

Hoffman DECADES

FALL 2011

Chapter and verse
on Connecticut's
best burgers



INSIDE

MADE IN CONNECTICUT

Meet three companies that manufacture some of the state's most famous and fun products.

See Page 18



The yellow light was invented in 1920.

**Almost one hundred years later, 85% of drivers
have no idea what to do when they see one.**

The highly intelligent new Audi A6 is here.

Built to outsmart the road, including the 38 million drivers who couldn't pass the driver's exam today. And although the A6 can't remove the driving-challenged from the road, it can help you avoid them with features like Audi pre sense plus*. This system helps prevent collisions and will take measures to protect you if a collision is unavoidable. And that's just a few of the 2,000 decisions the Audi A6 makes a second. We're on a mission to smarten up the roads, and engineering the Audi A6 is only our first step. Learn more at audiusa.com/A6.

The road is now an intelligent place.



Hoffman DECADES

CONTENTS

- 2** WELCOME
A letter from the Hoffmans.
-
- 4** DETAILS
Gizmos and Gadgets.
-
- 6** SNAPSHOTS
Hoffman and the community.
-
- 8** COVER STORY
THE BOOK ON BURGERS
Chapter and verse on Connecticut's best.
By Ellis Parker
-
- 14** FEATURE STORY
HONORING OUR VETERANS PAST & PRESENT
Hoffman Auto Group is proud of the men and women who not only serve our customers, but serve our country and defend our freedom.
By Anne Witkavitch
-
- 18** BUSINESS
MADE IN CONNECTICUT
Meet three companies that manufacture some of the state's most famous and fun products.
By Anne Witkavitch
-
- 22** PHILANTHROPY
CONNECTICUT WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL
A boon/boost to Hartford and to arthritis treatment.
By Ellis Parker
-
- 26** WHEELS
WELCOME TO H LOT LIVE - THE NEWEST ADDITION TO THE HOFFMAN FAMILY
Bringing the showroom to life - virtually.
By Lauren Piccini
-
- 28** HEALTH AND WELLNESS
SETTLING IN FOR A LONG WINTER'S NAP
A yoga practice and a good night's sleep are two ways to ensure mind and body wellness when temperatures get colder and holiday stress begins.
By Anne Witkavitch
-
- 32** HAPPENINGS
Greater Hartford Fall Calendar of Events

On the cover:
One of Connecticut's best burgers: the P.S. I Luv Pastrami burger from Corey's Catsup & Mustard in Manchester.



WELCOME TO OUR fall issue of Decades!

Autumn is the season when Connecticut is at its loveliest, with leaves turning to red and gold, football games in full swing, and cooler weather settling in!

But the state has more to be proud of than just its annual foliage display. Did you know that many beloved products like PEZ candy and WIFFLE ball are made right here? Or that Connecticut's very own craft beer, Thomas Hooker, is brewed in Bloomfield? In this issue you'll meet some of the people responsible for these recognizable brands that represent the ingenuity, innovation and quality Connecticut industry is known for.

At Hoffman Auto Group, we have a lot to be proud about this season. We are opening the new H Lot Live, our first dedicated used car facility that offers our customers the quality pre-owned and pre-loved cars they're looking for at prices between \$7,000 and \$15,000. Read about what we have in store for you when you visit.

We're especially proud of all the members of the Hoffman Auto Group family who have served our country as members of the armed forces. As we commemorate Veterans Day, we hear from several of our vets about their memories, experiences and thoughts as they reflect on this important day.

The Connecticut Wine & Food Festival is a new fundraiser that supports a cause and charity near and dear to us – The Arthritis Foundation. The event is being held at the historic Hartford Club and will feature top chefs and restaurants from across the state.

A special highlight will be the Mind, Body & Spirit Physicians Award Dinner where we will recognize those doing outstanding work in the field of arthritis research and treatment. Hoffman is proud to sponsor this event.

As we prepare for the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and the cold winter months ahead, it is important to put renewed focus on our personal health and wellness. We'll share how starting a yoga practice and getting enough sleep are two ways you can significantly reduce stress, keep down weight and maintain a healthier self, inside and out.

Finally, if you think burgers are exclusively for summer dining think again! Our food expert goes on a mission to find the best burgers in the state and shares his observations about where you can find the best in the bun.

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



PHOTO BY LANNY NAGLER

Jeffrey S. Hoffman
Co-Chairman

I. Bradley Hoffman
Co-Chairman

Hoffman DECADES

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HOFFMAN AUTO GROUP

I. Bradley Hoffman
Co-Chairman

Jeffrey S. Hoffman
Co-Chairman

Marlene Zychowski
Advertising Manager

Katie Bushey
Director of Public Relations

Alan Simon
Director of Marketing & Communication

Sam Pines
Director of Service & Parts

PUBLISHING COMPANY

360° Marketing and Events, LLC
PO Box 422, Westbrook, CT 06498
888.481.8555
info@360mande.com

PUBLISHER

Michael J. Guinan

EDITOR

Anne Witkavitch

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Ellis Parker
Lauren Piccini
Anne Witkavitch

ART DEPARTMENT

Kate Dawes, Creative Director
Ellis Parker, Photographer
Joseph Rivera, Photographer

ADMINISTRATION

Diane Mancini

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Collene Fernwood

BUSINESS AND EDITORIAL OFFICES

P.O. Box 422, Westbrook, CT 06498
P: 888.481.8555 F: 860.838.6402
360mande.com

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We are The Best Of Hartford. Why?

For us, it's about our extended family -

our customers, our friends, exceeding all their expectations,

protecting their investment and ensuring that their experience is unique.

BEST OF Hartford MAGAZINE 2011

Driven by trust is not simply our slogan -

it's our way of life.

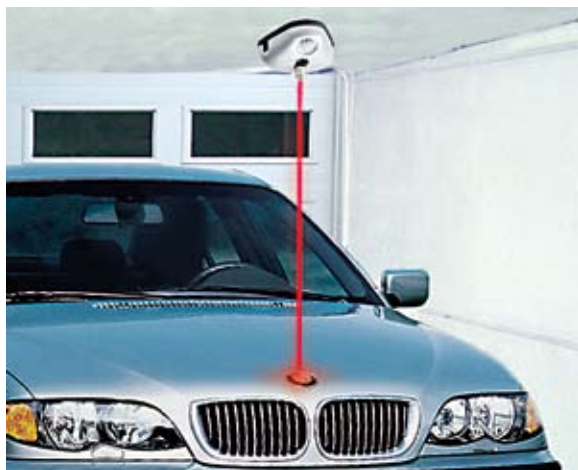
Employees pictured have been with Hoffman Auto Group for at least 10 years; some as many as 43 years!



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Jabra CRUISER2

The Jabra CRUISER2 Bluetooth™ in-car speakerphone sits comfortably on any sub-visor and, after the initial setup, connects to mobile devices every time. Because it synchronizes all contacts in the mobile devices phone book, the Jabra CRUISER2 says the names of the contacts from the phone book as calls are received. Thanks to Noise Blackout™ technology and a dual microphone system, the conversation always sounds right. Also equipped with an FM transmitter and A2DP, the Jabra CRUISER2 allows music to stream from the phone to the car stereo. This device ensures driver safety by keeping the driver in control and minimizing distractions. \$79.99. www.jabra.com.



PARK RIGHT® Garage Laser Park™

PARK RIGHT® Garage Laser Park™ helps you park your car in the garage in the same spot every time to help prevent damage to your car and your garage from flawed parking. Simply attach the device to the garage ceiling with the hook & loop tape included, or screws. PARK RIGHT® automatically activates when your vehicle enters the garage and shines a laser onto your vehicle to precisely guide you to the correct spot. \$24.95. maxsainnovations.com.

BreathKey® Keychain Breathalyzer

The BreathKey® Keychain Breathalyzer can help protect you and others from severe consequences as it gives an accurate measurement of your blood alcohol level after you've had a few drinks... or more. Even though you feel fine, drinking and driving is never a good idea. Although the BreathKey® cannot tell you if you are too impaired to operate a motor vehicle, as a tool it can help you make an educated decision and its convenient keychain design makes sure it is never lost. \$69.95. www.breathkey.com.



Cell Phone Cup Holder

The Cell Phone Cup Holder fits comfortably into any standard size cup holder with capability to hold popular phones such as an iPhone®, Blackberry® and other large smart phones as well as your MP3 or iPod®. There is a second pocket that can hold a note pad, spare keys or coins, and two additional wells for holding pens. A must-have for all commuters, the Cell Phone Cup Holder helps make room where space is at a minimum and is perfect for on-the-go. \$6.95. www.topoftheline.com/auto-phone-cup-holder.



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Porsche recommends **Mobil 1**

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PORSCHE



WILD AT HEART

On June 4, 2011 Hoffman Audi of East Hartford hosted the American Heart Association's Wild at Heart social event. The event was the first of its kind for the AHA, as the organization had never utilized an auto dealership as a venue before. More than 200 people attended the fundraiser, which featured 10 of Connecticut's top chefs, including Billy Grant and Tyler Anderson. Guests enjoyed heart-healthy fare, dancing and festive cocktails. All proceeds went to benefit the Teaching Garden, an initiative that teaches elementary students the value of nutrition and proper diet.

Pictured: Michael Guinan, event chairman; Tim Michael, Hoffman Audi general manager; I. Bradley Hoffman, Hoffman Auto Group co-chairman.



BURTON C. HOFFMAN MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Hoffman hosted the 13th Annual Burton C. Hoffman Memorial Golf Tournament to benefit Connecticut Children's Medical Center on June 5, 2011. Held at Tumble Brook Country Club in Bloomfield, more than 120 golfers took part in the tournament and more than \$100,000 was raised, with all proceeds going to CCMC. Jeffrey and I. Bradley Hoffman founded the tournament in the memory of their late father, Burton; CCMC was a favorite organization of his.

Pictured: Hoffman employees and family volunteers staffed the entire event. From left: Sam Pines, fixed operations director; Al Simon, director of marketing and communications; Steve Shields, East Hartford body shop manager; Chrissy Pakutka, assistant to fixed operations director; Jessica Pines; Gerd Pines; Kathy Halpner, human resources consultant; Lara Hoffman, administrative assistant; and Kristen Beth Ferris, event coordinator of The Ferris Group, LLC.



TOYOTA PRESIDENT'S AWARD

In May, Hoffman Toyota celebrated its recognition as a 2010 Toyota Motors USA President's Award dealer. To achieve this honor, Hoffman Toyota had to maintain outstanding customer satisfaction in sales, service and parts. To celebrate the achievement, the Hoffman's treated the entire staff to dinner at Grants Restaurant and Bar.

