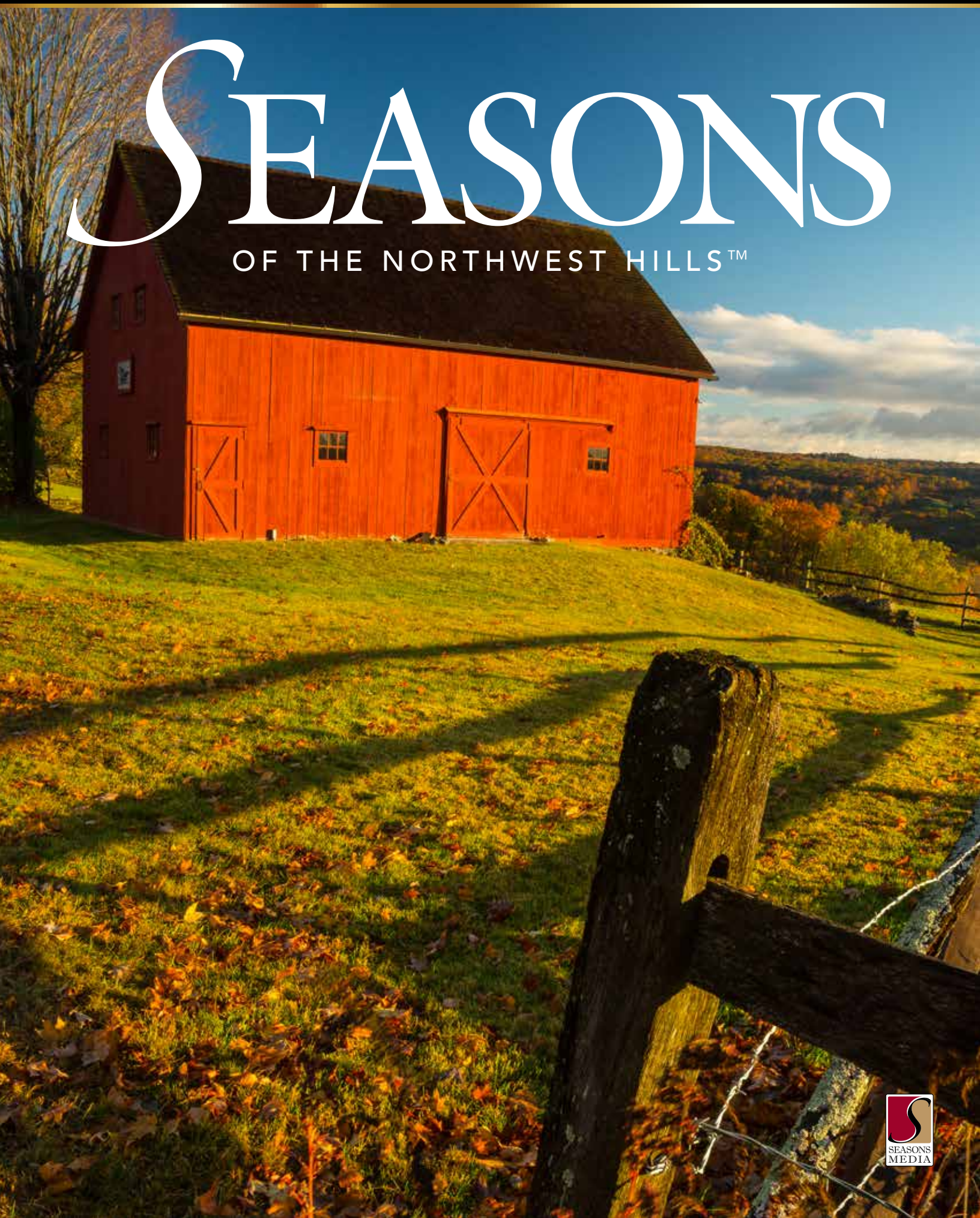
AUTUMN 2017: Walktober Offers Adventure | The Renaissance Man | Farm-based Entrepreneurs



SEASONS

OF THE NORTHWEST HILLS™

SEASONS MEDIA

You believe in you.
Your bank should too.

At Simsbury Bank, we never forget that small business is the cornerstone of our local economy. It's the kind of appreciation that you don't find in a bigger bank. So we strive to be more flexible. To approve faster. To work with your business not as a lender, but as a partner. How can we help?

Visit **simsburybank.com/grow-your-business**

SimsburyBank.com
860-651-2057

Simsbury Bank®
Bank this way.

Member FDIC

THE SHOPPES
at Farmington Valley

45 SHOPS + EATERIES

SEPHORA

THE PAPER STORE

J.CREW

SUR LA TABLE

WHITE HOUSE | BLACK MARKET

BARRE3

NORA CUPCAKE CO.

BARNES & NOBLE

OLD NAVY

AMERICAN EAGLE OUTFITTERS

B.GOOD

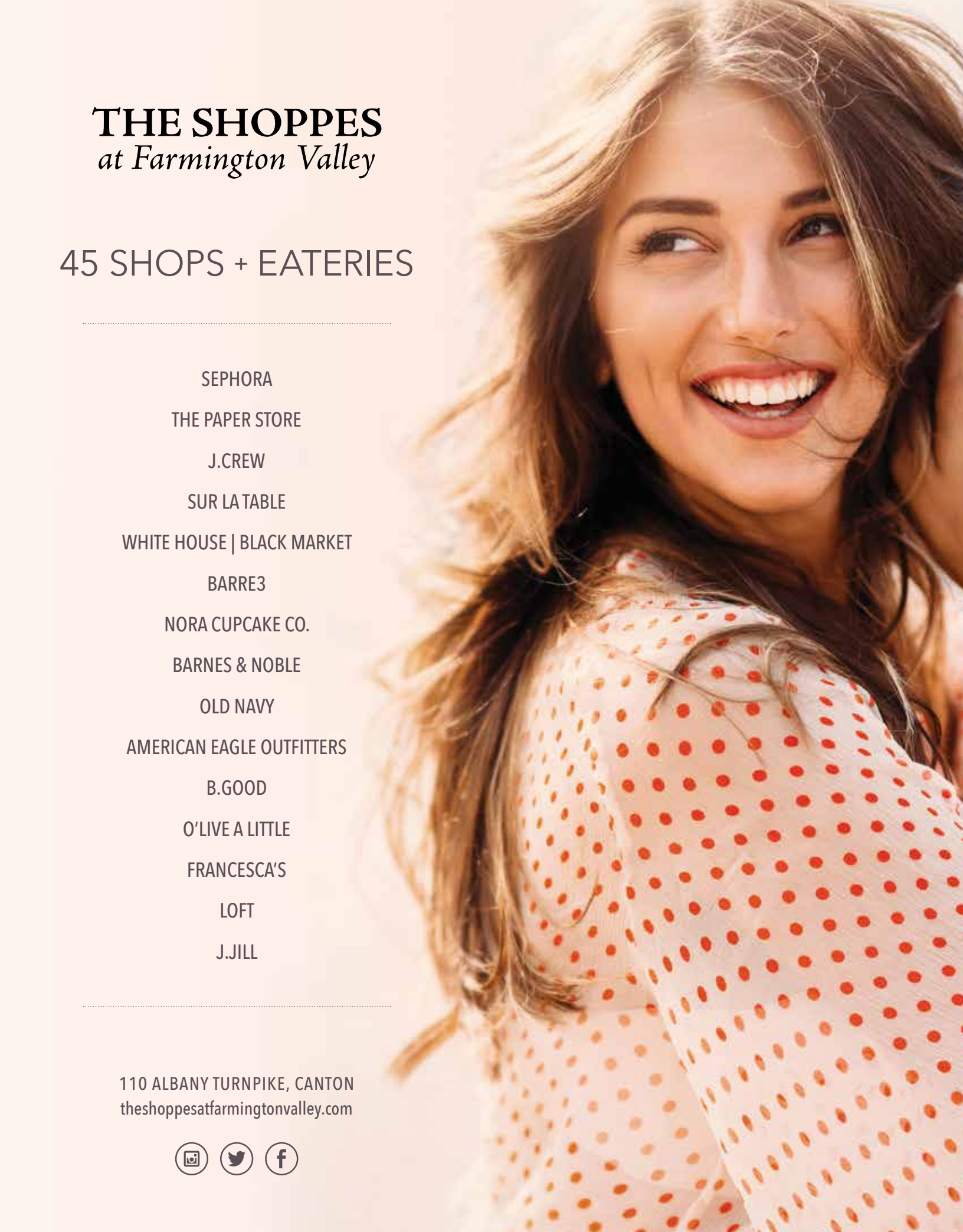
O'LIVE A LITTLE

FRANCESCA'S

LOFT

J.JILL

110 ALBANY TURNPIKE, CANTON
theshoppesatfarmingtonvalley.com



THIS COULD BE YOUR OFFICE FOR THE DAY

FROM EXCLUSIVE GUESTHOUSES TO INVENTIVE TEAM BUILDING

Meetings at Saybrook Point Inn, Marina & Spa

SAYBROOK POINT
INN·MARINA·SPA

Meetings at Saybrook Point Inn are both inspiring and convenient. Located just two hours from New York and Boston with easy access to Amtrak, the Connecticut Shoreline is calling. Let our professional Meeting Planners customize your programs with unique space, team building events and seasonal farm to table menus.

Get out of the board room and enjoy the views. Call to schedule your tour today.

2 Bridge Street, Old Saybrook, CT 06475 | SAYBROOK.COM, | 860-388-0000

RIZZO POOLS

Celebrating 62 Years of Quality Service, Construction, & Renovation

CALL US NOW FOR A FREE IN-HOME CONSULTATION

(860)666-1531

or visit www.RizzoPools.com

BEST OF Hartford MAGAZINE 2014 WINNER 10 YEARS IN A ROW!

MASTER POOLS GUILD Member

Building the world's finest pools

Rizzo Pools, LLC • CT Reg # HIC-0630439 • SPB Lisc # 000001 • SP-1 Lisc # PLM0280399-SP1

Seasons' Greetings

Hello, and welcome to our Fall issue of *Seasons!*

As temperatures – and leaves – begin to fall, the thoughts of many people turn to cozy sweaters, hot apple cider, and curling up on the couch as a whole new season of television drama and comedy begins.

But there's no reason to migrate indoors just yet. All across our beautiful state, there are countless fun and family-friendly activities just waiting to be enjoyed ... from autumn festivals and apple-picking to trick-or-treating and leaf peeping.

In this issue, writer Amy Barry takes us along as she learns about the fascinating tours offered by Walktober – a full month of more than 270 guided walks in forests, on farms, and around historic cemeteries and villages ... not to mention scenic paddles and bike rides. It's an event that Connecticut residents have been enjoying for 26 years, and something you won't want to miss!

Meanwhile, children and teens across our region are enjoying another fun fall tradition – flag football. Read about how one mom, in her quest to engage her young sons in sports, ended up founding a multi-town league that offers a safe and exhilarating activity for kids of all ages. The league has been growing by leaps and bounds, and its members now number in the hundreds.

Fall also brings to mind the annual harvest. Writer Lori Miller Kase visited four local farms where innovative entrepreneurs are taking farming to a whole new level. From soap making and coffee roasting to creating chocolate and woolen wearables, these pioneering folks are finding new ways to grow a business, to the delight of their customers.

Of course, not everyone loves cool-weather activities. Humorist Matthew Dicks tells us about the perils and pitfalls of November road races, also known as Turkey Trots and Ugly Sweater Runs. He does give thanks for the annual Macy's parade ... in person, not on TV.

Thanks for reading,

Carol Latter, Editorial Director

SEASONS MEDIA

Visit us online at
www.seasonsmagazines.com

Follow us on Twitter
@SeasonsMag

Like us on Facebook
Facebook.com/SeasonsMedia

Seasons of the Northwest Hills™
is published by *Seasons Magazines*
James P. Tully, Owner/Publisher

Creative Director
Stacy Wright Murray

Editorial Director
Carol Latter

Cover Photograph
Justin Coleman

For advertising information please contact James P. Tully at 860-413-2022
Seasons Magazines
6 Sharlin Drive, Simsbury, CT 06092

SEASONS of the Northwest Hills™

Autumn 2017

> *I would rather sit on a pumpkin, and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion!*
>
> **– Henry David Thoreau**

The Simsbury Inn

Elegant Weddings

Impeccable Service

Sweeping Lawns and Seasonal Gardens for Photos

Renowned Expertise in Planning & Customizing Your Special Event

Exquisite Cuisine

397 Hopmeadow St. • Simsbury, CT 06070 • 860.651.5700

www.SimsburyInn.com • Facebook.com/SimsburyInn • Pattic@SimsburyInn.com

Written by **Carol Latter**
Photography by **Seshu Photography**

Raising the Flag

GOOD, SAFE FUN: Flag football offers male and female players a chance to play the sport without the risk associated with tackle football.

