

Clinton events

VOLUME 20 • QUARTER 1 • 2021



DELIVERING TOWN NEWS

TO EVERYONE IN TOWN

Throughout This World-Wide Pandemic, We Continue To Stand By Our Rotary Motto: "Service Above Self"

How We Are Helping Locally:

- Support to the "Food For All Garden"
- Participated in CLINTON STRONG!
- HUGE SUPPORTER of the Clinton Food Pantry
- Third Grade Dictionary Project in Clinton & Killingworth
- United Methodist Church Soup Kitchen - 4 times a year
- Annual James Beardsley Memorial Cornhole Tournament
- Donated LEGO WeDo Robotics & STEM to the H.C.H. Library
- Sponsored the "Grab & Go" Ice Cream Truck at H.C.H. Library
- Provide Meals to Middlesex Hospital Shoreline Medical Center Staff
- Award Scholarships to Clinton H.S. Seniors
- Annual Mother's Day Flower Sale
- Morgan Student of the Month
- Sponsor A.R.C. Blood Drives
- Cancer Relief Fund (C.R.C.R.F.)
- AMBER Alert Child Identification
- The Morgan School Interact Club
- Participates in "Feed Your Neighbor" Meal Program
- Supports Annual Easter Baskets for Children at the Clinton Food Pantry
- Supports Annual "Breakfast with Santa" for the Local Foster Children

... AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS, too!



*It's Time to
Join Rotary!*

ATTEND Our ZOOM Meetings!

Our Clinton Rotary Club
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Every Thursday Evening.
If You'd Like to Attend
Our Meetings to See
How We Make A Difference
In Our Community...
Send an Email to:
dickmasonus@yahoo.com
to obtain a ZOOM link.

**WE LOOK FORWARD
TO MEETING
YOU!!**



Town Manager's Corner

Vote of Confidence

Welcome to the start of a new year and the sense of hope and renewal that comes with the change of a calendar as well as a list of resolutions to work on. As a community, we were challenged mightily in 2020 with the pandemic and its disruptions to our lives and operations. Nevertheless, as a community, Clinton was able to make progress during 2020 which build a good foundation moving forward into a new year.

Leading into 2021, the Town has received a number of votes of confidence that will help us move forward. First, it may not be widely known, but Clinton is home to world-class manufacturers who bring innovation to Connecticut. Of note, Bausch Advanced Technologies completed a second expansion in two years. The quiet success of our manufacturers may not be known to all residents, but they have been vital to our success as a community.

A second vote of confidence was seen in how well Wall Street responded to bonds and notes offered by the Town. Strong market interest and very low interest rates speak to the confidence the investor community has in Clinton's debt when we are restructuring debt to reduce costs or financing a project.

Confidence in Clinton as a retail business destination was seen in reinvestments into Clinton Crossing as they updated the premium outlet mall. New investment in the former Morgan School site

continues to make progress as the old school site is reimagined into the Shops at Indian River. We all be able to watch this project move forward as construction will begin this year and new life is brought to the area.



Karl Kilduff, Town Manager

In our efforts to keep Main Street

Clinton competitive, we received a State grant under the Small Town Economic Assistance Program which was a vote of confidence in the Town's plans to provide façade improvement grants that will help keep the vital retail corridor along Route 1 competitive and attractive adding to the character of the community. We hope to be able to roll out the program in the spring.

We remain a community committed to moving forward and making progress. Clinton has been resilient in adapting to the need for rapid change. As we move forward into 2021, we will continue seeking out opportunities to move Clinton forward.

Please continue doing your part to keep Clinton safe by wearing a mask, washing your hands and keeping a physical distance of 6 feet.

Enjoy the first signs of spring. Stay safe.

Karl Kilduff, Town Manager

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18 Industrial Park Road, P.O.Box 205

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www.essexprinting.com

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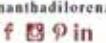
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The Food for All Garden



Did you know that there is a one acre garden in Clinton just off Main Street that supplies thousands of pounds of fresh vegetables every year to local Food Pantries? Did you also know that it is run entirely by volunteers? The Food for All Garden is a non-profit garden located behind the Holy Advent Church and next to the Abraham Pierson School. Last year volunteers logged in more than 2,000 hours at the garden and harvested 9,180 pounds of vegetables, herbs and flowers! Nearly all of this harvest

went directly to the Clinton Food Pantry where it was included in the weekly distribution of groceries.

