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See story on page 44

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

“My family was different from everyone around. At The Emanuel, I don’t have a feeling of being different. I’m so glad my kids don’t have to know that feeling.”

– Meredith Smith

See story page 34

ON THE COVER

Dan (left) and Laura Moran of West Hartford, were inspired by the brave spirit of their son, Johnny, and along with their friends Dan and Kelly Clark started the annual St. Patrick’s Day-themed Johnny’s Jog for Charity in 2011.

Photo by Ronni Newton
See photos on page 44

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Correction

In ‘Pops ‘Jazz continues to delight the senses of Page 33 of the April West Hartford LIFE, the photo of Jacob Dembo and Wycliffe Gordon was improperly credited. Steve McDonald took that photo. We regret the omission.

Sunday, June 2



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Dr. Michael Bourque, Rick Thibadeau and Anne D'Orvilliers are all instrumental in running Medical Aid to Haiti, Inc. They're shown here on a May 2018 trip to the country.

'Helping Haitians Heal Haitians'

Area professionals help address medical crisis in Haiti

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

When a colleague of Dr. Michael R. Bourque asked him to be part of a medical mission, he said no.

"[Dr.] Abe Daoud asked me to go on a surgical mission. He wanted to bring a surgical

obstetrician. I turned him down three times. I was nervous; I was a little afraid of everything I had heard about the Third World. I finally said, 'Mike, you've got to do this,'" recalled Bourque, a senior OB/GYN at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford. "I had turned about 55 years old and I just felt somewhat

lost. I had so many blessings. I felt I had to give back."

That trip changed the Farmington resident's life.

He delivered a baby his first day there and was shocked that when he came back the next day, the mother had died.

"I have been an obstetrician for 38 years now, and safeguarding mothers and their babies' health through the nine months of pregnancy with a safe entry at the end is still my purpose in life. In the greater world, however, disease, ignorance, difficult terrain and a lack of adequate health care combine to make this a hazardous journey that often results in the loss of an innocent young mother and an unborn child. And I found out up close and personal when I lost my first OB patient on my first mission to the Dominican

Republic 12-plus years ago now.

"All my training and skills learned in the U.S. were no help when I didn't know that all the supposed safeguards we take for granted in the U.S. are just smoke and mirrors in places too poor to have trained nursing and support staff to keep an eye on our patients when we are not there. And thus began my education into running surgical, OB and medical teams that can deliver first-class medical care in places too remote almost to travel to, and without running water and electricity," said Bourque, who has offices in Glastonbury, Hartford and Avon.

"Fast forward 12 years, when our international service organization needed a new home. Saint Francis Hospital was moving in a larger corporate direction, and I needed to find a place that mirrored my values, goals and dreams. And when I was told about MATH and Rick Thibadeau, I realized that after our first

heart-to-heart breakfast meeting, God's hand had sent me to MATH. And it has become a second family."

MATH – or Medical Aid to Haiti, Inc. – started in 2009 after Thibadeau, the group's founder and president, returned from a mission to the country.

"In 2007, I went to Haiti as a volunteer. I had the time and the ability to go and no more excuses; it was time. I was the only non-medical person and I didn't know what my role would be, but before the end of the week, they were referring to me as the medical maître d.' We conducted five mobile medical clinics, and as satisfying as assisting Haiti's incredible people was, what they really needed was a continuum of care and that led to the establish-

ment of MATH," Thibadeau explained.

Thibadeau, a West Hartford resident who owns Ray-Jurgen Company, a vehicle service equipment supplier based in Bristol, noted that his previous experiences helped him shape MATH.

"I had volunteered for some other work domestically and it had been unfulfilling because it was very political. When I went to Haiti and saw the absolute desperation firsthand, it made me realize that there's so, so very much that we could do there," he said. "Here in the U.S., as flawed as it may be, there is a safety net for the most destitute of our people. In Haiti, there is none, zero," Thibadeau noted.

MATH has medical missions that go to Haiti. But perhaps,

more importantly, it is developing a medical infrastructure within Haiti, including fixed sites and mobile clinics.

"Over 95 percent of every dollar that we raise goes directly to our mission in Haiti, which is providing basic health care, as well as surgical services. There's no government involvement with that; there's no middleman. We're an all-volunteer organization. We're a tiny, little charity, but what we're doing down there is meaningful and saving lives," he said. "People can say, 'Haiti, Haiti, Haiti, I've heard about Haiti. It's corrupt; the money I give is just going to be squandered.' That's not the case with us. The money is going directly to the people of Haiti. There's nothing standing in the way of that. Funds are wired down

"The thing that was most surprising was looking at the living conditions of the people, yet seeing how much joy they really had."

**– Dr. Donna Aiudi,
Dermatology Associates
of Eastern Connecticut,
Glastonbury**



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to

the doctors running the operations down there, and they use that money to pay doctor salaries, nurses' salaries, to provide medications and, ultimately, deliver the health care."

Last year, MATH supported approximately 17,000

OB/GYN Dr. Michael R. Bourque (far right) has made numerous trips to Haiti. His surgical mission trip in May 2017 included (from left) Dr. Marie Yolaine Chery, anesthesiologist; Dr. Benouchea Pierre, anesthesiologist; Dr. Joseph Glavylove, OB/GYN; and Dr. Esther Antoine-Dardignac, anesthesiologist.

patient visits, many of them in traditionally medically underserved areas.

MATH has invited a variety of specialists to join it on missions.

Dr. Donna Aiudi of Dermatology Associates of Eastern Connecticut in Glastonbury came across MATH "by chance" several years ago.

While she had been on a previous mission trip to Mexico, this was her first trip to Haiti.

"We landed in the airport and it was very hot; there was a lot of dust. Even though it was several years after the earthquake, there was still dust, there was still rubble. There were still U.N. peace-keeping trucks going back and forth keeping order around Port-au-Prince. It was a bit overwhelming. When we got there and tried to grab our bags, it was really like

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no other airport I've been in. It was kind of overwhelming. It was definitely an experience," she said of the 2012 mission.

"I found the people were incredibly welcoming; our translators were amazingly helpful. The Haitian people offered great hospitality to us and were quite grateful," she said. "At the time we went down, we went to five different sites outside of Port-au-Prince. Clinics were held at old churches, cement buildings. People would line up and sit in the hot sun and wait for hours to be seen by the medical team. I did specialty care, mostly dermatology, but I did help with some of the triage."

She said that each day they'd pack up their supplies onto a truck and drive an hour or more to get to the surrounding sites.

"We'd set up little cots and interview areas within the empty cinderblock structures, many of which just had tents and tarps for cover," she said. "We would see people every five or 10 minutes."

Aiudi did a couple of minor surgical procedures during her trip, as well as treating a lot of eczema-type problems,

dermatitis, acne, and fungal and staph infections.

"They were much more advanced and more severe than they would present in a clinic here because of lack of ongoing care," she noted.

Aiudi was impressed with the people she met.

"The thing that was most surprising was looking at the living conditions of the people, yet seeing how much joy they really had. You would look at the homes and there was still quite a bit of rubble from the earthquake, yet people came to these appointments dressed in their best clothing. The children were dressed immaculately; their shoes were immaculate. They're such a grateful people. They were sitting in a church. It was 101 degrees. We were all hot and sweaty. And the people just started singing amazingly joyfully," she remembered.

"Here we have so much, yet sometimes I think we don't appreciate what we have. For people who have so little, they were very gracious. They showed such hospitality. There was a joy there you don't often see. A faith is a good word for it. All in all, it was a

pretty amazing experience."

Since then, her church, the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury, has made MATH a mission partner.

"I think what they've achieved is absolutely phenomenal. They started out with something so grassroots and ended up training physicians. They're really turning this into something being left in the hands of the Haitian people. It's not like they're going down there and taking over. [They've] allowed people down there to take ownership and really turn this into something I think is just amazing," she said. "There really are a lot of really good, dedicated people out there, more dedicated than I am, really, giving so much because it's just in their heart to do that. I'm just in awe of all the volunteers who go down there and have gone down on a regular basis, subjected themselves to difficult working conditions and dangerous working conditions, travels and ongoing threats that occur politically. People have such generous hearts."

Retired optician Bruce Tooker, who managed groups

"All my training and skills learned in the U.S. were no help when I didn't know that all the supposed safeguards we take for granted in the U.S. are just smoke and mirrors in places too poor to have trained nursing and support staff to keep an eye on our patients when we are not there."

- Dr. Michael R. Bourque

of optical stores, was familiar with medical missions, having supported missions to the Dominican Republic and Haiti through First Church in Wethersfield, starting in 2010.

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Dr. Donna Aiudi of Dermatology Associates of Eastern Connecticut in Glastonbury rests for a moment with some Haitian staff during a medical mission through Medical Aid to Haiti, Inc. (MATH).

Then, in 2014, he saw a notice in a bulletin from St. Elizabeth Seton in Rocky Hill looking for readers and sunglasses for Dr. Mary Swaykus in advance of a 2015 mission, and Tooker and his wife, Pam,

were happy to help again. Then, he ended up in the emergency department at Saint Francis Hospital.

“The nurse [Maggie Levasseur, R.N.] who was doing my intake was only going to be there for 15 more minutes. She said she just got back from Haiti. We said, ‘We both supported you with eyeglasses.’ And I ended up going on a mission a year later. You could read into that whatever you want, but I

don’t think it was a chance thing,” said Tooker, a Rocky Hill resident.

He was unsure if he would have an impact.

“I didn’t think the optical thing was that important. It turned out the need was tremendous,” he said.

He saw more than 500 patients in two missions; two additional trips (November 2018 and March 2019) were canceled due to unrest. Tooker hopes to go again in September.

“It’s the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. When we get to the mission house, there’s a big iron gate with a big wall around it with barbed wire, and there was a guard with a gun, with the host opening the door for us. And I thought, ‘Good grief, what have I gotten myself into?’” Tooker remembered.

They got in on a Sunday, and Monday morning at 7 they were off.

Since there was no electricity, he worked near windows to do the exams. Most of his patients could

see well in the distance, but needed glasses for reading, and Tooker had brought a wide variety of glasses with him.

“The biggest thing is people don’t have anything. They don’t have electricity, they don’t have running water. They come with the best outfit they have. They’re very respectful and appreciative of what you’re doing. What we try to do is humble ourselves to their need and not be a know-it-all. We wanted to treat them really nice, to make them feel special. They each got a pair of sunglasses, and they each got a new facecloth to put wet compresses on their eyes morning and night. Every single person has itchy, watery eyes. The smoke and dust is everywhere.”

Tooker said that people were gratified to see trees, and many wanted to be able to thread a needle to be able to sew. He’s given a number of talks about his experiences to the Rocky Hill/Wethersfield Rotary Club, which honored him with its 2018 Paul

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Harris Unsung Hero award for 2018; his late father, Ballou Tooker, was a founding member of the club.

Bruce Tooker was struck by the poverty in Haiti.

“They might only make \$2 a day, if they’re lucky. Their focus is a meal and water,” he said. “Where we’d go, there would be more dramatic poverty in the countryside. The thing that took me by surprise was only 50 percent of kids go to school. You have to pay to go. If you don’t get to go to school, you don’t learn and the cycle of poverty continues. The poorest person in the U.S. is rich compared to their poorest person. Even if you’re homeless [here], you can get a meal every day.”

Although he’s been asked to go on other missions, he believes

in what MATH is doing.

“This one’s a sustaining mission. The idea is to have a full-time optical component mission down there. We’re at the fledgling part of it,” he said.

Tooker has sometimes sent specialty glasses to patients once he’s returned home. He’s currently trying to raise \$30,000 through a GoFundMe campaign, which will cover cataract surgery for 100 patients.

“I’m hoping 1,000 people will give me \$30 each,” he said. “Our youngest patient is 6 years old, the oldest is 75. There’s a whole ton of them in between. The 6-year-old has a congenital cataract.”

Other missions have included dentists, and MATH is always looking for volunteers. Nonmedical professionals are also



needed. Thibadeau said the organization could use a variety of skills, especially development and marketing assistance. “Raising money is my most

Bruce Tooker (left) of Rocky Hill saw about 500 patients in two visits to Haiti. His clinic team in September 2017 included (from left) Chevaughn Channing, RN; Michelle Wordell, RN; Anne D’Orvilliers; and Debbye Rosen, RN.

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Dr. Donna Aiudi of Dermatology Associates of Eastern Connecticut in Glastonbury enjoyed the people she met while on a mission through Medical Aid to Haiti, Inc. (MATH).

important function. It's not something I enjoy, but because of the significance of what we're doing, I do it," he said. "When we created the board, when we created MATH, I wanted to run it like a business, so we have multiple backgrounds involved in the decision-making process. It's important to run

transparently and collaboratively."

The group typically meets in West Hartford.

"That's where we began, as an outgrowth of a mission at St. Peter Claver Church in West Hartford. We have volunteers all over the United States and Europe join us on missions," he noted.

Thibadeau still returns to Haiti regularly, but he no longer goes on medical missions. His

trips now have a business bent, focused on assessing operations, reconciling finances and the like.

"A few years ago, I brought my family to Haiti so they could see what I was involved with firsthand. We visited a hospital at an orphanage. One of the babies stuck his hand out and grasped my daughter's [Margaret] hand as she was standing next to a crib. As tears were streaming down my daughter's face, she said, 'What did they do to be born to this?' That was pretty powerful," Thibadeau said. "The need is great and, unfortunately, in my lifetime it's not going to go away."

There are two fixed clinics, one in Port-au-Prince and the other in Dame Marie, as well as the mobile clinic operations. About 20 people are employed through the funds that MATH has raised, and more than 200 volunteers have gone to Haiti through MATH.

