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PO Box 1688, Lakeville, CT 06039
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Alexander Wilburn, *Special Sections Editor*

Susan Hassler, *Publisher and CEO*

Mary Wilbur, *Advertising Representative*

James H. Clark, *Chief Operating Officer*

Caitlin Hanlon, *Composing*

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by Alexander Wilburn

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Discover Salisbury

Does Salisbury boast the only main street in Connecticut that also acts as a grazing pasture for a flock of sheep? When Manhattanites step out of their cars at The White Hart Inn, there's no doubt as they take in the sound of chickens clucking behind a wire fence that they've left the concrete jungle behind. It may be easy to compare Salisbury to the quaint communities of yesteryear, even the English busybody-filled, everybody-knows-everybody pastoral dramas of George Elliot's "Middlemarch" or Anthony Trollope's Victorian Bassetshire chronicles, but time does not stop in rural New England, and there is always a new chapter unfolding.

In this Discover Salisbury, you're invited to take a closer look at new women-led businesses that have opened this year, from the health, wellness, and body-focused Riga Yoga Studio opened by Nina Embiricos and Blue Studio Dance founded by Darcy Boynton and Amber Cameron, to Abigail Horace's interior design studio Casa Marcelo (across from Carolyn Piccirelli's Honeychurch Home) and Ali DeProdocini's all-ages community arts center, ROYGBIV. There are some new girls on the block, proving that exciting things are happening in Salisbury, and their efforts are paving the way for a more vibrant, inclusive, and enriching small-town experience.

— Alexander Wilburn



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Discover Abigail Horace and Casa Marcelo

Functionality, spaciousness, and beauty: the guiding principles of Casa Marcelo, the start-up interior design business from Abigail Horace, echo the aesthetic values of Salisbury itself.

Her 2019 move from New York City to Salisbury was, in a some sense, a homecoming:

“The house that we grew up in had a backyard and we woke up to birds chirping and we had a community,” said Horace of her childhood home in Jamaica, Queens. “And that’s really what drew me up here. I felt like we do have more of a

community here.”

Horace’s discovery of Salisbury was happenstance; a decade ago, her close college friend moved to Falls Village, where Horace visited her regularly, and fell in love with the area.

“Fast forward ten years,” said Horace, gesturing around Casa Marcelo’s warm, 19th century space: She and her husband moved to Falls Village in 2019 with a one-year-old; they are now raising two young sons in Salisbury.

After 10 years in high-end residential design in New York City, the

move to the Northwest Corner was a welcome change for Horace.

“I was exposed throughout my career to a lot of different kinds of luxury,” said Horace—she has designed for villas on Mustique (a private island in the Caribbean), penthouses with views of Central Park, lofts in TriBeCa and hedge funds in the Flatiron.

What Salisbury offers, she said, is the luxury of time and space: “[clients] are at peace and there’s no rush,” said Horace, commenting

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Abigail Horace in her new design studio, Casa Marcelo.

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Abigail Horace's childhood photos.

... casa marcelo

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that even the contractors seem to have more time.

With the founding of Casa Marcelo, she's been able to imbue her projects with that same spaciousness—working with the views up here, she said, is not unlike working with great art, in that the depth becomes a focal point of the space.

“I really try to give the space a chance to breathe,” she said. “It's an additional layer of the design—to have a backyard that's full of mountains.”

Part of letting the space breathe, for Horace, is arranging it—both literally and metaphorically—around the life and personality of each client. She begins each project with an extensive questionnaire, which allows her to get a sense of how a potential client inhabits their space and their lives. It goes beyond the expected—beige, or colors? silver, or gold?—to ask how the client spends their leisure time, what their day-to-day routines consist of, where they love to travel, and what places they love the best.

“I like figuring out who they are,” she said, particularly when their personal tastes and experiences differ from her own. “Those are the types of challenges that I like, because then I can really draw from my experience and design a space the client loves.”

There's a challenge, said Horace, in creating a space that isn't simply attractive, but feels deeply personal. (The logic is sound: No one actu-

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... casa marcelo

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ally wants to live in the chic little Parisian hotel featured in Arch Digest—all those exquisite grays are bound to become oppressive after a while.)

