

# *Hoffman* DECADES

SPRING/SUMMER 2012

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of Rocking  
Hartford's  
XL Center

## INSIDE

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# Hoffman DECADES

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On the cover:

The almost 40-year history of the XL (Hartford Civic) Center is a fascinating reflection of changes in our tastes in music over the years.



WELCOME TO OUR Spring/Summer issue of Decades!

This is the time of year when many Connecticut residents grow restless. They want to get outside, they want to head to the shore or to our rivers, lakes and streams. Or sometimes, they just want to jump into a car, throw down the top or throw open the windows or sunroof—and DRIVE.

At Hoffman Auto Group, we're always concerned about driving safety. Taking to the roads will be some of the state's youngest drivers. We pause to remind these carefree, multitasking, social media enthusiasts of the importance of giving driving their full attention, and especially, of the perils of "drexting"—driving while texting. We remind readers that this activity is dangerous at any age. We even give parents some tips on how to encourage safe driving practices in their youngsters, beginning with modeling good decision-making themselves.

At Hoffman Auto, we're also concerned about the economy and the environment. Picking the right new car can be both a great economic and environmental move. In this issue, we look at 14 terrific cars which achieve the incredible mileage of 40 MPG or more. These automobiles come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, with something for every budget. Our car reviewer takes to the road in an all-electric, no gas 2012 Nissan LEAF™ SL and can't wait to tell readers all about it.

For those who crave the sights, sounds, smells and flavors of outdoor grilling, local chef Jennifer Krascella supplies expert advice. She explains the difference between grilling and barbecuing, provides an extensive list of recommended equipment, and offers important dos and don'ts for would-be grillers. Do try this at home! Don't miss this piece!

While most of this issue's content deals with the outdoors, our cover story has a decidedly indoor slant. We are thrilled to bring you a memorable retrospective on the almost four-decade history of the XL (formerly Hartford Civic) Center. Supported by the striking photography of Jerry Margolis, respected music and theatre critic Christopher Arnott gathers the reminiscences of major players and local musicians alike in this stirring tribute.

At Hoffman Auto, we believe in supporting our servicemen and women and their families. In this issue, we take a moving look at Stars & Tykes, an event held at Lake Compounce to alleviate the anxiety and hardship faced by the children of those in the service. We recognize organizations like Tribute USA and Our Military Kids and the people behind them who try to make the lives of these stressed children a little better.

We know you'll enjoy this issue. Thank you for your continued loyalty and support.



*Jeffrey S. Hoffman*  
Co-Chairman

*I. Bradley Hoffman*  
Co-Chairman

## Hoffman DECADES

VOLUME VII, Number 1

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*These employees have been with the Hoffman Auto Group for at least 10 years; some for as many as 46 years!*



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By Robert Bailin



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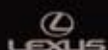
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## HOFFMAN PARTNERS WITH BRAIN INJURY ALLIANCE OF CONNECTICUT

In March, Hoffman Auto Group partnered with the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut (BIAC) to raise money in support of Brain Injury Awareness month. Hoffman and the BIAC appeared on WFSB's "Better Connecticut" morning show to help increase the community's understanding of brain injury and its prevention. Hoffman raised \$11,300, which will aid the BIAC in providing support for individuals with brain injury, their families and caregivers.

Pictured: Christine Buhler, development & marketing director of BIAC; I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Julie Peters, executive director of BIAC.

## A DONATION TO CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER

In late December, Enterprise Holdings made a donation of \$5,000 to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center on behalf of Hoffman Auto Group's annual Burton C. Hoffman Golf Classic. The golf tournament is held in remembrance of Hoffman Auto Group's second-generation owner, Burton C. Hoffman, and all proceeds go to benefit the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. With support from the Burton C. Hoffman Golf Classic, Connecticut Children's is able to create more private clinical care space, consultation rooms, and areas for respite and play for families awaiting surgery and for children in recovery.

Pictured: Lee Peters, group rental manager at Enterprise Holdings; I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Matthew Hoffman, vice president of Hoffman Auto Group; Larry Kuharski, vice president & general manager at Enterprise Holdings.



## HOFFMAN PORSCHE UNVEILS THE NEW 911

In early February, Hoffman Porsche unveiled the next generation of the Porsche 911. The newest 911 model marked the first redesign since 2005. Although the 2013 Porsche 911 respects its lineage and maintains the iconic shape, ninety percent of the car was completely redesigned—not one body panel remains the same. Hoffman Auto Group invited its most exclusive Porsche customers to come celebrate what has certainly become the golden age of the sports car. Guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvre by Emily's Catering and a special live demonstration of the 911's performance down Connecticut Boulevard.



## HOFFMAN TEAMS WITH MADD TO COMBAT DRUNK DRIVING

In December, Hoffman Auto Group partnered with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) for the 16th consecutive year in order to raise awareness and increase funds for the organization. To honor the cause, Hoffman employees tied approximately 2,000 red ribbons to vehicles throughout their lots and a portion of every sale was donated to MADD; in total, the company donated \$15,375 to the association. The money raised by Hoffman will directly impact the local community through education and victim services.

Pictured: Paula Dagostino, program specialist for MADD; Christan Miller, director of marketing & communications for Hoffman Auto Group; I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Matthew Hoffman, vice president of Hoffman Auto Group; Jeffrey S. Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Janice Heggie Margolis, director of MADD.



## HOFFMAN PORSCHE "IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN"

In March, Hoffman Porsche sponsored the YWCA's "In the Company of Women" luncheon. Hoffman has been supporting this initiative for 16 years, and counting! This annual event brings together nearly 1,500 diverse and successful women from the Greater Hartford area for the largest networking luncheon in the state. Attendees were able to meet other influential women who make a difference in Connecticut as well as gain insight and inspiration from this year's keynote speaker, actress Rosie Perez, who serves as a role model for women, and most important, is helping to fulfill the association's mission of empowering women and eliminating racism.

Pictured: Hoffman Auto Group representatives with actress and keynote speaker, Rosie Perez (left to right) Christan Miller, director of marketing & communications; Lori Principe, administrative assistant; Dolores Iannini; Monica Hoffman; Rosie Perez; Matthew Hoffman, vice president of Hoffman Auto Group; Randi Haney, public relations manager; Gabriella Simmons, Lexus office manager.





### HOFFMAN LAUNCHES 2013 LEXUS GS

In February, Hoffman Auto Group celebrated the launch of the all-new 2013 Lexus GS. Guests were welcomed into the Hoffman Lexus showroom to enjoy hors d'oeuvre by Emily's Catering and experience the newest technology firsthand. "Everything about this car is what we're headed towards. The big difference between the 2013 and the previous model is the way they integrated technology," explained Paul McAbee, sales consultant for Hoffman Lexus. "The new GS is a living lab of what Lexus is going to be."



### HOFFMAN AUTO GROUP RECEIVES PATRIOT AWARD

In January, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) presented Hoffman Auto Group with the Patriot Award. The award was presented by Private 1st Class Bryan Chiarappi of C Co. 102nd Infantry from the Army National Guard. The Hoffmans received this award for supporting Bryan during his deployment to Afghanistan and continuing to check up on him even after he took a leave of absence upon his return. "Even though I didn't work for the company anymore, Bradley Hoffman would call me just to check up. It was a great feeling and it made me miss Hoffman tremendously," said Bryan.

Pictured: Ronald Ferri, CT ESGR volunteer; Jeffrey S. Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; Bryan Chiarappi, East Hartford body shop appraiser for Hoffman Auto Group.



### HOFFMAN HELPS WITH "GIFTS OF LOVE"

In November, Hoffman Auto Group sponsored an event for local organization, Gifts of Love.

Gifts of Love provides basic needs—food, clothing, furniture, etc.—for people in need in the Greater Hartford area. The Hoffman Honda showroom was transformed for the '70s-themed party, a "Night Out in Style." Guests enjoyed food from local restaurants, a '70s-style band, silent auction, and were even able to transform into '70s garb with an onsite wardrobe, hair and makeup team!

Pictured: Hoffman employees volunteered to work the event.

Alecia Lombardi, cashier at Hoffman Honda; Brenda Scully, Lease Renewal Specialist at Hoffman Honda.



### HOFFMAN SPONSORS BIG RED FOR THE ARTS

In February, Hoffman Auto Group was the title sponsor for Big Red for the Arts, hosted by the Greater Hartford Arts Council. Big Red for the Arts is Greater Hartford's premier food and wine fundraising event. The event featured dishes from top area restaurants as well as wines and spirits from around the world. Hoffman Auto Group is very active in aiding local arts organizations. Monies raised are dedicated to funding and promoting the arts throughout the Greater Hartford region.

Pictured: Hoffman employees with Connecticut's first lady, Cathy Malloy. (left to right) Terri Principe, internet inventory coordinator; Carmen Mazzarella, Nissan sales consultant; Cathy Malloy; Robin Golightly, director of human resources; Katie Principe, receptionist; Lori Principe, administrative assistant.



### HOFFMAN AUDI RECEIVES ELITE MAGNA SOCIETY AWARD

In late March, Hoffman Audi of New London earned a place in the top 3% of Audi of America's top performing U.S. dealerships for 2011. Hoffman Audi of New London was one of only 10 Audi dealerships, out of 277 nationwide, to receive the very prestigious Elite Magna Society status. Admission into this prestigious group of dealers is no small feat. To qualify for elite status, dealerships not only have to meet or exceed sales targets, they must also demonstrate the highest operating standards, achieve consistently high customer satisfaction marks and excel in overall business performance—all of which contribute to their unwavering commitment to their customers, their employees and the Audi brand. It is with great enthusiasm and pride that we salute the team on this extraordinary achievement.

Pictured: Hoffman Audi of New London General Manager Joe Thomas.



# Rocking the Center

Sharing Tales of the Some of the Most Popular and Provocative Concerts at the Hartford Civic Center and XL Center.

BY CHRISTOPHER ARNOTT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY MARGOLIS

Whom have you seen play at the XL Center (or at the same place, under its former name the Hartford Civic Center)? The easier question might be whom *haven't* you seen?

Name a major pop star of the past three or four decades, and chances are extremely good that he or she has played the XL or Civic Center.

The history of shows at this venue is a timeline of popular tastes spanning several generations. In 1976 alone, it welcomed Elvis Presley, Aerosmith, John Denver, Kiss (twice!), Barry Manilow and Frank Zappa.

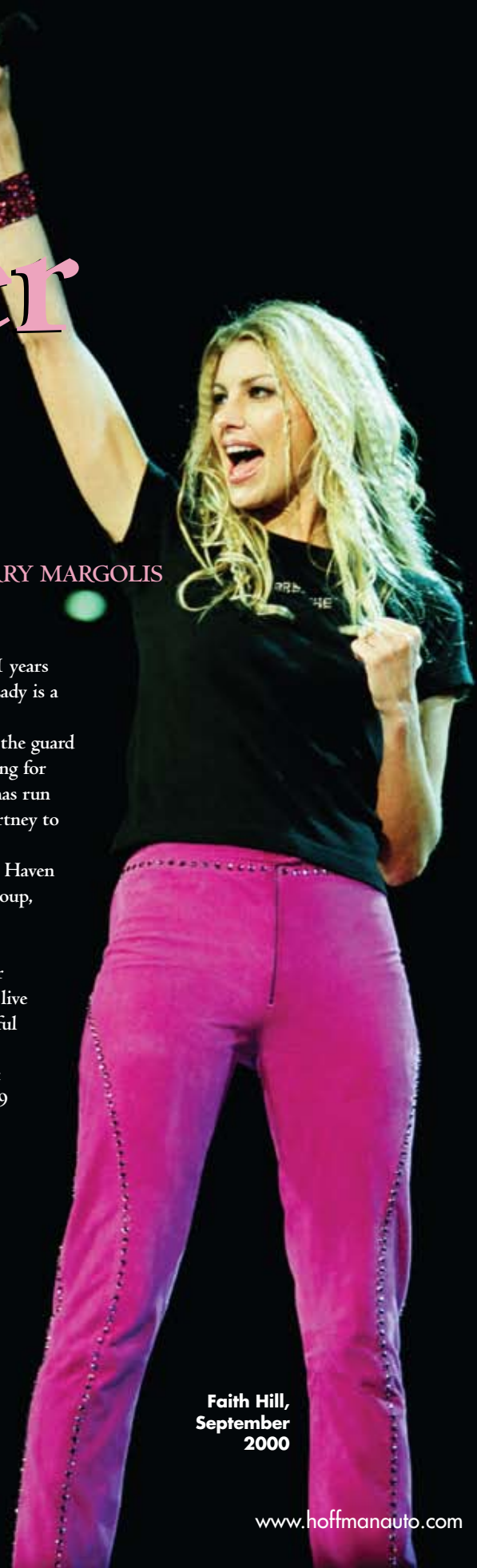
That momentum was shattered on January 18, 1978 when the roof of the then-five-year-old building collapsed from the weight of accumulated snow and ice, fortunately at 4:19 a.m. when no one was in the building. Renovations, which ultimately benefited the scale of the concerts that the Civic Center could attract, took several years, with Springfield, Massachusetts getting many shows which otherwise would have played Hartford.

