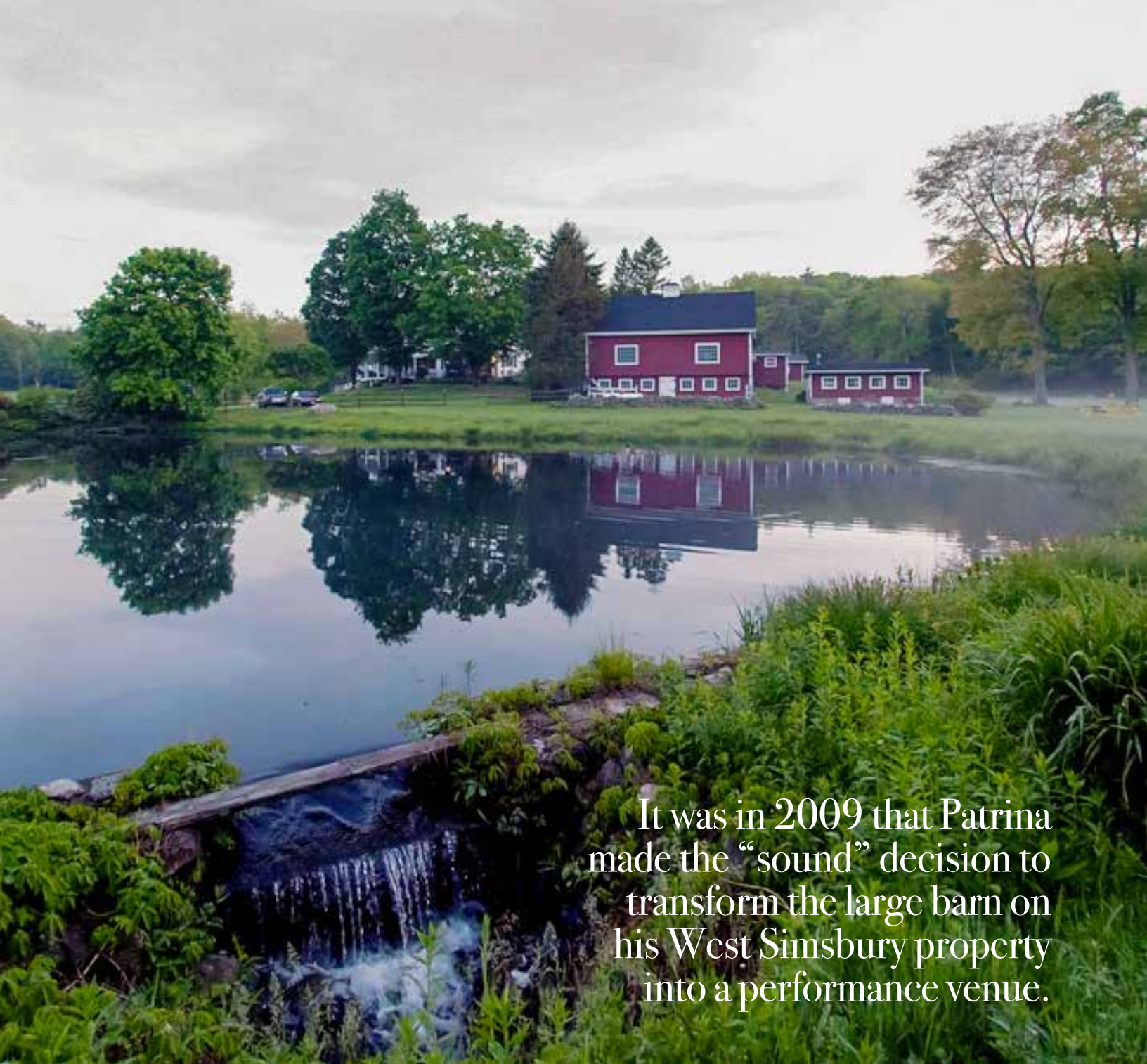
"Norbrook provides opportunities for numerous outdoor activities on its 472 acres, including 9.5 miles of hiking trails," Colleen Gundlach wrote in *Norfolk Now*.

"There is an also Airbnb on the property," Auclair points out. "My wife runs it."

The cozy cottage is only steps from the brewery," Norbrook's website (norbrookfarm.com) states, "offering the perfect retreat after a day of great outdoor adventures and refreshing beer."

Norbrook Farms Brewery doesn't hibernate during colder months; it celebrates them, with groomed cross-country trails and equipment rentals. Clearly, we can build a thirst in any season.





It was in 2009 that Patrina made the “sound” decision to transform the large barn on his West Simsbury property into a performance venue.

Being of sound mind...

When Joe Patrina was searching for an acoustically optimal space for his band to play what he calls “Heartland Music,” he looked no farther than his own backyard.

It was in 2009 that Patrina made the “sound” decision to transform the large barn on his West Simsbury property into a performance venue.

“The LittleHouse barn was built in 1950, and built well,” Patrina

says. “You can now hear the room’s personality in the live performances.”

Patrina says the idea came from Carter Family Fold in Virginia, which he visited in the 1990s after meeting with one of the original Carter cousins, Jeanette Carter, before she died.

“She hosted shows each Saturday night in The Fold, a barn built by her brother Joe,” Patrina explains. “I came home and did what she told me to do. I put a lot of money into acoustics... there’s patina on the wood, and I have

great lighting and a German sound system.”

LittleHouse Live started when Patrina started writing songs. Since 2010, he has written hundreds for him and a band of what Patrina calls “A-plus” musicians. Shows draw a combination of music enthusiasts and diehard LittleHouse Live fans to the barn.

Patrina says LittleHouse Live stages free shows about once a month from April through November, when fans



Photo courtesy of LittleHouse.

can enjoy music “for a song.” “Anyone wanting an invite to a show just has to enter their email address into the LittleHouseLive.com database,” he states.

In plane view

The future of Candlelight Farms, a 600-acre estate and event venue in New Milford, was once up in the air.

“We had an old barn that was used as an old airplane hangar,” says owner Nancy Saggese. “The house and the other barns date from 1843, but the hangar was probably built in the 1940s when we had a grass [landing] strip so people could fly here.”

Jessica and Carl Dunham, Sr. purchased the one-time dairy farm in 1937, describes the Candlelight Farms website (candlelightfarmsinn.com), creating a welcoming destination.

Without electricity at that time, however, they signed the deed by candlelight, thus the name.

“Carl Dunham [Junior], my husband, was born here,” Saggese states. “Back then, it was already a tourist attraction. People would fly in from New York... guests would even hang around and help with this and that.”