What are your plans for the spring? Make a difference while you are making new friends. Get involved in the garden this year and help our neighbors experiencing food insecurities. We are excited about starting our 9th season of growing vegetables for those in need, and would love to share our enthusiasm with new volunteers. Don't have any gardening skills?

continued on page 6



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Food for All Garden... continued from page 5

That's not a problem. It takes more than garden know-how to keep the garden growing. We welcome volunteers of all interests and abilities. Wouldn't you like to be a part of our garden community? Volunteers are in the garden April to November on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Our motto is "Come when you can, leave when you have to." Don't worry about social distancing. There is plenty of space to spread out and grow at the garden.

If you would like to support this all-volunteer effort with financial or in-kind donations, please contact us by email at foodforallgarden@gmail.com, through the Food for All Garden Facebook page, or our website, www.foodforallgarden.org.

Donations may be made directly on the website. Help is always needed, and very much appreciated. We couldn't do this without the support of the entire Clinton community.



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The Clinton Land Trust

Hiking is something you CAN do now and the Clinton Land Trust is happy our trails are being used more than ever. We encourage you, especially in these times of heightened stress and anxiety to immerse yourself in the healing properties of our forest. Shinrin Yoku is a Japanese term coined in 1982. It is translated as "forest bathing" and is known as a powerful therapy that can relax the mind, reduce stress, lower blood pressure and heart rates and other healthful benefits. Protecting and preserving forests does more than just help to clean the air we breathe and the water we drink. Walking in the woods is therapeutic.

The Clinton Land Trust is a non-profit organization that was first formed in 1967. We own and maintain with the help of volunteers many miles of scenic woodland trails right here in Clinton. Every organization needs leaders, and we would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to two of our board members, Dana Whitney and Frank Byrne. They have volunteered to serve on the CLCT Board for over 25 years. Dana is a Forester by profession and was an integral part of the reforestation of Peters Memorial Woods after the hemlocks were destroyed by woolly adelgid. He has also laid out and GPS'd most of our newer trails. Frank, Chairman of Land Manage-



ment, has been responsible for organizing workdays to make sure our trails are safe from downed or hanging trees, that our bridges over the waterways are maintained, and that the trail blazes are visible so you can find your way.

If you would like to volunteer, become a member or download a trail map, go to clintonlandtrust.org. Take a hike in the woods and enjoy the beauty that surrounds you!



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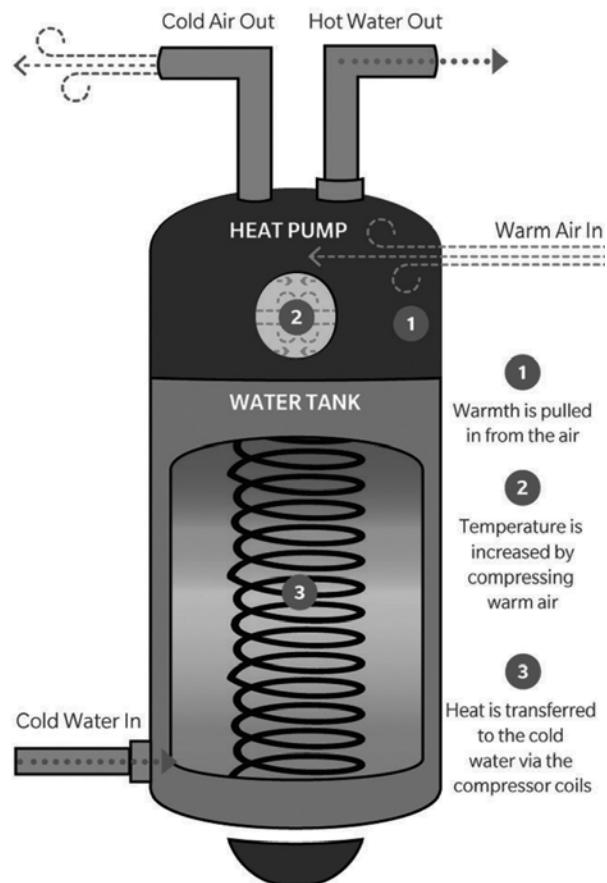
Heat Pumps: Your Energy Efficient Solution for Cold Winters and Hot Summers