Pictured standing outside Grants: I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman; Matthew Hoffman, vice president; and Jeffrey Hoffman, co-chairman.



ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

In April, Hoffman Honda partnered with the Alzheimer's Association of Connecticut and donated \$100 for every new and used Civic and Accord sold during the month; in total, the company donated \$3,300 to the Association. Hoffman Honda also hosted an Alzheimer's Basic class, and the company will take part in the October 2, 2011 Bushnell Park Walk to End Alzheimer's.

Pictured: Matthew Hoffman, Hoffman Auto Group vice president and Nissan dealer principal, and Howard Bloom, Alzheimer's Association director of development.



NISSAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In March, Hoffman Nissan hosted its first-ever Northwest Connecticut's Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours. More than 150 representatives from local businesses

attended the networking event held in the Nissan showroom. Guests enjoyed food from Chatterley's Restaurant and music provided by a local DJ. Raffle prizes, including a Hoffman Car for a Weekend certificate, were awarded to three lucky guests.

Pictured: Jeffrey Plaskett, Hoffman Nissan parts manager; Matthew Hoffman, vice president and dealer principal; Steve Dunham, Hoffman Nissan general manager; Shawn Pinto, Hoffman Nissan service manager.



SAM TRIATHLON

In June, Hoffman Auto Group Director of Fixed Operations Sam Pines competed in a local triathlon, presented by Revolution 3 at Quassy Amusement Park in Middlebury. Pines finished in the top 33 percent, in a competitive field with more than 800 participants. Pines swam over a mile, biked 26 miles and ran six miles – all in three hours, 14 minutes and 17 seconds.

Pictured: From left: Chrissy Pakutka, assistant to the fixed operations director; Craig Tracey, Hoffman Lexus service manager; Sam Pines, fixed operations director; T.J. Zongol, Hoffman Ford and Saab service manager; Steve Shields, East Hartford Hoffman auto body manager.



PHYLLIS KEYES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

In July, Hoffman Co-Chairmen Jeffrey and I. Bradley Hoffman presented Phyllis Keyes, corporate secretary, with a new Lexus ES 350 in honor of her 40th anniversary with Hoffman. Keyes was hired in 1971 by the late Burton C. Hoffman, and has held a variety of positions in her time with the company. At the presentation, Keyes noted that while she loves working at Hoffman, she is most proud of the company's commitment to its community – and “always has a smile on her face when she comes into work.”

Pictured: Jeffrey Hoffman, co-chairman; Phyllis Keyes, corporate secretary; I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman; and the rest of the East Hartford Hoffman employees.



NEW VAN FOR GREATER HARTFORD YOUTH SERVICES

In early July, Hoffman Auto Group donated a new van to the YMCA of Greater Hartford Youth Services. According to Susan Joys, vice president of development, the van will be used by staff to transport children to youth programs. During late summer, it transported youth to programs such as day camp.

Pictured: Youth members of the YMCA of Greater Hartford.



9TH ANNUAL MAX CLASSIC GOLF AND TENNIS TOURNAMENT

In August, Hoffman Lexus was a presenting sponsor for the 9th Annual Max Classic Golf and Tennis Tournament. Hoffman Lexus and Slocum and Sons, Inc. were the presenting sponsors for the event. All proceeds benefited the Arthritis Foundation Connecticut Chapter.

Pictured from left: I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman, Hoffman Auto Group; Richard Rosenthal, president, MAX Restaurant Group; Heather Schold, Arthritis Foundation; Mark Conley, partner, MAX Restaurant Group; Steven Abrams, partner, MAX Restaurant Group; Jaime Seltzer, Arthritis Foundation.



90TH ANNIVERSARY/ GRAND REOPENING

Hoffman Auto Group celebrated its 90th anniversary and grand re-opening of their Ford, Saab and Porsche stores on June 23, 2011. In honor of the milestone anniversary, Hoffman invited the major arts organizations of Connecticut – The Bushnell, Hartford Stage, Goodspeed Opera House, Hartt School, Wadsworth Atheneum and Hartford Symphony – to celebrate the history of Hoffman in an event titled “Connecticut Classics.” More than 400 people attended the event. Guests dined on local fare from Grants and beer from Hartford Distributors, and enjoyed performances by the arts organizations.

Pictured: Ballerinas from the Hartt School of Dance; glamour shot of the new façade of Hoffman Ford/Saab.



CPR DUMMIES DONATION

In July, Hoffman and the Greater Hartford Automotive Dealers Association presented the St. Francis Hospital Health Education program with six new CPR dummies. The dummies, also known as Resusc Annie, include both adult and child sized mannequins. The last set of dummies the hospital had were more than 15 years old. Hoffman sponsored the donation; each mannequin costs more than \$1,000.

Pictured: From left: James Flemming, president GHADA; Jeffrey Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group; St. Francis Hospital representatives; and I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chairman of Hoffman Auto Group.

Louis' Lunch



THE BOOK ON BURGERS

Chapter and verse on Connecticut's best.

BY ELLIS PARKER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELLIS PARKER

When it comes to hamburgers, Connecticut has always assumed a role disproportionate to its diminutive size. From the claim of Louis' Lunch in New Haven to the invention of the hamburger sandwich (as certified by Library of Congress records) to the debated origins of the steamed cheeseburger (Meriden or Middletown?) to the delights of Shady Glen in Manchester (generously crowned with crisp fried cheese), the Nutmeg State has got it all.

For three weeks, I traveled across Connecticut, trying almost 100 different burger venues (for a few, I relied on memory), consuming hamburgers for lunch and dinner until they invaded my dreams. As I sampled my way across our fair state, I ranked the burgers I tried from greatest to least favorite. I found it necessary to create a separate category for gourmet restaurants that couldn't resist showing off what a fabulous burger they could make — if only they were in the burger business.

What were my criteria? A burger should be so good that you hesitate to put anything on it that masks its flavor. For my top three dozen or so burgers, I never reached for the ketchup. Burgers that scored well on this list generally were house-ground, ground to spec by a supplier, or in some cases a superior commercial blend. Joints that only served their burgers well done lost points.

My lists are lengthy because Connecticut has far more great places to grab a burger than

most people realize. A top 10 list would do burger lovers a tremendous disservice. The rankings are obviously subjective, reflecting my personal tastes and opinions. Discussion at burgertrail.com is welcomed.

Some burger joints are seasonal, some keep odd hours, some don't even post a sign. A few are cash only. Calling in advance is always recommended.

BEST BURGERS:

1. **Louis' Lunch**, 261 Crown Street, New Haven, 203-562-5507 — The essence of simplicity. A blend of five meats is ground fresh daily, not over-seasoned nor overcooked, vertical grilling allowing dripping juices to flavor the burger's exterior. The burgers, juicy and flavorful beyond belief, are served over toast for textural contrast. No condiments are permitted — cheese, tomato and raw onion being the only accompaniments allowed. Go to Burger King (last on my extended list) if you want it done "your way."



Napa Burger



Dish 'n Dat



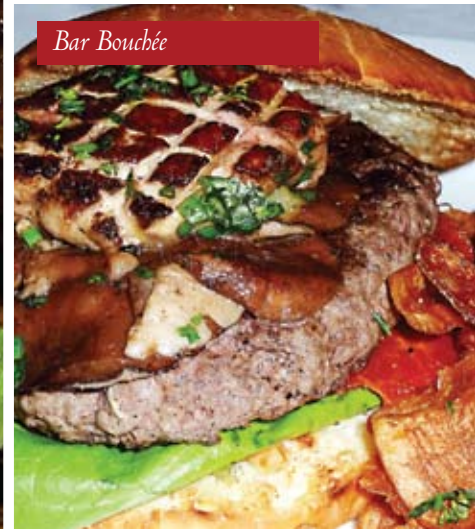
Zeeburger



Plan B



Corey's Catsup & Mustard



Bar Bouchée



BS&F



River Tavern



Caseus



Oaxaca Kitchen



Brasserie Pip

2. Burgers, Shakes & Fries (*Greenwich & Darien*) — When the Greenwich store first opened, I took one look at the menu and asked surprised owner Kory Wollins if he went to Cornell University. I recognized by the descriptions the Bo Burgers and Sage Burgers I subsisted on there in the late 1970s. You really can't do much better than one of Kory's spectacularly flavorful burgers paired with a beautifully layered black and white shake.

3. Plan B Burgers (*West Hartford, Glastonbury, Simsbury, Milford*) — The test of a great burger should be that it stands pretty much on its own, with nothing more than cheese and perhaps a slice of tomato and raw onion. But another test is whether the burger is so great and thick that it's still the star when more complicated ingredients are piled on. One of the best burgers I ever ate in my life is Plan B's West Coast burger with fried egg, avocado and kalamata olive mayo. Died and went to heaven!

4. Zeeburger, 670 Main Street South, Woodbury, 203-405-6011 — Long known as one of Connecticut's top chefs, Carole Peck decided to open a burger joint paying the same kind of attention to sourcing that she does at her Good News Café. Located in the same plaza as her standard bearer, Zeeburger may be hard to reach from most parts of Connecticut but it's well worth the trip.

5. Jack Rabbit's (*Old Saybrook & Storrs*) — Jack Flaws, another highly regarded chef, closed terrific Jack's Saybrook Steak when the economy soured and opened these charming and inexpensive joints that capture the childhood joy of stopping for a burger and a shake.

6. Goldburgers, 1096 Main Street, Newington, 860-665-0478 — Little known Goldburgers in Newington grinds its beef three times daily. Even when the burgers are embellished with extra fixings, you can taste the difference!

7. Corey's Catsup & Mustard, 623 Main Street, Manchester, 860-432-7755 — Adventurous Corey Wry has brought new life to downtown Manchester, offering great burgers and equally great and varied fries in a nice neighborhood tavern setting that draws families, couples, singles and groups with equal gusto.

8. Grand Burger, 15 Bank Street, Stamford, 203-323-3232 — Thanks to talented Nick Billelo, who opened Burger Bar & Bistro in South Norwalk, clubby g/r/a/n/d has become another key stop on the burger trail.

9. Burger Bar & Bistro, 60 North Main Street, South Norwalk, 203-853-2037 — Which brings us to

Burger Bar & Bistro, still one of Connecticut's best places to enjoy a burger. You can upgrade to Kobe beef for \$4.

10. Max Burger, 124 LaSalle Road, West Hartford, 860-232-3300 — The Max Restaurant Group doesn't do anything half fast, and its imaginative burgers are as delectable as you might expect.

