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B&W PHOTO: MICHAEL CALLAHAN



# Sophy's Voice

by Kristin Sinatra



**T**HE STAMFORD MUSEUM & NATURE CENTER is hosting a retrospective of Sophy Regensburg's paintings, drawings, prints and needlepoints through March 19. "Sophy Regensburg: A Retrospective" features 65 of her works including those on loan from more than 11 acclaimed institutions and 11 private collections.

Ms. Regensburg, who began painting at age 67 in 1951 while living on the Upper East Side, produced more than 500 works of art over the course of two decades. She is renowned for her vivid scenes depicting objects from everyday life: A pitcher of tulips, a plate of shucked oysters, a slice of cherry pie. While mining the Stamford Museum & Nature Center's permanent collection, Curator of Collections Maeve Lawler discovered

five of the artist's core works, which sparked the current exhibition.

"There was very little information available on where her works were located, so I scoured genealogy websites and the Internet to get in touch with descendants of Sophy," said Lawler. "Her great grandnephew and granddaughter were instrumental in securing loans from various family members and institutions for our exhibition. I also reached out to auction houses that sold her work and asked if they might be able to put me in touch with the current owners. Most of the private collection loans came from this route." Notes Melissa Mulrooney, CEO of the Stamford Museum & Nature Center, "Recognizing Sophy Regensburg's career is long overdue."

Born in 1885 to a prominent New York City

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## Sophy's Voice

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family, Sophy Pollak Regensburg studied drawing at The Chase Art School under William Merritt Chase and Robert Henri. During the war years, she drove an ambulance in New York City, transporting wounded soldiers to the hospital. Following the death of her husband in 1949, her physician instructed her to "slow down," so two years later the self-taught painter began painting daily.

In 1952, she entered an amateur painting competition sponsored by *ARTnews* and won first prize with her painting, "Chinese Tureen," which was only her fifth painting and a work that will be exhibited in the SM&NC's exhibition. This prize gained the attention of the New York City art world and two years later, Regensburg had her first one-person show at Davis Gallery in New York. It was a sold-out affair. Throughout her career, she had 15 solo exhibitions at prominent galleries including Babcock Galleries, FAR Gallery, and Roko Gallery.

Stamford Museum & Nature Center's Bendel Mansion & Galleries is located at 39 Scofieldtown Road. For more information, call 203.977.6521 or visit [www.stamfordmuseum.org](http://www.stamfordmuseum.org)





# Afternoon On A Hill

by Renée Kahn



MY GOOD FRIEND Peter stopped by a while ago to share the current crisis in his life. He has five children and uncounted grandchildren so you can be sure there's always a crisis at hand.

Since it was a lovely spring day, we decided to go for a walk and when I suggested the park at the former town dump, the corner of Rockrimmon and Scofieldtown Roads, Peter looked skeptical. "It's lovely there," I explained, "a beautiful new park."

The former mound of half-burnt trash had been transformed by the City's Department of Public Works into a beautiful hilltop garden replete with walking trails and tennis courts. There is a barn-like structure that holds sand for use on icy roads in the winter, plus a 30 foot pile of huge, red stone blocks of unknown origin. The remains of railroad tunnels adjacent to the thruway, maybe? No one seemed to know where they had come from or who had put them there.

I remember the mound of garbage that had occupied the site when my children were young. It was filled with cast-off detritus that was set afire every day at closing time, tended by three ghouls right out of Dante's "Inferno." My three offspring loved going to the dump and coming home with all sorts of treasures, like a pile of comic books or well-worn but still usable ice skates.

The mound is no longer a garbage site but covered with grass and newly planted wildflowers, a far cry from its former condition. Peter and I hiked to the top where some kind soul had left

two lawn chairs, perfect for a warm rest after a steep climb. The view was extraordinary, the breeze cool, and all our previous tensions just washed away. We sat on our hilltop thrones for fifteen or twenty minutes, discussing the vicissitudes of life and enjoying the 360-degree view. Then, refreshed, we started home through a sea of beautiful wildflowers.

For some inexplicable reason, a poem I had learned as a child started to come back to me. It's the only one I remember. Appropriately, it is called "Afternoon on a Hill" and was written around 1917 by a famous poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay. I learned it when I was ten or eleven. Much to Peter's amazement, I began to recite it to him. Eighty years later, I still remember it, although my version should be called "Afternoon on a Mound of Garbage."

I will be the gladdest thing  
Under the sun!  
I will touch a hundred flowers  
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds  
With quiet eyes  
Watch the wind bow down the grass,  
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show  
Up from the town,  
I will mark which must be mine,  
And then start down. 🌄

# Live Healthier in 2023

by Glen Tobias, RDN, CSSD, FAND



*M*ANY PEOPLE like to start the New Year with a resolution to lose weight and live healthier. I say, let's have solutions instead.

First, don't set unrealistic goals. You are destined to fail. If you are looking to lose 30 pounds in a month, it's not going to happen. One pound of fat loss per week is considered excellent. meaning 52 pounds over the course of a year. Do not deny yourself completely from something you know you love. Just minimize your intake if you are able and make better food choices.

Track what you do in a journal including your eating and exercising progress. If you ink it, you think it. If you don't, you won't. Eliminate negative thoughts. Be positive and eager to learn new things. Education will lead to success if it comes from reliable sources such as the USDA sponsored website [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov) and professionals like registered dietitians and nutritionists.

I know it's hard, but here is a quick plan for you to try over the next two weeks for weight/fat loss:

Drink more water, a lot more water. As a rule of thumb, take your weight in pounds and divide it by two, then drink that in ounces. Stop drinking one hour before bedtime to help sleep

deeper and avoid waking up to use the restroom. Stop drinking ANYTHING with calories. Eat your calories, don't drink them.

Don't wait for hunger to make you eat. Eating three meals a day is for survival and not optimization. Try eating five smaller meals a day. You will keep your blood sugar even and reduce the amount you eat at each meal. This will improve energy output and even help prevent becoming "hangry" (hungry-angry).

Avoid artificial sweeteners as they metabolically trick the body into anticipating sugar input.

Go to bed earlier and sleep a little longer. Your body considers lack of sleep a stress and will alter your normal hormonal balance, leading to weight gain.

Eliminate, or at least greatly minimize your caffeine intake. Temporarily masking hunger is not the answer for lasting energy.

