

D Hoffman DECADES S

Summer 2010

PORTRAITS IN COURAGE

The August 12-14
Whalers reunion
will benefit children
living with arthritis



INSIDE

Hoffman Auto Group is gearing up to present the third annual Connecticut Auto Show on October 3rd at Hoffman Ford. *Page 31*



Are you sure you've been fantasizing about the right German sport sedan?

The 2010 A4 2.0T quattro® is bigger, faster and more fuel-efficient than the nearest German-engineered competition* - including those driving around in your head. Reassess things today at an Audi dealer near you with a test-drive of the 2010 Audi A4. audiusa.com/A4



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Hoffman DECADES

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On the cover: Gathered at East Hartford's Rentschler Field to talk about the upcoming Whalers benefit for the Arthritis Foundation are (from left): Ex-Whaler Bob Crawford, ex-Whaler Kevin Dineen, Ted Monnes, Samantha Hart and Cindy DeLillo.. *Photo by Brian Ambrose*

WELCOME TO OUR summer edition of *Decades*!

This issue, we bring you a story about an exciting and unique event, coming up in August, that will benefit the hundreds of thousands of adults and children in Connecticut living with doctor-diagnosed arthritis, the leading cause of disability in the United States. The Whalers Arthritis Dinner, at the Marriott Hartford Downtown on Friday, Aug. 13, will be part of a weekend-long reunion of the Hartford Whalers hockey team. The fundraising dinner is a collaborative project involving the Hoffman Auto Group, which has been a supporter of the Arthritis Foundation since the mid-1980s.

We also tell you about some innovative programs at Hebrew Health Care seniors' facility, where programs like pet therapy are bringing a smile to the faces of its elderly residents, and making them healthier in the process.

And we introduce you to Dr. Jeremiah J. Lowney, a Norwich orthodontist who has worked tirelessly for the past 28 years to help improve the lives and health of the poverty-stricken people of Haiti. Founder of the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF), Lowney established a healthcare clinic in western Haiti, a region that had no healthcare facilities or programs until he arrived. Over the years, HHF has helped more than 225,000 people in 105 villages.

Looking for some family-friendly fun in the great outdoors now that summer has arrived? How about a little modern-day treasure hunting? Around the globe, adventure seekers of all ages are using high-tech and low-tech tools to track down hidden caches of goodies, and leave behind a few of their own for the next "seeker" to discover.

For some added adventure, we'll also send you on another road less traveled – the one that leads to Connecticut's wildest and wackiest museums. Think museums are stuffy places where the kids "can't touch" and have to keep their boisterous voices down to a whisper? Think again. We'll introduce you to museums that offer plenty of hands-on fun, and will even leave parents feeling like a kid again.

If it's cars that rev your engine, you won't want to miss the third annual Connecticut Auto Show, which this year for the first time welcomes exhibitors of all makes and models of cars, trucks and motorcycles. There will be prizes, raffles, food, live entertainment – and plenty of fun for the whole family.

All of that excitement is enough to make a person work up an appetite. We'll take you to 10 Connecticut restaurants that not only offer wonderful food, but an opportunity to enjoy a great view while you eat.

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



PHOTO BY LANNY NAGLER

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Jeffrey S. Hoffman
Co-Chairman

I. Bradley Hoffman

I. Bradley Hoffman
Co-Chairman

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PORSCHE



HISTORIC CLOCK TOWER TO BE RESTORED

On April 28, Jeffrey Hoffman and I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairmen of the Hoffman Auto Group, presented Simsbury Main Street Partnership, Inc. with a \$10,000 check, to be used for the restoration of the Enno clock tower.

The clock is original to the Enno building, which was dedicated on Memorial Day 1932, and is part of the bequest by Antoinette Enno Wood to the Town of Simsbury in memory of her parents, Amos and Lucy Enno.

Today, the Enno Memorial Hall is home to the Senior Center, Simsbury Community Television, Social Services, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Each year, the building also welcomes thousands of residents and visitors who attend meetings, performances and other social gatherings.

Restoration of the clock is part of a yearlong commitment made by the Simsbury Main Street Partnership, Inc. to bring the building back to its original condition, and comes on the heels of a long string of improvements. Projects are currently being done to improve the building's sustainability, energy efficiency and accessibility issues.

Restoring the clock will be a significant contribution to the overall plan to return Enno to its original grandeur. The Hoffmans said they're proud to be able to help.

"As a family-owned business in Simsbury, we take our commitment to the town and the residents very seriously," said Jeffrey Hoffman.

Added Bradley Hoffman, "We hope that this gift serves as an inspiration to others to get involved in improving their hometown."

"Enno is truly Simsbury's Community Center," said Jackson Enno, a descendant of Antoinette through his great-grandfather. "The Hoffman family stepping up to help out is just one more example of the generosity of business owners in our community."

In May, the Hoffman family donated a check for \$10,000 to Simsbury Town Hall to help restore the town hall clock tower. Shown on the front steps of Enno Memorial Hall are members of the Simsbury Board of Selectmen and the Hoffmans.



MADD ABOUT SAFETY

MADD Connecticut received a donation from every vehicle sold at all Hoffman locations during December 2009. Funds raised through this event – called "Tie One on For Safety" or TOOFS – benefit the many programs and services that MADD offers. Over the past 12 years, Hoffman has donated more than \$100,000 to MADD through this program. Shown from left are: Paula D'Agostino, MADD Connecticut programs specialist; I. Bradley Hoffman and Jeffrey Hoffman, co-chairmen of the Hoffman Auto Group; and Janice Heggie Margolis, executive director of MADD Connecticut.



SMART SHOPPING

Smart cars were featured at Whole Foods Markets on Raymond Road in West Hartford at the store's "Local Night" on April 20, in conjunction with Earth Day. People who took one of the cars for a test drive received a \$20 Whole Foods gift card. There was also a smart car on display inside the store.



HOFFMAN SPONSORS WOMEN'S LUNCHEON

Hoffman Porsche was a platinum sponsor of the YWCA's 15th annual In the Company of Women luncheon, held at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. Representing Hoffman Porsche were, from left, back row: Lori Principe, Anne Bjorkland and Kathleen Halpner. Front row: Lara Hoffman, Matthew Hoffman, Jeffrey Hoffman and Robin Golightly.



BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB MARKS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Hoffman Audi of East Hartford and New London was a major sponsor of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Hartford's 150th Anniversary Spring Gala and Silent Auction on March 25 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. Olympic gold medalist **Dominique Dawes** and actor **Courtney B. Vance** were guest speakers at the event. Boys and Girls Clubs, which now operate across the nation, got their start in Hartford. *Left photo, left to right, back row: Margaret Edes, Chrissy Pakutka, Peter Danis, Jay Schmidt and Steve Shields. Front row: Donna Zakewicz, Anne Bjorkland, Meri Robert, Phyllis Keyes, Lara Hoffman and Jillian Asselin. Right photo: Actor Courtney B. Vance and Kathleen Halpner, Hoffman Audi human resources consultant.*



HOFFMAN WINS PRESIDENT'S AWARD FROM TOYOTA

The Hoffman family hosted a gala celebration on April 1 at the Grist Mill in Farmington for Toyota employees, to celebrate Hoffman Toyota's achievement in receiving Toyota's prestigious President's Award. In order to qualify as a President's Award winner, Hoffman Toyota was required to excel in each of a series of categories, including customer sales and service satisfaction. *Left photo, from left: Cherif Diouf, Julio Sosa, Jesus Roche, Eddie Crouse and Malvin Brown of the Hoffman Toyota sales department. Right photo, from left: Tina Stoddard, assistant office manager; Angie Sawyer, office manager; Gina Fabro, lease renewals; Mike Keeman, service advisor; and Theresa Dragon, office manager.*



HOFFMAN WINS 2010 PORSCHE PREMIER DEALER AWARD

Hoffman Porsche celebrated its receipt of the 2010 Porsche Premier Dealer Award at Peppercorns in Hartford on Nov. 2, 2009. The Porsche Premier Dealer Program identifies the Top 25 Porsche dealers in North America and rewards those that best surpass expectations of Porsche customers. In order to receive this recognition, Hoffman Porsche met and exceeded Porsche's highest level of customer satisfaction in both service and sales, while at the same time maintaining excellence in performance among its peers. This is the second consecutive year that Hoffman Porsche has won this distinction. Shown from left, back row: **Karl Werner, Josh Dworman and Ric Nanni**, Porsche sales. Front row: **Ethan Gombossy**, Porsche Service; **Jeffrey Hoffman**, co-chairman of the Hoffman Auto Group; **Matthew Hoffman**, vice president of Hoffman Auto Group; and **Lori Principe**, administration.



AUDI AWARD

Hoffman Audi celebrated its receipt of the 2009 Audi Magna Society Award on Monday, May 10, at Peppercorns in Hartford. Providing superlative customer service while achieving strong overall business performance is no simple feat, yet Hoffman Audi excelled on both scores. Audi established the Magna Society to recognize U.S. dealerships that stand out as the best of the best. To qualify, dealerships can't just meet or exceed sales targets. They must also demonstrate that they are maintaining a solid financial foundation, merit high customer satisfaction scores and show that their facilities and staffs represent the progressive Audi culture. "This is far more than a sales contest," said **Reinhard Fischer**, director of Network Management for Audi of America. "It is a broad-based measurement of dealers leading the way in firmly establishing that the Audi experience is a superior experience for American luxury car buyers." *Top photo, from left: Sam Pines, Hoffman Audi director of fixed operations; Chrissy Pakutka, assistant to Sam Pines; Norm Hamilton, Eastern Area executive, Audi of America; Elaine Whitney, Hoffman Audi assistant office manager; Nate Pekala, Hoffman Audi sales representative; and Frank Daly, Hoffman Audi sales manager. Bottom photo, from left: Tim Michael, Hoffman Audi general manager; Robert Cope, sales; Matt Nelson, sales; Joe Thomas, sales manager; Dylan Bigge, sales; Rob Rypysc, business manager; Gualter Pereira, sales; and Dani Sayegh, sales.*





Water's Edge resort and spa is home to The Restaurant at Water's Edge, one of several spots on the property where you can enjoy a delectable meal while taking in a spectacular view of Long Island Sound.

