

HOUSE & GARDEN ISSUE

# FAIRFIELD

MARCH/APRIL 2015 | \$5.95

## The Family Home

CREATING SPACES THAT KIDS (AND DESIGN-INCLINED PARENTS) LOVE



### GORGEOUS GARDEN

TERRY & ANNE WILLIE'S RESOLVE TO NURTURE A HISTORIC ESTATE TO FULL GLORY

### REAL ESTATE REPORT 2015

THE BUYERS DEFINING FAIRFIELD NOW

# LIVING



LUXE SPRING FASHION!  
PAGE 72

FAIRFIELDLIVINGMAG.COM

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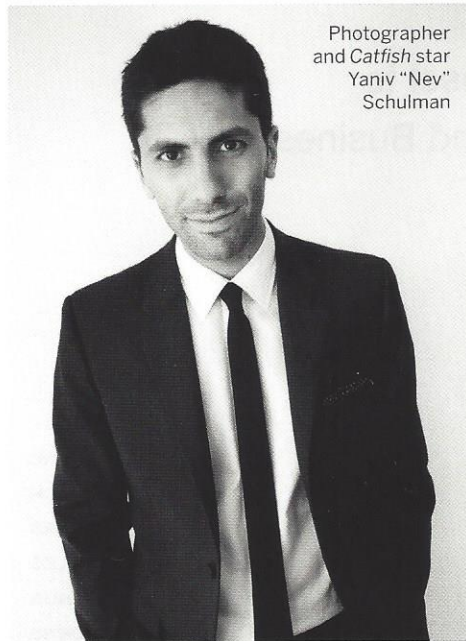


BY DAN HAJDUCKY

# In Real Life

Online Dating:  
Nev Schulman &  
Catfishing

Yaniv “Nev” Schulman became a household name as the star of the harrowing documentary *Catfish*. In *Catfish*, Schulman, a successful photographer, starts to receive fan mail from an eight-year-old art phenom from Michigan named Abby. He encourages her to create and, before long, he is communicating regularly over the phone with Abby and her family. He strikes up a relationship online with Megan, a musician and Abby’s twentysomething half-sister. When he discovers that Megan has been claiming other musicians’ works as her own, he, his brother Ariel, and friend Henry take a detour on the way home from a business trip to talk to Megan in person. What they encounter when they arrive in Michigan is beyond words, and,



Photographer  
and *Catfish* star  
Yaniv “Nev”  
Schulman

**Save the Date: March 31**

Visit [sacredheart.edu](http://sacredheart.edu) for more information.

possibly, comprehension.

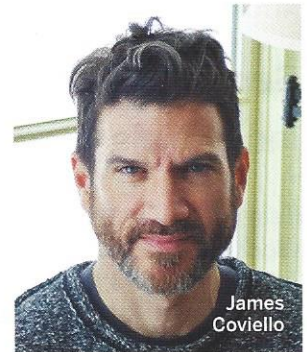
Schulman is the author of the memoir-cum-self-help book *In Real Life: Love, Lies & Identity in the Digital Age*—as well as the host and creative force behind *Catfish: The TV Show*. He will speak about his experiences and what knowledge he’s gleaned from the maelstrom of online communication/dating.



THE ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION ESTIMATES THAT  
**EVERY 67 SECONDS**  
SOMEONE IN THE U.S. DEVELOPS ALZHEIMER’S

## On a Better Note...

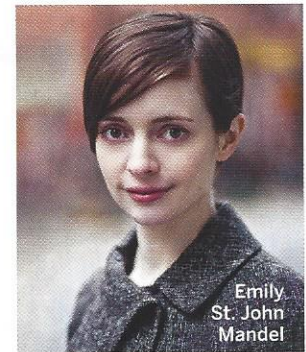
The philanthropically minded musicians of Band Together ([bandtogetherct.com](http://bandtogetherct.com)) are fighting back with a benefit concert to support the **Alzheimer’s Association, CT Chapter**. The theme is British Invasion, with songs to get you dancing in the aisles at Fairfield Theatre Company, March 13 (lights down, music up at 8 p.m.). This annual event has raised nearly \$60,000 in three years. 70 Sanford St.; [alz.org/ct](http://alz.org/ct)



James  
Coviello

## VINTAGE CHIC

The **Fashion & Fantasy Mimosa Brunch**, March 8, noon-2 p.m. A limited number of tickets are available for the event celebrating Fairfield Museum’s new exhibit *Fashion & Fantasy: 250 Years of Wedding Dresses*. Attendees will meet fashion designer and Fairfield native James Coviello. 370 Beach Rd.; [fairfieldhistory.org](http://fairfieldhistory.org)



Emily  
St. John  
Mandel

## WUNDERKIND AUTHOR

Fairfield has chosen Emily St. John Mandel’s tour de force novel *Station Eleven* as its **2015 One Book One Town** selection. Fairfield Library is hosting events around the book, including an author visit on Tuesday, March 31, at the Quick Center at Fairfield University. 1073 N. Benson Rd.; [fairfield.edu](http://fairfield.edu).

