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WELCOME

EDITOR'S NOTE



Happy New Year and welcome to the first Seasons of New Haven of 2018!

This time of year, nothing feels better than a fresh start, and I'm beyond excited to begin the year as editor of Seasons of New Haven. Having covered Greater New Haven as a journalist for more than a decade, and as someone who chose to put down roots and raise my family here, I know how fortunate we are to be part of such a vibrant community.

New Haven has so many diverse, innovative and interesting people and places. Our writers and photographers look forward to bringing you stories that showcase what makes New Haven special. We'll give you behind-the-scenes looks at some of the Elm City's most long-standing institutions and high-profile personalities, but we're also eager to share the area's lesser-known hidden gems. We hope that you learn something new with every issue – something that inspires you to explore.

I hope you'll join the conversation by connecting with us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Tell us what you think, let us know what interesting events or places you're checking out, and share your story ideas with us. We're looking forward to a great year ahead!

Happy reading,

Cara

Cara Rosner, Editor
cara@seasonsofnewhaven.com



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NEW HAVEN

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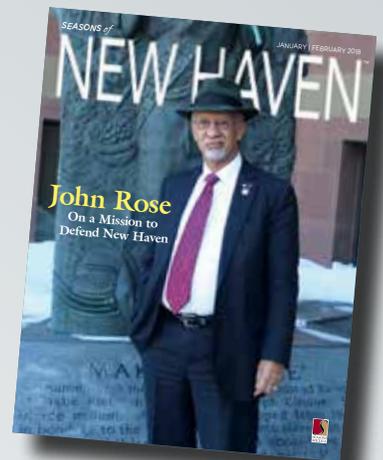
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John Rose stands outside New Haven City Hall, where he has served as the city's top lawyer since 2015.



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JAN. 14 INTO MARCH



FEB. 17-20

OUT & ABOUT IN

Winter Farmers Market

January 14 into March

Just because it's winter doesn't mean fresh, local, seasonal produce is hard to find. CitySeed runs one of the country's few year-round farmers markets and its Winter Market returns Jan. 14 into March. The market, which features various area vendors, takes place Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Metropolitan Business Academy, 115 Water St., New Haven. cityseed.org

Visiting Conductor

February 15

West Coast conductor Alasdair Neale, music director of the Sun Valley Summer Symphony and the Marin Symphony, steps onto the New Haven Symphony Orchestra podium to lead a mix of timeless classics and new favorites at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 15 at Woolsey Hall, 500 College St., New Haven. The concert will include Mozart Piano Concerto No. 20, featuring NHSO Artist-in-Residence Michael Brown. newhavensymphony.org

Girls Night Out

February 23

Grab your friends and get ready for "Girls Night: The Musical," which comes to the Shubert for one performance only, at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 23. Follow five friends as they visit their past, celebrate their present and look into the future during a wild night out - all set to some of the most popular songs of the 1980s and 90s. **245 College St., New Haven;** shubert.com.

Art Gets Political

February 24

Artspace's latest exhibit, which runs through Feb. 24, examines "humanity in the age of conflict." Curated by Erin Joyce, "Between Beauty and Decay" showcases the work of artists whose pieces are deeply inspired by their geopolitical backgrounds. The exhibit features digital media, performance and installation to tackle thought-provoking issues. **50 Orange St., New Haven;** artspacenehaven.org

A Piece of History

February 15 through May 27

The 17th-century painting "The Paston Treasure," which dates back to roughly 1663, makes its North American debut at the Yale Center for British Art, where it will be on exhibit from Feb. 15 through May 27. Organized in a partnership with the Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, U.K., the exhibit will trace the genesis and demise of the Paston family collection of treasures. The display will include 140 objects from more than 50 international institutions and private lenders. **1080 Chapel St., New Haven;** britishart.yale.edu.

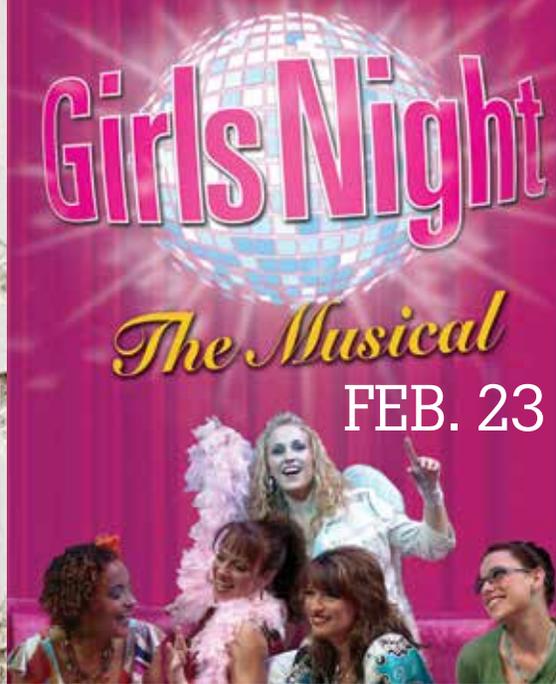
Dinosaur Days

February 17 to 20

The Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History's popular "Dinosaur Days" event returns Feb. 17-20. It will feature many hands-on activities for the entire family, including a fossil dig and an extensive fossil "touch table." Visitors also will have the chance to meet paleontology graduate students



FEB. 15



FEB. 23



FEB. 24

GREATER NEW HAVEN

and professionals and learn about their research. Museum admission required. **170 Whitney Ave., New Haven. peabody.yale.edu.**

Battle of the Bands

February 19

The Amity Teen Center presents its 23rd Annual Battle of the Bands at 4 p.m. on Feb. 19 at College St. Music Hall. The all-ages, alcohol-free event will have standing room on the floor and limited seating available. The Amity Teen Center gives area teens a safe place to express themselves, using musical performances, community outreach and mentoring. **238 College St., New Haven; collegestreetmusichall.com.**

Hold on to the Holidays

Runs through February 19

It may be the new year, but there's still time to see the Knights of Columbus Museum's annual Christmas exhibition, which runs through Feb. 19. "Peace on Earth: Crèches of the World" features many of the museum's own items, including stone sculptures from Zimbabwe and Hummel figurines, as well as pieces on loan from collections throughout the United States and Canada. An array of crèches, also known as nativities, showcase diverse cultures. **One State St., New Haven. kofcmuseum.org.**

Brunch and Bites

Every Sunday

Stop by Elm City Market to enjoy its Jazz Brunch every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Executive Chef David Lee prepares a variety of brunch offerings for sale, and a rotating schedule of local jazz bands perform each week. Those who want to stop in and enjoy the music can do so free of charge.

777 Chapel St., New Haven; elmcitymarket.com.

The Stories Behind the Stories

January 19 into April

The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library's newest exhibit, "+ The Art of Collaboration," runs Jan. 19 into April and examines exemplary works and the stories of their making. Its plays, children's books, novels, performance artworks, films, photos and more show the power

of collaboration. Writers and artists featured include Richard Wright, Orson Welles, Gertrude Stein and more. **121 Wall St., New Haven; beinecke.library.yale.edu.**



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IN THE SPIRIT

Music Haven

Tunes in to New Haven's Neediest Kids

by **AMY J. BARRY** / *photography by* **NICK CAITO**



Noel Mitchell, Music Haven violin student.



Mandi Jackson, Music Haven executive director, and Gregory Tompkins, violin teacher and member of Haven String Quartet, look at a chart of all the lessons and classes taught in the new Erector Square location.

A little over a decade ago, Music Haven was founded on the premise that all New Haven children, no matter their financial circumstances, should be given the opportunity to play an instrument. Founders also wanted the teachers to be full-time faculty and professional, performing musicians; and wanted students to be able to remain in the program from grade school through high school.

Today, Music Haven is fulfilling those goals, while growing exponentially. What began with about 20 students in a tuition-free afterschool program in two of the city's most struggling schools, has grown to nearly 80 students being taught by members of a string quartet – in a beautiful, newly renovated 6,700-square-foot facility, divided into large performance, individual studio, and office spaces in Erector Square, New Haven's largest rental complex for artists of all kinds.

And this spring, Music Haven graduates its first group of six high school seniors, several of whom have been in the program since its inception.

“Our mission has remained consistent since we started in 2006,” says Mandi Jackson, the program's executive director, “with the idea that a string quartet could teach and live in the community – a different way to be a musician, bringing access to high-quality instruction and live performances to people who otherwise wouldn't have the chance to learn the instruments and hear the music.”

Music Haven serves kids in the city's lowest-income, highest-crime areas (referred to as Promise Zone neighborhoods). The only factor that has really changed over the years, Jackson notes, is the size of the program, and most recently, she says, “rather



Student Jordan Brown with her arm around teacher Yaira Matyakubova



Volunteer Elena Brennan, wearing the headband, and Jane Stewart.

than teaching from school to school, being able to bring everybody together under one roof.

The members of the Haven String Quartet, who teach the students, are Yaira Matyakubova, violin; Annalisa Boerner, viola; Philip Boulanger, cello; and Gregory Tompkins, violin. Speaking for the quartet, Tompkins says they are thrilled to be in the new space.

“There are so many benefits,” he says. “As a teacher, it’s incredibly powerful and important to have your own studio space where you can put whatever you want on the walls and there aren’t the distractions of teaching in the public schools. Now, when kids come in for lessons after school, they have a spot to do homework and get help with homework. And there’s room for families to come listen to the orchestra rehearse and get to know one another. Having this space is about building a community.”

A new program that tunes even more deeply into the community is Music Bridge, a weekly beginner violin class for refugee children from all over the world who live in New Haven.

“It started when the refugee crisis was in the news a couple of years ago,” Jackson says. “The kids were asking Yaira [Matyakubova], who teaches the class, what a refugee was, and asked her if they could go play some music and do a workshop with refugee kids in IRIS’s [Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services] afterschool program. Music Bridge grew out of that with a grant from the Connecticut Office of the Arts.”

THE WAY IT WORKS

Admission to Music Haven is on a first-come, first-served basis, Jackson explains. The only requirements are that a child is between the ages of 6 and 12 and resides in one of the city’s Promise Zone neighborhoods.

“There’s a simple application, no auditions,” she says, “and we meet with the parents and child and make sure that parents realize how rigorous and demanding the program is. So, it is a little self-selecting.”

Students are provided with musical instruments, the majority of which are donated.



TOP PHOTO: Austin Rivera takes a bass lesson with his teacher, Philip Boulanger, a member of Haven String Quartet.
BOTTOM PHOTO: Teacher and Haven String Quartet member Yaira Matyakubova gives a violin lesson to Claudine Umumuporeze (left) and Noorhan Abdulridha.

“We’ve acquired quite a large inventory over the past 10 years,” Tompkins says. As they grow, students have to move up a size in their instrument more or less every school year.”

To encourage them to continue playing, and because they likely can’t afford to purchase one, students have the opportunity to earn instruments to keep when they leave the program. More than skill, the requirements are based on effort: progress, attendance, teamwork and other factors.

In terms of funding, Jackson says: “We have a small number of public grants, which are harder to secure given the current [Connecticut] budget situation. Fortunately, we have a lot of individuals and small family foundations, mostly from Greater New Haven and also the Shoreline that have supported us over the years, and that’s predominantly how we fund what we do. We also receive a small amount of earned revenue from performances and workshops given by the quartet that goes back into our program.”

A UNIQUE MODEL

Music Haven is the only program of its kind in Connecticut, and although there are similar programs in New England, it is unique in that there isn’t a second tier of part-time teachers – with the exception of Patrick Doane, who directs the Discovery Orchestra; a new three-day-per-week beginner program focusing on fundamentals.

“This is because we’ve felt like it’s really important to invest in our teachers so they don’t have to do 5,000 other things at the same time to [make a living],” Jackson says. “Instead of having a teacher here one hour a week teaching two students, our teachers are full-time. And so everyone gets to know each other over time and teachers develop one-on-one relationships with the kids and families.”

Tompkins finds that his being a teacher and performing musician benefits his students “because they learn so much from watching their teachers play and perform in concerts, and they also realize we make mistakes, too.”

Jackson and Tompkins say what students gain from participating in this program goes far beyond learning to play an instrument.

“The core of my teaching philosophy – it sounds so clichéd – is, ‘You can do anything if you work at it every single day,’ Tompkins says. “If you provide students with that experience of working for something and having a positive result on a regular basis, I think it’s something that really sticks with you. Well-being is so much associated with your ability to have control over your environment, over your life, and if we can teach them how they can have

MUSIC HAVEN WINTER PERFORMANCE LINEUP

Pushing Boundaries: Women Who Compose

March 10, 2018, 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Unitarian Society of New Haven
700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden

In recognition of Women’s History Month, The Haven String Quartet performs classical selections by women composers, including Aleksandra Vrebalov, Grayna Bacewicz, Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel and Jennifer Higdon.

Tickets: \$25 general admission; \$10 for students and USNH members.

