

NOISES FROM THE CENTER

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What's happenin' at the Senior Center

May 2014

Article by:
Charlie Farrow

Anita Ballek Remembers the 1950's



Senior Center, 15 Great Hillwood Road
Moodus, CT 06469

In 1950, I was a junior at UCONN, majoring in Dairy Husbandry, minoring in chemistry and genetics. The Gelston farm had been fallow for 10 years, though brother Mort had been haying about 100 acres. I did have a big vegetable garden and made money with a vegetable route.

In 1951, I graduated, married Bob Ballek and started farming. The place was a mess—total neglect. We tore down collapsing barns. The original 1663 frame is contained in the red one you see today.

The fields were so deficient, we frosted them with 4 tons of lime per acre. That year we had corn like you've never seen. Sixteen feet tall, could grow 10" in a day. Higher than a camel's eye.

Bob insisted on re-planting corn and the crop diminished thereafter. Bob, Jr. and Nancy were born. We purchased good heifers, built up the herd since we had 30 stanchions. Bob quit working for his uncle on Ray Hill. We were selling four 40-quart cans of milk, which I could lift myself, to Brock-Hall Dairy in Hamden.

Mort farmed Edgar Williams' place further west on Maple Ave. The Dills were active. We farmed together, shared equipment, pooled efforts, gathered to fill silos. I fed everyone when they worked here, often serving 15 people with homegrown ham, beef, and vegetables. We took in girls from Long Lane in Middletown and relatives, scraping money together for the bills.

We also hosted exchange students, one each year, from around the world: France, Norway, Mexico, Iceland, Spain, Japan, India and others.

There were lots of farms in East Haddam. I was the Farm Bureau representative, traveling around collecting dues. I saw how beautiful the land is here—stonewalls, rolling hills, green vistas, mostly still clear.

There were many poultry farms with one or two coops and run by Holocaust survivors with terrible stories. They contributed the \$10 to join the Bureau readily. The old farmers were more reluctant. \$10 was a lot of money.

The Grange flourished. I was master in 1954-55. It was post-war but pre-TV. People wanted something, needed to be entertained. There were contests, concerts, dances, performances, with fantastic talent. Extra chairs were needed every time. But underneath the farmer population was dwindling.

We kept cleaning the property, adding cows and gardens. April, 1954, was incredibly mild. We planted everything—watermelons, which grew to 3 feet long, sweet potatoes, peanuts. There wasn't a frost until late October. I canned and froze and didn't run out all winter.

I worked to increase the genetics of our Holstein herd. 4% butterfat, which brought a premium, was

excellent. I got ours up to 4.4%. In 1956, Brock-Hall began collecting milk via bulk tanks. That was an expensive upgrade and drove most of the smaller Yankee and Bohemian herdsmen out of business.

1957 was a bad year. Prolonged drought. Corn only a foot tall. Bob broke his back in a barn demolition accident. I was on crutches for 8 months after a cow stepped on my foot and broke it.

I was cooking a cauldron of crabs, which blew up all over the kitchen and me. Nancy was an infant crawling on the floor but had crawled out of the way. My face swelled, so I had no eyes. My hair fell out. The treatment was to let water run over my face to slough off the dead skin. But then well went dry.

For 5 months, I filled 32 milk cans 4 or 5 times a day at Fred Ballek's River Road Farm, now Franklin Academy, and siphoned them into our well, and trickled water over my face. There I was—cast on my foot, monster face, looking like a black Martian. I got a whole new face with no scars.

The drought continued. All the farmers bought trailer after trailer of hay from Canada. Debt rose. The state legislators were mostly farmers and they created the Farm Drought Loan Program which provided long-term loans. But we ate well, managed, got through.

The decade ended with us growing and buying cows, around 150 animals on three farms—2 in East Haddam and 1 in Chester. We were trying to get big enough to hire help to take a day off, but it never happened. I did have a housekeeper to watch the children. I remember saying to myself, "Anita, you can go anywhere in the world as long as you're home for the 4 pm milking."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

May Birthdays

- 2 Sheila Doherty
Patricia Murray
- 4 Jovita Cozean
- 5 Jane Chisholm
- 6 Marge Gaudio
- 7 Donna Mae Peterson
Vincent Conte
Suzanne Bostelman
Judy Grant
- 8 Louise Pear • Fran Diament
- 9 Kay Alderman
- 11 Eleanor Ziobron
- 12 June Traceski
- 13 Linda Ryder-Munet
- 14 Edith Bostelman
Que Hodge
- 15 Alison Guinness
- 17 Helen Bonfoey
Bob Trotochaud
Gert Tanski
- 18 Rebecca Faul
- 21 Irene Briga
- 23 William Cantrell
- 24 Nancy Borge
Agnes Allen
- 26 Alice Kostoss
Richard Custer
- 27 Louise Roberts
- 28 Trish Miner
Elizabeth Sibley
- 29 Nancy Giesey
Austin Myers
- 31 Mary McCormick

Birthday and a Movie

Is it your birthday this month? If so, come celebrate with us...on us...for free. Our birthday party includes lunch, home-made birthday cake, and a movie.

