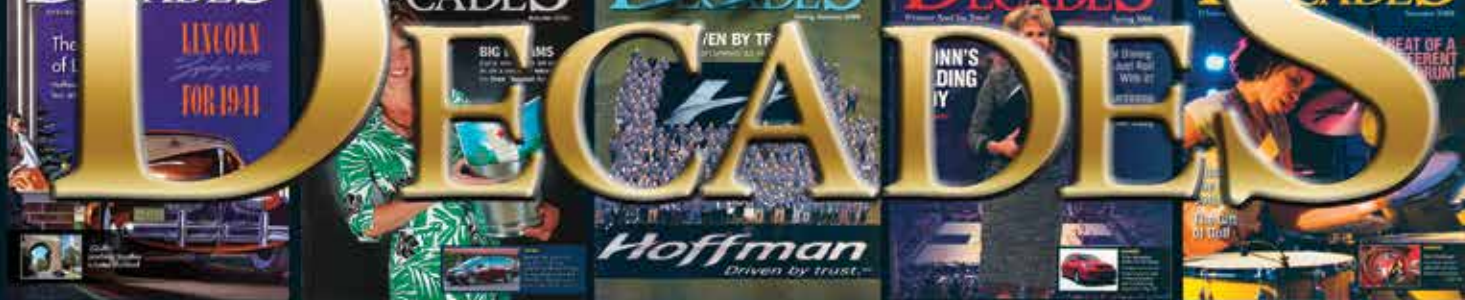


WINTER 2017-2018

Hoffman



CELEBRATING OVER A



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Audi

2017 Audi S3



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Audi
Magna Society

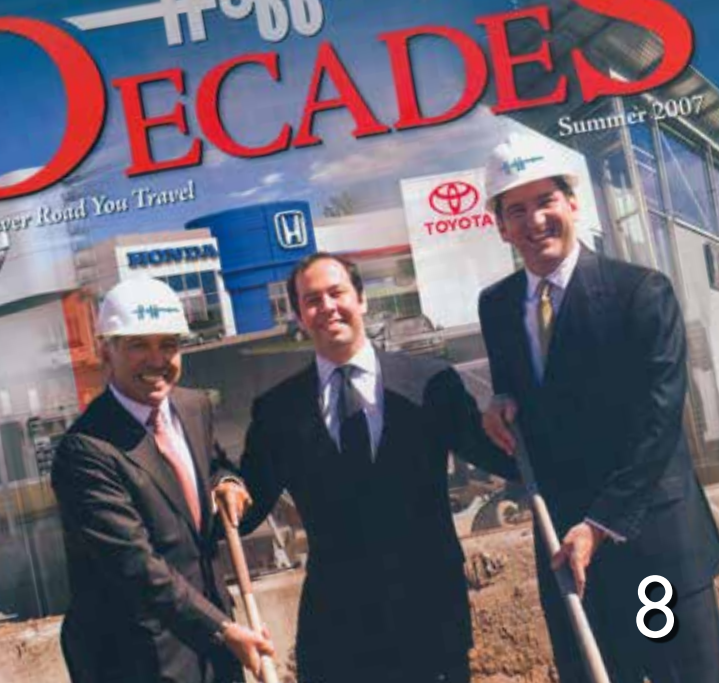


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Hoffman Audi of New London
490 Broad St., New London
860.447.5000/hoffmanaudiofnewlondon.com



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Hoffman DECADES

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Welcome

TO OUR WINTER 2017–2018 ISSUE OF *DECADES*!

We at the Hoffman Auto Group know you will enjoy reading this issue of our lifestyle magazine, *Decades*, as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. As each issue rolls out hot off the press, we're thrilled about the opportunity it affords us to reach out to our customers past, present and future.

As a fourth-generation family business since 1921, we never lose sight of the fact that you can't effectively move forward without knowing where you've been. Thus, we're excited to bring you an issue of *Decades* that places special emphasis on the past. We begin with Gil Walker's cover story, a look back at the 26 issues that preceded this one, beginning with our Premier Issue launched in Spring 2006.

Our retrospective isn't the only backward-looking piece in this issue. More than half a century after the start of the Vietnam War, contributor Lynn Fredricksen looks at its lingering impact on some of Connecticut's citizens. Superfan Kristen Ruehl takes a fond look at 24 of our past television newscasters, eight of whom are still active, and their impact on Nutmeggers. And longtime area resident Chloe Davis explains the history behind some of the intriguing proper names in Greater Hartford that we're accustomed to taking for granted.

But not all of our pieces in this issue are backward-looking. Contributor Kathleen Cei details the delivery of goods and hope by Hoffman Auto employees to hurricane-stricken family and friends in Puerto Rico. Foodie Nick Caito identifies some of the area's best food trucks, while introducing readers to some of the good folk behind them. And Jack Fader takes us deep into the little-known world of youth car racing and the sport's surprising benefits as a parenting tool. In Details, Brett Solomon suggests some technology that can improve your vehicle-owning experience. In Happenings, editor Robert Bailin suggests some rewarding activities and events in the upcoming months. Making the entire issue look dazzling is longtime designer Kate Dawes.

Remember, if you're not already a client, we look forward to introducing our family to yours.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MUSTO

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Audi of East Hartford

Hoffman DECADES

VOLUME XII, Number 1

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THE OFFICIAL HOFFMAN AUTO GROUP BLOG.



Making magical moments and dreams come true for children, Hoffman BMW of Watertown treated Molly, a 5-year-old cancer survivor and Wish Kid from Make-A-Wish Connecticut, to a day as a princess. Molly received a handmade princess dress from Kathy Faber Designs, LLC and was chauffeured with her family in a BMW for the day. Molly enjoyed a special manicure treatment at a salon, a delicious meal at Nino's and was whisked off to meet Cinderella at the Palace Theater. Best of all was the smile on her face as she was brought on stage for a formal and rather royal introduction to one of her favorite princesses!

For more about Make-A-Wish, visit bit.ly/mawctspot



The Hoffman Auto Group has closely worked with Lincoln Tech and together young minds have been **Inspired and Hired!** To date, Hoffman has placed over 45 Lincoln Tech students in the company (the number continues to grow) and created a “Hoffman classroom” for the students. The positive effect that it has had on our community has led Lincoln Tech to nominate the Hoffman Auto Group for a highly coveted award. The Chief Executive Officer and President’s Pride in Partnership Award is awarded quarterly to the organization that partners with Lincoln Tech in placing their students into promising career opportunities in their chosen field.

Read more: bit.ly/ltaward

Four Hoffman Auto Group employees—Billy Genereux, Tom Ryan, Walter Modeen and Bill Larson—joined the Pink Tie Guys this past year. They, along with the rest of the Pink Tie Guys, were honored at a special cocktail reception at the Hartford Club for helping to raise a total of \$23,000 for Susan G. Komen New England. Pink Tie Guys are leaders in their communities who attest to the fact that breast cancer knows no boundaries, who honor those affected and who bring urgency to efforts to find the causes and cures. Read more: bit.ly/hoffmanpinktieguys



HYPE's (Hartford Young Professionals & Entrepreneurs) Personal and Professional Development members attended a Car Maintenance 101 workshop at Hoffman Audi. From tires and brakes to fluids and lights, the workshop highlighted basic car care. Attendees learned what to look for, how to perform some basic tasks and what to leave to the professionals.

Hoffman Auto Group and the Hoffman family hosted their 19th Annual Burton C. Hoffman Golf Classic. The golf tournament was held in remembrance of the Hoffman Auto Group's second-generation owner, Burton C. Hoffman. The BCH Classic has raised over \$1 million thus far. The proceeds from the Burton & Phyllis Hoffman Foundation go toward charities involving the arts, health/medicine, education and social well-being.

Read more: bit.ly/burtonchhoffman17



On Thursday November 7, Hoffman Auto Group hosted an inaugural Service Talent Competition. A service advisor from each of our dealerships competed by demonstrating a mock walkthrough with a service customer. The fun and informative competition provided the opportunity to showcase service knowledge and presentation skills. The interactions presented a way to continuously learn from others and provide our customers with exceptional experiences. We are committed to offering our talented teams the opportunities to grow, learn and improve. The end results are highly skilled employees, happier teams and, ultimately, satisfied customers.



The holiday season provides a great opportunity for all of us to work together. It's a chance to help our fellow neighbors in need by putting food on their tables. Last year's food drive resulted in the collection of more than 6,000 food items weighing nearly 2,000 pounds, thanks to the collaborative efforts of several Honda dealers in Connecticut and many generous members of our community. Hoffman Honda will partner with the Boy Scouts of America Connecticut Rivers Council, Goodwin College and the community in an effort to raise an even greater contribution in 2018. For more information and to find how you can contribute this year, visit bit.ly/hah17mag

Last year's "Supporting Our Schools" campaign was organized to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford. It kicked off on July 1 and culminated in a one-day drive at Hoffman Auto Group on July 29 that brought in over 350 backpacks filled with school essentials and hundreds of boxes of classroom supplies. Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford could look forward to new notebooks, freshly sharpened pencils, colorful backpacks and many other school supplies when they returned to school on August 29th, thanks to the incredible support from our community, NBC Connecticut, Hoffman Auto Group, and Travelers. Read more: bit.ly/nbcdctss



Jeffrey and Bradley Hoffman are shown with the first two recipients of the Hoffman Family Endowment Scholarship at Goodwin College. Gathering at the Hoffman Family Library, the two students, Carol Nelson and Angel Ivery, expressed their gratitude. Ivery, who earned her associate degree in nursing from Goodwin, has been a peer tutor, student ambassador and student government treasurer. Nelson came to Goodwin to pursue a bachelor's degree in human services after 30 years in her previous position. She was elected president of the Human Services Club and inducted into the Tau Upsilon Alpha Honor Society. She plans to become an advocate for the elderly in a social services agency or senior center.

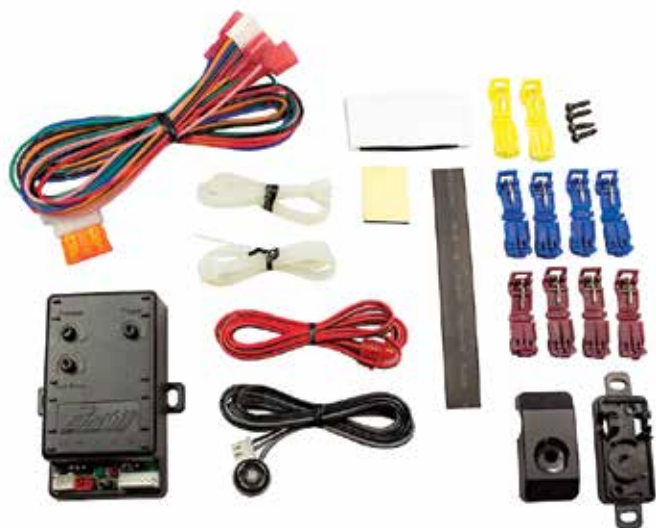
H

By Brett Solomon

When it comes to vehicle personalization and enhancement, car buyers are not limited to aftermarket products to improve vehicles' looks and functionality. Here are just a few...