Start to increase the quality of the food you purchase. Food must nourish the body and a lot of what we eat is just calories that don't nourish us.

Try organic chicken, milk, fruits, and veggies; wild fish, free range eggs, and grass-fed beef. There is a reason conventional food is so cheap compared to organic foods. 🌱



# Beginner's Guide to North Stamford

by Hugh McGoran

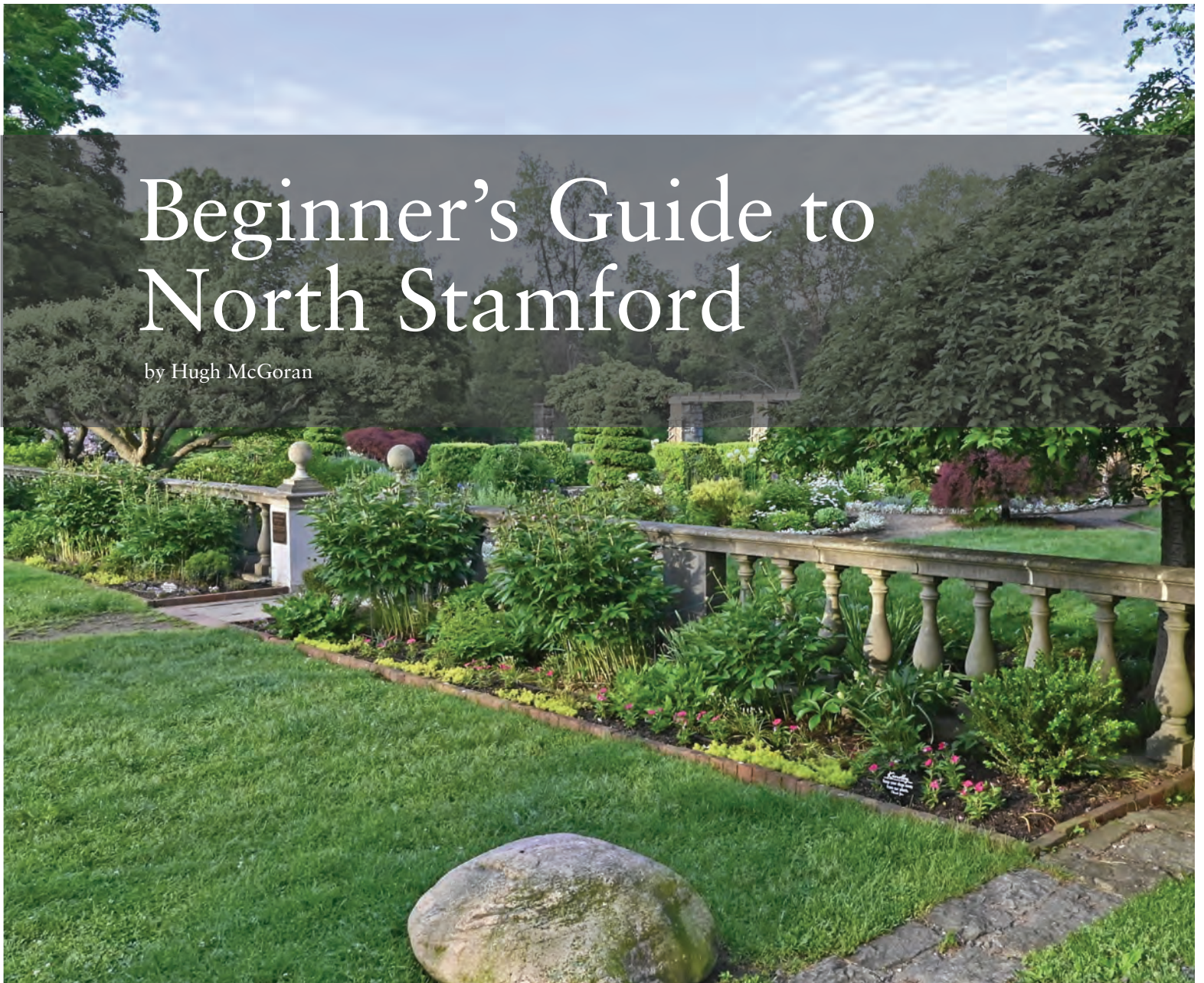


PHOTO: GOODBODY GARDEN AT FORT STAMFORD BY MARY TREHAN

AS A RESIDENT OF 06903, there's a good chance you've had a new family move into the neighborhood recently. You may be a recent transplant yourself, making a home for your family in the land above The Merritt Parkway. To this latter group, we say welcome!

Life in North Stamford may feel more like a Vermont weekend house than that doorman building you just left. Perhaps a few of your longer-tenured neighbors have shared some of their wisdom about life in North Stamford. For the rest of you, we thought it might help to provide a few tidbits to help our newbies with their onboarding to this unique community.

My family and I moved to North Stamford a little over fifteen years ago and we only recently stopped thinking of ourselves as the new family on our street. We moved into a neighborhood with many long-time residents and a deep sense of community. North Stamford is like Mayberry with a dash of Manhattan: One minute you are reveling

in your Norman Rockwell lifestyle and the next, wondering if the sushi delivery guy got lost and ended up in Pound Ridge. Here are a few items that may help you in your transition.

## Infrastructure, Utilities and Operations

When we were house hunting, one experience that stands out was a homeowner who couldn't wait to show us his recently installed whole-house standby generator. While we marveled at the gorgeous lake views from his back deck, he preferred to drag us to a remote corner of his home and expound upon the virtues of his Generac.

This unassuming gray box – about twice the size of a typical central air conditioning compressor – comes on automatically within seconds of a power outage and provides electricity for the entire house. Its benefit was completely lost on me. Having always lived in a city or nearby suburbs, I lost electricity a handful of times and only for a few minutes or hours. Little did I realize the outages

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## Beginner's Guide to North Stamford

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I would experience in this part of Connecticut during the ensuing years.

These automatic generators are a substantial investment and are not a simple plug-and-play affair. They can run on natural gas or, as is the case with most of North Stamford, propane. You may have noticed what looks like white submarines parked in the yards of some of your neighbors. These are propane tanks and they must be large enough to run the generator for several days. There are regulations about how far from the house they must be.