Bourque, who serves as medical director and chair of the Dame Marie medical committee, said that three rules govern everything they do.

"We always take the higher

road, we're always transparent, we never do anything for ourselves ever. Those three rules have enabled us to live by values that don't exist in other nonprofits. There's no room for egos. It's very difficult, it's challenging, it's dangerous. There's disease everywhere," he said.

There are additional complications such as patients not even knowing how old they are, as well as sometimes practicing unfamiliar customs, including voodoo.

Bourque has a photo of that first patient who lost her life giving birth, and he thinks about perhaps finding her son and giving the photo to him.

Bourque, who attended a Jesuit college, believes "in the Jesuit way of living a just life: service to others, sacrifice to attain that goal and a special commitment to the poor. My unofficial parish is the Church of Our Blessed Lady in Dame Marie. I work side by side with missionary angels of many faiths now from across the world and, yes, even those who have no faith. But we all believe that service above self makes us better in every aspect of our lives. And we live our



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commitment by returning trip after trip," he said.

"It is rare to see how a handful of people can somehow come together and create the magic that our donors recognize and support our Haitian medical colleagues and a growing number of patients. From hundreds to thousands and now multiple thousands of everyday Haitian children, men and women, now receive top-notch health care throughout the year by enabling the Haitians, who know their country best, deliver the care that is needed. And we supply the equipment, dollars and trained missionaries to help elevate the standards of care.

"And this brings me back full circle to my promise to that young mother who died on my first mission that I would change my life and dedicate it to trying to prevent other young innocent mothers facing the hazards of giving birth on a dirt floor, without trained attendants or simple medications that would save her life if a complica-

tion arose," he continued. "[We] have built a model where an in-house anesthesiologist and obstetrician, both Haitian, now reside most weeks of the year. They have become guardians in this remote fishing village called Dame Marie where the promise and hope of a safe delivery has now become reality."

That permanence is a key objective for MATH.

"Political instability and economic turmoil, that continues. It ebbs and flows, but it's always just under the surface.

So, by supporting endeavors that are actually in Haiti, that enables the operations to continue, as opposed to organizations that just send groups down there. We do both, but care can still be provided when we're not there," Thibadeau said. "We've had to cancel multiple trips recently



Dr. Michael Bourque poses with a patient who had returned to thank him for a surgery he had done on a previous trip to Haiti.

because of turmoil in Haiti because it wasn't safe to go, but that does not diminish the need for health care in Haiti. Our mission is 'Helping Haitians Heal Haitians,' and that's what we're trying to do." **WHL**

Learn more at medicalaidtohaiti.org or gofundme.com/heather039s-campaign-for-medical-aid-to-haiti.

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Coffee with Fred Larsen Jr.

by Lynn Woike
Editor Emeritus



In 2002, Fred Larsen Jr. went from being an environmental engineer managing and remediating Superfund and other hazardous waste sites, to owner and president of Larsen Ace Hardware in Canton, along with his father, who became the CFO. In May it will be four years since the two purchased the West Hartford store.

"It's just me and my dad. We get along pretty well. The day we agreed to work together, I said, 'I need two days a week off for my family, and if we get sick and tired working together to the point where I don't want to go to their house for holidays, then we end it.'"

He chuckles knowing he's "the helpful hardware man," because, while he can help customers accomplish whatever it is they come in wanting to be able to do, he considers himself the least handy person he knows.

You might not be handy either, but that's no reason to avoid his

stores, which sell everything from tiny screws to huge grills, including paint, tools, lightbulbs, kitchenware, candles and unique gift ideas.

"We sell local honey. It's amazing how much of it we sell. The guy used to work for me as a student in high school and college."

On a recent morning, he met up near his West Hartford store to answer LIFE's questions.

Name: Fred Larsen Jr. – though not technically a junior because we do not have the same middle name

Town of residence: Avon

Coffee order: Coke, please.

How do you take your

beverage: Cold, with ice

Occupation: President and owner, Larsen Ace Hardware located in Canton and West Hartford

Perception vs. reality: If you ask my kids, they say I sit at a desk all day. If you ask customers, they think I am in the store waiting to assist everyone that walks through the door.

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In reality, I am managing about 50 people and approximately 30,000 different items in two separate locations as well as all of the associated accounting and advertising – all while “fighting the fires” that come up every day. It’s a little bit of everything and I love it.

Why this profession: I worked at a couple of hardware stores through college and always loved helping people and merchandising products. When a former employer was looking to retire, he contacted me and my father about purchasing the store. That was 20 years ago and the rest is history.

Wildest request from a customer: We are known for being the helpful place, and we get a lot of requests for helping people in different ways. The strangest might be when a customer called the store and asked if we could go to the hairdresser a couple of doors down from

our store and tell her the hours the hairdresser was open.

Best advice received: You work to live; you do not live to work.

Title of autobiography would be: “The Helpful Hardware Man”

Topping bucket list: I love traveling and I have been fortunate to travel to places all over the world. But right now I most want to bring my family to Australia. I lived in Sydney for several years while in high school and I want to bring my kids to some of the places that I have experienced and told stories about.

No one would suspect: I am one of the least handiest people I know. That’s why I have some amazing people who work for us.

Fear: I would have to say I have a fear of heights – especially when it comes to tall buildings.

Biggest adrenalin rush: Ziplining in Alaska

Skill would like to master:

Golf. Not that golf can ever be mastered, but I enjoy trying ... and the walk.

Wisdom you’d give your younger self: Don’t take everything so serious – everything will work itself out. While I was living in Australia, I learned to relax. They look at everything differently down there. I took everything less seriously. They like to party down there.

Favorite tradition: A few years back, we started doing a grab bag on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day with my extended family. It’s a lot of fun and we have now expanded it to the Larsen Ace holiday party.

Favorite sport/team: My favorite sport to play is golf. My favorite teams are the Mets and Jets. I know, I am a glutton for punishment.

Favorite food: Pasta – any kind

Swore you’d never do, but did: Gain weight – see favorite food

What do people not appreciate enough: Each other – until it’s too late.

Where everybody knows your name: Larsen Ace Hardware in Canton

Defining moments: The birth of my two daughters

Favorite season: Summer – I enjoy vacations with the family and visiting places I have never been and experiencing new cultures and adventures.

One of your life lessons: Life is short and time goes quickly, so try and live life with no regrets.

Remember me: As someone who loved his family and friends, and tried his best to be compassionate and helpful toward others.

Money or longevity: As long as I have my health, I would choose longevity.

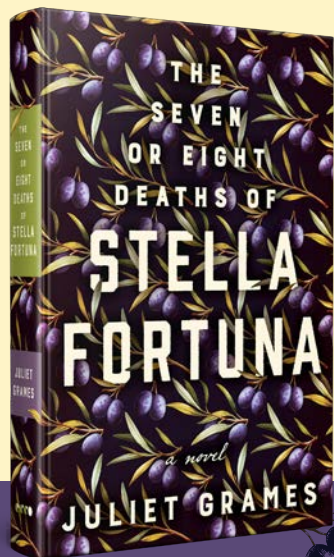
Second chances, yes or no: Yes

Ten years from now: I hope I will be doing what I am doing today. I enjoy helping people and fostering a positive, helpful, amazing place to work and get help. **WHL**

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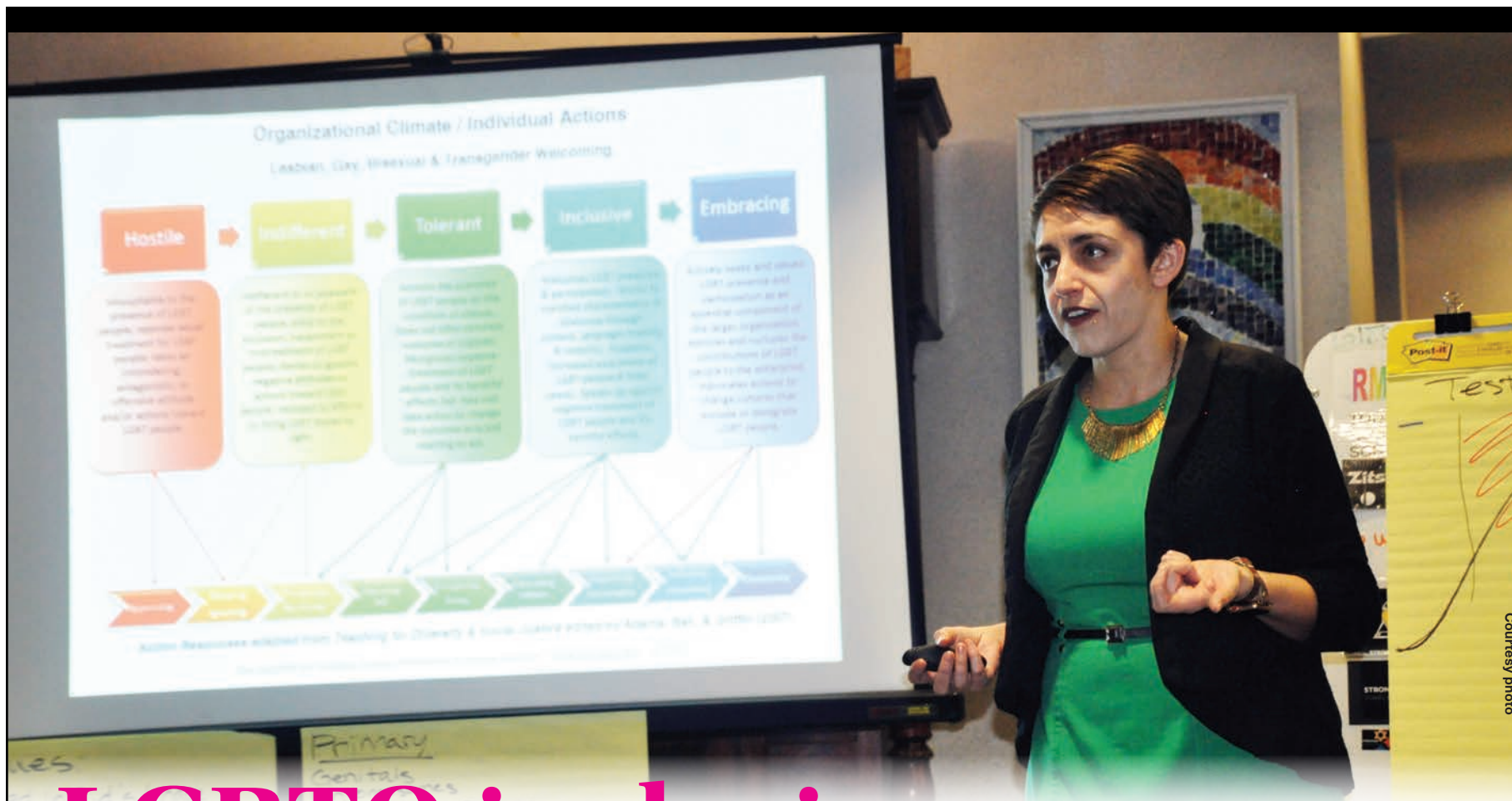
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Courtesy photo

LGBTQ inclusion

Getting educated about LGBTQ inclusion

by David Heuschkel
Staff Writer

Early in the presentation she recently gave at the Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Hartford, speaker Joanna Ware showed the audience one of her wedding photos.

"Here's my spouse," Ware said, alluding to the picture of the happy couple on the screen. "She's the one that's not me."

The comment produced some laughter, but the ensuing discussion about LGBTQ inclusion and equality in the Jewish community was a serious matter.

A member of the LGBTQ community, Ware spoke as a facilitator and educator on behalf of Keshet, a national organization that works for full LGBTQ equality and inclusion in Jewish life. Keshet, which means "rainbow" in Hebrew, was founded in 2001.

The event was the first one presented by Keshet at Solomon Schechter, and was free to the public. The 90-minute conversation with adults included a webinar entitled "Creating LGBTQ Inclusive and Celebratory Jewish Communities."

It was the first of three presen-

ments the following week.

"We know that within our students and within our families and within our communities this is a conversation that needs to be had," said Head of School Andrea Kasper. "It needs to be had more, it needs to be had louder, and that really our

"I think also in the last couple of years we've seen a backlash against LGBTQ equality on a legislative level in both state and federal."

- Catherine Bell

tations about LGBTQ inclusion at the West Hartford school. Ware also worked with the middle school students March 6 with "similar content but adjusted language." Another presentation was scheduled for just the eighth-grade stu-

dent aim is to create communities that are supportive and also allies.

"I feel strongly that we should be proactive and not reactive, and that really was important for us," she added. "If we kind of want to walk the walk, then we need to start self-edu-

Joanna Ware presented a webinar that was part of a 90-minute conversation about LGBTQ inclusion in Jewish life at Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Hartford in March.

cating and educating others so that we can live our values. You can want to live your values. But if you don't have the information and the sensitivity, you can't actually do it."

Ware spoke of her experience growing up in the Jewish community in San Diego. On her 21st birthday, she told her mother that she was gay. She was largely embraced by her family and others with whom she was close.

"But I realized that the Jewish community that I'd grown up in, that I thought was inclusive and progressive, actually had a lot of growing to do," said Ware, who owns a consulting company in Boston. "The people I was close to who have since come out weren't out in middle school and high school. They didn't feel like it was going to be a safe, supportive environment. I feel like what animates the work that I do

now is ensuring that everybody has access to the kind of Jewish community that I did, one that really feels like home, and that nobody has to doubt whether there's space for them if they bring their full selves into the room."

About 25 people attended the March 5 event. Ware asked the individuals to turn to the person next to them and explain why they were there that evening. There were discussions that addressed Jewish values, gender identity and components of gender, among other topics.

