

THE DAY'S FAVORITE PHOTOGRAPHS OF 2018



Crew and dock workers unload fish from the ice-covered Mystic Way at New London Seafood Distributors on the Thames River in New London in January.

2018

Looking back at the pictures I've taken over the past year, it was a bit surprising to see how many were related to severe weather. We had already taken pictures of ice fishermen and ice skaters, so I was at a loss to show how cold it was on another frigid day. Luckily, I found dock workers unloading fish from an ice-covered boat and the added bonus of the late-afternoon light.

— Dana Jensen, photojournalist



Car fires are notoriously difficult to photograph, simply because they are, generally, quickly extinguished and also tend to slow traffic making getting to them challenging. Due to these realities I do not photograph a lot of them. Unless the incident is quite close to me, or in a context that amplifies the newsworthiness of the situation, I often do not even respond. Close proximity to the office on a quiet January morning gave me enough cause to take a look at this one car fire. Thankfully nobody was hurt. The early morning light and the smoke lingering in the calm air gave me an almost painting-like quality to the moment as the firefighters mopped up after knocking down the flames. —Sean D. Elliot, director of photography

2018

New London firefighter Matthew Avery uses a saw to open the hood as a crew extinguishes an engine-compartment fire in a mini-van New London in January.



Everyone had the same reaction when I told them I was going to spend some time with a local underwater hockey team, “What’s that?” For me it just proved that I needed to get a little wet and do the story. There were some struggles I didn’t expect, using a GoPro I wasn’t familiar with as I dove 8-feet under the water and snorkeled across the pool to keep up with the game. But over the weeks I got comfortable with the camera, got a little stronger at holding my breath, and got good at following the game that can really only be seen underwater. The only unsurprising part was how much fun I had with it. (As did reporter Erica Moser who I would laugh at every time I saw her jump out of the pool and run to her notebook on the side trying not to get it wet as she stood in her flippers, snorkel still in her mouth, goggles pushed up as she tried to jot down what someone said in the water before she forgot.)
— Sarah Gordon, photojournalist

2018

Players fight for control of the puck during an underwater hockey game in August in the pool at the University of Connecticut’s Avery Point campus in Groton.



Roniya Rehman hugs her father Malik Naveed bin Rehman in the church kitchen at the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme during her visit in March. Malik and his wife Zahida Altaf have taken sanctuary at the church after being ordered to leave the United States by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. The Pakistani couple had lived in New Britain for 18 years. Their Roniya is an American citizen and is currently living in New Britain with extended family members.

2018

In March, Day staff writer Erica Moser and I got a first-hand look into the lives of a migrant family living in a sanctuary church at the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme. Witnessing the couple deal with living within the confines of a church and being separated from their young daughter, I tried my best to show the human side of a highly complicated issue. One of the most striking and not surprising moments that I did witness was the change that came over Malik and Zahida when their daughter Roniya would visit on the weekends. The happiness of having Roniya with them was only punctuated by the pain of watching them say goodbye when the weekend was over. — Tim Cook, multimedia journalist





The “selfie” has become ubiquitous today. Not just the actual photo as taken and posted on social media, but also the photo of someone taking a selfie. There are times when it is a crutch for the newspaper photographer and I will confess to leaning on it more than a few times. So, normally, I might not go so far as to single out such a photo for recognition, but in this case I make an exception. The sea of happy faces, all pretty clearly oblivious to my presence, makes me smile every time I look at this photo. How can I argue with that?
— Sean D. Elliot, director of photography

2018

Connecticut Sun guard Alex Bentley takes a photo with students at the Regional Multicultural Magnet School in May in New London. Bentley and teammate Rachel Banham spoke to the all-school meeting first and then spent some time with the fourth- and fifth-graders, talking about their careers, college degrees and plans for after basketball. The visit was part of the team’s community outreach efforts.





