

House calls Page A2

Charitable caviar, 'Grumpy Cat,' calligraphy, 'Nutcracker' and more Compass, Pages B1-2



Property transfers Pages B6-7

The Lakeville Journal will take a week off and publish again Jan. 7, 2021.

The Lakeville Journal

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Covering The News In Connecticut's Northwest Corner And Its Environs Since 1897

State Legislature 2020 Not all bad in a year that was 'a long way from normal'

By Patrick L. Sullivan

State Rep. Maria Horn (D-64) and state Sen. Craig Miner (R-30) discussed the upcoming session of the Connecticut General Assembly in phone interviews Dec. 19 and Dec. 20.

The Legislature convenes Jan. 6 and adjourns June 9. It is a "long session," and will include the biennial budget process.

The Democratic Party controls the Legislature, with a 24-12 majority in the state Senate and a 97-54 advantage in the state House.

Horn is co-chair of the Public Safety Committee, and a member of the Environment and Energy and Technology committees.

See 2020 LEGISLATURE, Page B7

State Legislature 2021 Challenges ahead in 2021 for legislators

By Patrick L. Sullivan

GOSHEN — State legislators spoke to the members of the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (COG) about the upcoming legislative session on Tuesday, Dec. 15.

The organization is made up of first selectmen from 21 area towns.

The meeting was held online, in lieu of the traditional "legislative breakfast" held in-person.

State Rep. Maria Horn (D-64) said because the Connecticut General Assembly is operating remotely, there will be a limit on how many bills can

See 2021 LEGISLATURE, Page A8



PHOTO BY RANDY O'ROURKE

Open at last

The Union Station depot in North Canaan is restored and now up for sale. The property includes a successful brew pub and a railroad history museum, above.



PHOTO BY LANS CHRISTENSEN

Mohawk Mountain Ski Area was packed with skiers of all ages and levels of expertise during the first full weekend of skiing and tubing, Dec. 18 to 20.

At Mohawk, hoping 2020 will end better than it began

By Cynthia Hochswender

CORNWALL — For most people, the abundance of snow that dropped on the region on Thursday, Dec. 17, was largely an annoyance. But for skiers — and ski area operators — it was an omen that maybe, just maybe, this winter season will be a great one for skiing, tubing and snowboarding.

Mohawk Mountain Ski Area opened just in time to take advantage of the 1-2 feet of snow that dropped, with a slow open the previous weekend (the warm weather gave the staff a chance to test out the new COVID-19 protocols) and the official opening the weekend of Dec. 18 to 20.

"We always like it" when we get a lot of natural snow, said Carol Lugar, who is president of Mohawk and the daughter of its founder, Walt Schoenknecht, who created the ski area 74 years ago — and who, according to legend, created one of the first snowmaking machines.

Lugar and her workers didn't take it easy, knowing that a huge snowstorm was on its way. The machines were still blowing base powder onto the slopes in advance of the storm.

"Everybody thinks, 'Oh, there's so much snow, we can ski! But it packs down, and we prefer to have packed snow down on the bottom.'"

Lugar was expecting a sizable crowd over the weekend, not only because of the heavy snow but also because so many people are really tired of sitting around at home.

"I think outside time is sorely missing from a lot of people's lives," Lugar said, "and that is going to drive the local ski areas this year. It's not unlike the way the beaches were this summer, and the parks

See MOHAWK, Page A8

"I think outside time is sorely missing from a lot of people's lives and that is going to drive the local ski areas this year. It's not unlike the way the beaches were this summer, and the parks and hiking trails."

Carol Lugar, Mohawk president

Twin Lakes plan and concerns about sanctity of easements

By Debra A. Aleksinas

Editor's note: Over the next several weeks, this topic will be presented in installments aimed at providing equal and unbiased coverage on all sides of the issue.

This week's article focuses on opponents of a landowner's proposal to remove a portion of a causeway on Twin Lakes that is protected under a 30-year-old conservation restriction by The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut.

SALISBURY — Elyse Harney first met Mary Alice White in the mid-1960s, after moving to town with her young family. The women enjoyed a shared passion for land conservation and preservation through mem-

bership in the Salisbury Association and its Land Trust.

"Mary Alice asked me to serve in an advisory capacity on the Land Trust," recalled Harney, who established her real estate company in Salisbury in 1987. White, a staunch environmentalist who died in 2000 at age 80 at her Salisbury home, served as president of the association for several years. "The land trust was her baby," recalled Harney.

In 1990, White entered into a Conservation Restriction Agreement with The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut to protect in perpetuity — "in its natural, scenic and open condition" — a 20-acre parcel she owned on Salisbury's Lake Washinee, which includes

an old causeway that once supported rail service across the Twin Lakes.

Three decades later, the current landowner, Jeffrey Keenan, has said he would like to remove a 400-foot swathe of the man-made peninsula off Taconic Road. That announcement has been met with opposition by a group of area residents who are concerned about protecting the sanctity of land protections; and it has raised concern among White's two grown children.

Keenan, who owns a residence across the lake from the causeway, has said that the century-old structure is a detriment to the West Lake. He claims it impedes the

See TWIN LAKES, Page A8

Carter officially named regional super

By Patrick L. Sullivan

FALLS VILLAGE — Region One Interim Superintendent Lisa Carter was appointed after the Sharon and Cornwall school boards approved the appointment last week.

Carter took over for Pam Vogel on June 30, 2020.

A search committee made up of the chairs of the six town school boards and the Region One board worked for six

months before deciding, on Nov. 18, to recommend to all seven boards that Carter get the job.

The seven boards subsequently met and voted to hire Carter. All the votes were unanimous.

Carter was assistant superintendent under Vogel from 2016. Before that she was principal at Salisbury Central School from 2011-16, and prior to that, a Social Studies teacher at Housatonic

Valley Regional High School, starting in 2003.

The six towns in the regional school district are Canaan/Falls Village, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon. Each town has its own elementary school and town school board, and all towns have one representative on the Region One School Board, which mainly deals with the regional high school and shared regional services such as special education.

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In The Journal this week

OUR TOWNS..... A3, A7	OPINION..... B4
OBITUARIES..... A4	VIEWPOINT..... B5
HOMETOWN..... A5, A6, A7	PROPERTIES..... B6, B7
HOLIDAYS..... A5, A6, A7	LEGALS..... B6
COMPASS..... B1-B2	CLASSIFIEDS..... B7
HEALTH..... B3	SPECIALIST..... B8

Three-day forecast

Friday..... Rain, high 50°/low 18°
 Saturday..... Cloudy, 27°/16°
 Sunday..... Cloudy, 32°/21°

POLICE BLOTTER: TROOP B

The following information was provided by the Connecticut State Police at Troop B. All suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Disorderly conduct

On Dec. 11 at approximately 9 a.m. Troop B responded to a 911 call and investigated an incident at a residence on Church Street in North Canaan. Rosa Morales, 21, of North Canaan was charged with disorderly conduct. She was scheduled to appear in Torrington Superior Court on Dec. 14.

Stolen ATV

On Dec. 12 at approximately 10 p.m. Troop B responded to a report of a stolen ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) from a residence on Millerton Road in Salisbury. The ATV is a black and white Tao Tao model. Anyone with information is asked to contact Troop B.

Vehicle rolled over

On Dec. 13 at approximately 10:30 a.m. on Route 7 in Cornwall a 2006 Jeep Commander driven by Carl Peterson, 83, of Brookfield, Conn., lost control, veered off the road and rolled over. The Jeep came to a rest against an Eversource utility pole. Peterson was transported to Sharon Hospital for minor injuries. He was issued a verbal warning for failure to maintain the lane.

Left scene of vehicle accident

On Dec. 15 at approximately 3 p.m. Troop B responded to a report of a damaged mailbox at a residence on Millerton Road in Salisbury. The suspected vehicles, a white Chevrolet Silverado and a black Dodge truck, evaded the scene. Anyone with information is asked to contact Troop B.

The Lakeville Journal will publish the outcome of police charges. Contact us by mail at P.O. Box 1688, Lakeville, CT 06039, Attn: Police Blotter, or send an email, with "police blotter" in the subject line, to cynthiah@lakevillejournal.com.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Scouts of Canaan retired eight American flags in a peace light ceremony held on Sunday, Dec. 20.

Scouts offer peace light ahead of holidays

NORTH CANAAN — Every year the Scouts of North Canaan deliver the peace light to the community. In the past, this ceremony has been dedicated to the school, the town, local churches and fallen soldiers. On Sunday, Dec. 20, the Boy Scouts along with the Arrow of Light Scouts of North Canaan gave the light to our country.

The year of 2020 has brought much loss and the Scouts thought a little hope was needed, going forward into

2021. The Scouts and families pledged allegiance to eight American flags, which were retired into the flame. Three Arrow of Light scouts, Scout Master David Moran and Cub Master Lindsey Crane took part in the ceremony. Richie Crane led the Scouts and families in a prayer of respect as taps were played.



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FAMILY & FRIENDS

The Santa Express passes through Salisbury

SALISBURY — For over 30 years, Santa (the late Bullet Sherwood) was driven around Salisbury by his elf (Larry Hoage), bringing holiday cheer to the town. This year, the tradition continued when the Lakeville Hose Company hosted Santa Express, with Thomas Sherwood and Russell Hoage as the next generation.

Helping out were elves Ray Flint and Russell Hoage's daughter, Kirstyn Hoage, as well as myself, Marie Castagna, as Mrs. Claus. We passed by the homes of 50 families and waved to 105 children.

Chief Robert Smith Jr. was "excited to do this as so many events have been canceled. It's something special for the children in our town. We had a tremendous response to our first year of trying out Santa Express. This was an all-day event but many days and hours of preparation went into it. All of our members of Lakeville Hose Company are completely volunteer."

—Marie Castagna



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Members of the Lakeville Hose Company and the Millerton Fire Department treated residents of Noble Horizons in Salisbury to a holiday parade of lights featuring Santa and Mrs. Claus on Friday, Dec. 18. Santa Claus also visited children in town last week.

Sharon Center gives back

SHARON — The winter holiday season will brighten for some local children thanks to the students and staff of Sharon Center School. On Friday, Dec. 11, the Student Council hosted "PJ Day for the Kids." The pajama day event was a fundraiser for children with cancer at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. A \$300 donation was made to CCMC.

Sharon Center School

has also been working with Sharon Social Services Director Miriam Jones to ensure that the children and families of Sharon have what they need this winter. Thanks to the generosity of students and staff alike, nearly 30 children in the community will have new cozy pajamas and socks to stay warm this winter. The spirit of giving is alive and well at Sharon Center School.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Caroline Burchfield, left, of Noble Horizons and Sharon Hospital's Laurie Eldridge and Cody Saylor, with N-95 masks donated from the retirement community to the hospital to protect workers against infection by COVID-19.

