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LOCAL NEWS BRIEFING

TOWN HALL

Parking Kiosks Downtown

New Canaan officials are considering adding eight new parking kiosks on Main Street and Locust Avenue as part of an expansion of the paid parking system introduced in October 2025. The project is aimed at reducing traffic congestion.

Potential Leaf Blower Ordinance

Town officials are considering an ordinance that would ban gas-powered leaf blowers from Memorial Day through Labor Day and limit electric blower use to certain daytime hours. The proposal includes exemptions for emergencies, storm cleanup, utility work, and some residential clearing, but it has not yet been finalized or approved.

Budget for 2026-27

The Board of Selectmen approved a \$186.9 million budget for fiscal year 2026-27, a 3.3% increase over the fiscal year 2025-26 budget. The proposal now moves to the Board of Finance for review, then to the Town Council, with a budget vote scheduled for April 14.

LOCAL BUSINESSES AND NONPROFITS

Croarkins Speak to Rotary Club

Rick Croarkin and his wife, Christine, recently spoke to the New Canaan Rotary Club about the life of Christine's grandfather, Daniel Mahoney, based on his written memoirs. Mahoney served in the military during the Pancho Villa campaign, fought in World War I, lived in Paris in the 1920s, and later re-enlisted during World War II.

NCLT Speaks at Coffee



CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Your Charter Your Survey

The Charter Commission has opened a public questionnaire, and residents should take the time to complete it.

The survey is at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8QXBNNK>

250th Independence Day Celebration Plans



Period clothing on display at Town Hall promoting the upcoming Semiquincentennial and related events.

Photo credit: John Kriz.

BY JOHN KRIZ

The 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence — the Semiquincentennial of our nation's founding — is fast approaching. And New Canaan is getting ready to party!

Tucker Murphy, New Canaan's Administrative Officer, said many of the major events will kick off on Flag Day (June 14) with a special 1776 flag, and will continue through Veterans Day (Nov. 11).

But there's more — much more.

Leading the charge is the New Canaan 250th Planning Committee, a group of around two dozen people chaired by Ms. Murphy that includes representatives from the town, schools, and charitable and community groups. It has been working for a year to share and generate ideas, and coordinate efforts. "We've gotten such a great response," enthused Ms. Murphy. "I'm so impressed with the level of creativity regarding the programs these organizations have pulled together."

The group is planning a kick-off release soon with more details.

However, town, schools, and local

civic and charitable groups are already underway creating events. A website <https://tockify.com/newcanaan250/> pinboard has been created to help everyone publicize celebratory events. Local groups with 250th Anniversary events are encouraged to post them on this site. Residents seeking to keep up and get involved with all the fun will be able to find information there.

The Town Hall lobby has a colorful display to help publicize the Semiquincentennial events.

Coming Events

Much is still in motion, but one signature event will be a 'NC250 Parade' on June 27 starting at 9:30am going down South Avenue to the high school, and the fireworks at Waveny Park on July 4. "We hope to have an extraordinary show," said Ms. Murphy.

Other events include:

- The New Canaan Beautification League plans to make the hanging baskets that grace downtown lampposts, as well as the other natural spots it cares for, especially patriotic.

- New Canaan's Public Schools are planning various concerts and other performing arts events.
- The Chamber of Commerce is working with local merchants to create special window displays.
- The Powerhouse Theater is planning to stage a 250th relevant play.
- St. Aloysius will host an interfaith concert.
- The summer concerts at Waveny Park will commence with the National Anthem or God Bless America.

And Many More!

The *New Canaan Sentinel* will cover as many of New Canaan's Semiquincentennial events as possible, and will be alerting people to them in its popular, free daily email, *Top 5 things To Do in New Canaan*. If you are not already on the 5 Things mailing list, you can sign up [HERE](#). The *Sentinel* also encourages the town and local groups to submit event photos and captions, and listing any people in them. Email them to publisher@newcanaansentinel.com

Does Anyone Know When Spring is Coming?

BY STUART ADELBERG

Punxsutawney Phil just pissed me off! Six more weeks? Really?? Forty-two more days of this crazy cold! Maybe you want to throw in another blizzard or two? The snow from the last storm is showing no signs of melting - but what the heck - what's another foot of dirty, hard as a rock, white stuff among friends? What are you thinking, Phil? Philly... Phil-man... Philip... get with the program! We've had enough!

Are you sure it was your shadow that you saw? Maybe you were under a tree or the sun was in your eyes. And speaking of your eyes, when was the last time you had your eyesight checked? You might need glasses. Find an eye doctor and I'll pay for the exam. Don't need groundhogs bumping



How cold is it?

Six more weeks of winter? Really? Forty-two more days of this crazy cold. Maybe you want to throw in another blizzard or two? We've had enough!!

into bushes... not to mention predicting endless winters!

Hey, Mr. P... I don't know if you remember, but we have dog... a wild dog... I guess she's still considered a puppy. Do you know what three-foot high snow berms, ice covered walkways, and frigid temperatures do to those of us who are outside multiple times of the day walking dogs? Booties, coats, even hats! One set for me and another for the puppy. And to the other dog walkers in the neighborhood that have the sixteen dog booties that Connie ripped off her paws and left in the snow after it took me fifteen minutes to get each of them on... I know who you are - I'll be sending out bills in the spring!

Last week, after a foot of snow fell and we endured ten days of record breaking cold, I stopped in my tracks when the weather forecasters claimed, "There may be another storm heading our way." What is this a joke? Are you playing with me Phil? I figured I better get prepared, so I went online, checked out the newspapers, and listened to local media. All week, the wise weather folks were outlining three scenarios. It was possible that we would see another major storm, with considerable snow. Oh boy. But it was also possible that the storm would miss us entirely. Finally, there was a reasonable chance that we may see a light dusting of snow. Really?? This is a forecast? I could have predicted these three scenarios by looking out the window, and I don't even

Communication Is What's Received

BY JILL S. WOOLWORTH, LMFT

in a different way.

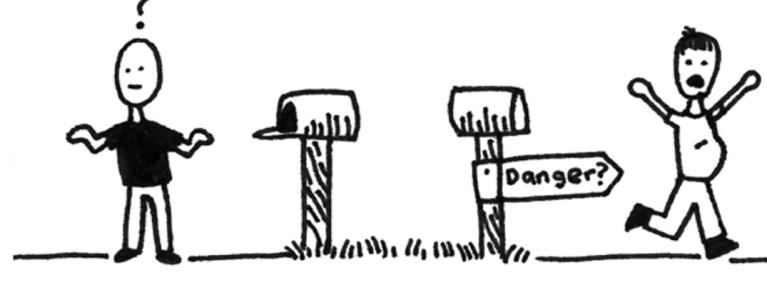
Communication is what's received, not what we intend. If we don't take responsibility for how we deliver our message, it might as well be lost in the mail. When communication goes awry, we often blame the recipient for not listening. But this is as useless as blaming someone for not receiving a letter. If our tone of voice, body language, or choice of words is off-putting, it is up to us to try again

If a person thinks that a message of criticism is coming, that there's "a bomb in the mailbox," she will run. When a person anticipates being told that he has messed up or neglected something, his normal human response is to escape or defend himself. In moments of perceived threat, our brains default to fear, rarely assuming the other person's good intentions.

Sydney and Adam

learned how to tell each other specifically what they wanted. They grew closer as they practiced new ways to communicate. "When you compliment me in front of your friends, I feel like your spouse (or colleague or to me...." became an hero." "You doing the employee.

Illustrated by Wajih Chaudhry



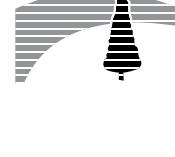
For Letters to the Editor

<https://www.newcanaansentinel.com/letter-to-the-editor/>

For All Other Questions

cordelia@sentinelhometownnews.com

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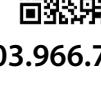


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Eat This, Drink That - Super Bowl Edition

Recipes, Wines, and Some Thoughts In-Between

By CARL FRANCO

The Super Bowl is here, and it's time to pick a side. Are you Patriots or Seahawks? Do you spell it Super Bowl or Superbowl? Are you here for the game or the commercials? Is your chili with beans or no beans? Are your chicken wings spicy or savory? And of course the big decision, beer, wine, or spirits?

While I'm a casual football fan, it should come as no surprise that I'm a serious food & wine fan. Over the years, I've tried just about every Super Bowl menu imaginable: a taco bar with all the fixings, a Wing-Off with several styles of chicken wings, a full-on appetizer grazing with chips, dips and nachos, and even a Cajun detour one year with seafood gumbo. But no matter how far I stray, I always seem to come back to the classic, a big bowl of chili. That said, no matter how big or small your gathering, you have plenty of options. So grab your Pepcid AC (for those of us over 40) and call your food play. Then once your menu is set, you'll also need a starting lineup for your beverages, so let's run through some choices.

Beer: Pick Six



While we all look forward to a great Budweiser commercial, beer choices have come a long way from the days when a few mainstream brands dominated market. The craft beer boom has settled into a more refined place, with the best brewers rising above the noise. The familiar standbys are still there, of course, but now there's room to branch out without feeling overwhelmed. If you're in the mood to stray from the usual picks, here are a few beers worth considering.

New Canaan native and now Darien Resident Mike Spellman and his wife Alex started Captain Zig Brewing and if you did not have a chance to sample his wares when they were here pouring at this year's Holiday Stroll then now is the time to give them a try. I can highly recommend the following:

Captain Zig Goodnight Oatmeal Stout: A smooth, easy-drinking oatmeal stout with rich roasted malt flavors and a balanced finish that makes it enjoyable any time of year.

Captain Zig Goosecake IPA: An easy-drinking hazy IPA with a balanced malt backbone, bright hop character, and a crisp finish that even lager drinkers can appreciate.

Captain Zig Sidekick Pilsner: A crisp, German-style pilsner with a clean, refreshing profile and a nicely balanced hop finish.

Vermont is home to numerous breweries, and Zero Gravity brings it home with beautifully balanced beers that blend classic styles with lively New England creativity. While they offer a wide range of seasonal releases, you can always find the following available year-round:

Zero Gravity Cone Head IPA: A bright, Citra-hopped India Pale Ale with juicy citrus flair and a golden hazy pour that balances hop character and drinkability.

Zero Gravity Green State Lager: A crisp, easy-drinking pilsner brewed with noble hops and premium malt for a clean, refreshing classic lager experience.

These are just two of the many breweries we carry—our other regional beers and microbrews include East Rock, Two Roads, Thomas Hooker, Hanging Hills, New England Brewing Co., and

SoNo Brewing, just to name a few.

Wine of Scrimmage

So, do people really do wine for the Super Bowl? The short answer is yes. If you're sticking with a traditional Super Bowl menu, it can get a little tricky. The flavors are bold and spicy, so if you pour something light and delicate, like a Pinot Noir or Chenin Blanc, it's likely to end up on the DL. This is when you'll probably find yourself rooting for a West Coast team like Cabernet or Chardonnay, though there are still a few solid options if you want to bring in a ringer from another country. That said, you don't want to climb too far up the fine-wine ladder, as the bold seasoning of the food will overpower any of the delicate wine nuances. So let's talk about bottles that can take the hit and still get you to the goal line.



My picks for MVB (Most Valuable Bottle) would be the following.

From California, I'd consider:

2021 The Verge Cabernet Sauvignon: A classic Alexander Valley Cabernet with deep dark cherry and blueberry fruits framed by mocha, licorice and firm tannins

2022 Altruria Cabernet: A subtle Sonoma Cabernet with ripe blackberry and cassis aromas that lead to a plush, full-bodied palate of dark fruit, spice and smooth tannins.

2023 Ferrari Carano Chardonnay: A rich, round Sonoma Chardonnay bursting with pear, golden apple and citrus flavors wrapped in vanilla and toasted oak notes.



If you'd like to sneak in a foreign all-star you can always take one of these players off the bench:

2020 Monte Real Rioja Reserva: Built on Tempranillo, this wine shows notes of cherry and raspberry and layered with spice, licorice, and gentle oak which makes this very food friendly.

2022 Chateau Montfrin Côtes du Rhône: A laid-back Southern Rhône red with ripe dark berry and wild cherry notes supported by spice, pepper, and supple structure.

2021 Chateau St. Roch Old Vines White: A full, round French white wine with subtle lime and ripe pear aromas, lively acidity, and a fresh, elegant finish.

The Offensive Line - Tequila



If you're not afraid of your guests getting a little too rowdy, you can always move things along with a Tush Push of tequila. Whether it's a margarita, ranch water, or enjoyed neat, tequila pairs effortlessly with nachos, chicken wings, and tacos. A few tequilas worth drafting include the following:

Siete Leguas Añejo: A rich, full-bodied añejo with notes of oak, caramel, and warm spice, perfect for sipping slowly.

Herradura Silver: A bright and crisp silver tequila with fresh agave, citrus, and a clean, smooth finish—ideal for cocktails.

Casa Noble Reposado: A balanced reposado with hints of vanilla, honey, and toasted oak, offering both complexity and easy drinkability.

End Zone

On Game Day as you huddle in the kitchen and review your plays, remember to pick drinks that match the casual energy of the day. There are plenty of options for beer, wine, and spirits, and if your menu is venturing off the usual playbook, stop in and we'll help you call the perfect all-star starting lineup. Teams may collide, guests may bump heads, but your food and drink should operate like a well-oiled machine, so by the final whistle, you can hoist the Vince Lombardi Trophy for hosting like a pro.

Carl Franco is the proprietor of Francos Wine Merchant, a local wine store in New Canaan.

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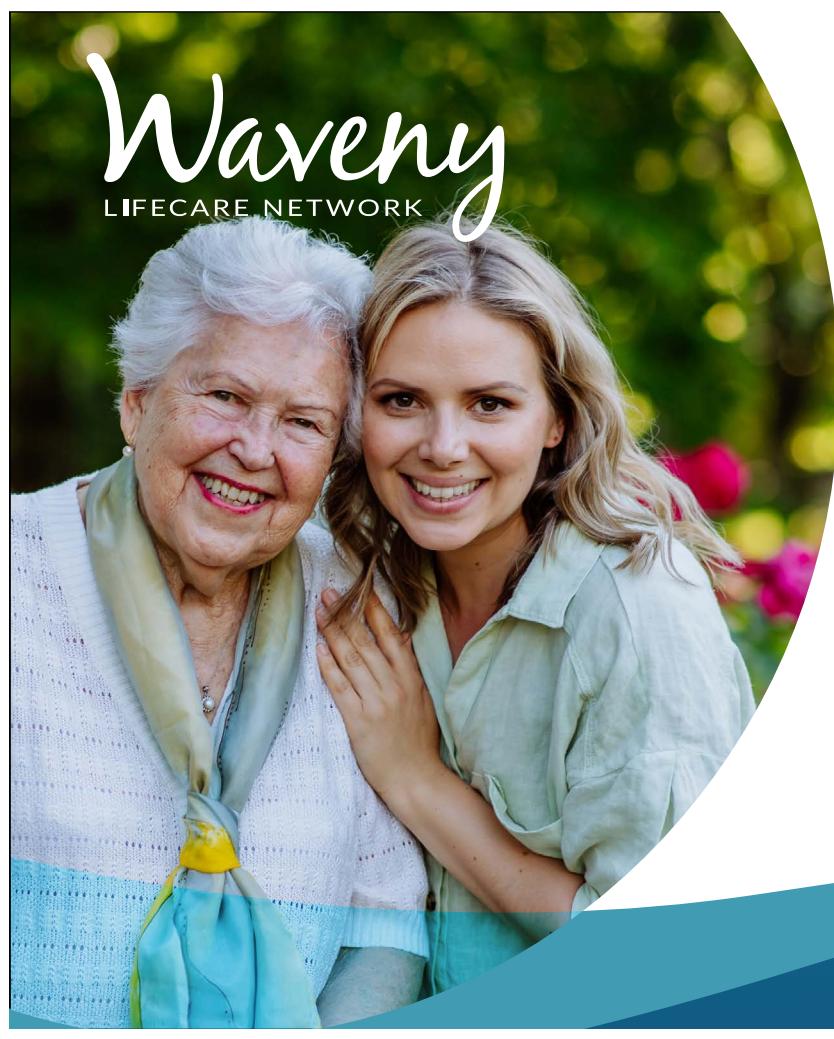


