

Amusing and Entertaining

EHAMPTON Gazoon



VOLUME MXLVI No. 13

APRIL 1924



FEDERAL PROJECT LEADS TO DISCOVERY OF GNOMES & 17th CENTURY WORKING GRISTMILL

A federally funded project designed to replace a bridge and culvert over Route 97 near Utley Road has led to a discovery of a gnome family, their home, and working gristmill dating back to 1682.

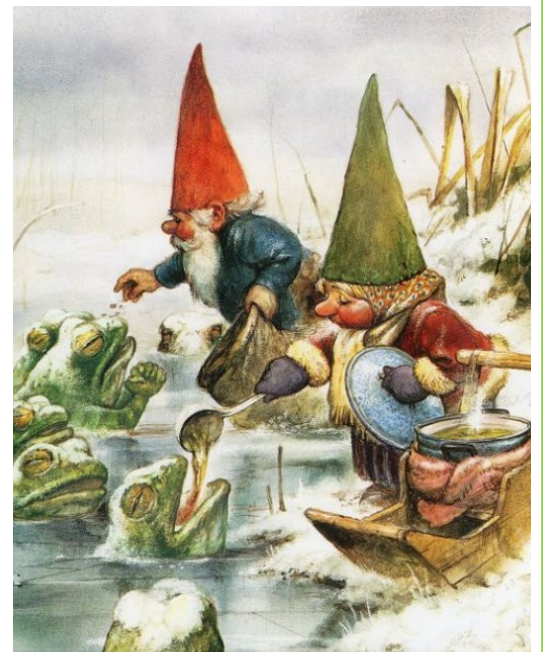
As construction began in November, Department of Transportation (DOT) workers had difficulty completing simple tasks, as some of their tools mysteriously disappeared and a portion of the previous days' work was sabotaged. Cameras placed around the project led to sporadic sightings of a gnome family, and finally of a well-camouflaged, but fully working gristmill.

After weeks of careful negotiation, involving members of the Governor's office, a deal was struck to move the Ebenezer Bakker Button Family up a 1/2 mile to a well-fitting niche at the Pribble's recently reconstructed dam. Ebenezer's wife, Eliza (Hammond) has already made fast friends with famed bakers Laurie Pribble and Trent Montgomery's Little River Bakery with fine flours for their specialty products.

After learning of the nature of the project, Ebenezer was inclined to help the DOT, as he had worked many years to help stabilize the bank. With this winter's torrential rains, destabilizing the hillside's stones and gravel, he was

tempted to give up and move. "We've spent almost two hundred years here. This was my mother's father's mill. When he came here from Holland, he made fast friends with the Nipmuck, as they observed him as a respectful steward who would keep the water clean, and have a good product to trade. They were also greatly appreciative of my mother, who helped their medicine people discover and make natural remedies to help with the small pox that the English brought."

GNOMES CONTINUED ON PAGE 3





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With all the items missing of late at Town Hall and the Community Center, from the kitchen cabinet to the large screen monitor, tables and chairs, pots, pans and toilet paper, causing widespread and undue dismay, sleuthing, and search parties involving public officials, resident volunteers, and multiple posses, we are relieved to announce:

THUMBS UP to the alert resident who witnessed and reported to the State police a recent brazen attempt to steal the Town Hall. ☺

THUMBS DOWN to the non-resident who was caught. ☹

Our plea for help in locating the senior's cabinet, affectionately known to the kitchen staff as "Rollie", yielded no results last month, not even a clue, so we've instituted Plan B: the cabinet is now pictured on circulating milk cartons. If this, too, fails, expect Hampton's first bill board to appear in the center of town with a picture of the cabinet captioned "Have You Seen Me?"

Town Hall recently acquired an Empire couch to be used for the Grand List Voters to recline on while they wait to cast their ballots. The small office next to the couch is in the process of being converted into a coat closet for their furs. Plans to serve them aperitifs and hors d'oeuvres as a prelude to the main event are in progress. ☺



2024 SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Hampton Gazette is pleased to announce our second year of offering a \$1000 scholarship to a deserving high school senior from Hampton. The 2024 recipient must complete an application, available online at hamptongazette.com, and submit a 500-750 word essay on this year's topical topic, "Democracy". The essay must include the applicant's understanding of democracy and its importance to our country, as well as using personal experiences which describe the way living in a democracy affects their daily life. The essay must be the students' original work; quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified. The applicant must be a resident of Hampton, currently enrolled in high school, graduating in June of 2024 and planning to attend a college, university or vocational school in Fall of 2024. Applications and essays are due May 1, 2024, and must be mailed to: The Hampton Gazette; P. O. Box 101; Hampton, CT. 06247. The \$1,000 Scholarship will be awarded on June 1, 2024.

The Editorial Board of The Hampton Gazette

CONTRIBUTORS: Deb Andstrom, Marie Cantino, Pat Cascio, Pat Coleman, Matthew Fralino, Alan Freeman, Jo Freeman, John Gorman, Matt LaFontaine, Rob Rondeau, Andrew Skarzynski, John Tillinghast, Janice Trecker. PHOTOS: page 1, Mary Oliver; illustration by Rien Poortvliet; page 2 Pat Boss, Juan Arriola; page 3 Penny Newbury, compliments of the New London Maritime Society; page 7 courtesy of the author; page 9 Debbie Fuller; page 11 Pete Vertefeuille.

"This winter has been especially hard on the wildlife, and those living in Fuller Brook. Just yesterday, Eliza and I had to make a warming waterlily broth for the frogs."

Asked about his longevity in Town, Ebenezer demurred, but slyly commented, “it’s in the water”. Continuing about his experiences with Town characters, he regaled this Gazette writer with historical insights and fond memories of those who made a difference.

Eliza gently reminded him to mention the ones they had helped and those who had helped their family in kind.

"Well, there were those nice women up the road who had trouble with that fellow building that big place on the hill. He was a nasty one. He used to follow them around threatening them with his walking stick. We got him good one night—set the stick into the horsehair wall and covered it with plaster. He kept complaining, but they finally got the better of him."

Eliza remembered the many kind farmers who would share their harvests and recipes: “One special evening, I brought my mother’s diary with me down to the Loew Farm. Eva was milking one of their more difficult bossies, a big girl with one horn named Octavia. I poured a little Valerian tincture into the hay in front of her. After a snort of that she settled down. It was lovely of Eva to help me translate some of my mother’s letters from the German. What a surprise when we found a little ditty from Muti’s dear friend, Wolfie, a wild joker and musician who died too young.”

Eliza continued, wagging her finger at her husband playfully: "And then there was the time Andy Woodward saved your bacon when you decided it might be fun to slide in the mud down to the pond and almost ended up as goose feed!"

"Not true!", growled Ebenezer, "I slipped when I was trying to fix the waterwheel."

"Pish-posh," snapped Eliza, her face softening with a smile. "They were good neighbors, the Woodwards, we loved watching the boys grow up and helping

Mrs. Woodward with her poultry. She taught all of my children to read, write, and do their math in her kitchen."