By the 1980s, things were better than ever at the Civic Center, where you could have caught The Grateful Dead, The J. Geils Band,

Cheap Trick, Frank Sinatra (then 71 years old, he closed his show with "The Lady is a Tramp") and Michael Jackson.

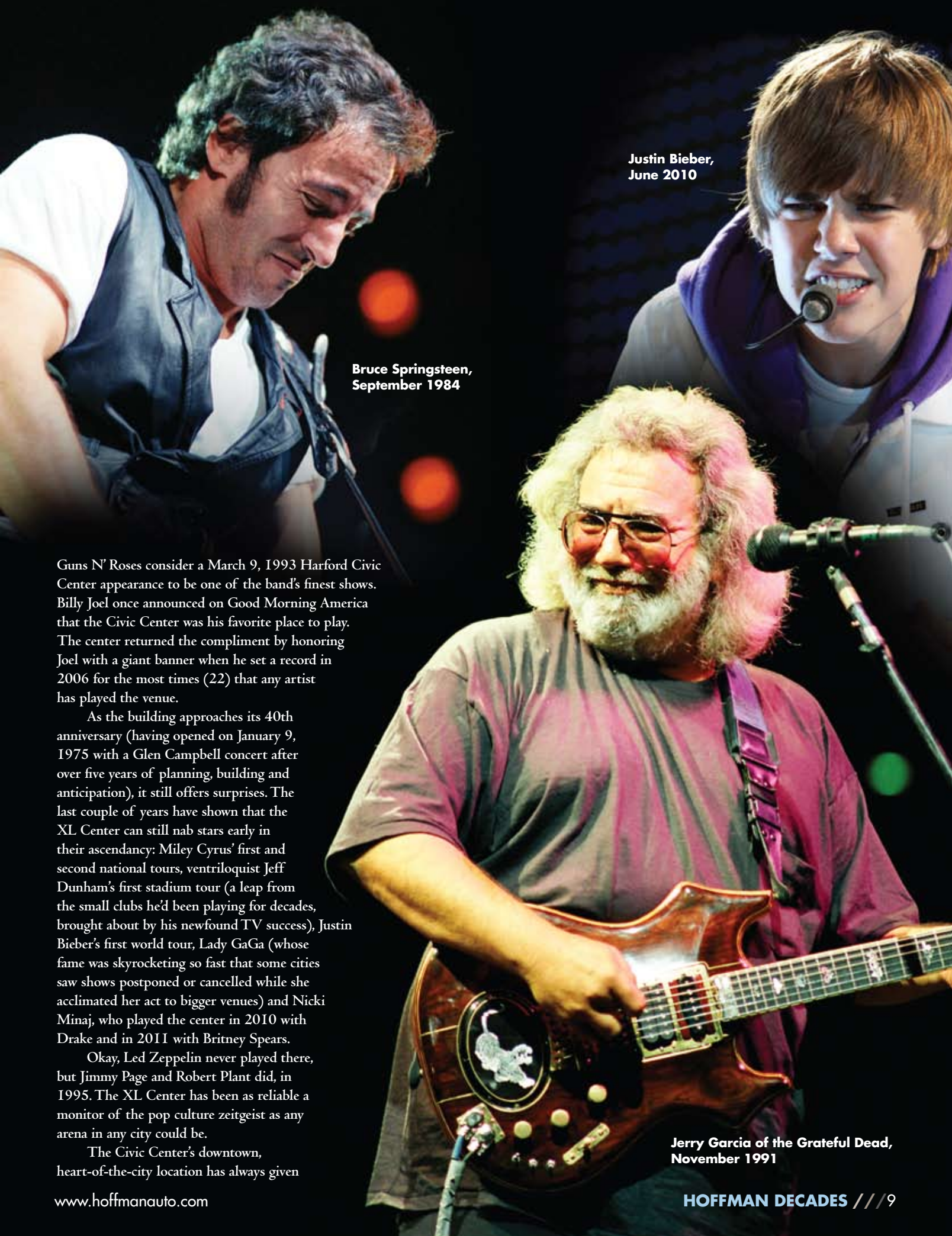
You could sense a changing of the guard in the 1990s, with The Pixies opening for U2 in 1992. The last decade or so has run the musical gamut from Paul McCartney to Kanye West to Madonna (her first Connecticut concerts since the New Haven Coliseum in 1985) to Blue Man Group, Coldplay, Green Day and numerous American Idol aggregations.

Historic Hartford Civic Center shows continue to resonate through live albums and other media. The Grateful Dead's May, 28, 1977 gig there—the last date of a 26-city East Coast tour—was officially released in 2009 as a 3-CD set titled *To Terrapin: Hartford '77*. A professional recording of Eric Clapton at the Civic Center in May 1985 has been much bootlegged. A major Barack Obama rally in February 2008, one of very few visits the future President made to Connecticut during his campaign, filled the center to capacity; Obama's speech has been preserved on YouTube and photos of the event are in the history books. Connoisseurs of recent Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees



Faith Hill,  
September  
2000





Justin Bieber,  
June 2010

Bruce Springsteen,  
September 1984

Guns N' Roses consider a March 9, 1993 Harford Civic Center appearance to be one of the band's finest shows. Billy Joel once announced on Good Morning America that the Civic Center was his favorite place to play. The center returned the compliment by honoring Joel with a giant banner when he set a record in 2006 for the most times (22) that any artist has played the venue.

As the building approaches its 40th anniversary (having opened on January 9, 1975 with a Glen Campbell concert after over five years of planning, building and anticipation), it still offers surprises. The last couple of years have shown that the XL Center can still nab stars early in their ascendancy: Miley Cyrus' first and second national tours, ventriloquist Jeff Dunham's first stadium tour (a leap from the small clubs he'd been playing for decades, brought about by his newfound TV success), Justin Bieber's first world tour, Lady GaGa (whose fame was skyrocketing so fast that some cities saw shows postponed or cancelled while she acclimated her act to bigger venues) and Nicki Minaj, who played the center in 2010 with Drake and in 2011 with Britney Spears.

Okay, Led Zeppelin never played there, but Jimmy Page and Robert Plant did, in 1995. The XL Center has been as reliable a monitor of the pop culture zeitgeist as any arena in any city could be.

The Civic Center's downtown, heart-of-the-city location has always given

Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead,  
November 1991



an edge over suburban-situated venues which serve more spread-out communities. The venue's Hartford-centricity was never sharper than on Monday, March 29, 1999, when the Rolling Stones played their second of two sold-out shows on their No Security tour. These were the band's first Hartford shows in 18 years, but a large percentage of the 15,600 attendees were distracted by another event going on that night: UConn Men's Basketball's NCAA Title game in Florida. As per the Stones' contract, no televisions or outside announcements were allowed during the 20-song set, which encored with "Sympathy for the Devil." But moments after the band left the stage, the center's Jumbotron screens switched on and generously flashed the news that UConn had defeated Duke 77-74, for the team's first national championship win, along with footage of the game's final minutes. The stadium roared and the fans left doubly elated.

Martin Brooks was the Senior Vice President and General Manager of the Hartford Civic Center for 11 years. He now works in St. Louis, Missouri, as the Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Scottrade Center and the Kiel Opera House. He recalls that '99 Stones tour as "one we were fortunate to get to begin with"; the UConn fever only added to the excitement. "I was surprised at the number of people who brought radios or portable TVs so they could follow the game in the concourse while the concert was happening."

It was Brooks who presented Billy Joel with a banner for playing the most shows ever at the Civic Center, during the singer's sold-out four-show engagement in 2006. The previous record-holder was Jerry Garcia, with 21 appearances at the center. "It was the only time in my career that I was onstage during a concert," Brooks recalls. He admits to being a big Billy Joel fan, but adds that "officially, my favorite artist, wherever I'm working, is the artist playing in the building at the time." Brooks has memories of great spates of bookings, such as having Paul McCartney, Luciano Pavarotti and The Rolling Stones all at the Civic Center in the same week ("My only regret is that we didn't hang a British flag in the building that week," he says). But he also recalls such human backstage encounters as when "I got a call to the artists' dressing room"

Bono of U2, June 2001





following a Crosby, Stills Nash & Young show. “That’s usually not a good thing.” It turns out that Graham Nash wanted to thank Brooks personally for sending the band buckets of Champagne to celebrate them selling out the center. “It was his wedding anniversary, and he thanked me for making it special,” Brooks says.

One other tense moment Brooks will never forget is the anxiety of waiting for Jay-Z—whose private plane was stuck in Thanksgiving weekend airport delays following a show in Philadelphia the night before—to show up at a concert in November 1997. “We had to have a 90-minute break between acts, knowing that he wasn’t even in the building yet.” They sweated it out, Jay-Z arrived and was onstage within 10 minutes. The gap in entertainment may not be the most memorable aspect of that night, however, since the other acts on the bill included Busta Rhymes, Foxy Brown, Usher and headliner Puff Daddy.

An informal poll of inveterate Connecticut concertgoers—many of whom are musicians themselves—yields a fascinating chronicle of how lives and loves have been shaped by having a major concert center in Hartford all of these years.

David Sorvillo remembers an afternoon in the mid-1970s when “I went to the Fiddlers Festival in Bushnell Park, and then serendipitously heard that the Grateful Dead were playing at the Civic Center. I waltzed up, got tix. Very fun. The fiddling vibe and Jerry Garcia went together beautifully. I’m just guessing, but I bet he walked in Bushnell Park on that summer day.”

For “Gary Gone” Vollono, who runs the Indepdisc online music store, “perhaps the one concert that sticks out to this day” of all the shows he saw in Hartford “is The Police/REM show in ’83.”

LeRoy General Jr., who does educational fundraising and has a colorful background as a bartender and rock-and-roller at Rudy’s Bar & Grill in New Haven in the 1990s, is embarrassed to recall a decidedly different double-bill: Journey and Bryan Adams at the Civic Center in May, 1983.

Singer/songwriter Carmen Champagne of the Hartford-area club band The Grimm Generation recalls “the collapse of the Hartford Civic Center causing preteen girls

everywhere to burst into tears at not getting to see Shawn Cassidy perform.”

Journalist Rebecca Milzof, who attended the center as a preteen herself, nominates “The Ice Capades! Maybe not seminal, but integral to my childhood.”

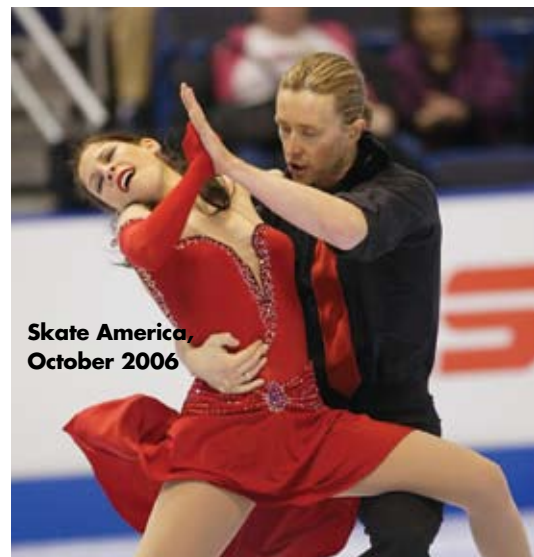
Eva Geertz saw the not-quite-Yes assemblage of Anderson Bruford Wakeman Howe. “God, don’t even ask,” she insists.

Albert Glassman mentions “Andrea Bocelli. We met a woman in line who flew in from LA just to be at his concert.”

New Haven guitarist/bookseller Bill Beckett’s tastes run from classic country to cutting-edge glam. The Civic Center provided both: a 1975 Johnny Cash date where “The Carter sisters opened the show, and Carl Perkins played guitar in Johnny’s band as well as doing a mini-set of his rockabilly hits,” then in July 1983, on the verge of 1984—“How appropriate!” Beckett jokes—“David Bowie’s Serious Moonlight Tour. The band was pretty great—Carlos Alomar on rhythm guitar, yay!—except for Earl Slick who over-played and hammed it up just a little too much.”

