

# *Hoffman* DECADES

Spring/Summer 2009

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**Hoffman**





**On the cover:** Employees of Hoffman Auto Group and Jeffrey, Bradley and Matthew Hoffman launch the new logo and branding campaign at Rentschler Field on April 14th. *Photo by Lanny Nagler.*

# Hoffman DECADES

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*By Nancy Thompson*

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SPRING IS FINALLY here, and in our first issue of *Decades* magazine for 2009, we have some exciting news to share.

Hoffman Auto Group, founded in 1921, and now in its fourth generation, is getting a whole new look, thanks to a rebranding campaign that better reflects our company philosophy. Despite a challenging economy, Hoffman Auto Group is continuing to move boldly forward – with a fresh new logo and branding slogan: *Driven by Trust*.

Soon, everywhere you look, you'll see our new logo – which includes a stylized "H" resembling a road to the future. It replaces the familiar signature style of our father, Burton C. Hoffman, that has served as our company logo for decades. Read more about our branding campaign, beginning on p. 16.

And there's more excitement afoot, including the long-awaited opening of the new Connecticut Science Center. We take you behind the scenes for a glimpse of what it takes to ready a state-of-the-art entertainment and education destination for its grand opening.

We also introduce you to Connecticut's new Tourism Commissioner, Randy Fiveash.

And speaking of tourism and culture, we celebrate the half-century milestone of the group that successfully rallied the governor's support, in 1959, to rescue an historic building, known today as the Goodspeed Opera House. And, we offer a rare glimpse at the incredible costume collection of Chester's Goodspeed Musicals Costume Rentals, a collection that includes a quarter of a million stage ensembles, many of them well-known.

We also take a look at a worthy philanthropic organization that is making a huge difference in people's lives. Special Olympics Connecticut is celebrating 40 years of helping people with intellectual disabilities to realize their potential and build lasting friendships through sport.

Does the recession have you down? Well, cheer up. We're bringing you a whole lot of comfort – comfort *food*, that is. In good economic times and bad, a good meal always makes you feel better. We asked four well-known chefs to share their favorite recipes for meals that will warm you, body and soul.

And speaking of the economy, if you need new wheels but are watching the budget, you may want to consider a pre-loved car from the Hoffman Auto Group. When you know what to look for, and who to trust, it's easy to find a reliable vehicle that will suit your wants, your needs, and your budget.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Thank you for reading, and for your continued loyalty and support.



Jeffrey S. Hoffman  
Co-Chairman

I. Bradley Hoffman  
Co-Chairman

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### Fuel Saving Device

If you want to get the best fuel economy out of your octane-thirsty engine, PLX Devices' new Kiwi is the answer. With an easy-to-see organic LCD display, 20 gas-saving lessons, and a check engine scan tool, the Kiwi has plenty of useful functions. If you're just interested in monitoring your miles per gallon, a smaller, less expensive Kiwi MPG is now available. *The Kiwi is listed for \$299.99 and the Kiwi MPG is \$89.99 at [www.plxkiwi.com](http://www.plxkiwi.com).*

### Armrest Console Cushion

There's nothing worse than being uncomfortable in your own car, especially on long trips. If your armrest is too low, only used for storage, or just plain uncomfortable, the AutoSport Armrest Console Cushion is a great solution. The cushion is made of memory foam, for guaranteed comfort, and has a durable, water-resistant microfiber cover. It's available in three colors: black, tan, and charcoal. This cushion will make a great addition to any interior, and its design still allows full use of your armrest storage bin. *The AutoSport Armrest Console Cushion starts at \$24.95 at [www.autosportcatalog.com](http://www.autosportcatalog.com).*



### Sirius Portability

Bring 220 stations to your car or home with the Sirius Sportster 5 Dock & Play Satellite Radio. A vivid multicolor LCD display and complete vehicle install kit make this radio a great bargain. It can dock in your car or your Sirius-ready home stereo, making the Sportster 5 a truly versatile form of entertainment. *The Sirius Sportster 5 Dock & Play Satellite Radio Receiver with Vehicle Install Kit is available for \$154.99 at [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com).*





### AC/DC/USB Power Inverter

Having the ability to charge or power any electronic device from your car is something Tom Edison would be proud of. The Smart AC 120 USB Power Inverter can do it all, whether it's charging your laptop or iPod, or allowing you to use any standard 3-prong wall-socket device. Just plug it into your cigarette lighter and go. *The Smart AC 120 USB Power Inverter can be purchased for \$39.99 at [www.thinkgeek.com](http://www.thinkgeek.com).*



### Bluetooth Speakerphone

While safe driving is always a priority, it's also nice to have a completely hands-free phone call with no irritating or uncomfortable ear piece; avoiding cell phone tickets from the men in blue is also a huge benefit. The Jabra Bluetooth Speakerphone has a slim, lightweight design that simply clips onto your sun visor. Unlike many of other Bluetooth car speakerphones, this unit doesn't need to be installed or wired. A car charger is included, and on a full charge, it will last up to 200 hours on standby. The Jabra SP050 can answer, reject, and end calls, as well as use voice dialing and last number redial. *The Jabra SP050 Bluetooth Speakerphone can be purchased for \$89.99 at [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com).*

## REINVENTING THE VEHICLE THAT INVENTED IT ALL. The all new 2010 RX.



Experience the all-new 6-speed Multi Mode automatic transmission, and the revised, more powerful 275-horsepower, 3.5-liter V6 engine, featuring dual Variable Valve Timing with intelligence (VVT-i), for improved performance and fuel efficiency. A uniquely designed double-wishbone rear suspension improves handling while increasing usable room in the cargo area.

Inside, the RX has a newly available Remote Touch device with voice control that can understand casual speech, plus available XM NavTraffic and XM NavWeather, an SUV-first. And rear-seat passengers can enjoy a new dual-screen DVD Rear Seat Entertainment System that's capable of showing video from two independent sources. Test drive it today at Hoffman Lexus.

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**Hoffman Lexus**

750 Connecticut Blvd. / East Hartford  
860.525.3987 / [hoffmanlexus.com](http://hoffmanlexus.com)

## SNAPSHOTS



### BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Enjoying networking and the fine fare at the fourth annual Business After Hours event hosted by Hoffman Audi of New London are Kristin LaFemina, catering manager for Lake of Isles Golf; Tony Sheridan, Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce president; Kristen Marcks, Foxwoods Casino; and Delcie Thibault, public relations coordinator for Connecticut Community Care, Bristol.



### MADD MONEY

For the past 11 years, Hoffman Auto Group has donated a portion of December's auto sales to MADD CT. On February 4, the company presented a check to MADD CT for \$10,350. Shown, from left, are **Jeffrey Hoffman**, MADD CT executive director **Janice Heggie Margolis**, MADD CT development director **Paula D'Agostino**, and **I. Bradley Hoffman**.



### FORD FIRST

Hoffman Ford's first annual All Ford Car Show was held on October 12 at the East Hartford dealership. It was a huge success, with more than 160 cars entering the show and over 500 people in attendance. The Late Model Mustang Club of Connecticut (LMMC-CT) gave \$500 to The Wounded Warriors of CT Project and \$500 to the Hot Water Rescue Group, which runs a shelter for misunderstood dog breeds. Also, an additional \$500 was given to the Sgt. Jeff Boucher fund. **Pete Calabrese**, LMMC-CT vice president, left, is shown presenting the donation to a Hot Water Rescue representative. See us Oct. 11, 2009 for the second annual All-Ford Car Show.

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**Hoffman**





### SCIENCE ON WHEELS

Pictured in front of Hoffman Audi of East Hartford are **I. Bradley Hoffman**; **Jeffrey Hoffman**; **Kevin Sullivan**, president of the West Hartford Children's Museum; and **Cindy King**, director of the UTC Wildlife Sanctuary at The Children's Museum, with the museum's 10-foot boa constrictor, "King." The Education Outreach Van, which is used to bring live animal and hands-on science programs to schools, libraries, and youth groups throughout the region, was recently given a makeover. The Hoffmans, who previously donated the van, also covered the cost of its new graphics. The van now displays The Children's Museum name and is covered with a bright, bold, science-themed design.



### PORSCHE PRIZE

Hoffman Porsche received the coveted Porsche Premier Dealer Award on January 15th in the Porsche showroom in East Hartford. Only 25 Porsche dealers nationwide receive this distinction, which recognizes those who excel in areas such as customer service, sales, and facility enhancement. Shown from left to right are: **Steve Sabatini** of Porsche USA; **Matt Marcotte**, Hoffman service manager; **I. Bradley Hoffman**; **Vasile Pasinis**, technician; **Bill Lundy**, Porsche USA regional manager; **Joseph Borawski**, technician; **Jeffrey Hoffman**; **Matthew Hoffman**; **Karl Werner**, sales; **Steve Gough**, parts manager; **Ethan Gombossy**, service advisor; **Brian Sayers**, technician; **Ric Nanni**, sales; and **Rob Gorski**, parts consultant.

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**Hoffman**



# Food to Soothe the Soul

Feeling a little recession stress? Check out these comfort-food recipes by four of Connecticut's top chefs, and save money while eating in style.

BY SARAH WESLEY-LEMIRE

**Y**ou only have to flip on your TV or pick up a newspaper to see the latest round of grim economic news: the stock markets falling, the mortgage crisis, lay-offs, and businesses closing. The headlines are enough to bring anyone down these days. As our purse-strings get tighter and our moods a bit more somber, it's more important than ever to find things that bring some peace to our distressed souls. With that in mind, perhaps it's time to go back to the basics.

In good economic times and in bad, there's nothing like delicious food to remind yourself that even in the toughest of times, you can

always find comfort in a good meal.

An at-home evening with friends or family can be fulfilling and filling! Set the mood by lighting some candles, break out the good dishes (don't save them for the big events – they're gathering dust in your cupboard), and play your favorite music. Don't just make dinner; make a night of it. With the stage set, all you need now is the right menu. Not to worry, we've got you covered.