3M™ Crystalline Automotive Window Film

The early days of window tinting sometimes left a bad taste in consumers' mouths. The film was easily scratched, and after a few years it turned purple. The new Crystalline Series of window film from 3M is a multilayer optical film that combines over 200 layers of material, yet is thinner than a Post-it® Note. Moreover, there are a variety of tint levels available. For those not into the look of dark tint, there's a nearly-clear option that still blocks up to 99% of UV light to give a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 1000—10 times more than any sunblock can deliver! The product is recommended by dermatologists as a preventative measure against skin cancers. In addition to UV protection, the film blocks up to 60% of solar energy and up to 97% of heat-producing infrared rays for the ultimate in comfort. Because the film is nonmetallized, mobile devices and GPS performance are not affected. These films need to be installed by a certified technician, so ask your Hoffman brand specialist about installation before delivery for the ultimate in convenience.



VOXX Pursuit CP1 Interior Theft Sensor

Most new vehicles that come from the showroom floor offer some sort of built-in theft protection that prevents all but the most brazen thieves from stealing the car. However, such features may not protect the contents of vehicles. For protecting vehicles' contents, the Pursuit Interior Theft Sensor CPI fits the bill nicely, picking up where the factory security system leaves off. Its patented technology interfaces seamlessly with the vehicle's security system—if the vehicle is so equipped—and operates through the factory keyless-entry remote controls. The Pursuit CPI gives car owners complete peace of mind. It is a small sensor that can be mounted in a multitude of locations and can be adjusted to give a warn-away chirp with just a light bump or a full-on alert for a breaking window.

Scorpion XO2 Bed Liner Coating

Are you using your Ford F150 or Toyota Tundra as it is intended—for heavy work? Some models of these trucks come with a bed liner from the factory, but even tougher and more durable is a spray-in coating designed to protect your vehicle as long as you own it. One company doing spray-on bed liners correctly is Scorpion. According to the chemists behind the product, Scorpion XO2 is an acrylic-reinforced, aliphatic, aromatic polyurethane. In simpler terms, it is a chemically-engineered product that uses the best characteristics of polyurethane. This gives Scorpion bed liner incredible strength, and when combined with a patented acrylic blend, adds ease of application and UV stability. In other words, it's a product that will survive the toughest conditions on the job site and at home.



what the manufacturer has to offer on the specification sheet. There are plenty of

Boyo 4-Channel Mobile DVR

Some car buyers may be aware of portable video recording devices. The technology became wildly popular in Russia, due to a lack of law enforcement and rampant corruption. Consider its applications here. Video could help you prove your innocence in a vehicle accident. Such devices typically attach to the windshield with a suction cup and record events as you are driving. For those who want to take it to the next level and make sure their automotive pride-and-joy is always being watched, Boyo has introduced a mobile 4-channel DVR that continuously records everything happening around your car, both while underway and parked. The system can be viewed remotely via a smartphone app. This DVR technology can help you keep an eye on your vehicle anywhere and anytime. *H*

4CH MOBILE DVR
VTR400E

Full HD 1920 x 1080p Digital Video Recorder with Wifi and GPS

- Full HD 1080P Recording
- SD Memory is compatible with up to 128GB
- Includes 8GB SD card
- Digital Zooming
- Built-in GPS with Google map playback with PC Viewer
- Low battery monitoring (automatic cut-off function)
- Recording file type: AVI
- Wifi app for iOS & Android
- PC Viewer Support: Windows XP, 7, 8, and 10
- 30fps + 30fps + 30fps + 30fps (4CH)
- Size 128 x 112 x 25mm
- Live Wifi monitoring through the app

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Fall/Winter 2014



Fall/Winter 2012

A Decades Retrospective— Our Story

By Gil Walker

Decades magazine, so named because the Hoffman Auto Group has been in business since 1921, is now more than a decade old itself. Happy belated birthday, *Decades!* Hoffman Auto Group, run by the same family for four generations amounting to nearly a century, proudly unveiled its premier issue in Spring 2006. In the magazine's 11-plus years of existence, Hoffman Auto has published 26 issues, this being the 27th.

Co-chairman I. Bradley Hoffman remembers what led to the birth of *Decades*. “The genesis was seeing advertising pieces delivered to our homes that would just get thrown in the trash. We thought, ‘Wouldn’t it be different if you received something in the mail that was helpful and entertaining—something you actually wanted to read?’”

Although in-house publications directed at employees are not unusual, in-house publications to benefit customers are a relative rarity. *Decades* magazine was a success from the beginning. This Hoffman Family collaboration started at a distribution of 35,000 and currently reaches between 50,000 and 70,000 households.

“The feedback has been terrific,” enthuses Bradley, “mainly because we have remained true to our original idea—make it enjoyable! For each issue, we bring 10 to 12 people together around a table for a session of crunching ideas about what might interest people in the community.

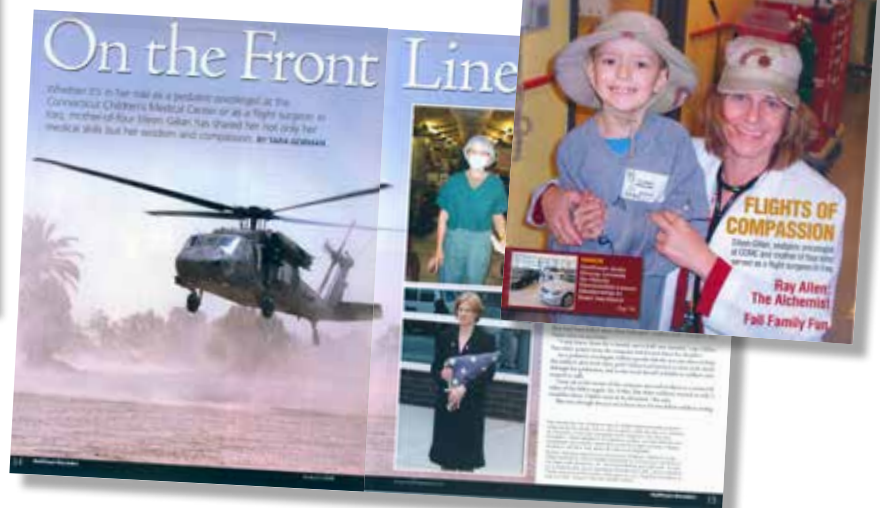
There have been opportunities for clients to provide feedback through surveys and voting, and the response has been tremendous. People everywhere tell us how much they enjoy *Decades*. Their biggest complaint is that we don’t send it more often.”



Winter 2016



Autumn 2008



Decades could have been taken to a pay model; however, the Hoffmans chose not to. "We closely monitor its content and limit the number of in-house ads. Branding has always been of paramount importance to us and we wanted to maintain the enjoyable lifestyle feel of the magazine."

Despite *Decades* being a lifestyle magazine, it would be disingenuous to suggest that vehicles haven't been a significant part of its coverage. *Decades* is, after all, produced by a family-owned auto group and cars are a significant part of people's lifestyle. In every issue, *Decades* has run a Details column featuring new technology that improves the car-owning experience. In each issue except the first, *Decades* has included a Snapshots section featuring Hoffman Auto news bites, which tend to be dominated by two topics: dealership news and philanthropic news (with plenty of overlap between the two). Beyond those two topics, *Decades* has featured 10 vehicle roundups, 15 actual car reviews or previews, and numerous other car-related articles.

Philanthropy has been just as prevalent in the magazine, an indication of how important giving back to the community is to the Hoffman Family. The organizations which have received financial and editorial support from Hoffman Auto are many. In addition to regular coverage in Snapshots, the first 26 issues have included, by our count, 34 philanthropy articles where a different community partner and its cause are championed.

When asked their favorite *Decades* stories, the Hoffmans cited covers that highlighted high school athletes. Christine Bendzinski, a former RHAM runner who graced the Spring/Summer 2014 cover, is in her senior campaign at Bucknell University, where she has excelled both athletically and academically. Bendzinski holds the Bucknell records in the outdoor 800m (2:08.76), 1,500m (4:19.99), mile (4:45.36) and 3,000m (9:27.37). She is a 17-time All-Patriot League selection, four-time All-East performer and two-time NCAA qualifier, and she has twice been the Patriot League scholar-athlete of the year.




Spring/Summer 2012

Here are a few articles we feel have especially stood out over time:

- Susan Cornell's profile of weatherman Scot Haney in the Premier Issue
- Bob Chaplin's feature on Connecticut wineries in Summer 2006
- Tara M. Cantore's profile of high school archer Catherine Sabi in Spring 2007
- Roger Adler's feature on Hoffman Auto expansion plans in Summer 2007
- Rachel S. Cohen's feature on Connecticut theaters in Winter 2007
- Carol Latter's piece on Hartford's Titanic connection in Summer 2008
- Tara Gorman's profile of flight surgeon Eileen Gillan in Autumn 2008
- Mike Briotta's profile of basketball player Ray Allen in Autumn 2008
- Carol Latter's feature on Hoffman's new branding in Spring/Summer 2009
- Carol Latter's feature on the new Connecticut Science Center in Spring/Summer 2009
- Raymond Bechard's history of the Berlin Turnpike in Spring 2011
- Ellis Parker's statewide burger roundup in Fall 2011
- Christopher Arnott's history of the XL Center in Spring/Summer 2012
- Christopher Arnott's roundup of Hartford's top 40 in history in Fall/Winter 2012
- Ellis Parker's interview of Miss USA Erin Brady in Fall/Winter 2014
- Christopher Arnott's history of Waterbury's Palace Theater in Spring/Summer 2016
- Nick Cretella's roundup of the top, and darkest, moments in Connecticut sports history in Winter 2016–17

Appearing on the Winter 2016–17 cover were former Cheshire Academy standouts (and Hamdenites) C.J. Holmes and Tarik Black, ranked Connecticut's runner-up and top football athletes in 2016, respectively. Holmes enrolled early at Notre Dame, where he is expected to work his way up the running back depth chart, but has been sidelined by a separated shoulder. Black, who enrolled early at the University of Michigan, scored Big Blue's first touchdown of the season and was its leading receiver after three games when a cracked foot necessitated an operation expected to sideline him for the remainder of the season. He has been sorely missed since.

With such an incredible variety of topics, *Decades* offers something for everyone. The Hoffman Family has found that their magazines are collectable and have a great shelf life. For those who haven't kept copies, PDFs of the last few issues published can be found at hoffmanauto.com/decades-magazine.htm. 

