

# NOISES FROM THE CENTER

Vol. 4, No 1

What's happenin' at the Senior Center

January 2015

Article by Charlie Farrow

## Bill Fiala—In Memorium

(Bill died November 25<sup>th</sup>, shortly after this interview.)

I was born August 9, 1919 at Hartford Hospital to Charles and Anna (Bedran) Fiala. Brother Charles, Jr., was there when I came home two weeks later to Millstone Farm on Fiala Hill in Hadlyme.

On the 70 acres purchased by my grandfather in 1888, we had cows, chickens, pigs, a woodlot, and gardens. We grew whatever we or the animals ate. My job was to keep the cows out of the corn.

The cash crop was 7 acres of cigar wrapper tobacco, which we sold at the train depot in Tylerville. The Culbro Brothers' buyers would come down from Hartford on the train. Everybody around worked tobacco.

My mother took in boarders during the summer. Many were Czech relatives from New York who worked the farm. Some were overflow from the Working Girls Vacation Society, which had two houses further up the hill. Everybody—my parents, the relatives, and the Society girls—spoke Czech.

As a young boy I hung out with Ken Hall, Crary Brownell, who eventually ran the mill, and a lot of Hungerfords.

Henry Parker had a water-powered mill at the bottom of Fiala Hill, where it intersects Clark Hill Rd. He made tool handles, ground grain, and made pomace, which is the apple mash needed to press cider. We grew the apples, pressed the juice, and let it ferment to hard cider in barrels. I went to Henry's funeral which was held in his house.

Grades 1-5 I walked to the Hadlyme North School on Town St. by



Senior Center, 15 Great Hillwood Road  
Moodus, CT 06469

the Congregational Church. My pals back then were Ken and Minor Gates. Lucille Narducci's name seems familiar as the teacher.

School was every day, September through June, 9 to 2 or 3 in the afternoon. I liked learning reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography. The teacher started the fire, and the day began with the Pledge and the Lord's Prayer. I had a girl friend back then—Arlene Boorman.

My mother packed my lunch. We had morning and afternoon recess on the church green. We played "Hide and Seek" and "Kick the Can," which the teacher made us change to "Kick the Candy Can" because she didn't approve of how "Kick the Can" sounded.

Minor Gates, who lived on Day Hill Rd., and I later developed a Niantic Bay scalloping business. The scallops were known worldwide. We'd rake them up from the bay's bottom and sell them to dealers. We made some good money. We also shucked tons of them out behind his house along Boggy Meadow Brook, which flowed past the schoolhouse.

1931 was an eventful year for me and my family. I was in fifth grade. My father died and the town closed the North School. For grades 6-12 I went to Nathan Hale Ray High School, the building that's now vacant. If I'm the last living graduate of the Hadlyme North School, I must be one of the oldest living graduates of the high school as well.



My first cousin Frank Fiala had the bus route and picked me up every morning. Because I had a bad knee, I didn't play sports. But I did work the farm with my mother and brother.

I served three years with the Air Corps during WWII. I was an airplane engine mechanic stationed in China and then Burma. I worked on planes flown by the Flying Tigers.

I came back to Millstone Farm after the war. I loved farm life—tobacco, cows, pigs, then Christmas trees. I worked a lot for others—cutting cordwood, hauling lumber, clearing fields. If it could be pulled, I pulled it.

I started selling Christmas trees for 75 cents apiece. Now a good, big tree is 75 dollars. I made wreathes and sprays. You can work forever on a tree farm because the job is never done. Even this year, with me here at Gladeview in Old Saybrook, people will still be cutting trees on the property.

You're talking to a hoarder. I've got stuff in barns I haven't used in 50 years. Then, if I use it just once, I'm delighted. But the trucks, bulldozers, tractors, saws, and farm equipment have really piled up.

I remember Moodus Center, which I drove to in a Model A Ford. Charlie Bernstein and Abby Pear had stores. Dr. Horsefield took care of you. I'd stop at Bill's Soda Shop or Weinstein's.

I have no idea why I've lived to be 95. I cut stove wood into my 80's and sold Christmas trees into my 90's. Then I started having trouble getting around. I miss living at home, but you would too.