According to the most recent analysis by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, an estimated 4.5 percent of adults in the United States identify as LGBTQ. The majority of LGBTQ people are female (58 percent).

The highest percent of LGBTQ people are in Washington, D.C. (9.8 percent) and North Dakota has the

lowest (2.7 percent). Connecticut (3.9 percent) is ranked 32nd in the country, the lowest percent of the six states in New England.

Catherine Bell, the chief program officer at Keshet, said the event at Solomon Schechter was suggested by a longtime supporter of the school who is the grandparent of a student.

"We hope to do this on an annual basis with Schechter," Bell said.

Last year, Bell said Keshet worked with more than 300 Jewish institutions across the country and trained more than 5,000 people. Keshet has reached more than a million people.

"We are working with members of the community so that they have the confidence and the skills to take action in their school to make their school a place that is not only passably tolerant to all students and families, but actively embracing LGBTQ students and families and

teachers," Bell said. "Part of what we do is trying to equip and empower people in the community."

Ware said these types of conversations about LGBTQ inclusion and presentations weren't happening nearly as frequently a decade ago when she began working for Keshet in 2009.

"It was hard to get in a room in a lot of places. It was hard to have LGBTQ equality and inclusion taken seriously," she said. "It was largely seen as sort of just for very, very liberal communities. I think that's really changed over the last decade. Without getting too deeply into partisan politics, I think also in the last couple of years we've seen a backlash against LGBTQ



Students at Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Hartford engage in some work during a Keshet presentation.

equality on a legislative level in both state and federal. I'm particularly thinking about the transgender military ban and a ban on same-sex adoptions in states around the country. I think it's incredibly important for young people to feel like their home community supports and embraces them and is a refuge when they're not getting those messages from society." **WHL**

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'No Good Nick'

The Netflix series just released is created and produced by Steinberg and Kogan

by Ronni Newton
Editor

When some people hear the date April 15, they think of tax day, but for West Hartford native David Steinberg, it's launch day.

"No Good Nick," the series that Steinberg and his wife, Keetgi Kogan, created and produced for Netflix, was released Monday April 15. It stars Melissa Joan Hart and Sean Astin, and Siena Agudong as Nick.

Steinberg said that 20 episodes have been filmed. The first 10 were released April 15, with the remaining 10 released sometime in the fall.

He and Kogan are the "show-runners," Steinberg said, and were involved with all aspects of the show, including the writing, set, editing, and pre- and post-production work.

There are about 150 on the crew, Steinberg said in a recent phone interview, on the morning the final episode was to be filmed.

"No Good Nick" is "a multi-cam comedy shot in front of a live audience, but it's also 100 percent serialized," Steinberg said. It's being produced as a "Netflix native" program, and intended to be watched in order as the story evolves over the entire 20 episodes.

"Because we assume a lot of the audience will watch back-to-back episodes, we don't remind them of anything," Steinberg said. What that means is as you binge-

watch, your time isn't being wasted as you move from one episode to the next.

"No Good Nick" is funny, Steinberg said, but it's also a mystery, with cliff-hangers spanning episodes.

The premise, he said, is that Nick shows up at the door of a family of four and says she is there to live with them. She convinces the family that she is a distant relative.

Viewers soon realize that she's actually a con-artist, but the mystery is who she actually is and why she's there.

"There's drama, there are twists in the plot. It's like 'Scandal' for kids," said Steinberg. But while the intent is for adults and kids to be able to watch it together, the adults in the live audience have clearly indicated that they watch the show because they really love it, said Steinberg. He said that Netflix has added the show to profiles for both adults and kids.

The 1987 Hall graduate (whose West Hartford schooling also included Bugbee and Kingswood Oxford), actually left town at age 16 to attend Yale ('90), then continued what he said in a previous interview was "a typical West Hartford track" and got his J.D. at Duke Law School ('93). Four years later, he realized he didn't like what he was doing, and secretly applied to and was accepted at the Peter Stark Producing Program at USC.

He's lived in California ever since, but often returns to



West Hartford native David Steinberg (right) and his wife, Keetgi Kogan, are co-writers and co-producers of 'No Good Nick,' which launched April 15 on Netflix.

Connecticut. His mother, Paula, still lives in West Hartford, as do his sister, Laurie Steinberg Kaufman, and brother-in-law, Josh Kaufman.

The idea for Nick's character isn't based on anyone he knows, Steinberg said. "Keetgi and I like clever characters. They're really fun to write. There's a little bit of wish fulfillment there," he added.

Nick is a 13-year-old girl doing a lot of crazy stuff – things that adults likely could never get away with. "It's fun to watch her outsmart [the adults], but also really interesting on a morality level," said Steinberg. "She's doing the wrong things for the right reasons, so it has a philosophical core to it," and she's is clever in a realistic way.

"If a kid showed up at your door, what would you do?" Steinberg asked.

Nick's character is not

infallible, Steinberg said, and she does learn lessons on the show.

Steinberg said he hopes families will discuss the issues of "right and wrong" that are raised on "No Good Nick." He and Kogan homeschool their children, Max, 14, and Hannah, almost 12, and spend a lot of time talking to them about consequences. He said that Hart and Astin, who play the parents on the show, share his and Kogan's parenting philosophy.

The trailer, which can be found on YouTube, was released in late March, and Steinberg hopes that people will put it on their "watch list" even if they don't have time to view the actual show right away. He's also hopeful that people will urge Netflix to set a date for the fall release – and ask for continuation of the series beyond the 20 episodes already filmed.

Alumni LIFE

In the meantime, he said the show can be watched multiple times. "When you watch it again, you might understand something you missed the first time."

As showrunner, Steinberg said he has the ability to do things like create the opportunity for his mother to be an extra in a scene he happened to be filming when she visited. And in episode 10, Steinberg said he walks his dog, a bearded collie named Beowulf, through a park.

In advance of the release there was been a billboard in Times Square promoting the show. Steinberg hasn't seen it in person, but he said that he is "impressed and honored" that Netflix has done that, and friends

have snapped photos and sent them to him. Netflix is also providing fun offers for kids along with promotion for the show.

Steinberg doesn't yet know what his next endeavor will be.

"There's drama, there are twists in the plot. It's like 'Scandal' for kids."

-David Steinberg

"It's all-consuming when you're making a show," he said. "It's a 7-day-a-week job, and since July we have been in it 100 percent."

Steinberg has been part of

many successful projects, although some of his earlier work was not as family-friendly as "No Good Nick."

"The sex comedies that I wrote in the beginning of my

career, like 'American Pie,' I haven't written in 15 years," he said.

Steinberg has had a varied career, which has included

writing and directing a feature-length romantic comedy film ("Miss Dial" had an East Coast premiere at the movie theater in Blue Back Square in 2013), and in 2012 he published a coming-of-age book, "Last Stop This Town" in 2012, that was set in West Hartford.

Other writing credits include DisneyToon Studios' "Tinker Bell and the Pixie Hollow Games," co-writer of the DreamWorks animated film "Puss in Boots," and episodes of "The Simpsons."

Although other projects have been on hold since last summer, if past experience is any indicator, Steinberg won't be idle for long. **WHL**



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LIFE

in the kitchen

Don Pinger pours fresh-squeezed lime juice into a quinoa salad that also included roasted beets, carrots, pickled onions, fresh mint and extra virgin olive oil.

Photos by Tracey Weiss

Don Pinger, owner and chef at Connecticut Organic Pasta

by Tracey Weiss
Staff Writer

At Connecticut Organic Pasta, chef/owner Don Pinger's eclectic selection of fresh, prepared foods mirrors his own diverse career.

Pinger started out in the restaurant business. A graduate of the renowned Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., he learned his trade working in high-end restaurants before he opened his own restaurant, the Long Pond Inn, in Mahopac, N.Y., which he ran from 1987-99.

"We served American food, at a time when American food was popular," Pinger said. "But the food had some German, French and Asian influences."

After he closed the restaurant, Pinger went back to school for network engineering. "I did that for a while, but it just wasn't me," he said. "There was no artistic element in it."

A few years later he moved to West Hartford and opened a decorative tile company. "I had that company for almost 15 years. I closed

it last May. It was getting taxing on my knees."

Opening Connecticut Organic Pasta takes him back to his restaurant roots - and was a lifelong dream for Pinger.

"Some of the teachers in cooking school were really great. One, Chef Elliot Sharon, taught us how to make fresh pasta."

It's that memory that lives on today at Connecticut Organic Pasta. Whether you eat in or take it out, daily pasta selections include six to eight fresh pastas, three different types of ravioli, gnocchi and dumplings, and a number of styles of sauces - marinara, Venezia, gorgonzola cream or Puttanesca and more - to go with them.

"Everything is made here," Pinger said, and that also means a vast selection of soups for sale, such as onion brie, parsnip and apple, or broccoli cheddar. There are also usually three types of macaroni and cheese, lasagna and other pasta-centric dishes.

Those who cook at home will be happy to know they



Fresh salads and other prepared dishes are available to eat in or take out at Connecticut Organic Pasta.



Danish, cinnamon rolls, focaccia breads and more are baked daily, from scratch, at Connecticut Organic Pasta.

Photos by Tracey Weiss

can purchase veal, chicken and vegetable stocks at the store, too.

And then there are the salads - such as a quinoa salad he makes with roasted beets, carrots, pickled onions, fresh mint, fresh-squeezed lime juice and extra virgin olive oil.

"It was one of our biggest

sellers until I started making farro salad," Pinger said.

On any given day, one might find a tofu edamame salad, curry chicken salad, or even shrimp salad for purchase. There are often vegetable sides such as roasted brussels sprouts, broccoli rabe, or fennel and celery salad on the menu.

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Packed with nutrients and tons of flavor, the microgreens grown in the refrigerated case at the store are used in prepared dishes.



Photos by Tracey Weiss

A visit to Connecticut Organic Pasta is not complete without checking out the refrigerator case full of perpetually sprouting microgreens.

The case is not only beautiful, but also but gives Pinger's fresh-made food a boost. "Sprouts are very concentrated in nutrients," he said. "And they have incredible flavor. They're a great complement to dishes."

Making food from scratch, with the best ingredients, Pinger said, also includes baked goodies.

Spiced cashews, bar nuts, pistachio sour cherry granola, and a case full of freshly-baked Danish,

cinnamon rolls, croissants, kouign-amann (a French cake/muffin made with butter, dough and sugar) and more greet customers as they walk up to the counter.

Connecticut Organic Pasta also makes coffees, cappuccinos, smoothies and even makes their own sorbet. Try the mango-pineapple passion fruit sorbet.

"I thought that (opening this business) would be cool to do. I know other people are doing fresh pasta, but I don't look at what they do. I rely on my instincts.

And it's morphed into this." **WHL**

"Whether you eat in or take it out, daily pasta selections include up to six to eight fresh pastas, three different types of ravioli, gnocchi and dumplings, and a number of styles of sauces - marinara, Venezia, gorgonzola cream or Puttanesca and more - to go with them."

-Don Pinger

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Don Pinger's answers to our questions were fun, smart, and a little snarky. That's just the way we like it.

Q: What's your "secret weapon" ingredient?

A: It's not really a secret. But what I use a fair amount of and is quite unique is fennel pollen. It has a great flavor and intense aroma. I've used dill pollen and bee pollen as well. But fennel pollen really adds a lot to many dishes.

Q: What's your least favorite food?

A: Jellyfish. My first restaurant job 40 years ago was as a manager in a steakhouse that had illegal Chinese kitchen help. Once a year they would take the managers to Chinatown for a night out and ply them with Johnnie Walker Black and authentic Chinese food. Even the Scotch couldn't make me like it.

Q: What is the one cooking technique that everyone should know how to do?

A: Sauté; it allows you to do so many things with food properly. Grilling is equally important.

Q: If you could take any celebrity chef out to dinner, who would it be and where would you take them?

A: How do I answer this without sounding supercilious? I'm 61 and I have a real aversion to people that like to be celebrities. I'm 61 and I have no interest in spending time with people that crave attention. They tend to talk about themselves disproportionately. There are chefs, real working chefs, and there are celebrity chefs. Huge difference. Look at a guy like Billy Grant here in West Hartford. The guy works his butt off cooking and you see the results. Real chef! A guy like Yotam Ottolenghi is a really interesting chef with amazing food. I'd love to have a nice meal with him at one of his places in London.

Q: What is your favorite cookbook?

A: It's hard to pick a favorite because there are so many that are completely different. "Joy of

Cooking," amazing how many diverse recipes are in that book. The other I get inspiration from is 11 Park Madison, which has some amazing combination of flavors I hadn't ever thought of. I had lunch there and their execution was flawless.

Q: What's your favorite ethnic food?

A: Thai, no wait! French! Wait! Italian! Oh wait! What day is it?

Q: What herb or spice best describes your personality?

A: Black peppercorn. Subtle, but intense, yet common.

Q: If you weren't a chef, what profession would you be in?

A: A musician. But as my lovely wife reminds me, I'm "tone deaf, can't sing, and for god's sake, you can't even whistle!"

Q: What's your "go to" staple dish?

A: Crab salad, with fresh jumbo lump crab. It's like candy.

Q: What do you like to cook when having guests to your home?

A: Summer, grilled pizza. In winter, roast stuffed loin of lamb with spinach and wild mushrooms, with a truffle sauce.

Q: What can you make with what's in your refrigerator?

A: Probably just chopped salad. When you own a takeout business, there is always food to bring home. Current favorite is lasagna scraps, the crispy ends in the pan, my manager and I fight over. Real comfort food.

Q: It's your last meal on earth. What's on your plate?