11. Joey Garlic's/Joey's Pizza Pie (*Farmington & Newington/West Hartford*) — There has been a lot of chat room support for these burgers for good reason! They're house-ground fresh twice daily.

12. Dish 'n Dat, 110 Albany Turnpike Suite 700, Canton, 860-693-4927 — You can't go wrong with Dish 'n Dat's blend of house-ground chuck, beef brisket and beef short rib.

13. Prime 16 Tap House & Burgers, 172 Temple Street, New Haven, 203-782-1616 — Prime 16 serves only 100% all-natural certified Angus beef graded choice and prime, that is when it's not serving a salmon burger, bison burger, lamb burger... you get the picture!

14. Central Steakhouse, 99 Orange Street, New Haven, 203-787-7885 — These absolutely great Certified Angus Beef burgers are offered at lunch for prices that approach stealing.

15. Tavern, 262 Main Street, Monroe, 203-880-5007 — With eight ounces of certified Black Angus beef, these burgers are worth standing in line for (and if you're lucky you won't have to).

16. Fuddruckers at Foxwoods, 39 Norwich-Westerly Road, Ledyard, 860-312-3000 — Never mind the buffalo, elk and wild boar burgers, these 100% all-American premium-cut beef burgers are cooked to taste and followed by a great fixings bar.

17. Moe's Burger Joint (*Greenwich & Bridgeport*) — These joints close early, but more "roadside stands" combining high quality with great value are in the works.

18. Harry's Place, 104 Broadway, Colchester, 860-537-2410 — One of the originals, for decades people have been lining up for these juicy burgers and carrying them over to a picnic table.

19. Bobby's Burger Palace at Mohegan Sun, 1 Mohegan Sun Boulevard, Uncasville, 860-862-2277 — Westport hoopla notwithstanding, this is the best of our celebrity chef burger and shake joints.

20. Michael Jordan's 23 Sports Café at Mohegan Sun, 1 Mohegan Sun Boulevard, Uncasville, 860-862-2300 — Michael Jordan's name was not lent in vain to this great burger lineup.

21. Shake Shack, 1849 Post Road East, Westport, 203-682-6570 — Not worthy of all the fuss



Fuddruckers



Contois Tavern



Dressing Room



Ted's Famous Cheeseburgers

and a bit over-seasoned, but a good burger nonetheless.

22. Contois Tavern, 150 Nicoll Street, New Haven, 203-562-5671 — There's no sign, no menu, no dinner hours and you may have to be buzzed in, but burger aficionados know you can't find a better or juicier burger for the price.

23. Backstage, 84 Main Street, Torrington, 860-489-8900 — Cheer up, Torrington, because you can boast one of the state's better burgers.

24. O'Rourke's Diner, 728 Main Street, Middletown, 860-346-6101 — The best of Connecticut's steamed cheeseburgers served in a memorable diner setting.

25. Five Guys, (numerous locations) — I grudgingly admit these tasty burgers to my top 25 despite two cardinal sins — overcooking and having peanut products everywhere.

26. Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar, 44 South Main Street, West Hartford, 860-676-9463

27. K. LaMay's Steamed Cheeseburgers (Meriden & Middletown)

28. Bun N' Burger, 3696 Main Street, Stratford, 203-375-9896

29. Monster B's Bar & Grille, 487 Glenbrook Road,

Stamford, 203-355-1032

30. Merritt Canteen, 4355 Main Street, Bridgeport, 203-372-1416

31. Jake's Wayback Burgers (numerous locations)

32. The Counter, 50 Memorial Road, West Hartford, 860-236-8400

33. Ted's Restaurant, 1046 Broad Street, Meriden, 203-237-6660

34. Wood-n-Tap (Hartford, Farmington, Southington, Rocky Hill, Vernon, Orange)

35. C.J. Sparrow, 908 South Main Street, Cheshire, 203-272-8204

36. Shady Glen, 840 Middle Turnpike East, Manchester, 860-649-4245

37. Rose's Dairy, 908 South Main Street, Cheshire, 203-271-3262

37. Wendy's (numerous locations)

38. Vaughan's Public House, 59 Pratt Street, Hartford, 860-882-1560

39. SBC (Southport, Stamford, Hamden, Milford, Branford)

40. The Playwright Irish Pub, 1232 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, 203-287-2401

41. Archie Moore's (New Haven, Fairfield, Milford, Wallingford, Derby)



Come see the all new Hoffman Ford-Saab!



Hoffman Ford-Saab has been completely redesigned inside and out. Your new facility now features climate-controlled drive-thru service; a luxurious porcelain tiled showroom enhanced with refreshment bar and children's play area; and customer lounge complete with internet access and wi-fi. Come test drive the new line-up of great Ford products and new Saabs today!

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- 42. **Half Door**, 270 Sisson Avenue, Hartford, 860-232-7827
- 43. **Ruby Tuesday's** (numerous locations)
- 44. **Mooyah Burger & Fries**, 10 Statehouse Square, Hartford, 860-241-9600
- 45. **G's Burgers**, 1300 Main Street, Watertown, 860-274-5551
- 46. **Red Robin** (Enfield, Manchester, Milford, West Hartford)
- 47. **Johnny Rockets** (Uncasville, South Windsor, Milford, Trumbull)
- 48. **The Educated Burgher**, 53 Broadway Street, New Haven, 203-777-9198
- 49. **Delaney's Tap Room & Restaurant**, 882 Whalley Avenue, New Haven, 203-397-5494
- 50. **Maggie McFly's** (Southbury, Middlebury, Brookfield)
- 51. **Chili's Grill & Bar** (numerous locations)
- 52. **T.G.I. Friday's** (numerous locations)
- 53. **Side Street Grille**, 15 Dickerman Street, Whitney Avenue, Hamden, 203-407-1539
- 54. **Lake Zoar Drive-In**, 14 Connecticut 34, Stevenson, 203-268-8137
- 55. **Eli's** (On Whitney, Hamden & On The Hill, Branford)
- 56. **TD Homer's Grill**, 461 Queen Street, Southington, 860-329-0387
- 57. **Buffalo Wild Wing's Grill & Bar** (numerous locations)
- 58. **Harry's Sports Grill**, 201 Washington Avenue, North Haven, 203-654-4191
- 59. **Scoreboard Sports Bar & Grill**, 12 Selden Street, Woodbridge, 203-387-2673
- 60. **Doogie's**, 2525 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, 860-666-6200
- 61. **Sycamore Drive-In**, 282 Greenwood Avenue, Bethel, 860-748-2716
- 62. **Glenwood Drive-In**, 2538 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, 203-281-0604
- 63. **Nick's Char-Pit**, 22 Middletown Avenue, North Haven, 203-776-0853
- 64. **Smokey's Char-Grill/BBQ**, 3810 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, 203-909-6729
- 65. **Rawley's Drive-In**, 1886 Post Road, Fairfield, 203-259-9023
- 66. **Tomlinson's Restaurant**, 1400 Noble Avenue, Bridgeport, 203-368-3988
- 67. **American Pie Pizza & Restaurant**, 500 South Main Street, Naugatuck, 203-723-8661
- 68. **Frankie's** (Waterbury, Naugatuck, Bristol, West Haven, Madison)
- 69. **Applebee's** (numerous locations)

- 70. **Friendly's** (numerous locations)
- 71. **Black Bear Saloon** (Hartford, Milford, New Haven, South Norwalk, Stamford, Windsor Locks)
- 72. **Duchess Restaurant** (numerous locations)
- 73. **McDonald's** (numerous locations)
- 74. **Dairy Queen** (numerous locations)
- 75. **IHOP** (Orange, Hamden, Waterbury, Newington, Wallingford, Bloomfield, Stamford)
- 76. **Sonic** (Wallingford & Manchester)
- 77. **Burger King** (numerous locations)

UPSCALE BURGERS:

Don't rule out these establishments under some kind of purist thinking. Many of these would storm the top 10 of my Best Burgers list.

1. **Napa & Co.**, 75 Broad Street, Stamford, 203-353-3319 — Connecticut's costliest, the Napa Wagyu burger is finished with aged Gouda, red onion jam and black pepper mayo and served with rosemary fries (\$26).
2. **Brasserie Pip**, 46 Main Street, Ivoryton, 860-767-0330 — Roughly eight ounces of house-ground meat consisting of trimmings from New York strip and some scraps of mangalitsa pork served on a house-baked bun with Cheddar, tomato, greens, special sauce and duck fat frites (\$16).

Seems like everywhere you turn,
there's something exciting to crave.
Look, here's something right now—the Honda CR-V.

- Luxurious interior
- Refined design
- Powerfully efficient

The CR-V has been named a 2011 Top RecommendedSM vehicle by Edmunds.com in its 2011 New Car SUV Buying Guide, and also wins a Best Retained Value Award from Edmunds.com.



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860.651.3501 / hoffmanhonda.com

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3. Artisan, 275 Old Post Road, Southport, 203-307-4222 — The amazing “1946 blend” cheeseburger with smoked Cheddar served over a SoNo Baking Company English muffin (\$13).

4. Bar Bouchée, 8 Scotland Avenue, Madison, 203-318-8004 — Eight ounces of natural beef are topped with seared foie gras, mushrooms, tomato confit and balsamic glaze on a brioche bun with housemade potato chips (\$15).

5. Oaxaca Kitchen, 228 College Street, New Haven, 203-859-5774 — Not a beef patty exactly, but 80% buffalo and 20% chorizo with queso Oaxaca, guacamole, lettuce, tomato, onion and poblano peppers, and served with hand-cut fries specked with guajillo chili flakes (\$10).

6. Grants, 977 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, 860-236-1930 — A succulent all-natural sirloin burger with Maytag blue cheese, onion jam, horseradish cream and hand-cut fries from a master of flavor (\$11).

7. Caseus Fromagerie & Bistro, 93 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, 203-624-3373 — Eight ounces of Painted Hills all-natural grass-fed beef served on a brioche bun with Vermont Cheddar or Bleu D’Auvergne and frites (\$15).

8. Foe American Bistro, 1114 Main Street, Branford, 203-483-5896 — A grilled filet mignon burger with melted Cheddar, applewood smoked bacon, sautéed mushrooms, onions and herbed mayo (\$11.99).

9. Dressing Room, 25 Powers Court, Westport, 203-226-1114 — The delightful P.L. Newman “mini-burger” features four-and-a-half ounces local pasture-fed beef grilled over a wood fire and dressed up with noble Amish Cheddar, house-cured bacon and caramelized onions served on a brioche bun with French fries (\$12).

