

# *Connecticut Muse*

A Celebration of Contemporary Connecticut Authors



Autumn 2008



## CT Press Club Fall Programs:

### **October 2 - Covering the Lucrative Health Care Beat**

With Janet Carlson, Health & Beauty Editor, Town & Country Magazine and author, *Quick, Before the Music Stops: How Ballroom Dancing Saved My Life*

### **November 6 - Working on a book?**

Meet editors Sean Desmond (Random House), Kendra Levin (Viking), and Deb Werskman (Sourcebooks)

*Programs begin at 6:00 PM and are held at The Norwalk Inn  
99 East Avenue, Norwalk*

Admission: \$35.00 - members / \$40.00 - non-members  
Reservations: (203) 968-8600 or [ctpressclub@gmail.com](mailto:ctpressclub@gmail.com)



## Connecticut Authors & Publishers Association Fall Programs

**October 18:** John Harnish will speak on the topic of Author-  
Originated Publishing, 10:30 AM

**November 15:** Nikko & Jim McGoldrick - The Power of One...or Two...  
Finding YOUR way to publishing your writing, 10:30 AM

*Programs are held at the Sycamore Hills Park Community Center,  
635 West Avon Road, Route 167, Avon*

[www.aboutcapa.com](http://www.aboutcapa.com)

# Connecticut Muse

A Celebration of Contemporary Connecticut Authors

Issue #15, Autumn 2008

ISSN#1556-746X

Dear Connecticut Book Lovers,

Not only is autumn my favorite season, it also promises to be a busy time in this corner of the Nutmeg State. In October, the *Northwest Connecticut Fiction Writers Series* gets underway at Northwest CT Community College in Winsted where Professor Jessica Treat and I will be reading and discussing the following novels: October 16 - *Glass Houses* by Jane Haddam, October 30 - *Exit Ghost* by Philip Roth; November 13 - *Black & White* by Dani Shapiro and December 6 - *Tipperary* by Frank Delaney. You can register by contacting Jessica Treat at [jtreat@nwcc.comm.net.edu](mailto:jtreat@nwcc.comm.net.edu).

The *Third Annual Litchfield Review Writers' Conference* will be held on October 18th at Chase Collegiate School in Waterbury. This is a wonderful opportunity to participate in a variety of informative workshops, including *The World of the Small Literary Magazine*, *Freelancing in the Magazine World*, *Landing an Internship*, and *Preparing Your Work for Publication*. And there are many other writing workshops around the State listed throughout this issue of *Connecticut Muse*.

In October, the newly formed Connecticut Muse Book Club will be reading Chris Knopf's *Head Wounds*. November's book choice is *Bachelor Degree* by Judith Marks-White, and in December we will read *Jump the Cracks* by Stacy deKeyser. Discussions are held at the New Milford Library on the third Friday of each month from 12:30 to 1:30. If you would like to join the club, please call Patricia D'Ascoli at 860-354-6488.

Happy Autumn and Happy Reading!

Patricia F. D'Ascoli

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## Connecticut Muse Cover Art

By Anna Myers

Illustrator



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[www.anna-myers.com](http://www.anna-myers.com)

## Literature for a Lifetime Series

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### “Murder on the Menu”

**10/15** *Red Hot Murder*  
5:00 at Calendar House

**11/5** *Blood Orange Brewing*  
2:30 at Southington Library

**12/3** *Last Bite*  
2:30 at Southington Library

To sign up: (860) 628-0649 ext. 5

East Hampton Library at 7:00 PM

### “Portraits of Suburbia”

**10/1** *Revolutionary Road*

**11/5** *The Ice Storm*

**12/3** *Human Capital*

To sign up: (860) 267-6621

## CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR

November 8-9, 2008

10:00 am - 5:00 pm

*Rome Hall, South Campus Complex  
University of Connecticut, Storrs*

Tomie dePaola  
David Johnson  
Mary Ann Hoberman  
Norton Juster  
Alan Katz  
Steven Kellogg  
Suzy Kline  
Barry Moser  
Robert Andrew Parker  
Jerry Pinkney  
Chris Raschka  
Bob Shea  
Lane Smith  
Javaka Steptoe  
Daniel Waters

## MFA in Professional Writing at Western Connecticut State University: Turning Writing Dreams into Real Life Success

by Anne Witkavitch

Ah, the dream of becoming a writer. How romantic it would be to craft words into ideas and structure sentences into stories for the world to read. But the passion and desire to write is often coupled with uncertainty and discouragement: “How can I possibly make a living by writing?”

The MFA in Professional Writing at Western CT State University has the answer. The program is described as providing “food for the table and food for the soul.” Students must study two genres — one creative and the other practical — in order to master both a literary interest and a professional application of their craft.

“We’re the only program that combines study in creative writing with a focus on a practical genre,” says Brian Clements, program coordinator. “Many students aspire to publish the traditional way — in literary journals or with a publishing house. They want to study fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, writing for stage or screen. But they are also aware they need to make living practicing their craft. They need to learn the business of writing, whether their interest is literary or professional, as well as master the form of the particular genres studied.”

The WestConn program is low residency. Students and faculty spend one week each semester on campus, participating in workshops, collaborating on works-in-progress, and networking with other writers, agents, editors, and each other. They have the opportunity to discuss writing with widely-known writers like Gay Talese, Francine Prose, and Charles Pierce.

Students also meet with their writing mentors to design customized syllabi specifically focused on their writing goals. These goals include producing publishable works and marketing them to the appropriate venues, and gaining practical writing experience in a particular field, like public rela-

tions. Students must also complete an enrichment project and an internship or teaching practicum in the second and third semesters, respectively.

For Ron Samul, a graduate of the program’s inaugural class, the combination of self-directed studies, one-on-one mentoring, and on-site residencies gave the WestConn program that something extra he was looking for.

“When I looked at the programs available, a lot of the coursework involved craft-based writing,” explains Samul. “That’s what a lot of people are looking for. However, I’d already been writing for 15 years. I had two manuscripts completed. I was producing on the literary side and knew where I stood as an artist. What I needed was to know where I stood professionally, how I could further expand my horizons. I needed an outlet to discover how I was going to get a job and support myself as a writer, whether I was writing fiction, book reviews, or features.”

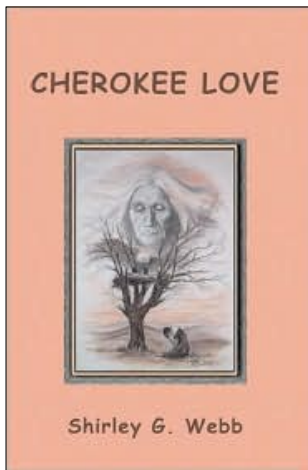
Samul’s experience with the program exposed him to writing genres he never thought he would have an interest in.

“Until recently I never considered writing nonfiction but started thinking, ‘I could do this.’ Being in a campus setting with a group of like-minded students involved with diverse genres — filmmakers, poets, novelists, journalists, corporate communicators, magazine writers — began to spark new ideas and make me realize there was more to my potential and what I could be doing.”

The community of writers created by the program doesn’t just benefit the students. Writers-in-residence, like Elizabeth Cohen, a published author of an award-winning memoir and former journalist who is now a full-time faculty member at the university, finds the low residency, self-directed approach a winning proposition for faculty as well.

“I was attracted by the idea of a professional writing program, one that trains people to actually work as writers. The WestConn MFA program prepares writers for the real world and writing

*Continued on page 29*



*Cherokee Love*  
by Shirley G. Webb

Reviewed by  
Kathleen J. Dolan

Imagine what it would be like to be a woman born in the 1880s—but to have the mindset of a modern day woman—liberal, free-spirited, independent, and very strong! How would this type of woman navigate through a male-dominated society with its narrow beliefs and limitations?

In *Cherokee Love* we discover a woman exactly like this. Her name is Deborah Howell, and unlike many women of her day, she chooses to become an ambitious newspaper reporter—truly an avant-garde choice in such an era.

Now imagine further what it would be like for Deborah, born of mixed blood, to discover the beauty, history and “family” of her Cherokee roots. And surprisingly, this discovery comes as the result of a newspaper story assigned to her. Imagine how Deborah feels when she discovers that the Cherokee matriarch she interviews turns out to be her very own grandmother!

The backdrop of the events in this delightful historical novel takes place during the tumultuous Civil War days. Through the eyes of Deborah we witness the assassination of President Lincoln, an encounter with Charles Dickens, and the beginning awareness of women’s rights. Added to these major events, we are drawn into the private and emotional experiences of Deborah’s personal quest for love, recognition, and contribution. Yet in every crisis, Deborah finds solace in the warmth and love of her Cherokee family.

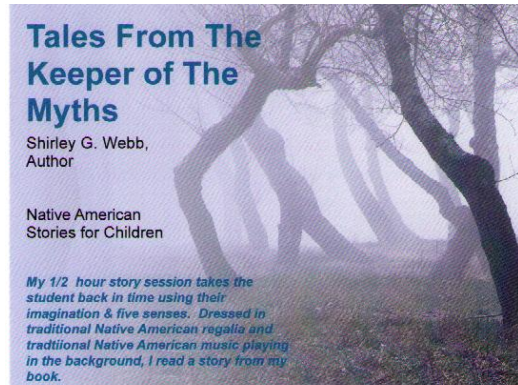
Readers are privileged to view rituals passed down through generations of Cherokee tradition. They

learn of the customs and spiritual roots that lie deep in the Indian Culture. They learn the saga of the shaman who foretells the prophecy of the “Great Spirit” to Deborah. Readers come to appreciate the bond of family ties, and the loyalty that grows from love.

