



Saybrook Manor Sentinel

Volume 2, Number 3

March, 2025

"May your joys be as deep as the oceans, your troubles as light as its foam"...Irish Blessing

Spring – Out With The Cold, In With The New

March is a month of transition, as we slowly pull out from the grip of Winter into the rebirth of Spring. We gain more daylight and more warmth. It is also a month full of special treats.

We have corned beef and cabbage on St. Patrick's Day, King Cake for Mardi Gras, and Zeppole for St. Joe's Day. Not to mention March Madness, where we carefully fill out our NCAA brackets and watch them sink or swim.

But the best thing about March is the onset of Spring, which begins on Thursday, March 20th at 5:01 a.m. It will not be long before we are all back at the beach for another summer of fun.



Summertime is coming soon too. Benches on all the SMA beaches were refurbished last Summer and will be touched up at our annual Spring Cleanup.



Hartford Avenue, circa 1910. Does anyone recognize these houses?

Members contributed to this month's issue. Thank you!!!

If you have something of interest to the association, let us know and we will consider it for a future issue. This includes birthdays, anniversaries, special events, etc. Email Dave P. at neech1214@gmail.com



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Reflections on Danny Redak

By Victor J. Schiavi

Danny was one of three brothers, Harvey, Danny, and Howard. The family has been in the Waterbury Avenue house since 1929.

Many of you knew Danny as the guy who took daily walks to the shore and drove an old red Subaru. He was a kind soul and friend to those he met. He loved my dog, Jack. Every time I came down to the cottage he would ask if I brought Jack. He was a good friend to me, but Jack was his favorite. He also liked it when neighbor Bobby Seminrow, (aka Bobby Lobster) or Kim would stop by to see if he needed anything or just to chat, but I think he liked Bobby's dogs just a bit more.

His biggest hero was his older brother and mentor Harvey. When you read Harvey's obituary, you will know why Danny looked up to him. Danny was a patriotic man who believed that the flag should be displayed every day. The flag represented to him duty, honor, and patriotism. He served in the Army and was stationed to at the North and South Korean border to guard the DMZ. To date, 49 U.S. soldiers have been killed at the DMZ. Once a North Korean sniper attempted to shoot Danny but missed. I asked Danny what he did when that happened, he said, "I hit the deck, HARD!" He will be missed by many.

Sincerely,
Vic Schiavi



Didja Know???

We live and swim on the banks of the Oyster River, but what do we really know about oysters, except that they taste good (to some people, that is). Here are some fun facts about these bivalve marine mollusks:

- Every 24 hours, a healthy adult oyster can filter the amount of water it takes to fill a bathtub.
- Prior to 1930, more than one-half of the world's oysters were harvested in New York City, which was known at that time as the Oyster Capital of the World.
- All oysters start out male, but they can change to female as they grow older. If there are too many females in the oyster bed, they change back to male.
- Oysters can live up to 100 years.
- In the 19th century, oysters were used as currency in some parts of the world.
- Despite the one oyster fact that everyone seems to know, there is no scientific proof that they act as an aphrodisiac.



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Member Highlight

Janet Antilla – "Driftwood"



Local business, "Driftwood" on Main Street in Old Saybrook.

SMA member Janet Antilla had a vision and a passion of opening a home decor and gift shop with a coastal vibe. She was already doing home decorating on the side and loved the opportunity to showcase some additional creativity.

During Covid, she and her husband Chris had limited hours at the restaurant they owned, so to keep busy, Janet set up a "mock" store at home. She made notes in a 'vision book' entitled "Ideas for my Shop" and the vision soon became a reality. "Driftwood of Old Saybrook" opened full-time in June of 2022...the same month that Janet, Chris, and their daughter Parker permanently moved to Hartford Avenue.

Driftwood is a boutique shop on 264 Main Street, and is filled with unique gifts and home decor with a very coastal vibe.

Janet is very involved in the community and delights in giving back. She is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, volunteers at "The Kate" and donates gift baskets or gift cards to many local charities. In fact, Driftwood is doing a "pay it forward" event on Saturday May 3 and Sunday May 4. If a customer mentions the mission trip sponsored by the Congregational churches from Old Saybrook, Westbrook and Essex, Driftwood will donate 10% of its total sales to the mission trip.

Janet also enjoys doing private "sip and shop" parties at the store. She closes the store for a 5:30-7:30 private shopping party (at no cost), and serves complimentary Prosecco and light appetizers...plus an upbeat raffle.



'Whale's Tales,' some of the many unique selections at Driftwood.

So, whether you attend an event or are just shopping Main Street, stop by and sell hello to our neighbor Janet and check out her wares.



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SMA History 101

The December, 2024 Sentinel featured the following picture from 1934 along with corresponding caption:



Front of a postcard to Miss Augusta Gates of Norwich, Conn. from her sister "D.W.G." Postmarked June 11, 1934. Look closely...the four people in full bathing suits in the foreground are guys!!! It looks like the Middletown Avenue Beach, with the Oyster River in the background, but could be wrong.

SMA member Bill Abbate sent us a wonderful note with some great SMA history. Here are some excerpts...

Yes, indeed the house was at the end of Middletown Ave, left side. The land is now owned by the Association. Just to the upper right of the cottage you can see the Club House. Both were swept away in the hurricane of 1938.

I have a picture taken in 1938 from the beach in front of the last cottage on the right side of Middletown Ave. The beach was the original beach in front of the wall now the back end

wall of the artificial beach. A portion of the short rock wall in front of the cottage remained and can be seen in pictures from the 1940's and early 1950's.

The hurricane of August 1954 (Carol) removed much of the front of the whole beach and exposed the chimney foundation of the former home. If I remember correctly the land was purchased from the Ziegler family sometime after that. The property marker near the light pole at the beach marks the back end of the lot. That gives one some sense of how much beach has eroded. The rocks at the current beach separating the Manor from The Cove are the second generation of those in the picture. They now extend much farther up the beach.

Also note the length and, again, the width of the beach. The beach used to spread across the current waterfront of the Appleby property to the mouth of the Oyster River. There at the mouth of the river was a large sand bar where boat owners in the 1940's, through 1955 used to drive in poles to dock their boats.

The current set of rocks to the east of the cove beach once surrounded 3 sides of a cottage that was built after the 1938 hurricane on that side. The current road to the left of Middletown Ave extended in a straight line all the way to the current end of Cove Beach. The road was the driveway to the home there. The garage for the cottage was there on the beach side of the road. The beach of the road had a large dune so that standing on the road one had to climb up and over the dune to the beach that sloped to the water. Some idea of the height of the dune is still visible at the line separating Manor and Cove Beach.