

EDITORIAL

This is just the right time for citizens to think about their right to know

There is no better time to think about open government and transparency than in the middle of an unprecedented health crisis. After all, the repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic are affecting all our lives right now, and will continue to do so as the full effects become clear down the line. In every nation that has dealt with this virus already, the way its government has handled it has made a difference in its spread and the outcomes for those who have contracted it. And in those places where information was made readily available and open to all, even if it took a while before they understood the severity of the crisis they were facing, the population understood better what they were dealing with and how to best manage it.

Here in the United States, our federal government has not been as forthcoming and open as it should have been from the start of the epidemic. Glossing over the risks associated with the spread of COVID-19 and dragging out the timing for widely supplying tests for the virus only created the uncertain atmosphere in which the markets have destabilized and the nation's relationship with the rest of the world has been compromised.

Sunshine Week is March 15 – 21, the week when the News Leaders Association and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and media across the country, join in the annual nationwide celebration of access to public information and what it means for you and your community. A public health event is just the moment when we need to appreciate what government can do for our communities, yet still hold fast to the idea that government must also be accountable and open to those it serves. Keep that in mind as the nation, and our region, deals with the coronavirus threat and finds the best ways to mitigate it at the local, regional, state and let's hope federal levels of government.

Below are guidelines for understanding and taking action on your right to know.

This Sunshine Week, know your rights to government information with tips from the transparency experts at MuckRock:

1) Know the law: Federal agencies are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), but each state has its own laws (for example, it's the Freedom of Information Law in New York, and in New Jersey you file an Open Public Records Act request, or OPRA). Look up which rules apply — in some states, for example, legislative records are exempt from disclosure. Cite the correct law in your requests.

2) Keep it specific: FOIA can be used to dig up all sorts of information, but you have to ask for something that exists. Avoid asking questions; instead, request documents or data an agency would likely have that would answer your questions.

3) Work together: Most records officers are happy to discuss requests. There's also a community of requesters eager to help. Look up your local National Freedom of Information Coalition chapter, browse requests others have filed publicly on MuckRock and other online resources:

- The Reporters Committee Open Government Guide: <https://www.rcfp.org/open-government-guide/>
- MuckRock's state-by-state guides: <https://www.muckrock.com/place/>
- NFOIC's map of state Freedom of Information organizations: <https://www.nfoic.org/organizations/map>
- State of Connecticut resources are www.ctfog.org and www.ctfoicouncil.nfoic.net/ccfoi-news/
- State of New York resource is www.dos.ny.gov/about/foil.html

Muckrock info courtesy of www.sunshineweek.org.

Lakeville Journal and Millerton News offices closed during COVID-19 emergency

With the area schools closed, many cancellations of events and the directive being a minimum of direct contact with others, The Lakeville Journal Company has made the decision to set up a system of remote work schedules so the majority of our people can manage their work from home. During this time, all of our staff will be available through the same voice and email communication, and the newspapers will continue to publish until further notice.

Contact editor@lakevillejournal.com and cynthiah@lakevillejournal.com or editor@millertonnews.com for editorial news, cynthiah@lakevillejournal.com for obituaries, legals@lakevillejournal.com for legal notices, classified@lakevillejournal.com for classified line ads and advertising@lakevillejournal.com for display advertising.

The phone for The Lakeville Journal is 860-435-9873; for The Millerton News, it is 860-435-9873, ext. 608.

Stay safe, calm and healthy and use caution during this challenging time of COVID-19 risk. Keep us informed of any news you want to see reported on during this timeframe and beyond.

Opinion



PHOTO BY LANS CHRISTENSEN

A breath of spring

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is this the beginning of the future?

The health and economic crisis that is the coronavirus COVID-19 is just a glimpse of what the coming climate crisis looks like. As devastating as this crisis is, it affords economies around the world a recovery investment opportunity in the future if they are forward looking enough to take it.

So in the United States, should economic recovery investments that are surely coming go to airlines, oil companies, meat producers or other carbon heavy industries? If no, then where?

... Transportation analyst Alon Levy estimates that for about €60 billion, Germany could build a comprehensive high-speed rail network that would better connect all its major cities and make domestic air travel obsolete. ... Source: Vox, "Coronavirus's threat to the global economy — and what to do about it," by Matthew Yglesias.

What if in the United States the billions of tax and deficit spending dollars that our government is going to allocate to meet this healthcare and eco-

nomc crisis go to financing and implementing the Green New Deal?

