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To Our First Responders

ready to respond to health, fire and safety emergencies

To Our Health Care Workers

meeting the physical, emotional and mental needs, routine or emergency, of our communities

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To Our Essential Personnel

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To Our Parents and Children

working through the challenges of distance and in-person learning during a pandemic

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whether you fit into a category above or are doing your part to keep our communities safe and healthy by wearing masks and abiding by current CDC or state recommendations

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Your Guide to Tri-State Events

March 11-17, 2021

SHARON PLAYHOUSE FEST CALLS FOR 10-MINUTE PLAYS

Sharon Playhouse in Sharon, Conn., has launched a festival of new 10-minute plays and musicals, called the "Sharon Playhouse Writers Playground."

The Writers Playground is committed to giving talented writers, performers, directors and technicians in the Northwest Corner of Connecticut and the neighboring communities in New York and Massachusetts a platform to showcase their talents in their own backyard and see their visions realized.

The Playhouse also hopes to empower all

people of any age and background to use their voice to tell diverse stories of self-expression and creativity.

Submissions will be accepted from writers in four different categories:

Youth Submissions (written by individuals 18 years of age or younger):

- Plays
- Musicals

Adult Submissions (written by individuals 19 years of age and older):

- Plays
- Musicals

The submission deadline is May 1, 2021. Entrants should live within 50 miles of the Playhouse.

Works chosen will have performances this summer as part of the Playhouse Live Drive-In entertainment, which returns after a successful season in 2020.

In addition to the Writers Playground, the 2021 Playhouse Summer season will include an even wider selection of entertainment including Broadway, Pop, Motown, Classical concerts, film, comedy, variety and the return of the very popular Dinner Cabaret Series.

More information can be found at the playhouse website, www.Sharon-Playhouse.org.

STREAMING: BRUCE T. PADDOCK

Sci-Fi and Brit Wit

If you're a science fiction fan, you probably know about Amazon Prime's "The Expanse" — the best SF show on television ever. But you may not have heard of "Dark," a German show running on Netflix.

Complete in three seasons, "Dark" is a time-travel story so full of plot twists you'll need a map, or at least a family tree. Fortunately, each episode rewards multiple viewings. The acting is good, the directing great, and the casting and makeup work are astonishing.

Don't want to commit to a series right now? Check out "Hunt for the Wilderpeople," the film Taika Waititi made in between "What We Do in

the Shadows" and "Thor: Ragnarok." It's more like the former than the latter: a small, sweet, New Zealandish movie.

Personally, I have little patience for films that wear their hearts on their sleeves, and 10 minutes in I was thinking, "OK, so the young boy is going to forge a bond with the crusty old man yadda yadda yadda." But dang if I wasn't misting up at the end all the same. And don't worry, the laughs outweigh the touchy-feely stuff.

Switching gears now, those of us who enjoy British humor but don't subscribe to Acorn or BritBox can find plenty to enjoy on, believe it or not, YouTube. My personal favorite is a genre that's very popular in Britain and nonexistent in this country: the panel show.

A panel show looks like a quiz show: Groups of celebrities, mostly comedians, are asked questions by a host. But the point isn't getting the answer; the point is being funny. And they can be insanely hilarious ... although I probably should mention that

none of the comics are censored.

The two best panel shows available on YouTube are "The Big Fat Quiz of the Year" (or "Decade") and "QI" — which, if you need help remembering it, stands for "quite interesting."

"QI" is more about little-known facts of history and science and such, while "Big Fat Quiz" features questions about pop culture. And yes, there are a lot of questions — and a few jokes — that you won't get because you don't live in the UK. But there will be enough laughs to keep you sailing through ... especially if you look for episodes featuring Noel Fielding, Richard Ayoade (teamed together, if possible), Aishling Bee, David Mitchell, Holly Walsh or Sarah Millican.

If you want a straight-up quiz show with civilian contestants, try the amusingly pompous "Mastermind," which has roughly "Jeopardy!"-level questions, or the insanely difficult but awesomely clever "Only Connect." Many episodes of both can be found on YouTube, too.