We've enlisted four of Hartford's finest chefs from several of your favorite restaurants to recommend the perfect recipes to feed your guests – and your soul.

## MEET THE CHEFS



PHOTO BY BRIAN AMBROSE

### LEE PERRINE OF APRICOTS IN FARMINGTON

1593 Farmington Avenue  
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[www.apricotsrestaurant.com](http://www.apricotsrestaurant.com)



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### NOEL JONES OF ON20 IN HARTFORD

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PHOTO BY CORLEY FLEMING

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Drunken Beef Stew with Farmhouse Buttermilk Biscuits is both a soothing comfort food and an economical dish.



PHOTO BY CORLEY FLEMING

### **Drunken Beef Stew with Farmhouse Buttermilk Biscuits.**

Accustomed to making this restaurant favorite in large quantities, Apricots' chef had to break it down to feed six to eight people. Perrine suggests this wonderful winter dish because it is both a soothing comfort food and an economical meal. Served with Farmhouse Buttermilk Biscuits, the stew feeds many, but doesn't require a lot. Enjoy!

#### **Drunken Beef Stew**

- 5 lbs. boneless beef chuck (not lean), cut into 2-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 1 large head of celery, diced
- 2 cups of pearl onions
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 (750ml) bottle dry red wine
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon fresh ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon minced rosemary
- 1 tablespoon minced thyme
- 1/2 gallon beef stock or broth
- 1 can of Dr. Pepper soda
- 3 lbs. new potatoes cut into quarters

Season cubed beef with salt and pepper, and dust with all-purpose flour, coating beef. In a hot Rondeau pot, add oil and then beef. Sear beef on all sides, stirring frequently. Continuing high heat, add red wine and wait until alcohol burns off. Add beef stock, soda, carrots, celery, pearl onions, garlic, bay leaves, fresh ground pepper, rosemary, and thyme. When all ingredients return to a boil, lower heat to medium and slow cook for 2-3 hours until meat is fork tender. Last, add the quartered potatoes. Cook potatoes in stew, which has now reduced down to a savory broth, for 15 minutes until tender but not disintegrating. The potatoes will help thicken the stew as well.

#### **Farmhouse Buttermilk Biscuits with Rosemary and Cheddar**

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped rosemary
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 3/4 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 stick cold butter
- 1/4 cup grated cheddar
- 3/4 cup buttermilk

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Whisk together flour, rosemary, baking powder, baking soda, sugar and salt. Blend in butter with fingers or blender until it resembles coarse meal. Stir in cheese, then buttermilk, until dough forms. Knead dough. Gather into 8-inch by 4-inch rectangle. Cut eight 2-inch circles. Brush with buttermilk. Bake on greased baking sheet about 15 minutes until golden brown.

**Braised Short Ribs will warm you through and through.**



**Noel Jones of ON20 in Hartford recommends Braised Short Ribs.**

Oftentimes, making any sort of meat dish that cooks in the oven reminds you of your childhood. It takes you back to coming home from church on a Sunday afternoon, or coming in from playing outside, and smelling the wonderful aroma of something good cooking in the oven. This is one of those dishes that brings back fond memories and reminds us of the warmth of home. With all the economic worries these days, this comfort food will take you away, even if it's only for a little while. Makes four 8-oz. portions.

**Braised Short Ribs**

- 2.5 lbs. boneless short ribs
- 2 tablespoons Canola oil
- 8 oz. carrots, roughly chopped
- 8 oz. celery, roughly chopped
- 8 oz. white onions, roughly chopped
- 2 qts. store-bought beef stock
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 bunch of fresh thyme

Preheat oven to 275F. Season ribs generously with salt and pepper. In a large sauté pan, bring oil to just the smoking point. Brown ribs on both sides, for approximately two minutes on each side. Remove from pan. Then, in the same pan, add chopped carrots, celery and onions. Cook over medium heat until brown. Then add tomato paste and mix well with vegetables. Cook for two minutes, stirring frequently. Transfer ribs and vegetables to a roasting pan. Add stock to cover. Add a bunch of thyme. Cover with aluminum foil and place in center rack of oven. Cook for approximately 2.5 to 3 hours. Check for doneness with the handle of a spoon. When it pierces the meat without resistance, it is done. Remove meat from pan and strain the cooking liquid to remove vegetables. Serve the ribs with the strained sauce and suggested accompaniments.

PHOTOS BY CORLEY FLEMING

**Christopher Prosperi of Metro Bis in Simsbury recommends Chicken Goulash as the perfect entrée.**

“Even though potatoes play a supporting role in this dish, we think they are the stars. Goulash, the classic Hungarian dish made of beef or veal with lots of onions, paprika and potatoes, can be a wonderful culinary experience if made well,” he says. “The potatoes stew in the paprika, wine and stock until they almost burst. If you fished them out, they would make a fulfilling meal on their own. In this version, we replace the meat with our favorite boneless-skinless chicken thighs. Finish it with some cider vinegar and a touch of butter for extra flavor.”

**Chicken Goulash**

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 6 cups of 3/4-inch diced onion
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 3 tablespoons sweet paprika
- 6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 cup white wine
- 2 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 4 cups 1-inch cubed, peeled potatoes
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sweet butter
- 1/4 cup chopped chives

In a heavy bottomed pot or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium low heat. Add the onions, kosher salt, and water. Cook, stirring occasionally for 7 minutes or until onions are soft and lightly caramelized. Then, stir in the sweet paprika and cook for 2-3 minutes. Toss in the chicken and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring to coat the chicken with the onions and spice. Pour in the white wine and reduce by half. Add the chicken broth and cubed potatoes, and cook for 60 minutes over low heat on a light simmer. Stir in the vinegar, butter and chives. Serve over egg noodles, or just on its own, with crusty bread. Makes 6 portions.

**Chicken Goulash is a Hungarian dish that bursts with flavor.**



Arroz de Tamboril with Shrimp  
is a Portugese favorite.



**Adelino De Sousa of O'Porto in Hartford recommends Arroz de Tamboril with Shrimp.**

Portuguese fishermen coming back from a hard day's work at sea created this dish. They wanted something that would warm them and satisfy their hunger. Arroz de Tamboril did just that. It is also a dish that can be made in a short amount of time and at a low cost. Tamboril, or monkfish, with its succulent, firm texture and fine, slightly sweet flavor, invites comparison with other "luxury" seafoods such as lobster and scallops. After making this dish, you'll see why it is so popular and a perfect comfort food.

**Arroz de Tamboril with Shrimp**

- 16 oz. monkfish
- 8 shrimp
- 1 cup rice
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large tomato, diced
- 1 teaspoon cognac
- 1 lime
- 2 sprigs fresh cilantro (or to taste)
- Salt, pepper and hot sauce to taste

Cut monkfish to desired size, and boil it in 2 quarts of water with salt to taste, for 5 minutes. Remove the monkfish and place the water to one side. In a saucepan, mix in the olive oil, chopped garlic, chopped onions, and diced tomato. Simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add 4 cups of the water previously saved in the saucepan, together with the other ingredients, and let boil on high. Add one cup of rice, cover, and cook on low heat for 15 minutes. Add the teaspoon of cognac, shrimp and monkfish and continue to cook for 3 minutes. Add salt, pepper and hot sauce to taste. Turn off heat, squeeze lime juice into the saucepan, and add chopped cilantro. Stir and plate. *H*



# Selling Nutmeg

**Connecticut's new tourism director is tasked with attracting visitors ... from near and far.**

BY NANCY THOMPSON

**F**or many people, Connecticut is the state they travel through to get to New York City or Boston or Cape Cod. They have no idea what they're missing.

Randy Fiveash – the new director of the tourism division of the state's Commission on Culture & Tourism – has lived all over the country in his 31 years in the tourism industry. He's already enchanted by his new home.

"It's great. It's beautiful," he said. "I've always been intrigued with New England." The Savannah native, who most recently

was the commissioner of tourism in Kentucky, said his first impression of Connecticut has been not its landscape, but its people. "It's been extremely positive. Everyone has given this old southern boy a great welcome."

Fiveash, appointed to his new post in November, 2008, is a nationally recognized expert in tourism, convention, visitor

bureau and association management and strategic planning, as well as an expert in organizational and marketing development.

In his last position, he led the successful "Kentucky Unbridled Spirit" promotion and branding effort.

During his time in Kentucky, the total economic impact of tourism there increased by 23.8%, employment in the tourism industry rose by 3.5%, total payroll rose by 7%, and the amount of federal, state and local taxes generated as a result of tourism increased by 12.8%.

Those results impressed tourism officials here.

"Randy's vast experience, including his success in Kentucky, impressed me and I knew that he would serve Connecticut well," says the state's culture and tourism commissioner, Karen Senich.

Fiveash also served as executive director of the National Tourism Foundation, and was the head of convention and visitor bureaus in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Arlington, Texas, Gatlinburg, Tennessee and Branson, Missouri.

"I wasn't really looking for a new position, but I heard about the Connecticut opening through a friend in the Mystic area," he says. "My background fit very well with what Connecticut was looking for."

He enjoyed the statewide and regional marketing efforts in Kentucky and is impressed by similar efforts here. "I was interested in Connecticut because it's part of the New England regional approach. I was active in Travel South USA, which was made up of 12 southern states, so I'm familiar with a regional marketing structure," he says. "Plus, I've always loved visiting New England. Historically, it's a great tourism destination."

Fiveash is a native of Macon, Georgia and a graduate of Mercer University. His wife, Shari, is a strategic development and hospital industry consultant. They have three children, a son who is a screenwriter in Hollywood, a daughter who is a senior at the University of Louisville, and a son who is a high school sophomore. The family will join him in Connecticut after the end of the school year.

Connecticut's tourism division works to attract out-of-state visitors, and also to encourage state residents to discover the attractions close to home.

Fiveash says he's already been to a few parts of the state and is getting ready to launch a series of listening forums in which he'll meet with tourism groups all over the state to hear people's concerns, hopes and dreams.