Birthdays are not meant to be a secret, but, they are meant for surprises. Our surprise every month is the flavor of the cake and the movie selection. This month's birthday party is Monday, May 19th at 1 pm.



DOOR PRIZE

We are now having a monthly DOOR PRIZE at the Senior Center. Sign in everytime you come to the center.

The winner of the March door prize was Lee Heinrich. The prize was a \$10 gift card the Luncheonette

Drawing is held on the last day of each month.

Casino Wednesdays

The Mohegan Sun bus trip is Wednesday, May 7th. Cost is \$5. Bus leaves the Center at 8:15 am and returns around 3:00 pm. Please sign up in advance.

Need a Ride? Hop on the bus!



If you would like to go shopping, call for reservations by noon Monday.

Bus schedule:

- 1st Tues; Shop-Rite, Glastonbury
East Haddam Food Bank
 - 1st Wednesday; Casino
 - 2nd Tues; Stop & Shop, Walmart,
Ocean State Job Lot, Saybrook
East Haddam Food Bank
 - 3rd Tues; Shop-Rite, Glastonbury,
East Haddam Food Bank
 - 3rd Wed; Red Hat's excursion
 - 4th Wed; Cromwell, Walmart, Xpect
- The fee schedule is \$3. for shopping, \$5 for recreational trips.

The medical car fee will remain at \$5. for the present time.

UPDATED

Lunch Bus Has Been Cancelled

We will no longer be offering the bus to lunch on Thursdays. We did have a small, loyal group, but not enough interest to make the trip economically viable. We may offer this opportunity in the future. However, lunch is still being served Monday – Friday, at noon time. The food and the company are worth the trip to the Senior Center, so come on down!

Bingo



Bingo will be held this month on **Thursday, May 15th.**

You can sign up for lunch and bingo for \$5.00 or just bingo for \$3.00. Please sign up in advance.

Senior Services Coordinator: Brad Parker

Assistant: Susannah Griffin

Café Manager: Peg Ziobron

Program Coordinator &
Trip Coordinator: Alice Sabo

Ed Gubbins; Bus Driver & social
media guru

Medical Car Driver:
Mickey Pear

Noises Newsletter Editor:
Beth W. Schondorf
Photocopy Specialist:
Brad Parker

Newsletter Distrib. Team;

- Jennifer Beaumont
- Jovita Cozean
- Nancy Geysen
- Alice Sabo
- Loretta O'Mara

Telephone; 860 873-5034

Fax; 860 873-5198

Kitchen; 860 873-5197

Email; Seniors@easthaddam.org

Center Hours

8 am - 3 pm weekdays

“Taste of East Haddam”

East Haddam businesses and restaurants invite you to the inaugural “Taste of East Haddam” on Saturday, May 3rd (rain date Sunday, May 4th), 11:00 am – 3:00 pm, at Heritage Park.

To date, there are 36 vendors participating in this celebration of local businesses. Meet the folks who can help you keep your money local, and in the long run, save you time, gas, and money. Fourteen restaurants will tempt you with their classic dishes. Businesses and organizations will provide information about themselves and their services, in addition to sponsoring raffles, demos and coupons.

Activities include dance performances and face paintings. And, for your four-footed friends, free dog and cat nail clippings (11:30 am – 1:30 pm) and a pet costume contest (2:00 pm), judged by radio personality David Fisch, *Fisch in the Morning*, radio 104.1.

Visit www.ehbact.com for an updated list of vendors. A portion of the proceeds will benefit our local *Ray of Light* equine rescue. Admission: \$10; seniors and children \$5.



Monday, May 12th, 1:30 pm
Summer Fun & Summer Sun:
Protect Yourself and Be Safe!

The summer months are upon us, and with it, an increased risk for skin cancer.

Join us for a conversation with Deborah Ringen, RN, MSN.

Topics will include ;

- how to protect yourself from ultraviolet radiation
- how to properly care for your skin
- how to spot the cancer warning signs
- how to and what to look for as you look.

Renter's And Homeowner's Rebate

The State of CT participates in a program entitled *Elderly & Totally Disabled Tax Relief Program* for renters & homeowners. Call the East Haddam Assessor's Office at 860-873-5026 to inquire about the age, residency, & income requirements as well as proof of disability (when applicable) for both programs. Application period is Apr 1, 2014 through Oct 1, 2014 regarding fiscal year 2013. Renters must fill out an application every year.