By Enoch Lenge

It's increasingly important for homes to be cozy and warm as temperatures drop and days shorten, especially with many continuing to spend more time at home. But it's also important that heating and cooling systems are energy efficient to ensure you don't spend more than needed to keep your home comfortable. There are several options out there, but heat pumps are the most efficient option for many homeowners that currently heat their home with electricity, oil, or propane.

Contrary to their name, heat pumps can both heat and cool your home. They are also much better for the environment – and your wallet – than furnaces and air conditioners. But choosing which heat pump is best for your home can be overwhelming. A local HVAC contractor can help you select the best system for your home and Eversource's Home Energy SolutionsSM can connect you with rebates and financing that can make a heat pump good option for you. These are some of the most common questions our team of experts answer when it comes to heat pumps:

- How do heat pumps work? Like a refrigerator or air conditioner, a heat pump runs on electricity, and a refrigerant transfers heat from one location to another. To cool your house, heat pumps take hot air from indoors and move it outdoors. To heat your home, heat is extracted from outdoors and transferred to the inside of your home. Because heat pumps transfer heat rather than produce hot or cold air, they are a more efficient option than conventional heating and cooling systems, reducing both carbon emissions and your energy bill. Geothermal or “ground source” heat pumps are another option which maximize efficiency by transferring heat and cold from water circulated underground where it is a constant temperature year-round.
- I have a boiler and no central AC. What should I do? Generally, ENERGY STAR[®] certified ductless mini split heat pumps work well for those who live in homes that are heated with a hot water system such as a boiler and



do not have central air conditioning. These units can be hidden via wall-mounting, floor-mounting or ceiling mounting, thus making them a more visually attractive option.

- I have central AC and existing duct work. Is a heat pump still right for me? Yes; people who live in homes with these features should consider a heat pump system. These systems are conducive to homes that already have ductwork and can be added easily.
- How do I get the most out of my heat pump? While it can be tempting to adjust the thermostat frequently depending on how you feel, try not to. Heat pumps work better when they stay at one, consistent temperature as much as possible.

With Eversource's rebates and incentives – coupled with the fact that we are spending more time at home than ever due to COVID-19 – there is no better time to increase your energy savings and your comfort with a high-efficiency, heat pump system.

Depending on what type of heat pump works best for your home,

rebates for Connecticut residents range from \$500/ton to \$1,000/ton.

Whether you're looking to improve the comfort of your home, save on your energy bill, or help save the environment, Eversource has several budget-friendly solutions to help you get started.

To schedule your Home Energy Solutions visit, call 1-877-WISE-USE (877-947-3873), or visit Eversource.com to learn more about Eversource's residential offerings and additional ways to save.

Enoch Lenge is Eversource's energy efficiency spokesperson.

Families Helping Families

This past year has been a challenge in many ways to all of us. Families Helping Families is so thankful for all the support we have received from the entire Clinton community. Without your continuing support we would not have been able to fund and operate our community outreach programs.

With the huge increase in the number of families using the Clinton Food Pantry our efforts have been focused on making sure there is plenty of food at all times for every Clinton family. We have partnered with a wholesale produce company and have developed some online sources which allow us to buy at considerably lower prices and buy more with your donated dollars. As of January 27th we have delivered over 73,000 pounds of fresh produce, non-perishable food items, and personal care items to our local pantry since April 1st 2020.

We are very hopeful that we be able to have some public events (with social distancing) later this year.

For the past five years through our Clinton Kids Initiative program and our partnership with Mr. Paul Egan (The Bike Guy) we have given away over 1,000 free bikes. This year we hope to have a bike swap/give away at The Clinton Police Dept in April.