“After closing in the 1950s, Carl re-opened it years later and [worked

with] horses,” Saggese explains. “After I retired from teaching, Carl said, ‘You’ve been having weddings here for all your friends, so why don’t you open up the barns for weddings?’”

“Before farm and barn weddings were popular, we were doing that,” Saggese says. “It was like the beginning of barn weddings, and boy, did people love it.”

The Candlelight Farms Inn was built



Photo courtesy of Deborah Rose

“Before farm and barn weddings were popular, we were doing that.”

Photos courtesy of Candlelight Farms.



Photos courtesy of Candlelight Farms.



Photos courtesy of Candlelight Farms.

in 1840 and offers breathtaking views of surrounding mountains, pastures and peaceful ponds, which are the heartbeat of Candlelight Farms, the popularity of which continues to soar.

Barn vivant...

400 billion stars just in our galaxy alone give astronomers a reason to up and look back in time for inspiration.

Conversely, a 2010 State Register of Historic Places study found only 8,600 barns remaining in

Connecticut. When we seek them out — when we look back in time — we learn what each has to teach us about adaptability and perseverance.

And we don't even need a telescope. 📡

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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THE WOMEN WHO KNOW US:

On Girlfriends, Friendship and the Women Who Shape Our Lives

By **KERRI-LEE MAYLAND**

My longest-running female friendship began when I was 2 years old. Her name is Shauna Duncan, and we met at preschool in Victoria, British Columbia. One of my favorite Shauna stories is one she is about to learn for the first time, more than 50 years later. I learned to ride a bicycle at Shauna's house. She just didn't know it.

When she asked if I wanted to try out her new birthday bike, I froze. "Do you not know how to ride a bike?" she asked. I didn't. But admitting that didn't seem an option, so with artificial confidence I said, "Yes I do!" I climbed on, began pedaling and somehow found my balance. I was riding a bike! I shrieked with joy as Shauna looked on, confused by my enthusiasm. To her, I was simply trying out her new bike. To me, it was the first time I had ever ridden one.

Eventually we went our separate ways. She stayed in Canada and I moved to the U.S. Facebook eventually connected us again, allowing me glimpses of the life she had built.

Turns out, when it comes to



Kerri-Lee Mayland and Shauna Duncan.
Photo credit: Jamie Campbell.

girlfriends, it doesn't matter.

We reunited a couple of years ago as 52-year-olds on the island where our friendship began. Seeing Shauna after nearly four decades was both surreal and completely normal. Sitting together in a downtown Victoria ocean-side bar and grill, the years between us seemed

to matter less than the history we shared.

That is the magic of girlfriends. They enter our lives in different forms and at different stages. There are childhood friends, work friends, mom friends and the women who become our confidantes — the ones who get the whole story rather than the edited version.

That's my friend Kimberlee Hart. Kim was my first friend when I moved to Connecticut 15 years ago. We met through our sons but connected on so many other levels, from theater nights at the Bushnell (Evita, our favorite!) to daily five-mile walks we call "the trees and the trails." Those walks became a safe place where conversations unfold naturally. There were tears of pain and joy, family struggles, celebrations and even a sudden rush to the ER for a gangrenous appendix (ask me how I know).

It's one of those friendships that has no limits and knows no boundaries, and if you get one friendship like this in your lifetime, consider yourself lucky.

But as I have gotten older, I've realized female friendships aren't necessarily measured by longevity.



Kerri-Lee Mayland (Halkett) and Shauna Duncan as young girls.

Sometimes friendship is about timing as much as history.

And halfway through my 50s, I am still making new girlfriends — which brings me to Christina Tarabishy and Kristina Bontempo. We had all lived in the same neighborhood for more than a decade, even trick-or-treated at each other's houses, yet somehow had never actually met. Then, while working on this story, I was scrolling Instagram when their *Pretty in Pink Again* podcast appeared in my feed. Two best friends talking about — what else — girlfriends.

So, I messaged them. They DM'd me back, and suddenly three women who had been orbiting the same

neighborhood were beginning a friendship of their own.

Christina and Kristina met randomly on a trip to the Bahamas 10 years ago. They discovered they shared the same first name (different spelling), were the same age and both from Connecticut. That chance encounter eventually led to an enduring friendship and their *Pretty in Pink Again* podcast.

I asked Kristina how her friendships have changed as she's gotten older.

"I think I'm much less desperate for people to be my friend. My mom always jokes that when I was little, if I saw a party happening, I would basically jump out of a moving car to get there — and honestly, I think some



Kerri-Lee Mayland and Kimberlee Hart.
Photo credit: Giovanni Lopez.

version of that lasted well into my twenties."

She says as she's aged, she's not searching for or grasping for friendships anymore. "Now I'm looking for depth. I want the friend I can catch up with after three weeks and immediately get into the real stuff. I think I care much less about being included everywhere and much more about feeling connected to the people I actually love."

For Kristina, some of those closest friendships are within her own family. She considers her youngest sister one of her best girlfriends.

"Sisters are special because there's almost no explanation needed. A sister is a sister is a sister. You can go on vacation together, grab lunch, go to a concert, spend an entire weekend together — and nobody has to explain why they were invited or why someone else wasn't. The sister relationship explains itself."

Christina sees girlfriends as the women who remind us who we are as our lives and roles evolve. "At this point in my life, my girlfriends are the people who remind me who I am outside of being a mom, a wife,

working as an influencer and content creator, and all the other roles we're constantly juggling...I think turning 40 made me realize that friendship doesn't have to look one particular way. At this age, there's just less pressure around it. The friendships that feel easy, safe and genuine are the ones I hold onto."

Christina has two young children, ages 2 and 4, and says motherhood has changed friendship, too. "It's made me understand that sometimes being a good friend means giving each other a LOT of grace... plans change, someone gets sick, bedtime takes forever and sometimes I realize I never responded to a text from three days ago. Motherhood has also made me appreciate the women who check in without needing anything from me, who don't take it personally when life gets crazy, and who can be honest about the hard parts too. There's something very comforting about

having another woman say, 'Yep, me too.'"

Getting older also teaches us that sometimes a friendship has run its course — and that doesn't have to be a bad thing.

Years ago, a television news colleague spoke warmly about the close friendship she still had with her former spouse after their divorce. She explained it simply. A relationship doesn't have to stay the same and last forever for it to have been good.

