

THE HERALD

November 2015



EXPAND YOUR REACH

Our annual Giving Season has begun. We want to *thank you* for your commitment to Saugatuck Church through your participation in our programs and your financial support. You make possible everything we do!

We can all rejoice that we are back in our beautiful church home . We are excited about what lies ahead.

Take a look at what's been happening in just the last few months!

- We are supporting **dynamic youth programming**, a confirmation class of fourteen 8th and 9th graders, an active high school youth group and young people who are leading worship and serving in our midst; (also, the number of volunteers teaching Church School doubled this fall!);
- Our first **art opening** and the creation of a **labyrinth** have inspired the formation of two new ministry teams, currently taking shape: one to explore **prayer practices** and one to explore **faith through the arts**;
- Every week we welcome **guests and new attenders** to worship, three of whom joined Saugatuck Church this fall;

- Our doors have opened to countless **community groups**, as far ranging as the Saugatuck Nursery School, Y's Men, Young Women's League, Boy Scouts and nearly twenty 12 step groups;
- We have partnered with Westport's **interfaith community** to clean the Saugatuck River and host community conversations on race.

In short, we are living out priorities named during our 2015 Leadership Retreat: to support the faith development of young people, engage the wider community and explore faith in and through arts.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully!" This is a message that applies to all of us as well as to the early church. We as individuals and as a church can reap bountifully thanks to your generous gifts and God's generous spirit! For 2016, we want to expand our reach so we ask that you think how you can Expand Your Reach!

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Practicing Thanks-giving



Recently, I received a jar of homemade applesauce, tied with a green bow and topped with a thank-you note. It's on my 'to do' list to write a thank-you note to the person who sent me that thank -you gift (right after I gobble up the applesauce!). It can become a vicious cycle, can't it? Thanking someone for the thank-you for the thank-you: Help! I'm trapped in a thank-you vortex and I can't get out!

Of course, saying thank-you for applesauce is easy. Even making the applesauce in the first place can be great fun (especially if you have one of those hand-crank apple peelers and small children to crank it...). "Praise God for apples, cider donuts and glorious, fall days!" That kind of thank-you just bubbles up, doesn't it? Like the psalmists, we burst into song: "Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to God with my whole heart!" (That's from Psalm 111.)

OK. Maybe you don't actually burst into song. But you know what I mean, right? We all recognize the feeling of gratitude that swells up inside you, when you encounter a beautiful day, resolve a difficult dilemma or receive an unexpected gift.

But what about saying "thank you" when times or circumstances are tough? The apostle Paul says, "Give thanks, whatever happens." (1 Thessalonians 5) *Whatever* happens. "You mean: Give thanks when I get a flat tire in the rain? Give thanks when the pain shoots through my abdomen, or when that pink slip shows up on my desk? Really?? Because I gotta say: in moments like those, I'm not feeling the joy..." Still: "Give thanks, whatever happens."

Maybe Paul doesn't mean that we need to thank God *for* the flat tire. Maybe he's encouraging us to give thanks *while* changing that tire; or navigating that pain in your gut or figuring out how you're going to pay next month's bills. Maybe Paul is talking about giving thanks the way we talk about prayer or worship...as a kind of discipline, or a faith practice. So I say, "Dear God: My tire is flat, I'm cold, wet and crabby, but I'm still thankful that I *have* a car. Thank you for the strength to change a tire – or for people I can call on in times of trouble. Thank you that I have a hot shower waiting for me when I get home..."

Saying 'thank you' like *that* shifts our focus and invites us to live out of a place of gratitude. I think it also opens us up, makes us a little more patient and compassionate (not to mention less prone to high blood pressure!). Maybe it even leads us to that other kind of prayer, the prayer that shifts our attention away from our own distress and onto others. As in: "Dear God, today I got a glimpse of what it means to feel really lousy, kind of vulnerable, even scared. So now I'm thinking about the people who feel like that every day. Please be with folks who can't get to work because they can't afford gas, or because they are sick, or because no one will hire them. Please comfort them today and help me to do what I can to help where I can... Oh! And, thank you."

