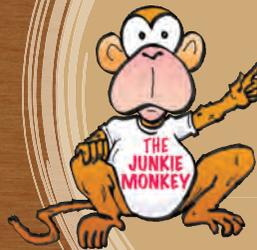


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# a homeowner...

If you are one that appreciates your personal surroundings; your couch, your kitchen, your bathroom, your garden, your garage, etc., and you have a passion for building, decorating or any other types of home modification, you may want to own. A landlord may not have your same sentiments with their property! There are many great places to live in Connecticut and hopefully you enjoy the change of seasons, or can at least tolerate them, so you can fully appreciate what this state has to offer. There are all types of homes, condos, and communities sprouting up; ones on golf courses, the over 50 ones and yes ones with horses too. The homes vary in size from small to medium, to big to the "McMansions." Homes, obviously, are all shapes, styles, sizes and colors. Unfortunately, sometimes a parcel of land has been sold off from the original property where there is a tiny little house. Then growing out of the land it once owned, is some disproportionately sized monster that neither showcases the character of the original house or property. Fortunately, there are still many areas where land is still virtually untouched. I, personally, like to live somewhere in between. I was neither a boondocks girl nor a city girl. So hence there are places for everyone here and your heart and your wallet will govern what you ultimately can do with your home. We will bring you to great historic homes, tell you about builders, contractors, new trends in the market, and whatever other great information we can find for you. Our new website [www.cthomeownersguide.com](http://www.cthomeownersguide.com), is a work in progress that will bring you a wealth of information online. We hope you enjoy your home and that we can provide you with some fun things to do with your house or condo!

**KIM WILLIAMS**

(if you must see her picture refer to cover, letter from the publisher, and ct bikers guide...)

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Robert Allen began his love affair with sound and performance early, perhaps it was the influence of his songwriter father and singer mother. From his acquisition of stereo equipment before he hit his teens, to recording jingles from the age of seven, his appreciation for the total experience, not just pictures, tone and decibels was developed. For the past 15 years he has been applying those sensitivities to create for his clients unique home environments that go beyond installation of media equipment. In their words "He has enhanced our home and our lives."

High praise indeed, but when you can create a mini performance center for kids, "float" a screen to create just the right workings for the room or create a custom Italianesque theatre all in concert with the client's unique living design, well, you then have a home you simply do not want to leave.

What's the difference? It's all in the design – the specialized design – windows, molding, cabinets, seats, curtains, lighting – and the attention to personal detail. That's what makes Robert Allen's approach unique.

There are so many options to choose from and, happily, that can accommodate a shoestring to a sky's the limit budget.

At the high end is a home that is fully integrated – lights, cameras, heating and cooling,

computers, security and entertainment, all operating with the convenience of a touch screen. For some

it's taking advantage of that new high definition television set with its incredible sound and picture. Others want that theater experience on their boat.

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- Design alternatives for the "big screen" – making your spouse happy.