Decades by the Numbers

Vol. I, No. 1,	Premier Issue	Weatherman Scot Haney
Vol. I, No. 2,	Summer 2006	Yankees-Red Sox mixed-sport marriages
Vol. I, No. 3,	Autumn 2006	Connecticut Teacher of the Year Mary Kay Rendock
Vol. II, No. 1,	Spring 2007	Archer Catherine Sahi
Vol. II, No. 2,	Summer 2007	Hoffman Groundbreaking in Simsbury
Vol. II, No. 3,	Autumn 2007	Smart Car
Vol. II, No. 4,	Winter 2007	Ultimate Snow Day
Vol. III, No. 1,	Spring 2008	UConn's Chris Dailey
Vol. III, No. 2,	Summer 2008	Drummer Cindy Blackman
Vol. III, No. 3,	Autumn 2008	Flight Surgeon Eileen Gillan
Vol. IV, No. 1,	Spring/Summer 2009	Hoffman, Driven by Trust
Vol. IV, No. 2,	Autumn/Winter 2009	Capital Prep Students
Vol. V, No. 1,	Summer 2010	Portraits in Courage
Vol. V, No. 2,	Autumn 2010	Sports Journalist Hannah Storm
Vol. VI, No. 1,	Spring 2011	Wild at Heart Chefs
Vol. VI, No. 2,	Fall 2011	Connecticut's Best Burgers
Vol. VII, No. 1,	Spring/Summer 2012	XL Center
Vol. VII, No. 2,	Fall/Winter 2012	Hartford's Top 40 in History
Vol. VIII, No. 1,	Spring/Summer 2013	Lincoln Legacy
Vol. VIII, No. 2,	Fall/Winter 2013	25th Anniversary of Film Mystic Pizza
Vol. IX, No. 1,	Spring/Summer 2014	RHAM Runner Christine Bendzinski
Vol. IX, No. 2,	Fall/Winter 2014	Miss USA Erin Brady
Vol. X, No. 1,	Spring/Summer 2015	Family Businesses like Munson's Chocolates
Vol. X, No. 2,	Winter 2015	University of Hartford's John Gallagher
Vol. XI, No. 1,	Spring/Summer 2016	Waterbury's Palace Theater
Vol. XI, No. 2,	Winter 2016-17	Top High School Athletes C.J. Holmes & Tarik Black

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Hoffman Auto Employees Deliver Sweet Relief to Hurricane-Ravaged Puerto Rico

By Kathleen Cei

Immediately after Hurricane Maria tore its way through Puerto Rico, leaving a trail of unprecedented devastation in its wake, Hoffman Audi Service Manager (and Vega Baja, P.R. native) Elliot Matos knew what he had to do.

He had to help.

His mission: To get food, water and other essential supplies not only to members of his own family living on the island but also to members of his extended family—his co-workers at Hoffman Auto Group.

As it turns out, far more Hoffman employees than Elliot first realized have personal ties to Puerto Rico. These employees had loved

ones significantly impacted by Maria, the most powerful storm to make landfall there in 85 years. Family and friends were unreachable by phone or email, with the power grid and cellphone towers knocked out across the island. Many of them lived in remote, inland mountain towns or near rivers where bridges had been destroyed, areas nearly unreachable by





Left to right: Elliot Matos, Jimmy Velasquez, Jorge Ayala, Juan Ortiz and David Velazquez

relief workers due to washed-out roads and a mess of downed trees and power lines.

Elliot had a plan. He approached Hoffman Auto Group Co-Chairman I. Bradley Hoffman and presented the idea of setting up collection areas at each of the Hoffman Auto locations, where employees could donate supplies specifically designated to reach their loved ones in need. Elliot would personally deliver those items, ensuring they arrived at their exact intended destinations without delay.

"His response was an immediate yes," says Elliot, recalling his conversation. Not only was Hoffman on board with Elliot's plan to solicit help from fellow employees, but he also informed Elliot that the Hoffman Family

would donate \$10,000 to the cause—funding that made it possible to acquire the two giant shipping containers that were needed.

"Our philosophy has always been family first," notes Hoffman. "We operate that way both personally and professionally, and when it comes to our employees, they are the top priority. Many of our team members have been loyal to our company for 10 years or more, and when their lives are impacted by tragedies like the hurricane in Puerto Rico, there is no hesitation on our part to step in to support them."

The other element needed to get the job done—perhaps the most important—was a team. To have the right team of travel

companions was imperative for what would certainly not be a relaxing island vacation. Just as quickly as Elliot knew what he had to do, he knew exactly with whom he needed to do it. He turned to co-workers/friends Juan Ortiz (Service Technician/Mechanic), David Velasquez (Facilities Assistant) and Jimmy Velasquez (Facilities Foreman, and David's brother), each of whom he'd known or worked with for at least 10 years, and whose outstanding mechanical skills and fix-anything abilities made them perfect candidates. So did the fact that they, too, hailed from Puerto Rico. Their familiarity with its diverse geography would come in handy when navigating the extended and dangerous delivery route.

"Having people with different skill sets offered the best chance of overcoming the problems we were sure to find," says Elliot. "Beyond that, I needed people who would see this through with my same sense of resolve. I saw that in them. I told them they would be sleeping on the ground, there would be no electricity or running water, and that they would have to pay for their own airfare. They all agreed to do so. I had my team!"

To drum up staff support, Elliot, along



with Hoffman Auto Group's Director of Public Relations & Community Engagement Susan Lane, prepared a presentation, visiting each and every department at the Hoffman Auto dealerships personally to pitch the project.

"Hoffman Auto Group is not only a family-owned and family-operated company," says Susan, "it is one in which we recognize our employees and customers as an extension of family. What does family do in times of great need? You take care of each other. I cannot imagine the feeling of helplessness when you cannot hug your mother, speak to your father on the phone or lend a hand to your relatives when they need it most. I have the utmost respect and admiration for Elliot, Jimmy, David and Juan."

Donations, from employees and customers alike, started pouring in, far exceeding expectations. The team collected, packed and sorted bottled water, personal hygiene products, medical supplies, baby products, generators and other goods for about six weeks. Community members, schools and other organizations (such as Los Amigos Softball League, run by former Hoffman Auto

employee Peter Mercado) pitched in, too.

"Once word got out, my phone became very busy," notes Elliot.

In the end, more than 400,000 pounds of supplies in two stuffed containers were shipped by train and boat to a furniture warehouse in Puerto Rico (thanks to Elliot's brother-in-law, George Ayala), that served as the distribution site.

Boxes were marked with names and addresses. "Some [people] left notes inside the boxes. Some were super vague; a name and a town was all we were given to work with," recalls Elliot.

But a vague address would not deter this team. Neither did traveling in the dark, with no street lights, in the rain, in the wee hours from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. (the darkest, yet safest, time to travel to avoid would-be predators and looters) for eight days in a row in early November. "Not knowing if the vehicles could pass until we got there was very stressful, but it did keep us awake!" laughs Elliot.

Keeping a sense of humor was essential, as they located every single family (even those with "super vague" contact info) in about 25 different towns on the delivery route across the island, from Caguas to Toa Baja to Trujillo Alto and points in between.

"The guys and I joked about calling ourselves 'H.E.R.T.'—Hoffman Emergency Response Team. We laughed, and kept saying, 'Let's just put a H.E.R.T. on it' when we were worn out. We would get back up and have at it again. 'If you have a problem, put a H.E.R.T. on it.' It kept us loose, and we wouldn't take ourselves too seriously. Trust me, the levity helped."

Lack of power and phone service meant most recipients had no advance notice about four (well-meaning) strangers pulling up in a box truck, knocking on their door in the middle of the night, claiming Connecticut connections. They first had to earn trust.

Elliot cites among the most rewarding aspects of the experience "the look on people's faces as we found them." The team's satellite phones allowed families to connect from island to mainland and hear loved ones' voices for the first time in weeks.

"It's one thing to help," he notes. "It's another thing altogether to receive that level of gratitude from so many. It was overwhelming, and so emotional at times that it both fed us and drained us at once."

To fight off the feeling of sheer exhaustion, Elliot and his team continuously reminded themselves and each other why they were there. "We kept our promise in mind: Deliver to those families. That was the mission."

Mission accomplished. Selflessly, only after delivering to each and every member of their extended Hoffman Auto family, did they finally visit their own immediate families in Puerto Rico—the best reward one could imagine at the end of such an intense journey.

Once the men returned to Connecticut and went back to work, they were greeted with "hugs and tears of gratitude" from so many thankful coworkers, says Elliot.

"I'm exceptionally proud of what these men accomplished," says Hoffman, calling them "model employees, devoted to our company while also giving of themselves to enrich the local community through their personal service. It is imperative that we remember those who give unselfishly of themselves to help others when the tables turn and they are the ones in need."

Those who wish to continue the Puerto Rico hurricane relief efforts ignited by Elliot Matos can make a donation through his GoFundMe page, at <https://www.gofundme.com/kr7cv-puerto-rico-relief>

Remembering Top Connecticut TV Personalities, Past & Present

By Kristen Ruehl

Connecticut may be sandwiched between New York City and Boston, but the Hartford-New Haven Designated Market Area has showcased some inspiring television newscasters over the past couple of decades. Some might dismiss our daily programming as provincial, and consider positions on our news teams to be mere stepping stones to big-time jobs, but there is actually much good to be said about holding a position on a Connecticut news team.

An advantage of our smaller geographic stature is that it allows our newscasters a big reach. Our weather teams can legitimately highlight all four corners of our state in a single 60-second update. Our traffic reporters are likely commenting on highways that affect a majority of our commuters. Our sportscasters have built-in rivalries between passionate fan bases they can stoke.

We Nutmeggers grow to know and love our TV families because we are touched by the stories they are telling us. Our newscasters have walked our colonial cobblestones and shoveled our snow-laden sidewalks alongside us. They were, and in many cases still are, a part of our community. They are, quite simply, telling our stories.

Here, based on news reports and various online sources, are profiles of some of the best and brightest stars who have crossed Connecticut's television networks.

PAST TELEVISION PERSONALITIES

Ann Baldwin: For the past 22 years, Ann Baldwin has been the president and CEO of Baldwin Media, a strategic communications firm. Active in the communications arena for over 25 years, Baldwin worked as a reporter and anchor at NBC Connecticut (WVIT) in West Hartford and as a radio personality for *The Connection* on WTIC NewsTalk 1080, the largest radio station in Southern New England. She leverages her expertise from being on both sides of the camera to help clientele locally and nationally tell their story.

Not only has Baldwin conquered the changing landscape of communications, she has also made the decision to put a face and a voice to the scourge of alcoholism. She has



been instrumental in raising awareness about the disease in Connecticut by candidly and publicly sharing her own recovery story and helping others to understand the disease.

Mike "Bogey" Boguslawski: Mike Boguslawski, or "Bogey," as he is affectionately known in Connecticut, has always been, and is still, "in your corner." The Bristol native began his career as a natural problem-solver, which led to a newspaper column. His newspaper column led to a segment on Channel 8 (WTNH) in the 70s and 80s, and the rest was history—Hollywood history! *Bogey's Corner* became a segment that ran from 1999–2001 in Los Angeles. He has been quoted as saying he read "every single letter" from the bags of mail that Channel 8 would receive (and sometimes still does).