Above and Beyond

Connecticut serves up a delicious selection of open-air dining options ... many with a view.

BY ALEXANDRA SCHWARTZ AND CAROL LATTER

Connecticut's picturesque New England landscape plays an essential role at the tables of numerous eateries around the state. From "vineyard specials" inspired by regions of Italy to rooftop views of some of Connecticut's most beautiful suburbs, the cuisine and ambiance of the state's top outdoor dining locations is filled with variation and style.

During the summer, there is nothing quite as enjoyable and relaxing as adding scenery to romance over a candlelit lobster dinner for two on the state's southern shore, or planning a weekend retreat in rolling hills and maple trees, enjoyed with a glass of Merlot and perfectly prepared filet mignon. With renowned chefs catering to families, couples, business partners and more, even the pickiest of eaters are certain to find both sustenance and solace in these destination dining locales.

Though the following list only skims the surface of the finest summer dining Connecticut has to offer, it is a compilation of a variety of fresh summer choices, with spectacular views for every taste.

TERRA MAR

Located on Connecticut's south shore at the posh Saybrook Point Inn & Spa, Terra Mar restaurant is nationally recognized for its dining elegance and intimate ambiance. Named one of the top restaurants in the United States by the Zagat guide and rated a Four Diamond restaurant by AAA, Terra Mar prides itself on breathtaking views of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound and features a menu of innovative American cuisine influenced by regions of Italy and France.

Terra Mar serves breakfast, lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch, along with fixed price "vineyard dinners" on the second Thursday of every month, from January

through April. These "vineyard dinner" specials showcase wines and traditional multi-course country dishes from different regions around the world, including Normandy & Piedmont, while using fresh ingredients from local farms.

Other delicacies on the menu include Maine lobster bisque and an all-natural veal osso buco. One of Old Saybrook's most celebrated restaurants, Terra Mar is an exquisite fresh dining choice for seaside enthusiasts.

Terra Mar

2 Bridge Street, Old Saybrook
(860) 395-2000
www.saybrook.com

FIDDLERS ON THE ROOF

Set above Fiddlers Green on Route 10 in Simsbury is the aptly named Fiddlers on the Roof – a restaurant offering sumptuous Italian cuisine, charming waitstaff and, from the rooftop deck, views of the Farmington Valley Greenway.

The restaurant – open for lunch, happy hour and dinner Tuesday through Sunday

– starts guests off with a list of mouthwatering appetizers that include Mozzarella Caprese, escargot and Clams Lucciano. Entrées run the gamut from homemade pastas like Ciao Europa (rigatoni sautéed with mushrooms, shrimp and sea scallops in a blush vodka sauce) to fresh fish and innovative meat dishes like Chicken Bocconcini and Veal Milanese.

During happy hour (Monday through Thursday from 3 to 6 p.m.), customers can enjoy \$3 draft beers and \$5 glasses of wine, and half-price appetizers. The Early Bird Special menu offers many of the dishes available for lunch and dinner, at reduced prices.

Fiddlers on the Roof, which opened in November 2009, is owned by first cousins Dino and Benny Cecunjanin – Montenegro natives who moved to the U.S. to join other family members in various restaurant ventures. In concert with other partners, the two have owned a number of other Connecticut restaurants, including Campagna's in Portland, Fiores in Middletown and Portofino in Kensington.

Dino is joined in the kitchen by Joe Pereira, the former owner and chef of Plainville-based Portobello's, which closed a number of years ago. Together, they make culinary magic.

Looking for a great place to enjoy a European atmosphere, authentic cuisine and a warm Italian welcome? You've come to the right place.

Fiddlers on the Roof
8 Wilcox Street, Simsbury
(860) 264-1604
www.fiddlers-ct.com

THE ELBOW ROOM

If you're seeking a contemporary spin on American Cuisine, West Hartford Center's The Elbow Room is the perfect spot. With a newly opened downstairs ultra-modern bar and scenic outdoor dining in the front and on the roof of the restaurant, The Elbow Room caters to diners all seasons of the year.

The restaurant is known for its classic American menu staples like the baked-to-perfection cheesy macaroni and tasty tuna burger. With phenomenal views of West Hartford center, rooftop dining is open on a first come, first served basis from April until November, and features its own mini-bar for the most efficient service.

"We like fine beers and wines to show off our great food, and offer many by the glass, half bottle, and in reasonably priced full bottles as well," said owner Benny Delbon. And their Bloody Marys are fantastic, too.

Open from 11:30 a.m. (11 a.m. on

Sundays), The Elbow Room is an ideal location for family dining in the heart of West Hartford.

The Elbow Room
986 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford
www.theelbowroomct.com
(860) 236-6195

BOOM

Boom Restaurant, found at Pilot's Point Marina, is Westbrook's premiere waterfront dining location. With a charming indoor bar equipped with a fireplace, and an outdoor deck and wrap-around veranda overlooking an armada of world class yachts, this fine dining choice is suitable for anyone who enjoys specialty pastas, prime steaks, artisan pizzas, and local seafood.

The outdoor restaurant serves lunch and dinner to private and public parties, and has a boating casual dress code. The lunch menu has a maritime flair, offering a fried seafood platter of Narragansett oysters, shrimp and whole belly clams; classic fish and chips; a "local scallop taco"; and a BOAT sandwich (bacon, olive tapenade, arugula and tomato).

For dinner, choose from more than a dozen chic entrees, including Cedar Plank Roasted Baby Brie, Pan-seared Salmon Nicoise, Sweet Potato and Walnut Ravioli, and Chicken Gorgonzola, just to name a few. And be sure to save room for one (or more!) of the housemade desserts, whether it's Callebaut Belgian Chocolate Torte with whipped cream and chocolate ganache, or key lime pie with a drizzle of raspberry.

"While the shipyard has seen earlier

restaurants come and go, Boom seems destined to be around for a long time to come," says *The New York Times*. The 20 outdoor tables, open from April to September, provide a scenic view of the harbor – a welcome accompaniment to the popular Stonington Sea Scallops and seasonal homemade desserts.

Boom recently opened another location at 90 Halls Road in Old Lyme for year-round Boom fans.

Boom
63 Pilot's Point Drive, Westbrook
(860) 399-2322
www.boomrestaurant.net

MAX A MIA

In 1991, Rich Rosenthal, owner of Max Restaurant Group, and partner Brad Karsky had a simple vision of creating a casual Italian bistro that blossomed into one of the top-grossing restaurants of its size.

Max a Mia was rated Best New Restaurant in its first year and has developed a reputation of offering the quintessential Italian experience in the Greater Hartford area.

The 25-foot granite bar in the luxurious main dining room contributes to a welcoming social environment that extends to the outdoor terrace dining in the front of the restaurant.

Max a Mia utilizes its authentic brick oven to create an assortment of traditional Italian staples, including its flavorful stone pies. Other classic Italian menu dishes include veal, pork, pasta and innovative risottos followed by desserts like tiramisù

Max a Mia in Avon provides fresh air dining, and a variety of menus to suit every taste.





Limoncello dessert tastes even more refreshing when served on the upper deck at Fiddlers on the Roof in Simsbury.

and white chocolate polenta cake.

The restaurant not only offers lunch and dinner menus, but gluten-free, intermezzo, dessert and after-dinner, and large party menus – so there’s something for every taste, every party size and every budget.

In the mood for celebrating something special? Check out the martini menu.

Open from 11:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. on Sundays, Max a Mia is a perfect, elegant bistro for family dining.

Max a Mia
70 East Main Street, Avon
(860) 677-6299
www.maxrestaurantgroup.com

THE BOULDERS INN

The Boulders Inn, a Dutch Colonial mansion built and designed in 1890 by the renowned architect Ehrick Rossiter, sits on Lake Waramaug and epitomizes

New England’s elegant charm. Boulders Inn is located on East Shore Road in New Preston and is surrounded by a natural and panoramic beauty of maple trees, rolling hills, and Lake Waramaug.

Adding to the romantic aspect the inn emanates is its renowned restaurant, featuring New American cuisine. “Dining at the Boulders Inn on a summer evening can be one of the season’s most memorable dining experiences. And, there’s no extra charge for the view,” says *The New York Times*. The classic stone dining room opens up to a hillside terrace with breathtaking views of the lake, perfect for a romantic summer’s eve. The inn’s menu of Moules Frites, Duck Confit, Slow Braised Lamb Shanks and more is paired with an award-winning wine program: a 400-plus selection of wines from California, France, and Italy.

Open from the beginning of April

through the summer and fall months, The Boulders Inn is the perfect retreat for any couple looking to drop their cell phone reception and take in New England’s traditional beauty.