Giving the gift of COVID-19 protective gear

COVID-19 positive cases continue to rise, across the nation and even in the Northwest Corner. As the infections increase, so does the need for protective gear for health-care

workers.

On Dec. 18, Noble Horizons in Salisbury donated 1,000 N-95 face masks to Sharon Hospital.

Correcting Errors

We are happy to correct errors in news stories when they are called promptly to our attention.

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3:30 PM Spiritual Eucharist & Hymns with festive descants, M. Praetorius' double choir motet "In Dulci Jubilo," Cresendo singers, C. Belluschio, trumpet. Collaborative "Joy to the World" w/ choir from Salisbury Congregational.

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Jan. 3—10:30 AM Christmas Lessons and Carols



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Our Towns

Finished at last, Union Station depot now needs an owner

By Leila Hawken and Cynthia Hochswender

NORTH CANAAN — It is often cause for concern when a landmark in a town goes up for sale. But the new listing of the North Canaan Union Station train depot is not necessarily a bad thing, and in many ways is a really great thing.

The depot had long been central to life in North Canaan, first as a train station (built in 1872) and later as a commercial plaza with a popular restaurant.

Most of the building was destroyed by a fire inadvertently set by some area youths, only days after the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Volunteer firefighters who had gone to New York City to help in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center returned home to help put out a fire that was similarly traumatic, albeit on a smaller scale, for this small

community.

After the blaze was finally extinguished, there was only a skeleton of the formerly sprawling structure.

It wasn't only town residents who felt the loss of the depot; it was also the many train buffs in the area, who would often make pilgrimages to a spot that brought history to life for them. Everyone agreed that the rebuild of the historic building couldn't happen fast enough.

Miles of red tape

Unfortunately, fast was not a word one could use to describe the process of getting state and federal funding, beginning the renovation and then completing it. It all took years and years longer than was hoped or expected.

The building had been owned privately at the time of the fire. The only way to get the federal funds (through a transportation grant) was for

ownership to be transferred to a nonprofit, with funds administered by the town government.

The property was transferred to the Connecticut Railroad Historical Association, whose chairman is former First Selectman Doug Humes. The other three trustees on the society's board at that time were Bob Gandolfo, Robyn Walsh and Leroy Riva (whose son Bob took his place after Leroy passed away).

Many town residents and officials took on the task of trying to get the work completed over the years, including Selectman Charlie Perotti, who was one of the first firefighters on the scene on that October night in 2001 and who is now the town's first selectman.

The official groundbreaking for the restoration was in September 2016. But even then, one delay followed another.



PHOTO BY RANDY O'ROURKE

North Canaan's beloved Union Station depot, in the center of town, is now for sale, after decades of slow-moving but meticulous restoration work following a fire in October 2001.

Be skeptical of online scams — and don't click anything

By Patrick L. Sullivan

SALISBURY — A modest amount of training combined with continued diligence will help protect computer users from security problems, according to Dave Hall of CompuWorks, an information technology support company in Pittsfield, Mass.

Hall spoke on an online webinar sponsored by Salisbury Bank and Trust on Thursday, Dec. 3.

Hall said a common form of identity theft is called "phishing." The attack comes in the form of an email that asks the recipient to click on a link or provide "credentials" — information such as Social Security numbers or bank accounts.

If you get one of these unsolicited emails, do not click on the link, said Hall, firmly.

A variation of this is spear-phishing, which is targeted to individuals whose names and emails can be obtained by looking at a company directory, for instance.

Again: Do not click on a link, and do not provide any information. At all.

There are other types of fraudulent activities, including the familiar "Nigerian prince" or "advance fee" fraud.

In these scams, the recipient is promised a large sum of money in return for providing a smaller amount of money up front.

This request is backed up by an elaborate tale of woe and

intrigue — a tale that usually does not stand up to even the slightest scrutiny.

Hall said email scams are often written in poor English, a sure sign the communication is bogus.

A slide in the presentation urged viewers to "Be cautious of badder english or typos."

Other scams include:

A phony antivirus alert. A window pops up informing the computer user that the machine is infected; click on this link to avoid disaster. "It's just a graphic," said Hall.

But if you click on anything associated with it, you're in trouble. To get rid of it, turn the computer off and then on again.

Another surefire sign of a scam is a request to send money somewhere to avert a calamity. Such as "I'm in Istanbul and I was mugged. I'm in a meeting right now so I can't talk to you but please send \$\$\$ to this address via Western Union."

Or a request to send gift card numbers and PINs to someone, again to avert certain doom.

In these cases, Hall said, the best thing to do is call the person directly and ask them if they are really in Istanbul without a cent (or lira).

Sometimes the scams appear to be official — such as a demand for money to settle an outstanding toll road debt.

The giveaway here is a "call to action": Settle this within 24 to 48 hours or else.

"Be skeptical," Hall urged the audience.

And don't click on the link.

What it's like to apply for college in COVID world

By Patrick L. Sullivan

FALLS VILLAGE — At the regular meeting of the Region One Board of Education on Monday, Dec. 7 (held online), the board heard from Kirin Terni and Sharon Veatch on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the college application process for Housatonic Valley Regional High School (HVRHS) students.

Terni said about half of colleges are allowing in-person visits, but there are limits to where visitors can go.

"Walking into a college campus now looks and feels very different," she said.

Virtual college tours have expanded, she continued. Students can speak with professors and coaches remotely. Terni said in some cases the virtual method provides more access than traditional tours.

This year HVRHS hosted 80 virtual college visits, with schools "coming to" HVRHS. She said some colleges, such as Princeton and Dartmouth, which might not have come for an in-person visit, did participate online.

Veatch said there have been numerous scheduling problems with standardized testing, with private schools deciding not to host the tests. HVRHS was able to give the SAT test in October for 56 seniors, spread out in the Science and Technology Center, the cafeteria and the gym.

The board approved three new courses at HVRHS: Literature of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), Pride Literature and Algebra Lab.

At a special meeting Tuesday, Dec. 15, the board voted to accept a recommendation for its Standing Building Committee to hire the firm of Jacunski

Humes to conduct a school infrastructure study for HVRHS at a cost of up to \$62,000. The idea is the study will set a five-year priority list and allow the school to address problems before they become emergencies.

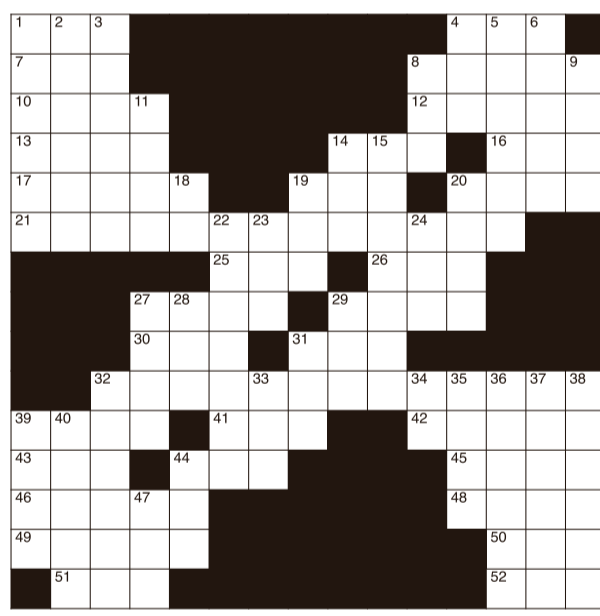
The board also voted for a building committee recommendation to purchase mobile ultra-violet-C (UVC) air purifiers, using a federal grant for the purpose.

There will be 73 units, one for each room in the high school, plus replacement parts and filters.

The UVC units will help with air quality in general as well as help mitigate immediate COVID-19 concerns.

Brain Teasers

- CLUES ACROSS 1. Crow species 4. Partner to flow 7. Male offspring 8. Sedate 10. Orange beverage 12. Pair of small hand drums 13. 12th month of Jewish civil year 14. Former Pirates star Jason 16. Computer company 17. Made angry 19. Beverage container 20. Charlize Theron film "Flux" 21. Localities 25. Consume 26. Don't know when yet 27. Bed style 29. Make a low, continuous sound 30. Wrath 31. Pollinates flowers 32. Association 39. Prejudice 41. Unhealthy 42. Hasidic religious leader 43. Distinctive philosophy 44. Short-term memory 45. In a good way 46. Emperors of Ethiopia 48. Imaginary line 49. Of barium 50. One's sense of self-esteem 51. Man who behaves dishonorably 52. Monetary unit



- CLUES DOWN 1. Rear of (nautical) 2. He minds the net 3. Ring-shaped objects 4. When you hope to get there 5. Young children 6. Beloved hobbit 8. Pigpen 9. Wish harm upon 11. Quick-eyed (Scottish) 14. Scrooge's phrase "Humbug" 15. One more 18. A ballplayer who only hits 19. Once vital TV part 20. Sixth month of Jewish civil year 22. Advantage 23. Type of tree 24. Luke's mentor —Wan

Look for the solution in next week's issue.

Dec. 17 Solution grid with words like RAMSAGES, IRINA, CAGOS, etc.

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers and Level: Intermediate label.

Dec. 17 Solution grid for the Sudoku puzzle, showing numbers in their respective positions.


Advertisement for EARLY DEADLINE for advertising notices, including contact info for The Lakeville Journal and Millerton News.

Advertisement for Noble Horizons, a nonprofit organization offering senior living, rehabilitation, nursing, and memory care.

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Our Towns

Solar panel company will pay taxes to town

By Leila Hawken

NORTH CANAAN — A solar energy facility proposed to be built on Sand Road and a proposed payment agreement with the town were discussed at the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Selectmen on Monday, Dec. 7. The meeting was held on Zoom.

Representing the project undertaken through Lodestar Solar Energy, Kirt Mayland reported that the project proposed for the Green Acres development at the north end of town is presently going through an approval process

with the Connecticut Siting Council.

Noting that the solar project, as planned, would be exempted from payment of personal property taxes to the town, he was seeking to propose an agreement with the town for a plan that would function in lieu of payment of the town's annual property taxes.

Hearing Mayland's proposal, the selectmen were in agreement as to its fairness. The solar project would pay the town \$15,000 in taxes annually for 20 years. A further suggestion by the selectmen that the project consider an incremen-

tal increase each year of 1.5% led Carrie Ortolano, associate general counsel for Lodestar, to agree to consider the add-on.

Selectman Craig Whiting said that the proposal seemed fair. To Selectman Christian Allyn's question about what would happen after 20 years, Ortolano replied that generally the useful life of the equipment is then at an end.

First Selectman Charles Perotti said that he saw no problem with the town being guaranteed that income amount. He plans to consult with the town attorney about the proposal.