A: If it was the last meal it would have to be on more than one plate. Start with puff pastry fleurons (pastries) stuffed with smoked salmon and beluga caviar and maybe a bit of crème fraiche. Then a little sautéed Foie Gras with sautéed apples. Then, seared filet of Wagyu beef with lemon and olive oil and grilled asparagus. Finish with a raspberry vacherin (cheese) and a 1963 Quinta do Noval port. Lastly, let's add a few Sarah Bernhardt chocolates with the port! Sorry, you asked? ■



Photos by Tracey Weiss

Don uses an Arcobaleno pasta maker daily to make his fresh pastas and noodles for prepared dishes such as lasagna.

KIDS voices

Every month West Hartford LIFE shares the words or artistic creations of a local student, and this month we highlight the works of two students. Norfeldt Elementary School fourth-grader Kennedy Caudle's poem about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "I Am," and Norfeldt first-grader Olivia Galdi's painting, "Tiger," were both chosen out of hundreds of submissions for publication in the statewide Connecticut Student Writers magazine.

Kennedy Caudle

Norfeldt Elementary
Grade 4

I Am.

I am Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
I know what needs to be done
I wonder why we had to be segregated.
I hear chants telling me to go home.
I see people who care.
I want a place where there is love not hate.
I am a believer of what could happen.

I pretend that I don't hear or see the people.
I feel support wherever I go but hate is still there.
I touch the skin of my children hoping that one
day they will live in a world that will have equality.
I worry that they will not listen.
I cry when I hear what people did.
I am a human being just like you.

I understand what is going on.
I say what I feel.
I dream about equality.
I try to fight for my rights.
I hope that they will listen.
I am a lover.

-Kennedy Caudle

Olivia Galdi

Norfeldt Elementary
Grade 1



"Tiger" by Olivia Galdi, first grade,
Norfeldt Elementary School

En pointe

Ballet Theatre Company celebrates 20 years with a look to the next 20

by Tracey Weiss
Staff Writer



Kirsten Evans, Calvin Bittner
and Brenna DiFrancesco
perform Melodies Pas de Trois.

Twenty years ago, ballet dancer Tracy Dorman was asked to be a co-founder and vice president of a new ballet company. Dorman agreed, "but only if I could do choreography."

Instead, she said, "I wound up doing everything."

Today, Dorman is executive director of the not-for-profit Ballet Theatre Company, celebrating 20 years of performance, education and outreach for the West Hartford community and beyond.

Courtesy photo

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Ballet Theatre Company's artistic staff includes Emily Keifer (school administrator), Stephanie Dattellas (artistic director), Tracy Dorman (co-founder and executive director), Megan Klamert (ballet mistress) and Emily Aubrey (assistant ballet mistress).



Courtesy photo

Dorman, whose decades of dance and dance management credentials include the Hartford Civic Ballet, Connecticut Opera Ballet, Connecticut Valley Regional Ballet, and the Mark Twain Masquers, among others, still has her hands in everything at Ballet Theatre Company. She

even creates and sews costumes - but these days she has help in Artistic Director Stephanie Dattellas and Ballet Mistress Megan Klamert, both experienced dancers as well.

Prior to joining Ballet Theatre Company two years ago, Dattellas studied with Kathleen Rathbond

at American Ballet Theatre Studio Company and was ballet mistress of the Syracuse City Ballet.

"A ballet mistress does stage productions, and helps with everything," Dattellas said.

That's an appropriate description for Klamert, who today is hands-on behind the scenes at

BTC and also teaches some of the classes. Klamert studied at Indiana University at the renowned Jacobs School of Music. She moved to the Hartford area to dance with a company, then taught dance before being recruited by Dattellas to join Ballet Theatre Company.

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Moving fast

“Tracy is very supportive. She is the history and she also understands the business,” Dattellas said. “She is what helps with our longevity. At the rate she’s going we’re going to continue to grow.”

Today, she added, their focus is “three-legged. We offer professional training, community outreach through studio dance and events, while keeping the integrity of and protecting the legacy of ballet and what it is founded on.”



Handsewn by BTC executive director Tracy Dorman for a production of “Don Quixote,” the outfit on dancer Rie Aoki boasts a full nine layers of tulle.

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“We offer classes for ages 3-18 and adult classes,” Klamert said. “We also have creative movement for ages 3-5 and two levels of ballet classes seven days a week. We also have contemporary jazz classes.”

Offering a number of class options means that those who are serious about pursuing dance can go one route, while those who want to take it more for fun can go another, all under the same roof. Men and women, boys and girls are all welcome.

“We have a really great community of families,” Dattellas said.

“I love being there,” Beverli Christensen said of the company. Her daughter, Tessa, 15, has been taking lessons and dancing in productions with Ballet Theatre Company for more than four years. Christensen is also an active volunteer and serves as secretary of the company’s board of directors.

“The kids are so amazing, and I love watching them all grow and develop into dancers and young adults,” she said. “There’s a sense of belonging - everyone there is

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"It's not competitive. There's no back biting. Everyone supports each other. I love everything about it," Christensen said.

Students who study at Ballet Theatre Company have gone on to be successful in dance and beyond. Julie Eicher, for instance, is a cast member of "Miss Saigon" on Broadway and has been a member of the national touring cast of "The Phantom of the Opera."

"If our students haven't gone on to pursue dance," Dattellas said, "they are generally more successful in the world. Dancers have a confidence that comes with the training. We're a different breed of people."

Outreach

Ballet Theatre Company was purely a dance company until 2005, just after its move from a much

"The kids are so amazing and I love watching them all grow and develop into dancers and young adults," she said. "There's a sense of belonging - everyone there is so nurturing and caring."

—Beverli Christensen

smaller space in the Masonic Hall building on Main Street in West Hartford Center to their current

4,000-square-foot studio in the Home Design District.

In 2004, the company started working with some of the children

in the nearby Hillcrest Avenue neighborhood, providing free instruction in ballet, hip hop and jazz dance.

Every year, the company invites more than 600 children from 20 area advocacy organizations to a performance of "The Nutcracker." It also does a program for the Miracle League of Connecticut, which serves children and adults who suffer from any physical or mental disabilities, called "Everybody Dance Now."

Ballet Theatre Company includes boys and girls of all abilities ages 4-11 in the company's junior troupe and ages 12-21 in the senior troupe.

"The outreach programs are just amazing that they do," Christensen said. "I love the kids from the Miracle League. They are just so amazing."



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Kids LIFE

Performance

The company celebrated its 20th anniversary in March with a black-tie gala at Kingswood Oxford School's Roberts Theater and Alumni Hall.

Annually, however, they do a number of events and performances.

"Dancing for a Cause" is a benefit show that in the past has raised funds for the victims of the Las Vegas shooting and the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

In addition to public performances with the West Hartford Symphony Orchestra, at Celebrate! West Hartford and the annual "Nutcracker" shows, Ballet Theatre Company performs a spring show as well. This year's

spring ballet is "Sleeping Beauty" May 4 and 5, and features dancers from the community and beyond.

"We have 30-50 community performers," Dattellas said. It also culls dancers from Boston's ballet scene to perform.

"Our first sugar plum fairy in 2002 was Christina Fagundes," Dattellas said. "She was one of Mikhail Baryshnikov's protegeses."

Other well-known dancers who have performed for the company's ballets include Carlos Molina and Erica Cornejo, principals from the Boston Ballet. Overall, Ballet Theatre Company has staged 75 ballet productions and trained more than 1,000 dancers.

Future

Dattellas said the future is already starting to become a reality.

"We contract performers to do our programs," she said, "and we're in discussions now to hire residence performers as full-time employees. It will allow us to offer more performances because we could have our dancers rehearse during the week and not on weekends only. That would open up the weekend and then we could produce two shows at once."

"I see that coming and I also think we are already there," she said, citing the spring's busy schedule.

There is one more thing the team at Ballet Theatre Company would like to have.

"We could use more space," Dattellas said. "But that's a good problem to have." **WHL**

"We're in discussions now to hire residence performers as full-time employees. It will allow us to offer more performances because we could have our dancers rehearse during the week and not on weekends only. That would open up the weekend and then we could produce two shows at once."

-Stephanie Dattellas

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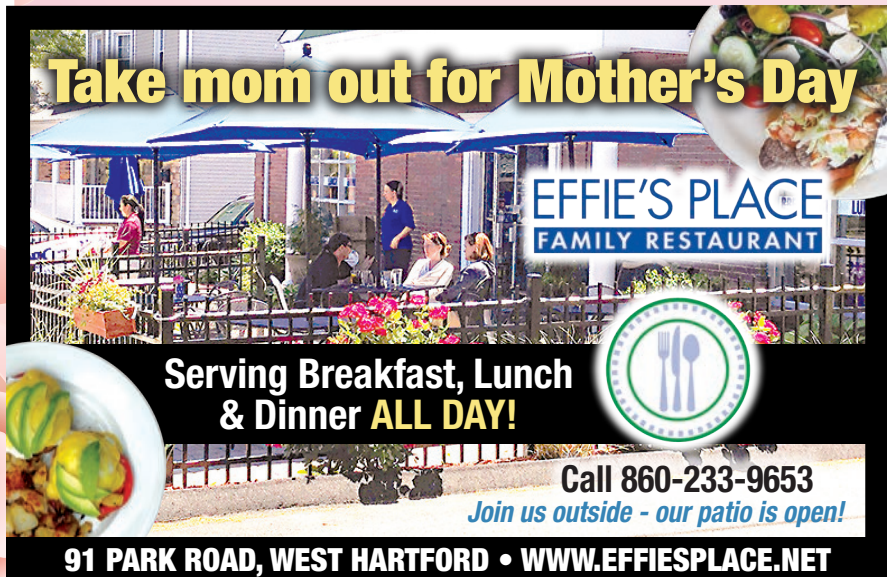
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The Emanuel Synagogue Celebrates 100 Years

Serving its Congregation and Community at Large

By Maria G. O'Donnell
Staff Writer



Courtesy photo

In Jewish history, 100 years is “a blip on the radar,” according to Rabbi David J. Small, spiritual leader of The Emanuel Synagogue, “but in American history, it’s a hefty stretch of time.”

Rabbi Small was referring to the West Hartford-based synagogue’s Centennial, which will be celebrated through the rest of

2019, beginning May 3 and 4 with special Shabbat services.

“It’s a real privilege to serve as spiritual leader of this congregation with its history and as we’re celebrating its Centennial,” said Small. He credited the contributions of staff and lay people of today, “and very much the generations who came before us – rabbis, cantors, educators, synagogue

presidents, lay leaders and supporters – are all part of this story and the reason we’re here today.”

Long-term leaders like Rabbi Morris Silverman (38 years) and Cantor Arthur Koret (42 years) highly influenced the synagogue’s history and generations of congregants. Silverman’s Prayer Book, “a compilation of poems, essays and readings that create a broader

context for prayer services,” according to Small, both inspired and influenced his own leadership. “I try to follow his lead and create an experience that takes into account the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s worshippers,” he said.

“I hope that the efforts of all of us here today will allow future generations to look back with

appreciation on our efforts and contributions, as well.”

Small said The Emanuel was “one of the first emergent modern congregations of its kind in central Connecticut,” and the first of the Conservative movement, which “would lend a modern interpretation to religious tradition and observance,” according to the March/April 2019 “Everything Emanuel” newsletter. In 1919, Hartford Jewish leaders drafted plans for such a congregation, and its members worshipped in three different locations before settling into their current location on Mohegan Drive.

Celebration events

Fast forward to 2019, and a series of events will unfold to commemorate this pillar of the community.

Elysa Graber-Lipperman, president of the board of trustees, said the official celebration will begin the weekend of May 3 and 4. First, there will be the regular Friday night Shabbat on May 3 at 6 p.m., followed by a special 8 p.m. service considered the “Centennial Shabbat” in the style of the “Old Emanuel,” with “nostalgia for the older generation that came from Hartford,” said Graber-Lipperman.

Hazzan (Cantor) Sanford Cohn and the Emanuel Adult Choir will lead the congregation in “older style tunes,” and keynote

speaker Arlene Neiditz will reflect on Emanuel history and congregational life. Oneg Shabbat will follow the service, featuring treats in traditional fashion, allowing for a time of sharing memories and stories to celebrate the synagogue’s proud heritage from generation to generation.

On May 4, Shabbat morning at the weekly Sabbath service, attendees will have opportunities to join in one of the groups of aliyot to the Torah, where they are “called up to the Torah for an honor,” explained Graber-Lipperman. “A blessing is said before the Torah; it’s read in different parts. Doing a blessing is considered an honor. Someone does a blessing before the reading, then a reader reads the Torah. We try to include everyone present in some form or another.”

Small and Graber-Lipperman will present “Our Emanuel Family, Past, Present and Future.” According to Graber-Lipperman, the rabbi will discuss the history and vision of the synagogue, and she will discuss the synagogue’s involvement and its important place in the Greater Hartford Jewish community, including its engagement, educational and outreach programs for all ages.

Following the service, all are invited to a Centennial Shabbat Kiddush Lunch sponsored and prepared by The Emanuel Brotherhood.



Bagels Blocks and Beyond. At this session, the children are learning about the holiday of Purim. (From left): Freddie Stein, Levi Jacobson and Asher Thierman.

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On May 19, “Community Service Day” will include activities in the synagogue itself, including gardening and cleaning up. Projects to benefit the community outside of the synagogue will also be conducted, said Graber-Lipperman.

July 14 will feature the “Centennial Bike Ride” – a metric century of 65 miles – that will start at The Emanuel and visit “all of the different places affiliated with the synagogue,” said Graber-Lipperman, including the old Emanuel Synagogue on Woodland Street in Hartford (1927-1967), the cemetery in Wethersfield, Beth Hillel’s old building in Bloomfield, its cemetery in East Granby, Beth Hillel’s predecessor in Hartford, and Beth Shalom Synagogue (which merged with Beth Hillel, which then merged with The Emanuel). Cyclists will return to their synagogue after their trek.

