

06880

Where Westport meets the world

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## Westport Tech Museum Welcomes (Virtually) The World

Posted on [May 8, 2023](#) | [2 comments](#)

New York City boasts remarkable museums: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Natural History and dozens more (including the [Museum of Sex](#)).

Hartford is known for the Wadsworth Atheneum; New Haven, the Peabody and Yale Center for British Art.

Westport has MoCA, and the Museum for History & Culture.

And now, the Westport Tech Museum.

You probably never heard of it. Unless you're a family member or friend, you can't get in.

But founder/curator Jay B. has amassed — and displays, in an attic and [online](#) — an astonishing collection of over 400 computers, video games, calculators, cameras, radios and more.

That's one fascinating fact.

Here's another: Jay is just 17 years old. (His last name is unpublished for privacy reasons. His museum is in his parents' home.)

The private school junior comes from a tech family. His father was into computers; his grandparents started radio station WMNR.

One day in 2018, in his dad's 15-year-old car, Jay found a circa-2002 iPod. Then, in his basement, he discovered a box of old phones: a Palm Pilot, Treo, Startec and others.

He brought the box to his room. Months later, he put the objects on a shelf. To add context he researched their backgrounds, and added information cards about their designers, production and more.

As Jay added to his collection, he needed more space. The attic was perfect.

Now — even with added shelves — it's almost too small. His 400-plus items fill most of the space.



**A wide-angle view of Jay's Tech Museum. Not all of it could fit in this photo.**

Every day, Jay works on his museum. He does more research, writes new cards, finds new stuff. ([Click here](#) for a virtual tour.)

A great source is eBay. He goes to tag and estate sales, and the Elephant Trunk flea market in New Milford.

Westport residents donate objects too. One recently offered a rare Osborne 1 computer.

Jay's personal favorites include a Commodore Amiga 1000 (his most expensive purchase — \$825 — but “definitely worth it”); an original Macintosh, and (newly donated by his grandfather) a 1937 radio. “It’s a work of art,” Jay says.



**The actual radio Jay's relatives used, to listen to news after the attack on Pearl Harbor.**

His wish list includes an Apple Lisa ("they're expensive, and hard to find — all the listings are in places like Slovenia," Jay says), and a Virtual Boy video game system.



**Jay's creativity is boundless. Here, he carefully recreates Steve Jobs' iconic photo, with Apple's ground-breaking Macintosh.**

Jay's museum is not open to the public. He doesn't want random strangers walking through his parents' house.

But the people who see it (spoiler alert: I'm a lucky one) are amazed.

Fortunately, the rest of the world can experience the Westport Tech Museum virtually ([click here](#) to enter). "Visitors" have come from as far as India, Malaysia and South Korea.

They marvel at his collection.

But they can only see its wonders — including a 1910 Edison light bulb that still shines; a 1905 crank telephone that still rings, and microphones and a 1940s-era television that once belonged to legendary voice actor Mel Blanc (Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Yosemite Sam, Barney Rubble) — in cyberspace.



**A still-working 1910 GE “Edison bulb,” and an early, pre-QWERTY keyboard typewriter.**

They won’t get a personal tour, as I did. They can’t hear the excitement in Jay’s voice, as he describes each piece — and its back story — to me.

There are some things technology just can’t do.

But if it’s related to technology — particularly whatever was cutting-edge, whether in the early 1900s or early 2000s — it’s there in Jay’s attic.

He’s not sure what the future holds, for his museum or technology in general.

But perhaps a few years from now, Jay will find a way to display today’s amazing — but tomorrow’s ho-hum — ChatGPT.

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*Now, scroll down for a tour of a few highlights from Jay’s Westport Tech Museum.*



# Welcome!





**This crank telephone from 1905 still rings.**



**This 1914 Victrola still plays music.**





**An early television (top) and microphones owned by Mel Blanc.**



**The “History of Audio” shelves display short-wave radio, a reel-to-reel tape, 8-tracks and much more ...**



**... and continues with LPs and 45s, cassettes, mini-discs, Walkmen, a Watchman and iPods.**



**Atari 400 (1979): early personal computer with Pac-Man.**



**A 1981 Osborne 1 — the first commercially successful portable computer. It was donated to Jay's Tech Museum by a Westporter.**



