



Message from the President



I was delighted by the good turnout at our annual meeting on October 23rd. It was a pleasure to report how much progress we've been making with membership recruitment and the expansion of services and activities. The suggestions that were offered after the session

were constructive and helpful.

HomeHaven is doing very well at the extremes. For our neediest members, the services we offer are being delivered effectively by competent providers and the recipients express real satisfaction with the quality of our work. For those who have joined to be sure that HomeHaven will be here when they need it, our social events, clubs, and interest groups are busier than ever. Activities, parties, and excursions are good reasons for being members.

But I think we're still short of a vital element of our stated goal of being a "village." I'm talking about the middle area — between those who really need help and those who primarily engage in the fun stuff. An important part of the village metaphor — neighborliness — is not getting enough attention. We really ought to be doing more together now, while we're still hale and able, so we'll be more inclined to be generous and helpful to one another when we need more support.

In order to foster this kind of neighborliness, we'll be offering several projects that we can participate in together. For example, we plan to engage a shredding service so we can trim down the piles of outdated but sensitive documents we've all accumulated. We'll also arrange periodic collections of hazardous waste so we can safely and legally help each other dispose of old paint, batteries, surplus medications, and potentially dangerous household products. It would be nice if we could work together to organize garages, cellars, and attics, if only as a step towards engaging our vetted haulers. And are your books like mine — accumulating exponentially, with new ones being shoved on top of the old? It's probably time to get friends together for

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*"There's no such thing
as bad weather,
only unsuitable
clothing."*

— Alfred Wainwright



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some sorting. There are several local purchasers of used books, as well as many institutions that would appreciate donations.

A HomeHaven task force is just starting to consider an opportunity for another kind of neighborliness — shared housing. In our area there are many large homes currently occupied by “empty nesters” and single elderly residents who might benefit from having housemates to share expenses and tasks like transportation and household maintenance. Our objective is to familiarize ourselves and our members and other interested parties with the concept of shared housing, its technical, legal, and social particularities, and to encourage the development of relationships that might lead to beneficial shared housing arrangements. The task force will publish a manual on shared housing, similar to our useful directory for *Life Care, Assisted Living, and At Home Programs in the Greater New Haven Area*, and you’ll be kept abreast of our progress in the coming months.

We welcome other ideas, so if you think of more ways we can work together, let’s talk. Please call the office at 203-776-7378.



Louis Audette, President

**A bequest to HomeHaven is
a gift that keeps on giving!**

HomeHaven News

Ellen R. Brainard, *Editor*
erbrainard@gmail.com

Jane Jervis, *Associate Editor*
hh.jervis@comcast.net

Published by HomeHaven, Inc.
291 Whitney Avenue, Suite 103
New Haven, Connecticut 06511
203.776.7378

info@homehavenvillages.org

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IN MEMORIAM

JOEL COGEN (1933–2014)

HomeHaven extends condolences to the family and friends of Joel Cogen, who passed away on November 8, 2014, at the age of 81. He is survived by his wife, Beth Gilson, a New Haven lawyer, his daughter, Jessica, his son, Jeffrey, and five grandchildren.



A graduate of New York City High School of Music and Art, Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations, and Yale Law School, Joel was a humanitarian, entrepreneur, musician, and lover of the arts.

He retired in June 2007 as executive director and general counsel of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), an organization he started in 1966 to advocate for municipalities and promote efficiency and responsiveness within their governments. Under his leadership, CCM grew to become the dominant voice for Connecticut’s cities and towns.

Before his tenure at CCM, Joel spent nine years at the New Haven Redevelopment Agency, the largest urban renewal program in the nation outside of New York City. As an assistant to then-mayor Richard C. Lee, he created new programs in community and human resource development, manpower training, and housing, including the development of housing co-ops for low-income families, an endeavor in which New Haven led the nation.

From 1968 to 1976, Joel was a partner in Cogen, Holt, and Associates, an urban affairs consulting firm. For Joel, the needs of the client, the reputation of the firm, and the importance of doing work of social value mattered far more than ownership or financial gain.

A colleague wrote of Joel: “Despite his personal intellect and work skills, his chief talent has been his ability to shape the process of decision-making so as to bring out the most creative in those around him.”