He points out that the current economic downturn makes customer service and customer satisfaction paramount. "There are so many opportunities, destinations, places people can go, and so many deals, that people will look for those," he says. "But they still want to be treated well."

He also expects to engage in marketing based on "good, solid research. If people aren't coming, why not? If they are coming, what do they like? How can we encourage them to stretch a day trip to an overnight?"

### Destination: Fun

Connecticut tourism is more than scenery, attractions and events – it's big business. The tourism sector accounts for about \$9 billion a year, including lodging, recreation, meals, shopping, fuel and transportation, marina sales and gaming. It supports more than 100,000 jobs and provides more than \$5 billion in personal income, and it has been identified as a statewide industry that will drive job growth and economic development.

Tourism experts promote Connecticut as a place to relax and unwind, and have

fun. To this end, they've developed image ads with captions such as "A Power Walk," showing a couple strolling hand-in-hand through a meadow, and "The Morning Rush," with two youths in oversized yellow tubes navigating river rapids.

The state is divided into five distinct and culturally diverse tourism regions. The Litchfield Hills region spans the western third of the state with the exception of Fairfield County, which is its own region. The Greater New Haven region comprises the south-central area from Milford to Clinton along the shore, and as far north as Cheshire, Wallingford and Middlefield. The River Valley region is perhaps the most diverse, extending from Westbrook and Old Saybrook on the shore, north to the Massachusetts line, where it stretches from West Granby to Stafford. The Mystic Country region covers the eastern third of the state, extending from Union at its northernmost border southward to Old Lyme.

The division's web site, [www.ctvisit.com](http://www.ctvisit.com), provides listings and getaways in five areas: active adventures; arts and culture;

family fun; history; and rest and relaxation. Visitors to the site will also find lodging specials, details about upcoming events, and stories about state attractions from a variety of publications. Events and activities are listed for each of the five regions as well.

Welcome centers on major highways throughout the state provide travel-related information and promote Connecticut's many attractions to visitors. They're located on I-84 in West Willington and Danbury, on the Merritt Parkway in Greenwich, and on I-95 in Darien, Westbrook and North Stonington.

The Connecticut Vacation Guide is published annually as a free glossy magazine, with information assembled by region and by interest. The guide is available online and at each of the six welcome centers.

The Ambassador Program, a relatively new incentive, encourages state residents to share the state's cultural and tourism assets with others. Ambassadors receive up-to-date information on events and special programs. To date, more than 13,000 people have enrolled in the program.

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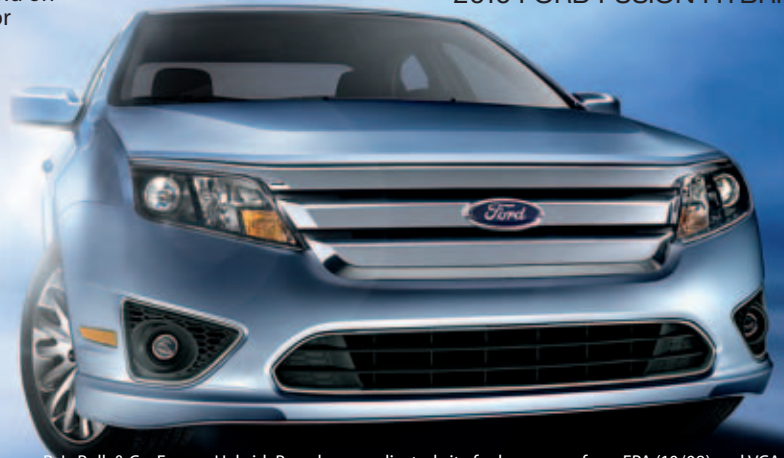
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**Hoffman**





1



2



3

**Looking for travel advice from the pros? Tourism officials offer five great suggestions to get you started:**

**1** The Connecticut Art Trail includes 15 world-class museums and historic sites ranging from bucolic farms, art studios and former artists' boarding houses to grand and modern art museums in vibrant downtowns. Collections include European masterpieces, American and French Impressionism, ancient art and contemporary culture.

[www.arttrail.org](http://www.arttrail.org)

**2** The Connecticut Wine Trail showcases more than 15 vineyards. The trail, which is divided into east and west sections, includes vineyards in the northwest hills, on the southeast shore and in many locations in between. A brochure is available to help in planning trips; it's generally hard to visit more than two or three in a day.

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

**3** The Connecticut Freedom Trail recognizes several sites connected with the movement that led to the freedom of the state's African American citizens. The trail includes buildings believed to have been part of the Underground Railroad, sites associated with the Amistad case of 1839 to 1842, and gravesites, monuments, homes, and other structures that were part of the freedom movement in the 19th century.

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

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4

5

**4** The Henderson Cultural Center at Hunt Hill is part of the Hunt Hill Farm in New Milford, home for many years of Ruth and Skitch Henderson. The complex includes the Skitch Henderson Museum – an intimate museum dedicated to Mr. Henderson’s collections; The Silo Gallery, with a long tradition of promoting arts; The Hunt Hill Farm Land Preserve, which works to preserve approximately 40 acres of farmland; and The Silo Store and Cooking School, which offers recreational cooking classes nine months of the year.

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

**5** Gillette Castle State Park in East Haddam looks like a medieval fortress, but a look inside the stone castle reveals built-in couches, a table trackway and woodcarvings that point to the creative genius of William Gillette, a noted actor, director, and playwright. The castle, a 24-room mansion, is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., from Memorial Day weekend through Columbus Day. The grounds are open year-round.

[www.ct.gov/DEP](http://www.ct.gov/DEP), then search for “Gillette Castle”

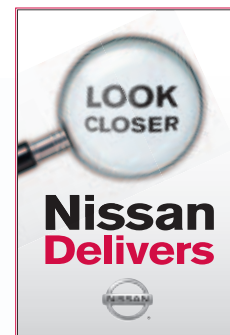
Left to right: New Britain Museum of American Art; Jonathan Edwards Winery in Stonington; the Foone gravestone, one stop on the Connecticut Freedom Trail in Farmington; The Henderson Cultural Center at Hunt Hill Farm in New Milford; and Gillette Castle State Park in East Haddam.

To learn more about Connecticut events and attractions or to order the 2009 edition of the Connecticut Vacation Guide, log on to [ctvisit.com](http://ctvisit.com). *H*

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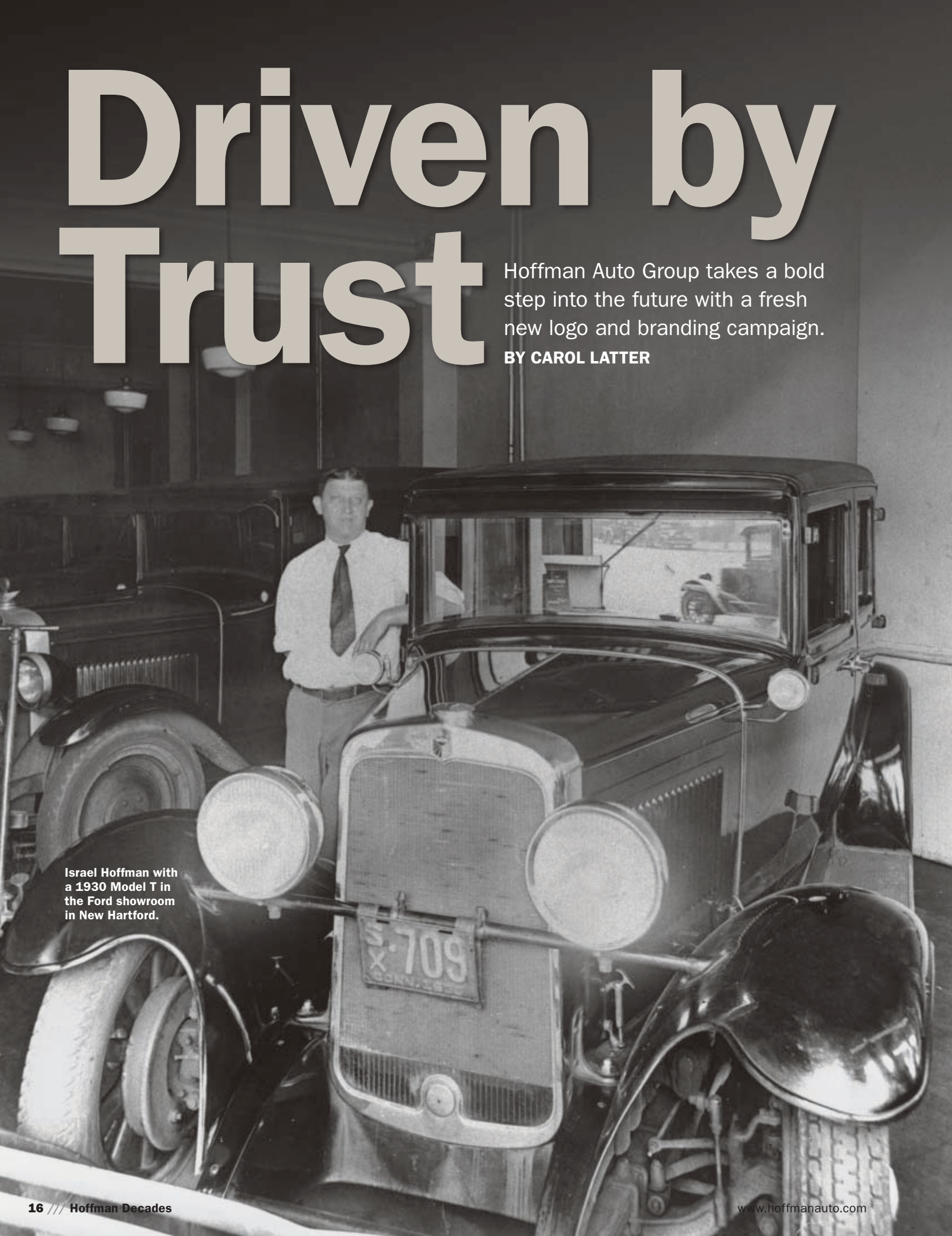
**Hoffman**



# Driven by Trust

Hoffman Auto Group takes a bold step into the future with a fresh new logo and branding campaign.