## AUTISM AWARENESS

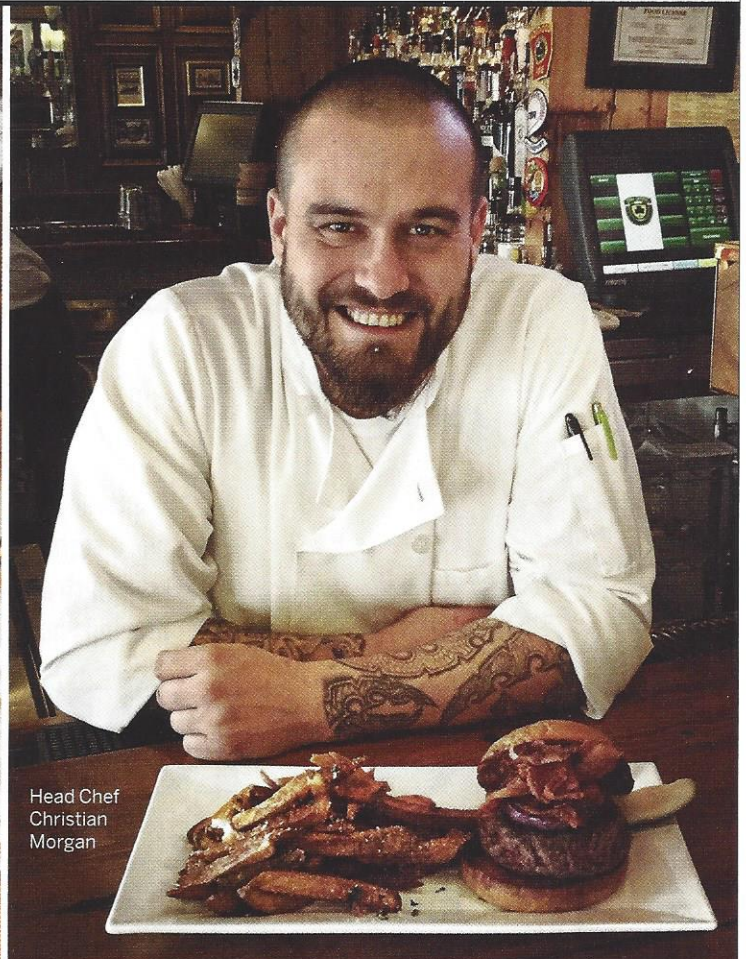
April is Autism Awareness Month. This year, April 2 will be declared **World Autism Awareness Day**. For more information, head to [facebook.com/groups/autismawarenessinwestport](https://facebook.com/groups/autismawarenessinwestport).

# EAT

ANNA LIFFEY'S



Baileys Irish Cream Chicken



Head Chef Christian Morgan

# Game On

Sit back and savor the beer and bites at Anna Liffey's in Fairfield

BY DAN HAJDUCKY  
 FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARVIN BURKE  
 PORTRAIT BY VENERA ALEXANDROVA

Last June, I headed to Anna Liffey's with friends to watch the US Men's National Team take on Ghana in the FIFA World Cup. When we scored in the eighty-sixth minute, securing a 2-1 victory over our World Cup rival, the hundred-plus crowd exploded with raucous cheers. The sturdy floor, under the weight of splendid, jumping chaos, bounced like a trampoline. I thought: "Is there a better place in Fairfield County to watch sports?"

With NCAA March Madness on the horizon, *Fairfield Living* magazine decided to feature a local haunt that has a dynamite sports environment, plenty of game-time food options (see sidebar) and—with St. Patrick's Day approaching—authentic Irish cuisine. Anna Liffey's of Fairfield hits the bull's-eye.

Recently, I sat down with my meat-loving brother and vegetarian girlfriend to watch NCAA basketball and share some delicious food. We began with Irish Nachos, Fish & Chips, Traditional Corned Beef & Cabbage, Emerald Isle Salad, and Roasted Beet & Fried Goat Cheese Salad.