I've often thought female friendships can be the same way. Some girlfriends are meant for a particular season. They arrive when we need them, make us braver or help us through a difficult stretch. Then circumstances change and paths diverge. A friendship ending doesn't erase the years it mattered.

Others endure through marriages, babies, careers, moves, disappointments and decades. They

may disappear from our everyday routine, but when we reconnect, the love is still there.

And then there are the women we haven't met yet.

Perhaps that is one of the most hopeful things about getting older. We can continue discovering one another and forming meaningful friendships at 40, 50, 60 and beyond.

Some women know us from childhood. Some meet us when we are already mothers, professionals, wives or empty nesters. Some walk beside us through the trails and trees. Some reunite with us after decades apart.

Which brings me back to Shauna, who just learned that the day she handed me her new birthday bicycle was the day I learned to ride. They say you never forget how to ride a bicycle.

And perhaps you never forget how to make a meaningful girlfriend, either. ■

Left to right: Kristina Bontempo, Kerri-Lee Mayland, Christina Tarabishy, Kimberlee Hart.
Photo credit: Giovanni Lopez



DELICIOUS



Maple Magic

Elevating Autumn's Dishes With New England's Sweetest Tradition

By AMY S. WHITE

As the humid air starts to turn crisp over Connecticut, the sugar maple leaves slowly change color. Not only do their vibrant new displays of gold and crimson signal an end to the heat of summer, they also usher into our kitchens the return of fall flavors, including their most beloved product: maple syrup. With its caramel-like color and rich sweetness, maple adds subtle warmth and depth to everything from every day breakfast favorites to new seasonal creations. This versatile pantry staple also has quite a history as an iconic symbol of the culinary heritage of New England.

Native Americans utilized sugar maple sap as a food source, teaching European settlers how to tap the trees to harvest the sap and then boil it into maple syrup. By the late 1700s, sugar maples stood as a farmland staple across the region. Maple syrup production, known as “sugaring,” became a time-honored tradition that communities gathered around. It takes almost 40 gallons of sugar maple sap to produce just one gallon of maple syrup. This means that maple syrup was then, and still is today, a cherished local product that is feted at festivals and fairs, and found in dishes both sweet and savory. Many local maple syrup producers still use techniques that have been passed down through several generations, improving their craft through modern day technologies.

Although sugaring season technically takes place

in early spring, maple syrup has become inseparable from fall cooking. Many think of maple only for pancakes, waffles or perhaps dessert. But in the recipes below, we explore how some of our state's best chefs incorporate this amber elixir in more unique ways, all the while celebrating the history and tradition behind each precious drop.

We'll start with a cocktail from mixologist Owen Barnett, whose great-great-grandmother Stefania, a widow with three little girls, took up bootlegging in Norwich during Prohibition. Following his ancestor's outlaw attitude, Barnett has created Blue Law Bourbon, distilled in Kentucky but bottled in Connecticut, and currently available at bars and liquor stores around the state. His cocktail, the Maple Pumpkin Pie Martini, uses his new Blue Law Northeast Maple Bourbon as its base, and it's perfect for fall. Next up is a Maple-Miso Roasted Carrots appetizer from the kitchen of private chef Ben Dubow. The carrots are glazed in maple, miso and brown butter, and served over cold lemony yogurt with a sprinkle of dukkah for a mix of sweet, savory, tangy and crunchy in each bite. Chef Zach Shuman, executive chef of Emily's Catering Group, is committed to crafting exceptional menus, supporting local farms and producers whenever possible, and helping make every celebration unforgettable. His addition to our maple menu is Pan-Roasted Sea Scallops with Maple Cream Reduction and Autumn Vegetable Hash.

May these unexpected ways to cook with maple syrup bring you a magical meal this fall season.

MAPLE PUMPKIN PIE MARTINI

Recipe courtesy of Owen Barnett, Blue Law Bourbon

Ingredients:

2 ounces Blue Law Northeast Maple Bourbon
1 ounce Fruitful Pumpkin Liqueur
½ ounce heavy cream
1 dash vanilla extract
Graham cracker crumbs, for rim
Ground cinnamon, for garnish

Directions:

Shake the maple bourbon, pumpkin liqueur, heavy cream and vanilla in a cocktail shaker with ice. Rim a martini glass with graham cracker crumbs, then strain martini into the glass. Dust with cinnamon.

MAPLE-MISO ROASTED CARROTS

Recipe courtesy of Ben Dubow, private chef

Serves 2-4

Ingredients:

1½ pounds carrots, scrubbed
2 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil
¾ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
3 tablespoons white miso
3 tablespoons pure maple syrup
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
1 cup thick Greek yogurt (plain)
1 lemon, zested and juiced
2 tablespoons olive oil
Dukkah (a Middle-Eastern seasoning of herbs,
spices and nuts)
Flaky salt

Directions:

Heat oven to 425°F. Halve the carrots lengthwise (leave skinny ones whole). Toss carrots with the vegetable oil and salt, then set them cut-side down on a baking sheet. Roast undisturbed for 22-28 minutes, until deeply browned on the flat side and tender. Melt the butter in a light-colored pan over medium heat. It will foam, then settle. Swirl often and watch for brown flecks to appear along with a nutty smell, about 3-4 minutes. Remove from heat and mix in the miso, maple, rice vinegar and ginger. Brush the roasted carrots all over with the maple-miso glaze and return them to the oven for about 5 minutes, until the glaze bubbles and turns glossy, taking care not to burn them. Stir the lemon zest, a squeeze of lemon juice and a pinch of salt into the yogurt. Spread the seasoned yogurt across a platter, then pile the warm carrots on top. Sprinkle generously with dukkah, then a drizzle of olive oil, another squeeze of lemon juice and flaky salt. Serve as an appetizer, side dish or even a vegetarian entree.





PAN-ROASTED SEA SCALLOPS WITH MAPLE CREAM REDUCTION AND AUTUMN VEGETABLE HASH

Recipe courtesy of Chef Zach Shuman, Emily's Catering Group, Bristol

Serves 4.

For the Autumn Vegetable Hash:

Ingredients:

1 cup butternut squash, peeled and diced
1 cup parsnip, peeled and diced
1 cup acorn squash, peeled and diced
2 tablespoons neutral oil (grapeseed, avocado or canola)
1 teaspoon fresh thyme, chopped
1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, chopped
1 teaspoon fresh sage, chopped
Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

Directions:

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Blanch the diced vegetables for 3–5 minutes, just until al dente. Drain immediately and spread on a tray to cool. Once cooled, heat a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the oil followed by the thyme, rosemary and sage to perfume the oil. Add the cooled vegetables. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook slowly, allowing the vegetables to caramelize and develop color. Season with salt and pepper, and keep warm.

