

Grace Farms Kicks Off the 2026–2027 Program of its Annual Series and Performances

The 2026-2027 headlining performance of the season showcases Tony® and GRAMMY® Award-winning artist Leslie Odom, Jr., who performed selections from the American Songbook and musical theater classics last Saturday — including special performances of songs from Hamilton, the Broadway phenomenon that earned Odom a Tony Award for his iconic portrayal of Aaron Burr (Sept. 26).

Music at Grace Farms

The concert series Music at Grace Farms, which is timed to conclude with the sunset, begins on Nov. 15, in the 700-seat indoor amphitheater with renowned violinist Nemanja Radulovic and his acclaimed chamber orchestra Double Sens — making its U.S. debut and first U.S. tour — performing works by Beethoven and Bach. Then, the GRAMMY®-nominated choir Broadway Inspirational Voices returns to Grace Farms to deliver another unforgettable, family-friendly concert of beloved Broadway, gospel, and Christmas melodies performed by 30 vocalists (Dec. 13).

GRAMMY®-nominated sarodist Alam Khan — son of the legendary musician Ali Akbar Khan — joins forces with one of the most innovative and leading classical guitarists, Derek Gripper. They explore the heights of spontaneous creation, re-imagining great African songs and Indian melodies (Feb. 28). The next performance features GRAMMY®-winning singer and songwriter Aoife



Grace Farms’ Sanctuary is the only fully-enclosed glass performing arts space in the world.

O’Donovan, who offers an intimate afternoon showcasing the quiet power of her singular voice and the warmth of strings intertwined. Joining her is cellist Eric Jacobsen and violinist Colin Jacobsen, co-founders of the groundbreaking string quartet Brooklyn Rider, and the chamber orchestra The Knights (Apr. 11).

On May 8, the last performance of the series features pianist Elizabeth Joy Roe (half of the groundbreaking Anderson & Roe Piano Duo) and GRAMMY®-winning cellist and Grace

Farms Artist-in-Residence Arlen Hlusko.

Lectures with Concert

The marquee series Lectures with Concert pairs visionary leaders who have shaped our world to share a thought-provoking portrait of their life’s work and explore central themes and fundamental questions that define their distinguished careers. Coupled with these talks, are curated chamber music performances by some of today’s most celebrated musicians that

thoughtfully respond to the lecturer’s creative output.

The series kicks off on Jan. 23, when Dr. Danielle Allen, James Bryant Conant University Professor, Harvard University, draws an arc from the American founding to the present to explore how the original vision of the Declaration of Independence can serve us still. The performance that follows will feature William Hagen (violin); David Bernat (violin) Masumi Per Rostad (viola); and

Arlen Hlusko, cello.

The next lecture features artist, scholar, and advocate Dr. Hannah Rose Thomas — who has established a renowned portrait painting practice, harnessing art as a tool for advocacy — and is followed by a performance by musicians of the London Philharmonic Orchestra (Mar. 14).

The last lecture of the series is presented by Dr. Sian Leah Beilock, the 19th President of Dartmouth and cognitive scientist, now positioned as a global leader on the most critical issues facing higher education. (Apr. 24). The performance that follows will feature William Hagen (violin); David Bernat (violin); Masumi Per Rostad (viola); and Arlen Hlusko (cello).

All musical performances that are a part of the Lectures with Concert series are curated by Grace Farms’ Artist-in-Residence Arlen Hlusko.

Leading with Purpose

Leading with Purpose is a signature series that highlights innovative leaders and transformational thinkers who are advancing more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive systems across industries. The series highlights bold ideas and purpose-driven leadership that shape culture, influence capital, and drive lasting change.

On May 6, this series brings together Mike Faherty, Co-Founder of Faherty, and Shilpa Shah, Co-Founder of Cuyana, for a lunch conversation exploring what it means to lead with purpose in today’s fashion industry.

[UPDATED] Waveny Playground Event Highlights Inclusive Play

By PETER BARHYDT

An inclusive playground designed to let children of different abilities play together was the setting for a Sept. 22 press conference highlighting more than \$1.44 million in state funding for two town projects.

The event at Waveny Park recognized a \$300,000 state grant for playground improvements and a separate \$1,142,750 award to replace a bridge on Lakeview Avenue. The playground project brought together town funding, state assistance and private fundraising by the Friends of Waveny Playground.

Located near Orchard Field, the roughly \$775,000 playground includes accessible play structures, inclusive swings, a poured-in-place rubber surface, picnic space and seating. A donor walk recognizes families, businesses and organizations that contributed to the project.