We also anticipate having our hosting "Stuff A Cruiser" Food Drive in April. This will be a Saturday and Sunday event and for those who can't attend we will have a virtual food drive on our website fhfclinton.org.

To help us continue to fund and operate our community outreach programs in the Clinton community you can donate online at fhfclinton.org or send a check to P.O. Box 166, Clinton, CT 06413

Miner T. Vincent
President
Families Helping Families

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FOR ALL AGES

Call (860) 669-2342 or visit hchlibrary.org for more information.

Community Art Projects: Help us decorate the library! Check back each month for new themes and prompts. Pick up supplies and instructions in the lobby during service hours, doodle, draw, write, or decorate your cutout, then drop off your creation and we'll hang it in our library to share (or, hang it in your window at home or work and send us a photo to be posted online). All ages (adults too) are invited to participate. We can't wait to see what you create!

StoryWalks: Enjoy self-guided storytime outdoors! Rotating seasonal exhibits. Check our website for updates and details.

FOR CHILDREN

Call (860) 669-2342 or email askus@hchlibrary.org to register/schedule pickup.

Stories & More - Weekly/Mondays @ 10 am: New storytime video posted on our website every week. No registration. Ages 2-6.



Miss Jan with Saturday Crafts

School-Age Storytime - Weekly/Wednesdays @ 10 am: New storytime video posted on our website every week. No registration. Grades K-6.

Baby & Me - Weekly/Wednesdays @ 10 am: Virtual story, song, and social time for babies and caregivers. Registration required. Birth-2 years.

Nonfiction Storytime - Monthly: New storytime video posted on our website every month. Grades 3-6.

Grab & Go Stories & More Craft - Weekly: A new craft each week to accompany our Stories & More video. Ages 2-6.

Grab & Go Saturday Craft - Weekly: Stop in on Saturdays to pick up a fun new craft kit each week.

Grab & Go STEAM Challenge - Monthly: A new kit each month. Grades 1-6.

Grab & Go Tween Craft - Monthly: A new kit each month. In November, try your hand at Finger Knitting crafts. In December, make a mini gingerbread house. Registration required. Grades 3-6.

Grab & Go Book Bundles - Ongoing: Choose a theme and receive a book bundle with corresponding activity pack. Visit website or contact us for available themes. Ages 3-6.

“Take The Library To Your Child” - February: Celebrate the 10th Annual “Take Your Child To The Library Day” all month long with fun challenges and prizes for reading! Send us a photo of your child reading or tag @hch_library in your photo on Instagram and be entered in a daily drawing for a free book (ages birth - 12 years). Borrow five or more books from us this month

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and earn "Brag Stick" keychains (ages 2-12 years). See website for details.

Nutmeg Book Club - May: Virtual discussion and activity about the 2021 Nutmeg Book Award nominee, *Restart* by Gordon Korman. Register to receive the book - Check website for details.

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Call (860)669-2342 or email cathleen@hchlibrary.org for more information/to register.

Live Online Practice SAT Exam - Sat. 3/6 @ 1 pm: Sign up to take a free full-length practice SAT test under timed conditions with live proctoring online from Revolution Prep. This proctored exam will help build testing endurance and provide a real-time experience. Test takers will receive an invitation for a free online score review with an academic advisor.

FOR ADULTS

Call (860) 669-2342 or email sarah@hchlibrary.org for more information/to register.

Virtual Meditation - Weekly/Mondays @ 11 am: Live, virtual, guided meditation class.

Virtual Yoga - Weekly/Fridays @ 9:45 am: Live, virtual, guided gentle yoga class.

Kanopy Film Discussion Group

Monthly/2nd Thurs. @ 3:00 pm: Discuss a different film selection each month. Use your Clinton library card to create your Kanopy account and access documentary, indie, and classic films, online. To view the film in advance, visit hchlibrary.org/event/kanopy.

Virtual TED Talks - Monthly/3rd Tues. @ 9:30 am: Join us online to watch and discuss a selection of inspiring TED Talks with a new theme each month. To view the talks in advance, visit hchlibrary.org/event/ted.

Virtual Book Chat - Monthly/4th Tues. @ 9:30 am: Log online for a chat with fellow bibliophiles about the latest faves and flops and some of the library's new arrivals.