Practicing gratitude may also stir us to greater acts of generosity, as in, "How can I say thank-you for all you've done, God? Here: take my gifts, and use them to make a difference in the world." As you prayerfully consider your pledge to support the ministries of Saugatuck Church in 2016, you might even think of that pledge as your thank-you note to God.

My own thank-you note reads, in part, "Thank you, God, for this amazing, dedicated, faith-ful community called Saugatuck Church!"

Still practicing,

Alison

From Our Member in Discernment

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to share with you that I will be graduating from Yale Divinity School in May. I would love to discuss how things are going and answer any questions you may have about my journey. In a word, it has been transformative. It has also been quite busy between classes at Yale, a year of supervised ministry at First Church in Fairfield and a year as a chaplain at Norwalk Hospital. As I look beyond graduation, the next steps include more chaplain intern work to complete the requirements of a professional chaplain. Whether the internship work will be part time or a full time residency is yet to be determined. Thank you for your support as I follow my call to ordination (chaplaincy is an ordained call). I ask for your continued support as I work through the steps of writing an ordination paper and other requirements to be presented before the Fairfield West Association Committee on Church and Ministry. I'll keep you posted on my progress.
Peace, Linda



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Please prayerfully consider your pledge to Saugatuck Church. This year, we invite you to prayerfully challenge yourself to increase your giving, because God invites us to live generous lives. Could you increase your pledge by 20%, 30%, or even more?

If you'd like to make an online pledge please go to our website <http://saugatuckchurch.org>. There you'll find a link in the center of the home page to a page where you will find a number of options available to making your pledge and/or paying your pledge online.

Every pledge, no matter the size, is an expression of thanks to God and sustains our shared ministry, so we can make a difference in Westport and beyond, thank you! Please join us on Sunday, November for Gratitude Sunday, when we will bless your pledges and give thanks to God for all we receive. Thank you.

Faithfully, Rev. Alison J.B. Patton; Stewardship Committee; Bruce Borner, Chair; Karen Kim, Jane Mangold, Ann Radley, Gary Stuart, Dan Long (ex officio).

Musings from the Moderator: Church Leaders

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

There is certainly no shortage of information about how to be an effective leader: thousands of books and articles are written about the topic. Go on the internet, and again, you can find tens of thousands of hits on how to lead. There are some great suggestions out there on this topic – but most of them focus on leading in the business world. Leaders in a church, I think, should possess some of the same skills as business leaders, but I also believe that as members of a church, we need to look for leaders in the context of our faith. When we are seeking leaders in our church, we need to consider the qualities of a good leader in the context of our faith in Jesus Christ. Skills that are necessary in the business world aren't always the same ones we are seeking in leaders from a faith community. At the last Council meeting, the members generated a list of qualities that they would like to see in the people that we choose to lead our congregation. In addition to these personal qualities, the members of the Council also stressed how important it is to match people's skill sets and passions with the tasks at hand.

The following were qualities that the Council listed: *Faithful energy (from an area of interest/calling; recognizing/inviting that call in others; freedom of expression; dedication; inspirational; visionary; able to listen and find humility in what we hear; love; resilience; healthy communication; wisdom; ability to problem solve; optimistic; a focus on what's best for the whole; transparency; not anxious; and the ability to forgive and be forgiven.*

An auspicious list for sure. However, these qualities are steeped in Christ like behavior. Isn't that what we want to see in our leaders: to be imitators of Christ? I would answer with a resounding YES! Isn't that what we are all striving to do in our daily lives – at church, in our families and in our community? And, don't many members of our congregation possess these traits? Yes, again!

Have you given thought to where you could lead at Saugatuck? If you haven't – it's time.

Blessings,
Priscilla Long, Moderator



What is a Labyrinth?