Studio Recital Week

Students perform in a series of studio recitals with their teachers. The community is invited to attend and stay for a potluck (and bring a dish to share). All concerts are held from 6 to 8 p.m. at Music Haven, Erector Square, 315 Peck St., Bldg. 5, 2nd Fl., New Haven.

March 19: Gregory Tompkins’ and Patrick Doane’s Violin Recital

March 20: Yaira’s Matyakubova’s Violin Recital

March 21: Annalisa Boerner’s Viola Recital

March 22: Philip Boulanger’s Cello Recital

All performances are free and open to public, unless indicated otherwise. For tickets and information, visit www.musichavenct.org or call 203-745-9030.

that power, I think it’s a really important thing.”

Students also learn a lot about teamwork and interdependency.

“They learn to listen to each other in a very deep way and to work out differences of opinion about how something should sound, make a plan for what they want to rehearse next, etc.,” Jackson says.



Yaira Matyakubova teaches Music Bridge, a weekly beginner violin class for refugee children living in New Haven.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Jordan Brown, 16, is a high school junior who has been in the Music Haven program since she was 6 years old. She's a violin student, studying with Tompkins.

Brown says Music Haven has made a huge, positive impact on her, noting she plays "big, complicated stuff now" and attends New Haven's Cooperative Arts Magnet High School, where she majors in instrumental and vocal music and is taking a percussion elective.

She hasn't decided yet if she's going to major in music in college, but says, "I'm most definitely going to college because my family raised me that way. I'm a person who knows everything is planned for a reason: whatever happens, happens. I would like to keep music in my life and believe it will be an important factor in my life in the future."

Asked what she most likes about Music Haven, Brown doesn't hesitate.

"I like the relationships that come out of it," she says. "I like the fact that this is not a school, you're not graded on what you do, but you put a lot of work into it because you want to. All the teachers are great. My teacher is great. I can

talk to him about anything. I have a lot of good friends here. It's one of the most consistent things in my life."

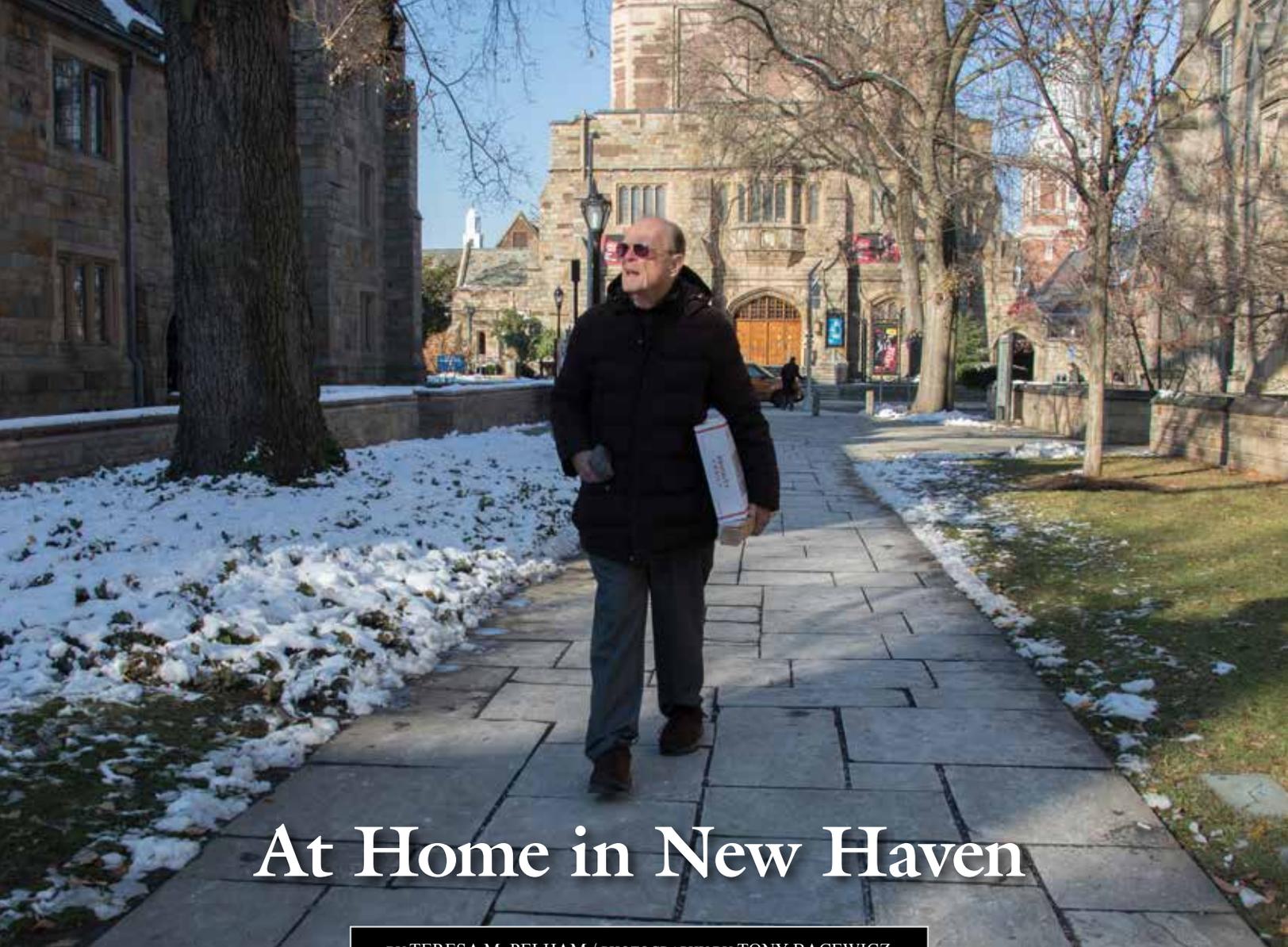
The program has given Brown many unexpected gifts.

"We learn a lot of moral things," she says. "We aren't in school, yet we have teachers that teach us more than they're supposed to. Also, we learn we have to contribute. As older kids, we have a responsibility to teach and mentor the younger kids. We have 'buddy practice' with them after they have lessons with their teachers to boost their learning. It gives us an idea of what the teachers' jobs are like, too."

Brown attributes many of her musical achievements to Music Haven.

"Music Haven has helped me a lot to where I am today, skill-wise on my instrument, like it's become a big part of my family now," she says. "Most of my family sings. Music has been a part of our family for a long time, my brother plays drums in my church. And I get a lot of support based off what I've been learning here.

"My brother is getting married and I get to play at his wedding," Brown adds with a big smile. "If it wasn't for me being here, I wouldn't be doing that. I'm playing, 'Say You Won't Let Go' by James Arthur. I'm really excited." 



At Home in New Haven

BY TERESA M. PELHAM / PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY BACEWICZ

Henry “Sam” Chauncey’s parents both lived to be over 100 years old. While that longevity can certainly be seen as a positive genetic trait, it can be a concern when you consider the amount of long-term care that’s often associated with a long life.

For this and other reasons, Chauncey got himself an insurance policy of sorts that will enable him to have fewer worries as he ages. Seabury at Home – a program that’s part of a growing movement to better plan for the future – has given him an invaluable sense of security.

The program works like this: Qualifying members pay a one-time, age-determined membership fee and a concurrent monthly fee depending on one of the eight Seabury At Home membership plans. Plans range from 100% coverage for home- and facility-based healthcare to more specialized plans that cover partial or complete coverage of in-home and/or facility-based care.

“Our benefit maximum is \$509 per day, equal to our daily rate for our skilled nursing facility on campus in

Bloomfield,” says Nicholas Olear, Assistant Director of Seabury At Home in New Haven. “Depending on which of the eight plans the Member selects, they are eligible to receive up to \$509 of services per day for no more than \$473 per month.”

We see on billboards and in the media a push to have older adults stay in their homes, but living alone in a big house can be isolating. Chauncey lives at University Towers in New Haven, an 80 percent owner-occupied building, where residents gather for potluck dinners and book clubs. It’s a co-op populated by folks including a retired chief of cardiac surgery, a music teacher, and medical school students.

“I wanted to live where there was a diverse population,” he says. “Here there are 24-hour door people, we have our own plumber and electrician. I’m able to walk to Yale Rep,

PHOTO ABOVE: Henry Chauncey enjoys his continuing connection to New Haven and Yale University on a walk to the post office.

Yale hockey games, and everything I need is just a few blocks away. Walking is so good for old people.”

Chauncey is pretty much the opposite of the mainstream definition of an “old person.” He’s a funny, vibrant, smart man with a fascinating career background. He now works with undergraduate and graduate advisees at Yale, does pro bono consulting for nonprofit organizations, and spends as much time as he can puttering in the yard at his little home in Vermont.

“When people hear ‘At Home’ they assume we’re simply placing home health aides or professionals of that nature in homes for personal or homemaker or even some skilled needs,” says Olear. “Seabury At Home is so much more than that.”

As members’ health needs change, their level of care adjusts accordingly. Some members are able to stay in their homes, as long as their physicians say it is safe to do so, while others move on to an assisted living or skilled nursing facility, similar to what can be found at the Seabury campus. Services start with a Personal Health Coordinator (PHC), who develops a relationship with members from day one and is available 24 hours a day. He or she provides initial and ongoing annual functional and wellness assessments.

In Chauncey’s case, his PHC made a small suggestion with an easy fix that could make a big difference in terms of safety: She encouraged Chauncey to get rid of the area rugs he had throughout his two-bedroom apartment, since older folks (and younger folks, too) can easily trip over the edge of a rug.

If Chauncey eventually needs home-based care, those costs are already covered with the right Seabury At Home plan. This can include medication management, home health aides for personal care, homemakers/companions for help with basic chores, live-in companion/home health aide, and home-delivered groceries and meals.

Also covered are facility-based services if needed, which, under normal market rate circumstances, can cause an individual’s retirement savings to evaporate within a year. The monthly costs are predictable, which protects Chauncey’s assets by helping him budget for the future.

Seabury At Home was the first Life Care At Home program in the state and the

fifth of its kind in the country when it began in 2008. A portability benefit is also one of the most attractive aspects of the program. As a Seabury At Home member, no matter where you move or visit, inside the US, you will still receive the same care coordination and coverage as you would in the New Haven area.

“I don’t want to gamble that I’ll have enough money,” Chauncey says. “I don’t want to have to face any of these issues alone. I can spend my money on anything I want. Maybe I’ll get a new car!”



Chauncey, 84, enjoys the comfort of his own New Haven apartment while staying very active in his work.

DELICIOUS



"Boiling" cookery has been called "Cajun-Asian-Fusion." At Boiling SoHo, Dungeness crab is the queen of the shellfish pile; the house special sauce combines Old Bay with "secret Asian seasonings."

THE RAW, THE COOKED, THE BOWLS AND THE BOILING:

A guide to New Haven's newest cuisines

by **TODD LYON** / photography by **NICK CAITO**

Adventurous eaters, rejoice! New Haven, which has had a curious dearth of seafood restaurants considering that it is a port town, is now home to a quartet of American/Asian hybrids that focus on fish and shellfish. That's good, but equally exciting is the interactive ways the food can be enjoyed: This new crop of eateries offers hands-on dining experiences that can appeal to the fussy control freak on a health kick as well as the unapologetic hedonist for whom more is more.

First, there are two new poké – rhymes with “okay” – places. Poké is a staple of the Hawaiian diet, and poké restaurants are usually casual, sometimes strictly take-out places known for enlightened, super-clean fast food. Customers build their own rice bowl, salad or wrap by choosing from an assortment of proteins – including raw fish, plus cooked and vegan options – as well as veggies, seaweeds, seasonings and toppings.

Next, we welcome two “boiling” restaurants. Inspired by low-country boil feasts of the deep American South, yet infused with Asian flair, these places offer messes of shellfish cooked in cauldrons, then seasoned and served family-style, to be eaten with not-quite-bare hands.

For the uninitiated diner, perhaps insecure about opening the wallet and diving into unfamiliar culinary territory, here is a primer. Let the culinary journey begin!

CAJUN BOILED SEAFOOD CT, a.k.a. “The Boiling”

This place is a blast. Imagine a hideaway on Church Street, steps from the Green, with fishing nets suspended from the ceiling, walls scribbled on by food-goofy customers wielding Sharpies, and a conspicuous lobster tank. Then, imagine you and your friends donning plastic gloves and half-body bibs and watching in awe as your server spins a large, double-walled bag full of seafood, lands it on your table with a thud, and splits it open in a cloud of steam.

That's when the real fun begins.

The Boiling, as it's known by fans, opened in May and has steadily built an enthusiastic following. “Dinner turns into a party,” says manager Jason Chen. He calls the cuisine “Cajun-Asian Fusion,” and, in fact, the menu veers madly between familiar Dixieland dishes like po' boys, seafood gumbo and fried oysters, and Asian offerings such as an edamame appetizer and spicy crab on fried rice. Chen notes, however, that about 80 percent of customers go for the boil experience, and that's a good place to start.