“I’ve walked into a lot of spaces that feel designed to the tee,” said Horace, comparing the effect to being in a museum. “It’s grounding to be surrounded by things that you love and that remind you of who you are.” (Horace, who is half Dominican and half Panamanian, has a special regard for the way culture can be embedded in the texture of a home.)

Casa Marcelo is named for Horace’s family (Marcelo is her maiden name), and her design philosophy both honors and refutes her parents’

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“It’s grounding to be surrounded by things that you love and that remind you of who you are.”

values.

“I think that my parents were extremely, extremely functional,” said Horace, and aesthetics were not a primary concern in her childhood home. In the formal living room, she said, the upholstered furniture was covered in plastic—including an exquisite chair which she saw uncovered for the first time this year (“I was like, wait, is this mohair?!”).

Now the mother of two young boys, Horace appreciates the practical functionality of her childhood home, she said, but she also believes that beauty is meant to be enjoyed, not to be preserved—practical,

rather than precious.

“My mother had fantastic personal style,” said Horace. “That always inspired me, seeing the way that she put things together for herself. She was always fashionable—she had a really short bob, she wore a lot of pattern. She was just rocking it, all the time.”

Patterns and textiles are central to Horace’s approach: “The rug is the foundation of the room,” she said. Each space with the rug and the lighting: “Your eyes are just drawn up to the chandelier—it should be worth it [...] Then I always have like a soft texture that

everyone wants to sit on—something cozy.”

The space itself, she said, works best when it’s a frame for someone’s life. “Ideally, an interior is the backdrop of a lot of memories for a lot of people.”

Ultimately, it is Horace’s goal to create homes rooted in all of the aspects of a client’s life—their heritage, their routines, their social and interior lives, the things they love and the memories they cherish. A space like that “helps you to breathe better, or come into your day enthusiastically,” said Horace. “It can completely shift your mindset.”



Discover ROYGBIV



PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

Ali DeProdocini of ROYGBIV.

On Friday nights, Ali DeProdocini gives young parents a break — or at least a break in the day to go have dinner. At ROYGBIV on Main Street in Lakeville, the all-ages community art space had more than enough supplies (and pizza) for children to paint, craft, design, and glitter (is that a verb?) their own kites and test their aerodynamic creations. This is ROYGBIV's "Drop & Dine" weekly Friday night program, just one of the regularly scheduled events that DeProdocini, a Salisbury native and young mother of three herself, has cooked

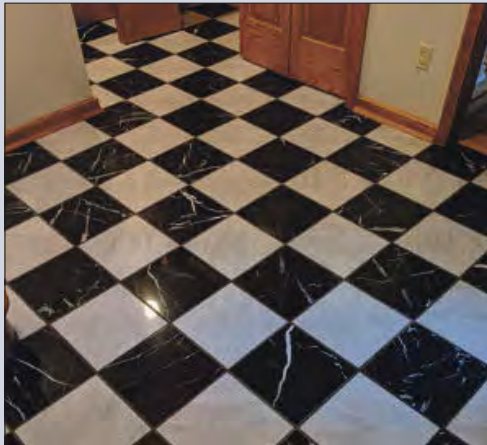
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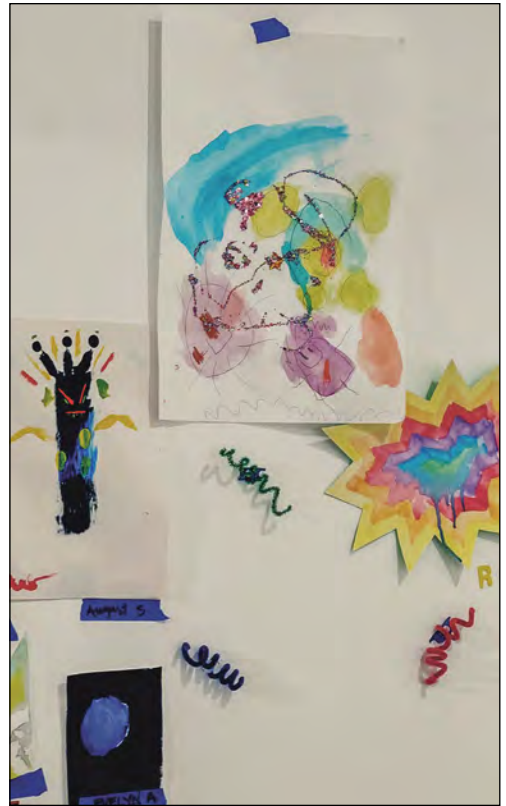
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PHOTOS BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