BY CAROL LATTER



Israel Hoffman with a 1930 Model T in the Ford showroom in New Hartford.

**E**ighty-eight years after Israel Hoffman opened the doors of his first automotive franchise in New Hartford, Connecticut – and 42 years after his son Burton built the first of a string of dealerships in East Hartford – the family-owned company is taking another bold step into the future.

At a time when many other automotive companies are struggling or even closing their doors, Hoffman Auto Group is continuing to move forward – with a fresh new logo and branding slogan: Driven by Trust.

Hoffman Auto Group – which now encompasses multiple dealerships in three towns and employs nearly 500 people – is in the final stretch of a \$30-plus million, 10-property expansion and upgrading project that will conclude in September. Now, the company is adopting a new marketing image to go along with the state-of-the-art look of its dealerships and service facilities.

The new logo – a stylized metallic “H” symbolizing a road to the future – replaces the familiar and beloved signature style of Burton Hoffman that has served as the company logo for decades.

The slogan “Driven by Trust,” meanwhile, speaks both to Hoffman Auto Group’s enduring relationships with its customers over the course of nearly 90 years, and its ongoing commitment to their satisfaction as it moves into the future.

Company Co-Chairman Jeffrey S. Hoffman, who joined the company in 1972 to work alongside his father, Burton, says he and his brother – Co-Chairman I. Bradley Hoffman – began looking at

developing a new brand image for the company last summer.

“We felt the time was right for a number of reasons – the renovation project being just one of them. First of all, we’re going into the fourth generation with my son, Matthew, who’s now a vice president in the business. Secondly, when you look at the direction our society is headed in, it’s moving more and more towards high technology and towards a faster, sleeker look. The new design of our logo shows that we are moving in that direction,” he says.



“My dad always wanted to be on the forefront with creativity, ingenuity and intuition. He always kept moving with the times. For us, it just seemed like this was the time to make a change.”

Jeffrey’s son, Matthew Hoffman – who worked his way up through the ranks to become vice president of Hoffman Auto, and is the dealer principal of Hoffman Nissan on the Avon-Simsbury line – is equally delighted with the company’s new branding initiative.

“My grandfather was always on the cutting edge of everything and I think that’s how we are as a company. This rebranding is change in a positive way – the passing of the torch from my grandfather’s signature to a logo that is forward-looking and more modern. I think it appeals to a much broader audience. The whole idea is to make it fit every generation and every age group to make it more mainstream.”

Bradley Hoffman says Hoffman Auto Group, proud of its heritage, has described itself as “The First Family of Cars” for 20 years. That slogan made reference to the fact that the Hoffman family was one of the first automotive dealers in the region, and that several generations of Hoffmans have provided first-quality service to the community since then. That remains true.

“As we’ve always demanded trust and expected it from our employees, the new logo came naturally. In any industry, trust is the difference between having customer retention and not having customer retention. Trust is a very broad word. The company’s job is to exceed customers’ expectations, not just meet them,” Bradley explains.

“And that desire to exceed expectations requires continual improvement. While Hoffman Auto Group has been extremely successful over the years and is now serving second- and third-generation customers, we can’t and won’t do business today the way we did 10 or 15 years ago, because the expectations of our clients have increased. We keep raising the bar for ourselves and that’s really why the customer experience at Hoffman is second to none.”

## Hoffman Auto Group through the years

### 1921

Hoffman Auto Group is founded by Israel Hoffman with the opening of a Ford dealership in New Hartford, Connecticut.

### 1941

Israel Hoffman opens an Oldsmobile dealership on Connecticut Boulevard in East Hartford.

### 1946

Burton C. Hoffman, son of Israel Hoffman, joins his father in the business.

### 1956

Burton C. Hoffman becomes president of Hoffman Oldsmobile.



### 1962

Calvin Ford (Hoffman Ford) opens on Tolland Street in East Hartford.

### 1967

Burton C. Hoffman opens a new Oldsmobile dealership on

10 acres of land on Connecticut Boulevard, East Hartford, across from its original Oldsmobile dealership.

### 1968

Hoffman Ford moves its Tolland Street

operation to East Hartford when a new Calvin Ford building is built next door to the Oldsmobile franchise.

### 1972

Jeffrey S. Hoffman joins his father Burton in the business. Hoffman acquires a Rolls Royce franchise.

### 1975

Hoffman opens Scott Olds/Rolls Royce/BMW on the Avon/Canton line. Todd W. Hoffman joins his father Burton in the business, and remains through 1987, when he leaves to pursue other business interests.

### 1976

Hoffman Honda opens on Route 44 on the Avon/Canton line, on 18 acres.

### 1977

The East Hartford Oldsmobile facility on Connecticut Boulevard is expanded with the addition of Porsche and Audi franchises.

### 1980

Hoffman opens its Saab and Isuzu dealership on Connecticut Boulevard, East Hartford.

### 1982

I. Bradley Hoffman joins his father Burton and brother Jeffrey in the business.



The rebranding campaign “does put pressure on us to go a step further, but we welcome the pressure. I want everybody in the company to move faster now.”

The new logo and tagline are being rolled out over the coming months and will replace the previous themes the company has used in TV and radio advertising, like “The First Family of Cars” and “Whatever Road You Travel.”

The new look will also take its place in the company’s dealership signage and in banners that will appear in Hoffman showrooms and service facilities.

Bradley says the company’s new image will also be used as a rallying point to re-energize the staff through an internal communications strategy. “I’m really excited about it. A lot of this is not only about driving our business but charging our employees up to deliver their absolute best to every customer, every day.”

With the company-wide renovation project nearing completion, he notes that an even higher level of customer service will be offered, not only in Hoffman’s state-of-the-art new showrooms but in its expanded service departments as well.

Grant Copeland, vice president of the Worx Group, which helped the Hoffmans to develop the new branding campaign, says highlighting Hoffman’s long-standing commitment to taking care of its customers and earning their trust is extremely important – especially in this industry, and especially in this economy.

“A car is not only a major financial purchase up front; there’s the residual purchasing for servicing, too.” A car’s reli-

ability and function, Copeland explains, “has a long-term impact on your family, your safety, how you conduct business, and the pace at which your family can move. If you’ve been sold a lemon or your car is always in the shop, it impedes your ability to conduct your life as efficiently as you might like.”

He adds, “Through the branding

long-term service and the best luxury cars and economy cars on the planet.”

Though the downturn in the economy has affected everyone in the industry, from small town dealerships to major automakers, “our expectation is for business to be the same as last year,” Bradley says. “The service and parts business,” he believes, “is going to be way up in 2009. We don’t automatically get that business – we have to earn it. When it comes to providing repairs and maintenance services, we are going to continue to do everything we can to make the experience unbelievable. There are many drivers out there who have not experienced the Hoffman way of doing business – and that is to make sure our customers are completely satisfied. If they walk in once, they’ll come back a second time and beyond.”

Jeffrey notes that he, his brother, and his son take personal responsibility for ensuring their clients are happy after a service experience or sale. “I say, ‘Look out the window and see whose name is on the sign. If something comes up, you can call Jeffrey, Bradley, or Matthew.’”

“We get mostly good calls,” he points out, but adds that it’s also a company practice to follow up with clients by phone to make sure that they have no outstanding concerns. “We’re committed to making the customer completely satisfied and that’s why we have such a high ratio of repeat customers.”

Asked about the company’s decision to continue with its expansion and renovation projects and to roll out a new branding initiative at a time when other automotive companies are reeling, Jeffrey expressed a

## EVOLUTION OF IDENTITY



campaign, we’re going to be addressing the service almost more than the purchase. Even if customers don’t buy a car there’s a huge opportunity to get service done at Hoffman, and that involves the same ultimate goal: trying to build a long-term relationship with me, my wife, my neighbors, my relatives, and my kids someday. We’ll be emphasizing not only the great franchises the Hoffmans represent, but the fact that they have a unique blend of the best



1982

**1984**  
Hoffman buys Goodwin Park Toyota in Hartford, which subsequently becomes Hoffman Toyota. A new Hoffman Toyota building is constructed on Route 44, on the Avon/Canton line (West Simsbury).

**1985**

Hoffman Toyota moves to the Hoffman Auto Park on the Avon/Canton line (West Simsbury).

**1989**

Hoffman Lexus makes its debut at the renovated location of the original Oldsmobile, Porsche and Audi building on Connecticut Boulevard, with neighboring buildings renovated to make room for Oldsmobile, Porsche and Audi. A renovation is completed at the Ford dealership.

**1990s**

Hoffman Auto Group becomes the first auto group in New England to open a Customer Contact Center (now Hoffman’s Customer Loyalty and Business Development Center).

**1998**

The Burton and

Phyllis Hoffman Foundation is established in memory of Burton C. Hoffman. The foundation makes a substantial gift each year to six local arts organizations, as a way to continue their father’s love of the arts, along with many other gifts to the community.

**1999**

A new Audi dealership is constructed on Connecticut Boulevard. The first annual Burton C. Hoffman Golf Classic is begun, to raise funds for the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. More than

\$800,000 has since been raised.

**2001**

An elegant Porsche building is built on Connecticut Boulevard in East Hartford.

**2002**

Matthew S. Hoffman, Jeffrey’s son and the 4th generation of Hoffmans, joins the business.

**2004**

Hoffman Scion is added to the Avon/Canton Auto Park, in the Toyota building. A second Hoffman Audi dealership, measuring 27,000 square feet, is built on Broad Street in New London.

**2006**

Hoffman Auto Group launches “Project HX,” an expansion project that includes major facility renovations, new construction and new franchises.

**2007**

Hoffman acquires Wagner Nissan in Simsbury. The Hoffman expansion continues with construction and renovation of sales and service buildings on Connecticut Boulevard. A state-of-the-art new dealership, Hoffman



1985

philosophy that has kept his family enterprise in business for close to a century.