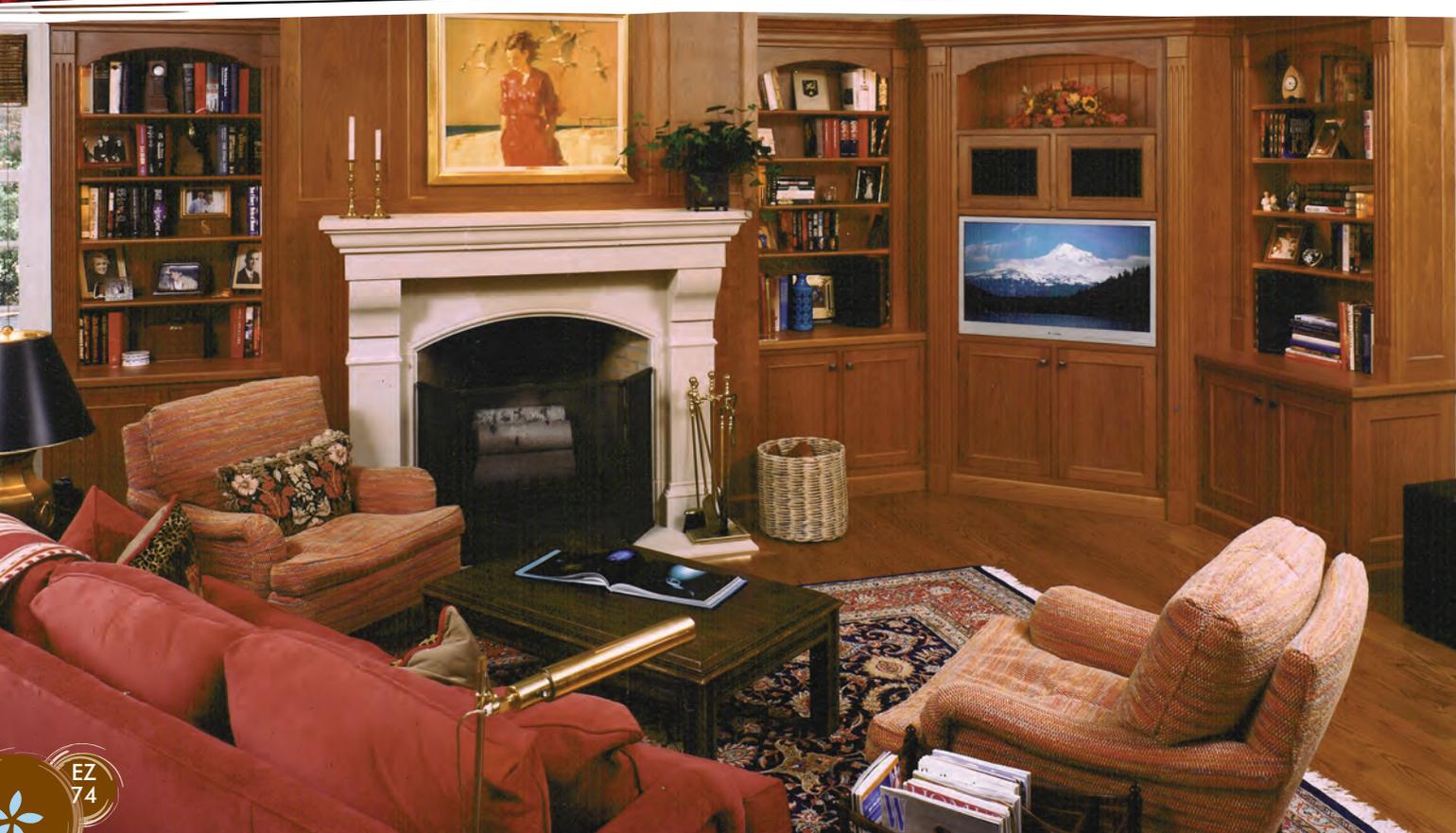


## THINGS HOMEOWNERS NEED TO THINK ABOUT:

### New Home Multimedia Design Considerations

- 1. Level of integration.** At the more elaborate end you'll find integration of lights, security, phone, audio, video, computers, and even heating and cooling. The most common is integration with audio, video and lighting.
- 2. User interface.** Most people today feel a little overwhelmed with their media equipment, remotes, what goes on with what, etc. The user interface makes the use of the system very intuitive and hassle free. The more elaborate user interfaces can pull up cover art with the music playing, show video on the screen and display options in the way the particular owner wants to see them.
- 3. Coverage in the house.** This refers to the rooms in the house that will offer music/television. Most common is to make sure the living areas and master rooms are covered. Guest rooms, laundry rooms, utility rooms are often times not covered. This also addresses what kinds of options will be offered in each room. It is common to only put in volume controls in some rooms, while full control in others.





**4. Coverage outside the house.** Since many times outside spaces function as other rooms of the house there is special attention paid to speaker types, placement of speakers, wires and even televisions in areas such as barbecue pits, pools, saunas, decks and gardens.

**5. Equipment quality and sophistication.** This typically will vary even in one home depending on the level of use of the room. Kitchens, for instance, surprisingly see better quality speakers and televisions since they are in constant use. Dining rooms, on the other hand, typically require less sophistication and quality since they are usually used as background to quieter conversation. Some rooms, bathrooms as an example, due to their acoustical properties don't require larger, more powerful speakers.

**6. Media rooms and theatres.** These can be big cost drivers due to the number of components and level of sophistication involved. Typically satellite receivers, AM/FM tuners, center, side and rear speakers, amplifiers, DVD, CD, VCR screens, and projectors are considered/implemented. Couples usually have strong (and many times different) opinions on this topic.

**7. In-wall vs. free standing speakers.** Many times people would like their speakers concealed in the room. There may be a room or two where listening to great music would be best supported through the bigger, more visible speakers. The best way to determine this is to listen to sample speakers and decide the level of appreciation to the sound.