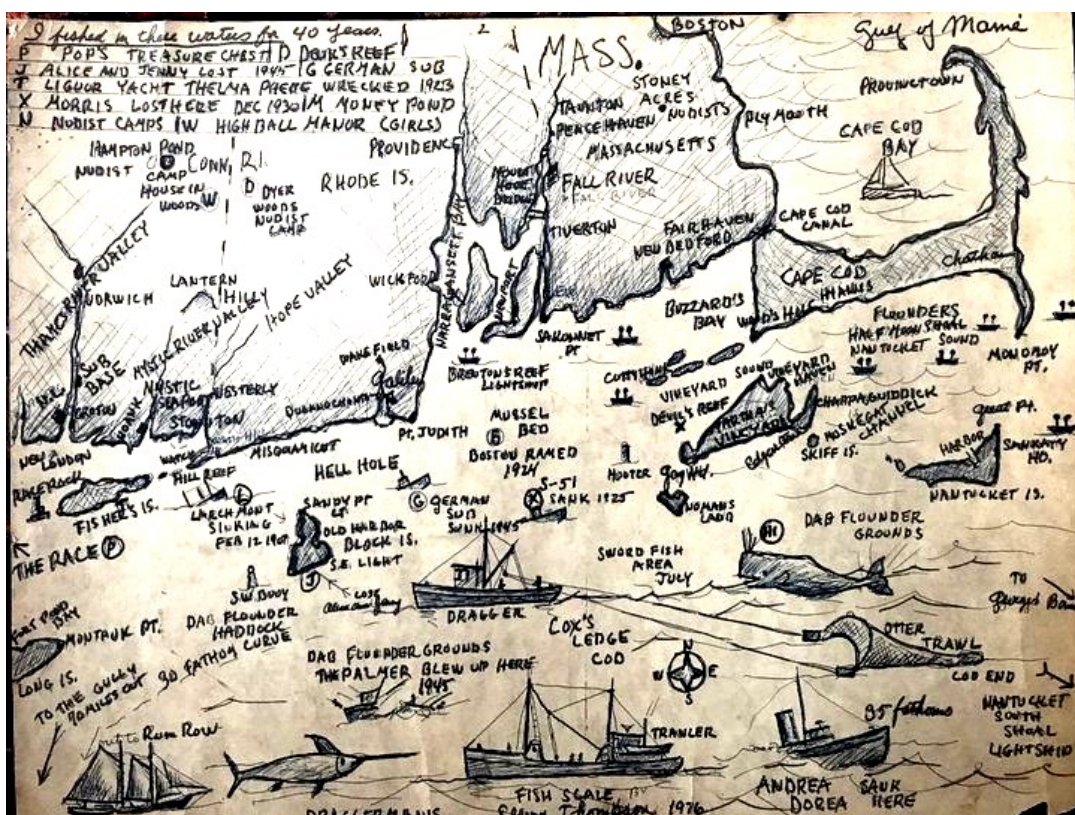
"Speaking of schoolteachers," Eliza continued, "That Catherine Ameer girl was Some-thing! She could play almost every-thing, and even if she couldn't we thought she could! Remember when the neck to your fiddle cracked and you thought the world was going to end? She sent you right over to that charming Mr. Davis and his smiling Alison. All fixed and we had a proper little party to celebrate on the porch there looking out on their fields, making music and listening to the cows across the way."

"So many people", Ebenezer recalled fondly. "I remember when little Peggy Marcus (Fox) first found us after school was out, and wanted to take us home to play with her cat. We had a hard time convincing her it was not a good idea. The people who moved there after were good, too. Edwin and Nellie were always sharing their stories with us".

"Hampton has been good to us," offered Ebenezar. "There have been some tough times, but we've had good neighbors, especially some of the more colorful ones! We're looking forward to our new home at Little River Farm, Paul has already drawn up plans for the move and a home under the waterfall better than Frank Lloyd Wright's!

We'll miss our gracious neighbor, Arlene Becker always with good cheer when she pops out to feed her birds. But it just might be a faster ride down to get maple syrup at Bright Acres. Now where's my kayak?" 😊

Mary Oliver



Drawn by Captain Ellery Thompson, a lobsterman and “colorful waterfront character” who became quite famous for his marine paintings, the “memory map” depicts places the artist fished or visited, this one of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and surrounding waters. See if you can find the source of Hampton’s notoriety. 😊

THE HAMPTON Gazette



VOLUME XLVI No. 3

APRIL 2024

APRIL FOOLS!

Ever since we produced our April Fools issue in celebration of our 40th anniversary, we've published humorous items in our April issue. We can always count on Auntie Mac, Fire House Dog, and the Reluctant Gardener, as well as the humorists on our editorial board, some photographs captured and captioned, and local folklore to help us with this – thank you to everyone who offers the gift of laughter to us, this month and throughout the year! ☺

The Hampton Gazette

and Beyond.... VILLAGE VIEW

VOTERS APPROVE PURCHASE OF FIRE TRUCK

Voters at the March 12 referendum approved in a 112-22 vote the purchase of a new fire truck, with roughly half of the price covered with funds earmarked for the purpose. Support for the purchase was not a surprise, as there was no opposition voiced at the Town Meeting on March 4 called to discuss the purchase.

About two dozen officials, members of the fire department, and residents attended the meeting to hear Fire Chief Rich Schenk explain the process used for the purchase, which included listing criteria and ranking the selections. "We looked for the best truck before looking at the price tags," Schenk said. The committee charged with selecting the new truck brought their recommendation to the whole department, which unanimously approved their choice. Their selection of Firematic Supply Company included extra perks, such as annual inspections of the vehicle. The company is also an equipment supplier with a shop in nearby Rocky Hill. These were "major draws," Schenk said. Schenk also listed issues with the current truck,

which at 30 years old is "at the end of its life cycle". It is expected that it will last until the next truck comes in, which could take three years, though the price will remain the same no matter the time of delivery. First Selectman Allan Cahill explained that the old truck belongs to the Town and "has value in its parts".

Board of Finance Chairman Kathy Donahue stated that with \$344,404 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and \$159,058 from the Capital and Non-Recurring Account for trucks and equipment, the Town is left with \$584,000 to finance, less a 5% return on the pre-paid deposit. Though one resident advocated use of the General Fund to pay the remainder, major expenses could be on the horizon, Donahue said, citing the elementary school's HVAC system. She also noted that budgeted items previously funded by ARPA would now have to become part of the Town's annual spending plan. Both Donahue and Cahill said officials will be looking into the financing, through loans and use of surplus funds. We have to find "the sweet spot between the two", Cahill said.

FROM THE REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

The polls will be open on April 2 from 6AM to 8PM in the Community Room at Town Hall for the Presidential Preference Primary. Only voters who are enrolled members of the Democratic or Republican parties are eligible to participate. There is no opportunity for Same Day Registration for Primaries. Absentee ballots are available from the Town Clerk during regular Town Hall hours, Tuesdays from 9AM to 4PM and Thursdays from 10AM to 7PM.