10. MiKro Craft Beer Bar, 3000 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, 203-553-7676 — Eight ounces of certified Angus ground chuck served with Vermont Cheddar, pickled green tomato, lettuce, red onion & special sauce over a brioche bun (\$11).

11. Mickey’s Restaurant, 2323 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, 203-288-4700 — Eight ounces of all-American Angus beef with lettuce, tomato, sliced raw onion (and numerous inexpensive additional toppings) on a hard roll (\$8).

12. River Tavern, 23 Main Street, Chester, 860-526-9417 — Description changes daily, but pleasure is guaranteed (\$14). **H**



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BEST OF
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2011

Hoffman



Honoring Our Veterans Past and Present

Hoffman Auto Group is proud of the men and women who not only serve our customers, but serve our country and defend our freedom.

BY ANNE WITKAVITCH PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSEPH RIVERA

On Veterans Day, we thank and honor those who have served in the military during wartime or peacetime. Different from Memorial Day, which honors those who have died while serving or as a result of injuries sustained while in service, Veterans Day recognizes the living heroes who in the past or present have fought for our freedom and protected our country.

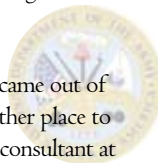
Armistice Day, as Veterans Day was originally called, was established at the close of World War I, which officially ended on November 11, 1918. In 1938, legislation was passed declaring November 11 a legal holiday to honor World War I veterans.

As more wars followed, more service men and women were called into action. In 1954, following the Korean War and World War II, and at the urging of veterans service organizations, Congress replaced the word "Armistice" with the word "Veterans." November 11 was deemed a day to honor American veterans of all wars. For a brief period in the early 1970s, the Uniforms Holiday Bill called for four national holidays – Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Columbus Day – to be celebrated on Mondays so Federal workers would have a three-day weekend. This did not go over well for Veterans Day so a law was signed into effect that reverted the holiday back to its original date. Since 1978, November 11 is the day that we honor our veterans.

The Hoffman Auto Group is proud of the many men and women who not only serve our customers every day, but who have served our country and defended our freedom in times of war and peace. They represent every branch of the military and every war since World War II. To commemorate Veterans Day, several of our veterans share their stories and thoughts.

Ken Frey, U.S. Army

"I joined the Army when I came out of college in '67 because I had no other place to go," says Ken Frey, who is a sales consultant at Hoffman Audi in New London. "It was the middle of Vietnam. No one was hiring and I had just graduated college with no job and no prospects." Ken went through Basic Intense Training and then to Fort Benning, Georgia. There he attended Officer Candidate School (OCS). After completing his training he became a second lieutenant and proceeded to complete Airborne School, earn his jump wings and become a member of the 82nd Airborne Unit.



By law an officer has to serve in command for six months before he or she can go into combat. Frey met his commitment and was given orders to Panama for two to four weeks of jungle school, where he was "climatized" for the Vietnamese environment. "They showed us how to operate. What was edible and not. We learned how to deal with the hot and humid weather." Frey then went to Vietnam and joined the 25th Infantry Division where he became a platoon leader in the 4th of the 9th Brigade Infantry, a historically distinguished unit. He was one of the elite in active duty allowed to wear the distinctive belt buckle. He spent a week at Cueche, learning about the flora and fauna of the region as well as the types of anti-personnel mines that would be used against him. From there he went to Tay Ninh to take command, a day he'll always remember.



Veterans Day is an opportunity to thank and honor those who have served, including these Hoffman Auto Group employees.

“We were coming in with ammo, food, one other replacement, and me,” recalls Frey. “As we were landing we came under attack.” The helicopter dropped to 15 feet above ground and then Frey, the replacement, food and ammo were pushed out the door. “We later learned that it wasn’t enemy fire we faced. Instead, someone had mistakenly set off one of the clay more mines that were placed around the perimeter of camp to protect the troops at night,” he laughs.

Frey stays in touch with about a half dozen Vietnam vets. “We generally pass information back and forth between us,” he says, “and reflect on the people we’ve lost.” He thinks there is an opportunity to help others, especially children, understand the wars by sharing stories and vignettes.

“On Veterans Day, think about the living vets who have survived the war. They protect you

whether they are here or someplace else. And they deserve our respect,” he says. “If you come across a vet, say thank you,” he suggests. Or, if it’s an older vet who served in the Vietnam War, the custom, says Frey, is to simply say “welcome home.”

Billy Genereux, U.S. Navy

Billy Genereux joined the Navy in June 1993 and attended the “A School” in Memphis, Tennessee, to become an air traffic controller. Genereux, general manager of Hoffman Ford and Saab, was stationed at San Diego’s North Island Naval Air Station for three years. During that time, he also served on the honor guard and participated in military funerals.

“That’s tough. You can’t show emotion but you stand with tears in your eyes, listening to people tell their stories,” he says.

During his three-year stint in Coronado, California Genereux worked in the TACRON squadron as a member of the Admiral’s staff and worked on the naval amphibious base. There he trained to be a forward tactical air traffic controller, which meant he controlled craft, water to land and land to water. “A very detailed job,” he says.

Genereux was chosen to train on the Theatre Battle Management Core System (TBMCS) with other armed services. TBMCS is a focal point for joint warfare air and control and integrates all systems into a single interface. “A theatre is where tactical movements are figured out,” he explains. “I worked with the other branches to test out the system.”

During his three years in TACRON, Genereux deployed on the U.S.S. Tarawa, an amphibious assault vessel that transported many



Hoffman Auto Group recognizes its veterans who have served our country and defended our freedom.

Marines to theatres, and deployed Harrier jets and helicopters. He went to Jordan and the Red Sea, where he worked hand-in-hand with Jordanian air traffic controllers at Akaban International Airport and spent three weeks in Iraq working with the Marines. "It was basically peace time, but we were gearing up for the eventual war in Iraq," he says. He also participated in the rescue of more than 200 Americans from the U.S. Embassy in Eritrea, Ethiopia, when civil war broke out there.

Genereux eventually transferred to the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River, Maryland, where he qualified to do approach control for this high traffic area around the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. airports. He received many commendations during his years of distinguished service, including two Navy and Marine Corps commendation medals and several letters of commendation.

Genereux loves the structure, accountability and responsibilities of being an air traffic controller. "You pay close attention to detail," he says. "Everything is based on rules and air space separation. People's lives are at stake." That precision came in handy the day he landed President Clinton's aircraft for a detailed precision approach landing at Naval Air Station North Island. His experiences help him to be good at his job at Hoffman Auto Group.

"Veterans Day means different things to different people, he says. "For me, it's really about

honoring men and women in uniform who give the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Freedom is not free." He spends the day remembering those who gave their lives.

The military is all about tradition, and Genereux is proud to be a part of the Hoffman's many charitable traditions, including its sponsorship of the Late Model Mustang Club of Connecticut. "The group raises money for different charities, including Wounded Warriors of Connecticut," he says. Wounded Warriors is an organization that honors and empowers those who incurred service-connected injuries on or after September 11, 2001.

Frank Pawlowicz, U.S. Marine Corps



Frank Pawlowicz served on active duty as a military policeman for the United States Marine Corps between 1994 and 1998. Pawlowicz, who works in Hoffman Auto Group's Business Development Center and Internet Department, was deployed to northern Italy for Operation Joint Endeavor in support of NATO peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia.

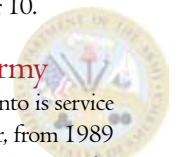
"The unit I was with got a meritorious unit commendation for bombing the Yugo factory," he says. "They were building tanks there during the war."

When it comes to Veterans Day, Pawlowicz feels people should remember that "the ability to live in the greatest country in the world and

most of the freedoms enjoyed here were provided to us by other people's sacrifices." He echoes the same sentiment as Billy Genereux: "Freedom is not free."

Pawlowicz doesn't do anything in particular to acknowledge November 11 "but every Marine is my brother and every so often we have reunions for my MP company," he says. He also joins other Marines to celebrate the Marine Corps birthday each year, which is November 10.

Shawn Pinto, U.S. Army



At Hoffman Auto, Shawn Pinto is service manager for Nissan. However, from 1989 to 1992 he served in the U.S. Army and was stationed at Camp Darby in Livorno, Italy, near the Tuscany region. A veteran of Desert Storm, Pinto specialized in transportation. He supported anything involving mobile units, whether they were transporting heavy artillery or airborne troops.

"Italy was the biggest port in southern Europe," explains Pinto, "so a big part of what I did was to put the big tanks on the ships to be sent over to the Middle East." Stress during wartime was intense, but being stationed in southern Italy had its advantages. "We played a lot of beach volleyball," he says.

In addition to serving his country, Pinto took away a lot from his experience in the Army. He traveled throughout Europe to participate in NATO field exercises. Training in different countries — like Denmark, Germany and England

Right: (from left to right)
Paul Markie,
Frank Pawlowicz,
Ethan Gombossy
and Ken Frey

Inset: Mark Zavatkay



– gave him and others the opportunity to learn about each other’s weapons and strategies during war time. “I got to meet new people from all over the world,” he says. “We were all on the same team but from different cultures.”

Pinto thinks that today, especially because we are currently at war, people understand better what the men and women in the service go through. “There is a sense of understanding, a sense of respect,” he says.

To commemorate Veterans Day, Pinto tries to take the day off and watches the military channel. “It’s a meaningful day to watch the programming,” he says.

When asked how we can all pay respect to our troops, Pinto suggests this simple approach. “If you see a man or woman in uniform, go up to them, shake their hand and say thank you.”

Craig Tracey, U.S. Air Force

Craig Tracey, Lexus service manager at Hoffman Auto Group, served in the U.S. Air Force as an electronic warfare simulator specialist between 1981 and 1987. His job was to run a simulator that took up about six-to-eight feet of wall space. “Today it would fit into the palm of your hand,” he says. “I maintained the machines and had top security clearance.”

Tracey attended technical school at Chanut Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois. After being stationed at Castle Air Force Base in Atwater, California, he transferred into the National Guard 103rd where he worked on the mobile radar

site “in a big bubble.” Through simulation, his unit would move into enemy territory, monitor air traffic and identify threats. “Because you also become a target when a radar is activated, the career field was extremely dangerous,” he says.