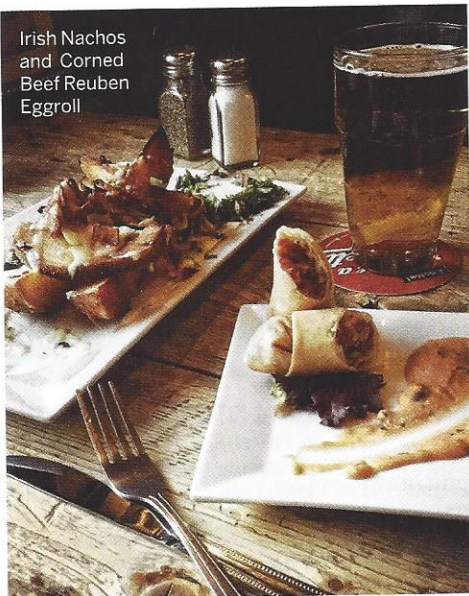
The Irish Nachos employ thick-cut potato wedges, scallions, jalapeños and cheddar cheese, and are served with house-made salsa and a light tequila lime sour cream that makes for a perfect dip. (The nachos include bacon, but we opted out.) The beer-battered fish of the Fish & Chips is moist but not overly fried, and the side of garlic and Parmesan-flaked Irish fries is a crispy masterpiece. Head Chef Christian Morgan makes them fresh—cut, blanched, salted and fried—taking three days to prepare. The Traditional Corned Beef & Cabbage, cooked for nearly five hours, is spectacularly tender. The Emerald Isle Salad has slivers of Irish bacon (akin to Canadian bacon, but better), arugula, Jameson Whiskey apples, goat cheese, and a Jameson Whiskey vinaigrette. The Roasted Beet and Fried Goat Cheese Salad, another arugula-based dish, includes candied pecans, roasted beets, fried goat cheese balls and a fig vinaigrette. More delights were to follow.

For dinner, we ordered Old Country Pasta, a Stuffed Whiskey Apple & Smoked Blue Cheese Burger, the Shepherd's Pie, and Baileys Irish Cream Chicken.

The Old Country Pasta features marinated chicken, sundried tomato, artichoke, spinach, and garlic Parmesan cheese, all in a white wine butter sauce and served with orecchiette pasta. My girlfriend worried they wouldn't make the dish without chicken, but they obliged. While some restaurants are rigid about their menu, Chef Morgan is willing to alter any dish. "I want to give each and every customer the best experience possible," he says. Once, when a vegan customer wandered in, Morgan scrounged for some butternut squash and Portobello mushrooms,



Emerald Isle Salad



Irish Nachos and Corned Beef Reuben Eggroll



Anna Liffey's front room bar

# SLAM DUNKS

A selection of **Anna Liffey's** appetizers to kick off the meal right

## GUINNESS STEW

Fear not—culinary alchemist Christian Morgan routinely concocts masterpieces out of thin air. Chunks of tender beef, root vegetables and potatoes, simmered in a thick Guinness and beef gravy. If you plan to go "full shamrock" on St. Patrick's Day, pull your chair up to this delectable dish.

## SPINACH ARTICHOKE DIP

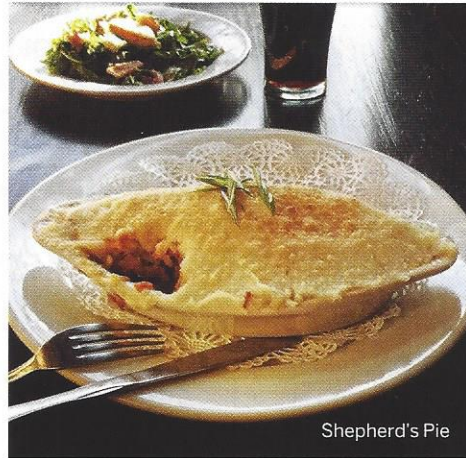
Chopped baby spinach mixed with artichoke hearts in a creamy sauce, served with vegetables and chips. This appetizer is so good that during March Madness' can't-take-your-eyes-off-the-screen action, you'll be clamoring for overtime and a second helping.

## CHICKEN WINGS

Not including the special wing flavors (like the current Smoked Blue Honey Sriracha), Anna Liffey's offers four flavors of wings at all times: buffalo, barbecue, garlic Parmesan, and Dublin sweet and spicy. The perfect way to cope with a nail-biter of a game? Finger-licking, lip-smacking wings.

## CORNED BEEF REUBEN EGGROLL

The Corned Beef Reuben Eggroll might be the most intriguing, alluring dish on the menu. Tender corned beef and Swiss cheese, wrapped in a flaky egg roll, and served with Thousand Island dressing. When coupled with the Philly Cheese Steak Eggroll, this duo is a force to be reckoned with.