“Mark Twain had a great saying: ‘Success is the intersection of opportunity and preparation.’ I think about that every day. While the media is filled with bad news – including dire reports on the economy – those who give in to doom and gloom scenarios create a self-fulfilling prophecy,” he says.

“It takes a lot of courage on our part to say, ‘We’re going to cut through all that clutter.’ We’re the same family we were in 1921. Let’s talk about how we can be successful and help our customers in this environment,” Jeffrey adds. “I think our business has the opportunity to grow alongside its employees and great customers. In doing the preparation work of coming out with the next generation Hoffman logo, we’ll expand our customer base, and create an even tighter bond.”

Bradley agrees. “It’s extremely important that we recognize that there’s a new generation out there, too. Most of them don’t even know we’re [representing] four generations, so we also want to address the way things are in the year 2009, and be more progressive in the way we do things. We think our new symbol is very exciting. You’ll see it everywhere.”

Copeland says in times like these, few car companies would be bold and forward-thinking enough to reinvent the wheel, as it were – or at least, to give the wheel a whole new look. “It signals a real confidence by the Hoffmans to do it at all. To do it when they’re doing it, I think, supports who they are as people and as a family. They have

the confidence and the courage to want to make the experience better for their employees and for their customers.”

He adds, “Creating a better buying experience and a better servicing experience fits with who they are as people. While they have big ideas, they also have a real hands-on approach and the follow-through that’s needed. They want to make sure that their customers are satisfied.”

And while the look of the Hoffman Auto Group’s logo may have changed,

Matthew says, one thing never will: the Hoffmans’ commitment to family values, customer service and general excellence. “My grandfather passed away when I was 19, but he instilled in all of us the desire to be the best we can be every day when we go to work. He was a larger-than-life figure,” he says, adding, “While we’re always looking toward the future, there’s a lot of pride that goes along with being part of something that my great-grandfather started.” **H**

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2007

Audi of East Hartford, holds its grand opening in October.

2008

Another franchise, the eco-friendly automobile *smart* Car built by Mercedes Benz, is added to the mix. The newly constructed Hoffman Nissan opens in July. The “Project HX” expansion and

renovation work continues. When the project is complete, Hoffman will have 10 franchises and 10 facilities, totaling an estimated 212,000 square feet.

**Hoffman**  
Driven by trust.™

2009

Hoffman Auto Group unveils a new brand logo and slogan. Completion of Hoffman Honda’s renovation is scheduled for June, while Toyota’s building will be finished in September. The updated facilities will include brand new showrooms, drive-through climate controlled service areas and additional service bays.

# The Science of Entertainment

Take a peek behind the scenes during last-minute preparations at the new Connecticut Science Center.

By Carol Latter

Photography by Steven Schwartz and Brian Ambrose



Science Center president Matt Fleury



The KidSpace gallery will offer creative play and discovery for ages 3 to 7.



Invention Dimension will feature some Connecticut firsts.



The Hoffman 3-D Theater



During construction, scaffolding soared several stories into the air.

**M**ORE THAN three years after the sod was turned on a piece of land donated by the Phoenix Companies, the architecturally breathtaking, \$165 million Connecticut Science Center in downtown Hartford is preparing to welcome its first guests.

From a distance, the six-level, 144,000-square-foot building looks like a serene, if futuristic, oasis of calm. But looks can be deceiving. Behind the mostly glass walls of the structure, a buzz of activity has been ongoing at the facility from sunup until sundown, day after day, month after month.

Now, with just weeks left before the building's official opening, there's an increased excitement in the air and a greater sense of urgency as drywall, painting and electrical contractors begin to share space with the crews who will take delivery of, carry, unpack, paint and assemble the state-of-the-art, one-of-a-kind exhibits.

Located on Columbus Boulevard, next to the Marriott Hartford Downtown and the Connecticut Convention Center, the

new science center was designed by famed architect Cesar Pelli, of Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects in New Haven.

With its triangular lines and raised "magic carpet" roof, the building looks like something out of a science fiction film. For passersby, the outside of the structure—with its gigantic exterior movie screen—will seem as much of an exhibit as the hands-on science stations inside.

When visitors first walk through the front doors in late May, the brightly colored walls, soaring spaces and new, expansive views of downtown Hartford and the Connecticut River will provide an instant "wow factor"—and a vivid backdrop for the 10 galleries designed to engage, entertain and educate visitors of all ages.

But on a cold day in early February, opening day seems a long way off. Entering the street-level portion of the building through the unheated garage, the walls and windows are in place, but the painting is incomplete, and the huge expanses of glass are marked with strips of tape and covered in a thick coat of drywall dust. The floors

are still rough, the escalator is still being assembled, and in a 140-foot tall, light-filled lobby at the top of a huge set of stairs, a maze of scaffolding soars from floor to ceiling. Bright yellow chutes extend down to the street from the outdoor upper deck, while tools, various boxes, coils of electrical wire and an army of workers wearing hardhats and goggles make walking from one section to the next an adventure.

Less than four months to go ... can the building be ready on time?

"We're really feeling very good about our spring opening timeframe," the science center's new president, Matt Fleury, hollers with a smile over the din of electrical tools. Construction manager Dave Elliott and Vice President of Operations Sherry Sweeney, in charge of visitor services, nod in agreement as a hardhat



Construction manager Dave Elliott goes over plans with science center president Matt Fleury.



The Exploring Space gallery will let visitors investigate the universe.



An army of workers attends to every detail.



tour of the facility begins. “We’re within weeks of having our team members begin to move in the exhibits.”

But Fleury admits, “it’s an extraordinarily complex process of completing an architecturally sophisticated building, completing 150 exhibits – each of which is brilliant in its own right – and really creating from whole cloth the opening of a major learning destination. It involves putting together policies, practices, planning, people and resources in the abstract, and then moving that into an operating environment.”

Still, he has no doubt that it will all come together – and right on time.

WHEN THE building is complete and open for business, he says, it will include more than 150 exhibits in 10 galleries – with names ranging from “Smart Energy” and “A River of Life” to “Exploring Space” and “Invention Dimension.” Another traveling exhibit gallery will showcase two to three national and international shows each year.

The Pfizer Discovery and Education Center, at ground level on Columbus Boulevard, includes a community room and four educational labs, where students can do hands-on learning activities and

experiments. Each year, the center expects more than 100,000 school children to visit from throughout Connecticut.

The lobby floor will feature a gift store, café and outdoor patio, along with a Children’s Gallery where kids three to seven can experiment with science through water play, magnetic balls, building stations and spiral air tubes. Also on this level is the 203-seat Hoffman Foundation 3-D Digital Theater, sponsored by Hoffman Auto Group, with a 30-foot by 40-foot screen and a stage. The theater will offer film screenings, presentations and lectures throughout the day.

On floors two and three, the Travelers Science Hall, with 20-foot ceilings, a full wall of glass, and views of the garden plaza and the river, is available for meetings and special events.

Floors four, five and six hold the exhibit galleries and a rooftop garden.

Fleury says the science center will be fascinating, fun and entertaining for visitors of all ages – from preschoolers brought by their parents, to teens who visit on school field trips, to seniors who sign up for science seminars. From turtle tracking by remote sensors to the science of social networking, there will be something for everyone.

In fact, thanks to its evolving programming, the science center will always have something new to offer, whether it’s children’s entertainment or “symposia for adults on hot science topics: anything from space missions to the science of love on Valentine’s Day. It will be constantly changing, so we want people to come and have a fantastic time, and come again and again.”

FIVE WEEKS after the initial tour, the science center seems transformed. There is still plenty to be done, but there is less scaffolding, more painting completed, and more room to walk. The plastic-shrouded seats are installed in the theater, and some of the exhibits – which are arriving almost daily by truck from New Jersey and Michigan – have begun to be unpacked.

In the Exploring Space gallery, the ceilings and walls have been painted black, and the floor – once bare concrete – is covered with a black-patterned floor covering. With only a small amount of light filtering in from the lobby, it’s not hard to imagine that you are in space – perhaps on a moonwalk, despite the lack of craters. Those will come later, along with the moon rock, meteorite and Mars rover.

For more than a year, the science center’s senior staff and board members have been working with design and fabrication firms, as well as lighting, media, and subject matter experts from across the country, to plan and create unique exhibits, many with a local connection or flavor.



Director of Exhibits Richard Thomas, center, is flanked by Exhibit Specialist Rick Bogdan, left, and Exhibits Manager Liam Cawley.



Hank Gruner, vice president of programs for the science center, said each of the galleries has its own unique atmosphere, and each offers a variety of interactive experiences – from mechanical to visual to cause-and-effect.

“The idea is to address a variety of learning styles, and help people make connections not only between different exhibits in one gallery, but between different galleries. Visitors will learn how to reference connections between Mars and the Forces in Motion gallery, for example.”

Richard Thomas, the center’s director of exhibits, said some of the exhibits are “world firsts,” that is, they’ve never been offered anywhere else. For instance, in the Exploring Space Gallery, visitors will be able to sit in an orbiter and conduct a “Mars flyover,” using joysticks to control their flight paths. Real footage, taken from an altitude of 50 miles, will be shown on six-foot curved panels – each one “like a personal IMAX.”

In the Sight & Sound Experience room, visitors entering the curved “Art Jam”

exhibit will be able to make new kinds of music, thanks to sensors that react to sound frequency to create a concert, and trigger colored lights. For now, though, the gallery and its exhibits are still in the process of being assembled.

The science center is not all about fun. Education is a pivotal piece. Part of the science center’s mission is to spark young people’s interest in science and to get them thinking about the possibility of a well-paying career in field. If the center is successful, Hartford youngsters who may have low educational and career aspirations because of poverty or other factors could have a good shot at a better life. The science center’s board of trustees has set up a fund to cover the admission costs for Hartford public school students so that all young people will be able to visit the center, regardless of their family’s ability to pay.

Apart from its educational mission, the science center will offer high-level entertainment, and is expected to infuse millions into the local economy by attracting more than 350,000 people each year. Many of them, especially out-of-town visitors, will give local businesses a further boost by dining out, visiting other area attractions and staying in local hotels.