Musician and visual artist Forrest Harlow, who was a part of the golden age of the New Haven punk/new wave scene in the 1970s and ’80s, and whose new album *Kennedys & Kings* was just released, seconds the impact of Bowie’s *Serious Moonlight* but ranks numerous other concerts just as high: “Feb. ’91: Sonic Youth opening for Neil Young & Crazy Horse—both totally epic sets. Nov. ’81: The Rolling Stones . . . the non-geriatric version. Sept. ’88: Of all the times I saw Prince, including the tour with Maceo Parker on sax, *LoveSexy* was the most amazing, a snarling piece of funk in the round theatre.”

For longtime Connecticut music scenester Catherine Lendler, it was U2’s Unforgettable Fire tour. Singer/songwriter Chris Bousquet saw that show too, and also the band’s earlier Joshua Tree tour. He adds that “The REM Green tour was remarkable because it was the first time I saw them in an arena where they looked like they actually belonged in an arena. I saw the U2/Pixies tour as well. I was still in the fan club then, so I was right up front. One of the things I remember most is how surprisingly good the Pixies were. They really grabbed the reins and played their hearts out.”



**Skate America,  
October 2006**



**Neil Diamond,  
August 2008**



**Cirque du Soleil,  
July 2006**



David Brooks, who recently reunited his 1990s alt-rock band The Streams and released the band's debut album *Today, I Died*, extols the virtues of Neil Young and Crazy Horse's Ragged Glory tour. "It was everything I wanted, especially harmonic stadium feedback."

Katharine Blossom, who used to book

first record deal."

The Zambonis went on to play outside CT Wolf Pack games and at other hockey-oriented Center events. "For us back then, it was a huge thrill. As a musician, it's cool to play a club where your favorite local band is playing, then to play an arena where all the biggest rock

did those too. The first major concert would be the Rolling Stones in 1981. Up to that point, they'd never had a photographer." Margolis, who also shoots concerts at the Meadows, Oakdale and Rentschler Field, considers photography his avocation; his day job is running the Victor Advertising and Marketing company in Middletown.

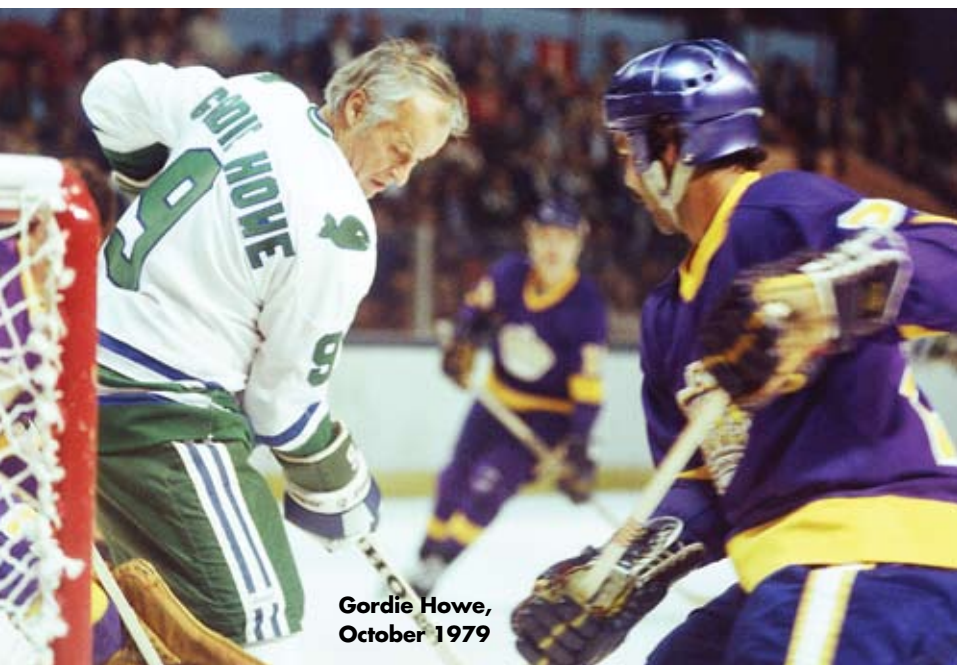
Typically, concert photographers at major arenas get to shoot from a small area directly in front of the stage for the first three songs of the headliner's set. From that vantage point, Margolis has seen everyone from Frank Sinatra to Luciano Pavarotti, from Cher to Green Day. He still bristles a bit about the only time he was not allowed to photograph a show—Michael Jackson's *Bad* tour, when the performer himself decreed that photography was not allowed. On the other hand, "Billy Joel has come so many times—18 or 19 times—and I've photographed him all those times. All the Bruce Springsteen concerts were crazy. He electrified the building."

"I remember when the Civic Center building went up," Margolis begins, "...and when it went down. I woke up one morning and it was on the radio that the roof had collapsed. It was a pretty horrific thing. I had been in the building, along with thousands of other people, the night before."

Margolis still refers to the post-collapse renovations of three decades ago as "the new building." "It was awesome. And I still think it's awesome. Performers have a lot more choices of where to play now. But Hartford was always the place to have a concert in Connecticut."

Keith Sheldon, director of Business Affairs for Anschutz Entertainment Group, is ensuring that the legacy of great concerts at the XL Center continues. AEG is one of the world's largest presenters of live music and entertainment events as well as the owner of numerous sports teams. "We're the only major event company that also does programming," Sheldon explains. AEG owns and operates over 100 entertainment complexes worldwide, including the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Many of those venues are owned outright by AEG. In the case of the XL Center, the building is owned by the city of Hartford, which leases the space and contracts outside companies to run it.

Thanks to the promotional and management deals it has with some major stars, AEG can bring in events which Hartford might not otherwise get a crack at. Among these are Roger



**Gordie Howe,  
October 1979**

Toad's Place in New Haven in the 1980s and early 1990s and is now Arts Director for The Connecticut Hospice Program, may win the cool Civic Center recollection sweepstakes with this: a 1991 Connecticut Opera production of Verdi's *Aida*, billed as the largest indoor presentation of the opera ever. Blossoms recalls it had "a full animal procession—elephants, camels, etc."

Dave Schneider hasn't just attended countless XL/Civic Center concerts and sports events—he's played there numerous times as a member of The Zambonis. The band specializes in "hockey rock," writing and playing songs devoted exclusively to that noble sport. Schneider also tours nationally with his Jewish rock bands The LeeVees and The Macaroons.

"The Zambonis played inside the [center], outside, in the walkways..." Schneider recalls. "We did a Whalers corporate event on the stage there in 1996. The Whalers told us they wanted to work us regularly, and that they weren't going anywhere. Six months later they left Hartford. For a band, it was like losing our

stars play. We went from the thrill of seeing Emerson, Lake and Palmer there as a kid to playing the same stage.

"Maybe it should have felt weirder, but we're a bunch of weirdos anyway. You just adjust. Instead of standing three feet from each other, like in a small club, you stand 12 feet from each other."

When visiting the venue as a humble concertgoer rather than as an attraction, Schneider says "one of the greatest moments in my life happened at the Civic Center"—an impromptu parking-garage encounter with Bob Dylan when the superstar troubadour played Hartford alongside Tom Petty's band in 1985. Unfortunately, Dylan's exchange with the young Schneider cannot be recounted in a family publication.

Another local who's had uncommon access to concerts at the Center is Jerry Margolis, who's been the official photographer there for over 30 years.

"I was the Whalers' photographer for five years, then when they started having concerts I



Daltrey (who performed the entire rock opera Tommy and other songs by the band for which he usually sings, The Who, at the XL Center last September), Taylor Swift and Justin Bieber. Teen heartthrob Bieber held the tech rehearsals and first performances for his first world tour at the XL Center.

AEG has only managed the XL Center for the past four years, but is aware of the venue's extraordinary history. "Some of the employees here now have worked since the time the roof collapsed," Sheldon says. "When it was rebuilt, it really turned into a different type of facility. Three thousand seats were added, and they were able to bring in more concerts." (The center currently can accommodate crowds of up to 17,000.)

"Hartford isn't always a must-play market" for nationally touring acts, Sheldon says, "but it's sandwiched in between New York and Boston, which are." Plus, there has always been competition from other Connecticut arenas—for decades it was the (smaller, yet feisty) New Haven Coliseum until it closed in September 2002, and these days the XL Center has to compete for bookings with the casinos and Bridgeport's Harbor Yard.

Yet the XL continues to excel at providing variety and immediacy for Connecticut culture-seekers.

For this May and June, the Center booked Cirque du Soleil's new tribute to Michael Jackson, "The Immortal"; *Madea Gets a Job*, one of the crowd-pleasing live plays starring Tyler Perry; eight performances of the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus; the WWE Raw Supershow; and the return of Roger Waters' *The Wall* tour, liberating the classic rock concept album from Waters' old band Pink Floyd.

The scale of these shows is usually measured in "trucks," the number of equipment trucks it takes to lug a show from city to city. A pared-down Pearl Jam concert, for example, is three trucks. A recent Britney Spears tour took 15 trucks. The Cirque du Soleil tour needs 39. This is, of course, distinct from the Monster Truck shows which play the XL Center every year. The center hosted 172 events last year alone.

That's some variety, but Sheldon says AEG is always on the lookout for new entertainment spectacles. He's excited at the possibilities of electronic dance music events. A recent show by electro-house producer/recording artist deadmau5 involved "huge LED screens and several DJs," Sheldon marvels.

"The electronic dance brand is so green, it's great to be a part of that."

"This is a really cool building," Sheldon gushes. "It's an older arena, a great place to see arena rock. It also works for circuses and Monster Trucks."

Jim Koplik, the legendary rock promoter who almost singlehandedly put Hartford on the map as a concert destination, has been booking bands into the Hartford Civic Center for nearly 40 years. He remembers his last show there before the roof caved in (The Marshall Tucker Band, in 1977) and the first one after the building was rebuilt (Linda Ronstadt). Like everyone else, he has fond memories of the 1999 Stones/UConn conjunction, but also of another Rolling Stones appearance, in November 1981, not long after the center

Nickelback show he booked there in April.

"The Hartford Civic Center has the greatest history of the greatest superstars of any venue in Connecticut," Koplik says. "It was the largest room, and the prettiest room." While he admits that nowadays it's "a 40-year-old arena that starting to look its age," Koplik says "I think AEG does a good job running it," and he finds that the center still has unique charms. "I like to put the great classic rock bands in there, the major Hall of Famers: Roger Waters, Bruce Springsteen..."

The last word—or the last note—on the historic importance of the Hartford Civic Center/XL Center should be given to sports buff/rock star Dave Schneider. The Zambonis pay special tribute to both the rock and hockey legacy of the Civic/XL Center on their new



**Christina Aguilera,  
April 2007**

reopened. The honor of the Civic Center's first three-night stand went to the Journey/Bryan Adams tour in 1983.

Koplik's immensely proud to have booked Paul McCartney's Back in the U.S. tour at the center in 2002 (the only Connecticut concert ever by the cute Beatle, who received an honorary degree from Yale in 2008), not to mention four Billy Joel/Elton John shows the same year.

Koplik says his own concertgoing schedule has scaled back from personally seeing over 125 shows a year to around 50 a year now, but he still loves to go to the XL Center, including the

CD *Five Minute Major (in D Minor)*. The album opens with a raucous rendition of "Brass Bonanza," the jazzy tune which played whenever a goal was scored during a Whalers game. "Not everybody likes it," Schneider laughs.

"I've had hockey players tell me that they hated to score a goal in Hartford because they'd have to hear that music," Schneider chuckles. "But what a wonderful, weird sports celebration song. I love it. I told the guys 'We have to do this!'"

And the big, round, booming history of downtown Hartford's illustrious music/sports center comes full circle. **H**



# I4 Cars Over 40 mpg

BY ELLIS PARKER

40 MPG is the magic number now for fuel efficiency. It used to be 30 MPG—undoubtedly, it will be 50 MPG someday. By 2025, automakers must achieve a Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) of 54.5 MPG, nearly double the current 27.5 MPG requirement.

The cars available to American consumers today are more efficient than ever. But that doesn't guarantee that Americans will consume less fuel than ever. Consumption won't drop unless Americans actually elect to buy the fuel-efficient vehicles available to them. Shockingly, the year America achieved the best overall gas mileage was 1987, when manufacturers managed a CAFE of 26.2 MPG. Fuel economy subsequently dropped, as Americans turned toward larger vehicles, especially embracing the luxury, status, safety features and aggressive styling of SUVs. Even after the oil price increases of the 2000s, fuel economy hasn't fully rebounded.