As a photographer, exploring different religions and their traditions has always fascinated me. I have been to many a Sunday church service and more temple gatherings than I can count. But this morning was the first time I got to join a local Islamic center as hundreds gathered in a baseball field at sunrise celebrating the sacrifices their ancestors had made before them. It was a beautiful service and I was walking away honored by what I had witnessed and proud of the work I'd done when I caught this moment that blew away everything else I had taken that morning. In this simple gesture it didn't matter their religion, what language they were speaking, what holiday they were celebrating or where they came from, the human connection and joy they shared is universal.

— Sarah Gordon, photojournalist

2018

Adam Aboudawd celebrates with his cousin Eyad Alawi as members of the Islamic Center of New London gather for a prayer to celebrate Eid al-Adha at Washington Park in Groton. The holiday, also referred to as the Festival of Sacrifice, honors the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God's command. It is the second of two Islamic holidays celebrated worldwide every year.



Covering the rally outside of the Garde Arts Center before the first gubernatorial debate in September I knew going in that there was a potential for things to get heated. I had covered a similar event four years earlier where supporters of Governor Malloy and Republican candidate Tom Foley got into a shoving match and lamented in the 2014 Year in Review that I was afraid that due to growing political discourse in the country that scenes like that one would be repeated in the future. At a moment like this you have to read the crowd and watch for the tension points. This serves two purposes. First to record any unfortunate shenanigans that may occur, and secondly and far more important, is to make sure that you do not get caught up in it. — Tim Cook, multimedia journalist

2018

Supporters of Republican gubernatorial candidate Bob Stefanowski and Democratic candidate Ned Lamont scuffle outside of the first Connecticut gubernatorial debate at the Garde Arts Center in September.





Ari Klau (108) and Donn Cabral (261) and cyclists riding the course travel in a heavy rain during the Ocean Beach/John & Jessie Kelley Half Marathon in August.

2018

I have covered this race several times over the years, and to get photos of the runners during the competition I've always been in the back of a police vehicle that stays out in front of the lead runners. This year was a race I'll never forget because the only vehicle available was a privately owned pickup truck with no cover and severe weather was in the forecast. I was prepared for rain so I wore waterproof gear head to toe and protected my camera equipment the best I could. At around the halfway mark of the race, the rain came down harder than I've ever experienced while trying to take pictures. The bed of the pickup truck was a pond and my equipment and I were soaked. I was very concerned about the equipment and as soon as possible dried things off the best I could and let things air out for a couple of days and by some miracle the camera equipment survived. It wasn't the best conditions to work in, but it definitely made for a more interesting race photo.

