



THE DAY'S FAVORITE PHOTOGRAPHS OF 2019



The Ledyard High School marching band prepares to take the field at the NFA Classic marching band festival at Norwich Free Academy in September.

2019

As a photographer, I am naturally obsessed with light. It is the bread and butter and visual language of my trade. Most people see a colorful sunset, the first words out of my mouth are usually, “This is amazing light!” It was during the NFA Classic marching band festival that I had one of these moments. Instead of being under the lights of the stadium, the competition was moved to daytime due to the Eastern equine encephalitis scare. As the Colonels took to the field, the late afternoon sun backlit the team, which stood in sharp contrast against the shadowed wall of the NFA field house. I immediately saw the asymmetry, the flashes of color from the brass instruments and rolled video just to capture the scene. Overall I would not even call this good light. It is contrasty and harsh and overran the dynamic range of the camera I was using. It did, however, make for a graphically interesting visual.

— Tim Cook, multimedia journalist

ON THE COVER

Petty Officer 3rd Class Collin Miller and his wife, Ashley, enjoy the traditional first kiss upon the return of the U.S. Navy Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Providence (SSN 719) to the Naval Submarine Base in Groton in March following a six-month deployment. During the deployment, Providence steamed approximately 37,000 nautical miles, equal to approximately 1.7 trips around the world at the equator. Port visits were conducted in Faslane, Scotland, and Haakonsværn, Norway.

2019

It’s probably not unusual for a photo from a submarine homecoming to be chosen among the favorites from someone on the staff at The Day. There are few events in our region so universally revered as the reunion of families after a lengthy overseas deployment. This year it appears to be my turn. I will admit that I am often reluctant to focus on the traditional “first kiss” recipients at the homecoming. To some degree I figure they already got their big break. Yet, sometimes the moment is too good to resist. I imagine the pressure, for the couple, with all eyes on them, to make the moment memorable, could be quite daunting. And yet Petty Officer Miller managed to execute a textbook dip, and clearly surprise his wife with grace and style.

— Sean D. Elliot, director of photography

Oftentimes spot news becomes an “if you can, when you can, get there” situation. I knew I’d missed the flames and dynamics of this house fire in Norwich, as I couldn’t leave another assignment. This scene in the aftermath, while lacking the flash and danger, really illustrates the damage of the flames, which is sometimes hard to visualize. It also puts into perspective the care and danger of the work fire-fighters do even long after the flames are gone.

—Sarah Gordon,
photojournalist

2019

Firefighters work from the roof, in a bucket, and the attic as several area departments fight a fire on Prospect Street in Norwich in February. Everyone in the two-family home got out safely.

ABOUT THIS SECTION

Each December we ask our talented photo staff to select some of the more memorable images they gathered over the previous 12 months during their travels throughout southeastern Connecticut. We asked them to tell us how they captured that special shot, what obstacles they faced and what insights they gleaned. We hope you enjoy the results.

The photos were edited by Sean D. Elliot. The section was designed and edited by Scott Ritter.

Contributors:

- **Sean D. Elliot**, director of photography
- **Tim Cook**, multimedia journalist
- **Dana Jensen**, photojournalist
- **Sarah Gordon**, photojournalist





Megan Hutchison, 9, of Preston helps return crabs to the water after spending time crabbing with family and friends in Noank in August.

2019

Every season, there are activities that we photograph as we wander around the region between assignments. In the summer, you can find people of all ages crabbing. One day, I stumbled on a few young girls crabbing off a dock in Noank. I spent some time with them and after taking a few photos I liked, they started to pack up their equipment and I started to walk to my car. I then heard one of the girls say she wanted to count the crabs they had in a bucket before releasing them into the water. I decided to stick around and watch. They carefully dumped the crabs on the dock and placed the scurrying crabs carefully in the water. Crabbing photos are often nice, but I think being able to be close to the crabs' level this time made for an even more interesting photo.

— Dana Jensen, photojournalist





Connecticut's Courtney Williams is lifted by her father, Don, after she addressed the fans following the Sun's win over Washington in WNBA finals game four action at Mohegan Sun Arena in October. Williams scored 16 points as the Sun won 90-86 to force a game five in D.C.

2019

Don Williams quickly became a fixture at Connecticut Sun games late this season, cheering for the team and his daughter, Sun guard Courtney Williams, from his courtside seat. Williams is the quintessence of the enthusiastic sports parent demonstrating his fervor in a place, the professional sports arena, where it really seemed rather unusual. Every athlete I've ever covered has parents, and sometimes I see them cheering from their seats, but Williams' fandom is infectious, and seeing his daughter's response is equally fun.

— Sean D. Elliot, director of photography



Cooper Thompson, 5, reacts to holding a beaded animal as he and his sister Scarlett, 3, both of East Lyme, look at pieces by Domingo Wire and Bead Works during the Juried Arts and Craft Show at East Lyme Town Hall in July. The annual show, sponsored by the Niantic Lions, featured over 140 vendors and a food court.