Mika Brzezinski: @MorningMika, as Mika Brzezinski is now popularly known, made Connecticut her home in the early years of her career. In Connecticut, Brzezinski is much more than the Joe Scarborough sidekick and Trump tweetstorm target that has propelled her name for good, bad and ugly into the national vernacular. She is the mom that openly and proudly shared her personal and professional milestones with us—her Nutmeg audience—when she welcomed her first daughter into this world. She has since navigated through the national television landscape and landed as the co-host of MSNBC's *Morning Joe*. A best-selling author and champion of women's right to equal pay, Brzezinski holds a special place in our hearts.



Logan Byrnes: For seven years we had the pleasure of waking up with Logan Byrnes, a legal eagle who served as Fox 61 (WTIC)'s *Morning*



Denise D'Ascenzo, Dennis House, Gayle King and David Ushery

News anchor. From six to eight a.m., he brought his sunshine smile to our all-weather winters and festive falls. That said, never were we more enamored with this morning-man than when he revealed his carefully-crafted wedding proposal that took place in Paris on New Year's Eve under the fireworks with Champagne in reach—essentially defining the hashtag “#nailedit.” It seems inevitable that the Fox affiliate in Los Angeles would scoop up this avid traveler, triathlete and national news contributor.



Geoff Fox:

There seems no clearer example of the intensity of the Connecticut television fan base than the story of Geoff Fox. A long-time meteorologist for Channel 8, Fox then moved on to



Fox 61 and followed that up with several stints at local stations in Nebraska and California. Most recently he found himself back in action with Channel 8 as a guest meteorologist who reports from his home studio in California. With every move he has made, his fan base has loyally been beside him; never has this been more apparent than currently while Fox is battling cancer (and winning, as last reported). Fox recently declined an offer from Channel 8 to continue on in a part-time position at the station.

Hilton Kaderli:

Channel 3 (WFSB)'s Hilton Kaderli had a familiar cadence that was unmistakable. To say that Kaderli was a staple of our weather universe would be an understatement. Coining the phrase “gullywumper,” his following was so extensive it led to advertising deals and appearances even after he tried to retire. Who would have ever guessed that this Oklahoma native would become such a New England fixture?



Gayle King: Nowadays, when you google the name Gayle King, she is presented as an American television personality, editor-at-large of *O Magazine* and a co-anchor of *CBS This Morning*, but we know King as a girl from Glastonbury.

For 18 years, she brought personality and presence to all her Connecticut endeavors. And then, of course, there was Oprah. Who doesn't remember King's road trips and glamping experiences with the famous BFF? King has since worked in print, radio and several national spots. We hope she makes it back to Bricco soon.



Tom Monahan: It is safe to say that the political landscape in Connecticut was shaped, in large part, by NBC Connecticut's Tom Monahan. Monahan could ask the toughest of questions with the most gentlemanly demeanor. It surprised no one that he was the first to interview then Vice-Presidential Candidate Joseph I. Lieberman when the Senator had been

chosen to run with Presidential Candidate Al Gore, or that he led the charge on the coverage of embattled Governor John Rowland. Monahan left NBC Connecticut in 2010 after 45 years of service to journalism.



as host of *Access Hollywood* and *Access Hollywood Live*, appears on *Dateline NBC* and *NBC Nightly News*, and is the *Today Show* West Coast anchor.

Joanne Nesti: Joanne Nesti is the success story we all want to see. A former substitute teacher, Nesti brought her ability to command a class to the camera and never looked back. She successfully executed 25 years of reporting in the Hartford/New Haven media market, retiring in 2006, but not before mediating the highly-watched Lieberman-Lamont campaign debate. When Nesti left the anchor chair, she didn't leave the people of Connecticut behind. Rather, she continued her charitable work in earnest, focusing on the preservation of important local landmarks, among other things.



Janet Peckinpaugh:

Janet Peckinpaugh was a familiar face in the nightly news anchor chair at Channel 3 in the 90s. Having started her career in politics, Peckinpaugh circled back to that arena as both a campaign manager for Lisa Wilson-Foley and as a candidate herself for Connecticut's 2nd Congressional district. She continues her efforts on Nutmeggers' behalf as a voice of charitable action throughout the state and works as a Realtor out of Essex.



Natalie Morales: Natalie Morales, or Natalie L. Morales-Rhodes since marrying on August 22, 1998, is celebrated as one of America's most influential Latinas in journalism. Nutmeggers remember that the start of her journalistic career took place with NBC 30 (WVIT) right here in Connecticut during the late 90s. Morales even co-hosted and reported for the Emmy-nominated documentary, *Save Our Sound*. More recently, she has replaced Billy Bush



Beasley Reece:

After leaving the NFL where he played for the Dallas Cowboys, the New York Giants and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Beasley Reece began a new



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career as a sports analyst. At the beginning, Reece spent some time as the sports director at NBC 30 while also serving as an NBC analyst for the 1992 Summer Olympics. He later moved to CBS3 (KYW) in Philadelphia as sports director and in 2012 was inducted into the Broadcast Pioneers of Philadelphia's Hall of Fame.

Pat Sheehan: A Connecticut Journalism Hall of Famer, Pat Sheehan left his reporting career after decades of working in radio and with the major network affiliates in our state. Now, Sheehan is a champion of the "fourth estate," founding the Connecticut Television Network and serving as the chairman of the Connecticut Public Affairs Network, its governing board. His actions offer our citizenry a greater glimpse into the workings of the General Assembly at the Connecticut State House.



Dave Smith: When Dave Smith moved on from Channel 3 in 1995, he was the TV sports anchor with the longest tenure in the Hartford/New Haven market—more than 19 years. For those of us who followed the Hartford Whalers, it seemed like we watched them through his lens. Gerry Brooks, who worked with Smith for 14 years before moving on to Channel 30 (WVIT), said no one knew the market better than Smith did. Beasley Reece, sports director at Channel 30, paid tribute to Smith as the most "no-nonsense guy in the market. He has opinions and states them and gives sports without any fluff."



David Ushery: Thanks to the "Kidsworld" phenomenon, David Ushery may hold the Connecticut record for the earliest start in journalism. Born in Bloomfield, he was only 11 years old when he was chosen after a statewide search to host a

local edition of the national syndicated show. A UConn graduate, former employee of the *Hartford Courant* and Channel 3 alum, Ushery—now with several awards and his own show, *Moms and the City* and a *Dad Named David* under his belt—has done right by Connecticut.



Chris Wragge: Another local gone national, Chris Wragge was a sports reporter for NBC 30 in the early 1990s. He made his way up through the sports world for nearly 20 years before landing as the co-anchor for *CBS This Morning*, the nationally broadcast morning flagship. Since the show's re-vamp, Wragge has made his way back into



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the morning anchor chair for a CBS affiliate in New York.

CURRENT TELEVISION PERSONALITIES

Gerry Brooks: No one tells it better than Gerry Brooks. A Silver Circle of the New England Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences award winner, an honor for some who have been in broadcasting for 25 years or more, Brooks has been covering Connecticut since 1974. Currently, we watch him on weekdays at 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. on NBC Connecticut. According to his biography, "he's had a hand in covering virtually every major news, weather and sports story in Connecticut since 1974, including the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School, the attacks on 9/11, the death of Gov. Ella Grasso, the resignation and trials of Gov. John Rowland, the collapse of the Mianus River Bridge on I-95, every



Travelers Championship golf tournament and the UConn basketball championships." Brooks speaks with us, not at us, and for that he has stood the test of television time.

Rich Coppola: For 28 years, Rich Coppola has been with Fox 61. As the acting sports director, he has taken his ESPN roots and made his own way in the Connecticut sports world. In 1991 and 1997, Coppola won the Associated Press Award for best sports broadcast. A University of New Haven graduate, he has made Connecticut his home then and now.

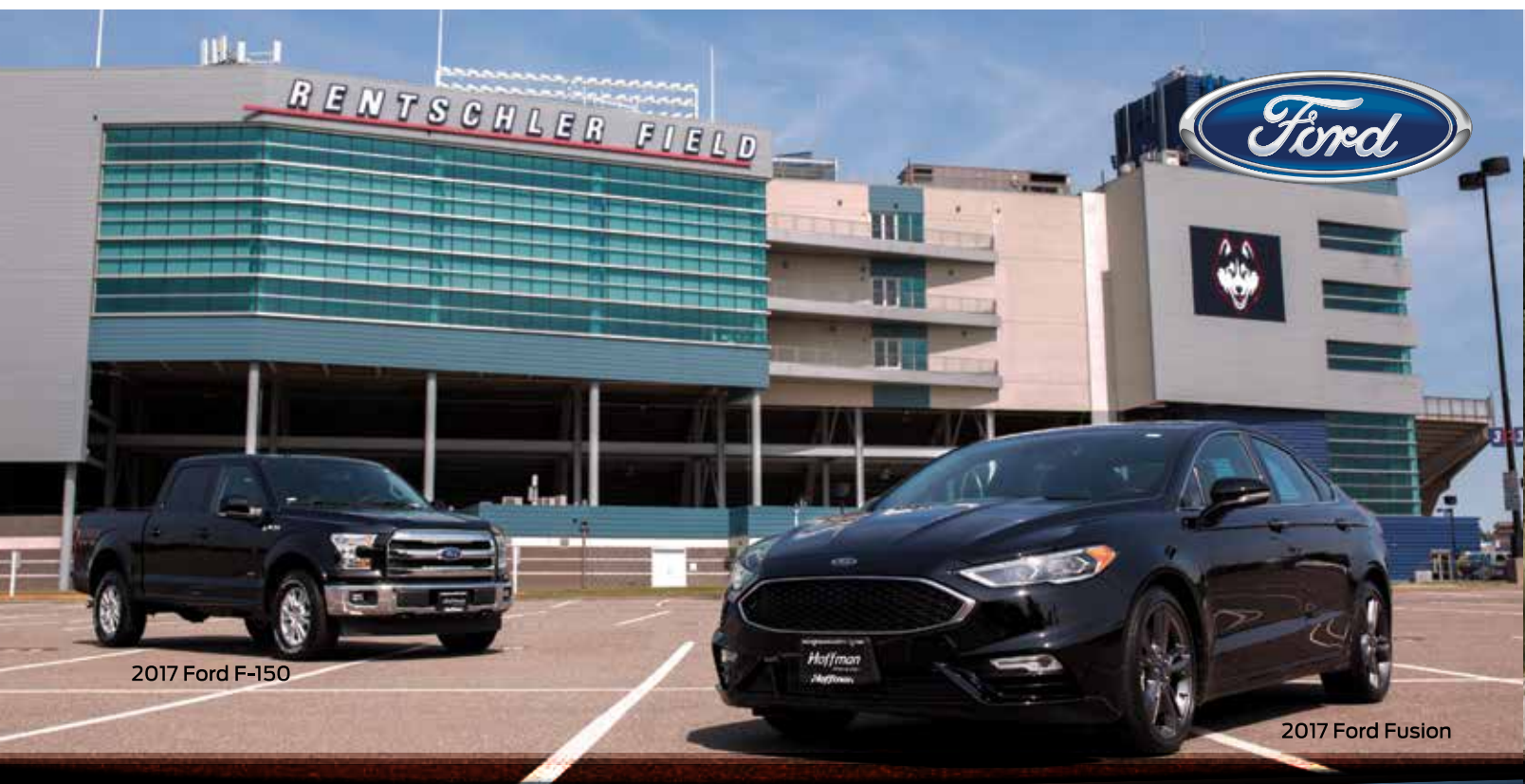


Joe D'Ambrosio: Joe D'Ambrosio clocks in at about 27 years speaking sports with Connecticut fans. The host of several sports radio shows over the years in conjunction with his work on TV, Joe is a voice of

sports reason and UConn fandom. As one *Hartford Courant* reporter put it best, "D'Ambrosio has been in the market forever and the voice of UConn athletics nearly as long. He has the stethoscope on our state's sports heartbeat. He walked that line between sharp talk show host and play-by-play broadcaster, approved by the school, as well as could be expected."