Joel exhibited a lifelong love of the arts and was an avid theatre, museum, and concert-goer. An accomplished flutist, he performed regularly for more than 20 years with the Wayland Woodwind Quintet at local venues, including the Yale Center for British Art.



Happy Holidays! A Season of Celebrations

by Jane Jervis



Seldom does our calendar offer us such a rich array of holidays to celebrate as in December and January. Christmas, various saints' days, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Twelfth Night/Epiphany. This is no coincidence. Many holidays were originally based on astronomical events, and thus connected with timekeeping and calendars.

Winter solstice is the shortest day (and longest night) of the year, when the sun is at its lowest point below the celestial equator and begins its climb back to the vernal equinox. (The word solstice means sun standing still.) Many primitive peoples celebrated the "return of the sun" with festivals of light. The solstice is again increasingly celebrated in its own right by those practicing Wicca (or witchcraft, or neo-paganism). Some Wiccans claim both a male and a female deity, and they celebrate natural rhythms, with holidays on the solstices, equinoxes, and four sabbaths in between.

Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus, did not get attached to December 25 until the 4th century, when Christianity moved from a persecuted sect to the official religion of the Roman Empire. There is evidence that it was placed intentionally to supplant Saturnalia, a Roman festival of light (and debauchery) leading to the solstice. Twelfth Night commemorates the arrival of the Magi who followed a star (perhaps a nova) to offer gifts to the baby Jesus.

Celebrations of Christmas have taken many forms in many places and times. The Puritan colonists emphatically did not celebrate it at all, but in Scandinavia, for instance, Santa Lucia wears a crown of candles in a festival of light. Christmas trees and mistletoe probably derive from the Druids. Saint



Nicholas, a 4th century Greek bishop who at various times has been the patron saint of almost everybody, was said to secretly put coins in shoes that were left out for him. His feast day is in early December and he eventually became Santa Claus. For many people today, Christmas has become a secular holiday, an orgy of consumerism – perhaps returning to its pagan origins.

Chanukah, or Hanukkah, is the Jewish Festival of Lights. Its date is fixed in the Jewish calendar, a lunar calendar only 354 days long, and it occurs sometime between late November and the end of

December, sometimes coinciding with Christmas. It commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after its desecration by Antiochus in the second century BCE. There was enough oil for the lamp in the Temple for only one day, but miraculously it burned for eight days. Observant Jews light one candle each evening for eight days, and have a tradition of giving gelt, a small coin, because even the very poor are required to light candles and Jews who can are required to give them the means. The giving of lavish gifts may have arisen in response to the rising commercialization of Christmas.

Kwanzaa is a celebration of African family, community, and culture during the last week of the year. First held in 1966, it was expressly designed to help African Americans and others of the African diaspora connect with their history and culture. The seven principles of Kwanzaa (a Swahili word) are: Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith. The celebration culminates in a feast and gift-giving.

New Year's Eve and Day perhaps speak for themselves.

But historically and astronomically the new year began with the spring equinox. (Aries, the first sign of the zodiac, was in March. October was the 8th month, November the 9th, December the 10th, and February has a peculiar number of days.) Only in the 16th century was January 1st officially adopted as the first of the year by most European countries, by Russia and the British Empire in the 18th century, and by the Ottoman Empire in 1918.



Whatever you choose to celebrate, have a happy one!

Jane's academic specialty was the history of astronomy, including the history of timekeeping and calendars.

Holidays are festive times for many of us, but they can be particularly difficult if you are alone. If you would like company during the holidays, or if you would like to invite a solo member to share a part of your holidays, please call the office by mid-month.



HEALTH MATTERS

Goodnight, Sleep Tight, by Nissa Simon

With shorter days and longer nights, our thoughts this season turn to sleep. Here are some of this year's more fascinating findings from around the world.

A full moon can mess with sleep.

According to folklore, a full moon interferes with sleep. Although the scientific community has been divided on the truth of this assertion, a recent study comes down on the side of ancient wisdom.