**The very popular Apple IIe (left), and the first commercially successful computer with a mouse: the 128K, introduced with great fanfare as the “Big Brother” Super Bowl commercial in 1984.**





**A 1984 Commodore 64 — the best-selling personal computer ever.**



**This Commodore Amiga 1000 (1985) is Jay's favorite.**



**Early Apple laptops.**





**Jay with a NeXT computer. The company was Steve Jobs' venture after being forced out of Apple. It was a bit pricey, and sold only 50,000 units. But its graphical user interface was very influential.**



**An iMac: the first Apple product with a USB mouse (1998).**



**An Apple Cube (2000-2001) was a rare Steve Jobs failure. Priced incorrectly for its features, it sold only 150,000 units.**

### **iMac G3**

After a hard decade without Steve Jobs, Apple Computer decided to buy Steve Jobs' failing company, NeXT Computer, and return Jobs to the company. Jobs quickly made the decision to eliminate the failed Apple Newton line, and released the iMac G3, the first iMac, in 1998. The iMac was a huge success first being released in the original "Bondi Blue" color and later in 4 other colors in the following year. They were known as "the Five Flavors" with an advertising slogan of "Yum". In total, 13 colors and patterns were released for the iMac G3 by the time it was discontinued. The iMac was a big success for the education market, who used the computers in schools to create computer labs. It also played a big role in eliminating outdated technology such as the floppy disk and serial ports. Instead, the computer used CD ROMs and USB connectors. It was eventually replaced by the iMac G4 and eMac and discontinued on March 18, 2003.

### **iMac G5**

The iMac G5 was released in 2005 and discontinued in January 2006.



Descriptive cards and posters add information about many items. Jay writes every one himself.



**Top: a 1992 “brick phone” and rotary phone. Bottom: pagers and beepers.**





A collection of camcorders includes the JVC product used in 1985's "Back to the Future."



Jay's museum includes "tech toys." He also displays Cabbage Patch Kids (which saved Coleco — originally the Connecticut Leather Company — from bankruptcy after its video games were supplanted by home computers. Also, though not high-tech, on the 2nd shelf from the top: an original pie plate from Bridgeport's Frisbie Co.



*(Westport is filled with people doing amazing things. "o688o" is proud to bring you their stories. [Please click here](#) to support our work.)*

Posted in technology, Teenagers

Tagged Westport Tech Museum

## 2 Comments

## Pic Of The Day #2211

Posted on May 7, 2023 | 2 comments



## **Doubleday/PJ Romano Field, behind Kings Highway Elementary School (Photo/Tom Feeley)**

Posted in [Education](#), [Pic of the Day](#), [Sports](#)

**2 Comments**

Tagged [Doubleday Field](#), [PJ Romano Field](#)

## **Photo Challenge #436**

Posted on [May 7, 2023](#) | [21 comments](#)

Gilbertie's Herbs & Flower Garden is [101 years old](#).

The iron wagon and concrete planter on the beloved business' Sylvan Lane property may be even older.

But Gilbertie's — which sells far more than herbs and flowers — always looks fresh and new.

Its many loyal customers always go back for more. Among them (no doubt) are Mousumi Ghosh, Amy Schneider, Lisa Gold, Andrew Colabella, Seth Schachter and Michael Calise.

All 6 knew exactly where last week's Photo Challenge could be found. ([Click here](#) to see.)

Today's Photo Challenge commemorates one of at least 2 times George Washington passed through Westport. The plaque was placed in 1932, honoring the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Father of our Country.

If you know where in Westport you'd see this, click "Comments" below.





(Photo/John Lisee)

Posted in [Local business](#), [Photo Challenge](#)  
Tagged [Gilbertie's Herbs & Garden Center](#)

**21 Comments**

## Roundup: Railroad Parking, Clarendon Art, Woman's Club Show ...

Posted on [May 7, 2023](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Prices for the Saugatuck and Greens Farms parking lots will increase on July 1.

The new rates are:

Single permit: \$400 plus \$25.40 state sales tax = \$425.40 yearly

Multi-permit: \$500 plus \$31.75 state sales tax = \$531.75 yearly.

Daily parking: \$6. That's the first daily parking increase since 2011.

For full information on railroad station parking, [click here](#).





**Weekdays at the train station are more crowded than this weekday shot. (Photo/Carolyn Van Duyn)**

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[Clarendon Fine Art](#) has 80 locations in the UK.