Denise D'Ascenzo: Timeless is the only appropriate word here. Denise D'Ascenzo is the class act of Connecticut news. She has had the rare opportunity to celebrate a silver jubilee (25 years) with Channel 3



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in an industry that is known for cut-throat, ratings-based decision-making. A Connecticut constant, we know that when D'Ascenzo graces the airwaves we will be greeted with drama-free TV and an even-tempered interpretation of our daily news.

Scot Haney: If it is happening in Connecticut, Scot Haney, who graced the cover of our first *Decades* magazine in Spring 2006, knows about it. Taking a page out of Hilton Kaderli's book, Haney has infused our weather reports with verve and veracity since becoming a Channel 3 meteorologist in 1998. He takes his passion off-camera, too. A commonly sought after master of ceremonies throughout the state, this *Better Connecticut* host has gone above and beyond to make Connecticut better.



Dennis House: Dennis House is the "Hartfordite!" father, blogger and news anchor.

House is not just taking our politicians to task on *Face the State*, but he is also setting an example of citizenship with his involvement in local charities and his encouragement of Hartford's renaissance. A nightly newscaster now, after years of on-scene reporting for national news events like 9/11 and the first World Trade Center bombing, he has also served the test of time celebrating his 20-year anniversary with WFSB.



Kevin Nathan:

A 35-time-E Emmy-nominated, 10-time Emmy-winning sportscaster, Kevin Nathan has been to the Olympics and back again. With the UConn Huskies making their



meteoric rise during his tenure at NBC Connecticut, he is continually at the crossroads of opportunity and preparation. Nathan's in-depth and on-the-scene sports coverage has been counted on since 1996 to cover some of the greatest moments in hometown basketball history, and he has been voted by his peers the Connecticut Sportscaster of the Year seven times.

Al Terzi:

Al Terzi is popularly known as "The Dean of Connecticut News Anchors." Starting in the 1970s, he worked for Channel 3, Channel 8 and Fox 61 News. This Air Force Intelligence Operations veteran and UConn Law graduate has been at the helm of many of our most celebrated and heartbreaking stories over the years. His son, Tony Terzi, continues the family tradition at Fox 61 News. Terzi currently co-anchors the Sunday morning current events program *The Real Story*. **H**



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The Rise of the Food Trucks

Story and photography by Nick Caito

It's a sunny afternoon at a Farmington office park and lunch has just arrived. Workers save their documents, minimize windows, and get up from their cubicles to head toward the parking lot. This lunch doesn't come in a bag or a box—it comes from the side of a truck.

Food trucks aren't exactly new, though their widespread popularity in the Nutmeg State is relatively recent. Modern mobile eateries have been a metropolitan movement in hip urban centers like New York for years, and exhibit stark differences from the classic roasted nut or hot dog stands of the Big Apple.

Today's lunch is from the truck now known as Craftbird. Formerly called Yardbird and Co., a naming dispute with an out-of-state business forced a rebranding, but owners Mallary Kohlmeier and Eric Stagl plan to keep slinging delicious fried chicken sandwiches, potato wedges, and mac & cheese.

"Every Wednesday we get a food truck that comes here. We give some suggestions and depending on what works, it comes back," said Jean Louis, while waiting for his turn to order. "[Craftbird] is one of the popular ones. I think they've been back four or five times now."

As the turn of the decade brought a sudden burst of "foodie-ism," along with it came a rise in entrepreneurs seeking to make their culinary dreams a reality. Mobile eateries provide a relatively low cost of entry, a simplified business structure and the flexibility to go to the customers.

Some owners have restaurant experience (Stagl cooked with the Barcelona and Max Restaurant Groups), while for others it's their first foray (Kohlmeier worked in special education).

"Separately, we both had interest in opening our own businesses. I didn't necessarily think mine was going to land in food, but I'm glad that it did," Kohlmeier says. She began the truck with Stagl a little over a year ago. "We spent a lot of time eating at food trucks around Connecticut and in New York and Boston, and each time we did we got more and more excited about the idea."

Items like barbecue, poutine, buffalo chicken meatballs, roast pork belly, and brick-oven pizza can regularly be found on the road all over the state. The increased popularity of such foods has led to a greater variety of eateries taking the food truck leap. Food trucks may never be destination dining, but they can be perfect go-tos for one's favorite food.

"I was at the hardware store filling up the propane tanks, and a guy said 'Oh, you're that lady who has the lunch cart, aren't you?'" Kohlmeier recalls. "Some people haven't realized that we're not selling turkey sandwiches and buttered rolls at a train station anymore. It's really



high-quality food done in a very fast environment.”

Things were different only a few short years ago. Josh and Jillian Moskites started the Whey Station truck in 2011 after a few false starts at opening a restaurant. The two Johnson & Wales graduates soon found themselves on the cutting edge of the new trend.

“My husband asked ‘Would you consider a truck?’” said Jillian. “I thought it was a joke at first because there wasn’t much of a food truck scene in Connecticut at the time. It was definitely a stretch.

“They weren’t hip, they weren’t ‘in’ around here. It was kind of an interesting and new idea at the time, so we wanted to do something that would be a little more approachable for people.”

Finding that approachability was easy—the two had worked at fromageries owned by Josh’s mom, so making grilled cheese sandwiches was the obvious choice. With ingredients like prosciutto, roasted garlic aioli, guacamole, and tater tots, the gourmet audience was also covered.

At that time, there were few places in Connecticut one could consistently find food trucks. Those places, however, had been mainstays for decades. Hartford’s Bushnell Park was one, Old State House Square another. Both catered solely to the lunch crowd. Elm City residents managed better, with a wide variety of Latin American fare along Long Wharf Drive and a veritable United Nations of food near Yale-New Haven Hospital and Ingalls Rink (a.k.a. The Whale). However, for the next generation of truck vendors, finding new and unique places to vend was a challenge.

“...It’s fresh food on the go.”

Cook Mark Rubin of Craftbird taking orders, preparing sandwiches

While these trucks are based out of specific towns, their locations change on a daily basis. Check each listing for more location information.

NoRA Cupcake Truck, Middletown—

The same hip attitude as the bakery serving the same decadent cupcakes, but on wheels. www.noracupcake.com

Fryborg, Milford—With so many toppings and combos, you'll never think of fries the same way again.

www.fryborg.com

Fishy Tales By Hot Pots, Hartford—

Soul food, jerk, and plenty of fried seafood. www.facebook.com/pages/Fishy-Tales-By-Hot-Pots/443328289198328

Verona On Wheels Pizza Fire Truck, Waterbury—Sal serves wood-fired pizza out of a retired fire engine outfitted with a brick oven. www.pizzafiretruck.com

The Cheese Truck, New Haven—

From the owners of Caseus Bistro & Fromagerie comes this truck with gourmet grilled cheese and tomato soup. www.thecheesetruck.com

Gmonkey, Branford—This high-quality vegan food truck makes frequent appearances at farmers' markets in Hartford and New Haven counties.

www.gmonkeymobile.com

Chief Brody's Bahn Mi, New Haven—

This truck slinging Vietnamese sandwiches is frequently found at breweries and festivals around the state. www.chiefbrodys.com

Mexcalli, New Haven—One of the many taco trucks on Long Wharf Drive, the al pastor and cabeza heads a list of personal favorites. www.facebook.com/mexicanthai/

Poutine Gourmet, Plantsville—This old train caboose dishes out the rich Canadian classic of fries, gravy, and cheese curds. www.facebook.com/Poutinegourmet/

Greekin' Out, Glastonbury—Selling all the Greek classics, it's the go-to place for a gyro, souvlaki or baklava. www.greekinout.com



"I remember contacting farmers' markets and begging them to [let us] come in. They weren't really receptive, too many of them," said Josh. "It's funny how now every farmers' market is contacting the truck to come out."

Whey Station's big break came when they were contacted by Hartford's Xfinity Theatre, the largest music venue in the state. "It was like boot camp for us," says Jillian. "We learned how to put out a lot of food, made our mistakes early and streamlined the process."

The truck was in its fifth season working with the venue, serving grilled cheese to concertgoers, and had grown to include a trailer. Unfortunately, the truck is currently out of commission, the result an accident in late October. The Moskites hope to have a replacement by spring while continuing to utilize the trailer for catering and late-night stops at the Wesleyan campus.

While many vendors brought restaurant backgrounds to the food truck business, for others it was quite the opposite, their food truck experience paving the way to brick-and-mortar operations. The Lucky Taco truck, which started shortly after Whey Station in 2011, rolled into a space on Manchester's Main Street two years ago.

More recently, Roy and Heather Riedl, owners of the Mercado truck, opened the

fast-casual rotisserie chicken restaurant called El Pollo Guapo on the Berlin Turnpike in Wethersfield.

"I ask myself the question every day, are we crazy for doing this?" Heather says. "There's a degree of flexibility with the food truck, we were able to set our own schedule, but in other aspects it was really hard for our business."

Mercado cooks up what they refer to as "Span-ish" food, a take on the flavors and style of Catalonia with a localized spin. Empanadas, duck fat potatoes with fried egg, queso frito (fried cheese) with truffle honey, and arroz con pollo are all menu mainstays.

After working together at West Hartford's Barcelona, the Riedls started by cooking for friends before buying a catering trailer. Quickly outgrowing the trailer, they bought a former DHL delivery truck from Fishy Tales By Hot Pot. Using high-quality local ingredients, Mercado is truly a gourmet farm-to-truck venture. The complex style of cooking didn't exactly lend itself to a relatively bare-bones truck.

"We were not very efficient, we didn't have a dishwashing machine or a walk-in fridge," Heather says. "We were really getting food, preparing it that day, going out and selling it, then coming back and cleaning up

like crazy. We'd be working ten hours for [being on site at] a three-hour event."