A labyrinth is constructed as a single path, a series of concentric circles with many turns all leading to a center. Going back thousands of years, labyrinths have independently existed in multiple cultures as an ancient means to recognize spiritual energy. To experience the energy offered by the labyrinth, one walks from its entrance to its center, pausing to meditate, and then back again following the same path to exit. For many, walking the labyrinth provides a calming meditative state that allows for a shift in consciousness and can re-energize, reduce stress and help re-focus and nurture the soul.



The SCC Labyrinth

The path of Saugatuck's Labyrinth is lined with over 1500 individually laid bricks. The center of our labyrinth is circular in shape and about 6 feet in diameter. Our labyrinth has 7 rings designed to traverse the material world through to the realm of higher consciousness. The entire labyrinth spans approximately 50 feet. A world-renowned dowser, Marty Cain, assisted in determining the optimal location of the rings, the spine and its entrance.

How the SCC Labyrinth Came to Be

For many years, members of Saugatuck Congregational Church have been anxious to build a labyrinth on church property that would be open to anyone interested in taking its spiritual route. A confluence of events made that eventuality a reality. A surplus of bricks from a recent church renovation, stored in the church parking lot, gave impetus for ideas to use them.

When SCC member and confirmand Liam Borner was considering various Eagle Scout projects, members Betsy Gillespie, Linda Bruce and Sara Walsh became involved to support Liam and to put the excess bricks to good use, resulting in the Saugatuck Labyrinth project. Betsy then approached church member, Meredith Lederer, to assist in overseeing the project from the perspective of the church, working closely with Pastor Alison Patton.

Linda Bruce contacted a dowser, Marty Cain, who had helped the Bruce family with their labyrinth in Maine. She happened to be visiting New England from her home in North Carolina, and coincidentally had brought her dowsing materials with her on the trip. Marty spent a weekend in Westport, offering a slideshow and lecture presentation, and teaching a workshop on dowsing, while guiding a group of about a dozen people to lay out what would become the Saugatuck Labyrinth.

Over the course of several weekends, members and friends of Saugatuck Congregational Church, along with representatives and scouts of Boy Scout Troop 36, completed the installation of the permanent labyrinth in a very special tree lined section off the front lawn of the church at 245 Post Road East in Westport. Close to 200 people hours of labor went into the tedious process of digging trenches and laying individual bricks.

Barbara King, Troop 36 committee chair and Craig Patton, Scoutmaster were overseers of Liam Borner for the Eagle phase of the project. Liam's role in building the labyrinth was to organize people, equipment, bricks and refreshments over a period of 3 weekends in October.

It is expected that this labyrinth will become an oft visited spiritual retreat for all members of the community and beyond.

Meredith Lederer



And a labyrinth was built by an enthusiastic, dedicated workforce. Liam Borner (center) with Betsy Gillespie (left) and Meredith Lederer



Saugatuck Congregational Church's Growing Family

AeRhee Lee

Karen Kaminsky

Pastor Alison

Joan Cavanaugh

AeRhee Lee: AeRhee has been a pharmacist for 20 years. She moved to Westport last year to take a new position with Yale Smilow cancer center. Her passion is Eastern Healing Food Medicine. She has written a couple of books on the subject and gives talks on healing foods from Asia at numerous venues when she is asked to. Following her passion, AeRhee founded a company called 'Healing Foods To Go/ Kitchen Medicine' which is an on-line alternative provider for people whose health is compromised. AeRhee also loves clamming, sailing and blue crabbing. AeRhee has two adult children who live and work in Manhattan and who she sees often. She grew up in a UCC family and admires the UCC spirit that moves our belief into action. She is looking forward to being part of the UCC family and is looking forward to contributing what she can, when she can and wherever she can.