For the Maple Cream Reduction:

Ingredients:

1 cup heavy cream
1 cinnamon stick
¼ cup pure maple syrup
Pinch of kosher salt

Directions:

In a small saucepan, combine the heavy cream and cinnamon stick. Simmer gently over medium-low heat until the cream has reduced by about half. Remove the cinnamon stick. Stir in the maple

syrup and continue reducing until the sauce reaches a nappe consistency — thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Season with a small pinch of salt. Keep warm.

For the Scallops:

Ingredients:

16–20 dry sea scallops
Kosher salt
Freshly cracked black pepper
2 tablespoons neutral oil (grapeseed, avocado or canola)

Directions:

Pat the scallops completely dry using paper towels. Dry scallops are essential for achieving a beautiful golden crust. Season both sides generously with kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Heat a heavy skillet over medium-high heat until very hot. Add the oil. Carefully place the scallops in the pan without overcrowding. Sear for 2–3 minutes per side, depending on their size, until deeply golden and just cooked through. Avoid moving them while they sear.

To plate:

Spoon the caramelized autumn vegetable hash onto the center of each plate. Arrange the pan-roasted scallops over the vegetables. Spoon the warm maple cream reduction around and lightly over the scallops. Finish with a few fresh thyme leaves or crispy sage, if desired.

IN THE SPIRIT



Left to right: Dennis House, Denise D'Ascenzo Foundation's president; Kara Sundlun, Denise D'Ascenzo Foundation's vice president; Human Spirit recipient and former State Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr.; and Kiki Kennedy



Be Open. Be Brave. Be Kind.

By DENNIS HOUSE

“Be open. Be brave. Be kind.” Those were words spoken by Denise D’Ascenzo, my late dear friend and co-anchor, as she delivered the commencement address at Quinnipiac University a few years before she passed away. They are the guiding principles of the foundation created in her memory, of which I am honored to serve as president.

The Denise D’Ascenzo Foundation was founded by her husband Wayne Cooke and daughter Kathryn, along with my wife, Kara Sundlun, who serves as vice president. To date, we have raised and given away more than half a million dollars to various causes. We have four fundraising events every year. Each fall, we have the Human Spirit Awards Dinner, which honors people from Connecticut who faced enormous struggles and have persevered to give back to Connecticut, society and the world to improve the lives of others.

Among those we have honored in years past are Nelba Marquez-Greene, who lost her daughter Ana Grace; former State Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr, who lost a leg to cancer at age 12; and the Bristol Police

Department because of the courage they showed after losing two of their officers in an ambush. Each recipient is carefully chosen; this year is no exception. Those receiving the DDF Human Spirit Award this year include the Late Rabbi Philip Lazowski, a Holocaust survivor; Ali Truwitt, who lost a leg in a shark attack; and Carrie and Steven Roux, whose son Luke was killed by a drunk driver.

Their and other recipients’ stories are compelling and inspiring. Those who attended the event have told me they left with a better understanding of the challenges so many in our community face. They left vowing to do more to help others. That is the goal of the Denise D’Ascenzo Foundation.

We also present the Kindness Award. The first went to former Hartford Deputy Fire Chief Dan Nolan, who tirelessly volunteered his time with charities and community events. He also served in the National Guard overseas and worked helping New York firefighters at Ground Zero after 9/11.

In 2025, we honored Tom Baklik, a barber from the Naugatuck Valley who celebrates the spirit of giving by organizing a massive toy drive and Christmas

“The Human Spirit Awards are a group effort. Journalists from all four Connecticut television stations nominate worthy recipients they’ve met during their reporting.”



Dennis House and Human Spirit award recipient Nelba Marquez-Greene.

breakfast for the less fortunate.

This year, we are honoring Andrea Hurley, who spends countless hours bringing cheer and support to patients at Connecticut Children’s. These beautiful youngsters fighting difficult battles rely on her to make their days brighter and to encourage them on their darkest, most challenging days.

The Human Spirit Awards are a group effort. Journalists from all four Connecticut television stations nominate worthy recipients they’ve met during their reporting.

I invite you to join us as we carry out Denise’s legacy. For more information on how to attend the Human Spirit Awards Dinner on November 7 at the Hartford Marriott or to support the foundation, visit thedenisefoundation.com.

Dennis House has been covering the news in Connecticut for over 30 years. He can be seen week-nights 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.

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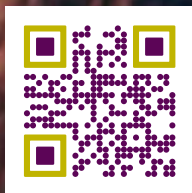
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**BLAST FROM
THE PAST**