Mayland indicated that he

would appear at the January selectmen's meeting to report on progress. His hope is to begin construction before the end of the year.

Perotti reminded residents that Town Hall remains closed due to COVID-19. It is important to call ahead for an appointment to schedule a visit. The main doors near the selectmen's office are closed. Visitors with appointments are to enter through the door near the resident state trooper's office.

Reacting to the recent uptick of local cases to 15, Perotti said, "Be careful, that's all. Unfortunately, it's in our town."

P&Z hears Geer plans for new 120-bed facility

By Leila Hawken

NORTH CANAAN — Plans for major construction to add a 120-bed nursing and rehabilitation facility on the South Canaan Road Geer campus were reviewed at a public hearing held during the Monday, Dec. 14, meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z).

No public comment was offered at the hearing. P&Z members indicated that they would wait for a final report from the Inland Wetlands Commission before reaching their decision on the application. Part of the 46-acre campus is located in a wetlands area.

The project has been in the planning stage for five years under the stewardship of Kevin O'Connell, CEO of Geer. An initial grant of \$2.2 million received from the state Department of Policy and Management in early 2019 helped with the planning and design phase.

A loan of \$30 million to be received from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) would largely finance construction of the new facility.

The three-story modern facility is to be located 600 feet south of the existing nursing facility, which was built in 1969. Each of the three floors of the new building will be 6,000

square feet in area, arranged either side of a central core where the nursing staff stations and offices will be located. Single-occupancy patient rooms will be in the east and west wings. The kitchen area will be on the third floor.

Once construction begins, the developers estimate that it will take 12 to 18 months to complete. The result will be an enhanced standard of care.

The project developers, The Geer Corporation, are applying for a special use permit for the site.

The building design is timber frame to complement Geer's existing main building. The new building's footprint will measure 28,000 square feet, and will feature surrounding courtyards. The lighting will be downcast to meet dark-sky requirements.

An increase of 14% in traffic is anticipated. The sewage effluent is estimated at 18,000 gallons per day. That estimate is based on 150 gallons per day for each bed, a figure that the designers felt exceeded what would be the actual amount.

P&Z Chairman Steven Allyn indicated that a report is expected soon from the Inland Wetlands Commission, making it possible for a vote on the application at the next P&Z meeting scheduled for Monday, Jan. 11, at 7 p.m.

Cornwall begins planning for affordable housing

By Leila Hawken

CORNWALL — Moving toward providing housing options for low- or moderate-income home buyers or renters, the Cornwall Board of Selectmen discussed housing needs at their regular meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 15, held remotely by Zoom.

Based on that discussion and information provided by Janell Mullen, a Northwest Hills Council of Governments [COG] consultant on affordable housing, the selectmen agreed to form a residents' committee to work with Mullen in devising a plan over the coming months.

First Selectman Gordon

Ridgway reported that by 2022, each town in the state must have an affordable housing strategy in place. The town received a COG grant of \$10,000 to accomplish the task with Mullen's assistance in her role as a regional planner.

Mullen is also assisting the towns of Harwinton and Falls Village with their housing plans.

"The underlying need for housing has not changed," Ridgway said, noting the surge in the real estate market in recent months due to the spread of COVID-19. The cost of real estate has gone up, he observed, and the population numbers have risen.

"Things are changing quick-

ly," he said. A year ago, Ridgway said, the state was predicting a population decline for Cornwall based on the advancing age of its residents.

The current rental inventory in town is low. Cornwall has only two units of vacant affordable housing available, Ridgway reported.

Key to the strategy will be planning with awareness of the distinction between affordable housing and workforce housing, described by Ridgway. The latter would be housing planned with local workers in mind, enabling those who work in town to find housing locally.

Selectman Priscilla Pavel said that there is little in town for sale at under \$350,000,

termining it a very tight market.

"It's a great time to examine affordable housing," Pavel said.

Mullen estimated that the residents' committee should expect to engage in nine months of planning meetings to arrive at a proposed plan; and one additional month for reporting their results.

The key goal, Mullen said, is to increase the number of affordable, diversified housing units, to aid towns in broadening their housing options.

Ridgway noted that transparency will be a key component in the process. He felt that Cornwall will offer the advantage of being creative in planning and considering a variety of options.

Hometown Holidays

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MOHAWK

Continued from Page A1

and hiking trails.”

Of course, the heavy use, especially by out-of-town visitors of hiking trails and, especially, the Housatonic River created problems for towns, with too many cars, too many people and not enough masks and social distancing. There was also a great deal of trash left in the wake of many of the visitors.

Lugar doesn't expect those kind of problems at the ski area.

“Skiing requires a little more organization,” she noted. There is also no way to just drive up to an unauthorized part of a snowy slope. Visitors have to purchase a lift ticket and, usually, rent equipment.

And if novices still want to come and try their hand at snow sports for the first time, that's just fine with Lugar.

“We're always prepared for that. Our place within the industry is that we teach a lot of people to ski and snowboard, this is a place where people can learn to ski.

Of course, she added, “There are always the young adult daredevils who spend 10 minutes on the easy stuff and



PHOTO BY LANS CHRISTENSEN

Although there wasn't much social distancing in the long lines at Mohawk Mountain Ski Area over the weekend, most skiers were fully outfitted with ski masks and protective facial gear.

decide they can handle it from the top.”

But, she said, “Our ski patrol is always prepared to deal with people who are a little out of their skill level; that's how they learn.”

People also learn the old-fashioned way: with lessons. COVID-19 has forced some changes in the lesson protocol for this season. Mohawk will mostly offer private lessons, but that can include all the members of a family “pod,” or a small group of friends who

are together all the time anyway.

“If they feel comfortable coming here in a group in one car, they will be comfortable taking a group lesson,” she said.

Hopefully those groups will come in a fairly large vehicle because this year, access to the building will be limited and skiers are being encouraged to out their ski gear on in their vehicles and store their regular shoes and gear and clothing there as well.

“That's sort of our philoso-

phy: The car is your new locker room,” Lugar said.

The ski area's new COVID-19 restrictions were put in place after consulting with state and area health officials and with other ski resort owners. Even though the lodge and other buildings seem large and barn-like, there are restrictions now on how many people can be inside at one time.

“We're trying to look at it as going a bit 'retro,' back to when we opened 74 years ago,” she quipped. “In the early years,

people would park in what is now the 'far' lot. They would gear up in their car and hike or ski up to Pine Lodge, which is now our sit-down restaurant. So we're kind of going back to that for this year.”

Lugar certainly has a sense of humor about the whole thing, which perhaps is an outgrowth of her family's main mission in running the ski area: “My father's bottom line was always that people should come here to have fun.”

Of course, for many area residents, Mohawk is also a place to come to work. The ski area employs as many as 400 full- and part-time workers, with about 20 staff members staying on even during the off season.

“One of my favorite groups is the newcomers to the job market, the students. I love

having them there and love being their first job.

“There are a lot of people who work here because they like to ski, and that's a benefit. Some people work here because they want their kids to ski; there are parents who drop their kids off to ski and wait for them, so we sometimes talk them into working for us. We have a lot of people who have other seasonal jobs, such as agriculture or other outdoor seasonal work.”

There's a lot at stake for the little ski area. Lugar seems confident that 2020 will end well for Mohawk — certainly better than it began.

“We shut down March 11 because of the pandemic, so we lost a quarter of our season. We had more snow and colder weather in March than we'd had earlier in the season; looking at the calendar and watching the weather, we could have gone into even April.

“But it wasn't to be, and that hurt. But we muddled through and here we are starting over.”

To find out more about this season's COVID-19 protocols are and what Mohawk's hours are, and also to see which trails are open and what the conditions are, go to www.mohawk-mtn.com.

“You can pre-buy a lot of the products and services there, too, such as lift tickets,” Lugar said. “It helps with the distancing and makes the time people spend in the building go a little quicker.”

TWIN LAKES

Continued from Page A1

natural flow of water. He says he purchased the site several years ago with the intention of removing the causeway.

Those who knew White said they fear that such a proposal would be a breach of the conservation easement, and it would harm the land that she sought to protect.

“She was a very intelligent woman and a dedicated conservationist,” said Elyse Harney, referring to her late friend. “Mary Alice was a formidable woman. When she wrote the conservation easement, she knew what she was saying.”

'She would be furious'

White's daughter, Kate Kimball, who now resides in Washington state on the Pacific Coast, said she was saddened and surprised to hear that after 30 years, her mother's conservation easement is being challenged. “The easement was everything to her. That property and its protection meant more to her than anything in her life. She was so proud of it, and rightfully so.”

Kimball said her mother moved to Salisbury in the 1970s. “I spent a summer there while in law school, in addition to visiting on holidays and vacations,” said Kimball. “I walked out to the gazebo with her,” situated at the end of the causeway, “with every visit.”

Her mother, said Kimball, was extremely proud of her property's conservation agreement, penned in 1990. Every visit thereafter, “She would say to me, ‘There's an easement on it,’” said Kimball. “If she knew that the causeway was in danger of being eliminated, she would be furious. She wanted to preserve the property as it was,” said White's daughter — particularly the area's wildlife and natural habitat.

“Her legacy is that this was not going to be disturbed. When the property was purchased, the easement was in place, and nothing's changed since,” said Kimball of its current ownership. “Removing 400 feet of the causeway would destroy the very thing she wanted to protect. That's not a ‘change in use.’ It eliminates land within the easement.”

Kimball, who has experience with land use/urban planning and helped write the Clean Air Act under Sen. George Mitchell, said she is counting on The Nature Conservancy to “stand up not only for my mother's easement,” but for other properties under its stewardship. “If you can blow apart this easement, what does that say” for similar agreements?

The landowner has yet to file a formal application with The Nature Conservancy, but if one is filed, said Kimball, she hopes that the conservancy will honor

“Salisbury, Sharon, all the little hill towns, look like they do largely because people have put land into conservation. If that protection can be eroded, landowners might wonder, ‘What is the point?’”

John Harney Jr.

her mother's intent. “We just have an unusual circumstance where someone has the means to suggest something like this,” said Kimball.

“I hope they are most focused on the fact that nothing's changed that would warrant destruction of the causeway,” and the risk of additional damage to the fragile ecosystem in the process of allowing “100 dump truck trips” to remove the man-made structure, said Kimball.

If The Nature Conservancy can't protect the easement, they should no longer be the trustee, White's daughter noted. “They should transfer it to another land trust willing to protect it.”

'Something doesn't feel right'

A group of citizens, headed by John Harney Jr. (who is Elyse Harney's son), has filed a petition with the town's Inland Wetlands Conservation Commission, raising concerns about clearing that they say Keenan has done on the property without first seeking permits and permission.