Sept. 15 is the date for the official “Centennial Celebration.” It will be a “big party with a ‘Through the Years’ theme,” said Graber-Lipperman, adding that the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford will help make a video, and there will be music and pictures from different years, along with speakers, dancing, and food.

The year will cap off with a Cantors Concert on Nov. 17. Some of the former cantors will be present, as will Rabbi Emeritus Gerald Zelermyer’s son, Gideon.

Cohn, who has been the congregation’s cantor since 1999, will not only be part of the Cantors Concert, but also the May 3 Centennial Shabbat, which he said will be “very special because it used to be 20-25 years ago that it was normal to have late Friday evening services. But now the community needs have changed, and the Conservative movement puts more emphasis on Saturday morning.”

He added, “This [May 3] recalls the older style – late services with a lot of choral music and a different style than what we normally do.” Cohn plans to retire in June 2020 and said that for the future, “I’d like to see the continuation of our strong musical tradition. We have a long musical legacy that dates back to the mid-20th century established by Cantor Arthur Koret.”

Cohn said the Centennial is a very significant milestone, one that he’s proud to be part of. The Emanuel congregation is special, he said. “It’s a very warm and welcoming community, and

people care for one another. There’s something for everyone – opportunities to learn as adults, opportunities for community service and social action. We’re a center for prayer every single day.”

An embracing congregation

Indeed, it was the congregation’s warm, welcoming presence that also drew Graber-Lipperman into the community. When she and her family moved to West Hartford in 2000, she enrolled her children into The Emanuel’s award-winning Hebrew school. “I was drawn in by the community; it was warm and welcoming and I was encouraged to get into activities right away. I came to inquire about membership and was invited to dinner that night. I’m not from the area and have no family here. They became my extended family.”

For Meredith Smith, a sense of belonging, spiritual growth, and a welcoming rabbi drew her to The Emanuel. She belonged to another synagogue and, while her husband is Catholic, she still wanted him to participate in their son’s Bar Mitzvah as they decided to raise their three kids Jewish.

“My son got a Bar Mitzvah

date at the other synagogue and I was worried that Stephen couldn’t participate as a Catholic because he wasn’t allowed on the bimah while the Ark was open and the Torah was out,” Smith said. “I had a friend at The Emanuel who said they’re very inclusive. Rabbi Small said if he wants to participate he can; he was so welcoming. It was important for me that Stephen felt he belonged there, too.”

Smith’s conversations with Small during the Bar Mitzvah process appealed to her. “He’s the kind of person you want to be around, a wonderful person.” When Smith became more involved with minyans every month, she noted, it “became easy to be involved when being around these folks. It’s a large congregation, but one rabbi, and it feels like a small, intimate place.”

In the town where she grew up, her family was the only Jewish one. “I felt different,” Smith admitted. “My family was different from everyone around. At The Emanuel, I don’t have a feeling of being different. I’m so glad my kids don’t have to know that feeling.”

Decades-long member Arlene Missan Neiditz, a recently-minted octogenarian, has been a

member of The Emanuel since the third grade. “Rabbi Silverman married my parents,” she recalled, noting that the synagogue was located on Woodland Street in Hartford then. “All synagogues in the area gathered in [Keeney Park] for the recess during afternoon break” during high holidays, according to Neiditz, who explained there would be a full 26 hours of services and fasting. Break ran between 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. before service resumed.

For Neiditz, The Emanuel was “where I got my foundation – the way my life was formed.” Many family members from both her and husband Danny’s side belonged to and got married in the synagogue: Danny’s grandparents, both of the

couple’s parents, as well as their children. Even though their children now live elsewhere, “no matter where they are, The Emanuel is their spiritual home,” said Neiditz. “For Danny and me, it’s always been our spiritual home; there’s a sense of community and a certain warmth because so much family is at The Emanuel.”

In addition, The Emanuel gave her life structure, and goals, Neiditz said. “Other than my parents, The Emanuel was my prime influence. I have the highest esteem for our rabbi.”

Neiditz’s mother was administrative secretary to Alfred Weisel, the longtime director of the synagogue’s religious school, but outside of that she has always felt a



Courtesy photo

Rabbi David Small

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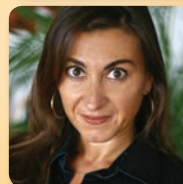
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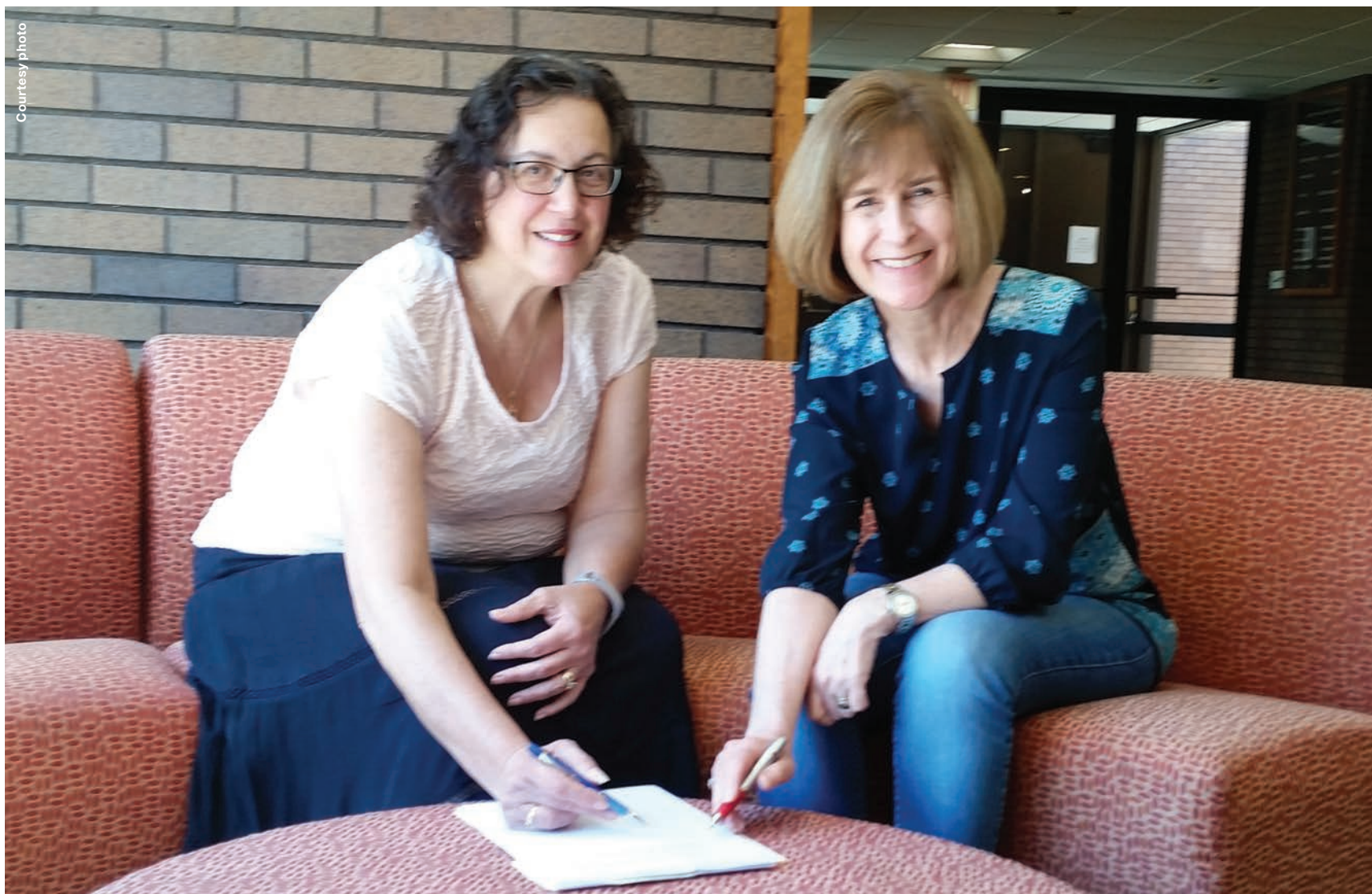
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Board of Trustees President Elysa Graber-Lipperman, at left, signing the merger agreement with the former Beth Hillel Synagogue president Jackie Isaacson.

meaningful connection to the school. She was also impacted by many of her teachers. “One who stands out, who I was closest to and learned so much from, was Frieda Clark Hyman,” said Neiditz. “She was very important to me.”

The Emanuel’s religious school was also important to her own children, and Neiditz built on that and became one of the founders and founding parents of Solomon Schechter Day School, which opened as an independent entity at the synagogue’s Mohegan Drive location in the early 1970s. The school remained there until the 1990s when it moved across West Hartford to its current Buena Vista Road location in the former Bridle

Path School.

“Happy occasions of being married at The Emanuel, seeing children as Bar/Bat Mitzvahed, and a lifetime of involvement – of learning, praying and family experiences,” Neiditz added.

The synagogue is all-inclusive of gender and age equality, people with varied physical disabilities, LGBTQ individuals, and couples where one is Jewish and the other isn’t, Small said.

An evolving congregation and role of rabbi

The history and influence of The Emanuel clearly cannot be underestimated; it has seen 100 years of evolution combined with

tradition within its congregation and the community at large.

The secret, Rabbi Small said: “We behold the Divine image in everybody before us and around us, and we conduct our congregational life, worship, cultural and social life in that spirit.”

There are 700 families in The Emanuel’s congregation, including those who joined as part of the merger with Beth Hillel members last June.

“We’re very fortunate to have them aboard,” said Small, noting that they have contributed a great infusion of energy. Overall, he said, “There’s a joy of synagogue family and welcoming others that people feel – they sense it; it’s genuine. We work at this

and don’t take it for granted. It’s shared by everybody.”

He noted the teaching of the Jewish sages: “How do we best show our love for our Creator? By acting in a way that extends our love and care to the creation – people, creatures, the earth.”

During the synagogue’s founding years, there was a “collective consciousness; group pride was important, especially at a time when American Jews were a newly arrived population. They struggled to establish themselves in society. The synagogue was an important base in which to cultivate self-respect,” Small said. Rabbis helped that population feel comfortable and connected in America.

In the 1960s and '70s, however, "personal meaning and the individual" became a greater focus, and the synagogue evolved. "In order to form and maintain a cohesive community, it's essential to successfully engage people as individuals, connect with their interests and concerns, and engage their talents. We cannot rely on ethnic solidarity or on practices of the generation before to ensure people stay involved." He noted that personal engagement has resulted in people being motivated, involved and happy to be at The Emanuel.

The role of rabbi has also changed in the past 100 years. The rabbi was the "exemplar for the community, and somebody people looked at as the true voice with

emphasis on the sermon ... the teacher inside the synagogue and spokesman for the greater society." This role continues, though Small said today there is more emphasis on being a "spiritual guide, teacher, counselor, listener, who helps people reflect and think." The focus often becomes more person, with one person or one family at a time.

Reflecting on when he first came on as spiritual leader in 2002, Small said, "There's been something constant since its inception. [The Emanuel] was founded as a modern synagogue – the wisdom of the ages combined with contemporary sensibilities and thinking." Boys and girls both learned the same things, whereas in older generations only boys participated.



Courtesy photo

Cantor Sanford Cohen

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Summing up Conservative Judaism, Small noted, "Make tradition meaningful in every generation." He added founding principles that have carried through the synagogue's history, saying that The Emanuel is an intergenerational synagogue, which promotes "Jewish learning, life, worship, community at every age and stage of life."

Small's own wedding was at The Emanuel. He and his wife, Debbie, were married there in 1988, but after he was ordained in 1989, he served in Westchester County, N.Y., then Pittsfield, Mass. "Little did I realize I'd become rabbi of the congregation; it never dawned on me," he said.

"I feel very fortunate to serve here," said Small. "Above all, it's the fantastic people that are the beating heart of our synagogue life and spiritual life."

Engaging with the community

Another principle since The Emanuel's founding is the "sense of community within the synagogue membership, celebration of happy life occasions and major holidays, and social opportunities," said Rabbi Small, including participation in civic activities and in the wider community.

Examples of service include youth preparing for Bar or Bat Mitzvah at age 13. One young man involved the entire religious school for a Walk Against Hunger for Food Share. A young woman held an anti-bullying meeting at the Jewish Community Center as a kindness project. Yet another student formed a jazz ensemble with other students and performed for Hebrew Healthcare, SummerWood and Purim Cafe.

"Each student finds a way to help others and contribute to society with their own enthusiasms," said Small.

Another key point about today's Jewish youth are "the ways in which we engage young people in learning today. Creativity and engaging many different modes of learning come into play today – less emphasis on rote learning and more emphasis on group projects and lively activities to engage and motivate the children," said Small.

Learning in general has also evolved over the past 30 years from age-segregated to integrated, intergenerational programs for all ages. "Another element that's special about our synagogue is the commitment to service in society," said Small, noting The Emanuel also actively

partners with other congregations and organizations for community service.

Its Social Action Committee not only feeds the hungry, but also "educates people about measures to counteract genocide, to promote humane treatment of immigrants and those seeking asylum in our country," he said, adding that they're in partnership with the First Church of Christ Congregational in Farmington supporting immigrant issues.