For many people, the arrival of Labor Day means "back to school," back to a regular work schedule, and the end of summer vacation.

For Avon resident Laurie Hicks, her three kids and, in fact, kids from Connecticut communities far and wide, it marks the beginning of a fun annual tradition: flag football.

Every Sunday afternoon from just after Labor Day through mid-November, hundreds of school-aged children gather at Avon Middle School from noon to 4 p.m. to play the no-contact sport.

Most of the players range from 6 years of age through their early teens. High school students can play too, and also serve as paid referees. The five-on-five, 44-minute games, Hicks says, are "very fast and very strategic." And kids of any level of athletic ability can play.

"The thing that's really neat about it is that the league is extremely inclusive. Some of these kids might have physical challenges; some might be on the spectrum. It ranges from children who have never played a team sport before to a kid who has been an athlete his or her whole life and is on all of the travel teams—and they'll all play together."

She adds, "We're not about the level of athletic skill. We rotate the kids, and they can play all positions unless they don't want to."

The league is also coed. "My daughter plays," says Hicks.

EVERYONE'S WELCOME: The Farmington Valley NFL Flag Football League has 340 players, not only from Avon but from towns throughout the region.

"Girls love it and everyone has a great time."

Hicks founded the league several years ago following a confluence of unexpected events. She and her family lived in Avon from 2005 to 2011 and had three children—a daughter Sarah and preemie twin boys, Jack and Eric. When he was very young, Jack was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and needed surgery at the age of 3.

He was hemiplegic on his right side, due to damage to the part of the brain that controls muscle movements. Instead of recommending physical therapy, their doctor advised the couple to enroll their sons in "every sport possible," which they did.

When their boys were 5, her husband was transferred to New Jersey, where they discovered that NFL FLAG football was extremely popular—largely because it was so much safer than tackle football. Instead of tackling players to the ground, the defensive players must remove a flag or flag belt from the ball carrier to end a down. Since tackling and kicking are not allowed, there was no risk of concussion or other injuries, just sheer fun.

GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN: Teams are coed up to the high school level, where separate boys' and girls' teams are available.

During the two years that the Hicks family lived in New Jersey, their kids played in a flag football league consisting of 700 players from first grade through high school, and loved it. When the family received another work transfer that brought them back to Avon in 2014, Laurie Hicks was unable to find a league for her children to play in. So she started one.

"There was no flag football league but most towns have tackle leagues. That was story in Avon." She conducted a survey of local parents, asking if they'd allow their children to play.

"Eighty percent said their kids did not play football, and they wouldn't let them play because they worried about concussion. Most didn't understand the concept of flag football or the safety that NFL FLAG Football provides," Hicks recalls.

Initially, just 55 kids signed up for her league, but soon, word got out and the numbers began to grow. Now, going into its fourth season, the Farmington Valley NFL FLAG Football League has 340 players—from Avon, Canton, Burlington, Bristol, Bloomfield, Farmington, South Windsor, and Simsbury. Any town is welcome. "People come into Avon just to play," Hicks says. As a result, "kids from all

over the region get to meet each other."

The league, operated through Avon's Recreation & Parks Department, holds all of its games on Sundays, so it doesn't interfere with other sports. "You drive by and see the excitement," she says, adding that anyone is welcome to stop in and watch. "We get so many people who volunteer—former NFL players who coach, and people from ESPN."

One of the appealing aspects for many players is the idea of being part of something larger. Roughly 300,000 kids play NFL FLAG football nationwide. Once the regular season is over, organizers have the opportunity to take teams in the 9 to 11 age range to regional matches—in Boston, for instance—where they can play against other kids from across the country. "Our first year, we were brand new, and these other teams just killed us," she laughs. To be fair, one of their opposing leagues flew in from Florida, "where they play flag football all year long."

EXPERT GUIDANCE: Volunteer coaches include former NFL players and folks from ESPN.

Hicks would love to increase the number of high school students who play, saying, "Once they get to high school, it's a separate league, and they can play old school pickup on a Friday or Saturday, instead of going out to party. It's a lot of fun."

Flag football is fun for the parents, too. One of Hicks' proudest moments as a mom was at the end of the first season, when her son Jack "actually ran a touchdown; it was the neatest thing to see. It's so great to know that these kids can be part of a team."

For more information, Google "Farmington Valley NFL Flag Football League."

Carol Latter is the editor of Seasons, *and a freelance writer living in West Simsbury.*

Photographer Seshu Badrinath of Avon specializes in intimate, natural portraits of families and children; seshuphotography.com

SEASONS
MULTI-MEDIA EXPERIENCE

SEASONS MEDIA
Your Community Connection

Visit us at **SeasonsMagazines.com** and **NewHavenMag.com**

***Seasons of Connecticut* FREE app**
Read, watch video and share any or all of the content available. Advertisers benefit from having a direct link to their ad and video embedded in the app.
Available on all Apple and Android devices and Kindle Fire.

***Seasons and NEW HAVEN* exclusive websites**
NewHavenMag.com is a great resource for anything happening in and around New Haven and offers advertisers a new way to communicate with *NEW HAVEN* readers via contests and giveaways throughout the year.

***Seasons and NEW HAVEN* social media | Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn**
NEW HAVEN readers are actively involved in social media. *NEW HAVEN* reaches your target audience daily and offers the ability to send your company's message through our social media outlets.

Seasons Magazines Up Close
Seasons Magazines Up Close is a television show that will bring the magazines' award-winning stories to television. *Seasons Magazines Up Close* features local stories, interviews and commentary with a "CBS Sunday Morning" feel to them.

For advertising opportunities call **Jim Tully** at **860-413-2022**

EVERYWHERE IN THE NORTHWEST HILLS

Walktober

The Last Green Valley's Lasting Legacy

by **AMY J. BARRY**

The idea that technology has supplanted the great outdoors is a misnomer – at least in this part of the country.

What began 26 years ago as one weekend of about 20 scenic walks in eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts has evolved into a full month of more than 270 walks in forests, on farms, and around historic villages and cemeteries, plus paddles, and bike rides.

Many are dog friendly and handicapped-accessible. All are free, expertly guided tours that people of all ages from all over New England and beyond participate in every October.

Fittingly named Walktober, this is the signature event of The Last Green Valley, a non-profit environmental organization that advocates for the "fragile and irreplaceable resources" of the 35 towns in the bi-state National Corridor.

Marcy Dawley, who until recently served as TLGV's project administrator and lead ranger, has been coordinating this enormous undertaking every year. The event hit a record-breaking 64,000 participants in 2016.

The Last Green Valley was the fourth national heritage corridor designated in the entire country (there are now 49). Dawley explained that part of the requirement to receive this special national designation was to highlight the natural resources, history, and culture of the towns in the corridor.

"It was [created] as a tool to make it known how special what we have here is to everyone," Dawley said. "The plan was never that it would grow into what it is today!"

Dawley, who is continuing to serve as a volunteer ranger, explained that Walktober is about fresh air, exercise, learning about the region, and protecting the environment. She said the reason so many different tours are offered is that "some people don't want to go for a walk in the woods. Some people prefer to go for a paddle. Other people want to go on every farm tour there is."

She added, "It's encouraging to see how excited people get about Walktober and how many people return year after year. People like the guided hikes. They like to know

FALL FUN: A Walktober guide points out features of the Rapoport-Spalding Preserves in Woodstock, 154 acres owned by the Wyndham Land Trust. Photo by Marcy Dawley, The Last Green Valley. TOP RIGHT PHOTO: Walktober participants play follow the leader at the Wolf Den in Pomfret. Photo by Marcy Dawley, The Last Green Valley. BOTTOM PHOTO: Local expert Tricia Staley offers little-known facts about one of the historic homes on the Millionaires' Triangle in the Chelsea Parade Historic District of Norwich. Photo courtesy of the Norwich Historical Society.

where to go and what to do. You see people smiling and laughing and enjoying this together. You forget how simple fun can be."

Walktober may ultimately be about simple fun, but it's a complex web of volunteers and coordination that makes it such a successful large-scale event.

The way it works is that businesses, organizations, and individuals fill out an online form proposing a new (or repeat) walk or event each season. The only requirement is that whoever is leading the walk must be a member or partner of TLGV, and provide their own volunteers to head up their events.

The small TLGV staff then creates a full-color brochure that lists and describes all the walks, and distributes the brochure throughout The Last Green Valley and beyond. Staffers also post all of the information on TLGV's website and Facebook page, and provide the leaders with signs and T-shirts for easy identification.

"Looking back, it's amazing how seamlessly and smoothly everything goes, besides the weather, which we can't predict," Dawley said, "although some leaders build in rain dates."

Follow the Leader

Regan Miner leads and organizes many of the walks in Norwich, all of which are coordinated by the Norwich Historical Society. Born and raised in Norwich, Miner is a consultant for both the historical society and the city, and is involved in everything history-related about Norwich. In fact, that was her inspiration to get a master's degree in public history, which she is currently completing at Central Connecticut State University. (She has an undergraduate degree in history from UConn.) Miner admits that her passion for local history at her age (25) makes her a bit of an anomaly.

There are more than 30 Walktober tours and events in downtown Norwich, including art walks, garden tours, museum tours, maritime history tours, and a tour of a Colonial burial ground and a Civil War-era cemetery. Most of the tours are focused around a theme — like the city's role as abolitionists in the Underground Railroad or a historical figure like Benedict Arnold, the "infamous" son of Norwich.

"We try to offer tours that appeal to a variety of people," Miner said. "All of our tours are very family-friendly. We always have a ghost tour before Halloween. And this year, we'll adding a new one — 'Off-Kilter Tales of Norwichtown.' It gives me a lot of pride seeing people enjoying our community and what it has to offer," she said.

Miner commends The Last Green Valley for doing a great job of marketing and promoting Walktober.

"It benefits all the Norwich organizations and enhances our visibility in the community as well," she said. "It's all a win-win."

Mike Bartlett is a forester with Hull Forest Products, a third-generation, family-run sawmill and woodland management service. For close to 20 years, Bartlett has been offering tours that range from walks on forest management topics to tours of the sawmill.

Bartlett received the "Mr. Walktober" award from TLGV for taking more than 1,000 participants on tours during his years of volunteering for Walktober.

A popular walk given by Bartlett is a two-hour, two-mile guided tour of Myers Pond Forest in Union, formerly the summer home of George Hewitt Myers, who graduated in the first class of Yale Forestry School in 1902. The 450-acre property is owned by Hull Forestlands LP and operated as a multiple-use working forest. It has four ponds and significant bird habitats. During the walk, Bartlett will discuss the history of the

STEPPING BACK IN TIME: Dale Plummer, Norwich City historian, gives a guided tour of the Norwich Freedom Trail in historic downtown Norwich. Norwich is home to several sites that make up part of the Connecticut Freedom Trail, established by the state in 1995 to recognize the fight for freedom and social equality by African Americans and other minority populations. Photo courtesy of the Norwich Historical Society.

READY FOR MY CLOSE-UP: An alpaca makes the most of a photo op at Morning Beckons Farm in Thompson. Photo by Marcy Dawley, The Last Green Valley.

property, sustainable forestry, and how woodland management can improve bird habitat.

Another big draw is Bartlett's tours of the Hull Forest Products processing facility in Pomfret.

"People find it fascinating," he said. "They get to see the whole process, from forest to flooring — we make custom wide hardwood floors that are shipped all over the country. Everyone uses trees, but what they don't think about is where the trees come from."

An aspect of Bartlett's tours that he finds personally rewarding is explaining to people who think it's bad to cut down trees, why thinning trees in the forest is necessary to give them more sunlight and room to grow healthier and faster.

"People don't realize what we're doing; they don't see much from the highway," he said. "We're adding significantly to the local economy and preserving the forest as forest. It helps us maintain our social license, so people understand how we keep it a working landscape rather than it being converted into a subdivision, for example."

Participant's Point of View

If only one person could be designated to represent Walktober out of the thousands of participants, it would be Paul V. Kozlowski.

A resident of Southbridge, Massachusetts, Kozlowski, a travel counselor for AAA, was on the first TLGV Walking Weekend 27 years ago, and has returned every year since.