Through marriage, widowhood, remarriage, and an unbelievable twist of fate that allows Deborah to love—and powerfully influence—the growth of her daughter and Cherokee niece, we are vividly exposed to the universal challenges that befall all cultures and all backgrounds. In the end, we not only learn to “cherish the Cherokee,” but also to embrace all human conditions.

*Kathleen J. Dolan is the author of I Need a Face-Lift! (Spiritually Speaking).*

Shirley G. Webb, Author/Storyteller



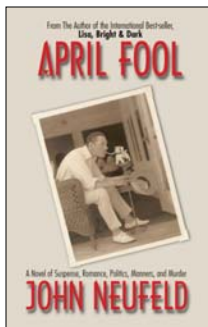
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## *April Fool*

by John Neufeld

Reviewed by Robert Crooke

American fiction is a frontier ruled by outlaws, from the deluded gangster, Jay Gatsby, and girlfriend-murdering Clyde Griffiths, to the sociopathic Tom Ripley, and chaotically priapic Harry Angstrom. Our literary anti-heroes explore love beyond boundaries of reason and morality, playing havoc with our national optimism, reflecting our equally deep-rooted skepticism about man.

Even sympathetic figures in our literature tend to be outsiders struggling against twisted social virtue. The archetypal rascal, Huck Finn, is a thief and felon based on contemporaneous fugitive slave laws and his own admirably confused assessment.

Still others, like Salinger's nonconforming prep-school boy, Melville's Bartleby who simply would "rather not," or the neurasthenic Wheelers of Yates' suburbanite tragedy, *Revolutionary Road*, drop out. They embody a sense of failure that belies the national dedication to success, and see empty promise in our myth of transformative bliss.

George Willetts, the desolate protagonist of John Neufeld's latest novel, *April Fool*, follows in this tradition. A retired, big-time political operative, he's reluctant to accept the offer of a new job and, like Bartleby, his reasons suggest metaphysical malaise. Haunted by slightly pathetic sexual urges and failing health, he's reminiscent of an aging Harry Angstrom in the final installments of Updike's Rabbit saga. His decision to murder his stolid wife, Peg, after encountering a vibrant, new woman, Valerie Herrick, evokes Tom Ripley's chill.

George is dying from the inside out, but spiritual suicide isn't quick. Indeed, a psychological death-watch comprises the novel's arduous first half.

When dramatic action finally occurs it is so welcome we accept its monstrous irony—George's death impulse now is outer-directed.

His secretive days and nights are suddenly animated with longing for Valerie, to whom he also lies, telling her his wife is dying of cancer. Deceiving Peg and dealing with the seedy characters he pays to murder her, George moves cash carefully from his accounts, and plans his disposal of a PC hard drive imprinted with incriminating emails. It all crackles with dark purpose. He sees with renewed clarity what he wants, or thinks he wants—a new lease on life, which requires the death of another.

Set in northwest Connecticut, Neufeld's novel has a fine feel for life's seasonal comings and goings in towns like Sharon, Salisbury and Lakeville, their customs and social strata, the quaint villages, mountain vistas, quiet meadows and lonely roads. It makes an apt American Eden in which to play out George's temptation and fall.

Many readers will dislike George Willetts, but that is the author's clear intention. Others may find him hard to care about, though not because he plots murder, commits adultery, or represents one more miscreant in an outlaw literary tradition. It's rather that George Willetts is guilty of a truly unpardonable American sin—laziness. Unlike most great scoundrels, recusants and fools of American letters, George isn't playing for stakes much higher than relief from himself.

*Robert Crooke's latest novel is Sunrise.*

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# A Poet's Work

by A. S. Maulucci

In the minds of many people, the words “poet” and “pauper” are closely linked. And with good reason. If you want to raise eyebrows, just tell someone you make your living as a poet. Your statement will most likely be met with a blank stare, or a comment such as “Really? How do you manage that?” The standard joke about neophyte actors in New York can readily be applied to poets: Young New Yorker at a party boasts about being an actor, and one of his new acquaintances skeptically replies, “Is that right? What restaurant are you appearing in?”

Many American poets have deliberately chosen a different path, preferring a professional life that would provide a steady income while leaving ample room for the writing of verse. For them, peace of mind is the prerequisite for the composition of their poems. Wallace Stevens is prime example of poets who follow this route. Stevens believed in the adage that you must be conservative in your life so you can be wildly free as an artist in your spare time. Perhaps this is the most reasonable approach for the average poet. As most Connecticut residents know, Stevens lived in a palatial home in Hartford's West End and walked to work as a lawyer with the Hartford Insurance Company. He composed as he walked and wrote the lines down when he arrived at his office.

American expatriate poet T. S. Eliot, who made his home in England, worked in a London bank before making his name as a modernist poet and accepting an executive position with a prominent British book publisher, remaining there for the rest of his working life.

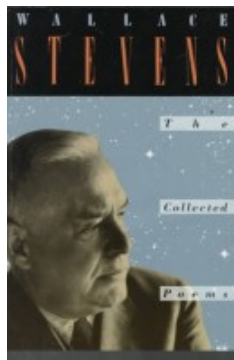
My point is that if you're not independently wealthy and need to work for a living, and if you want to avoid the teaching trap, then you should consider a non-writing job such as the examples I've given. Serious poets should avoid working at any profession that taps into the creative spring without replenishing its waters. Being a counselor

or therapist is another one of those professions that diverts the flow from writing and dries you up. Any type of job that will leave your mind free at the end of the day is your best bet. Perhaps the worst occupation is that of publicist, magazine writer, ad copy writer, or journalist, any job that steals your creativity will ultimately waste the fire you should save for your best writing, though there are probably some rough-and-ready scribes who are able to avoid this occupational hazard.

Perhaps the most suitable job for a poet is one that not only leaves your mind free but fills you with creative energy. I'm referring to work that inspires you and benefits humanity as it hooks you up to the power of life in the raw, such as nursing or firefighting or community building. Why do so many doctors become writers (e.g., Somerset Maugham, William Carlos Williams, Anton Chekhov, Richard Selzer)? Partly because of their exposure to suffering and death.

In his book *What Is Art?* Leo Tolstoy writes that art which produces feelings of brotherhood among all men should be valued and validated above all other types of art. This concept pertains to poetry, perhaps the highest form of literary art, for it has the power to inspire people to rise above their differences and find the things that unite them. But it can also be applied to the occupations of poets themselves. Those poets whose work is involved in one way or another with the improvement of human life are more likely to write poetry that produces feelings of brotherhood.

Regardless of what a true poet does to earn a living, he is always a poet first. He defines himself by the thing he loves most, which is writing verse. By necessity, poetry is the hyphenated profession. In America, most poets must be poet-teachers or poet-radiologists or poet-booksellers or poet-engineers or poet-lawyers. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as it provides the poets in question with economic stability and interesting material for their writing. To write poetry and do something you love to earn a living is to be doubly blessed. Very few poets have the desire to emulate Edgar Allen Poe, who, despite writing some of the greatest American poetry, lived as a drunkard and died a pauper.



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Broken Bridge "062"  
Creative Writing Seminar  
with Brad Davis  
Editor of *Broken Bridge Review*

October 7, 14, 21, 28 & November 11,  
7:00 to 9:00 PM

Victoria Station Cafe, Main Street, Putnam.  
For enrollment details (incl. fee) contact  
[bdavis@pomfretschool.org](mailto:bdavis@pomfretschool.org).

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Memoir Writing - Madeleine Parish

Thursday mornings 10:30 to 11:00  
Darien Senior Center

Friday mornings 10:00 to 11:50  
Sept. 26, Oct. 3, 10 & 17  
Norwalk Community College Lifetime Learners

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Poetry writing with Reggie Marra

October 11 at 1:00  
Sloane-Stanley Museum, Kent  
Confirm time w/museum at 860-927-3849



## *Odyssey of a Wayward Traveler*

by Raymond A. Uzas  
Reviewed by Shirley G. Webb

Reading *Odyssey of a Wayward Traveler* (inspired by a patriotic mother) is exactly what the author described in a hand-written note in my copy of the book: "The journey is the reward." This creative non-fiction journal of travels around America was a fascinating reward for this reader.

What held my interest was not simply the fact that the author had no pre-planned route or itinerary for visits of historical sites, but rather the skillful fiction-like writing technique he employed throughout. He tells the story while showing us and capturing our attention through his eyes and ears, creating each impression with a few bold strokes, a few explanations, and a few carefully selected details. Descriptive scenes add vitality, motion, action, and life to his story.

I found myself captivated on this multifaceted journey along with Ray, and I hesitated only for a moment when I reached a page where he visited a brothel. But in his words, "...the cost of services was not a factor in my decision to take a pass on the offerings!" Even this incident seemed in character for a man who had lost his wife to cancer (his traveling companion since a teenager), sold his home, and was embracing the challenge of finding and understanding himself.