Dayna McDermott-Arriola and Sulema Perez-Pagan

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT FUNDS FULLER BROOK REPAIR

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has been steadily working on the replacement of Bridge No. 02591, Route 97 over Fuller Brook, near Utley Road since late last fall. Many commuters watched as trees came down and the vision of the waterfall (on the Brown's side) continued to a steep rush below Arlene Becker's home. This project consists of removing and replacing the existing culvert bridge and all the superstructure elements above. The new bridge will be constructed above the 100-year design storm elevation.

This project was awarded to New England Road, Inc. at a cost of \$2,463,762 and is scheduled to be completed by November 2024. The project is administered by the Bureau of Engineering and Construction, Office of Construction, District 2 in Norwich.

While there was a lane closure on Route 97, the traffic signals have been removed. Route 97 will be closed from the beginning of May —August and detours will use Routes 44, 169, and Route 6. This may lead to more traffic on our back roads. Be careful out there, folks!

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents, Educators, and Esteemed Members of the Hampton Community,

I hope this message finds you well and thriving amidst the end of this winter season. My name is Andrew Skarzynski and it is with great excitement that I step into the role of Interim Superintendent of Schools for Hampton Elementary School. As I embark on this journey, I am keenly aware of the profound responsibility that accompanies this position. My commitment to fostering an environment of excellence, inclusivity, and growth for every child, educator, and family within our community is paramount.

My journey in education spans over 20 years, with experiences that range from classroom teaching to administrative leadership, all of which have strengthened my belief in the power of community-centric education. The unique charm and close-knit nature of Hampton has resonated with me since I first visited the town, and it is an honor to be a part of this community in a meaningful way.

Our school is the heart of our town, a place where young minds are nurtured, where values are instilled, and where the leaders of tomorrow begin their journey. I have already discovered the staff, families, and community members to be deeply committed to creating a caring elementary school experience for the students at Hampton Elementary School and I anticipate that this sense will only be heightened as I learn more about the town.

In the coming weeks, one of my primary goals is to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our learners, in both the short and long term. Supporting the teachers and administration, ensuring sustainability of staffing levels, and designing an implementation plan for several State initiatives are of primary importance. Developing a budget that both meets the needs of students and staff and demonstrates good fiscal stewardship is an additional priority.

I am looking forward to acquiring a greater understanding of the Hampton community as well as Hampton Elementary School. The time I have already spent in Hampton confirms my belief in the importance of education, the role of relationships in accentuating understanding, and the benefit of small learning communities. Hampton Elementary School is most certainly a special place and one of which I am thrilled to be a part.

Andrew Skarzynski,
Interim Superintendent,
Hampton Elementary School

SCOUTING NEWS

During the last few meetings, preparations are being made for the upcoming cabin campout at JN Webster in Ashford. This is the campout where the Webelos Scouts are invited to attend and see what life in the troop is like. We will be holding a cross over ceremony during the campout to welcome them to the troop as they graduate from Cub Scouts. There will be hiking, scout skill stations, and of course games to be played. On April 6th and April 13th, both the troop and pack will be participating in Scouting for Food. On the first Saturday, Scouting families will be assigned routes to drop off collection bags, and on the second Saturday we collect and organize the food, mostly through drop-offs at the church. Keep an eye out for the donation bags to be left at each mailbox. *Scouts meet at 7 pm on Tuesdays at the Hampton Congregational Church*

Rob Rondeau

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Requests from residents for recipes to celebrate spring yielded no response this month, but we did receive an invitation to Seasonal Menus of Yore. Here are suggestions for "What My Children Love to Eat During the Spring".

Sunday: Chicken Custard & Creamed Ribbons, Monday: Clam Broth & Pilot Biscuits, Tuesday: Birds' Nests & Bread & Butter, Wednesday: Coddled Eggs & Stewed Pie Plant, Thursday: Celery Sandwiches & Junket, Friday: Scraped Beef Sandwiches & Milk in Glass, Saturday: Cream Toast & Educators. ☺

GROWING & LEARNING

SCOUT FOOD DRIVE

This year's Scouting For Food Drive is taking place in early April. Every year, Hampton residents open their cupboards and wallets to donate over a thousand food and personal care items. These are then distributed to the local food pantry and the Covenant Soup Kitchen in Willimantic.

The boys and girls of Pack 93 and Troops 93 and 1093 will be distributing bags and collecting food. On Saturday, April 6, bags with flyers will be hung on mail box posts. Bags will also be available in the post office lobby for PO Box holders. On the following Saturday, April 13, donations will be collected. You can drop off your donation at the Hampton Congregational Church between 8 and 10:30 AM. If you wish to have your donation picked up, please call 860-208-2848 and leave your name and address. Please help us to once again make this event a success.

Donated items should be non-perishable items such as cereal, canned beans, soups, pastas, canned meat and fish, baby food and diapers, coffee, fruit juice, sugar, paper lunch bags, plastic grocery bags and zip-lock baggies, and personal care items such as soaps, toothbrushes, deodorant and feminine care items. Gift cards to local supermarkets are also welcome.

ADDENDUM TO LIST OF EAGLE SCOUTS

When the Gazette honored the Scouts as the 2024 Citizens of the Year, the list we were given inadvertently omitted some of the heroes. We apologize to the Eagle Scouts listed below, and thank them for their efforts to improve our town and our world.

- Karl Deschler, whose project was a fundraiser for the St. Jude's Fund
- Tim Fox, whose project refurbished landscaping and built the garden in front of the Hampton Congregational Church.
- Neil Perry, whose project was building bridges at Rock Springs in Scotland
- Eric Wallace, whose project was in Hampton

MONTHLY EVENTS

April 1-- 30 **Top Shelf Gallery:**

Awakenings, by Janice Leitch

Featured artist resident Janice Leitch's oil paintings are on display during Library hours: Wednesday NOON-7PM, Thursday & Friday 9AM-NOON, and Saturday 9AM-3PM.

April 1 – 30 **Passport to CT Libraries**

Once again, we will be participating in this program in which patrons pick up a Passport and receive a small gift. At every participating library, your passport will be stamped & you will be given a small gift. At the end of April, bring your stamped Passport to Fletcher Memorial and if you've visited at least five libraries, you will be eligible to win a VISA Gift Card. The person who visits the most libraries will also receive a special gift.

April 10 **FML Book Discussion Group** 6PM

We will be discussing *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. Stop by the library to pick up a copy of the book. New members are always welcome.

April 26 **2024 Arbor Day Program**

9:30 – 10:30AM

Celebrate Arbor Day at the library where a new tree will be planted to replace the one we lost last year. Highlights include an official Arbor Day proclamation from the office of the First Selectman and a visit from a Forester from the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Forestry Division. This event is sponsored by Hampton's Recreation and Conservation Commissions.

Wednesday Afternoons **After School Story & Craft** 4-5PM. Join us for a story and a related craft every Wednesday during the school year.

Thursday Mornings **Tai Chi at the Hampton Town Hall** 8:30AM. Tai Chi takes place in the Town Hall Pavilion, weather permitting.

Mah-Jongg 101 10 – NOON. Mah Jongg is a popular tile game currently taking a foothold with older people. It's a terrific brain teaser, it's addictive, it's fun, and it's social. Try it out, all skill levels are welcome.