Here's how: First, you and your crew choose from three different prix fixe boils, each larger than the next. For a party of four adults with average appetites, Chen recommends the “Pick 3” option (\$37.99 – a bargain) in which you choose clams (one pound of tiny littlenecks, sweet and tender); mussels (a pound of large, green-lipped mussels from New Zealand); a pound of shrimp,



Love
Crawfish
❤️
Shrimp

Dinner at Cajun Boiling Seafood is always a party. Even the walls, scribbled with messages from happy patrons, are entertaining.



The poké experience involves an assembly line of fresh ingredients, starting with white rice, brown rice or salad...



... and continuing with choice proteins from land and sea, plus an abundance of veggies, toppings, sauces and "crunch."



Crawfish and company at Cajun Boiled Seafood, ready to take the plunge.

with an additional fee for head removal; and/or a pound of crawfish. Says Chen: “People in this area sometimes don’t know how to eat crawfish; we can teach you how, just ask!” All of the prix fixe options include corn, potato and sausage in the mix.

Next, choose your sauce from six offerings, including Cajun, Old Bay and the can’t-go-wrong Garlic Butter. The food generally arrives so quickly that you barely have time to don your gloves and bibs, but that’s OK, because it needs

a minute to cool down. (You will learn this on your own.)

Then, dig in. Make a mess. Toss your shells into the discard bucket with WNBA flair. Down a glass of inoffensive house wine, or a perfectly drinkable beer, or fresh juice selected from a list that includes cucumber and carrot. You might find yourself shoving food into your mouth and fighting the person on your right to snag the last mussel, and that’s OK. You can always order more.

Final step: Go home and step directly into the shower.

BOILING SOHO

Xiaofang You, a.k.a. “Melody,” is from the Fujian Province of China; she says that her authentic homeland dishes, including Spicy Crawfish, are what draw Chinese natives, many from the Hunan Province, to her Boiling SoHo restaurant on State Street. As it is at the other boiling place, however, the majority of her customers come for the deeply primal fun of eating seafood with their hands. And, when tackling snow crab legs, king crab legs or Dungeness crab – the specialty of the house – clutching mighty shears.

Boiling SoHo* is in a space that is best remembered as the original home of Goodfellas. Although the vibe is completely different, the layout remains the same, with a fully stocked bar occupying about a third of the space. (Note to self: Return to bar to try skewered meats, raw oysters and classic cocktails.) Servers are friendly and eager to please;

they are also quick to note that some of the traditional Chinese items may not please American palates. But the more-familiar Cajun offerings surely will.

You’s advice to newcomers: Try the boil of the house, that is, Dungeness crab (\$40). You can choose your own victim from among a feisty crew in a bubbling tank. Then, add shellfish by the pound, starting at \$13 for clams and mussels and \$14 for crawfish, and soaring to \$35 for King crab legs. Corn and potato come along for the ride; add-ins like sausage, pasta and broccoli are \$3-\$4. Sauces include the popular Garlic Butter, which has a bit of Cajun spicing, and the SoHo Special with extra Old Bay. Spice levels range from mild to “fire,” but whatever level you choose, says Ms. You, “We add a bit of secret Asian seasoning.”

As one of the newest additions to what has become a burgeoning restaurant row, Boiling SoHo lends some mad



This Pokémoto feast ends with sweet swirls of Dole Whip (a cult favorite at Disneyland), subject to availability.

diversity to the State Street scene. It's a great place to go with a fun-loving crowd of foodies, and even non-squeamish children will have a ball.

*You and her co-owner/husband, Simon Zheng, are transplants from downtown Manhattan, where "boiling" restaurants are increasingly popular. Thus the name.

POKÉMOTO

Audubon is one of the most charming streets in New Haven, with its jumbo kiosk and bright tables perched on brick sidewalks. It is also the heart of the city's arts scene. And now, it is home to an ever-so-welcome eatery, Pokémoto.

"Clean" and "bright" are the first words that come to mind when describing both the cuisine and the atmosphere. Owner Thomas Nguyen, whose familial roots are in Vietnam, left a career in finance after the Great Recession to set out on his own. "I love food," says the energetic 35-year-old. "I've traveled all over the world for food." He experienced his first poké in Honolulu in 2005; "I thought it was awesome," he says. Years of restaurant experience followed, and in October of 2017, together with his friend Gladys Longwa, he realized

his dream of opening a one-of-a-kind poké place.

At Pokémoto, the build-your-own model is followed, with ingredients that would be right at home at a sushi bar. Customers choose a Poké Bowl with rice, a Poké Burrito, or a Poké Salad. Then, perusing the colorful options laid out behind glass, the proteins: wild caught ahi tuna (raw); salmon (raw); chicken prepared via the sous vide technique; cooked shrimp; and/or organic tofu. Since prices are based on the number of proteins you choose – \$10.25 for two and \$12.75 for three – the next several steps can be kid-in-a-candy-store crazy. One could theoretically ask for all nine mix-ins, 15 toppings and six "crunch" options, at no extra charge. Some of the more popular options are chopped mangoes, fresh jalapeños, ogo seaweed ("tastes like the ocean," says Nguyen), kani salad, avocado (with an upcharge) and wonton crisps. These are flavored with a choice of seasonings and sauces, a favorite being a blend of ponzu fresh and wasabi aoli.

For an extra \$1, patrons can treat themselves to Nguyen's house-made miso soup. He's proud of it, and for good reason: In the chill of



Shredded nori tops a bountiful poké bowl that also includes kani salad and avocado.



The New Haven Poke at Pokelicious features salmon, tuna, wasabi mayo and more, topped with a fresh orchid.

winter it is a profound pleasure to take a seat at a communal table in the spacious dining area, sip the steaming broth dotted with scallions and tofu, and taste the love.

POKELICIOUS

Katie Kim and Sam Kim are not married, nor are they related. They both happen to be foodies of Korean heritage with the same last name who left sensible careers – she in medical billing, he in real estate – to become fast-food restaurateurs.

Their first venue was a pop-up in



Long Island City, offering Korean barbecue. “It was fried chicken with gochujang - Korean spicy pepper paste,” explains Ms. Kim. “Then we decided we wanted to do something more healthy. We started our first poké place in Queens, then moved the whole business here.”

“Here” is a sleek space on Church, across the street from Gateway. At 700 square feet, it offers limited seating but has an open, airy feel. The main focus is, of course, the poké bar, where beautiful ingredients such as masago, radishes, pineapple, bonito

and arugula are ready to be made into a bowl (small, with two scoops of protein, is \$9.95; large, with three scoops, is \$10.95; and the “sushiritto,” a wrap, is \$9.95). The Kims put their own spin on traditional poké in a few ways; first, their rice offerings, used as a base for the bowls and the wraps, include a green tea white rice with macha powder, while their brown rice is mixed with hijiki seaweed, infusing it with an unusual depth of flavor. Then there are the signature bowls.

“We created our signature bowls to reflect major cities we’ve been to, and

mixed in a bit of each city’s flavors,” explains Ms. Kim. The Mexico City Poke, for instance, includes shrimp, lemon, jalapenos, and pico de gallo; the Tokyo Poke is a mix of salmon, wasabi shoyu, edamame, hijiki salad (with lotus root and ginger, lovely), eel sauce and more.

The New Haven Poke, says Ms. Kim, is most like authentic Hawaiian poké. “We named it after our new home,” she notes, and displays a charming final flourish: a fresh, edible orchid atop the bowl of crunchy, healthy goodness. 

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The ladies are wearing the women's Beadnell Waxed Jackets in Olive, Navy, Sage, and Black. The gentleman is wearing the Classic Barbour Beaufort Waxed Jacket with a coordinating Classic Tartan Scarf.

Weekend Away In Style

An afternoon at Barbour with Debbie Wright

photography by TODD FAIRCHILD

"It's a spontaneous weekend away. The warmth of your face from a roaring fire. It's a hearty pub lunch, surrounded by people you love. It's walking the dog on a crisp, winter morning. It's spending quality time with friends and family, and building memories that last a lifetime." – Barbour

This is what you discover when you shop at Barbour and why Seasons of New Haven chose it as our featured boutique for this heartwarming season.





See more from Debbie Wright at SeasonsofNewHaven.com



Carrie Touchette-Ladden is wearing the Barbour Selsey Shirt and Beadnell Waxed Jacket.

Your weekend getaway wardrobe should include endless options that fit into an overnight bag. Simple and stylish is easy when you pack a pair of straight leg denim jeans, striped tops, vests and cute accessories. You can get multiple wears out of the same pair of bottoms while maximizing multiple shoe options which can range from tall boots to comfy walking shoes. Layering is key when catering to a weekend filled with memorable moments and experiences. Pack light with the right pieces and enjoy the adventures life has in store for you.

Alexa Pagnani is wearing the Barbour Berwick Tee and Selsey Sweatshirt.



Brandy Zuber is wearing the Barbour Wester Shirt and Westmarch Gilet





Natacha Saint Juste is carrying the Telescopic Umbrella and wearing the Barbour Wester Sweater and Faero Shirt.

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– **Debbie Wright**
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Steven Smith is wearing the Barbour Duke Jacket and Whitehall Shirt.

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FEATURE



As New Haven's corporation counsel, John Rose is tasked with defending the city in legal matters. Earlier in his career, he broke ground when he was the first African-American attorney to be named partner in a major law firm.

Making the Case

Trailblazing lawyer defends city's best interests

by JACK KRAMER / photography by TODD FAIRCHILD

Most people, after working more than a half-century in their chosen field and in their mid-to-late 70s, would be enjoying their retirement, thinking about early bird specials, planning their next vacation and just enjoying slowing down a bit.

They wouldn't be working long hours in an office, attending meetings – some that start early in the morning and some that end late at night or, if it's a Board of Alders meeting, sometimes the following morning.

But that isn't John Rose.

Don't misunderstand: Rose, who is the city of New Haven's top lawyer, former top lawyer for the city of Hartford and the first African-American partner in a major Connecticut law firm, loves talking about his two children, two grandchildren and hobbies (golf and watching theater/arts), but he fits all those things in the little bit of spare time he does have.

You see, he's still got a lot of work to do.

Why?

"I love it. I love the job," is his simple answer. "It's the most wonderful, awful job you can have," he jokes.

Asked if he sees himself slowing down anytime soon, Rose has a one-word answer: "Nope." He then politely asks his interviewer if there are any more questions.

"I've got someone waiting for me," he explains, as he says goodbye and gets back to work.

Rose's background as a lawyer is immense and

groundbreaking. He was recognized last year with the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association's Visionary Award, and was honored in 2016 by the Connecticut Bar Association for his work in the state, which spans more than 50 years.

After graduating from Yale Law School in 1966, he went to work at New Haven Legal Assistance Association. Two years later he joined Ribicoff, Ribicoff & Kotkin, where he broke ground when in 1972 he was named the first Connecticut African-American partner.

In 1978, he left Ribicoff to found Louden, Byrne, Schechtman, Slater & Rose, where he was responsible for business and client development. It grew to 30 lawyers. In 1984, he joined Levy & Dronney as partner.

In 2004 he went to work as Hartford corporate counsel. In that position, Rose led efforts to settle a lawsuit filed against city police after a fatal shooting. He also wrote numerous legal opinions for the city's leadership, including one that asserted for the first time the City Council did not have subpoena power.

He went back to private practice a few years ago, but in 2015 came to New Haven as acting corporation counsel. Early in 2016, the acting was removed from his title, and he currently leads the city's legal, fair rent and disability services departments.

As the city's top lawyer, Rose serves as New Haven's chief legal adviser and attorney for city officials, departments, boards, and commissioners in matters relating to their official duties. The lawyers on his staff provide legal advice and are responsible for handling any litigation or contract matters that relate to city departments.



Rose stands outside City Hall, where his office is located. He has deep ties to New Haven, having graduated from Yale Law School in 1966 and later worked at New Haven Legal Assistance.

Just as important to Rose as his “official” job description is his role as one of the first African-American lawyers in the state to make a name for himself.

“I consider part of my job, my responsibility, to mentor young black lawyers,” Rose says during an interview in his New Haven City Hall office. “I also try and mentor women lawyers, other minorities. I feel a need to reach back, to pull up those that I can help down the path I’ve traveled in any way I can.”

While Rose has tried hundreds, if not thousands of cases in his career, there is one he says really stands out in his mind.

It was when he was practicing law in Hartford and he represented a party that had an interest in a piece of property in Farmington known as “The Golden Triangle.”

A well-known developer had tried to, in Rose’s words, “buy off” his client’s interest for \$10,000. Rose said after reviewing the deal his client and the developer originally had, he sued.

“The court awarded us a prejudgment remedy of \$46 million based on the incredible value the fully developed property had attained. Less than a year later the case settled for \$5 million cash to my client,” Rose says proudly.

He grins when asked the “difference” between being the top lawyer for the cities of New Haven and Hartford.