Kozlowski's fondness for the event is rooted in his early childhood.

"I've been hiking in local woods for 56 years and I'm 56 years old — since I was a baby in my mother's backpack, he said. "I've been hanging out in places like Bigelow Hollow State Park in Union since grade school with my dad. It's one of the last great wilderness tracts: over 500 acres with two bodies of water. It's wonderful now that I'm appreciating the same places I appreciated as a kid."

As a travel counselor, Kozlowski also enjoys seeking out hidden corners and secret gems, and getting a group of people together out in the woods to

see a piece of property they never even realized was there.

Among some of Kozlowski's favorite Walktober expeditions was kayaking on the Thames River last fall.

"About a dozen of us went for five or six miles within the watershed," he recalled. "And, as much as I enjoy paddling, I don't own a kayak, so for that one day, free of charge, it got me out on the Norwich harbor and made me feel like I owned a piece of this waterfront. The leaders provided you with the confidence to get out there if you're not accustomed to kayaking, but also gave you your own personal space."

Night hikes in the forest are featured every year and Kozlowski never misses one.

"It's pitch dark and your eyes aren't fully adjusted to the darkness, so it allows you to sharpen your sense of sight and smell," he said. "After about 20 minutes, your eyes adjust to the low level of light. A lot of other people share this fascination I have to walk through the woods at night. You have the security of being with a group, but are also able to distance yourself and have your own private space."

He is impressed and overwhelmed at times by how much Walktober has grown since the very first year he participated.

"Even meeting Marcy – she puts her heart and soul into this. In her case, it's now become her profession. But it's also her life song. She's out in the woods being adventurous even when she's not working. Her enthusiasm is contagious."

For Kozlowski, the cliché "There's no place like home" rings true. He's traveled to 42 states and 18 countries, but says The Last Green Valley is at the very top of the list of places he's been.

"I've been to the Southwest, Iceland, Central Europe. Their landscapes can easily rival what we have here in our own backyard. But what does my heart the happiest is just being at home, walking in the woods of Connecticut."

For a detailed map and schedule of Walktober '17 events, visit: thelastgreenvalley.org/explore-the-last-green-valley/walktober/

Amy Barry has been publishing feature stories and reviews for 30 years. She has been awarded more than a dozen first places for her columns by Society of Professional Journalists, CT chapter. She also facilitates expressive art and writing workshops and retreats.

Noticing the Natural World

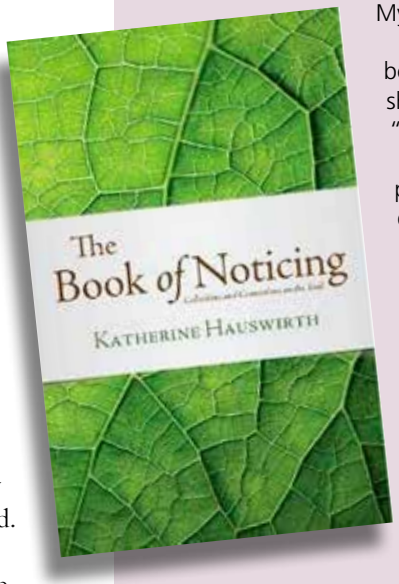
by **AMY J. BARRY**

When Katherine Hauswirth moved from suburban New York to Deep River, Connecticut two decades ago and discovered all the natural beauty surrounding her in one little river valley town, it had a profound impact on every aspect of her life.

In her newly published book, "The Book of Noticing: Collections and Connections on the Trail," Hauswirth shares in beautifully articulated essays the joy and peace she found — and continues to find every day — walking in the woods and around the historic sites within steps of her home.

A self-described amateur naturalist, Hauswirth has published essays and stories about nature in many publications (including *Seasons*), and was awarded a Connecticut Audubon Society writing residency at Trail Wood in Hampton, Connecticut and another residency at Acadia National Park in Maine.

A medical writer in her "day" job, Hauswirth said, "I've been writing for close to 20 years, and in the last year or so, I began writing almost exclusively about nature. I always loved nature and always enjoyed walking, but when we moved to Connecticut, I started paying more attention. We have the Cockaponset State Forest behind us and when I would walk my dog, while she was doing her sniffing, I'd look around. It forced me to take longer walks, and I hit a rhythm. My mind and spirit open up when I walk."



Hauswirth attributes the idea for the title of her book — "The Book of Noticing" — to the writer she most admires, Mary Oliver, quoting her line, "Attention is the beginning of devotion."

"That made me think about noticing, just paying attention," Hauswirth said. "To me, it is a devotion. Of course, I work, I have a family, but to be out there really looking, using all my senses, noticing, makes me very curious and [inspires] me to do a lot of research and writing. But it's also how I connect to the world."

Hauswirth is aware that the publication of the book is well timed, with environmental issues on the top of so many citizens' minds.

"Like a lot of people, I feel there are huge swaths of nature in danger of slipping away forever," she said. "In many political arenas, it's not prioritized. I feel we're at a very risky time and I know I'm not alone."

And yet, Hauswirth stressed, "The goal of my work isn't to promote some environmental activist cause, but I hope the book reminds people to connect or reconnect with nature for themselves, but then, in turn, because they want to protect it."

"The Book of Noticing" (Homebound Publications) by Katherine Hauswirth is $16.95, softcover.

For a schedule of Hauswirth's upcoming events and workshops, visit **fpnaturalist.com**.

Written by **Teresa M. Pelham**
Photography by **Mara Lavitt**

Among those celebrating at the 2016 SMART Girl event were: Adrienne Lawrence, legal analyst and anchor for ESPN; Elle Duncan, SportsCenter anchor at ESPN; Aracelis Mia Figueroa, 2016 SMART Girl of the Year; Jada Copeland, 2016 Middle School SMART Girl of the Year; and Sam Gray, president and CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford. *Photo courtesy of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford*

For the Girls

While many of us know a few teenagers who spent their summers sleeping until noon and watching YouTube, 16-year-old Aracelis Figueroa landed herself a paid internship at Aetna (as she did last summer, too). It's this type of hard work and motivation that led Aracelis to be named the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford SMART Girl of the Year in 2016.

Figueroa participated in the competition for five years before finally winning the highly competitive award.

"I started as a sixth grader and learned new experiences every year," says Figueroa, who is now a junior at Pathways Academy of Technology and Design in East Hartford. She plans to double major in Visual Communications and Design and minor in Photography in college.

Now it's another young woman's turn.

On November 3, the 2017 SMART Girl of the Year will be recognized at the 20th Annual Dashaway Luncheon, following a review of essays written by contestants and interviews with Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford board members. Held at the Bond Ballroom in Hartford, the luncheon raises funds for the club's SMART Girls Program. The luncheon is named after the first Boys' Club (today known as Boys & Girls Clubs) in the country — the Dashaway Club, which was founded in Hartford in 1860.

The SMART Girls Program encourages young women ages 8 to 17 to have healthy attitudes and lifestyles, and to acquire and maintain positive self-concepts, good decision-making skills, and mentor relationships. Judges choose the SMART Girl of the Year based on her embodiment of the program's vision.

Donna Stout is a board member who became involved in this event following the death of her husband's father, whose charity of choice was the Boys and Girls Clubs of Hartford.

"I live in Hartford, I'm interested in helping children, I saw the success of the Boys and Girls Clubs and wanted to help it work," she says.

Stout, who hosts a reception at her home, where judges and board members can meet the finalists and put faces to their names, had nothing but praise for Figueroa and the other contestants.

"Aracelis was very inspiring," she says. "Her stamina to succeed is amazing. She didn't give up."

Figueroa's winning essay — and her speech at the luncheon — focused on what the Boys and Girls Clubs meant to her during some difficult times, including the passing of her grandfather, who had lived with Alzheimer's Disease for two years.

"Her speech was amazing," says Ashley Stewart, program director at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Hartford's Trinity College location. "It was really touching because it was authentic. There were a lot of young ladies in the audience who could relate to the club being a positive part of their lives."

If you are interested in sponsoring the event or in becoming a table captain, please contact Matt Broderick at mbroderick@bgchartford.org or (860) 929-7665.

To learn more about the SMART Girls program, please contact Shannon Healy at shealy@bgchartford.org or (860) 929-7662.

Teresa M. Pelham is a writer living in Farmington. She is a parenting columnist for the Hartford Courant *and a relationship columnist for* Hartford Magazine. *Teresa is the author of three books, including two written about her little brown rescue dogs from Tennessee. Contact Teresa at tpelham@comcast.net.*

LIVE AT THE BUSHNELL

THE CONNECTICUT FORUM'S 2017-2018 SEASON!

THU . SEP 28 . 2017

AN EVENING WITH

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE STEPHEN BREYER

Hosted by Day Pitney LLP

SAT . NOV 18 . 2017

LAUGHTER, ANYONE?

An evening with comedians

Hosted by Comcast

FRI . MAR 16 . 2018

THE STATE OF JOURNALISM & THE NEWS

Hosted by Hartford Courant Media Group

SAT . MAY 12 . 2018

CHEFS & THE ART OF FOOD

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO A SEASON OF UNSCRIPTED, UNFORGETTABLE CONVERSATIONS

CALL

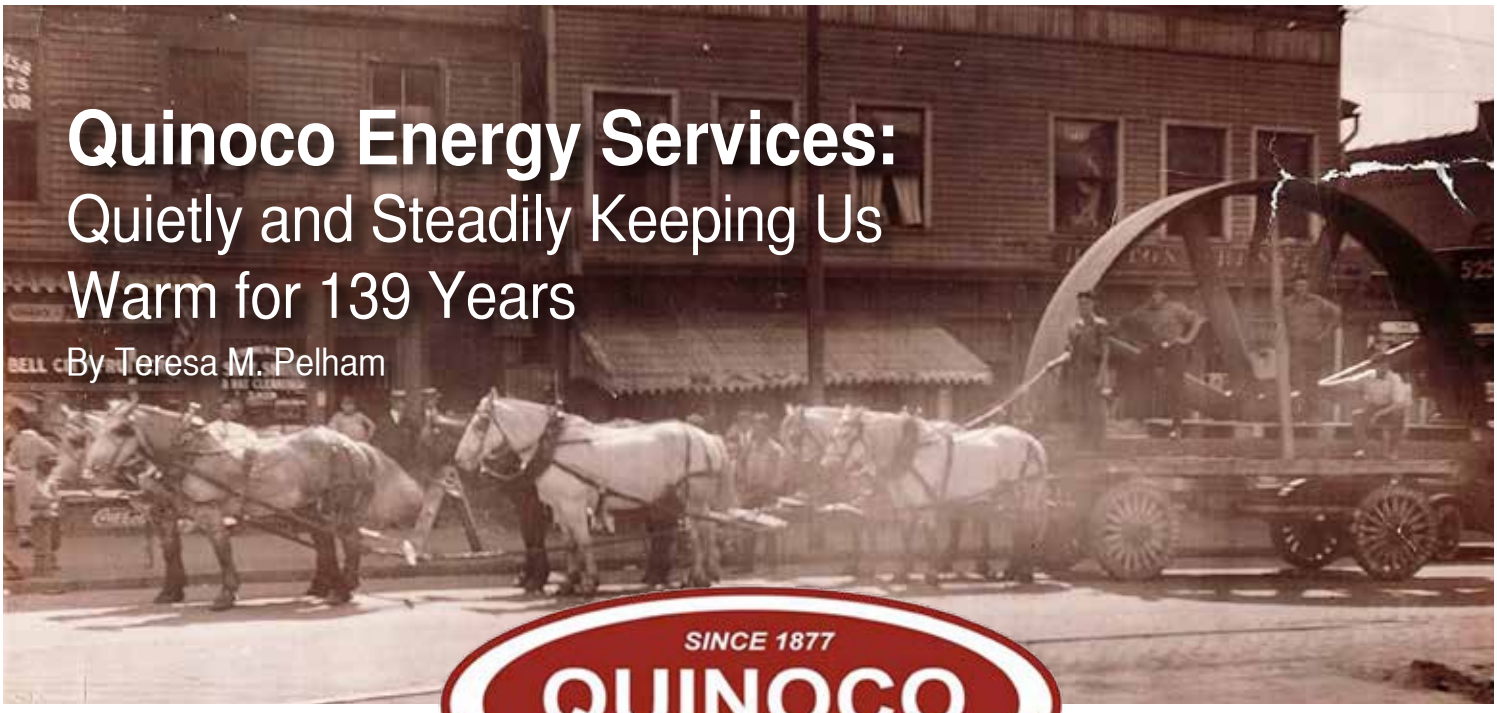
860.509.0909

OR VISIT

CTFORUM.ORG

THE CONNECTICUT FORUM

LIFETIME PATRONS: Aetna | Connecticut Public Television and Radio | The Hartford Financial Services Group
Lincoln Financial Foundation | The Rosalyn Group | Stanley Black & Decker
Travelers | United Technologies Corporation | Voya Financial



Quinoco Energy Services:
Quietly and Steadily Keeping Us Warm for 139 Years

By Teresa M. Pelham

While many of us have embraced the ease of electronic billing, a certain segment of society prefers to pay bills in person, sometimes with cash. To accommodate these folks, George Quinion had a drive-through window built to receive payments at his oil company's Bristol headquarters. Even into his 90s, Quinion could be found sitting at the window, building personal relationships with the members of the community.