2019

If you'd tell me one of my favorite photos of the year was from an arts and craft show, I'd probably laugh. But thanks to Cooper and his facial expressions, I proved myself wrong. I was on my way out with a few images that I was OK with when I heard him and his sister long before I saw them. His mother laughed as I introduced myself and he didn't even notice me as I framed the perfect shot to catch his reaction to holding the delicate beaded animals.

— Sarah Gordon, photojournalist



Jeffery Allen Evans, aka Lord Jeffery of the Knights of Gore, prepares himself for battle by securing his helmet before a demonstration at the Connecticut Renaissance Faire at the Lebanon Fair Grounds in August. The Knights of Gore are a medieval fighting troop that specialize in scripted and unscripted fighting demonstrations using medieval armor and weapons.

2019

When one sees armor-clad human beings hitting one another with maces and broadswords, you realize that you are in the presence of a truly unique entertainment experience. So it was when I went to cover the Connecticut Renaissance Faire. Having never been to the fair before, I was quick to realize that this would be a video paradise, with the demonstration by the Knights of Gore being the fulcrum to the story. This is a perfect example where video, with the sound and movement of two combatants slamming into each other, can deliver greater impact (no pun intended) than even the best still photo from the event. As the team suited up for the demonstration, it was almost as much fun watching them don the armor, which on an almost 80-degree day, appeared to be a daunting task unto itself.

— Tim Cook, multimedia journalist





Faraz Talukdar, 2, stands with his father, Jabirul, in June as members of the local Muslim community bow for Takbir prayers to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the holiday to mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan, at the College Center at Crozier Williams at Connecticut College. The Islamic Center of New London County secures the hall at Conn for the Eid prayer and party event, which is attended by hundreds more than will fit in the center's Groton building. Salah and Takbir prayers are followed by a Khutba, a sermon, from Islamic Center President Altaf Rasool, and then a feast. Ramadan is observed by Muslims worldwide with prayer, fasting, reflection and community and commemorates the first revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad.

2019

I am almost universally fascinated by the myriad religious practices one can witness in a nation of such rich diversity. I enjoy the opportunity to show readers of The Day many of the traditions in our region. I was very happy making interesting photos of the many aspects of the prayer rituals of the Eid al-Fitr festivities. It takes a lot for me to fully appreciate the dedication it takes to observe the fasting of Ramadan, so the clear joy of the Eid prayers are easy to see. Young Faraz made a great visual contrast, both in the color of his clothing as well as his small stature and body language, amid the sea of men bowing in prayer. The moment only lasted a few seconds and I'm glad I captured it.

— Sean D. Elliot, director of photography



Illustrating summer, especially in late August, gets increasingly hard as more photos are taken. It was a rainy day and we were desperate for a feature photo. When I encountered a group of kids jumping off the bridge in Groton Long Point, I had to stop. We'd taken a few "yay summer bridge jump photos" already this year and I knew I had to get creative and think outside the box to be able to use it. Focusing on the landing — rather than on the jump — the pain captured in this image really works. (And doubly illustrates the incoming pain of waking up for the first day of school the next morning.)

— Sarah Gordon,
photojournalist

2019

Rain falls as siblings, from left, Nathan, 11, Noah, 14, Lily Johnson, 9, and friend Cisto Mercado land in the water after jumping off the Groton Long Point Road bridge in late August. The friends, who attend Groton Public Schools, were set to return to school the following morning and were jumping off the bridge to say goodbye to summer. "My alarm is going off at 6 a.m. tomorrow," said Mercado, "it's gonna be way too early."



Members of the Naval Submarine School from the Naval Submarine Base in Groton march during Groton's 40th annual Fourth of July parade.

2019

While covering Groton's Fourth of July parade, I wanted to try getting a few photos from a different view than the spectators watching the parade would see. When the Naval Submarine School from the Naval Submarine Base came marching down the road, I thought this would be a good opportunity. As they marched in straight lines, I lined myself up between two rows and started shooting photos as they passed by and captured this image.

— Dana Jensen, photojournalist





Old Lyme's Rory Cavicke (9) kicks a ball past North Branford's Jason Stanford (17) during a boys soccer game at Colafati Field in North Branford in September.

2019

The best sports photos are sometimes the ones that make you laugh. This was one of the first games of the season and I could not tell you what the score was, or if it even mattered, but something about the flight of Rory here and his posture makes me giggle every time I see it. Probably because it reminds me of the great '80s movie *The Karate Kid*, headband and all.

— Sarah Gordon, photojournalist



Entertainer Justine Nicole of Mystic performs a hula hoop routine on the boardwalk at Ocean Beach Park during the New London Pride Festival in August.

2019

I think part of the reason this photo made my “favorites” list this year was because it was taken on a warm, beautiful summer day at a party at Ocean Beach. Being surrounded by positive energy is a great place to find oneself, and usually a pretty good place for capturing fun moments.