**8. Location of equipment.** A very important design consideration is less about the economics of the system and more about making sure the investment is well housed and accessible.

**Perhaps the most important thing in all of this is focusing on making it simple to use. Having all this power isn't any good unless you know how to harness it. Intuitive remotes, user friendly touch screens, cheat sheets and one on one hand holding can all be employed as necessary, to make sure those using the system feel in control. Robert Allen Multimedia does not leave you until you are completely in control of your controls.**

KIM KELLY



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# SO You Want to be Your Own GO?

The only thing I can say is HANG ON! It is going to be the ride of your life. If you have decided to delve into this position with no prior experience, you are going to be in for a lot of surprises. There will be the "The Good, The Bad & The Ugly." Great and wonderful we will save as descriptions for when you are actually sitting on a piece of furniture in a room in your FINISHED house. Well, at least as close to finished as you might get. Often "finished" may mean, "We still have a piece of baseboard to put in the bathroom," or "a piece of trim that needs to be painted." But by the time you actually get to that point, it will feel like you're finished!

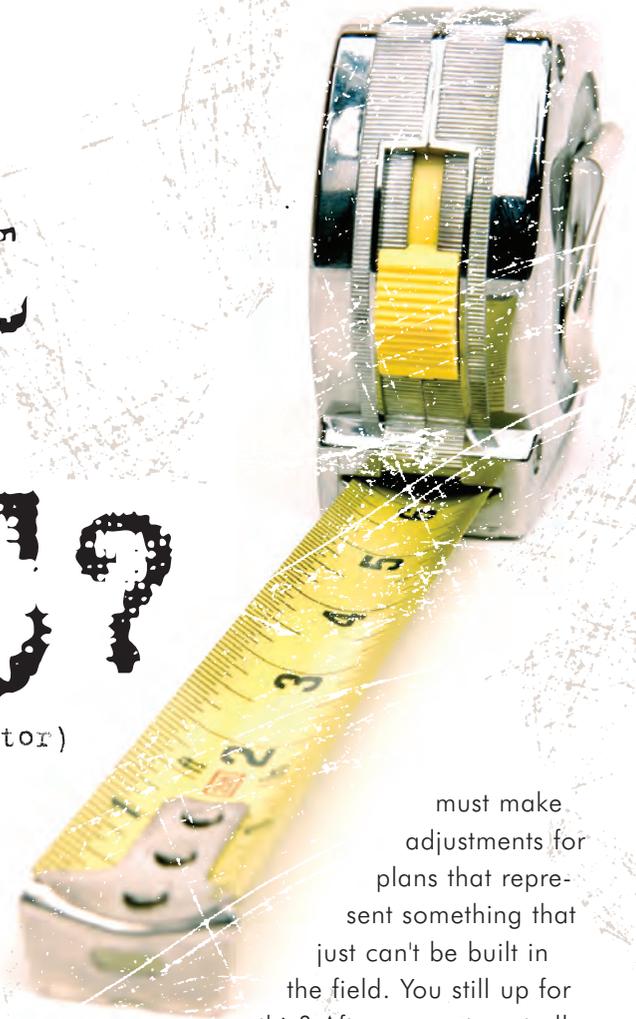
The first thing to do is educate yourself. Please don't become one of those "I know enough to be dangerous" types. You're only asking for trouble. Talk to people who have been through this process before, talk to the lumber companies, and talk to your town zoning commission (You are going to have to talk to them anyway for permits and such.

(General Contractor)

Yes, maybe to even change your toilet, but quite often they are really great people and are eager to help).

Whether you will be working with an architect or (attempting) to design your project yourself, it's essential to have a good idea of what you are going to have in the end. You need to think up, upside down, sideways, inside, outside, and any other way there is. Designing can't only be from the inside out, it must also be from the outside in. What you do inside will drastically affect the outside, just as whatever you do outside will affect inside if you are not careful. If you want to center a window in a room, it may not wind up in the place you think on the outside. Careful thought must be given to these issues so one or the other doesn't look horribly out of whack. If you have had an architect do all the work, then you may think "OK, we are ready!" Not necessarily. Many framers

must make adjustments for plans that represent something that just can't be built in the field. You still up for this? After you get past all that, the next fun part is getting to KNOW your contractors. This is really where that "The Good, The Bad & The Ugly" can't be anymore true. Being the GC of your own home becomes very personal. Unlike going to buy a new car, the salesmen, as good or bad as they may be, usually are not standing in your kitchen while trying to make the sale. The contractors are. They are going to be in your bathroom, bedroom, family room, kid's rooms and any other place they need access to.