Quinion passed away in 1979, and the window is no longer there, but customers do come in to pay, to chat, and to see a friendly face. It's that personal connection between employees and customers that has made Quinoco Energy Services a fixture in Farmington, Bristol, and Torrington and their surrounding communities.

Quinion, whose working-man-in-flannel portrait hangs in the lobby, founded Quinion Coal and Trucking on North Main Street in Bristol in 1877. Ulysses S. Grant was President. The company hauled heavy equipment with horses, delivered coal, and hauled paper from railcars to The Bristol Press.

When current owner Don Phillips first began working for the company in 1976, he was a 19-year-old technician, doing repairs and installations. Phillips, along with Quinion's grandson Brett Quinion, who was also starting out at the company, would pick up their boss at his home in Bristol and drive to work together every day.

Brett Quinion took over the business after his grandfather's death in 1979, and the company name changed shortly thereafter to Quinoco. In 2002, after moving his way up through the ranks, Phillips bought the company from Quinion. In addition to oil delivery, which began in the early 1900s, Quinoco added heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) to its list of services, acquired Farmington-based Cadwell, and built a propane terminal in Farmington.

These days, Quinoco has 30 employees, 30 oil and service trucks, a storage capacity of a half million gallons of oil, 7,500 customers in 20 towns, and a strong commitment to the community. A framed photo of a throng of Little Leaguers wearing Quinoco jerseys hangs in the home office.

"We've been sponsoring the team for what - 25 years?" says Phillips. "We're very civic-minded. We have a reputation to live up to and I think we do a pretty good job of that." The company also donates to the Lupus Foundation of America, the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, and Relay for Life.

The majority of Quinoco's employees have stayed with the company for their entire careers, with the average employee working there for more than 20 years. Thousands of customers have stayed with Quinoco for decades.

"Businesses like ours are kind of rare," Phillips says. "Once people get a taste of what our customer service is like they stay with us. There's a real person answering the phone - a person you know."

Teresa M. Pelham is a writer living in Farmington, and is a frequent contributor to Seasons. *She is the author of three books, including two written about her little brown rescue dogs. Contact Teresa at tpelham@comcast.net.*

Written by **Katherine Hauswirth**
Photography by **Caryn B. Davis**

INSPIRED BY LIFE: A lifelong resident of southern Connecticut, Leif Nilsson has no shortage of real-life inspiration for his paintings.

The Renaissance Man

During Leif Nilsson's early growing up years in the 1960s and '70s, the Florence Griswold Museum in his hometown of Old Lyme, now known as the home of American Impressionism, hadn't yet hit its full stride. But art was in the air. Nilsson, today an accomplished and award-winning impressionist artist, recalls that every public building — the town hall, the library, the school, the church — had at least one iconic American impressionist painting of the Lyme landscape featured prominently on its walls.

Nilsson took great interest in art from an early age. He recalls that he and his schoolmates all drew when they were young, but at a certain point, around fifth or sixth grade, many stopped drawing as often. One day, he came back to school after being out sick and his classmate Randy said he wished Nilsson had been there the day before. Some kids had needed to draw a donkey, and knew that Nilsson would have been skilled at the task. Something clicked for him — he realized that not everyone could create art, that he had been given something special. This epiphany evolved into the desire to be a professional artist, although he also considered, among other things, working in carpentry, or with leather.

Nilsson was recognized recently with the prestigious Stobart Foundation Award for his "From Hamburg Cove" oil painting at the Mystic Seaport Maritime Gallery. He received the Lyme Art Association's People's Choice Award for another work in oil, "The Studio Rose Garden." But rather than rest on his laurels, he remains a big believer in practicing and in working hard, applying continual, laser-focused attention to the foundational basics of his craft.

Nilsson says that even now, with decades of experience behind him, it's never wise to assume that he knows it all. There is always more to know, more to learn. He admires a similar trait in 19th-century artists like Pissarro and Monet, who he says were always evolving and "pushing the limits."

Nilsson admires a similar trait in 19th-century artists like Pissarro and Monet, who he says were always evolving and "pushing the limits."

Nilsson enjoys painting from life, setting up his easel and working to capture the moment at hand. He often works in oil, although he also dips into other mediums, like drawing, pastels and working in gouache (opaque watercolor). When he can, he prefers to create alla prima ("at once," or in one session), but sometimes his work may take a new direction, evolving from its original plan and requiring several sessions.

And of course, distractions can enter the picture. Many trucks idle near his studio, delivering goods to the stores and restaurants along Chester's charming Main Street. And recently, Nilsson was treated for Lyme disease. The condition seems less vexing now that it has been identified and addressed, but the knee ache and fatigue that preceded the diagnosis made it challenging to spend long stints at the easel.

He often works on a large canvas. "I like big paintings that you can 'walk into,' when they are like a picture window, almost like you can walk into the scene," he says. For him, creating a painting that mimics real sunlight coming into the room, one where the viewer might say, "Oh look, it's sunny outside — no, wait, that's the painting!" is a worthy pursuit.

Knowing where he comes from is another basic that's guided Nilsson's life. He recounts his plan to hitchhike with a friend to Santa Cruz in 1980. They stopped for the International Black Hills Survival Gathering in South Dakota, where about 12,000 people had convened. Nilsson describes common worries among the people there, about the multinational military-industrial complex and the potential antidote to be found in natural living, natural food, and peace with the earth. The gathering included many

AN ARTISTIC TOUCH: The historic home shared by Leif Nilsson and his wife, Caryn Davis, is adorned with his paintings.

AN EYE FOR DETAIL: Nilsson puts the finishing touches on a painting of the whimsical entrance to his garden amphitheater, which is home to monthly concerts.

Native Americans, and one advised, "Go back and find out where you come from, and decide what you want to do with the world."

Nilsson took the advice seriously. He didn't make it to California on that trip, but instead returned home and began learning more about his ancestors. His grandparents had emigrated from Sweden to New York in 1920. His grandfather, who had been one of 13 siblings back in Europe, with the family paying rent with what they grew as sharecroppers, ended up working as a gardener at Black Point in Niantic. His grandmother did domestic work, and Nilsson's father was one of the four children that the couple managed to raise during the Great Depression.

Once reacquainted with his roots at home, Nilsson went on to meet and work with some cousins in Sweden, also hitchhiking around to see much of Europe, including England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Around that time, he enrolled at the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts, where he spent six years altogether, completing the classical studies curriculum. The program was rigorous, often involving 12- or 13-hour days that included life drawing (from a live model) and provided a solid foundation in anatomy and art history.

It's clear that his family's legacy of hard work has resonated with the artist, helping him to become successful in a field that can be quite unforgiving. Odd jobs helped him get through school. Today, he keeps busy with hands-on work on his home and garden, applying the same stick-to-itiveness that he uses to perfect his art.

His grandfather connected deeply with nature and growing things, and Nilsson has not fallen far from the family tree. His studio sits amid abundant flowers and greenery. His artistic sensibility spills out into the garden, with the credo that, ideally, there must always be something in bloom. New things must be continually tried in both studio and garden, as he experiments with what works best. Sometimes when he paints the landscape outside his door, he thinks to himself, "this needs something." So he'll go out and get a flat of annuals with the right color and characteristics to complete his scene.

The garden benefits from this venture, too. At one point, he counted 170 varieties of plants in this relatively small space.

MUSIC FOR THE SOUL: Nilsson built a garden amphitheater that is now a stage for monthly concerts in his backyard.

When he needs a new perspective, he launches his boat, and paints much-loved places like Hamburg Cove, South Cove in Essex, and Selden's Creek from the water. He relishes his quiet time out there, which on a good day won't be disrupted by a Jet Ski or the like. He appreciates the calm and the goings-on in nature — the wild rice, the pickerelweed, and the antics of the beavers.

The Hamburg Cove piece that garnered him the Stobart Foundation Award uses eye-catching texture and soft, blended color, making viewers feel like they're actually on the cove, watching the light and the land. Nilsson strives to evoke a feeling for his viewers, capturing the time and the atmosphere that can spark the senses and lead to a whole range of human emotion.

That said, he realizes that art appreciators may have a very different take on a scene than the artist who created it. One friend purchased a piece that he'd been admiring and later marveled about what the "bridge over the creek" evoked for him. Nilsson knew that the "bridge" was, in fact, a shadow and chuckled at the interpretation, but he also appreciated the meaning that his friend found in the image.

A modern day Renaissance man, Nilsson has a talent not only for art and gardening but for construction, design and music. He and wife Caryn B. Davis, a photographer, live in a circa 1830 home, which many years ago was the Chester Hotel. The age of the house has meant plenty of fixing and rebuilding — for Nilssen, it was another chance to dive in and create something beautiful.

Before his 2011 wedding to Davis, Nilsson took on yet another project: he created an amphitheater in preparation for their wedding ceremony from stone he acquired from a construction project.

After the wedding, the "Sunday Salons" that he had been hosting since the 2000s — throwbacks to the centuries-old tradition of inspiring get-togethers for artists, writers and musicians — found a new home in the tiered stone seating amid Nilsson's abundant blooms. Now, he and Davis host monthly concerts in the garden amphitheater, with musicians on the stage that he created. He takes great pride in the stage's handsome eyebrow dormer, which "took a lot of drawing, planning, math, erasers, pencils, rulers, graph paper." Nilsson riffs on a familiar phrase, commenting on

SUNDAY SALONS: Concerts at the amphitheater attract friends and acquaintances who gather to enjoy music played by guest artists, and by Nilsson's own band, Arrowhead.

the intensity of the work needed for the stage: "measure 80 times, cut once."

It's clear that Nilsson admires the musicians who visit his place. He spoke with great excitement about an upcoming garden concert that would fall on his birthday and feature The Meadows Brothers, a talented, young Americana and folk music duo. Even better, Nilsson and his band Arrowhead were asked to open for the main act with some of their original songs. The artist plays the banjo and has been in a succession of bands, on and off, over the years. They have played in some bars and for private parties, and Nilsson has found that, with the recent challenges of Lyme disease, getting into the musical groove has come more easily than the visual arts, since it seems to call for "more feeling, less thinking."

But talking to Nilsson, one gets the sense that all of these endeavors are linked, and work to edify each other. As with his visual art, Nilsson attends to basics on the musical front, noting that he's "trying to relearn the structure of music."

His passion for music started young. He recalls getting good enough at playing guitar so that he could ride his bike while strumming, and still relishes the trade he made in South Dakota, of a leather bookmark for a baritone ukulele.

One concept pops up a couple of times while speaking with Nilsson about his earlier education, and about traveling abroad: These experiences opened him to a bigger world, a world that he continues to find fascinating.

While he still travels from time to time, most recently to the island of Malta, he doesn't seem to seek long, far-off journeys as much as he did when he was younger. Quite often, the world that Nilsson paints is just a short trip from his door. Whatever the location of his subject, his paintings have us traveling, in a way, stepping into a world that we can see with fresh eyes.

For more information on Leif Nilsson, visit nilssonstudio.com.

Katherine Hauswirth's book on experiencing nature in Connecticut, The Book of Noticing: Collections and Connections on the Trail *(Homebound Publications) launched in May. She lives in Deep River.*

Growing Businesses

REPLACEMENT KID: "Baby P," a not-yet-named goat, is a new addition to the family of soap maker Nancy Butler of Granby.

Written by **Lori Miller Kase**
Photography by **Todd Fairchild**

The demand for locally sourced and artisanal products has never been higher, and Connecticut farmers are rising to the challenge. The proliferation of farmers' markets in our region reflects a growing desire on the part of consumers to know where their food — and handcrafted goods — are coming from. In fact, a recent study conducted by University of Connecticut found that 60 percent of Connecticut consumers were willing to pay a premium for products labeled Connecticut grown.