Salisbury's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission issued a Cease and Correct order to Keenan on Nov. 17 for disturbing and removal/cutting of “trees, brush and nesting habitat” without a permit at the Taconic Road property. The landowner has maintained that any clean-up of debris at the site was allowed under the easement. A show cause hearing on the issue is set for Jan. 4.

Although Keenan has communicated with town and lake officials and hired consultants regarding his proposal to cut 400 feet off the old railroad bed, he has not filed a formal application for the project either with The Nature Conservancy or with Inland Wetlands.

The petition filed with Inland Wetlands at their Dec. 7 meeting is premature to any formally announced plans for the causeway.

Harney said, “We've put the cart purposely ahead of the horse because our thought was

that it would be better to show a level of support to the town's Inland Wetlands Commission and let them know this issue is very much of interest to town residents.

“This is big enough that we would like to have this publicly chatted about. That's how a New England town does it — not in the dead of night. It's individuals coming forth who sense that something doesn't feel right.”

Harney rowed the waters of the Twin Lakes while attending Salisbury School from 1968-1971. He later coached rowing there and now paddles the waters for recreation. If there is anything that has changed over the past three decades at the old causeway site, he said, “It's that it has become more of a wildlife sanctuary as it's matured.”

Are easements truly protections?

Harney said he has received calls from concerned people who have placed conservation easements on their own land, asking, “If this is happening to Mary Alice's rights, what about ours? Is it only valid until the next owner?”

“Salisbury, Sharon, all the little hill towns, look like they do largely because people have put land into conservation. If that protection can be eroded, landowners might wonder, ‘What is the point?’”

Elyse Harney said the sanctity of, and trust in, land conservation easements is at stake.

“It's very important, because if The Nature Conservancy is going to take the role of being the steward for a conservation easement like this, it reflects on everyone and all land trusts.”

Kate Kimball said she will continue to monitor the causeway situation and the fate of her mother's legacy. “My hope is that the community doesn't get dragged into years of studies and uncertainty on this.”

Nature is messy and wild

White's son, Chris Kimball, recalled that his mother had an

infallible respect for the land in its natural state. “I remember walking on the causeway, and it was messy and that was the essence of nature for her — not coming in and cleaning it up, because nature isn't about cleaning stuff up.”

His mother, said Kimball, “viewed it as being an ecosystem. It wasn't about the view. She was very much an environmentalist. She liked the wildness of nature, because nature, by definition, is chaotic and unruly.”

Before White moved to her circa 1700 house on Salisbury's Twin Lakes — where she raised free-range chickens that would often wander into the roadway, according to those who knew her — White resided in New York's Westchester County.

Chris Kimball recalled a home his family once owned in Rye, N.Y., on a corner lot in a neighborhood lined with dogwood and beech trees, a short drive from the country club and waterfront. His mother, he said, took a down-to-earth approach to landscaping. She would plant a vast garden and wouldn't tend it, he said, preferring instead to leave it alone. “It was like the survival of the fittest.”

What is at stake

Kimball, who said he “doesn't have a dog in the fight,” as the Lake Washinee property has long been transferred out of his family's ownership, said what is at stake beyond his mother's legacy is not only the sanctity of conservation easements in general, but an erosion of Salisbury's beauty.

“The charm of Salisbury is the ungrooved part of it; there's a soul to the place. If you keep cleaning everything up, you end up with nothing from the past,” nothing that gives the town character.

Kimball echoed his sister's position that there is no evidence of any new ecological threat from the causeway that would warrant its removal. “There is no need for it. The Nature Conservancy should get off its rear end and do its job or let some other organization take it over and manage it.”

2021 LEGISLATURE

Continued from Page A1

be considered.

“Our government is not a digital government,” she said. The drafting of bills is heavily reliant on paper, she added.

“That's not a bad thing.”

She said a concern about holding employers harmless because of difficulties with unemployment benefits is already covered in existing law.

Horn said work is already being done on a bill that would make it easier to use space designated for municipal purposes on existing utility poles for fiber optics.

Asked about holding hearings online, Horn said that in some ways the remote version is better because people who wish to testify don't have to travel to Hartford and then “sit around for hours.”

But the online procedure is not flawless either, she said, adding that she is confident the Legislature can find a workable solution.

State Sen. Craig Miner (R-30) said the regulations review committee will look at spill regulations, particularly “legacy staining” in soils, which he said have a “significant effect on single-family homes.”

He said the environment committee will be taking a look at digesters as a way to reduce food and animal waste in the

“There's almost not enough money to do what we need to do. We shouldn't be taking it from each other.”

State Sen. Craig Miner (R-30)

municipal solid waste stream, as well as raising the bottle deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents, and expanding the categories of bottles covered by the deposit.

Miner noted he is the ranking member on the Appropriations Committee. “I always get this assignment when there's no money.”

He said he did not want to get into the “perennial battles” between wealthy and “not wealthy” municipalities.

“There's almost not enough money to do what we need to do. We shouldn't be taking it from each other.”

The Legislature must deal with an estimated \$4.3 billion deficit over the two-year budget. The state will have about \$2.1 billion in reserve funds.

Horn said that businesses and municipalities “need resources the state doesn't have.”

Finding an answer will be “extraordinarily difficult.”

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NEW YEAR'S EVE: CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

Caviar as a Way To Usher in Good Fortune for the Coming Year

New Year's Eve is coming up, a time when even those of us who think we're pretty sensible are inclined to indulge in some superstition and wishful thinking. We will make resolutions and we will make toasts and we will eat "good luck" foods such as hoppin' john or noodles shaped like coins — or caviar.

Caviar is a lavishly luxurious food that Russians traditionally ate at New Year's as a talisman, meant to usher in a year of abundance and good fortune.

And you'll need a fortune if you want to get some caviar — which is not inexpensive. But caviar, like sushi, is an indulgence where it pays to get the good stuff. If you mostly eat the day-old \$5 sushi special from the grocery store, you haven't really experienced the wonders of Japanese raw fish. If you've only ever bought your caviar in little glass jars at the grocery store, it might be a salty but enjoyable treat but it's not really caviar — certainly not the kind that will signal to the angels that you're hoping for a New Year of Great Benefits.

There ain't nothing like the real thing

Shopping for caviar is tricky, if you're not an expert. The world is full of ersatz olive oil and truffles and even vanilla beans and peppercorns. Needless to say, the world of caviar is full of charlatans as well.

"Caviar is like diamonds or cocaine," said Michael Kline, who lives in Salisbury, Conn., with his wife, Alexandra Du Cane; together they are the owners of Pointy Snout Caviar.

The love story behind Michael and Alexandra's meeting and marriage is a really good one; if you ever meet them, you should ask them to share it. But long story short, after notable careers in finance and fashion/photography/publicity, they are now semi-re-

Until Jan. 2, 25% of gross sales of caviar by Pointy Snout, based in Salisbury, Conn. (and packaged in Millerton, N.Y.), will be donated to an area food pantry. Annie Wayte of The White Hart in Salisbury serves the caviar on brioche toast rounds, with Hudson Valley creme fraiche from Ronnybrook Farm Dairy.



PHOTO BY ELIZA HOYLAND

tired here — semi retired, but running a company that sells fine caviar that has been sustainably raised and cared for with the love and tenderness one might lavish on a precious baby.

Not everyone bestows that kind of care on their caviar, Kline notes, referring to the dark side of the luxury industry that he and Du Cane discovered after they started Pointy Snout in the mid 1990s.

"Many heads of caviar companies have ended up in jail," he said. "There is a slight menace to this business."

For those of us on the consumer side of the equation, that menace translates to, "You can spend a lot of money for caviar that isn't remotely what the label promises."

Du Cane and Kline are the opposite of what seems to be the norm in their new professional world: They seem completely transparent and dedicated to their customers' easy access to and enjoyment of their product.

"We love many of the traditions of caviar, the legacy," Kline said. "But we wanted to take the intimidation factor out of it. We wanted people to have fun with it, not be afraid of it."

The trigger that got them into this business in the first place was the realization that the caviar-producing sturgeon were being overfished and were in danger of extinction. So their other mission, in addition to providing delight, was to support farms that were sustainably produc-

ing caviar — and not only protecting the wild fish (by not capturing them) but also by releasing sturgeon that had been raised in captivity out into the wild.

Stepping gently into a new world

Kline and Du Cane are the best tour guides you could wish for on a maiden voyage into the world of caviar. Their attitude is not, "If you have to ask the price, you can't afford it." It's more along the lines of, "No, no, don't get that one, it's too expensive for what you're trying to do. Get this one instead."

Which is not to say that they aren't willing to sell you a kilo of their finest eggs. That is completely an option.

But for those of us who are just looking to step up a rung from grocery store roe, they strongly encourage a small container of their less expensive Siberian caviar. Without going into exhaustive detail (feel free to ask them to explain), the fish that produce these eggs are raised on a farm in Uruguay that takes exquisite care of the fish; the eggs are sold without borax on them (which is technically illegal but somehow borax-treated eggs still manage to cross the border); and the caviar costs \$150 for 50 grams.

"Fifty grams is plenty for two people," Kline promises.

"Or even three," Du Cane adds.

They recommend that you eat your caviar right away once you've opened the tin. In other words, don't buy a big container and plan to nibble away at it over the course of a few months.

"It's not that the eggs will go bad," Du Cane clarifies. But the quality

will degrade. Like high-end wine merchants looking to develop loyalty in their clientele, Kline and Du Cane don't want you to have a bad experience with their product.

They want you to love it and realize that, if you're going to splurge for a big occasion, then you should do it with Pointy Snout Caviar (which is named, in case you didn't figure it out yourself, for the needle-tip proboscis of the caviar-producing sturgeon fish).

A benefit for an area food pantry

This all of course sounds terribly 1%, which is really the exact opposite impression of the one Kline and Du Cane would like to present.

They are now running a special holiday season promotion which is less of a marketing scheme and more of a heartfelt thank you to the community they have come to love and appreciate.

"We want to do what we can to share during this season when so many people can't afford to buy food, much less caviar," Du Cane said.

Anyone who purchases caviar from the Pointy Snout website (or by calling or emailing directly) between now and Jan. 2 can enter a special code (the code is 2020). Kline and Du Cane will then donate 25% of the gross sale to the Corner Food Pantry.

For normal shopping, you can purchase Pointy Snout at Guido's in Great Barrington, Mass., and at Westerlind Pantry in Millerton, N.Y. But don't do that for your holiday season purchase; buy direct from Pointy Snout

Continued on next page



PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE RARE

Ballet Collective's performance of "The Nutcracker" inside and on the grounds of the historic Wethersfield estate in Amenia, N.Y., can be seen "virtually" until Dec. 26.

BALLET:
CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

'The Nutcracker,' Performed Live In and Around Wethersfield

For many of us, the holiday season isn't complete without watching or listening to Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker."