The Boulders Inn
East Shore Road
New Preston
(860) 868-0541
www.bouldersinn.com

THE RESTAURANT AT WATER’S EDGE

At the enchanting Water’s Edge resort and spa, located at 1525 Boston Post Road in Westbrook, summer diners have a myriad of different award-winning dining choices to select from, for a romantic wedding celebration or a more casual family dinner. Voted the “Best Sunday Brunch Statewide,” The Restaurant at Water’s Edge promises spectacular ocean views and a magical ambiance.

Along with selections from the mini raw bar, appetizers include Maine Lobster and Cassava Fritters, Zucchini Squash Blossoms and Saffron Potato Gnocci. Among the entrées are Native Block Island Swordfish, Hawaiian Big Eye Tuna and Fire-grilled Lobster and Sea Scallops. For landlubbers, there’s also Filet Mignon, Colorado Lamb Loin and Veal Porterhouse.

For signature margaritas, blended tropical drinks, premiere wines and more, The Seaview Bistro and Martini Bar is the perfect stop after a sunny day on the shore. But the resort and spa’s ideal outdoor dining location is Sunset Bar and Grill, an outdoor patio accessorized with draping flowers, breathtaking ocean views, and live music all throughout the summer. The restaurant remains open, weather permitting, from May through the end of September. Sunset Bar and Grill’s impressive seafood menu is filled with cocktails and calamari, as well as American sandwich favorites and delicious desserts.

The Restaurant at Water’s Edge
1525 Boston Post Road, Westbrook
(800) 222-5901
watersedgeresortandspa.com

APRICOTS

Overlooking the banks of the Farmington River sits Apricots Restaurant & Pub, a critically acclaimed eatery located in a converted trolley barn. The building served as a turn-around and drop-off point for the horse-drawn trolleys that brought passengers to and from Hartford in the 1800s.

In 1983, Ann Howard, a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu and La Varenne French cooking schools, transformed the build-

ing into a two-level restaurant offering white tablecloth dining upstairs and a more casual pub and “parlor” downstairs.

In the summer months, guests can sit outside on the veranda to catch some cool river breezes while they dine. For those seeking a better river view, Apricots offers tables inside white, open-walled tents, and an adjacent bar for serving cocktails or non-alcoholic summer concoctions for patrons of all ages.

Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner, Apricots generally offers a more sophisticated menu upstairs, and pub fare downstairs. Starters include baked brie, crispy lobster spring rolls, steamed Prince Edward Island mussels, soups and salads. For lunch, there is an array of sandwiches and burgers – but not your run-of-the-mill variety. Grilled Chicken & Bacon Croissant, and the Grilled Ahi Tuna Burger are just two possibilities.

Entrées run the gamut from Oven-roasted Rack of New Zealand Lamb to North Atlantic Swordfish. Vegetarian dishes are also available.

Apricots has earned “3 Stars” from *The New York Times* and an “Excellent” rating from Zagat. The restaurant has also been voted “best in state” for desserts and continental cuisine.

Apricots Restaurant & Pub

1593 Farmington Avenue, Farmington
(860) 673-5405
www.apricotsrestaurant.com

WOOD-N-TAP

If you’re looking for someplace casual with a lovely view of a lake, look no further



If you have a hankering for the seaside and the freshest possible lobster, head for Abbott’s Lobster in the Rough in Noank.

than the Wood-n-Tap in Farmington.

This popular eatery offers a wide range of pub casual food, and a “Café Room” and outdoor deck overlooking picturesque Kettle Lake.

During the warmer months, the Wood-n-Tap has a special summer menu, featuring items such as lobster & shrimp bisque, steamers, soft shell crab sandwich and crab-stuffed filet of sole. For dessert, try key lime pie or strawberry shortcake. And to drink? How about Georgi Peach Tea Lemonade (made with a little bit of vodka) or a gin “Mishito,” meaning “good times” in Romanian?

The Wood-n-Tap, located on Route 4, is also famous for its bar bites (think hamburgers that look like they got shrunk

in the wash) and its sweet potato fries.

Stop by on Wednesday evenings for live acoustic music in the bar, starting at 9 p.m.

Want to host a private party overlooking the water? The Wood-n-Tap will be only too happy to accommodate you.

Wood-n-Tap

1274 Farmington Avenue, Farmington
(860) 773-6736
www.woodntap.com

ABBOTT’S

Nothing says family summer dining quite like Abbott’s Lobster in the Rough, located at 117 Pearl Street in the Noank section of Mystic. A lobster lover’s utopia, Abbott’s specializes in serving freshly steamed lobster in an outdoor setting overlooking Long Island Sound. This informal seafood restaurant, where bibbed diners eat at traditional picnic tables, is B.Y.O.B. for individuals and parties alike.

Lobster isn’t the only thing on the menu, as Abbott’s serves up a “weekend raw bar” of Mystic Whale Rock Oysters, Local Little Neck Clams, Icy Cold Shelled Shrimp, Crab Claws and a variety of special dipping sauces to accompany the delectable dishes, accompanied by a variety of chowders, bisques, and rolls.

TV Food Network personality Bobby Flay, who recently opened two new restaurants in Connecticut, taped one of his network shows at Abbott’s, letting the whole country know of its great seafood reputation. Don’t miss out on this unique summertime dining opportunity.

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In the summer months, guests at Apricots can sit outside on the veranda or dine at tables inside white, open-walled tents.



Portraits in Courage

An upcoming Whalers reunion will benefit those who compete daily for a chance at a normal life.

BY MATT EAGAN | PHOTO BY BRIAN AMBROSE

Cindy DeLillo was a teenager who enjoyed softball and sailing, and dreamed of becoming a marine biologist. She also had nagging pain in her joints and chest. The symptoms were initially dismissed as the flu or, sometimes, as growing pains, but when antibiotics didn't work, it became clear something else was wrong.

That something was arthritis. Three years ago, when she was 16, DeLillo was diagnosed with Ankylosing spondylitis, a chronic inflammatory arthritis and autoimmune disease.

"I had no idea that children could get arthritis," said DeLillo, now a sophomore at Roger Williams College in Rhode Island. "I'm 19 and it can only get worse for me. I had all these dreams of becoming a marine biologist but that won't happen now. I could go into anaphylactic shock."

The disease may call to mind images of stiff, sore fingers and an elderly uncle claiming he has, "a touch of the arthritis," but for the more than 46 million people who suffer from arthritic conditions, including 300,000 children, it has a different face.

"Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States," said Jaime Seltzer, chief development officer of the Northern and Southern New England chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, which is located in Rocky Hill. "In Connecticut alone, more than 700,000 residents and 3,400 children have doctor-diagnosed arthritis. More children have arthritis than

diabetes. These are facts that most people don't know exist."

The Arthritis Foundation is working to change those hard numbers and has enlisted the help of some heavy hitters to make it possible.



For the past seven years, University of Connecticut football coach Randy Edsall helped with the foundation's major summer fundraiser, but this year Edsall made the

understandable decision to host an event to benefit causes more directly related to the life of Jasper Howard, his former player who was tragically killed last fall.

Stepping into the void are some old friends: Howard Baldwin and the Hartford Whalers. The Whalers Arthritis Foundation Dinner, to be held at the Marriott Hartford Downtown on Friday, Aug. 13, will feature former players and the former owner as part of a weekend-long Whaler Reunion and Fan Fest. For Baldwin, the goal is to reintroduce the Whalers brand into a market that has never forgotten it and to pave the way for a possible return of a National Hockey League team to Hartford.

"And have some fun and do some good along the way," Baldwin said.

The dinner came together when I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group, came up with the idea of a Whalers' reunion. Hoffman has raised money and volunteered on behalf of the Arthritis Foundation since the mid-1980s.

Meanwhile, Baldwin was planning a weekend of events with the team he once owned.

"To me, it was the perfect storm," Hoffman said. "Other than my family and God, my passions are my community and hockey. I will give everything I have to make the Arthritis Foundation event a suc-

cess and, in doing that, we can give some exposure to what Howard is trying to do in our community, which is great. This is a win for everyone."



Former Whalers owner Howard Baldwin with former Whalers players Bob Crawford and Kevin Dineen, and three local children affected by arthritis.

The Whalers dinner will feature a VIP cocktail reception for players and sponsors, a silent and live auction, and a dinner with a former Whaler player at each table. After dinner, players will take the stage to share memories of their careers and update fans as to what they are doing now.

“When the Whalers were here, they

“Whenever they have a doctor come to one of the [Arthritis Foundation] presentations, they always say they are on the verge of a breakthrough,” said Marianne Navickas, 35, who was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis when she was a freshman at Oberlin College in Ohio. “This is the big hope that we all have. I

programs in local communities; offering support and education to families affected by juvenile arthritis; and undertaking advocacy and public policy initiatives.

“This is one of our major events in Connecticut, and it’s very important to us,” said Heather Schold, regional development director for the local chapter of the Arthritis Foundation.

For Hoffman, it’s rewarding to see the growth of the Arthritis Foundation and the work it supports.

“I want to get the story of what these people do out there,” Hoffman said. “Many of us give money to causes and we don’t know where it all goes, but I’ve been fortunate enough to see how this organization has grown from a small operation in the ‘80s to what it is today, and all the good they do.”