The safety argument, whether clever marketing by auto manufacturers preferring to sell larger, more expensive vehicles or a rationalization adopted by consumers or both, turned out to be somewhat hollow. Among First World nations, the United States and Canada are the least fuel efficient. But while the rest of the First World drives smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles, it also has much lower traffic fatality rates.

Early 2012 sales figures have been encouraging, however. This March showed a 12.7 % increase in automotive sales over the prior March, with small cars and fuel-efficient models leading the way. Most brands were up, and Nissan reported its best U.S. month ever. The improving economy may be driving sales, but high gasoline prices are pushing consumers to consider fuel efficiency in choosing a vehicle.

Ford spokesperson James D. Farley, Jr. said the automotive industry's fuel-efficiency drive has hit a "tipping point" in transforming product lineups. Now there's a tempting selection of 40 MPG cars available to consumers. Where just a couple of years ago an auto manufacturer was fortunate if it had one 40 MPG car in its lineup, some now have several.

How have so many auto manufacturers managed to bring 40 MPG vehicles to the market? There are a number of ways that carmakers achieve this high mileage goal. The most obvious approach is to shrink cars, reduce their weight by using lighter materials, or install a smaller engine. But today's clever

carmakers have a few other tricks up their sleeves as well.

A second approach is to introduce technology that tweaks a car's efficiency. Some automakers design their vehicles to be more aerodynamic, making their shapes more streamlined, adding carefully-placed louvers, dams and spoilers to improve drag resistance, and eliminating features like sunroofs that increase air resistance. They may utilize low roll resistance tires. They may turn the engine off at stoplights or turn off cylinders when they're not needed. They may introduce clean diesel engines. They may install shifters that compel a car to drive more efficiently. They may add eco modes and give drivers positive feedback as to which driving behaviors are more efficient. Even adding a navigation system improves efficiency by helping eliminate unnecessary driving.

The third approach is a full frontal assault on what makes vehicles significant consumers of domestic and foreign oil. A number of car manufacturers now offer either hybrid car models that use electricity to greatly reduce oil consumption and emissions, or all-electric car models that use no fuel and produce no emissions whatsoever. They may also add solar panels or regenerative brakes. With this approach, the mileage gains are so great that manufacturers can produce larger and luxurious cars that still achieve great mileage.

Most of these techniques have been used in at least one of the fourteen 40 MPG vehicles in the Hoffman Auto lineup. With all of these savvy designs available, you'll be surprised at the pleasures today's 40 MPG cars can deliver. Take a close look at the Hoffman lineup, because surely there's just the right car for you!





#### FORD FIESTA SE W/SFE

- 29 MPG city, 33 MPG combined, 40 MPG highway, \$1,800 annual fuel cost
- \$17,000 with destination charges
- 4-door, 5-passenger compact sedan or hatchback
- Especially attractive to young car buyers; European styling makes car look zippy even when stationary; European handling makes car great fun to drive; laudable fuel efficiency provided by SFE (Super Fuel Economy package); appealing technology package; tight in rear for larger or older adults; state-of-the-art safety features are standard on all of these Fords, including antilock brakes, traction control, stability control, unibody construction for advanced protection, etc.; in short, the Ford Fiesta SE w/SFE is a lot of car for not a lot of money.



#### FORD FOCUS SE W/SFE

- 28 MPG city, 33 MPG combined, 40 MPG highway, \$1,800 annual fuel cost
- Starting at \$21,000 with destination charges
- 4-door, 5-passenger compact sedan or hatchback
- Will appeal to a broader range of consumers due to wider stance and more American feel; assembled 100% in U.S.; car is a little bigger and heavier than the Fiesta; European handling produces a nice solid feel during bumps, turns and

braking; direct injection technology helps it burn cleaner and with more horsepower; nose of car has an air dam that closes at 35mph to conserve fuel; more room than Fiesta and good visibility makes it seem even larger; stadium seating in rear, but headroom could be an issue for tall people who sit bolt upright; My Key inhibits young drivers' speed and driving without seatbelts; still a lot of car for not too much money.



#### FORD FUSION HYBRID

- 41 MPG city, 39 MPG combined, 36 MPG highway, \$1,500 annual fuel cost
- 4-door, 5-passenger midsize sedan
- Starting around \$29,000 with destination charges
- Classic styling without the alien looks that characterize some hybrids; great fuel economy for a mid-sized sedan, especially driving around town; handling and performance are traditional and uncompromised for a sweet ride; plenty of luxurious touches; you can reconfigure your dashboard setup like a laptop; in the instrument panel, a green tree grows leaves based on your fuel economy; everything you could want in a hybrid vehicle at a competitive price.



#### TOYOTA PRIUS TWO HYBRID

- 51 MPG city, 50 MPG combined, 48 MPG highway, \$1,200 annual fuel cost
- \$23,300 with destination charges
- 5-door, 5-passenger midsize
- Of the more than 4.5 million hybrid vehicles sold by the end of 2011, 3.5 million of them had been Toyotas or Lexuses, with 2.5 million of those being Priuses; Priuses may take a little getting used to, but people who overcome that threshold are likely to be loyal for life; the Prius Two is the base model, the Prius One reserved for fleet cars only; the Toyota Prius Two is not your mother's Prius, but it still retains enough of the distinctive styling to be instantly recognizable; it's now wider, has more torque and an improved turning radius; to its trademark blend of fuel efficiency and practicality now add a technology upgrade with Bluetooth phone and audio connectivity, dedicated iPod control, and a touchscreen electronics interface (but to get Toyota's new Entune system you have to sign on for a higher trim level); a good ride, a spacious cargo area, good backseat room and strong safety scores suggest that many more buyers will flock to the Toyota Prius; and keep in mind that few cars are as dependable or hold their resale value like Priuses.

*Ford spokesperson James D. Farley, Jr. said the automotive industry's fuel-efficiency drive has hit a "tipping point" in transforming product lineups. Now there's a tempting selection of 40 MPG cars available to consumers.*





## TOYOTA PRIUS C HYBRID

- 53 MPG city, 50 MPG combined, 46 MPG highway, \$1,100 annual fuel cost
- \$19,700 with destination charges
- 5-door, five-seat compact hatchback
- Definitely a car designed to attract younger buyers; test-driven habañero orange Toyota Prius C was snazzy as all get-out; wanted to grab my boogie board and head for the beach; leg room from rear seats a little better than expected, but head room marginal; still, if it were mine, I'd always be seated in front; European styling nice; car not quite as zippy as I would have guessed; offers an array of ways to track one's fuel efficiency; nice sporty-looking little vehicle is flying out the dealership doors.



## TOYOTA PRIUS V HYBRID

- 44 MPG city, 42 MPG combined, 40 MPG highway, \$1,400 annual fuel cost
- \$27,000 with destination charges
- Five door, five-passenger wagon
- The most family-friendly Prius; a lot of car compared with the standard Prius hatchback; roomy cabin and great cargo capacity, especially after rear seats are folded down; ease of operation facilitated by large controls that are easy to read and well-located; handling is fine but in no way will make you think you're driving Formula One; a very good bet for today's growing family.



## TOYOTA CAMRY HYBRID

- 43 MPG city, 41 MPG combined, 39 MPG highway, \$1,450 annual fuel cost
- \$26,600 with destination charges
- 4-door, 5-passenger midsize sedan
- Love at first sight; sporting a new body style, now quite possibly the best-looking of Toyota's extensive 40 MPG vehicle lineup; after criticism of hard, cheap-looking interior plastics in prior model, now looks just as good inside as out; great functionality, with everything readily visible and in easy reach; keyless access with push-button start; power windows, locks and outside mirrors; real-time fuel economy gauge, cruise control, dual-zone automatic climate control and tilt/telescoping steering-wheel; audio system with Bluetooth and USB/iPod connectivity; new model is a real winner, yet the price has actually been lowered \$1,150; in short, a tremendous amount of car for the price.



## TOYOTA PRIUS PLUG-IN HYBRID

- 56 MPG city, 67 MPG combined, 75 MPG highway, \$1,100 annual fuel cost
- \$32,700 with destination charges
- 5-door, 5-passenger midsize sedan
- Toyota Prius Plug-In Hybrid wasn't yet available to drive, so I can only comment on what others have reported; an evolutionary rather than revolutionary vehicle, but Toyota always seems to know

where it's headed; acceleration is said to be quite gradual in eco mode and quite vigorous in power mode, but normal mode should do for most driving; achieves much higher mileage than other Toyota hybrids but is still substantially less efficient than an all-electric vehicle; batteries are lithium ion rather than the older nickel-metal hydride technology still used by other Toyota hybrids; unlike a regular Prius, you can take the car all the way up to 62 mph on electricity before the engine kicks in; now available for test drive at Hoffman Toyota.



## HONDA CIVIC HF

- 29 MPG city, 33 MPG combined, 41 MPG highway, \$1,800 annual fuel cost
- \$20,000 with destination charges
- 4-door, 5-passenger compact sedan
- Some say Honda has been less aggressive in changing its interior and exterior styling and available options than a number of its competitors; but for those who like Hondas (clue: I've had two), there's genuine comfort in their classic styling and ease of use; this new body design should appeal to both younger and more mature consumers; it's sleeker and more aerodynamic, employing features like roll-resistant tires and a plastic shield covering the undercarriage; 60/40 fold-down rear seats provide great cargo room; the car is loaded with standard safety features; an econ button allows drivers to exceed the rated mileage; for me, it's a lot of car for a still reasonable price.





#### HONDA INSIGHT HYBRID SDR EX

- 41 MPG city, 42 MPG combined, 44 MPG highway, \$1,400 annual fuel cost
- Lowest trim model starts at \$19,100 with destination charges
- Four-door, five-passenger midsize hatchback
- Honda's answer to the Prius; sporty design inside and out; spacious in front, decent legroom and headroom in back, but with a middle seat suited only to a child; the Insight has been updated with a revised interior and displays; the car provides a nice ride, handling confidently under a variety of circumstances; the base model includes power windows, remote entry, automatic climate control, and a two-speaker sound system; I drove the top-of-the-line EX, which I would describe as loaded; I was particularly taken with the paddle shifters mounted behind the steering wheel that allow the driver to improve vehicular responsiveness.



#### HONDA CIVIC HYBRID

- 44 MPG city, 44 MPG combined, 44 MPG highway, \$1,350 annual fuel cost
- \$24,800 with destination charges
- Four-door, five-passenger compact sedan
- A sweet car with a quiet, composed ride; it has perhaps the best visibility of any vehicle I tested; an excellent choice as a commuter vehicle; the car receives very high safety scores from the federal

government; it also scores very high in predicted reliability; it may not have the flash of some of its competitors but it will win converts with its steady performance, intelligent design and pleasure of use.



#### NISSAN LEAF™ SL

- 106 MPGe city, 99 MPGe combined, 92 MPGe highway, \$600 annual fuel cost
- Four-door five passenger midsize hatchback
- \$38,270 with destination charges (eligible for federal tax savings of up to \$7,500); SV model starts at \$35,200
- The 100% electric, no gas Nissan LEAF™ is the first full-electric vehicle to be mass-marketed to American consumers; a zero emissions vehicle with numerous green features; much more "street cred" than you'd expect from an electric vehicle; except for its 100-mile range, there are no compromises when driving a Nissan LEAF; the car handles beautifully under a variety of driving situations, with great torque supplied by its electric engine; its 100-mile range addresses the daily needs of more than 70% of the world's car-driving population; The EPA rates the Nissan LEAF the most environmentally friendly car in the entire midsize vehicle class; see our review on page 22.



#### AUDI A3 TDI

- 30 MPG city, 34 MPG combined, 42 MPG highway, \$1,800 annual fuel cost

- Four-door, five-passenger near-luxury wagon
- \$31,500 with destination charges
- Here's a sweet ride, as Audi demonstrates that luxury and fuel economy need not be mutually exclusive; groundbreaking TDI® (Turbo Diesel Injection) clean diesel engine provides unmatched fuel economy without sacrificing engine performance; generous headroom and legroom; terrific German engineering; great features like all-season tires, dual climate controls and panoramic sunroof; nice brisk acceleration; understated sophisticated interior; Audi says its low, wide stance eats curves for breakfast; everything about the car's design was meant to stir the senses; Green Car Journal named the Audi A3 TDI its 2010 Green Car of the Year®.