... roygbiv

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up since opening the space last month.

Envisioned as a creative community-based center for young children and adults alike, ROYGBIV creates space outside school for socializing, arts education, and tactile play. Sign your kids up for a class in abstract impressionism (is it ever too early to start?) or let them enjoy the free storytime program on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. with Rita Delgado, better known to the children as “Miss Rita.” DeProdocini has also been introducing adult evening programs, including an adult friendship bracelet-making class — a way for young working adults in the area to get together casually without the pressure of hosting in their homes.



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Discover Riga Yoga



Nina Embiricos of Riga Yoga in Salisbury.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RIGA YOGA

To cure a 5 a.m. wake-up, there was no better balm than an 8 a.m. slow yoga class with Nina Embiricos at Riga Yoga.

The hour-long session centers around what Embiricos calls “a precise framework.” Meaning attention to anatomy, spacial and bodily awareness, and a willingness to provide gentle correction to form to ensure no one injures themselves. The studio space itself is well-balanced and well-appointed, and gets beautiful morning light — so it is the perfect environment to get

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... riga yoga

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limber and energized before a long day of work.

Located in Salisbury, Embiricos opened Riga Yoga to the public in December of 2022—and though the business is in its beginning stages, Riga is already holding classes every day of the week. Ranging from prenatal yoga, to more standard Vinyasa, and into trauma-informed practices — Embiricos has set out to provide a space that is both welcoming to newcomers and in which more seasoned yogis would find opportunities to learn and grow.

“It’s a place for people to learn techniques. Whether you’re new to yoga or you’re experienced, you can come and refine your technique.


“But I also wanted Riga to be something more holistic than a fitness studio. I wanted it to include the breath and the mind. Where people could get peace for a little bit! We’re in a fight or flight mode all day long, responding to emails, and working. I wanted Riga to be a place where you can come for an hour, unplug, and be with yourself.”

It was clear to see that Embiricos is deeply thrilled to be a yoga instructor and excited to provide a space where yoga instructors and casual practitioners alike can find community. Having grown up in France and moved to New York City in her 20s, finding a regular yoga practice was revolutionary

to Embiricos, and also involved a degree of trial and error.

“As someone who was really anxious in my head, it was a way to disconnect from those feeling and get centered and calm. To find a space within myself that felt safe and happy... And I was like, wow, this is life-changing!”

“So what I wanted to do was offer a yoga practice to people that they can sustain. That just feels like it’s a longevity practice, that’s sustainable and joyful, and brings them centering and health in the long term. Where you can come, and then go back to your life, and there are no frills. That’s what I wanted for myself when I was a student and



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couldn't find, and I'm hoping to offer that to people."

The opening of Riga Yoga was preceded by years of hopping between studios and teaching extensively throughout the Tri-State area. Exiting that period of movement, and laying down roots in Salisbury was a simultaneously difficult, and clarifying experience for Embiricos — from which the positives have already begun to arrive in droves.

"The community here has been amazing. I opened the studio and they came, they showed up... That's what I'm most proud of — the community we have managed to



PHOTO BY ELIAS SORICH

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... riga yoga

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build in such a short time. I see the same faces every week, if not every day, and a lot of them tell me about the heightened sense of well-being they experience after taking a class. That makes it all worthwhile.”

Embiricos is committed to expanding Riga Yoga’s offerings as she builds the business, and emphasized the importance she places on bringing experienced, and curious instructors into the fold. Riga currently houses roughly four teachers that specialize in different yogic approaches, including Vinyasa, Hatha, Katonah, prenatal, and trauma-informed practices.