FEATURE

*From Seasons Magazines
Autumn 2010 Issue*

A Time to Fly

Empty nesters try their wings

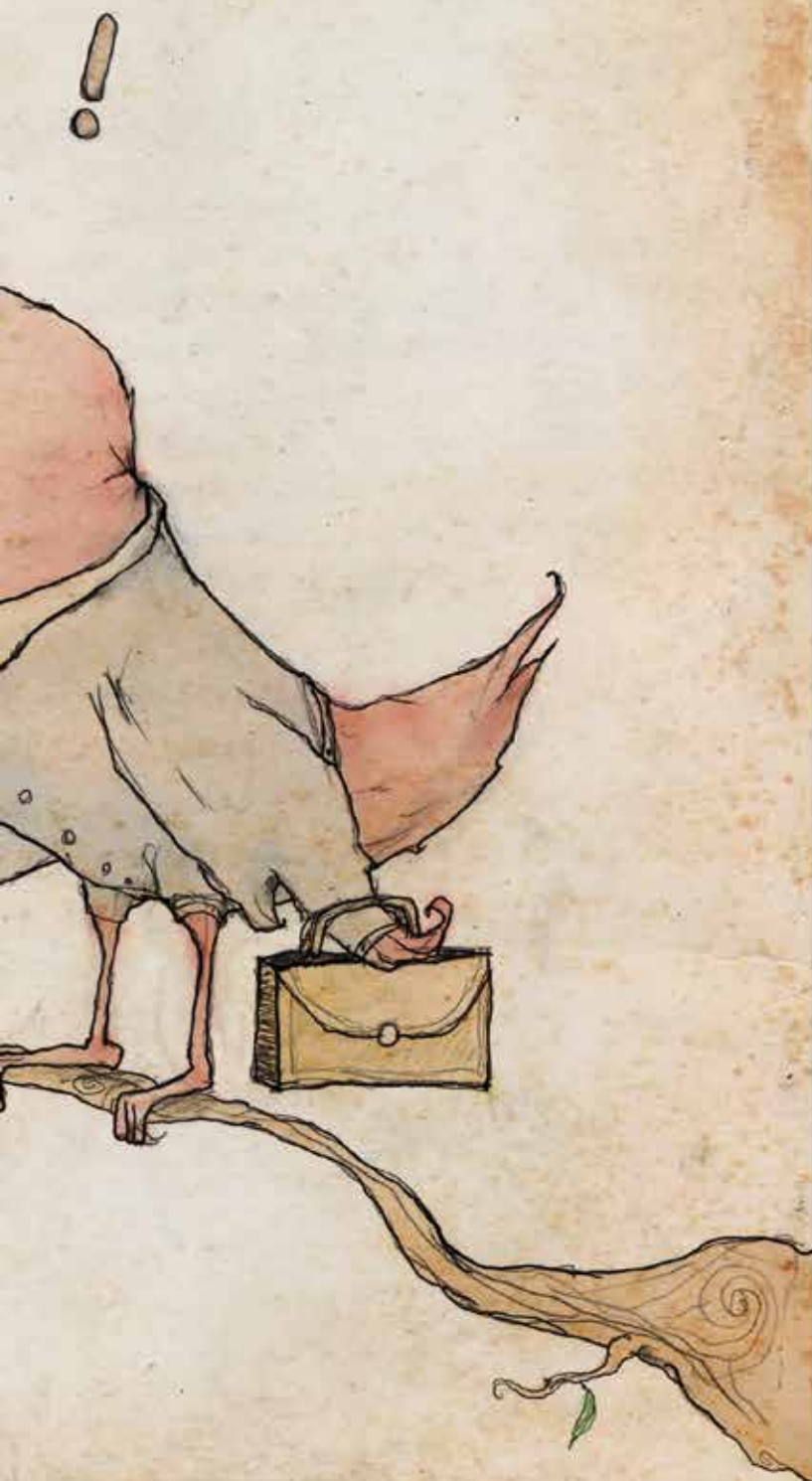
Written by Elaine Lang

A former full-time mom became an accomplished author. Her friend expanded an already rich professional and personal life. A performer who focuses on preschoolers developed an adult relationship with her grown children. Each of these women discovered their empty nest years to be a time of fulfillment and growth. Although the phase of life after the kids fly the coop can seem daunting, it can also represent an opportunity for new adventures. As the saying goes: a successful parent works herself out of a job.

"It is a time of many challenges," says Naomi Lufkin, MA, LPC, a West Hartford psychotherapist specializing in midlife transitions. Suddenly, parents may find themselves with time, freedom, and mental energy that they haven't had for years. That can lead to feelings of loss and depression, or a surge of energy and a newfound sense of freedom—often both. "The key is to take stock and inventory your life, and to rethink your sense of personal meaning and purpose," Lufkin says. "When you approach the transition mindfully, you can use this time to reinvent and empower yourself."



Illustration courtesy of stockillustrations, Ltd.



Joy Smith of Glastonbury experienced many of these conflicting emotions when her daughter was married. "It was such a joyous time, but it still hurt to feel that final separation. It was as though the last shred of the apron strings had been cut," she remembers. In her desire to feel connected to her family, Smith started spending a lot of time in her kitchen, preparing food and writing down the recipes.

The immediate result was a spiral-bound cookbook, which she gave as a gift to family members attending her daughter's wedding. The long-term fruit of her labors was a successful writing career.

Although the phase of life after the kids fly the coop can seem daunting, it can also represent an opportunity for new adventures.

"As I worked on the recipes, I also started writing other little things about my thoughts and ideas," she recalls. "I discovered that I loved to write." As Joy and her husband began to spend more and more time sailing together, she was once more inspired to pick up her pen. The result was *The Perfect First Mate*, a book about women and recreational boating, which has recently been revised and re-released in its second edition. Her follow-up effort brought her full circle: in 2002, she released *Kitchen Afloat: Galley Management and Meal Preparation*. The following year, *The Empty Nest Cookbook* was published, with recipes and essays focusing on the time of life when she discovered her passion and rediscovered herself. Smith is now branching out into fiction. "This has been a wonderful time to reconnect with my husband and my friends and to fully realize myself beyond my role as parent," she says.

Glastonbury realtor Margaret Wilcox, of Coldwell Banker Moves, also found that her children's departure allowed her adult relationships to blossom. "My husband and I finally have time to relax and have fun together. It is fantastic to remember that we are not only co-parents, but also good friends," Wilcox says. She also had additional time for other activities. "I have expanded my involvement in community organizations in the years since my kids left home, and I can choose those that reflect my own interests, not just the activities of my children," she notes.

Careers can also flourish during the empty nest phase of life. Some will forge a new path, while others with established careers will enhance their work lives. "It was liberating," Wilcox says, "to be able to take on more clients and to service their needs with more commitment and flexibility than ever before."

Fern Michonski, a professional children's performer from Simsbury, whose business is Fern's Music/Fern Forest Enterprises, was also thrilled to expand and develop her career interests. In the process, she experienced the additional exciting benefit of a new kind of relationship with her adult

"Ultimately, this time of change can lead you to enrich your relationships, feel connected with the community, and embrace your authentic self," Lufkin says.

children. "Running a business with three kids at home was a massive undertaking. Now that they are grown, I have the freedom to really hone it," she says. Michonski began taking online marketing classes and using the

Internet to publicize and market her services, with the help of her computer-savvy adult children. "The same little toddlers who came along to my performances for years have helped me launch fernsmusicforkids.com and a whole new phase of my career," Michonski notes. Many parents with grown children find this new, adult relationship to be one of the most reward-

ing aspects of this time of life.

"Ultimately, this time of change can lead you to enrich your relationships, feel connected with the community, and embrace your authentic self," Lufkin says. And, if there is a bit of sadness along the way, that's completely normal. "If feelings of loss and grief feel overwhelming or refuse to pass, don't hesitate to seek professional help," she advises. After mourning the stage of life that has passed, she notes, empty nesters are often ready to take advantage of the new and exciting opportunities ahead.

Joy Smith agrees. "It was sad, at first, to let go. But, your family doesn't ever really leave you! It all comes back again, with extra love and without all the pressure and responsibility that came with parenting young children," she observes. The Empty Nest Cookbook, notably, offers a section of recipes designed for feeding the large gatherings that come when the kids arrive home to visit, spouses and children in tow.