Participants will receive a monthly list of



Community Art Projects

titles recommended by the group.

The Atlantic Magazine Virtual

Discussion Group - Monthly/4th Wed. @ 9:30 am: Since its founding in 1857, The Atlantic Magazine has had a goal of, "challenging assumptions and pursuing truth" through journalism with a focus on literature, art, and politics. Join us online for a monthly discussion group. For magazine access, email sarah@hchlibrary.org.

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Your Support Matters...Now More Than Ever.

Now is the time for us to give thanks for all the good people making great things happen in Middlesex County.

Thank you for stepping up to support our frontline workers with critical supplies and services.

Thank you for helping our local nonprofits meet the increasing and changing needs of our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for working together for a better today and a brighter tomorrow for all.



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Library... continued from page 11

Grab & Go Wellness - Monthly: Make time for self-care with grab & go wellness kits. Participants will also receive access to an exclusive video tutorial and recommended eBooks, movies, music, and audio-books. Check website for details.

Get Real: Nonfiction Book Club - Monthly: Read and discuss a different nonfiction book selection each month. Check website for details. To get the book, email cathleen@hchlibrary.org.

Virtual Saint Patrick's Day Concert - Mon. 3/15 @ 4 pm: Enjoy a live virtual performance of classic and contemporary Irish tunes performed by the talented musician and former CT Troubador Pierce Campbell. Check website for details.

Henry Carter Hull Library is currently offering services during the following hours. For the most up-to-date information call (860)669-2342 or visit www.hchlibrary.org.

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Henry-2-Go Curbside Services: Call (860)669-2342, email henry2go@hchlibrary.org, or visit hchlibrary.org to request specific titles and schedule pick-up.

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Job, Career, & Employment Assistance: Looking for employment, business development, training, or résumé help? Visit hchlibrary.org/research/job-career-resources to access our Virtual Job Board, Reference Solutions business database, JobNow SkillSurfer course catalog, Cypress Resumé skill-builder, and more resources online.

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From the Town Clerk's Office

Shellfish Licenses

2021 shellfish licenses are now available for purchase in the Town Clerk's Office.

Please note we only accept cash or checks.

Fishing / Opening Day

Opening day for fishing is April 10th, sports licenses are available in the Town Clerk's Office.

Important Dates to Remember

April 7 - Budget Public Hearing

May 5 - Annual Budget Meeting

May 12 - Budget Referendum

6 am to 8 pm

Permanent Absentee Ballots

An elector can file an AB application together with a doctor's certificate (presumably on letterhead), stating that they have a permanent disability and are unable to appear in person at their polling place. This will allow an elector to be on our Permanent Absentee ballot list. AB ballots will then be

automatically mailed to the elector for an Election or Referendum.

The Town Clerk's office is open Monday – Wednesday 9 am to 4 pm, Thursdays 9 am to 7 pm, and Fridays from 9 am to noon.

If you have any questions, please call 860-669-9101 or email townclerk@clintonct.org.

Sharon Uricchio, CCTC

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Community Foundation of Middlesex County

A Growing Community of Support

At the Community Foundation of Middlesex County (CFMC), we celebrate the many people who are stepping up and working together to make a difference in their local community now, and forever.

Thanks to a grant from the Cathy Weiss Sunrise Fund at CFMC, the Food for All Garden in Clinton was awarded a grant to purchase seeds and fertilizer for the new growing season. The volunteers at this non-profit plan to work side by side daily to expand the garden and to serve the community's ever growing need due to the pandemic. The Cathy Weiss Sunrise Fund also provided assistance to the Estuary Council of Seniors, the sole provider of Meals on Wheels to residents in Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook. At the beginning of the pandemic, the Estuary Council lost power and their freezer broke down. This grant award, along with other grants, helped purchase a new freezer that will allow them to prepare more meals in advance and provide a faster service.

This is one more example of the good things that happen when community members put their hearts and dollars to work for the benefit of all. We can't predict what tomorrow will bring, but we do know that the future will be brighter thanks to the abundance of kindness and compassion we see being practiced every day. You can count on us to help connect you with your area of interest and a community need.