— Tim Cook, multimedia journalist

FOLLOWING PAGE

One snowy egret dives onto another to claim a prime fishing spot in the Bride Brook salt marsh at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme in April.

2019

I am not a nature photographer. In truth I lack the patience it takes to wait for the kind of activity that makes for compelling wildlife photos. With that in mind, it’s rare that I take any time to even try and therefore really rewarding when a few extra minutes watching the egrets in Bride Brook allowed me to witness a little bit of avian drama. I had several nice frames of the egrets wading and catching food, and when one took flight I figured my outing was over, but instead, the graceful flight ended with a sudden flurry of conflict and the aggressor perched in a new fishing spot.

— Sean D. Elliot, director of photography





Natalya Thomas, 8, left, and her grandmother, Terry Wright, second from left, both of New London, play in a pile of leaves at Mitchell College during the school's Family Halloween Festival in October.

2019

It was very close to the end of my shift one Saturday, and I had already taken a couple of photos, but I had this nagging thought that I should see if I could find something better. I remembered that Mitchell College in New London was hosting its Halloween Festival and decided to check it out. When I arrived on the lawn, I saw a few men with rakes talking while standing around a pile of leaves but nothing else happening. I continued inside to the activities taking place in Clarke Center to find things were winding down. I left the building and saw a couple of kids playing in the pile of leaves I had spotted earlier. I thought this could possibly make a good picture, but initially it was not panning out. Slowly people started to gravitate toward the pile and children and adults began having fun playing with the leaves. The combination of the light, leaves flying and the facial expressions made a nice photo.

— Dana Jensen, photojournalist



I had the honor back in the spring to spend time with a New London institution, Christos “Chris” Armoutsoglou, the Bank Street Cobbler. Armoutsoglou has been working in his store on Bank Street for almost as long as I have been alive. In a story like this, the shop becomes as much of a character as the person you are interviewing, and capturing that becomes essential to telling the story.

— Tim Cook, multimedia journalist

2019



The Bank Street Cobbler, Christos “Chris” Armoutsoglou, works on customers’ shoes at his Bank Street business in New London in March, as he has done for the last 41 years.



Martha Geehan, second from right, curator of textiles for the Stonington Historical Society, talks to people about the Stonington Battle Flag in August.

2019

When I heard the Stonington Battle Flag was going to be on display at the La Grua Center in Stonington Borough I knew it's not unfurled very often and wanted to get a photo. I had taken a photo of the flag once before several years ago, but it was at ground level with the flag carefully displayed on a museum's floor. This time I remembered that the La Grua Center has a balcony and the flag would appear less distorted looking down from that angle. On my drive there, I hoped I would be able to see people walking around the flag. I was pleasantly surprised when I arrived to see Martha Geehan, curator of textiles for the Stonington Historical Society, gesturing while telling visitors about the flag.

— Dana Jensen, photojournalist





Trainer Wendy Brayman, with Hunter Ridge in Ashaway, R.I., leads Oki from his overturned trailer in Waterford in January. Both Oki and his traveling companion, Sheldon, were safely removed from the trailer and attended to by a veterinarian, who also responded to the scene.

2019

Some calls heard over the police scanner really catch my ear. A lot of what happens in the realm of emergency responders has become quite routine after my more than 25 years as a photojournalist, but when I got a tip about an overturned horse trailer I knew I had to get there. On mornings when the roads are icy, accidents are not unusual, but regardless of the road conditions, accidents involving horse trailers are. I arrived to find most of the first responders arrayed around the trailer, taking direction from a paramedic on scene who was also an equestrian and therefore the best-qualified person in the situation. I was impressed to observe the efforts of all the rescuers and amazed at the quick response of the horse-riding community in the form of equipment and medical support. Thankfully, both horses emerged from their harrowing ride with little more than scrapes and bruises.

— Sean D. Elliot, director of photography



The Cross Sound Ferry Susan Anne moves through rough waters as waves crash on the rocks at Eastern Point Beach in January.

2019

Coming up with different ways to illustrate weather — sunny or stormy alike — is a routine creative challenge for most newspaper photographers. I was frustrated as the people who were outside watching unusually high waves at Eastern Point Beach were back in their car by the time I got all my rain gear on. In retrospect, however, that’s a photo I’ve taken many times before. The thing I saw lining up as I was finally prepared to get out of my car was even better. The angry storm makes the Thames River look like something much stronger against the glow of the ferry lights in the sea of gray.

— Sarah Gordon, photojournalist

FOLLOWING PAGE

Waterford’s Emma Marelli celebrates after completing a double-play for the final out against Seymour to clinch the CIAC Class M State Softball Tournament championship for the Lancers at West Haven High School in June.

2019

In the high emotions of a championship win or loss, there are usually a large number of opportunities to make some good images. The precision of hitting the “game winning” moment, however, takes a bit more patience and skill, especially in a game like softball, where the final out could have happened anywhere on the field.

— Tim Cook, multimedia photojournalist