Now they've got one in the US.

Their 22 Main Street gallery opened in February. Last night, a large crowd welcomed them, at their official launch party.

CEO Helen Swaby loved Westport, from the moment she saw it. She calls our town 'a flourishing cultural and creative center (which), like Clarendon, has a strong commitment to preserving community, traditions, and quality

of life.”

The world’s largest gallery group wants to make art “accessible to all.” They showcase an eclectic portfolio of artists, across a broad range of genres.

The new 2-story building features an international portfolio of originals, collector’s editions, and sculpture from famous names, alongside emerging talents.

Works from artists like Picasso, Miro, Warhol and Hockney; cutting edge pop, street, and contemporary art; more traditional work including landscape, wildlife, still life, figurative and abstract art, is all on view — and sale — at Clarendon.



Clarendon’s 2nd floor. (Photo/Dan Woog)

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Speaking of art: There are plenty of great works at this weekend’s Westport Woman’s Club 8th annual show.

Yesterday, there was also A-list entertainment.

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame keyboardist Mark Naftalin (Paul Butterfield Blues Band) and Crispin Cioe — who has played sax with James Brown, the Rolling Stones, Solomon Burke, Darlene Love, Tom Waits, Ray Charles, Robert Palmer, Bronski Beat, the Ohio Players, Usher and others — offered music to admire art by. Both are Westporters.

The show ends today: 2 to 5 p.m., 44 Imperial Avenue.



Mark Naftalin and Crispin Cioe, at the Westport Woman's Club. (Photo/Miggs Burroughs)

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In an age when every youngster seems to be on a device — and/or traveling up and down the East Coast playing youth sports — it's nice to see that these kids had good old-fashioned fun yesterday, decorating a driveway on Gorham Avenue.





Elle and Axel Enslin, their mom Kara, and Charlotte Peters, hard at work.

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Lovely lilacs are today's "Westport ... Naturally" featured flower. Thank you, Dana Kuyper!



(Photo/Dana Kuyper)

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And finally ... it's great having Mark Naftalin as our neighbor (see story above). He is very generous with his time, and talent.

He's sure had a legendary career. Here's one small sample, from 1965:



I Got My Mojo Working



*(Get your mojo working — and support “06880.” [Just click here](#) — and thank you!)*

Posted in [Arts](#), [Children](#), [Entertainment](#), [Transportation](#)

[Leave a comment](#)