Fleury said because of its proximity to the Connecticut Convention Center, the science center is expected to “add great appeal to Hartford as a convention destination.” The building will also be available to corporations and the science industries as a unique location for company gatherings.

Most of all, though, this center – the product of a tremendous amount of hard work, financial commitment and personal dedication by many people – is a gift for the people of the Hartford region.

“This is a moment when our country and our community is struggling to find reasons for confidence and optimism, but this world-class science center is something that is coming, and it’s at least as exciting as anything that has been done here,” Fleury says.

“For the average family who wakes up on a Saturday morning in the north end of Hartford or in South Glastonbury, this, more than anything else in Hartford, is for them. No matter what game or event may be on, no matter what the season or the weather, you can decide spontaneously to come. If you’re looking for something fun and wholesome to do with the whole family, our doors will be open.”

STILL, THEY’RE not open yet.

Looking around the site in mid-March, Exhibits Manager Liam Cawley says it

will take 10 to 13 weeks to get all of the exhibits in and installed, with eight to 24 technicians and supervisors – along with some locally hired installation personnel – working on the project.

“Everybody’s on board,” he says. “It’s a big operation, and we’ve got a short timetable.”

Setting up the exhibits requires more than just opening boxes and propping things in place – much more.

“Some of the larger pieces are coming unfinished or unpainted. Some pieces require light wiring, others need some carpentry. A lot of walls have to be bolted. Everybody’s got to be a Jack of all trades. It’s high-paced, and we’re putting in long, 12-hour days,” he says.

“It’s not a plug-and-play museum. Hence, the 13 weeks and the sheer number of staff involved. But it’s fun, because we’re creating giant toys.”

Will they finish on time?

“It’s going to be tight. The closer we get, the more pressure. But the people who are working on it are excited about it, and eager to work on it. The closer we get, we’ll work longer, and harder. This, to us, is really what the museum is – people are coming for the exhibits. Regardless of what crops up, we will make sure it’s perfect.”

The process is more complicated, he says, because it’s a new building, “and we’re trying to do this while the building is still being finished. There’s a lot of coordination between the construction crew and the building trades. Everybody’s excited, but it is a lot of work.”

He predicts the night before the official opening, “everybody will be here. The guys will be walking out the back door as the first visitors as walking in the front.”

Cawley, who volunteered at the old Science Center (now the Children’s Museum) in West Hartford as a high school student before working in its planetarium for a couple of years and then moving on to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, is clearly delighted to be not only back in the area, but in his dream job.

And he’s fired up about seeing the look in students’ eyes when they finally walk through those doors.

“The students and the kids finally get their world-class science center. Now they don’t have to go to Boston or Philly – it’s right here,” he says.

“It’s the latest one in the country, with the newest technology. It’s got very cutting edge exhibits, things you’re not going to see anywhere else.”

Was it worth the wait? “Absolutely.” **H**



# The Flame of Hope

**Special Olympics Connecticut is celebrating 40 years of helping people with intellectual disabilities realize their potential and build lasting friendships through sport.**

BY CAROL LATTER

In 1968, Eunice Kennedy Shriver lit the Flame of Hope, launching the first Special Olympics games in Chicago. A tireless supporter of people with intellectual disabilities, the sister of former President John F. Kennedy and the mentally disabled Rosemary Kennedy believed that these children and adults could reap great enjoyment and increased self-esteem from participating in competitive sports. She was also convinced that involvement in these activities would help them be more successful in other parts of their lives.

To many, it seemed like a radical notion. At the time, most people considered mental disability a source of shame, and believed those affected should be kept at home, out of sight, or sent to an institution. But Kennedy Shriver had the connections, backing and determination to turn this “radical” idea into a reality.

During that first Special Olympics, 1,000 young men and women from 26 states and Canada took part in sports like swimming, field hockey, and track and field – with just 100 spectators in the stands to cheer them on.

Today, nearly 3 million Special Olympics athletes in approximately 180 countries participate in year-round training and competition, in almost 30 individual and

team sports. Worldwide, more than half a million volunteers support every aspect of the Special Olympics program, from administration and fundraising to coaching athletes and officiating at events.

Kennedy Shriver has clearly changed the world – both the way it sees people with intellectual disabilities, and the way millions of these children and adults view the world around them. “Once ignored and neglected, hidden at home or isolated from the community, people with intellectual disabilities have gained respect and acceptance,” says the organization’s web site, “because, through Special Olympics, they have been able to reveal their virtues and display their gifts.”

Representatives from Connecticut were among those on hand at Soldier’s Field

in Chicago in July 1968 to take part in the games and witness the beginning of a global movement. One year later, the newly formed Special Olympics Connecticut (SOCT) gained official nonprofit status – this year marks its 40th anniversary.

One of the most active and innovative Special Olympics organizations in the nation, SOCT hosts more than 50 tournaments and competitions, and provides year-round sports training and athletic competition for all ages, according to its president, Beau Doherty. In addition to a “Young Athletes” program for children aged 2 to 6, there are elementary, middle school, high school and adult programs, and “every one of those different age levels gets to train in various sports seasonally,” he says. “They train and compete in one sport, and when that season is over, they choose a different sport.”

As well as competing, athletes 40 and older can become certified sports officials through mentor training, and learn to serve as spokespeople for the organization.

But its programs are not just for those who are intellectually disabled. Doherty says since the 1980s, Special Olympics has brought athletes with and without intellectual disabilities together on the same teams to compete in a variety of sports, through its Unified Sports program.

The program was promoted by Kennedy Shriver to state Special Olympics organizations, beginning in the 1980s. SOCT was one of the early adopters, and has run a Unified Sports program since 1988, with the goal of providing “the most inclusive and meaningful school- and community-based sports training and competition” possible for its athletes.

In Connecticut, nearly 5,300 athletes with intellectual disabilities now train and compete as partners alongside almost 3,700 non-disabled athletes in local, regional and state events.

“Our entire school-aged program is a unified program. We do that because we’re very aware of the research conducted by two different universities showing that the nondisabled kids’ feelings about themselves change for the better when they have that interaction,” says Doherty.

There are tremendous benefits for the Special Olympics kids as well. Usually, for intellectually handicapped young people, “there’s a lot of isolation. There’s loneliness. Oftentimes, the people who are in their lives are either the parents or the siblings, and it’s not easy for our people to be connected beyond that. In typical school settings, they’re not the ones on the football teams. But we’ve had instances where captains of the football teams were Unified Sports partners with the disabled kids in basketball, and they’ve said, ‘Will you sit with me at lunch?’ That’s very powerful.”

In some cases, he says, “our people have served in the wedding parties of their nondisabled teammates.”

Doherty says in the early years of Special Olympics, “we were focused on showing that people with disabilities can play sports.” The organization, he notes, has been “a phenomenal catalyst to bring people with intellectual disabilities together.” But in the past 20 years, with its original goal accomplished, Special Olympics has concentrated on reducing athletes’ isolation.

“Everybody talks about team building,” he says. “It’s a term that’s gaining ground at the corporate level and nonprofit level. But if you really want to change people’s attitudes about disabled people, put nondisabled people on a team with disabled players, and a lot of good things happen.”

Overall, more than 10,000 volunteers, 9,000 athletes and partners, 900 coaches, and numerous corporate and civic organizations are part of the SOCT team.

With 55 sporting events held throughout the year, “it’s nonstop craziness,” Doherty says with a laugh. “Pretty much every week, we could go to a sporting event or qualifying event.”



*“If you really want to change people’s attitudes about disabled people, put nondisabled people on a team with disabled players, and a lot of good things happen.”*

Summer games are held in June, fall games are held in September, a holiday sports festival is held in November, and the winter games take place in late February or early March.

Funding for the training and events, he says, comes from “a ton of different sources – corporate America, individuals, and a small percentage from the State of Connecticut.” In addition to a direct mail program to solicit donations, done in cooperation with Special Olympics’ international headquarters, SOCT receives funding from both family and corporate foundations, including Hoffman Auto Group. Hoffman is the official corporate sponsor of the 2009 Special Olympics Track & Field Event, being held at the University of Hartford and Weaver High School on May 9.

SOCT also organizes a variety of fundraisers. “We do a lot of penguin plunges, and hold a law enforcement torch run, which raises a lot of money. Then there’s Tip a Cop, where officers go into restaurants and act as waiters and waitresses.” Why does SOCT hold so many different types of fundraising events? “These days,” he says, “if you’re a nonprofit, you have to diversify.”

Doherty says the organization has a whole has been blessed with abundant and dedicated volunteers, without whom it couldn’t accomplish all it does. For example, “the great majority of our coach-

es are not paid. That’s what we’re about – finding those kinds of people. Luckily, there are a lot of people who are like that. I know a lot of incredible people.”

Some volunteers become involved as individuals – perhaps because they have a handicapped child themselves. Others get involved through their company, which may have arranged, like Hoffman, to sponsor a track event.

He says the employees of sponsor companies are trained by U.S. track and field officials, “and they simply love it. They will be the timers. They will be the finish judges who will pick first, second, and third place. They will be the inspectors who look for lane violations, and the marshalls at the starting line who help get the athletes in the right lane. Kids will be runners and stagers – they bring athletes to the start of the race and make sure the recorder gets the name of the athletes and what lanes they’re in at the finish line. It’s a lot of fun for the volunteers and, of course, for the athletes.”

Doherty, who’s been involved with Special Olympics for 30 years and came to Connecticut in 1986 as SOCT’s assistant director, says his career to date has been extremely rewarding. “If all we did was teach someone to play a sport, I don’t think we should be around. I think we need to do more than that. To me, it’s really about expanding people’s life experiences in a positive way.” **H**

# Ready to Roll

"What sets us apart is that the bulk of our inventory is certified, which is a major plus," says Kevin Warriner, general manager of the Hoffman Lexus dealership in East Hartford.

## Used vehicle buying can be complicated – but it needn't be.

BY KEITH GRIFFIN

**T**he used car and truck market has become an attractive alternative for new vehicle buyers in tough economic times. However, purchasing a used car can quickly become a headache if it's not done the right way, because a used car or truck doesn't offer the same protections and warranties that a new vehicle does.

