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From Geography to Genealogy Local History Program Has Something for Everyone October 19 at UConn Torrington

The **Locally Grown History Forum: Context and Connections** will be held at the UConn Torrington Campus on Sunday, October 19 from 1 – 4:30 pm. The forum will feature afternoon sessions on topics ranging from Immigration, Geology, Religion and Genealogy with Walt Woodward, Connecticut State Historian, Nick Bellantoni, Connecticut State Archeology, as well as several other noted professionals. The forum is geared to interest public history enthusiasts, professionals and educators. It is open to the public.

The greater Litchfield Hills region is home to a wealth of historic sites and museums that are just waiting to be discovered. The feedback from participants of this fall's first Locally Grown History event, a region-wide History Hunt, has shown that visitors are delighted—and proud—of the experiences they've had while traveling to the various sites featured in the Locally Grown History Hunt. The Forum on October 19 will cap off this fall event with an opportunity for the casual history observer and the scholarly history professional to dig deeper into our rich stories.

Rob Forbes, Assistant Professor of History at UConn and a key leader of this effort, stated, "Enthusiasm for different aspects of history is alive and well! This is illustrated by the fantastic popularity of television's History Channel, Antiques Road Show and This Old House; we can see it in the excitement about the upcoming movie, 'The Express: The Ernie Davis Story'. The Locally Grown History project reveals outlets for this enthusiasm right in our own backyards."

The forum has a lot to offer as far as history interests, with two concurrent sessions covering five topics. In the first session **Andrew Walsh**, Associate Director of The Leonard E. Greenwood Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College, will present *From Hills to Mills: the Power of Geography in Connecticut History* and **Erin Bartram**, Doctoral Candidate in History at UConn will discuss *Religion's Role and Impact on Connecticut History*. Session two will explore the power of the written word with *Stories Told Through Letters*, during which Civil War era letters will be read and a discussion of their importance and impact will be moderated by **Davyne Verstandig**, Director of the Litchfield County Writers Project. There will also be a presentation by **Ruth Glasser**, Lecturer in History at UConn, on *Immigration in Connecticut*. A hands-on workshop, *Genealogy 101: Starting to Climb Your Family Tree*, led by **Sheila Lafferty**, Director of the Julia Brooker Thompson Library at UConn Torrington will be offered in both sessions.

Also on the Forum's schedule will be a roundtable discussion, *Teaching with Local Treasures: The World in Your Backyard*. Panelists include **Nick Bellantoni**, Connecticut State Archeologist; **Briann Greenfield**, Public History Coordinator at CCSU; **Kaye Wickman**, Student, Trinity College; and **Pat Conroy**, History Teacher at Torrington High School and UCONN ECE Instructor. This discussion will be moderated by **Walt Woodward**, Assistant Professor of History at UCONN and Connecticut State Historian.

Networking opportunities and informational displays from various local historical societies and organizations will also be available at the Forum.

Registration fees for **Locally Grown Stories: Context & Connections** are all under \$10, with special rates for seniors, educators and students. Registration is underway, and will also be available for walk-in registrations on the day of the Forum. UConn Torrington is conveniently located off of Route 4 with ample parking. Full details, registration materials and directions to the campus can be found at www.locallygrownhistory.org.

Here's a sample of what's happening this week in the Locally Grown History Hunt (October 10 through 17):

- Danbury Railway Museum, Pumpkin Patch Trains (Oct 11-26) Ride a train to the Pumpkin Patch and Kids get a free pumpkin. Historic railroad equipment is on display. (203) 778-8337
- Litchfield Historical Society, Kids' History Activities and Exhibit (Sept 1-Oct 18) Special activities will be held every Sunday afternoon at the Tapping Reeve House. (860) 567-4501
- Merwinsville Hotel, Columbus Day Weekend Arts & Crafts Show (Oct 10-12) Juried Arts and Fine Crafts Show and Sale to benefit the Historic Merwinsville Hotel Restoration. (860) 350-4443
- Salisbury Association, World War II Exhibit – Part 2 (Oct 8-19) Exhibit of materials and memorabilia and local residents' recollections of the impact of WW II on Salisbury. (860) 435-0566
- TIMEXPO: The Timex Museum, Connecticut's Clock and Watch Industry (Oct 7-11) The history of Waterbury Clock Company roots from 1857 to the present day. 1-800-225-7742

For an up-to-date listing of participating sites visit www.locallygrownhistory.com.

Locally Grown History is a project organized by historical societies and museums throughout Northwest Connecticut, along with UCONN Torrington, the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council, and the Northwest Connecticut Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Locally Grown History aims to serve a 48 town region that includes Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Barkhamsted, Bethel, Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Bristol, Brookfield, Burlington, Canaan, Colebrook, Cornwall, Danbury, Derby, Goshen, Hartland, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Middlebury, Morris, New Fairfield, New Hartford, New Milford, Naugatuck, Newtown, Norfolk, North Canaan, Oxford, Plymouth, Prospect, Redding, Ridgefield, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Seymour, Sherman, Southbury, Thomaston, Torrington, Waterbury, Warren, Washington, Watertown, Winchester, Wolcott, and Woodbury.

For more information, contact Melissa Flaherty at lgh@uconn.edu or 860-626-6802

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