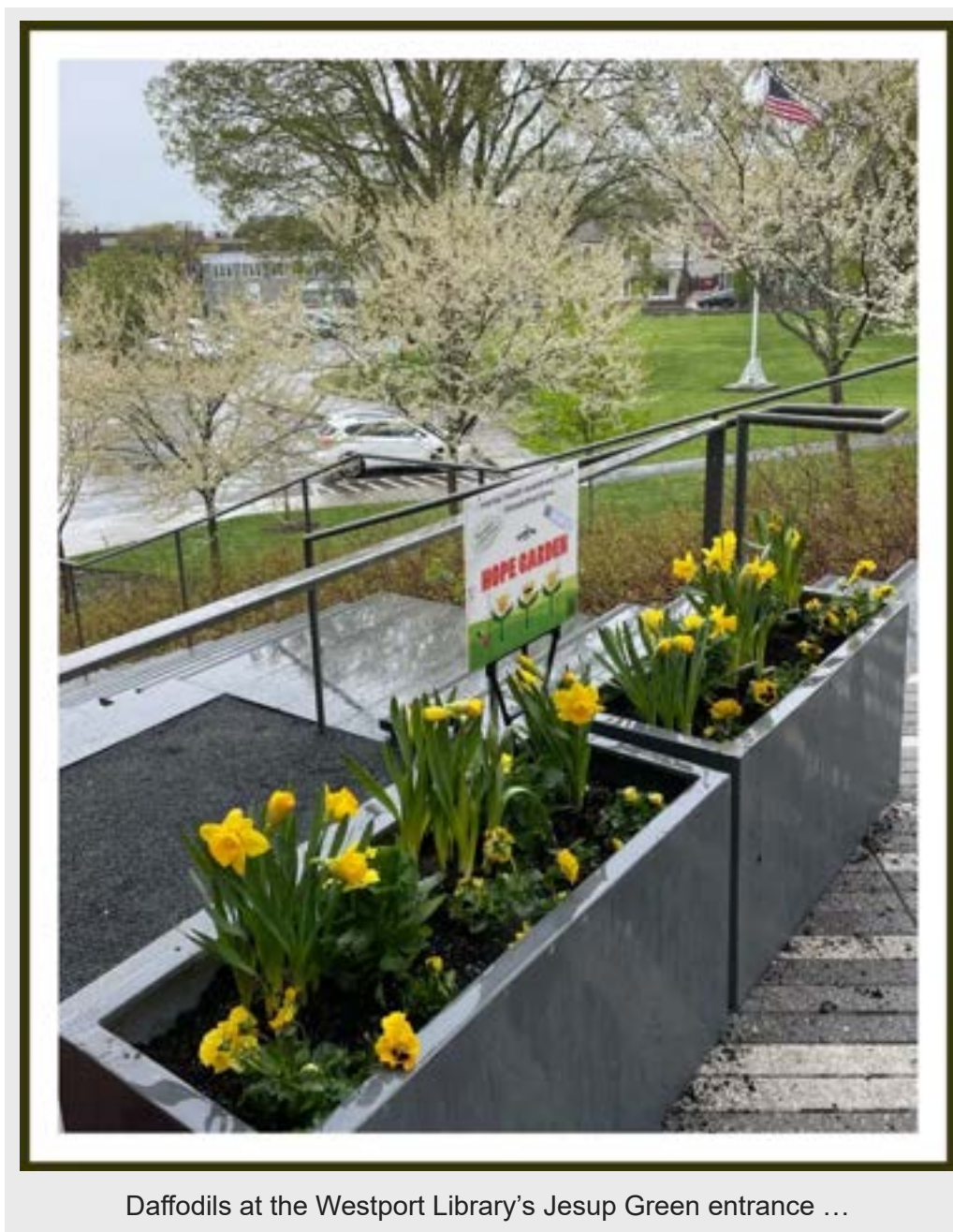
Tagged [Crispin Cioe](#), [Mark Naftalin](#), [train station](#), [Westport Woman's Club](#)

## Yellow Tulips Look Lovely — And Raise Mental Health Awareness

Posted on [May 7, 2023](#) | [4 comments](#)

Yellow flowers.

If you’ve been to Town Hall, the Westport Library, Staples High School, or Bedford or Coleytown Middle Schools recently, you’ve seen them there.



Daffodils at the Westport Library's Jesup Green entrance ...

It's not a coincidence. It's part of the "Yellow Tulip Project," helping break the stigma of mental illness.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. To honor it — and let those who suffer know they're not alone — the Westport Garden Club placed small "Hope Gardens" of yellow flowers at high-visibility spots.



... and outside the cafe.

It's a great project. Of course, there's a deeper Westport connection.

Garden Club member Kelly Pollard knew Yellow Tulip Project co-founder and executive director Suzanne Fox from their days in Staples High School's Class of 1983. Kelly brought the idea to them. They unanimously agreed to go forward.

The Yellow Tulip Project was inspired and co-founded by Suzanne's daughter, Julia Hansen.

As a teenager Julia felt alone dealing with depression. Deafening silence and stigma kept her from reaching out for help.

But after losing her 2 best friends to suicide as a high school sophomore, Julia found her voice. She began speaking out.

She and her mom had an idea: create a space where youth could erase stigma, build community, and inspire conversations about how to combat rising rates of suicide. The Yellow Tulip Project was born.

All over Westport, you can see it blossom.



Yellow tulips outside Staples High School.

To learn more about the Westport Library's resources and materials, [click here](#). To learn more about the Yellow Tulip Project, [click here](#). (Hat tip: Kelle Ruden)

*(The Westport Garden Club will have more information on the Yellow Tulip Project at their annual Plant Sale. It starts at 9:30 a.m. on May 13, at Jesup Green.)*

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Westport Library materials and resources.

Posted in [Education](#), [Environment](#), [Library](#), [Staples HS](#)  
Tagged [Suzanne Fox](#), [Westport Garden Club](#), [Yellow Tulip Project](#)

**4 Comments**

## Pic Of The Day #2210

Posted on [May 6, 2023](#) | [5 comments](#)



**Clarendon — the British art gallery — opened its first US location in February. Tonight they held a grand opening party, with this grand greeter at its Main Street entrance. (Photo/Dan Woog)**

Posted in [Downtown](#), [Local business](#), [Pic of the Day](#)  
Tagged [Clarendon Fine Art](#)

**5 Comments**

## **Roundup: Robin Tauck/Y Challenge, Narcan, Pop-Up Sale ...**

Posted on [May 6, 2023](#) | [3 comments](#)

Robin Tauck and the Westport Weston Family YMCA are teaming up again.