The funding breakdown provided by Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz’s office identifies \$325,000 from the town and \$150,000 from the Friends of Waveny Playground, alongside the \$300,000 Small-Town Economic Assistance Program grant. The state announcement describes the playground funding as supporting Phase 2

improvements.

The event also offered two complementary perspectives on the project: the importance of designing public spaces for children with disabilities and the role of public-private partnerships in building town recreation facilities.

In a written statement marking the celebration, state Rep. Lucy Dathan emphasized the practical barriers that can keep children from participating at conventional playgrounds, including difficult surfaces and equipment that does not provide sufficient support.

“The play structures are designed for children of different ages and different abilities to use the same equipment, at the same time, side by side,” Dathan said.

She described the rubber surface and supportive swing seats as features intended to help children participate together. Seating and picnic areas also accommodate the parents and caregivers who bring them.

“Inclusive design isn’t about a separate area for children with disabilities,” Dathan said. “It’s about one playground where every child is in the game.”

Dathan credited the Friends of Waveny Playground with years of fundraising and said



Elected officials and members of Friends of Waveny Playground gather to highlight the funding awarded to New Canaan for the playground. (Contributed Photo)

her experience raising three children in town informed her appreciation for the project.

State Rep. Tom O’Dea, in his own written statement, placed the playground within a longer history of improvements at Waveny, which the town purchased in 1967.

“This playground is a shining example of what happens when residents, volunteers, town government, and the state pull in the same direction,” O’Dea said.

First Selectman Dionna Carlson thanked the town’s legislative delegation for supporting New Canaan’s grant application and helping secure state funding. Also present were

Parks Superintendent Ryan Restivo, Parks and Recreation Director John Howe, Public Works Director Tiger Mann and playground committee members Monica Capela, Hilary Ormond and Meredith Tobitsch, along with donors and state officials.

At the playground, the shared objective was more immediate: creating a community space where more children can join in.

“I raised three children in this town,” Dathan said. “I know what a playground is worth to a family. I’m proud that this one has room for every New Canaan child.”

BOS MEETING From Page 1

Farm Road projects could bring approximately \$2.3 million in funding. Additional engineering costs reflected repeated meetings and requests from state agencies.

The Center School lighting project prompted extended discussion about competitive bidding, rising costs and the parking lot’s future.

Bill Oestmann, presenting the proposal for the Department of Public Works, said existing fixtures were about 45 years old. A lighting study identified inadequate coverage, and Mann said the lot generates more lighting complaints than other town parking lots.

The board unanimously approved \$97,743 for lamp posts and fixtures from F&M Electric Supply, \$23,375 for removal and installation, and \$21,505 for electrical work by Darien Electrical. Each amount includes a contingency.

The purchase covers 19 single and four twin lamp posts. Oestmann said the fixtures would direct light downward, with shielding to protect neighbors, warm-colored LEDs and timers that adjust to sunrise and sunset.

Carlson questioned why the lamp purchase attracted only one qualified bid. Oestmann said two bids arrived, but one was disqualified for failing to follow submission procedures.

Carlson asked whether the town should reconsider how it publicizes bids and contact potential vendors individually.

Oestmann said the selected fixtures cost less than decorative alternatives and suited the lot’s needs. Higher costs would require transferring approximately \$30,000 from a completed project.

Karl questioned making substantial improvements without resolving the lot’s long-term future. Carlson said a parking study completed within the past year found adequate parking.

Mann said some fixtures could remain if the lot were expanded, while others could be relocated and reused. Crews would reuse existing infrastructure where possible and install new conduit through grass, avoiding excavation of the asphalt.

Officials hope to finish site work before winter and install the poles when delivered.

Other approvals included a \$46,019.75 Toro diesel utility vehicle, reflecting a \$9,000 trade-in allowance, to replace a 2015 model used for year-round operations.

Technology spending included \$49,738.50 for Microsoft licensing, \$24,985.72 for the town’s backup system and a \$52,066.34 payment under an existing phone-system agreement. Selectmen also approved \$10,305 for election equipment software.

The board approved hiring Jack Grace as information technology systems administrator and Richard DeLeo as a Highway Department equipment operator, both starting Oct. 5.

Mann said Route 106 work was expected to begin Sept. 28 at the Wilton town line. He advised residents to anticipate as much as six weeks of work and avoid the stretch during daytime hours when possible.

HELP!!! Where Is The English Grammar We Were Taught?

By PATRICIA CHADWICK

Five years ago, I wrote a column titled, “In Defense of Grammar: The First in a Series.” It was a light-hearted, but pointed, reflection on the misuse of the English language. I was not referring to the vernacular associated with a particular region of the country, nor turns of phrase that are often part of a social group within the population. Rather, I was bemoaning how, bit by bit, incorrect grammar was becoming the norm. At the time, I reminisced on my five years of grammar lessons in grade school and middle school, lessons that incorporated diction, and even etymology. I surmised that my dear teacher, Sister Ann Mary, would likely be rolling over in her grave, (metaphorically speaking) were she to hear how the rules of the language she had taught with such distinction, precision and authority were no longer respected.