Researchers at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden found that study participants woke more often and slept 25 minutes less during a full moon than during other moon phases. Compared with women, men had more trouble falling asleep and slept less when the moon was full. And it's not simply the light of the moon that's to blame: The rooms in the sleep laboratories have no windows. The researchers speculate that there may be a built-in biological clock affected by the moon, similar to the one that regulates circadian rhythm.

Want to learn a new language? Sleep on it.

Swiss researchers wanted to see if students learning Dutch could improve their memory of that language by listening to new words while they slept, so they gave a group of native German speakers a series of Dutch and German word-pairs to learn.

Half the group then went to bed and slept while the others stayed awake. Several hours later researchers played back a tape of the words they had learned earlier to both groups of participants. At 2 a.m., the sleepers were wakened and everyone was tested. Those who had been asleep when they heard the playback did better.

If you're thinking of trying this method, learn the words and record them before you go to bed. Then set your machine to play them back quietly during non-REM sleep, the deep, dreamless stage of sleep that occurs one to three hours after you turn out the light.

Tart cherry juice to the rescue

Montmorency cherry juice may help you sleep longer and better. Louisiana State University researchers found that adults over 65 who suffered from insomnia slept an additional 90 minutes each night after two weeks of drinking a glass of tart cherry juice twice a day.

Montmorency cherries are a natural source of melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle. In addition, the pigments that give cherries

their ruby-red color are rich in compounds that help increase the availability of tryptophan, a precursor to serotonin, which produces healthy sleep.

"Placebo sleep" helps your math and word skills.

Believing that you slept better than you did boosts cognitive performance the next day, according to researchers at Colorado College. Two groups of subjects were told about the importance of sleep quality and then connected to a machine that purportedly measured their 'brainwave frequency' and the time they spent in REM sleep the night before. The tests were a sham.

The participants were then given a battery of cognitive tests. Those told they had slept better scored higher on tests of attention and memory than those who learned they slept poorly.

The take-away message? How you slept last night isn't only about how you actually slept, it's also about how you think you slept.



Happy Birthday to HomeHaven members with a birthday in December

Hans Bergmann Sue Eisner

Lucy Hutchinson Constance LaPalombara

Scott Long Copeland MacClintock

Barbara Parry Wendy Wells

or in January

David Belt Ann Feinstein

Wayne Meeks Sandy Methot

Bruce Russet Mary-Jo Warren



Cooking in Different Languages (CinDL)

How to Sign Up

This popular activity is open to all HomeHaven members interested in cooking and sharing good food from around the world. Dinners take place on the 3rd Monday of each month. You may come regularly or only now and then, but you **must sign up for each dinner you wish to attend**. Signing up is simple: Here's how:

- Look for the **date** and the **sign-up deadline** for the upcoming dinner in each **HomeHaven newsletter** (See ONGOING GROUP MEETINGS) or in the "HomeHaven Happenings" emails from the office.
- If you wish to attend, simply RSVP to Celeste Markle at c_markle@yahoo.com by the deadline date. If you don't have email access, you may phone her at 203-397-0492 or call the office.

ERVerse:

THE BLENDER OF YOUR DREAMS (or The Gift-Giver's Dilemma)

Two years ago, our son requested a blender for a holiday gift for his family. They like smoothies, but their blender had not stood up to the task.

It seemed a simple request, but. . . .

Picking blenders is perplexing.
Many questions, all so vexing.
Must it serve for chopping ice?
Crush frozen fruit to something nice?
Turn raw kale to green puree?
Make a creamy smooth parfait?
All with just a gentle whirring,
Like a kitten softly purring,
Sitting still on countertop,
Never leaking, not a drop;
A proper jar that will not shatter,
Even filled with fibrous matter.
Though no such blender may exist,
Your loving mother will persist,
And to your doorstep will be sending
The perfect instrument for blending.

— Ellen Brainard



"So what language is this supposed to be??"

Celeste will answer your email and let you know that you are on the list for that month. **You must RSVP to get on the list.**

The complete list is then divided between hosts (there are usually two dinners and two hosts). Your host will contact you and your fellow diners to coordinate the menu. Then, just show up for dinner with your ready-to-serve dish and enjoy good food, good company, and good conversation!