The former trustee, benefactor of the Robin Tauck Wellness Center and longtime executive with her family's international travel company celebrates the Y's 100-year anniversary with a \$100,000 matching challenge.

From now through June 30, Robin will match every dollar donated at \$500 and above. Funds will go toward new programs for seniors, adults, and youth that improve health outcomes.

They include fitness and well-being for arthritis, Parkinson's, cancer management and other diseases, and special strength and conditioning program for youths.

Funds will also benefit the Y's financial assistance program, serving under-resourced families and those in need.

Donors who contribute \$1,000 or more will enjoy a special summer event.

For more details and to participate in the matching grant challenge, [click here](#).

Questions? Email [kguthrie@westporty.org](mailto:kguthrie@westporty.org)



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Opioid abuse is rampant everywhere — including Westport.

And in the event of an overdose, everyone can help.

A free overdose awareness and Narcan training session is set for next Friday (May 12, 4 to 5 p.m., Positive Directions, 90 Post Road West).

Topics include how and when to administer Narcan, and prevention resources and messages to share.

Registration is required; [click here](#).



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A pre-Mothers Day pop-up shopping event This Friday (May 12, 12-4 p.m., Yoga45, 201 Main Street) benefits [A Better Chance of Westport](#).

A portion of sales will go to the local organization, which for 20 years has offered educational opportunities to academically gifted young men of color.

It's a great way to shop local, at a women-owned store, for Mom — and for a great cause!



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Among many other things, Verso Studios and the Westport Library are becoming a film hub for movie buffs throughout the area.

On May 19 (7 p.m., the Lundberg Family Foundation Masters Film Series launches, to tie it all together.

The first event is the Connecticut premiere of the documentary “Heaven Stood Still: The Incarnations of Willy DeVille.” Are residents Chris Frantz and Crispin Cioe are featured in the film.

A Q&A after the showing with the filmmakers, including the filmmakers; Frantz and Cioe, and DeVille’s niece.

The Lundberg Family Foundation Masters Film Series will showcase films and filmmakers. It bridges independent production and established innovation. Special screenings coupled with master classes will “educate and inspire on modes of production and storytelling craft, as well as technical, philosophical, and historical aspects.”

Master classes on June 14 and 21 will focus on techniques to convert a film concept into a compelling documentary story.





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Brown University 1968 Bernicestine McLeod Bailey adds another degree later this month. The IT leader and longtime advocate for inclusion of alumni of color will receive an honorary degree — doctor of humane letters — at the commencement ceremony.

Following her career as an IBM systems engineer, she established McLeod Associates, a pioneering minority-owned IT consulting firm.

McLeod Bailey is a founding member of TEAM Westport, and former board member of the Westport Library and Fairfield County’s Community Foundation.

At Brown, she is a longtime member of the Pembroke Center Advisory Council and served as founding chair of its Archives Committee with a focus on elevating gender history. She has established funds to support undergraduate diversity and initiatives highlighting Black history at the university.

McLeod Bailey served as a Brown trustee from 2001 to 2007, and is an honorary lifetime member of the President’s Advisory Council on Diversity. She also received the Brown Bear Award, the Brown Alumni Association’s highest volunteer honor.

McLeod Bailey and her husband, Brown alumnus Harold Bailey Jr., are the parents of Brown alumni Aisha (Class of 1999) and Harold III (Class of 2003).



Bernicestine McLeod Bailey

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Last night's Pic of the Day showed [tulips blooming beautifully](#) at the Minute Man monument.

How did they get there?

Andrew Colabella — RTM member and all-things-Westport booster — planted 100 bulbs.

Another 400 are coming this fall, he promises.



Andrew Colabella, with a bulb at the Minute Man monument. (Photo/Jimmy Izzo)

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Former Westporter Kristin Erickson died April 25 in New Fairfield. She was 62.

She studied at Northfield Mount Hermon, Denison and Southern Connecticut State Universities, and a earned a master's degree in social work from Fordham University.