“That’s an amazing thing, right? I’m the owner and I get to learn from the people who come through the doors. Personality-wise, they’re amazing people. And then they have really clear teachings to offer. And they’re curious. We all come to each other’s classes, and we all learn from each other... I think the community is going to be so happy to have them.”

Riga has now added prenatal yoga classes, available for booking on www.rigayoga.com “A 60 minute yoga class designed for women in their first, second, and third trimesters. A safe space to move, breathe, and stretch. A soothing practice where you can feel supported and secure while gaining strength and flexibility.”



PHOTO BY ELIAS SORICH

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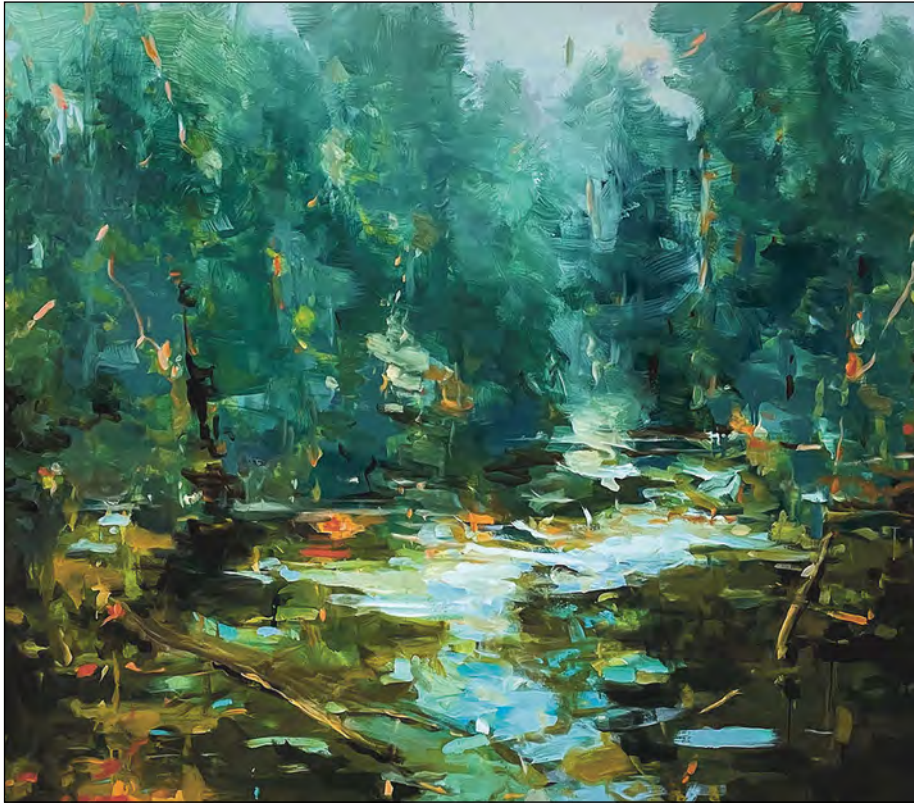
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Discover Argazzi Art Gallery

On Oct. 4, Judith Singelis celebrated a birthday of sorts — not her own, but the anniversary of her Lakeville gallery, Argazzi Art, which she opened to the day, twenty years ago. Now the sole rotating exhibition gallery left in the town of Salisbury, Argazzi stands as both an outlier and a beacon of longevity as more women-owned businesses continue to spring up in the neighborhood.

Previously a gallery owner for twenty years in Sun Valley, Idaho, Singelis came to the Northwest Corner of Connecticut on a whim. “I didn’t do any research about Lakeville; I stumbled upon it. I just really wanted to be here. I thought the community was engaging, and this building was beautiful, so I bought it.”

The works she gravitates toward are often broad-stroked acrylics or oils, freehanded and emotional sweeps and streaks of paint that embrace the artist’s effort instead of disguising it. You can see it in Victor Mirabelli’s ghostly white farmhouses fading into distance like a daylight moon, in Liz Decheimer’s abstract constellations, spilling over like a waterfall, growing like ivy, forming new clusters and shapes.