#### LEXUS CT 200H HYBRID

- 43 MPG city, 42 MPG combined, 40 MPG highway, \$1,400 annual fuel cost
- Five-passenger, five-door luxury sedan
- \$29,100 with destination charges
- Nice youthful styling combined with an affordable price tag are aimed at bringing in younger buyers to the Lexus luxury line; this handsome car should make loyalists out of buyers; it features the highest combined fuel-efficiency rating of any luxury vehicle; it can drive 450 miles on 12 gallons of gas; the car features four driving modes—normal, EV (battery power alone), ECO and sport; dual zone automatic climate control, 10-way power driver's seat and numerous other luxury amenities; Bluetooth comes standard; a raft of safety and security features. **H**

# GRILLING ME SOFTLY

## Lessons on Outdoor Grilling from Chef Jennifer Krascella

BY ELLIS PARKER

When most people think of outdoor grilling, they probably envision an alpha male holding court in the backyard. They picture a Jim Belushi type wielding the tongs in a big paw, occasionally singeing his hairy forearm. The guy's probably wearing a big old apron with something crude printed on the front and a backwards-facing Yankees baseball cap. Mopping perspiration from his brow with the back of his hand, our macho man grabs another cheap beer from the cooler.

But (just about) anything guys can do gals can do—better! Testifying that excessive testosterone levels are not an essential component of grilling is talented Hartford-area chef Jennifer Krascella. A Manchester native, Krascella broke into the business at renowned Cavey's. Since then, she has accumulated so much culinary education that she has more

degrees than a stove. Krascella graduated from Peter Kump's New York Cooking School (now called the Institute of Culinary Education), Le Cordon Bleu in New York, Le Cordon Rose (baking training from Rose Levy Beranbaum), and the Culinary Institute of America. She even taught for a time at the Connecticut Culinary Institute in Hartford (now called the Lincoln Culinary Institute).

Krascella cooked for a dozen years in New York City, working much of that time in Pino Luongo restaurants. She worked for a couple of years in the Hamptons. Locally, she has done stints with the Max Restaurant Group, the Dish Group, J Restaurant/Bar and Peppercorns, to name a few. She is currently lending her expertise to Café Louise, a West Hartford-based catering company. *H*







## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GRILLING AND BARBECUING:

**GRILLING** is cooking food over direct heat for a short period of time. Typically, the fuel used is charcoal or gas, allowing temperatures to climb higher than those reached in barbecuing. The food sits on the grill rack above the coals or other heat source. The cooking time will be brief, so this method is best for thinner cuts of meat, burgers, chicken breasts, fish fillets and vegetables. Because of the intense heat, the exterior of the grilled food is seared, sealing in the ever-important juices.

**BARBECUING** is a slow-cooking method which uses a low, smoldering wood fire to produce indirect heat. Lower heat allows the food to cook more evenly. Longer cooking times allow the connective tissues in meats to break down better. This cooking method is best for larger pieces of meat, such as a roast or a whole chicken or turkey. Cuts like brisket, ribs and pork butt also benefit greatly from low heat and longer cooking times.

## SUGGESTED TOOLS & EQUIPMENT:

Barbecue grill	Heatproof gloves
Paraffin cubes	Heavy-duty plastic wrap & foil
Oil towel	Two cutting boards
Grill brush	Spice grinder
Heavyweight grates	Large resealable bags (for marinating)
Spray bottle	Sharp knives
Fire extinguisher	Grill press
Thermometers	Meat pounder
Sufficient fuel	Grill baskets
Shovel & bucket for ashes	Syringes (for injecting)
Platters	Basting brushes (conventional & those made from bundled herbs)
Fresh spices	Spatulas (metal and rubber)
Water & sunblock (it can get hot out there!)	Skewers
Baking dishes	Rotisserie grill fork
Aluminum pans	Chimney starter
Sheet trays	Firebricks (wrapped in heavy-duty aluminum foil, to be used for resting meats, applying weight & creating hot spots on the grill)
Plastic quart dishes	Notebook & pen (to record what works, what doesn't & any experiments or ideas)
Mason jars	
Small Bowls	
Squeeze bottles (for mixing sauces, glazes, herbs & spices, etc.)	
Immersion blender	
Microplane grater	

## DON'TS:

- Please don't rush the process—grilling and barbecuing are as close to meditation as you can get.
- Don't skimp on the quality of your ingredients—the purpose of grilling or barbecuing is to enhance the natural flavors of food.
- Never cut into meat or poultry, because the juices will be lost; test with a thermometer or your fingers.
- Don't run out of fuel—make sure you have enough charcoal or propane.
- Avoid briquettes infused with lighter fuel, because they will impart an unpleasant flavor onto your food.
- Don't grill or barbecue food directly from the refrigerator; always allow food to come up to room temperature.
- Don't place chimney starter or excess ashes on the picnic table or grass; have a designated place for these items.
- Try not to get distracted, or you can wind up with bits of cinder instead of juicy, delicious pieces of meat.
- Never use a basting sauce that contains sugar until the last 10 minutes of cooking or you will wind up with a crusty & singed piece of meat.
- Gentlemen, don't wear loose clothing or dangling ties.
- Ladies, tie the long hair back and watch out for bracelets & chains because they can get really hot.

## DOS:

- Understand the difference between direct heat and indirect heat and when to use which method.
- Always preheat the grill.
- Keep the grill grates clean to avoid sticking.
- Oil the grill grates.
- Grill with the lid down, for both direct and indirect cooking (there are exceptions).
- Turn foods only once (this will test your level of patience).
- Use your thermometer to gauge the temperature of the grill, as well as the internal temperature of larger cuts of meat.
- Let your meats and poultry rest before serving to redistribute the juices evenly for better flavor.
- Maintain your grill, respect the flames, learn patience, don't be afraid to experiment—you will become the grill master you always dreamed of!

By Robert Bailin



## Himalayan Salt Plate

You've never had grilled food that tasted better or cooked as evenly as it does with the Himalayan Salt Plate. Place the plate on the grill and eliminate the risk of charred meat while still getting the benefits of grilling. The natural properties of the plate also add depth to the flavor of anything cooked on it. Great for any type of meat, fish or grilled vegetable. Naturally anti-microbial and easy to clean—just scrub the surface and pat dry. \$29.95. [www.surlatable.com](http://www.surlatable.com).



## Vacu Vin® Vacuum Instant Marinator

Throwing a spontaneous barbecue and wish you'd marinated the meat? Wouldn't it be great if your food could just vacuum up the marinade? Well, that's exactly what the clever Vacu Vin does! Just put meat and marinade in the roomy 2½-quart polycarbonate bowl, place the lid on and pump all the air out of the container. Your food will absorb the marinade in five minutes. The vacuum-sealed container is dishwasher safe, and you can use it to store food in the fridge afterwards. \$33.83. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

## The amazing 2012 Ford Focus.

Focus SE with SFE package delivers up to 40 highway mpg\*

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Hatchback SE starting at only \$16,995



\*2012 Focus SE Sedan with SFE Package: EPA-Estimated 28 city/40 hwy/33 combined mpg. Prices shown are for 5 speed transmission and include rebate to dealer.

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**OF**  
**HARTFORD**  
**READERS' POLL**  
**2012**

**Hoffman**





## Meatball Grill Basket

We have to imagine that trying to cook meatballs directly on a grill surface would be a pretty messy affair—not so with this basket. The sturdy stainless-steel basket features 12 perforated wells to brown your meatballs and infuse them with a delicious smoky flavor while excess fat drips away. Works with beef, lamb and poultry as well as vegetable mixtures. \$50. [www.Williams-Sonoma.com](http://www.Williams-Sonoma.com).



## Grill Alert® Talking Remote Meat Thermometer



Cook to perfection—and never worry about overcooking again! Now you can have the freedom to mingle while using our remote meat thermometer for BBQ. Just insert the stainless steel probes in the center of the meat. Select the type of meat and how you would like it done (Rare, Medium Rare, Medium or Well Done). That's all you have to do—a voice prompt will alert you when your entree is 'Almost Ready' and 'Ready.' Let our wireless remote grill thermometer do the work while you entertain guests. With a belt clip for added freedom and a range of 300 feet., the Grill Alert® even has a display backlight for nighttime grilling. Uses two AA and two AAA batteries (not included). \$69.99. [www.brookstone.com](http://www.brookstone.com).

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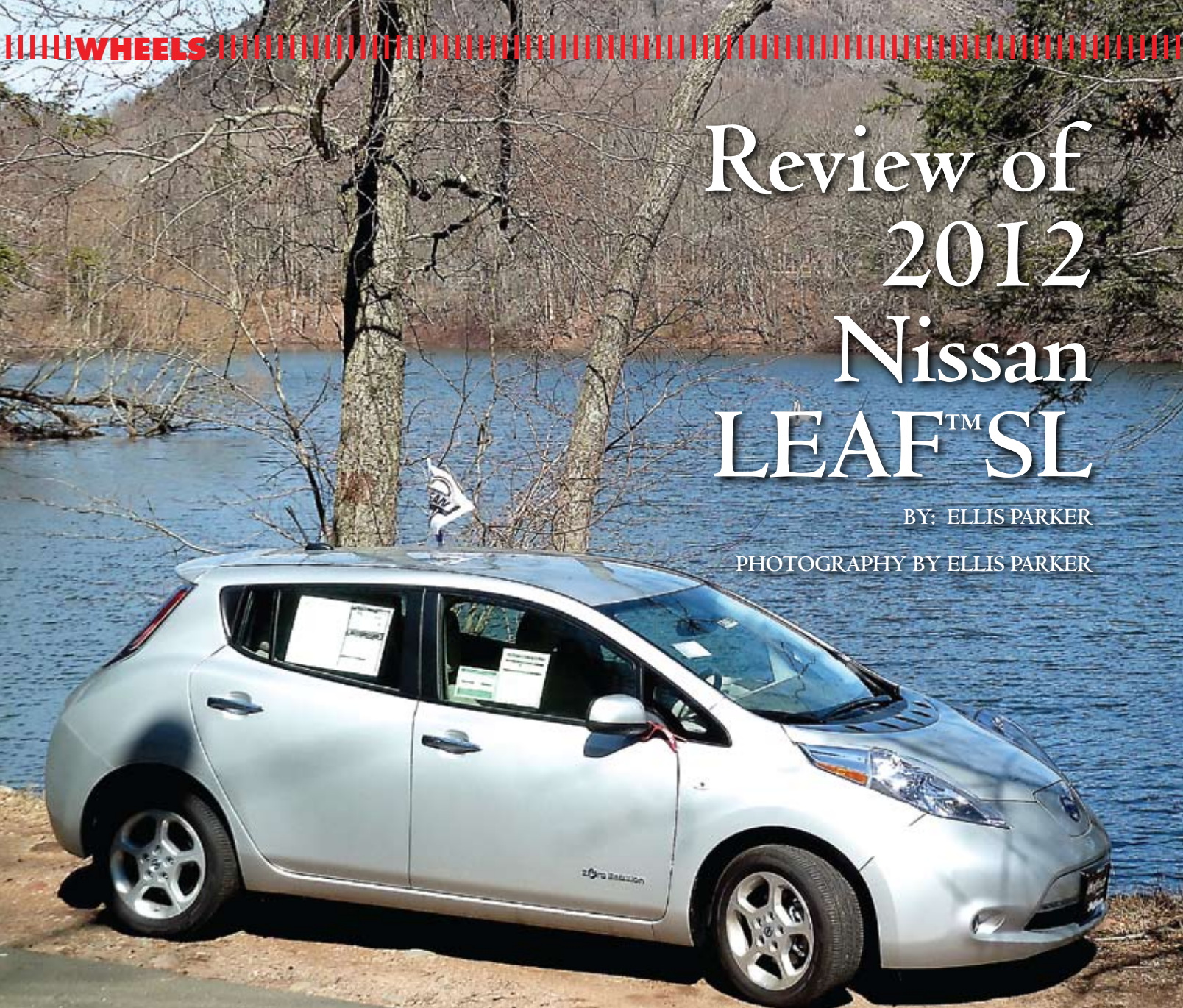
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# Hoffman







# Review of 2012 Nissan LEAF™ SL

BY: ELLIS PARKER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELLIS PARKER

The Nissan LEAF SL enjoying a view of Sleeping Giant across Clark's Pond in Hamden.

The environment is threatened, the earth is getting warmer, weather patterns are becoming more extreme, the human population is multiplying at an alarming rate, and energy resources are dwindling, all because mankind has charted an ill-considered course through the cosmos. If you agree with this distressing indictment, you may be an excellent candidate for a 100% electric, no gas Nissan LEAF™.