As a hospice social worker, Kristin had “a remarkable capacity to show up for people and their families in very dark moments.” She was passionate about death with dignity, access to mental health resources, and caring for senior dogs and dogs with high needs. She was recently certified as a death doula.

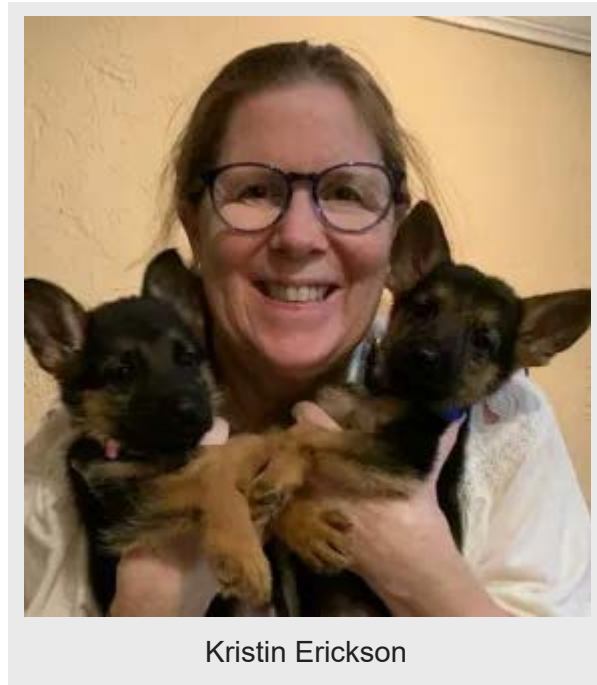
Kristin and her former husband Dan Carpenter raised 3 children in Fairfield. They were her pride and joy. Her family says, “she was a creative, goofy, and above all, deeply loving mother. She also filled roles as a cool aunt, second mom to her kid’s friends, and dedicated dog mom.”

Kristin spent the past years between West Palm Beach and New Fairfield with her partner Ken Green and his dogs. She spent a lot of time with her mom, Sue, as well. Kristin had recently become certified as a death doula and had

continued to hold space for people at the end of their lives.

Kristin is survived by her parents, Susan and George Erickson; children Nell, Guthrie and Aria Carpenter; siblings Jon and Martha Erickson and their partners Jayne and Bones; nieces Riley, Mullein, Romy, and Faye, and many lifelong friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to [Compassion & Choices](#), a non-profit Kristin was passionate about.



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There's always something different to see from Grace Salmon Park.

Patricia McMahon framed this "Westport ... Naturally shot beautifully, as spring comes to the popular Saugatuck River spot:





(Photo/Patricia McMahon)

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And finally ... in honor of Bernicestine McLeod Bailey's honorary degree from Brown (story above), here is the world's greatest college fight song.

Sorry, Michigan and Notre Dame. But this one's clearly the best.

## Brown University Fight Song - "Ever True to Brown"



*(Be ever true to "o688o"! [Please click here to support your hyper-local blog.](#) Thank you!)*

Posted in [Entertainment](#), [Library](#), [Local business](#), [Obituaries](#), [YMCA](#)

**3 Comments**

Tagged [A Better Chance of Westport](#), [Andrew Colabella](#), [Bernicestine McLeod Bailey](#), [Kristin Erickson](#), [Minute Man monument](#), [Narcan](#), [Positive Directions](#), [Robin Tauck](#), [Yoga45](#)

## Online Art Gallery #160

Posted on [May 6, 2023](#) | [3 comments](#)

Peter Barlow was a young man in Westport when Queen Elizabeth was crowned.

Today — older, but still quite active, in his eastern Connecticut home — he celebrates King Charles' coronation.

Peter's painting is one of a baker's dozen works of all kinds in today's online art gallery. As always, the range of subjects and mediums is both wide and impressive.

This is *your* feature. Everyone is invited to contribute. Age, level of experience, subject matter — there are no restrictions.

All genres are encouraged. Watercolors, oils, charcoal, pen-and-ink, acrylics, lithographs, collages, macramé, jewelry, sculpture, decoupage and (yes) needlepoint — whatever you've got, email it to [o688oblog@gmail.com](mailto:o688oblog@gmail.com). Share your work with the world! (PS: Please include the medium you're working in — art lovers want to know.)