“New Haven is a wickedly political town,” he says. “Everybody thinks they can walk into the mayor’s office and get a toy.”

He adds: “Everybody’s related in this town. That can make it challenging a lot of the time.”

But anyone who knows Rose knows he is a friendly, congenial man who isn’t shaken by the challenges of operating in government service. In fact, his proponents say one of his greatest strengths is his even-handed demeanor.

Rose points out that the mayor – and his or her team – has to be elected every two years in New Haven, while in Hartford the mayor serves a four-year term. Meaning, he said, “In New Haven, you are constantly campaigning. It never ends.”

Anyone who knows Rose knows he is a friendly, congenial man who isn’t shaken by the challenges of operating in government service. In fact, his proponents say one of his greatest strengths is his even-handed demeanor.

Rose is a fan of Mayor Toni Harp, who recently was overwhelmingly elected to her third term, and the feeling is mutual.

“The remarkable and productive longevity of attorney John Rose is even more impressive to me when I remember how volatile the national climate was 50 years ago – that amid widespread racial tension at the time it was a particularly rich, and risky, time for an African-American attorney to try and get started,” says Harp.

“Throughout the 50 years since, attorney Rose has been a thoughtful, deliberate, and reliable presence in Connecticut legal circles, always helping young attorneys along the way, because he has not forgotten his own beginning struggles,” says Harp.

She adds, “There’s serendipity now in John’s public service as Corporation Counsel in New Haven, the city where he first studied law more than 50 years ago. The city is most fortunate to receive legal

interpretation, advice, opinions, and representation from this esteemed, venerable member of the Connecticut Bar.”

Another admirer is Mike Carter, chief administrative officer for the city of New Haven who, like Rose, is a Dartmouth College graduate.

“I first met John Rose when I was a student at Dartmouth and selected to be on a trustee-appointed committee looking at student life at Dartmouth,” says Carter. “John was one of the alumni representatives and it was so refreshing to meet an African-American alum who was a practicing attorney and highly engaged in the practice of law as well as alumni and civic issues.”

Fortunately for Rose’s proponents and those who depend on his service, the attorney doesn’t seem to be slowing down anytime soon. 

Ripe for Growth

Craft juice maker eyes expansion.

by **JACK KRAMER** / *photography by* **NICK CAITO**

Michel Boissy's simple way of explaining what he and his 130 workers create each day in their 22,000-square-foot factory on Kendall Street in New Haven is, "We are the craft beer makers of the juice world."

Boissy, 39, grew up in Wallingford, and in 2009 co-founded the company Freshbev Craft Juicery after noticing there were no completely fresh and natural cocktail mixes available commercially.

His idea has grown into a bustling business that is equal part RIPE Bar Juice® (cocktail mixes) and RIPE Craft Juice® (non-alcoholic). The brand has become increasingly popular in grocery stores, bars and liquor stores across Connecticut and across the country.

"Our philosophy is simple," says Boissy. "Keep it fresh, keep it simple. We want to make them the best juices and mixers we possibly can for our customers."

The mixes are popular at the biggest liquor store in nearby Branford, Coastal Wine & Spirits. Coastal has been carrying RIPE Bar Juices for two years.

Paul Gagliardi, assistant store manager, says the RIPE brand "sells like crazy" with the store's customers.

"Especially the margarita mix," says Gagliardi. "That is the most popular seller by far. It probably sells 10



times more than any other one."

Other popular sellers, Gagliardi says, are the mojito and cosmopolitan mixers.

Gagliardi says the products are popular because "people just like the authenticity of the mixers. It's not cheap, but people are willing to pay for the high quality and that's what

these mixers are all about."

Boissy acknowledges that his juices and bar mixes aren't inexpensive, but that's not what he's going for.

"We're into health and wellness," says Boissy. "Besides, people, especially Millennials, today will trade up incrementally for value."

To that point, Boissy shows a guest a copy of report entitled "The Evolving Non-Alcoholic Beverage Landscape," which says the Millennial generation has a much higher inclination toward purchasing healthier, authentic products than older generations.

"That's the market my juices have been tapping into," says Boissy. "It's a market that will continue to grow."

Anyone who spends any time with Boissy – who lives in Fairfield these days so he can quickly get to the New York airports to make business appointments around the country – quickly sees his passion for his product.

As he gives visitors a tour of what he calls "the only



Michel Boissy, shown here in his New Haven office, founded Freshbev Craft Juicery after noticing a lack of fresh, natural cocktail mixes on the market. Amid the growing popularity of his company's Ripe bar mixes and craft juices, he plans to expand his business.



Boissy checking out the quality of oranges; and oranges and pineapples being readied for juice making



Ripe bar mixes and juices use only fresh, natural citrus and ingredients - and are made under strict quality control guidelines. When consumers buy one of the brand's products, they can be assured it was freshly made recently.



Ripe juices emerge from the processing machines

factory of its kind,” he high-fives and hugs his workers as they go through the RIPE processing routine.

But before any visitor gets a tour of the plant, he or she must first wash up as if they are preparing to perform surgery: put on sanitary scrubs, glasses, hats, etc. Only then is anyone, including Boissy, allowed into the precisely set 38-degree production room to, as Boissy’s puts it, “see where the magic happens.”

He walks briskly – actually jogs – from machine to machine, anxious to show what he calls “the best, most innovative juice producing equipment that money can buy.”

While he shows off the equipment, he explains in

painstaking detail the routine of making juice.

That routine, Boissy insists, means “no heat – never.” Instead, RIPE uses a cold production process that ensures that the final product “has the freshest color, aroma, unfrozen and nutritious,” he says.

“Making the best juice starts with buying the best produce; it’s that simple,” says Boissy, who spent years in the food service and bar business before opening his own operation. “We buy directly from growers we know by name.”

RIPE workers chop, peel, mill and press all of the fruits and vegetables into pure-squeezed juice, which are then



submitted to several thousand pounds of pressure per square inch. Boissy explains it takes four to six hours from start to finish to make a bottle of juice in the factory, emphasizing that “nothing is ever added” to the juice – especially heat.

“We simply refuse to cook the nutrients out of our juice by exposing it to heat pasteurization,” he says. “And when you pick up a bottle of RIPE you know it was made within the past few weeks, not sitting on some shelf for six months.”

Now on a roll, Boissy goes on: “No artificial colors, flavorings, additives, high-fructose corn syrup, GMOs, stabilizers, preservatives, sticks, rocks, starfish. Nothing

but pure, natural ingredients from Mama Nature.”

RIPE Craft Juices come in Cranberry, Red Grapefruit, Pomegranate, Apple Juice, Orange Juice and Pineapple. Boissy says the best sellers are Pineapple, Cranberry and Orange Juice.

“All of our citrus is bought fresh and delivered daily to our juicer. We source our citrus from the U.S. and Mexico, depending on the time of year,” he says. “Either way, they’re both held to the same quality standards.”

Information on where the juices can be bought can be found online at drinkripe.com. The juices can also be found at grocers such as Big Y, Stop & Shop and Whole Foods Market.

As for the bar mixes, besides the Agave Margarita, there is also San Marzano Bloody Mary, Classic Lemon Sour, Agave Mojito, Classic Cranberry, Classic Cosmopolitan, and Bajan Punch.

The bar mixes can also be bought online, at bars, hotels, clubs, spas, cruise lines, and – in Boissy’s words – “gin mills and dive bars.”

The bar mixes and juices generate about the same share of sales for the company, he says.

Though he started his business in Wallingford, where he grew up, Boissy says, “We were soon busting through the seams, so I chose to come to New Haven – it was a good fit for my company. It’s important that our company be close to where our customer base is. I want to be in the backyard of where RIPE is known.”

Boissy is proud to have his factory in New Haven “because of this city’s rich tradition of awesome food making and products.” He notes part of that tradition

includes his factory, which is in the old Perri Sausage building.

He adds that with his busy travel schedule and visiting customers, farmers and potential clients, “being located close to I-95 and I-91 and being halfway between New York and Boston is a real plus for me.”

Boissy says his workforce is up to 130 in New Haven “and we will be hiring more very, very soon, I can tell you that.”

His expansion plans don’t end there.

“We’ll be opening a second plant, somewhere in the





Worker pours a vat of juice into processing machine.



Midwest, by the end of 2018,” Boissy says.

There are markets where he wants to introduce the brand; California is somewhere in particular where he believes RIPE will flourish.

In the meantime, he and his co-workers have some new plans for RIPE fans in the New Haven area.

RIPE recently collaborated with the popular Stony Creek Brewery in Branford to launch a Ripe & Cranky beer line.

The businesses have collaborated on a series of three beers: Valencia Orange, Costa Rican Pineapple Juice and Ecuadorian Passion Fruit Juice. The beer will be blended with RIPE’S juice for what Stony Creek brewers say on its website will be “perfect hoppy harmony.”

“It’s fun being a foodie to know that we are a local juice company doing something with a local brewery,” says Boissy. The first beer to hit the shelves is the Valencia Orange.

Boissy also plans to relaunch his packaging in 2018, using flexible pouches that can be easily refrigerated by customers.

As he shows the pouches off, he beams: “I’ve got a lot of ideas. There’s plenty of new things coming down the road, I can promise you.” 



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The Greater New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade has a long history dating back to 1842 and draws crowds of up to 350,000 people from all over to the Elm City.

Going Green

St. Patrick's Day Parade Steps Off Soon,
With Plenty of History Behind it

by SLOAN BREWSTER



Photo caption



More on the St. Patrick's Day parade at SeasonsofNewHaven.com

For one day every year, the Elm City is awash in green as hundreds of thousands of people line the streets and, irrelevant of their particular ancestry, invoke their Irish hearts during the annual Greater New Haven St. Patrick's Day parade.

Music blares from bagpipes and drums as musicians donning traditional plaid kilts march rhythmically along, their tasseled scarves fluttering in the pre-spring breeze. High school marching bands flaunt their musical prowess in the procession while cars carrying dignitaries casually roll by and mini motor bikes whizz in circles to the cheering applause of the crowds and the wide-eyed wonder of young girls eagerly awaiting the appearance of the queen and her attendant.

The parade goes back to 1842, when the Hibernian Provident Society gathered for the first-ever official New Haven celebration of the patron Irish saint. That year, according to "Wearin' O' The Green," a book by Neil Hogan, the entertainment took place at the Exchange Saloon, a hall in the city, with a procession there by the Hibernians through State, Elm, York and Chapel streets. There was singing of Irish ballads, oration and later, a procession back to the Hibernians' hall. The festivities concluded with a rendition of "Yankee Doodle."

The following year did not go as smoothly.

In 1843, the parade was postponed because of the weather, according to a March 16, 1843 article in "The Daily Herald," chronicled in a book at the New

Haven Museum library. The cancellation was among 43 announcements in the paper that day.

"The celebration of St. Patrick's Day by the New Haven Hibernian Provident Society is postponed until Friday next," the paper reads. "The route of the procession will be the same as announced yesterday and the exercise will be the same if the weather should prove favorable."

It did not.

The festivities were postponed a second time, to March 23, but due to two inches of snow and bitter cold, there was yet another postponement.

"Strange weather for the 23rd of March," reads an article printed the following day.

Then, the Hiberians made a decision.

"The New Haven Hiberian Provident Society held an extra meeting last night at the Exchange Saloon where it was resolved, owing to the still unfavorable state of the weather, that their annual celebration of St. Patrick's Day should be indefinitely postponed," the paper states.

Parade day always began with walking to St. Mary's Church and a celebration of Mass, says Courtney Lundgren Connors, chairwoman of 2018 St. Patrick's Day Parade. That tradition has continued and remains an important part of the day's festivities. The Knights of Columbus lead the procession while music from bagpipes accompanies the walkers and the parade committee shines in tuxedos with tails and top hats.

"When I think about the modern parade, we start out



Connecticut's oldest fife and drum band, Mattatuck Drum Band of Waterbury, which was organized in 1767 and has had continuous membership since, marches in the 2015 Greater New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade.



The Bristol Eastern High School Marching Band is a fan favorite at the Greater New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade. Here, the band performs at the 2009 parade.

with a Mass at St. Mary's Church," Connors says. "It's really kind of nice to tie that back."

There is no historical mention of the parade between 1885 and the 1920s, Connors said. In 1920, it began again but during wartime years the festivities, while not canceled, were more modest, and some years the day was marked merely by religious services.

In 1956, the Ancient Order of Hibernians decided it was time the parade had a comeback, says Connors.

John O'Donovan, who immigrated to the U.S. with his wife, Kathleen O'Donovan, in 1953, is the oldest living parade grand marshal. The couple was at the parade in 1956, and he served as grand marshal in 1976.

"I took pictures of the first parade that was held in New Haven in 1956," he says. "The snow was heavy on the ground, but the streets had been cleared for the parade and we were wondering if we were going to be able to have the parade because of the weather, but they cleared the streets very well that day."