For photos and more details, see "Cooking in Different Languages" by Jane Jervis in the September 2014 HomeHaven News, p. 3, by clicking [this link](#).

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

What can YOU do?

Drive someone to the doctor?

Visit a homebound member?

Fill in at the office?

Change a lightbulb?

**Call the office (203-776-7378)
to discuss volunteer opportunities.**

Let us know what you can do.

It's good for us, It's good for you.

HOME MATTERS: Tips from Bruce Lawler Chimney Cleaning

We're all veterans (victims) of high-pressure calls pushing us to have our chimneys cleaned. What's the real story?

Most modern houses have two types of chimneys — fireplace flues and the flues related to furnaces. In gas-furnace flues residue buildup is very unlikely, and if oil burners are maintained there should be no pressing reason to have recurring cleanings. This is the season for contract furnace maintenance. Ask your serviceman about the condition of the burner throat. If there's no soot or oily ash buildup there, there won't be any in the flue either. Have him inspect the flue as part of the service, just in case.

Fireplace chimneys are different. Log fires burn slowly and are relatively cool, so unburned tars and soot can accumulate on chimney liners. Pointing and sometimes even entire bricks can become dislodged inside interior walls as older houses settle so, if you have a lot of recreational fires, it's a good idea to have fireplace chimneys inspected every five years and especially when you move into a newly purchased house.

The greatest potential for tar and carbon buildup in chimneys happens with wood-burning stoves. Second generation modern stoves (those built after 1980) generally have catalysts to help with better combustion, but overnight banking and slow burns inevitably lead

to tar and soot buildup in stove flues. You never want to experience a chimney fire — they're terrifying! — but if one starts shut all the lids, vents, and dampers immediately and *then* call the fire department!

Remember — NEVER discard wood ash until it is cold to the touch throughout the pile. Put it in a closed metal container, not a carton or plastic garbage can. And, once a fireplace is cool after a fire, remember to shut the fireplace damper so household heat isn't drawn out and wasted.

TAKE A MINUTE!

If you've been helped by HomeHaven's referrals to service providers, please call the office or drop us a note and tell us about the experience.

Were you satisfied?

Were there problems?

We'd like to know how things turned out.

203-776-7378

— Laughter, The Best Tonic —

HELP WANTED: Copy Editor Vacancy!

(Actual advertisements from newspapers across the country)

- Semi-Annual after-Christmas Sale
- Our bikinis are exciting. They are simply the tops.
- Stock up and save. Limit: one.
- Sheer stockings. Designed for fancy dress, but so serviceable that lots of women wear nothing else.
- Now is your chance to have your ears pierced and get an extra pair to take home, too.
- And now, the Superstore — unequaled in size, unmatched in variety, unrivaled inconvenience.

HORN OF PLENTY

When a music student brought his French horn to my shop for repair, he complained that the instrument "felt stuffy" and he couldn't blow air through it. It's not unusual to find partial blockages in brass instruments if small items get lodged in the tubing, but when I tested the instrument, the horn was completely blocked. After much probing and prodding, a small tangerine dropped out of the bell.

"Oh," said the musician when I handed him the fruit. Seeing the bewildered look on my face, he explained, "My mom used the horn for a cornucopia in a Thanksgiving centerpiece."

Computer Corner: Where's Grandpa?

Hints for Searching the Internet

by Christa Sammons

The Internet is a marvelous thing. Never before has so much information been easily available to us without moving from our chairs or desks. The trouble is, all that information is no longer neatly organized in encyclopedias, dictionaries, and reference books. Type "eggplant recipe" into Google search (www.google.com) and you get over 5 million "hits" in less than a second. How to find just what you want in this welter?

Luckily, Internet search engines are now *almost* as intuitive (although not as nice) as real live reference librarians when it comes to knowing what someone is looking for. You can simply type your question into Google in natural language and get some good answers. "How to skin a haddock filet?" brings up several sets of directions about how to deal with that thin-skinned fish—as well as reasons not to skin it at all.

A lot of folks get interested in family history as they age. I know I did. One project was finding out more about my American grandfather. But alas, many people have shared his name, Homer Smith.