Now you have your plans, your permits and your team of subcontractors. Are you ready? All I can say is that no matter how organized you are, things that you never counted on will go wrong. Imagine how bad it will be if you are not organized to begin with. The floor guys will come in and poly the floors, it will rain over night into the next morning, the floors are still too tacky to walk on, which means the electrician who actually shows up on time can't get in to put the fixtures up that you just realized has a piece missing or is broken. They are custom fixtures that were on order for 6-8 weeks and your move in date is only two weeks away. Are you having fun yet?

Then the carpet guys come and turn the heat up to 100, so that when they lay the carpet it will relax and install properly. In the meantime, you are seeing your oil bill skyrocket and before you understood why the heat was so high you have gone ballistic yelling at them and made them mad. So now "they" just happen to not be able to finish on time. Did you cover those carpets with plastic and paper? Not sure you wanted to spend that extra \$100 or \$200 to cover them right away, huh? Well, try this one out; after you get your \$300 per foot (normally sold by the yard, but exaggerating here) carpet installed, the driveway was just oiled and your tile guy steps in it unknowingly (he is one of your GOOD guys). He tromps across your \$300 a foot carpet leaving tracks of your freshly oiled driveway from the entrance of the room to the exit. How do you feel now? You will be dealing with all kinds of situations and people.

Be respectful of your subcontractors. They all need to work in some kind of harmony. They need space to do their thing, so don't crowd them with your wants and needs. Keep the electrician out of the bathroom the day the tile guy is there. Do not have the floor guys install the floors the same day the kitchen cabinets are being installed. Just because you think the area is ready for the painter, the electrician, the plumber, the home theater guy, and everyone else, unless you can put them in their own area, don't schedule them on top of each other. Most subcontractors do try to work together. Make sure the contractors know you are trying to work with them, not against them. Otherwise you will become the enemy. Just remember, this is your money, your house, and your sanity you are trying to keep intact! Expect the unexpected and just try to keep your head. Also, know the meaning of patience. Whatever the word is for having ten times the amount you think you will need, that is the word you need to describe the (realistic) amount you will need. In the end, you will either be addicted to the entire process and the gratification it brings, want to rip apart any untouched area of your home and redo it, or never ever do it again.

**Good Luck!! – Kim Williams**

Make sure the contractors know you are trying to work with them, not against them. Otherwise you will become the enemy. Just remember, this is your money, your house, and your sanity you are trying to keep intact!



# 8 Ways to Make Your House More Saleable

**for SALE**

1. Less is better than more....less clutter, less furniture, less on the walls, etc. Your home will not only appear larger, but prospective buyers will more easily be able to envision themselves in the home.
2. Light makes every room look more appealing.... pull shades up, turn on as many lights as possible and use higher wattage bulbs. Basements and attics should be well lit too.
3. Check for those minor annoyances that you have been meaning to take care of. These are usually inexpensive or do-it-yourself repairs that can make a big difference. For example, repair that screen with the rip in it or correct that running toilet.
4. Take a paint brush and walk around each room with the matching paint looking for any areas that need touch up. If an entire room needs painting, do it. Painting gives you the most return for your investment.
5. Don't forget the outside. First impressions are made with a drive by. Be sure the front door is attractive. Repaint it an attractive color, add a decorative doorbell or wreath.
6. Speaking of the exterior....especially at this time of year, the grass and shrubs should be trimmed. Gardens should be weeded and/or fresh mulch added. Clear gutters too. An inexpensive way to freshen up the outside is to add some potted plants to your front step and around your deck or patio.
7. Be aware of any pet odors. Often a family with pets may not realize that pet odor is present. Use products available to deodorize your carpeting and remove any soiled carpeting. If you have hardwood floors under the carpeting, expose them. Most buyers prefer a hardwood floor to carpeting.
8. Clean kitchen and baths especially well. These are the most important rooms of your home. Often it is the kitchen or baths that sell a home. Nothing turns off a buyer more than a kitchen or bath that looks neglected.

Now that you have done these things, you are ready for showings. As you proceed, keep your mind open to feedback you will get from buyers and your agent. The more pride you take in the appearance of your home, the more confidence a buyer will have that your home has been well taken care of and the more likely you are to receive an offer.