O'Donovan has only missed the parade once since then, when he was in California about four or five years ago. Over the years, there have been some changes to the parade but much of it remains constant, he says. A big component has always been the selection of the queens. In the early days, when there were more Irish immigrants, Miss Ireland was born in Ireland and Miss Irish America was born here. Now

there is a Parade Queen and her Honor Attendant.

Connors recalls going to the parade with her grandmother when she was a young girl and waiting for the queen.

"My grandmother would say, 'You can run for parade queen one day,'" Connors says. "In 2007, she said 'Can you please run for parade queen now? I think you're going to win it.'"

Connors did run that year and was named Honor Attendant.

The 2018 parade promises all the usual pomp and circumstance, with even more marching units than in past years, including the well-known Mumpers, which haven't participated since 2007, Connors says.

"They're quite a treat to see," she adds.

Well-known high school marching bands will wow crowds with their skill. Among the ranks will be the Trumbull High School Golden Eagle Marching Band, which has performed at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, the Terryville High School Marching Band and the Bristol Eastern High School Marching Band.

"They are fabulous, they win awards all the time," Connors says of Bristol Eastern. "They've been coming since as far as I can remember."

Divisions in the parade include a military division, with groups performing Civil and Revolutionary War



The parade is not all Irish, nor is it meant to be, LaFrance says. Rather, it is a celebration of and for all ethnic groups, designed so that everyone in the 350,000-person crowd lining the streets will find a personal connection.

reenactments, a fife and drum corps, bugle bands, major bands, bagpipes, the Emerald Society, elementary school and high school marching bands, fire department and police units, the Irish American Community Center, Irish step dancing groups and traditional Irish music and dancing, says Bernadette Smyth LaFrance, former parade grand marshal.

The parade is not all Irish, nor is it meant to be, LaFrance says. Rather, it is a celebration of and for all ethnic groups, designed so that everyone in the 350,000-person crowd lining the streets will find a personal connection.

“It really is a true depiction of New Haven because New Haven was built by all these different ethnicities... all the different people that had the American dream,” LaFrance says. “We want everyone that lines the streets to relate to at least one group.”

The 2018 Greater New Haven St. Patrick’s Day Parade, steps off at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 11. Information: stpatricksdaysparade.org. 

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Vinyl Revolution

Seasons talks with area spin doctors about getting their grooves back

It's easy to wax rhapsodic about vinyl. When you drop a needle into a groove, it elicits pops and hisses. As the platter spins, music recorded decades ago spills from a pair of well-worn speakers. Streaming an MP3 is like getting a text message: cold and remote. But playing your favorite record is intimate; it's having a conversation with a good friend.

Pulling out a record connects music and listener. The ritual taps into the collective unconscious shared by generations of Americans. There's even a unique smell to new vinyl.

Moving into a new apartment once meant carrying milk crates full of your favorite albums. Instead of watching music videos, which launched with MTV in 1981, listeners used to admire beautiful album artwork and pore over detailed liner notes.

Today, a trip to Barnes & Noble might be shocking to those who still have old vinyl in their basements. New record sections are cropping up in stores. Record sales are at a 28-year-high, according to several business magazines.

There's a vinyl revolution going on, and it's not just for audiophiles and hipsters anymore. Whether you're into jazz, classic rock, or indie bands, the allure of listening to records is attracting more fans. A passion for records is bringing customers back to music stores in droves, and inspiring us once again to find space in our living rooms for a turntable.

Medium Fidelity

Modern listeners, streaming music on their iPhones, may be baffled about why anyone would prefer to hear vintage vinyl. But a unique, and perhaps undefinable, quality is prompting people to return to records, both new and used, in the digital age of CDs and MP3s.

"It's the sound, which I understand is not for everybody," says Dan Curland, owner of Mystic Disc, on Steamboat Wharf in Mystic. He operates a funky, eclectic shop featuring

more than 50 feet of record bins, catering to all styles of music. He continues, "Not everyone has a high-end turntable, but it's about the sound. If the music was recorded analog, then I recommend buying the record. It's going to sound better on a turntable."

Sound is only part of the appeal. "This is an 'old-time' way of listening to music. We always want to go 'back to the garden' as we said in the '60s," says Curland, quoting from the Crosby, Stills Nash & Young version of Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock." "But half of my customers are under the age of 25. They haven't seen album art like this before. So there's that side of it. Whether they pick up a Charles Mingus or Neil Young album, they are always amazed at the artwork." He adds, "Now I sell more Frank Sinatra albums to 14-year-old kids than anyone else. It's just cool to have a record player."

Curland says the number one seller of new vinyl nationwide is the millennial-focused clothing store Urban Outfitters. Mystic Disc, which opened in 1983, nearly closed in 2006 due to waning interest in physical media. A decade ago, fewer CDs were being sold, and the resurgence in records had yet to arrive.

"We got rid of all the CDs," he says. "In the 1990s CDs took over like weeds in a pond, but in 2006 I almost closed. A few years later, I sold my house to help the store survive. We were fortunate that business started to pick up three to four years ago. Since then, interest in vinyl is up at least a hundred percent. Foot traffic is up. People are curious about records again."

He says price is another attractive element of record collecting. "You can come in my store and find good condition LPs [long play vinyl records] starting at three dollars and up," he says. "We guarantee they don't have defects. We have a listening station for you to preview the music. On a rainy weekend, coming here is a social thing."

No Jacket Required

New London's record retailer The Telegraph is a relative newcomer to the vinyl revival, riding the wave during the past six years. Owner Rich Martin is uniquely positioned for this return-to-records trend.

"We've seen growth every year since opening," Martin says. Although getting music online is undeniably the elephant in the room, Martin says technology opens the doors for listeners who may then choose to experience their favorite songs in physical form. "People are streaming a lot, which is a means of discovery for them," he explains. "They're hearing new and old acts online, then coming into the shop asking about them."

The Telegraph has no particular musical focus, instead preferring to stock almost every genre. "Right now, in new vinyl there's a big emphasis on indie rock," Martin says. "For used records, we have a large selection of jazz, reggae, and punk. We try to have a little bit of everything."

Martin also runs an adjunct business called Telegraph Recording Company, which produces indie rock and punk music on vinyl and other mediums. It was the catalyst for opening the record shop in 2010. He says the longevity of the medium also helps sell records. "Vinyl can last for the ages," he says. "I've got vinyl that's 60 years old and can still play, unlike CDs from a few years back."

Martin adds that even the act of switching songs on an album is indicative that vinyl fans want a tangible connection. "You have to find the song you want to hear. You have to get up and change it," he says of lifting the needle off the record. "This is a conscious choice to be engaged in the music."

A Love Supreme

The most venerable place to buy vinyl in Connecticut is Integrity 'n Music, a Wethersfield institution for almost half a century. The shop is truly a hidden gem. Although it disappeared from direct view along the Silas Deane Highway, the record store survives in back of its former location.

It's tucked away unceremoniously behind a beauty salon and a needleworks shop. Only a weathered wood sign tells record aficionados they have arrived. A black-and-white photo collage in the foyer shows you exactly what to expect. It's a "who's who" of performers specializing in the style Integrity is known best for: jazz.

"I first opened shop in 1972," says owner Ed Krech. "We've been down here since 2001, and we were upstairs for 25 years." The store mascot is an English Sheepdog. His current canine is named "Satchmo," the nickname of famed trumpeter Louis Armstrong. On any given Saturday, a current of customers courses through the record bins, exiting the store with stacks of vintage vinyl.

Krech hasn't seen a renewed interest in records because his customers' passion for them never waned. "I've been selling

vinyl for 45 years," he says. "I can't really say there's been a resurgence here because there's always been an interest for jazz and blues records. As soon as I get a big bunch in, they're gone. I have deejays coming in from New York City to buy from me. I've bought collections of five thousand and six thousand pieces and sold most of it within a couple weeks."

The records at Integrity, while known for jazz, can run the gamut. Used classic rock records, such as those by The Who, typically sell for just 99 cents. Rock and pop records from the 1980s by artists like Def Leppard and Adam Ant are relegated to the 50-cent bin. Not far away sit much more expensive, and brand new, reissues of European jazz records that can fetch as much as \$30 each. Krech is a big fan of New Orleans jazz. Lately, he's noticed younger fans of genres other than jazz. "Kids are coming in to buy the older rock and R&B albums," he says. "The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, and Chicago are popular."

Buying records is not just nostalgia for bygone days. There's a reason why Facebook recently rolled out a video celebrating online "friendships" featuring the image of an old turntable: We exist in an analog world that digital media can only try to approximate.

A re-issue of a Charles Mingus album on display at Integrity sums it up. The album proclaims on the cover that purchasing vinyl is "The nicest thing you can do for your stylus - and your ears." A lot of Krech's customers agree. One customer remarks, while holding a tower of records at the check-out counter, that this is how music is meant to be heard.

Looking over the old wooden bins full of American music history, Krech shares what he believes to be the siren song of his shop.

"I love good music," he says. "Good music is good, whether it's on vinyl, cassette, or CD. Other people say they can hear a difference, and that may be true. What I'm sure of is that I know guys who have collections of 10,000 records. They still come in here looking for more." 



INTEGRITY 'n MUSIC

"I love good music,"
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MEET THE MASTER: Ed Krech, of Integrity 'n Music, in Wethersfield, has been selling vinyl for 44 years. "I can't really say there's been a resurgence here because there's always been an interest in jazz and blues records," he says. "As soon as I get a big bunch in, they're gone."

BREAKFAST WITH

ANNE WORCESTER

Anne Worcester sitting inside one of her favorite restaurants, Claire's Corner Copia.

THE CONNECTICUT OPEN TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR LETS US IN ON SOME OF HER LOCAL FAVORITES.

by **CARA ROSNER** / photography by **TODD FAIRCHILD**

Anne Worcester loves New Haven, and she wants the world to know it. As director of the Connecticut Open presented by United Technologies tennis tournament and chief marketing officer at Market New Haven, which was formed to raise the city's profile, it's her job to sing New Haven's praises. But her enthusiasm extends well beyond that. Speak with her and it's clear her bond with the city has grown deeply personal. It's the first place she brings visiting friends and families, she says, and she loves when the Elm City impresses someone who has never visited or may have had preconceptions.

On a recent morning at one of her favorite spots, Claire's Corner Copia – "This is my home away from home," she says – Worcester greets most of the staff with hugs. With a ginger smoothie and a coffee in hand, she's eager to talk about the city she loves.

Q: What's your favorite way to spend a day with friends or family in New Haven?

A: When I have friends or family come visit I always like to start with the Yale tour, which is free to the public. It's like a tourist attraction; it's not just for students looking at the school. It's 75 minutes and there are about 60,000 people who go through it annually. It's just a great birds-eye view into how integrated Yale is into the city of New Haven. It's given by students so every tour is different. I love the two art museums (Yale University Art Gallery and Yale Center for British Art), which are right across the street from each other. Then, of course, the boutique shops on Chapel. I also love antiquing so I like the English Building Market on Chapel Street.

Meals are always my favorite part. I'll always start with breakfast at Claire's, there's a lot of great lunch spots (Zinc is a favorite) and I always do a progressive dinner – drinks and apps at one place (like Ordinary), dinner at another (like Olea), and dessert and drinks or coffee somewhere else (like Union League Cafe).

Q: What hidden New Haven gems do you wish more people knew about?

A: The Knights of Columbus Museum. Most people don't know the Knights of Columbus' international headquarters is here in New Haven, and they have a museum that is free to the public. They have amazing exhibits. Another one is the Grove Street Cemetery. I love walking in there, especially early in the morning, and I just think of the stories those tombstones could tell. Then there's the Institute of Sacred Music [a partnership of Yale School of Music, Yale Divinity School and other academic units at the university]. It trains musicians and artists and clergy for careers, but it also hosts lectures and concerts, most of which are free to the public.

Q: What's a typical day like for you?

A: Every day is different. Yesterday, for example, I was in Stamford for a 9 o'clock sponsorship presentation (for the Connecticut Open) to a global company headquartered in Connecticut, and by 12:30 I had to be in Madison to present to another global company. We are very much selling sponsorship all winter, for the 2018 tournament and beyond. Then I came back to the office and had one conference call after another, and I finally checked my email at 5:30.

My alarm goes off at 6:15 every morning. I love my quiet time, with my coffee and my laptop at my kitchen counter before the world starts rocking and rolling.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: In my free time I love to cook, I love to entertain, I love to spend time with my friends and family. [Worcester is married to husband, Tom, and has a 22-year-old son, Tommy, and 20-year-old daughter, Victoria.] I love, love, love to travel. My favorite country in the world is Spain. I lived there 30 years ago and I visit a lot.

Q: When you're not watching tennis, what is your favorite sport to watch - on TV or in person?

A: College basketball. I went to Duke University so I'm one of those obnoxious Dukies.

Q: When players visit for the Connecticut Open, what are their impressions of New Haven?