Singelis leaves them open to the viewer. “Art is so subjective. It’s subjective to the person viewing it, writing about it. It’s completely discretionary, and there’s no right or wrong.”

In her current show of work by Suzanne Onordera, the painterly abstract landscapes evoke the ballet



‘ALL THE UNQUIET MAYBES’ BY SUZANNE ONODERA

pinks and earthly garden greens of Jean-Honoré Fragonard’s Rococo paintings, stripped of their literal

scenes but sprightly in their pops of detail and lush in their depiction of a deep forest of delights.

Discover The Pollinator Meadow Project



PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

The pollinator meadow is located on the campus of Salisbury School.

There is a curious hillside at the Salisbury School facing Route 44.

Students Sachem Ramos and Russell Judge are the minds behind what they have dubbed the Pollinator Meadow Project. The two spent their senior year at the high school working with the land to increase the biodiversity on their campus.

In the fall of 2022, Salisbury School science teacher Brooke Niermann debuted a sustainability course that relied on project-based learning. The open-ended class encouraged students to answer the question, “How do we make Salisbury School more sustainable?” with real-world projects instead of more traditional assessments.

Ramos and Judge wanted to create something for their school that would have a lasting effect. At first, they didn’t know where to begin, and simple brainstorming sessions with their teacher were the most informative exercises.

“It took a while, but we got to the idea of creating a meadow,” said Judge. “We had no idea how we were going to do it, but we knew that was the end goal.

“Then we went to this conference, and that’s where things really started to kick off.”

In early February 2023, Ramos and Judge attended a presentation

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PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

... meadow

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hosted by the biodiversity awareness organization Silva et Pratum started by Jeb and Sabina Breece in Salisbury. Mike Nadeau, a published author and one of the leading authorities in the field of sustainable organic and ethical land care strategies, gave a talk titled as part of the Bad Grass symposium series at the White White Inn in Salisbury, expounding on issues related to European turf. This species of grass is regularly manicured, thus it becomes a monoculture — an environment that only supports one species of plant. Additionally, it consumes dangerous chemicals, maintenance time, and excess funds.

The solution is to transform turf into native meadows that grow many types of plants beneficial to local wildlife.

Ramos elaborated on his intentions. “I just wanted to plant native plants, thinking how we could increase carbon dioxide intake and increase oxygen on campus. Then, we went to that meeting and the project boosted off from there.”

To get their vision into practice, the two set up consultations with Nadeau and multiple administrators at the Salisbury School, including the head of school, the CFO, and the heads of the maintenance and grounds crews.

In the first week of March 2023, Niermann remembers Judge and Ramos trekking the hill and hand-planting flags with care. “Sachem just looked at the land slope. He

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had a natural eye for design. It was incredible,” she said.

The two had to flag the land to demonstrate their idea visually, “We flagged a little more than three acres, which wasn’t the entire hillside,” said Ramos. “Then our headmaster said, ‘Why aren’t we doing the whole lawn?’”

In May, the school scalp-mowed six acres of the hillside. It deep-cleaned the lawn, to revert it to a more original state, prime for a wildflower meadow. On July 11, the meadow had its last vinegar spray treatment, so it was ready for seeding on July 24.

There will be about 45 species of plants, and the meadow will be mowed once a year (starting in spring 2024) for maintenance. Students will participate in hand-weeding.

Judge described plans to put educational signage in the meadow so students can enjoy the space, either in an outdoor class setting or just for recreation, and learn about the project’s details. Ramos noted that a new chapel will be built in the coming years, so the thriving meadow and the completed construction will create an inviting scene.

Though the project came together in a condensed development period in the spring months of this year, Ramos and Judge have always had a slight awareness of its need.

Ramos said, “My junior year, [Hugh] Cheney, a science teacher at Salisbury, brought our class out to look at the meadow.”

They learned about its restrictive monoculture. He continued, “I never thought we would end up turning it into a wildflower mead-

“I just wanted to plant native plants, thinking how we could increase carbon dioxide intake and increase oxygen on campus. Then, we went to that meeting and the project boosted off from there.”

ow.”