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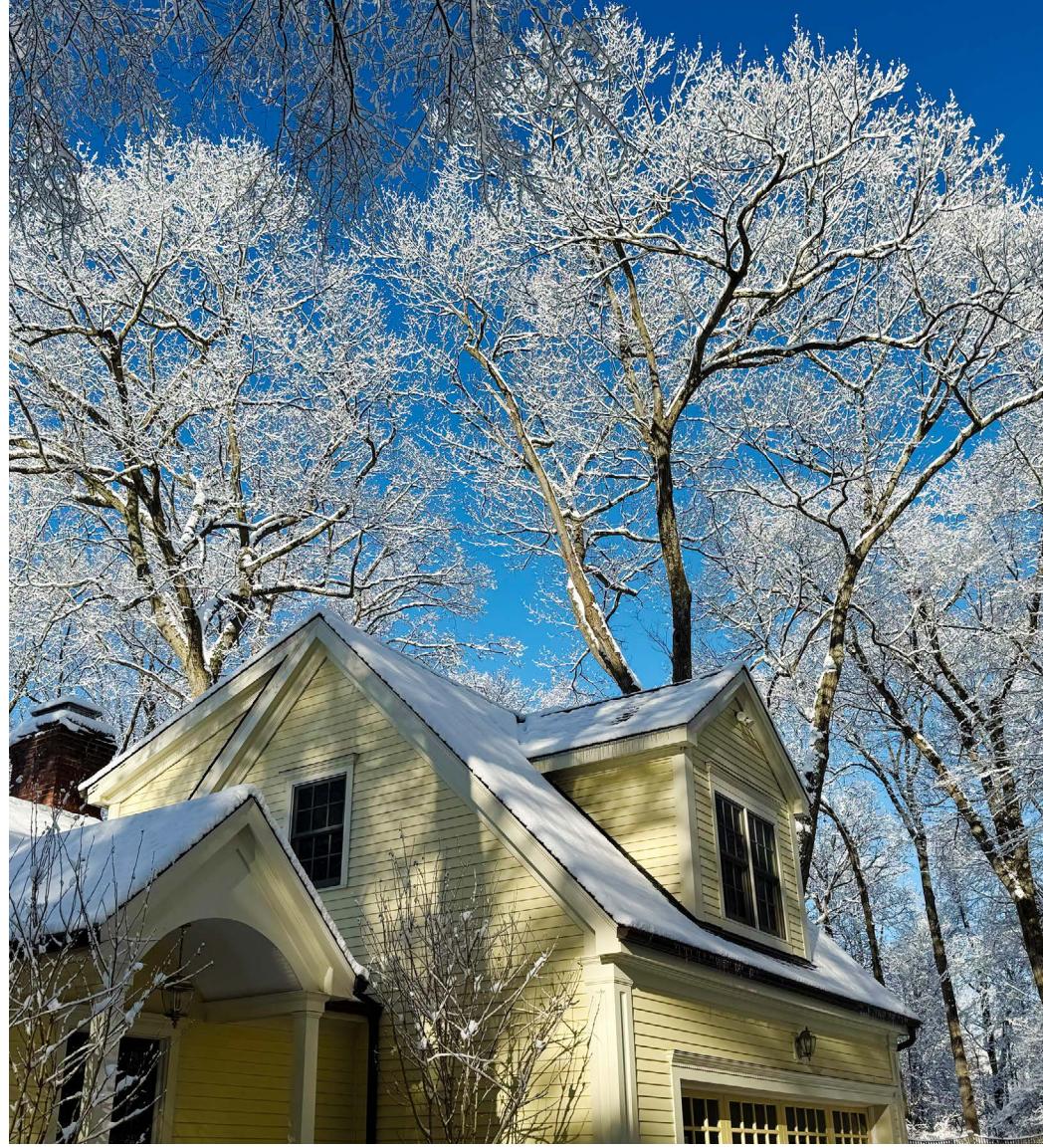


The Silvermine Historic District, near Weeb Pond on Snowberry Lane -- the right name!

Photo credit Wm. E. Hilson, 2026



A big hawk waiting for prey. Scott Herr

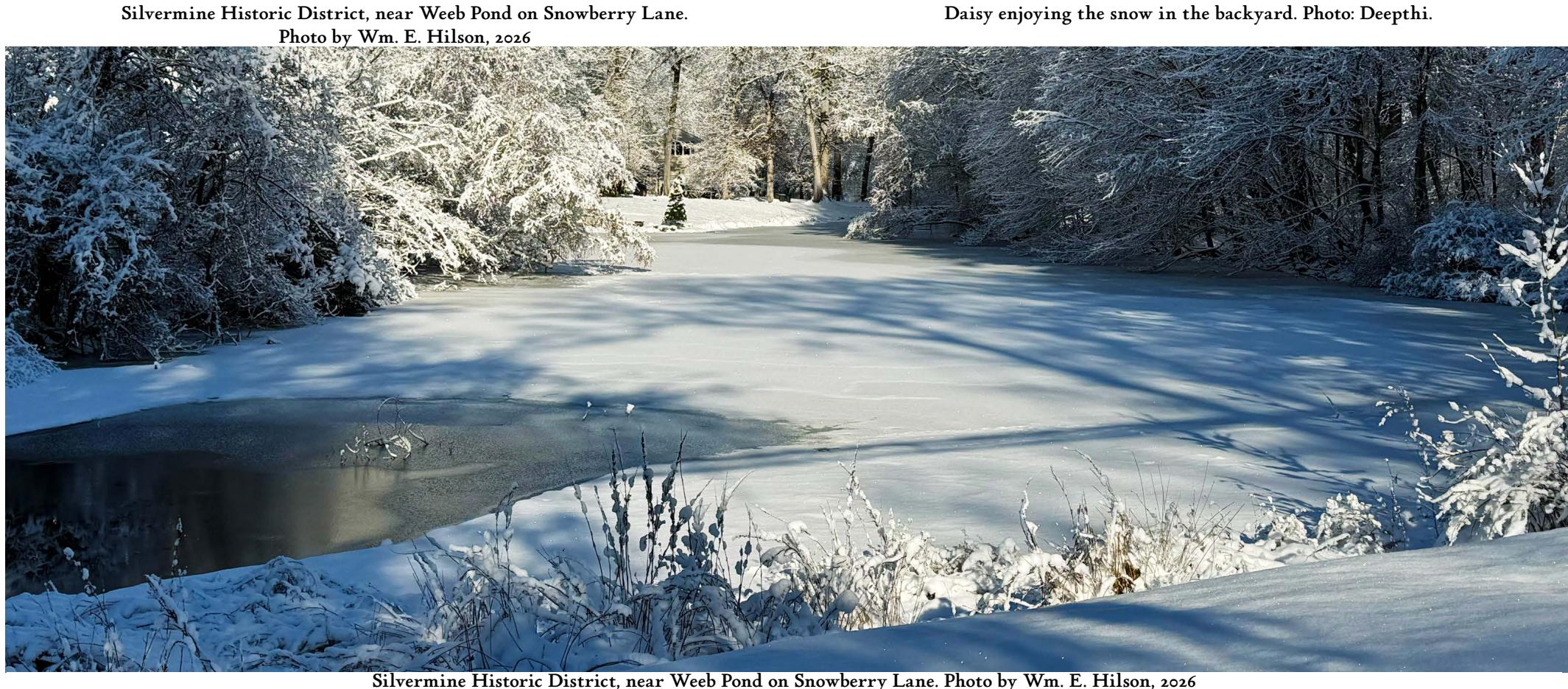


Silvermine Historic District, near Weeb Pond on Snowberry Lane.

Photo by Wm. E. Hilson, 2026



Daisy enjoying the snow in the backyard. Photo: Deepthi.



Silvermine Historic District, near Weeb Pond on Snowberry Lane. Photo by Wm. E. Hilson, 2026

BY STUART ADELBERG CONTINUED From Page 1

know how to spell precipitation!! Guess what? No storm. . . no snow. . . nada!! And several weather forecasters were on TV the next day preening about their ability to correctly predict. . . nothing!!

I'm hoping that Punxsutawney Phil went to the same weather school as those other forecasters. Maybe he really doesn't know and is just making an uneducated guess? I think he claims to see his shadow because he wants to be left alone

to enjoy his winter nap for a few extra weeks. I heard on the news that Phil's prediction is suspect because he invested in a ski property. . . but that was on cable. . . so it might be fake news.

Last night I noticed that the sun went down a little later than the day before. Is that possible? Are the days really getting longer? Spring must really be on the way. Phil, I hate to be mean, but you need to freshen up your resume. And I hate to be the one to tell you. . . but that top hat does nothing for you!

Stuart Adelberg has a long history of leadership and active involvement in the region's nonprofit arts and human services communities.



Stuart's dog, Connie loves the snow!!

Tomashi Jackson and Robert Rauschenberg: The Catch One

April 16 - December 14, 2026

SUBMITTED BY THE
CARRIAGE BARN ARTS CENTER

To mark the centennial of Robert Rauschenberg's birth, The Glass House together with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation proudly presents *Tomashi Jackson and Robert Rauschenberg: The Catch One*. Featuring newly commissioned paintings by Jackson in dialogue with works by Rauschenberg from the historic site's permanent collection, the exhibition contributes to a global slate of 2025-26 initiatives that reexamine Rauschenberg's legacy, honoring his expansive creativity, spirit of curiosity, and commitment to change.

Rauschenberg was one of the most innovative artists of the twentieth century who influenced the trajectory of American art. In 1961, the artist made the *Combine First Landing Jump*, which Philip Johnson purchased and later gave to the Museum of Modern Art, New York; it was the first painting by Rauschenberg to enter the museum's collection. In 1967, Rauschenberg designed costumes for a performance choreographed by Merce Cunningham on The Glass House grounds, set to a score by John Cage and debuted alongside a concert by the Velvet Underground. Three works by Rauschenberg remain in The Glass House's permanent collection.

Drawing inspiration and materials from his surroundings, Rauschenberg famously collaged images and everyday objects into his work. "There is no reason not to consider the world as one gigantic painting," Rauschenberg said. This exhibition includes two artworks from the *Spread* series (1975-83) by Rauschenberg from The Glass House collection: *Ring Master* and *Recital*—both made in 1980 and collected by Johnson and Whitney. These works are composed of plywood panels on which Rauschenberg variously applied acrylic, paper, fabric, solvent-transferred imagery, and commonplace objects, such as a fan. Additional works from The Glass House permanent collection and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation will also be featured in the exhibition.

While distinct in approach and context, Tomashi Jackson's practice has affinities with Rauschenberg's: She employs painting, printmaking, photography, and performance to examine how abstraction, color theory, and social histories intersect in shaping perception and everyday life. Rigorous and experimental, her work is rooted in archival research while pushing the material and conceptual boundaries of painting.

Jackson was invited to respond to the Spreads in The Glass House collection during a summer 2025 Rauschenberg Foundation residency in Rauschenberg's former home



Tomashi Jackson, Constant Craving (Jewel Thais Willians and Friend at Jewel's Catch One, 1970s/ Spottswood Thomas Bolling, et al., Petitioners, v. C. Melvin Sharpe, President of the District of Columbia Board of Education, et al. 1954), 2025. Photo by Joseph Frantz. Courtesy of the artist and Night Gallery, Los Angeles.



Robert Rauschenberg, Recital (Spread), 1980. Collection of The Glass House. Photo by Andy Romer Photography. Art © 2026 Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

and studio in Captiva, Florida. While reflecting on the Captiva compound and The Glass House as creative sanctuaries fashioned by white queer men, Jackson recalled memories of her mother's involvement with sanctuaries for and by Black lesbian women in her native Los Angeles.

Jackson's new paintings feature archival images related to Jewel's Catch One, a Black lesbian-owned nightclub in Los Angeles that provided a welcoming space for Black and queer communities, offering cultural programming, health services, and social support when many mainstream clubs excluded them. Under the leadership of its owner, Jewel Thais Williams, The Catch One became a vibrant community institution that fostered a sense of joy, care, and belonging.

"At The Glass House, we have long understood the site as a place of exchange between past and present, architecture and art," says Kirsten Reoch, Executive Director of The Glass House. "This exhibition carries that vision forward by placing Robert Rauschenberg's historic work in dialogue with Tomashi Jackson's powerful contemporary practice; by pairing pieces from our collection with new commissions, we seek to create

an experience that deepens engagement with the site and underscores our commitment to exhibitions that provoke reflection, spark dialogue, and invite discovery."

"This exhibition demonstrates the power of dialogue across time, place, and lived experience," says Courtney J. Martin, Executive Director of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. "Bringing Tomashi Jackson's newly commissioned works into conversation with Rauschenberg's Spreads invites us to encounter both artists anew, each attuned to the social textures of their moment and to the ways material, image, and history shape how we see and understand the world."

Jackson's response echoes Rauschenberg's conviction that art is not separate from life, but an active force within it. We are proud to partner with The Glass House on this ambitious project, which honors Rauschenberg's centennial as a living exchange grounded in care, experimentation, and the enduring capacity of art to foster connection and change."

Tomashi Jackson and Robert Rauschenberg: The Catch One is curated by Cole Akers and organized by The Glass House, a site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in

partnership with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

This project is supported in part by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. Special thanks to Night Gallery, Los Angeles.

About the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation builds on the legacy of artist Robert Rauschenberg, emphasizing his belief that artists can drive social change. Rauschenberg sought to act in the "gap" between art and life, valuing chance, and collaboration across disciplines. As such, the Foundation celebrates new and even untested ways of thinking.

About Rauschenberg 100

Robert Rauschenberg's (1925-2008) strong conviction that engagement with art can nurture people's sensibilities as individuals, community members, and citizens was key to his ethos. Centennial celebrations seek to allow audiences familiar with him and those encountering the artist for the first time to form fresh perspectives about his artwork. A series of global activities and exhibitions in honor of Rauschenberg's Centennial reexamines the artist through a contemporary lens, highlighting his enduring

influence on generations of artists and advocates for social progress. The Centennial's activation of the artist's legacy promotes cross-disciplinary

partnership with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

This project is supported in part by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. Special thanks to Night Gallery, Los Angeles.

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The Power of Letting Go

New Canaan is a town that thrives on connection. Our schools, town events, volunteer networks, and neighborhood gatherings give life to a sense of shared purpose. But even in a place built on community, grievances accumulate. People bring old wounds—real or imagined—into conversations, into committees, into email chains, asking neighbors (and often this paper) to judge, to take sides, to carry the weight of conflicts. When this happens, innocent bystanders become unwilling participants in quarrels that have nothing to do with them. The result is quiet harm: anxiety, mistrust, and erosion of the very bonds that allow a community to flourish.

Holding onto resentment is psychologically corrosive. Research shows it increases stress, diminishes empathy, and isolates the individual who refuses to let go. The cost is not just personal. It spreads outward. Children observe it, friends feel it, neighbors experience it. Communities cannot thrive when yesterday's quarrels become tomorrow's controversies.

Every major moral tradition instructs release. Christianity exhorts: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Judaism teaches: "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge" Islam commands: "The recompense for an injury is an equivalent good, but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is upon Allah." Buddhism instructs: "Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned." Hindu philosophy urges: "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

Forgiveness is not naïve. It does not excuse harm or erase accountability. It recognizes that people change and that life is too brief to be spent dragging old quarrels behind us. A neighbor who once offended may now be generous. A coworker who erred last year may now act with care. Communities, like individuals, grow. They thrive on trust, civility, and the conviction that people can improve.

Leadership in New Canaan, whether in our schools, town boards, or civic organizations, is exemplified by those who show the bigger picture. Great leaders do not hold grudges or demand that others carry them. They demonstrate through action what it means to rise above old conflicts. They model patience, respect, and generosity. By doing so, they transform ordinary interactions into lessons of moral courage. The town itself becomes the beneficiary of their example.

Asking uninvolved neighbors to take sides is corrosive. It forces the uninvolved into conflicts that are not theirs. It spreads suspicion and breeds resentment. New Canaan's vitality depends on resisting this impulse. Forgiveness, belief in growth, and choosing kindness are not mere gestures; they are civic imperatives.

So let go. Speak kindly. Believe the best. Resist the temptation to relitigate old battles. Tend to personal wounds, yes, but do not drag the innocent into quarrels that are not theirs. In doing so, you free yourself, your neighbors, and your town. New Canaan is at its best when we act as citizens, leaders, and neighbors who understand that kindness and forgiveness strengthen the community more than any old grievance ever could.

Editorial Page

"You're not making it easy to be your Guardian Angel."



What Does Not Work

I disagree with the Sentinel editorial board's January 29, 2026, editorial, "What Works," which relies heavily on comments made by Selectman Steve Karl before the Charter Revision Commission. The editorial argues for restraint and continuity, yet it does not meaningfully address a series of governance and oversight concerns that have prompted residents to call for charter review, including recent developments involving fiscal oversight and internal controls.