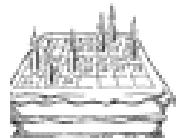


## Birthday & a Movie

On the fourth Monday of every month, we have a birthday party – homemade birthday cake and a movie. If it is your birthday month and you are 60 or older, please join us for lunch, for free, anytime during the month. Reserve your lunch by noon the day before you wish to come. This month's party is on **Monday, January 26, 1 pm.**

### January Birthdays

- 1 Jan Balcom
- 2 Helen Adams • Barbara Borent
- 3 Elise Snell
- 4 Barbara Feldermann
- 5 Dolores Newman
- 6 Joe Sina • Roger Snell
- 7 Elaine Woods
- 11 Diane Beggs • Loretta O'Mara
- 13 Wilson Brownell • Joan Nedovich
- 14 Patricia Huckabons
- 15 Margarete Martin • Ellen Park
- 16 Alice Sabo
- 17 Janice Nowik • Julie Peterson  
Julie Pionkowski
- 19 Bob Bostelman
- 20 Sharon Fritz • Marianne Heinrich
- 21 Greg Chasko
- 22 Howard Borgnine  
Linda Stajduhar  
Dennis Whitty
- 23 Darlene Dunbar • Vivian Horton  
Lauren Olszanski
- 24 Ruth Shumbo
- 25 George Drenga • Renee Goldstein  
Carl Green
- 27 Beatrice Balvin
- 29 Eva Davis  
Robert Sheedy



**Birthday Joke** for the month:  
Patient to the Doctor: "I get heartburn every time I eat birthday cake." Doctor to the patient: "Next time, take off the candles."

## Blood Drive

The Senior Center will host a blood drive in conjunction with the **American Red Cross on Thursday, January 29, 1:30 pm – 6:15 pm.** It will be cold outside so we will serve hot soup to re-energize you!

If you are interested in donating blood or volunteering to help at the event, please call the Senior Center to sign up.



## Healthy

### Living Expo

The Senior Center is planning its first-ever **East Haddam Healthy Living Expo: Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.** We are fortunate to have as a co-sponsor the *Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley*. The focus will be on living a balanced life, which is the secret to healthy living. So, mark your calendars, stay tuned for details, attend the fair, and discover those "secrets"!

### Youth Update

Colleen Sullivan, Prevention Coordinator for the E H Local Prevention Council (LPC), will be giving a brief presentation summarizing some the results of our most recent survey of E H youth. It will highlight some of the drug & alcohol issues we are seeing with our youth, particularly marijuana. This is an important issue for all of us in E H because drug & alcohol use among our kids has an effect on every one of us. All community members from all sectors of the community are encouraged to attend. **Mon, Jan 12, 1:30 pm.**



## Shopping Schedule

Fee: \$3.00. If desired, the bus will stop at the East Haddam Food Bank.

**Tuesday, January 6:** Aldi  
**Cromwell:** Walmart, Xpect,  
**Tuesday, January 20:**  
**Old Saybrook:** Walmart, Stop & Shop, O.S. Job Lot

## Chess

Do you play chess? Would you like to learn how to play chess? Would you like to teach us how to play? If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, please call the Center.

## Mah Jongg

Is anyone interested in learning to play Mah Jongg? Similar to the Western card game Rummy, Mah Jongg is a game of skill, strategy, and calculation that involves a degree of chance. The game is played with a set of 144 tiles based on Chinese characters and symbols. We are planning a beginner class after the first of the year if there is enough interest. Call the Center for details!

Currently, the Mah Jongg group meets Tuesdays at the Center.

### Senior Services Coordinator:

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Café Manager: Peg Ziobron

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**Alice Sabo**

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## Center Hours

**8 am - 3 pm weekdays**

## Many, many thanks...

The Senior Center continues to be

a busy, happy place because of all the volunteers who support our events. This month, we would like to thank

those who made our Christmas and Holiday festivities a *festive success*. The East Haddam Middle School Chorus not only sang but danced their way into our hearts. We have many talented youngsters in this town! The "Craft, Tag, & Bake Sale" was once again a huge success, thanks to all who donated their time, their "once-upon-a-time-treasures", and their baking, cooking, and crafting talents. The tag sale items filled the meeting room. The baked goods flew out the door. Well, actually, many were eaten on the premises! The \$5 lunch – chili, bread, & coffee – kept the crowd energized to shop. The vendors who rented tables provided the shoppers with holiday gifts for those on their "nice lists". Special, special thanks to those who contributed one of the 45 prizes for the *Teacup Auction* - congratulations to all the winners!

And, of course, we thank our neighbors and friends for supporting this annual event.

## Time to think TAXES...



We know it is still winter, in fact it has hardly begun, but April 15th will sneak up on us!

The Senior Center will once again provide state trained tax consultants to assist with both Federal and State tax forms. Seven days are scheduled: **Wednesdays, 9 am – 3 pm: February 18, 25. March 4, 11, 18, 25. April 1.** Please call the Center to sign up for your private consultation.