For Navickas, medical advances, made possible in part through Arthritis Foundation funding, have made a huge difference in her quality of life. She has had her hips and knees replaced, which improved her mobility – enough to allow her to travel all the way to Vienna, Austria, where, amid the imperial palaces

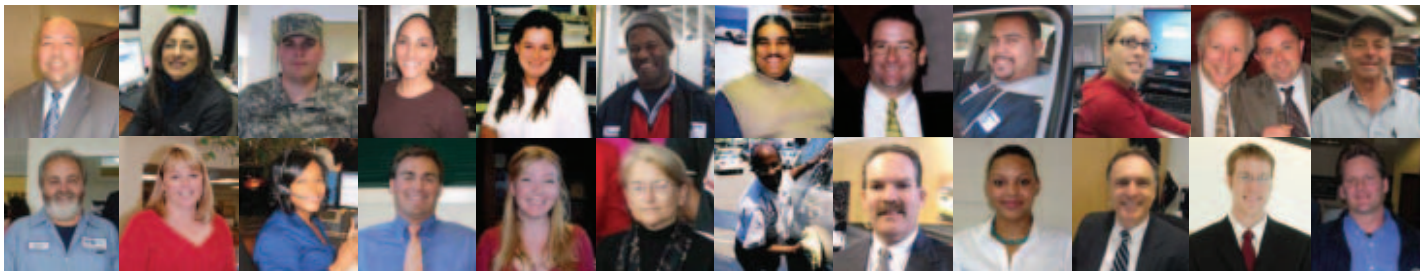
“In Connecticut alone, more than 700,000 residents and 3,400 children have doctor-diagnosed arthritis. More children have arthritis than diabetes.”

were extremely active in the community,” said Donna Elkinson, partner at Elkinson & Sloves advertising agency in Farmington, who was instrumental in getting Hoffman and Baldwin together to arrange this event. “It’s so fitting that when they are coming back for a reunion, they are still giving back to the community.”

For those afflicted with arthritis, the event is an important ray of hope.

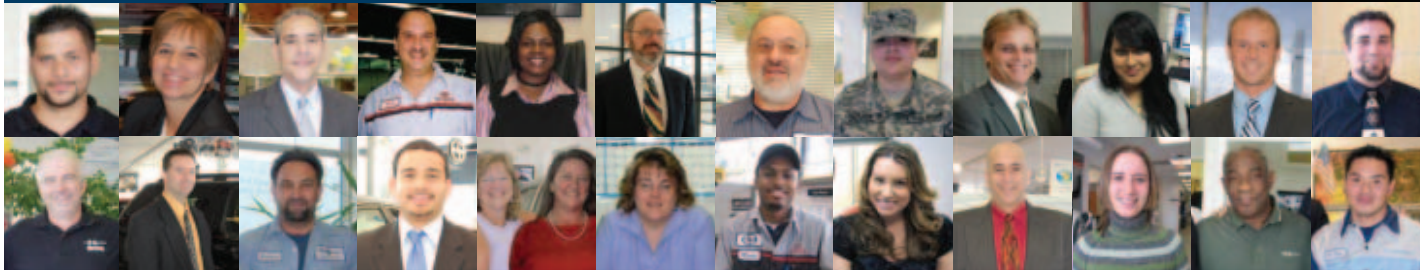
have a young daughter and there is a little part of me that fears that she can get this. The hope is that by the time she is that old, there will be a cure – something that would allow her life to be different.”

The Arthritis Foundation uses the funds raised in such events to help people take control of arthritis and improve their lives by supporting research; providing education, exercise and self-management



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and Riesenrad Ferris wheel, she met her husband in 2005.

And the development of the biologic drug Enbrel, which is part of a family of drugs that work by blocking the chemicals thought to drive the inflammation and tissue damage in certain types of arthritis, allowed her to shake off the feeling that she was living each day with the flu.

"That has been a miracle drug for me," Navickas said. "I've been able to have an extremely full life."

But other people are still waiting for their miracle drug, Olivia LaLuna, a fifth-grader in Wallingford who was diagnosed when she was 2, has tried Remicade and Enbrel.

"Remicade is a wonderful arthritic drug but it doesn't work for my daughter," said Lisa LaLuna. "It closes up her throat. Enbrel worked well arthritically, but she went blind for five days."

On a good day, Olivia can go swimming in her uncle's pool, but not all days are good days.

Nonetheless, "she has a great spirit," LaLuna said.

While much of the Arthritis

Foundation's mission is to secure funding for research into new medications that could help children like Olivia, some the funding is reserved for improving their lives in the present. The foundation paid for her to go to a week-long camp with other children who are diagnosed with arthritic conditions.

"It's great," her mother said. "It's for kids from 8 or 9 up to 17 who are all afflicted with rheumatic diseases. I was nervous at first about letting her go, but by the end of the week, she didn't even have time to talk on the phone. She left me a message and she said, 'I can't talk. I have plans.'"

The common perception that arthritis only afflicts the elderly leads to its own challenges in the community.

"I have been questioned three different times by police officers accusing me of using my grandmother's handicap sticker," DeLillo said. "So it's very difficult each and every day. I have very good friends who don't really understand what this does to you."

Debby DeLillo, Cindy's mother, says raising awareness of the struggles that children and young adults with arthritis

face is an important part of helping people with the disease.

"Cindy and I are both big believers in educating people," she said. "It's not just an old person's disease."

If Navickas, DeLillo and LaLuna have anything in common, other than a disease that is more common than most people know, it is a buoyant spirit.

That spirit is seen in Navickas and her determination to travel and in Cindy DeLillo's determination to get up on those days when it seems like it's too much to get up, but she tells herself, "You're not going to feel any better lying there."

It's also evident in members of the LaLuna family, who live by a simple statement, one they borrowed from the foundation that has given them so much support.

"The Arthritis Foundation has a motto," Lisa LaLuna said. "Live strong. Be strong. On her hardest days, I tell her that. I tell her that all the time. I have adopted it. I live by it." **H**

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Brightening Their Days

Hebrew Health Care takes a holistic approach to aging.

BY SARAH WESLEY LEMIRE

Ida Strouch will tell you that she's had a wonderful life. She spent most of her adult life either in Florida or at her seaside cottage on Crescent Beach near New London. She loves the beach and has always loved art.

Strouch came to the United States from Poland nearly 90 years ago, when she was just a young girl. She was married to her husband for many years before his passing in 1989. She has three grown children, along with many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Her ability to live independently came to an end six years ago, when serious heart trouble and a fractured hip made it obvious that she no longer could live alone.

At 98, she's a full-time resident at Hebrew Health Care in West Hartford. Being in a long-term care facility may not be Strouch's ideal, but thanks to a new approach being taken by Hebrew Health Care, clients like her continue to live with many of the same comforts and familiarities of the lives they left behind.

Pamela Atwood, Director of Dementia Care Services and Life Enrichment at Hebrew Health Care, has been striving for the past several years to enhance the experience of living in a long-term facility, and to change perceptions of what it means to age.

She sees her role as that of a facilitator in making the lives of her clients as rich and fulfilling as possible – an approach also adopted by her colleagues. "In a population such as this, so much is about your losses, about your pain, and about your physical problems and limitations. One of the things we focus on is the remaining abilities; what can this person still do?"

At Hebrew Health Care, there are

19 different enrichment programs that include everything from Reiki, an ancient healing method, to cooking and even massage therapy; residents are given the opportunity to participate in activities that are fulfilling and meaningful to them.

One of those enrichment programs is the Master Painting program, which allows residents like Strouch to pursue their passion. There's an easel in her room

"We've put more effort into helping folks reach old age than into helping them enjoy it."

– Frank A. Clark, author, *The Country Parson*

and she displays an impressive collection of her work. "I've painted 38 pictures since I've been here. I paint here in the corner. I have the window and I can paint on my own," she said. She takes great pleasure in her art and appreciates that she's still able to be creative. "When I know it's good, I have a wonderful feeling of accomplishment. It's a wonderful feeling when you do it right."

Atwood sees the Master Painting program, along with the others, as life

enrichment rather than recreation planning. "We still do games, we still do entertainment, and we have a great time, but we [also like to provide] quiet time activities." Among the activities offered are "horticultural therapy" in the onsite greenhouse, and "pet therapy," in which the residents are able to pet or walk a dog, or simply play a game with a dog lying at their feet. The latter offers more than simple enjoyment, she notes. "You can have your blood pressure naturally lowered by petting a dog."

Ready and willing to oblige is "Nolia." She's a sweet yellow Labrador who is, in essence, a resident rock star – or so you'd think, based on the oohs and aahs she receives as she ambles with Atwood down the hallways. Nolia was born in a barn in Mississippi during Hurricane Katrina, and managed to survive the ordeal.

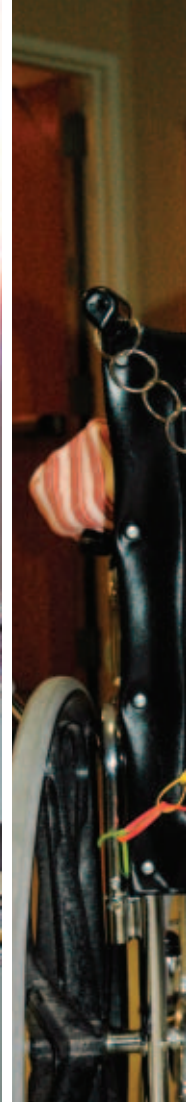
Hebrew Health Care had been looking for just the right dog for its pet therapy program for more than six months. Any dog would have to be comfortable with all aspects of the environment, including visiting families with kids and the general ongoing bustle of the facility. Nolia fit the bill, and in February 2009, she became a permanent fixture.

From residents to staff, it seems no one is able to resist her. Atwood admits that she doesn't get anywhere quickly when she's with Nolia. She stops frequently so that passersby can pet her, and some of the residents even carry treats to feed her.