Judge had a similar experience. “My junior year, we learned about what’s going on in the world with environmental science. It was super depressing to sit there and just listen, not being able to do anything,” he said. So, when he learned about Niermann’s sustainability class, he jumped at the opportunity to

combine learning and project-based change.

The meadow will be a type of living lab for future classes of Salisbury students. Niermann is clearly proud of Ramos and Judge; she said, “I think a lot of the learning happened through the failures, but the boys worked their tails off and had a lot of great support.”



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Discover The Dog Park

If you caught only a quick glimpse at Nero, you might think he's a bear. You certainly wouldn't be the first. But Nero is just a fluffy black Newfoundland, and, as his friends at Salisbury Community Dog Park know, a gentle giant.

Salisbury Community Dog Park was built in 2014 on vacant land inside Mary Peters Park. In the years since, it has become a hub for dog owners and their furry friends, who come not only from Salisbury and nearby towns like Lakeville, but from as far as New York City and Massachusetts to unleash their dogs on the acre or so of fenced-in grass.

Bill Littauer, the treasurer of the group that oversees and maintains the park, has been there since the beginning, and he says that community is key.

"Most dog parks are built by the towns or cities that they're in. But ours relies on volunteers," he said. "And it's been growing. It's been doing pretty well. It's well supported."

In addition to a PayPal account, the group also has donation boxes in the park and at the local pet and liquor stores. It also sends out the occasional fundraising e-mail to its list of about 168 donors; its most recent one raised \$2,800 in a week, he said. The funds go toward things like grass maintenance — mowing and reseeding — and snow plowing in the winter, as well as buying

supplies like garbage bags and water for the dogs.

"Everybody pitches in when they have to," Littauer said.

In late July, the volunteer group used some leftover funds to erect a

new structure in the park: a 14-by-20-foot gazebo, which fits like a glove on a stone terrace that had been installed a few years ago to solve a drainage problem.

It came from Amazon in about

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PHOTOS BY OLLIE GRATZINGER

While dogs enjoy the park, owners can enjoy the new gazebo.

... dog park

continued from page 27

a million different pieces with no written directions, Littauer said, but using an accompanying booklet of graphics and a method of trial and error, volunteers were able to assemble the gazebo in about a week.

“It’s worked out really quite well,” said Sue Reville, one of the group’s board members. “We needed something. You know, protection from the sun and the rain.”

The gazebo provides that protection, but with no walls, it’s still open enough to let owners watch their dogs run and play.

The land upon which the dog park sits was once a thriving resort,

complete with tennis courts, a golf course, stables, a social hall and other amenities that would become standard fare for the luxurious camps of the early 20th century.

It first opened in 1917, just a week after the U.S. entered World War I, as Camp Wonoka. It would later be renamed to Cedar Hills, and then to Camp Cedars. But in 1955, what remained of the facility, withered by the Second World War, was mostly washed away in the floodwaters of back-to-back hurricanes Connie and Diane. All 90 of its buildings were damaged or destroyed, and by 1971, no trace of

it remained.

Two tennis courts once occupied the space that now comprises the dog park, which offers two separate enclosures for small and large dogs respectively. Regulars gather under the new gazebo to chat while their dogs burn off excess energy chasing balls and digging holes.

“It’s definitely a community,” Reville said.

For Littauer, the most important thing is that people know the park is there, and that they’re welcome to visit.

“If we’re putting the effort into it, we want people to use it,” he said.

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Discover Tom Morrison's Latest Legal Novel

Tom Morrison of Salisbury has just published his third comic novel, "Send in the Tort Lawyers."

The book chronicles the ongoing and absurd adventures of Pap and Pup Peters, brothers and lawyers specializing in class action lawsuits — the crazier, the better.

In a phone interview on Wednesday, Sept. 20, Morrison was asked about making fun of his own profession.

"Frankly, it's one of my pet peeves" Morrison said of lawyers

who have no sense of humor about themselves. "It's delicious fun for me to write books that skewer lawyers."