Having a commissary kitchen was born out of necessity, and it only made sense to serve food out of the space as well. Heather says moving from a small operation to more than a dozen employees has been a learning experience but also a rewarding challenge.

Despite the drastic increase in the number of mobile eateries on the road, there's an ever-growing demand fueling expansion. Carnivals, farmers' markets and brewery tasting rooms seem incomplete without food arriving on four wheels, and festivals dedicated to food trucks have cropped up everywhere from the Big E to Hartford's Riverfront Plaza to the New Britain Bees stadium.

"The perception now from the consumer is that they can go out and get something from a food truck that they can get at a restaurant, and they can get it in 5 minutes as opposed to sitting down and waiting," says Heather. "It's fresh food on the go." **H**



"Spanish Gyro" from Mercado, with rotisserie chicken, crema, plantains, pico de gallo and pickled onions.



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The Three Soldiers, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, DC



The Vietnam

By Lynn Fredricksen

More than 50 years have passed since American involvement in the Vietnam War escalated on March 8, 1965. Three area veterans have generously agreed to share their wartime experiences, all of which attest to the fact that there is no such thing as a good war.

According to veteran sources, 58,000 Americans were killed in action in Vietnam between 1956 and 1975—612 of them were from Connecticut. Among the 2.7 million surviving Vietnam veterans, few returned unscathed.

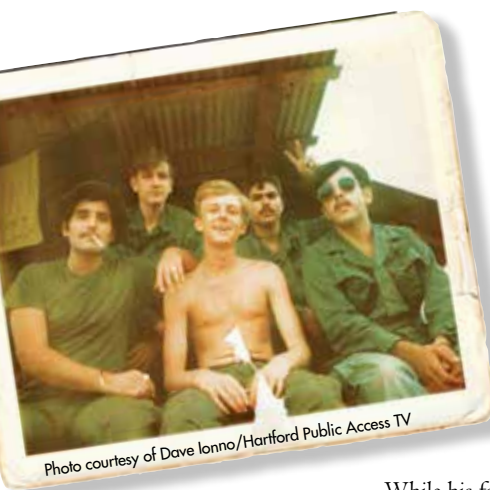


Photo courtesy of Dave Ionno/Hartford Public Access TV

At 18, Hartford resident Dave Ionno wasn't old enough to vote when he enlisted in the Army and went to serve in Vietnam as a medic from 1970 to 1971.

"I had just graduated from high school," says Ionno, who grew up with a military father who moved the family over the years to multiple locations around the world. I always felt a sense of duty and honor."

While his father's years of service instilled in him the importance of military service, it was his father who tried desperately to talk him out of it.

"He knew what war was like," Ionno says. "I was very naïve. Innocent would be a good term. I had all these ideas about glory and that we were helping the Vietnamese people. I kind of bought into the whole thing."

While Fred Louis, who served in the Army from 1967 to 1969, describes his upbringing in Brooklyn, N.Y. as "pretty normal," his experience in Vietnam was anything but.

Having participated in an anti-war demonstration in Central Park in the spring of 1967, Louis had his own ideas about how to approach his service.

"I went in kicking and screaming and determined to keep a low profile," Louis says. "But what happened was I had very high test scores going in and was given an interview to apply for Officer Candidate School and I pretty much laughed in their faces."

His reaction was ill-received to the point where he felt officials were sending him off to Vietnam not caring if he returned alive or not, Louis says.

Like Ionno and Louis, New Haven native Ray Fowler also served in Vietnam. Unlike them, Fowler is a career Marine who also saw war in the Dominican Republic, Beirut and Desert Storm.

"I served 26 years in the Marine Corps and now I've been out for 26 years," Fowler says. "In wars before Vietnam we had one goal: go in there, end the threat, and let's go home and resume our lives. In Vietnam we went in and had no goal and no time frame for how long we were going to remain. We went in very often not knowing the government we were defending or even who we were fighting against."


While all three men described harrowing experiences, it's Louis' years-later account that seems especially spine-tingling.

"Being mortared and shot at is an absolutely terrifying experience no matter who you are," Louis recalls. "The adrenaline just brings that right out and you're instantly sober and trying to remember your training and how to react. It's a feeling of terror and helplessness, especially after a mortar attack, and you're just hoping the next round doesn't hit you."

A piece of shrapnel remains lodged in Louis' neck, a souvenir from what he maintains was his most terrifying night in Vietnam.

"I was absolutely sure of not seeing the next day," Louis says of the night a satchel bomb went off just inches from his face. "I didn't know what had happened. I remember crawling around the ground looking for my weapon, and I was in the process of slipping into a bunker when this thing went off in front of me. I knew they were close and all it would take was a grenade being thrown into the hole and four or five of us would be dead."

War's Continuing Impact



Currently, he has a television show through Hartford Public Access Television. It's called "Voices of Veterans," and in it Ionno shares his story and resources.

"It's a 30-minute show, and me and another veteran have been doing them every Tuesday," says Ionno, who recently retired as an Assistant Librarian for Hartford Public Library.

Ionno also takes comfort in being part of both Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Veterans for Peace. He also serves on the Hartford Veterans Committee and the Metropolitan District Corporation. "I'm working with vets with bad discharge, opiate addiction and trying to... make them aware that there are places they can go and services they can access," Ionno says.

Unlike Ionno, Louis opted not to discuss his war experiences. When he returned home he took great comfort in spending time with his best friend, another veteran who Louis insists "saw a lot more crap than I did."

"When I got home, he was my debriefing," Louis says. "We spent three days together, hardly eating, hardly sleeping, just exchanging stories. That saved me a lot of grief. We didn't have to explain anything. We knew."

Louis still suffers from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), depression and has been through a divorce.

"Looking back, that was certainly part of my PTSD," he says. He adds that, despite numerous people urging him to seek treatment, he declined for more than 20 years. "I kept saying a year in combat didn't affect me at all and that I was fine."

These days life is better for Louis. His two sons are grown and doing well. Since seeking treatment, he's done a fair amount of public speaking about his experience—something he says turned out to be helpful after all. He has remarried, and he and his wife are enjoying a new granddaughter.

"I want people to know that war is your worst nightmare times 10," Louis says. "I'm hesitant to say there's such a thing as a just war. I want to emphasize that war is horror and should be avoided at all costs."

Fowler describes his return from Vietnam as positively eerie. He recalls that, by the time

he returned, the attitude toward the war had changed so much that authorities had to establish a separate airport terminal for returning soldiers.

"We were processed without new orders and we were just suddenly turned loose," Fowler says. "It was like stepping from one world into another."

But Fowler is enjoying life these days. He got married when he returned from Vietnam, and he and his wife raised a son and a daughter, both of whom he supported when they each made their own decision not to enlist in the military.

"Here's what I believe," Fowler says. "The United States is a great country. If I believe that and want to put any substance behind it, then I have to believe that anything worth living for must also be worth dying for. That's why I volunteered for the military."

Resources for Veterans:

■ **Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.** is a national non-profit founded in 1978 that is committed to helping all veterans. Funded with no contribution from the government, it is the only organization chartered by the U.S. Congress and dedicated to Vietnam veterans and their families. Visit <https://vva.org/>

■ **Veterans Support Foundation** is a non-profit humanitarian and education organization geared to improve the quality of life for veterans and their families. Visit <http://vsf-usa.org/>

■ **Veterans For Peace** is comprised of veterans, their family members, and allies. It is an international group that accepts veteran members from all service branches. Dedicated to cultivating a culture of peace while exposing the true costs of war, this group aims to heal the wounds of war. The group has more than 120 chapters in the U.S. and overseas. Visit <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/>

For a link to Dave Ionno's cable access television show, "Voices of Veterans," visit <http://www.hpatv.org/vod/> **H**

Three soldiers from Louis' unit died that night and 37 others were injured.

As returning soldiers, all three had very different experiences and channeled them in different ways.

Ionno, who married before going to Vietnam, spent the first year of his marriage away from his wife. The couple went on to have four daughters, all of whom he is determined to keep out of the military.

"It's been my experience that men in the military don't treat women the right way," Ionno says. He adds that it's a topic he regularly brings up when he speaks in area schools. It's these speaking engagements that led Ionno to pursue other avenues to try to help fellow veterans.

"My focus is on the hurt and what we can do to stop the pain," Ionno says. "As a medic that was always my focus anyway."

Kids Racing Cars

By Jack Fader Photography by Dilys Wolfram

Hoffman Audi of New London General Manager Joe Thomas has been involved in the racing community for what seems like his whole life, but he still gets the same joy from it that he did when he began racing quarter-midget cars years ago by helping his own kids with their budding racing careers.



Hannah Thomas and Joe Thomas

Thomas' children, Hannah and Cooper, who are 11 and 7 respectively, are both drivers in a quarter-midget series in Thompson, Conn. that runs from May to September every summer. Thomas enjoys having his kids involved in the racing community because it allows him to see a side of them he says most parents don't get to see.

"Racing puts the kids in control," says Thomas. "They have to make the decisions with their cars on the track on their own, which is something most kids their age don't get to experience. When they are out there, they are on their own."

Quarter-midget racing gets its name from the reduced size of the car the kids are driving. A quarter-midget car is typically about a quarter of the size of a normal "midget" car, which are driven by adults at most local speedways. Children ages five to 16 can participate. Quarter-midget racing is divided into 13 regions across the United States and Canada, with each region being home to one or more quarter-midget clubs. Racers from all over these regions, New England for example, congregate at the club week after week to race on 1/20 mile dirt or concrete ovals.



Major NASCAR stars such as Jeff Gordon, Tony Stewart, and Connecticut native Joey Logano all got their start in quarter-midget cars. All three drivers return to their smaller tracks from time to time to race. Most notable is Stewart, who retired from NASCAR to his home track to race dirt-track cars in an environment with considerably less pressure than the national series.

Thomas, who raced quarter-midget cars himself as a child before rising through the racing series, says participating in racing gives his kids more experience than simply making split-second decisions on the track.

"The kids are definitely very involved with setting up their cars. They understand that their cars are specialized machines that have to be tuned and tweaked to ensure the car has speed and that it is safe to drive," says Thomas. "And some of the kids can really drive, they are better than most of the people who drive on the roads, at a very young age."

Hannah, who started at age seven, and Cooper, who started at five, both have full seasons of racing under their belts. Thomas has noticed that as they have advanced in their racing careers, they have become more comfortable with the setup of their cars.

"They have started to get an understanding of what the car needs, and can communicate to [Thomas] about what they need."

Thomas says he appreciates that he can have these important conversations with his kids, which he acknowledges not many parents can in this day and age.

"We go to the track on the weekends for 12 hours, and they don't have their iPad or TV, and it's one of the last places where kids can be involved in something that they are doing with their own hands and can see rewards for their hard work."



Thomas believes these types of actions teach his kids irreplaceable lessons. The kids see everyone helping each other out, no matter the rivalry, and are taught that no matter what, everyone is there to have fun and be safe. While everyone wants trophies, there is more to life and racing than that.