Helen Horovitz is one those residents. As she comes down the hall in her wheelchair, on which she's amusingly posted a sign reading "Chairwoman of the Bored," she stops upon seeing Nolia and pulls out a small baggie full of dog treats, then takes

Both residents and staff at Hebrew Health Care are enamored with Nolia, including resident Molly Dressler, who stops to greet and pet the dog.





This page: Ida Strouch shows off one of the pieces she created as a participant in the Master Painting program at Hebrew Health Care. *Opposite page:* Resident Helen Horovitz brings a smile to passersby with the sign she affixed to the back of her wheelchair.

a moment to feed her a couple. It's obvious that Nolia would happily sit at her feet and take treats for the rest of the day, but Horovitz gently chides the dog, "No, that's all for now," and puts them away.

Horovitz enjoys her interactions with Nolia and believes that having the dog at the facility benefits the residents. "I think it makes a big difference. You'd be surprised how some of the people just light up. I am fortunate; I can get around and do things. Some people can't, but they wait [for the dog], and the dog jumps all over them. They just love it."

But Nolia does more than just make social appearances. Hebrew Health Care has a large population of dementia and Alzheimer's patients, and sometimes the dog and the other animals (there are parakeets, too) are able to reach those patients in a way that transcends other, more traditional, methods. The benefits are amazing.

"They've done all kinds of studies on people who are very, very late in their dementing process and advanced

Alzheimer's, and they can't talk anymore," explained Atwood. "We'll also have the Humane Society come with their pets. They bring rabbits, and the person just starts petting. All of a sudden, those natural reflexes wake up. We're not curing Alzheimer's with this, but it's making a difference and connecting the soul who's still here. It really is about quality of life."

She also feels that having animal-assisted activities make regular activities more comfortable rather than clinical. The bottom line is, quite simply, that it's more fun when the dog is around.

It's not only the residents and visitors who enjoy her presence, but staff as well. Dr. Henry Schneiderman – Vice President for Medical Services and Physician-in-Chief at Hebrew Health Care – finds Nolia to be an invaluable asset, both personally and professionally.

"I'm a big fan of this dog," said Schneiderman, who is also a professor of Medicine (Geriatrics) and associate professor of Pathology at the University

of Connecticut Health Center. "We take walks together, and we're buddies. I really miss walking a dog, and so this dog is part of my routine when I come here. The walking is very good for my mental health and tremendously good for the residents – no question. I think animals provide something for human beings that is indispensable and not provided by other human beings, and that's important. You see the way residents relate to this animal; they greet her by name."

Out of consideration for those who may not be "dog people," Nolia is leashed when she's in the building. Atwood feels that the dog intuitively knows which people are afraid of her, and tends to avoid them. At the end of the day, Nolia goes home with Atwood and has become part of her family. She feels that leaving the dog at the facility 24/7 wouldn't be fair to the staff members who would need to tend to her. Plus, Nolia benefits from the downtime.

Whether it's fostering the love of painting and art for residents like Ida Strouch or



providing folks like Helen Horovitz with the opportunity to feed a beloved animal a treat, the philosophy at Hebrew Health Care is about enhancing the quality of life and giving each day meaning.

And as far as Atwood is concerned, even if only one person benefits from the enrichment programs, what matters is that the one person found fulfillment in what they were doing. Ultimately, that's what she's aiming for.

"I don't need to have 10 people at each program. It's more important to have a variety of programs that reach everyone. On our recreation assessment, everyone is asked the same question: 'What makes you smile?' I want to know that. If you're going to be living here, short-term or long-term, that's the most important information I can have. If I know what makes you smile, then I'm going to be able to take care of you a little bit better."

As for Ida Strouch, what makes her smile is being able to paint. Thanks to Pam Atwood and a new view on aging, Strouch is still doing what she enjoys. *H*



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Making a Difference

BY MARK JAHNE

A Norwich dentist is a driving force behind Haitian relief efforts.

Tucked along a side street not far from downtown Norwich is a man and an organization dedicated to serving the people of Haiti. Dr. Jeremiah J. Lowney is a local orthodontist and the president and founder of the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF).

His experiences with Haiti began in 1982 when, at the age of 42, he was invited to accompany Bishop Daniel Reilly, the former bishop of the Diocese of Norwich, on a trip to that nation. It was in response

to a call from Pope John Paul II for Roman Catholics to reach out to those in need in the Third World.

Bishop Reilly “asked about 10 of us to join him. The second day I was there, I



Dr. Jeremiah J. Lowney Lowney stands with his wife Virginia outside the Haitian Health Foundation's Klinik Pèp Bondyé-a in Jérémie. She also volunteers for programs in Haiti.

Top right: Dr. Lowney speaks with a young Haitian girl. Her red hair is a sign of malnutrition.

Bottom right: Food is one of the many services provided through the Haitian Health Foundation.



found myself at a home for the dying run by Mother Teresa of Calcutta's sisters" in the capital city of Port-au-Prince, Lowney recalled.

More specifically, he toiled in Cite du Soleil, the most impoverished section of a profoundly impoverished city.

"I worked from dawn to dusk every day. I was really taken with the poverty and with the appreciation of the Haitian people," he said.

In addition to the invitation from the bishop, another reason he undertook the journey was because he had been diagnosed with cancer and was told that he had only a year to live. He decided to dedicate that year to performing charitable works.

Suffice it to say that the diagnosis for Lowney, now 70, was wrong. He decided

to offer his gratitude for this unexpected turn of events by returning to Haiti whenever he could.

"I guess God wanted me to hang around a little longer. I've gone back every three months for 28 years," he said.

Lowney "got very friendly with Mother Teresa over the phone" and later met her in person. She asked him to move his volunteer operation out of Port-au-Prince, where several other aid groups were operating, and take it to Jérémie.

Jérémie is a city situated in a rural area in western Haiti known as the Grand Anse, 140 miles from Port-au-Prince. People in that region had no healthcare facilities or programs until the HHF arrived.

Most of the people there depend upon subsistence farming, charcoal production and other menial jobs for their livelihood.

The average income is the equivalent of \$90 to \$300 U.S. per year.

The area is isolated and communication is scant. Living conditions are dehumanizing, with families crushed into hovels of banana leaves and thatch – shacks unsuitable for human habitation. Children root with animals through the garbage, seeking scraps of food.

Some people are so desperate that they eat dirt and clay. Sickness is rampant.

Lowney decided to build a small outpatient clinic on land owned and donated by an anesthesiologist who immigrated to Norwich from Haiti. "I ended up with a 27,000-square-foot building, four stories high."

It's called the Klinik Pèp Bondyé-a.

Next came an \$850,000 grant from the U.S. Agency for International



Dr. Jeremiah J. Lowney greets two children who survived the earthquake and just disembarked after a 14-hour boat ride from Port-au-Prince.

Development. He used that money to establish a maternal health and child survival program in 25 villages. It remains in operation today. That clinic, called the Center of Hope, and other services grew to serve 225,000 people in 105 villages. Some of those villages are 15 or more miles away from the clinic, and the only way to access them is on foot.

His wife Virginia also visits Haiti and runs outreach programs there. His

daughter Marilyn is executive director of the Haitian Health Foundation. The foundation has a \$3 million annual operating budget.

Lowney also has a passion for education, having served for 15 years on the Connecticut Board of Higher Education, so he took an interest in that aspect of Haitian life.

"About 50 percent of the children in Haiti don't attend school" because of

the cost and the lack of facilities, he said. So in the mid-1990s, he built a school in Jérémie. In addition to education, it serves another vital purpose.

"We give them a meal every day and sometimes, it's the only one they get," he said. Another objective is to "place some normalcy in their lives."

The foundation also provides children with support for tuition, uniforms, books and shoes.

Since the recent earthquake, the population the foundation serves has grown dramatically. Tens of thousands have fled the destruction in Port-au-Prince and moved into the countryside to live with friends and relatives.

More than 300,000 died in Port-au-Prince alone, and an estimated 1 million survivors fled the city.

"Since the earthquake, we've had 100,000 people make their way to Jérémie," said Lowney. "They're refugees in their own country. Every single refugee was taken into a home" by people who were already in dire straits.

Many of the refugees arrived by ferry. Others walked more than 100 miles.

While Jérémie is far from the epicenter of the quake, it did not escape unscathed. Three schools and 500 homes were ruined by the temblor. "I'm trying to raise money to rebuild the 500 houses that went down," the doctor said.

The quake also caused cracks in his clinic building.

He believes in giving people a hand up as well as a handout. Lowney has worked with various Rotary clubs around Connecticut — he's a Rotarian himself — to provide Haitian families with sows, purchased to replace pigs that were wiped out by flu last year.

"We restored all the pigs in the area," he said.

Livestock provides families with a means of self-support. Another program gives out pregnant goats for the same reason.

Why goats? They only cost \$150, they produce milk, they require less grazing land than cows, they can adapt to the rough mountain terrain, offspring may be sold at market or kept to increase the size of the herd, and their manure can be used as garden fertilizer.

"The major killer [in Haiti] is bacterial pneumonia," said Lowney. "The second major killer is diarrhea in children. It will kill them in 72 hours" unless treated.

Many of the children arrive at the clinic in a condition known as "in extremis,"

which means they are close to death. Staff members save as many as they can, but some children are so ill and malnourished that they die in no more than a few days.

Lowney estimates that the foundation has treated more than 200,000 patients.