Not surprisingly then, homegrown businesses are thriving on area farms. Our state was home to almost 6,000 farms when the last U.S. Census was completed, an increase of more than 20 percent over the last decade. In addition to the more customary offerings — like produce, animal and dairy products — many of today's farmsteaders are also entrepreneurs, launching small-scale businesses from their farms and selling everything from bath and body products to specialty foods to clothing.

Lyric Hill Farm, Granby

"Baby P," the not-yet-named goat that follows Nancy Butler around Lyric Hill Farm as if it thinks she's his mother, was born shortly before Butler's daughter Mollie moved across the country.

"I call him my 'replacement kid,' " says the Granby-based soap maker. But Butler blames her son Austin, who went off to college around the time that Baby P's mother arrived, for the unlikely deviation in her career path.

The Granby mother of four (she has another son, Ethan, and an adult stepdaughter, Corinna), studied geology and civil and environmental engineering at Cornell University as a college student. She then spent 10 years as an environmental and safety engineer at Travelers insurance company, and did stints as both a garden adviser at White Flower Farm in Morris and a master gardener/horticulturist at West Hartford's Westmoor Park, before starting her now-thriving goat milk soap and laundry detergent business.

Butler and her husband, Don, bought their first pair of goats in 2008 to indulge Austin, who, as a third grader, became enamored with their friend's goats and decided he, too, wanted to start raising and showing the animals. He learned how to care for them through a local 4-H farm program, and showed them for three years. "Then he hit puberty," recalls Butler, "and decided that goats are not nearly as cool as the guitar, which you don't have to leave your room twice a day to milk."

By then, she was too attached to the animals to part with them. After several months of using the goats' abundant supply of milk to make cheese, which found its way into every family meal, her children rebelled, and she turned to soap-making instead.

"I have approached soap-making as I bake — using the freshest, highest quality ingredients I can get," says Butler. In addition to using milk from her own goats, which is pesticide-, hormone- and antibiotic-free, she infuses the soaps with herbs and botanicals like lavender, calendula, lemon verbena and white sage, all of which she grows on her farm. Every ingredient in each bar of soap — except the lye, which is needed to saponify the vegetable oils and turn them into soap — is food grade, she says.

Butler keeps eight Alpine goats, six of which have pedigrees whose lineage can be traced back to their French goat ancestors. "It's not like we have a big herd — I know every one personally," she says, pausing to say, "Hi, girls" to a group of goats that are grazing by the front barn. "The soap supports my goat habit."

She originally produced the soaps in a small kitchenette in the 1895 farmhouse she lives in with her family, but when racks of soap threatened to overtake her dining room, living room and sun porch, she

CLEANING UP: Nancy Butler's Lyric Hill Farm can produce 500 bars of soap daily.

HAPPY TO HELP: Lindsey Scott, left, has been working for Carol Adams as a barista and supervisor for about 5 years.

moved the operation into a studio in one of several barns on her five-acre property. "When I first started out, on a really productive day I could make 60 bars of soap," she adds. "Now I can make 500 in a day."

She sells her soaps out of a charming milking house that has been standing on the property for over a century. Patrons, using the honor system, record their purchases in a little notebook and leave their money in a black mailbox hanging by the door. In addition to the beautifully wrapped soaps that fill a farmhouse sink, a long pine cupboard and an old breakfront in the tiny store, customers can also find old-fashioned tins of laundry detergent, as well as hand-knitted washcloths on display.

Butler originally developed the all-natural laundry detergent because a local laundromat was looking for an eco-friendly alternative to store detergents, but she now has many "detergent groupies." The detergent is scented with essential lemongrass oil and is free of filler, anti-caking chemicals, and artificial fragrances.

She started knitting her own linen washcloths because she was "looking for something with a natural fiber that wouldn't take my skin off, and couldn't find something that wasn't made in China." Though the linen is imported from Belgium, it is spun to her specifications at a mill in Rhode Island. "I'm always trying to expand in a way that is eco-conscious and local," she says.

Butler, who is passionate about community outreach, and "making sure that agriculture and farming is real to people," periodically visits local libraries to introduce local children to her Alpines. "I'm a small enough farm that I can drop what I'm doing if someone wants to come and see a baby goat," she adds.

She also sells her products online and at about 20 independent shops in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

"I feel very strongly about only placing my products in businesses that really give back to their local communities, " says Butler. She donates a portion of her proceeds to Heifer International, a charity that gives goats and other livestock to families in developing countries to help them earn a living.

Ashlawn Farm Coffee, Old Saybrook

When Carol Adams first bought a roaster and started roasting her own coffee in an old barn on the Lyme, Connecticut, farm she shared with her then-spouse, Chip Dahlke, she never expected to be running a full-service cafe and selling her beans to restaurants and specialty grocers across Connecticut. "I really thought this would be some kind of glorified hobby," she confesses.

It all started one morning when she woke up and realized she was out of coffee. "I was so desperate that I brewed a stale packet of Cape Cod Coffee Roasters decaf from a hotel I had stayed at two years earlier," Adams recalls. "It occurred to me that, wow, coffee had always been the drink of the farm. If they roasted it in Cape Cod, why couldn't I learn to roast it here?"

Fast forward 16 years, and not only does Adams produce 27 varieties of coffee under the name Ashlawn Farm Coffee, named for the roastery's birthplace, she also runs a café by the same name next to the Old Saybrook train station. The café attracts a steady flow of "coffee geeks and gourmands" from near and far, she says, including local devotees, train commuters, and regulars from the days when a smaller café was housed in a red barn perched above the farm's picturesque cow pastures.

Soon after that fateful morning when Adams realized she could roast her own coffee, she found herself in Florida, taking a three-day coffee-roasting workshop offered by the company that sold her the roaster.

COFFEES OF THE WORLD: Ashlawn's beans come from around the globe.

"I came back realizing that people were going to want to taste what we were going to roast, to learn what they liked and would want to buy," she says. So she created a tiny "tasting room," which was slowly expanded over time and gradually evolved into the original Ashlawn Farm Café in Lyme. That café became so popular that Adams opened a second one in Old Saybrook in 2013.

The coffee business was definitely a departure for Adams. In her former life, she taught English at a middle school in North Haven. She met and married Dahlke in 1996 and moved onto Ashlawn Farm, which had been in Dahlke's family since 1909. Following her divorce in 2016, Adams closed the original café and moved the roasting operation to the Old Saybrook location.

Today, Adams serves 300 to 400 customers each day in the café, and the large stainless steel coffee roaster roars to life daily in a barnlike space next door. Bins lining the walls of the roastery contain green coffee beans representing every coffee-growing continent in the world, from South and Central America to Africa. There are single-origin beans, from places like Sumatra and Nicaragua and Zambia — and several blends, including "Black Angus," in honor of the bovine residents of Ashlawn Farm who once grazed outside the original roasting barn.

Every day, the green Arabica beans (they are all Arabica; that is, they have been handpicked in the mountainous areas where they are grown) are dumped into the roaster, where they attain the rich brown color that most people associate with coffee beans.

Some of the freshly roasted beans will be served or bagged up and sold at the café; others will be distributed to about 60 restaurants and specialty grocers around the state, and even a couple in Rhode Island and New York.

Ashlawn Farm Coffee roasts and sells 1,000 to 1,500 pounds of coffee per week.

Thorncrest Farm & Milk House Chocolates, Goshen

"Nowhere else on Earth can you enjoy a 'single cow origin' chocolate," states a sign posted on the wall inside the circa 1895 milk house from which Kimberly Thorn sells her delectable European-style chocolates.

Only Daydream, a 7-year-old Jersey, provides the naturally sweet milk that can produce the buttery and vanilla tones in Thorn's chocolate encased caramels. The dark chocolate ganache inside the "Brigadoon," she says, gets its velvety finish from the rich milk of Valor, a 4-year-old Holstein. Indeed, according to Thorn, the stress-free bovines at Thorncrest Farm are the secret ingredient behind the success of her artisanal chocolate business.

"Our cows are bred for the flavor of milk that they provide," says Thorn. "Any time a cow is stressed, it will affect the flavor of the milk. We focus on keeping our cows stress free." That job falls predominantly to her husband, Clint, and their two sons, Garret and Lyndon, who ensure that everything from the hay the cows eat, to the feng shui-inspired barn they relax in is designed to support a stress-free existence.

RELAXING TREATS: Kimberly Thorn makes chocolates from the milk of her stress-free cows.

"Clint designed the whole barn for the cows' health and comfort," she says. For example, relying on the natural westerly breezes allows the air to flow through the open doors at either end of the barn. The cows are positioned so that they face north to south, rather than east to west, because it is the orientation they instinctively opt for. "If you watch cows, or animals in general," she explains, "they tend to lay in a certain direction."

The inspiration for Milk House Chocolates came while she was working on a thoroughbred stud farm in Ireland in 1984, and befriended a local dairy farmer who was providing the milk, cream and butter from his farm to a little pastry shop nearby.

"I actually fell in love with the shop and the entire idea," she recalls. When Clint, then her boyfriend, came to visit, she took him there for lunch. "We were sitting out on the grass and saying, 'Wouldn't it be great to do this kind of thing with this same connection to our cows?' " she says. The two traveled together to France and 13 other countries (living on chocolates, wine and an occasional slice of bread), which is where she first came across small artisanal chocolate shops. "That's where the idea of us combining the cows with chocolates was born."

Clint grew up on a dairy farm in Goshen and had always had cows. The couple, who were married when they returned from Europe, started farming together on the original Thorncrest Farm property (the couple moved their milk-and-chocolate operation around the corner six years ago).

With the exception of two light brown Jersey cows, including Daydream, and a handful of Longhorns that they breed for, well, their long horns, most of their 60-cow herd consists of black and white dappled Holsteins.

The true secret behind the chocolate flavors is Hanover Hill Jethro Koral, a Holstein cow from Port Perry, Ontario, who is the basis for their herd. Her pedigree, according to Thorn, extends back to "the greatest flavor cows in the history of the breed." Clint breeds the cows for the flavor of the milk they provide. Thorn uses that milk to create more than 120 different seasonal varieties of her unique chocolate confections.

In 1997, she discovered which cows' milk worked best for chocolates through trial and error and invented the single-cow chocolate idea. "Certain cows provide milk that allows other flavors to "maintain a consistent profile on your palate," Thorn explains. In other words, she says, the milk doesn't overpower the chocolate, and thus the chocolate

doesn't overpower the other elements in her confections, which might include garden herbs or orchard fruits, all organically grown and freshly harvested from her farm.

There are bonbons infused with mint, thyme, lemon verbena, and curry; customers love Daydream's milk chocolate caramels, as well as her Valor's black pepper ginger truffles and dark chocolate lavenders.

"Most of my chocolates have more of a longer finish than a boastful beginning," she says, arguing that like a fine wine, every chocolate — and the milk that goes into it — has a distinct profile. "Their smell is different, their taste, the texture on your palate — it's unique and very special to each one."

Customers can order her chocolates online. She has shipped to every state in the country as well as Europe. Her only non-virtual marketplace is on the farm.

"I really want to keep it artisanal, for everything to be fresh and what I could make myself," says the chocolate-maker. "I love the fact that I can create new flavors from the cows and bring about a culinary journey for everyone, in a sense, to experience the cows and what's growing on the farm through classic old-world style chocolate."

Clatter Ridge Farm, Farmington

Historic preservationists Bobbie Emery and Anne Foss were doing a project at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington back in 2002, when Emery suggested that adding sheep to the property, to graze beside the 1901 homestead's old barns along Route 4, would "put the estate's farm complex into context."

Museum administrators responded that they didn't have the funds to buy sheep, Emery says, so she offered to purchase a couple of animals for them. "They said. 'We can't afford to take care of the sheep,' " she recalls, "so we said we would."

The then-novice shepherds raised their first pair of lambs on Clatter Ridge Farm, which had been in Emery's family for more than a century and where the two had just built a farmhouse together, "just to make sure we could take care of sheep," Emery says.

Fifteen years later, Emery and Foss's shepherding business has outpaced their historic preservation business. The pair tends a flock of about 60 Shetlands, both at Hill-Stead and on pastures at and near their farm, producing about 100 pounds of wool per year. The wool is turned into a variety of natural fiber products that are sold online, as well as at the Hill-Stead Museum Store, where they are displayed alongside reproductions of the museum's impressionist paintings and other local artisanal offerings. Every wool hat, pair of gloves, scarf and throw bears the name of the sheep who "proudly produced" the item.