In remarks cited by the editorial, Karl told the Charter Revision Commission, "Let those who seek revision provide evidence of failure. In the absence of that, stewardship requires restraint." That framing assumes the current charter remains well suited to a town whose size, budget, and operational complexity have changed substantially since the charter's adoption in 1935. Historical continuity alone does not establish present effectiveness.

The editorial accurately notes the age of the charter but treats longevity as evidence of success rather than as a reason for reassessment. New Canaan today bears little resemblance to the town governed under a \$22,600 annual budget and a population of roughly 5,400 residents. A municipal framework designed for a small town in the early twentieth century warrants examination to determine whether it continues to provide sufficient accountability, transparency, and fiscal oversight for a much larger municipality.

The editorial further quotes Karl as stating before the Charter Revision Commission that "of the 169 towns in Connecticut the overwhelming majority would exchange their charter for New Canaan's without hesitation." That assertion is presented without supporting evidence. Many Connecticut municipalities

have adopted governance structures that include elected boards of finance, elected planning and zoning commissions, voter approval of school budgets, and direct oversight of major expenditures. Those structures reflect deliberate choices by local electorates seeking broader participation and accountability.

The editorial highlights the creation of the Audit Committee and the Board of Ethics as evidence that the current system works. Both bodies, however, are appointed by, confirmed by, and report to the Board of Selectmen. While such boards may operate in good faith, their structural dependence on the same authority they review raises legitimate questions about independence. The recent resignation of the Audit Committee chair has only heightened those concerns.

That resignation has raised questions among residents about the independence of the town's audit function, the handling of internal control findings, and whether unresolved governance issues could affect New Canaan's financial standing, including its A+ bond rating.

I also have questions about municipal health insurance costs, including a reported \$31 million difference in spending compared with the Town of Darien over a multi-year period, despite Darien having more residents and municipal employees. Those questions were compounded by the resignation of Rob Fryer, which some have cited in connection with concerns about health care costs and financial oversight.

Those of us advocating for charter revision have raised concerns about fiscal oversight, transparency, and accountability. These include questions about long-term debt, the relationship between assessed property values and tax burdens, and the role

of appointed boards in reviewing significant financial decisions. They have also pointed to procurement practices and major municipal transactions as areas where clearer oversight and public reporting could strengthen public trust. These concerns are presented as matters for review, not as settled conclusions.

Questions regarding internal controls and procurement oversight, including the authority and independence of the Audit Committee, underscore the need for a rigorous and independent review process. When such concerns arise alongside resignations from key oversight roles, they merit examination rather than dismissal.

The Charter Revision Commission exists to evaluate whether the town's governing document continues to serve us effectively. Efforts by elected officials to influence that process, even indirectly, risk compromising its independence. A review process that presumes the charter is beyond question undermines its purpose.

New Canaan's charter has endured for nearly ninety years. Longevity, however, is not a substitute for evaluation. Other Connecticut towns have revised their charters in response to growth, fiscal pressures, and evolving expectations of transparency and accountability. New Canaan should be willing to undertake the same examination.

Residents calling for charter revision have raised concerns they believe warrant careful review. Stewardship requires restraint. It also requires the willingness to confront unresolved questions when they bear directly on fiscal integrity, public confidence, and the town's future.

Roy Abramowitz

LEGAL AD

TOWN OF NEW CANAAN

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that the Planning and Zoning Commission at a regular meeting held via hybrid and in person on January 27, 2026 duly adopted the following resolution(s). Approved Applications become effective upon the filing of a copy thereof in the office of the Town Clerk.

1. RESOLVED, 272 Elm Street – that the application of Cole Harris Homes, Cole Harris Associates, Authorized Agent for VMI, Inc., owner(s), for a Site Plan approval pursuant to Section(s) 4.4 to allow the renovation and limited addition to existing structure, previously used as a bank in the Business A Zone at 212 Elm Street (Map L, Block 16, Lot 89) is approved with conditions.

2. RESOLVED, 43 Vitti Street – that the application of David Rucci, Lampert, Toohey & Rucci, LLC, Authorized Agent for Columbus Center of New Canaan, owner(s), for a Site Plan approval pursuant to Section(s) 4.5.C.16 to change specialty establishment to a wellness center in the Business B Zone at 43 Vitti Street (Map T, Block 75, Lot 619) is approved.

3. RESOLVED, 8-24 Review – from Tiger Mann, Director of Public Works, requesting approval for the lease of the property at 28 Grove Street for additional business employee parking. The Commission voted unanimously that the lease of property at 28 Grove Street for additional employee parking is consistent with the POCD.

4. RESOLVED, 8-24 Review – from Tiger Mann, Director of Public Works, requesting approval for the lease of the property at 93 Elm Street for the Playhouse Theater. The Commission voted unanimously that the lease of property at 93 Elm Street is consistent with the POCD.

Krista Neilson, Secretary

Dated February 5, 2026

LEGAL AD

TOWN OF NEW CANAAN

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Town Council of New Canaan will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, February 9th, 2026 in the Town Hall Meeting Room at New Canaan Town Hall, 77 Main Street, New Canaan, CT, and via Zoom.

For the following purposes:

To consider, hear public comment upon and take action on a proposal to lease a portion of the Town-owned parcel of land at 28 Grove Street for outdoor employee parking. The public hearing is intended to meet the public hearing requirement of Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-163e.

AND

To consider, hear public comment upon and take action on a proposal to lease the building known as The Playhouse, located at 93 Elm Street, New Canaan for a theater operator. The public hearing is intended to meet the public hearing requirement of Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-163e.

Legal Ads

Charter Review Commission Meeting Exposes Sharp Divisions Over Governance, Accountability

By PETER BARHYDT

A wide-ranging and often contentious meeting of the Charter Review Commission (CRC) on Tuesday underscored deep divisions over how New Canaan should govern itself, as residents and Town Council members debated accountability, public engagement and whether town boards and commissions should be elected or appointed.

Public comment: criticism of appointed power

Public comment featured criticism of New Canaan's appointed boards and spending oversight.

One resident accused the town's financial structure of lacking meaningful checks.

"The appointed Board of Finance has never questioned or materially adjusted the Board of Education budget," he said. "There's no oversight of spending, cost overruns or non-competitive bidding."

Sarah Pierce, a resident involved in land-use litigation,

focused on Planning & Zoning.

"If you're asking yourself how a 1.4-acre

parking structure got put in a residential neighborhood,

keep asking that question,"

she said. "The only recourse

residents have is court, and it

costs about \$350,000 just to

get through the first appeal."

"Voting should not require

half a million dollars," Pierce added. "Anyone who writes law should be elected."

Speaking on Zoom, Laura Dijs, a longtime election poll moderator, urged the CRC to preserve elected offices. "The town clerk certifies election results," Dijs said. "That impartiality comes from independence — and that independence comes from being elected."

Dijs also supported electing Planning & Zoning commissioners. "Residents

have no meaningful recourse short of filing a lawsuit," she said. "There needs to be a way to hold Planning & Zoning accountable."

Town Council perspectives diverge

Town Council Vice Chair Hilary Ormond urged caution, likening the charter to a foundational document.

"I look at our charter the way I look at the Constitution," Ormond said. "It's not something to amend on a whim."

Ormond questioned whether elections would improve outcomes. "I keep hearing words like 'transparency' and 'accountability,' and they sound great," she said. "But I

have yet to hear why electing Planning & Zoning or the Board of Finance would

result in better decision-

making."

Councilman Eric Thunem echoed that view, emphasizing expertise over election status. "There are many more pros to appointed boards than elected ones," he said. "There's no assurance you get the qualifications you need through elections."

"Accountability is something a person assumes," Thunem added.

"Being elected or appointed doesn't guarantee it."

Councilman Mike Rodgers said the town's changing demographics warrant structural reconsideration. "This town is changing," Rodgers said. "What worked 20 years ago may not work now."

Rodgers urged the commission to consider expanding the Board of Selectmen. "Two people

can ice out one person very easily," he said. "It's much harder to do that with five, and that makes for better governance."

Councilwoman Kim Norton critiqued what she described as an imbalance of power. "By my count, about 85% of our town government is appointed and 15% is elected," Norton said. "Appointments are appropriate — but the cumulative effect matters."

"Perception matters,"

she added. "Public trust is strengthened when authority is clearly shared."

Norton also called for stronger procurement rules, whistleblower protections

and expanded audit authority, and urged the commission to modernize public engagement. "Our

charter provides no guidance on how to communicate with residents using modern tools," she said. "Government should be accessible on demand."

Councilwoman Jennifer Zonis defended the current system, praising appointed boards and commissions. "In my time on Town Council, I haven't encountered a situation where I thought,

"This just isn't working,"

she said. "The level of professionalism and expertise on appointed boards is a gift to this town."

Councilwoman Cristina Ross took the opposite view, emphasizing electoral accountability. "Elected members are accountable to voters," Ross said. "Appointed members are accountable to the appointing authority. That difference matters."

Ross called for major structural changes, including electing the Board of Finance and Planning & Zoning, removing the first selectman

from the Board of Finance

and expanding the Board of Selectmen. "Checks and balances only work when power isn't concentrated," she said.

Survey update and outreach debate

CRC Commissioner Jennifer Holme said responses are being presented without editorial filtering.

"We've directly lifted comments word for word, verbatim," Holme said. "Misspellings, typos, oddities — they're all there."

Commissioner Karen Willett said participation remains limited. "We're still at 49 responses," she said, adding that the CRC previously discussed closing the survey around March 15.

New Canaan has more than 20,000 residents. This is a response rate of around 24%.

CRC Chairwoman Kathleen Corbet stressed that outreach efforts have respected resident privacy.

"The town has been very clear that email addresses provided for emergency notification or newsletters are not to be used for other purposes," she said. "We respect that."

Commissioners debated whether to expand outreach through mailed postcards or printed notices. One commissioner argued that

outreach should happen quickly, while another cautioned that residents may respond more thoughtfully once the commission publishes preliminary recommendations.

No final decision was made. Costs and logistics will be explored.

Process continues Corbet repeatedly emphasized that the Charter Review Commission has reached no conclusions.

"We didn't come into this with preconceived notions," she said. "Our job is to listen, research and present options — not dictate outcomes."

Corbet encouraged continued public participation and noted that additional time will be reserved at the commission's Feb. 17 meeting for speakers who were unable to complete remarks.

"The voters will ultimately decide," Corbet said. "Our responsibility is to make sure they have clear, well-researched choices in front of them."

A link to the charter revision survey can be found on the town's website, https://www.newcanaan.info/government/commissions/charter_revision.php

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Many Traditional Skills are at Risk of Disappearing



A wooden boat hull rests on supports in an outdoor workshop. Traditional wooden boat-building is one of many endangered skills. Photo by Aysegul Alp.

By EMMA BARYDT

In May 2023, Heritage Crafts released the fourth edition of its Red List of Endangered Crafts, a comprehensive assessment of traditional craft skills practiced in the United Kingdom and their long-term viability. Evaluating 259 crafts, the report classified each according to risk—viable, endangered, critically endangered, or extinct—offering a rare, systematic account of how well these skills are being passed from one generation to the next.

Though the Red List is a UK initiative, its framework has proven widely resonant. No equivalent national inventory exists in the United States or Canada, but the same questions surface repeatedly across North America in ecological studies, museum conservation efforts, Indigenous cultural programs, and apprenticeship initiatives: who still knows how to do this work, and who is learning from them?

Heritage Crafts defines a heritage craft as a practice rooted in manual skill, traditional materials, and techniques developed over at least two generations. Viability is measured not by visibility or commercial success, but by transmission. A craft survives only if there are enough practitioners actively teaching it.

That focus has sharpened attention on skills that tend to disappear quietly. In the UK, several crafts have already crossed into extinction within the past generation, including hand-stitched cricket ball making, gold beating, lacrosse stick making, mould and deckle making, and mouth-blown sheet glass making. Their disappearance was gradual, often unnoticed outside specialist circles.

The critically endangered category is broader and includes trades once central to daily life and industry: bell founding, piano making, watchmaking, clog making, parchment and vellum making, and scientific instrument making. In some cases, fewer than ten people remain able to practice a craft professionally. The reasons are familiar—lengthy apprenticeships, high material costs, limited training routes, and an aging practitioner base.

Across the Atlantic, similar patterns emerge, though they are documented differently. In North America, the absence of a centralized registry means risk is often identified indirectly. Indigenous crafts, in particular, appear at the intersection of cultural transmission, land stewardship, and material access.



Blacksmiths work at an anvil beside a forge, continuing the endangered craft of traditional blacksmithing in a historic workshop setting. Photo by Tannis Sullivan.



Wooden bobbins and fine threads arranged for bobbin lace making, an endangered textile craft known for its intricate patterns and traditional methods. Photo by Delaney Van.

Black ash basketry, practiced by Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Wabanaki communities in the Great Lakes and Northeast, is one of the most closely studied examples. The craft depends on black ash trees now threatened by the emerald ash borer. Ecological projections suggest severe losses in coming decades, prompting responses that include seed collection, forest management, and renewed apprentice training. Basketmakers are working not only to preserve technique, but to sustain the living systems that make the craft possible.

Other North American traditions face different constraints. Chilkat weaving, practiced by Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian artists in Alaska and British Columbia, requires years of specialized instruction under master weavers. Birchbark canoe building, once widespread across the Northeast, survives today through workshops and community-led teaching often supported by museums and cultural centers. Native Hawaiian kapa (barkcloth) making, nearly eliminated by the early twentieth century, has been reestablished through sustained instruction, cultivation of traditional plants, and institutional partnership.

What distinguishes many of these efforts is that they are not attempts at reconstruction, but continuation. Teaching remains central. In both the UK and North America, the most effective preservation strategies involve direct transmission: mentor-apprentice programs, community workshops, and structured training that treats craft knowledge as something learned through time and repetition.

Heritage Crafts' Red List draws on conservation models used by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, translating them to human skill. That language of risk has proven useful. It allows policymakers, funders, and educators to see craft not as an abstract cultural good, but as a system that can be stabilized—or allowed to fail.

The report's visibility has grown accordingly. It has been launched at the House of Lords, cited in policy discussions, and featured in national media. King Charles III, Patron of Heritage Crafts, emphasized in the foreword to the original report the urgency of documenting skills before they are lost, particularly those reliant on tacit knowledge learned through observation rather than written instruction.

What the Red List also makes clear is that many heritage skills remain deeply relevant. Millwrighting, wheelwrighting, sail making, canoe building, natural fiber processing, musical instrument making, and ceremonial arts continue to shape public spaces, performance traditions, and working landscapes. Their future depends less on preservation in the abstract than on continued use.

There is evidence, quietly accumulating, that this work is happening. Apprentices are being trained. Materials are being stewarded. Young practitioners are entering fields once assumed to be closing. The Red List itself is revised regularly not only to document decline, but to track recovery where it occurs.

Ultimately, lists like these are not endpoints. They are tools for attention. They clarify where continuity is fragile, where it is holding, and where support can still make a difference. As long as teaching continues—hand to hand, generation to generation—these crafts remain alive.

EXTINCT: Cricket ball making (hand stitched); Gold beating; Lacrosse stick making; Mould and deckle making; Mouth blown sheet glass making

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED: Arrowsmithing; Basketwork furniture making; Bell founding; Besom broom making; Bow making (musical); Bowed felt hat making; Chain making; Clay pipe making; Clog making; Coiled straw basket making; Copper wheel glass engraving; Coppersmithing (objects); Currach making; Cut crystal glass making; Damask weaving (linen); Devon stave basket making; Diamond cutting; Encaustic tile making; Engine-turned engraving; Fabric flower making; Fabric pleating; Fair Isle straw back chair making; Fan making; Figurehead and ship carving; Flute making (concert); Fore-edge painting; Frame knitting; Glass eye making; Glove making; Hat block making; Hat plaiting; Highlands and Islands thatching; Horse collar making; Horsehair weaving; Industrial pottery; Linen beetling; Maille making; Matte painting; Metal thread making; Millwrighting; Northern

several crafts have already crossed into extinction within the past generation, including hand-stitched cricket ball making, gold beating, lacrosse stick making, mould and deckle making, and mouth-blown sheet glass making. Their disappearance was gradual, often unnoticed outside specialist circles.