A: The city of New Haven is a huge selling point for the players. What they love is that it's five minutes from the Connecticut Tennis Center at Yale to downtown; everything is proximate. Players enjoy complimentary meals at all of our award-winning restaurants (as part of the longstanding Mayor's Passport to Downtown Dining promotion to encourage players to explore the city), but their entourages pay for their meals so it's a great economic driver for the restaurants.

Players definitely love the shopping here. They love the unique one-of-a-kind boutiques, especially up and down Chapel. Martina Hingis once said to me, "New Haven is like a smart and sophisticated European city." And Lindsey Davenport (who, like many others, has played the tournament before heading to the U.S. Open in New York) once said, "Players love New Haven because it's the calm before the storm." 

Worcester outside one of her favorite dining spots.

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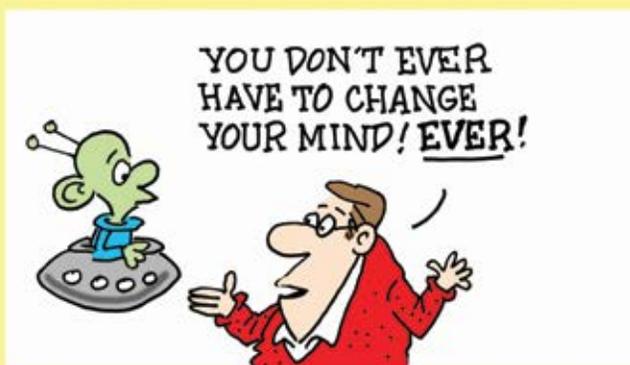
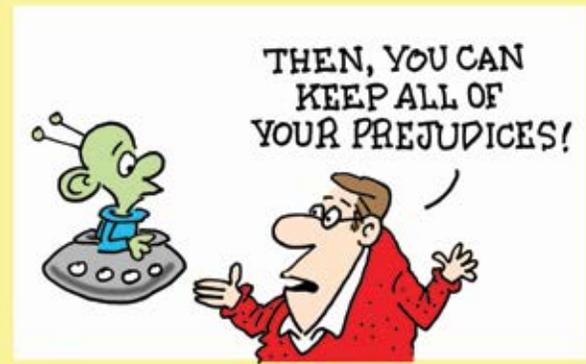
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A Room of Their Own

Local Couple's Efforts Provide Peace and Comfort in Difficult Times

by THERESA SULLIVAN BARGER

After doctors told Gary and Jocelyn Doyens that they wouldn't be able to save the life of their 2-month-old daughter, Caroline, the couple and their 3-year-old son gathered by her bedside to say goodbye.

The wheels squeaked as hospital staff rolled over a cloth partition to separate them from the other families in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. Their nurse disconnected their premature baby from the machines that had been keeping her alive.

"What was terrible about the cloth partition, it signaled to all the parents in the room that something was bad. They were asked to leave the room," Jocelyn says. "You wanted to hold onto your baby as long as you could. You knew you had to let go eventually because parents had to come back in the room to see their babies. And so, there was really no place for us to go."

The nurse who had cared for their daughter held her briefly, then gave her back to Jocelyn.

"And then I realized," says Jocelyn, her voice cracking, "that fathers needed to hold their babies too, and I gave her to Gary. She took her last breath in her dad's arms."

Aware that other families wanted to return to their babies, the couple felt rushed packing up and leaving – without their daughter. While the Doyens felt the medical staff took excellent care of their family, the New

Haven couple wanted to do something to express their appreciation and protect others from their fate.

"For us, we decided that the one thing we wished we had was a private space, where we didn't feel rushed, where we could cry, where we could take our time," Gary says 20 years later.

They wanted to provide a peaceful, home-like room within the Yale-New Haven Children's NICU where parents could have private conversations with their doctors, caregivers and spiritual advisers. Through donations and a fundraiser, they worked with a designer to outfit a room to comply with hospital regulations while looking and feeling like a living room. Friends suggested calling it Caroline's Room.

Thanks to a federal grant, 11 hospitals in seven states contain Caroline's Rooms, including one at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford.

Nearly 500,000 babies are born prematurely in North America (the U.S. and Canada) annually, according to the March of Dimes. In an average week in Connecticut, 64 babies – or one in 11 – are born prematurely. In 2016, 9.4 percent of babies born in Connecticut were premature, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Nationally, 9.8 percent were premature.

At Connecticut Children's NICU, babies lie in isolates several yards apart, with each baby connected to monitors. Visiting parents hold their babies in their arms or, if infants can't leave the isolate, parents extend a hand through a side opening so their baby can grasp a finger.



Jocelyn and Gary Doyens, of New Haven, wanted to express their gratitude for the care their premature daughter Caroline received while in the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. They decided to donate a room that would give parents a private space to meet with doctors, to cry and, if their baby passed away the way their daughter did, to say goodbye to their baby – the one thing they had wished they'd had. They're pictured here in the Caroline's Room at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. Photo by Tony Bacewicz



Premature birth is stressful on parents, infants and their siblings. Providing a private room within a hospital's NICU can make a powerful difference in how a family gets through this challenging, often painful experience, says Dr. Marilyn Sanders, shown here in the Caroline's Room at Connecticut Children's Medical Center's NICU, where she is a neonatologist. Photo by Tony Bacewicz

Background sounds include babies crying, phones ringing, people talking, loudspeakers calling and monitors beeping.

Premature birth is stressful on parents, infants and their siblings, and a NICU is akin to a trauma center, research shows. Lessening that trauma has long-term benefits for families, says Dr. Marilyn Sanders, a neonatologist at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford and professor, Department of Pediatrics, UConn School of Medicine in Farmington.

In a paper published in the *Journal of Perinatology* in August 2017, Sanders wrote that the toxic stress babies and their parents experience in the NICU can have lasting negative effects on their health.

All mammal infants need a care provider who is consistently available, who is attuned to the baby's needs and who is in both physical and emotional proximity to the baby, Sanders says.

Can a room with a couch, a couple of comfy chairs,

'Caroline's Room can be a bridge for a family. It can be a place where families can go for quiet conversation and to care for a baby while convalescing. There aren't a lot of places in a traditional NICU where parents can go for a quiet place.'

— Dr. Marilyn Sanders

table lamps and artwork make a difference to families grappling with the heart-wrenching experience of having a baby in the NICU? It's an oasis, say mothers and healthcare providers.

"Caroline's Room can be a bridge for a family," Sanders says. "It can be a place where families can go for quiet conversation and to care for a baby while convalescing. There aren't a lot of places in a traditional NICU where parents can go for a quiet place."

At Connecticut Children's,

the room includes monitoring equipment and a sleep sofa, so parents can stay with their babies the night before they're scheduled to be discharged. If there is an emergency, the parent just has to pull a cord and a NICU nurse responds immediately.

A Room with Many Uses

Each hospital is encouraged to use the room in a way that works for its patients. At St. Vincent's Women's Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana, the 87-bed NICU reserves

its Caroline's Room for families experiencing a major crisis or loss of their baby, says Debra Beynon, NICU nursing director. Once life-saving care has been removed, families may take as much time as they need in the room to hold their baby and be together as a family in a private, soothing space.

Meanwhile, at Connecticut Children's and Yale-New Haven Children's the room fulfills a host of needs. When Jennifer and Kevin Kugelmas' twins were born prematurely on Feb. 29, 2016, at 26 weeks, the Fairfield couple basically lived out of Caroline's Room at Yale-New Haven Children's. They met with their doctor in that room, slept there when their son Jack's condition deteriorated and waited in the room while their 1-month-old daughter Josie had emergency surgery.

"With Jack and Josie, they were both pretty critical for a little while there. It was scary and we were emotional. We were able to cry in there without strangers looking at us," Jennifer says. "It makes a big difference to have the privacy, with all these scary, awful things you're hearing about your children. I just found it a nice place to take a breath. Hearing the alarms constantly is incredibly stressful. ... Not having to hear it for a couple of minutes was very calming. Also, I could be right there if I needed to be."

When their son was about 9 weeks old, their doctor told the couple he wouldn't survive. Jennifer and Kevin took turns alternating between Jack's bedside and sleeping in Caroline's Room, and it served as a waiting room for family members who came to say goodbye to Jack.

"If we didn't have that room, I wouldn't have left the ICU for days on end, because I would not leave him. They had to almost force me to go into the room to sleep," she says.

For other families, the room allows for sibling bonding and provides a haven to parents torn between meeting their infants' needs and their older children's needs.

When Amanda and Ed Ramsdell's third son, Michael, was born June 1, 2015, at 27 weeks, he weighed 2 pounds, 2 ounces. During the 98 days Michael was in the NICU before going home, the South Windsor couple tried to keep the family routine as normal as possible for his brothers Matthew, 4, and Jack, 6.

While her children were in school, Amanda stayed with her baby. She went home to have dinner with her family and put her boys to bed, then returned to the Connecticut Children's NICU for a few hours. She used Caroline's Room to pump her milk, rest, clear her mind, reset emotionally and physically and escape the activity and sounds of the NICU, without actually leaving the unit. (Before being admitted into the NICU, everyone must scrub in, a process which takes at least three minutes.)

When Matthew and Jack visited, one boy stayed in Caroline's Room with one parent, while the other visited his baby brother with the other parent. This permitted them to bond with Michael without Amanda worrying about whether they were disturbing other families.

"Having them be part of it allowed them to grow with it and process it rather than not seeing it and fully



While their mom was with their baby brother Michael in the NICU at Connecticut Children's, big brothers Jack, left, and Matthew posed for a selfie with their dad, Ed Ramsdell in Caroline's Room. The private room gave them a place to be themselves so that it would be easier to be quiet for the few minutes they visited with their brother. Photo courtesy of the Ramsdell Family.

understanding what happened,” she says. “Caroline’s Room gave them a place where they could relax and be themselves and we could spend time together as a family.”

Earlier, when Michael was 3 days old, Amanda and her visiting parents walked into the NICU and her baby was going into cardiac arrest.

“I didn’t know what to do. I stood there crying,” she says. “I went to Caroline’s Room. I called my husband. We stayed in Caroline’s Room until the doctor came.”

She was grateful for the privacy the four walls gave them. They discussed whether to get him baptized, and before the priest baptized Michael, he talked with the family in the privacy of that room.

“That room, honestly,” Amanda says. “It was a lifesaver.”

While most preterm babies eventually go home with their families, some don’t make it. Caroline’s Room provides a private refuge to say goodbye and grieve.

Mary Diaz Raymond, a nurse manager in Connecticut Children’s NICU, helped a family of Mexican heritage fulfill their tradition of bathing their daughter’s body in

Caroline’s Room provides a private refuge to say goodbye and grieve.

white rose petals. Diaz-Raymond placed a tub on the floor, filled it with petals, and she and the father knelt beside the tub and bathed the infant. Her mother and other family members sat nearby.

“That’s an experience I’ll never forget,” Diaz Raymond says.

Today, Gary and Jocelyn have two children, Jordan, 23, and Campbell, 16. They’ve launched a line of USA-made luxury pantyhose, called Frangi Pangi, that they hope will help fund more rooms. The Doyens are working to raise \$1 million so that at least one hospital in every state will have a Caroline’s Room.

The couple never imagined their gift would lead to multiple rooms across the country.

“The stories that come out of this NICU at Yale, they bring tears to your eyes, but also this sense of purpose,” says Gary, with a catch in his throat, his eyes moist. “The idea that this little two-pound life could be positively impacting families, and will be impacting families’ lives forever, it’s just kind of extraordinary.”

To learn more, see CarolinesRoom.org. 