"King of Diamonds" (Peter Barlow)





“Channeling O’Keefe” (Amy Schneider)





Untitled (Ellin Spadone)



"Old Mill Solitude" (Fred Cantor)



Artist Ken Runkel says "Lighthouse Man\_2" was "inspired by the great Surrealists of the era (a touch of Dali, a dash of Magritte)."



"Whoa! Judge Not That Ye Be Not Judged" (Mike Hibbard)



"Flamingo: The Only Bird Not Seen in 'Westport ... Naturally'" (Steve Stein)





"Fais Do Do" — abstract acrylic resin epoxy  
(Patricia McMahon)



"Pablo's Girls" (Ann Chernow)



"Dancing Musical People" — encaustic wax (Dorothy Robertshaw)





"Marlboro Man Still Smoking" (Karen Weingarten)





"A Colorful Sail" (Anne Bernier)



"Nocturne" (Lawrence Weisman)

Posted in [Arts](#)

**3 Comments**

Tagged [Amy Schneider](#), [Ellin Spadone](#), [Karen Weingarten](#), [Lawrence Weisman](#), [Mike Hibbard](#), [Patricia McMahon](#), [Peter Barlow](#), [Steve Stein](#)

**[OPINION] Living With Regret**

***Ron Berler is a 1967 Staples High School graduate. He writes magazine and newspaper stories on a variety of subjects, from education to guns. Today, he focuses on baseball.***

We've all done things in life we regret. And we regret them all the more for never having owned up to them, for never having made things right.

Major wrongs, minor wrongs, it doesn't matter. Sometimes it's the small ones that trouble us most, if only because they were so avoidable. A word of thanks here, an unprompted act of kindness there. That's all it would have taken to avoid a regret – or to fix it.

An avoidable act of mine was to never tell Craig Matheson, the decades-long director of the Staples Players, how much it meant to me to be cast in one of his plays.

Even today, performing in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is among my most cherished memories. I still don't quite understand why I landed the part. I wasn't much of an actor; the theater critic for *the Town Crier*, Westport's local newspaper, described my performance – generously, I thought – as "entirely adequate."



Ron Berler (center) in "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

But in gifting me that part, Mr. Matheson opened a world of art to me that I hadn't truly appreciated, filled me with a new sense of confidence and introduced me to a circle of cast and crew to whom I still feel a bond.

Years later, having been away from Westport for decades, I walked into a Post Road restaurant in which Mr. Matheson happened to be dining. It was my opportunity, finally, to properly thank him, to make things right. He

was grateful for my words, but not nearly so grateful as me for the chance to finally say them.

That was a moment I'll always cherish. But like so many of us, I'm guilty of other oversights that I've never managed to correct.

I'm 73 now, and those missed opportunities – by now, some of them lost opportunities – continue to nag at me. It takes so little to be kind, to be thoughtful. The best I can express it is through an essay I wrote recently for the opinion page of the *Chicago Tribune*, regarding another person I dearly wanted to thank, but who died before I was able to do so. Gratitude is such an easy gift to give.

The *Tribune* has a paywall. I posted it also on [Medium](#). I thought “o688o” readers would appreciate it too.



Craig Matheson — founder of Staples Players — was very involved in the Saugatuck Church too. In 2010, for its 175th anniversary celebration, he played the role of founding father Daniel Nash.

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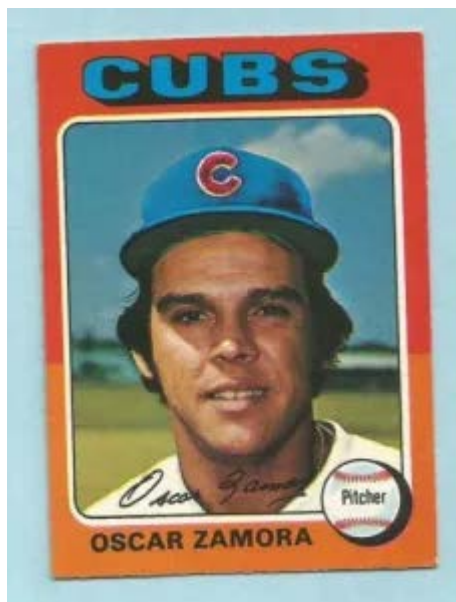
How do you thank someone who has passed?