Isles basket making; Orrery making; Paper making (commercial handmade); Parchment and vellum making; Piano making; Pietra dura; Plane making; Plume making; Pointe shoe making; Quilting in a frame; Rake making; Rattan furniture making; Saw making; Scientific and optical instrument making; Scissor making; Sieve and riddle making; Silk ribbon making; Silver spinning; Spade making (forged heads); Spinning wheel making; Straw hat making; Sussex rug making; Swill basket making; Tanning (oak bark); Tinsmithing; Wainwrighting; Watch dial enamelling; Watchmaking; Welsh vernacular thatching; Wooden fishing net making; Black ash basketry; Chilkat weaving; Birchbark canoe building; Kapa (barkcloth) making; Wampum shell bead making; Dugout canoe carving; Plains porcupine quillwork; Inuit drum making and ceremonial dance traditions

ENDANGERED: Armour and helmet making; Bagpipe making

(Northumbrian pipes, smallpipes, bellows-blown pipes); Bee skep making; Bicycle frame making; Block printing (wallpaper and textiles);

Traditional wooden boatbuilding; Brass musical instrument making;

Brick making; Brush making; Canal art and boat painting; Clock making;

Coach building and trimming; Composition picture frame making;

Coopering (non-spirits); Coracle making; Corn dolly making; Cornish hedging; Cricket bat making; Fairground art; Flintwork (buildings); Free

reed instrument making; Gauged brickwork; Globe making; Graining and marbling; Hand engraving; Hand grinding; Harp making; Hat making;

Hazel basket making; Hewing; Historic stained glass window making; Horn, antler and bone working; Hurdle making; Illumination;

Irish vernacular thatching; Keyboard instrument making; Kilt making;

Lace making (bobbin lace); Lacquerwork; Ladder making; Letterpress;

Lithography; Lorinery; Marionette making; Nalbinding; Neon making;

Oar, mast, spar and flagpole making; Organ building; Orkney chair making; Pargeting; Stucco and scagliola; Passementerie; Percussion instrument making; Pewter working; Pigment making; Pysanka egg

decorating; Reverse glass sign painting; Rigging; Rope making; Rush matting; Sail making; Shoe and boot making (handsewn); Silk weaving;

Silversmithing allied trades; Slate working; Spectacle making; Split cane rod making; Sporran making; Straw working; Vegetable tanning; Type

founding; Umbrella making; Vardo art and living wagon crafts; Welsh tapestry weaving; Wheelwrighting; Withy pot making; Wooden pipe

making; Woodwind instrument making; Sweetgrass basketry; Pueblo pottery; Métis jigging; Regional fiddle traditions; Native Hawaiian featherwork; Traditional blacksmithing; Saddle making; Hand drum

making; Ceremonial dance traditions and regalia making; Regional folk

dance traditions



An antique clock mechanism with exposed gears and a Roman-numeral dial, representing the tradition of endangered clockmaking, photographed at Ourense Cathedral in Spain. Photo by Eric Prouzet.

Wildlife Photographer Shares Extraordinary Path



A Great Grey Owl mother bringing food to her fledglings atop a snag in a Montana forest. Photo by Melissa Groo.

BY ANNE W. SEMMES

On a recent January afternoon in midtown Manhattan, prize-winning wildlife photographer Melissa Groo addressed some 40 attendees on how she was able to capture that wildlife around the world with help from her Sony cameras. She was invited to do so by Sony at the B&H Superstore on 9th Avenue. Two years ago, she was honored as a Sony ambassador – a “Sony Artisan of Imagery.”

She gave a kind welcome to her mother Anne W. Semmes and daughter Ruby Gelder, then began an “intimate story” of her life and journey into wildlife photography. How she turned professional and evolved into a conservation photographer with a “focus on ethics” that would get her “into some trouble along the way.”

“I was kayaking with my father in Alaska and a humpback whale breached next to the boat then fluked (put its tail up) as it dove down,” she told, and “in that moment, I completely fell in love with humpback whales.” (She is presently on her 7th dive with humpbacks.) It was while she was working in education in Cleveland, Ohio that she would be led to swim alongside humpbacks off the coast of the Dominican Republic, having learned that humpbacks sing songs as discovered by Roger and Katy Payne.

Melissa would wind up swimming with Katy Payne alongside those humpbacks. Katy had serendipitously come to Cleveland’s Museum of Natural History to speak about her most recent finding, that “elephants

partly communicate using infrasound below our level of hearing.” Spellbound, Melissa would leave behind her efforts to help low-income school districts to become Katy Payne’s research assistant, which took her to live in the equatorial rainforest of the Central African Republic, studying the communication of forest elephants.

“We were up on a platform looking down on a clearing in the forest where up to 150 forest elephants would gather every day...We’d see big males jousting... babies playing together... greetings between family members that had been separated. Katy assigned me to the video camera - I was not a photographer then. But Katy saw something in me... that I had an ability to predict behavior when it was about to happen... that I had an eye for framing and storytelling.”

Melissa learned, importantly for her photography, “to go down to the ground to get a better eye level of the elephants.” Melissa and Katy would bring their data back to Ithaca, New York, where they lived. “That’s where the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is located, where there’s a bioacoustics research program that studies the sound of birds and whales, and elephants.” After five years working for the Elephant Listening Project, Melissa quit to give birth to “this little sprite, Ruby, who’s now in college.”

Melissa’s path to photography

Melissa would take up photography as a hobby, attending a community college offering a basic digital photography course. “At first, I was really into macro, investigating textures and colors and shapes.” Splendidly detailed photographs emerged of flowers, of orchid closeups. But a family vacation in Newfoundland brought birds first into focus. “There’s this spectacular seabird colony there called Cape St. Mary’s, with the largest gannet colony in the world, hundreds of thousands of these birds nesting on these cliffs. You see the chicks, how well camouflaged they are against the rocks.”

The year was 2010 when Melissa “just fell in love with wildlife photography.” “This is what I wanted to pursue.” She would get “the best gear for the job, a top-of-the-line DSLR camera, a 500mm f/4 telephoto lens and a carbon fiber tripod which I used for years...” and was “obsessed with getting birds in flight, especially really fast ducks.” To “seize that moment in flight was really satisfying for me... I was also learning how important it was as a photographer to be at the level of the bird or other animal. For me, it dignifies them in a way, but it also technically throws the background out of focus.”

She spent time in Florida, discovering, “The birds are so tame that

“To have a moment that shows that they have emotions and connection and family, that I could use this image to try to wake people up with the beauty of these animals, the soul of these animals, is very special.”

Melissa Groo

you can get away with a 70-200 or 300mm lens. You don’t have to have a big lens because they are very accommodating.” She also spent time on the New Jersey shore, positioning herself tummy-down on the beach. “This is my favorite position when I’m on the beach, photographing waterbirds, shorebirds, getting as low as you can. I know it’s easier for some of us than others, but I’m using a skimmer pod that allows you to have that low intimate feeling.”

And on those beaches, she encountered a wonder with a Least Tern, her favorite tern species. Spotting a group of them nesting, one stood out with “a grumpy fish face.” She saw the bird had two tiny, newly hatched chicks hidden under its wings. “I’d never seen anything like that.” That photo would go viral, becoming “a really good seller.”

Another capture Melissa made in Florida was coming upon a startlingly white Great Egret, preening in a mangrove on a darkening day. “I exposed for the bird, and everything went dark behind him. It won the Audubon Grand Prize in 2015...It launched a relationship with Audubon that continues to this day. I advise Audubon on ethics and photography content, and travel on assignment for them.”

Targeting different species locations

Melissa’s focus would move to target “a particular species in a particular place across the country, usually in a wildlife refuge.” In the Prairie Pothole Region in North Dakota, she found nesting Western Grebes. “With my 600mm lens and teleconverter,” she told,

Continued on Page 10



L to R Melissa Groo mother Anne W. Semmes, and Melissa’s daughter Ruby Gelder. Photo by Shoshana Perry.



A Least Tern shorebird sheltering her young. Photo by Melissa Groo.



A bobcat mother being nuzzled by one of her offspring. Photo by Melissa Groo.

At the Lapham Center

Flower Arranging with Juliet Howe of Twigs Design

Tuesday, February 10, 11 a.m., \$50.00

Spend a cozy winter morning creating beautiful, sustainable floral arrangements with New Canaan local, Juliet Howe, founder of Twigs Design. In this hands-on workshop, Juliet will guide you through echo-friendly, approachable floral design techniques, sharing some of her favorite tips and creative strategies as you craft your own unique arrangement. Containers and choice of fresh flowers will be provided. Participants are asked to bring clippers, if possible.

Juliet Howe, founder of Twigs Design, has lived and gardened in New Canaan since 2003. Juliet creates custom containers for doorsteps, patios and pools, provides floral designs for events, and teaches classes in floral arranging.

Brain Bugs - Recognizing Cognitive Biases

And Building Healthier Thinking Habits

Wednesday, February 18, 10:30 a.m., free

Join Gabriel Corredor, founder of Evergreen Daytime Senior Care, for an engaging presentation on how confirmation bias, the spotlight effect, and loss of aversion quietly influence our decisions - and how understanding them can help us think more clearly, act more confidently, and connect more effectively.

Evergreen serves the "forgotten middle" - older adults who wish to stay living at home as long as possible - offering back-to-back engaging activities, chef-prepared meals, and light care in a warm, social environment that helps families keep loved ones thriving at home. Coffee and treats.

February: South Indian Breakfast & Sweet Delights

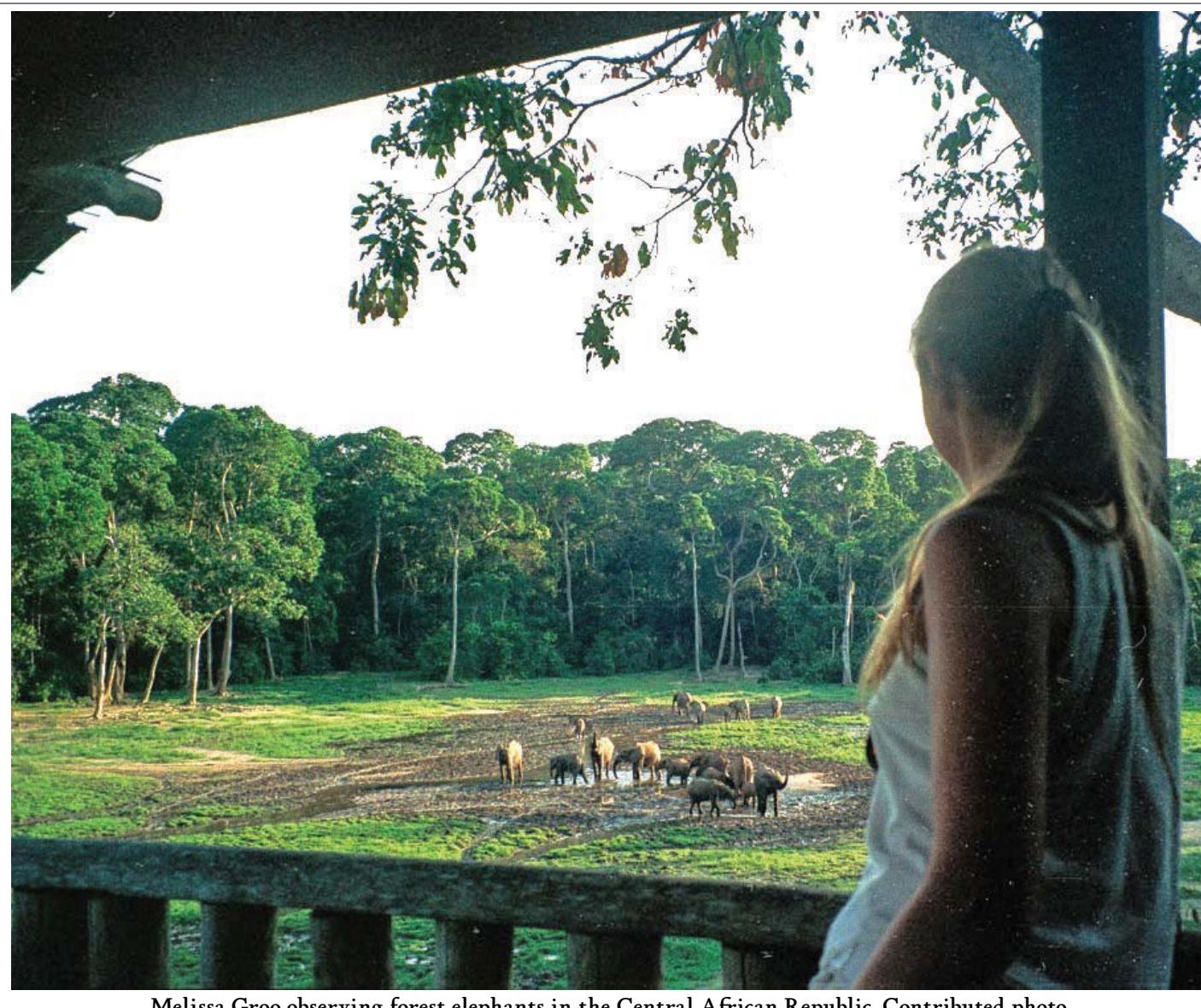
Tuesday, February 10, 11 a.m., \$60

Dishes: Idli (Steamed Rice Cakes), Sambar (Lentil Vegetable Stew), Coconut Chutney, Carrot Halwa (Warm Carrot Dessert)

Experience the comforting flavors of South India with this breakfast-themed class! We will learn to make Idli, soft and fluffy steamed rice cakes, served with a hearty lentil stew (Sambar) and fresh Coconut Chutney. To end on a sweet note, we will prepare Carrot Halwa, a traditional dessert made by slow-cooking grated carrots in milk, ghee, and sugar.

Skills you'll learn:

- Fermenting batter for perfect idlis
- Making authentic sambar from scratch
- Blending and seasoning chutneys
- Preparing traditional Indian desserts



Melissa Groo observing forest elephants in the Central African Republic. Contributed photo.

GROO From Page 9

"I approached very slowly... I was able to capture their natural behavior, nest building, and chicks riding on the parents' back..." Then in Montana at the Bowdoin Lake National Wildlife Refuge, she was able to capture the mating movements of a pair of American Avocets - her favorite shorebird. "They have this elaborate mating ritual... This to me is so beautiful and romantic - I'm always trying to capture this moment." After mating, the male "puts his wing over the female and for a split second they cross bills and you have to be very fast... that crossing of the bills is just so poetic."

But Melissa was also making discoveries in her hometown of Ithaca such as the family life of red foxes as seen in a neighbor's backyard. "The homeowners allowed me to put up a blind, which I like to use so as not to disturb creatures like foxes, especially if there is a sensitive den with young." She saw "how incredibly diligent and committed and involved father foxes are." With the mother "mostly away, the father was there, tending to them, grooming them, watching for danger - just an amazing parent."

Another special moment in her neighborhood was an alert of a family of bobcats feeding on a deer carcass, it having been hit by a car. "It was a mama bobcat and two kits." Her resulting photo of the bobcat with one of her kits nuzzling against her became one of Melissa's signature photos. "To have a moment that shows that they have emotions and connection and family, that I could use this image to try to wake people up with the beauty of these animals, the soul of these animals, is very special."

"We need these animals in our ecosystem," she continued, "They provide important rodent control, and they provide magic and mystery to our landscapes." That bobcat photo she would use to fight against killing contests

in the state of New York. "That's where hunters go out and kill as many foxes, coyotes, bobcats as they can in one day. And we finally got those banned a couple of years ago, thank goodness."

Becoming a conservation photographer

Thus, no surprise Melissa would evolve into a wildlife conservation photographer, as shown in a story she has brought to the current Audubon magazine. "I photographed a story on nesting Great Grey Owls in Montana that highlights the importance of snags, or dead trees. They're so important and a lot of people think, 'We have to get rid of all the dead trees.' But these dead trees can often harbor more life than living trees."

She would become a Fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers, having demonstrated her photography had affected the conservation of a species or habitat. She also volunteers as a photographer at Cornell's Wildlife Hospital. "I want to be able to tell the stories of why these native animals come into the hospital, because I want to offer solutions. So many of them are injured or sickened because of simple everyday decisions we each make."

Lastly, Melissa addressed what has become a longtime passion for her - ethics in photography. "I began to see as I progressed in wildlife photography," she said, "that some people were taking shortcuts at the expense of wildlife." She addressed those concerns in her column on wildlife photography in Outdoor Photographer magazine. "I wrote about 30 articles over the years and often focused on how we as photographers can be really cognizant of and careful about our presence in the field because anytime we're out there, we're impacting wildlife."

"So, what sort of field practices can we follow," she said, "to allow animals to feel comfortable with us, that we're not a threat?" Working with well-known birder and author Kenn Kaufman, the two created an online guide for photographers with Audubon.