Google suggested almost 39 million sites relating to Homer Smith, and none of the results at the top of the list had anything to do with Grandpa. When you're searching for an obscure or specialized bit of information like that, put as many relevant words as you can think of into your search request, words that are likely to be used in relation to your topic. When I added Grandpa's middle name and the towns where he lived (Homer Haskell Smith Rockport Gloucester) to my search request, he jumped right to the top of the Google results. Another trick is to put quotation marks around words you want to find as a phrase, and to work variations on that phrase as it might appear in various sources. Using the example of my grandfather, I might also do searches on "Homer H. Smith," "Homer Haskell Smith," "Smith, Homer H." and "Smith, Homer Haskell," the inverted forms being the way his name might appear in a list or directory.

Google advanced search (www.google.com/advanced_search) is a useful tool for pinpointing information. On that screen, you can enter exact phrases to be searched, eliminate words you don't want to include, and limit the results by language, extension (.edu, .com, .org), or by when the website was posted. The last can help if you're researching a topic over time and want to look for recently indexed information, sites you might not have run into before. The words-not-wanted function eliminates a lot of static. When I'm looking for sites relating to my home town, for instance, I sometimes exclude Virginia, VA, and Gloucestershire so that my search results for Gloucester, Massachusetts, aren't diluted by a whole lot of stuff about other Gloucesters.

Help with computer problems is always available from HomeHaven. Call the office at 203-776-7378 and ask Kate to connect you with one of our volunteer computer consultants.

Introducing New Members

HomeHaven is delighted to welcome the following members who joined us last month.

Amity Village

Sue & Gus Davis

ERV Central

Phyllis & Joseph Crowley

Ralph Franklin

ERV Downtown

Beverly Carbonella

Rochelle Lambert

Drika Purves



*The first fall of snow is not only
an event, it is a magical event.* ❄️
❄️ *You go to bed in one kind of world
and wake up in another quite different,
and if this is not enchantment then
where is it to be found? — J.B. Priestley*

Ongoing Group Meetings

BOOK GROUP

Monday, December 1, 11:30 am-1:30 pm at the home of Jane Jervis, 36 Lincoln Street, New Haven, for discussion of *The Opposite of Loneliness* by Marina Keegan. We will also choose books to read in the coming months. New members are welcome and we will welcome back former member Marti Mattia who is in a writing program much like Ms. Keegan's. Please contact Jane at 203-773-3503 or hh.jervis@comcast.net to let her know you will attend. Bring your own sandwich or salad for lunch; drinks will be provided.

Monday, January 5, 2015, 11:30 am. Book title and location, to be decided.

PINS AND NEEDLES

Monday, December 8, 3:00 pm at the home of Jeanne Drury. Please call or email her to let her know whether or not you plan to attend. This will be the only meeting in December. Meet for sewing, mending, handwork of any kind, wide-ranging conversations, and refreshments. New members always welcome. For further information, please contact Jeanne Drury at jeannedrury@aol.com or 203-281-3227.

Please note: January meetings will be held as usual on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month with hostesses to be determined at the December meeting.

COOKING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES:

Cookie Fest

Monday, December 15, 6:30

pm. Take a sweet break for the holidays. This month will **not** be dinner but simple appetizers, cookies, and wine. Hosts will provide the starters — guests will bake up a batch or two of their favorite cookies. So start pulling out those delicious recipes and be ready to share. **Sign-up deadline: Thursday, December 4.** (*Calls after that go to the waiting list.*) Newcomers welcome. **RSVP** to Celeste Markle at c_markle@yahoo.com. Those without email may phone Celeste at 203-397-0492 or call the office. (For more about signing up, see p. 5.)



Monday, January 19: Theme for this dinner will be determined in December. **Sign-up deadline: Thursday, January 8.**

MEMOIR WRITING GROUPS

The two ongoing writing groups meet at the convenience of their members. New members are always welcome. For information, please contact Harriet Bergmann at 203-776-0703 or hfb183@gmail.com.

ERVerse:

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Democracy is now for sale.
Our candidates are bought.
Money means they will not fail
If enough of it is sought.

And those whom we elected,
Will use the next few years
To reward the well-connected
Who financed TV smears.