On Veterans Days, Tracey likes to reflect and think about the troops. While he used to get more involved with activities like parades when he was in active duty and active National Guard, today he is more likely to get together with the



Jill Corey:
United States Navy
1984 - 1990



Frank Pawlowicz:
United States
Marine Corps
1994 -1998

Tracey encourages others to think about the people who willingly went out and sacrificed their lives for the United States. “Whether it’s war time or not, we sign on a dotted line and make a commitment. People need to appreciate that someone took their life and put it on the line to defend our democracy.” He thinks the Internet has helped people understand what it means to serve. “You find information, good or bad, that makes you think.”

guys he was in the Guard with to reminisce and talk about their experiences.

“There have been a lot of changes,” he says. “The National Guard has downsized. Processes have been updated. Radar sites are totally different than they used to be.”

But, he adds, “When it comes down to it, it’s always about helping people.” **H**

Made in Connecticut



Meet three companies that manufacture some of the state's most famous and fun products.

BY ANNE WITKAVITCH



Connecticut has a long history of manufacturing innovative products. From the cotton gin to medical equipment, buttons to wire,

helicopters to submarines, the Nutmeg state has produced goods known across the country and around the world.

Three companies that call Connecticut home – PEZ Candy, Inc., WIFFLE Ball, Inc., and Thomas Hooker Brewery – represent both traditional brands and newly established favorites. One thing is for sure – all three share a passion for quality, innovation and success.

PEZ CANDY, INC.

PEZ is recognized around the world as fun to eat and fun to play with. The iconic character dispensers are an important part of pop culture and among the hottest collectibles for children and adults.

In 1927, the Austrian-based company manufactured its first product – a condensed peppermint candy. Thus, the name PEZ

was created. It is derived from the German word for peppermint, Pfefferminz. Today, more than three billion PEZ candies in 14 flavors are consumed annually in the United States alone.

PEZ has been a part of the Connecticut manufacturing scene for nearly 40 years. “Back in the early ‘70s, the town of Orange was actively pursuing European companies to set up facilities,” explains Keith Whitaker, vice president of marketing and sales administration. “For PEZ, the move made sense and the company established its U.S. headquarters and manufacturing facility here.”

Part of the PEZ appeal is its history and heritage, as well as the quality and craftsmanship of each dispenser. The most popular dispenser is Santa Claus. “He’s a universal character,” says Shawn Peterson, project manager and an avid collector for more than 20 years. The Santa dispenser, which has been updated numerous times, will introduce its newest look in 2012. PEZ is also the second longest running licensee of the Walt Disney Company; the Mickey Mouse dispenser was introduced in 1961 and today there are more than 100 Disney character dispensers on the market. Next up are the characters from Phineas and Ferb, the popular animated series that airs on the Disney Channel.

Whitaker describes each dispenser as a little piece of artwork. “What is so impressive is the level of detail and likeness in something so small and inexpensive,” he says. “A lot of dispensers are still handpainted, depending on the characters.” Despite the advent of advanced technology, the process for creating the dispensers has remained pretty much the same. Artwork, called “turns,”

that represent a character’s front, back and side views are submitted for sculpting and design. From there, molds and tooling are created.

Everyone has a favorite PEZ dispenser and company employees are no exception. Peterson collects “any dispenser with a cool story to it.” What makes it interesting, he says, is how and from where the dispensers come to you. His favorite is the full-bodied Santa Claus, a unique dispenser introduced in 1956. “I’ve got 28 of them!” he says proudly.

Whitaker is partial to the Wizard of Oz collection. “These were phenomenal,” he says. “When you look at each one, they are amazing.”

Although the company is always looking at different products to launch with the dispensers, Whitaker and Peterson believe the key to success is that the company “stays true to the brand.” PEZ also plans to stay in Orange. “Our people are here. Our facility is here. Our commitment is here,” says Whitaker. “People know what PEZ is. They grow up with it. This is home.”

In fact, the company is opening a new Visitors Center in November that will “encompass all things PEZ,” says Peterson. The more than 4,000 square feet of space will include the





PEZ and WIFFLE Ball are two Connecticut manufacturing companies that take pride in their quality and craftsmanship.

largest, most comprehensive collection of PEZ memorabilia on public display in the world; an interactive historical timeline, a PEZ motorcycle custom built by Orange County Choppers, and a demonstration room and viewing window so the public can see how PEZ is made.

WIFFLE BALL

Most people recognize a WIFFLE ball and bat. But what they don't know is that the plastic ball with the eight oblong perforations on one side was invented by an out-of-work, left-handed pitcher (a guy who had played for UCONN and turned semi-pro) so that his son could throw curve balls without injuring his arm. The guy's name was David Nelson Mullany.

The story about WIFFLE ball is as much fun as the game itself, and no one tells it better than David J. Mullany, grandson of the inventor and president of WIFFLE Ball, Inc., who runs the company along with his father and brother. "My grandfather graduated from college in 1929, at the beginning of the Great Depression," says David J. "Out of work and not knowing what to do he took a room at the Bridgeport YMCA while looking for a job. He also played baseball for the local leagues. But when the money ran out, he headed to the bus stop."

"A man walked up to him and asked, 'Where are you going?' He replied, 'Home.' The man said, 'No, you're not. You're going to play baseball and work at McKesson Pharmaceuticals.' At the time, many companies had competitive industrial leagues but in order to play you had to work there. The man offered him a job and a position on the team."

Over the years, the future WIFFLE ball creator worked his way up from the loading dock to the purchasing department and played ball for McKesson, earning more money with baseball than he did in his paycheck.

"I lucked out," he would say. "I had a skill people wanted and was fortunate enough to get a manufacturing job out of it."

An entrepreneur at heart, David N. always wanted to do something on his own. In the early '50s he left McKesson and developed the formula for one of the first liquid car polishes. The company was going well until the product was offered to customers on a guaranteed sales basis. When the returns came in, the money ran out. In 1953, he was forced to close the company.

"My grandmother didn't have a clue what had happened," recalls David J. "My grandfather had cashed in a \$2500 life insurance policy and was giving her \$50 a week. Each day he would

Family Fun at the New PEZ Visitor Center

PEZ is available around the world in more than 90 countries, but starting in November 2011 visitors can experience PEZ in person at the Orange, Conn., factory. The new Visitor Center has over 4,000 square feet dedicated to all things PEZ:

- See the world's largest, most comprehensive collection of PEZ memorabilia on public display
- Check out the historical interactive timeline
- Get an up-close view of the world's largest PEZ dispenser
- Taste any one of the 14 candy flavors
- Play PEZ trivia
- Learn how a PEZ dispenser is made
- Visit the PEZ factory store and much more. . .

For ticket information and hours of operation contact Shawn Peterson at 203-795-0531 ext. 222.

leave the house as if he was going to work and then return in the evening when, in fact, he was hanging out with his buddies.”

As he left his Fairfield home, David N. noticed that the neighborhood boys, including his son, (David J’s father) were hitting a tennis ball with a bat, but they were also causing damage to the house and yard. He found little plastic golf balls for them to play with instead.

The first factory opened in Woodbridge in 1953. The company moved to Shelton six years later. Today it still operates in the same building as a small, family-owned business.

Everyone involved shares the belief that you “don’t change something for the sake of change.”

“WIFFLE is a simple product,” says David J. “There is no need to make it complicated.” Quality and service will never be compromised.

charities. For example, The Travis Roy Foundation, which provides grants for spinal cord injuries, receives significant donations from WIFFLE tournaments.

While David J. is the consummate storyteller, he never tires of hearing other people talk about their WIFFLE experiences. “Everyone has a good story,” he says. “They get a look on their face and then tell their tale. It’s a lot of fun to hear.”

While WIFFLE ball could be called a cultural phenomenon, this Connecticut-born sport stays true to its humble beginning. David J sums it up. “WIFFLE is a game that gives you good memories and lots of fun. What can be better than that?”

THOMAS HOOKER BREWERY

Five years ago when he was researching business opportunities, Curt Cameron made an important discovery.

“Connecticut was ripe for a craft beer it could call its own,” says the president of Thomas Hooker Brewery. Who better to get one going than a former software guy?

After graduating with degrees in computer science and business, Cameron had a successful career in the software industry, working for several Silicon Valley startups. His first entrepreneurial venture was a landscaping company, but after three years he sold his shares and returned to the world of computers.

When his children were born, Cameron decided it was time to make a change. He built a wine store in Litchfield County (town of Torrington), expanded into Orange, and eventually sold the business. As he conducted market research for his next opportunity, he learned that craft beer was starting to take off in states like Vermont, Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire, with brands like Long Trail, Magic Hat and Harpoon. But he also found out that while Connecticut had the demographic, there was no strong brand in the market. When he asked why, he heard things like, “Connecticut doesn’t support local” and “Connecticut is not a beer state.” He was not ready to accept these anecdotal reasons for not having a brewery here.

A common theme among the successful beers was that they all had built a “feeling” around their brand by creating a great experience with the product. Cameron looked at the Thomas Hooker Brewery, saw the opportunity, and decided to go for it.



Curt Cameron, president of Thomas Hooker Brewery, looks forward to completing a major expansion that will double brewing capacity.

Each night, when he returned home, the boys were still playing ball. “If they’re not wrecking stuff this is good,” he thought. But there was a downside. The boys’ arms were getting sore trying to throw curve balls. He set out to make a ball that curved on its own. After getting plastic balls from a local fragrance company, he began to experiment by cutting holes and adding weights. He mixed and matched until he found what worked. The WIFFLE ball was born and named after a strike-out, or “wiff.”

“We make sure our product does what we say it will do and is manufactured with the highest quality possible. People recognize that,” he says.

The popularity of WIFFLE ball continues for young and old alike, whether it is played in a backyard, at a picnic, or competitively. “It’s a good, simple game that can be played by kids who are just learning, older kids, or dads in the backyard,” he says. In fact, competitive WIFFLE ball leagues can be found throughout the country. Many tournaments raise money for



Open house events let customers experience the brand firsthand and raise money for local charities.

His first challenge was to find a space that met his requirements and ended up moving the brewery from Hartford to Bloomfield. “The folks were so helpful and easy to work with,” he says. “They continue to be supportive.”

The second challenge was distribution. Although craft beer is fun, it’s still a business. “Just because you brew a great beer doesn’t mean the world will beat a path to your door to get it,” says Cameron. “That’s just too idealistic.” The big break came when he convinced HDI, a major distributor of brands like Budweiser and Heineken, to represent Thomas Hooker.

Finally, it was time to get down to the business of brewing beer. Cameron knew nothing about running a brewery. He counted on his entrepreneurial nature to be a driver and also surrounded himself with a knowledgeable group of investors who he could draw on for advice. He then set out to create the brand experience his research told him would make the difference.