"It's not rules as much as it is best practices for how we can proceed in the field to keep wildlife safe." She's proud to say. "It's referred to by a lot of people." (Those guidelines are found at <https://www.audubon.org/photography/awards/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography-and-videography>

Becoming an advocate for wildlife

A further crusade would, as stated in the start of her talk, get her "into some trouble along the way." "A few years ago, I realized," she shared, "that a lot of the photos we see of elusive animals look too good to be true, like mountain lions leaping from one boulder to another... I don't care how much time you've been out in the field, you're not going to get these photos. How is this happening?" She would discover photography game farms. "It's a little-known photo industry that imprisons wild animals, particularly elusive carnivores hard to see in the wild."

Those animals "are kept in the most miserable conditions, in small concrete cells, and brought out to perform for treats for paying customers." She would locate three sites, two in Montana and one in Minnesota, two of which have shut down, leaving Triple D Wildlife in Montana. "They sued me a few years ago for speaking out about them," she said. "I never said anything untrue. I shared results of USDA inspections and photos, and the knowledge I had about the living conditions of these animals. I was sued for tortious interference."

Melissa's revelatory story came out in 2024 in a lengthy exposé in Rolling Stone magazine, alongside that of the woman who had served for years as head trainer at Triple D (also sued). She had left the facility and reached out to Melissa with a request for her help in rescuing those suffering animals. Their ensuing relationship and crusade will be the subject of a forthcoming documentary.

Melissa's website is melissagroo.com. Prints of her photos are available.



Rare Spirit bears, mother and cub spotted in Great Bear Forest, British Columbia, Canada. Photo by Melissa Groo.



American Avocets crossing their bills ending a mating ritual. Photo by Melissa Groo.

It was three years ago that Melissa Groo switched to Sony cameras, she told her talk attendees. "I felt they were at the cutting edge of mirrorless cameras, and the best at autofocus and portability. For me, that's proven to be true." Her present "workhorse" is the Sony A1 II "which is a fantastic camera and has everything that I need. The Sony A9 III is also an excellent tool."

She has also recently added the new Sony A7 V to her arsenal and cites it as having "a much lower price than the other two bodies, under \$3000, yet with a lot of the same features as the other two. So, it's a really exciting camera." The lenses she mostly uses for wildlife are the Sony 600mm f/4, the 300mm f/2.8, and the 200-600mm f/5.6-6.3 lens. I absolutely love those lenses." She also mentions the 400-800mm f/6.3-8 as "another great wildlife lens, especially useful in Africa, and places like Yellowstone where you get such a variety of wildlife, from huge to small."

"With all these cameras, now I can get that moment when a bird is just unfurling its wings... Now you're able to get shots that you were never, ever able to get before. It's amazing... Some of the great things about the new Sony A7 V are its incredible AI-powered subject recognition, real-time tracking, and excellent autofocus for birds and other animals... And it offers precapture, which allows you to capture moments that happen up to a full second before you fully press the shutter. It's like going back in time! You know how hard it is to get the dolphin coming up. Just imagine what precapture allows you to get now with a whale breaching, a waterbird surfacing with its catch after diving, or a leopard leaping from a tree."

In her captures Melissa had worked long to find the perfect image that shows the size difference between a Hairy woodpecker's beak and a Downy woodpecker's beak relative to their heads, "because these birds are so hard to tell apart from one another when they're not next to each other... they're always moving so fast and I wanted to get them perfectly aligned." That moment came with both coming to her suet feeder.

"Because I was using precapture, I was finally able to get the shot. As I was pressing halfway down, I saw the moment happen in a fraction of a second, and then I pressed all the way down and it seized that moment that had just passed. And look at how instructive this is - how much shorter the Downy's beak is in relation to its head! Anyway, I think that's cool."

More information on Sony cameras is available on their website at <https://electronics.sony.com/imaging/>

Submit your events at:
newcanaansentinel.com/submit-an-event/

TOWN MEETINGS

Monday, February 9

Affordable Housing Committee
 7-8 p.m., Town Hall Board Room
Town Council Public Hearing
 7:30-8 p.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

Tuesday, February 10

Board of Selectmen
 8:30-9:30 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

Pension Committee Meeting

11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Location not posted at time of publication.

Fire Commission

5-6 p.m., Town Hall

Board of Finance

7-8 p.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

Wednesday, February 11

Special Audit Committee Meeting
 8:30-10 a.m., Location not posted at time of publication.

Parks and Recreation Commission

7-8 p.m., Location not posted at time of publication.

Thursday, February 12

Conservation Commission

12-2 p.m., Town Hall

Board of Finance

7-8 p.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

Friday, February 6

Developing Athletes for the Long Game

9:30 AM at the New Canaan Library
 New Canaan CARES will host a parent education program focused on the growing pressures of youth sports and early specialization. The event will feature a panel discussion followed by a Q&A with NCHS Coach Lou Marinelli, a legendary community figure with nearly 50 years of coaching experience, alongside clinical psychologist Dr. Suzanne Allen of The Parenting Pair and physical therapist Dr. Becky Nardi of Wellness Insights & Concierge PT. Register at <https://shorturl.at/HgChy>.

Valentine's Watercolor Card Making Workshop with Carolyn Childs of Art B.L.I.S.S.

10:30 AM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
 Join for a Watercolor Card Making workshop led by Carolyn Childs of Art B.L.I.S.S. at the Carriage Barn. Whether you're a seasoned artist or a curious beginner, this workshop welcomes all skill levels. Tickets are \$40 and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/valentines-watercolor-card-making/>.

Saturday, February 7

Yoga and Sound Bath

9 AM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
 This Gentle Yoga and Sound Bath will engage both body and mind to help melt away the stresses of the week and start your weekend right! Tickets are \$40/person and available at <https://shorturl.at/wSYYG>.

Cut the Cord to Cable

2 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room

If you're considering cutting the cord to cable, then this class will give you the latest information on possible options and alternatives. Librarian James Ludy will also give an overview of Kanopy and teach you how to use your New Canaan Library card to stream free films, series, and documentaries every month. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/cut-cord-cable-194349>.

World Music Series: West African Drumming and Dance

3 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

Learn about and experience powerful rhythms, dynamic movement, and the communal energy of West African performance traditions. All ages are welcome. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/west-african-music-dance>.

Sunday, February 8

Mad Hatter Valentine's Tea Party

12 PM at the New Canaan Museum & Historical Society

Join for the third annual Mad Hatter's Tea Party. This family friendly event will include tea sandwiches, hot beverages, sweets, craft projects and other surprises. Tickets are available at <https://nchistory.org/3rd-annual-mad-hatter-valentines-tea-party/>.

Computer Basics: Digital Privacy

2 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room

Calendar of Events for Your Fridge

In this class, you will learn strategies and tools to help control what information about yourself you leave online. Topics covered in the class include how to find and change privacy settings, choosing internet browsers and search engines, basic tech security, and more. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/2ncfbazc>.

Chef's Palate | The Science of Flavor

3 PM at Grace Farms
 Engaging each of the five senses, join Grace Farms to experience the flavor building blocks that create the food you love during this deep-dive into the science behind taste. Tickets are available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/the-science-of-flavor-2026>.

Classical Argentine Guitar: Music & Stories with Carlos Pavan

4 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
 Learn about the history and culture of Argentinian Classical Guitar during this unique afternoon recital. Sample some wines from Argentina, then get swept away in the stirring and dramatic music of Carlos Pavan interspersed with anecdotes from his travels and musical experiences. The Argentine Born/Brooklyn based chamber music composer skillfully blends Argentine tango & folklore rhythms with classical and jazz concepts. Tickets are \$35 and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/argentine-guitar-carlos-pavan/>.

Monday, February 9

VITA Free Tax Preparation

10 AM-5 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room
 Get your 2025 taxes filed for free at New Canaan Library through SimplifyCT. This service helps get you the Federal and state benefits that you need. More information and registration is available at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/vita-free-tax-preparation-l61829>.

Chair Yoga

11:30 AM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

With the support of a chair, this gentle Chair Yoga class will help you improve postural alignment, maintain pelvic mobility, reduce muscle tension and gain strength through flowing movements and focused breathing. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/chair-yoga-l80322>.

Crime Prevention and Awareness with the New Canaan Police Department

6 PM at the Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium
 The New Canaan Police Department would like to invite members of the public to a crime prevention presentation. Members of the Police Department's Investigative and Patrol Division will speak on various types of incidents that citizens should be aware of, and how to prevent becoming a victim of crime. Register at <https://shorturl.at/Wy7Q9>.

Author Event with Brian Schaefer

6 PM at Elm Street Books
 Join for an author event with Brian Schaefer, here to chat about his novel, Town & Country. To register for the event, visit <https://elmstreetbooks.com>.

Tuesday, February 10

Valentine Calligraphy Card Workshop

10 AM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
 In this relaxed, mindful workshop, participants will create and hand-letter Valentine's Day greeting cards using modern calligraphy techniques. The class is beginner-friendly and designed for anyone curious about calligraphy, with no prior experience required. All materials are provided. Tickets are \$65/members, \$75/non-members, and available at <https://tinyurl.com/6df56tsk>.

Flower Arranging with Juliet Howe of Twigs Design

11 AM at the Lapham Center
 In this hands-on workshop, Juliet will guide you through echo-friendly, approachable floral design techniques, sharing some of her favorite tips and creative strategies as you craft your own unique arrangement. Containers and choice of fresh flowers will be provided. Participants are asked to bring clippers, if possible. \$50/person. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

South Indian Breakfast & Sweet Delights

11 AM at the Lapham Center
 Experience the comforting flavors of South India with this breakfast-themed class. Learn to make Idli, soft and fluffy steamed rice cakes, served with a hearty lentil stew (Sambar) and fresh Coconut Chutney. To end on a sweet note, prepare Carrot Halwa, a traditional dessert. \$60/person. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Ask the Attorney with Nedder and Associates

2-4 PM at the Lapham Center
 An attorney from Nedder and Associates, LLC will be available for a free, private, fifteen-minute consultations to answer your legal or financial questions. Please call (203) 594-3620 to schedule your appointment. No drop-ins.

Lunch & Learn with Mary Frances Malone, and The Town Players of New Canaan on the History of Valentine's Day

12 PM at the New Canaan Museum & Historical Society

Bring your sandwich, soup or snack and join for a Lunch & Learn session. On this special day, Mary Frances Malone, along with The Town Players of New Canaan, will delve into the History of Valentine's Day. Discover the stories behind the celebration through engaging narratives and performances. Register at <https://shorturl.at/F5Llt>.

Open Tech

2-4 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room

If you need help with email, smartphones/tablets, social media, or accessing our digital library, stop by for one-on-one support from a tech librarian. Tech assistance is limited to 20 minutes per session and is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Reception with Peter Kunhardt, Jr.

6 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center

Join for a reception & presentation with Peter W. Kunhardt, Jr. Executive Director of the Gordon Parks Foundation. Register at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/parks/>.

The Attwood Lecture: Simon Winchester Returns with The Breath of the Gods

7 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

Attend the Attwood lecture discussing "The Breath of Gods". Register at <https://shorturl.at/WNUPs>.

Wednesday, February 11

Blood Sugar & Blood Pressure Clinics

12:30 PM at the Lapham Center

Ellen Samai from New Canaan's Department of Health provides in-person blood sugar and blood pressure testing. If you plan to have your blood sugar level tested, it is recommended you fast for four hours prior to testing. To register, call (203) 594-3620. Walk-ins welcome.

Cooking & Crafting: Valentine's Edition

4 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center

Celebrate Valentine's Day at this festive hands-on workshop for kids ages 7-13! Participants will learn to make heart shaped sugar cookies from scratch, chocolate dipped strawberries and design custom packaging to take home their edible treats. Tickets are \$55/members, \$60/non-members, and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/cooking-crafting-valentines/>.

Yale Science: Enter the Fold - Designing Codes, Origami, and Molecules

6:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

Join for this month's Science in the News talk where three Yale scientists will talk about the structures that shape our world. Learn about the math that supports cryptography keeping your data secure, molecular design for medications and beyond, and how origami is being used to drive engineering innovation. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/yalescience>.

Thursday, February 12

Valentine Calligraphy Card Workshop

10 AM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center

In this relaxed, mindful workshop, participants will create and hand-letter Valentine's Day greeting cards using modern calligraphy techniques. The class is beginner-friendly and designed for anyone curious about calligraphy, with no prior experience required. All materials are provided. Tickets are \$65/members, \$75/non-members, and available at <https://shorturl.at/ohBA0>.

Clever and Crafty with Tricia

1 PM at the Lapham Center

Join Tricia to create felt needling penguins. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Tech Workshop with Cooper Young and George Geist of Good Kid Tech

2 PM at the Lapham Center

The program will begin with a fifteen-minute presentation on a tech-related topic, followed by time to answer your personal tech questions. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Ask the Attorney with Nedder and Associates

2-4 PM at the Lapham Center

An attorney from Nedder and Associates, LLC will be available for a free, private, fifteen-minute consultations to answer your legal or financial questions. Please call (203) 594-3620 to schedule your appointment. No drop-ins.

Implementing AI Responsibly in Your Organization

6:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room

AI is already showing up in many workplaces, often without clear rules, policies, or guidance. This presentation explores how professionals can use AI responsibly without creating legal, ethical, or reputational risk. Register at <https://shorturl.at/X8UCS>.

Free Medicare Counseling

By appointment at the Lapham Center
 Dick Neville is a CHOICES certified Medicare counselor providing free, objective, person centered assistance about Medicare options and related benefits. Sessions are offered free of charge to New Canaan residents and Town employees. Call (203) 594-3620 to schedule an appointment, no drop-ins.

Friday, February 13

Valentine's Bingo

11 AM at the Lapham Center

Play bingo and win prizes with a Valentine's Day theme. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Health Talks with Shannon and Ellen

11 AM at the Lapham Center

Meet up with Shannon and Ellen from the Health Department for coffee, conversation and snacks. These engaging discussions will help improve your mood and your health. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Time to Type: Typing Practice Workshop

11 AM at the New Canaan Library, Community Room

This is a one-hour workshop where patrons can build up their typing skills. Bring a computer from home or let the library know if you need to borrow a laptop. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/time-type-l94357>.

Saturday, February 14

Calendar of Events for Your Fridge

the River building. Kimberly Kelly will facilitate the crafting while discussing the importance of creating a structure that will become part of nature again. Tickets are \$10/members, \$12/non-members, and available at <https://shorturl.at/Hxmde>.

Thursday, February 19

Understanding Hospital and Subacute Evaluations: Purpose, Process and Patient Benefits

11 AM at the Lapham Center Ever wonder why hospitals and subacute care facilities conduct so many tests and evaluations? Join Kathy Collins to learn about the purpose behind these assessments, how they help ensure safety, guide treatment and support recovery. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

New Canaan Land Trust Presents: Movie Night - The Wild Robot

5 PM at the New Canaan Playhouse The New Canaan Land Trust presents a screening of The Wild Robot. Tickets are \$20 and available at https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/G24HLH46LhXqTHIZi4SfPg.

Practical Technology Considerations for Small Business Owners

6 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room SC O R E of Fairfield County presents Practical Technology Considerations for Small Business Owners. Register at <https://shorturl.at/Nk58r>.

Friday, February 20

Winter Drop in Movie | Wicked

11 AM at the Lapham Center Elphaba, a young woman ridiculed for her green skin, and Galinda, a popular girl, become friends at Shiz University in the Land of Oz. After an encounter with the Wonderful Wizard of Oz, their friendship reaches a crossroads. Free.

Polar Bear Picnic

5:30 PM at Grace Farms Join the Polar Bear Picnic, and have breakfast for dinner. After enjoying a meal, take part in winter-inspired crafts and games. Tickets are \$24/members, \$30/non-members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/polar-bear-picnic-2026>.

Saturday, February 21

Music at Grace Farms | Arlen Hlusko, cello

4:30 PM at Grace Farms Internationally acclaimed Canadian cellist Arlen Hlusko is a dynamic, versatile artist who has performed extensively as soloist and chamber musician across the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Tickets are \$40/members, \$50/non-members, and available at <https://shorturl.at/ZwwtQ>.

Sunday, February 22

Celebrate Lunar New Year

2 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium Usher in the Year of the Horse with dance and choir performances, food, and crafts from a number of Asian traditions. Local organizations and New

Canaan community members will give insight into New Year's customs. This drop-in program is ideal for the whole family. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/celebrate-lunar-new-year-191325>.