"It's those times," Smith says, "that you realize that the empty nest isn't quite so empty after all." ■

Elaine Lang lives in Simsbury with her husband and three daughters.



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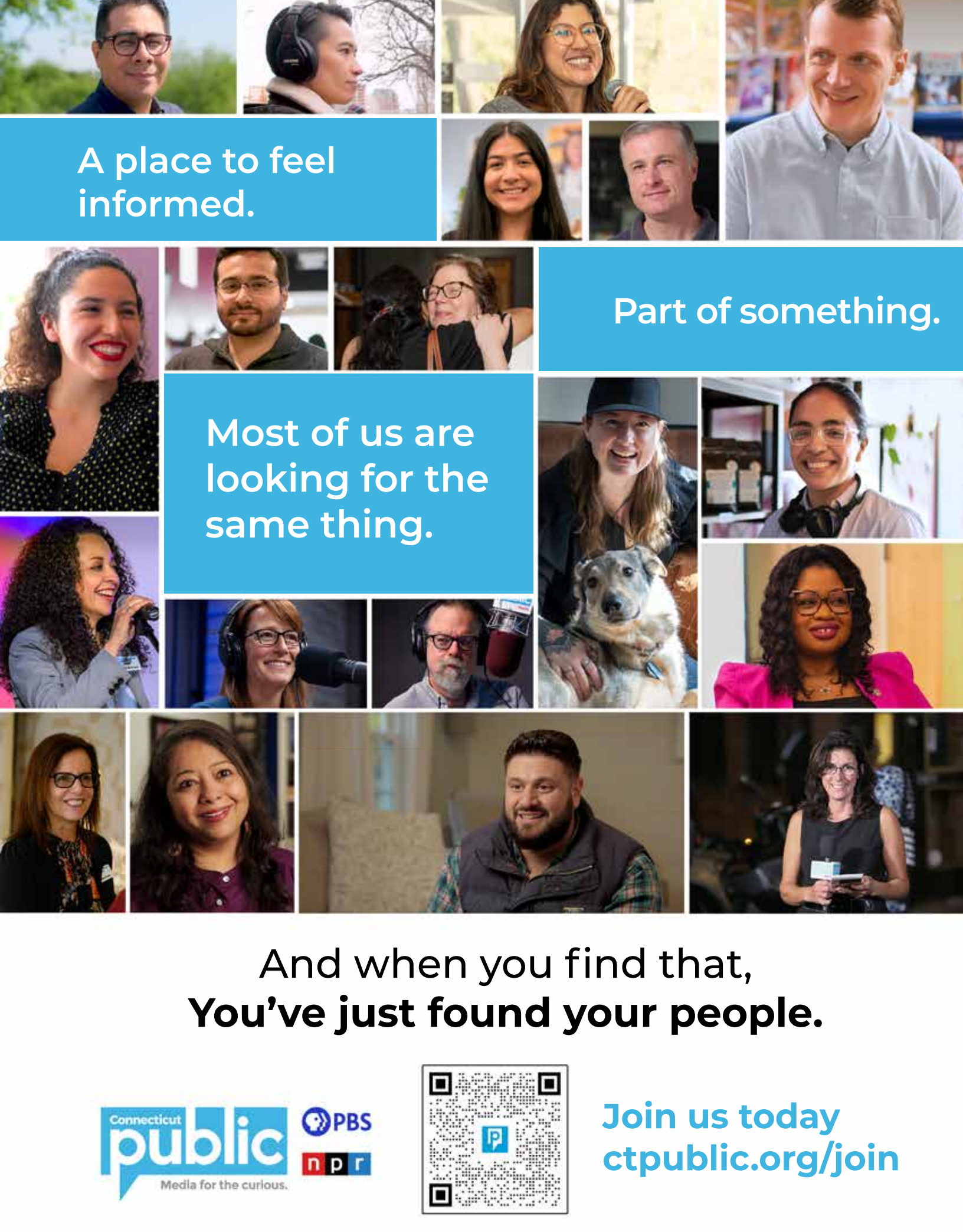
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William Berloni's 'Full Circle' with Goodspeed's 50th Anniversary 'Annie'

HIS LIFE AND CAREER CHANGED AT A DOG SHELTER

By FRANK RIZZO

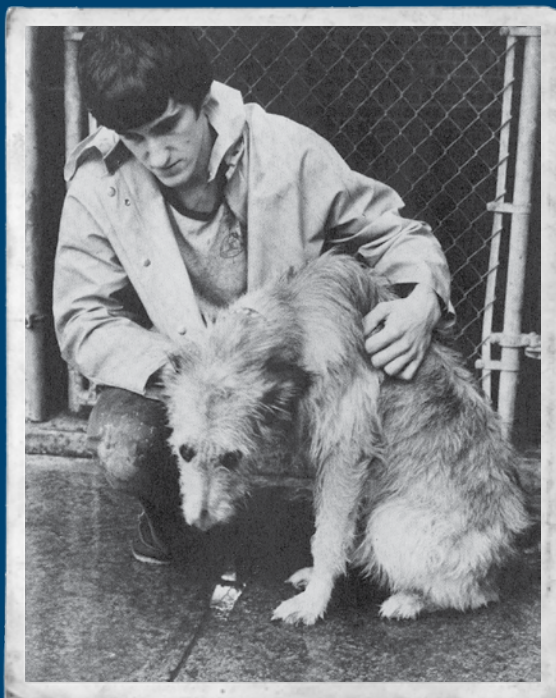
For famed animal trainer William Berloni, Goodspeed Musicals' 50th anniversary production of "Annie" this fall is an emotional homecoming. His assignment is the same as it was in 1976: find a dog to play Annie's "Sandy."

"I decided I wanted to make this search for the revival a sort of homage to how it all began, going through the search and training process, just like I did before."

In the summer of 1976, Berloni was a 19-year-old acting apprentice at East Haddam's Goodspeed Opera House when executive director

Michael Price, now 88, told him to get a dog — without spending any money — and train it for the show. In return, he would get his Equity card.

It was an assignment that came with harrowing drama, a career-change twist and a Broadway musical-style happy ending.



Berloni taking the original "Sandy" home for Goodspeed's "Annie" in 1976. Photo courtesy of Goodspeed Opera House.

The show's book writer Thomas Meehan told Berloni to find a friendly, mixed-breed, medium-sized and sandy-colored pooch. After striking out at several dog pounds, Berloni arrived late in the day at the animal shelter at Newington's Connecticut Humane Society. There, he found one particular animal, quietly sitting in the shadows — thin, wet, dirty and probably had been abused. The dog slowly approached Berloni, looked up at him with his sad brown eyes and for the first

time allowed someone to pet him. Berloni knew he found the right dog.