“Beer is subjective,” he says. “The trick is to offer variety. We make 11 different beers, something for everyone.” A well-made prod-

uct and consistent quality is also critical. “I’ve dumped a lot of beer down the drain because I wasn’t happy with it,” he says.

He also opened up the brewery for open houses, inviting the public to experience the brand firsthand. But he took it a step further. Proceeds from open house events on the first and third Fridays of the month benefit the company’s main charity, The Village for Families & Children, a private nonprofit human services agency based in Hartford. Cameron is on the board of directors. The brewery is also available to other charities, organizations and corporations for fundraising events, or just meetings and gatherings. As well, the brewery employs residents from the Oak Hill organization, which runs a home for mentally challenged adults.

Buzz around the brand experience is also generated by what Cameron calls good old fashioned cleverness. “I can’t always gravitate toward cool and hip,” he says, “so I surround myself with people who think cool.” A popular marketing tool is the topical e-mail sent to promote the open houses. “While we utilize the

‘plumbing’ of social media, in the end it’s the cleverness and the content that count.”

Named after the founder of Connecticut, the company takes great pride in the name and the history. “I love getting e-mails from folks who come from the family lineage,” says Cameron. “One of my favorite letters contained a picture of three generations of Thomas Hookers, all wearing our T-shirts and holding up one of our 12-packs. It was really cool.” The company also worked with the Connecticut Historical Society to create a display for its new Visitor Center, which not only tells the story about Thomas Hooker, but also the history of beer brewing in Connecticut.

In addition to the Visitor Center, the brewery is completing a major expansion that will create the capacity to double brewing output. Otherwise, Cameron is content to wake up in the morning and try to simply make the right decisions for that day. “My plan is to keep making good beer, make the company more efficient, provide a fair return for our investors, and enjoy the passing of time.”

Who wouldn’t want to raise a glass to that?





Connecticut Wine & Food Festival

A boon/boost to Hartford and to Arthritis treatment.

BY ELLIS PARKER

The city of Hartford, which many feel has really come into its own as a fine dining destination during the past decade, will be the site of the first Connecticut Wine & Food Festival held on November 18th and 19th of this year.

Co-produced by the Arthritis Foundation and 360 Marketing & Events, the two-day event will be hosted by the Hartford Club, a bastion of civility and culture in our capital city since 1873. Proceeds from the festival will benefit the Arthritis Foundation.

The event is presented by the Hoffman Auto Group. "Our company is extremely

excited to be involved with the festival and the wonderful charity it benefits," says I. Bradley Hoffman, co-chair of the event with Lawrence J. Kucharski of Enterprise Rent-A-Car. "Hartford has never seen anything like this event and we know it will be a huge success."

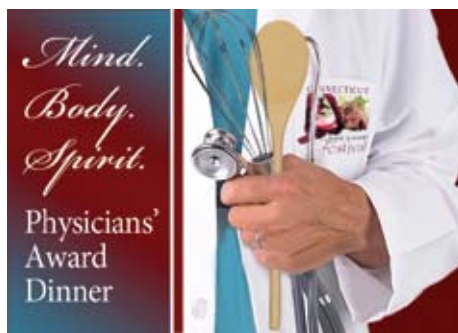
On Friday evening, November 18th, The Mind, Body & Spirit Physicians Award Dinner will be held. Recognized for their contributions to arthritis research and treatment will be rheumatologist Dr. Jonathan Dixon and orthopedist Dr. Bruce Browner from Hartford Hospital, rheumatologist Dr. Ann Parke and orthopedist Dr. Robert Green from Saint Francis Hospital

CONNECTICUT



& Medical Center, and pediatric rheumatologist Dr. Lawrence Zemel from Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Far from being just another stop on the rubber chicken circuit, honorees and attendees will be fêted with seven courses from some of



Greater Hartford's top chefs. This stellar lineup includes Noel Jones of ON20; Billy Grant of Restaurant Bricco, Grants and Bricco Trattoria; Tyler Anderson of Brasserie Pip at the Copper Beech Inn; Hell's Kitchen runner-up Kevin Cottle of Jordan Caterers; Hunter Morton of MAX Downtown; Ryan & Kellyanne Jones of The Mill at 2t and The Market at Hartford 21; and Christopher Kube of the Hartford Club. The seven courses will be paired with distinguished wines selected by Frederick Wildman & Sons Importers.

Saturday, November 19th, will be an all-day affair. It will include an Industry Trade & Press Hour in the late morning and two Grand Tasting sessions (\$75), one throughout the afternoon and one throughout the evening. Live chef demonstrations as well as wine, spirit and craft beer tutorials are planned. Sandwiched between the two Grand Tastings is a V.I.P. Grand Cru Tasting (\$125) from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. that serious oenophiles will not want to miss.

On Saturday during the Grand Tasting and VIP Sessions attendees will have the opportunity to sample a wide variety of old and new world wines, creating an incredible tasting experience. In addition there will be select spirits and craft beers for those enthusiasts as well. Take the opportunity to expand your wine knowledge and sit in on one of the select wine seminars hosted by Jonathon Alsop, Director and Founder of the Boston Wine School.

The brief history of this exciting new event is a heartwarming story, with a common thread of people from different corners of the Greater Hartford community pulling together in a spirit of cooperation to elevate Hartford and to raise funds for the worthy cause that is the Arthritis Foundation.

Explains Heather Schold, regional development director of the Arthritis Foundation,

"For six years, our annual fundraising event in this area was the Gridiron Gala featuring former UConn football coach Randy Edsall."

"In 2010, we developed another unique event celebrating Hartford," says Jamie Seltzer, vice president of philanthropy for the New England region. "The Whalers Hat Trick Reunion Dinner with 24 former players returning was wonderful and a tremendous success for the Arthritis Foundation. But we realized that it was a one-and-done event and that we needed to create an event we could depend upon every year."

Enter Michael Guinan of 360 Marketing & Events, fresh off hugely successful promotions like Fork & The Cork held at Mohegan Sun Pocono Downs in northeastern Pennsylvania, the Newport WineFest in Rhode Island, and Wild at Heart in East Hartford. Founder of the enormously popular Sun WineFest held annually at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Guinan is establishing himself as a top promoter of regional events in the Northeast.

"We're proud to be involved with this event," says Guinan. "I have always been a strong supporter of the city of Hartford. It has been my dream to see Hartford recognized as a premier wine and food destination. I'm pleased to be part of the team bringing such a marquee event not only to the city but to such an iconic landmark as the Hartford Club."

This event features a number of firsts—not surprising when so many committed and talented people put their hearts and heads together. "We made a strategic decision to involve all three Hartford hospitals this first year, rather than just acknowledge one of them,"



says Seltzer. "We're so pleased to have all three participating under the Arthritis Foundation banner. It's a unique opportunity to recognize outstanding rheumatologists and orthopedic surgeons who have dedicated their careers to helping patients with arthritis."

Honorees and attendees will be fêted with a seven course dinner from some of Greater Hartford's top chefs.



Billy Grant
of Restaurant Bricco, Grants
and Bricco Trattoria



Tyler Anderson
of Brasserie Pip
at the Copper Beech Inn



Kevin Cottle
of Jordan Caterers



Noel Jones of ON20



Hunter Morton
of MAX Downtown



Ryan & Kellyanne Jones
of The Mill at 21 and
The Market at Hartford 21



Christopher Kube
of the Hartford Club

Adds Stephen Evangelista, CEO of the Arthritis Foundation's New England region, "It's unique to have these three hospitals working together and honoring their physicians who help those whom we serve. We are honored that they are being so strongly supportive of our message and our mission. I think the entire weekend will be great fun and extremely successful, especially with leadership like Bradley Hoffman and Larry Kucharski."

It's also the first time that the Hartford Club has been taken over so completely for a major public event. CEO James Fisher doesn't contain his excitement. "It's a great concept. We know this will become an annual event. We're thrilled to be involved in the Arthritis Foundation's newest big fundraiser as well as having the opportunity to showcase our club and our chef. As a private club, we don't often get the chance to pull back the curtain."

Asked how he feels about taking on the role of host chef, Kube grins, "I got rooked

into it. But really, we're looking forward to being part of the community and being showcased in that light."

Mark Raymond of Frederick Wildman & Sons Importers would second that motion. "This type of event is always good for exposure. And with something like arthritis that affects so many people, it's important to help."

In fact, the numbers are staggering. Says Schold, "Much of our funding goes toward programs and services for the 669,000 Connecticut residents who have doctor-diagnosed arthritis, including 3,400 children. We believe there are many more individuals suffering from arthritis who have not yet been diagnosed."

"There are more than 100 forms of arthritis," Schold continues, "including Lyme disease and gout. It's the leading cause of disability in the United States. Over 300,000 American children have arthritis, three times as many as have juvenile diabetes, making it

the second most chronic disease after asthma. Golfer Phil Mickelson and tennis player Billy Jean King have become spokespersons for the Arthritis Foundation and have been helping get the message out that exercise is a great way to help contain and manage the pain of arthritis. They also encourage the public to see a physician and get diagnosed early, which definitely helps in treatment."

"Within the next 20 years," says Seltzer, "one in four Americans will suffer from some form of arthritis. We're really grateful that the hospitals have recognized the importance of supporting the Arthritis Foundation and recognizing their leaders in the fields of rheumatology and orthopedics. The proceeds from this weekend will help fund research and provide options for the patients and families faced with the challenge of arthritis on a daily basis." **H**

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The unique and innovative approach to buying cars demonstrated in H Lot Live creates a virtual experience both in and out of the showroom.

Welcome to H Lot Live – The Newest Addition to the Hoffman Family

Bringing the showroom to life - virtually.

BY LAUREN PICCINI

Hoffman buyers recognize the unique shopping and buying experience they receive from their dealerships, adding to the success rate of their auto group and their own satisfaction. A new addition to the Hoffman family, H Lot Live, recently opened in early October and caters to a different niche audience—one full of youth, technology and knowledge. H Lot Live is the first dealership to offer pre-owned and pre-loved automobiles and trucks within a strict price range of \$7,000-\$15,000 that appeal to every buyer, and to use virtual marketing to reach this audience.

Although all Hoffman dealerships offer used cars, those vehicles rarely fall below the \$15,000 price point. H Lot Live gives customers the same Hoffman experience but attracts those with a different need. “Because everyone is searching for a good, quality used vehicle, H Lot Live became a common sense approach

to the used car market,” says General Manager Kevin Warriner of Hoffman Lexus. “There is a high demand and cars within this price point sell first,” he says. Fran Marinaro, H Lot Live general manager, agrees; “H Lot Live offers an affordable and quality product to both the first time Hoffman buyer and our loyal

Hoffman customers. In short, we offer real cars for real people from one of the most trusted auto dealers in Connecticut.”