At least some legal people agree. Morrison noted that he includes the American Museum of Tort Law in Winsted, Conn., among his fans, which has the two previous installments on display.

The lawsuits and incidents described start out fairly nuts and steadily get crazier. Suing the Russian secret police, for instance, or testifying before the state legislature

on attracting tort law activity as an economic development strategy for cities like Bridgeport and Hartford, Conn.

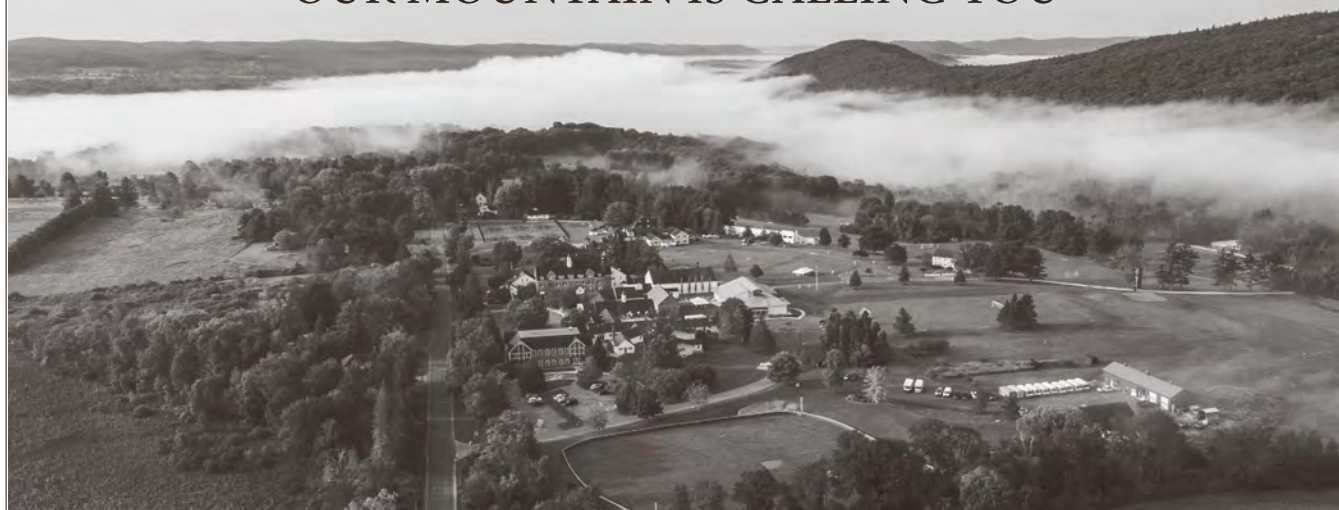
Asked how much exaggeration he deploys, Morrison said not that much. He doesn't have to make stuff up.

Using a recent example of a California congressman caught up with other prominent men in a "honey trap" with a woman suspected of

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PHOTO COURTESY TOM MORRISON

Tom Morrison is the author of “Send In The Tort Lawyer\$.”

... tom morrison

continued from page 29

being a Chinese spy, Morrison said, “I take the underlying story, twist it a bit, add some humorous components.

“There was no actual class action on behalf of honey trap victims,” he added, but he keeps a running file of stories about class action lawsuits for use as raw material.

Morrison has fun with names: psychiatrist Dr. Hazel Nutt, or Judge Lee Waye.

Asked if he ever considers and then rejects a funny name as being just too silly, he said not really.

“Names occur to me all the time, when I’m shaving or doing yard work. I keep a list and when I sit down to write, I look for one that matches the plot.”

The book is described on its cover as “a legal farce.” Morrison was asked about the difference between farce and satire.

“Farce is one step beyond satire,” he said.

His literary model is Joseph Heller’s “Catch-22.”

The subject, the Army Air Corps in World War II, “is serious stuff, but Heller had no problem making fun of it with every character, every scene.”

Tom Morrison will be signing books at the Salisbury Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct. 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Main Street in Salisbury.