Friday Mornings **Mexican Train** 9AM -- NOON. Join us for free classes on a modern version of Dominoes on Friday mornings.

Baby Story Time Song & Play

10:30 – 11:30AM. An interactive program for birth to three-year-olds using a variety of musical instruments, rhymes, songs, finger plays, puppets, as well as a story or two. Our goal is to encourage a lifelong love of reading and learning.

Senior Delivery Service

The library is happy to provide a delivery service for library items (books, audio CDs, and DVDs). Please call or email the library with your requests and/or questions on this and all listed programs at 860.455.1086 or fletchermemorial-library@gmail.com

Fletcher Memorial Library

NEW BOOKS

New DVDs of popular TV series this month, plus a wide range of adult fiction from favorites like James Patterson and Jayne Ann Krentz to newcomers like Michael Crummey, Tara Kerr Roberts and Anders De La Motte.

ADULT FICTION

Stig Abell
Marie Benedict
Michael Crummey
Anders De La Motte
Dan Jones
Jayne Ann Krentz
Mike Lawson
Julia London
Jeanne Mackin
James Patterson
Kate Quinn
Tara Kerr Roberts
Tuli Ilaria

Death Under a Little Sky
The First Ladies
The Adversary
The Mountain King
The Wolves of Winter
The Night Island
Kingpin
My Inconvenient Earl
Picasso's Lovers
Alex Cross Must Die
The Phoenix Crown
Wild & Distant Seas
Daughter of Ashes

NON-FICTION

Noah Charney

DVDs:

The Thefts of the Mona Lisa
The Creator, The Chosen, seasons 1, 2 & 3;
The Ipcress File (TV series)



SMOKE MIRRORS & SPOTLIGHTS

During the month of February, Hampton Fire Company logged 178 man-hours responding to 22 emergency dispatches:

2/6, 1PM -- Sick Person
2/7, 8:45AM – Fall Injury
2/9, 8:30AM – Smoke odor investigation
2/9, 2PM – Fall injury
2/9, 5:30PM – Smoke in building
2/12, 7PM – Back pain/Injury
2/13, 4:45AM – Structure fire.
2/13, 11:30AM – Difficulty breathing
2/14, 2AM – Lift assist
2/15, 8AM – Vehicle accident
2/16, 10AM – Tree and wires down
2/16, 3:45PM – Difficulty Breathing
2/18, 11:45PM – Lift assist
2/20, 9PM – Lift Assist
2/20, 9:15PM – Sick person
2/21, 7:30AM – Cardiac Distress

2/22, 12:30PM – Medical alarm

2/26, 3:45PM - Vehicle accident

2/26, 9:15PM – Sick person

2/28, 8:45AM – Injured person

2/28, 10:45AM – Tree and wires down

2/29, 1AM – Difficulty Breathing

The Annual Hampton Fire Company Ham and Bean Dinner is scheduled for May 4th from 4--7pm. Tickets priced: Adult \$15/Children \$10. All you can eat. Eat In or Take Out.

Members will conduct door to door sales in April. Tickets also available at the door.

Woof!

Firehouse Dog



LOCAL AUTHOR'S BOOK IS "BOSS"

Short Stories of "Growing up in Milford and Other Far Away Places" is a wonderful, new book written by resident Jamie Boss. Though Milford is the setting of most of the stories, with far-away places, and closer to home, Hampton, included as well, the book is really about friendships, and encounters with people in different stages of the author's life.

Jamie's book entertains us with an America that has, to a large extent, disappeared, introducing an era to a younger generation, and permitting those of us of a certain age to reminisce over what life was like. The book brings to mind, for example, all the things that we got away with when we were kids, and our parents were never aware of what we had done -- right under their noses!

Jamie began his book with a chapter titled "The Big World of Small Town Life". He describes Milford as "a centralized New England community focused around a large green in the center of town. Everything you needed was downtown." Some of us remember that downtown -- a movie theater, clothing, hardware, record, grocery and drug store, a place to hang-out and watch the goings on in the community. On top of all of this, Jamie's small town had a marina, a river, and the Long Island Sound to pique his interest. Though thousands of miles from whence I came, the adventures he describes are those that many of us might have experienced on our home turf in 1950s and 60s America.

One of the earliest memories is of Jamie, as a three-and-a-half-year-old, deciding that due to the unfair treatment of a boy known as "Bad Eddie", he would run away from home to China, that "far-away place" that many of us thought we could dig to in our sand boxes. Jamie had no idea that China was not "...a bus stop on the main intersecting road". He packed his six gun holster, a cowboy hat, and a peanut butter sandwich for his trip. The bus stop didn't resemble the China he imagined. A stranger asked, "Are you alone little boy?" This forced Jamie to retreat and abandon his plans. He walked home, where his mother, who hadn't noticed he was missing, asked, "Where were you?" His quick response? "I was in China".

We can all relate to Show-and-Tell, which was usually the first event of the morning in school. Normally it doesn't involve a visit to the principal's office, or your father having to come to school. Jamie and his friend Dave brought in very authentic and memorable items to share with their classmates. Nowadays DCF, local police and the school psychologist would have been involved. All I can say is -- I'm glad they weren't loaded.

Later in life Jamie recalls a "huckleberry moment". When a friend is suspended from school, before the parents are notified, Jamie and his friends decide a move to Florida may solve the problem. They conjure a plan to hop a train, knowing exactly where they can accomplish this. Jamie is first, and his jump is a good one, except that inertia was never considered and he is knocked out. His friends, thinking Jamie is dead, make alternative traveling accommodations. And leave Jamie to fend for himself. Someone spots his body and contacts the State police. The train is stopped, and he's awakened by a trooper. Jamie creates a story that is believed and is given a ride home. His parents have no idea what he has done. And his friends? They make it to Atlanta

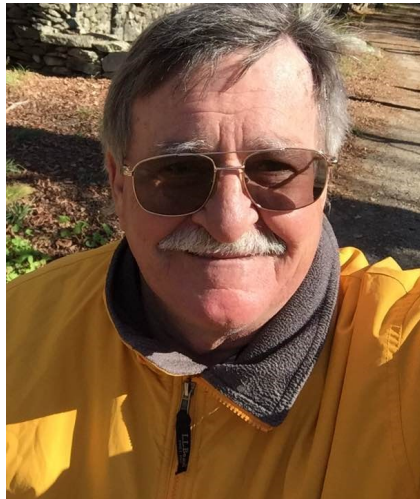
before their trip is aborted.

Another theme: it's a small world. We may encounter people from our small town in America anywhere in the world, and once while walking in the wilds of Vietnam, Jamie encountered a person from Milford. Jamie was one of the "lucky ones" who the selective service chose to serve this country. He spent 1968-1969 in Vietnam repairing tanks, day and night till the job was done, in the sun and humidity, in clouds of mosquitoes, in monsoon rains, on base, or in country, aka combat zones. He told his Dad about missing his guitar and his Dad sent it to him, but during an attack on the base, it was trampled to pieces. He also became very aware that he could lose friends at any time, and tried hard not to think about when his time was done.