Our elected politicians
Have only one concern:
More dollar acquisitions
To ensure that they'll return!

— Bob Gifford, *Doctor of Doggerel*

LINKING UP

*Links to items of interest recommended
by newsletter readers.*

A series of three articles in the *New York Times* on November 2, 3, and 4 points up the dangers of falling among the elderly, and offers tips for preventing falls:

- “[Bracing for the Falls of An Aging Nation](#)”
- “[A Tiny Stumble, A Life Upended](#)”
- “[Steps to Avoid An Accident](#)”

Wendell Bell calls our attention to a Stanford University resource with videos about balance, sleep, and other geriatric issues available [here](#).

We welcome your comments about these links and your suggestions for others. Send responses to the editors (p. 2) or the office.



Events: December 2014 - January 2015



Thursday, December 4, 5:00-8:00 pm

45th Celebration of American Arts: HomeHaven Night at the Creative Arts Workshop, 80 Audubon Street. Join us for wine and tasty tidbits while taking advantage of the Creative Arts Workshop's offer to HomeHaven of 10% off on all items bought this night. Do your holiday shopping early and find something for everyone on your list. Every item, however large or small, is the unique work of an American artist.

Sunday, December 7, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm

HomeHaven Holiday Party at the Audette's, 24 Everit Street. It's that time again. Come celebrate the season with your HomeHaven friends. Good food, good wine, good friends, and good live music all provided. Who could ask for anything more! To RSVP, make sure to call or email the office by **December 3.**

Second Sunday Concerts at the Audette's. Because the newsletter comes out after most seats have been reserved, future notifications will be made by email using our *HomeHaven Happenings* service.

Sunday, December 14, 7:00 pm

Amahl and the Night Visitors, at Bethesda Lutheran Church, 450 Whitney Ave., New Haven. HomeHaven members are invited to attend this holiday program featuring the Western Connecticut State University Opera Ensemble, led by Margaret Astrup. Part of the Bethesda Music Series, it is free of charge (donations welcome). Free parking and reception following the performance.

Tuesday, January 13, 11:00 am.

Tour of the Yale Art Gallery's American Decorative Arts Furniture Study. Meet at 149 York Street. This installation of over 1,000 chests, tables, chairs, desks, clocks, cupboards, looking glasses, and woodturning charts offers a unique opportunity for in-depth study of stylistic developments and regional differences in American furniture. In addition, there is a selection of woodturning and cabinetmaking tools. This tour is limited to 15 participants and is wheel chair accessible. To sign up, please call or email the office by **Monday, December 29.**

Tuesday, January 20, 3:00 pm

Talk by Dr. Robert Gifford about lower back pain. Community Room, 100 York Street, New Haven (University Towers). HomeHaven's own "Doctor of Doggerel and All Things Medical" takes on the common problem of lower back pain and why much of it is still a big mystery for medical science. He will touch on neck pain and osteoporosis of the spine and why 80% of pain sufferers improve with little or no specific therapy. Dr. Gifford is Professor Emeritus of Medicine at Yale and a specialist in rheumatology.

Park in 100 York's parking lot off George Street or in the metered parking on George or York. Call the office to reserve a place.

Tuesday, January 27, 9:23 am MetroNorth train for 11:30 Tour of Grand Central Station with Joyce Gold followed by lunch in the station. Take this tour and you will see things you never noticed no matter how many times you've passed through this fabulous 100+ year-old landmark building. You will also hear stories from Ms. Gold's deep knowledge of its impact on the development of the city and the many larger than life figures associated with it.

Meet on the platform for the 9:23 am train. This is a 2-hour walking tour with no place to sit for brief rests. Bring snacks if needed to keep you going until 1:30-ish lunch. The cost of the tour depends on the number of participants. If 20 people sign up it will be \$20, not including train fare and lunch. For further information and to sign up, please call or email the office by **December 15.**

November Wine Tasting



HomeHaven members braved the wild weather on November 1 for a tour and tasting at Savino Vineyards in Woodbridge.

HOMEHAVEN OFFICE

☎ 203-776-7378 ☎

hhkateh@gmail.com