You will likely need to dig a trench for the line from the tank to your unit and there are permits involved. (Stamford's permit process is graduate-level course work, so we won't cover that in this article). Suffice to say that the process is no small undertaking, but the joys of sitting in well-lit comfort while a storm rages outside can't be overstated. While your not-so-fortunate neighbors are gorging on their melting ice cream in the dark praying that the sump pump doesn't need to kick in, you can be toasty warm with sufficient light to read the latest copy of "o6903" magazine.

We eventually bought a portable generator that runs on gasoline. We keep it in the garage and pull it out in emergencies. This is a solid, though less convenient and robust solution for home backup power. You must limit what you can power. In our house, refrigeration, the oven, and heat and sump pumps all made the cut. Sadly, the kegerator didn't fare as well.

About ten years ago, we were hit by back-to-back years with the catastrophic storms Irene and Sandy. Some parts of North Stamford were without power for a week. Getting gasoline for our portable generator was almost impossible. Speaking of power sources, when we moved in we inherited a glass-top electric range. My wife loves to cook and she was adamant that she wanted a gas stove. Simple, right?

There are a lucky few residents of North Stamford who have access to natural gas. For the rest of us frontier-people, we must rely on private oil and/or propane delivery. Propane required a plumber to run a line from one side of our house to the kitchen. We now get a Christmas card from our propane provider each year, along with bills for our tank rental and gas deliveries.

### Septic systems

For most residents, as long as you minimize flushing stuffed animals, watermelon rinds and the much-feared baby wipes, you should be okay for many years of trouble-free septic service. The last thing you want is a house full of holiday guests and a septic system flare up, so regular service and pumping is needed. Septic systems are actually pretty sophisticated and when they go south, you can be in for a major expense. It's a good idea to use "septic safe" detergents and bathroom tissue.

### Well water

Speaking of sophisticated systems, the contraptions in your basement powering your well water system can be intimidating and include enough hardware to power a small municipality. You'll find tanks and water softeners and filters connected to miles of pipes and tubes. You'll want to get your water tested periodically to make sure your water source stays safe. If you're lucky, you'll only see your wellhead at your home inspection and can forget about it after that.

### Trash & Recycling

Although the city sends trucks to North Stamford once a week to pick up our recycling, the impenetrable force field of the Merritt Parkway continues to keep us safe from city trash collection. There are many reputable private trash collection services to choose from, and if you play your cards right you may end

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up with another holiday card on your mantle in December.

### **Landscaping**

I had the best intentions when I moved to North Stamford to mow my lawn. But an acre is a lot to handle and that hammock isn't going to swing itself. We quickly hired someone to take care of mowing the lawn, got rid of the (hardly used) lawnmower and never looked back. If you're like many North Stamford property owners, a lush, gently sloping lawn may not be in the cards anyway. With a move to the suburbs, the trees, shrubs, driveways and decks or patios all require their own maintenance and care; can I get a "cha-ching"? Maybe that doorman building wasn't such a bad deal after all.

### **Autumn Leaf Collection**

Personally, I think the city does a phenomenal job collecting the loose leaves from our curbs each year. The spectacle of the bulldozers, earth movers, dump trucks, leaf blowers and street cleaners moving through our streets is as intricate as a holiday production of the Nutcracker.

The trick is timing when to have your leaves set out to the curb. Too early, and you risk the inevitable wind storm that blows them back onto your property. Too late and you miss the city truck parade. Then, you will have to make other arrangements. I won't go into the controversy of leaf collection versus "let-nature-do-its-thing" or the complaints about using noisy gas-powered leaf blowers. I'm not here to solve these issues. I'm just here to stir the pot.

### **Rocks**

Yes, rocks and stones are a way of life for the North Stamford homeowner. You have probably ruined a trowel or shovel trying to remove one of these "New England potatoes" to get that new azalea bush in the

ground. Even though you might not be able to tell a chunk of granite from a New Haven Arkose or a Brimfield Schist, you may have become an admirer (or hater) of those enormous boulders protruding from the middle of your front lawn.

Dating back hundreds of millions, and in some cases over a billion years, these natural beauties will be around for a long time to come – possibly even outlasting the construction site at the High Ridge exit of the Merritt Parkway. I'm certainly not qualified to say how long a construction project like that should take, but it has given me a greater appreciation for what it took to build the great pyramids at Giza.

### **Snow Removal**

Perhaps you remember mowing lawns and shoveling snow as a teenager for a little extra pocket money. Snow removal in North Stamford is big business and a lifeline for many of the landscapers that otherwise shut down in the colder months.

Like mowing, I had planned to plow my own driveway in our early days in North Stamford. Also like our mower, the snow blower sat for years in our garage, taking up space and mocking me each time it snowed. The good news is that, with the time I now save from having my driveway professionally plowed, I can work to perfect my hot toddy recipe.

Even better news is the city's quick reaction forces to clearing the roads when winter weather strikes. Like their autumn act with leaf removal, the city is no slouch when it comes to removing snow from our roads. Your mileage may vary, but my experience has been that seemingly within minutes of the first flakes falling, the plows and salt trucks have already made their third pass.

### **Lions and Tigers and Bears:**

I get a chuckle when I see someone on social media



posting about the occasional deer that has wandered into their neighborhood. Here in North Stamford, we are immersed in nature and, with that, the return of many of the region's original wildlife residents.

Yes, deer are aplenty around these parts. I am certain that they watch me from the woods with amusement each spring and summer as I diligently spray my hosta, impatiens and other delicacies with repellent in an attempt to keep them and the bunnies away. One good rinsing rain and my garden turns into an all-you-can-eat salad bar making me think that I'd do just as well spraying with a nice balsamic vinaigrette.

The deer are only the start. Squirrels, raccoons and possums run amok, and foxes and coyote are also frequent visitors (so be careful of your pets and kids). The blood-curdling shriek of a fisher cat in the middle of the night will send chills down your spine. Neither a cat nor much of a fish eater, they are little weasel-like carnivores that have made a come-back in the area.

Bobcats have been seen with much more frequency lately and just a few weeks ago a nearby acquaintance showed us a video she had taken of one trotting down her driveway. If you even occasionally venture into the 06903 social media scene, debates rage about identifying bobcats or mountain lions or Tasmanian Devils in North Stamford. There is at least one black bear who periodically trends in a home security video.