Shepherd's Pie

improvising a dish on a whim. "It's all about making the customer happy," he affirms.

The Stuffed Whiskey Apple & Smoked Bleu Cheese Burger features a half-pound of lean ground beef, Irish bacon and Irish cheddar on a roll, served with Irish fries. The Shepherd's Pie, cooked for four hours, is an immaculate blend of cubed lamb, roasted root vegetables and gravy, topped with mashed potatoes and Parmesan. The Baileys Irish Cream Chicken, with bacon and provolone, is sublimely coupled with sweet potato and root vegetable mash and asparagus.

With dinner, try the Tennent's Whiskey Oak Aged beer, a Scottish beer that General Manager Jimmy McDermott says is a rare find on this side of the pond. After dinner, visit Lead Bartender James Fodiman for a glass of Angel's Envy, Port Finish, aged six years. The Kentucky Straight Bourbon, finished in port wine barrels, is smoky but not assaulting, sweet but not saccharine.

As a lead-in to the frenzy of March Madness, Anna Liffey's opens for crack-of-dawn English Premier League soccer matches, and serves breakfast, on weekend mornings. Noting the back room's projector screen and multiple big screen TVs, McDermott says: "We have the biggest screen in Fairfield County, and during March Madness you can expect four to six games on at a time here." This March Madness command center boasts a winning menu, a crowd-loving atmosphere, and enough TVs to satisfy the most ardent sports fans.

1494 Post Rd., Fairfield; [annaliffeys.com](http://annaliffeys.com)

# SWITCH UP THE COURT

Other big-game friendly **Fairfield restaurants** (lottery picks, per se)



## FLIPSIDE BURGERS & BAR

This burger joint and bar on the Post Road has plenty of TVs, specialty and custom burgers and hot dogs, and Happy Hour Monday through Friday (3–6 p.m).

Dive into the dynamite Asian chicken wings or tenders. [flipsiderestaurant.com](http://flipsiderestaurant.com)



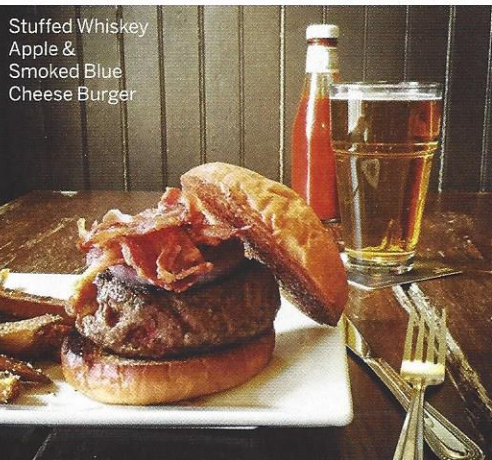
## COLONY GRILL

Famous for its perfected minimalist menu, Colony has been serving incredible thin-crust pizza for 80 years. Is there a better time than March Madness to treat yourself to their legendary hot oil pizza? [colonygrill.com](http://colonygrill.com)



## LOCAL KITCHEN AND BEER BAR

This brick-walled bar and restaurant on Mill Plain Road brings class to watching sports. Their twenty-plus beers and ciders on-tap and bottled selection are a sports fan's dream come true. [fairfieldlocal.com](http://fairfieldlocal.com)