Along with a major prenatal clinic, the foundation operates a feeding program that provides sustenance to 5,000 people a day. After the earthquake, Lowney said, "I went to the Dominican Republic and bought the food and brought it in. What we have been doing is providing food for these families by the ton."

The primary food product the foundation provides is akamil, a finely ground cereal made of rice, corn and beans. It is mixed with water and oil. One recipe, using coconut, cinnamon and vanilla, results in a sweet taste, while another recipe that includes salt cod and leaves produces a spicy flavor.

Akamil is a valuable source of protein, fat and carbohydrates. The foundation has constructed five mills to produce this mixture, which provide jobs in addition to food.

"I try to give as much employment as I can to the Haitian people," the dentist said.

"What we're trying to do is be a beacon of hope for these people. The worst form of poverty is to wake up each day unable to imagine that tomorrow is going to be any better."

Another foundation program is Happy

cialized surgeries for children and adults in the United States and other areas of Haiti, and special construction projects, including St. Pierre School and Testasse Fishing Village.

The foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, relies upon donations from individuals, private foundations, religious organizations, civic groups, schools and

"What we're trying to do is be a beacon of hope for these people. The worst form of poverty is to wake up each day unable to imagine that tomorrow is going to be any better."

Homes. This helps people build a house for as little as \$600 U.S.

Lowney is the beneficiary of the kindness of many people who share his interest in helping the poorest of the poor.

"We have a lot of volunteers. We have a group in every week from the United States or Canada or Europe," he said.

In the past, HHF has also sponsored other animal distribution projects, spe-

other benefactors.

HHF has overhead costs of less than 8 cents per donated dollar, meaning 92 percent of the funds it collects go directly to services for the poor. **H**

For additional information e-mail bhf@HaitianHealthFoundation.org or call (860) 886-4357. Donations may be sent to the Haitian Health Foundation at 97 Sherman Street, Norwich, CT 06360.

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A Treasure Trove

Geocaching and letterboxing turn an ordinary hike into a hide-and-seek adventure

BY ALICIA B. SMITH

The thrill of “the find” can be invigorating – especially when you’re out on a glorious early summer morning for an adventure that takes you over hill and dale, through Connecticut’s woodlands and beyond.

Treasure hunting has been popular since ancient times, when tomb robbers made their way into Egypt’s pyramids to steal valuables from royal burial chambers. In later centuries, pirates seeking gold coins and other bounty made the high seas an even more dangerous place for early European adventurers. And members of diving expeditions continue to discover sunken vessels carrying all manner of historic artifacts, as they’ve done for decades.

Now, two relatively new forms of treasure hunting are making such seek-and-find expeditions more accessible to everyone, a whole lot safer, and just as much fun. In countries across the globe, newbie and experienced adventure seekers of all ages are using high-tech and low-tech methods to conduct their treasure quests. Interested? Read on.

Take one, leave one

All over the world, a new craze has taken hold: geocaching. Using a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) device, Indiana Jones wannabes can find hidden caches of treasure.

The geocaching phenomena was inspired in May 2000, when the Earth’s 24 orbiting satellites were simultaneously synched with one another, suddenly enabling GPS receivers to gain more accuracy.

The website www.geocaching.com credits Dave Ulmer, a computer consultant, with developing the geocache “game.” In an effort to see how well his GPS would work with the synched satellites, he hid something at a specific navigational point in the woods, noted it on a website and waited to see what would happen.

He called the game “The Great American Stash Hunt.”

Within three days, two different GPS enthusiasts had found the cache Ulmer had hidden in Beaver Creek, Oregon. As the finders posted their discoveries online, the concept began to spread.

Mike Teague, the first to find Ulmer’s hidden box, soon began wracking his brain for a new name, and the term “geocache” caught on. “Geo” means earth, and “cache,” a hidden object.

The hunts became more formalized by Jeremy Irish, a Seattle web developer who developed a centralized website, www.geocaching.com, for the hobby. Word soon spread beyond the GPS users, and the game quickly became an activity for technology enthusiasts, families and anyone with a love of getting outside and learning more about the world around them.

How do you start? The first step is to log onto www.geocaching.com to find caches and clues as to where things may be hidden near where you live or work. The geographical coordinates (longitude and latitude) for the caches can be input into a GPS. Sometimes, players must figure out a code to obtain more clues.

Then, it's just a matter of taking to the woods (or elsewhere) to find the cache in question.

Geocachers typically hide trinkets in a concealed container. Those who find them are asked to sign a logbook, pick an item from the assortment and leave something behind for the next geocacher who comes along. Participants often log back on to the website to share their thoughts with fellow players. They may inform others about the difficulty of finding a particular cache, offer more clues for the next seeker, or comment on their experience.

A traditional cache consists, at minimum, of a container and a logbook. Coordinates posted online describe the exact location for the cache. With a multi-cache, the seeker must visit two or more locations to find the prize.

The website outlines the difficulty in finding the cache — what type of environment the seeker may be facing, or if additional equipment is needed. For example, one cache hunt required rappelling skills.

GEOCACHING

What: finding or hiding a small box of trinkets or a treasure-hunting log

Where: forests, parks, countrysides and urban settings in countries around the world

How: log onto www.geocaching.com, find the listing for a nearby cache, note its geographical coordinates, and use a handheld GPS device to locate it (or hide a cache yourself and post the coordinates online)

When: anytime, anywhere

How much: free!

Needed: a computer and GPS device

LETTERBOXING

What: finding or hiding a box containing a logbook, stamp and stamp pad

Where: any outdoor or public setting

How: log onto www.atlastquest.com or www.letterboxing.org, find the listing for a nearby hidden treasure, and write down the clues as to its location

When: anytime, anywhere

How much: free!

Needed: a computer, a stamp and stamp pad, a personal logbook, and a map or compass

Writing about geocaching is one thing; doing it is another. I couldn't resist.

I gathered the coordinates for the "Green Theme Cache" and headed for Penwood State Park, which straddles the

Simsbury/Bloomfield town lines. About an hour later, I hit paydirt. Among the items inside the hidden cache were an empty Magic Hat beer bottle sporting a bright green cozy, some dolls, green beads, a plastic frog, a few plastic dinosaur figurines, and a card with 1 Corinthians 16: 13-14 written on it.

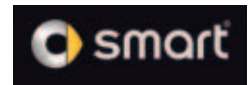
This cache had originally been hidden in 2004. According to the logbook, it had last been found on February 28, 2010.

According to www.geocaching.com, there are thousands of caches hidden in Connecticut, and caches can be found in 75 different countries around the world.

Kimberly Sanzo is a Newington resident who has gone on geocaching adventures in and around Newington, West Hartford and Wethersfield. She also uses the activity to explore her temporary home in Vermont,

where she is attending college, going out to the woods of the Green Mountain State to see what she can find.

Sanzo admitted when she first heard about the activity from a friend, "it went



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Harry Fuller pulls out a cache from its hiding place in Farmington.

completely over my head and I wasn't at all interested." After her friend showed her the website and the caches that are hidden all over the world, including the ones he found while abroad, she decided to try it.

"Vermont is the perfect place to geocache," she said. Among the places she has sought caches are Little River State Park, in and around Burlington and the Montpelier/Barre areas.

"It's a lot of fun being out in the woods or on the trails. It's beautiful, peaceful and private, and you're not concerned about getting lost because everyone has a GPS," said Sanzo, who uses her car's TomTom. "Getting out into nature is the best part about geocaching. You discover natural beauty you would have never known existed otherwise."

One of her favorite cache hunts involved a night adventure. The only way to find the cache was by using flashlights at night to follow the reflective markers left on trees by the person who hid the cache.

Her other finds include a cache that looked like a pipe coming out of a building, one that looked like the cover of an electrical box and another that was left behind loose bricks in a wall. She herself has hidden about 10 "micro" caches that only hold a logbook. Many of hers, she said, are hidden in trees.

Although she does not add or remove cache items, her younger cousins have had fun bringing along items they no longer want, and trading them for discovered treasures.

"Geocaching is just a great way to get

outside, see new things and meet friendly people," Sanzo said. "Kids love it, and so do dogs. The communities are close and often have events where cachers from a certain area can all come together and cache, or simply shoot the breeze."

Hiding a cache is as easy as finding one. Once your container of items and a logbook is placed, the coordinates can be filed on the website for others to seek.

Less technology, but just as fun

For those who are less technology oriented, but have a flair for creativity, there is a way to get in on the action that uses less complicated tools to spark the fun.

Letterboxing is another form of hide-and-seek that can inspire an "Aha!" moment, in the same way that geocaching does.

With letterboxing, containers have also been hidden out and about throughout the woods or other locales. Inside these containers are a logbook, a stamp and a stamp pad. A "letterboxer" finds clues (online at www.atlastquest.com or www.letterboxing.org) as to where these containers are hidden. Bringing with them their own stamp, inkpad and personal logbook, participants locate a letterbox, then stamp the logbook inside. They also stamp their own logbooks to record the discovery.

In 2003, the State of Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection – hoping to attract visitors with a fun activity – placed a series of letterboxes in the state parks as a way to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the first purchase of land, specifically for the state park system, in 1903.

Supposedly, letterboxing began when a gentleman left a calling card on the moors of Dartmoor, England, according to www.letterboxing.org.

Although the activity is less high-tech than geocaching, it may require a map and compass in order to find the hidden treasures.

Christine Mazzotta was turned on to the activity through a neighbor who had found several hidden in Bicentennial Park in Kensington. (She describes the area as "the letterboxing hub of Connecticut. You could spend weeks hiking around Berlin/Kensington for boxes.")