Dana DiMatteo, who also began his racing career in quarter-midgets and currently races SK Lights at the Waterford Speedbowl in Waterford, Conn., says he has seen such selflessness through all of his racing career, even up to the NASCAR circuits.

DiMatteo points to an instance where Ryan Preece, who recently won a NASCAR Xfinity race, the second level of NASCAR racing, gave him necessary equipment to finish his own season.

expense in both time and money. It takes a lot of time in the garage and on the track to get the car to run as it should, and if you inevitably get in a crash, it can cost a lot of money to fix.

Thomas won't push his kids to continue their racing careers past quarter-midgets, but says he will support them as far as they want to go, and appreciates the help he gets from his wife, Jen, who has been involved in racing since they were married, and from the Hoffman family.

"With school and other things, like the career I have at Hoffman, you have to rely on others for some help with the car, and we are lucky to have people who have our back."

However, Thomas says money does not necessarily decide whether or not you can advance in racing.

While at the track, the kids are focused on setting up their cars, but are also able to be part of a tight-knit community that looks out for each other. Thomas says that when the kids are not working on their cars, they are hanging out with the friends they have made through the sport, whether it be playing basketball in the infield or even a simple game of tag.

Thomas says this type of experience for his kids, being a part of a close group of people at the track, is emblematic of the racing community as a whole.

"People really help each other at all levels of the racing community. At our track, if one kid gets in a crash and has to come out of the race, you will have a large group of people there to help them repair the car. Maybe 15 dads or moms will go over to work on the car, no matter if the damaged car is a rival that they are fighting with for points."

"[Preece] gave me an extra seat from his shop so that I could race, and comes back to the tracks in Connecticut all the time to offer advice and even race the modified cars he grew up in."

At every level, the racing community looks out for one another, and Thomas has appreciated seeing his daughter pay attention to that as she has become more ingrained in that community.

"As she has become able to keep up with racing news on her own, she sees how the community gives support to people who have been hurt in a big crash or fire, and I can see her really want to be a part of that closeness moving forward."

Thomas says that the largest drawback to driving a race car, no matter the age, is the

"If you are good enough, people who maybe can't get in their car for whatever reason will find you and have you drive their car. There are people out there that would rather spend their money chasing wins at a small race track than buying yachts, they are so passionate about racing."

Thomas himself continues to work as a mechanic on a dirt midget team, traveling to Kansas and Pennsylvania for race weeks to fulfill that need.

"I'm really fortunate to have found racing" Thomas says. "It has given me hours with my kids without any distractions, and I've been able to see confidence shoot through them whenever they race, which makes it all worthwhile." **H**

What's in a name?

By Chloe Davis

"Take the Bissell Bridge into Hartford." "Meet us outside Mortensen Hall before the show." "We just joined Wampanoag Country Club!"

These common statements—and so many more just like them—are often uttered. Yet how many of us actually know whence these names we use in our everyday speech derive?

The ol' bard William Shakespeare wasn't kidding when he wrote "that which we call a rose/By Any Other Name would smell as sweet." So what exactly does a name tell us? Apparently quite a lot! Just ask soon-to-be parents who are attempting to keep their unborn baby's name top secret for months. Ask copywriters who struggle to be creative in naming new products or developers who are running out of catchy names for their South Florida condominium projects.

In today's world, buildings are often named after benefactors and philanthropists: Kravis Center in Palm Beach or Rockefeller Center and the Whitney Museum in New York City. In our small state of Connecticut, so rich in history, we often give a nod to the past and pay homage to our forefathers. Thus we have to look back in time to find the origins of names. This brings us right back to the question at hand—just how much do we really know about the names we are surrounded by? All 169 Connecticut towns could join in asking themselves about their own favorite names as we take a look at a few of the more common ones in the Greater Hartford area.



The "Reservation" ~ West Hartford

In the 1950s, families were moving to new housing being built in West Hartford. These

streets were named King Philip, Mohegan, Mohawk, Iroquois, Tecumseh, Pilgrim and Colony. It sounds like homage was being repaid to the original inhabitants of Albany Avenue north. Clearly, "The Reservation" neighborhood is in honor of the Native Americans whose land it was originally. The Wampanoag Country Club got its name because the land it was built upon was occupied and enjoyed by the Wampanoag tribe, then referred to as "The People of the First Light," who came to summer there from Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Elizabeth Park ~ Hartford

You can smell the roses, and possibly name a dozen or so varieties, but do you know who Elizabeth was?

Home to strollers, concertgoers, tennis players and diners, this 102-acre local treasure skirting Hartford and West Hartford is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was originally owned by financier Charles M. Pond, who bequeathed his estate to the City of Hartford with the stipulation it be named for his beloved deceased wife, Elizabeth. Little could he have known there would someday be a trendy restaurant, The Pond House, on the grounds bearing his name.

Gideon Welles School, Welles-Turner Memorial Library ~ Glastonbury

Glastonbury-born Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy and a cabinet member under Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, was a strong opponent of slavery. He was one of the most influential figures of the Civil War and oversaw the Navy's growth from fewer than 9,000 sailors and officers and only 50 vessels to more than 50,000 men and 650 ships. President Lincoln credited Welles as being instrumental in winning the war and called him one of the best secretaries in Navy history. Welles kept a detailed diary during this pivotal

period in American history, imparting great insight into wartime and the Lincoln years. In his later years, after returning to Glastonbury, he authored many books and journals and founded the *Hartford Evening News* to publicize his outspoken political views.



Cheney Mills ~ Manchester

Manchester boasts many buildings with the name Cheney proudly displayed. This very successful family revolutionized silk manufacturing, making the Cheney Brothers Historic District the center of the silk industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Cheney Mansions were located on 70 acres east of their mills. By the early 1920s, the giant mill employed 4,700 workers. People moved to town to work in the mills and make a better life for their families, as the Cheneyes were fair, generous and forward-thinking. The Cheneyes so believed in their townspeople that they were instrumental in providing housing, firehouses, and electric and gas companies. Believers in the importance of quality of life, they also promoted cultural experiences for their workers. This special family even offered its homestead to serve as Manchester Hospital during the 1918 influenza epidemic.

The Colt Armory, Colt Gateway, Colt Park ~ Hartford

It is hard not to have your eyes wander while driving Interstate 91 through the South Meadows in Hartford to the beautiful

“blue onion dome” and wonder what this edifice could have been in days gone by. The large armory was named after Samuel Colt, American inventor, industrialist and hunter. His Hartford-based factory supplied firearms eventually used by both the North and the South during the Civil War and was unmistakably one of the most prominent industries in Hartford for over 150 years. In 1836, Samuel Colt received a patent for the revolving cylinder gun, the first weapon able to fire multiple times without reloading. Using new technology, the company was able to produce more than 5,000 firearms in its first year. The business flourished, and Colt died in 1862 as one of America’s wealthiest men. His young widow became a doyenne in Hartford society and ensured his legendary contributions carried on.

Noah Webster House, Noah Webster Library ~ West Hartford

Before becoming widely recognized as the father of the American dictionary, Noah Webster first published a three-volume compendium entitled *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, the first volume of which was colloquially known as the “Blue-Backed Speller.” To honor this local hero, Blue Back Square in West Hartford was so named. Ben Franklin taught his granddaughter to read, spell and pronounce words using this speller. Webster’s childhood home—now the Noah Webster House—is open to visitors on South Main Street, less than a mile from the lifestyle center bearing the name of his most influential work.

Bulkeley Bridge ~ Hartford

The Bulkeley name can be seen all around town on bridges, schools and streets. Originally known as the Hartford Toll Bridge, the oldest bridge over the Connecticut River

Aerial view of Elizabeth Park; vintage postcard of Noah Webster House



was renamed after the prominent Senator Morgan Bulkeley. This four-term mayor, governor and United States senator was born in East Haddam in 1837 and fought in the American Civil War. After working with an uncle at H.P. Morgan, he then helped form the United States Bank of Hartford, serving as its first president. At the time of his death at age 84, he had been the president of Aetna for 43 years, transforming it into an insurance industry giant. Bulkeley was also the first president of the National League and was posthumously elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937. Bulkeley Avenue and Bulkeley High School are also named in his honor.

Rentschler Field ~ East Hartford

Today, UConn Football fans call “The RENT” their home field. Nearly 100 years ago, it was a 165-acre, grass-covered field. This important tract of land would be developed for something quite different than sports and concerts. The East Hartford site was the property of the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company and destined to become its original hanger complex and runway.

Pratt & Whitney was founded in 1925 by Frederick B. Rentschler. Prior to his innovations, aeronautical experts believed airplane engines should be liquid-cooled, as they always had

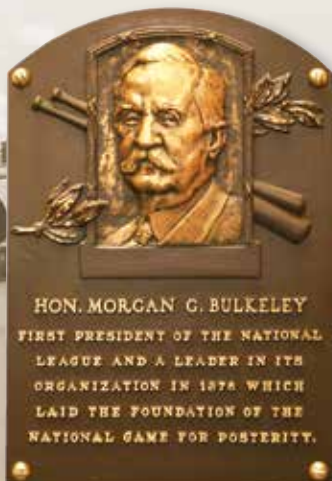
been. Rentschler was determined to create a better design. Indeed he did, and in 1926 the United States Navy ordered 200 of his lighter, air-cooled Wasp engines that revolutionized the aircraft industry. Orders continued to fly in as his ideas multiplied and more novel aeronautical innovations surfaced. This giant of the air industry was board chairman of Pratt & Whitney when he passed in 1956 at age 68.

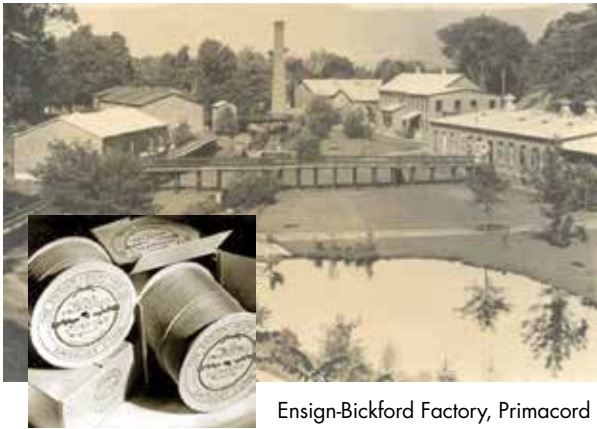
Mark Twain House (Nook Farm) ~ Hartford

Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, was part of the tony group of artists and writers that lived in the Asylum Hill section of Hartford bordering the West End. Gothic Park was their special neighborhood. Fellow writer Harriet Beecher Stowe lived next door. Born in Hannibal, Missouri, Clemens didn’t reside in Hartford until raising his family at Nook Farm, just west of a bend, or nook of the winding Park River, which was a writer’s and artist’s paradise. The prolific and beloved author of tomes like *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, who built his stately family home in 1873 would be proud to know it is now open to the admiring public who flock from all over the country to see it.