This new Hoffman dealership is innovative and different—there is nothing else like it around. Warriner adds, “People are always looking for a good, inexpensive car for many

purposes. They may want to keep a car down by their shore house, need a four-wheel drive vehicle on the Vineyard, want to buy a car for their granddaughter or look for a pickup truck to do dump runs. There are so many different reasons why someone may want an additional car but at a lower cost. I think this is going to attract all kinds of buyers.” Hoffman’s large built-in feeder system from the existing dealerships allows H Lot Live to maintain a diverse and abundant inventory to fulfill each customer’s needs.

Upon entering the H Lot Live showroom, the customer immediately recognizes that this dealership is different. Vibrant blues and greens cover the walls and the café-style customer lounge creates a relaxed atmosphere. Sales persons carry iPads that contain updated inventory information, and in stock autos can also be seen live on a big screen monitor. Anne Bjorkland, director of facilities and property management, explains, “With interactive screens we will tailor the furniture to go with the new buying habits of this clientele.”

The strong emphasis on social media, like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, helps Hoffman connect with younger buyers as well as other prospects by creating a virtual showroom outside of the dealership and educating them about the cars before they step foot onto the lot. Al Simon, director of marketing and communications, says, “We are focusing on new media to communicate with potential customers. Heavy use of real-time video, Twitter tweets on the newest arrivals into inventory, and viral communication through Facebook are all parts of the strategy to reach a younger audience.”

Embracing a new style of buying cars, H Lot Live helps to develop a more informed customer; but that doesn’t mean that a customer cannot walk off the street and buy a car. Bjorkland adds, “For H Lot Live the customer relationships are developed electronically before they even come to the dealership. It is a virtual way for someone to buy a car.”

The unique and innovative approach to buying cars demonstrated in H Lot Live creates a virtual experience both in and out of the showroom. It’s a one of a kind niche and the perfect addition to the Hoffman Auto Group family. **H**

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SETTLING IN FOR A LONG WINTER'S NAP

A yoga practice and a good night's sleep are two ways to ensure mind and body wellness when temperatures get colder and holiday stress begins.

BY ANNE WITKAVITCH



Autumn in New England conjures up images of colorful foliage, apple picking and carved pumpkins. But it also signals the time of year when the days get shorter, the hectic holiday season is nearer, and end of year deadlines loom closer. When summer vacation becomes a distant memory, many people get caught up in the frenzy of day-to-day to-dos and neglect to make well-being a priority.

The way to maintain a healthy body and mind this winter is to adopt a wellness program built around flexibility and strength, meditation and relaxation, and getting enough sleep. Yoga is one way to keep yourself in tune as the winter weather settles in.

“Yoga has many benefits for mind, body and spirit. It is not just a form of exercise, but rather a scientific system of total wellness that benefits every aspect of a person's being,” says Kristin Banick, who owns BigFaceLove Yoga of New Haven along with her husband, Bill. They are both certified yoga instructors and trainers. “Yoga strengthens and stretches muscles, improves balance, opens and stabilizes joints, improves breathing, and decreases the effects of stress by helping to normalize gland function, blood pressure and heart rate.”

Starting a yoga practice is fairly simple. There are many types of yoga to choose from. Among the most popular types of yoga in America today are Hatha, Anasara, Ashtanga, Bikram, Forrest, Hot Yoga, Iyengar, Kripalu, Kundalini, Power Yoga and Restorative. Each delivers its own unique benefits. A person's experience may vary, depending on the type of yoga class, the instructor, the location, and the community with whom they study.

For example, Restorative Yoga is appropriate for those most interested in a gentle, passive type of yoga with an emphasis on relaxation rather than a physical workout. “Restorative Yoga can be beneficial to those of us recovering from illness or injury, or those dealing with chronic stress, which is most people,” explains Banick. Types such as Ashtanga, Bikram, Forrest

and Power Yoga offer a more physical challenge. “Ideally, any type of yoga taught by a reputable instructor should provide relaxation and stress reduction benefits,” she says.

Another beneficial practice that is essential in a chronically stressed out and overworked society is Yoga Nidra, the systematic method of inducing complete mental, physical and emotional relaxation. This practice rejuvenates on all levels, and is particularly beneficial for supporting the immune system during times of extreme stress, preventing illness and rejuvenating the physical body. “It is said that a 45-minute-long practice of Yoga Nidra is worth the equivalent of four hours of restful sleep,” says Banick.

Yoga is particularly important for us here in New England as we approach the sometimes



A good night's sleep is a must for maintaining one's health and wellness.

long and dreary winter, with the many physical and emotional challenges and stresses of the holidays. An appropriate yoga practice can keep you feeling healthy, help prevent piling on some of those additional winter pounds, and keep the seasonal blues and holiday anxiety at bay. "Yoga can help maintain a balanced perspective so that we can navigate the extremes of the season with ease, allowing us to enjoy this special time of the year, rather than stressing over the little things that can accumulate and make us feel crazy," she says.

Yoga is a unique form of exercise in that it can be done anywhere, indoors or out, with only a small amount of space and no special equipment. In fall and winter, you do not need to rely on the weather conditions to determine whether or not you can practice that day. Even getting to the gym can be a challenge once the bad weather hits, but a yoga practice can be done in the comfort of your home.

Starting a yoga practice with a small investment of time can reap big benefits. "The healing practices of yoga can allow us to transform even five spare minutes into a

restful retreat from the stress of the season," says Banick.

Another important consideration for a health and wellness program is to tap into the benefits of sleep. According to Keith Dixon, M.D., medical director for Gaylord Sleep Medicine with locations in North Haven, Glastonbury, Guilford, Bridgeport and Trumbull, the science of human health has historically been limited to the study of the body during wakefulness when, in fact, we spend roughly a third of our existence asleep.

"We have largely ignored sleep as it pertains to general health," he says, "but in the past few decades we have learned that quality sleep is actually vital to normal functioning of the heart, blood vessels, brain and endocrine systems, to name just a few."

Sleep requirements change from birth throughout childhood, but once adulthood is reached the requirement is about seven to nine hours. However, that is not always easy to achieve.

"The modern world is currently conducting a grand experiment in sleep deprivation as

we have numerous inventions that are impacting quantity of sleep, starting with the light bulb and the latest, of course, being TV, smartphones, iPods/Pads, laptops, to name a few," he says. "The time we spend using these devices when we should actually be sleeping is staggering. We are now bathed in light nearly around the clock with our attention focused on just about everything except getting adequate sleep."

Some of the direct dangers of inadequate sleep include hypertension, increased risk of motor vehicle accidents, poor school performance and weight gain mediated through hormonal interactions.

Another cause of sleepless nights is anxiety, which can trigger insomnia. Especially around the holidays, increased stress can negatively affect sleep. "Battling anxiety involves removing oneself from known stressful situations whenever possible, and seeking help from a professional if stress becomes hard to manage," says Dixon. He cautions not to take anxiety lightly. "Constant stress and anxiety can lead to serious health consequences. Sometimes

LOOKING FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP?

DR. DIXON OFFERS THE FOLLOWING TIPS FOR GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP ANY TIME OF YEAR:

- Start a relaxing routine before bed. "I call this the buffer zone strategy," he says. The idea is to create a routine that marks the end of your day. Begin by dropping the burdens and stresses carried around each day and creating some time and space prior to sleep that is quiet and relaxing. This might include dimming the lights, pouring a hot bath, meditating or some form of relaxation therapy for about an hour or so. Avoid stimulating activities during this time.
- Your sleeping environment is important. Sleep in a cool, dark room without noise, advises Dixon (unless you find sound machines or "white noise" conducive to sleep). Be aware of how your bed partner affects your sleep. If he or she tosses and turns, kicks their legs, snores or is in and out of bed frequently, this can significantly disturb your sleep.
- Limit activity in bed to sex and sleep only. Reading, using the computer, listening to music, watching TV, paying bills—all send confusing signals to the brain. Instead, getting into bed should send a clear signal that it is time for sleep.
- Maintain a fairly regimented sleep schedule. A steady sleep time and wake up time can help create a steady circadian rhythm (based on your internal biological timekeeper) that can ward off both insomnia and daytime sleepiness.
- Surf the net for tips during daytime hours. There are more great sleep health tips available online from sites like WebMD and the National Sleep Foundation, or visit the Sleep and You Website www.sleepandyou.com. The goal of Sleep and You is to help improve and enhance your health and quality of life by raising awareness about the importance of sleep. The website provides information on how sleep and sleep disorders can affect you, as well as how to get treatment and care for your sleep issues.
- Finally, seek help from a professional if the usual healthy sleep tips don't seem to work for you. Underlying sleep disorders are a common cause of poor sleep quality, sleep that is not refreshing, insomnia and daytime sleepiness.



Yoga provides a scientific system of total wellness that benefits every aspect of a person's being.

poor sleep quality or inadequate amounts of sleep can lead to anxiety and irritability. Consultation with a professional when these symptoms become overwhelming is key."

Dixon says increased sleep is not necessarily needed as seasons change and colder weather moves in. But the season can affect quality and quantity of sleep for some. Fall and spring can bring allergies and increased nocturnal symptoms, including difficulty breathing during sleep. Winter and fall can bring seasonal affective disorder, which can cause either hypersomnia or insomnia mediated through mood disorder. Sleep patterns can also change based on the timing of sunrise and sunset.

"The changing of clocks affects sleep via the most important time cue we have for

our internal sleep clocks – light," says Dixon. "Exposure to light (in addition to medications and certain behaviors) can cue changes in sleep and wake times." Dixon says fewer people have problems adapting to the fall clock change because of the extra hour of sleep. However, the winter months can make it challenging to get light exposure and keep up energy levels as total sunlight availability diminishes. Staying active and getting outside despite cooling temperatures can be important. It can also help to keep off the pounds that tend to accumulate in the winter.

"A good rule of thumb for daylight savings time changes," says Dixon "is that it takes about one day to adapt to each hour of time change. In spring, allowing for an

additional hour of sleep may be beneficial. Avoiding alcohol, caffeine and certain medications that might negatively affect sleep can also help.”