Snapshots scattered within the pages show us places we may have only heard about—the two-room house in Mississippi where Elvis Presley was born, a mobile home in a Louisiana bayou, a buffalo herd along the road in Yellowstone National Park. The author's varied experiences come across as believable, vivid, and emotionally compelling. And his interactions with the people he meets along his journey are inspirational and heart-warming.

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**“They Ain’t Heavy”**  
*Picture This: Photo-Inspired  
Reflections*  
by Patricia F. D’Ascoli

**Steve** My brother Steve was a great mystery to me. I did not know what his life was like before I was born or even understand who he was throughout my childhood and well into my adult years. By the time I turned 21, I had only seen him on five occasions that I can recall; certainly not enough time for us to build a real relationship. I know that he probably felt we had little in common, being almost fifteen years apart. Perhaps that is why his limited appearances were always like a sudden bolt of lightning, briefly brightening and swiftly disappearing.

Battling personal demons unknown to me until much later, Steve presented himself to our infrequent family gatherings as a jokester; the role in which he felt most comfortable and least vulnerable. His apparent self-confidence was merely a façade. His eccentricities were entertaining, but he was distant and seldom warm. And living 3,000 miles away, Steve was not only inaccessible to me metaphorically, but also geographically. What hope was there for us to develop any kind of meaningful relationship?

There was also the matter of his virtually impenetrable bond with our brother Bruce. This connection did not grow, however, from any kind of fond remembrances about growing up. These intense reunions were, instead, a perversely humorous recounting of the many abuses they (mostly Steve) had experienced at the hands of our father. Although there was nothing funny about the way our father treated them, it was the way they had learned to hide the anger and disappointment that came from being the sons of Paul Fryer.

By 1999, Steve and I had been living our adult lives like disparate links in a broken family chain, when we were reunited to perform an extraordi-

nary task – to fulfill our dying sister’s last wish. In doing so, Steve and I drew upon some dormant alliance we had never previously accessed. Joined by our common fear of death, we drew strength from knowing that we would survive this trauma together. Our sister would be gone, but we would go on living. As strange as it was, Steve and I would finally have the first shared memory we could claim as our own.

And yet in some cosmic way it made sense that losing a family member would be the impetus needed to finally establish a connection. When we were drawn together again a few years later because our mother’s health was failing, it seemed eerily familiar. After she died, though, something



*Steve, Patricia and Bruce 2008*

totally unexpected happened. Steve filled in the gaping hole left in my life by our mother’s death. As if it were the most natural thing in the world, he assumed the role of responsible eldest child; he metamorphosed from a guy who was never serious into a loving older brother who was able to understand, sympathize and even comfort. No longer the invisible sister, I was someone with whom he could share his own sorrows and joys. We became friends at last.

**Bruce** My brother Bruce was the closest thing to a “real” sibling I had as a child. And although I remember his teasing and light hearted banter, his kind and gentle ways, I have no memories at all of any family event where we were both present. Not a holiday, not a vacation, not even a dinner. Bruce was 13 when we moved to Connecticut; all of his energy was devoted from that point forward toward merging himself into the Darien teenage culture. Surviving his adolescence living under our father’s roof required the rest of his energy. There was not much left for a little sister.

What I do remember is Bruce, at 17, being kicked out of the house by our father because he refused to cut his hair. And I remember my mother’s heartbreak when this happened. I saw Bruce

occasionally on his surreptitious missions to raid the refrigerator when Dad wasn't home. Munching on a bologna sandwich followed by an orange, consumed peel and all, my brother and I would chat for awhile in the kitchen before he disappeared again.

I thought of Bruce as my "hippy" brother. A rebel against conformity, his hair was long; he sported a beard and he refused to wear deodorant because it wasn't natural. Bruce seemed to live a simple life, communing with nature, meditating, eating organic foods, tending a garden, working with his hands. I found it intriguing and mysterious. He came to visit once a year on Thanksgiving, but it was little more than a brief opportunity for us to reacquaint.

Years later, with a thriving business, a wife who would soon be a doctor, and a charming home in the country, Bruce seemed to have it all. Dinners at his home always featured expensive wines and gourmet food. While I admired and occasionally envied his good fortune and success, I couldn't help feeling a bit unnerved by his idyllic existence. There was something unnatural about their blissful lives. No one could really be that happy, I thought.

I never knew the exact details concerning the subsequent failure of my brother's business or his financial difficulties. But the life he envisioned as the spouse of a successful physician collapsed like a house of cards. Nothing turned out the way he planned. And with this personal devastation and several more that followed, Bruce became increasingly distant and unavailable, absorbed in patching together the broken pieces of his life.

While his inaccessibility was frustrating, I had not made any attempt to bridge the gap either. Like Steve, though, Bruce ultimately experienced our mother's death as a turning point. It was now just the three of us. Bruce and I would both have to work at nurturing our neglected relationship, but it would be well worth the effort. I knew that despite whatever slights and misunderstandings had separated us in the past, he was still the loving and caring brother that he had always been. And I couldn't ask for more than that.



Picture This:  
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Reflections*

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**October 16**

Publication Celebration of *Wild Dreams* – "The Best of 25 Years of *Italian Americana*"

With **Carol Bonomo Albright**, editor-in-chief of *Italian Americana*,  
and **Dennis Barone**, professor of English at Saint Joseph's College

Featured musicians: Jazz Duo with **Norman Johnson**, guitar,  
and **Don Wallace**, bass

**November 20**

A Celebration of Curbstone Press and the Life of Alexander (Sandy) Taylor  
With **Judith Doyle**, executive director of Curbstone Press,

**Paul Pines**, author of *My Brother's Madness*, and **Raouf Mama**,  
author of *Why Monkeys Live in Trees & Other Stories from Benin*  
Featured musician: **Ken Cormier**, guitar, voice, and loops

**January 15**

Featured poets: **Jeff D. Cannon**, author of *Traces of Passionate Leaves*,  
and **Gray Jacobik**, author of *Brave Disguises*

Featured musician: **Lydia Fortune**, jazz & folk guitar and vocals

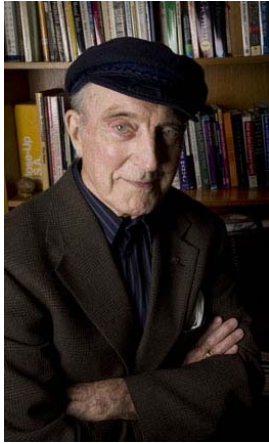
**February 19**

A Celebration of Black History Month

With featured poet, **Charles Coe**, author of *Picnic on the Moon*

Featured musician: **Deborah Simmons**, professor of music at MCC





## Meet Howard Layton

It's never too late to write the story of your life. At least not according to 89-year-old Howard Layton, who has recently published

*Love and Sand: An RAF Flyer's Memoir of Love, Lies and Mayhem in the World War II Deserts of North Africa*, the second installment in his autobiographical trilogy.

During an interview in his Brookfield home, the spirited and sprightly gentleman who will turn 90 this November, related his unique approach to writing a personal history. Rather than starting with his childhood and moving forward, the author chose to write about the most recent events first.

"They were easier to remember," explained Layton, who is originally from Coventry, England.

Shortly after Layton's arrival in the United States more than 50 years ago, he founded Interlab, a hi-tech manufacturing company located in Danbury. Although he continues to work there, over the past several years he has increasingly devoted time to writing and publishing his three-part memoir.

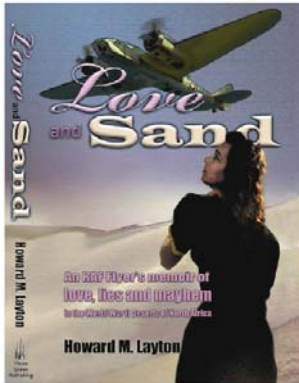
Joe Keeney, owner of Vested Publishing in Monroe, first met Layton through the Connecticut Authors and Publishers Association. Keeney related how much he admires Layton's ingenuity and creative spirit.

"Howard is an intelligent person who has accomplished a lot of things in his life," said Keeney, who believes that readers of *Love and Sand* will instantly become immersed in Layton's intriguing story.

In 2001, Layton published *The Thirteen Club*, the first book in his memoir trilogy. Prior to its publication, his writings were chiefly about technical subjects related to his experience in the radio communications field and the microchip and precision optics industries.

When he realized that he wanted to make the transition from technical writing to "making people want to turn the page," Layton enrolled in a few creative writing classes at Fairfield University and started the journey of writing his personal history.

"It's nice to draw on the wisdom we have accumulated over a lifetime and do something creative," Layton said. "Writing is a wonderful alternative to a permanent yearning for a creative outlet."



Layton's primary motivation for writing the memoir trilogy was a desire to give his children the full story of his life, particularly because his parents had failed to share much about their own history with him.

"I have to provide the story about my heritage," said Layton, although he soon realized that in order to do justice to his life story, he would have to write three books (he is already making notes for the final episode, which will be entitled *Short Pants*).

*Love and Sand* recounts and skillfully interweaves two separate narratives. One is the story of Layton's experiences as a navigator air-bomber in the Royal Air Force during World War II. The memoir also relates a poignant love story.