Though the two continue to operate East/West Builders, their preservation business, and still do restoration work for the Hill-Stead, they are more often found on the pastures at the north end of the landmark estate, tending to their Shetlands.

"Farmington has a rich agricultural history and it's cool to drive into Farmington and see the sheep grazing here," says Emery. She notes that their Shetlands, a "heritage breed of fiber sheep," are not only hardy, but produce a very fine wool.

"I have sensitive skin, but I wear our wool socks nine months out of the year," she says. Foss also notes that the breed's natural variation in color adds to their desirability. Indeed, the pasture at Hill-Stead is dotted with sheep in an assortment of grays, browns and whites. These same natural shades can be found in the herringbone and braided plait patterns on their woolen throws.

Clatter Ridge Farm also participates in the Connecticut Blanket Project, a cooperative initiative designed to support the state's shepherding industry by producing blankets made entirely of wool from Connecticut sheep farms. Each year, they contribute wool for (and eventually sell) a blanket made through this volunteer effort that is modeled after the blankets once made by the Charles W. House & Sons Company in Unionville.

Along with their natural wool products, Foss and Emery also run a year-old "online farmers market," through which they sell — and hand-deliver — their own lamb, pork, free range eggs, shitake mushrooms and maple syrup, as well as dairy, organic produce, meat and poultry from other farms in the area. "We'd like to be among those raising awareness of the importance of local farms and food that is grown near you," notes Foss.

Foss and Emery are dedicated to sustainable farming. Not only are their lambs raised on pasture, but their pigs are born and raised in the forest, and their chickens are free range and cage free. The pair is also passionate about the need to preserve the state's agricultural heritage. "People need to think of what they want Connecticut to look like in 10 years," Emery says. "Local people buying local products is the only way we preserve our farms."

Lori Miller Kase is a freelance writer living in Simsbury.

Todd Fairchild of West Hartford is a longtime contributor to Seasons. *For more about Todd, go to shutterbugct.com.*

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:
Lyric Hill Farm: lyrichillfarm.com
Ashlawn Farm Coffee: farmcoffee.com
Thorncrest Farm: milkhousechocolates.net
Clatter Ridge Farm: clatterridge.eatfromfarms.com

TASTE TEMPTATIONS: Seasons Restaurant executive chef Jim Junkins paired his entrée with this lump blue crab martini. For the recipe, download the *Seasons Magazines* app from **seasonsmagazines.com**.

Written by **Carol Latter**
Photography by **Todd Fairchild**

A Feast for the Senses

For Jim Junkins, executive chef at Seasons Restaurant at Avon Old Farms Hotel, cooking is more than just a career. It's his passion. And every day, he and his team not only seek to please guests at the hotel or people from the area, but look to create that little bit of magic that will lure patrons from towns across Connecticut, and beyond.

"Just recently, we had people who drove over Avon Mountain to get to us from West Hartford to eat here. After dinner, they asked to speak to the chef. I came out and they said, 'Oh my God. We usually go to West Hartford Center to eat. We came over here to try it and your food is fantastic.' It was great to hear. They loved everything very much and asked me why we weren't busier. I told them, 'For some people, it's just uncharted territory in this direction. We're a little off the beaten path.' "

But the restaurant is quickly earning a reputation as a hidden gem, and well worth the drive.

Junkins says when people come to Seasons, whether it's from across town or halfway across the world, "they want to see some New England style entrées, but things they're not used to getting elsewhere. This summer, I created a lobster and scallop dish with a twist. I used some unusual ingredients and put a spin on my risotto, using saffron and goat cheese. Some people follow the old adage that cheese and seafood don't go together, but I don't play the old-school games. I think there are no boundaries."

The end result was a visually gorgeous dish with an explosion of flavor. (See next page for the recipe.)

Says Junkins, "For me, flavor has a lot to do with the visual. You eat with your eyes first. I think it's important to look at a dish as art, but the flavor transformation has to be at least that good, if not better."

When it comes to the quality and inventiveness of the food on the menu, Junkins gives a lot of credit to the members of the team he works with. After working at many restaurants across the country in a variety of capacities, he says, he's never encountered the combination of camaraderie, skill and enthusiasm that he's seen at Seasons Restaurant.

"I have to say that the professionalism shared within the staff is just so refreshing. It enables us as a team to really go a to a higher level and put out recipes and food products that you wouldn't be able to do with a lesser team."

He says his colleagues are always keen to create a new dish, and if the quality is there, it goes on the menu.

He has high praise for the front-of-the-house staff as well. "When you come into our facility, you're greeted as if you walked into your family's front door. It's complete respect and an extremely comfortable atmosphere. These guys will do anything for anybody — there's no hesitation as to how far they'll go to help a customer."

Junkins got his entrée into the culinary field at the age of 13, doing kitchen chores after his uncle's wife gave him a weekend gig at a Jack in the Box restaurant in his hometown of Corona, California. At 17, he moved to Bloomington, Minnesota, where he worked at Chili's and a year later, moved to the Park Tavern next door. He worked there for several years, learning the ropes under two trained and highly skilled chefs — one of whom had served as a dietician for Muhammad Ali.

"On Sunday nights, they would take me off the line and say, 'Okay, Jim, make us dinner.' They would critique everything and show me how to improve. That's where I really got my passion for cooking."

For Junkins — who worked as both a chef and as a trainer in a corporate environment after graduating from culinary school — his position at Seasons, and the chance to mentor young people in the kitchen, is a dream come true.

"I'm blessed to have that opportunity, which a lot of people don't get. It really humbles me and makes me realize that we maintain this type of food quality because of the phenomenal people who work here. I help drive the car but I have everyone giving me directions and helping me fill the tank. I can rely on these people to say, 'What's your opinion on this? How do you feel about that?' That makes me love this job."

Carol Latter is the editor of Seasons Magazines, *and a longtime writer and editor in the Greater Hartford area. She lives in West Simsbury.*

SAFFRON AND GOAT CHEESE RISOTTO

3 tbsp unsalted butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
kosher salt and black pepper
4 bay leaves
1 cup Arborio rice
½ cup white wine
¼ tsp saffron threads
3 ½ low-sodium chicken broth, plus more if needed
½ cup grated Parmesan
2 tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 cup goat cheese stirred in at the end of the cooking process

Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 6 to 8 minutes.
Add the rice and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the wine and simmer until absorbed.
Add the saffron and half the broth (1 ¾ cups) and simmer, stirring once, until absorbed, 8 to 10 minutes.
Add the remaining broth and simmer, stirring once, until the rice is tender and creamy, 8 to 10 minutes. (If the rice is not cooked through and the mixture is dry, add more broth and continue to cook until tender.)
Stir in the Parmesan and the remaining tablespoon of butter. Sprinkle with the parsley and additional Parmesan, if desired.

SEARED SCALLOPS AND LOBSTER

5 jumbo sea scallops
5 shelled lobster claws
½ tsp garlic
½ tsp shallots
1 tbsp truffle butter
2 oz sherry
2 tbsp olive oil blend

Heat a sauté pan on high heat until a droplet of water boils on contact and evaporates. With a dry hot pan, add blended oil.
Add scallops to the pan. Sear scallops on both sides, approximately 3 minutes per side. (You'll want a nice brown color.)
Reduce to medium heat. Remove pan to reduce temperature. Place pan back on the heat once it has cooled a bit.
Add truffle butter, or unsalted butter if preferred.
Add shallots and garlic and brown for about 30 seconds; remove from pan.
Add lobster to pan; cook 1 minute before removing.
Add sherry to pan and reduce. Turn off heat and reserve sherry reduction for plating.

Serves 1-2 people.

Perfect Pairings

Sipping with Seafood

Written by Scott Clark

Pairing wine with seafood isn't a difficult task. Think in terms of weight and substance — delicate raw fish and light, briny shellfish go best with equally delicate, light white wines. Similarly, a piece of grilled swordfish goes better with a richer, more substantial white.

Shellfish tend to call for light whites, and sparkling wines like Champagne. If the dish is spicy, consider a wine with some sweetness, like an off-dry Gewürztraminer. Or try a Grüner Veltliner from Austria, made from that country's premier white grape. It produces a palate-cleansing white that, like Sauvignon Blanc, is versatile enough to go with almost anything.

Chardonnay, with its delicious vanilla notes, is an excellent choice to serve with lobster. Just be sure to choose varieties with more mineral and only light touches of fruit and oak. White-fleshed fish in a butter-based sauce is also a good opportunity to drink Chardonnay. If the sauce is more citrusy, consider one of Spain's favorite wines for seafood, Albariño, a citrus-zesty white variety from Galicia.

Salmon works remarkably well with Pinot Noir, while bright red ahi tuna is so substantial that it can even pair with a medium-bodied red like Merlot.

If you can't decide, or everyone at the table is eating something different, order a bottle of nice Champagne — it's one of the most food-friendly of wines.

For the chef's Seared Scallops and Lobster with Saffron and Goat Cheese Risotto, there are a few paths you can follow. Risotto immediately makes a scallop dish richer, especially if it also includes crab or lobster. You can go for a matching richness with Chardonnay or a smooth Italian white like a Gavi or Soave. You can also opt for a contrast by way of Sauvignon Blanc or another crisp white.

I recommend:
Phantom Chardonnay (California)
Louis Latour Pouilly-Fuissé (Burgundy)
Banfi Principessa Gavia (Italy)
Kentia Albariño (Spain)
Concha y Toro Terrunyo Sauvignon Blanc (Chile)

Scott Clark is the general manager of Liquor Depot Inc.

Above the Clouds

Mary Goodrich Jenson was Big News in the 1920s

LOFTY AMBITIONS: In 1928, a 20-year-old became the first woman in Connecticut history to earn her pilot's license.

Written by **Leonard Felson**
Photography courtesy of the **Wethersfield Historical Society**

It was on her return from Europe in May 1927 when a not-yet 20-year-old from Connecticut felt the urge to fly ... to pilot a plane ... solo.

Mary Goodrich was on her way back to America aboard an ocean liner when she heard the news that made her want to fly. Charles Lindbergh had crossed the Atlantic in an historic first, piloting his single-engine, single-seat Spirit of St. Louis non-stop from Long Island to Paris.

A year later, in 1928, she became the first woman in Connecticut history to earn her pilot's license.

"The plane dashed along the ground, gathering speed constantly," Goodrich wrote afterward of her experience in the cockpit. "The roar of the engine grew so intensely that it was deafening. I was so absorbed that I was not aware that the ship had left the ground."

Mary was born in 1907, the daughter of James and Ella (Reed) Goodrich of Wethersfield, and sister to William and James. Her paternal grandfather, Elizur Stillman Goodrich, who once headed the Hartford-New York Steamboat Company and the Hartford-Wethersfield Horse Railway, loved to read to his granddaughter. Fairy tales when she was a little girl; more serious publications as she grew older, including newspapers and magazines, Shakespeare, and the works of authors Sir Walter Scott and William Makepeace Thackeray.

Mary Goodrich had attended Wadsworth Street Elementary School in Hartford, and later, Burnham Preparatory School in Northampton, Massachusetts. Despite taking advertising courses at Columbia University and the classes at Collegio Gazzolo in Verona, Italy, she was said to have disappointed her parents because she never graduated from college.

For nearly a year, Goodrich took flying lessons, meeting flight instructors at Hartford's Brainard Field, a few miles north of her Wethersfield home. She loved flying over her parents' house, yelling down, "I'll be home in half an hour. Keep the supper hot." And her parents would wave and yell back, "Okay."

Flying wasn't her only passion or claim to history. She loved journalism, a trait inherited perhaps from the many hours she spent listening to her grandfather read to her.

While learning to fly, she paid a visit to the city editor of *The Hartford Courant*; the paper's offices were then on downtown State Street. Coincidentally, another woman, at the rival *Hartford Times*, was also working to get her pilot's license.

"If you get the first license, come back and I'll give you a job," the *Courant's* then-city editor, Col. John R. Reitemeyer, told Goodrich.

The ambitious young woman had both by the age of 20.

In late September 1928, readers of the *Courant* saw the advertisements for a new upcoming series called, "Learning How to Fly," by "a local girl pilot." Describing Goodrich as "Hartford's girl aviator," the ads told readers that Goodrich would chronicle her adventure, her quest to obtain a pilot's license, the first in the state by a woman.

"Everything seemed to change," Goodrich wrote in her series in the *Courant.* "The motor roared musically as the ground fell away beneath. The feeling of calm and peaceful solitude contrasted strangely with the nervous hesitancy I had felt but a few moments before. I had no fear at all," she wrote.