But the teen apprentice didn't have the \$7 to rescue the animal, which was to be euthanized



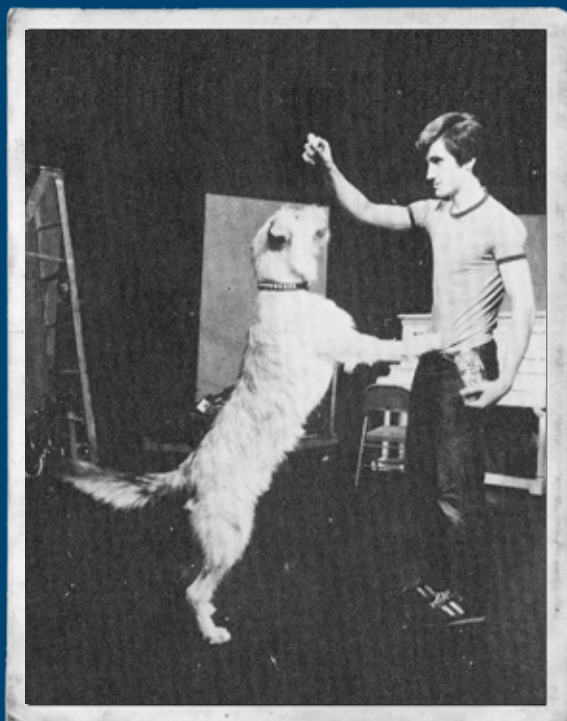
Laiken Jules ("Annie") and Scotty ("Sandy") are revealed at Goodspeed Opera House's 50th anniversary celebration. Photo by Diane Sobolewski.



Berloni taking the original "Sandy" home for Goodspeed's "Annie" in 1976. Photo courtesy of Goodspeed Opera House.



Berloni training "Sandy" 50 years ago. Photo courtesy of Goodspeed Opera House.



Berloni training "Sandy" 50 years ago. Photo courtesy of Goodspeed Opera House.

the next day. Frantic, Berloni returned to East Haddam but couldn't find any of the show's creative team for guidance. His roommate urged him to go back regardless and fellow apprentices and crew members chipped in their dollars, too. The next morning, Berloni was sitting on the shelter steps before it opened, paid for and adopted the dog, and saved the nameless pooch who would forever be "Sandy."

That story would have been a good one if it ended there. But it gets even better.

The new musical faced improbable odds. The show opened in a torrential rainstorm. The leading critic was dismissive. And the young actress playing Annie was replaced (by Andrea McArdle). Things looked dire for the show.

But at the last Goodspeed performance, legendary director Mike Nichols saw the musical and its potential. Under his producing savvy, the show was reworked and headed to Broadway the next year.

That's when Berloni — still an aspiring actor — was living in Manhattan in a six-floor, no-dogs-allowed, Bleeker Street walk-up with two other roommates — and a secret Sandy. Unexpectedly, he and his canine buddy were asked to join the new Broadway production, which turned out to be a sensation, running nearly 2,400 performances. Touring productions followed as well as revivals, films and television versions of the show, launching Berloni into a career he had never envisioned for himself.

Over the decades, Berloni, an only child who grew up on a farm on Kensington, became a leading show biz animal trainer with 34 Broadway credits and countless off-Broadway, touring and regional productions.

Films for his animal stars began with 1981's "Neighbors." Others followed, including "The Greatest Showman," "Charlie Wilson's War" and 2024's "The Friend," starring Naomi Watts, Bill Murray and the Great Dane title character.

His man television gigs include "Sesame Street," "Only Murders in the Building," and "High Maintenance," the latter which featured an entire episode from a dog's point of view. Berloni also guided canine performances



Bill Berloni with Scotty, playing "Sandy" in Goodspeed Opera House's 2026 production of "Annie." Photo by Diane Sobolewski.

A scruffy, tan and white dog, likely a terrier mix, is sitting upright on a dark stage floor. The dog has a white patch on its chest and wears a brown leather collar with a gold bell. The floor is marked with various colored tapes (yellow, pink, green) in the shape of letters and symbols. The background is dark and out of focus.

Over the decades, Berloni, an only child who grew up on a farm on Kensington, became a leading show biz animal trainer with 34 Broadway credits and countless off-Broadway, touring and regional productions.

Scotty, playing "Sandy" in Goodspeed Opera House's 2026 production of "Annie." Photo by Jenna Berloni.



Photo by Jenna Berloni.

in NBC's "The Wiz Live!," "Peter Pan Live!" and in 2021's "Annie Live!"

Berloni and his wife and business partner-producer Dorothy — along with 20-plus animal family — live on their 90-acre property in Haddam. A life-size bronze statue of the original "Sandy" greets visitors at the combination retirement/rescue/working-dog home.

Berloni's heart has a special place for Goodspeed, which also produced 2019's "Because of Winn-Dixie," a musical based on the 2005 film. The lead was a dog named Bowdie, one of Berloni's biggest and most beloved stars.

Berloni found Goodspeed's new Sandy in a shelter in Florida, "and he has an uncanny resemblance to the original Sandy."

"I've seen a lot of ghosts this time out," Berloni, 69, says of this latest Goodspeed production. "About 80 percent of those involved in that first Goodspeed show are now gone. But I look back knowing I was in the room where it all happened and feel very humbled."

Over the years, Berloni has received many honors, including recognition at the Tony Awards, and by the Drama League, Outer Critics Circle and Playbill. But he received a special tribute last year at Goodspeed's annual gala.