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Discover The Fall Festival Scarecrow Contest

Fall Festival is back again on October 6, 7 and 8, so step into the enchanting world of autumnal charm as you wander down the picturesque Main Streets of Salisbury and Lakeville and take in the much-anticipated return of the scarecrow contest. These country streets adorned with whimsical, weird scarecrows can be just the thing to prepare you for the Halloween spirit.

continued on page 33



PHOTO BY PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

The SVNA's rescue scarecrows from a previous Fall Fest.

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... scarecrows

continued from page 31

But it's not just the festival organizers who are the masterminds behind these colorful and often comical scarecrows; everyone from local businesses and organizations to schools, families, and even children are invited to partake in this vibrant tradition. It's a celebration of community spirit where imaginations run wild and crafting talents are on full display.

These scarecrows aren't mere flimsy straw-filled figures; they are sturdy creations mounted on a foundation of 2x2 pine. This commitment to durability ensures that these rabbits, pigs, and all sorts of crafted creatures will stand tall, guarding the streets against the (albeit, imaginary) mischief of crows and ravens.

A standard-size scarecrow stands at an impressive 5 feet in height. However, while creativity knows no bounds, there are a few Fall Festival rules to ensure that this display remains accessible and safe for all. In the spirit of inclusivity and environmental responsibility, the festival organizers kindly request that participants refrain from using perishable materials. After all, we wouldn't want our furry friends, such as black bears or the stray raccoon, to be lured into town by the scent of decaying pumpkins and produce. That's more trick than treat.



PHOTO BY PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

A black rabbit scarecrow in front of The Black Rabbit Bar & Grille.

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The advertisement features a dramatic background of a lightning storm over a road. A large lightning bolt strikes a building on the left. The text is overlaid on the image, providing contact information for Associated Lightning Rod Company, Inc.

Discover Blue Studio Dance

My life would be totally different if I didn't have the dance studio I had as a child," Amber Cameron said at the open house of the new Blue Studio Dance in Lakeville.

Cameron, together with Darcy Boynton, is extending that same gift to the area's children with their new studio, which will welcome students from four-years-old to 17, along with some adult classes) for a 10-week fall session.

The two initially crossed paths as cast members of the Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical "Oklahoma!" at The Sharon Playhouse in 2010. Since then, they've embarked on a journey to mentor the region's

next wave of young talents. Boynton engages in choreography roles at Indian Mountain School in Lakeville and Berkshire School in Sheffield, Mass. Meanwhile, Cameron takes charge of choreographing student productions not only at The Hotchkiss School, located just up the road from Blue Studio in Lakeville, but also at Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Falls Village, Conn., and The Taft School in Watertown, Conn.

Their dedication has finally culminated in the realization of a long-held aspiration: opening their own studio. The aim of this space is to serve as a nurturing hub where

aspiring dancers — or children just wanting to (to quote Taylor Swift) "shake it off" — can refine their skills in ballet, tap, jazz and more.

Even with the adult programming, for Boynton and Cameron, dance transcends mere physical exertion, embodying a deeper significance. "The ballet classes are more than just a workout," Cameron said. "It's toning, its balance, it's working your brain to follow combinations."

"Learning about your body and its space is so important for children and adults," Boynton added. "Dance doesn't just benefit people who become dancers. It's an es-

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PHOTO BY PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

Amber Cameron led a children's ballet class at Blue Studio Dance.



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CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

... blue studio

continued from page 34

sential skill, not necessarily to have perfect choreography or perfect form, but to have comfort in your own body and the confidence that comes with that.”

Blue Studio Dance is offering a free community class for adults on Mondays from 6 to 7 p.m. This lively Latin Dance class will be taught by Tara Xheladin, a competitive dancer from North Macedonia. She will lead the class variety of Latin Dance styles: Cha-Cha, Rumba, Samba, Jive, and Paso Doble.



PHOTO BY PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

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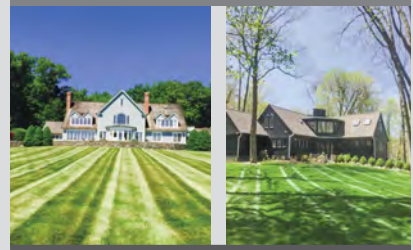
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