Karen Kaminsky: Karen and her daughter Willow have resided in Westport for two years. Willow is attending first grade at Long Lots Elementary School, and at present, Karen is a full time Mom. They are in the midst of renovating their vintage house, and enjoy spending time in the backyard growing flowers and vegetables. Karen grew up in Rhode Island and she and Willow spend a lot of time visiting family there. They also love the local beaches, the Westport Library, New York City, and when winter comes, they spending many weekends snowboarding and skiing. They are looking forward to becoming members of the Saugatuck Congregational Church community.

Joan Cavanaugh: Having lived between New York City and Westport for many years Joan decided in May, to make Westport her permanent home. She is a widow with 5 grandchildren who are all newly University graduates. In fact, this quote from a grandchild's thank you note speaks to how she inspires those around her. "Thank you for teaching me that "girls rule" and inspiring me to be an accomplished, driven, successful woman. I am so lucky that I have you in my life to inspire me." Joan believes that her life as a teacher, corporate administrator, entrepreneur and community leader has been and continues to be about awakening the Holy Spirit in those she meets and with whom she works, even with something as simple as a smile or a greeting. She looks forward to helping grow our community and sharing her teaching skills with the children's Sunday School program.

SCC Volunteer Opportunity - Crib Room

Christian Education is hoping to find a few adult volunteers for our crib room rotation during the Sunday service. Please consider spending some time with our youngest congregants! Contact CE at saugatuck-church.ce@gmail.com with questions or if you have an interest in volunteering. Who couldn't use a little more play time in their week?

Saugatuck Happenings: Cleaning Up Saugatuck River Shores



Our Member in Discernment is also a patient and talented gardener. She applied her talents and energy to making the church flower boxes ready for fall and winter.



NEW! The Healing Prayer Group will be meeting on the third Sunday in the month from 5-6:30.. It will be at 35 Bridge Street, #109 at the Saugatuck Coop. This month it will be on November 15th. Please come and pray for others and if you choose for ourselves. Blessings,
Anne Patterson



The tradition continues at SCC...
All children through grade 4 and their parents
are cordially invited to the
Angel Breakfast
December 6th at 9:30 am
Hoskins Hall

Birthdays in November:

2 Sandra Long	4 Jackie Flournoy	4 Craig Patton	4 Nolan Call
11 Kim Mathias	11 Dana Langham	13 Liz-Ann Koos	14 Mark Mathias
16 Betty Minor	20 Vonnie Spies	22 Heather Hamilton	
26 David Cross	29 Lee Bemus	30 Justin Jendrock	

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

A view of Earthplace's new water quality laboratory dedicated as the Harbor Watch Richard Harris Laboratory in honor of Dick Harris, the retired director and founder of Harbor Watch. Since its inception, Harbor Watch has monitored more than 250 sites for a variety of physical and biological parameters. (Photo by Julia Mally for WestportNow.com)



The Westport Community Theatre held a fundraiser to benefit a newly established scholarship honoring Westporter Bill Meyer, a volunteer for WCT and many other causes. It included a pre-show reception at the Westport Historical Society followed by a staged reading of "Our Town" by Thornton Wilder in the Town Hall theater with many local politicians and well-known Westporters



joining the cast. The scholarship will be given in Meyer's name to a Staples High School theater department senior "who personifies the spirit of volunteerism that Bill lived every day. Phyllis Groner for WestportNow.com

MEN'S RETREAT:

SAUGATUCK ENTERTAINERS

Rear: Doug Johnston, Craig Gillespie, Bob Yingling, Art Schoeller, Larry Robinson

Front: Dan Long, Willie Salmond, Larry Aasen, Bob Mitchell

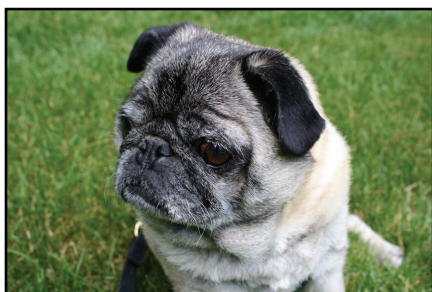
Lots of music

and a good time was had by all!