Vietnam was not without its lighter moments. Once when driving to deliver a motor, Jamie spotted a pretty woman with a swaying red ponytail. His focus caused him to miss a curve and drive into a rubber tree. If you hit a rubber tree, you're not going to bounce back. Driving your vehicle into a tree might not seem particularly "light", but relatively speaking...

And then there were the poignant moments. While working in the driving rain, a representative from the Red Cross approached and asked, "are you specialist Boss?" He delivers the news, "Your wife is well and you're the father of a son. Congratulations." The messenger hands him cigars. The birth of his son in his absence leaves Jamie in a state of depression, his salty tears concealed by the heavy rain he must continue to work in.

An investment in the purchase of this book -- Short Stories of Growing Up in Milford and Other Far Away Places -- will be well spent. One may be inclined to visit Milford just to explore some of the places that Jamie wrote about. This book is one of those you'll go back and read when you need to smile or just take time to think about the innocence we grew up with Small Town America. This book can be purchased from the author, at The Hampton General Store, on Amazon, or by calling 844.714.8691 and online at www.XLIBRIS.com.



Many towns have what is known as “the village idiot”. Hampton is not one of them. We have no idiots here, in the village or elsewhere. We have, however, “colorful” people who we lovingly refer to as “characters”, those unique individuals who fearlessly insist on simply being themselves. We have plenty of them. Our history is rich in characters, and they are among the most beloved and remembered of our neighbors.

The character most familiar to many of us is Paulie Tumel who lived all his life in the center of town but was visible everywhere. When “Dr. Dirt”, as he was fondly called, rode his trusty bulldozer into his last sunset, seventeen residents contributed to the *Gazette’s* front page tribute. They shared: Paulie’s words of wisdom, “Don’t go into a hole that you can’t back out of!”; ‘Paulisms’, such as “I got two permits – one for me to mind my own business and another one for you to mind yours!”, and “If I ever shoot a deer with your name on it, I’ll bring it right up to your house!”; and stories, like the time an FBI Agent solicited Paulie’s help to investigate a suspicion of Communist activity in the area. Handing him a pitchfork, Paulie said, “you’ll need this,” explaining when the agent asked why, “to clean my barn”.

“I’m not doing your work,” the Agent objected, to which Paulie replied, “then don’t ask me to do yours.”

Apples don’t fall too far from trees in Hampton, so it should come as no surprise that Paulie’s mother was a character, too. Paulie said she had a “swear jar”, claiming, “it’s getting so I can’t afford to go home!” It proved less than adequate; as P. J. Navin pointed out, “Paulie always had the last word, but his first words were always “J**** C*****!” Her mode of transportation to Willimantic, almost daily, was much more effective. She simply stood in the middle of the road so everyone was forced to stop. Many of us remember the formidable bearing and no-nonsense expression which no one refused. She used the same method to return home.

More recently there was Don Ladd, who completed restoration projects on two famous Main Street Homes, Governor Cleveland’s and Reverend Moseley’s. But he not only beautified the village, he spiced things up a bit every once in a while, like the time he drove his vehicle through his competitors’ yard sales, or the cars he impaled with a spiked wrecking ball when he caught teenagers parking in his driveway. Good times.

Many of us remember Barney Pawlikowski who lived in the village all his life. He was such a celebrity that we declared a holiday, “Barney Day”, to honor him when he retired. From the humble beginnings of making cabbage crates,

Our Rural Heritage THE VILLAGE PEOPLE

Barney eventually learned plumbing, heating, carpentry, mechanic, and electrical work, passing all examinations in 1970 when the State required licenses. The quintessential “Jack-of-all-Trades”, the town counted on him for everything. “You could always tell what work he did on a given day”, his daughter, June Miller, relayed.” If he came home covered with cobwebs, he was in someone’s cellar.” He always considered what his customers could afford, and responded immediately to their needs. Frozen pipes in the middle of the night? Furnace breaks during a blizzard? No problem. As June confirmed, “He thrived on emergencies.”

Eunice Fuller was a memorable Main Street character who served as our librarian for 40 years. In “One Proud Yankee Who Kept Her Sox On”, the *Willimantic Chronicle* described our “crusty, yet loving” librarian and “dispenser of literary taste” as a “tree trunk of a Yankee woman whose feet were planted firmly in the Hampton soil.” They were also firmly planted in the Fletcher Memorial Library, where she knew where every book was without use of the card catalogue, disapproved of certain selections with “an askance look or a click of her tongue”, and if she disliked someone on a magazine cover, she would “give them a mustache with her date stamp.” An avid Red Sox fan, she listened to every one of their games on the radio, refusing to watch them play on television or at Fenway Park despite several invitations, and recorded their scores in a journal only if they won.

Some of us still remember Harold Stone. In Alison Davis’s *Hampton Remembers*, Harold recalled swimming in Bigelow Pond daily, including in winter, when he cut through the ice to bathe there because it “wasn’t as bad as taking sponge baths with cold water in a cold room.” His was one of the first motorcycles in town, which he purchased “in gold.” He brought his bride, Hazel, all the way from New Jersey in its side car, and during the Depression, the couple ran a Bed and Breakfast, the Yankee Tourist Home, after tired travelers on two consecutive evenings stopped and asked to spend the night. What Harold remembered of Hampton was this: “You stopped as you were going along the road, stopped at your neighbor’s, chinned with him a few minutes. Everybody knew one another. You never sent any bills. You never had any contracts. Everything was word o’ mouth and it was worth something!”

Harold also recorded stories of other characters, of a classmate who called out, “I was put together wrong. Here it says you smell with your nose and run with your feet, but my nose runs and my feet smell.” Or the woman who tied herself to the railroad tracks for “publicity”, knowing the train would notice her “cause she wore her red outin’ flannel petticoat”. Or the “awful swearer” who worked at the Chelsea Inn, explaining “There’s no harm in swearing when you’re so god-damned mad you can’t help it!”

One of the characters Harold described was Main Street resident Ella Sharpe:

One April first Ray Baker and Herb Copeland, they had soldered a quarter to a spike and then drove it in the sidewalk that used to be right out in front of the house. They were working upon the roof and keeping track of the people that was coming along, and by and by Ella came along. And she spotted that quarter. Of course she stooped down to pick it up and she couldn’t get it. But she worked on it, with her shoe, until she got it loose. And then they hollered “April fool!” She says, “I got the quarter – I don’t know who the fool was!”

"She was a woman who liked to have her way," Gertrude Pearl relayed. "She had a whole bunch of keys tied to her belt. She was a great one for locking up things."

She also made, and donated the proceeds for, a thousand walnut-faced granny pen-wipers. "One thousand dollars for the church," Helen Matthews recalled, "That's a lot of little walnut dolls!"

Andrew Rindge didn't live in the village, but his presence was certainly felt there. In *A Naturalist Buys an Old Farm*, Edwin Way Teale wrote of Rindge's poems, "usually dealing with local happenings and the foibles and misdeeds of his neighbors" which he posted on the bulletin board in front of the store. Margaret Marcus, in *Hampton Remembers*, was more elaborative:

One time he wrote about a certain lady who was very nice to all the gentlemen. Then she decided she'd settle for just one, and all the others weren't welcome so all those others caught her lover and tarred and feathered him. Well when this poem came out, there were the names of all the men who patronized this lady, you see, and they didn't want to be there at all – it was all very hush-hush, of course – and to have it come out and tell who they were – 'cause most of them were married men – a scandal in Hampton!