The Nissan LEAF is the ideal car for those who see issues of greenness in terms of black and white. It's the car for people who feel they should be part of the solution, not part of the problem. While good conservation and minimal emissions can be achieved with some of the latest gasoline-powered vehicles and gasoline-electric hybrids, the Nissan LEAF is the car for those who want their transportation to leave the smallest carbon footprint—or tire track—possible. Even then, you're still talking the materials, energy and emissions used to manufacture the vehicle, the energy and emissions used to ship it from the factory, and the energy and emissions required to produce



the electricity to run it. (Even a bicycle requires the first two computations.) Environmental calculations can truly be thorny.

But the Nissan LEAF will make you feel virtuous—very virtuous indeed. After road testing more than a dozen economical gasoline-powered and hybrid vehicles that achieve more than 40MPG, I found our “Brilliant Silver” 2012 Nissan LEAF SL with just 138 miles on it an utter joy to drive. (The less poshly appointed model is designated the SV.) Priced \$38,270 after destination charge, the car is eligible for federal tax savings of up to \$7,500 that make it quite affordable. At the end of our weekend-long road test, my wife and I did not want to turn over our new Nissan LEAF.

We were sad to return to our version of normal (a high-miles car built in the prior millennium that gets mileage once considered good—a mere 24 MPG city, 34 highway, 28 combined, with an estimated annual fuel cost of \$2,050). The Nissan LEAF, by contrast, gets 106 MPGe (miles per gallon equivalent) city, 92 highway, 99 combined, with an annual electric cost estimated to be just \$561 (33.7 kilowatt hours are said to be equal to one gallon of gasoline energy). *The EPA rates the Nissan LEAF the most environmentally friendly car in the entire midsize vehicle class.*

The Nissan LEAF's greenness doesn't end with mileage efficiency, however. Keep in mind that this is a zero emissions vehicle. It's propelled by an 80-kW electric motor fed by an advanced, gel-packed, 24 kWh lithium-ion battery guaranteed for eight years or 100,000 miles. It takes no fuel or oil. There's no tailpipe. No lead to worry about. No carbon monoxide. No wonder it's a popular choice as a pace car to lead racing runners and bikers. Nissan LEAFs are even being tried out as New York City taxis, a rough-and-tumble job if ever there was one, with quick charge ports to be installed to support them.

There's evidence of green thinking everywhere in the Nissan LEAF. The car uses regenerative brakes (probably the least intrusive of any vehicle on the market). The headlights are somewhat bug-eyed to direct airflow away from the side mirrors, not only producing greater aerodynamic efficiency but reducing driving noise (which tends to be much more noticeable in quieter electric cars). Even the seats are covered with partially recycled cloth seat fabric.

The Nissan LEAF is truly a complete car. You may think greenness involves sacrifice, but you won't be joining the ranks of the martyrs with standard equipment on the SV model that includes 16-inch alloy wheels, LED headlamps, heated exterior mirrors, a battery heater, keyless ignition/entry, numerous full power accessories, cruise control, automatic climate control, a height-adjustable driver seat, a heated steering wheel with tilt steering column, heated front and rear seats, and 60/40 split-folding rear seats.

Upgrading to an SL, which I strongly recommend, adds a spoiler-mounted solar panel, automatic headlamps, fog lamps, a rearview camera and a cargo cover, along with a quick-charge port that facilitates charging to 80% capacity in 30 minutes at high-voltage public charging stations (if you find yourself near any). While the photovoltaic panel doesn't charge the vehicle's lithium ion batteries used for propulsion, it does help keep charged the 12-volt lead acid accessory battery that provides power to the car's computer systems



Architect Peter de Bretteville's famous house constructed from a repurposed water tank is a perfect backdrop for the very green Nissan LEAF.

Safety and security features abound, including power-assisted vented front disc/rear disc brakes, a 4-wheel anti-lock braking system, electronic brake force distribution and brake assist, vehicle dynamic control, traction control, a tire-pressure monitoring system, six standard air bags, and a vehicle security system.

Also included are an auto-dimming rearview mirror, Bluetooth, an advanced trip computer, a navigation system (which volunteers directions to nearby charging stations), and a six-speaker sound system with a CD player, satellite radio, auxiliary audio jack, and iPod/USB audio interface. And with an active subscription to Carwings®, you can use the cell phone app to check on your battery charge, begin charging, see your estimated driving range, and activate the climate control systems.

and accessories such as the audio system, supplemental restraint systems, headlights and windshield wipers.

Yes, the future has finally arrived, as the ground breaking Nissan LEAF is the first full-electric vehicle to be mass-marketed to American consumers. Some might say it was an interminable wait, as inventors have been tinkering with the idea of electric-powered vehicles since the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Driving the Nissan LEAF, you may be reminded of those pneumatic tubes that department stores once used and some drive-through banks still use. There's something *Jetsons*-ish about Nissan LEAF's synchronous electric motor and instant torque that almost seem to draw, rather than push, the vehicle. Even the slight hum or whine to alert pedestrians (Vehicle Sound for Pedestrians, or

VSP) that the car is in motion may remind you of that timeless cartoon. It's a retro-futurism—you can feel a little nostalgic and ahead of your time all at once.

I took the Nissan LEAF on a scenic tour of the middle third of the state. Except for the limitations of battery range, I found there to be no drawbacks associated with driving this all-electric vehicle. The four-door hatchback comfortably seats five adults, with ample head

Grist Mill Restaurant in Farmington, Nod Brook in Avon, the Shore Line Trolley Museum in East Haven, and Miya's Sushi in New Haven, one of the world's most sustainable restaurants. In Branford, I took it (actually, it took me) to Indian Neck, Short Beach and Young's Pond. In Hamden, I brought it past the Eli Whitney Museum, where the cotton gin was one of the key inventions of the Industrial Revolution, and architect Peter de Bretteville's famous home

Folks will come up to you and ask questions about it. You'll find yourself infecting them with your enthusiasm. Many people seem ready to make the leap to a Nissan LEAF.

There's only one area of real sacrifice with Nissan LEAF ownership, and that's range. If you're the kind of person who needs a car, or second car, for city living or a metropolitan area commute, the Nissan LEAF could be a beautiful solution. But if you attempt more regional than suburban use, as we did, you could find yourself crossing a stream by leaping from stone to stone, pausing at each to recharge your battery or nerve.

There are three ways to charge the battery of a Nissan LEAF SL. The first is to plug into a recommended 240-volt home charging unit, full charge attained in about seven hours. (The charging unit will run you a couple of grand, but federal tax credits may offset a portion of the costs.) The second is to locate the nearest 480-volt quick charge unit, an 80% charge being attainable in 30 minutes. (At this time, there are no quick charge units located in Connecticut and this option isn't available on SV models, which lack the optional quick-charge port.) The third option is to plug in to a conventional electrical outlet, but it may take up to 21 hours for a full charge. Note that in an emergency, it's even possible to use the stored charge in your Nissan LEAF to power your house, as many in Japan did with donated Nissan LEAFs in the aftermath of the terrible 2011 tsunami.

We set out under the misconception that there were such quick-charge stations around, when it turns out they exist so far in only a handful of states, the nearest being New Jersey, and had to play a little hopscotch from parking garage (free charge after paying for parking) to Nissan dealership (free charge and free coffee). You lose the charge quicker in cold weather, quicker at freeway speeds (due to increased wind drag) and sometimes a little quicker than the gauges would suggest. We actually "Kramered" it at one point, referring to the *Seinfeld* character gleefully driving past empty on his fuel gauge during a test drive to see how far he could go before running out.

We continued past the low charge warning (roughly 8 miles remaining), the very low charge warning (roughly 4 miles remaining), and even the flashing trio of dashes when this highly intelligent car probably wondered if it had an intelligent driver, all accompanied by offers to find us the nearest charging station. Had we run



From early 20th to early 21st Century electric technology at the Shore Line Trolley Museum in East Haven.

room and leg room all around. Stadium seating in the back improves rear seat visibility. In the front, visibility is aided by fixed glass vent windows just inside the A pillars. My only quibble might be that, due to the positioning of the battery pack, cargo space isn't tremendous and the rear seats don't fold down flat.

Fun and responsive, the Nissan LEAF drove *better* than most of the cars I tested. There was no learning curve with this electric vehicle—every action I took seemed natural and well-anticipated. The vehicle has real get-up-and-go. Acceleration, braking, firmness of electric steering, handling around turns, tight turning radius—the car was a winner on every level.

I toured our Nissan LEAF past numerous notable Connecticut locations, including the

constructed from a repurposed water tank.

Also in Hamden, I sensed that my Nissan LEAF wanted to climb the Sleeping Giant Tower Trail (highly frowned upon), but that's no surprise for an electric car that has already ascended Pike's Peak in 14 minutes and 33 seconds. The Nissan LEAF may not be designed for racing, but in 2011 a standard model such as you might purchase, with racing tires and a couple of safety features appended, handled the mountain almost silently and with aplomb. That was a 12.42 mile course, parts of which were gravel and tarmac, with 156 turns that began at 9,390 feet and finished at the 14,110-foot summit.

But the Nissan LEAF doesn't need to visit iconic locations or perform unusual tasks to draw attention. The Nissan LEAF turns heads.



out, we would have been a sitting duck—just as if we were driving a gas-powered vehicle. (Note that AAA has started a pilot program offering roadside electric vehicle charging, but it's not yet available in Connecticut.) And while dealerships don't appear to close off their parking lots at night, at least one (certainly not Hoffman Nissan) wasn't too careful about blocking off its charging units with parked vehicles.

There's talk of cheaper and more widespread quick-charge units in the works or of adding more batteries to the vehicle to increase its range, which would make the Nissan LEAF suitable to a wider range of uses. For the time being, those who need a car with truly regional capabilities or who are highly susceptible to "range anxiety" aren't the Nissan LEAF's target audience. Studies show, however, that the all-electric vehicle's estimated 100-mile range addresses the daily needs of more than 70% of the world's car-driving population. For those people whose lifestyle is compatible with the range of the very green Nissan LEAF, this is a revolutionary, not evolutionary, vehicle—and the future is NOW. **H**



The Nissan LEAF pauses before a covered bridge at the Eli Whitney Museum.

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# Driving While Texting: Is it Worth Risking Lives?

BY REBECCA COHEN

Everyone has been distracted while driving. It could have been reaching into a handbag for chapstick, taking a bite of food, looking for a new CD to play, fiddling with a navigation system or reaching behind the seat to calm an upset child. But texting may be the most distracting of all actions a driver can undertake while operating a vehicle. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Official Website for Distracted Driving ([www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov)), this is because texting requires simultaneous visual, manual *and* cognitive attention from the driver, making "drexting" the triple whammy of distracted driving activities.

By all accounts, the incidence of text-related accidents is quickly reaching cataclysmic proportions. Although people of all ages can be guilty of texting and driving, it is especially problematic among "new" drivers—a.k.a. teenagers. Of all age groups, the under-20 bracket has the highest proportion of distracted drivers, with 16% of their fatal car accidents in 2009 occurring as a result of distracted driving, according to the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. When it comes

specifically to texting, the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) found it made drivers 23 times more likely to crash.

Why are adolescents so prone to drive while texting? For one thing, teenagers are new to the roadways, and as such, are inexperienced and more susceptible to distraction, whether due to nervousness, overwhelmed senses, general naiveté or a sense of invincibility. Factor in that texting has become the most common way that today's youth communicate. What's more,

we live in a society where many youth prize continuous connectedness, with some kids updating their Facebook and other social media constantly. In this fast-paced, multitasking world where instant gratification has become the expectation, teens are more likely to text friends and tap into their social media outlets while driving instead of waiting until they reach their destination.

So what can be done to get drivers, especially our youngest ones, to understand how



serious an issue distracted driving is? Improving awareness through education is an important first step toward communicating the implicit dangers and soliciting community involvement. To this end, April was declared National Distracted Driving Awareness Month by the National Safety Council.

Many organizations are trying to raise awareness about this deadly hazard by sharing statistics and stories. The DOT's Distracted Driving website as well as the FocusDriven ([www.focusdriven.org](http://www.focusdriven.org)) and Text Responsibly ([www.txtresponsibly.org](http://www.txtresponsibly.org)) websites all aim to discourage driver cell phone use.

The DOT shares a wealth of statistics on its website, like this sobering one from Carnegie Mellon that says using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%. And an even more sobering one: a study from the University of Utah showed that using a handheld or hands-free cell phone while driving delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent.

FocusDriven is a group of self-proclaimed "advocates for cell-phone-free driving" who know someone who died because of someone who drove while using their cell phone. To promote Distracted Driving Month, the site encourages drivers to take the FocusDriven pledge to drive cell-phone-free, to send tweets to friends (e.g. "I care about your safety and I want you to #drivecellfree"), and to share FocusDriven social media communications with friends.