The historical portion of Layton's story partly grew out of his memory of events but also required the author to do a bit of research. Because he wanted to accurately describe the interior of the Blenheim IV airplane in which he spent so much of his time, Layton traveled to England to gather data at the British Archives.

While his wartime activities are certainly interesting, it is Layton's recollection of his first love and the agony he experiences after he abruptly calls off the wedding before being posted overseas that

catches the reader. Layton is haunted by the memory of Verna; she is the woman he “never got over.”

In 1944, Layton married Laura, a Jewish woman from Cairo (he even converted to Judaism in order to win her father’s approval) but he now regards this episode as “crazy” and one that was motivated by unrealistic expectations. The couple ultimately divorced and Layton remarried his current wife in 1962.

*Love and Sand* ends where *The Thirteen Club* begins. With two-thirds of his long life down on paper, Layton is fully prepared to recapture the story of his childhood; a period he believes will be the most difficult to recall.

As his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday approaches, however, Layton is undaunted by the fact that he may not be able to complete this task. If anything, publishing the two memoirs has given him more incentive and optimism about the future.

“I’m just beginning to learn how to live and fulfill myself and bring things together and make them work for me,” reflected Layton, who summed up his philosophy on how he continues to exhibit such vitality by saying, “We have to work at staying alive and being productive.

*This originally appeared in the News Times.*

*Howard Layton will be signing Love and Sand in the following locations:*

Oct. 4 at 2:00 Stamford Borders

Oct. 11 at 2:00 Milford Borders

Oct. 12 at 1:00 Meriden Borders

Oct. 25 all day at Southbury Borders

November 1 at 1:00 Waldenbooks, Danbury

November 8 at 11:30 Wilton Open Book Shop, Wilton



## *Jump the Cracks*

a novel  
by  
Stacy DeKeyser

“Teens are sure to find this an interesting read.”  
*School Library Journal*

“Bracingly realistic...An absorbing and emotionally effective read.”  
*Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*

“Strong characters and fast-paced action.”  
*Voice of Youth Advocates*

“Thought-provoking.”  
*Booklist*

[www.stacydekeyser.com](http://www.stacydekeyser.com)

### POETRY READING/ PUBLICATION PARTY

October 29 at 6 PM

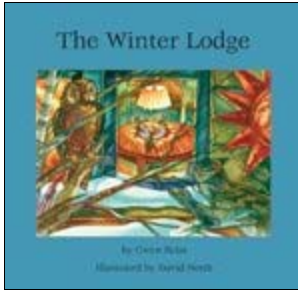
The Faxon Library in West Hartford will host a poetry reading and publication party for two area poets who have recently published their first volumes of poetry:

**Connie Magnan-Albrizio** of Windsor will read from *LION’S TOOTH*.

**June Sidran Mandelkern** of West Hartford will read from *REFLECTIONS*

Both Connie and June are founding members of the Faxon Poets Group.

The Faxon Library is located at 1073 New Britain Avenue in West Hartford. For more information, call the library at 860-561-8201.



*The Winter Lodge*  
by Gwen Reiss  
Illustrated by David  
North

Reviewed by  
Christine Zona

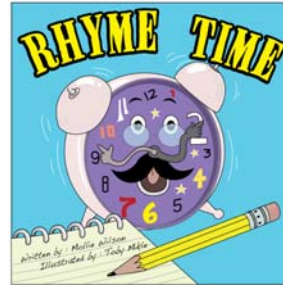
I recently read *The Winter Lodge*, by Gwen Reiss, illustrated by David North, to my two children – Jack, who is 7 and Grace, who is 5. The book is about the escapades of three mice who decide to spend the winter in a summer lodge that has been closed for the season. The story is told by a young mouse who lives with his “cautious” mother and flamboyant uncle.

I enjoyed the way the author opens the story with a description of the “Chatham Woods Camp.” Ms. Reiss makes the camp sound like a fun place to explore. There are no pictures on this page so children can use their active imaginations to bring themselves into the story. Ms. Reiss uses vivid language and rhyme to tell the story of the three mice. Uncle Gar is a spirited mouse who likes to turn everything into an adventure and brings his family with him. The young storyteller loves to join Uncle Gar as they play and explore throughout the camp.

My children related to this story. Both kids love to explore and go on quests throughout the house and outside seeking adventure. We also live in an area where we are prone to mice who try to set up shop for the winter in our basement or attic.

My children and I also found ourselves examining the extensive details in the illustrations. The pictures helped to make the story come alive.

As a former first grade teacher, I think the book would be a valuable tool in a classroom. Students can explore the change of seasons as the mice move in at the end of fall and stay until spring. The little storyteller also ventures back to see the camp in summer. The book was written in rhyme, so students can focus on rhyming words or using rhyme in storytelling.



*Rhyme Time*  
by Mollie Wilson  
Illustrated by Toby Mickle

Reviewed by  
Christine Zona

The poems in *Rhyme Time* range in concepts from enjoying your youth as expressed in the poem “T-rex” to bullying in school from the poem, “The Bully” to more light-hearted topics like birds enjoying a bird bath in “Litterbirds” or a silly moose in “Moosecaboose.”

I read these poems to my two children, Jack, who is 7, and Grace, who is 5. When we read books that are comprised of poems, the kids select what to read based on the illustrations for the poems. A majority of the illustrations in *Rhyme Time* caught my children’s attention and gave extra meaning to the poems.

This anthology of poems could almost be broken up into two works - one with the fun, zany poems that could be enjoyed as bedtime stories or just for pleasure and another with the poems that are geared toward character education that could be used by both parents and teachers as conversation starters for serious discussions.

When I read “Nathan” to my kids, a poem about a boy whose friend is deaf, it sparked a discussion about how we are all different. We also talked about friendships and acceptance. These concepts, along with those conveyed in “The Bully” and “Brown Skates,” a poem about persistence, are topics that can be difficult to discuss with children. Using poetry, Ms. Wilson has given parents as well as educators a great way to introduce these topics and thus enhance communication with our children.

*I recommend both books to parents as well as teachers. They were well-written and will appeal to a variety of ages.*

## MUSE MEMBER FICTION

### *Requiem for America*

by Richard O. Benton

I removed my glasses and as my vision blurred, a bright flash outlined my window. The little window in the cellar led to a sunken window-well outside. I'd welded bars on the metal frame to discourage burglars, although my area of town hadn't had a problem in some years and I considered it safe. It's okay to think you're safe, but you know about that old ounce of prevention. My wife had insisted we cover it with a privacy curtain.

"Besides," she had said, "It'll look nicer when we have parties."

"Yeah, yeah, I'll get to it," I grumbled.

I hadn't gotten around to it. I'd only finished the room two weeks before and I was, by God, taking a break. She wanted it done quicker, I could show her where I kept the screwdriver and the screws and she could put it up herself. I had an old rod that would work in that spot. Damned if I wanted to spend any more money on this project.

The light shone like a lightning flash, incredibly brilliant, quick and deadly. I definitely wished at that moment I had done what she asked. I always go down cellar and watch TV at the end of my shift. Tonight I sat in my recliner all antsy, watching the bad news on TV get worse while sipping on a vodka martini. I had no time to do anything but dive for the floor.

The TV hadn't given any warning. Could our government have been that lax, I wondered idly while overload lights and fears crashed through my brain? These politicians were screaming at each other, half for war and half for appeasement, a regular Churchill and Chamberlain donnybrook.

I don't know what I expected, maybe a high-pitched whistle like the one the phones made to signify the atomic annihilation of Moscow in the movie "Fail Safe." Maybe it'd be a low concussive ground-shaking wave, but whatever, I expected the house above me to disappear in a tornado of man made destruction, leaving a huge gaping hole with me at the bottom, hands over my head, wondering if I'd start glowing now. It didn't happen.

Another dream? I struggled to get to my feet and then I guess I woke up, because I discovered myself sitting right where I'd been since I got home. Must have dosed

off? Liquor befuddled my brain again. Gotta drink less in the evening after work. Where was I? Yeah, my stinking job, hated it. I got that acid, pit of the stomach feeling again. Corporate job evaporated. Downsized. Nice word. I'd like to upsize them!

Nobody in his right mind would deliver pizza for a living; maybe a high school kid who needed some jingle to impress the chicks with, maybe that, but not me, forty-eight years old with one foot on a financial banana peel.

"So you could stop buying the booze, right, Frank?" she said during one of our heated arguments recently.

Uh-uh, not that. Gotta have something. Oh, jeez, twelve-thirty.

Just at that moment the local TV station, WGJD went off the air. Color bar came up and audio went to hiss. Heard it before. Marge didn't wake me up for bed again. She's kind of pissed. Tonight I could relate. Lost a really good job and if people don't think losing your level of living based on a big paycheck doesn't cause strain in the family, I can tell you, it does.

I got out of my chair and moved slowly to the stairs. We had an extended ranch style house. Living all on one floor, except for the room downstairs I just cobbled together was pretty nice, but the bedroom was close to the cellar stairs and one of them creaked pretty good. Have to fix that, one day. Soon, maybe. Anyway, I knew where it was and I could avoid the squeak by stepping on the outside edge of the stair. I climbed carefully up and tiptoed into the bedroom.