Tuesday, February 24

How to Use My Rec with Kathy Collins

11 AM at the Lapham Center If you've used MyRec to register for a program at Lapham only to find out when you come to the program that you were not registered, this talk is for you. Join Kathy to learn how to use this system to register for all your Lapham programs and activities. Review step-by-step how to create an account, browse programs, add choices to your account, register and receive confirmation. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Open Tech

2-4 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room

If you need help with email, smartphones/tablets, social media, or accessing our digital library, stop by for one-on-one support from a tech librarian. Tech assistance is limited to 20 minutes per session and is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Wednesday, February 25

Blood Sugar & Blood Pressure Clinics

12:30 PM at the Lapham Center

Ellen Samai from New Canaan's Department of Health provides in-person blood sugar and blood pressure testing. If you plan to have your blood sugar level tested, it is recommended you fast for four hours prior to testing. To register, call (203) 594-3620. Walk-ins welcome.

Flashes of Brilliance Photography Book Talk

6 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center

Anika Burgess, New York Times freelance photo editor will talk about her new book which tells the story of the wildest experiments in early photography and the wild people who undertook them.

She will be in conversation with photographer Jane Beiles. Register at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/flashes-of-brilliance-photography-book-talk/>.

An Evening with Michele Filgate and Cynthia Weiner

6 PM at Elm Street Books

Join for an evening with Michele Filgate and Cynthia Weiner, to chat about their recent books, What My Father and I Don't Talk About and A Gorgeous Excitement. To register for the event, visit <https://elmstreetbooks.com>.

American Contradiction with Pulitzer Prize-Winner Paul Starr

7 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

The whole truth about America, Starr argues in this new history of the United States since the 1950s, has never been contained in one consistent set of values or interests. Register at <https://shorturl.at/QSUDv>.

Saturday, February 28

Celebrate Lunar New Year

2 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

Usher in the Year of the Horse with dance and choir performances, food, and crafts from a number of Asian traditions. Local

Thursday, February 26

From Bloom to Canvas: The Flowered Press Workshop

10 AM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center

Discover the art of pressing flowers and transforming them into beautiful, one-of-a-kind works of art. In this special two-part workshop led by artist Marguerite Alpert, participants will learn both traditional and contemporary techniques for preserving botanicals and using them creatively. Tickets are \$195/members, \$205/non-members, and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/flowered-press/>.

Tech Workshop with Cooper Young and George Geist of Good Kid Tech

2 PM at the Lapham Center

The program will begin with a fifteen-minute presentation on a tech-related topic, followed by time to answer your personal tech questions. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Robert Schumann and Virginia Woolf Performance & Conversation with Narrative Resonance

7 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

The Narrative Resonance series pairs works of classical chamber music and literature to explore artistic parallels and their relevance for contemporary audiences. Join to learn how the emotional force of Robert Schumann's Third String Quartet mirrors that of Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse. Register at <https://shorturl.at/NCZ8E>.

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2 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

Usher in the Year of the Horse with dance and choir performances, food, and crafts from a number of Asian traditions. Local

Thursday, February 26

Fundraiser at the Library

10 AM- 3 PM at the New Canaan Library

Bring your whole family during the tee times to play Mini Golf. The 18-hole course will take you all around the library with fun prizes for you to win. Tickets are available at <https://shorturl.at/4eSrA>.

Color Theory: Exploring Color Through Paint

10 AM- 12:30 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center

In this workshop, led by artist and instructor Evelyn Harvey, you will analyze and determine the properties of color, explore their relationships, and learn to utilize the color wheel. This class is perfect for both beginners and for artists wanting a brush-up or refresher of color theory. Registration is \$75/members, \$95/non-members, and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/colortheory/>.

One Man, Two Guvnors

7:30 PM at the Powerhouse Theater

A fast-paced, laugh-out-loud farce set in 1960s Brighton, England. Follow Francis Henshall, a down-on-his-luck man who finds himself working for two bosses at the same time – without either of them knowing. Packed with physical comedy, pratfalls, and quick wit, this modern take based on Goldoni's masterpiece Servant of Two Masters is a wildly fun night at the theatre. Tickets are available at <https://tpnc.org>.

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, March 1

One Man, Two Guvnors

2 PM at the Powerhouse Theater

A fast-paced, laugh-out-loud farce set in 1960s Brighton, England. Follow Francis Henshall, a down-on-his-luck man who finds himself working for two bosses at the same time – without either of them knowing. Packed with physical comedy, pratfalls, and quick wit, this modern take based on Goldoni's masterpiece Servant of Two Masters is a wildly fun night at the theatre. Tickets are available at <https://tpnc.org>.

Thursday, March 5

Author Candice Morrow, RN: Book Talk & Signing Event

6 PM at Elm Street Books

Author, Registered nurse and survivor advocate, Candice Morrow will appear for an author book talk and signing. Morrow will discuss her memoir, Not One More Day, a deeply personal account of surviving domestic violence and reclaiming her life after years of abuse. Representatives from DVCC will be present to share information and available services and community resources. For more information, call Elm Street Books at (203) 966-4545.

Friday, February 27

Pages & Putts: Mini Golf Fundraiser at the Library

6-9 PM at the New Canaan Library

Bring your whole family during the tee times to play Mini Golf. The 18-hole course will take you all around the library with fun prizes for you to win. Tickets are available at <https://tpnc.org>.

Friday, March 6 & Saturday, March 7

William Shakespeare's Macbeth

Show times vary at New Canaan High School

Experience the dark allure of ambition and fate in New Canaan High School's production of William Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Tickets will be available on the NCHS Theatre website.

Tuesday, March 24

The Art of American Independence: Beyond the Declaration

12 PM at the New Canaan Museum & Historical Society

Bring your sandwich, soup or snack and learn from Robin Hoffman, of Artscapades.

ArtScapades has developed a special lecture which ties in with the 2026 celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Tickets are available at <https://shorturl.at/4eSrA>.

Friday, April 17

Breeches & Bowties Spring Gala

Time to be announced at the Wee Burn Country Club

Join the New Canaan Mounted Troup at their 2026 Spring Gala with guest speaker Drew Doggett. Tickets will be available at <https://newcanaanmountedtroop.org>.

Friday, April 17

NCNC Annual Lecture & Luncheon

11:30 AM- 2 PM

Additional details will be provided as the event approaches.

Thursday, May 7

NCNC Annual Lecture & Luncheon

11:30 AM- 2 PM

Additional details will be provided as the event approaches.

Friday, April 17

AA Meeting-Sober Citizens Group

Saturdays at 9:15 AM

First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan

AA Meeting-Laundry and Dry Cleaning Group

Saturdays at 10:30 AM

First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan

Lost Then Found NA Meeting

Wheelchair Accessible

Beginnings Without Illusions



By REV. MAXWELL GRANT

this moment is a language for holding both truths together without falling into nostalgia on the one hand or cynicism on the other.

The Bible is stubborn in its reminder that every beginning is mixed. Remembering that story, when the Christian tradition speaks of original sin, it's not trying to insult or deny the possibility of human goodness, but to remind us of how easily we get in its way. Even our best intentions are entangled with self-interest, fear, and blind spots—and always have been.

For some, that may sound particularly negative. It's not meant to be. Rather than trying to deny our aspirations, it seeks to temper them—to pump the brakes. Faith knows all too well that our most confident moments are rarely ones when humility comes naturally. It teaches us to press forward

with caution, and to view our motives with care.

In my tradition, the early New England Congregationalists understood this clearly. John Winthrop had that caution in mind when he famously described the Massachusetts Bay Colony as "a city upon a hill." He was not offering a victory speech. It was a warning. The visibility he imagined was not for admiration alone, but for accountability. If the community failed, he believed, it would fail publicly—and deserved to do so.

That sensibility trained people to consider themselves carefully as they examined their ideals. Moral aspiration, they believed, required honest self-examination from the very beginning.

I believe it still does.

It also offers insight into this year of thanksgiving and

Tempting as it may be to oversimplify the story of 1776, we have a chance to hold the hope and compromise of our founding together once again and to seek the lessons they contain to teach us for today.

remembrance.

The Declaration of Independence articulated claims about freedom and equality that were breathtaking in scope—and deeply compromised in practice from the very beginning. Even now, those contradictions are not footnotes; they are part of the story. The founding was massively aspirational—a group of colonies was learning to become a nation

than a pious fiction—and very likely, a short story.

With the 250th anniversary of Independence just a few months away, there will be many attempts to take stock of those early aspirations.

Tempting as it may be to oversimplify, we have a chance to hold the hope and compromise of our founding together once again and to seek the lessons they contain to teach us for today.

Some may say that doesn't matter. Yet anyone who has raised children, built institutions, sustained communities, or read their Bible knows otherwise. What matters is not only how something begins, but whether it can learn, repent, and repair over time. So

many of our finest hours have followed such a process.

This year offers an opportunity to practice that kind of mature remembrance.

As the next year unfolds, the real question may not be whether our nation began well, but another one: are we still willing to examine ourselves with the seriousness that meaningful beginnings demand?

Rev. Dr. Maxwell Grant has been Senior Minister of Second Congregational Church of Greenwich since 2012. He also serves as Board Chair of the Congregational Library and Archive in Boston and as the Moderator of the Fairfield West Association of the United Church of Christ.

Worship Directory and Services

UPDATE SERVICES AND ADD SPECIAL EVENTS TO THIS CALENDAR AT
www.NewCanaanSentinel.com/worship-calendar-updates

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

682 South Avenue 203.966.5849
www.ComeUntoChrist.org
 Sunday Service: 12 PM

Congregational Church

23 Park Street 203.966.2651
office@godsacre.org
www.godsacre.org

Sunday Services: 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM. The 10:00 am service is also live streamed and recorded, the video replay will be available throughout the week. Church School is available on Sundays for children ages 3 through 7th grade each Sunday from September through mid-June.

Recurring Events:

Tuesdays at 9:30 AM: Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays at 9:30 AM: Bible Study

Fourth Thursday from 12-2:30 PM: Meet at the Open Door Shelter in Norwalk to serve a meal.

First Church of Christ, Scientist
 49 Park Street 203.966.0293
christiansciencect.org/newcanaan

Sunday 10:30 AM, in person only. Sunday School is available during Sunday Service and is open to children and young people up to the age of 20. There is also childcare available for children too young for Sunday School.

Wednesday Testimony Meeting: 1st Wednesday of each month, join by zoom or by phone 646 558 8656. Reading Room Hours: Open Mondays 11-2, Call to confirm hours 203-966-0293. All are welcome to the Sunday and Wednesday services, Sunday School, and the reading room.

First Presbyterian Church

178 Oenoke Ridge Road 203.966.0002
fpcnc.org

Sunday Service: 10am in person or via LocalLive. All are welcome. Coffee Hour after the service is also available in person or via Zoom. Dedicated childcare is available for all children via Wee Care Nanny Agency from 8:45-11:30am in the Nursery School. Transcripts of previous sermons are also available via the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan's website. Recurring Events: Every Saturday 9:15am (closed) and 10:30am (open): Alcoholics Anonymous. Every Tuesday 8pm: Men's AA.

Third Wednesday from 6-7:30 PM: Wednesdays at the Well are intergenerational opportunities to learn and grow in faith together. Dinner will be served and all ages are invited.

Upcoming Events:

February 6 at 7 PM: New Canaan Chamber Music Concert. Tickets are \$50 and available at <https://newcanaanchambermusic.org/tickets/>.

Saint Aloysius Roman Catholic Church

21 Cherry Street 203.966.0020
www.starcc.com

Service Schedule:

Saturday: Vigil for Sunday 5:00 p.m.

Sunday: 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Sunday 8:30 a.m. mass is live-streamed and recorded.

Monday-Friday: 7:00 am and 5:30 pm

Saturday: 7:00 am

Recurring Events:

Last Monday of every month 7pm: Women's Praise & Worship Holy Hour

Fridays 7:30am-6pm: Eucharistic Adoration (September-June)

Saturday 8:30am: St. A's Healing Rosary Prayer Group

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

111 Oenoke Ridge 203.966.4515
churchoffice@stmarksnewcanaan.org
www.stmarksnewcanaan.org

Sunday Services: 8:00am: Indoor Holy Eucharist Rite I; 9:00am: Outdoor Holy Eucharist Rite II; 10am: Indoor Holy Eucharist Rite II (Live Stream also available on the St. Mark's website). Coffee Hour follows the 10am service.

Church School during the 10am service: Godly Play for children in kindergarten through second grade; Holy Moly for third and fourth grades; Meet in the Middle for fifth, sixth and seventh grades. Professional childcare is offered for children ages four and under. Families with children who are not yet ready to separate for childcare are invited to use the rocking chairs at the rear of the chapel.

Weekday Services: Monday-Friday, 8:30am: Morning PrayerRite II by Zoom.

Wednesday at 12:05pm: Noonday Eucharist in the chapel.

Recurring Events:

First Wednesday at 1pm: Laundry Love volunteering opportunity to come alongside people who are struggling financially by assisting them with their laundry.

First & Third Wednesdays from 6-7:30pm: Youth Group

Upcoming Events:

February 28 at 6 PM: The professional members of the St. Mark's Choir will delight everyone with their talents in a program of solos from operas, oratorios, and musicals, as well as entertaining works for vocal ensemble. A festive reception will follow.

St. Michael's Lutheran Church

5 Oenoke Ridge 203.966.3913
office@stmichaelslutheran.org
www.stmichaelslutheran.org

Sunday Service at 10:00 am. Following the service there is coffee, cookies and conversation' in the Fellowship Hall.

Recurring Events:

Thursday 12 PM: Alcoholics Anonymous

Trinity Church

New Canaan | Darien

1800 E. Putnam Ave, Old Greenwich

203.618.0808

info@trinitychurch.life

www.trinitychurch.life

Join us **Sundays at 10 a.m.** at Greenwich Hyatt Regency for lively worship, thoughtful and applicable teaching, weekly Communion, and an opportunity to make friends and grow in community. Trinity Kids (infants through fifth grade) and Trinity Youth (middle and high schoolers) take place during the service, and coffee and refreshments are served following worship. The service is also available on livestream via YouTube, Sundays at 10:00 a.m.; learn more at www.trinitychurch.life.

United Methodist Church

165 South Avenue 203.966.2666
frontdesk@umcofnewcanaan.org

www.umcofnewcanaan.org

Join us for Sunday Worship!

Sunday Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

Come for uplifting music and a relevant, inspiring message – and stay after for coffee and conversation during Fellowship Time.

Sunday School for ages 3 through high school. Child care is available for children from infancy through age 5.

Recurring Events:

First Sunday at 8:45 AM: All men are invited to our monthly Men's Breakfast – a time of warm fellowship, good food, and meaningful conversation as we grow together in faith and friendship.

Community Baptist Church

174 Cherry Street 203.966.0711

cbcnewcanaan@gmail.com

www.cbcnewcanaan.org

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoZ2UNa8aHI3O_SyP_X0KDg

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CBCNewCanaan/>

Sunday School at 10:00am

Worship Service at 11:00am

Live Facebook Broadcast 11:30 am

Grace Community Church

9:30am Service @ New Canaan High School,

11 Farm Road, New Canaan

203-966-7600

info@gracecommunity.info
www.gracecommunity.info

Welcome to Grace Church, where we strive to build a church of action, founded on Biblical truth, characterized by faith, grace, community, service, authenticity, clear thinking, and cultural relevance. Grace Community Church is an exercise in knowing God, knowing truth, and building community that extends to our full lives, not just to our Sunday mornings.

Join us **Sunday mornings at 9:30am** or via GCC's Facebook page or YouTube page. Nursery care and Sunday school/teen programming is available for babies through 12th grade. Coffee and bagels available in the lobby after the service, all are welcome.

Upcoming Events:

February 13 at 6 PM: Night to Shine sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. Individuals with special needs, ages 14 years and older, are invited to be their guests. Tickets are available at <https://www.nighttoshinenewcanaan.com>.

Talmadge Hill Community Church

870 Hollow Tree Ridge Road; Darien, CT

203.966.2314

talmadgehillchurch@gmail.com

www.talmadgehill.org

Ministers: Rev. Carter Via and Rev. Cheryl Bundy **Sunday worship service at 10:00am** in person. All are welcome! We encourage everyone to stay for coffee hour after the service. Sunday School is every Sunday during the service and uses the Godly Play curriculum. Please reach out with any questions utilizing information listed above!

Recurring Events:

Thursdays at 9:30am: Bible Study

First Saturday at 8am: Men's Group

Second Saturday at 10am: Women's Circle

Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center

137 Putnam Rd

info@chabadnewcanaan.org

www.newcanaanjewish.org

The Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center is dedicated to strengthening and building the New Canaan Jewish Community by offering local Jewish resources that bring more positivity, Jewish education, charitable activity, good deeds and blessing to our lovely town.

We are about Judaism, not affiliation. Regardless of your background, and however you choose to define your level of Jewish observance or identity, the Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center can add spirituality, joy, study, community and connection for you and your family. The programs of the Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center are held in various locations, all located in New Canaan.