Please give us a call at 860-347-0025 or visit us online at MiddlesexCountyCF.org to learn more.

A Better Today, Brighter Tomorrow for All

Since 1997, the Community Foundation of Middlesex County (CFMC) has helped people from all walks of life make great things happen throughout Middlesex County. This year we continue to celebrate our superb local nonprofits and community members.

We are thrilled to announce the return of the CFMC Virtual Pop-Up Grants, and invite everyone to join the fun. Visit the CFMC Virtual Pop-Up Grant webpage (middlesexcountycf.org/2021/01/submit-your-favorite-nonprofit) and submit the name of your favorite Middlesex County nonprofit. On the third Friday of each month, CFMC will draw a name and award the organization a small grant. Recipients to date include the East Haddam Historical Society, The Buttonwood Tree, Shared Harvest Garden at Parmelee Farm, Everyone Outside, Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries, Shoreline Arts Alliance, Pandemonium Rainforest Project, Wesleyan Potters, and Artists for World Peace.

Our celebration continues with a shout-out to a community collaboration that inspires us all. The Open-Air Meeting Space at Chester Elementary School in partnership with the Town of Chester, the school, and the Chester Leadership

Fund at CFMC is one of note. This project will provide a space that can be used as an outdoor learning classroom for the students as well as a gathering place for community members. The structure will be built in close proximity to the school to accommodate a wall-mounted monitor with access to wi-fi and electricity. This outdoor learning space will allow for learning with social distancing and will have lasting benefits long after COVID.

Even in the most challenging times, there is no shortage of creativity and compassion in Middlesex County. The opportunities to make a very real and personal difference for the benefit of all are endless. We encourage you to learn more and help us share the joy.

Give us a call at 860-347-0025 or visit us online at MiddlesexCountyCE.org.

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Vista Life Innovations Receives Mask Donations to Support Individuals with Disabilities



Vista Life Innovations received donations from The Rotary Club of Madison and Connecticut Biotech. CT State Representative Vincent Candelora and former CT State Representative Noreen Kokoruda were present.

During the pandemic, Vista Life Innovations, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting the personal success of individuals with disabilities, has seen our community pull together in unique and unexpected ways to support us. Over the last few months, both the Rotary Club of Madison and Connecticut Biotech have donated important PPE resources. Their efforts helped to supply our staff, students, and members with 4,000 surgical masks and 1,000 N95 respirator masks.

For Vista, these donations will help support in-person, personalized instruction for our dormitory in Westbrook and throughout the homes of individuals along the Connecticut shoreline. COVID safety has been an important lesson for all of us and the students and members at Vista have incorporated these behaviors into their everyday lives. Both donations were part of

larger efforts to serve Connecticut. The Rotary Club of Madison took part in the “Million Mask Challenge Tour,” where Rotary clubs across New England teamed up with the Rossi Family Foundation to donate one million disposable masks.

Connecticut Biotech has been working hard to fight PPE shortages across the state. They have partnered with local leaders to distribute N95 masks to organizations in need. Vista was proud to be the recipient of these donations.

To learn more about the Rotary, visit www.madisonctrotary.com
To learn more about Connecticut Biotech, visit www.ctbiotech.com/

To learn more about Vista Life Innovations, visit www.vistalifeinnovations.org.

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From Sea to Space – A World of Exploration

by Sigrid Kun



Graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy (Electrical Engineering) and MIT (Ocean Engineering), achieving the status of a Navy Captain and serving as the first Executive Officer of the Pre - Commissioning Unit VIRGINIA (SSN 774, Groton, CT) alone constitute a rewarding military career. For Captain Stephen G. Bowen (left), that was just the beginning.

Moving from submarines to space was Bowen's destiny. NASA opportunities popped up here and there during Bowen's Navy career. A colleague once noted that NASA was seeking applica-

tions. Another time, after pulling into port in Groton, Bowen found a Navy-wide call to apply posted on his message board. It was a week past the due date. "I really had never thought about it," recalls Bowen. But those moments stuck in the back of his mind. When NASA issued another Navy-wide call for applications in 1998, he didn't miss his chance. "One of my dreams as a kid was to become an astronaut and participate in space exploration," Bowen notes. "I was incredibly lucky, and fortunate to be selected." Bowen, now 56, is the first submarine officer selected as an astronaut by NASA.