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Your Guide to Tri-State Events

March 18-24, 2021

BOOKS: ALEXANDER WILBURN

Losing Time With the Author Of 'Call Me By Your Name'

At the one-year anniversary of the start of the pandemic, we have become unwitting experts on the subjective nature of time. In joy, hours escape us, when waiting in expectation the second hand stands still, and when we have nowhere to go and nothing to do for a year, we reconsider what time means to us. When you think back on your year spent at home, you'll remember not just what you did, but what you wanted to do instead, what you had missed and missed out on, and all you dreamed of doing once this ordeal met its end.

This blending of the emotional and temporal is central to the writing of André Aciman. The distinguished professor at the Graduate Center of City University of New York is the author of the memoir "Out of Egypt," and is

best known for his 2007 novel which inspired the 2017 Best Picture-nominee and Best Adapted Screenplay-winner "Call Me By Your Name," as well as the novel's 2019 sequel, "Find Me."

In a joint online presentation on Wednesday, March 10, between House of Books in Kent, Conn., and Kent Memorial Library, historian and biographer David Nasaw joined Aciman to discuss his new collection of essays, "Homo Irrealis." An ode to the transportive and tricky nature of time, Aciman takes on the irrealis mood, a minor grammatical expression that accounts for an event spoken of which has not yet, and may never, occur — and turns it into a condition of living.

"Most of us spend ... I don't know what percentage of our time... thinking of the future, of what our fantasies are, our past fantasies, the ones we never realized in the past and that continue to reverber-

ate on us," Aciman said to Nasaw. "In other words, the things that we never did have acquired their own memory. So they haunt us just as much as the things that we did."

Many will associate Aciman with the idle summer atmosphere of Italian director Luca Guadagnino's adaptation of "Call Me By Your Name," but crucial to the novel is the young narrator's anxious relationship with what might be. His mind is a dance between his lusty daydreams of the future and the fear that time will run out before they are ever realized. As Aciman said of his fiction, in which most of the story's "action" occurs within his characters' longing, romantic minds, "There's a very unsteady foothold in reality."

This willingness to escape the concrete is what makes Aciman such a tender observer of human desire — the excited fever and pangs of loss it can stir in us at once. "Homo

Irrealis" recounts moments from across Aciman's decades and travels, from Egypt to Rome to Manhattan movie theaters to see Éric Rohmer's French films, but what happens in the darkened theater, or on a crowded bus as a teenager when he feels a stranger press against him, is so illusory it is almost incidental.

What Aciman is keenly interested in is not recounting exact events, but our relationships with those lost yearnings, as well as the art that colors our perceptions. Writing on everything from Sigmund Freud to Julia Child to James Joyce's "The Dead," Aciman understands the way art reshapes our own views of love, sex, growing older and even entire cities.

As in one essay, as he described seeing the 1960 film "The Apartment": "The film was about me. All great art invariably lets us say the same thing, 'this was really about me.'

And this, in most cases, is not only a consolation, it's an uplifting revelation that reminds us that we are not alone."

Much of "Homo Irrealis" exists in the speculative, and Aciman is above all an observer of speculative desires. He writes of our hope to connect and the pieces of art that we borrow along the way to better chart the grammar of our own searching hearts.

As he said to Nasaw, "You can never see Nice again, you see Matisse in Nice. You never see the cathedral in Rouen, you see the cathedral that Monet painted. You're always seeing things through the artist. And of course you can never see Dublin in snow without thinking of Joyce."

Personalized signed copies of "Homo Irrealis: Essays" are available through House of Books in Kent. For orders and more information go to www.houseofbooksct.com.

WORK BY PRENTICE AT ALDRICH MUSEUM

Tim Prentice, a beloved artist/architect whose work is created and often seen in Cornwall, Conn., where he has lived for decades, has a new show of work at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Conn.

The two-part solo exhibition showcases 20 indoor works, five outdoor works and a video portrait of the artist. The indoor exhibition will be on view from March 29 to Oct. 4 and the outdoor installation will be on view from Sept. 19, 2021, to April 24, 2022.

Artist David Colbert, also a Cornwall resident, has assisted Prentice for more than 30 years and his role in the artist's practice cannot be overestimated. Increasingly, Colbert has become a true collaborator in all details of the studio's output, and he is working closely with The Aldrich on the realization of the exhibition.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 28-page catalogue featuring an essay by the exhibition's curator, Richard Klein.

To learn more about the show, go to www.thealdrich.org. To learn more about Prentice and his work, go to www.timprentice.com. To learn more about Colbert, go to www.davidcolbert.com.

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