We haven't seen as many wild turkeys as we used to, though we still get a group that occasionally trots down our yard from the surrounding woods. How they still survive with the growing population of much faster predators is beyond me (though I guess their dwindling numbers answers that question). Plenty of lakes, ponds and creeks in North Stamford mean plenty of waterfowl. You may covet your neighbor's lakeside view, but so do the Canadian Geese. Quite the prolific poopers,

they can make a walk in the yard a potentially squishy experience.

It appears that North Stamford lakeside real estate has become too attractive to many of these feathered friends. Yes, a good number still make that remarkable migration each year, but many have found the charms of this area too irresistible to leave. Although North Stamford still has some controls over development and population, ADUs notwithstanding, the geese have no such upper limits and continue to propagate with wild abandon. Some residents have taken matters into their own hands with hunting and other forms of population control.

A clean, green, and possibly warmer environment makes North Stamford very hospitable for wildlife. It can only be a matter of time before the American bison makes its triumphant return to grazing on the grassy knolls of the Stamford Nature Center.

## Commerce

Although some residents may have a different point of view, one of the attributes that adds to North Stamford's laid back and serene character is our limited commercial development. Aside from the occasional zoning challenge, North Stamford has been fairly consistent over the years in limiting commercial expansion. There are a handful of business establishments here. But for any real shopping, you'll have to journey south of the Merritt Parkway.

For me, the culinary mascot of North Stamford would have to be the donut from Lakeside Diner on Long Ridge Road. When we first announced our plans to relocate to Stamford, people who knew the area exclaimed, "Colony Grill pizza!" When we refined our location to North Stamford, it was all about Lakeside Diner and its donuts. For some higher-end dining options, both Madonia and Farm House at the Crossroads are good bets.

Another notable business is LaRocca's Country Market on Old Long Ridge Road. My

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PHOTO: MICHAEL CALLAHAN





first few visits there was like a trip back in time and really cemented the old school feel that many of us love about North Stamford. While my wife did the shopping, I cruised the back aisles and was transported to the corner grocery stores of my childhood.

The local regulars have their purchases added to their chit in a small, handwritten notebook kept at the cashier. LaRocca's has come a long way in recent years with a significant remodel and the addition of a wine and spirits store next door. For those who live close enough, it is a pleasant grocery alternative to the larger supermarkets below the Merritt, and a great option for a quick dash to pick up a few items, a fantastic butcher, or a prepared meal to go.

If farm-to-table is more your style, the Stamford Museum & Nature Center has a farmers' market on Sundays running June through October. Another great back-to-nature spot for a picnic regardless of your lunch's origin is the Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens.

### Location, location, location

Back when we were spending every Saturday in our realtor's car running around North Stamford in search of our future home, the many scenic country lanes and roads that we traveled soon became an indistinguishable blur of stone walls, trees and shrubbery. To keep it simple for us, he explained the High Ridge & Long Ridge north/south arteries and how they connected North Stamford to the rest of the civilized world. He also warned us that we had better get used to our trips up and down one or both of those two roads, because we'd be taking them many, many times.

We ended up close to Long Ridge and he wasn't kidding. Need to buy milk? Hop on Long Ridge. Take the kids to a play date? Long Ridge. Escape the zombie apocalypse? Zombies are pretty crafty and they'd definitely have both Long Ridge and High Ridge Roads staked out. Kidding aside, up here we

are rather dependent on these two thoroughfares.

Yes, the back country of Stamford is a scenic maze of winding roads and twisting byways. But a warning to the uninitiated: One turn off Long Ridge or High Ridge, and driving can become a navigational nightmare. Squeezing past an oncoming Amazon delivery truck while you simultaneously veer to avoid a cyclist or dog walker around a blind curve is standard operating procedure in these parts. What might be a white-knuckle route for a new North Stamford resident or visitor quickly becomes part of muscle memory after a few months.

Another thing you might have noticed in your travels here in North Stamford are the variety of interesting street names. We nod to the flora with street names like Daffodil and Apple Valley Roads and to the fauna like Quails Trail and Eagle Drive. You want mills? There's Timber Mill, Sawmill and Cider Mill Roads. We've got famous people like Ethan Allen Lane and our very own Gutzon Borglum (sculptor of Mount Rushmore) Road. There is even the downright whimsical like Very Merry Road, Harpsichord Turnpike and Huckleberry Hollow.

On the other hand, I find some of North Stamford's street-naming conventions confusing, bordering on sadistic. I'm convinced that our delivery people simply flip a coin when deciding to drop off at Chestnut Hill Lane or Chestnut Hill Road. And who was the genius who plotted Fox Ridge Road, Foxwood Road, Fox Hill Lane, and Fox Glen Drive all withing 2,000 feet of each other? Make sure to distinguish between road, street or lane to potential your visitors.

There is a lot to like about our part of the world, though some things may take a little getting used to. In some ways life is simpler in North Stamford than in other communities, albeit not simple. Your decision to move here may end up helping you develop expertise in areas that you'd never dreamed would come from home ownership. For now, I'm going to put another log on the fire, wait for the next snow fall (and the plow guy) and get back to work on that hot toddy. Cheers and welcome to the neighborhood. 🍷



# City of God

by Mark Diamond

*V*ERN GOT LAID A LOT. This is how he did it.

He would sit at the bar in Sloan Kettering Hospital and introduce himself to every woman who came in seeking strength. He was a good talker. The bartender always had a story to tell after work.

"Sloan Kettering has a bar?" Vern's friend asked.

"Sure," Vern said. "It's Sloan Kettering."

The friend thought a moment. "That works?"

Vern nodded. "You'd be surprised."

He had a flexible enough schedule to get laid. For a living, he sold antique posters at shows and flea markets in wealthy Long Island communities. His father had been a public school teacher and his mother liked to travel. During summer months, Vern and his family lived in a different town in Italy and Spain, where their money went far. He was good at languages and picked up enough to hold a conversation.

The skill wound up being useful. After graduating college, with no way to earn a living, he hit upon the idea of bumming through Europe and buying up batches of old advertising posters that people were storing in their basements and attics for years because, while the posters were old, they weren't art and so unworthy of display. Vern shipped the boards back to the States and marketed them as "Antique European Posters."