My hope had been that the tide might turn and English grammar would return to its rightful place in the primary and middle school curriculum of all schools across the country. How naïve could I have been! Since I penned that column in 2021, I have become disheartened by the reality that there is no going back to English grammar in America as it was taught in the mid- and late-twentieth century. Call me a fuddy duddy, and I won’t argue with you—at least not on the matter of language.

There was a time three or more decades ago when being an editor—at a newspaper, a magazine, or

a book publisher—was a highly respected career. The editor’s skills were a crucial part of the production of a headline news story, an opinion piece, or a book—fiction or otherwise. However, the role of the editor has, for all intents and purposes, disappeared since the early 1990s, as newspapers and publishing houses were acquired or merged out of existence. Think: Random House and Penguin; Time Inc and Warner Communications (now Hachette); Harper & Row and Collins (now Harper Collins). On the cutting floor of those takeovers lay the role of the editor, deemed dispensable in a world that valued profits over literary excellence. It is now a common occurrence to find grammatical errors in Op-Ed columns in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post. All I can do is sigh, and, on occasion, text my tribe of four siblings to vent my frustration, as the five of us share the same grammatical scholastic heritage.

In spoken English today (at least in the U.S.) the part of speech most subjected to egregious misuse is the poor pronoun. Just a week ago, I heard a teenage boy shout to his mother, “Mom, me and him are going to the movies.” I simply sighed, and under my breath I whispered, “He and I.” But that became the motivation for today’s column. And when was the last time you heard the word “whom” used? It appears to have vanished from our language entirely. Is it laziness, or has it fallen out of favor because it takes a little thought to know when to use “who”—in the subject or after the verb “to be” versus “whom,” which is the object of a verb or a preposition. Is it too

difficult to say, “Whom should I ask?” instead of “Who should I ask?”

I wonder at times if some of the most common pronoun errors take place in speaking because we tend to talk faster than we think. Speaking takes little forethought; one just blasts out a sentence. Writing, on the other hand, happens at a pace that is far slower than thought. It’s occurred to me that if an easily misspoken statement, e.g. “Her and me are going bowling,” were left as a note on the kitchen counter, might it more likely read “She and I are going bowling.” Perhaps that is just wishful thinking.

When my children were younger—much younger—I repeatedly corrected their grammatical errors, most of which were misuses of pronouns. My hope was that by the process of osmosis, they would catch on, and by and large they did, which I found rewarding. It was particularly gratifying when they would correct each other.

Other grammatical pet peeves of mine: converting verbs into nouns—“I’ll be sending out the wedding invites tomorrow.” I’ve learned to hold my tongue despite aching to say, in schoolmarm fashion, “It’s an invitation, not an invite.” On those few occasions, when my frustration gets the better of me and I give vent over the misuse of that word, I’ve been met with a “So what?” kind of stare. Because I believe in polite society, I have learned to swallow my frustration.

My newest vexation is the misuse of the past tense of the verb “to go.” “He should have went with you,” I was told the other day. My back bristled as though five fingernails had scratched the length of

the blackboard. What is wrong with the word “gone?”

When I feel morbid about the state of the spoken English language in this country, I must admit to myself that some four centuries ago those very pronouns that I cherish today—you, your, yours—did not exist. Instead, thee, thy, and thine were once common usage, but went through their own metamorphosis and ultimately became today’s you, your, and yours.

And I accept the fact that I face a certain dilemma today. When it sounds weird to speak grammatically correctly, and I find myself at an uncomfortable fork in the road, I admit that I will occasionally take the “less proper English” path. When someone calls out, “Who is there?” I know that the grammatically appropriate response is, “It is I.” But I chicken out by replying, “It’s me.” I can hear Sister Ann Mary’s dulcet voice in my ear. “My dear, you should never be afraid to do what is correct.” But at the age of seventy-eight, I sometimes accept the fact that there are bigger, and perhaps more valiant, battles to fight.

Patricia Chadwick is a businesswoman and an author. Her first book (2019): Little Sister: A Memoir, tells the story of her growing up in a religious community-turned cult in the 1950s and 1960s. Her most recent memoir (2024), Breaking Glass, with the subtitle: Tales from the Witch of Wall Street, is a sequel to Little Sister and tells of her starting out on the lowest rung of the corporate ladder and succeeding in what was then the all-male bastion called Wall Street. She is working on a third book. www.patrichadwick.com