The Senior Center will host a **Blood Mobile on Thursday, May 29th** with the American Red Cross from **1:30 to 6:30.**

Anyone interested in either donating blood or volunteering to help at the event should call the Senior Center

Photography Discussion with Joe Sina

Did you get a new camera for Christmas? Have one in the closet gathering dust? And you promised yourself you would use it more, but you can't face reading through that huge on-line manual (or you have no idea where that manual went), or you are discouraged because the pictures you took just don't look as good as you were expecting.

Well, what if there was a place to exchange solutions and new ideas? With Spring just around the corner with its bursts of color, not to mention all those family occasions with the children and grandchildren, now seems like a good time to start a photography self-help group. If you would like to try the same thing here at the Senior Center, bring your point-and-shoot or digital SLR camera, your questions, and your experiences.

While there is no guarantee that anyone will have all the answers, let's see if we can each walk away with at least a couple of tips to bring more enjoyment to the simple act of taking a picture. Joe Sina, a recent East Haddam transplant from the Philadelphia area, who picked up his camera again after 30+ years, has volunteered to moderate a discussion for those of all ability levels. Joe doesn't have any formal training in photography, but over the last few years has been developing his skills by showing his “mistakes” to other photographers, many of whom had useful tips from their own experience.

Monday, June 9th, 1:30 pm.

Senior Center Trips



The E H Senior Center members just won't stay home! Below is a list of our up-coming road trips. If one of our adventures sparks your interest, please call for more information. All trips are open to the public.

Suffolk Downs - \$64. Thoroughbred Races Action-packed races just outside of downtown Boston. Beautiful location, luncheon buffet at the *Topsider Restaurant*, fourth floor of the Clubhouse. Enjoy the races inside the Clubhouse or trackside. **Wednesday, July 16th.**

Newport Playhouse & Cabaret Restaurant - \$59.95 Spend the day at the Surf & Turf Matinee! An extensive buffet including stuffed shrimp and Angus prime rib. One free Bloody Mary or Mimosa. A play - *Murder at the Howard Johnson's* – Is all fair in love? Funny comedy about a love triangle. The day ends with a Cabaret performance. **Thursday, August 14th.**

Pumpkin Festival Keene, New Hampshire - \$82.00 Spend the day enjoying nature. Outdoor band shell with live entertainment. Food & Craft Court. Street performers. Grand Pumpkin Illumination of 30,000 pumpkins....you can even bring your own carved pumpkin to include in the “tall tower of pumpkins”! Lunch at Chandler's Restaurant. **Saturday, October 18th.**



Walking Path

To all the walkers, runners, and those who are thinking about being one or the other.....**all are welcome to use the path at Heritage Park.** Covered in snow and ice, we hadn't seen it for the longest time. We are happy to announce that it is still here!

A gentle reminder: no pets allowed.



Thanks to our own Ed Gubbins for donating his time to create a Facebook page for the Senior Center.

We are dragging Brad "clicking and screaming" into the 21st Century! Join us, like us, follow us.

You will find photos, announcements and the monthly newsletter, menu, and activities calendar.

Senior Center
15 Great Hillwood Rd
P.O. Box 623
Moodus, CT 06469

The Senior Center
will be closed on

Monday



Friends of the Center

We wish to acknowledge and thank the following people for supporting the endeavors of the Senior Center. Contributions help make the Center hum along for all to enjoy.

- Hildie Aitken: cranberry sauce
- Mary Augustiny: copy paper
- Peggy Blake: Sweet & Lo
- Barbara Boluck: coffee
- Wilson Brownell: copy paper
- Leona Gowac: Readers' Digest, large print editions
- Susannah Griffin: 2 spring wreaths on front doors
- Sam & Gail Guy: copy paper
- Georgia Hutchinson: cash donation
- Kyle: styrofoam cups
- Travis Loucks: knitting, crocheting, craft items
- Bhavna & Vijay Mehta: Juice for the Pancake Breakfast

- MPAC Middle School: puzzles, games, crafts supplies, etc.
- Alberta & Rob Mirer: syrup for the Pancake Breakfast
- Diana & Tim Moore: condiments
- John & Corrie Paardenkooper: cash donation
- Brad & Dot Parker: 6 pots of spring flowers
- Donald & Gail Sama: cash donation
- Henry & Karen Schweizer: cash donation

Flea Market – Tag Sale

The Senior Center will be hosting a flea market – tag sale. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for details. Table space will be available for rent for \$10.00. Contact the Senior Center for information. The usual summer menu fare will be offered for purchase. Heritage Park, Saturday, **August 16th, 9 am – 2 pm.**