Oscar Zamora was a relief pitcher for the Chicago Cubs in the mid-1970s. He wasn't very good, to put it kindly. During his Wrigley Field tenure, Cubs fans would serenade him as he exited the game, often in mid-inning after having surrendered a blizzard of runs. Here is a sample verse, sung to the tune of the long-ago Dean Martin hit, “That's Amore.”

*When the pitch is so fat  
That the ball hits the bat,  
That's Zamora!*

From the press box where I sometimes sat, he seemed to accept the razzing with equanimity, as if he agreed it was deserved. I was a young reporter at the time, and after games I'd pass him in the clubhouse as he dressed quietly at his locker, while I sought out one or another of his more prominent teammates.

Zamora pitched for the Cubs for parts of three seasons, and I can't remember ever interviewing him for a story or even stopping to chat. He was one in that category — an interchangeable part, a minor actor who wouldn't last long in the game.



Zamora was 31, in his second big-league season, on the day in May 1975 when we came closest to sharing a real conversation. My target that afternoon, as I strode past his locker, was one of his teammates — a star infielder I knew slightly who would win the league batting title that year. I had a favor to ask.

Like Zamora and his Cubs teammates, I too played the game, though not credibly enough to have made my high school team. Still, baseball was my passion. I played shortstop for a bar-league softball team, and my bucket-list dream was a new glove. Not just any glove — a major league-quality one, made of a grade of leather and stitching so fine, it was manufactured exclusively for professional ballplayers.

No problem, the infielder said. He named a price and I handed him the money. A week later, I returned to the clubhouse and the infielder waved

me over. He reached into his locker and tossed me a new glove.

I thought he was joking at first. It was a Wilson A2000 — a popular model readily available in any decent sporting goods shop. Not a pro-quality one. Not at all what I'd asked for, or desired. I stood there silent, head dipped, feeling taken, staring at this unwanted object.

Word spread round the clubhouse about what had transpired. One of the infielder's teammates, centerfielder Rick Monday, eyed the Wilson A2000 and shook his head. "If you wanted a glove, why didn't you ask me?" he said, shooting a look at the infielder before returning to his locker.

I was still staring at the retail-store glove when Zamora, the pitcher to whom I'd never spoken, approached. "Here," he said. "Take this." In his hand was a Rawlings Heart of the Hide professional-model glove. "It's my backup," he said, meaning the one he used during pregame drills.

I was too stunned at first to speak. I took his gift and turned it gingerly in my hands, as if I were examining a piece of fine jewelry. "I don't know how to thank you," I finally managed and kept repeating. The glove was the stuff of my dreams.

You'd think after such unprompted kindness that I would have sought him out regularly in the clubhouse, sat with him at his locker and gotten to know him as a treasured acquaintance, if not as a friend. I certainly had the time and opportunity. But I was 25, self-absorbed, oblivious. To my shame, I never did. By the time I realized my error, my loss, he had left the game. I never saw him again.

Zamora's glove, though — that was a different story. I would take the field wearing his gift for the next 45 years, until I turned 70, till suddenly ground balls I had once readily handled seemed to come at me like sniper fire. It was time to retire.



Ron Berler



Time for the glove to retire, too. Over the years it had taken a battering, its leather worn raw and thin, like a faded house stripped of its paint.



The glove.

I'm 73 now and haven't played catch since hanging up my cleats. But every so often, I slip on Zamora's glove and flex it till the pocket brushes my palm, till it feels as it did on the ball field, like a second skin. And I think, too, of the man who'd once worn it and of his selfless generosity.

Last December I sought to contact Zamora, to tell him about the glove and what it still means to me. But mostly, I hoped to get to know him. A Major League Baseball Players Association representative, wanting to help, mailed a letter to his last known address but received no response. Later, I learned he had opened a Miami shoe store after retiring, and I located Cosme de la Torriente, the attorney who had handled his business affairs.

I was too late, de la Torriente told me over the phone. Zamora died four years ago. He was 75.

The attorney and I spoke for almost an hour. Zamora had been not only a client but also his friend. He told me Zamora had emigrated from Cuba to Miami as a child and had returned to Miami after retiring from the game. The two had played local ball together and sometimes had gone nightclubbing.

"Oscar knew everybody, and everybody knew him. He loved people," de la Torriente said. "What he did for you, that was his character. You would have liked him."

I wish I'd made the effort.

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