Stuffed Whiskey Apple & Smoked Bleu Cheese Burger

# PEOPLE & Places

BY DAN HAJDUCKY

MOFFLY MEDIA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELANI LUST



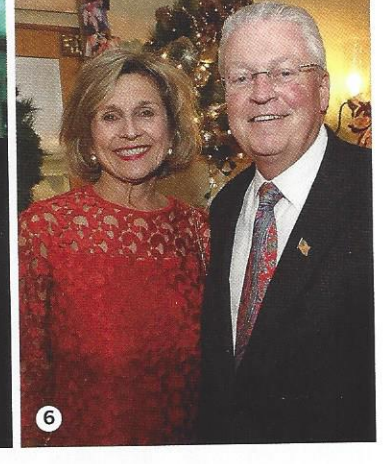
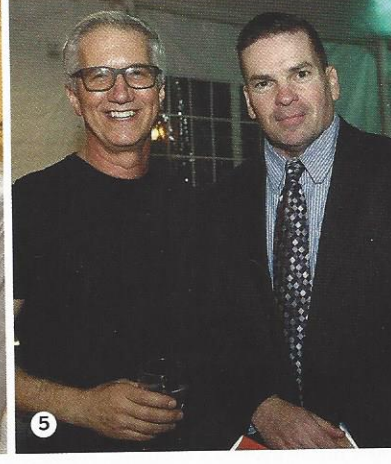
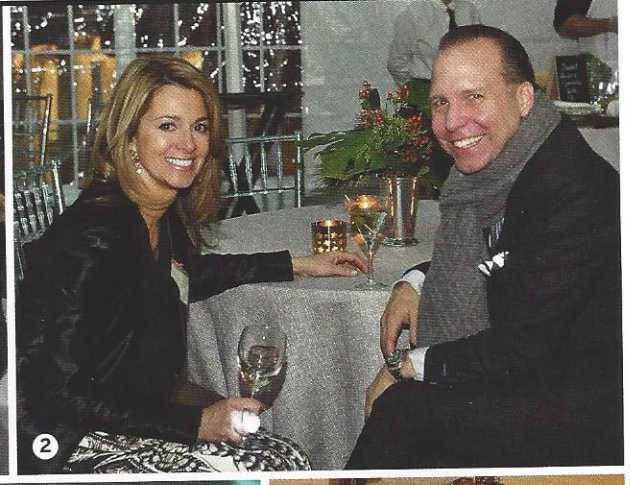
**top:** Tony Hwang, Lee Crouch, Diane Sembrot **middle** Michael and Dana McCreesh, Megan Couch, George Venizelos **bottom:** Cristin Marandino, DJ Kunjan, Alexandra Wallace-Currie, Mallick Currie, Terry O'Connor, Trevor Crow

## Simply on Fire

Moffly Media's seventh annual Light a Fire Awards were a bona fide success. This heartwarming annual event, celebrating our community's nonprofit and philanthropic leaders, was held at the Westport Country Playhouse in the Jason Robards Theater, hosted by Kendra Farn of PGaryn Productions. There was also an elegant cocktail reception, catered by Marcia Selden Catering and Event

Planning, accompanied by fine wines (provided by Tarry Lodge), which preceded the awards ceremony. Each year, Light a Fire salutes the exceptionally generous who have given back to their communities. From philanthropists and volunteers to organizations helping families, children, the environment and the community, the honorees are individuals who shine as a beacon of selflessness. »

## PEOPLE & Places



**1** Erin, Greg, Gloria and Harry French of HC Reid  
**2** Donna Craft, Mar Jennings  
**3** Diane Sembrot  
**4** Caroline Pech Leslie, Katia Mead  
**5** Jerry Vigorito, Fairfield Chief of Police Gary MacNamara  
**6** Sheryl Shaughnessy, Fairfield First Selectman Mike Tetreau  
**7** Cochairs of the 2014 Christmas Tree Festival Donna Craft, Catherine Gallagher and Shaun Amberg

### || FAIRFIELD CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL ||

## Season's Greetings

**F**or thirty-three years, the Fairfield Christmas Tree Festival has been a grand tradition of Fairfield's holiday season. Since 1981, the festival has raised over \$3.7 million for charities and local nonprofit organizations. The beneficiary of this year's festival was The Center for Family Justice, and the event's theme was "Cherishing Family: The Greatest Gift of All." Fairfielders gathered at The Burr Homestead for the Holiday Preview Gala, called "A Night of Celebration," and events, such as a holiday tea for finger foods with friends, a quilt raffle drawing and "Christmas Around the World," a sampling of international food and drink pairings. "Let's Build a Snowman," the event especially for children, featured face painting, a magician, crafts, music from St. Thomas Children's Choir and even a surprise visit from Santa. Guests enjoyed dinner, generously donated by Billy's Bakery and The Pantry, and then strolled to Fairfield Town Hall to watch the annual tree lighting. »

## PEOPLE & Places



### || FAIRFIELD THEATRE COMPANY ||

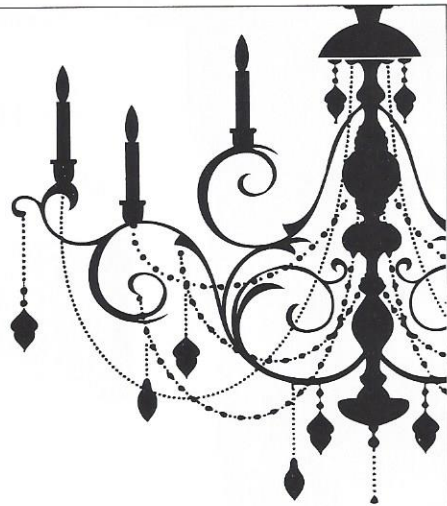
# Encore! Encore!