The Emanuel also has a Caring Committee, run by lay people with guidance from the clergy. The committee caters to the homebound, including supplying meals or providing hand-created lap blankets to people at home or who are hospitalized. [WHL](#)



Rabbi Emeritus Philip Lazowski

Rabbi Emeritus: Philip Lazowski

Rabbi Emeritus Philip Lazowski knows about the longevity and endurance of synagogues. He's been spiritual leader of three, most recently at The Emanuel, where he served during Rabbi Small's sabbatical in 2009 and was named rabbi emeritus in 2011. Lazowski began his rabbinical career in 1954 at Hartford's Congregation Beth Shalom Synagogue, later serving as spiritual leader of Bloomfield's Beth Hillel Synagogue until 2000.

"The legacy of the synagogue is to build for the future," said Lazowski, noting that after the destruction of the first temple 3,000 years ago, synagogues were built for people to plan for the next generation.

He illustrated with a story from the Book of Taanit from the Talmud about the 1st century Jewish scholar, Honi. "Honi

passed by an elderly man planting a carob tree. He asked the man, 'Do you know it takes 70 years for the carob tree to bear fruit? Do you think you'll be around to enjoy the fruit of your labor?' The elderly man said, 'I am aware of the nature of the carob tree, but just as my grandparents planted one for me to enjoy, I'm doing it for my children.'"

The next part of the story is a precursor to the Rip van Winkle story, Lazowski said. "Honi has a meal that puts him in a deep sleep. Rocks enfolded him and covered him for 70 years – the precise amount of time for the carob tree to bear fruit." Honi woke to see a man picking carob and, unaware of how long he'd slept, he asked the man if he planted the tree.

The rabbi said the man replied, "No, my grandfather planted it."

The purpose of the story, according to Lazowski:

"Our lives are given direction, but the legacy is what we inherit." And the legacy of the synagogue is that it provides not only for spiritual needs, he said, but also "serves as an assembly for people to meet, for social problems to be discussed and also for prayer."

"Synagogue" means "a little sanctuary," said Lazowski. "It serves many different purposes, especially for refugees who have no place to stay."

This powerful message comes from a Holocaust survivor who hid for almost three years in the White Russian woods.

In addition to serving as rabbi of three synagogues, Lazowski has been chaplain of Hartford Hospital's Institute of Living, the Hartford Police and the Connecticut State Senate. He has earned multiple degrees and authored and published 14 books. He and his wife, Ruth, have three sons and seven grandchildren. ■

TIMELINE: Emanuel Synagogue**1919**

- Future Emanuel members meet to draft plans for first Conservative synagogue in Connecticut
- Rabbi Leon Spitz assists to formulate plans/religious practices
- First worshipped at Pleasant Street Talmud Torah
- Bought the North Methodist Episcopal Church to convert to new synagogue
- Miss Annie Fisher first Sisterhood President

1920

- Renovated building dedicated as The Emanuel Synagogue (1921-1922)
- Rabbi Abraham Nowak is spiritual leader

1920

- Cantor Weisfield employed for cantorial and religious school leadership

1921

- Land in Wethersfield purchased

for cemetery

- CT State General Assembly passed House Bill 1050 making The Emanuel official
- Brotherhood formed. First president is Louis H. Katz

1922

- Rabbi Morris Silverman arrives. Serves as rabbi for 38 years

1926

- Land purchased on Woodland Street in Hartford

1927

- New 645 Woodland St. Emanuel Synagogue is dedicated

- Daily minyan services begin

1933

- First Bat Mitzvah

1936

- Rabbi Silverman publishes "Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book"

1939

- Rabbi Silverman publishes "High Holiday Prayer Book"

1949

- Cantor Arthur Koret begins as cantor.

With The Emanuel for 42 years

- Rabbi Silverman elected Chairman of the Connecticut State Inter-racial Commission

1953

- Cantor Koret elected Chairman of Connecticut branch of The Cantors Assembly of America

- The Emanuel Basketball Team wins their first Synagogue Basketball League Championship

1954

- Cantor Koret records his first album "Songs of the Synagogue"

1956

- 10 1/2 acres land purchased on Mohegan Drive

1959

- New Religious School on Mohegan Drive, West Hartford, is opened

1961

- Rabbi Simon Noveck follows Rabbi Silverman as rabbi

1962

- First Conservative congregation in United States to allow women on

the Board of Trustees

1967

- Last service held at Woodland Street synagogue
- Services held at school building on Mohegan Drive

1969

- Rabbi Howard Singer becomes spiritual leader

1972

- Sanctuary and chapel added to structure on Mohegan Drive

1983

- Rabbi Gerald Zelermyer becomes spiritual leader

- Chapel, Torahs, prayerbooks destroyed by arsonist

2002

- Rabbi David J. Small becomes spiritual leader

2018

- Beth Hillel merges with The Emanuel Synagogue

2019

- The Emanuel Synagogue celebrates 100 years ■

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Business round-up

by **Ronni Newton**
Editor

From one end of town to the other, West Hartford has a vibrant business community – and every month there are openings, closings (we like the openings better), changes in operation, or milestones to be celebrated.

Here are some of the highlights from the past month:

New Park Brewing (485 New Park Ave.) celebrated its second anniversary at the very end of March, and West Hartford's only craft brewery has been so successful that it has recently expanded into an adjoining and formerly vacant space, and transitioned from a 7-barrel electric system to a 15-barrel steam system that more than doubles the capacity. Can releases are now weekly, and customers can now purchase four four-packs of beer at a time. The greater capacity has also expanded the offerings in the tap room.

West Hartford Coworking (967 Farmington Ave.) is under new ownership and management. West Hartford resident Annisa Teich, who began a relationship with West Hartford Coworking last September with a contract to manage and market the space, has partnered with her mother, Annette Farese of Bradenton, FL, and purchased the business through their family-run investment firm, Bromleigh Ventures, LLC. Teich said that the arrangement provided perfect synergy – an ideal space for her to run her own marketing and social media firm, The Small Business Collective, and at the same time assist some of the members with their marketing and business development needs. West

Hartford Coworking was founded by John Paul Vasellina in October 2016, immediately attracting a diverse group of professionals looking for flexible office space.

If you've heard rumors that **Toy Chest** is moving, you're correct – but this is not bad news and no fear, West Hartford Center's iconic toy store is not going far! Owner Marilyn Caruso has confirmed that the Toy Chest is moving next door, just one storefront to the east, from 975 Farmington Ave. to 973 Farmington Ave. "We think it's a very positive move," Caruso said. "We love the Center, and don't want to move from the Center." Caruso said she renovated the store when she purchased the business from its original owner, Morris Shlien (G. Fox's former toy department manager), in 1989, and knowing it's in need of some updating, she determined it would make more sense to move next door. While the space, which most recently was home to Second Time Around, is somewhat smaller, Caruso said it "will be a fresh, new look," and they will still carry the same products that generations of West Hartfordites have come to depend on – toys, games, puzzles, dolls, furniture, strollers, baby equipment, and more. Work is underway readying the new space, which like the current space has a lower level, but the move won't happen for at least a few weeks. Toy Chest, which celebrated its 60th birthday in 2016, was originally at 986 Farmington Ave., where the Elbow Room is now located. Shlien moved across the street in 1980, taking the space of the Youth Center, a clothing store.

Park Road between South Highland and Tobey streets has turned into quite the healthy destination, and the latest addition is **Health is Wealth**, which offers

a variety of juices and smoothies that can be customized to your taste and nutritional needs. "Our mission is to inspire community through healthy drinks," said owner Anthony Williams, who also owns the nearby **Jaws Barbershop** (5 Oakwood Ave.). Health is Wealth's menu offers a variety of suggested blends (\$5.5 for a 16-oz. serving and \$7.50 for a 24-oz. serving), including the WEHA Special (strawberry, pineapple, mango, kiwi, and agave), and blends named for – and in the school colors of – Conard, Hall, Northwest Catholic, Kingswood, and ASD. The shop, located at 74 Park Rd. right next door to Essential Health, has a grand opening planned for May 1, Williams said.

Charming Nails & Spa has recently opened at 312 Park Road. (next to Sweet Chili). Owners Peter and Eileen recently moved here from New York City.

Congrats to Fleet Feet West Hartford – named one of the Best Running Stores in America for 2019!

The West Hartford Chamber of Commerce has been very busy with ribbon cuttings, and one of the most recent businesses to be honored was **Uberdog**, which held a ribbon cutting on April 5, celebrating the doggy day care/boarding facility's recent move from 635 New Park Ave. to 121 Talcott Rd.

Barb's Pizza (968R Farmington Ave., in the Brace Road parking lot) opened in February, but now has its provisional liquor license, owner Barry Arpaia said. They have applied for and are awaiting the permanent license, but the meantime are serving beer and wine. Their patio is open for the season, as are the patios of most of the restaurants in West Hartford. Al fresco dining season is here!

The past month has also seen some closings, including the shuttering of Billy Grant's eponymous restaurant, **Grant's Restaurant & Bar**, on April 1. When the news was first released, many thought it was an April Fool's joke, but it was true. Grant said that he made the decision with a heavy heart, and that it was "a very hard moment for me" to close the restaurant after a 17-year run in West Hartford Center. Grant said that his lease was coming up for renewal, and that he and his brothers (who were co-owners) were working to negotiate new terms, but in the end could not work things out and closing made the most sense. Grant still owns and operates the immensely popular Restaurant **Bricco** (78 LaSalle Rd.) in West Hartford Center, as well as **Bricco Trattoria** in Glastonbury.

Another closing to report is **Potbelly Sandwich Shop**, which shut down operations on April 12 in Blue Back Square. Potbelly has recently closed other locations in addition to the one in West Hartford.

And finally, the **Judaica Store** (31 Crossroads Plaza in Bishops Corner) is in the process of a liquidation sale, and plans to close for good by the end of May. The store has been owned and operated by Rivka Dvorin for 31 years, 24 of those which have been in the current location across from the Bishops Corner Post Office. "Every year it's been getting harder and harder," Dvorin said. The store operates in a narrow niche, and she said her main competition is the internet. Dvorin said that she will not only be retiring, but will also be getting married, and we wish her the best of luck.

To stay up-to-date with news about West Hartford businesses, check out my weekly Business Buzz column on We-Ha.com. **WHL**

Slice of LIFE

Photos by
Hunter Marotto

A bright, cheerful, and successful Johnny's Jog

The ninth annual St. Patrick's Day-themed Johnny's Jog for Charity 5K was held on Sunday, March 24, 2019, in West Hartford's Blue Back Square.

Participation and fundraising reached record levels on a sunny and mild morning in West Hartford, as the ninth annual Johnny's Jog for Charity raised an estimated \$80,000-\$90,000 for local nonprofits.

Organizer Laura Moran said that it was the first time since 2012 that the weather has been really nice on race day. Laura and her husband, Dan Moran, and their friends and fellow West Hartford residents Dan and Kelly Clark, started the

5K fundraising event in 2011, in honor of Moran's late son, Johnny.

Greg Weaver, 39, of West Hartford was the overall winner again this year, crossing the finish line in 16:34 – a new record for the race. Chessie Lawson, 40, also a West Hartford resident, was the first female finisher in 22:52.

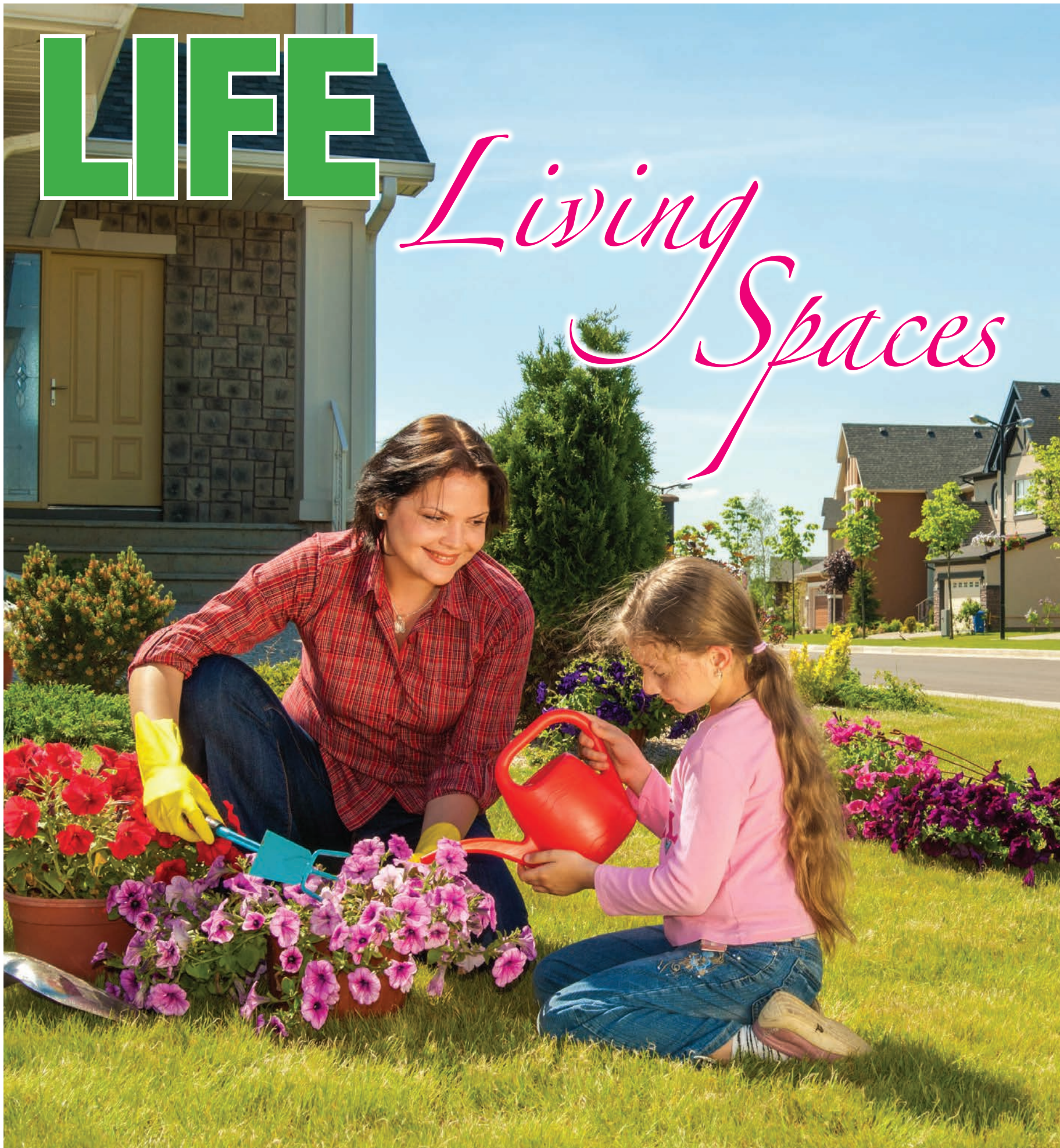
The beneficiaries of the race include Covenant Preparatory School of Hartford, Miracle League of Connecticut, and the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation. These organizations benefit the lives of countless children annually and depend on communal donations to do so. ■





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LIVING *spaces*

5 Simple ways to bring more color to your home



When you look at your home's interiors, do you find yourself craving a refresh? If so, there's no better time than now to update your home with thoughtful design touches that embrace the power of color.