Text Responsibly is another site whose mission is to promote responsible texting through story and fact sharing. All three websites encourage visitors to pledge not to use phones irresponsibly while operating motor vehicles. For instance, the DOT's website urges drivers to pledge never to talk on the phone while driving, to speak out if they are passengers in a car with a distracted driver, and to ask friends and family to abstain from cell phone use in the car.

States are increasingly cracking down on distracted phone use. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's website, which provides current information on state cell phone laws, talking on a hand-held cell phone while driving is currently banned in 10 states plus the District of Columbia. Thirty-one states plus the District of Columbia currently ban all cell phone use by novice drivers (those under 18 years of age), while 37 states plus the District of Columbia ban texting.

Connecticut's cell phone laws are among the nation's most stringent, mandating that handheld use and texting is banned for all drivers, and *all* cell phone use is banned for novice drivers and bus operators. Research conducted by the Preusser Research Institute in Trumbull indicates that Connecticut has seen a decline in texting-related car crashes as compared to the national average since 2008, which it attributes to the state's tougher cell phone laws.

It's not just tougher laws that may be helping but Connecticut's efforts to increase awareness of the issue. Connecticut's Department of Motor Vehicles has held Teen Safe Driving Video contests for the past four years to promote safe driving and communicate how destructive distracted driving can truly be. The 2012 theme is "How a Community Helps to Make Teens Safe Drivers." High school students submit Public Safety Announcement (PSA) videos with their thoughts on the subject, the winning entry to be awarded in late April.

In the past couple of years since driving and cell phone use really began to be problematic, several media campaigns have addressed the issue, often using scenes of horrifying, fatal car crashes to educate teens. In March 2010, AT&T released a 10-minute documentary titled "The Last Text." The short film targeted the adolescent population as four individuals shared stories about how they or their loved ones were involved in a texting-related car accident. The heart-wrenching stories were recounted by a victim's sister, a teenaged perpetrator, a victim and a victim's mother. Each storyteller shared the last, simple, insignificant text message that caused the accident, and that ultimately could have waited to be read or sent: "Yeah", "LOL", "Where R" and "Where U At".

In late 2011, the DOT unveiled a new "OMG" PSA campaign aimed at the adolescent population. The video shows several collisions that resulted from teens driving while either talking on their phones or texting. Common abbreviated and slang text phrases like "OMG", "LOL" and "L8R" are somberly used in the aftermath of the crashes, and the video ends with the grim slogan "One Text or Call Could Wreck it All". The PSA aired nationwide on Regal Cinema theater screens and on gas station pump-top screens owned by Outcast's PumpTop TV during the holiday season.

Although beneficial, education and driving laws alone do not seem to be enough to curtail teens' penchant for texting and driving. *USA Today* recently reported that, according to

a study conducted for State Farm Insurance, teenagers *on the whole* are not texting while driving any less frequently than they were when a survey was conducted in 2010: only 43% of 16- and 17-years olds reported never texting while driving in both 2010 and 2012. What the study did find, however, is that the role of parents in encouraging safe driving practices is crucial. Of the teenagers who reported that they do text while driving, only 67% said that they talk often with their parents about driving. Of those safer drivers who claim never to text and drive, 82% said they talk often with their parents about driving, suggesting a strong correlation between parental influence and safe teen driving practices.

The National PTA is also monitoring the discussion and posting helpful information on their website for parents to prevent distracted teen driving. The website offers some tips provided by the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety (LMRIS), including parents modeling good driving behavior for their kids and offering tools for promoting safe driving. Said David Melton, director of transportation consulting services at LMRIS, "I really believe that people know how to drive safely but they choose not to. If they choose not to you don't have a training problem you have a management problem. And in a family guess who the managers are? Mom and Dad."

Many of us think we are excellent drivers and can multitask while driving. But the bottom line is operating a vehicle at any speed requires a driver's complete attention. According to VTTI, sending or receiving a text message typically diverts a driver's eyes from the road for about 4.6 seconds, comparable to driving the length of a football field at 55 miles per hour—blind!

There is no truly "safe" way to use your phone while driving. The best way to ensure the safety of all passengers in a car is to refrain from cell phone use altogether. This goes for drivers and passengers alike. Passengers should respect the concentration of drivers, which means limiting their cell phone use in the car. Those who are not in the car can make a difference too; if someone they know calls them while driving, they can let the caller know that they can talk later after they're no longer driving.

You, too, can help. Armed with all of this information, you can do your part to make our roadways a little safer. **H**



# Stars & Tykes Forever

## Tribute USA Makes a Difference, and Throws a Wonderful Party

BY CHRISTOPHER ARNOTT

*Editor's Note: Our Spring/Summer 2012 issue of Decades was scheduled to come out at about the same time as the Stars & Tykes event being held at Lake Compounce in Bristol. Although awkward timing for the magazine, we felt it was important to cover this worthy event and hope that this article comes out in time for you to get involved. If you missed the event, look for more great things to come from the good folks at Tribute USA. And don't forget that May is also the official opening of the new Army Strong Community Center in Bristol, the only one on the East Coast.*

Karen Fallo remembers the day when “I decided with my friend Elli Crisman that we would make a difference.

“We sat down one day and said, ‘Oh, my goodness. We’re in October. We just had this big storm. There had been some political things

in Farmington, where we live, and we felt that doing something political at this time was not appropriate. The more we talked, the more we thought about freedom, how many people pay no attention to the concept that freedom has a price.

“Military people are selfless. We met with veterans, and those men have given us a purpose. They bring tears to my eyes. They have taught me things our young people should know.”

Many young people, Fallo and Crisman realized, are all too aware of those sacrifices and selfless acts—the children of men and women currently serving in the military, especially those whose parents are serving overseas.

“The children—which is what this is all about—are like little warriors themselves,” Fallo suggests. “They suffer because their parents are gone.”

That realization led to the founding, just five months ago, of Tribute USA, a fundraising and consciousness-raising organization which puts on events to benefit family of service members. The group’s first major event, “Stars & Tykes,” takes place May 19 at the Lake Compounce theme park in Bristol. The two-part, day-and-night celebration begins at 11 a.m. with military honors, special activities and fun in the amusement park. When the park closes at 6 p.m., there’s a further “Celebration and Reception,” with a swing-dance WW2 theme, at Lake Compounce’s historic carousel.

“We always wanted it to be at Lake Compounce,” Fallo says. “It’s family-oriented. It’s got that great Starlight Ballroom. It’s the right size, with the right family feel.”

Lake Compounce spokeswoman Sara Frias says Lake Compounce—the oldest continuously run amusement park in North America,



Left: Andrew Tinkham received a grant from Our Military Kids while his father deployed overseas.

now in its 167th season—is “happy to host such a wonderful organization as Tribute USA.” Among the fresh attractions for the families enjoying the park is a brand new ride, the Rip Tide Racer.

Fallo and Crisman hope to make “Stars & Tykes” an annual event, and are also planning other awareness and fundraising events. “Our finances are pretty slim,” Fallo confesses, but support has been extraordinary, and the May 19 event has exceeded her wildest hopes. The Tyler Advertising and Lamar billboard companies have donated ad space to promote “Stars & Tykes” statewide.

Not only does the gathering fall on Armed Forces Day, Governor Malloy proclaimed April 2012 as the Month of the Military Child, noting that “over the past decade there have been approximately two million children who have experienced the deployment of a parent. This recognition highlights the important role children play in the Armed Forces community.”

“Then, unbeknownst to us,” Fallo continues, “the Connecticut General Assembly issues a citation.” That document, presented to Fallo and Crisman by State Representative Bill Wadsworth of Farmington, applauds the work of Tribute USA as “a key resource for any non-profit organization looking to raise funds for families who have loved ones serving overseas.”

Now Tribute USA is hoping to convince the governors of all 50 states to make their own “Month of the Military Child” proclamations for future Aprils.

Tribute USA’s stated mission is to “foster Patriotism, Pride & Purpose” by creating partnerships with non-profit groups and event sponsors, by organizing events, and by directly helping military children. “What we are trying to do is make a difference for these children, a ‘Thank you’ for what they go through.”

It’s that basic. Yet when the children in question have parents in the U.S. armed forces, making a difference can involve jumping through quite a few hoops.

When dealing with kids in military families, there are confidentiality and privacy issues to observe and special protocol to follow. Tribute USA realized that in order to do the outreach it wanted to do, it should ally itself with a group already versed in the special circumstances of assisting military children. “We

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The folks at Lake Compounce know exactly what it takes to put smiles on little tykes' faces.

were able to build our own program, but we knew very little about how the infrastructure worked," Fallo says. "We realized that without the assistance of the military, there would be no way to reach these children."



Although sad to bid their father farewell, Skylor and Ethan Ness could look forward to the support of Our Military Kids to help cope with his deployment.

So Tribute USA quickly partnered with Our Military Kids, an organization founded in 2007 which provides grants to children whose

parents are in the National Guard or Military Reserve and are currently deployed overseas. According to its website, Our Military Kids also serves "children of Wounded Warriors in all branches." The organization's grants program helps pay for sports and arts programs, camps, tutoring and other opportunities which can help a child get through the absence of a parent.

"Thanks to Our Military Kids," Fallo exults, "we can cut through all that red tape. We can do fundraising to support their grant program, and directly help Connecticut military families. Just yesterday," Fallo says, "we were trying to figure out how we could send military kids to camp, and we found no way to do that. Now we know a way." Closer to home, she says, "if a child wants to take a dance class, or a karate class," Tribute USA can help through Our Military Kids.

Fallo will soon have other outlets for Tribute USA's outreach. "When we started,

we did not know this, but Bristol was issued an Army Strong Center, which has its official opening in May," she says. "All military can come there for assistance." The result of years of planning, this will be the only Army Strong Community Center (ASCC) on the East Coast, and one of only seven in the country. Overseen by the U.S. Army Reserve but open to all branches of the military, the Strong Center has offices in Bristol City Hall. According to the ASCC website, the centers "are designed to assist geographically-dispersed Service members and their families who may not have ready access to the services typically available on military installations. The ASCC motto could be Tribute USA's as well: "Connecting Soldiers, Families and Communities."

Tribute USA has been continually brainstorming other projects to support and thank children in military families. Next up may be an outdoor barbecue event for military families hosted by the Winding Trails Cross Country Ski Center in Farmington.

The May 19 Lake Compounce event, meanwhile, is shaping up to be not just a fun day in the park for families but "a celebration and a 'Thank you,'" Fallo says. The day features a Color Guard opening ceremony, a military



equipment display and a picnic, all included in the price of admission. There's also an elaborate floral-design competition in which 19 different designers have each been assigned a different military flag—whether from the first 13 historic styles of the American flag, the Connecticut state flag or flags from the various branches of the armed forces—to adapt into a floral display. The floral flags will be constructed right at the park, with a panel of judges selecting a single winner. “Some of those flags are more difficult than others,” Fallo teases, which should make for an interesting competition.

The organizers are working on further enticements right up to the last minute. “We just found out that the WWE is participating,” Fallo says. “They’re sending a legend.”

At night, for a separate \$175 admission, there's a special reception with valet parking, cocktails, food tastings, and a silent auction, all framed within a 1940s USO Canteen-styled dance party. Connecticut TV food-show host Prudence Sloane will be there as part of the

Stardust Dancers ensemble, foxtrotting and jitterbugging to live music from the 15-piece Little Big Band. Silent auction items include books signed by former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell or former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and the chance to fly in a fighter jet. “We can’t believe how it’s all

come together,” Fallo says. But it shouldn’t be such a surprise. Community support is what Tribute USA is all about.

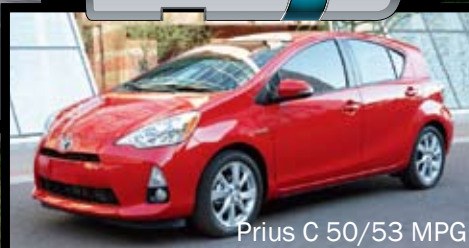
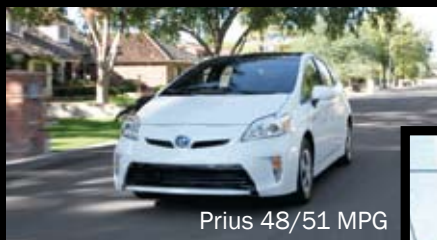
For more information on Tribute USA and the May 19 “Stars & Tykes” event at Lake Compounce, visit <http://www.tributeusa.com> or call (860) 305-2456. **H**



Left to right: Elli Crisman (Tribute USA Organizer), CT Senator Jason Welch (Supporter), U.S. Representative William “Bill” Wadsworth, and Sunilda Munroe (All Occasion Flowers), a Stars & Tykes participating Floral Flag Designer.