## Can't Get Enough of a Good Thing!

Cora, Massage Therapist extraordinaire, will be here **Wednesday, January 21, 9:30 am – 2:30 pm.**

Call to schedule an appointment: 30 minutes for \$25. Start the New Year with a treat for yourself...experience what we have all been enjoying. Wear loose, comfortable clothing.

# Upcoming EVENTS

Please sign up for all events!  
Stop in or call.

Blood Pressure Check:  
Tues, Jan 6

Shopping & Food Bank:  
Tues, Jan 6

Casino Trip: Wed, Jan 7  
Executive Meeting: Thurs, Jan 8  
Club Meeting: Mon, Jan 12, 1:00  
LPC Discussion: Mon,

Jan 12, 1:30

Red Hats Trip: Wed, Jan 14  
BINGO: Thurs, Jan 15, 1:00

**CLOSED: Mon, Jan 19**

Shopping & Food Bank:  
Tues, Jan 20

Cora: Massage Appointments:  
Wed, Jan 21

COA Meeting: Thurs, Jan 22  
Pot Luck Dinner: Thurs,

Jan 22, 6 pm

Birthday & Movie: Mon, Jan 26  
Blood Drive: Thurs, Jan 29

Souper Bowl: Fri, Jan 30, noon



also Our annual **Souper Bowl**, one of our special events that focuses on food and a wonderful side dish called friendship, will take place **Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon.**

For \$5, lunch will include bread, dessert, and coffee. Take – outs will be available. 50 & over are invited. Please call or come on in to sign up to volunteer to contribute a homemade soup, chowder, or chili **and/or** to sign up for the luncheon.

Come out of the cold and into the warmth and coziness of the Center!



The dinner bell is-a-ringing! Join us for our January Pot Luck Dinner: **Thursday, January 22, 6:00 pm.** 50 and over invited. Please call to sign-up and to let us know what you will bring.

NEVER lend money.  
It gives people amnesia!

## Sign-In, Please!

"Why? Because we like you!" Remember the *Mickey Mouse Club* song? Anyway, we ask everyone who attends the Senior Center to sign-in because it means "money". When the Center applies for its operating budget and for any local, state, or federal grants, attendance numbers are requested; not names, just numbers. So, when you walk in the front, or the back door, think "Sign-In, Please!"



A BIG thank you for all the donations. For January, we would like sunshine and warm days!

## Presentation: Ethiopia, Island of Africa!

40+ years ago, Joe Sina was offered the chance to go to Ethiopia as part of the Peace Corps. After looking at a map to find out exactly where the country was located, Joe spent 2 years there. Recently he had the opportunity to spend 2 weeks touring different areas of the country, reliving some experiences and visiting many new places. From the predominantly Coptic Christian north to the tribal areas of the south, from the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela to the geology and archeology of the Omo Valley, site of the earliest known hominid fossils, Ethiopia is a fascinatingly diverse country. If you are curious about this portion of Africa, or are just interested in a travelogue, join us at the Senior Center on **February 9 at 1:30** when Joe will present a slide show of his trip and share his perspectives.

Senior Center  
15 Great Hillwood Rd  
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## Inclement Weather Policy

Winter is here, and with it, all that winter weather that often times wreaks a little havoc. **A reminder:** When the **Town Offices are closed** due to inclement weather, the **Senior Center is closed**. The Senior Center does not follow the closings or delays that the schools follow.



The winner for *November* is Ellie Breinan.

Ellie's prize is a \$10.00 Gift Certificate to our very own *Hilltop BBQ*. Ellie never wins anything so it is about time!!

## December

Dot Afonso: cash donation  
Anonymous: wheel chair, bench, office supplies, popcorn

Susanne/Bob Bostelman: juice  
Jean Burdette: greeting cards

Denise Collin: cash donation  
Bill Guinness: tea

Audrey Martin: copy paper  
Charlie Myer: food, etc.

Janice Nowik: poinsettias

Pat/Jim O'Brien: poinsettias  
Jean/Brian Olson: ice cream, supplies

Trudy/Peter Novak:  
Mr. Coffee machine

Corrie/John Paardenkooper:  
cash donation

Gail/Donald Sama: cash donation  
Rain Spiegel: holiday decorations

**Salem Ice Cream:** tubs of ice cream & yogurt  
**Jansky Rubbish Removal:** since 1973!



## Closed

MARTIN  
LUTHER  
KING JR.  
*Day*

Monday, Jan 19

"I Have  
a Dream..."