While it's comforting to watch a favorite older version (such as the New York City Ballet production featuring a young Macaulay Culkin, from 1993), it's of course wonderful to watch a new version of this old favorite.

There's an innovative new version now available for streaming that was filmed earlier in December on the grounds of Chauncey Stillman's grand Wethersfield estate in Dutchess County, N.Y.

The ballet, which begins in the living room of a manor house, is performed in and around the grounds of the estate. Costumes for the party scene were designed by the late and very elegant Oscar de la Renta (who was for many years a part-time resident of Kent, Conn.), and Todd Snyder, who does kind of campy, fun modernizations of American classic clothing.

The performers are all with New York City's Ballet Collective. As they entertain young Clara with holiday delights in the form of delicious short dances dedicat-

ed to "Tea" and "Sugar Plums" and exotic worlds, they also lead a tour of Wethersfield's rooms and gardens.

Ballet Collective's Troy Schumacher directed and was the choreographer. For the original live performance, small groups of socially distanced guests were invited to walk through the rooms and grounds to experience the ballet. It was an invitation-only performance that is now available "virtually."

To find out how to stream the performances, go to the website at www.nutcrackeratwethersfield.com/about; you can also link from there to the Wethersfield website, which has more details on the neo-Georgian manor house, formal garden and carriage house museum. The property was once the home of Chauncey Stillman, grandson of James Stillman, chairman of the National Bank, which later became CitiBank. The estate is now managed by the nonprofit Wethersfield Foundation.

The streamed performances are free but donations will help the foundation to maintain the property. The stream will be available until midnight on Dec. 26.

ADVERTISE IN COMPASS

To advertise your event under the Arts & Entertainment banner, call 860-435-9873 or email advertising@lakevillejournal.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Despite concerns about COVID-19, many cultural venues are opening again and many events are being scheduled — but some events are then being canceled as infections rise again. It's a good idea to check websites before you go to an event.

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BOOKS: PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

An Attorney Takes on Attorneys — Who ‘Take Themselves too Seriously’

Tom Morrison, of Salisbury, Conn., lampoons the legal world in his first novel, “Torts R’ Us,” published this fall and available at Oblong Books in Millerton, N.Y., and Salisbury Pharmacy.

Morrison will discuss the book with Bill Litaauer, a retired network newsman who also lives in Salisbury, at an online event sponsored by Noble Horizons (also in Salisbury, Conn.) on Thursday, Jan. 7, at 7 p.m. (go to www.noblehorizons.org for details.)

The story revolves around the Peters broth-

ers, Patrick A. (known as “Pap”) and Prescott U. (aka “Pup”) as they leave their comfortable perches in established New York law firms and start their own firm, specializing in class-action lawsuits.

This in turn takes them to New York City strip clubs and to the murky world of Midwestern college basketball.

Along the way there’s a woman who does battle with environmentalists over geese removal, a website that publishes mugshots, and a pulchritudinous paralegal.

If it all sounds some-

what familiar, that’s because the various subplots are “inspired by real cases,” Morrison said in a phone interview.

Asked why an experienced, respectable attorney nearing his well-earned retirement would write a broadly farcical novel making fun of his profession, Morrison was clear: “Lawyers take themselves too seriously.”

Although in his half-century of practice he didn’t do much class-action work, Morrison said he believed that many such lawsuits are frivolous “and should not be

brought.”

Referring to the phenomenon of a person receiving a letter inviting the recipient to participate in a class-action suit, Morrison said most of the money from a victory will go to the lawyers involved.

“You’ll get \$1.78 and some coupons.”

(Such as the Victoria’s Secret gift certificate which is part of the settlement for the book’s strippers.)

Morrison has a lot of fun with names — the incontestably preppy Pap and Pup, the well-known pharmaceutical company

Jumpsum and Gypsum, busybody Nina Nosenyourbus and the Friends of Geese, Groundhogs and Yaks (FROGGY).

Asked if he was worried that his satire might strike someone as actionable, Morrison was sanguine.

“I wish they would,” he laughed. “It would increase sales.”

And for those who don’t agree with the words, “It’s only funny until someone files a lawsuit,” there are now virtual online tours of Ralph Nader’s American Museum of Tort Law in his hometown of Winsted, Conn. Famous tort law cases are explained in snappy short text boxes illustrated with cartoons. Go to www.tortmuseum.org.

...Caviar

Continued from previous page

to activate the food pantry donation.

To make it even more enticing, Kline and Du Cane will invite you into their packaging facility in Millerton, which is on South Center Street; or they’ll even deliver it to your house, if you live in Salisbury, Sharon or Millerton. You should take them up on that offer, because as long as this article is, it could have gone on for pages more; these two have a lot of stories to tell, about their interesting lives and about their beloved caviar.

To order Pointy Snout Caviar go to www.pointysnout.com; or email alex.ducane@gmail.com. If you order online be sure to enter the special code 2020 to activate the 25% food pantry donation; if you phone in your order (800-910-1760) be sure to mention that you’re an area resident and would like your order to trigger the donation.

‘GRUMPY CAT’ AND THE MADNESS OF INTERNET MEMES EXPLORED IN A NEW PLAY: ‘PUT ON A GRUMPY FACE’

You don’t have to be a super sophisticated user of the internet to know about the “Grumpy Cat” meme. It started in 2012, when photos of a cat named Tardar Sauce got posted online. Because of what her owners think is feline dwarfism, Tardar Sauce has what might be referred to as a “resting grumpy face.” People started using photos and videos of the cat as a blank canvas for making jokes; and the Grumpy Cat meme was born (go to www.grumpycats.com to learn more).

Reed Halvorson’s new play, “Put on a Grumpy Face,” imagines what would have happened if Tardar Sauce’s owners had become dependent on the income from their cat’s popularity — and if the cat had suddenly stopped looking grumpy. The play explores the fast-changing world of internet celebrity, and will be screened between Jan. 1 and 13 as part of the ninth annual International Playwrights Festival at the Nancy Marine Studio at the Warner Theatre in Torrington, Conn. To stream this and other plays in the festival, go to <https://youtu.be/sZxOIU47rRw>. The performances are free but donations are welcome.

— Cynthia Hochswender



PHOTO BY SHARON W. HOUK

“Put on a Grumpy Face,” a new play by Reed Halvorson, will be featured in the first two weeks of January, online, as part of the ninth annual International Playwrights Festival at the Nancy Marine Studio at the Warner Theatre in Torrington, Conn.

SIMMONS, STREEP AND DUNHAM AND A JAN. 9 FILM & FUNDRAISER

The Northwest Corner of Connecticut has more than a normal number of well-known artists. Some know each other, some don’t; some work together on feature films or television programs, others never cross professional paths with their peers.

A fundraising Zoom event for the Cornwall, Conn., public library on Jan. 9 will bring together three disparate artists in one combination film screening and live interview.

Laurie Simmons is a respected artist whose work often includes dolls and ventriloquist dummies. In 2006, the Cornwall resident made a short film featuring the dolls and dummies; The Alvin Ailey II Dancers, an arm of the famed modern dance company that features newer dancers; and the actress Meryl Streep, who is, well, Meryl Streep and, among other things, an area resident.

Streep sings and performs in “The Music of Regret,” a film made by Simmons (who also wrote all the song lyrics) that explores “love, interpersonal dynamics, problems with neighbors, and of course, regret,” according to the



STILL PHOTO FROM ‘THE MUSIC OF REGRET’

Meryl Streep brings to life the 2006 short film “The Music of Regret” by photographer/artist/filmmaker Laurie Simmons. The film will be screened Saturday, Jan. 9, and followed by an interview with Simmons and her daughter, Lena Dunham.

press release sent out by the Cornwall Library.

That’s a lot of information to digest about a 40-minute film and a 90-minute fundraiser. To help viewers unpack it all, the screening of the film will be followed by a conversation between Simmons and her daughter, Lena Dunham, an actor/director/writer who is known for her HBO television series, “Girls.”

Dunham’s father and Simmons’ husband (just to add another layer of complexity) is the painter Carroll Dunham. He will

not take part in this particular fundraiser; neither will Cyrus Grace Dunham, Lena’s sibling, who was also in “Girls.”

The screening and interview will be on Zoom on Saturday, Jan. 9, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Viewers can send questions in during the post-film conversation. The cost is \$20 per household/computer screen. This is a benefit for the Cornwall Library in Cornwall, Conn., but residents of all towns are welcome to participate.

To register, go to the “events/programs” page at www.CornwallLibrary.org.

NEW YEAR 2021: CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

Greeting 2021 With Calligraphy and Wishes

In contrast to the boisterousness of New Year’s celebrations in the West, the Japanese traditionally greet the new year with quiet reflection.

There is even a Japanese buddhist admonition to “stay at home and drink sake with your wife” on New Year’s Eve.

One annual ritual is the practice of “kaki-zome,” or first writing: Japanese will take out their calligraphy brushes and practice writing out the labor-intensive but beautiful pictographs (or ideographic logograms, if you want to be precise) of Japanese “kanji.”

The Mid-Hudson Japanese Community Association has teamed up with the Folk Arts Program at Arts Mid-Hudson to

present a workshop on kakizome and a selection of other traditional Japanese art forms including origami and the making of sweet rice flour mochi cakes, which are eaten on New Year’s day along with small oranges.

According to the news release announcing the video, “Kakizome is ... based on the belief that practicing one kanji over and over helps the writer focus on the hoped-for theme. If there is ever a time that stating such intentions is vital, 2021 is surely the year.”

Because of the pandemic, the workshop will be online only and can be watched on Facebook at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 9 (search the Arts Mid Hudson page) and on YouTube after the live stream.

TRI-CORNER CALENDAR

Look for a regional calendar of events at our website, www.tricornernews.com/events-calendar. We will also include the calendar in our print edition as space allows.



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Health

It's better when you make your own beef stock at home

About five years ago the world decided that bone broth was a magical elixir that could help cure our most serious afflictions (which at that time mostly seemed to amount to wrinkles and joint pain).

Well, the world is a different place now and we have different health priorities, but of course wrinkles and joint pain continue to plague many of the world's inhabitants.

The sad truth is that bone broth doesn't actually help with those superficial but still annoying ills, at least according to the Harvard Health website. And oddly, there doesn't seem to be any research that supports bone broth as a healthy part of your diet; and yet, it seems impossible that it wouldn't be good for you.

If nothing else, there is at minimum something to be said for having hot, satisfying homemade food in the cold winter months.

