

Inquiring News

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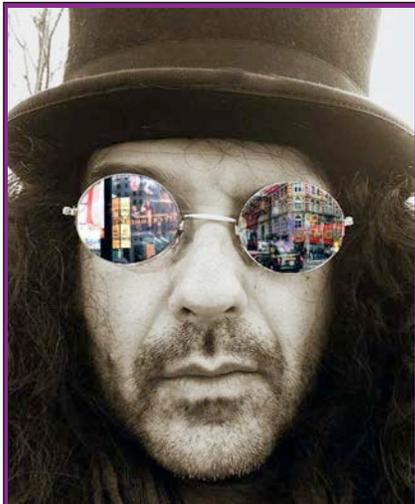
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Wednesday, February 17, 2016

N.Y. "Artist" (Xio) See & Capture the Beauty in Hartford Parks

*Tasked to Showcase the
Photo-Art of New England*



NY Artist (Xio)

Hartford - The National Park Service and its partners have commissioned Xio-ro to create an artistic photographic series that will bring wider acclaim to the NK "www.newenglandtrail.org" New

England National Scenic Trail (NET), a 215-mile hiking route through 41 communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts

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Dr. Cornel West: Always Speaking His Truth

By Jocelyne Hudson-Brown w/ William "Bill" Clark – Inquiring News-CT



Dr. Cornel West speaking at Uni. of Htfd., in West Hartford, CT, as part of Black History events. Photo by Bill Clark

WEST HARTFORD - In a nod to Black History Month Dr. Cornel West was at the University of Hartford to discuss matters of race and social justice. He made time for a one-on-one interview to speak off the script with *Inquiring News*.

Inquiring News: In today's diverse, multicultural and global society is there still a significance

to the celebration of Black History Month?

Dr. Cornel West: It is more relevant than ever! We are a blues people. Now the whole nation and world has the blues. If they don't learn anything from a blues people then the whole thing goes under.

INQ: So you better learn something from the people who already suffered?

DCW: That's exactly right. How you deal with catastrophe and still continue to dose out compassion and creativity in the face of catastrophe. A lot of people feel they can escape catastrophe because it has not visited their house or their

*See West and Uni. of Htfd., students.
Continued, Page 9*

If You're a Minority Business. Let's Do Lunch. Join Us!

H.E.Z.B.A. Annual Minority Business Luncheon
We're Honoring Connecticut State Trooper

Friday, Feb. 26, 2016 - *See Details Page 8*

Celebrating Black History



Fred Abrams

National & International News

N.Y. "Artist" (Xio) See & Capture the Beauty in Hartford Parks *Tasked to Showcase the Photo-Art of New England*

Weir Farm Artist Commissioned by Connecticut Forest & Park Association To Highlight the New England National Scenic Sights and Trails



Doris Johnson, DEEP Agent (who's passion it is the have a safe and clean community) guided Xio, through Old North Cemetery. Photos by Xio



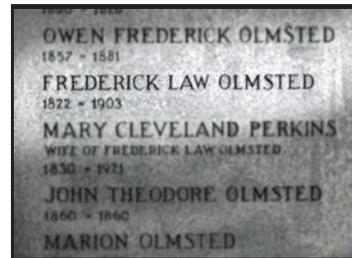
Keney Park



Olmsted Crypt



Light spirit shines on Old North Cemetery



Olmstead Head-stone Marker

comprised primarily of historic trail systems.

Although the NET has been in existence for over a half century, it was federally designated as a National Scenic Trail in 2009 to receive protection as a nationally significant recreational resource. The trail is jointly

managed and cared for by the National Park Service, The Connecticut Forest & Park Association and the ational-scenic-trail.cfm" Appalachian Mountain Club (for the Massachusetts portion). The three organizations commissioned Xiom-ro (SEE-oh-

MAH-ro), an artist known for creating artistic photographic collections that help draw wider public attention to national parks and historic sites. Since 2011, Xio has been the Visiting Artist at Weir Farm National Historic Site, in Wilton/Ridgefield, Connecticut.