Marge left me plenty of room in our king sized bed. She slept over near the edge, like she could fall off if she moved wrong. I got the message and it brought me back totally sober. I'd have to do something soon or this marriage was going to dissolve and deep down I didn't want that. I loved her. The strain had worked its nasty magic on us. I knew it in my more lucid moments, but delivering pizza? My God, how far down I'd come!

I looked at her sleeping form, the mound of her hip and the gentle slope of her legs under the covers, the slight bulge made by her small feet. Our sex life went down the toilet a couple of months ago after I announced that I had to take something, anything, that we couldn't survive on nothing and my unemployment checks were about to stop. I tried to make working for Pizza Hut sound like an opportunity, but she saw through it as quick as I did.

## MUSE MEMBER FICTION

I crawled in, trying not to shake the bed and resolving that I would somehow get better work. I needed it for me, too. I'd married late. We still had two at home, Justin, the fifteen year old and Mark, our late love child, only nine. I owed it to them, and yeah, I owed it to Marge, too. She'd stuck by me through thick and thin. We'd had some rough shoals to cross, but we'd crossed them together. I warmed the hollow I'd made under the covers and went to sleep.

We lived in the nice suburb of Arlington outside of Cliffside Park in New Jersey, a river and a stone's throw across from that fat target, Manhattan Island. I didn't live far from work and in the morning I had nothing to do. Marge made breakfast quietly and avoided any more blowups. I just as quietly thanked her for it. Work didn't start until eleven.

I turned on the TV in the living room and the events that had caused my dream the night before came crowding back. Senator Pacifier and Congressman Inflater's words were being rehashed over the news again. The newscaster didn't look nervous. He was a professional. I had to admire that, but I'd bet the two nickels in my pocket that behind his eyes he feared like I did, like most of us.

From the news and the stuff coming out of Nicaragua the corrupt African country that announced a year ago they had the bomb and a nice delivery system, thanks to some fifty surplus ICBM's the Russians willingly sold them thinking they'd never be able to use them and it was no skin off their nose, anyway, it sounded like the hawk was getting the upper hand.

The Africans had a lot of support in America for some reasons I thought were obvious. I also detected a bit of black pride on the streets lately, too, more than usual. Most of them didn't seem to realize that if push came to shove and Nicaragua shoved first, it was their necks, too.

The world seemed to be heading into another mess with the U. S. bullying and threatening. The Nicaraguans weren't backing down. Matter of fact, the announcer just said something new. I concentrated on his words; Washington had received an ultimatum and the Executive and the Pentagon were studying it in closed session. He said an announcement from Fred Dingle, the President's press secretary would be forthcoming. A chill crawled down my back.

I'll fight if I have to. I'll fight to the last for my kids and for Marge, too, but the TV was bringing into my home possibilities I never thought I'd have to face and

they were here, right now. How do you fight an atomic bomb? How do you do that? I wouldn't think for a minute that if a hydrogen bomb exploded over the Empire State Building, we wouldn't be seriously affected across the Hudson. Are you kidding, we'd be devastated. I mean, I had for years enjoyed looking across the river at that bustle of humanity, usually being glad I didn't have to live so tightly packed in, that I had space. Suddenly it was way too close.

I went in to work and worked the day, even got fifty in tips - it helped - and when I got home at eleven, I went right downstairs to watch the day's events rehashed as they always do at night. The news, if anything had gotten worse and America's military had gone on Def-Con 1, whatever that was. At least the military was awake. The fear I'd held earlier came back. We were all in a big pickle!

A thought came to me and I slammed my forehead with my palm. I didn't kiss Marge when I came in. Funny, as I thought about it, I hadn't done that in a long time. With the internal upset in our lives, I'd stopped. I couldn't remember when that happened. It wasn't simple neglect, I realized, and I also realized that I needed her desperately.

I ran back upstairs and into the bedroom where she sat up reading that awesome book by Wally Lamb, "I Know This Much is True." I'd done the audio book. She had the novel.

"Marge?"

She looked up. I felt anguish come into my voice and I had trouble starting. She looked at me curiously.

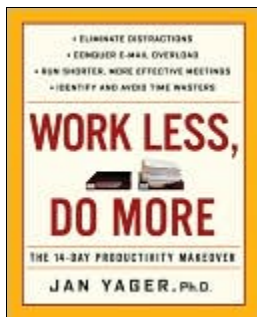
"I love you, Marge."

She stared at me and in a little hurt voice, she said, "What brought that on?"

"America's going to hell, Marge. I just realized that I've been responsible for all the crap we've been going through. I'm sorry." Tears leaked from the corners of my eyes. I removed my glasses and as my vision blurred, a bright flash...

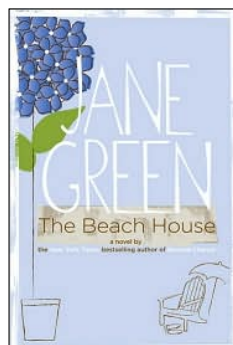
Richard O. Benton is the author of *I Wish I May* and the forthcoming *Moonlight Man*. Visit his website at [www.richardObenton.com](http://www.richardObenton.com)

## NEW RELEASES



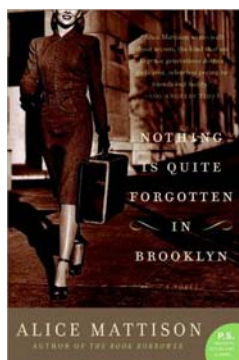
*Work Less, Do More*  
Sterling Publishing  
Jan Yager

An essential guide to getting things done intelligently and efficiently.



*The Beach House*  
Penguin Group  
Jane Green

A true-to-life dilemma about 65 year old Nan, the crazy lady who lives in the rambling house atop the bluff on the island of Nantucket.



*Nothing is Quite Forgotten in Brooklyn*  
HarperCollins  
Alice Mattison

A woman confronts suspicious circumstances surrounding her mother's death in this dark comedy of manners with an even darker family suspense.

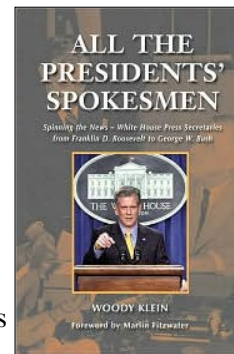


*The Everything Family Guide to New England*  
Adams Media  
Kim Knox Bekius

Filled with ideas for fun that will help budget-conscious families avoid the stuck-at-home blues.

*All The Presidents' Spokesmen*  
Greenwood Publishing  
Woody Klein

Chronicles the evolution of the symbiotic relationship between the presidential press secretaries and reporters who covered White House.



*Songs for the Missing*  
Viking Penguin  
Stewart O'Nan

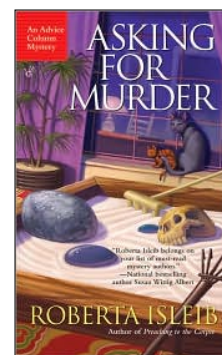
An enthralling portrait of one family in the aftermath of a daughter's disappearance.



**Look for a Q&A with Stewart O'Nan in the December issue of Connecticut Magazine!**

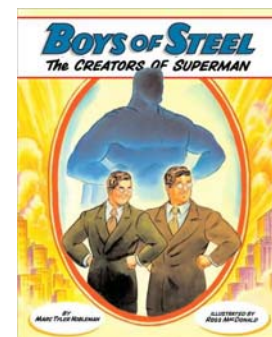
*Asking for Murder*  
Penguin Group  
Roberta Isleib

The third installment in Isleib's "advice column" mystery series.



*Boys of Steel*  
Random House  
Marc Tyler Nobleman

A vibrant & well-researched picture book biography set in the 30's introduces the youthful inventors of Superman.



## NEW RELEASES

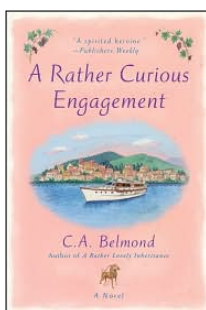
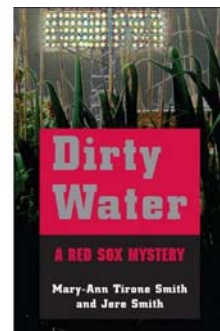


*Blood Alone*  
SoHo Books  
James R. Benn

The third installment in the popular Billy Boyle World War II mystery series.

*Dirty Water: A Red Sox Mystery*  
Hall of Fame Press  
Mary Ann Tirone-Smith  
Jere Smith

A unique take on the 2007 championship season, weaving mystery around the mystique of Fenway Park.

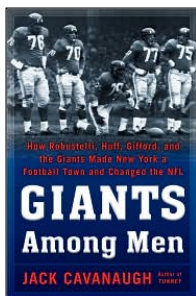
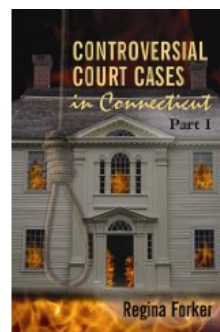


*A Rather Curious Engagement*  
Penguin Group  
C.A. Belmont

A much anticipated sequel to the author's debut novel, *A Rather Lovely Inheritance*.

*Controversial Court Cases in Connecticut*  
Law First Publishing  
Regina Forker

Explores six of the most talked about court cases in Connecticut history.