Color is a key component of interior design and a useful tool for updating any space. What's more, colors can convey many emotions - from calm to energetic - helping you create rooms that are perfectly reflective of your personal tastes.

Even though the possibilities are endless, color can be intimidating. While you may like the use of color when you see it online, in magazines or other people's homes, the uncertainty

about how to incorporate it into your own home may hold you back. Fortunately, a few simple expert tips and tricks will have you using color like a pro in no time.

Lifestyle expert and EasyCare Paint Brand Ambassador Camille Styles knows the power of color in transforming spaces from bland to beautiful. She uses color throughout her home to create rooms that are stylish and unique and you too can transform your favorite spaces by using her top tips to bring color into your home:

Paint an accent wall:

An accent wall commands attention and creates depth in the space, becoming the focal point of the room. The color you choose can be any hue that's different from the other walls in the



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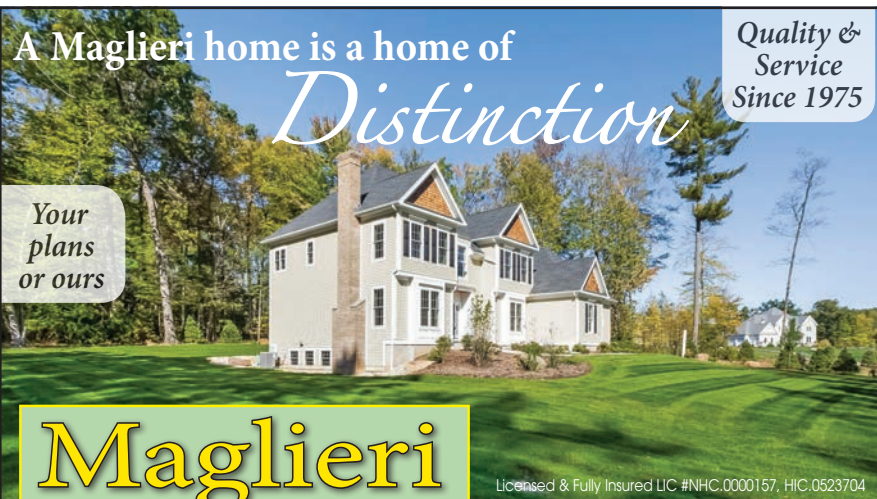
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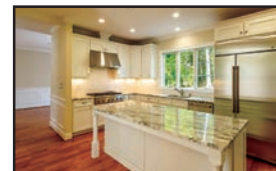
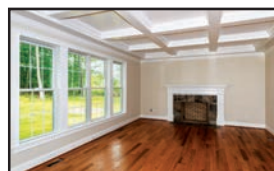


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room. Whether it's slightly different or drastically different is up to you.

"I'm really into EasyCare Paint's French Coast color," says Styles. "Its strong blue hue makes a bold statement without being too harsh or overpowering."

Add a rug: Transform a room in an instant with a vibrant rug. It will add the perfect touch of color and can even be changed out seasonally to bring new hues into the space.

A rug with a bright color or pattern can help create the illusion of more space so don't be afraid to use one in a smaller room to open it up and make it more inviting.

Start small: Many people are timid about color, so you can start small and incorporate a new, bold tone with items like a coffee table accessory or oversized pillows. You may find that your choice quickly becomes a favorite piece in your home, plus you'll gain the confidence to add more color to other rooms, too.

Introduce textures:

Bringing in different colors and textures, such as a plush throw blanket or a woven basket, takes your space up a notch and adds another visual layer. Since these aren't permanent fixtures in the room, they offer an easy way to play around with colors to see what works best in the space.

Embrace the unexpected:

Bring in a bold pop of color by doing something unexpected, like painting the trim instead of the wall.

"Black can take a room up a notch with its rich tone. "EasyCare Paint's Crow color will really wow your guests whenever you entertain," says Styles.

Whether you're looking to do a quick update or a complete interior design overhaul, color makes a room more dynamic and energized. From simple decor pieces to bolder accent walls, bringing color into your home is a great way to refresh. ■ - (BPT)



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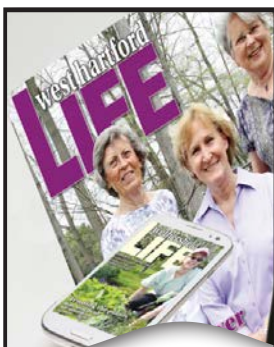
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Lawn equipment: keep safety in mind



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"Before you use a mower, trimmer, blower, chain saw, pruner or other piece of outdoor power equipment this season, it's important to refresh yourself on handling and safety procedures," said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), an international trade association representing outdoor power equipment, small engine and utility vehicle manufacturers and suppliers. "We're all eager to get outside and enjoy the living landscape after a long winter, but take the time to do basic maintenance now to ensure your equipment operates safely for the season and is ready to get the job done."

These six tips can help:

1. Read your owner's manual. Follow all guidelines for your outdoor power equipment and familiarize yourself with the controls. If you have lost your manual, look it up online (and save a copy on your computer for easy reference in the future).

2. Inspect equipment. Check for loose belts and missing or damaged parts. Replace any parts needed or take your equipment to a qualified service representative for servicing.

3. Drain old fuel. Never leave fuel sitting in the gas tank of your equipment for more than 30 days. Untreated gasoline (without a fuel stabilizer) left in the system will deteriorate, which may cause starting

or running problems and, in some cases, damage to the fuel system.

4. Protect your power by using only E10 or less fuel in outdoor power equipment.

Some gas stations may offer 15 percent ethanol (E15) gas or higher-ethanol fuel blends but any fuel containing more than 10 percent ethanol can damage—and is illegal to use in—small engine equipment not designed for it.

5. Store fuel safely. Label your fuel can with the date of purchase and ethanol content of the fuel. Never put "old" gas in your outdoor power equipment. If you don't know the date of purchase, dispose of the fuel in the can safely and buy fresh

fuel. Always store fuel out of the reach of children or pets and in approved containers.

6. Clean equipment.

Remove any dirt, oil or grass stuck to it. Clean equipment will run more efficiently and last longer.

"Now is also a good time to assess your outdoor power equipment needs," adds Kiser. "Whether you're needing battery-, gasoline-, propane-, diesel- or hybrid-powered equipment, there is a product to fit your unique needs that can handle any job."

Learn More

For more safety tips, go to www.opei.org. For further information on proper fueling, go to www.LookBeforeYouPump.com ■

—Courtesy of Kris Kiser, CEO of OPEI

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How lawns benefit from aeration



Compacted soil can have a dramatic effect on grass. Compacted soil blocks oxygen, water and nutrients from reaching the root systems of the turf. That creates a lawn with weak roots, which make grass more vulnerable to disease and compromising its ability to withstand harsh weather, such as summer heat.

The buildup of thatch, which is a matted layer of grass clippings and other organic debris that collects on the top of the soil, is one indicator that a lawn could benefit from aeration, a process in

which the surface of the lawn is perforated to break up compacted soil and allow oxygen, water and nutrients to reach root systems. Other signs that aeration may be necessary include patches of thin grass, brown spots and a high concentration of clay in the soil.

When faced with a lawn that could benefit from aeration, homeowners may wonder if such a task lends itself to DIY or if it's best left to professional landscapers. Aerating a lawn is not always easy, and typically it involves the use of one of three types of aerators:

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• **Core aerator:** A core aerator uses hollow tines to pull plugs of soil from the lawn. The plugs are left on the surface of the lawn. Homeowners can pick up the plugs or, according to the grass seed experts at Pennington, even leave them in the yard and allow them to break down.

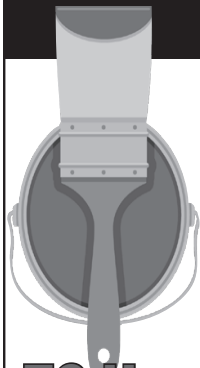
• **Spike aerator:** The experts at Pennington note that spike aerators employ solid, spike-like tines to poke holes in the soil. These aerators leave the spikes in the soil. Some people wear spiked aeration shoes while walking around the yard to mimic the effects of spike aerators.

• **Slicing aerator:** According to Pennington, slicing aerators employ rotating blades that slice through thatch and down into the soil. These aerators leave the soil in the ground.

Aerators can be operated manually, though professionals tend to use motorized aerators. The machines are often heavy, so homeowners should consider their health and physical ability before deciding to aerate on their own. Hiring a professional landscaper who has experience aerating may be the quickest and most effective way to restore a lawn to full health. ■



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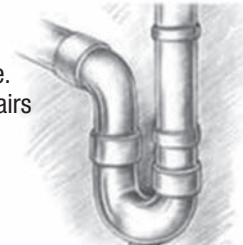
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LIVING *Spaces*

3 tips to prepare to sell your home

Eliminating pet odors, including those associated with pets, can help homeowners prepare their homes for prospective buyers.

According to Realtor.com, spring and summer are the busiest and best seasons to sell a home. While a good home can find a buyer any time of year, homeowners might find the buyers' pool is strongest in spring and into summer. The reasons for that are many, ranging from parents wanting to move when their children are not in school to buyers wanting to move when the weather is most accommodating.

Because spring is such a popular time to sell a home, homeowners who want to put

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LIVING Spaces

their homes on the market should prepare their homes for the prying eyes of prospective buyers. The following tips can help homeowners during the pre-selling preparation process.

1. Address the exterior of the home.

The weather can be harsh on a home's exterior, so homeowners who want to sell their homes should make an effort to address anything that might negatively affect their homes' curb appeal. A study of homes in Greenville, S.C., from researchers at Clemson University found that the value of homes with landscapes that were upgraded from "good" to "excellent"

increased by 6 to 7 percent. If it's in the budget, hire professional landscapers to fix any problematic landscaping or address any issues that arose in the past few months. Homeowners with green thumbs can tackle such projects on their own, but hiring professionals is akin to staging inside the home.

2. Conquer interior clutter.

Clutter has a way of accumulating over the years. Homeowners who want to put their homes on the market should start clearing any clutter out. Just like buyers are impressed by curb appeal, they are turned off by

clutter. The Appraisal Institute suggests homeowners clear clutter out of their homes before appraisers visit, and the same approach can be applied to open houses. Buyers, like appraisers, see cluttered homes as less valuable. In addition, a home full of clutter might give buyers the impression, true or not, that the home was not well maintained.

3. Eliminate odors.

A home's inhabitants grow accustomed to odors that might be circulating throughout the house. Pet odor, for instance, might not be as strong to a home's residents as it is to guests and prospective buyers. A

thorough cleaning of the house, including vacuuming and removal of any pet hair that accumulated over the a period of time, can help to remove odor. In the weeks leading up to the open house, bathe pets more frequently, using a shampoo that promotes healthy skin so pet dander is not as prevalent. Open windows when the weather allows so more fresh air comes into the home.

Spring is a popular and potentially lucrative time to sell a home, and homeowners who spend the time preparing their homes for the market may reap even greater rewards. ■

—Courtesy Metro

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LIVING *spaces*

Outdoor improvements that boost home value



Whether home improvement projects are design to improve the interior or exterior of a house, focusing on renovations that make the most financial sense can benefit homeowners in the long run. The right renovations can be assets if and when homeowners decide to sell their homes.

So how does one get started? First and foremost, speak to a local real estate agent who is knowledgeable about trends in the community. While a swimming pool may be something coveted in one area, it may impede sales in another. It also helps to study generalized trends and data from various home improvement industry analysts to guide upcoming projects.

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The following outdoor projects are just a few renovations that tend to add value.

• **Fire pit:** A fire pit is a great place to gather most months of the year. Bob Vila and CBS news report that a fire pit realizes a 78 percent return on investment, or ROI.

• **Outdoor kitchen:** Many buyers are looking to utilize their yards as an extension of

interior living areas. Cooking, dining and even watching TV outdoors is increasingly popular. Outdoor living areas can be custom designed and built. In addition, prefabricated modular units that require a much smaller commitment of time and money are available.

• **Patio:** Homeowners who do not already have a patio will find that adding one can

increase a home's value. Patios help a home look neat, add useable space and may help a home to sell quickly. The experts at Space Wise, a division of Extra Space Storage, say that refinishing, repairing and building a new patio offers strong ROI.