Submitted by

**Joanna Martin, Broker**

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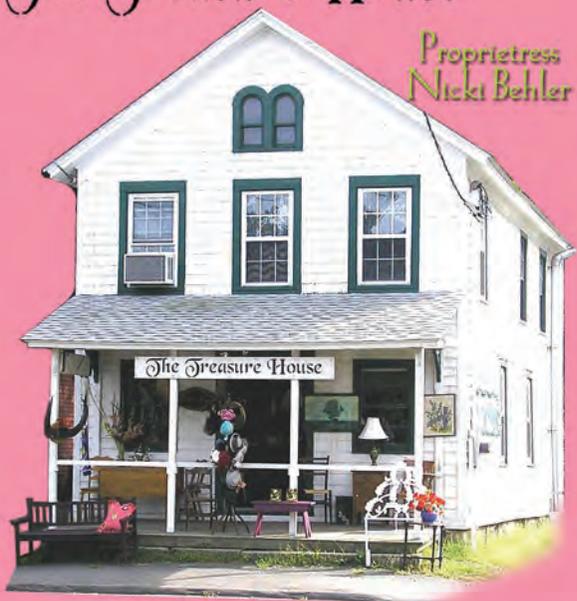
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# The Nathan Hale Homestead

Coventry, Connecticut



*Nathan Hale's life and actions during the Revolutionary War made him a sparkling figure in American history. At the age of twenty one, while spying against the British in New York, he was captured by their forces and hung as a "traitor," his body left to rot in the streets of the city. His final statement "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country," is remembered by anyone who has ever studied American history, and many who have not. He is Connecticut's state hero.*

Nathan Hale's self sacrificing deed was absolutely neither random, foolhardy or arbitrary. He was one of the four captains of the select regiment, "Knowlton's Rangers," formed for the purpose of reconnaissance and forward action, still one of the jobs of rangers today. His risky undertaking and summery execution were the result of a particular type and level of upbringing that can be understood by knowing the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere in which he was raised at the Hale homestead, an atmosphere which continued after his death.

The term homestead is a good one to use in our description, because it was the home, not just the house that produced such a remarkable young man. It was certainly a case where relative wealth gained by hard directed work nurtured a particular set of standards.

So let's take a trip back to the 18th century and try to get the feel of the home and kind of family life that helped produce the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and our democratic institutions. Merely walking through the rooms and grounds of the homestead, looking at the furniture and pictures on the walls combined with getting to know the family's story, can inspire a real sense of those qualities.

The homestead and its seventeen acres adjoin 1,500-acres of wooded and pastoral landscape that constitute the Nathan Hale State Forest. By the time you approach the house itself, you are already enclosed in natural surroundings very similar to those that fostered Hale's youth. To put it mildly, the Hale farm was a multipurpose operation. Although livestock was its primary business, with cattle, sheep and pigs raised

and driven to markets in Norwich and New London, there were also fields of grain, gardens, and orchards, as well as a cider mill. All this eventually encompassed four hundred and fifty acres.

Approaching the home you can see the dignified structure with its double chimneys beautifully framed by a rock wall and trees. A one hundred-foot long lengthy ell runs directly back from the main house adding balance to the completed picture. In fact that sense of balance seems to describe the whole family history. The ironic tragedy of this is that Nathan Hale did not live to see the house completed. He was killed a month before the family was able to move in from their original home on the same property, property that is remarkably similar to the setting of Hale's growing years of the 1760s, containing virtually unaltered field patterns, stone walls, as well as the original barn. A small statue of Hale stands in front of one of those walls and closer to the house an engraved tablet describing his deeds lies embedded in the earth.

The Georgian house reflected the newest ideas in country living. But these were not the only new ideas percolating in the Hale family, not at all. Within the walls of the current and previous adjoining house where Hale grew up, the philosophy of liberty expressed by Englishman John Locke and eventually Americanized by Thomas Paine, were galvanizing the forward thinking colonists toward the desire for total independence from Britain, as opposed to merely conciliatory economic relief. In fact, it was Paine who coined the phrase, "Declaration of Independence" eight months before Hale's death.





Hale's entrance into Yale College at the age of fourteen would have only fostered a greater belief in those ideas. But his "libertarian" ideas took a personal direction that went beyond revolutionary ideals. While at Yale, he argued and won in a debate for the equal education of young women. He put these ideals into practice while headmaster at the Union Grammar School in New London where he took the radical step of getting permission to teach girls from 5 to 7 a.m. before the male students arrived.