Instead of a simply being given a plaque, a duplicate of Berloni's "Sandy" bronze statue now stands in front of Goodspeed Opera House (goodspeed.org), honoring the dog — and the man — where it all began. "Annie" will play at the theater through December 2. 🐾

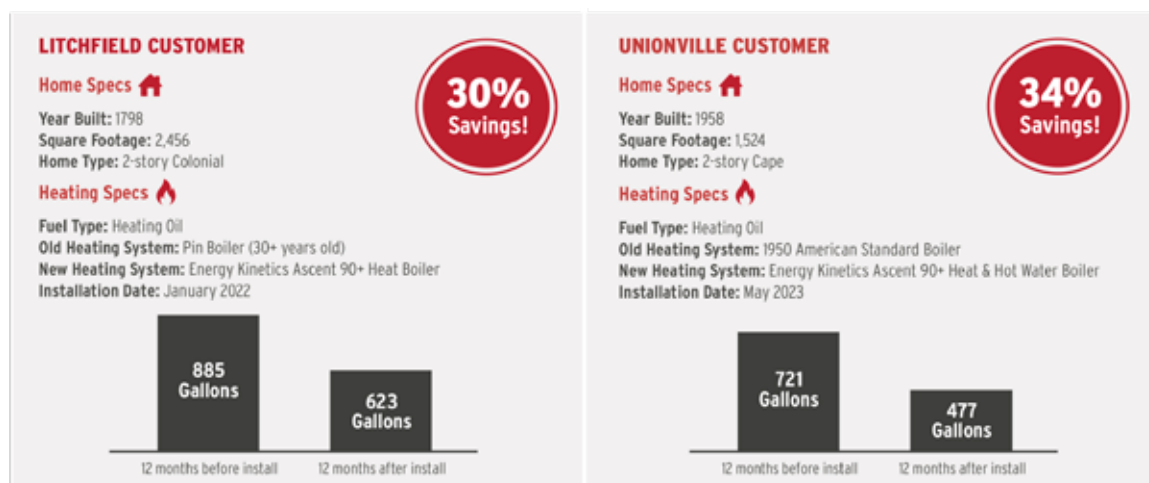
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Blessed Suffering

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

Certain things in life make no sense when you observe them objectively. We answer a telephone call with “Hello?” even though the phone tells us who’s calling. We drive to a gym to walk on a treadmill. We announce we’re leaving social media...on social media. Yet we do them anyway. Sometimes, we love them despite their ridiculousness.

This is my thought when my friend, Shep, spills his beer on the folding table, and it’s so cold — 4° with a -10° wind chill — that the beer flash freezes.

What are we thinking? It’s January 10, 2004. The AFC Divisional Playoff vs. the Tennessee Titans. I’m standing in a dirt parking lot — P11 — across

the street from our hallowed hall: Gillette Stadium.

It’s the coldest game in New England Patriots’ history. It’s so cold that the Patriots provided hand warmers at the gates. They opened their field house as a warming center, allowing fans to step inside and then return to their seats. Dunkin’ Donuts handed out free coffee in the parking lots and warming area.

Yet here I am, standing in the dark with my friends, shivering, as we wait for the 8:15 p.m. kickoff and a game that would end at nearly midnight. Ridiculous.

I’m a Patriots season ticket holder, which means that for the past 25 years, I have spent many a Sunday standing in the frigid cold, driving rain, relentless snow, inexplicable sleet and hail, and

sometimes, blessedly, the blazing heat on an early September afternoon.

I have sniffled. Shivered. Suffered. And returned. So goes life for a Patriots fan.

Yes, a multitude of warm, cozy restaurants surround the stadium, providing delicious food and a friendly atmosphere before the game, but no. I am a tailgater. I stand in parking lots and eat meat while waiting to watch my team hopefully win.

It makes no sense. It also makes all the sense in the world.

Happily, my friends and I have gotten better at this as time has gone by.

First, I upgraded my winter clothing. Layers of flimsy sweaters and jackets have been replaced with arctic gear

akin to that worn by Mount Everest climbers. Alpaca wool socks. Arctic-grade boots. Mittens with specialized pockets for handwarmers. Hats and coats for every occasion.

Then came the EZ Ups with walls. Propane heaters. Flat screen TVs to watch the early game. Grills. Tables. Side tables. Trash cans.

We all own warm, comfortable living rooms adjacent to refrigerators, pantries, stoves and clean bathrooms. But no, we build a half-baked living room on dirt in a parking lot two hours away to stay warm for the three hours before game time.

We've gotten much better at this over the years. It took a decade of suffering and near-frostbite, but today we know how to do it right. And it's worth it because the memories are joyous.

The gathering of dedicated, impassioned men and women before a game, devouring meats of various sizes and types, corn bread, victory brownies, and massive amounts of beer.

I don't actually drink, but I don't mind watching my friends get tipsy before the game. It's often quite entertaining.

And anything can happen at a tailgate.

I watched two men drive into the parking lot with a Christmas tree propped up in the bed of their pickup truck labeled Tree-bow, after Tim Tebow, who briefly played for the Patriots but was playing for the opponent on this day. These two geniuses set the tree on fire prior to the game, apparently burning their representation of Tebow in effigy and nearly burning their truck to the ground in the process.

I remember the time we forgot to

bring the grills, so we cooked our food in a neighboring half-baked living room of strangers who became our friends on that day.

There was the time my friend, Tom Swale, left before the game was over, taking the meat for the after-game tailgate with him. Desperate for food, we traded beer for meat with random tailgaters throughout the parking lot while asking strangers to make videos threatening Tom's life. We managed to trade enough beer for meat to make a decent meal. Tom has never been invited back to a game.

But there are also those lovely autumn games, when the weather and temperature are not factors, and the land surrounding the stadium is bathed in autumnal splendor. I bring my wife and now my son to these games; tailgates fit for civilians who want to eat a hot dog and watch a game without worrying about their survival.

I love these games, too. Fall signals the beginning of something great: another Patriots football season. A return to one of my favorite places on the planet, and a return to the gathering of friends and meat in a parking lot that has oddly come to feel like home.

My wife loves a day when she can wear light cashmere and feel warm, and that is what these blessed September and October games have to offer: they are easy games to attend. Lovely afternoons in the stadium. But, also, often forgettable. When you're not struggling to not die, the party before the game isn't exactly unforgettable.

It's those late autumnal games — late November and into December — when the temperatures drop, the wind howls and the beer flash

freezes when the memories are made. There's something about surviving a Patriots game in harsh conditions that makes the experience so much more visceral, meaningful and unforgettable.

Early season games are perfect for fair-weather fans, because that is what they so often offer: fair weather. Late-season games — the day after Thanksgiving and a week before Christmas — when all the leaves have fallen from the trees, it's dark by mid-afternoon and the freezing rain is encrusting your eyebrows, are for the intrepid, the brave and the true fans of this great team. These are the games that test your mettle.

The Patriots beat the Titans that day back in 2004, and they went on to win the Super Bowl. It snowed during the AFC Championship Game, which I also attended, of course, but it was a balmy 30°. Light wind. Piece of cake. We didn't have propane heaters or side tables for our tailgate yet, but those luxuries weren't needed that day. They never really are.

Give me an autumn afternoon or evening where I stand on dirt, consuming meat and sharing stories with my friends, and I am a happy man. Possibly cold and wet and shivering, but also happy. ■

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