Mazzotta said she had been more of an indoor type of person, but when she learned about letterboxing, it piqued her interest.

She began with the Cemetery Series and was hooked. The first month she was

involved, she lost 10 pounds, and went on to wear out the hiking boots her husband had bought for her. Since then, her two children have joined her and have also fallen in love with the activity.

Letterboxes can be found just about anywhere — in the woods or in the shrubs around a parking lot. The containers run the gamut from simple plastic ones to ornate wooden boxes. And you never know what you will find inside. Stamps may be beautifully handcrafted from wood, store-bought plastic ones, or anything in between.

For Mazzotta, sometimes the hike is not all that exciting, but “the find” is. Other times, it’s the hike itself that makes the whole exercise worthwhile. Often, memories are created through the people she “boxes” with, and there are times when she will learn more about the history of the area.

She has also planted boxes herself and even created a series — a number of boxes based on a theme. In her case, the “Resting Series” involves letterboxes that have been

planted in cemeteries, from Rhode Island to Pennsylvania.

Mazzotta said Northwest Park in Windsor is another great place to go, and in Coventry, Nathan Hale Park in particular is also full of boxes.

“Sometimes it isn’t the place that draws me in to find a box, it’s the person who

for letterboxing. “You could literally pick any city in the country and plan an entire route of boxing to get you there, and to visit some of the best highlights of that area,” she said.

“This hobby offers such a wide range of involvement and options for participating. You can join a postal ring and mail your

“You could literally pick any city in the country and plan an entire route of boxing to get you there, and to visit some of the best highlights of that area.”

planted it,” she said. “Some folks simply have amazing hand-carved stamps with such great detail and design, that I will hunt down their boxes anywhere.”

In addition to the exercise, the “hunt” and the excitement of the find, the activity is a way to explore the state and beyond. Mazzotta said she has found places she never would have visited, had it not been

images; you can make LTCs (letterboxing trading cards) and trade them like you would baseball cards. You could attend events and gather in meeting halls to share your stamps. You can do any or all of these activities and consider yourself a boxer. There isn’t really a right or wrong way to go about it. I think it offers something for a wide variety of folks.” *H*

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CRRA GARBAGE MUSEUM

Weird and Wonderful Museums

This summer, find some family fun in the most peculiar places.

BY SARAH WESLEY LEMIRE AND BONNIE BLETHEN

While mulling over activities to fill those dog-days of summer, you might want to consider bypassing the usual hubs like the beach, the mall or your living room and check out some museums. But if you're thinking stuffy Picassos and Rembrandts, forget it – because we're going to send you off to check out a 24-foot-long dinosaur made entirely of trash and tell you where you can go to climb inside an army tank. This summer is the perfect time to see some of Connecticut's more unusual and utterly groovy family-friendly museums.

The Barker Character Comic & Cartoon Museum

If you've been waxing nostalgic about your childhood and yearning for the days of wind-up toys and retro metal lunch boxes, then head to Cheshire and visit the Barker Character, Comic and Cartoon Museum. There you'll find a downright impressive collection of cartoon-themed toys and artifacts ranging from tin toys of the 1930s to cereal boxes of the 1950s. The museum boasts it has "every item that has played a part in American childhood, from fast food toys to Disney displays."

And they aren't kidding. With more than 1,000 lunchboxes manufactured

between 1930 and 2000, and multitudes of toys dating from 1873 right up to the present, there's something for everyone looking to relive his or her childhood.

Nothing at the museum is for sale, but toys are tagged with their name, date of manufacture and current market value so guests can see what their old toys would be worth today if they hadn't wrecked them or given them away. Guests are free to wander and to view the toys for as long as they want. They can also play a trivia game and visit the adjacent Barker Animation Art Gallery, one of the few remaining animation art galleries in the country.

Barker Character Comic & Cartoon Museum

1188 Highland Avenue, Cheshire
(203) 699-3822
www.barkermuseum.com

Connecticut River Museum

67 Main Street, Essex
(860) 767-8269
www.ctrivermuseum.org

CRRA Garbage Museum

1410 Honeyspot Road Extension, Stratford
(203) 381-9571
www.crra.org

Military Museum of Southern New England

125 Park Avenue, Danbury
(203) 790-9277
www.usmilitarymuseum.org

The New England Carousel Museum

95 Riverside Avenue, Route 72, Bristol
(860) 585-5411
www.thecarouselmuseum.org

Timexpo: The Timex Museum

175 Union Street, Brass Mill Commons Mall
Waterbury
(203) 755-TIME
www.timeexpo.com

Vintage Radio and Communications Museum

115 Pierson Lane, Windsor
(860) 683-2903
www.vrcmct.org

Connecticut River Museum

"We have constantly evolving exhibits," said Helen Davis, shop manager at the Connecticut River Museum (CRM) in Essex. The CRM is located directly on the Connecticut River, and is home to historical exhibits, guided boat excursions, and its own educational boathouse.

One historical exhibit currently being featured is "On the Great River: The Story of the Connecticut and Its People," which portrays life from the time of the early Native American settlers through 1814. Davis said the museum also has exhibits on eagles, the history of the Connecticut River, and steamboats. "We are able to show you the history of the river, and how it relates to today," Davis said.

The building has three floors, with exhibits that change every few months. The boathouse is home to educational demonstrations for school groups and can be also used as a venue for special events.

When visiting the CRM, be sure not to miss out on a boat tour. Recent seasonal boat tours included an eagle watch on the Oceanology. Afternoon and sunset cruises aboard the historic schooner Mary E are offered daily in the summer through fall foliage season."

CRRA Garbage Museum

If you've ever wondered what becomes of your household trash, head on over to the CRRA Garbage Museum in Stratford. With an entire museum dedicated to recycling, it is by far the most Earth-friendly museum in Connecticut.

Its most notable exhibit is the "Trash-o-saurus," a dinosaur made completely of garbage by Philadelphia artist Leo Sewell. The most interesting part of this dinosaur is its weight: 2,000 pounds. "And what some people might not know is that it also represents the amount of trash one person throws away in a year" said educational director Sotoria Montanari. Visitors can go on a scavenger hunt with the Trash-o-saurus, looking for items placed around the dinosaur after being given a list of what to find.

"We also have a giant compost pile that people can walk through, and they are able to see a different type of recycling," said Montanari. Although this compost pile isn't real, it does show which items can go into one, including eggshells, bugs, and grass.

Of course, this museum wouldn't be complete without its own recycling center. "People are able to see the trucks come in, take the materials, and view the whole process of recycling," said Montanari,

adding that most of the exhibits focus on source reduction, the trash-to-energy process, and recycling.

The Military Museum of Southern New England

There's something very cool and intriguing about military equipment; tanks, trucks, guns and all sorts of neat stuff. If you're a guy, it's a prerequisite that you spent a good portion of your childhood playing with tiny replicas of the tanks and jeeps that you wished were parked in the backyard.

The Military Museum of Southern New England, located in Danbury, offers military enthusiasts and just about anyone else a chance to see any number of nifty military items up close and personal. Among the 10,000 artifacts available for public viewing are Howitzers, armored cars and 60-ton tanks.

Samuel Johnson, the executive director of the museum, said that the museum is the only one in New England that has such a comprehensive collection of military items. The next closest is located in Virginia.

According to Johnson, the museum is "special and unusual" based solely on the fact that there are dozens of tanks on display for both young and old to check out. But perhaps the best thing the museum offers is "Open Turret Days" – one weekend a month when guests can actually climb inside the tanks and other military vehicles and check them out firsthand.

The New England Carousel Museum

Who can resist a carousel? There's something almost ethereal about the sound of the organ playing old-time music while horses slowly climb up and down in their

perpetual spin around the track. Who better to capture that magic than The New England Carousel Museum in Bristol?

The museum was founded in 1990 as a non-profit educational organization and now, 20 years later, houses one of the largest collections of antique carousel pieces in the country. Come to see the painted ponies and stay to learn about the history and artistry involved in creating them and all the other carousel animals.

Guests can peruse the exhibits on their own or walk through with a tour guide who will share information about the art and history of the carousel.

Along with carousel pieces, guests can enjoy one of the museum's two fine art galleries which hosts art shows regularly. The Museum of Fire History, located on the building's second floor, includes fire equipment and memorabilia.

The museum also runs and manages the historic Bushnell Park Carousel in Hartford, which was built in 1914 and continues to bring squeals of delight to children visiting the park each year.

Timexpo: The Timex Museum

What time is it? It's time to visit Timexpo: The Timex Museum in Waterbury. If you want to see firsthand (pun completely intended) if they "take a licking and keep on ticking," then you have to set aside some time (oops, there it is again) to stop by this unique museum with more than three floors of exhibits.

Housed in one of Waterbury's old Brass Mill buildings, visitors can trace Timex's history from the 1850s to today in a number of fun and interesting ways. Guests can walk through a "Time Tunnel" which

When visiting the Connecticut River Museum, be sure not to miss out on a boat tour.



FAMILY FUN



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BARKER CHARACTER COMIC & CARTOON MUSEUM

takes them to an exhibit based on the work of Thor Heyerdahl (a famous adventurer who looked at possible contacts between ancient civilizations). On scheduled days, visitors can watch craftsmen performing on-site restoration of watches and clocks.

For the children, there are plenty of hands-on opportunities and craft activities. Adults can check out the original "torture test" reminiscent of the TV commercials from the 1960s and watch a re-enactment of a watch strapped to a boat motor and immersed in water.