One of the most important things to consider is how long a dealership has been in business. The Hoffman Auto Group has been selling new and used cars since 1921, which is a good harbinger of its ability to weather economic downturns. Tyrrell Dabrowski, general manager of Hoffman Toyota in West Simsbury, says that's important to used car customers. "The longevity of the Hoffmans being in business, and their being reputable, are important," he says.

If you're in the market for a used car, you've probably heard the term "certified pre-owned." There are important distinc-

tions when it comes to certified used cars – those certified by the manufacturer and those certified by the dealer. The latter is, frankly, almost worthless to a used car buyer because most local dealers lack nationwide standards and service.

That's where the Hoffman certified pre-owned used car programs stand apart. All 10 lines of its certified pre-owned vehicles are certified by the manufacturer. This means these used cars, trucks and sports utility vehicles must meet tough, national standards and are warranted by the manufacturer. So, in the unlikely event that something goes wrong, you can

bring your car to any dealership across the country. That's something the used car dealer on the corner can't offer you.

"What sets us apart is that the bulk of our inventory is certified, which is a major plus," says Kevin Warriner, general manager of the Hoffman Lexus dealership in East Hartford.

A certified pre-owned vehicle from Hoffman undergoes a thorough inspection. For example, at Lexus, each vehicle goes through a 161-point certification inspection. Technicians perform a mechanical inspection and computer diagnosis of the engine, and the undercarriage is checked – including wheel alignment, chassis, frame rails and subframe. The safety and security of airbags, seatbelts, brake pads and rotors, plus tire tread depth, are assessed. The upholstery in the luggage compartment is evaluated, along with the spare tire and first aid kit. The upholstery, audio systems, power windows and locks are part of the interior inspection, while the exterior is checked for dings, dents and scratches. As

well, a road test is performed to check for engine noises, handling issues, interior squeaks, rattles and vibrations.

Granted, certified used cars are going to cost more than non-certified, but it's a price worth paying. "I think it's the best investment you can make. You know you're getting the right car with the right warranty," says Warriner.

Another major advantage to certified pre-owned used cars is their upgraded warranties – something else an unfranchised used car dealer can't offer.

At Hoffman Ford, for example, a certified pre-owned used car comes with a 6-year/100,000-mile warranty that provides, among other things: coverage for the engine and transmission; 24-hour, seven-day roadside assistance; and a fully transferable warranty to future owners at no cost.

Dabrowski says a certified pre-owned warranty can, in some cases, provide you with longer coverage than that offered for a new car (warranties vary by manufacturer). Toyota, like Ford, has a 100,000-mile power train warranty that extends 40,000 miles longer than the new car warranty.

Buy a two-year old Camry with 30,000 miles, and you have protection for four years and an additional 70,000 miles. (The 6-year/100,000-mile warranty becomes active when the new car is first put into service; it does not go into effect when the used car is purchased.)

Just because a used car is not certified,

though, does not make it a bad proposition when it's a Hoffman used car. "We pick and choose what we sell," Warriner says, explaining that 30 to 40 percent of the vehicles taken in trade are not good enough to become a Hoffman used car. "The ones we keep are the nicest of the bunch," he explains. "We're very picky about what we sell here. We have one of the best reputations around."

For example, all manufacturers have age and mileage restrictions on what can be considered a certified pre-owned vehicle. An older vehicle can be in great shape, but can't be certified.

Also, Hoffman can't sell certified pre-owned used cars for manufacturers it doesn't have a new car franchise for. That means any BMW, Mercedes, or Volvo used car it sells can't be certified. That doesn't make them any less of a value, though, because when you're a dealership the size of Hoffman, you can sell only the best used cars. "We do a lot of off-make business," Warriner says.

There's another factor that used car buyers will appreciate at Hoffman – a wide selection. "We have so many different franchises that it gives the consumer a one-stop shopping experience," he says about Hoffman's 10 brands that are sold at its dealerships. The web site, [www.hoffmanauto.com](http://www.hoffmanauto.com), has an excellent selection of used cars, both certified and non-certified, as well as a wide selection of great used vehicles for less than \$10,000. *H*

Tyrell Dabrowski, general manager of Hoffman Toyota in West Simsbury, says a certified pre-owned warranty can, in some cases, provide you with longer coverage than that offered for a new car.



## TOP 10 TIPS FOR BUYING A USED CAR

As the author of the used cars guide for About.Com, a *New York Times* company, I get a lot of questions about buying a used car. Here are my Top 10 tips. You can read more about used cars at my web site, [www.usedcars.about.com](http://www.usedcars.about.com).

**1** Find out what was inspected to qualify the vehicle as a certified, pre-owned used car. Your dealer will be willing to share the information with you.

**2** Not all certified pre-owned programs are created equal. Only buy used cars that are certified by manufacturers, because of their national standards and service.

**3** Ask who the vehicle was purchased from. It says a lot about a dealership if you're buying a used car that a former customer owned. Odds are good the dealership knows the complete mechanical history of the car.

**4** Get a CarFax report. While not perfect, it gives a pretty good look back at a used car's history. A lot of dealers will provide it to you.

**5** Do some comparisons on price, but understand that no two used cars are exactly alike. Prices will vary. No web site can every give you the exact value of a used car down to the last penny.

**6** Take the car for an extensive test drive. Drive it in circumstances similar to your use of a car. Don't take it only for a spin on the highway or through the local suburbs.

**7** Leave the kids at home when test-driving used cars. They are a big distraction. However, feel free to bring along a spouse, partner or trusted friend for their opinions.

**8** Don't forget to pop the trunk. Will it meet your storage needs? Are you a golfer? Is there space for your clubs? Bring a tape measure to be sure.

**9** Take the car into a parking lot, and see how easy it is to park.

**10** Enter and exit the vehicle a few times. If you experience any discomfort now, it will be magnified over the years you own the car.

# From ruin to renown

Half a century after its fate appeared sealed, Goodspeed Opera House continues to wow audiences and win prestigious awards.



BY NANCY THOMPSON — PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOODSPEED MUSICALS

Fifty years ago, the Goodspeed Opera House was a storage depot for the state's highway department. Today, it is an acclaimed musical theater — the only regional musical theater in America to have been awarded two Special Tony Awards.

The story of the opera house's rise from wreckage could be the makings of a Broadway show, complete with floods, hurricanes, a few very persistent ladies, an arts-loving politician named Abe and an orphan named Annie.

The opera house, owned by East Haddam shipbuilding tycoon William Henry Goodspeed, opened in 1877. For about five years, the theater, with its rich Victorian style, was a noted landmark in the lower Connecticut River valley and home to minstrel shows, lectures, comedy sketches, concerts, vaudeville acts and a stage version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

With Goodspeed's death in 1882, the theater started its long decline. The property was sold to a railroad and,

during World War I, was used to house militiamen charged with protecting the nearby swing bridge from Germans who might try to storm up the Connecticut River to Hartford.

The building withstood a devastating flood in 1936 and a hurricane in 1938 before enduring its final insult, sale to the state's highway department in 1943.

Its elegant hanging balconies—designed without pillars to give all seats an unobstructed view of the state—and its porches were torn down, its stage equipment removed and donated to the Wadsworth Atheneum, its Victorian splendor ruined.

The opera house survived two more major hurricanes, in 1954 and 1955, and was about to be leveled to make room for

a highway department truck garage in 1958 when Libby Kaye, president at the time of the Haddam Historical Society, contacted then-Governor Abraham Ribicoff and asked for his help in saving the theater.

"Mrs. Alfred H. Terry of Hadlyme, Corresponding Secretary of the Antiquarian & Landmarks Society, Inc. and I seek an opportunity to discuss this matter with you, to ask for your advice and counsel, not only because the property is owned by the State but because we believe if structures of architectural and historic interest are to be saved, participation of government is essential," Mrs. Kaye wrote.

The governor responded quickly, and early in 1959, the state legislature passed a bill preserving the exterior of the building for five years to give local preservationists time to restore the structure.

The Goodspeed Opera House Foundation was formed, and the rest of the story is legend.

The opera house, fully restored to its original splendor, reopened June 18, 1963

"Annie" made its World Premiere at Goodspeed Musicals.

with a production of "Oh Lady! Lady!!"

Since then, 183 musicals have been produced at the theater. Eighteen have gone on to Broadway and several have won Tony Awards, including "Man of La Mancha" in 1966 (five Tonys), "Shenandoah" in 1974 (two Tonys), "Annie" in 1976 (seven Tonys) and "The Most Happy Fella" in 1992 (one Tony).

Productions at the opera house are recreations of seldom-produced musicals as well as new musicals; productions in Chester are new musicals, many of which are world or American premieres.

About 140,000 patrons attend Goodspeed performances at the 398-seat opera house and at the 200-seat Goodspeed-at-Chester/The Norma Terris Theater. It's been estimated that Goodspeed Musicals' expenditures and direct patron spending bring more than \$17 million to the area each year.

Michael Price has been the opera



house's executive director for more than 40 years and has directed the organization in its mission of preserving and advancing musical theater.

He says during the past year, the

theater ran at 85 percent capacity, and had two shows on Broadway – "13" just closed, while "The Story of My Life" is in previews. Another show, "Happy Days," is on the road. "How can you complain?" he asks.

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## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

"It's good. I can't ask for anything more."

Price also has high praise for his gifted colleagues. "It's a fabulous operation. I sit here in awe of the people I work with. I work amongst the most talented people, with people who feel closest to the Goodspeed."

Beyond its productions, Goodspeed Musicals, as it is officially known, offers educational programs through apprenticeships and internships and in conjunction with the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and with the Hartt School at the University of Hartford. Community outreach programs include kids' nights four times during each production, student-teacher workshops, study guides for all productions, the Scherer Library of Musical Theatre, tours for schoolchildren, a scholarship fund and opportunities for patrons to interact with staff and performers.