Caroline's Room at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

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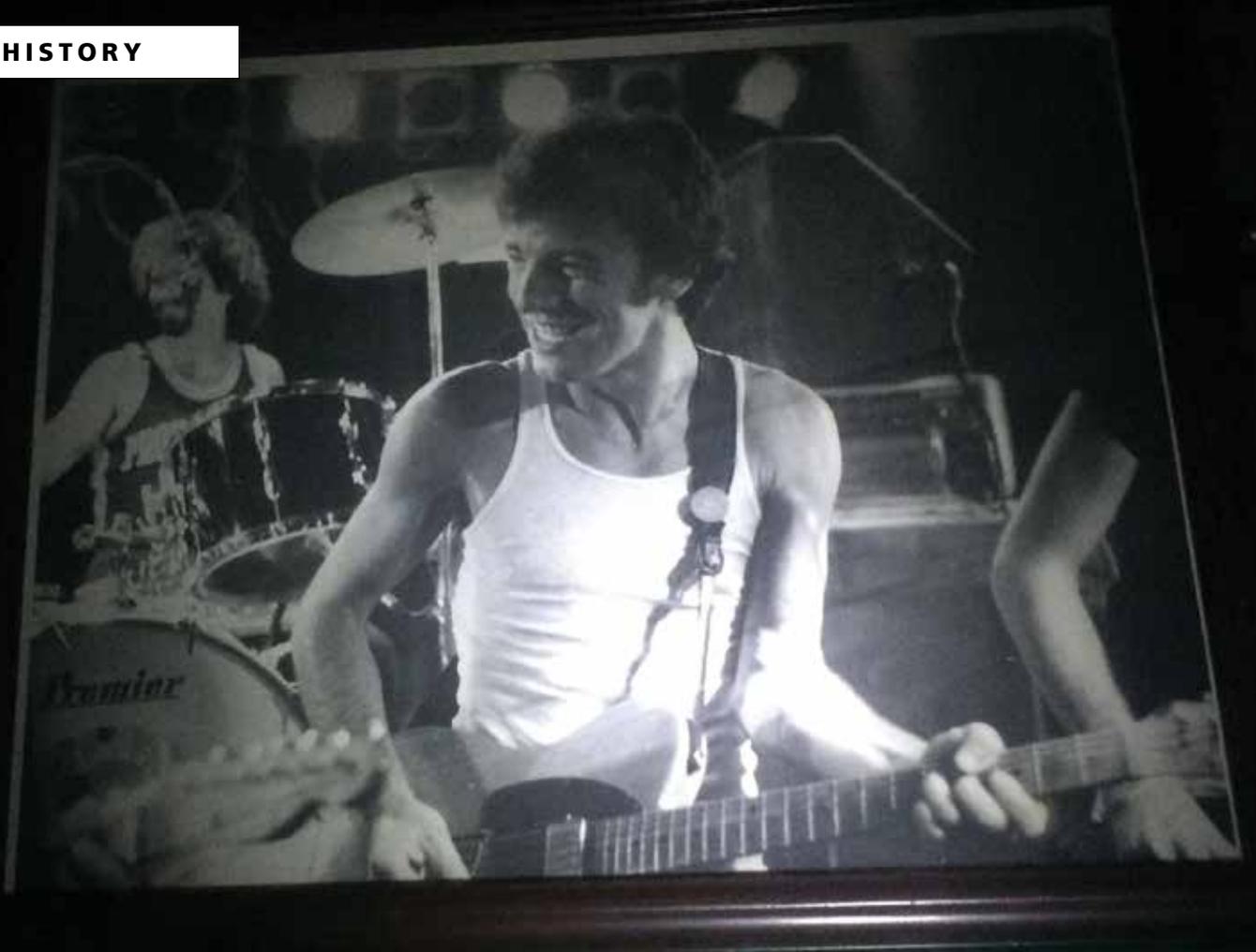


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Toad's Place

A Music Landmark for
More than Four Decades

by LEONARD FELSON

Bruce Springsteen is one of many famous names who performed at Toad's Place.

It's the New Haven icon that isn't Yale. Stately university buildings neighbor the landmark institution called Toad's Place, the York Street nightclub near Broadway, which turns 43 years old this year.

Once the original Yale Co-op, the building was also a popular restaurant called Hungry Charlie's in the 1960s. It turned into a tavern for a spell until a former Culinary Institute of America student opened a French restaurant in 1974, naming it Toad's Place. It was an inside joke, a term the restaurateur, Michael Spoerndle, used as a child when his parents, self-described homebodies or "couch potatoes," would go out to eat, a rare act for them and far less frequent a generation ago.

With his two co-owners, Spoerndle gradually brought in bluegrass and cover bands to offer diners entertainment. The restaurant failed, but the music struck a chord (no pun intended), and by 1976 it had morphed into a live music venue.

Since then, Toad's Place, called New Haven's living room for great music, has drawn a veritable who's who of rock, jazz, country, folk, rhythm and blues, and hip-hop artists to the club. Five years ago, "Rolling Stone" magazine named it one of the top 20 venues in the country, noting its national fame for two iconic shows less than six months apart.

The first, its biggest claim to history, came when the Rolling Stones played a surprise concert before they began a 1989 tour. Seven hundred fans filled the club; tickets were \$3 each. Five months later, in January 1990, Bob Dylan played his longest-ever show (more than five hours) at the club before starting his own national tour.

Other famous names have performed at Toad's too, some before they were big, like Phish (twice in the early 90s) and R.E.M., Talking Heads, and Black Eyed Peas. The back of Toad's Place t-shirts are covered with the names of virtually every band that have performed inside the 7,000-square-foot club, capacity 1,000. Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel, James Taylor, Bon Jovi, Beck, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, B.B. King, Dave Matthews, Wilco, David Bowie. On and on goes the list.

"Toad's has a unique vibe," says Jack Reich, the club's national booking director from his office at The Strand in Providence, a ballroom and theater. "Not too many rock clubs have been in the same location for so many years.

"The sound and lighting systems are top notch



and the intimacy of the room makes it a special place to see a show," says Rich.

Spoerndle's two partners eventually moved on. By serendipity, a new partner emerged, Brian Phelps, who was working at a karate school on nearby Broadway when a vandal broke through the school door, stealing the school's sign. Phelps went searching for it, believing it hadn't gone far when he found it around the corner at Toad's Place. Phelps talked to Spoerndle, the thief was arrested, the two became friends, and in the fall of 1976, Phelps was hired as the club manager, learning on the job how to book, promote and run the club.

Eventually, Phelps became co-owner, taking control in 1995. Spoerndle, who struggled with drug and alcohol addiction, died in 2011.

"I never imagined this," says Phelps, a New Haven native, from his office above the main room where the big acts perform. "If that incident didn't happen, I wouldn't be here."

Reminiscing about the Stones and Dylan shows, Phelps sounds like a ballplayer reliving a momentous home run he hit, even if the gigs landed at Toads because both the Stones and Dylan wanted an intimate club setting before heading off to the big coliseums across the country.

Phelps talks that way about Billy Joel too. He played in 1980 for two nights, recording a song at Toad's for his album "Songs in the Attic," before selling out the 16,606-seat Hartford Civic Center (now the XL Center) two more nights. "People



January 1990, Bob Dylan played his longest-ever show (more than five hours) at the club before starting his national tour.

Yale, the club draws from nearby Southern Connecticut State University, the University of New Haven, Quinnipiac University in Hamden and Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.

The club even offers shows for high school students and younger kids whose parents drop them off so they can dance to singers like Jacob Sartorius or Sammy Wilk and Derek Luh. “We couldn’t survive on the 21-and-over crowd,” Phelps says, noting the legal drinking age in Connecticut. For the under-21 shows, the club’s bar closes and only non-alcoholic drinks are served.

Besides the main room, Toad’s features two other smaller clubs within the building, Lilly’s Pad and the Rainforest room. Often on Monday nights, for example, jazz musician Rohn Lawrence & Friends, is a main staple in the Pad. He grew up in West Haven, and counts four generations in New Haven.

Over the years, Phelps has watched technology affect the music business. In the early years, to get word out about upcoming shows, “All we had to do years ago was put some advertisements in the New Haven Advocate, [the former alternative weekly newspaper] and some ads on [radio station] WPLR,” recalls Phelps.

Today Toad’s Place has an active Facebook page and uses Twitter regularly. Its huge database, based on online ticket purchases, allows staff to email fans about specific acts.

Of course, pulling off any production takes local manpower. On busy nights, up to 60 men and women from New Haven and nearby work behind the scenes, led by Phelps, general manager Ed Dingus and office manager Hollis Martin. Included are bartenders, bar-backs or runners, waitresses, security personnel, cashiers, sound and lighting engineers, loaders and city police officers. On sold-out nights, add a city fire marshal.

Ironically, when Phelps started working at Toad’s he was hardly into music. But he learned the ropes. And anyone who loves music has found their way or heard about Toad’s Place. Says Phelps: “Most people in the area have been here one time or another. 

always loved Billy Joel,” Phelps says.

Other bands too played Toad’s to warm up before bigger venues, including the rock band O.A.R., who performed the following night at Madison Square Garden in New York.

“We try to be a total night club with all different styles of music,” says Phelps. “Back in the ’80s through the early ’90s, we were doing mostly rock-oriented stuff. Then hip-hop came in and started getting bigger in the ’90s, and,” he says, “we started to move with it,” booking such legends as Nas, Ms. Lauryn Hill and Kendrick Lamar.

Beyond live music, Toad’s Place is also known for college dance parties, often on Saturday nights, with disc jockey-selected music. Besides students from

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If skiing is not on the schedule for the day, The Hermitage offers an exhilarating tubing run.



Heavenly Haven on the Slopes

by **DEBORAH BERRY** / *photography courtesy of THE HERMITAGE CLUB*

To ring in the New Year, Amy and Leigh Small, of Branford, drove to the Hermitage Club at Haystack Mountain, a 1,400-acre private resort in Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley. Though it was a holiday weekend, the couple, parents of six children ages 22 to 30, skied multiple runs on fresh "corduroy" without waiting in a long lift line. Later, they snowmobiled over the mountain for dinner at the 1842-era Hermitage Inn, pausing at the peak to marvel at the diamond-bright stars. In late August, their son wed his sweetheart on that very 3,200-foot mountaintop. The bride and groom, in a traditional wedding gown and tux, ascended to the peak on a chair lift, exchanged vows alongside family and friends, then descended, champagne glasses in hand, for a reception at the Clubhouse.

For the Smalls, the Hermitage Club is something to celebrate. As a child growing up in the '60s, Leigh, who works in construction, spent most every winter weekend skiing with his brothers on Haystack Mountain. He and Amy, who own a vacation home about 10 minutes from the club, taught their kids to ski there. The Hermitage Club opened in 2011, and the Smalls signed on, eager to try the private skiing experience with family and friends.

"Now that the kids are grown, it's like we're on a second honeymoon," says Amy, owner of three Alphabet Academy early learning centers, two in Hamden, one in New Haven. She and Leigh spend most winter weekends at the club, enjoying outdoor adventures, gourmet meals and spa treatments.

Six years ago, Jim Barnes, CEO and founder of the Hermitage Club, introduced a vacation escape like no other in the Northeast; a private, four-season enclave where members could savor premium experiences typically found at exclusive resorts out West. At the Hermitage Club, about a 2.5-hour drive from New Haven, members have the entire mountain to



themselves. They don't need to lug equipment, as valets deliver and retrieve skis. They average 25 to 40 runs daily because there are no crowds. After a day on the slopes, they can dine on farm-to-table fare at the Hermitage Inn, or one of the club's other premium restaurants, and tuck into deluxe sheets in a guest room with a fireplace overlooking a pasture where Percherons graze.

The Yellowstone Club, a membership-based resort in the Rocky Mountains with an entry fee in the six figures, inspired Barnes to try the private skiing concept in New England. "It was our hunch that people didn't like the

crowds and didn't feel safe at public resorts," says Barnes, adding that several members hail from Greater New Haven. "We said, 'Maybe there's a better way.' Clearly, there is, and people are spending the money to have that experience." In summer, members of the four-season resort can golf on an 18-hole course designed by Desmond Muirhead, architect of courses in Rancho Mirage, California, Scottsdale, Arizona, and West Palm Beach, Florida.

The Hermitage Club offers several membership types; Family Legacy Memberships are \$85,000 (annual dues of \$9,500 are waived through November 30, 2018). The club



The Clubhouse is the center of The Hermitage Club featuring food, drinks and concerts throughout the year.



Haystack Mountain in its winter glory.

currently has 600 members; memberships are available until the club reaches capacity at 1,000, which Barnes expects to occur in 2021.

While private skiing is available elsewhere in the Northeast, the Hermitage Club offers a lux package. Cross the truss-and-lattice covered bridge to the Hermitage Inn and opt for private dining in the 5,000-bottle wine cellar. Board a snowcat dubbed the Haystack Cadillac for a mountaintop party at the Haystack Summit Cabin. After a Swedish massage, relax in the tranquility room, soothed by the sounds of a waterfall bathed in blue light. Every touch, from a guest room fireplace expertly crafted from locally-sourced stones to the arrangement of Vermont cheese and charcuterie presented at dinner, defines the brand, embodied by the graceful, long-horned stag that serves as the club's logo.

There is a practical aspect to the Hermitage Club, too. Members say private skiing saves time and energy: schlepping gear, cramming onto crowded lifts, and sharing the mountain with speed demons are non-factors at the Hermitage Club. "I don't feel like I have to rush to the mountain first thing in the morning to get the most value out of a pricey day pass," says Amy Small, a veteran skier. "We ski on our schedule." Recent megamergers – the acquisition of Stowe, for example, by Vail Resorts, a group that includes Park City (UT), Vail (CO), Whistler (Canada), and others – could lead to increased traffic in that popular Vermont town, as the company's "Epic Pass" entitles skiers



Powder, powder, powder!

"We've taken the elements of the ski experience that you don't like and we got rid of them," says Jim Barnes, owner of the Hermitage Club in Vermont's Deerfield Valley. "Maybe you got tired of walking half a mile from your car with your skis on your back, or overcrowded lodges, or icy conditions. We offer a new reality."



to admission at all Vail properties. “The more the merrier is the public ski model,” says Barnes, adding that club members ski on fresh corduroy all day long. “We’re just the opposite.”