On her first solo flight, Goodrich flew north on takeoff and gained enough altitude to safely execute her first turn. She turned east across the Connecticut River, flying south along the east bank until she swung around, approaching the airfield in an easy glide. But she misjudged the distance and descended too steeply and too fast.

"I leveled out about ten feet from the ground," she wrote later. "And when I thought the ship was ready to be set down, I pulled the stick back," circling the airfield and landing this time more easily and smoothly. Down safe. A licensed pilot. "I had no more fear of flying alone," she said.

Once, her pilot's license was suspended for 30 days when she got lost flying in an open cockpit during a snowstorm over Long Island Sound. Someone had dared her to take off despite a storm looming. She made it across the Sound, but by then, Mary was flying blind, snow whirling around her. The National Guard sent a search plane out, but the Guard never found her because she was flying too low — no more than 15 feet above the ground, following railroad tracks.

Mary flew her blue-and-silver Fairchild KR-21 bi-plane, which she purchased for $2,400, into the early 1930s. She flew at air shows where she competed, and made history anew as the first woman to fly solo to Cuba.

To her dismay, soon after that trip, she began experiencing vision problems, specifically with her depth perception. That hampered her ability to land safely, and she was forced to give up her license. But it didn't keep her from flying. In 1936, when the Hindenburg — a German passenger airship — flew low over Hartford, Mary was one of the only female passengers.

Her flying career, coupled with her newspaper career, lasted all of about five years, after which she teamed up with a partner to start an airplane model manufacturing company. Unfortunately, it failed.

In the late 1930s, she traveled west. She got a job as a secretary at Walt Disney Studios, later starting Disney's story research department. Once, visiting a Hollywood library, she picked up the children's book, "Dumbo the Flying Elephant," and suggested the studio make it into an animated movie.

At Disney, she met her future husband, Carl Jenson, a publicist. They married in 1940 and returned to Connecticut and her hometown of Wethersfield, where they remained married for 53 years, raising two children, William and Ann.

Mary Goodrich Jenson grew active in local affairs, serving on the town school board and on the Republican Town Committee. She was also a member of The Hartford Golf Club, the Town & County Club of Hartford, Wethersfield Historical Society, Wadsworth Atheneum, the Connecticut Historical Society, and the MAD Money Investment Club.

During World War II, she was one of almost 45,000 women nationwide who volunteered for the Motor Corps of the American Red Cross. Duties included transporting sick and wounded servicemen and women, delivering supplies, and driving nurses and volunteers to and from their posts. Most corps members drove their own cars and were trained in auto mechanics so they could fix their vehicles in the event of a breakdown.

In 2000, Mary was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame for being the first female pilot from Connecticut to receive her license and the first female aviation reporter and editor for the *Courant*.

Reflecting back in a 2000 newspaper interview, she put her historic flying career into perspective.

"It was much more of a sport," she said, likening it to riding a horse through jumps.

Perhaps. But she remained a large part of aviation history, as a founding member along with Amelia Earhart of the Ninety-Nines, Inc., a group named for the 99 charter female pilots who created an organization to support and recognize women pilots. During the 1930s, she was also director of the Betsy Ross Air Corps, a group of female pilots organized to assist in national defense during emergencies.

She died in Hartford in 2004 at the age of 96.

Leonard Felson, a regular contributor to Seasons, *is a magazine writer whose passion for local history began at a young age. For more about him and his work, see www.leonardfelson.com.*

Written by **Sloan Brewster**
Photography by **Caryn B. Davis**

Christmas in Connecticut

Along tree-lit byways winding through cities and towns, upon wreath-bedecked doors of houses framed by light, and within halls adorned, year after year, with the colors of the season, Christmas glistens in Connecticut.

In her new book, "A Connecticut Christmas, Celebrating the Holiday in Classic New England Style," Caryn B. Davis captured some of the state's finest traditions. The book offers a cache of lovely photos, accompanied by essays written by Eric D. Lehman describing delights, displays and celebrations in quiet nooks and populated corners the state over.

A professional photographer since 2000, the Chester-based author is doing what she has always wanted to do. Her plans, however, were waylaid by a career in television, a business in which she remained for many years before deciding to return to her first love.

All around, Davis sees lights and scenes that tell stories she can collect and share, using her camera. "It just fits the way I see the world," she said. "I see the world compositionally and I'm a very visual person and visual thinker so I think it kind of complements my brain. When I'm looking around, I see everything as a photographer."

"A Connecticut Christmas," a commission by Globe Pequot Press in Guilford, fulfilled a lifelong dream she had to publish a book, but was not a project she conceived or even sought. "It was just a fluke," she laughed.

Davis had pitched a story on the Connecticut River Valley for Victoria magazine, and Ann Nyberg, news anchor for WTNH, happened to see the images on Facebook. Nyberg — whose book "Remembering Katharine Hepburn" was published by Globe Pequot — knew that Amy Lyons, editorial director at Globe, was looking for a photographer to shoot a book on Christmas in Connecticut and passed along the pictures. Lyons was instantly taken by Davis' art.

"And it all fell into place," Lyons said. "I mean, her photos were so lovely."

Completing the book was a two-year adventure, and New England weather was just as unpredictable as one would expect. In the first winter Davis set out to take the photos, there was practically no snow and the running joke was that there was never going to be snow again.

When at last snow did come, it was unexpected and Davis found herself rushing to Essex while deathly ill to capture the town dusted in white. She was grateful that picture was chosen for the cover, saying, "I worked really hard for that shot."

Lehman, a Hamden resident and director of creative writing at the University of Bridgeport, came into the project after Davis had completed the photo shoots, so he had the pictures to work from while crafting his words.

An award-winning author of a dozen books, including "Insiders' Guide to Connecticut" and "Connecticut Town Greens," Lehman already knew much of the background and history on many of the traditions. For the rest, he made calls and sent emails to fill in the blanks. Collaborating with a photographer was new for him but it went smoothly and was a unique experience with a good end result.

"We got it done pretty quickly," Lehman said. "And I was pretty happy with it."

Davis said she was thrilled to work with Lehman, who writes eloquently.

One of the more unusual seasonal happenings featured in the book takes place at Country Quilt Llama Farm in Cornwall. Debbie Labbe, the farm's founder, invites visitors to take rambles through the woods with the llamas.

"If you're into walking in the woods in summer or winter and you don't have a dog, you can rent a llama," Davis said. "It's something people can do at Christmas time."

Davis waited through snowless weeks, hoping for whisper white flakes to cover the ground when she went to the farm for a photo shoot. As it happened, she was glad she waited, despite repeatedly having to call and reschedule when it had looked like snow and then, alas, there was none. When it did come, she was able to trudge with llamas Peanut and Jack through drifts and mounds, catching amusing shots along the way.

"The llamas don't mind the snow and, you know, it was pretty deep so it made for nice photos watching them lifting their feet in unison with the person walking them," Davis said.

Lehman said he is planning to visit Country Quilt llama with his wife. "My wife is obsessed," he said. "She's like, 'We have to do the llamas this year.' "

"A Connecticut Christmas, Celebrating the Holiday in Classic New England Style" will be available this fall in stores and on Amazon.

For more information on Davis and the locations of her upcoming book signings, visit her website, www.carynbdavis.com. To learn more about Lehman, visit www.ericdlehman.org.

Sloan Brewster has been writing professionally for more than 15 years. In addition to writing for newspapers and magazines, she has written a novel and her share of poetry.

Irene and Caroline Hurlburt take a snowy stroll through the woods with Peanut and Jack, llamas from Country Quilt Llama Farm in Cornwall.

Dr. Abdul Majeed Sheikh

Since the advent of modern-day antibiotics in the 1940s, illness and death from infectious disease has greatly decreased. But the widespread use, overuse, and misuse of these drugs have given rise to an increasing number of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, posing a serious threat to public health. In an effort to preserve the effectiveness of these much-needed medications, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital has recently instituted an Antibiotic Stewardship Program. At its helm is infectious disease specialist Abdul Sheikh, MD, a passionate advocate for the responsible use of antibiotics.

"Antibiotic stewardship – which is defined as the right antibiotics for the right patients, for the right diagnosis, for the right duration of time – is really in the limelight right now," says Dr. Sheikh. "This is because of multi-drug-resistant bacteria that are causing diseases in humans." Dr. Sheikh says he was first taught the principals of antibiotic stewardship during his Infectious Diseases fellowship at Louisiana State University School of Medicine.

In the ICU, Dr. Sheikh saw staff treating critically ill patients with antibiotics only when they had objective evidence of a bacterial infection, such as a positive blood culture from blood or other sites, rather than using them empirically. "My mentors at LSU were great champions of antibiotic stewardship," he says, "and I've tried to follow in their footsteps here at CHH."

DOING THE JOB OF A DETECTIVE

Dr. Sheikh, who lives in West Hartford and works in Torrington, at CHH, and Hartford, at an HIV clinic, is a long way from the place he first called home. Born and raised in Peshawar, a small town in Pakistan, he attended elementary school through medical school in his native country. In 2002, his brother-in-law, a practicing physician in the United States, urged Dr. Sheikh to come to the US for his medical training. He decided to apply to the University of Connecticut, familiar to him because several of his medical school classmates in Peshawar happened to be training there.

On his residency application, Dr. Sheikh stated he would like to become an infectious disease physician. "Luckily, the chairman of UConn medicine residency program was Dr. Richard Garibaldi, who himself was a great infectious disease physician," Dr. Sheikh recalls. "He wrote a letter back to me in his own handwriting saying he liked my resume, enjoyed having the interview with me, and would be happy if I would become an infectious disease specialist – I still have that letter."

As an infectious disease specialist, Dr. Sheikh says he is often called in when other doctors can't figure out what is causing a patient's illness. It is his job, he says, to gather all the information about the sick person and connect the pieces together to get a diagnosis. "It's an exciting specialty because, in a way, you are always doing the job of a detective," he says. "And I always wanted to be a detective."

PRESERVING PRECIOUS ANTIBIOTICS

Dr. Sheikh has been working at the HIV clinic at the Community Health Services in Hartford since 2014; his job at CHH began as a locum tenens (or temporary) position in May 2016. He officially joined the staff about a year later and was asked to helm the Antibiotic Stewardship Program. Dr. Sheikh immediately joined forces with the pharmacy staff to update the hospital's policies regarding antibiotic use,

Written by **Lori Miller Kase**
Photography courtesy of Charlotte Hungerford Hospital

SEARCHING FOR CLUES: Dr. Abdul Sheikh says infectious disease is an exciting specialty. He's often called in when other doctors can't figure out what is causing a patient's illness, and he "always wanted to be a detective."

and the institution launched its new antibiotic initiative in January of this year.

Now, every antibiotic prescription is reviewed by Sheikh's team to determine if it is the appropriate medication and course for that patient and his or her diagnosis. In addition, he says, certain powerful antibiotics like colistin and carbapenems cannot be prescribed without approval from the team. "Antibiotics that are considered precious we want to save for patients with real drug resistant bacteria," explains Dr. Sheikh. "We want to make sure they don't get used indiscriminately." Pharmacists are expected to switch from IV antibiotics to oral medication whenever patients can tolerate it, since IV antibiotics carry the risk of infection at the IV insertion site. "A pill is always the preferred form of medicine," he says.

Each year, at least two million people become infected with a bacterium that is resistant to the drugs designed to kill it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). And at least 23,000 people die each year as a result of such infections. The CDC, in fact, published a national action plan for combating antibiotic resistant bacteria in 2015. "They want some kind of accountability and follow-up where they can determine which physicians are writing how many antibiotic prescriptions and how much and why," he says. "Things are very exciting right now in the antibiotic stewardship world."

TAKING ON TICKBORNE ILLNESS

According to Dr. Sheikh, tickborne illnesses are the "bread and butter" of an infectious disease doctor, especially in Connecticut, where infections like Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, and babesiosis are on the rise. "Lyme disease is dangerous," says Dr. Sheikh, "but these others, if left untreated, can be fatal." The earlier an infected individual gets treated, he adds, the better.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease include the telltale "bullseye" rash, pain in the joints, fever, and headaches. Later symptoms may include numbness, nerve pain, and paralysis or weakness in the muscles of the face. If left untreated, Lyme can lead to chronic joint pain; the bacteria can also spread to the heart and nervous system. Signs of the other tickborne diseases, which like Lyme, are carried by deer ticks, also include fever and headaches, plus darkening of the urine, rashes, easy bleeding and easy bruising. "Anyone who has these symptoms needs to be evaluated," Dr. Sheikh says.