Temple Sinai (Reform Synagogue)

458 Lakeside Drive; Stamford, CT 06903</

NEWS BRIEFS

CONTINUED From Page 1

Robin Bates-Mason, executive director of the New Canaan Land Trust, recently spoke at Staying Put's Ladies' Coffee, where she shared updates on the Land Trust's work and upcoming programs. Photo credit: Staying Put in New Canaan.

POLICE AND FIRE

Recent Scam Warning



INVOICE
FROM:

Town of New Canaan Planning & Zoning Department
77 Main Street New Canaan, CT 06840.

SCAM WARNING!

Invoice Details:

- Amount Due: \$6,953.00
- Payment Method: WIRE
- Remittance Information: Issued on request.
- Invoice Number: EPC-NPZD-242065
- Due Date: On Receipt

The New Canaan Police Department is warning residents about scam emails sent from an address impersonating the town's Planning and Zoning Department. The messages falsely claim money is owed for variance or approval fees and attempt to obtain wire transfers to an account not associated with the town. Residents are advised to report the scam to police at (203) 594-3500 and verify any questionable emails through Town Hall. Photo credit: New Canaan Police Department.

Clear Around Fire Hydrants



The New Canaan Fire Department is asking residents to clear snow and ice from around fire hydrants. Keeping hydrants accessible allows firefighters to respond more quickly during emergencies. Photo credit: New Canaan Fire Department.

PEOPLE IN TOWN

SCSU Deans List

Southern Connecticut State University announced that New Canaan resident Santi Zelaya was named to its fall 2025 Dean's lists.

SCHOOLS

SLS Trip to NYC



St. Luke's theater students traveled to New York City to see Buena Vista Social Club on Broadway and participated in a Q&A with cast members after the performance. Photo credit: St. Luke's School.

SLS McAffery



14. GREER McAFFERY

ST. LUKE'S SCHOOL, USA



BRANKSOME HALL

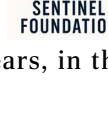
Fiercely Independent

Greer McAffery '26 of St. Luke's School placed 14th out of 120 competitors in an international speech and debate contest hosted by Branksome Hall. McAffery advanced to the semifinals after delivering a speech on prioritizing a UN Sustainability Goal, with a chance to reach the finals in Toronto. Photo credit: St. Luke's School.

Tanner Clark at NCHS



An Evening with Tanner Clark will be held in the New Canaan High School auditorium on February 9 at 7 pm, featuring a talk on overcoming distractions and focusing on personal goals. Photo credit: New Canaan Public Schools.



Obituaries

RONALD MERCER



Ronald L. Mercer, 91, passed away peacefully on January 25, 2026.

Ron was born on October 19, 1934 in Dewey County, Oklahoma, the youngest of Joseph William and Lura Elizabeth Mercer's ten surviving children. Raised on a cattle ranch, he learned the value of hard work, integrity and ingenuity from a very young age. He would employ those character qualities for his entire life. His mother was instrumental in his spiritual upbringing. The family co-founded Camp Creek Church of the Nazarene, and it was there that he gave his life to the Lord – the best decision he ever made. His faith in God was the cornerstone of his life, and he lived out his firm convictions all of his days, in every arena of his life. He graduated from Taloga High school in 1952, and a year later left home for the first time to attend Bethany Peniel College (Southern Nazarene University). It was there he met the love of his life, Yvonne Edwards, and they were married the summer after their freshman year at age 19. They lived in a converted chicken coop (with only three rooms and an outhouse) near NW 38th and Council, in Bethany, OK. Yvonne graduated on time but Ron was on the multi-year plan and graduated in 1970 with a degree in Business Administration. He graduated from the Program for Management Development at Harvard University Graduate School of Business in 1977. In 1989, SNU awarded him an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree.

Ron started his career as a used car salesman in Bethany. They welcomed their first child, Gary, just 13 months after their wedding, and Marla arrived three years later. The family moved to Denver, Colorado for Ron's new job as an insurance salesman. They then moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma where, in 1961, he began his 26-year career at Xerox Corporation. Their third child, Lisa, was born during their short stint in Dallas. Ron performed well and was promoted to Branch Manager and returned to Oklahoma City, where their fourth child, Michael, was born in 1965.

Future promotions led the family to Rochester, NY and Chicago, Ill. In 1975, Ron was named Vice President and General Manager of the Northeast Region, relocating the family to New Canaan, CT. They were members of the Lamb's Manhattan Church of the Nazarene

during those years, in the heart of Times Square.

Ron was promoted to President of Xerox Canada in 1979, moving the family to Toronto, Ontario. After the conclusion of that assignment Ron accepted the position of Senior Executive Vice President of US Operations in 1983 in Rochester, NY where he stayed until his retirement from Xerox in 1987.

After retirement, Ron & Yvonne returned once again to Bethany and built a home in Woodlawn Park, on the same property where they lived when they were first married. (This home had multiple indoor bathrooms). His retirement was short-lived because he was approached by Larry Doskocil to serve as President and Chief Operating Officer of Doskocil Companies. Ron was pivotal in reorganizing the company after the acquisition of Wilson Foods. Ron attempted retirement again in 1989, without success. Local funeral director Gene Adams approached Ron with the idea of starting a distinctly Christian funeral home that would serve Bethany and the surrounding community. In 1989, Ron combined his business acumen with Gene's experience in the funeral industry, and they launched Gene Adams Funeral Service, now operating as Mercer-Adams Funeral Service.

As the owner of Mercer-Adams, he was heavily invested in the Bethany and greater Oklahoma City communities, serving in leadership roles with many organizations including:

SNU Board of Trustees, Children's Center Board of Trustees, Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs (OCPA), Oklahoma City Leadership Foundation, and various bank boards. He was named Vice-Chair of the DHS Commission, and Governor Frank Keating appointed him Co-Chair of the Oklahoma Futures Board. Ron served numerous terms on the board at Bethany First Church of the Nazarene, and served on the General Board of the Global Church of the Nazarene as Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee. He was elected to serve as a lay member of the Board of Directors of Nazarene Theological Seminary. Ron was an adjunct professor at SNU where he taught Business Ethics. No matter where they lived Ron fully invested in every church they attended, serving as a Sunday School teacher for over 50 years.

He is survived by his wife of 71 years, Yvonne; son, Gary Mercer and wife Sunni of Bethany; daughter, Marla Cole and husband Tim of Yukon, daughter, Lisa Jones and husband Ken of Oklahoma City, and son, Mike Mercer and wife Sabrina of Houston; 11 grandchildren: Josh Mercer; Danica Whitman and husband Matt; Brian Cole and wife Heather; Jonathan Cole and wife Ariel; Cullen Jones and wife Ashleigh; Blair Berrones and husband Frankie; Allie Canobbio and husband Michael; Caitie Mercer; AnnaGrace Rodgers and husband Kyle; Fayth Fitzgerald-Tempenny and husband Sam; and Seth Fitzgerald; 15 great-grandchildren: Audra, Desmond and Judah Mercer; Lenora and Asher Whitman; Sloane, Crew, and London Cole; Brylan and Parker Cole and Beckam Washington; Ava Cannobio; Louisa, Emmaline and Genevieve Rodgers; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral Service was Monday, February 2, at Bethany First Church of the Nazarene. Viewing was held Saturday, January 31 and Sunday, February 1, at Mercer-Adams Chapel.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Ronald L. Mercer Business Scholarship fund at Southern Nazarene University or Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

SALLIE DOWD

Dec 15, 1950 - Jan 12, 2026

Sallie Proctor Dowd, age 75, passed away unexpectedly and peacefully on the evening of January 12, 2026. She had recently been diagnosed with heart problems and was undergoing testing to determine the best intervention.

Sallie lived with her husband of thirty-four years, Ken Dowd, at Bishop Gadsden Retirement Community. Before moving to Bishop Gadsden seven years ago, the Dowds lived in Spring Island, SC, London, UK, and New Canaan, CT.

Sallie was born December 15, 1950, in Winston-Salem, NC, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Richard Proctor. She graduated from Salem Academy, was an honors graduate of Vanderbilt University, and received her MBA from Emory University Goizueta School of Business. Prior to her position as an investment advisor with Mitchell Hutchins in New York City, Sallie was an investment banker at Nations Bank/Bank of America in Charlotte, NC. She also counseled adolescents as a therapeutic assistant on psychiatric inpatient unit at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, SC. Her strong work ethic and spirit of adventure provided other interesting employment experiences, among them crewing on a shrimp boat and staffing the Augusta National Pro Shop during the Masters Tournament. Sallie loved spending time in the NC high country and was a terrific dancer including clogging to bluegrass or other traditional folk music.

Sallie and Ken were passionate lovers of golf and played courses around the world. They also loved boating during their summers at Christmas Cove, ME. Sallie was an avid sports fan, especially of Wake Forest basketball where both her father and brother attended, and read her weekly Sport Illustrated with much pleasure. Ken and Sallie were patrons of the arts and supported many charities with their time and donations.

Sallie's love of family, her loyalty to lifelong friends, and her zest for life sustained her through many medical challenges. She could find humor in the direst of circumstances and rarely failed to bring laughter to those around her with her great stories and presence.

She is survived by her husband, Ken; her brother, Rick Proctor (Brenda); her niece, Ellie Proctor (Riley), and her nephew, Harley Proctor (Whitney). She is also survived by her stepchildren Warren Dowd (Caroline), Libby Dowd, and Sara Wells (Tom). Sallie especially enjoyed her 7 step-grandchildren, and 3 step-great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at the Chapel at Bishop Gadsden on Tuesday, February 3, follow a reception. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Bishop

Gadsden Employees Fund. Click on link, go to Project Designation tab, and then Employee Appreciation fund. <https://bishopgadsden.givesvirtuous.org/Donate>

FRANK HAWLEY, JR.



Frank Jordan Hawley, Jr., a private equity executive and founder of Saugatuck Capital, died December 18, 2025, in Stamford, CT. He was 98.

Mr. Hawley began his career at Lazard Freres. He joined Foster Management Company in 1974 and made a notable early investment in Yoplait, which later helped launch the American mass-market yogurt business. In 1982, he founded Saugatuck Capital, where his successes included PhyCor, Sylvan Learning Systems, and Floor and Decor, among others.

Born October 3, 1927, in Roanoke Rapids, NC, Mr. Hawley graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he studied physics. He served as a lieutenant aboard the USS Forrest Royal during the Korean War, then earned his MBA from Harvard Business School in 1955. While in Cambridge, he met his future wife, Alethea Wood. They married in 1959 and lived on Long Island and later in New Canaan, Connecticut. Mr. Hawley served on the Board of Visitors at UNC-Chapel Hill and the board of the Kenan Institute for Private Enterprise. He was also vice president and treasurer of the New Canaan YMCA.

In 2013, he married Sarah Litchfield of Pound Ridge, New York. He is survived by his sons Jordan, Mark, Andrew, and Stuart Hawley; daughter Alethea (Lee) Elkins; nine grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

A memorial service will be held on February 7, at 11:00am, at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in New Canaan, CT. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Squam Lakes Association and the Special Olympics of New York.

The New Canaan Sentinel does not charge for obituaries. Every member of the community deserves to be remembered and honored without families facing added financial burdens. Obituaries may be sent to Carroll@GreenwichSentinel.com.

The cost of publishing obituaries is covered by The Sentinel Foundation, a nonprofit that supports the local Top 5 Things to Do Today daily email, obituaries, education and entertainment pages, worship pages, and sponsorship of charitable organizations and events.

Sudoku for Kids

		2	5					
5	4	2	6					
4	6	1	2	3				
		4						
1		4		2				
3		1	5					

5	1	3	2					
2		4						
3	5		6					
6		5	3					
	3	2	6	3				
1		2	6	3				

	1	3	5					
5	4			1				
6	5	4						
4	5	6						
3	6	1						
4		3	2					

4	5		3	2				
3			6					
	4		3					
6	1	2	4					
2	1	5						
3		4	1					

SUDOKU

Each row, column, nonet can contain each number only once. Answers below.

Easy

	7	6	8					
5		4	7					
8	1			4				
	4	1	9	3			5	
	3		7	1				
9			1	5	4	6		
	6				2	4		
			2	6		8		
			9	7	3			

Hard

	6			7	3	9		
2		3				8		
			3					
6		8		4		1		
5	9		7		4	2		
4		9		6		7		
			6					
3			9		5			
9	4	8			7			

Very Hard

		3	2		9	4	5	7
9								1
	4				1			9
				9				
8			5					6
			2					
4		8					2	
	2							8
3	8	5	9		2	1		

Easy

		4			2			
6		8			7			
7	3	9		5				
		3			7			
9	8			2	4			
2			7					
	1	4	9		3			
8		1			9			
3			5					