As the holiday season gets under way, it is particularly important to pay attention to sleep. Dixon advises that despite one’s busy schedule and competing interests, prioritizing a good sleep schedule that allows for adequate rest is important. He suggests avoiding activities that alert or stimulate just before going to bed to help stave off insomnia. Avoiding holiday sweets and snacks two to three hours before bedtime is also a good idea. Other good tips include monitoring caffeine and alcohol intake close to bedtime and avoiding intense exercise at night.

As the New England chill settles in, give yourself the gift of wellness this season by starting a yoga practice and committing to better sleeping habits. **H**

Ready to Strike a Pose?

KRISTIN BANICK SUGGESTS SEVERAL WAYS TO GET STARTED ON A YOGA PRACTICE AND MAKE IT PART OF YOUR WELLNESS ROUTINE:

- Research the type of yoga that best suits you and seek a qualified instructor. You can find excellent instruction not just at a yoga studio but through your local park and recreation department, fitness studios, gyms or community education classes.
- Find what works for you and do a little every day. Five minutes daily is better than nothing and can make a big difference in all aspects of your life.
- Incorporate breathing and relaxation practices into your everyday routine. Banick, who has advanced training in teaching meditation from the Himalayan Institute in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, recommends the Himalayan Institute’s Guided Yoga Relaxation Practices by Rolf Sovik. More information about these practices can be found on the organization’s website.
- Develop a personal home practice. If you get too busy to make a class or weather keeps you off the roads, create a practice for home with a few poses, along with some relaxation and breathing. You can achieve many benefits with just 15 minutes in your living room.
- Finally, add Yoga Nidra once or twice a week. This can help undo some of the stress year-round.

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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.

September 23 – November 27. “City of Angels.” City of Angels is a witty detective thriller with a jazzy score that really kills. A parody of 1940s Hollywood films, this Tony Award-winning show follows the story of a real world detective fiction writer and the life of his fictional hero. Tickets \$82. *Goodspeed Opera House, 6 Main Street, East Haddam; 860-873-8668; www.goodspeed.org.*

October 19 – November 6. “Jersey Boys.” The 2006 Tony Award-winning musical, Jersey Boys, entertains Hartford with The Four Seasons rise to fame. An inspiring story of how four blue-collar kids blossomed into one of the greatest sensations in pop music history. Tickets \$30-\$89. *The Bushnell Theatre, Mortensen Hall, 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford; 860-987-5900; www.bushnell.org.*

October 27. “Cost of the Living: A Zom Rom Com.” New London County native and East Lyme High School graduate, Daniel Lee White, has lived out his life’s dream and made his first feature film. Zom Rom Com stands for Zombie Romantic Comedy - a live action feature film that is set in a world where the undead have risen and can be tamed to live peacefully with humans. 8:00pm. Tickets \$20. *Garde Arts Center, 325 State St., New London; 860.444.7373; www.gardearts.org.*

October 28 – December 3. “I Hate Hamlet.” Relocating to New York, a young and successful television actor rents a marvelous, gothic apartment. With his television career in limbo, the actor is offered the opportunity to play Hamlet onstage, but there’s one problem: he hates Hamlet. Ticket Prices: TBD. *Connecticut Cabaret Theater, 31-33 Webster Mill Plaza, Berlin, 860-829-1248; www.ctcabaret.com.*

October 29. “In the Heights.” In the Heights, a 2008 Tony Award-winning musical, is about chasing dreams and finding one’s true home, and tells the story of a vibrant community in Manhattan’s Washington Heights. 3:00pm & 8:00pm. Tickets \$40, \$50, \$60, \$70. *Garde Arts Center, 325 State St., New London; 860.444.7373; www.gardearts.org.*

October 20 – November 13. “Water by the Spoonful.” The story of Elliot, back from Iraq, who is struggling to find his place in the world again and put aside the demons that haunt him. Somewhere in a chat room, recovering addicts forge an unbreakable bond of support and love. *Hartford Stage, 50 Church Street, Hartford; 860-527-5151; www.hartfordstage.org.*

October 22. “Boston Celtics vs. New York Knicks.” Returning to the XL Center, the 17-time champion Boston Celtics will compete against the New York Knicks in one of their preseason games. Tickets \$25, \$35, \$45, \$75, \$100, \$140. *XL Center, One Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860-249-6333; www.xlcenter.com.*

October 29. Connecticut Ballet Presents: “The Sleeping Beauty.” Brett Raphael’s version of this 19th century masterpiece recreates the timeless story of good against evil. Compiled of three acts and accompanied by music from Tchaikovsky, this piece brings the famous storybook characters to life. 2:00pm & 7:00pm. Tickets \$31-\$55. *The Bushnell Theatre, Maxwell and Ruth Belding Theater, 166 Capitol Ave., Hartford; 860-987-5900; www.bushnell.org.*

Nov. 3 - Nov. 27. “Hello! My Baby.” Presenting the greatest hits of Berlin, Gershwin, Kern and more, Hello! My Baby is a brand-new, all-American musical for all ages. Characters sing and dance their way through class struggles, street gangs and debutante balls, making this comedic romance story a must-see! Tickets \$82. *Goodspeed Opera House, 6 Main Street, East Haddam; 860-873-8668; www.goodspeed.org.*

November 11 – November 13. “2011 Connecticut International Auto Show.” Great entertainment for serious shoppers, car buffs and the entire family, the Connecticut International Auto Show showcases the newest model year import and domestic vehicles, cars, vans, crossovers, hybrids, light trucks and sport utilities. Friday & Saturday 11am-9pm; Sunday 11am-5pm. Tickets \$10. *Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford; 860-249-6000; www.ctconventions.com.*

November 11 – November 12. “Empowering Me... Naturally Wellness Conference.” Featuring Dr. Joan Borysenko and Suzane Northrop, this event uses workshops, exhibits and demos to educate all about the importance of everything natural, green and spiritual. Tickets \$35, \$45, \$49. *Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford; 860-249-6000; www.ctconventions.com.*

November 15. “Katy Perry - The California Dreams Tour 2011.” Pop sensation and Grammy nominee Katy Perry is the first female artist to remain in the Top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart for more than a full year. Tickets \$40.50, \$50.50. *XL Center, One Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860-249-6333; www.xlcenter.com.*

November 18-19. “Connecticut Wine & Food Festival.” This first time event benefits the Arthritis Foundation and is presented by Hoffman Auto Group. Friday evening’s Mind, Body & Spirit Physicians Award Dinner honors rheumatologists and orthopedists from Hartford Hospital, Saint Francis Hospital & Medical Center and Connecticut Children’s Medical Center and features a seven course Chef’s Dinner and specialized wine pairings. The Saturday Wine & Food portion includes an Industry Trade Hour, two Grand Tasting Sessions (afternoon and evening) as well as a VIP Grand Cru Tasting. Sessions will include live kitchen chef’s demonstrations and opportunities for wine, spirit and craft beer tutorials. Chefs from Friday evening’s dinner will also be at the Saturday event. *For Sponsorship, Exhibitor or Ticket Sales Information, contact Heather Schold at 860-563-1177 or at Hschold@Arthritis.org. For Physicians Dinner only Sponsorship and Ticket Sales Information, contact Jaime Seltzer at 860-563-1177 or at Jseltzer@Arthritis.org. The Hartford Club, 46 Prospect Street, Hartford; www.CTWineandFood.com or www.arthritis.org.*

November 26. “Trans-Siberian Orchestra Winter Tour 2011.” Pushing the boundaries of rock music, Trans-Siberian Orchestra travels to Hartford to showcase its Christmas installment, “Christmas Eve and Other Stories,” followed by selections from its upcoming installment “Gutter Ballet and The New York Blues Express.” 3:00pm-6:00pm. Tickets \$32, \$40, \$50 & \$60. *XL Center, One Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860-249-6333; www.xlcenter.com.*

December 1 – December 3. “Holiday Masterworks.” Conductor Richard Coffey describes this holiday-themed program as “exuberant, magical, mystical, moving, jubilant and sometimes raucous,” with selections including Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite, Glinka Overture to Russlan and Ludmilla, and Vaughan Williams Hodie. Friday 8:00pm, Saturday 8:00pm, Sunday 3:00pm & 8:00pm. Tickets \$35.50, \$45.50, \$58.50, \$67.50. *The Bushnell Theatre, Maxwell and Ruth Belding Theater, 166 Capitol Avenue, Hartford; 860-987-5900; www.bushnell.org.*

December 2 – December 4. “LEGO Kidsfest 2011.” LEGO Kidsfest is a hands-on, interactive and educational workshop for children and families of all ages featuring: LEGO & DUPLO® Construction Zones, dozens of large-scale and miniature LEGO models and displays, LEGO Universe and LEGO Games, group builds Creation Nation and Mystery Murals, LEGO Master Builders, and much more! Tickets \$18, \$20. *Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford; 860-249-6000; www.ctconventions.com.*

December 3. “UConn Men vs. Arkansas.” UConn Men’s Huskies Basketball returns to the XL Center to challenge the Arkansas Razorbacks. Ticket Prices: TBA. *XL Center, One Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860-249-6333; www.xlcenter.com.*

December 6. “UConn Women vs. Texas A&M.” UConn Women’s Huskies Basketball returns to the XL Center to compete against Texas A&M. Ticket Prices: TBA. *XL Center, One Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860-249-6333; www.xlcenter.com.*

December 9 – January 28. “Into the Woods.” When a Baker and his Wife learn they’ve been cursed with childlessness by the Witch next door, they embark on a quest for the special objects required to break the spell. This fractured fairytale features characters such as an ambivalent Cinderella, a blood-thirsty Little Red Ridinghood, a Prince Charming with a roving eye and a Witch... who raps. Ticket Prices: TBD. *Connecticut Cabaret Theater, 31-33 Webster Mill Plaza, Berlin; 860-829-1248; www.ctcabaret.com.*

December 10. “CT Whale vs. Providence Bruins.” Catch the wave as a new generation of professional hockey hits Hartford and cheer on the CT Whale as they take on the Providence Bruins! Tickets \$7, \$14, \$25, \$44. *XL Center, One Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860-249-6333; www.xlcenter.com.*

December 29. “Jeff Dunham ‘Controlled Chaos.’” Attendees will meet two new Jeff Dunham characters: Achmed Junior, the not-as-equal skeletal son of Achmed the Dead Terrorist, and Little Jeff, a mini-version of the ringmaster himself. His sidesplitting performances have made him the top grossing live comedian in North America for the past three years; more hilarity ensues with his performance of “Controlled Chaos.” 7:30pm. Tickets \$49.50. *XL Center, One Civic Center Plaza, Hartford; 860-249-6333; www.xlcenter.com.*

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