Frederick B. Rentschler, Rentschler Field





Ensign-Bickford Factory, Primacord

Ensign-Bickford ~ Simsbury

While traveling down Route 10 or Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury, you may wonder who Bickford was. In 1836, the invention of a superior initiator for mining explosives' safety fuses was developed in the factory that still stands today. This invention heralded a safer era for miners. Founded by William Bickford in 1836 to find better and safer mining techniques, the company today is a global manufacturer of hardware used in spacecraft, military and other industries. The globally touted company, Ensign-Bickford, is still headquartered in town and it continues to contribute unmatched solutions and engineering breakthroughs.

Ann Uccello Street ~ Hartford

A 1940 graduate of Weaver High School in Hartford's Blue Hills neighborhood, Antonina (Ann) P. Uccello was elected the first female mayor in Connecticut in 1967. In fact, the well-liked and respected Uccello was the first female mayor of any United States state capital. A social liberal yet fiscal conservative, Uccello was Hartford's first Republican mayor since World War II.

Uccello attended Saint Joseph College, followed by graduate studies at both Trinity College and the University of Connecticut Law School. Prior to stepping into politics, her business career included a position at the G. Fox & Company during its heyday, earning her the influential backing of Beatrice Fox Auersbach when she ran for office. After successfully guiding Hartford through the turbulent 60s, she eventually lost her bid for the 1st Congressional seat to William Cotter.

In 2008, Ann Street was renamed Ann Uccello Street in her honor.

William H. Mortensen Hall (Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts) ~ Hartford

William H. Mortensen was born in Hartford in 1903 and died in 1990 at age

87. Ironically after not completing college himself, Mortensen would receive two honorary doctorates: in fine arts from the University of Hartford in 1956 and in law from Trinity College in 1984. Mortensen's name would become inextricably intertwined with the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, originally known as Bushnell Memorial Hall.

Reverend Dr. Horace Bushnell was a Hartford minister and civic leader in the 1800s. His daughter, Dotha Bushnell Hillyer, wished to honor him by building The Bushnell as a living memorial. Hillyer asked Mortensen, who had been Bushnell's student, to research the construction of an auditorium. Corbett, Harrison and MacMurray architects designed the auditorium with a Georgian Revival exterior and Art Deco interior. Mortensen supervised construction, and was named managing director upon completion in 1929, a post he held until he retired in 1968. In 1992, the main auditorium, with a seating capacity of 2,800, was named in his honor.

Mortensen also became a Connecticut state senator, mayor of Hartford and even ran for governor in 1950, withdrawing due to health problems. Mortensen donated \$250,000 to the University of Hartford in 1969 for its central reference library, which was named after him. The William and Alice Mortensen Foundation continues to offer grants and funding to nonprofits in the Hartford area to support programs in the arts, education, historic preservation and more.

Harry A. Gampel Pavilion ~ Storrs

The philanthropic UConn alumnus graduated in 1943 and was a huge supporter of his alma mater. Born in Hartford, his many accomplishments included developing shopping centers, condominiums, apartments, offices and industrial buildings, both locally and in later years in Florida. Gampel raised his family in West Hartford and was proud to have two of his daughters and one of his granddaughters hold degrees from UConn.

His million-dollar gift helped finance Gampel Pavilion, home to both the men's and women's basketball teams. His generosity can be seen all over the UConn campus through athletic scholarships and a fund benefitting the insurance program at the School of Business. Gampel was given an Honorary Doctorate of

Laws from UConn in 1993, the same year he was inducted into its School of Business's Hall of Fame.

Bissell Bridge ~ Windsor

One of many bridges that cross the Connecticut River in our state is the Captain John Bissell Memorial Bridge, connecting Windsor and South Windsor. Records show that the Bissell family was among the very earliest New England settlers, arriving from England around 1640.

Captain John Bissell is said to be a founder of Windsor. The historical marker located on the eastern shore of the Connecticut River, then known as the Great River, near the Bissell Homestead reads: "The first ferry crossing of the Connecticut River was tended by John Bissell in 1641." The ferry continued to operate until 1917.

Not a certified "captain," this ferry operator nevertheless helped families survive the wilderness conditions and harsh New England winters. He is buried in the Poquonock section of the town he cared for as his own.

Abigail's Grille & Wine Bar ~ Simsbury

This Simsbury landmark built in 1780 was originally a stagecoach stop on the Boston to Albany Turnpike, not the upscale restaurant and bar it is today.

Built in 1780 for Jonathon Pettibone, Jr. in memory of his father, it was a popular spot. History has it as the meeting place of Captain Noah Phelps and General Ethan Allen with his Green Mountain Boys to plan the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. Over the years, many travelers stopped and spent a night at the tavern. But it gets more interesting...

According to legend, this old home, known then as the Pettibone Tavern, is haunted by the ghost of Mrs. Abigail Pettibone. Abigail was the wife of the original owner, who murdered her in a fit of jealous rage. While Captain Pettibone traveled the sea, leaving his "poor lonely wife" alone for long stretches of time, she reportedly took on many lovers. One day, Mrs. Pettibone was caught red-handed when her husband returned home unannounced and found her in the act. He instantly killed both Abigail and her unlucky lover. Poor Abigail supposedly still roams the building, and if you visit the second floor ladies room, you may feel her spirit. She has kept her mischievous ways ever since, turning lights on and off and generally making her presence known. **H**

HAPPENINGS

By Robert Bailin

Greater Hartford hosts a variety of special events throughout the year — from street festivals and art shows to major concerts and sporting events. Here is a sample of upcoming events for you and your family to enjoy.

Now through January 14. "GingerBread Lane."

Chef Jon Lovitch is the creator of GingerBread Lane, an amazing 3-layered gingerbread village display which took 10 months and over 800 hours to conceptualize and finalize. This year marks Chef Lovitch's 24th year creating these elaborate, delicious creations, made from only real, edible ingredients: gingerbread, royal icing and candy. This village takes up over 295 square feet and contains 320 houses, 4 cable cars, a train, and over 3 dozen storefronts. Tuesday–Saturday, 9am–4pm; Sunday, 11am–4pm. Adults, \$14.75; seniors (63+) and children (2–12), \$13.75; under 2, Free. *The Children's Museum*, 950 Trout Brook Drive, West Hartford; 860-231-2824; www.thechildrensmuseumct.org.

January 15. "Vacation Exploration Camp: Ninjago."

Become a Spinjitzu master as you investigate the elements of earth, ice, fire and lightning. Test your flexibility as you dip, dive and dodge through a laser maze, and work with other fellow ninjas to build the skills necessary to defeat the evil Lord Garmadon and achieve true

Ninjago status. Campers in grades 1–6 will experience hands-on science enrichment through fun and engaging activities. Camp includes structured activities with our STEM Educators, as well as supervised free time to explore the Science Center's galleries and exhibits. Monday, 8am–4pm. Non-members, \$68; Members, \$62. *Connecticut Science Center*, 250 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford; 860-520-2177; ctsciencecenter.org/programs/

February 2–18. "Harvey."

This Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy is the story of a perfect gentleman, Elwood P. Dowd and his best friend Harvey. The problem is that Harvey is a six foot, three and a half inch tall white rabbit that only Elwood can see! Issues arise as Elwood's family tries to deal with Elwood's "condition" and doctors become convinced that Elwood isn't the problem! *Harvey* has charmed audiences since it premiered on Broadway in 1944 and was subsequently a smash-hit movie



starring Jimmy Stewart. Friday–Saturday, 8pm; Sunday, 2pm. Adults \$19; Seniors, students and children \$17. *Little Theatre of Manchester at Cheney Hall*, 177 Hartford Road, Manchester; 860-647-9824; www.cheneyhall.org.



February 8–11. "The 49th Annual Hartford Boat Show."

If you're in the market for a boat, this is without a doubt the place to be. The Hartford Boat Show features the newest boats on the market, including fishing boats, luxury cruisers, center consoles, deck and pontoon boats, sport and ski boats, personal watercraft, and paddleboats and boards, plus fishing gear, boating accessories, shoreside activities, and food and beverages. Produced by the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA), the show features more than 100 exhibitors, 400 boats



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and watercraft, as well as educational seminars and demonstration areas. Thursday, 3–8pm; Friday, 12–8pm; Saturday, 10am–8pm; Sunday, 10am–5pm. Adults \$10; Children (12 and under), Free.

Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford; 860-563-2111; hartfordboatshow.com.

February 10–May 6. "Gorey's Worlds." Gorey's *Worlds* is the first exhibition to explore the artistic inspiration of the famed American artist and author, Edward Gorey (1925–2000). For more than 50 years, he delighted and amused audiences with spare pen and ink drawings that illustrated tales of hapless children, kohl-eyed swooning maidens and whimsical creatures. *Gorey's Worlds* is centered on his personal art collection, which he chose to bequeath to the Wadsworth Atheneum, the only public institution to receive his legacy. Wednesday–Friday, 11am–5pm; Saturday–Sunday, 10am–5pm. Adults \$15, Seniors \$12, Students (18+ with school ID) \$5, Youth (under 18) Free. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 600 Main Street, Hartford; 860-278-2670; www.thewadsworth.org.

February 16–18. "Hartford Symphony Orchestra Masterworks Series: The Keys to Romance." It's a night of epic love for the annual Valentine's weekend program, featuring the dynamic Anderson & Roe Piano Duo. Mascagni's opera *Cavalleria rusticana* tells the doomed tale of a love affair that ends with a duel to the death. Its lush, dramatic "Intermezzo" is considered one of the single most attractive tunes in operatic history. Sarasate's raw, virtuosic *Fantasy on Bizet's Carmen* pays tribute to Bizet's beloved opera. Also on the program are Haydn's invigorating *Symphony No. 104 in D Major*, "London" and Poulenc's sentimental "Allegro ma non troppo" from *Concerto for Two Pianos in D minor*. Greg Anderson & Elizabeth Joy Roe will also delight with lush piano duos. Friday–Saturday, 8pm; Sunday, 3pm. \$38–\$72. Belding Theater, The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford; 860-987-5900; www.hartfordsymphony.org.

February 18–21. "The 37th Annual Connecticut Flower & Garden Show." In the bleakest of winter days, a breath of spring comes to the Connecticut Convention Center with gorgeous landscape exhibits constructed by some of the most talented landscape designers in the State. The award-winning landscape exhibits occupy over an acre within the Exhibit Hall. Landscapes in full bloom with lush green grass and fragrant flowers continue to amaze attendees each year. The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut's design and horticulture competition "Breath of Spring" features stunning design arrangements in unique themed settings. Thursday, 10am–7pm; Friday–Saturday, 10am–8pm; Sunday, 10am–5pm. Adults, \$18; Children (5–12), \$5; Children (under 5), Free. Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford; 860-844-8461; www.ctflowershow.com. **H**

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