Holiday kitchen wish list

In a sense, this is also a last-minute holiday shopping story, because making bone broth (or beef stock, as it is also known) involves my four most beloved kitchen tools, all available in a range of price points both online and at area big box stores. Any chef who doesn't have these yet will deeply appreciate a small digital scale (the Escali Primo is reliable and easy to operate) at about \$25; a digital thermometer (the Lavatools Javelin used to be cheaper but is now \$26 and extraordinarily helpful); a really good knife (for Christmas I received and am already using a Victorinox bread knife, which I use on everything including meat); and a large Instantpot, which I scoffed at originally but which I now use almost daily. Since you're probably reading

this on Christmas Day or after, think about obtaining these if you end up making an exchange somewhere and have credits to use up.

Why bother?

If you're going to go to the trouble to make beef stew or short ribs or a thick enriching winter soup, you need a good stock at the base, to make it richer and tastier and more unctuous — and healthier — even if for no other reason than that it will have no preservatives and probably less salt than packaged stock.

Stock is expensive and takes a long time, but it's worth the effort. And if you have an Instantpot, the time is much shorter and your stock will be much richer. The two basic reasons are that steam doesn't escape an Instantpot; and supposedly the broth doesn't boil as hard and get agitated and cloudy.

The best bones to buy

The recipe for this stock is online at www.kitchn.com, and it also provides directions on how to make stock without an Instantpot. I made three versions of this stock and found that I like to use much less water for a richer, more concentrated broth (which will take less room in my freezer and which has a delightful solid jelly texture).

The basic recipe calls for 2 pounds of beef bones, but I bought about 7 pounds, for \$115. I could have been fine with 3 pounds, but you do want to get a good variety. LaBonne's market in Salisbury had for sale the trifecta of essential stock bones: ox tail, short rib and osso bucco or shank. Sharon Farm Market in Sharon, Conn., also has a large freezer case full of these essential broth bones.

Because I bought twice as many bones as I needed, I now

FOOD FOR HEALTH

CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

have enough broth to last me for two years. I wanted the mix of different bone types, though; if you want to get all the bones but don't think you'll need as much broth, maybe share with a friend.

Roast & boil

Rinse off 3 pounds of bones, pat them dry with a paper towel and then roast them on a foil-lined baking sheet for about 45 minutes at 400 degrees. You can do this a day or two before you make the stock. You can weigh the bones on your handy Escali scale if you can't figure out the weights from the label on the meat package.

I left the bone on the meat when I roasted it, and after it was done, I sliced off the delicious short rib and osso bucco meat after roasting and before the next step.

Put the bones in the Instantpot with 6 cups of water (use filtered water if your tap water has a mineral or bleach-y or sour taste; your broth is only as good as your water). Add three tablespoons of cider vinegar (or white wine vinegar is fine; it'll cook off).

Put the Instantpot on "sauté" and "high" for 30 minutes. Skim off any foam from the top and wipe it on a paper towel and dispose of it as it cooks. You want a super clear broth with no impurities in it.

Pressure cook for hours

Next, put the lid on and close the steam vent. Set the cooker to pressure cook/high/2 hours. It will take about an hour to reach high pressure, so add that to your 2-hour timetable.



PHOTO BY CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER

While you're waiting for the broth to cook and cool, peel two carrots and cut them in half; and peel and quarter one and a half modest-sized onions.

After it completes its two hours, you'll want to let it come down to pressure naturally; do not try to release the steam or you could end up with a geyser of hot liquid shooting out of the pot at you.

When the pressure release valve drops, add the vegetables, then close up the cooker and set it again to pressure cook/high/2 hours (be sure as always that the vent is closed). When it's done, again, let the pressure release naturally.

Straining the broth

You'll want to have a lot of ice ready; and if you have a cold porch, this is the time to use it as a kitchen annex. It's essential for you to cool off the broth as quickly as possible. You can't put it in the fridge until the broth is down to about 60 degrees, though, or it will just heat up your refrigerator (yes, this really happens).

Take a large bowl and put in about 2 inches of ice and cold water. Put a large bowl in the

ice. Put a mesh strainer in the bowl and add some cheesecloth on top of that (yes, we are fighting hard against impurities).

Do not pour your broth into the bowl. First, gently lift out the bones and veggies and put them in a separate bowl.

Then, gently ladle the stock into your bowl/strainer/cheese cloth. Do not pour it; the weight of the liquid will force impurities through your cheesecloth and your mesh. It's tedious but, if you've come this far already why ruin it in the last steps?

Gently lift the strainer and cheesecloth out of the broth bowl and throw them away. Then stir the thick brown liquid in your bowl. If you can, take the broth bowl and its partner ice bowl and put them in your cold porch. It will now take two or three hours for the broth to come down to about 60 degrees.

Stir the broth every 20 minutes or so. You'll know it's ready when you're able to easily scoop the fat off the top. You can also dip your digital thermometer in the liquid and get an instant readout on the temperature.

Storing it for the winter

Gently pour your broth into a large rectangular storage container or a large bowl that you can cover, and put it in the refrigerator overnight.

In just a few hours, your broth should set to a nice solid wobbly gelatin.

Spoon your gelatin into several small storage containers that you can keep in the freezer until you need them. If it's really nice and solid, as it should be, you can gently turn your container over onto a cutting board.

If you used a rectangular container you will find it's easy to cut this broth up into individual slices that you can put in containers and freeze. A 3-inch slice is a good amount for stew for two or three people.

Once the bones have cooled, you can pick the tender beef off the oxtails and make sandwiches with it.

You can also marinate your short ribs and cook them with your new broth — in your Instantpot, if you have one, or in whatever cooking vessel traditionally works best for you.

Campaign for Sharon Hospital ends Dec. 31

If it is true (and it is) that Sharon Hospital is there for Tri-state area residents when they need a small, good hospital, for everything from maternity to emergency room visits, it is equally true that many of the region's celebrities make themselves available to help the hospital when it is in need.

This is one of those moments. COVID-19 has stressed nearly all organizations that must interface with the public, including of course all health-care providers.

A fundraising drive that began in April will end at midnight on Dec. 31. The goal is to raise \$1 million through the hospital's foundation.

"This is a significant gift for Sharon Hospital," hospital President Dr. Mark Hirko said.

The campaign was started by an anonymous donor, who has promised to "match every donation dollar-for-dollar."

At press time, almost all the money had been pledged except \$65,000.

The money will be used, according to a press release sent

out last week, for:

- "Improving the wireless and cellular coverage at the hospital so patients, staff and visitors can communicate more effectively;" as anyone knows who has spent time in the emergency department, cell service is limited at the hospital.

- "Essential structural upgrades for utilities/HVAC systems for air quality, flow, humidity and overall patient and staff safety. These are not visible but important as everyone has learned by the virus' airborne transmission."

- "Diagnostic/Patient Care: Population increase and patient demands led to hiring an additional cardiologist as of July 1. Cardiology diagnostic equipment and a new MRI machine are needed."

For anyone who needs additional convincing to make a donation, six area celebrities have stepped up (as they have in the past) to tell you why they think the hospital is important and a worthy beneficiary.

In the past, these folks have

spoken out on, for example, local newscasts, but because we live in a world of live streaming, you can watch them this time on social media.


The links to the short pitches from Sam Waterston, Meryl Streep, Kevin Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick, Liam Neeson and Jane Curtin can be found at www.facebook.com/SharonHospital/photos; you need to click on "videos" and then scroll down to see the short films (you can also type the performer's name into the search bar on the hospital photo page).

Donations can be made to Sharon Hospital Challenge, c/o The Foundation, Sharon Hospital 50 Hospital Hill Road, Sharon CT 06069; or online at www.nuvancehealth.org/supportsharonhospital. Gifts can be IRAs/DAFs and appreciated securities as well as checks and cash. Sharon Hospital is now part of the regional nonprofit Nuvance Health, which has doctors and hospitals in Connecticut and New York.

— Cynthia Hochswender

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This letter has been enclosed in print editions of The Lakeville Journal and Millerton News and on www.tricornernews.com. We invite all our readers to continue to keep track of our progress and we will keep you updated regularly.

Can you imagine a world without your Lakeville Journal or Millerton News?

Dear Reader,

Late in 2019, we came to you, hat in hand, to share with you our story within the world of vanishing local journalism. You generously supported us, to date, in the amount of \$164,975 in what was known as the "Community Membership" model and will now be known as the "Community Contributor" model.

- Your generosity made up a deeply appreciated 39% of annual General Expenses from September of 2019.
- We are happy to have qualified for a PPP loan (which we will convert to a 'grant', having met the necessary criteria), in the amount of \$146,643, contributing 35% of General Expenses during this same period.
- As they experienced their own COVID-19 cash needs, our steadfast advertisers needed to scale back their commitments to us. Our advertising revenue has dropped over 30%.
- Effective October 15, 2020, we have raised the cost of the newspaper to two dollars, the first increase since 2003.

COVID-19 has awakened an awareness of the significance of our papers, as we seek information about our world. Thanks to our Community's generosity and the unwavering dedication of our fine Team, we were able to remain fully functional through this pandemic. We love our Community partnership. We will continue our work, with your kind respect and support.

— The Lakeville Journal Company, LLC

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In return for your Community Contribution, we regret that we cannot offer a tax deduction at this time.

EDITORIAL

There should be a path to compromise

There are so many opportunities for miscommunication and mutual misunderstanding during the isolation COVID-19 distancing and sheltering has produced. On social media, especially when it comes to politics, the impersonal approach to exchanging ideas and positions can lead to harsh divisions. There is no gray area in such discourse any more.

This could also well be part of what has led to more polarized discussion locally, with town meetings of all kinds now happening online and with much less, if any, in-person contact. While more people may be able to attend such meetings no matter their ability to travel, it can be tougher than ever to find common ground on the more contentious topics up for decisions at the meetings.

Those topics include, but are not limited to, affordable housing, planning and zoning and land trust management. The discussions in Falls Village and Salisbury around these issues have taken turns that seem more personal and confrontational than those that would happen face-to-face, with all parties in one room.

On the topic of affordable housing, for instance, those opposing the current proposals in both Salisbury and Falls Village say they support the concept of affordable housing and understand the acute need for more in the area. But the specific projects on the table have flaws, they argue, that just cannot be overcome.

Now is the time for all sides to come together and figure out a compromise, in both towns, so that opportunities to create this essential housing aren't lost, as others have been. With the influx of many who can well afford individual residences to the Northwest Corner and the surrounding area, it is more essential than ever that the people who cannot afford the rate of local housing be supported in their wish to live here: teachers, medical workers, restaurant staff, local journalists, town and school staff, contractors, landscapers and more. They, and all our communities, would benefit from more housing options in an area that only seems to escalate in cost of living.