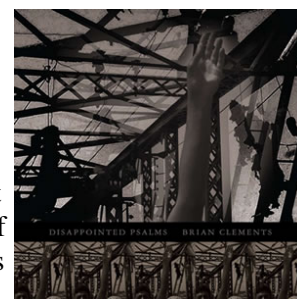


*Giants Among Men*  
Random House  
Jack Cavanaugh

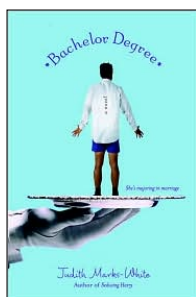
How a close-knit and diverse group won the heart of a city, helped spread the gospel of pro football across the nation, and recast the NFL as a media colossus.

*Disappointed Psalms*  
Meritage Press  
Brian Clements

Poems that combine short phrases from The Book of Psalms with catch phrases from the post-9/11 cultural reservoir.



### COMING IN NOVEMBER:

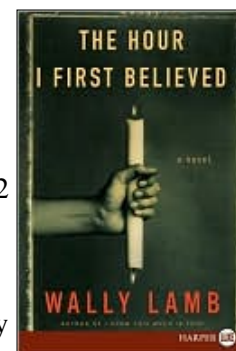


*Bachelor Degree*  
Random House  
Judith Marks-White

In her second novel, Marks-White takes us to Manhattan's posh Upper East Side where her quirky characters look for men who are "marriage material."

*The Hour I First Believed*  
HarperCollins  
Wally Lamb

Into his new weighty novel (752 pages), Lamb weaves myth, psychology, family history, and the questions of faith that lie at the heart of everyday life.

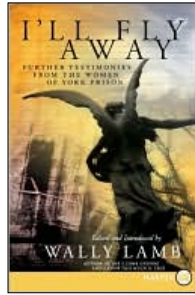


# CONNECTICUT BOOK AWARDS

## Biography & Memoir

### WINNER:

*I'll Fly Away*  
Edited by Wally Lamb

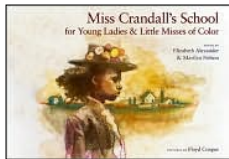


### FINALISTS:

*House of Good Hope*  
Michael Downs

*The 17 Traditions*  
Ralph Nader

## Children's Author



WINNER: *Miss Crandall's School for Young Ladies and Little Misses of Color*

Elizabeth Alexander, Marilyn Nelson

### FINALISTS:

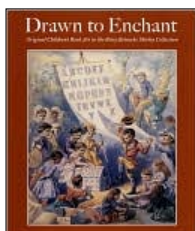
*The Day My Mother Left*  
James Prosek

*Scribble*  
Deborah Freedman

*The Tale of Pip and Squeak*  
Kate Duke

*When Dinosaurs Came with Everything*  
Elise Broach

## Design

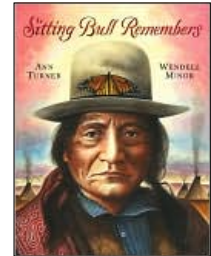


WINNER: *Drawn to Enchant*  
Howard Gralla - Design

## Children's Illustrator

### WINNER:

*Sitting Bull Remembers*  
Illustrated by  
Wendell Minor



### FINALISTS:

*The Busy Little Squirrel*  
Illustrated by Nancy Tafuri

*Hey Batta Batta Swing!*  
Illustrated by Ross MacDonald

*The Tale of Pip and Squeak*  
Illustrated by Kate Duke

## Poetry



WINNER: *One Body*  
Margaret Gibson

### FINALISTS:

*Teeth*  
Aracelis Girmay

*The Wife of the Left Hand*  
Nancy Kuhl

### FINALISTS:

*Opium Season*  
Georgiana Goodwin - Design

*Smotherhood*  
Jane Sheppard - Design

# CONNECTICUT BOOK AWARDS

## Fiction



**WINNER:**  
*Exit Ghost*  
Philip Roth

### FINALISTS:

*Last Night at the Lobster*  
Stewart O’Nan

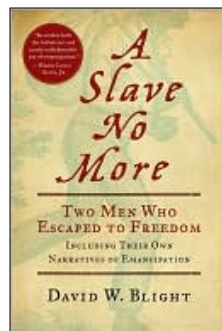
*On Borrowed Wings*  
Chandra Prasad

*Soul Catcher*  
Michael White

*Spaceman Blues*  
Brian Slattery

## Nonfiction

**WINNER:**  
*A Slave No More*  
David W. Blight



### FINALISTS:

*The Children in Room E4*  
Susan Eaton

*Kitchen Literacy*  
Ann Vileisis

## New Metaphysical Science Fiction / Fantasy



**Lee Denning**  
“HIDING HAND”

The boy Joshua comes of age in a blistering conflict between the love of power and the power of love. He must confront his own dark side as human evolution explodes around him. This second book of the *Nova sapiens* trilogy continues its intricate psychodrama, knitting a fable together with science, mysticism and unrelenting suspense...

When his parents are disabled and his uncle is killed, Joshua becomes the sole protector of his baby sister Eva. She is the first *Nova sapiens* -- a potential Messiah for a troubled humanity.

But the child is kidnapped by a psychopath masquerading as a pious Muslim cleric; he wants Eva’s power for himself. Joshua gives chase, in the process accidentally rescuing a mysterious young Muslim woman, Elia. They fall in love, a thing forbidden to her and unwise for him. Elia helps him on his mission, using her strange rapport with an ancient arcane Sisterhood to harness the psychic forces building in the world. But the cleric has overwhelming resources, including a quantum machine that can degrade that part of the brain dealing with moral balance; he uses the machine to deceive Joshua and re-capture Elia.

Joshua is forced to proceed alone, with the machine pushing his mind inexorably toward an insane love of power. If the boy succumbs to the power and uses it, he could rescue Elia, but his first duty is to rescue his baby sister and defend the next stage of human evolution. Torn, Joshua must confront not only the forces arrayed against him, but also the greater darkness within his evolving self... as he struggles with use of a primal power he can never control.

Now available in bookstores. ISBN 1-60619-016-4. Read excerpts of *Hiding Hand* and *Monkey Trap* (Book I of the trilogy) on [www.monkeytrap.us](http://www.monkeytrap.us).

### About Book I they said...

“... a SF adventure that combines hard science, mysticism and alien contact. For most libraries.” ~ *Library Journal*

“... originality sets it apart from the rest of SF novels...”  
~ *Midwest Book Reviews*

“... storyline pacing is nearly perfect... well done, well worth your time...”  
~ *typical Amazon.com reader*



## LITERARY EVENTS IN CONNECTICUT

### October

**2 at 7:30** Bob Jacob will read from his new book, *Perspective*, a collection of poems rising out of his work as a Hospice volunteer at Seabury Retirement Community, Bloomfield. (860) 712-8265.

**4 at 11:00** Jan Mann at Broad Street Books, Middletown, Book Signing

**4 at 6:30** - 13th Annual 'Wallace Stevens Birthday Bash' at Hartford Public Library, 500 Main Street. Featured Speaker— John N. Serio. Tickets \$40 per person. Call to reserve your tickets at the door (860) 695-6360.

**5 at 11:00** Jan Mann at New Hartford Fall Fair (Outdoors) Book Signing

**6 at 6:00** Richard A. Radune at MCC Institute of Local History, Manchester Community College

**7 at 12:00** Jan Mann at Guilford Free Library, Book Talk & Signing

**8 at 6:30** Cheryl Della Pelle, Sandra Ebner and Lori Desrosier at Silas Bronson Library, Waterbury. Reading will be held downstairs. Admission is free.

**8 at 7:30** Richard A. Radune at Essex Historical Society, Essex Town Hall

**11 at 7:30** Jan Mann at Baptiste Women's Aux, New Britain, Book Signing

**13 at 7:00** Stacy deKeyser at Mother-daughter book club, Simsbury Library, Simsbury

**13 at 7:30** Norman Weissman will be reading and signing "Snapshots USA" at Branford's Evergreen Woods community auditorium

**14 at 7:00** Roberta Isleib presents to the Madison Women's Club, Madison

**15 at 7:30** Marie Bostwick will participate in the "Authors in the Evening" series at Weston Public Library, Weston.

**15 at 7:30** Three poets in celebration of Italian Heritage and Culture Month: Dennis Barone, Clare Rossini, and Maria Sassi at Bruyette Athenaeum, Saint Joseph College.

**15 at 6:15** Jan Mann at Avon Lion's Club

**16 at 6:30** Randall Balmer will be talking about his book *God in the White House: How Faith Shaped the Presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush* at Gunn Memorial Library, Washington

**16 at 7:00** Marilyn Johnston, author of *Silk Fist Songs*, will inaugurate this season's Wintonbury Library Poetry Series with a reading at the Wintonbury Library, Bloomfield. An open mike will follow the featured reading. (860) 242-0041

**21 at 7:00** Judith Marks-White will be signing her new book *Bachelor Degree* at Barnes & Noble, Westport

**22 at 7:00** Bob Jacob will be reading and signing his book at Visiting Nurses Association, Plainville

**23 at 6:30** Brad Davis will celebrate the publication of *Like Those Who Dream* at Jacob Edwards Library, Southbridge, MA: (508) 764-5426.