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# Events Calendar

*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 events that may be of interest to you.*

**May 31-June 3. "Bluegrass Music Festival."** Four-day bluegrass festival featuring concerts, music workshops, food and craft vendors, and more. Day tickets and weekend passes available, as well as free rough camping (with music pass), rentals and campsites. Folk music stage as well. Admission \$20-\$110. *Strawberry Park Resort Campground, 42 Pierce Rd., Preston; 860-886-1944; [www.strawberrypark.net](http://www.strawberrypark.net)*

**June 1. "Connecticut Sun v. Minnesota Lynx."** The defending WNBA champions and former UConn standout Maya Moore challenge the Connecticut Sun early in the season. Tickets start at \$13. *Mobegan Sun Arena, 1 Mobegan Sun Blvd., Uncasville; 860-862-4068; [www.connecticutsun.com](http://www.connecticutsun.com).*



Native American girl at the Educational Powwow.

**June 2. "Carmine & Frank Mangini Football Camp."** Attendees of this football camp will get to experience an entire day of training with the gridiron greats of football. Over 120 NFL coaches and players, as well as college and high school coaches, are scheduled to help teach the latest and most effective football techniques. \$45, open to grades 8-12. *[www.cfm-foundation.org](http://www.cfm-foundation.org)*

**June 11. "Burton C. Hoffman Golf Classic."** The Hoffman family and Connecticut Children's Medical Center will be hosting the 14th annual golf tournament at Tumblebrook Country Club. Over the past 13 years the BCH Classic has raised over one million dollars for the Burton C. Hoffman Surgery Center at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

**June 16-30. "International Festival of Arts & Ideas."** The 2012 Festival of Arts & Ideas is a 15-day extravaganza of performing arts, lectures, and conversations that takes over theaters and open spaces in New Haven each June. More than 80% of Festival events are completely free! *195 Church Street, 12th Floor, New Haven; 888-ART-IDEA; [www.artidea.org](http://www.artidea.org)*

**June 18-24. "Travelers Championship."** A ticket to the 2012 Traveler's Championship is your opportunity to experience a world-class PGA Tour tournament. Tickets may be purchased online. *TPC at River Highlands, 1 Gold Club Rd., Cromwell; 866-840-8821; [www.travelerschampionship.com](http://www.travelerschampionship.com)*

**June 23-24. "CT Irish Festival, Feis & Agricultural Fair."** Featuring the finest in Irish music, dance and sports. Cultural offerings include language and instrumental music competitions as well as genealogy and traditional music presentations. Many family-friendly activities will be available both days. Admission is \$12. *North Haven Fairgrounds, Washington Ave. (Rte. 5), North Haven; 203-467-3638; [www.ctirishfestival.com](http://www.ctirishfestival.com)*

**July 1-August 31. "Summer Music Festival."** Held throughout the summer months of July and August on Monday and Wednesday evenings at the Darius Miller Memorial Band Shell in Walnut Hill Park. The

performances feature a variety of genres from talented bands throughout the Northeast. Admission is free.

*Walnut Hill Park, 184 W. Main St., New Britain; 860-826-3360; [www.newbritainct.gov/RecNPark](http://www.newbritainct.gov/RecNPark)*

**July 7. "Independence Day at the 32nd Annual Riverfest."** A dazzling fireworks show shot from three barges on the Connecticut River highlights this traditional Hartford festival. Riverfest also features free entertainment, including live bands, musicians, clowns and other walk-about entertainers, kids' activities, and more. Admission is free. *Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, 300 Columbus Blvd., Hartford and Great River Park, 301 East River Dr., East Hartford. Rain date for fireworks only is Sunday, July 8. 860-713-3131; [www.riverfront.org/events/festivals](http://www.riverfront.org/events/festivals)*

**July 11-12. "Educational Powwow."** Listen to the drum and learn to identify different songs. Watch dancers in their colorful regalia and join in a social dance or two. Native artists demonstrate and sell their works, including wampum and beaded jewelry, sweetgrass baskets and pottery. Free with museum admission. *Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center, 110 Pequot Trail, Mashantucket; 860-411-9671; [www.pequotmuseum.org](http://www.pequotmuseum.org)*

**July 13-September 23. "Carousel."** Carousel has captivated audiences around the world with the powerful love story of an innocent young millworker and swaggering carousel barker. He meets a tragic end but is given one chance for redemption by delivering hope to the daughter he never knew and whispering words left unspoken to his wife. Experience one of the most celebrated musicals of all time. Call for ticket information & special packages. *Goodspeed Opera House, Rte. 82, East Haddam; 860-873-8668; [www.goodspeed.org](http://www.goodspeed.org)*

**July 16. "Hoffman Audi Quattro Cup Golf Tourney II."** Hoffman Auto Group will be hosting its first Audi Quattro Cup this year. Customers of Hoffman Audi of East Hartford are invited to tee off at the picturesque Hartford Golf Club. The winning team will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to play in the 2012 U.S. Finals at the Pebble Beach Golf Course in Pebble Beach, CA.



All seats seem good at the Connecticut Tennis Center at Yale.

**July 20-22. "Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz."** Featuring three days, two stages, 14 jazz bands, 45 food and marketplace vendors all located in the beautiful and historic park. Notable performers in past years include Dave Brubeck, Chuck Mangione, Herbie Mann, Gerald Albright and many others. Admission is free. *Bushnell Park, 1 Jewell Street, Hartford; 860-727-0050; [www.hartfordjazz.org](http://www.hartfordjazz.org)*

**July 26-August 12. "Twelfth Night; or, What You Will."** Outdoor Shakespeare production presented by Capitol Classics. *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will* is a tale of mistaken identity, separated twins, deflated ego, and gender-crossing disguise, all to overcome obstacles and find "true" love. The festival will also feature pre-show

entertainment, which includes the Elizabethan Consort, dance, lectures, and more. Adults \$15, seniors and students \$10. *St. Joseph College, 1678 Asylum Ave., West Hartford; 860-231-5555; [www.capitalclassics.org](http://www.capitalclassics.org)*



Lynne Williamson/Institute For Community Research

The West Indian Independence Parade is a colorful affair.

**August 11. "West Indian Independence Parade."** Celebrate the independence of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Many islands of the Caribbean received independence in rapid succession. The celebration activities, along with the spectacular parade, focus on community and unity. Parade followed by live entertainment. Admission is free. *Main Street to Bushnell Park, Hartford. 860-249-4806; [www.wiidhartford.org](http://www.wiidhartford.org)*

**August 18. "Dinosaur State Park Day."** Dinosaur State Park Day is a celebration of the discovery of the dinosaur tracks revealed during a state construction project on the site that is now Dinosaur State Park. Live entertainment, animal shows, games, face painting, arts and crafts, and more. Outdoor activities free; Exhibit Center: adults \$6, children (6-12) \$2. *Dinosaur State Park, 400 West St., Rocky Hill; 860-529-5816; [www.dinosaurstatepark.org](http://www.dinosaurstatepark.org)*

**August 18-19. "Riverfront Dragon Boat Festival."** Two full days of dragon boat racing accompanied by a culture-rich Asian Festival, complete with authentic Asian cuisine, and a full schedule of cultural entertainment, activities for children and martial arts demonstrations. Admission is free. *Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, 300 Columbus Blvd., Hartford; 860-713-3131; [www.riverfront.org](http://www.riverfront.org)*

**August 19-25. "New Haven Open at Yale."** An Olympus U.S. Open Series tennis event, a WTA Tour-only. Call for a schedule of events & ticket information. *Connecticut Tennis Center at Yale, 45 Yale Ave., New Haven; 203-776-7331; [www.newhavenopen.com](http://www.newhavenopen.com)*

**August 30-September 23. "Hedda Gabler."** The role of Hedda Gabler is considered the Hamlet of women's roles. The character has been referred to as the original desperate housewife. Ibsen's elusive, sardonic, and self-destructive heroine has captivated generations of theatergoers. A victim? A villain? Both? Renowned Canadian director Jennifer Tarver helms the revival of this Ibsen masterpiece. Call for tickets. *Hartford Stage, 50 Church St., Hartford; 860-527-5151; [www.hartfordstage.org](http://www.hartfordstage.org)*

**September 24, 25. "Sr. Golf Championship."** The 67th Connecticut Senior Amateur Championship is presented by Hoffman Lexus and will be held at the Golf Club of Avon. Entry deadline is August 15 with an entry fee of \$130. Must be 55 years or older and a bona fide member of a CGA member club.



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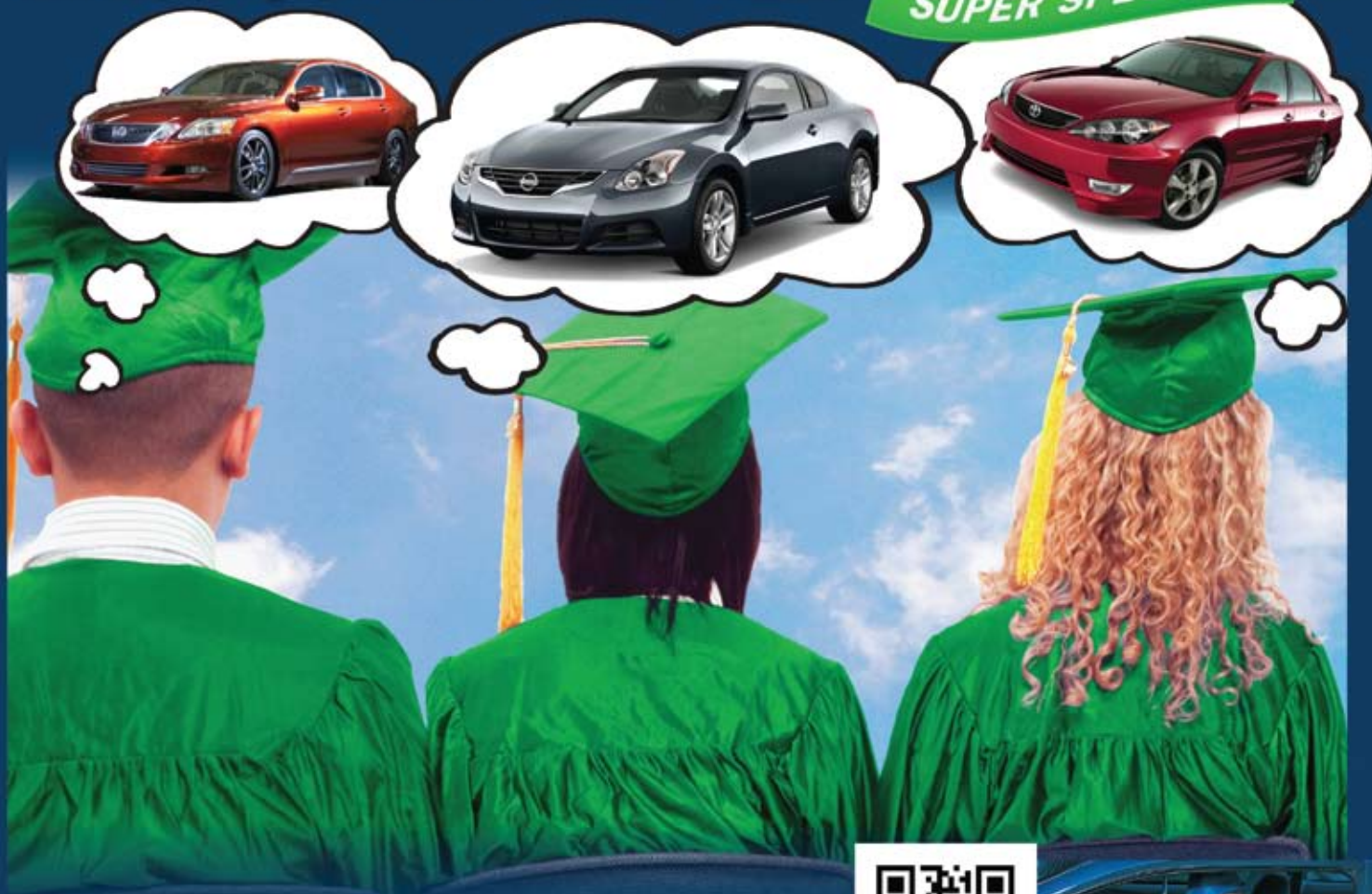
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