These are the critical people who help our society function. One example is those who made a big difference to quality of life following the snowstorm Dec. 17. A lot of snow fell overnight and into the next morning, but the area residential plowers and town crews got out in the middle of the storm and, along with state plow drivers on the state roads, made the roads and driveways drivable and safer as the days went on and the temperatures stayed cold. Thanks to all who moved a lot of snow around in the dark and cold, then had to dig their own homes out after they were done. Where would the area be if there isn't housing available for these folks, and others who are so willing to serve their communities doing fire, ambulance, town and other volunteering? This is a moment when a changing of the guard is happening, and many of those who have served for decades are aging out of their roles. There needs to be space for others to step up, and to find reasonable and good lives here while they're at it.

Let's hope that communication improves and compromise becomes a real part of the discussion going into 2021, for the good of all our communities.

Just the facts on the 18 states' case

Heartbreaking that anyone would suggest that states leave the Union as retaliation for the nation's Supreme Court complying with the Constitution — a startling stance being proclaimed by some officials in Texas. Peaceful transition of power, a weight-bearing support to democracy, is American, is so stated in the Constitution. Threatening secession as recourse for not succeeding at overturning votes of citizens of other states is puzzling, perplexing, incomprehensible and downright sad.

Seventeen state AG'S joined Texas in its recent suit regarding the 2020 election — pretty much the same states that joined Texas earlier at the Supreme Court deeming the Affordable Care Act unconstitutional (Texas vs. California).

Who are these 18 states representing 36% of the number of states in the Union with 34% of the U.S. population? If they seceded what might be implications for the U.S.? Of the 18 states supporting the Texas election results filing to the Supreme Court, two, Florida and Texas, are among the top 10 states ranked by their GDP, four more states are in the top 20 for state GDP. Regarding GDP per capita — how productive/wealthy are a state's citizens? — only Nebraska is among the 10 states with the highest GDP per capita with three others in the top 15.

For geographical positioning, the 18 states when encir-

led on the US map are mainly dead center — half of the Mississippi River runs through them — up to and including Missouri. Their boundaries incorporate the Gulf of Mexico but no water ways/ports along the Atlantic or Pacific, not a resident Great Lake. Utah, Indiana and West Virginia would be physically adrift among the remaining 32 states that supported the ACA and did not join the SCOTUS case on the 2020 election results. If secession happened, interstate commerce would perhaps have three regions — Western/South Western 11 states, Atlantic Northern 21 states, and the Central 18. One of these 18 Central states would share a border with Mexico and two states would share a border with Canada — neighboring countries forming the U.S.'s largest trade partners.

Sixty-five percent of the top 20 federally dependent states (take in more federal funds than they pay out) are of this cadre of 18 looking to overturn the 2020 Presidential. As for health access, quality and public health, the 18 states were 14 of the lowest 20 rated health care states — 65% of the bottom 20. Only Utah was among the top 20 rated states for health care. Currently eight of the contesting cadre are among the top 20 states in COVID deaths per capita.

Recent political affronts in the US indicate a strong disinclination toward agreement on

policies and politicians. Patching the frays in the fabric of the nation seems, on many days, impossible.

Yet Abe Lincoln reminded us:

"America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves."

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies."

Kathy Herald-Marlowe Sharon

Letters are no more than 500 words. You may email letters to publisher@lakeville-journal.com.

Listen to people who study these things

"Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." Martin Luther King said this half a century ago.

Once upon a time there was respect for education as opposed to just opinion. So now we have deli owners weighing in on grave matters of public health because, after all, opinions are for the having.

And we have a president spewing forth false claims as to the efficacy of hydroxychloroquine and Clorox instillations because he believes he's a smart guy who thinks he might just have a talent for medicine on top of his many other skills.

This is the tyranny of the under-informed and over-opinionated. Why would anyone listen to them rather than someone who got eight-plus years of medical education? Don't!

Marietta Whittlesey

Lakeville Gallatin, N.Y.



PHOTO BY JANET MANKO

Winter's arrived

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Support your local libraries

Canaan's Douglas Library website was unable to accept donations for the last few weeks. The site is now fixed and I was able to make a donation in memory of my stepfather yesterday.

I encourage all Northwest Corner residents to use and appreciate their local libraries, especially in these rough winter months. Curbside pick-up is available and librarians are available to help you with selections. My Canaan family is especially grateful to librarian Norma DeMay at Douglas, who makes spot-on book, film, and resource recommendations for a wide range of tastes, and does a great job of affordably sourcing new material for patrons of all ages.

I hope that Journal readers avail themselves of these local treasures and, if they are able, to support them with a donation.

Stay safe, strong, and well-read.

Kristine Anstine Berkeley, Calif.

The next issue of The Lakeville Journal will publish on Jan. 7, 2021. The deadline for letters for that issue is Monday, Jan. 4, 2021 at 10 a.m.

More letters next page.

Thanks for the support for ambulance purchase

The Sharon Fire Department, Inc./ Ambulance Squad wishes to thank all of the supporters of our "Lights of Love" fundraising event for a new ambulance. We were able to light up 3,000 linear feet of the Sharon Green with approximately 1,200 lights honoring loved ones both past and present.

While the weather presented challenges, the evening was lovely and community members enjoyed walking around the Green as they looked for that special luminaria in recognition of families, friends and community members. Others drove by enjoying the beauty of this event taking in the beautiful tree lights and luminarias from a distance.

Many thanks to Brian Wilcox for his beautiful photos and drone fly over of the luminarias posted on Facebook. An event of this scope is labor intensive and not enough can be said for the residents who assisted our squad members that truly made this fundraising effort a labor of love.

There are far too many to name here, but much gratitude to all that supported and made "Lights of Love" a successful fundraising and meaningful community event for the Sharon Ambulance Squad. With appreciation.

Patricia Chamberlain, Luminaria Chair

Sharon

This is the right answer for Falls Village housing

Yipes, where to start? I read the Colter Rule letter of last week and it's like déjà vu all over again. As a Falls Village property owner and member of the Falls Village Housing Trust (FVHT), I have to respond.

First of all, we now have a zoning permit to construct our 16-unit affordable rental unit housing on River Road. This is a privately owned property, a registered 501(c)3, the town has no stake in this, much as it doesn't have a stake in your home. We have the permit because we meet all the requirements of the Town of Canaan zoning regulations. This was an arduous task given the constant barrage of specious claims, personal denigration and impugning of reputations all through the process by the opposition. It reminds me of the election: it's over, right, but some people don't think so.

Every issue the opposition could think of was thrown at us, or the selectmen or the P&Z and we answered them. For example "Is the Incentive Housing Zone legal?" Yes, it is, nonetheless, like a Trump tweet, alternate facts keep proclaiming it's not, in the hope that if repeated enough, it somehow becomes true?

This project is a modest attempt at providing affordable rental housing in our community for our community members who are being displaced by the ever increasing

socioeconomic disparities that dominate our real estate market. What will our community look like if 85% of home ownership is reserved for weekend residents?

The state of Connecticut through the Dept. of Housing (DOH) is supporting this project with a grant to cover approximately 50% of costs to construct. When was the last time someone in Falls Village secured a grant of that magnitude for a project that will pay real estate taxes? We're the bad guys?

None of the affordable housing initiatives in northwest Connecticut have access to mass transit or are centrally located unless supported by town sewers, which we don't have. Should that disqualify us from funding? DOH doesn't think so.

The FVHT will continue to move forward with this project. We need your help and support, if not financial, then at least in spirit. Look us up online and contribute if you can.

Allen Cockerline

Salisbury

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

NORMA BOSWORTH

100 years ago — December 1920

SALISBURY — George Doty while chopping wood last Sunday had the misfortune to cut his left foot so badly that four stitches were required.

NEW YORK — The region between Millerton and Pine Plains is reported as considerably excited over the rumor that oil had been found on the farm of C.A. Hryan near Shekomeko at a depth of 840 feet.

CANAAN — The New England Lime Co. at Canaan has been closed for an indefinite period because of a lack of orders.

LAKEVILLE — Miss Mary E. Robbins and Margaret Sterling are in town for Christmas. Miss Robbins has as a guest her nephew, Samuel Capron Robbins of Gt. Falls, Mont. He is the eleventh generation from Samuel Robbins who settled in South Canaan in 1649.

50 years ago — December 1970

Robert H. Estabrook of Pelham, N.Y., has contracted to purchase the Lakeville Journal, the actual transfer of ownership to take place on or before June 1, 1971. This was announced this week by Stewart and Ann Hoskins who have owned and managed the 73 year old weekly newspaper since May of 1940. Mr. Estabrook has been on the staff of The Washington Post for nearly 25 years and currently is its United Nations and Canada correspondent.

LAKEVILLE — Ronald Barry, owner of Salis-Lake Jewelers in Lakeville, was the victim of a robbery last Thursday morning, when his store was entered and nearly \$9,000 worth of valuables taken. The robbers made their entry during a violent snowstorm, through a rear window of the store, and made their escape unseen.

25 years ago — December 1995

FALLS VILLAGE — Canaan and Falls Village fire companies were called to the Paul Fife house on Barnes Road Tuesday afternoon for a fire that started in a downstairs room.

SALISBURY — The Salisbury Land Trust this week announced a gift from Donald and Diane Hewat of a conservation easement to 199 acres on Selleck Hill.

FALLS VILLAGE — Friday the Nature Conservancy bought 182 acres of grass and forestland off Route 7 from Edmund H. Dean and his sisters Mildred D. Marshall and Mafred D. Allyn. The Conservancy paid \$136,500 for the parcel and another \$6,500 in survey and closing costs.

These items were taken from The Lakeville Journal archives at Salisbury's Scoville Memorial Library, keeping the original wording intact as possible.

THE LAKEVILLE JOURNAL

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Our goal is to report the news of our communities accurately and fairly, fostering democracy and an atmosphere of open communication.

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In Memoriam
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Managing Partner
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Viewpoint

The quickening pace of COVID-19 vaccine delivery, and a question not answered

Three vaccines have passed Phase 3 tests — that last step before submitting the data to the FDA for an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). These are the two vaccines made by Pfizer and by Moderna, both of which consist of an mRNA molecule wrapped in lipid. When injected into muscles the vaccines produce large amounts of Spike protein that provoke the immune system. Both vaccines provide resistance to natural infection with SARS-CoV-2. There are two caveats: only a few hundred people have been protected so far and second, we are relying on a press release, rather than data. Data will come at FDA meetings in December.

A third vaccine made by Oxford and AstraZeneca, in which the Spike gene is inserted into a crippled adenovirus that normally infects chimpanzees, also works. When injected into humans, Spike protein provokes the immune system to make antibodies and T-cells that provide immunity to SARS-CoV-2 infection. It is not necessary to freeze this vaccine, and plants in India, the UK and the United States are pouring it out in the expectation of a coming EUA.

A fourth vaccine by Novavax in Maryland is made from Spike protein in insect cells. The Novavax people purify the Spike protein, attach it to a synthetic particle about the size of a virus, and use it as a vaccine. It does not depend on expression of the Spike gene in humans. The bet on the immunogenicity of the Spike protein seems to be paying off.