THREE SPACE SHUTTLE MISSIONS

He was off to Houston in 2000 followed by two years of training and evaluation at Johnson Space Center. In 2008, he was selected for NASA's fourth space shuttle flight. That was the first of three space shuttle missions for Bowen. STS-126 (Endeavour 2008) comprised a 16-day mission during which the living quarters of the International Space Station (ISS) were expanded. Bowen performed three spacewalks (above far right). STS -132 (Atlantis 2010) delivered an Integrated Cargo Carrier and a Mini Research Module to the ISS. Bowen performed another three spacewalks (installing a spare antenna and stowage platform and replacing batteries that store solar energy) (lower right). STS-133 (Discovery's final mission, 2011) delivered the Permanent Multi-Purpose Module and fourth Express Logistics Carrier to the ISS. Overall, Bowen has logged over 40 days in space including over 47 hours of spacewalks (7 walks).

For astronauts, 90% of the work is on the ground in support of missions. So being given the opportunity to fly is a "humbling thing" for Bowen. "You do your best to help," he says. "In a sense it is my job and it is exciting to be a part of." For the submariner, astronaut work was uncannily familiar. He recalls first entering the ISS. "The first thing I noticed was that it smelled like a submarine... It looks like a submarine," he observed. Submarine and space technology is not just familiar - it is almost exactly the same.

EXUBERANCE FOR SPACE EXPLORATION

Bowen is passionate about the import of NASA's work - whether it is supporting the ISS (manned continuously for 20 years) or otherwise. "There is so much potential for what we can do in space. Whether it is the moon or Mars, what we do in space matters to life here on Earth," he says. There are so many examples. Bowen describes the ISS's unique drinking water system. It was designed so that astronauts don't have to take up as much drinking water. That system is now used on Earth in

17 May 2010 - NASA Astronaut Steve Bowen, STS-132 mission specialist, participates in the mission's first session of extravehicular activity (EVA) as construction and maintenance continue on the International Space Station. During the seven-hour, 25-minute spacewalk, Bowen and NASA astronaut Garrett Reisman (out of frame), mission specialist, loosened bolts holding six replacement batteries, installed a second antenna for high-speed Ku-band transmissions and adding a spare parts platform to Dextre, a two-armed extension for the station's robotic arm.



24 Feb. 2011 - Astronaut Steve Bowen, STS-133 mission specialist, is seen on the middeck of the space shuttle Discovery soon after reaching Earth orbit on flight day one. Bowen is still in his launch and entry escape suit.

places that never had fresh water on a continuous basis. In the 1960s and 1970s, NASA developed communications systems based on cell switching - the founding technology for our cell phones. "If you don't ask the questions in exploration, you won't have the answers," he explains. "The research we are doing - we are all lab rats. When we go to space we can make life better here on Earth."

SO, WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE AN ASTRONAUT... TO HAVE BEEN IN SPACE?

For Bowen, it is about perspective. "It's kind of frustrating that it took me going to space to see just how amazing Earth is," he observes. "It is a sense of awe. Look at nature. Look at what civilization has done in trying to make Earth a whole better place... It is amazing what mankind and civilization have accomplished. It is incredible." It is also a time to be reflective. "To see how far we've come - it's staggering. And you can [reflect] on a daily basis," he notes. "Nature - just allow yourself to take a look. We can get caught up in the news...we have to step back and appreciate things every so often."

Currently on the Artemis project (to land the first woman and next man on the moon by 2024), Bowen's joy in his work is clear, whether it is training, flying, working with cosmonauts, or practicing spacewalks. "Being a part of this is incredible. It's the greatest job in the world." Not bad for a kid who lugged buckets of cement for his father's tiling business. "250 miles about the Earth and orbiting the planet every 90 minutes, what kind of world do we live in where that is possible... it's absolutely amazing."

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