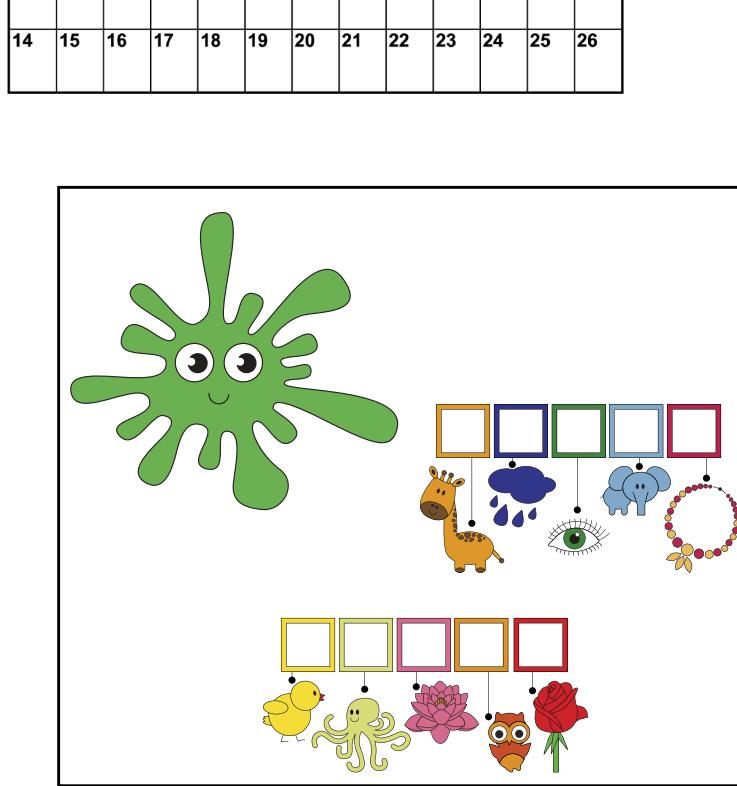
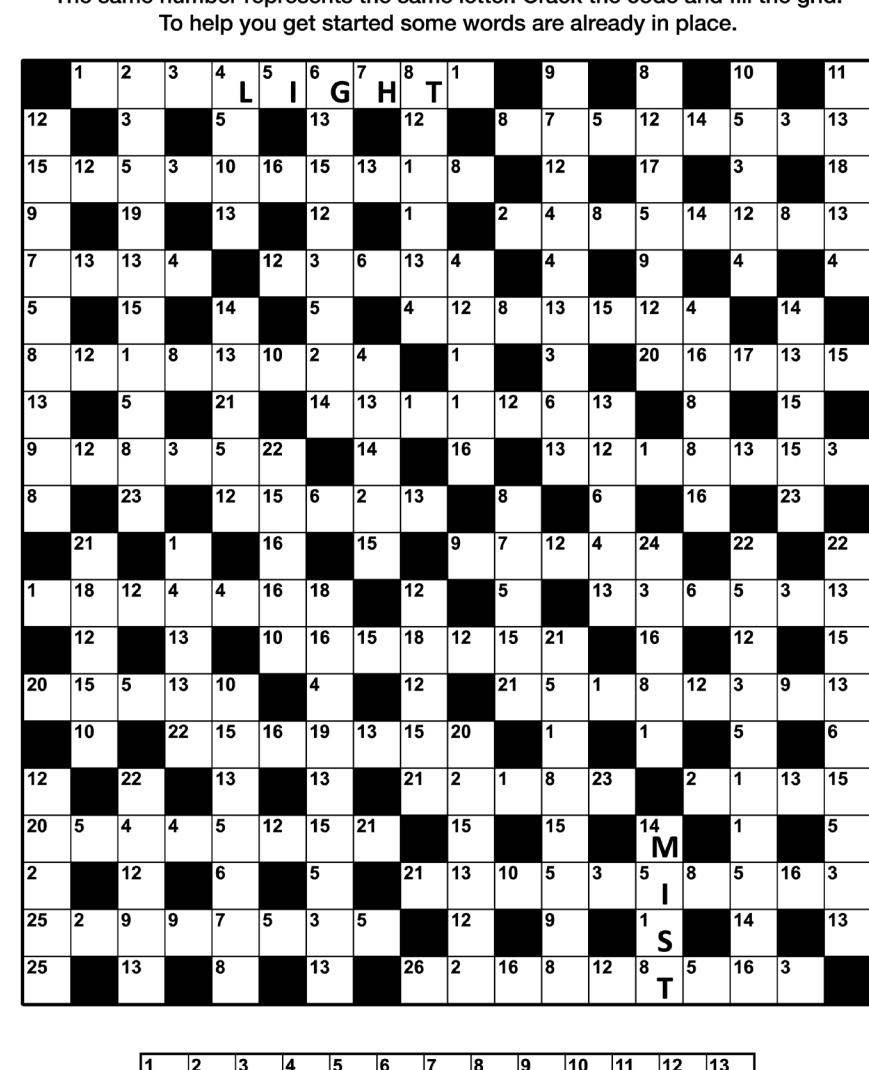
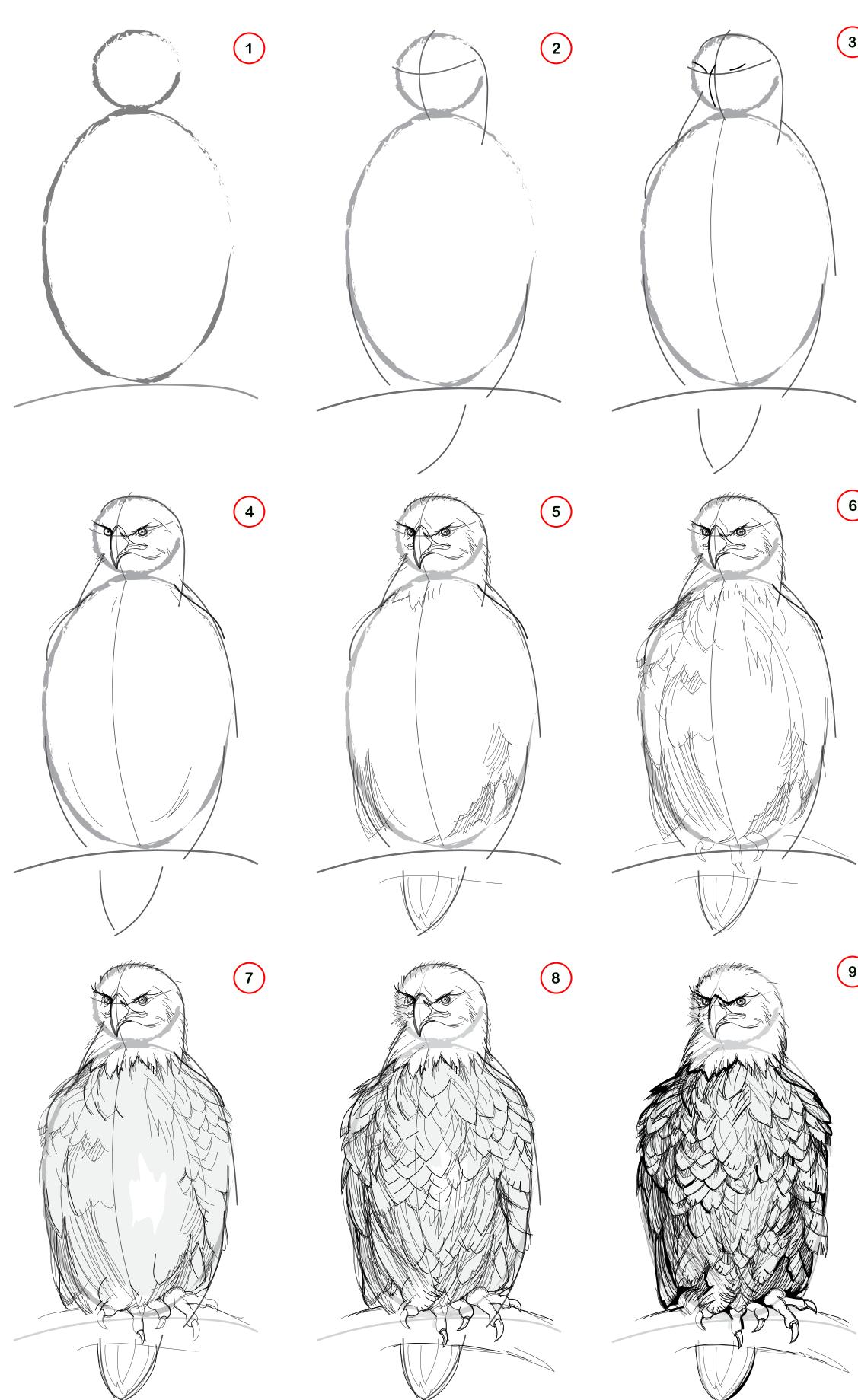
Hard

	1			6	8			
5			3	1				
7	8			5				
		3		1		4		
9		5	2		6			
6		7		9				
		8			9	7		
2			5	7		1		
	1				6			

Very Hard

9				2	8	6	7	
7				6				5
6	3							8
				9	8	7		
8								
4		3						8
3	7	2	1					4

GRAB YOUR SKETCH BOOK step by step



THE JHOUSE GREENWICH



STAY
ROMANCE PACKAGE



THE JHOUSE Hotel | Restaurant | Spa

Join us for a romantic night of luxury and relaxation with your loved one! Our Romance Package Includes:

- Choice of Veuve Clicquot Champagne or Pellegrino
- One Dozen Roses with Romantic Setting Premier Chocolates
- Custom-Made Pillowcases with Your Initials
- Complimentary Valet Parking & Continental Breakfast
- Late Check-Out at 1PM

DINE
DINNER FOR 2





\$125 per Person (Tax & Gratuity Not Included)

- Indulge yourself at our award-winning Italian steakhouse and experience dining like never before.
- Enjoy your choice of appetizer, entree, dessert, coffee & tea.

Reserve Your Table Today!

UNWIND
COUPLES MASSAGE





Complete your stay and treat yourself and a loved one to a couples massage at our world-class spa!

- Melt your stress away with one of 50+ different massage and wellness treatments personalized just for you.
- Benefit from the highest-quality luxury products—always organic and chemical-free!

**BOOK ONLINE AT JHOUSEGREENWICH.COM OR
CALL US AT 203-698-6980**

The J House Greenwich

1114 E. Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut, 06878

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REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD

REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD EDITOR

John Engel | John Engel@Elliman.com

REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD CONTRIBUTOR

Robyn Bonder | Robyn.Bonder@Elliman.com

NEW SALES

Address	Original List	List Price	Sold Price	DOM	BR	FB	Acres
47 Bank Street	\$1,395,000	\$1,395,000	\$1,700,000	8	2	3	
1123 Oeno Ridge	\$8,400,000	\$8,400,000	\$8,400,000	363	7	9	3.12

NEW LISTINGS

Address	List Price	SqFt	Price/SqFt	AC	BR	FB
2 Wahackme Lane	\$2,595,000	4,911	\$528	2.9	5	4
96 Weed Street	\$2,995,000	7,052	\$425	1.63	4	4
98 Indian Waters Drive	\$4,195,000	6,070	\$691	2.07	5	6

FEATURED OPEN HOUSES

Get Your Open Houses Into the MLS by Wednesday at Noon for a Listing Here

Address	Price	Day	Time	Broker
111 Parish Lane	\$4,950,000	SAT	12:00 - 2:00 pm	Raveis
1343 Smith Ridge Road	\$3,995,000	SAT	2:30 - 4:30 pm	Raveis
928 West Road	\$7,995,000	SAT & SUN	1-3pm/2:30-4:30pm	WPSIR
2 Wahackme Lane	\$2,595,000	SAT & SUN	1-4pm / 12-3pm	Raveis
101 Parade Hill Road	\$1,199,900	SUN	12:00 - 2:00 pm	Serhant
1038 West Road	\$2,595,000	SUN	12:00 - 2:00 pm	Raveis
148 Ramhorne Road	\$2,895,000	SUN	12:00 - 2:00 pm	WPSIR

They All Look the Same From the Train. They're Not.



BY JOHN ENGEL

I've broken lower Fairfield County down by how each town actually functions – not how it photographs.

First, the "big four" are Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan, and Westport. They're in a class by themselves – brand-name destinations like Aspen, Palm Beach, or Palm Springs. But as with those places, each has a completely different personality.

Greenwich, at 60,000 people over 60 square miles, is roughly the size of the other three combined. It's hard to describe it as just one place. To live in backcountry Greenwich is to drive 20 minutes to get to the train or market, while Old Greenwich is a tight beach town. The Greenwich brand is simple: Be #1. Large estates, first-class shopping on the Avenue, and great schools, at a median price of \$3.8 million last year.

The kind of people who pay up to live in Greenwich usually need to be there because they want the shortest possible commute. It starts with athletes, performers, designers, financiers, and billionaires who need a top address close to New York City, along with the people, businesses, and restaurants that support them. If you're a New York Yankee, Knick, or Ranger whose workday doesn't end until midnight, you probably live in Greenwich.

It's easy to say Darien, Westport, and New Canaan are just for commuters priced out of Greenwich. That's true, but it's oversimplified. Median prices in all are around \$2.5 million, yet the towns have very different personalities. It's not about price.

The Darien vs. New Canaan rivalry goes back 100 years – and I've been here for nearly 50 of them – used to be known as the "beachies" versus the "woodsies." Prices in Darien have historically run about 10% higher on average, but Darien has a greater range. The waterfront homes in Tokeneke and Pear Tree Point push the average price higher, but they're balanced on the lower end by smaller homes in Noroton Heights, a historically blue-collar neighborhood of antiques on quarter-acre lots. The latter are no longer the entry point they used to be; Newlyweds and young professionals have been buying, renovating, and expanding those homes for 50 years. An unrenovated starter there is now \$1.5 million.

The draw for Darien comes down to a few things: a sub-60-minute commute, great schools, beaches, and low taxes. There's no true downtown, and the arts scene is thinner than in Westport (Westport Playhouse) or New Canaan (Grace Farms, Midcentury Moderns). Darien is about to change that with the Corbin District, a seven-acre mixed-use project, 20 years in the making, meant to create a real, walkable center in the style of New Canaan.

New Canaan, just up the street, is nothing like Darien. And yet, in all the obvious ways – prices, taxes, schools, and sports – it's exactly the same. That's where the similarities end.

New Canaan revolves around its quaint, walkable village center. You'll find the Holiday Stroll, the Halloween Parade, Taste of New Canaan, Caffeine & Carburetors, Fall Fair, menorah lighting, Christmas carol singing, October4Design, and the Memorial Day Parade all happening downtown throughout the year. The restaurant scene also sets the town apart. With more than 30 restaurants packed into the center, spilling onto the brick sidewalks in season, New Canaan has become the popular food court of Fairfield County.

Westport shares many of Darien's advantages: beaches, I-95, good schools, and a mainline commute. But like New Canaan, it's about 15 minutes farther by train to NYC, which makes it tougher for the five-day-a-week commuter. That extra distance may explain its long-standing reputation for attracting the artistic crowd more than the banking crowd. Think Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward and the Westport Playhouse. Martha Stewart, too, broadcasting for decades from Turkey Hill Farms and showing everyone what life there could look like.

That leaves Wilton, Weston, and Easton, three rural towns side by side, about five miles from the crowded, commercial coastline. Connecticut weather changes north of the Merritt. So does the personality of these towns.

Weston is one of the four wealthiest towns in Connecticut, yet it does not have a traffic light or a commercial center. Most people head south to Westport for groceries, and it can be a 20-minute drive. While Weston has two-acre minimum zoning, Easton is even more rural. It has 20 working farms, and more than 35% of its land is preserved as open space. This is where



I've stopped thinking of these places as towns and started thinking of them as stages of life.

you go for apple picking or to cut your own Christmas tree, and the entry point for homes is still under \$1 million.

Growing up in this area, I regarded Wilton much the same way, rural but with a few businesses along the Route 7 corridor. My Wilton relatives had horses. No longer. Wilton is roughly 40% less expensive than New Canaan and Westport, with an equally good school system, attracting young professionals who have been priced out or who just prefer a slower, more rural pace. The lower prices in these towns are offset by roughly 40% higher property tax rates, resulting in similar tax bills town by town.

That leaves three small cities that are essential to the fabric of Fairfield County.

In the 1980s, Stamford had the highest concentration of Fortune 500 headquarters outside New York City, with 18. Today it's down to four, but the population is 140,000 strong and growing fast; it's now the fastest-growing city in Connecticut and a hub for fintech and media.

The average resident is younger than homeowners in the surrounding towns, about 38 years old and more likely to be single. Stamford was recently named the number one place in America to get rich, based on incomes relative to cost of living.

Fairfield, with a population of 65,000, has a dual personality: beaches and schools. Its public schools consistently rank in the top ten statewide, alongside Fairfield Prep, Fairfield University, and Sacred Heart. Students, teachers, and administrators make up a big share of the population, and the whole local economy revolves around education. It also has five town beaches along a five-mile coastline, some of the best public beach access in Connecticut.

That leaves Norwalk. It's bigger and more diverse than Fairfield, smaller than Stamford, without the corporate headquarters or the college-town identity.

Norwalk is really five distinct neighborhoods.

Rowayton, South Norwalk, and East Norwalk are older, denser coastal villages with homes on quarter-acre lots. South Norwalk is booming, with hundreds of new waterfront condos. West Norwalk and Silvermine are leafier, with one-acre lots bordering New Canaan. Cranbury and Old Hill feel similar and border Westport. These inland neighborhoods often attract downsizers from New Canaan and Westport who want to stay close but no longer need the top-rated schools.

I've stopped thinking of these places as towns and started thinking of them as stages of life.

My parents grew up in Stamford. My grandparents moved to New Canaan. I have relatives in Wilton, Weston, Rowayton, and Darien. My parents attended New Canaan and Fairfield schools. My parents bought a house in Norwalk. Five generations, same few miles. Around here, you don't move away. You just move to the town that fits.

Notes from the Monday Meeting

It's the week before the Super Bowl, which in our business is the unofficial start of the spring market. This is when we lay all 52 cards face down on the table and start playing concentration. We know what listings are coming. We know who's looking. The job is to start flipping cards and making matches.

John Engel is a broker on The Engel Team at Douglas Elliman, and this week, he's tightening up his videos. Rose pointed out the "millennial pause," that half-second of silence at the start of every clip. Charlotte, whose Historical Society videos routinely draw millions of views, starts everything with what is known in the industry as "the Gen Z shake," rolling mid-motion and mid-sentence. Lillian edits feature films for a living and cuts dead air on sight. John's still learning to hit "record" and talk.

Submit questions and comments to John Engel@Elliman.com



Keith E. Simpson
Associates

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ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
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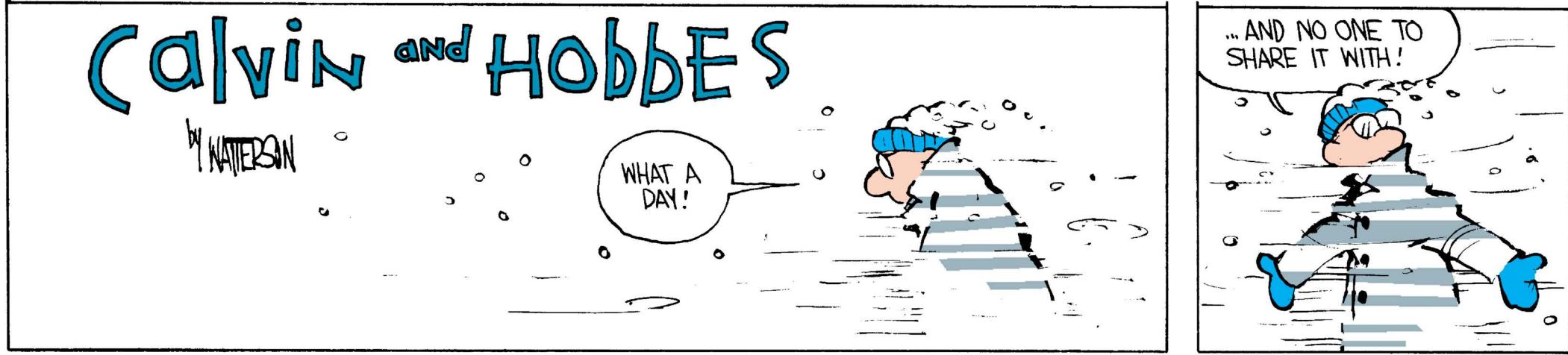


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