But first he would research a poster's

provenance and write a sales brochure. That is how he sold as original Cappiellos, for example, ten good reproductions for which he paid a hundred dollars to a tanner in Italy. Cappiello was the artist who designed the successful 1906 advertising poster featuring a green devil de-corking a bottle of Maurin absinthe.

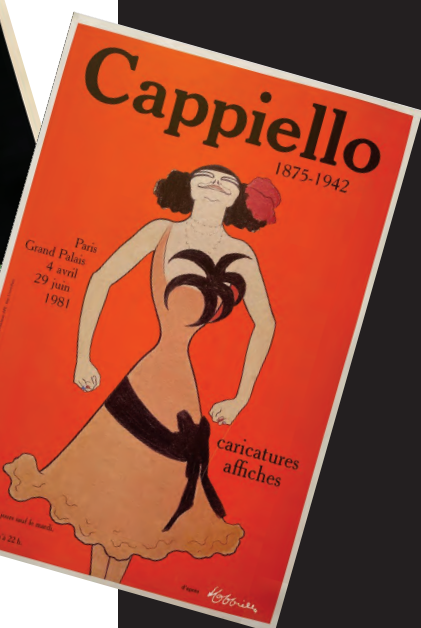
Every poster Vern sold became an original and each one had a story to tell. One of Vern's ten rules of selling was this: Make the buyer feel smart about his purchase. Vern knew that everyone had seen the green devil poster at some point, it was that famous, and no one would pass up a good deal on a work of art they were clever enough to recognize. A customer's awareness of the Cappiello made the connection between buyer and poster that Vern used to close the deal.

"Product posters and travel posters from the turn of the century are very hard find," he would tell his customers. "People just didn't save them back then. Plus, they were meant to make an impression but not last forever. They were beautiful, but they were manufactured on uncoated paper. I was lucky to find these. As you can see, I framed them using archival matting and UV-resistant glass. As sharp and colorful as they look now? They'll still look that way in fifty years."

Vern was not lying much. The posters were beautiful. They were printed on lousy paper. They were covered in glass. They just weren't the real thing.



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## City of God

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“What’s the difference?” he told his daughter. “They’re happy and I’m happy.”

Vern had a hobby, too. He got elected to the board of representatives of his town after learning to shake men’s hands firmly and nod in agreement with women sincerely. As rep, his bailiwick was local development. He perfected his skills to give everyone what they thought they wanted.

One skill was this. He saw, when it came time for the Board to vote on a particular project, the developers would sit on one side of the room and the community group that opposed the developers on the other side. Vern would stand in between them when presenting his committee’s recommendation and wink with his right eye toward the developers, then with his left eye toward the community group so that each could see only their special eye.

Vern drank too much. He abided his wife and children. He cheated at pinochle and mixed real garbage with the recyclables to avoid having to pay for trash pickup.

Vern woke one day with a sharp pain in his stomach. It lasted most of the day. Then it went away. Then it came back and did not go away. He ignored it as long as he could and then saw his doctor.

“Not good news,” said the internist after doing an endoscopy. “I think you have stomach cancer.”

Vern shut his eyes. “My father died of stomach cancer and so did his father.”

“How old were they?”

“They were big smokers and drinkers,” said Vern. “I thought it was a lifestyle thing. I guess it wasn’t.”

The doctor continued to enter notes into his computer. “It can be treated,” he told his patient. “The next step is an MRI. Then we can make a plan.”

Vern smirked. “There is no plan. It’s stomach cancer. No cure.”

The doctor looked up. “We can help you

live for years.”

“In pain.”

“We can give you medication for the pain.”

Vern shook his head. “Not for me, doc.”

Vern waited a month before visiting his dentist, complaining of a bad wisdom tooth. The dentist said he could send Vern for a root canal but there was no guarantee.

“Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. It’s worth a try, or we can just removed the tooth, wait a month for the gum to heal, and put in an implant.”

Vern nodded. “That’s fine. Yank it.”

“You know that it’s impacted. I told you that before. You’ll be in more pain than if it were a simple extraction.”

“How much pain?”

“Could be a lot. I’ll give you plenty of pain medication before you leave.”

Vern’s dentist removed the wisdom tooth and handed Vern two med-packs, one filled with 800-milligram Ibuprofen and the other with Dilaudid.

“Try the Ibuprofen alone and one Dilaudid only if necessary. Don’t wait for the pain to start before taking the Ibuprofen and don’t take either on an empty stomach.”

“I won’t,” said Vern, who patted his dentist on the back and left.

Vern got home and watched some television in the basement den with a big tumbler of bourbon. Then he leaned back in his black leather easy chair and swallowed all the white pills his dentist had given him. He knew he could not finagle away out of death but he could finagle his way out of a slow and painful death.

As Vern fell asleep, he had the presence of mind to look up at the ceiling and ask for forgiveness. Then, despite sharp practice all his life, Vern was drawn into the same ether as everyone else, growing thin as a sheet of paper, light as a sliver of glass. ■





ARTIST AT WORK

Rachel Lussier works at the Long Ridge Firehouse on "Laurel Reservoir," an oil-on-canvas painting inspired by the John Singer Sargent work "Alpine Pool."



# Way Back, When

By Bob Callahan

## My Day at the 1939 New York World's Fair



WHEN I HEARD mom and pop talking in the kitchen about taking my brother and me to the New York World's Fair I couldn't believe my ears. I had heard about the great Fair on the radio but never thought I would be going there. It was a wonderful day, full of new experiences. First the train ride into Manhattan, then subways and walking...walking...