These and a number of other clever vaccines produced by the tools of molecular biology should deliver a large amount of vaccine, starting in December and increasing in January, February and beyond.

And yet, there are mysteries about Covid-19. One that seems productive to think about is why are there such a wide range of symptoms? There are asymptomatic spreaders, there are people with mild disease, there are severely sick people who need oxygen and ventilators, and finally there are people who have had the disease and who recover, but with lingering and exhausting symptoms, the so-called long-haulers.

Let's follow the course of an infection and suppose that a person with no underlying conditions just wants to have a

drink with friends and goes to a bar where a carrier (not apparently sick) breathes out some

THE BODY SCIENTIFIC RICHARD KESSIN

droplets of coronavirus, each of which contains thousands of copies of the SARS-Cov-2 virus. Or perhaps a smaller particle is circulating in an aerosol, which can keep the virus in the air for hours.

Our victim inhales and a bolus of virus escapes from its lipid raft onto the mucous membrane cells in the nose, throat, or lung. The virus binds to a protein called ACE2, that has a role in controlling blood pressure, but in our case is a convenient landing site for the Spike protein on the outside of the virus. The virus is pulled into the cell, unwraps, and starts to copy itself. This sounds ominous and it may turn out that way, but in other cells lining the lung or throat, the alarms of the innate immune system are clanging.

The innate immune system responds immediately to threats. It does not recognize them specifically as the adaptive parts of the immune system do (T cells and B cells), but it is always on duty and does not require 2 weeks to ramp up. Its receptors (detectors) face out of our cells and sample the environment for viruses, bacteria, fungi or worms, which it can distinguish and signal what is coming to the adaptive immune system (B and T cells). The innate immune system's police force includes Natural Killers cells, which recognize virus infected host cells and destroy them by blasting holes in the cells' membranes.

When the innate immune system recognizes an RNA virus, it activates many genes that produce cytokines, interferon and other proteins that limit viral damage to the host's cells. If there is too much induction, the lung's blood vessels leak and the lung can fill with fluid, as in the case of a cytokine storm. If the innate immune system is functioning, it tends to control early SARS-CoV-2 and other infections. We might infer that the DNA of very sick Covid-19 patients contains mutations in important proteins of the in-



nate immune system and that seems to be the case, at least for some patients.

The dance between host and virus is complex. Viruses have genes that they can activate as weapons to turn off the host's immune response. All this feint and jab is circumvented if the human victim has antibodies to the virus, as we hope to have soon. That does not make the innate immune response uninteresting. There may be some systematic way to turn

other new viral infections into a milder form of any disease, perhaps by prodding the innate immune system. Covid-19 is not going to be our last pandemic.

Richard Kessin is Emeritus Professor of Pathology and Cell Biology at Columbia University's Irving Medical Center.

He lives in Norfolk. Email him at Richard.Kessin@gmail.com. He will give a course on Covid-19 at The Taconic Learning Center in January.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some thoughts on the Georgia runoffs

Recently (Carl Hulse, NY Times, Nov. 15) I learned why Georgia has runoffs, should no candidate win a majority in the first round: they were instituted in the 1960s by white Georgians to dilute Democrats' voting power, because voter turnout is notoriously low in such little publicized by-elections, and especially so in democratic, urban and mostly Black areas.

Georgia did the right thing however, if for suspect motives. Runoffs are commonplace in democracies and in the U.S. in many, mostly local elections, as well; just, mysteriously, not in our most important ones; in those we continue to use that old "First Past The Post" (FPTP) — a horseracing term - British election system, which is only still used in former British colonies, the U.S. included; it is a stealthy democracy killer, enabling minority government and aspiring autocrats. Not just here: in the UK, the pro-Brexit Conservatives in their "landslide" 2019 victory won only 44 percent of the popular vote, but they took 56 percent of the seats in the House of Commons. Had it been a referendum, or an election with runoffs demanding a majority, not just a plurality, the Brexiteers would have lost. No wonder New Zealand has abandoned FPTP, as have other British-influenced state legislatures, pressured by their fed-up voters; Northern Ireland, Scotland and now Wales as well.

Ranked-Choice-Voting is an instant runoff method, used by

Maine since 2018 in congressional and presidential elections. Instant, Ranked-Choice-Voting is of course much cheaper than second-round runoffs Georgia style, and that without the drop in voter turnout.

Runoffs ensure that the candidate acceptable to the majority of voters wins. Runoffs respect the will of all voters, also of minor third- and fourth party voters, whose votes so often have corrupted the outcome of presidential elections, most notably in 1992 when Ross Perot got 18.9 % of the vote but not one Elector; in 2000, when Ralph Nader's 4% in Florida doomed popular vote winner Gore, and in 2016, when two other vainglorious candidates took just enough swing-state voters away from popular vote winner Clinton to make Trump president.

In the 2020 presidential race we got lucky again. No third party candidate mattered. Without some reform of election procedures we may be in trouble again next time. Reforming the Electoral College — by for instance assigning electors proportionally — or abolishing it altogether may be difficult, but runoffs are totally uncontroversial, can be decided on state by state, without congressional or constitutional approval. Maine and Georgia did it. Kind of a no-brainer.

Fritz Mueller

Sharon

What would Dr. Mary Alice White do?

As a relatively new homeowner on Lake Washinee, I read with considerable interest the articles and letters published in the last two issues of The Journal about the evolving controversy regarding the lake restoration project proposed by Mr. Jeffrey Keenan (who generously has offered to fund the project as well). As in all controversies with potentially significant community impact, successful resolution is greatly enhanced by clarity about what is actually in dispute, be it objectives or ways to achieve those objectives. Just as confusion over means and ends diminishes the likelihood of successful resolution, so does excessive emotion. Cool heads make better decisions. As far as controversies go, we had an inauspicious start. The lead-off article in the December 10th issue incorrectly framed the dispute as "over whether it's acceptable to ignore a conservation easement" and wrongly claimed that Mr. Keenan had done just that with respect to an easement established 30 years ago by Dr. Mary Alice White. A letter published in the same issue turned up the emotional heat with rhetoric like, "Easements are a sacred, legally binding covenant..." and asserting that there have been "ongoing attempts to scuttle the storied conservation legacy of Mary Alice White." Fortunately, an expanded article in

last week's Journal corrected these erroneous allegations. Mr. Keenan's actions to date to maintain his property appear to fall squarely within the easement's covenants. Furthermore, it would appear that Keenan's Lake Washinee restoration proposal would, if implemented, enhance and extend Dr. White's conservation legacy. However, on that point reasonable people may disagree. Was Dr. White's primary objective to optimize the health of the lake and its immediate ecosystem using means supported by contemporary state-of-the-art environmental science? Or was her goal to leave forever untouched "a manmade structure like a railroad causeway," as one opinion writer characterized the ostensible object of the controversy in last week's Journal. We live in hyper-polarized times; it has become all too common to obfuscate controversial issues and to demonize those with whom we disagree. In the coming months, in our small corner of the world, on an issue concerning the best means for achieving an ultimate objective about which there likely is widespread agreement, we have the opportunity to demonstrate respect for facts and civility toward those with whom we may disagree. Let's not squander that opportunity.

Don Ronchi

Salisbury

West Twin Lake is changing, needs attention

As a 22-year old returning from my junior year abroad, I can remember discovering and exploring West Twin Lake (WTL), where I felt incredibly close to nature. Today, as a 47-year old father, I find myself enjoying the lake with my eight-year-old twin daughters, but it's changed. Last summer I heard vague details about the proposed intriguing causeway project, reminding me of the narrows below the gazebo showing an increased rate of weed growth, and silt and/or biomass build-up. I've not met causeway owner Jeffrey Keenan, but I find the hostility towards him and this project premature and unfair considering his approach appears to have been slow and methodical. Recently I listened to a thoughtful project presentation and read supporting materials. Subject to doing no lasting harm to plant and animal species in adjacent wetlands, I support the project notwithstanding the conservation easement aspect of the project, which would need to be appropriately handled.

The causeway is a pinched bottleneck in the Twin Lakes system from the NE corner of East Twin Lake to the Taconic Road dam. In addition to the low water level, my family, neighbors and I have been concerned by the deterioration in WTL's health. I'm no limnologist, but I've observed WTL plagued with more widespread and thicker weed growth, lily pads and their alligator-like floating root systems, impacting swimming and boating. The TLA and their partners have done admirable work treating and harvesting weeds, but the rate of growth and biomass accumulation appears not to have abated, especially around the narrows. Therefore, I find the opportunity to partially remove the causeway an intriguing opportunity to improve the lake's health and long-term viability by improving water flow and reducing 'build-up'. Experts should study this.

I respect the conservation easement, but I believe amendments can narrowly be pursued under certain circumstances, including when no personal gain results. During its construction, this man-made causeway must have violently disturbed adjacent wetlands, so parties should consider the merits of conserving this section of man-made causeway versus partially opening-up this section of WTL. Mr. Keenan's offer to undertake this project is generous by any measure, and I cannot see any resulting personal gain since he already enjoys wide-open western views of Mt. Washington and expansive lakefront frontage. TNC would also vet this. This has also not been stress-free or inexpensive for Mr. Keenan. I am hopeful there is a way to protect the integrity

Trestle deserves analysis

In response to the recent letters and articles in The Lakeville Journal we would like to voice our support for Mr. Keenan's effort to remove the old railroad bed from the lake.

Although Mary Alice White may have had good intentions when she established the property with conservation covenants, we don't think she'd be happy with what had happened with the lake portion of her property. We have seen the condition of the area around the trestle become completely clogged with vegetation, almost to the point that it is no longer a water body as much as a land mass. In addition to the invasive plant growth, the trestle itself is a physical hazard. Boaters not familiar with the lake have damaged their boats on existing piling and most of us have had our propellers clogged with masses of weeds. But most importantly, the trestle has changed the natural flow of the water in the lake, limiting the natural cleansing and removing of sediment out through the Schenob Brook-Twin Lake ecosystem.

West Twin Homeowners: Nancy and Rudiger Stoer, Sharon and Steve Klein, Kathy Drosch, Al and Rhea Higger, Mary Kay and Kyle Pero and Kate Spaziani and Alex Reid

Taconic


of the conservation easement and avoid setting bad precedent, while allowing the modification. Ideally the removed causeway acreage would remain protected. Thoughtfully handling the conservation easement would carry a lot of water for those who've preliminarily vocally opposed the project. It would also allow community members on both sides to win and come together; important for our small community. Should you be so inclined, now is the time to respectfully and thoughtfully speak-up in favor of the proposed partial removal of the causeway along with any proposed conditions.

Happy holidays.

Eric Stoer


Salisbury and New York, NY

More letters are on the previous page.



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