**23** Marie Bostwick will be signing and discussing *River's Edge* at the Beardsley Memorial Library, Winsted

**25 at 11:00** Jan Mann at Candlewood Chapter of Quota International Book/Author Luncheon, Bethel, Book Talk & Signing

**25 at 2:00** Donna O'Boyle her new books *The Domestic Church: Room by Room* and *Grace Cafe: Serving Up Recipes for Faithful Mothering* at Borders Books, Danbury

**29 at 10:30** Westport Writers Workshop presents A panel on "Breaking In: How to Get Published in the 21st Century" with Jessica Bram, Lucy Hedrick, Prill Boyle, Nina Nelson, Denise Marcil at New Canaan Library, New Canaan. FREE

## **November**

**1 at 12:00** Julian Padowicz at Elm Street Book Shop in New Canaan

**1 at 2:00** Marie Bostwick will be signing her new book *A SINGLE THREAD* at Hickory Stick Bookshop, Washington Depot

**5 at 1:00** Martin Schiller will be giving a reading from *Bread, Butter and Sugar* at the Farmington Library, Farmington

**6 at 7:00** Sandi Kahn Shelton will be reading and signing her new book *Kissing Games of the World* at R. J. Julia Booksellers, Madison

**9 (morning)** Ronnie Fein is having a book signing for *Hip Kosher* at Temple Beth El, Stamford

**10 from 8am - 4pm** Stacy DeKeyser will sell and sign her books at the Connecticut Association of School Librarians Annual Conference, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell

**10 at 7:00** Karen Olson signing her new mystery *Shot Girl*, RJ Julia Booksellers, Madison

**11 at 6:00** Book launch of Wally Lamb's new novel *The Hour I First Believed* at UConn Co-Op, 2075 Hillside Road, UConn, Storrs. This event is a fundraiser for two schools in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans. Call 860-486-5027 to sign up.

**11 at 8:35 AM** Arthur Wiknik, Jr. will be doing a Veteran's Day interview on WXMLM 104.7 in New London. It can be heard on the radio or on [www.wxlm.fm](http://www.wxlm.fm)

**13 at 7:00** Karen Olson at Wallingford Library

**13** Judith Marks-White will be at the Norwalk Community College Writer's Festival (column panelist and fiction panelist)

**13 at 7:00** Jan Coffey at Oliver Wolcott Library, Litchfield

**18 at 7:30** Richard A. Radune Nathan Hale DAR Chapter - Acton Library, Old Saybrook

**19 at 6:30** Marilyn E. Johnston and Dick Allen at Silas Bronson Library, Waterbury. Reading will be held downstairs. Admission is free.

**20 at 7:00** Arlene Swift Jones at Wintonbury Poetry Series, Wintonbury Library, Bloomfield Open mike theme: "Healing"

## **December**

**4 at 7:00** Father/son duo-- Father: poet John Surowiecki and Son: singer and composer John E. Surowiecki will appear at Wintonbury Poetry Series, Wintonbury Library, Bloomfield. Open mike theme: "Healing"

**5 from 6:00-8:30** The Greenwich Arts Council presents Third Annual Literary Lights 2008 Gala Party, featuring more than 20 authors signing their new releases at The Greenwich Arts Council, 299 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich. Admission is free, includes food and wine and discount for dinner at local restaurants afterwards. [www.greenwicharts.org](http://www.greenwicharts.org)

**9 at 7:00** Karen Olsen at North Haven Library

**13 at 3:00** Brad Davis will read and sign his new book *Like Those Who Dream* at Central Gallery, Old Saybrook. (860) 510-0432

**13 at 2:00** Karen Olsen at Yale Bookstore

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## **Writers' Circle is now forming at the Re Life Spa in Farmington**

A supportive community of kindred spirits who are interested in the art and craft of writing will meet once a month. Activities will include guided visualizations, critique and feedback, discussions on writing topics and guest speakers. Membership is FREE but capped at 15.

### **First meeting Nov. 8 at 10:00 AM**

Anyone interested in joining the circle (7 spaces left) should call Annie Kelleher at 860-693-1613 or email [anniekelleher@aol.com](mailto:anniekelleher@aol.com)

## MUSE MEMBER NEWS

**Stacy Lytwyn Maxwell** will be teaching the following continuing education classes at Roger Ludlow Middle School, Rm. 239, Fairfield:

"How to Write/Publish the Book You've Always Wanted to," **Oct. 6, 13, 20; 7-9 PM**

"Write Your Heart Out," **Oct. 2, 16, 23; 7-9 PM**

"Top-10 Places to Visit in CT this Fall,"  
**Oct. 1; 7-9 PM**

**Carol Ascher** will be leading a five session memoir workshop at the Scoville Memorial Library in Salisbury on Thursdays, 5:30 to 7:00 from October 16 through November 13. Her book, *Afterimages*, has been selected to be featured at the Miami Book Fair International in November and she will be reading at Florida Atlantic University on November 17.

**Alan Bisbort** has just published *Media Scandals* with Greenwood Press. A reference work, the book is part of Greenwood's "Scandals in American History" series. Bisbort has also signed a contract to write a book called *Beatniks* for Greenwood Press, to be published next year. Another reference work, *Beatniks* is part of Greenwood's "Guide to American Counter-cultures" series. *Media Scandals* is available through [www.greenwood.com](http://www.greenwood.com).

**Lee A. Jacobus** has a new book coming out this month, *The Bedford Introduction to Drama*, Sixth Edition.

**Cathryn Prince** author of *Burn the Town and Sack the Banks: Confederates Attack Vermont!* is working on a new book to be published by The Wesleyan University Press about The Weston Fall: America's First Recorded Meteorite - the story of a professor, a president and a meteor.

**Joe Vogt** announces release of the second edition of *Threshold Of Consciousness*, a book that focuses on the world of manufacturing through the life of Clay, a determined and honest, yet exceedingly frustrated Quality Manager.

**Linda Merlino**, author of *Belly of the Whale* will be having a Virtual Book Tour **October 1-31** on *Belly of the Whale* and Breast Cancer Awareness ([www.lindamerlino.com](http://www.lindamerlino.com)). On October 19, she will be under the Survivor Tent at the Central Park 72nd Street Band Shell - Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the books will go to Making Strides. On the same day, she will be signing her book at Columbus Circle Borders at 3:00 PM.

**M.W. Penn** will be artist in residence at Webster Hill School in West Hartford **Oct. 20-24**. She recently spoke at the ribbon cutting for the lighthouse status of Katherine Brennan School which is a step on the way to magnet school status with the focus on writing. (The lighthouse grant will include money for visiting writers).

**Chris Knopf** taught the mystery class at this year's weeklong Cape Cod Writer's Conference. He will be a panelist at the New England Crime Bake at the Dedham Hilton, **November 14 - 16**. Knopf is now officially part of the Thomas Dunne/St. Martin's family, with *Short Squeeze*, the first of his spin-off series due for release next year.

**Mary Donnarumma Sharnick** will read from her memoir-in-progress, *Scenes of Lee: How My Aunt's Alzheimer's Changed My Mind*, at the 41st annual conference of the American Italian Historical Association, New Haven, **November 6**.

**Suzy Kline** will be the featured author at the 16th Annual CCMC Auxiliary Storybook Gala on **November 1**. The Storybook Gala is the signature formal dinner benefit for Connecticut Children's Medical Center being held at the Hartford Marriott Downtown. This year's special guest is TV and film star Ben Vereen. A special evening with dancing, live and silent auctions, the Gala is a celebration of the vital mission of CCMC.

**Carole Shmurak** will lead a multigenerational celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the publication of *Anne of Green Gables* at the Granby Public Library on **November 4 at 2**.

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**Charles Young**

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**Karen Romano Young**

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## Muse Member Organizations

**CT Authors & Publishers Association**

www.aboutcapa.com

**MFA in Professional Writing at Western**

**Connecticut State University**

www.wcsu.edu/writing/mfa

**The Litchfield Review**

www.thelitchfieldreview.com

**Connecticut Press Club**

www.ctpressclub.com

**Vested Publishing**

203-452-9520

**Floating World Editions**

www.floatingworldeditions.com

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## **Plays With Poetry**

**October 3, 10 & 11 at 8:00 PM** Reggie Marra's poetry will be among that presented by the East Haddam Stage Company's production of "Plays With Poetry," which combines poems from CT poets with a series of 10-minute plays from around the world. East Haddam Historical Society, 264 Town St., East Haddam.

On **October 25**, Reggie will offer two poetry writing workshops at the Capitol Theater in Willimantic as part of an all-day poetry event that ends with "Plays With Poetry" at 6:30 PM

**Alyse Aalyn** author of the forthcoming psychological thriller *Woman Into Wolf*, a novel told from the point of view of a well-kept trophy wife who finds out that her husband's twin brother, reputed to have hanged himself 15 years earlier, is now a suspected serial killer.

**Carol Ascher** author of *Afterimages: A Family Memoir* published earlier this year, is a resident of Sharon. She is a senior research scientist at New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy and Principal Associate in the New York City office of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.

**Shelley Frome** is a professor of dramatic arts emeritus at The University of Connecticut, a former professional actor, a writer of mystery novels and articles and books on theatre and film. He is the author of *Tinseltown Riff*.