**R**ecently, the Fairfield Theatre Company Board of Directors invited locals to turn out for their annual Encore Gala. At Encore 2014, cochaired by Leslie Cober-Gentry and Lou Heumann, the founding members of The Talking Heads and Tom Tom Club, Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth, were honored as Artists of the Year. Brody Wilkinson PC Attorneys and Counselors at Law were honored as the Corporate Citizens of the Year. Attendees enjoyed cocktails, dinner provided by OnTheMarc, silent and live auctions, as well as a performance by Caravan of Thieves. The FTC is in the process of building The Warehouse at FTC, an 8,000-square-foot, 640-person theater in the existing FTC facility on 70 Sanford Street. To donate, go to [fairfieldtheatre.org/warehouse](http://fairfieldtheatre.org/warehouse). »

1 Dede Trainor, Katie Noonan 2 Russ Fein, Georgiana and Ira Platt, Amy Fein 3 Alice and Keith Lindenburg 4 Jenny Nelson, Ben Gott, Dwight Nelson 5 Dave and Susie Cardona 6 Fairfield Theatre Company Producing Artistic Director John Reid, founding members of The Talking Heads and Tom Tom Club Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth, Fairfield First Selectman Mike Tetreau 7 Jennifer Corbett, Kathy Mitchell with Tom and Lisa Vacheron 8 Jane and Brad Purcell 9 Adele and Ryan Moran, Joe and Kathleen Friedler



THE  
PARTY  
OF THE  
YEAR



# TIME FOR LYME

— GALA • 2015 —

PRESENTED BY LYME RESEARCH ALLIANCE  
& TICK-BORNE DISEASE ALLIANCE  
SATURDAY APRIL 11 2015  
HYATT REGENCY GREENWICH

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES • GRETCHEN CARLSON

HONORARY EVENT CHAIRS • JANE ALEXANDER  
ANDY COHEN • ELENA DELLE DONNE • DONNA DE VARONA  
BILL EVANS • DEBBIE GIBSON • ALLY HILFIGER  
JOANNA KERNS • TOM SEAVER • AMY TAN  
HEATHER THOMSON • BOBBY VALENTINE

EVENT CHAIRS • AMY MARISA BALDUCCI • RIANN SMITH

FOR RESERVATIONS & SPONSORSHIPS  
LYME RESEARCH ALLIANCE: 203.969.1333



## PEOPLE & Places

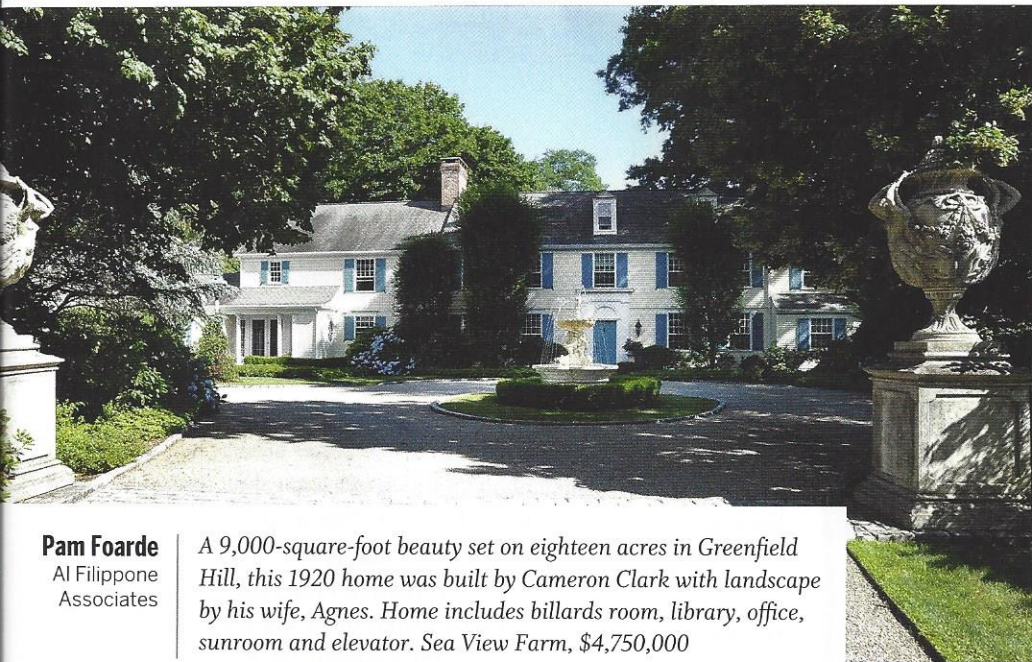


1 A sampling of the detail and care that goes into the train show each year 2 Fairfield Museum Volunteer Coordinator Walter Matis speaks to attentive children 3 Kids and adults alike marvel at the antiques 4 Two young boys take in the sights 5 A young Batman enthusiast is awed by the miniature town