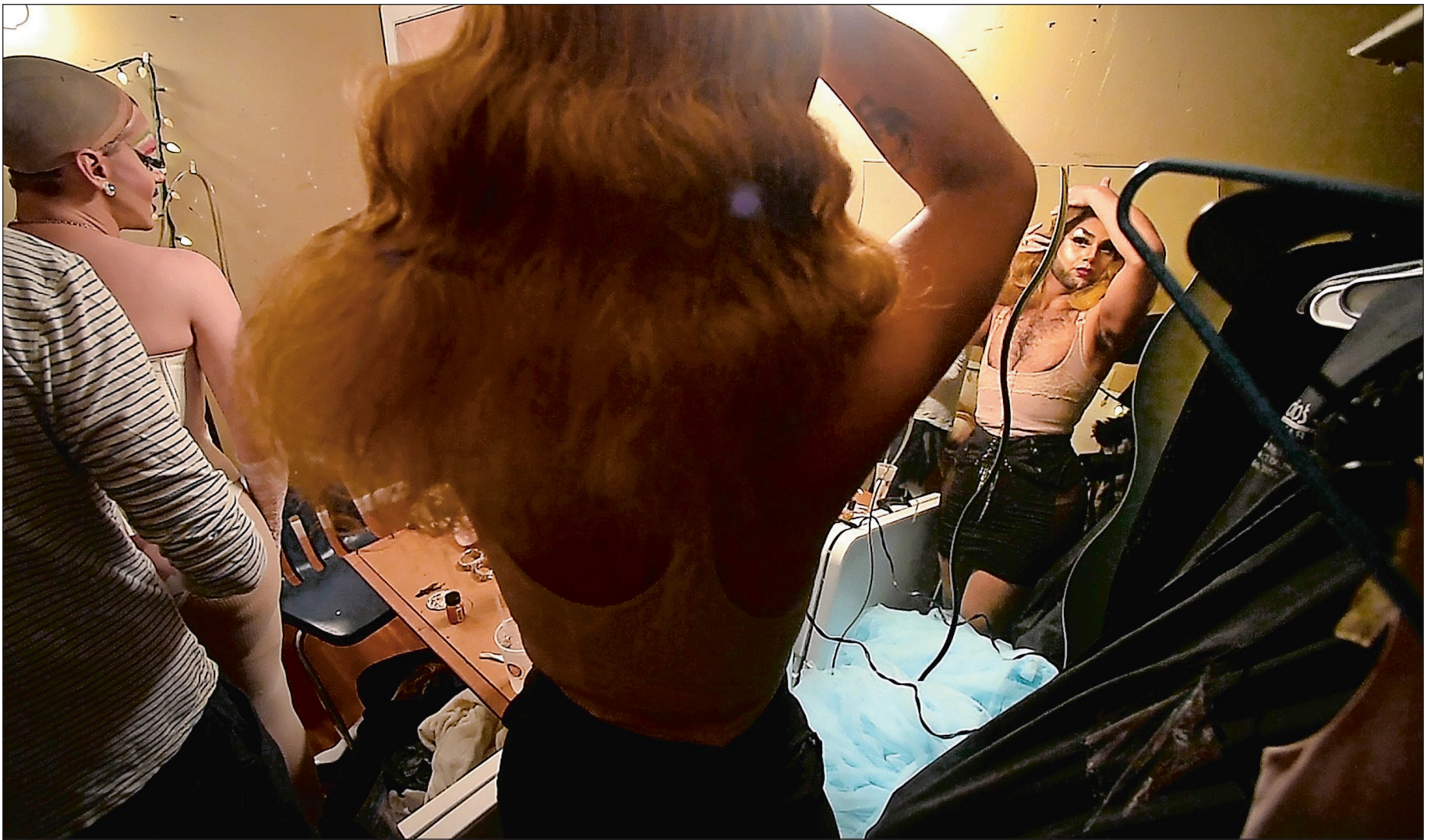
— Dana Jensen, photojournalist



Taking this photo broke my camera, but only for a day. Looking for weather features are the bread and butter of newspaper photography and I was having a fruitless effort. I paused at Harkness as the rain slowed and got excited when I noticed a few cars in the parking lot; there were people here. Then I saw Lobsang's tent and his umbrella and knew luck was on my side. We conversed in his broken English as he explained he was from Tibet and this rain was nothing. He didn't understand why there weren't more people enjoying the day at the park. He and his friends had the day off of work from the casinos and with umbrellas and tents, a little rain wouldn't stop their plans (or tea time.) My camera spent the night in rice and my clothes spent the night hanging in the shower and all was dry and unbroken by the time I woke up. — Sarah Gordon, photojournalist

2018

Lobsang Sangye, of Montville, stands under an umbrella while heating a kettle for tea on a grill as it rains in August at Harkness Memorial State Park. Sangye, who works at Mohegan Sun and had the day off, was prepared for a rainy picnic with friends as they ate in a tent and took turns grilling in the rain. "I'm from Tibet, I'm used to the rain," said Sangye. "It doesn't stop me from doing what I want on my day off."



Harry Cruz, 23, of Waterford checks himself in the mirror in the dressing room O'Neill's Brass Rail in New London in July as he secures his wig while preparing for his performance as his drag stage persona "Bella Daleadho."