• **Deck:** Decks can be as valuable as patios. A deck is another outdoor space that

can be used for entertaining, dining and more. Remodeling magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value" report indicates that an \$11,000 deck can add about \$9,000 in resale value to the home, recouping around 82 percent of the project's costs.

• **Door update:** Improve curb appeal with a new, high-end front door and garage doors. If that's too expensive, a good cleaning and new coat of paint can make an old door look brand new. These easy fixes can improve a home's look instantly.

• **New landscaping:** The National Association of Realtors says an outdoor makeover that includes well-thought out landscaping can net 105 percent ROI. Installing a walkway, adding stone planters, mulching, and planting shrubs are ideas to consider.

Many different outdoor projects can add value to a home. ■ -*Courtesy Metro*

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The art of buying art for your home

Designing a home's interior can be fun. Whether furnishing a first apartment or a newly purchased family home, many people feel that the art they put on the walls of their homes is an expression of their individuality, and that a home isn't truly a home until its interior reflects their personalities.

Furnishing a home with art can be intimidating, especially for people doing so for the first time. But a few tricks of the trade can help men and women turn the interiors of their homes into spaces that reflect who they are.



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• **Embrace your personal taste.** Don't hesitate to decorate your walls with art you like. When buying furniture for a home, it can make sense to follow certain rules. For example, parents of young children might want to purchase dark-colored furnishings that can hide stains. But no such rules should govern your choices of artwork. Art reflects the person who made it, but it also reflects the person who buys it, so buyers should embrace their personal taste when furnishing their homes with art.

• **Shop around.** Thanks to the internet, billions of pieces of art, from tapestries to photographs to paintings, are at your fingertips. Comparison shopping can be fun and help novices discover their personal tastes. It also can be a great way to support artists. For example, 90 percent of all image royalties on art purchased from YourArtGallery.com goes directly to the artist, ensuring much of buyers' money is going toward supporting the people responsible for the art they plan to hang in their homes. That can give people

a greater sense of pride in their home's decor.

• **Seek inspiration.** If you're unfamiliar with art, don't hesitate to seek inspiration. Art is everywhere, from the hotels you stay in while traveling to the billboards you pass while driving to work to the local art museum near your home. If you're uncertain of what you like, make a concerted effort to recognize the art you see but may not stop to notice each day. As you expose yourself to more and more art, you will gain a greater knowledge of what you like and dislike. Use that knowledge to inform your decisions when buying art for your home.

• **Switch things up.** Your entire home does not need to follow a theme. If your taste in art is eclectic, embrace that and have different rooms throughout your home reflect your different tastes. This can give each room its own unique feel and make for a colorful home.

The art people hang in their homes is a personal choice, and the process of finding that art can be fun and eye-opening. ■

—*Courtesy Metro*



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Must-haves for an amazing kitchen remodel

Kitchen remodels are among the most popular home renovation projects, whether they consist of swap-

ping out cabinet hardware or doing major demolition.

Due to the sheer amount of time families spend in the kitchen, not to mention the number of tasks performed in this space, it is easy to see

why Remodeling magazine consistently ranks kitchen renovations as projects that will enable homeowners to recoup a high percentage of their investments. In the magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value"

report, midrange major kitchen remodels costing an average of \$63,829 recouped 59 percent of that investment.

When investing in a kitchen project, it is important to incorporate items that are coveted.



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• Deep, double sinks:

Having a double sink enables you to soak dishes in one side and then wash on the other. It also makes it easy to wash and prep produce for meals.

• **Kitchen island and bar stools:** Even though many meals are enjoyed around the table, there's something to be said for the convenience of a kitchen island and some well-placed bar stools for quick breakfasts or snacks.

• Smart kitchen storage:

Work with a contractor to include storage solutions built into cabinetry and the pantry. Slide-out shelving, nooks for a paper towel roll and custom-designed areas to store stand mixers and other necessities can make kitchens more functional.

• **Outdoor access:** If possible, design a kitchen so it is easy to access the backyard via sliding doors. This can make outdoor entertaining or even coffee on the deck much easier.

• Under-cabinet lighting:

Fixtures installed under cabinets provide both ambient lighting and task lighting. Such lighting makes it easier to see what you're working on as well, as even well-placed overhead lighting can fail to illuminate dark corners and spots on the counters.

• **Convenient warming drawer:** This appliance provides backup to the oven. It's a slide-out drawer that can keep prepared foods out of the way and warm until they are ready to be served. This is particularly handy for holidays and other entertaining.

• Beverage station:

Designate one area of the kitchen to beverages, such as coffee and tea. Or make the area an informal bar. This can limit traffic in the kitchen to a single area.

Kitchen remodels are exciting to envision, and several choices can make these high-traffic spaces even more coveted. ■ *-Courtesy Metro*

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Editorial

by **Ronni Newton**
Editor

I'm so excited about my new role as editor of West Hartford LIFE! I'm really looking forward to meeting even more people in the community, sharing interesting stories and photos – about residents, business owners, unsung heroes, pets, events, and more – in a way that is engaging to readers.

I'll be looking for plenty of input and story suggestions, but I'd like to take the opportunity, in my first editorial for West Hartford LIFE, to introduce myself.

If you already know my name, it's probably because of my most recent role – as managing editor of We-Ha.com, the hyperlocal online news site that I launched with a team of several others nearly five years ago. I'm continuing in that role along with editing West Hartford LIFE, and you can expect to see more collaboration between the publications.

I've written thousands of stories (really) during the past several years, and while I admit that I enjoy the adrenaline rush of breaking news, what I love most of all is writing heart-warming feature stories.

In my opinion, one of the most important roles of a community

journalist is to tell the stories that might otherwise go untold, but are significant to the people they impact. Those are the types of stories you can expect to see in the pages of West Hartford LIFE.

Sometimes stories are best told in pictures. Expect to see plenty of photos in the pages of West Hartford LIFE as well.

I've lived in West Hartford for more than 20 years, and have worked as a journalist for most of that time, in roles that include freelance writer for a weekly paper, writer for local and regional lifestyle magazines, editor of several lifestyle magazines, columnist for an online news site, and editor/regional editor for an online news site. I've also dabbled in public relations and recycling education.

I grew up in Stamford, attended Westhill High School and graduated from Duke University (where I met my husband, Ted, who is a West Hartford native) with a degree in political science and economics. My first career was in the insurance industry, starting out as an underwriter/marketing representative with Travelers, and eventually becoming a vice president and consultant/client executive



at the international insurance broker Marsh & McLennan in Washington, DC.

I have two children, both of whom graduated from Conard, where they played multiple sports. My daughter, Katie, is about to finish the classroom portion of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at UConn (she got her undergraduate degree at UConn as well) and begin her clinicals. She's engaged (Matt is also from West Hartford) and getting married in 2020. My son, Sam, is finishing up his junior year at UConn.

I've been sadly pet-less since our beloved dog, Scarlett, passed away just shy of her 16th birthday last November. We're planning to get another dog this summer. I'm sure you'll all be reading more about that very soon!

When Lynn Woike wrote her final editorial in this space last month, she spoke of endings, and new beginnings.

I'm looking forward to beginning my new journey at West Hartford LIFE. ■

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M.G

Help Wanted

LICENSED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS, LCSW'S, APRN'S and other practitioners FT or PT - Counseling Affiliates, LLC, a long established Glastonbury and Farmington mental health practice, is expanding and developing new services and programs. Interested professionals should forward resumes to Dr. Jack Thaw at cai.counseling@yahoo.com or call (860) 659-2697.

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PRINCE OF GUTTER CLEANING - Hand cleaned out then rinsed. Starting at \$75. Insured. Josh Langdon 860-922-4621

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Services

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Support Groups

NAMI SUPPORT GROUPS: Do you have a loved one suffering from mental health challenges? NAMI trained volunteers assist at Support Groups. They are focused on providing an opportunity for people to share and learn from each other's common experience. Groups are free and participation is strictly confidential. Contact: 860-882-0236 or www.namifarmingtonvalley.org.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS - Problem drinking affects as many as one in four people in our community, but many are still uninformed about Al-Anon Family Groups, free services to friends and families who suffer from a loved one's drinking. Please call 1-888-425-2666 (1-888-4AL-ANON).

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB Meteorologist [AMS]



The month of May...

The 5th month of the year is one featuring many events. Here's a look at historical weather-related statistics for some of them: **Cinco de Mayo** – average low: 45, high: 68; record low: 30 (2005), high: 93 (1949).

Mother's Day, the 12th this year – average low: 47, high: 70; record

low: 32 (1983), high: 90 (2014).

Memorial Day, falling on the 27th – average low: 51, high: 74; record low: 37 (1969), high: 94 (1965).

The hottest temperature recorded this month: 99 degrees, and it's happened twice. In 1996, on the 20th then again in 2010, on the 26th.

In case you're wondering, averages are calculated over a

three-decade timespan (1981-2010). Meanwhile, records have been kept for the Greater Hartford Area since 1905.

Also to note, the Full Flower Moon on the 18th – marking fertility with the warmer temperatures, named for the abundance of flowers coming into full bloom. Happy gardening!

This May also marks one year

since an unusual and destructive outbreak of severe weather in Connecticut. Last year on May 15th, a potent storm system produced widespread damaging wind in the form of 3 EF-1 tornadoes, a waterspout, a microburst, and a macroburst. Some towns saw hail to the size of tennis balls! May of '18 also ranked in the top five warmest. **WHL**

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WEST HARTFORD | \$774,900
This grand Georgian brick colonial blends character with updates to create a welcoming home! 5 BR, 3.5BA, chef's kitchen, stunning family room, home office and lovely grounds near Elizabeth Park. Michael Antisdale 860.803.6560.



WEST HARTFORD | \$409,900
This gracious 4BR/3BA Colonial in Duffy has the perfect blend of tasteful updates & vintage charm throughout. First flr fam rm, two FP, eat in kit, finished walk out LL, screened in porch. Annie Sullivan 860.306.2016



WEST HARTFORD | \$369,900
Great price for this handsome home in premier Foxcroft neighborhood. Walk to Morley, Eliz Park and St Jo College. 9 rooms include spacious live and dine, sunrm and den/ home office addition & remodeled kitchen! 2 c gar. Must see! Sherry Rifkin / Catherine Leake 860.985.6053 / 203.592.5839



NEW BRITAIN | \$361,900
Rarely available colonial right on the 7th Fairway of Shuttle Meadow Country Club. 3,600+ sq. ft., great views, in ground pool, sauna and beautiful views all close to UConn, UTC and ESPN. Don Sagarino 860.836.8711



WEST HARTFORD | \$324,900
A special oversized ranch w/ 4BR and three season porch. Cathedral ceilings, classic white kit, beautiful hardwoods floors. Amazing architectural details including skylites. Mark Merin / Lori Simons 860.463.5289 / 860.558.3233



WEST HARTFORD | \$319,900
Classic 4 bedroom Tudor with all of the period charm at a great price. Wonderful curb appeal and updated. High ceilings, hardwood floors, walk up attic. Blocks from Blue Back Sq and the Center. Greg Reese 860.818.4861



BERLIN | \$319,500
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CANTON | \$285,000
Perfect light filled contemporary for the outdoor enthusiast! Privately set on over 1.5 acres w/beautiful gardens, vaulted ceilings & blue stone patio. Hardwood flrs, open living rm & architect designed. Maggie Brennan 860.690.6582



WEST HARTFORD | \$239,900
Easy living in this luxury condo on Elizabeth Park! 2 BR's with 2 full baths on one-level with new kitchen, spacious master suite, laundry, new windows & indoor parking in an elevator building. Michael Antisdale 860.803.6560



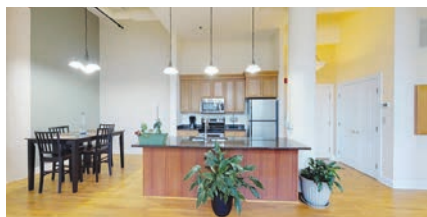
WEST HARTFORD | \$219,900
Fantastic value for so many updates in the 3 bed Colonial! Replacement windows, newer roof and furnace, and updated kitchen and baths!! Flexible floor plan with first or second master. Chris Scigulinsky 860.906.7726



BLOOMFIELD | \$215,000
Spacious and affordable split level on cul-de-sac! 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, wood floors, fireplace, huge great room & 2-car garage on a sunny level lot. A great value in a great neighborhood! Michael Antisdale 860.803.6560



WEST HARTFORD | \$215,000
Spacious 2BR ranch style condo on 1st floor with updated kitchen and bath, hardwood floors, fireplace and sweet front porch! Garage parking and laundry in unit. Walk to WH Center & Blue Back Sq. Michael Antisdale 860.803.6560



WINDSOR | \$197,000
Spacious 2BR/2BTH, HW FLRS, granite counter-tops, laundry in unit condo with amazing views and privacy. Workout center, elevator, and private trails. Must see! Adam Cannon 203.927.6042



WEST HARTFORD | \$2,300
Luxury rental at Quaker Green! Top floor ranch unit with 2 bedrooms, 2 full baths, open floor plan, double balcony and 2 car garage! Pool, clubhouse and fitness center included. Great location. Michael Antisdale 860.803.6560



WEST HARTFORD | Call for Price
Fully updated & painted 3 bed colonial w/architectural details. Walk to the Center, Sedgwick & Duffy schools. New windows, HW flrs, FP, SS apps in EIK, fam rm, updated BA, patio in fenced backyard & gar. T. Dalton Faenza 860.205.4263



WEST HARTFORD | \$750,000
Elegant home w/bright sunroom, cozy library w/detailed built-ins & fireplace. Kitchen has Brazilian cherry floors, granite island & 2 Butler's pantries. Carriage house w/apt above 5 car garage & pool! Elaine Groundwater 860.729.3489

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