The site is the homestead of .wikipedia.org/wiki/J._Alden_Weir" J. Alden Weir, the father of American Impressionist painting whose works can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Smithsonian and many other world-class institutions.

Early February (in Hartford) famed artist and photojournalist Xio visited with Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to prepare an exhibit of my photographs of Weir Farm, which is Connecticut's first national park unit.

After my meeting at DEEP, Doris Johnson (Agent for DEEP) who was instrumental in guiding him through Keney Park, Old North Cemetery and other locations in Hartford. So Xio could create photographs pursuant to a commission for the Connecticut Forest & Park Association and its partners. This commission,

(which begins in Connecticut) but will also include important adjacent destinations.

The commission seeks to draw national attention to the trail, which can serve as an economic driver to neighboring communities like Hartford and its recreational/cultural resources such as Keney Park and Spring Grove Cemetery. Xio created wonderful photo-arts in Hartford.

The NET travels through classic New England landscape features: long-distance vistas with rural towns as a backdrop, agrarian lands,

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State News

AG Jepsen: Connecticut Joins \$470 Million Joint State-Federal Settlement with HSBC to Address Mortgage Servicing and Foreclosure Abuses

HARTFORD - Attorney General George Jepsen announced today that Connecticut has joined a \$470 million joint state-federal settlement with mortgage lender and servicer HSBC to address mortgage origination, servicing, and foreclosure abuses. Connecticut joins 48 other states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Department of Jus-

tice (DOJ), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) in today's settlement.

The settlement provides direct payments to Connecticut borrowers for past foreclosure abuses, loan modifications and other relief for borrowers in need of assis-

tance and rigorous mortgage servicing standards it grants oversight authority to an independent monitor.

"This settlement holds HSBC accountable for past abusive practices while also providing relief to borrowers here in Connecticut at a time when they can still use that help to save their homes," Attorney General Jepsen said.

"Through tough servicing standards, this agreement compels HSBC to treat its borrowers fairly in the future."

Roughly 643 Connecticut borrowers whose loans were serviced by HSBC and who lost their home to foreclosure from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2012, and encountered servicing

abuse will be eligible for a payment from the national \$59.3 million fund for payments to borrowers. The borrower payment amount will depend on how many borrowers file claims. Eligible borrowers will be contacted about how to qualify for payments.

The HSBC agreement also requires the company to

provide certain borrowers in Connecticut with loan modifications or other relief. The modifications include principal reductions and refinancing for underwater mortgages.

The agreement's mortgage servicing terms largely mirror the landmark \$25 billion joint federal-multistate agreement with the nation's five largest mortgage servicers; Attorney General Jepsen served as a member of that settlement negotiating team in February 2012. That agreement provided consumers nationwide with more than \$50 billion in direct relief, created new servicing standards, and implemented independent oversight. Also, in December of 2013, Ocwen Financial Corporation and its subsidiary, Ocwen Loan Servicing, also agreed to a \$2.1 billion joint state-federal settlement. A subsequent state-federal agreement with SunTrust Mortgage Inc. worth nearly \$1 billion was announced in June of 2014.

The Attorney General encourages any Connecticut homeowner having difficulty with their mortgage to call the state Department of Banking's Foreclosure Assistance Hotline at 1-877-472-8313 to learn about state and federal help available. They should also contact their loan servicers to discuss the possibility of achieving an affordable loan modification. The agreement will be filed as a consent judgment in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Assistant Attorneys General Joseph Chambers and Matthew Budzik, head of the Finance Department, assisted the Attorney General in the settlement negotiations.

CT CHARTERS THANK EDUCATION COMMISSIONER FOR VISITING NORWICH CHARTER SCHOOL

Norwich, CT – Recently, Dianna R. Wentzell, Connecticut's Commissioner of Education, visited Integrated Day Charter School (IDCS) in Norwich. IDCS opened in August 1997 by three local teachers who wanted to create an alternative public education option for

students in the community. IDCS is one of a small number of HOT Schools in Connecticut they focus on teaching and learning in, about, and through the arts. The school currently serves 330 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. To learn more about Integrated Day Charter

School, visit www.idcs.org. "It was fantastic to have the Commissioner here today to visit our school, meet our incredible teachers and staff, and spend time with our students," said Anna B. James, director of Integrated Day Charter School. "We look forward to serving the greater Norwich community and its

children, in partnership with the state, for many years to come."