2018

In a comedy of scheduling misfortunes I began a project on local New London drag queen Harry Cruz on the night of his performance. Up to that point, I had been hopeful to visit with Cruz and interview him during his hum-drum daily life to build a little more trust through the journalist/subject relationship. Instead I found myself at the bar, late at night, trying to get as much footage of Cruz during the chaos of changing looks in the hot and cramped dressing room and working the floor during the performance. My ideal is to not greet the subject of a longer-term project by being aggressive with my camera, where the subject gets to know the front of my lens before getting to know me. Thankfully in this case I feel that the images still had the visual intimacy that I was looking for.

— Tim Cook, multimedia journalist





One of the things that makes working for, and reading, *The Day* special is the investment in stories. When reporter Julia Bergman and I pitched the idea of spending time with a local submarine family during their father's deployment we were met with none of the hesitation I expected in undertaking a half-a-year project. I had the opportunity to spend Thanksgiving with the Smiths, go shopping for their Christmas tree, go to gymnastics classes and basketball games, be there for "getting ready for school" time and bedtimes. It was in some of the quiet moments, like this one, that really demonstrated for me, though, what it was like for the families left behind. The strong mothers who became temporary single parents, the kids who struggled with missing their father and not knowing how to express that emotion. This quiet moment of Kelsey and her kids on an afternoon after school quickly became one of my favorites from the time they shared with me.

— Sarah Gordon, photojournalist

2018

Kelsey Smith carries her daughter Hadley, 2, down the stairs as her son Colton, 6, aims a bow and arrow as they play at their Groton home in January. Kelsey's husband Josh is a sonar technician on the fast-attack submarine USS *Minnesota*, and on deployment for six months.



Things were pretty quiet when I first arrived at the Basque Fest and had some OK photos but was hoping for something better. When groups started to dance I was starting to get some pictures that I liked but it was when the Gaudeno Bat group started to dance that I knew what image I hoped to capture. The women's skirts really flowed as they moved around the dance floor. After several frustrating attempts — because the dancers were either too far away or their skirts were blocking the view of other dancers — I finally captured what I was hoping to see.

— Dana Jensen, photojournalist

2018

The Gaudeno Bat dance group from Chino, Calif., perform during the Basque Fest on Parade Plaza in New London in June. The festival was hosted by the New England Basque Club.



My first experience with the shipwrights at Mystic Seaport Museum's H.B. duPont Preservation Shipyard came two decades ago with the construction of Amistad. Since then I have photographed work on many historic wooden vessels there. The Mayflower II has been undergoing an epic restoration there for two years. The installation of this plank, the first new plank added to the hull, was a significant moment, but the combination of the cool, cloudy, weather and the steam rising from the plank made for a photo that I found nearly as epic as the moment itself. If only someone had found a different parking spot for their white truck that morning.

— Sean D. Elliot, director of photography

2018

Shipwrights at Mystic Seaport's H.B. duPont Preservation Shipyard carry the steaming port side aft garboard plank from the steam box to be installed on the Mayflower II in February. The garboard plank, the plank closest to the keel, is white oak, 25 feet long, and was steamed for about 3 hours to make it pliable enough to be bent to fit the nearly 90-degree bend from fore to aft. The ship, a replica of the vessel that brought the Pilgrims to the new world in 1620 and built in 1957 in England as a gift to the United States in thanks for support during and after WWII, is an attraction at Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Mass., and will be undergoing a 30-month restoration at the Seaport in preparation to sail it again on the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrim's voyage.



After reading about the British explorer Ernest Shackleton and his expedition to Antarctica, I often wondered what it must have been like. Having the opportunity to spend time with the Coast Guard ice breakers on the Connecticut River and be able to see and hear the ice breaking gave me in a small way an idea of what Shackleton and his Endurance crew were up against when they lost their ship in the ice pack.
— Dana Jensen, photojournalist

2018

The view from the USCGC Hawser of the USCGC Bollard as it hits packed ice while the two vessels work together breaking ice on the Connecticut River in January.