Saugatuck Happenings:

Blessing of the Animals hosted by Saugatuck Church & Westport Animal Shelter Advocates



All Hallows Fest



Pot Luck Supper & Bingo

Pianist Robert Cassidy Concert



Welcome Back Sunday, September 13th



CUBA

Support our HS mission trip – June 2016!

November 1st – December 31st Holiday Greens Fundraiser (see flyer)

www.worcesterwreaths.com use code SCCYG

Youth receive 25% of proceeds and you receive a 10% discount on your online order!

Sunday, November 8th – Books, Bake Goods and Dinner to Go*

Books, games, puzzles, DVDs and more....on Front Lawn (weather permitting)

Bake Sale and Dinner to Go in Hoskins Hall during Fellowship Hour

*Book and Bake Sale donations greatly appreciated.

Thursday, November 19th – Panera Bread Westport

Pick up a flyer in church or from a youth group member prior to 11/19.

Bring your flyer to Panera Bread in Westport on 11/19, place an order and the youth group will receive a percentage of the proceeds!

Sunday, November 22nd – Mission Trip Announcement Brunch

HS Mission Trip youth will host a brunch for the congregation during Fellowship Hour.

Suggested donation: \$10/pp or \$20/family

Need more info? Contact Dana Johnson at dana21@optonline.net



Our Youth Raking Leaves and
Relaxing with Nourishment & Conversation



During the Stewardship Drive several members of the church have given their testimonials. On October 25th Judy Puchalski gave her testimonial. Judy is a recent new member and has become our volunteer financial secretary.



“A year ago I knew only one of you

I had been brought up very Catholic. Fifteen years of Catholic education, countless years of working with the CYO and fifty years of Mass every Sunday, holiday and holy day. But I had grown apart from my church. August of last year started a time period that became a pivotal awakening for me. I became ill and was diagnosed having a ruptured appendix.”

As Judy recovered, her sister became ill and was hospitalized with serious life-threatening medical problems. Judy was met at the hospital by a social worker and a chaplain. The chaplain was our own long time member, Linda Bruce. They accompanied me into a room to meet the ER doctor and to see my sister who was on a respirator and unconscious.

Amputation of one of her legs was recommended. “I felt unbelievably frail and in the need of human presence. As I was standing at the nurses’ station awaiting the paperwork to allow the amputation, I felt myself shaking like I had never felt in my life, Then, I felt a calm hand on my arm. I turned and was thankful to see Linda Bruce by my side to comfort me and to escort me to the hospital chapel to talk.”

“Yet the emotional upheaval was taking a heavy toll on me. Linda calmly reminded me that my suffering was my own and it was okay to feel that way. I felt the need to return to a church. Linda mentioned a Women’s Spirituality Group in her church.

It was here that an amazing experience occurred. Within minutes, a number of the women from the Spirituality Group welcomed me to their group. It was here that my love of Saugatuck and its people began.

I am awed and genuinely thankful by the welcome that I have felt from the members of this church, many of whom have become lasting friends. I have shared in the Women’s Retreat, and very recently in the building of our brand new labyrinth. Again, the love of this church was so different from anything that I had ever witnessed in my life.

I want to publicly thank all of the members of this family who have taken the time to talk to me. Even if you only have come to me at the sign of peace, please know that I have been uniquely touched by the warmth of each and everyone of you. This is what community truly is. This is what I have missed for most of my life. And when despair and anguish comes to me from here on, I know that I will have many supportive friends right here. Friends who care, to laugh with, and to cry with. Friends who will always be there for me when I need them, and I will be there for them.

I especially want to thank Linda Bruce for being present for me. I have no doubt in my mind that God’s spirit was involved in bringing Linda to me when I needed her most.”

So, in closing let me say. God Bless Saugatuck Church.....My Church.