Rindge lived at Trailwood, where his chickens roosted in his bed, and his pig, who ate potatoes with him from the same pot, lived in the hallway. His method of heating the home was, shall we say, minimalist as well. When the weather cooled, he simply put a large log through the window and sawed off pieces for the fire.

The center of town wasn't the only "hot spot" for characters. Those who met Vic Postemski could never forget him. A hard-working farmer from the North end of Town, he taught his kids and any others how to swim by chucking them in the pond. A salty character, usually chomping on a cigar, he also had a softer side. To cheer a friend one weekend, he drove into the yard with an enormous armful of daffodils just picked. Neighbor Roma Dupuis happened to be there, and couldn't get over their beauty. "They look just like the ones in my yard", said Roma. "Well," laughed Vic, "that's 'cause they are!"

There was "The Farmer Poet of Hampton", "Thunderstorm Bill", so named for the force of his spit whenever he spoke, "The White Tornado", a whirlwind of a welcome wagon, Charlie Baker, who bathed in the rivers because soap and water were "pieson", "Uncle Gene" Darrow, the tin peddler, who also dispensed advice on revenge, "You don't want to do nawthing right aways. Even if it takes ten years, get even," and "Aunt Josie", who was so superstitious that when it "wasn't the right time of the moon", Helen Mathews relayed in *Hampton Remembers*, "she put on an old coat that had a hole in the pocket and put the seeds in the pocket and went out and jumped around on the ground. And that's the way she planted her seeds at the wrong time of the moon!"

And, of course, there was Stanley Gula, who earned national recognition when Charles Kurault interviewed him for the CBS News show, "On the Road". A Polish immigrant, he provided Dickinson's with the witch hazel he found and cut in the woods, delivering it in his Model A. He built a house that he never inhabited, preferring to live with his antique vehicles in his garage. He took excellent care of his animals – pigeons, roosters, rabbits, horses and a cat, and the strawberries he cultivated, never letting anyone with large feet pick in his patch. He distributed "magic" eggs wrapped in handkerchiefs to children, which reportedly would hatch "little Stanley Gulas". Maybe, but like all of these other individuals, Stanley was one of a kind.

REMEMBERING...

Paulie decided we needed a bulldozer for a job. We drove to his house and to an old bulldozer that hadn't been used for over five years. When I saw its condition, I doubted it would even stir. There were vines growing all through it and around the engine – some at least five inches thick. Paulie walked around it, muttering to himself. I realized he was actually talking to the dozer. He climbed on, pushing the vines aside, and kept whispering to it. Pats it a couple of times. Turns the key and with a deep groan, it rumbles to life! I went to grab something to cut the vine. Why bother? Paulie put it in gear and the monster began to move, ripping up the vine. That's how he drove it out of there. By the time we got to the job, the natural camouflage was a distant memory.

Matt LaFontaine



Last month's Rural Heritage on the history of our Post Office prompted several responses. Apparently, along with the resident dignitaries, identified in this month's Rural Heritage, Uncle Sam and Betsy Ross were among those who attended the grand opening of the new Post Office. Some personal memories were also shared by the Postmistress's grandchildren:

My Grandmother and I would sometimes have "brown cows" together at the old P. O. Grandma would give me the change to pop into the store part of the building to buy a root beer soda and a Dixie cup with vanilla ice cream. I'd bring both back to her and she would make up the ice cream floats which we would have together, she on her official side and me in the public area. Of course whenever anyone came in for their mail she would take care of their postal needs before enjoying our treat together again. She always greeted everyone with a smile. This is one of my most cherished memories.

Jo Freeman

I got a good start collecting coins when my grandmother allowed me to pour through the P.O. change and keep what I needed. I had to keep an account and replace every cent I took.

Al Freeman

AUNTIE MAC Dear

My teen-aged daughter asked me to take her shopping for a new swimsuit. Her mother is away for a couple of months helping her sister recuperate after a serious accident, and I don't want to bother her about it, but my female co-workers have me scared witless sharing tales of florescent lights and cruel mirrors that can make an already difficult reality lead to an emotional melt-down. I've been holding down the fort in my wife's absence, but this is beyond me.



Out of My League

My Dear Neighbor:
Auntie Mac applauds you for wanting to take an active role in your daughter's summer sartorial excursions, but she hopes she will be forgiven if the merest wisp of a smile, and perhaps a soft guffaw, passed her lips as she read of your perceived dilemma. Since you have intimated that you are not wise to some of the ways of what may be called "our camp," you can be forgiven for taking your female colleagues' tales of dressing-room degradation and subsequent emotional scarring at face value. Auntie Mac advises you to pause, let your breathing return to normal, and entertain for a moment that these women are taking no small amount of enjoyment in seeing you implode at the thought of having to offer just the right amount of encouragement and then console the poor thing after she has articulated in detail to you her post-dressing room existential crisis. In other words, dear, they're having you on.

Your daughter has not asked you to take her shopping so much as she has asked you to be her chauffeur. The fact that she has requested this of you indicates not a fragile ego about to be shattered but a well-adjusted young woman who needs to get to the mall. She certainly does not expect you to constantly be by her side agreeing that this year's high-waisted bottoms seem

frumpy, or that hot pink is a bit déclassé. As a matter of fact, a friendly wave and an "I'll be over in the fly-fishing department" might be just the level of interaction she's hoping for, as opposed to a glum posting on a nearby tufted bench. It is almost certain that you will be called upon to transport one or two friends with her as well, and if not, you might suggest she bring one along. Should this occur, Auntie Mac assures you that you would much rather be examining plastic worms and eight ounce sinkers than be within earshot of the shrieking and howling erupting from the swimsuit area.

There are, of course, ground rules to set. Unless you have one of the most comfortable and egalitarian father-daughter relationships on the planet, your daughter is not going to model her choices in front of you. And so, you must let her know that you trust her to choose a suit that is both pleasing to her, fits comfortably enough to swim and lounge about in, and appropriate for her age (which, brace yourself, allows in pretty much everything except see-through bras and thongs). If she chooses to show you her final selection, and you see that she feels confident and happy with it, then congratulate her on a great choice and get out your credit card. And put the worms back—this day was not about you. ☺

Your Auntie Mac

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN: THE GHOST OF HAMMOND HILL

Walking, just walking, is good exercise. Good for the body. Good for the mind. Good for the soul. Often while walking, revelations, and solutions to problems I hadn't been actively seeking at the moment will arrive unexpectedly. Since there is no downside to walking, I walk as often as conditions permit.

A little over a week after the last big February snow most of the snow was gone. It was a good morning for a walk. I hadn't yet explored the recently established Little River Preserve at the base of Hammond Hill. I decided to explore it. As it turned out it was a perfect morning.