"We're honored to have a Commissioner of Education who recognizes that the more than 9,300 students in Connecticut's charter schools are public school students. We're fortunate that she makes it a priority to engage

with all types of public schools, whether charter or traditional district schools.

IDCS is a great option for Norwich families and Commissioner Wentzell saw that firsthand," said Jeremiah Grace, CT. ST. Dir., for Northeast Charter Schools Network.

SEN. COLEMAN PLEDGES LEGISLATION TO END PRISON GERRYMANDERING IN CT.

Hartford - State Senator Eric Coleman (D-Bloomfield), who is Senate Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, joined The Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) and a coalition of civil rights and good government groups to call for an end to prison gerrymandering in Connecticut a practice that results in unequal representation across the state.

Prison gerrymandering refers to the practice of counting prisoners as residents of the town where they are incarcerated, instead of where they lived prior to incarceration. This

enhances the representation of prison towns in the legislature without increasing their number of constituents. A more impartial alternative is to count prisoners as residents of their last known town of residence before they went to prison.

"This issue merits the attention of the legislature," Sen. Coleman said. "Because of the compelling information that has been assembled, I will advocate raising a proposed bill for a public hearing so that my colleagues will have an opportunity to hear from the experts, review the evidence, and consider the appropriate course of action for the State of Connecticut."

"For too long, Black and Latino communities have been robbed of their full political representation in Connecticut," LPRAC Chairman Richard Cruz said. "This ends in 2016. The Commission, and its allies on this issue, will do everything in their power to end prison gerrymandering in Connecticut to the benefit of the overwhelming number of state residents – not just Latinos. Other states have ended prison gerrymandering and Connecticut must follow their example."

LPRAC has said it will marshal the forces of its Commission to restore equal political representation to all

affected communities across the state by continuing its successful non-partisan approach to engaging legislators, citizens, and non-traditional partners on policy issues.

"After concentrating the prison population in 11 towns, the prison population is then used to artificially increase the political power of these few towns at the expense of the communities where these incarcerated people had previously lived," said Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. "This is contrary to the principle of equal representation. We look for-

ward to a public hearing on this important proposal."

"Our communities are constantly changing.

With those changes, come demographic shifts that need to be properly represented in the way our district lines are drawn so as not to disenfranchise any voting bloc through underrepresentation," said Ingrid Alvarez-DiMarzo, CT. ST. Director of the Hispanic Federation. "However, gerrymandering too often achieves the opposite goal of disenfranchising those that are majority Black or Latino.

NY Artist (Xio) See the Beauty in Hartford...Continued

large forests, and river valleys. The trail also highlights colonial historical landmarks and a range of diverse ecosystems: mountain ridges and summits, forested glades, wetlands and vernal pools, lakes, streams and waterfalls. Since the federal designation in 2009, there

have been some noteworthy changes to the historic route, including a 15-mile extension to Long Island Sound in Guilford, Connecticut.

Xiom-ro is a nationally recognized artist, curator, writer and speaker whose photography has been covered media and Fine Art

Connoisseur. His photography has been widely exhibited at Harvard University, Long Island Museum, Frances Tavern Museum and other major institutions. Xiom-ro has completed several commissions for the National Park Service including [tp://www.nps.gov/boha/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/boha/index.htm)" Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area and Theodore Roosevelt's Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, Long Island. A large exhibit of his Weir Farm photographs will be exhibited this year at the Connecticut Capitol/Legislative Office Building and at

the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, both in Hartford, in celebration of the National Park Service's Centennial. "Using the camera as a palette, my goal is to showcase the unique beauty and history of the NET and the dedicated volunteers who care for it.

The public needs to know of this resource and increased visitation is a much needed economic driver for the communities touched by the trail," says the artist.