Judy Puchalski

From Our Board of Missions

Two Opportunities for Acting on Your Passion for Social Justice

We need "Co-Stewards" for two of Saugatuck's Mission Partners:

The Open Door – see <http://www.opendoorshelter.org>

Positive Directions -- <http://www.positivedirections.org>

WHAT DO MISSION PARTNER CO-STEWARDS DO?

Become familiar with the organization so you can look for ways other Saugatuck members can get involved.

1 month/year educate the congregation about your organization, e.g write a Herald article and bulletin prayers. Organize a special offering for your partner agency that month (bulletin and pulpit announcement on the 1st Sunday of your month; put special offering envelopes in the pews before the service.)

Meet with other Stewards briefly 3 times/year to coordinate and make budget decisions.

As you can see, it's not a lot of work. Besides helping to carry out Christ's mission of caring for vulnerable persons, your work as a co-steward helps our church maintain its strong Missions reputation.

Contact Frank Basler at frank.basler@gmail.com or 203-345-5682 to get your questions answered.

CHURCH HOSTS NEEDED and WANTED

When the church is rented to outside groups or individuals after 5:00 pm or on weekends it would be most helpful to have one or two people on hand to welcome the group, be available to answer questions or help them find things they need for their event, and to close up at the appointed time.

If we get enough people volunteering to do this, you would probably only be needed to help two or three times/year. Frank will ask one of you to be a coordinator, who Marcia can contact when an event is being planned. That person will then e-mail or call the folks on this volunteer hosts list to find one or two people for that date.

This is a fine way to show a welcoming face to people wanting to use our church. It will help with both rental income and, possibly, with membership!

Interested? Please contact Frank Basler at frank.basler@gmail.com. Many thanks in advance!

*Recognition of
Our
Church School
Teachers
on October
5th*



"Thin Places" Art Show Explores Community



Thin Places, an exhibit by MaryEllen Hendricks, on display in Hoskins Hall at Saugatuck Congregational Church.

Article written by Sophie Call, Staff Writer for Inklings, Staples High School Newsletter

MaryEllen Hendricks first started thinking about her Thin Places Project after hearing a sermon at Compo Beach about the small island of Iona off the coast of Scotland.



"Thin places," she explained, "are places where the distance between heaven and earth are tissue thin."

She's spent the last two years documenting people from the community's thin places, places of reflection and escape. "What I love about it," she said, "is that people have thin places in their own backyard, across the street, around the corner. You don't need to travel to somewhere like Iona to find them." She's captured these photos on antique equipment, including a lens from the late 1800s.

Her husband, Michael Hendricks, explains how the primitive photography lends something to the photos that is lost with modern equipment. "They capture auras," he said, "they leave room for interpretation."

Now, the photos are printed on silk and displayed in Saugatuck Congregational Church. Some hang from the ceiling, fluttering in the breeze, while most are framed on the wall, with a small quote from the person who contributed the place.

All of the photographs have a full life behind them — a photo of a small toy soldier on the beach simply captioned "I need to be my own knight in shining armor," is the story of a woman who, after her mother's death, had continued to visit the beach, a place her mother had so loved.

"I come here and I'm just at peace," reads a quote next to a photo of the woods.

"All of a sudden this blinding joy came over me," declares an image of a marsh at sunrise.

"It's about the stories first," said Michael Hendricks. "The photographs are trying to catch the relationship between a person and a place."

Looking at the photos, it's easy to feel the connection. Priscilla Long of Westport said as she pointed to a photo of the sanctuary of Saugatuck Congregational Church, "This one is so peaceful. It actually brought tears to my eyes."

Nicole Mathias '16, who has known MaryEllen Hendricks since kindergarten, said of the photographs, "You can really see the movement of the natural world in her photos," and went on to say that the creativity that

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she's always admired in MaryEllen Hendricks is completely visible in this installation.

Standing in this room, surrounded by the private places of dozens of people, it's easy to feel the connection that MaryEllen Hendricks was photographing.