**Frances Gilbert** is the pen name for Gillian Collings, a learning specialist who teaches sixth grade students. She has published six books for children and a poetry collection. Her novel *Where is She Now?*, a psychological thriller, was recently released.

**Jane Gordon** is a longtime journalist whose work appears frequently in *The New York Times*, and has been published in newspapers nationwide. Juggling four children, freelance writing work and a full-time job as a writer for a university communications department, she is at work on her first book.

**William Kelly** taught English at a number of universities, worked as a freelance writer and a regional journalist, and was the writer/editor of *Undercurrents*, the (now discontinued) natural history magazine of Mystic Aquarium. He has just published his first novel *The Basilisk Solution*, under Hammonasset House Press, an imprint he and two other writers launched.

## NEW MUSE MEMBERS

**David K. Leff** is a freelance writer from Collinsville. His essays and fiction have appeared in newspapers and magazines. His non-fiction book, *The Last Undiscovered Place* was published in 2004. It deals with the relationship of people to their community and landscape and was a Connecticut Book Award finalist. *Deep Travel*, about traveling close to home, will be published by the University of Iowa Press early in 2009.

**Linda Merlino** is the author of *Belly of the Whale*, a riveting story that centers on a woman who longs for release from the breast cancer that is destroying her, only to realize that life is very much worth living when she is taken hostage by an angry young man planning murder. Merlino is honored that many breast cancer survivors and their support groups are recommending the novel. [www.lindamerlino.com](http://www.lindamerlino.com)

**Dana Meachen Rau** has written over 200 books for children in a variety of genres - early readers, picture books, historical fiction, biographies and scientific nonfiction. Her newest book for early readers *Corn of Plenty* will be published in 2009. [www.danameachenrau.com](http://www.danameachenrau.com).

**Gwen Reiss** is a poet and freelance writer on architecture and preservation whose work has appeared in *Connecticut Cottages & Gardens*, *The New York Times* and *Preservation Magazine*. She has just published a children's book, *The Winter Lodge*, illustrated by David North. [www.salemstreetbooks.com](http://www.salemstreetbooks.com)

**Jeffrey Stephens** is an attorney whose practice includes civil and criminal courtroom experience. He lives in Greenwich and is the author of *The Portofino Deception*, a fast-paced thriller that moves from one suspenseful action scene to the next in a contemporary story of the real and present perils of the modern world. [www.jeffreysstephens.com](http://www.jeffreysstephens.com).

## CONNECTICUT POETRY CIRCUIT

### Fall Tour - Kurt Brown

Kurt Brown is the author of six chapbooks and five full-length collections of poetry, including *Return of the Prodigals*, *More Things in Heaven and Earth*, *Fables from the Ark*, *Future Ship*, and the upcoming *No Other Paradise*.

**October 21 at 12:00** University of Connecticut, Waterbury

**October 21 at 7:00** Tunxis Community College, Farmington

**October 22 at 8:00** Wesleyan University, Middletown

**October 27 at 7:00** Central Connecticut State University, New Britain

**October 28 at 12:15** University of Hartford, West Hartford

**October 28 at 4:30** Trinity College, Hartford

**October 29 at 8:00** Manchester Community College, Manchester

**October 30 at 12:30** Middlesex Community College, Middletown

For additional info, contact James Gentile at [jgentile@mcc.commnet.edu](mailto:jgentile@mcc.commnet.edu)



opportunities, from public relations to journalism to poetry, but always with an eye to making it as a *working* writer.”

Since the program was introduced in 2005, students have been quick to achieve success. “We have graduates of the program who are teaching at private boarding schools, working in the entertainment industry, writing for well-known magazines and journals, and accepting positions in the corporate sector,” says Clements.

A January 2008 graduate, Samul became a writing mentor in the WestConn program this fall, and is a full-time professor of writing at Mitchell College in New London.

While in the program, Samul interned with Inquiring News in Hartford, which is bylined as New England’s largest African American newspaper. “The opportunity helped me to make connections with other people and learn more about my community,” he said.

“I also got to know players on an international literary stage when I attended the AWP Conference in Austin, Texas to do research for my enrichment project.” For his project, Samul launched Miranda Literary Magazine, an online publication, is now internationally recognized and a member of the CLMP Literary Magazines and Publishers.

Students are also getting published before they complete their studies. “The diversity of success is beyond what we imagined,” says Clements.

David Holub, for example, recently published essays in McSweeney’s Internet Tendency and the Christian Science Monitor, articles he wrote as a part of his studies. Although he had a number of short stories in print prior to joining WestConn, getting into these recognized publications was a major achievement.

“I had submitted to McSweeney’s eighteen times previously,” explains Holub. “When I finally broke through, it was a direct result of how much I’d been writing during my MFA studies. Mentors like writer Daniel Asa Rose really encouraged me to experiment and I was able to find my voice and style. I would not have done so if not for the program.”

“I could sense David was straining to break free of the constraints he imposed on himself with his writing,” says Rose. “The freedom of the program allowed me to encourage him to take off in directions we hadn’t prescribed, and to see what might come of it. A more orthodox program may have insisted we stick with a pre-conceived plan, but David and I were able to improvise and do some break-out stuff.”

Rose’s writing has benefited as well. During a recent residency, the author worked through the idea for a new book live with students and faculty.

“I dearly sought – and valued – the advice I received for the book from the community of writers gathered at the residency. Not only did they help me out with specific questions I had, they energized me and galvanized my efforts forward. “

Rose continues, “Within the residency setting, the work often continues outside the lecture hall. For example, the morning after my talk, Don Snyder, an author and fellow writer-in-residence, and I were working out in the gym. He continued to press me about the structure of the book as we sweated through our work-out. By the time our session was over we’d constructed a blueprint of three acts, which became the underpinning of my last nine months of work.”

WestConn’s self-directed, low residency approach requires that students work hard, motivate themselves to produce their best work, and aspire to achieve well-defined goals. However, as Holub puts it, the effort put in definitely produces results.

“Nothing is wasted in this program,” he says. “I don’t spin my wheels. I direct my own coursework; there’s no busy work assigned by somebody else who doesn’t understand my goals.”

Cohen sums it up. “Getting an MFA is an investment of time, energy, and money. I think an important thing the WestConn program offers is some real world skills, some hands on attention from mentors who work one-on-one with students, and lots of opportunities to publish and create a career.”

[www.wcsu.edu/writing/mfa](http://www.wcsu.edu/writing/mfa)

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Connecticut authors*

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## CONNECTICUT MUSE

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The Third Annual Litchfield Review Writers' Conference  
at Chase Collegiate School

Saturday, October 18, 2008 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Theme: *The Writer in Solitude and Community*

**Keynote Speaker: Joanna Clapps Herman**

Joanna Clapps Herman is an award-winning critic, short-story writer, poet, and co-editor of *Our Roots Are Deep with Passion: Italian-American Creative Nonfiction*. With Carol Bonomo Albright, she edited *Wild Dreams: The Best of Italian Americana*. She teaches in the Masters in Writing program at Manhattanville College and lives in New York City.

**Panelists:**

**Novelist Katharine Weber**, author of four novels including the award-winning *Triangle*.

**Poet Rennie McQuilkin**, author of *North Northeast: We All Fall Down* and winner of numerous awards.

**Author Patricia D'Ascoli**, publisher of *Connecticut Muse* and author of *Picture This*, an essay collection.

**Poet Theresa C. Vara**, founding co-editor of The Litchfield Review and The Litchfield Press.

**Playwright/director Bob Cutrofello**, director of Drama & Theater at Chase and has written many plays.

**Workshops:**

A: Christopher Dannen - *Freelancing in the Magazine World*

B: Patricia D'Ascoli - *Shaping the Memoir*

C: Nan Rossiter - *Creating Stories for the Youngest Readers*

D: Lia Albini - *Landing an Internship*

E: John Stanizzi - *Writing from Life*

F: Mary Donnarumma Sharnick - *Preparing Your Work for Publication*

**Mss. consultations with Mary Donnarumma Sharnick and Theresa C. Vara, co-editors The Litchfield Review:**

Mary's fiction writing won her a scholarship to the 2004 Wesleyan Writers' Conference. "The Rule," a short story, appears in the latest issue of *Voices in Italian Americana*. Non-fiction excerpts from *Scenes of Lee: How My Aunt's Alzheimer's Changed My Mind*, have been published in: *Italian Americana*, *America*, *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* and other publications. Mary Chairs the English Department at Chase Collegiate School, and leads tours and writing workshops in Italy.

Theresa is the author of *Profligate with Love*. Her verse has been published by New Song Press and anthologized by Houghton Mifflin Company. Her scholarly work has appeared under the aegis of Gateway Press and Wesleyan University's Graduate Liberal Studies Program. She has twice been selected by the Gilder Lehrman Institute to participate in seminars. Theresa chairs the English Dept. at University High School in Hartford and is completing her dissertation for her doctorate from University of Wales, Swansea.

To register and reserve your place in two workshops, please send a check for \$125.00 to:  
The Litchfield Review, 7 Bonna Street, Beacon Falls, CT 06403  
Contact Mary at: [msharnick@chasemail.org](mailto:msharnick@chasemail.org) or (203) 723-9321

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