Barnes’s previous companies, OAKLEAF and FM FACILITY Maintenance, have combined annual revenues exceeding \$1 billion. In 2007 he acquired the Hermitage Inn, built in an era when Vermont’s cow population outnumbered humans. When an opportunity arose to purchase adjacent Haystack Mountain, which had undergone several management changes, Barnes did just that and launched the private skiing concept. Over time, the Hermitage Club has grown to include an 90,000-square-foot Clubhouse with 14 spa rooms, a movie theater and an editing suite for GoPro helmet cams so skiers can post their runs on social media, several upscale area restaurants and lodges (including the White House Inn in Wilmington and the Snow Goose Inn in Dover), and dozens of real estate options. Vacation home buyers can find properties ranging from 3,400-square-foot town homes (\$1,250,000) to 7,000-square-foot luxury homes at Stag’s Leap (\$2.9 million to \$3.5 million), where Barnes himself resides. The Hotel Hermitage on Haystack Mountain, reserved for members, breaks ground in 2019.

“We built, a one of a kind private ski resort here, and now everything that’s around it is infinitely more valuable,” says Barnes, of Deerfield Valley real estate. “Once, for two million dollars, you might have gotten a thousand-acre farm with a full farmhouse. Now, that’s what a mountain side villa costs here.” Houses near the Hermitage Inn that sold for \$750,000 five years



ago are now worth \$1,750,000, says Barnes. And though that's meant higher property taxes, Barnes says the revenue has improved community services and infrastructure.

The social hub of the Hermitage Club is the Clubhouse, distinguished by a massive stone fireplace. The Doobie Brothers, Train, and Natalie Merchant have performed in the 1,500-person venue exclusively for members and friends. With its panoramic views of the Green Mountains and intimate setting, word is spreading among musicians that the Clubhouse rocks. "Jackson Browne played here and then told other artists," says Barnes. To commemorate their appearances, some Haystack Mountain ski trails are named after the performers' iconic songs: "Smooth" for Rob Thomas, "Danger Zone" and "Footloose" for Kenny Loggins, and "Running on Empty" for Browne.

Barnes knows the Hermitage Club is not only a campus, but a community. "It was never my dream to own a ski area or a golf course," Barnes told *Seasons Magazine* in 2011, "but Haystack has a lot of personal significance for me. I skied here in college. I took my wife out on a date up the mountain before we got married. It's a particular thrill to see families make so many memories here."

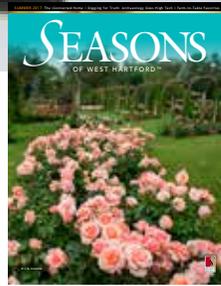
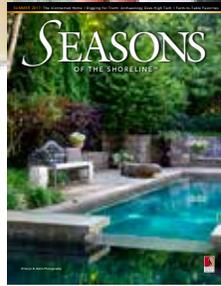
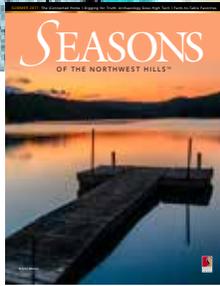
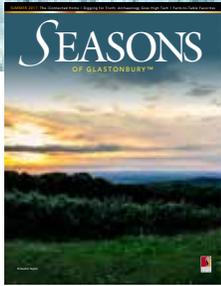
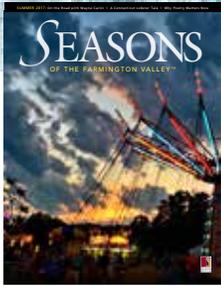
Families, like the Smalls and their six children, plan on gathering at the Hermitage Club for years to come. Andrew Small, the oldest child, who got married on Haystack Mountain, continues the legacy. He and his wife, Alissa, are members, too.

For membership information, contact the Hermitage Club at 802-464-7734 or www.hermitageclub.com. 



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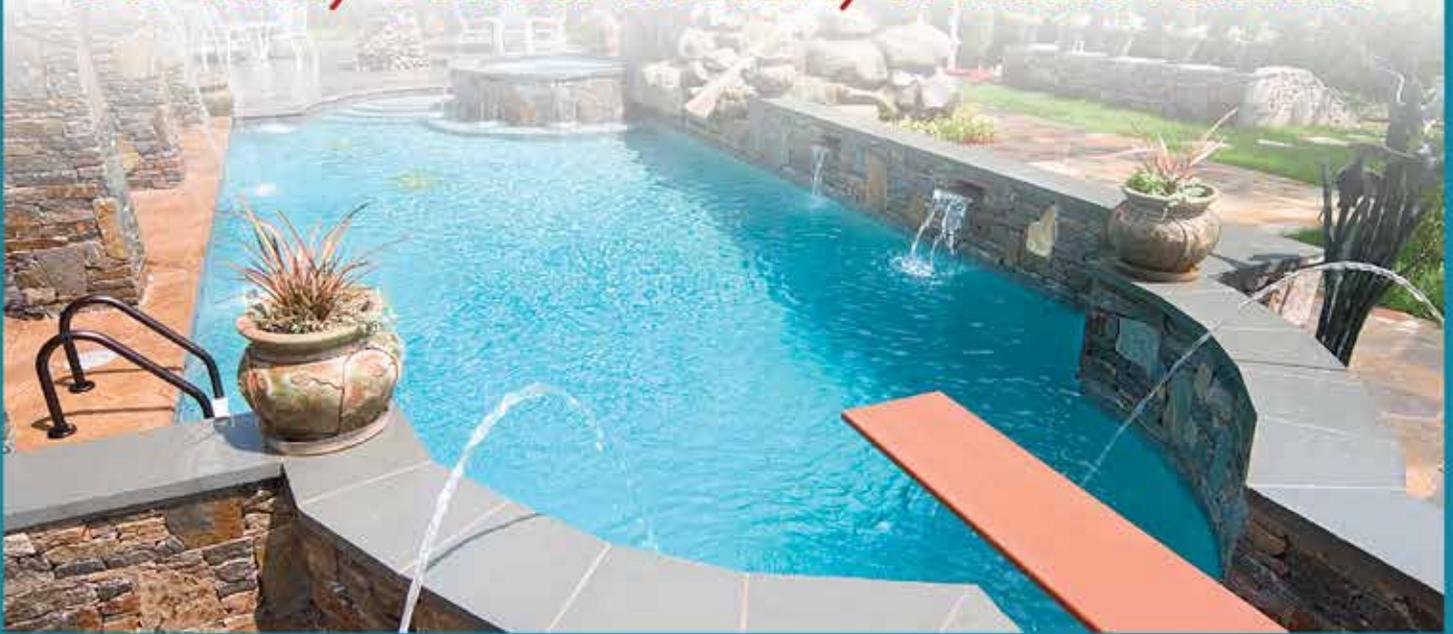
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Snow Daze

As the summer draws to a close and I bemoan the end of lazy summer days on the golf course, my friend, Jeff, will invariably interject, “But there’s still fall golf.”

Jeff speaks with an optimism that is genuine and energized, and I nod in agreement, but deep down in my soul, I know what fall golf truly is:

The rapidly decaying body of a summer filled with golf. With each golden leaf that spirals from the top of the sugar maples that line the 17th fairway, we take another step closer to winter and the end of another season on the fairways (but mostly the rough).

Fall golf is the aging, bastard stepchild of summer golf. It is summertime golf on life support. It is akin to a middle-aged man’s purchase of a cherry red Corvette in hopes of preserving some of his fleeting youth.

Nevertheless, I play. It is, after all, golf.

But I also agree that it’s odd that my friend, Andrew, and I have ventured onto the course on this particular November day wearing knit caps and coats. It’s occasionally chilly enough on an early morning of golf to warrant a jacket and perhaps even a knit cap, but this is high noon, and the air is still bitter and seeming to get colder by the second.

Not exactly golfing weather, and yet here we are, playing. Sucking the marrow from these final throes of another season. Trying to squeeze in one final round.

My wife questioned my decision to play as I left the house. “It’s a little cold for golf,” she warned. “Will the course even be open?”

“It’ll be open,” I assured her. Even if it wasn’t, we would sneak on and play. She doesn’t play golf, so she doesn’t understand.

I have spent the spring, summer, and fall walking miles with my closest friends. Complimenting their shots while secretly praying for bad bounces and impossible lies. We’ve laughed at terrible swings and freakishly terrible shots into gravitationally equipped ponds, menacing bunkers, and once, off the side of an unlucky waterfowl. We’ve shared stories, sought and offered advice, and commiserated on days that are harder than they should be. The golf course is where I stand between earth and sky and commune with nature while standing close to the men I love most.

This cannot happen anywhere else. If I called Andrew and asked if he wanted to get some coffee, he would assume that I was dying. If I called Jeff and asked him to go for a walk, he would run me over with his truck. If I called my friend, Plato, in hopes of chatting over the phone, he would likely change his number and

FINAL THOUGHTS

never speak to me again.

We are men of a certain type. We enjoy one another's company, but we can only do so if there is a small, white sphere to chase and a scorecard to mark our progress.

Still, it's cold. As cold as I have ever experienced on a golf course before. When I chunk my 6-iron into the semi-frozen earth, my hands go numb and I cry out in pain. I secretly wonder if there is such a thing as golf mittens. I wish I had thought about foot warmers before I left the house.

Andrew laments the lack of a scarf. He whines a little.

Still, it's golf.

We're on the 15th green, trying not to shiver as we prepare to putt, when I notice the first flake.

It can't be, I think. It can't.

Then there is another. And another. It is. It can be. It's snowing.

I'm playing golf in a snowstorm.

Winter has raised its ugly head when we weren't looking. Awful, cruel, unforgiving winter, with its short days, biting wind, and snow. Hateful, unreasonable snow.

I look at Andrew. He smiles. I do, too. It's snowing, but still, it's golf.

Our phones buzz simultaneously. We look at our screens. It's Andrew's wife, Kim, texting. She's informing us that it's snowing. We know this, of course. Better than most, since we are outdoors.

What she's really saying is this:

"What would possess two otherwise reasonably intelligent men to play golf in the snow? Are you quitting? Coming home? Smartening up? Growing up? Please tell me you're aren't stupid enough to keep playing."

Oh, yes, Kim. We are stupid enough and then some. We are not quitting.

We are not coming home. We will play these last three holes in the snow if need be, because this decaying corpse of a golf

season is gasping its last breath, and I feel honored to be here as it happens. Thrilled to have spent every last possible moment playing this game that I love with these men who I love more.

We play in the snow, damn it, because it is golf, and golf is perfect, even when played poorly in a snowstorm. 

Matthew Dicks is a West Hartford elementary schoolteacher. Despite his general dislike for cold-weather sports, he will happily risk frostbite for one last chance at a round of golf. (And as he points out, when the ground is frozen, there is less chance of a divot.) He is the author of the new novel, The Perfect Comeback of Caroline Jacobs, as well as Memoirs of an Imaginary Friend, Something Missing, and Unexpectedly, Milo, which have been translated into 25 languages worldwide. Learn more at matthewdicks.com.

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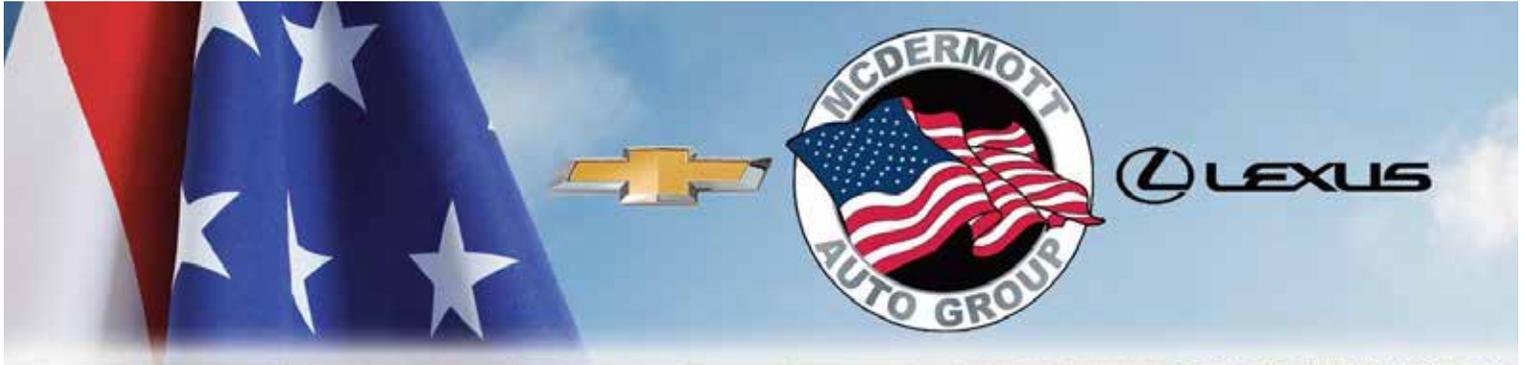
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