|| FAIRFIELD MUSEUM AND HISTORY CENTER ||

## Chugging Along

The Fairfield Museum and History Center hosted a record number of visitors at its annual Holiday Express Train Show. Kids and adults alike enjoyed large-scale model trains winding around a spectacularly decorated tree and beautiful holiday scenery. Members of Fairfield's Housatonic Model Railway Club, the Connecticut G-Scalers and Central CT G-Gaugers clubs talked about the antique trains and modular dioramas. Through the duration of the train show's exhibition there were a number of events, including a real steam train demonstration, candy house workshops, Choo Choo story times and build-your-own model train workshops for young train enthusiasts. **F**



**Pam Foarde**  
Al Filippone  
Associates

A 9,000-square-foot beauty set on eighteen acres in Greenfield Hill, this 1920 home was built by Cameron Clark with landscape by his wife, Agnes. Home includes billiards room, library, office, sunroom and elevator. Sea View Farm, \$4,750,000

are living in the house and paying the taxes and then when they go to sell. It's not just the beach area; there are definitely parts of our town that are being appraised higher than they should be." That Sasco Hill Road property that sold for \$6.75 million in December, for example, was appraised at \$10.6 million. The one down the street that sold in January for \$13.9 million was valued by the town at \$19.7 million.

Fairfield's mill rate is 24.4 (in other words, homeowners pay \$24.40 for every \$1,000 of the assessed value of their homes—and assessed value is 80 percent of the appraised value). While this is higher than in towns such as Westport (18.07) and Darien (15.01), Fairfield residents get more bang for their buck, contends Julie Vanderblue, CEO of The Vanderblue Team and president of The Higgins Group. "Our mill rate is higher here certainly. But we have two high schools, the school system is phenomenal and there are more amenities for families. We have an amazing lifestyle here. And your cost of the home is less than it would be in those other towns," she adds. "When you compare the taxes to Westchester, for example, we're extremely affordable. A lot of new buyers in town are coming from Westchester or New York City, where it's ridiculously expensive."

## BEACH ALLURE

Vanderblue has been courting those buyers as well as others who live abroad and are look-

ing to invest in luxury properties within commuting distance of New York. "A lot of people moving up here think Westport might be the last stop. Educating these consumers on the benefits of Fairfield—the fact that we have five beaches, three public golf courses, two colleges and more diversity, and that their commute home might be actually shorter from our three train stations—that becomes very attractive. And you can't get sand-in-your-toes beachfront anywhere in lower Fairfield County like you can in Fairfield."

Waterfront property along Fairfield Beach Road is "definitely a strong market," Vanderblue says. New and renovated homes on the beach which are FEMA-compliant are selling best, says Fingelly, noting that beach prices have dropped about 20 percent from their height, with non-FEMA compliant properties dropping about 40 percent. This has resulted in "some really nice opportunities at the beach right now," Fingelly says.

Adds Vanderblue, "You have to be careful: If it's not FEMA-compliant you're not going to get a regular mortgage or insurance." Buyers who pay cash don't have to concern themselves with FEMA regulations.

## FAMILIES, YOUNG & OLD

The range in properties in town continues to appeal, real estate agents agree, because young families can settle here and move up as their needs and assets grow. "As we speak, there are 409 condos and single-family

## FAIRFIELD IN THE RANKS

### TOWN, STATE, NATIONAL

1.9%

**Fairfield's current crime rate** for its 60,126 residents (or 1,933 per 100,000) (current U.S. violent and property crime rate is 3,246.1 per 100,000 inhabitants, or 3.3%).

6.5%

At the end of 2014, **Fairfield's unemployment rate** was 6.5% while Connecticut's was 6.4%.

32

From May 2008 to December 2010, Connecticut had 32 straight months where the **unemployment rate was below or equal to the national rate.**