The theater, on the east bank of the Connecticut River immediately south of



David Elder makes a splash as Don Lockwood in Goodspeed Musicals' production of "Singin' in the Rain."

PHOTO BY DIANE SOBOLEWSKI

state tourism posters and other publications.

Price says the Goodspeed is "in very good shape going forward. We've become part of the Connecticut community and the worldwide theater community in a most enduring way. We've built a bond with our audiences and our artists, and that's what keeps us going. We produce an artistic product that's loved by our patrons and that our artists enjoy doing."

This year's season at the opera house opens April 17 with "42nd Street" through June 28 and will be followed by "Camelot" July 10 through September 19 and "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" September 25 through November 29. To order tickets, call 860.873.8668 or visit [www.goodspeed.org](http://www.goodspeed.org). *H*

the Haddam-East Haddam swing bridge, is the largest wooden structure along the river's 410 miles and is often pictured in

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# Lights, camera ♦♦♦ costumes!

With a quarter of a million ensembles, Chester's Goodspeed Musicals Costume Rentals is a virtual treasure trove.

BY NANCY THOMPSON

WHILE MOST CONNECTICUT residents have heard of the Goodspeed Opera House, far fewer people know about the Goodspeed's tiny gem housed in a former knitting needle factory across the Connecticut River in Chester.

Goodspeed Musicals Costume Rentals provides theatrical costumes to theaters across the U.S. – along with Tony Award-winning designers, television, film and commercial production houses, museums, colleges and even individuals looking for the perfect ensemble for a special occasion.

Jennifer Etheridge, costume rental business manager, founded the non-profit company in 2004 to save some money and even create income for Goodspeed Musicals.

The result is more than 250,000 costumes stored in a 14,000-square-foot warehouse, all inventoried, photographed and available for rental.

The costume collection got its start years before the rental business, when Michael Price, longtime executive director of Goodspeed Musicals, needed a place to store Goodspeed's growing costume collection and then started buying costumes from other production companies.

"Michael Price had the foresight to purchase costumes when other costume companies closed," Etheridge says. "Now people know about us and donate costumes as a tax write-off, or a show closes quickly and the producer wants to get rid of them. Storage space is scarce in Manhattan, and they know we'll take good care of the costumes." Sometimes the show may go on, but a specific part is written out and Goodspeed ends up with that costume.

Among the collection are costumes from both the national tour and the Broadway production of "Showboat."

"There's everything from the turn of the century to the '30s, and lots of great menswear," Etheridge says of the "Showboat" collection. "We used them in our production of 'Big River.' I don't think Goodspeed ever puts on a production without at least one costume from 'Showboat.'"

Costumes from the Goodspeed's collection have appeared in the motion picture versions of "Enchanted" and "The Producers," and the rental shop has dressed many stars, including Paul

Newman, Shirley Jones, Kyra Sedgwick, Renee Zellweger, Jennifer Garner and Kevin Kline, whose rehearsal hat from the Broadway production of "Cyrano de Bergerac" is part of the Goodspeed collection. The costumes also have been used in two episodes of the PBS series "Great Performances" and in the New York City Opera productions of "Candide" and "Cyrano de Bergerac." Patti Lupone wore a dress from the Goodspeed's "Kiss of the Spider Woman" collection at the 2006 Tony Awards. And the costume rental shop currently has 29 costumes at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, in an exhibit featuring more than 100 women designers in the performing arts. The exhibit runs through May 8.

One of Etheridge's most interesting calls was from "Saturday Night Live," which was staging a spoof of "The Other Boleyn Girl" and wanted a 16th century gown, pronto.

"We work with all kinds of clients – Tony Award-winning designers, colleges, commercials, and special events," Etheridge says.

The Goodspeed shop usually deals with professional costume shops and professional seamstresses. "They may well call and ask if they can embellish a costume a certain way," Etheridge

says. Sometimes they call and ask permission to alter the size of the costumes, but when professionals are doing the work, the alterations aren't a problem. "A lot are for showgirl, showboy bodies, size 6 and 8," she says.

Other shows for which the Goodspeed has partial or full collections are "Ain't Broadway Grand?," "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," "Candide," which won a Tony Award for best costumes in 1997, "The Crucible," "Gypsy," "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," "Kiss Me, Kate," which won a Tony for best costumes in 2000, "Mame," "Man of La Mancha," "Pirates of Penzance," "Sunset Boulevard" and "Thoroughly Modern Millie."

The lower floor of the collection is broken out by show, and costumes on the upper floor are sorted by men's and women's, style and period.

Not only costumes, but some 1,400 pairs of shoes, hats and even boas are available. "We have Greek and Roman to futuristic designs," Etheridge says.

The rental shop often attracts people doing research for a show. "They just look around at a certain period," she says. "Some designers do their renderings first, and others come in and find costumes."

She says the shop's location, about halfway between New York and Boston, is a plus, as is its location in the town of Chester, with its many boutiques and restaurants.

Demand for a specific show or type of show varies. "Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat" is very popular this year," Etheridge says. "After Arthur Miller died, there was a big demand for 'The Crucible.' If Hollywood does a big '40s movie, '40s shows become popular."

"You never know what it's going to be on any given day," Etheridge says. *H*





PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

# Events Calendar

**Greater Hartford hosts a big variety of special events throughout the year — from street festivals and art shows to major concerts and sporting events. Here is a sample of events that may be of interest to you.**

- **Through June 28—“42nd Street.”** Enjoy the ultimate Broadway fairytale as a stage-struck understudy becomes an overnight star in the biggest and most sparkling dance musical to ever hit the Goodspeed stage. *Goodspeed Opera House, 6 Main St., East Haddam; 860.873.8668; www.goodspeed.org.*
- **June 4–July 12—“mixus.”** Fifteen West Hartford area artists display their work. An artist’s reception will be held June 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. The show is open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. *Mandell Jewish Community Center, 335 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford; 860.236.4571; www.mandelljcc.org.*
- **June 6—Komen CT Race for the Cure.** Join hundreds of women and their families as they raise money to find a cure for breast cancer by participating in a 5K run or a 4K walk at Bushnell Park in Hartford. There will also be races for children, a survivor’s breakfast, an awards ceremony and a survivors’ recognition event. *Bushnell Park, Hartford; 860.728.5500; www.komenct.org.*
- **June 8—Burton C. Hoffman Golf Classic.** This 11th annual fundraiser for the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center includes contests, an auction, a raffle, a BBQ, a banquet and more. Registration begins at 11 a.m. *Tumble Brook Country Club, 376 Simsbury Rd., Bloomfield; www.connecticutchildrensevents.org/Event/301/Hoffman-Tournament.html.*
- **June 9–14—“The Color Purple.”** This stirring musical tells the inspiring story of Celie, who triumphs over tremendous odds to find joy and her true inner beauty. The performance includes a Grammy nominated score of jazz, ragtime, gospel and blues. *The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, 166 Capital Ave., Hartford; 860.987.5900; www.bushnell.org*
- **June 10—Sunken Garden Poetry Festival Opening Night.** Every Wednesday evening through August, join the area’s top poets and a special group of musicians for an evening of music and literature, rain or shine. Bring chairs and an al fresco dinner, or purchase a meal from the Farmington Gourmet. *Hill-Stead Museum, 35 Mountain Rd., Farmington; 860.677.4787; www.hillstead.org.*
- **June 12–July 26—“Wonder of the World.”** A 7-year marital itch and a shocking revelation prompt a wife to leave her husband and do all the things she wanted to do in her life. *TheaterWorks, 232 Pearl St., Hartford; 860.527.7838; www.theaterworkshartford.org.*
- **June 13—Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Birthday.** Celebrate the 198th birthday of the famed author and abolitionist at her home, from noon to 4 p.m. Witness living history presentations, stroll the gardens, participate in a game of croquet, sit in on the drumming circle, and enjoy a piece of birthday
- cake. *Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, 77 Forest St., Hartford; 860.522.9258; www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org.*
- **June 17—Bushnell Park Foundation’s 4th Annual Summer Solstice Party.** Celebrate summer with hors d’oeuvres, wine and beer, and choose your favorite in the dessert contest from 5:30 to 8 p.m. The party includes tours of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch and live jazz. *Bushnell Park, Hartford; 860.232.6710; www.bushnellpark.org.*
- **June 19–21—Rose and Garden Weekend.** Come see the roses in full bloom at the Butler-McCook House in Hartford, Hill-Stead in Farmington, Wickham Park in Manchester, and West Hartford’s Elizabeth Park, where a Wine and Roses party will be held on Friday. *Central Regional Tourism District, www.ctriver.com.*
- **June 19—Juneteenth Pilgrimage.** June 19th marks the end of slavery in the United States. Gather with your friends and family to make a pilgrimage of remembrance from the Charter Oak Cultural Center to Hartford’s African Burial Ground, where a commemoration ceremony will be held. *Charter Oak Cultural Center, 21 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford; 860.249.1207; www.charteroakcenter.org.*
- **June 19—Read it and Sleep: A Community Pajama Party.** Come in your pajamas to the Charter Oak Cultural Center for hot chocolate, cookies and a bedtime story read by a guest reader. *Charter Oak Cultural Center, 21 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford; 860.249.1207; www.charteroakcenter.org.*
- **June 22–28—The Travelers Championship.** The Travelers Championship returns to the Tournament Players Club at River Highlands in Cromwell. Amateurs and PGA TOUR Professionals compete in the Aetna Tournament Players Pro-Am on the 22nd, with practice rounds scheduled on the 23rd and the Travelers Celebrity Pro-Am on the 24th. Competition rounds begin on the 25th. *Tournament Players Club, River Highlands, 1 Golf Club Road, Cromwell; 860.635.5000; www.tpcatriverhighlands.com.*
- **June 26—“Summer Groove: Rhythm, Blues & Soul.”** A 40th anniversary celebration of Woodstock kicks off the 2009 season of the Talcott Mountain Music Festival. *Performing Arts Center, Iron Horse Blvd., Simsbury; 860.244.2999; www.hartfordsymphony.org.*

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