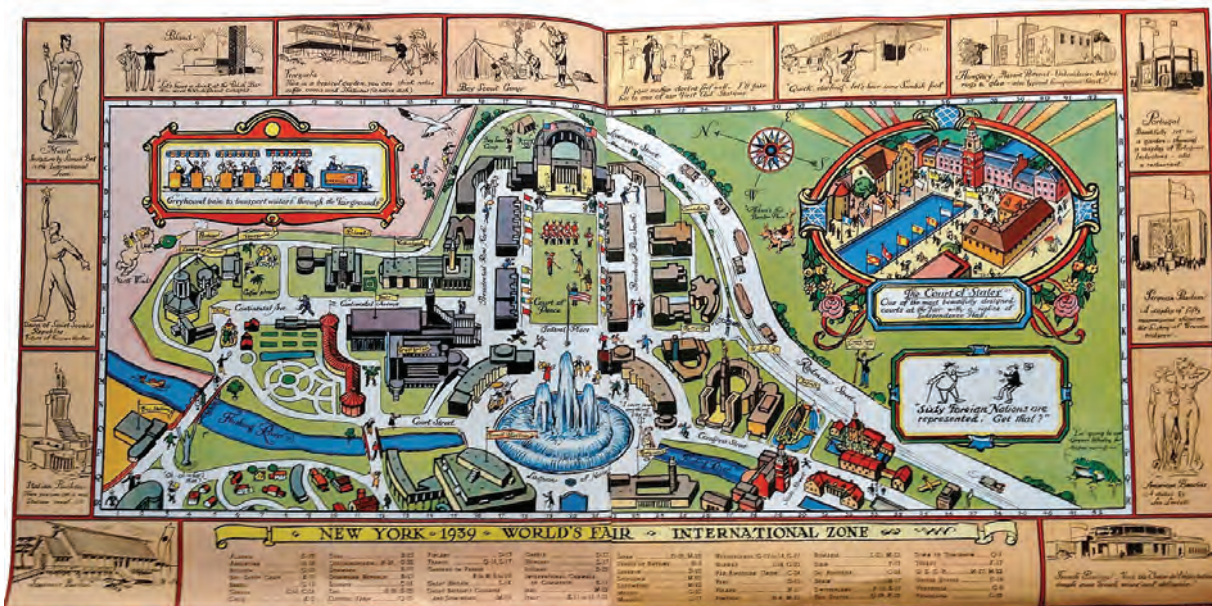
Everything looked so big and all those people everywhere!

There were long waiting lines but I remember keeping busy just looking at people. All the men wore suits and

fedoras and the women colorful dresses. I guess there was only one dress code back then.

We couldn't possibly see everything in one day so we sat at a table at the Automat and planned our day. My other favorite restaurant was the Mayflower Shoppe. There was one in New Rochelle and they served the best donuts. 5 cents each.

My favorites were the pavilions that gave out souvenirs: Pittsburg Plate Glass gave me a small mirror.





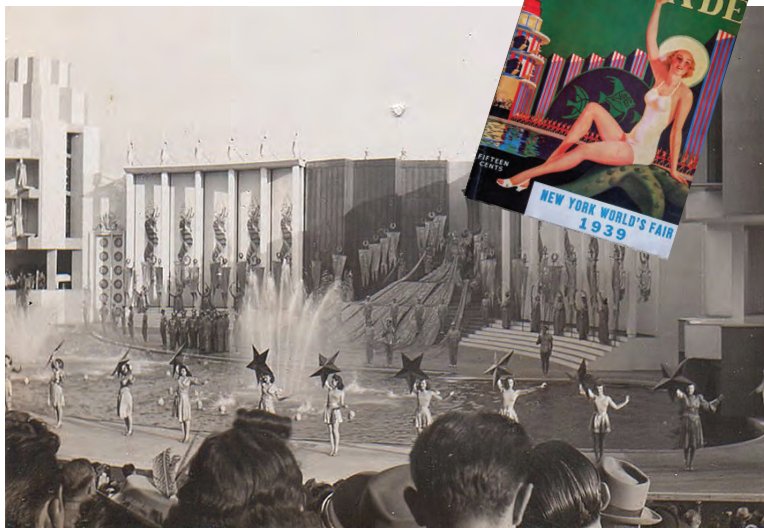


Pet Milk gave out small milk cans and Borden's Milk gave out small Elsie the Cows. My all-time favorite was the small green Heinz pickle pin made of plastic.



I didn't know what plastic was, it looked like you could eat it.

The Billy Rose Aquacade was fun to watch, all those swimmers. And there, right before my eyes, was Tarzan. The program said he was Johnny Weissmuller but I knew he was Tarzan. What fun!



There was a parade of elephants going somewhere so we stopped to watch for a while. I had the best seat at the Fair...on my father's shoulders.

Men with carts sold lots of things from pins to banners to balloons. We stopped at one and I was allowed to choose a World's Fair pin. So many to choose from!

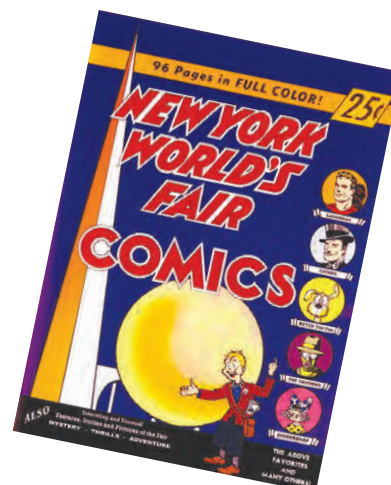


There was a giant water fountain in the center of the Fair and people would throw pennies into it. I asked if I could take off my shoes and wade in the water but I already knew the answer. All those pennies!

After lunch at the Automat I took a nap under a shady tree. All the stimulation and food put me right to sleep. After my nap we went to a few more exhibits and then went home. It was a long trip and we didn't want to leave with so many other people leaving at the same time.

On the train ride home I looked over the big book of World's Fair Comics I had with me all day. I dozed off thinking about the places I went and seeing places I still may go some day.

What an adventure! 🌳



# The Infamous Chestnut Hill Road Park-In

by Sally Sachs

SCHOOL HAS BEGUN and I watch our neighbors' children traipsing to and from their bus stop at the end of our road, Jordan Lane. I think to myself, you kids don't know how good you have it! Because if it hadn't been for a group of local mothers 56 years ago, you'd have a long walk to the school bus, navigating a narrow, curvy road in all sorts of weather while dodging traffic and Amazon trucks.

It began in 1966, when our children began kindergarten. The school bus picked them up about a quarter of a mile from our home. The trip ran from our cul-de-sac onto the hilly, twisty-turny Chestnut Hill Road and down to the bus stop at its junction with Long Ridge Road. There were two other kindergarteners that year and we three mothers took turns driving the children to and from the bus stop.

But when they went into first grade, our kids strongly campaigned to walk to the bus stop along with the older children. The length of the walk was not unrealistic, but it was definitely unsafe. West Haviland Road was being developed and in addition to the normal commuter traffic, all sorts of heavy construction trucks were going up and down Chestnut Hill. It was not safe for walking.