The Green New Deal offers all we need as a guidebook for a COVID-19 national recovery strategy: (excerpt of it as below)

... Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that - (1) it is the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal (A) to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers; (B) to create millions of good, high-wage jobs and ensure prosperity and economic security for all people of the United States; (C) to invest in the infrastructure and industry of the United States to sustainably meet the challenges of the 21st century; (D) to secure for all people of the United States for generations to come - (i) clean air and water; (ii) climate and community resiliency; (iii) healthy food; (iv) access to nature; and (v) a sustainable environment; and (E) to promote justice and equity by stopping

current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression of indigenous peoples, communities of color, migrant communities, deindustrialized communities, depopulated rural communities, the poor, low-income workers, women, the elderly, the unhoused, people with disabilities, and youth ... (O) providing all people of the United States with - (i) high-quality health care; ... As stated in H.Res.109 - Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal. 116th Congress (2019-2020)

Source: www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text

You can affect how our government meets this crisis by speaking out, how you spend your money and how you vote. What will it be? To build a new future or prop up a house of cards that climate change will just blow away?

Bernard Re, Jr.

North Canaan

Finding positive inspiration at a hard time

With all due respect to the world's shared concern of COVID-19, everyone can benefit from "retracing their steps" with awareness of where they were and who they interacted with recently and going forward with a daily journal. Sharing ex-

periences of travels from the past and helpful events online may encourage others that "one day things will normalize." Keeping in touch by phone, and online in private, local and other forums is also helpful to keep current with best practices in living, working and creating a stronger sense of community.

February found me headed to Hawaii for a program with Dr. Laurie Moore of animiracles.com as part of a small group connecting with positive intentions. Then I went to the Southwest for a few weeks, visiting the Grand Canyon and Prescott, Ariz., and more.

In Sedona, I got to be part of author Gregg Braden's program, which included seeing the educational heart-mind film HeartMath Experience (now gaia.com).

I reconnected as well with a couple dozen family members in New Mexico. I had met some of them in a cross-country trip during my Vassar College days in 1983.

The generations are amazing to learn about and will be a nice challenge to keep in touch with in coming years.

Before rules advised otherwise, I attended two events, honoring volunteers and women.

I share more about events and healing ideas over the past decade in Connecticut. Augmenting what is on mainstream media, I highlight insights about our late teen son Kaelan's heroic actions and safety ideas on lively.org.

I appreciate encouragement for decades of outreach, writing and learning endeavors as part of ongoing networking and advocacy efforts.

I welcome ideas and can be reached at thinkingkapp@gmail.com or 347-471-9209.

Many people doing their part to create community online has taken on an urgent meaning.

Hopefully we can find ways to network and keep everybuddy in the loop to stay positive and healthy!

Catherine Palmer Paton
Falls Village

TURNING BACK

THE PAGES

NORMA GALAISE

100 years ago — March 1920
SALISBURY — George Tellerday has severed his connection with Grassland Farms, and is now employed by G.A. Selleck.

Violin Lessons — 35 cents for three quarters of an hour. Apply to Gerald A. Bauman, Lakeville. Phone 39-4.

Norfolk boasts a snow drift as big as a house. It is 27 feet high, and overspreads the Litchfield road near the overhead bridge. Shovelers have cut a channel through the huge snow bank.

A milk peddler is needed in Lime Rock very badly.

ORE HILL — Mrs. Wm. Davis had the misfortune to slip on the ice and break three of her ribs recently.

50 years ago — March 1970
This week the Journal welcomes back Amherst Eaton of Canaan who formerly had the job of Canaan reporter for the Canaan Journal page and left to assume a part-time office position with the Connecticut Western News.

While the family was out, the two-car garage in the rear of the home of the Rev. F. Newton Howden in Lime Rock was destroyed by fire last Friday afternoon. The fire was reported by a passer-by, and the Lakeville Hose Co. responded but the small wooden structure was a total loss. There was no other damage. The garage was empty at the time, but an electric hair-dryer had been used to start a car and apparently had been left on.

Ray M. Wilder of West Main Street, Canaan, retires this month after 40 years of service with the Southern New England Telephone Co. Mr. Wilder has been plant service supervisor in Canaan.

25 years ago — March 1995
SALISBURY — In a matter of weeks, the 8,000-pound hunk of gray Woodbury granite that was unceremoniously dumped at the Salisbury town sand shed this week will become a graceful curved replacement for the present water kettle next to the town hall. Clear spring water from Mt. Riga, treasured by many residents and visitors to the area, will continue to flow out the spigot as it has since 1908. The original kettle stood in the center of what is now Route 44, placed there to make it easier for horses to drink. The first kettle was made out of iron forged at a local blast furnace. In 1966 the kettle was moved to its present location and replaced with a limestone basin, which was too soft and too susceptible to freezing and thawing.

All items are taken from Lakeville Journals from that time period, and are reproduced here as they were published back then.

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Mission Statement

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Our goal is to report the news of our communities accurately and fairly,

fostering democracy and an atmosphere of open communication.

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During the COVID-19 health crisis, The Lakeville Journal will continue to welcome letters to the editor. Deadline is 10 a.m. on the Monday morning of publication week. Send them to publisher@lakevillejournal.com, with "Letter to the editor" in the subject line.

William Kelsey
Sharon