A thick curtain fog, of the sort my father used to call pea soup, had begun to lift revealing a meadow blanketed with a crystal frost. Out on Route 6 a police cruiser was running hard, it's fog-filtered siren fading to the west. Up on the hill a house light struggled to pierce the haze. I could hear muffled voices, a vehicle door closed, engine started. There was a crunch of gravel followed by the sound of the vehicle slowly accelerating up the hill. And all was quiet again. The whole scene provided an enchantingly eerie start to my walk.

As I started to pass through the Preserve entrance something odd caught my eye. The paper-thin ice of a shallow puddle broken in the center. It was one of those shallow puddles that when the water freezes no water remains underneath – just a hollow between the ice and the frozen ground.

No big deal. We've all seen them. Not this one. This one had a very unusual feature. In the middle of this frozen puddle was a foot print. Not a shoe print – a foot print -- a human adult size footprint with the distinct outline of three toes. Water -- From where? The puddle was dry -- was slowly seeping into the print as if freshly made. I looked around but saw no other prints, no disturbed frost in the meadow, no sound or indication of anyone else in the area. Weird.

Walking out through the meadow my thoughts began dancing. I had recently been reading *The History of Hartford County 1633- 1884*, and the not very amiable relationships between the colonists and the various Native tribes of the area. In the early 1600s a raiding party of Pequots abducted two young girls from a settlement in the area of Windsor, one of whom was 16-year-old Louise Watson. Her fiancée, 19-year-old Simon Always, joined the militia company that was quickly organized, by a Captain Whittles, to pursue raiders, retrieve the girls, and retaliate. Pequots and the Narragansetts were at

times traders, at times enemies, at times allies -- I suppose, as the mood and circumstances struck them. Captain Whittles believed the Pequot were intending to trade the girls with the Narragansetts. The militia company lost the Pequot trail in the new fallen snow when it reached the Natchaug River. With winter upon them Captain Whittles decided to abandon the pursuit and turned the company back. All except for Simon Always. He determined to press on southeast alone, following the track of the river. Neither he nor Louise Watson were ever seen or heard from again.

Was this some sort of synchronic experience I was having as a result of reading about the Pequot raid, or was my ruminating mind playing tricks on me? Was the ghost of Simon Always mournfully wandering Hammond Hill, still searching for his lost love? Was it his footprint I saw?

Finishing my walk, I returned to my car and headed up toward South Bigelow. Passing the Hammond Hill Cemetery, the fog now fully lifted, I glanced up at the white stones dotting the hill. Shaking the fog out of my own head, I thought, "Don't be ridiculous – there's no such thing as a ghost." Or is there?

Uncle Grampus

WHEN YOUR BODY SPEAKS TO YOU

The other day I was at the post office and struck up a conversation with a guy picking up his mail. I commented on how good the body is at predicting weather. I told him that the weather channel had predicted rain for a certain day last week, and my right hip didn't hurt on the day preceding the predicted rain day. On the predicted rain day, it didn't rain, and my right hip said: I told you so. This guy then asked me what my left hip says. I answered, oh, it doesn't speak to me. He laughed and said that reminded him of someone he knows.

Do you have body parts that speak to you in predictive ways? Check this out. Barometric pressure is the measurement of air pressure. Low barometric pressure causes the joints of many people to ache. Why? Because as the air pressure drops, which happens with a rainstorm, soft tissue in joints and fluids in joints expand, irritating the nerves. Cold temperatures can affect joints also. Low temperatures can make fluids in joints thicker, which makes those joints feel stiffer. I remember decades ago reading an article in the newspaper written by a scientist who had no medical training at all. He was angry at the medical establishment for scoffing at people who thought they could predict weather by their joints. The doctors all said that is an old wives' tale (meaning not scientific and a bunch of crap). This scientist said that some joints have bursa in them (small sacs of fluid) that can expand in bad weather and put pressure on nerves in joints. He was laughed at by the medical establishment. I researched weather and joint pain on Google before writing this article. I hope the man who wrote that article on weather and joint pain is still alive, because now the medical scientists admit that barometric pressure changes can cause pain, and they explain why that happens.

What happens to some people when there is high barometric pressure? This can cause headaches and mood changes. Well, you can't make a rainstorm go away, but with high barometric pressure you can take aspirin or ibuprofen plus have a scone and a cup of tea. Maybe people could form their own little weather channel clubs with friends or family. If the weather channel says heavy rain tomorrow, you could sign into your joint pain weather club and see if your family or friends, who get joint pain when it rains, have any joint pain yet. I have already discovered your joints are always right. The same club could send out emails if they have a headache when there is a reading of high barometric pressure in their area of the state. That's one good excuse to get together with people for tea and goodies!

Angela H. Fichter

WATER COLOR CLASSES STARTING SOON!

Starting on April 18, monthly on the first and third Thursdays of the month, the Seniors are sponsoring a Water Color Class from 10:15 to noon at the Town Hall. The cost is \$5 per class. Bring your materials, or we can loan you some, but loans must remain with the club.

Don't want to commit? Want to skip a class? Have an appointment? No Problem – Come when you want! If interested, please respond to: hamptonseniorsclub@yahoo.com



***Spring has come to Hampton
village & it's our first sale
of the season at Vintage
Revisited! Mark your
calendars for
April 12, 13, & 14,
9:00am - 3:00 pm***

*Among our April treasures are
colorful kitchen and glass ware,
vintage Easter and Valentines
goods, old toys and games, textiles
and linens, paper ephemera, and
knick-nacks of all sorts! Select a
hand-crafted birdhouse for spring
nesting too! 45 Station Road,
Hampton, You never know what
you might find!*

FOREST&FIELD

CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SOCIETY

Grassland Bird Conservation Center

218 Day Road, Pomfret Center

April 7 **Become a Backyard Naturalist** 1PM

April 20 **Bats: Winged Wonders** 2PM

April 27 **Long Pond Bird Walk** 8AM

Tuesdays in April & May **Early Morning Bird Walks** 8AM

At Trail Wood

93 Kenyon Road, Hampton

April 3 **Troubadors** 6-9PM

Join our casual group to play music written during the period the Teales lived at Trail Wood, 1959-1993. Songs can be viewed in advance. Chords and words will be projected on screen.

April 13 **Nature Sketchbook Journaling**

1-4PM. After a lesson and a "10-minute-sketch-walk", participants will finish their pages with paint and details. Bring a watercolor sketchbook, permanent markers, a portable watercolor kit, a small cup to hold water, and paper towels.

April 20 **Earth Day Clean Up** 9AM –2PM

Join us in getting the yard and trails at Trail Wood ready for the Spring. Please bring work gloves, gardening and pruning tools.

Stop for an hour or stay for the day! Please email us at trailwood@ctaudubon.org if you want to help.

April 21 **Earth Day Walk** 2 PM

Observe the start of Earth Day week by observing the changes Spring brings to Trail Wood with Caretakers Laura & Paul Tedeschi and readings from Edwin Way Teale's "A Walk Through the Year" and "North with the Spring".