One of his students remembered, "Scholars old and young (were) exceedingly attached to him, respected highly by all his acquaintance by fine moral character. Face full of intelligence and benevolence manners mild and genteel."

Hale's charisma with his students extended to his well known athletic gifts. "He would jump from the bottom of one hoghead up and down into a second and from the second up and down into a third like a cat. He would also put his hand on a fence as high as his head and jump over it." That Hale was also known for his good looks, goes without saying.

The Hale spirit of service to others continued after Hale's death, as it had gone on before it. Six of the eight Hale brothers served in the war, two of them dying from infirmities contracted during the war. His father Richard took in widows, nieces, and nephews. At one point there were about twenty five people living in the Hale homestead. As you might imagine, every room had its use and then some. The whole family worked hard in support of the war. For example Hale's sister Joanna used the east bed chamber to make socks for the soldiers. Other family women produced wool for textiles. Brother David helped run the family farm. While walking the rooms and grounds, you can imagine the extraordinary activity that went on there morning, noon, and night with adults working amongst the activities of

children and crying of babies, with father Richard seated at his desk (still in the east parlor) taking care of business.

The Hale family eventually left the homestead during the early 19th century, but there was one particularly bittersweet return. Hale's niece, Rebeckah Abbot Hale, who had left the house in 1799 for New Hampshire, attended the dedication of the monument to Hale in the Coventry cemetery. When she visited the house she was dismayed to find out that all the doors had been painted. There was a particular poignancy to this discovery.

The only known picture of Hale was a "shadow portrait" carved into one of the doors and now covered forever, or so she thought.

Rebeckah returned home and wrote a letter expressing her deep sorrow at this discovery. But all was not lost. In 1914, a remarkably dedicated man named George Dudley Seymour, who had become enamored with the Hale legend as a boy, purchased the vacant and neglected Hale homestead for the purpose of restoration and commemoration. One of the influencing factors was his discovery and reading of Rebeckah's forlorn letter. His first

action was to search for the lost shadow portrait by stripping the doors of paint. The very first door he stripped revealed the lost portrait! This door with its portrait is at the current homestead along with many of the original pieces of furniture in the accurately restored home.

Come, see, and enjoy.

*Mike Michaels*

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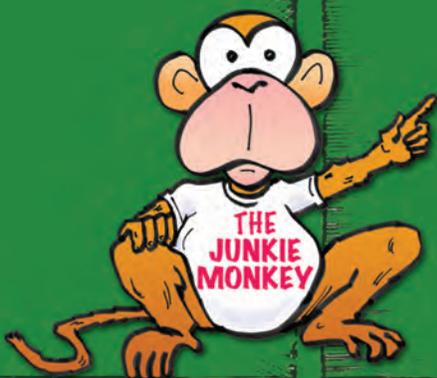
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# LAKERIDGE

**A CONDO COMMUNITY THAT CARES**  
ABUSED AND NEGLECTED HORSES HAVE A PLACE TO CALL HOME

**H**orses with a history of abuse and neglect have an unlikely place to call home — a condo community in Litchfield County Connecticut. While most condo associations have strict rules against pets, Lakeridge, a horse-loving community inside a 235-acre forest preserve welcomes them.

Stable manager, Pam Carlson, said that at least six horses at Lakeridge have been rescued from starvation and abuse. As both her personal and professional passion, Carlson finds it very satisfying to provide a new life for these horses that can be enjoyed by the entire community. "One of the most rewarding things I have done over the years is to take in horses that are in need of rescue and rehabilitation," said Carlson, who has worked at Lakeridge for six years.



Two of the horses came from the Second Wind Adoption Facility in West Virginia. "This facility takes in starved, abused and unwanted horses and rehabs them," said Carlson.

It's not uncommon for residents and staff to grow attached to the horses at Lakeridge. So far, two horses have been adopted out including Zara, a grey Arabian.

I had her for six years," said Carlson, "I was waiting for the right person to come along and one of the Lakeridge residents offered to adopt Zara to her primary residence which has a stable."

Many of the eleven horses at Lakeridge are used for private and group lessons, as well as trail and pony rides. In addition, Carlson also coordinates the children's camp program and an adult horsemanship class on weekends.