We contacted parents of other children in the neighborhood and along with our immediate neighbors, appealed to the superintendent of schools and the president of the board of education: Please move the bus stop to a safer location.

We suggested the junction of Jordan Lane and Chestnut Hill. They gave reasons why this was impossible: The bus had no room to turn around and it would have to go to the end of Jordan Lane and back up twice in order to turn. Too dangerous. End of story.

Several of us presented our story to the mayor, who was a very nice guy but powerless to help. So we went to work and emerged with a plan. In order to impress the powers that be with the importance of maintaining our kids' safety, we had to do something that would stop people in their tracks. How better to do this than to literally stop them in their tracks? We would stage a Park-In.

Two days later, at the time the children normally left for school, we all drove onto Chestnut Hill Road and parked our cars on both sides all the way down to Long Ridge. No one else, not the drivers of construction machinery,







milkmen, or commuters, could pass. Interestingly, none of these people seemed upset once they found out why we were blocking their way. In fact, they cheered us on.

We waited for the police. Would we get arrested? No, they never arrived.

We had made sure to notify the “Stamford Advocate” of our plan, as well as WSTC, a local station. Reporters and photographers popped out all over the place, eagerly interviewing us and taking pictures.

After about an hour, we disbanded and let traffic resume. Suddenly, we were celebrities. Three of us were interviewed on a popular WSTC talk show that afternoon and our Park-In was the subject of a major story in the next day’s paper.

I was quoted in a letter to the Advocate saying, “We did not wish to resort to a demonstration, but we were forced to do so by the lack of cooperation of city officials to whom we appealed for aid. We insist that the city owes our children a safe route and hope that the inconvenience we caused may stir the city officials to adopt immedi-

ate action, before a tragedy occurs.”

There ensued a further investigation by the president of the Board of Ed, the police department, and others. In time, we received word that they had no immediate solution but that there was a strong possibility of re-routing the bus to Chestnut Hill Road.

The final decision came down. The bus would pick up and drop off at the junction of Chestnut Hill and Jordan Lane. In order to turn around, it would enter Jordan Lane, drive to the cul-de-sac and turn around by (horrors!) backing up twice. But, there must always be a parent on duty during the backup to make sure no children were endangered.

We agreed and we kept to this routine for several months until a bus driver discovered, guess what; there was plenty of room to turn by backing up just once. No more need for parental assistance.

Now, 56 years later, I realize that I’m the only one of the plucky band of protesters left in the neighborhood. It was a crazy plan, but we carried it out and got results. Yay for us! 🌱



# Money Never Sleeps

By Tom Rice



*F*RANKIE THE BRAIN ROMANO, a well known gangster, was born in a small mountain top village in Sicily called Sant' Angelo Muxaro. It lies about 23 miles north of Agrigento and 75 miles south of Palermo. One road led up to the village, maybe 1200 feet above sea level, and for 2500 years or more the villagers would pour burning oil down on whichever invader was attacking Sicily at the time. It remained a tough village.

His parents left the village when he was just three years old and immigrated to America. But that village DNA ran deep in Frankie. He was tough but he didn't have to be a gangster. He chose to be one.

Frankie was brilliant. His mother would say he was smarter than a tree full of owls. The nuns at Saint Agatha of Sicily in Chicago where they settled agreed. He was off the charts in IQ and standardized tests. He won scholarships to the finest private high schools and colleges and graduated with honors.

The summer before senior year in high school, he got a job at a local currency exchange. The exchanges back then were small mom and pop storefront businesses with two bullet proof teller windows. The services they provided were minimal for the most part. Laborers came in to cash their weekly checks for a modest fee. Neighborhood ladies came

in to buy money orders to send as birthday gifts to nieces and nephews. In some areas you could pay your utility bills there. The more contemporary ones wired money back to the old country for recent immigrants.

Frankie absorbed everything about the business and saw where the future might be different. Every summer for the next five years, he returned. By the time he graduated from the University of Chicago he had taken over the original place and two more that he had convinced the original owners to open.

His neighborhood revolved around Taylor Street. It was almost all Italians and it produced the entire spectrum of Italian culture and society. Doctors, lawyers, artists, politicians, teachers, businessmen, judges, police and, of course, gangsters. It was a wide list to choose from but for whatever reason, Frankie the Brain chose that last career.

Currency exchanges serviced and were themselves cash businesses. What's more, they were licensed by the state. Once approved, they could pretty much do business as they saw fit. They didn't produce any product. There were no tangible costs of goods sold. They facilitated the transfer of money and helped move it from point A to point B. For a fee.



Frankie figured he could attract large scale cash transfers just as easily as small ones. Many of those large scale ones involved cash from illegal activities that Frankie would wash on his side and have come out clean on the other. It took a sharp financial mind to make it work and his nickname was well earned.

Ultimately, the business grew to 200 currency exchanges across the country. He developed relationships with the largest and most influential banks around the world. Frankie based his business on one simple fact – money never sleeps. It moves 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If someone can make it move seamlessly and successfully, that someone can make

an enormous amount of money.

That is until that someone gets too greedy and imagines himself too important in the grand scheme of things. Hubris has been the downfall of many including one awfully smart young man from a tiny little village in Sicily. You can be too smart for your britches, they used to say in the old neighborhood. Frankie believed money never sleeps and he was right. But he also believed he was indispensable and he was wrong about that.

Money still never sleeps and Frankie the Brain is sleeping for eternity. 🗿







# Stamford Food Scrap Recycling

by Caryn Furst



The Food Scrap committee's table at the Bartlett Arboretum's Earth Day event. Left to right Karen Fisher-Baird, Caryn Furst, Wendi Hoak, and Jennifer Henkin.

**F**OOD THROWN in the garbage is food that winds up in landfills where, rotting, it emits methane, which is a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide. About 17 percent of human greenhouse gas is emitted by landfills, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. This is why in 2021, The City of Stamford launched its Food Scrap Recycling Program.

In North Stamford, we see the impact of climate change on our trees and gardens. I know that on my property, trees are dying because they are stressed, my flowers are blooming earlier, and the drought has taken its toll.

Stamford residents are on pace to recycle 65,000 pounds of food scraps a year, up from 43,000 pounds last year. The food scrap program has a nice benefit to taxpayers, too. Trucking our garbage to landfills costs \$87 per ton. The city's Department of Recycling and Sanitation estimates that some thirty to forty percent of our garbage is food or organic waste that can be composted.