Please call 860.928.4948 or visit ctaudubon.org for information or to register for programs



While driving around with his camera, Pete Vertefeulle caught this image of the new road crew members, hired during the highway department's more troublesome seasons. In this picture, it appears they are inspecting the roadside for easy access to the woods, though it was difficult to decipher what they were saying since they all gobble at once. "Where is the tape measure?" were the only discernible words. General consensus around town is that our own road crew is better off without these turkeys. ☺

JOSHUA'S TRUST

30 Trails in 30 Days Spring Challenge

Visit 30 Joshua's Trust properties over the course of the month and send an email to michelle.poudrette@joshuastrust.org, listing where you've been and when. Prizes to be announced. Participation in events listed below count towards your total.

April 3 **Wednesday Walk at H.E. Preston Nature Sanctuary** 9 – 10AM

Join us for a slow saunter through field and forest on this one mile loop to the Little River.

April 6 **Spring Mysteries in Bradley-Buchanan Woods** 9 – 10:30AM

Join Master Naturalist Deb Field for a guided walk in search of early spring blooms and vernal pool surprises. Park in the lot south of Mansfield Public Library.

April 13 **Joshua's Trust Annual Meeting** 4 – 6PM

Join our Board of Trustees at Knowlton Hall in Ashford to celebrate another great year of accomplishments in conservation. Featured speaker is Landis Hudson.

April 17 **Wednesday Walk at Pigeon Swamp Preserve** 9 – 10:30

Join us for a 2.25 mile hike through multiple habitats including pasture, wetlands and forested areas at this Lebanon preserve.

April 21 **Water in Earthly Processes at the Gurleyville Grist Mill** 1 –2:30PM

For this Fourth Annual Earth Day Walk, Robert Thorson will combine a stream-side view of the Gurleyville Gristmill with a northerly hike along the crest of a glacial esker.

April 27 **Mosses and Lichens of Northeast CT** 10AM -- NOON

Join UConn professor, Bernard Goffinet, as he explores the mosses and lichens that inhabit Tolland's Tobiassen Forest.

Visit <https://joshuastrust.org/events/> for details, changes and cancellations.

THE RELUCTANT GARDENER: WHEN THE RAIN COMES

Growing up as a Native person from the southwest, rain was one of those things that the Creator delivered. Yes, we had our ceremonies -- a rain dance, but to counter that there was the occasional ceremony to stop the rain, or to cut the clouds. I saw the consequence of the latter only once, and it did not rain for seven years.

As a Native person -- rain, sun, wind -- are all a part of what's natural. People here would question why I'm not scurrying away from rain. I'd explain, where I come from it's a gift, and so we take the opportunity to embrace it rather than complain.

While New Englanders might not understand my affinity for rain, I must say I don't understand your descriptors. "It's raining cats and dogs". Now there's one that's hard to imagine. Who has actually seen these two animals falling from the sky? I've never seen that phenomenon. I suppose it could happen after a tornado, when they could have been sucked up and dropped in the rain afterwards. But I understand why you dislike rain if it involves the possibility of being hit by one or the other. I imagine this leads to a few lawsuits, if the pet can be linked to the owner. I've heard of attorneys who are "ambulance chasers". Are there "cat and dog chasers" when it's raining them?

The next phrase to consider -- "a driving rain" Does rain actually drive? And what state is rain licensed to drive in?

Then there's the "hard rain" and the "soft rain". A hard rain is not actually so hard that it may injure you. Out west on the Rez, a hard rain is actually an opportunity to take advantage of a free shower. Grab your soap and shampoo, and don't forget your towel! A soft rain offers another chance to take a shower, but unlike the hard rain, people don't necessarily seek shelter in a soft rain. I don't see myself disrobing at a time when others may remain outside, strolling and singin' in it.

The last phrase I'll question is "raining buckets". How come I've had to buy buckets when they're falling from the sky? Where are they stored? Are they recycled? Collected and sold? Apparently there's a fortune to be made if you're willing to brave the elements when the weatherman predicts that it will be raining these items.

Back to the point. It is not in our nature, Native Americans, to curse the rain. But the torrents that we've had to endure this particular winter have left me less than a happy camper, and I haven't even camped during them. For starters, I've chased my driveway down the street -- how many times? I've had to gather all those stones to fill in the ruts that were left behind from the rain that gouged them to unprecedented depths. I suppose I shouldn't complain when others have had to deal with ruts so deep their vehicles have been damaged driving into them. Those ruts are ruinous to our cars -- the alignment, the tires, damage to the undercarriage. Mechanics must look out their windows and smile during this winter's rain, thinking about all those owners left with holes in their wallets. I'm sure there were incidents necessitating tow trucks. There were also neighbors who risked life and limb retrieving their mail from receptacles on the side of the road.

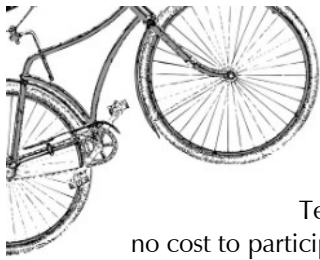
This winter's rains have created a small river in our backyard and in our front yard, actually small creeks. I've considered damming them and installing rotors to generate power when I lose mine, or to create alternative methods of electricity. Puddles are actually lakes, and I've considered skating on them when they freeze. I've also considered taking an



engineering class to build bridges to navigate the puddles. Questions: What is the water flow per minute? What is the strength of the current? How deep is it, and what materials do I need so my crossing won't get swept away in next week's rain? We have over 40 gardens to care for, too. We hear our poor plants call "help, I'm drowning here!" When we begin our annual spring clearing of winter's debris, we are forced to consider moisture rather than leaves, branches, and budding daffodils. The task resembles puddle jumping rather than raking.

All this rain has promised us beautiful spring and summer flowers -- and one really good mud season. My boots sink in and soak my feet and everything else. And there is my personal forgetfulness to contend with, my wife's look of disdain when I walk into the house and forget to take off said boots. Are you denying that trail of mud is yours? I try to explain that I didn't walk down the hallway, but the mud evidence disputes what I say. My wife likens herself to an F.B.I. agent. She'll point to the patterns of mud left on the floor and then ask to see my treads. Of course, I'll be found guilty. I clean up after myself, but only after losing my argument.

Still, I appreciate the rain. I remind myself, "Juan you're from the desert. What are you complaining about?" I'll remember the rain as I cut the dusty lawn in the summertime, or worry over a drought. I keep my choice words to myself when the Creator is listening; I look to the heavens and say "thank you for the rain", while under my breath, I mention the picnic we had to cancel, that barbecue I've been promising, the party that depended on dry weather because -- how could we fit everyone into the house? But we did, somehow, and the BBQ waited another day, as did the picnic. And so when it comes, driving, or in buckets, or with cats and dogs, all we can really say is, "Let it Rain!" ☺



2024 Town Wide Yard Sale: Unity in the Community!

Tentatively scheduled for June 21st & 22nd,
no cost to participants; a \$5 donation fee is acceptable,
though not obligatory, to help defray advertising expenses,
signs, etc., all of which are provided.

Participate one or both days, 8AM to 3PM, rain or shine.

Deadline: May 24th



Please contact Terri Warner
at hamptonyardsale2022@gmail.com,
or via land line (no texts or leave a message)
at **860.465.9166**

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Hampton Fire Company, 190 W. Old Rte 6, Hampton, CT

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Cash donation at will
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(call or text 860-336-8823)

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