Honestly, I photograph just enough soccer to suffer frequent frustration at being in the wrong spot to capture one of those elusive goals. It's not like the high-scoring sports where it's almost easy to be in the right spot most of the time. Score tied, with the program's fourth-consecutive state title on the line, and in between the clicks of my shutter I watched Mya Johnson split the defenders and poke the ball just past the onrushing goalie. Then, with the ball in the net and the goalie crumpled in despair Johnson turned and began to celebrate. I might have smiled a little myself.

— Sean D. Elliot, director of photography

2018

Lyme/Old Lyme's Mya Johnson turns to celebrate with Dani McCarthy (2) after putting the ball past Immaculate goalie Aimee Cirella (1) for the go-ahead goal in the second half of CIAC class S girls' soccer championship in November at Middletown High School. The 14th seeded Wildcats won their fourth state title in a row with two goals from Johnson for the 2-1 win over the 4th seeded Mustangs.



It is never what you want to hear on your scanner. It reported that a bad automobile crash had occurred on the highway on a stormy night. The time, place and weather are not relevant to the possibility that people are hurt, but the conditions create hazards for the rescue personnel that now have to work the scene. At moments like this, I am always looking for the safest way to cover the story. Committing to the highway is not always a good or safe option, so in this case back in March, I found a highway overpass that provided an interesting perspective from which to tell the story, but a safe one as well.

— Tim Cook, multimedia journalist

2018

Waterford firefighters work the scene of a single car rollover accident on I-395 southbound in March. The southbound lane of the highway was temporarily closed as emergency crews worked the scene.





Charlene Moosey looks to Shawn Williams as they recite their vows during their wedding ceremony in April at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital in New London. The couple, who live in Pawcatuck and have two sons, have known each other since they were children. Hospital staff, friends and family worked together to pull off the spiritual wedding for Charlene, who has a terminal cancer diagnosis.

2018

I've been lucky enough to bear witness to many special weddings in my career, a few even in hospitals. But this was maybe the first where there were tears gathering in my eye behind the camera as I delicately documented. As Charlene and Shawn exchanged their vows, sharing the moment with friends, family and hospital employees there was not a dry eye in the room. Including mine. Their story of love, that they shared with two sons, and how many weddings they planned to only selflessly put off for more important reasons or use of resources, was a beautiful one. Charlene unfortunately passed away the next day, maybe even before copies of *The Day* hit the doorstep. And months later when I saw Shawn at their son's graduation and he greeted me with a hug and words of thanks it was the thanks he deserved for sharing their story.

— Sarah Gordon, photojournalist



During my career, I have covered a lot of protests and rallies but I have never covered so many in one year. Protests and rallies always look the same with people gathered together with a lot of signs and by the time I arrived at the Williams School I really wanted to try and get a photograph that looked different from my previous protest and rally images. At this location, I was lucky to have a staircase where I could take pictures from a higher angle. I studied the crowd and then I spotted a student holding two of his classmates in a bear hug. The expressions on the faces of these students to me shows how strongly people are feeling about certain subjects and that they want to be heard.

— Dana Jensen,
photojournalist

Williams School students listen to speakers while participating in a walkout to protest gun violence on National School Walkout Day in April. The event, located across the street from the school, was hosted by the Williams' Political, Social Justice, Awareness Club.





My ballet photos most often focus on the elite dancer, the pros and high level students, so it was a special assignment to photograph this milestone day in the dance career of these much younger and less polished dance students. The photo was more than a year in the making, as I waited for the arrival of the pointe shoe fitters to coincide with an opening on my work schedule. One of my favorite things to photograph, in almost any subject matter, is candid moments of significant milestones and rituals in the lives of regular people in our community.

—Sean D. Elliot, director of photography

Damara Bennett, Director of Children's Programming at the Eastern Connecticut Ballet, works with Sophia Monte, 11, of Stonington, on fitting the dancer's first pair of pointe shoes during a fitting session for young dancers with the Eastern Connecticut Ballet in September in East Lyme. A first pointe shoe may last as long as six months; many dancers will outgrow them before they wear them out, according to Bennett. More experienced dancers will wear out a pair of pointe shoes more quickly. "Sometimes after one performance," Bennett added.