Vintage Radio and Communications Museum of Windsor

In a time of ever-changing technology, the Vintage Radio and Communications Museum of Windsor is working hard to preserve antique radios and early communication tools.

"We have turn of the century phonographs, radios from the 1920s, and even a 1930s Crosley refrigerator with a built-in radio," said volunteer John Bayusik.

The Vintage Radio and Communications Museum has real crank

The Barker Character
Comic & Cartoon
Museum outline

Victrola phonographs that allow you to listen to music from 100 years ago, and displays of early cinematic projectors. "We also have historical Connecticut radios from the 1930s, with two made right here in Hartford," said volunteer Ed Sax.

This unique museum also hosts Crystal Radio classes by appointment. "These simple radios are run by power from an antenna and no batteries are needed," said Bayusik. A favorite among Boy Scout troops, the process of making one only takes about half an hour, and all the children need to bring is a toilet paper roll. The VRCM will supply the rest.

About 95 percent of the museum's items have been donated, he said, adding that many people learn about the facility through word of mouth. "We attract a lot of different people to our museum; it's a fun place to be."

With so many cool and interesting museums to visit around the state, there simply aren't enough days in the summer to see them all, so you'd better get started. *H*

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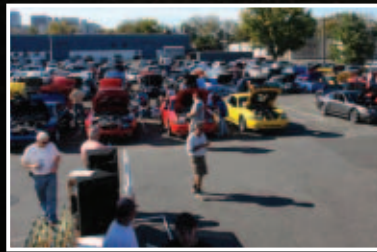
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Best in Show

Some of the best vehicles from across New England will be on display at the third annual Connecticut Auto Show, coming up in October.



BY CAROL LATTER

Hoffman Auto Group is gearing up to present the Connecticut Auto Show – but this year, with a twist. For the first time, all makes and models of cars, trucks and motorcycles are welcome.

“In the past, it’s mostly been an all-Ford car show, featuring cars from about 1940 to 2011,” said Billy Genereux, general manager of Hoffman Ford/Saab, who is coordinating the event with Peter Calabrese. To qualify as a show entry in 2008 and 2009 – the first two years of the show – a vehicle had to be a Ford vehicle or have a Ford engine.

“This year, we’re not going to limit it. We’re trying to get as many car owners to come out and show their vehicles as we can. We’re also talking with a number of car clubs – Porsche, Ferrari, the Subaru Club of Connecticut – to try to make it an even bigger auto festival.”

Last year’s show had more than 180 cars on display, and attracted more than 450 spectators. “This year, we’re hoping to double both the entrants and the spectators,” Genereux said.

Slated for October 3 with a rain date of October 10, the show will be held at the Hoffman Ford/Saab dealership at 600

Connecticut Boulevard in East Hartford. It will benefit the Wounded Warriors Project, which assists returning soldiers injured in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Previous beneficiaries have included the American Cancer Society and the Hot Water Rescue Group, which rescues animals in need of homes, and provides foster care until the animals are adopted. This year, organizers are hoping to raise a minimum of \$5,000.

Spectators are free, and children of all ages are welcome.

Calabrese said in addition to raising money for a good cause, the show is a lot of fun for exhibitors and spectators. “We’ve had people come from as far as Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, and especially New York – basically, from across the Northeast,” he said. “You can bring your kids, there’s always food, drinks and plenty to see, and we have a deejay providing music.”

For the car owners, “it’s about people bringing their hotrods and showing them off. There are goodie bags for the first 100 people to enter their car in the show, and raffle prizes.”

Those showing cars pay a set fee of \$10 to enter their vehicles in the show and compete for a whole host of trophies. Last year’s event awarded trophies in about 15 categories, from “best in show” and “originality” to “best interior” and “best engine bay.”

Calabrese said by changing the format of this year’s show, organizers hope to “open it up to more participants, have a wider variety of vehicles and help charities in a greater capacity.” He said with Hoffman Auto Group’s increased involvement this year, “we’re hoping to expand the diversity of cars and give everyone an opportunity to see cars they wouldn’t normally see at an event for one make or model.”

The show’s organizers are also hoping to attract a wider range of sponsors – “including car parts places and anybody who wants to have their names on the flyers or the trophies. We usually have 15 to 20 sponsors, and they could be anybody who wants to advertise and put money toward a good cause.” *H*

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.

□ **Through July 11.** “OVO.” Internationally acclaimed circus troupe Cirque du Soleil again brings its Grand Chapiteau to Connecticut for the newest touring show. Come enjoy a dazzling look at a diverse ecosystem of insects full of color, movement and beauty. Tickets are \$31-\$125. 408 Market St., Hartford; 800.450.1480; www.cirquedusoleil.com.

□ **July 1.** “La Pivellina.” A film about a circus woman and her husband who find a two-year-old girl in the trailer park where they live. With the help of another child, they search for her mother. Directed by Tizza Covi and Rainer Frimmel. Starring Pratrizia Gerardi and Asia Crippa. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 600 Main St., Hartford; 860.278.2670; www.wadsworthatheneum.org.

□ **July 2.** “Celebrate America - The Annual Red, White & Blue Tradition.” Join Maestro Edward Cumming and the Hartford Symphony Orchestra as they celebrate America with a Fourth of July concert, complete with fireworks. Tickets are \$20, \$5 for children age 12 and under. Performing Arts Center at Simsbury Meadows, 22 Iron Horse Blvd., Simsbury; 860.244.2999; www.hartfordsymphony.org.

□ **July 6-11.** “An Evening with Ben Vereen.” Tony Award winner Ben Vereen embarks on a timeless journey through the Broadway songbook, paying tribute to Broadway, Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. *The Roberts Theater, Kingswood-Oxford School, 170 Kingswood Rd., West Hartford; 860.527.5151; www.hartfordstage.org.*

□ **July 8-25.** **The Capital Classics Shakespeare Festival.** Enjoy Shakespeare for the whole family with outdoor performances of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” *Saint Joseph College, 1678 Asylum Ave., West Hartford; 860.231.5555; www.capitalclassics.org.*

□ **July 9-11.** **Connecticon.** Come to one of New England’s largest pop cultural events and enjoy three days of guest speakers, performances, screenings, workshops, panels, games and more. To register, visit www.connecticon.org.

org. Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Blvd., Hartford; 860.249.6000; www.ctconventions.com.

□ **July 9-Sept. 18.** “Carnival!” A musical love story about a naïve young woman who joins a traveling circus and finds love amid the clowns, acrobats and magic. *The Goodspeed Opera House, 6 Main St., East Haddam; 860.873.8668; www.goodspeed.org.*

□ **July 10.** **Lynyrd Skynyrd “God & Guns” Tour.** The Rock and Roll Hall of Famers tour their first album of new material in more than six years, with performances by Bret Michaels and 38 Special. *Comcast Theatre, 61 Savitt Way, Hartford; 860.548.7370; www.livenation.com.*



□ **July 16.** “Classical Mystery Tour – A Tribute to The Beatles.” A Beatles tribute concert performed by members of the original cast of Broadway’s “Beatlemania,” accompanied by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Tickets are \$20, \$5 for children age 12 and under. *Performing Arts Center at Simsbury Meadows, 22 Iron Horse Blvd., Simsbury; 860.244.2999; www.hartfordsymphony.org.*

□ **July 16-18.** **The 19th Annual Hartford Jazz Festival.** Come celebrate America’s truest original art form at New England’s largest free jazz festival. Bring the family to enjoy live music, food, and arts and

crafts. Thomas Harris IV Pavilion, Bushnell Park, Hartford; 860.727.0050; www.hartfordjazz.com.

□ **July 22-Aug. 15.** “Sheila’s Day.” This triumphant musical set in Perry County, Alabama and Johannesburg, South Africa follows the stories of two groups of women that represent the domestic workers of the world, collectively known as “Sheilas.” Written by Duma Ndlovu and directed by Ricardo Khan. *The Roberts Theater, Kingswood-Oxford School, 170 Kingswood Rd., West Hartford; 860.527.5151; www.hartfordstage.org.*

□ **Aug. 1.** **Lilith: The Celebration of Women in Music.** Lilith is back in Hartford for its 2010 revival, bringing with it a stunning all-female lineup including Sarah McLachlan, Cat Power, Indigo Girls, Selena Gomez and more. *Comcast Theatre, 61 Savitt Way, Hartford; 860.548.7370; www.lilithfair.com.*

□ **Aug. 7.** **John Mayer “Battle Studies” Tour.** The seven-time Grammy Award winner tours his fourth studio album “Battle Studies,” which Billboard calls “the best and most adventurous of his four studio albums.” *Comcast Theatre, 61 Savitt Way, Hartford; 860.548.7370; www.livenation.com.*

□ **Aug. 10-14.** **USA Gymnastics 2010 Visa Championships.** Watch first-hand as the country’s best gymnasts – both the established stars and new talent – compete for spots on the U.S. National Team and their ticket to the 2012 Olympics. *XL Center, 1 Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860.727.8010; www.xlcenter.com.*

□ **Aug. 17.** **Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers with Crosby, Stills and Nash.** Don’t miss an evening full of heartland rock as these Rock and Roll Hall of Famers bring their extensive North American tour to Hartford. Every online ticket purchased comes with an MP3 copy of “Mojo,” Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers’ first studio album in eight years, delivered via e-mail. *Comcast Theatre, 61 Savitt Way, Hartford; 860.548.7370; www.livenation.com.*



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