Carlson, who holds a certification in Stable Management and Recreational Riding from the American Riding Instructors

Association, emphasized that horses at Lakeridge have to fill many needs and are hard to come by.

"They have to be people-friendly and patient for beginners, as well as trained well enough for the more experienced rider," said Carlson.

Presently, there are eight different breeds ranging from ages 4 to 40. Breeds include: Appaloosa, Quarter Horse, Haflinger Cross, Shetland Pony, Mini, Pony-of-America, Standardbred and Arabian.

**"THEY ALSO NEED TO BE TEAM PLAYERS, AND BE HAPPY TO WORK IN THE RING, AS WELL AS ON THE TRAIL," SHE SAID. "THIS TYPE OF HORSE CAN BE HARD TO COME BY SO I AM THANKFUL WHEN I FIND ONE."**

But according to Carlson, "I feel very strongly that no matter what the breed or pedigree, – a good horse is a good horse, no matter what!"

Residents of Lakeridge agree, and have formed a "stable committee" to coordinate many activities.

As Lakeridge is located on a 235-acre forest preserve, miles of country roads and trails are available, including the nearby 2,000-acre Paugnut State Forest.

If you wish to learn more about how this community embraces horses, please contact us at:

LAKERIDGE  
81 Burr Mountain Road  
Torrington, CT 06790  
800-796-8929

» MICHELLE ROSENBAUM «





## our preservation halloween story

# *A Tale of Good and Bad Spirits*

by mike michaels

It was Halloween evening (*All Hallows Eve, Some Hallows Eve, or for some, Nobody's Hallows Eve*). Michelle and Nicole were twin sisters and had been declared old enough to go trick or treating by themselves in the neighborhood. At thirteen years of age they immediately showed themselves NOT old enough by deciding to sneak out of the neighborhood and visit a haunted house that they had discov-

ered a few miles away from their home. This old house was unpainted, deserted, and at least one hundred or even two hundred years old. It stood, proud and alone, on a hill overlooking a beautiful valley of pastures, trees, and a winding river. It faced westward across the valley towards the setting sun. Michelle and Nicole arrived just before sunset. They spread a little blanket on the grass in front of the

house, and sat awaiting both darkness and ghosts, chewing on a tuna sandwich they shared for dinner. As the light grew dimmer, they could see the reflection of the sunset in wavy old windows. It was certainly a good start for their ghost raising adventure.

A half hour later, pure darkness had enveloped Michelle and Nicole, as well as the house and the valley.



The shivers had turned to quivers as the front of the house actually turned red. Simply breathing was totally out of the question. And then a voice.

**“What are you girls doing here?”**

The girls turned around. They saw an old man in farmer's overalls holding a large flashlight with a red lens. He smiled a crinkly smile and his blue eyes sparkled in the light of Michelle's penlight. This man just didn't look like a ghost.

Nicole answered, “It's Halloween sir, we're just looking for ghosts, spirits of the dead. This seemed like the right place.”

The man smiled a most unghostly smile and said, “Well actually you are right. This house is a house of spirits. But there are good spirits and bad spirits and this place is filled with the

good kind. There are memories of the families who lived here for generation after generation, spring, summer, winter, fall – working, playing, raising children, enjoying holidays – good times and bad times, and doing it all together. But now it looks like it is all coming to an end. There is a rich man who wants to buy up the property, rip the house down, and put up a strip mall. There is nothing and no one to stop him.”

Michelle looked at Nicole. Then both of them said together, “Not if we can help it!”

*Preservationz is a new program in Excursionz Magazine. Starting with our next issue, we will feature a house, piece of landscape, or urban setting that is in need of preservation. We will attempt to draw attention to these valuable and threatened parts of our heritage. We look forward to our readers' help and participation.*

Check it out at: [www.preservationz.com](http://www.preservationz.com)

Michelle shined her little penlight toward the window in search of ghosts. The chill of the evening sent a little shiver down two little spines – but was that shiver caused by something else? Suddenly the front of the house started to glow in the dark!! Michelle grabbed Nicole's arm. Nicole grabbed Michelle's arm. They both squeezed – HARD.

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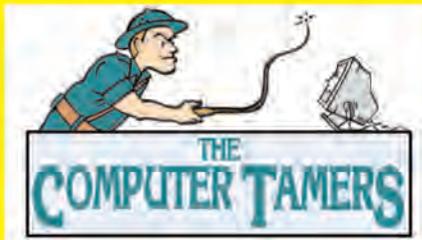
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