1663

**Fairfield average SAT score** is 1663—149 points higher than state (1514) and 166 higher than national (1497).

\$10,913,511,153

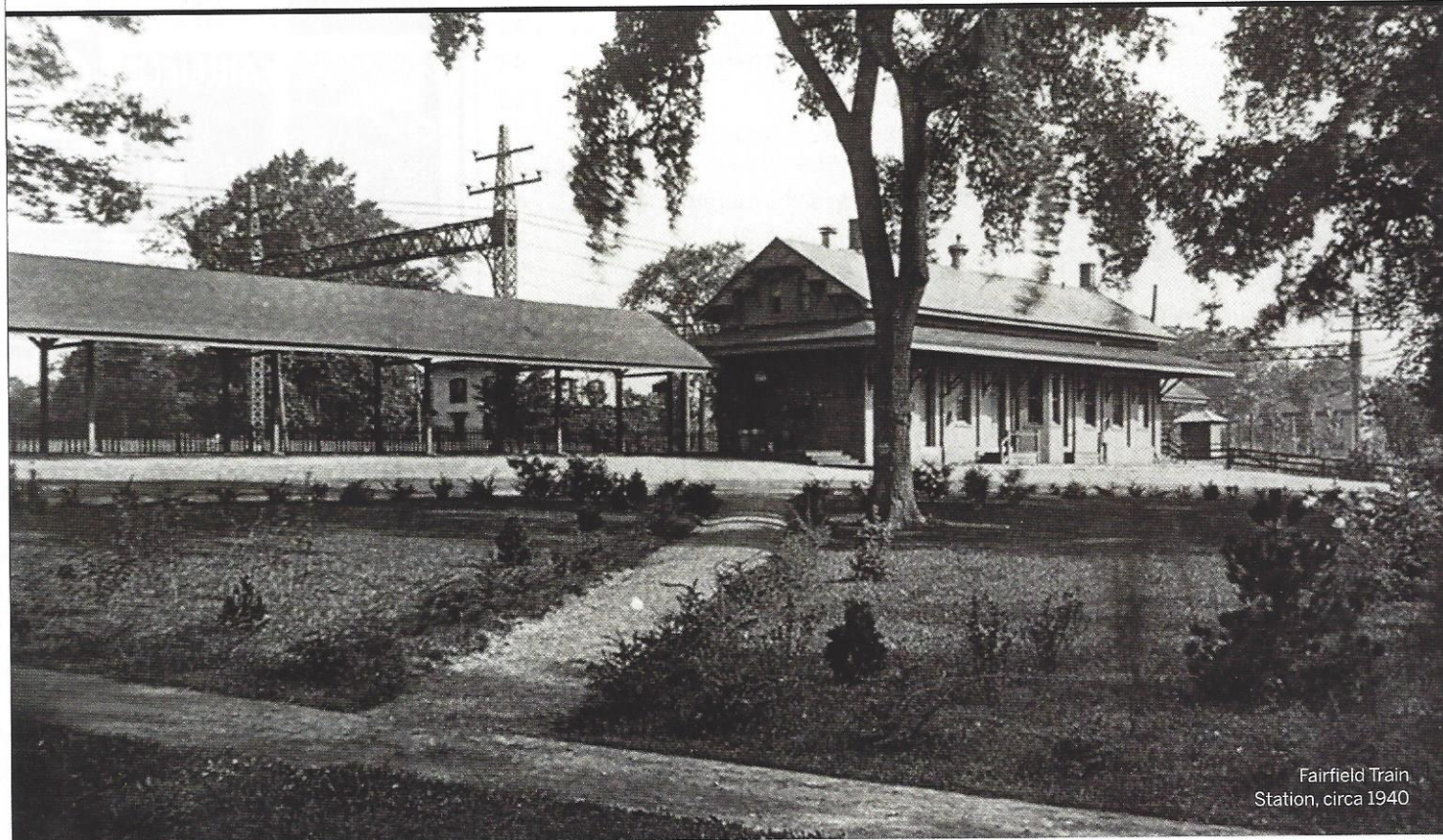
In 2009 **Fairfield's Top Five Grand List** of taxable properties yielded \$12 billion. It was \$10.79 billion in 2010, and \$10,913,511,153 in 2013.

Information compiled by Dan Hajducky. Sources: Fairfield 2014 CERC Town Profile, United States Census Bureau, United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Fairfield Top Five Grand List, College Board, and NeighborhoodScout.com

# THEN & NOW

A LOOK AT FAIRFIELD'S LIVING HISTORY

BY DAN HAJDUCKY



Fairfield Train Station, circa 1940

## Fairfield Train Station

**T**rains have been serving Fairfield since 1848, carrying a thousand passengers a day only a month after trains first started running. The eastbound station seen here was built in 1882 to replace a depot destroyed by fire, while the westbound station was built in 1890. Both are in the National Register of Historic Places. We might take the luxury of swift transportation for granted, but it's worth acknowledging that the railroad's advancements over time have been vital to our town. Despite alterations, the bones of the station remain the same, as has its purpose—to get people to work, to visit with friends, take in a show and return home.



The building today

"I'm struck by how it retains the look of the past. It speaks for the town itself; maintaining a link to the past is important and valued by the people who live here. That desire to preserve and celebrate the past is rare and difficult, but it is something Fairfield can be proud of."

—Joe Rog, director of development of the Fairfield Theatre Company