Here is how it works. Households can recycle cooked and raw food, even meat, cheese and oily foods not compostable in a backyard pile. Just bring your food scraps in compostable bags to one of two locations downtown: the Mygatt Recycling Center on Magee Avenue

and, soon, Fairgate Farm on Stillwater Avenue. Both locations have a big green composting machine that grinds up your food waste and turns it into compost. In the future, additional composting machines will be installed in sites in northern portions of the city.

Stamford opted to process the compost on-site instead of carting the food scraps elsewhere. This means that no rotting food sits longer than a few hours in the collection bins. It also allows the city to process the scraps into compost on site. You can take home the cured compost and use it to enrich your home garden if you wish.

Just follow the simple guidelines for what is and what is not compostable that are posted at [www.stamfordct.gov/foodscraprecycling](http://www.stamfordct.gov/foodscraprecycling). Then, bring your bagged scraps to the collection sites. Try a Compost Carpool with your friends and neighbors to avoid multiple trips.

The city sells food scrap recycling kits at cost. These optional kits include a countertop bin, a 6-gallon transport bin with a locking lid, and a roll of compostable bags. The \$20 kit and \$2 rolls of bags can be purchased at the Transfer Station (101 Harborview Ave) and Stamford Government Center (888 Washington Blvd) by cash or check only. Residents are free to use their own containers. 🌱



SUNSET PHOTO: MICHAEL CALLAHAN







PHOTO: MICHAEL CALLAHAN

# If you build it...

By Barbara Espinosa Occhino

*I*T WAS APRIL, 2020. Jack Frost had surrendered his wintry winds to the spring showers and longer daylight hours. This year, the change in seasons was burdened with the unanticipated anguish of the global pandemic. It was a collective experience that stripped us of activities, gatherings, and work and family routines.

I found ways to keep my sanity during the quarantine weeks. Having read several studies on the mental and emotional benefits of sustaining familiar schedules, I continued with morning workouts and getting dressed as if I were going to the office. My husband, Ron, and I are business owners, and we worked from home.

I didn't want to go down the rabbit hole of boredom, so I found online dance, music, art, and writing classes. But no matter how busy I kept my days, the human connection was missing. Sure, it was great to stay in touch, often hearing from folks I hadn't spoken to in years. But the opportunity to shake a hand, give a hug, and feel the shared energy of a hearty laugh in person was forsaken.

I knew my family, friends and neighbors were all in need of some semblance of normality. I longed to reclaim that sense of community but I knew safety was imperative. That's when it hit me. How about a spontaneous Happy Hour on Happy Hill, where I live? Amazingly, it had been months since I last interacted with a neighbor.

So I put aside all else and plunged my creative energies into designing an invitation. I would invite neighbors to grab a lawn chair and bring beverages and snacks at 5:00 to our cul-de-sac. There would be plenty of space for social distancing while enjoying the company of our friends. That night, I printed flyers and, with childlike enthusiasm, placed them in every mailbox on my block.

On Saturday morning, I gathered bags of chips, cookies and other treats and placed them in a huge bin to share. I cleaned the small folding table I stored in my basement and dusted off the outdoor folding chairs. I prepared some appetizers and gathered beer and wine to put in a small picnic cooler.

But when Happy Hour time came and no one appeared, I nervously sat alone, looking down the quiet, empty street. I was overcome with the embarrassing reality that I might be a party of one, the odd woman who lives down the driveway.

And then one person emerged from a driveway with a chair on his shoulder. Then the family with toddlers, the couple next door, the widow, the new residents with their elementary-age daughters on scooters, were all were walking towards me and smiling. My eyes teared up and my heart jumped with excitement! I instantly recalled the movie "Field of Dreams" in which Kevin Costner's character exclaims after building the baseball field, "If you build it, they will come."

That Happy Hour turned into a four hour celebration filled with laughter and children playing on the street. I recently had dinner at my next-door neighbor's house and a fellow guest gave me a heartfelt hug, thanking me for arranging that get-together. Two years have passed, but somehow that simple evening relaxing with our friends remains a lasting memory.

Another winter is upon us and we will once again hunker down in our homes, adapting to snowy days and the onset of flu and Covid precautions. For me, it remains a time when I am increasingly aware of the healing power of waving hello with a smile, sharing a moment of conversation, and appreciating each other. That is what North Stamford is all about. 🍷



# MISSION STATEMENT

*The purpose of the association is to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of life in North Stamford, identified as all areas north of the Merritt Parkway and within the limits of the City of Stamford. The mission of the Association shall include, but not be limited to:*

- ~ Seeking to ensure a fair share of city services commensurate with the taxes paid by North Stamford;*
- ~ Protecting the integrity and seeking to ensure the appropriateness of land use regulations and decisions, including but not limited to the regulations and decisions of the Planning, Zoning, Zoning Appeals, and Environmental Protection Boards of the City of Stamford;*
- ~ Encouraging the enhancement of the quality and availability of educational opportunities in North Stamford;*
- ~ Promoting communication among the residents of North Stamford;*
- ~ Maintaining the natural beauty of North Stamford, and:*
- ~ Advocating the need to preserve, protect and defend the natural resources and environment within North Stamford and its surrounding communities.*

### NSA Membership

Join your neighbors who are already working to help the community. Please complete the membership form and mail it to us with a check.

If you would like more information, phone us at 203.329.2498 or email us at [Info@northstamfordassoc.org](mailto:Info@northstamfordassoc.org)

Please send your Letters to the Editor to:  
**NSA**  
**P.O. Box 16830**  
**Stamford, CT 06905**  
**[www.northstamfordassoc.org](http://www.northstamfordassoc.org)**  
or  
**Mark Diamond at**  
**[markd53@hotmail.com](mailto:markd53@hotmail.com)**

### NSA Membership — Year 2023

**North Stamford Association Membership Dues**

Please complete this form and mail it to:  
P.O. Box 16830, Stamford, CT 06905  
or join/renew online at [northstamfordassoc.org](http://northstamfordassoc.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



North  
Stamford  
Association

Membership per Household

Gifts	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25
Sponsor	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50
Patron	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125
Benefactor	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125+





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## North Stamford Association

*An association of residents dedicated to preserving North Stamford as a wonderful place to live.*

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