"At first, I thought this was going to be an exercise in photography," she said. "What I quickly came to understand was it was an exercise in community and trust."

Sophie Call, Staff Writer for Inklings



Four of the Thin Places, printed on silk and hung from the ceiling.

*It's a place where I feel like
I'm in God's embrace.
JC*



The following article was written by Larry Aasen, printed in the October 15th issue of the Westport Minuteman and edited to utilize our limited space. I highly approve and support articles on our community issues. If you have "opinions" that would be interesting to the Herald readers please submit them to the editor, jmangold@optonline.net.

One man with a gun: Shootings afflict American communities

In the 1940's. Americans were worried because countries like Germany and Japan were building up their armies. Today, one man with a gun can shock and frighten an entire nation or a town like Westport. Almost every week, there is another terrible shooting in the United States.

According to Wikipedia, the source for most of the facts in this story, from 1991 to August 2015, there were some 35 mass shootings in the United States, resulting in 293 deaths. These tragedies include the Newtown, Connecticut massacre with 27 killed and the attack in Blacksburg, Virginia where 32 died.

Who are these people doing these horrific shootings? Why do they murder people? All too often, we see photos of these killers on TV, in our newspapers.

Most of them look like everybody else, but they must be filled with rage or have mental problems. There are many reasons why they kill, some unknown. The most common reasons, many experts say, are insanity, grudges, drugs, job loss or hatred against the world as they see it.

Most of these shootings have been carried out by young men, between 18 and 40, and mostly white. Almost all have been American citizens.

The shootings are in major cities, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit, and in smaller places such as Columbine, Colorado and Roseburg, Oregon. They happen in every region of the country. They happen where people gather, in movie theaters, schools and public buildings.

A personal experience I had in 1987 in New York City indicates how gun-related incidents can happen anywhere, anytime, I worked in the Helmsley building and was taking the stairway in the Pan Am building down into Grand Central Station during the rush hour. A nice-looking young man about 20 pushed a gun against my chest and demanded my money. Having been in the Army, I could see it was a very real gun. I gave him \$50. Then he asked for my ring. Stupidly, I said "but it is my wedding ring." A man standing next to me said, "What is going on here?" I cried out, "He's mugging me." The man ran up the stairs, I ran down into Grand Central. When I found a cop, I was shaking and swearing and didn't make much sense.

When I entered our Westport home that night, my wife said I was white as a ghost. This happened years ago, but I still dream about it. Why did this young man try such a hold up in the busiest building in New York? A policeman said, "He was probably hard up for a fix."

Where do these mad men get their guns? Many have been purchased in retail gun stores. Store owners should be reminded that they have the power to refuse to sell a gun to anybody. Gun buyers must be given complete background checks. This effort has been fought by gun lobbies in every state. This is very upsetting. Public opinion polls indicate that a majority of Americans believe in background checks. But few of our leaders in the Senate or Congress up for election dare to cross the gun lobby, The gun

lobby has big money and they play hard ball. Congressmen who oppose background checks should not be given contributions and should be targeted in their next election.

Many will continue to fight new gun laws. Having once worked on Hunting and Fishing magazine, I knew your gun editors and writers very well. It will be hard to get them to change their minds.

Based on the personal experiences, I think the subject of gun control will not go away. However, I would hope and pray, that sensible background check laws would be passed soon. I would hope that people would learn that more guns in America will not result in more security, and that guns in homes should be kept under lock and key.

This would reduce the number of gun accidents. I would hope that idiot laws allowing people to carry guns into bars, churches, night clubs and on college campuses would be repealed. I would hope that parents would recognize that teaching young children how to shoot a gun could have dangerous consequences.

There is hope. It took time to get seat belt laws. But now we have them. Maybe sensible gun laws like those in Europe will come to America. But it will take time.

However, we must not let one insane person with a gun grip us with fear.

Larry Aasen