While there are medications to treat these infections, a newer tickborne disease – caused by the Powassan virus – has no known cure. "Prevention is the best treatment," says Dr. Sheikh. He recommends wearing lighter colored clothing and socks during outdoor activities, removing shoes and socks and "shaking yourself off" before coming inside, as well as checking yourself – and your pets – for ticks after potential exposure. Using insect repellent with DEET is also a prudent precaution, he adds, though natural repellents like neem or tea tree oil work as well. Ticks are most prevalent in early spring through mid-fall.

OTHER INFECTIONS: PREVENTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE

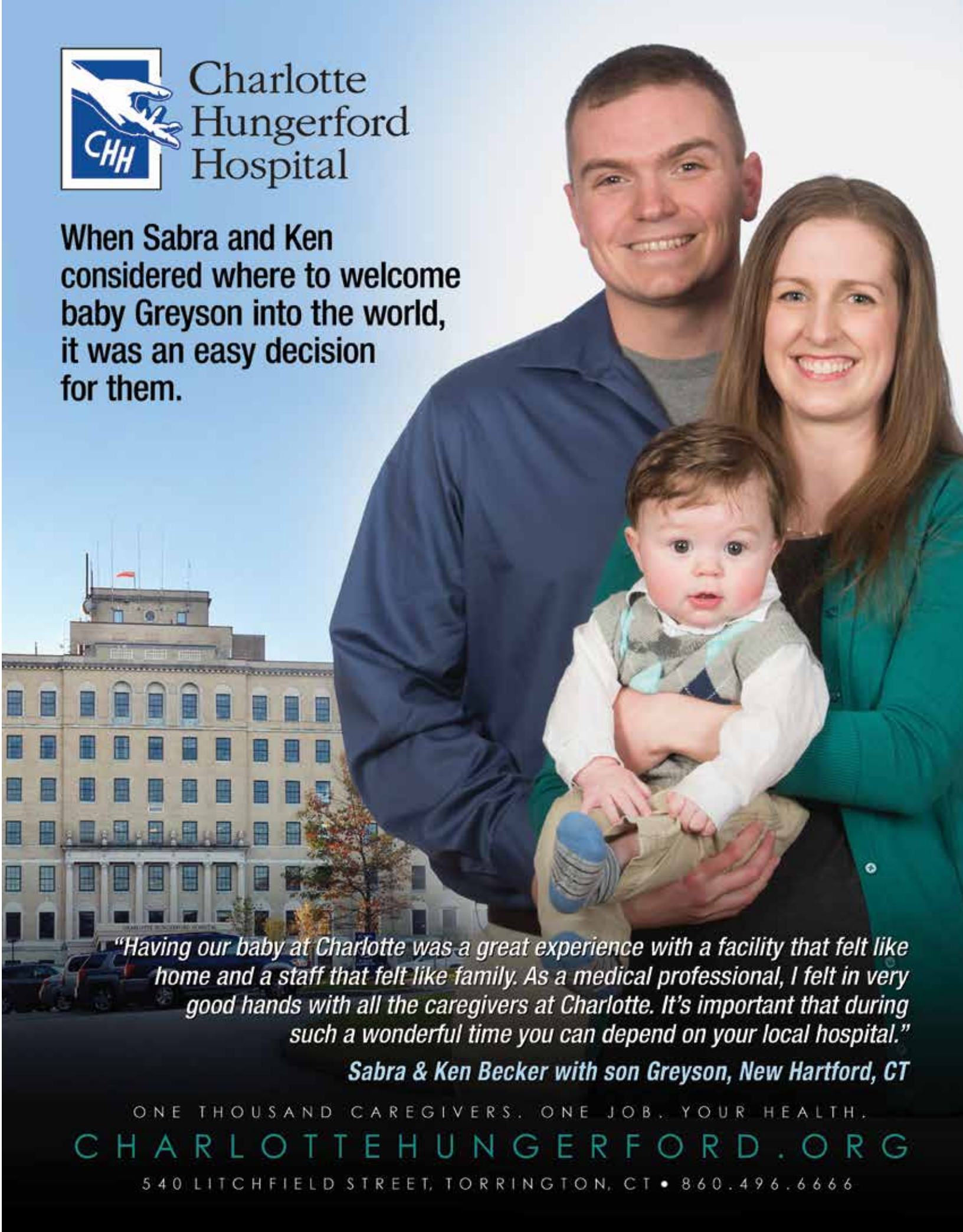
While the nasty mosquito-borne illnesses that have made headlines in recent years – Chikungunya virus, West Nile, and most recently, Zika – are not yet a serious problem in Connecticut, West Nile has been detected in local mosquitos. Residents, particularly pregnant women, who plan to travel to the Caribbean and even parts of Florida need to be aware of these threats. Zika infection can lead to a brain defect called microcephaly in infants. "Protection is the primary treatment for any infectious disease," says Dr. Sheikh, who advises wearing protective clothing and using insect repellent.

Influenza is a much more prevalent concern in Connecticut, particularly as we enter flu season. "Anyone beyond the age of 2 months who has no immune suppression should get flu shots," says Dr. Sheikh. "Influenza is a very aggressive virus, particularly in the very young and the very old." When treated within 48 hours, antiviral medications like Tamiflu can shorten the duration and severity of the illness. Common symptoms of the flu, which include fever, body aches, sore throat, and cough, can mimic those of other upper respiratory infections, like strep or the common cold, though they tend to be more severe.

"If you're not feeling well," says Dr. Sheikh, "come and get checked." The doctor, whose own children, 7 and 9 years old, have yet to take an antibiotic, advises caregivers to be thoughtful about antibiotic use. "Sometimes giving your child an antibiotic at a time they don't need it can cause more harm than good," he says. The danger, he adds, is that overuse can give rise to a bacteria in the child that cannot be easily treated by routine antibiotics in the future.

When it comes to infectious disease, he says, it's prudent to defer to your healthcare provider. "Don't self-prescribe, don't self-diagnose, and don't push your doctor to give you an antibiotic," warns Dr. Sheikh. "Let your doctor be the maker of that decision."

Lori Miller Kase is a freelance writer living in Simsbury.


Charlotte
Hungerford
Hospital
When Sabra and Ken considered where to welcome baby Greyson into the world, it was an easy decision for them.
"Having our baby at Charlotte was a great experience with a facility that felt like home and a staff that felt like family. As a medical professional, I felt in very good hands with all the caregivers at Charlotte. It's important that during such a wonderful time you can depend on your local hospital."
Sabra & Ken Becker with son Greyson, New Hartford, CT
ONE THOUSAND CAREGIVERS. ONE JOB. YOUR HEALTH.
CHARLOTTEHUNGERFORD.ORG
540 LITCHFIELD STREET, TORRINGTON, CT • 860.496.6666

Written by **Matthew Dicks**
Illustrated by **Sean Wang**

For the Birds

Memories...

It's Thanksgiving Day. I'm bundled in one of those winter coats that my friends and I wore as armor during our childhood BB gun wars. Thick. Bulky. Imposing.

I'm wearing mittens, hat, and scarf, too, but I'm still cold. It's late November. Snow covers the ground. The wind is blowing. I'm shivering.

This is where normalcy comes to an end.

I'm standing on the side of a road amongst hundreds – perhaps thousands – of other people dressed almost exactly like me. Most are cheering. Shouting words of encouragement. Pumping fists into the air. It's universal, enthusiastic mayhem.

I don't do any of this. I stand stoically. I'm too damn cold.

These inexplicable enthusiasts are cheering on clusters of certifiable lunatics who are running down the street toward an arbitrary, irrelevant finish line. I worry about these runners. They occupy that frightening space between freezing-to-death because they are dreadfully underdressed for sub-freezing temperatures and overheating because they are ridiculously overdressed for running.

I'm witnessing a Turkey Trot. Or a Thanksgiving Day 5K. Or an Ugly Sweater Run. Whatever the

name, it's what most people call a race, even though there are only about six people trying to win. The rest are here because…

I have no clue.

On this finest of all holidays, a day set aside for football and gluttony, these morons have decided to run with scores of other morons down the city street … even though almost every other single day of the year is better for running.

I'm here because I have made the terrible mistake of dating a girl who belongs to one of those families who think this particular Thanksgiving Day tradition is a good idea. She and her family rise at the crack of dawn so the most disturbed members of the family can eat a hearty breakfast before venturing into the cold to join the rest of the lunatics at the starting line.

I can never marry a woman who thinks running on Thanksgiving Day is a good idea. I would prefer to marry a woman who hates puppies or thinks Bruce Springsteen is overrated.

An hour later, we leave the house, though I can't imagine why. It's freezing outside. We don't attend non-competitive foot races on the loveliest of days, so why would we do so today? Let the dummies run. We can have turkey ready for them if and when they return.

I'm so desperate to remain indoors that I suggest that we watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, which is only slightly better than watching hypothermic/hyperthermic attention seekers run on a day when I'm supposed to be giving thanks by watching football players smash into one another. Watching a parade on television is only slightly less ludicrous than watching fireworks on television.

Admittedly, I may be biased. When I was in high school, I marched in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with my high school band, so to watch it on TV is anticlimactic, to say the least. Watching enormous balloons reduced to the size of a television screen is ridiculous. Listening to television personalities banter about their banter is obscene. It's depressing. Still, I make a play for the parade.

At least I'll be warm.

"But you'll love the race," my girlfriend assures me. I don't believe her, and hate her for thinking so. This is akin to the people who make a stew containing only foods you despise but assure you that "You'll love it." You never love it *because that makes no sense.*

I won't like this either. It's cold, and watching people run is not my thing. It's not anyone's thing unless it's Thanksgiving, and that makes no sense, either.

So here I stand, shivering. I'm offered hot chocolate. I take it, thinking hot chocolate doesn't work as well as *not being here.*

I make a half-hearted effort to pretend I don't hate this as much as I do. It's one of those times when you despise something with every fiber of your being, but you're surrounded by people who adore it. You can't just declare your hatred. That never goes well. Instead, you offer a measured critique while trying to sound open-minded and amusing.

As it turns out, the day is not entirely a waste.

The race is stupid, and it takes me hours to warm up once we return home. My girlfriend's mother records the parade after hearing how much I wanted to watch it, so when we finally make it back to the house, she surprises me with it. I sit there and pretend to think that the balloons are majestic and the banter is hilarious.

But as I watch, I come to a conclusion:

I can never marry a woman who thinks running on Thanksgiving Day is a good idea. I would prefer to marry a woman who hates puppies or thinks Bruce Springsteen is overrated. I'll take a wife who drives under the speed limit before I'll marry someone who wants to watch non-athletes run surprisingly slowly in the frigid cold on a major holiday.

I learn what I want and what I don't want in a spouse that day. And for that, I give thanks.

Matthew Dicks is a West Hartford elementary schoolteacher, and is happily married to someone who does not run in road races at all, let alone in sub-freezing temperatures, dressed as a can of cranberry jelly. 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.*

Sean Wang, an MIT architecture graduate, is author of the sci-fi graphic novel series, Runners. *Learn more at seanwang.com*

BUCKINGHAM MAIN LIVING SPACE

BUCKINGHAM KITCHEN

You'll Fall In Love With This Place

BUCKINGHAM MASTER BEDROOM

Fall is here and the new one- and two-bedroom Independent Living residences in Seabury's South Wing are nearing completion.

We're very excited to welcome our new residents to campus and to watch these beautiful new spaces be transformed into neighborhoods and communities by the people who will live here.

We have a limited selection of South Wing residences still available. Start planning today!

Life at Seabury offers a stimulating, engaging environment surrounded by friends and neighbors, with the peace of mind and security of Life Care. Come be a part of it. And invite your friends.

Learn more about how to reserve your future home at our monthly informational sessions on every 1st Thursday at 1:30pm and every 3rd Wednesday at 10:30am.
Call (860) 243-6081 or (860) 243-4033 for reservations or e-mail info@seaburylife.org

Seabury

An Active Life Plan Community

Revolutionizing the experience of aging!

GET Busy LIVING

BEST OF Hartford MAGAZINE 2009 THROUGH 2017

ASPIRE to Excellence® carf ACCREDITED

A Proud Member of International Council on Active Aging ICAA

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

200 Seabury Drive | Bloomfield, CT 06002

(860) 286-0243 | (800) 340-4709 | www.seaburylife.org | info@seaburylife.org

SEASONS OF THE NORTHWEST HILLS™
P.O. BOX 92
WEST SIMSBURY, CT 06092

PRESRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
BURLINGTON, VT 05401
PERMIT #25