2021 Photo & Poetry Contest Submissions
People Photography on the Tolland Trails
Entry 13: “Yoga on the Rocks” – Emma Tremblay
Entry 1: “Gail Jackson on the Upper Crandall Pond Trail” – Mark Jackson
Entry 2: “Gail Jackson on the Crandall Park Red Trail” – Mark Jackson
Entry 20: “Solitude” – Shin Kim
Entry 21: “Adventure” – Shin Kim
Entry 23: “Dappled Path” – Christa Berezowskyj
Entry 25: “Snowy Climb” – Christa Berezowskyj
Entry 31: “Fire” – Brandon Gilbert
Natural Landscape Photography on the Tolland Trails
Entry 18: “Treasure in a Forest” – Shin Kim

2021 Winner
Natural Landscape
Entry 3: “Late Autumn on the Blue Trail” – Mark Jackson
Entry 4: “Dusting of Snow on the Shenipsit Lake Blue Trail” – Mark Jackson
Entry 6: “Upper Bolton Lake” – Michael Carlo
Entry 7: “Upper Bolton Lake” – Michael Carlo
Entry 8: “Red Trail” – Pat Coviello
Entry 10: “Waves of Grain” – Pat Coviello
Entry 11: “Daybreak” – Emma Tremblay
Entry 12: “Upon the Treetops” – Emma Tremblay
Entry 14: “Autumnal Reflections” – Tricia White
Entry 16: “Summer Beauty at Crandall Park” – Mira Tarasyuk
Entry 17: “Summer Beauty at Crandall Park” – Mira Tarasyuk
Entry 24: “Sunset Through the Pines” – Christa Berezowskyj
Entry 26: “Reconciliation” – Sage Park
Entry 27: “Tranquility” – Sage Park
Entry 28: “Can we come here every day?” – Barbara Hyde-Fleming
Entry 29: “Can we come here every day?” – Barbara Hyde-Fleming
Entry 30: “Trail” – Brandon Gilbert
Poetry on the Tolland Trails
Entry 5: “Knofla Conservation Area” – Seema Kohli

I have always been fascinated with the lotus flower growing up as a child in India. I grew up drawing and painting pictures of lotus flowers. A lotus flower is almost ingrained in my brains. Again, I am one of the biggest admirers of Monet’s Water lilies, again a lotus family.

In 2020, when I saw the beauty of the Knofla conservation area, I was just blown away. I have not yet been able to forget those pure white water lilies glistening away like pearls. Not one, not two but hundreds and hundreds of them.

2020 was the year of the Pandemic.
2020 was the year when we as a family went for many hikes in the Tolland conservation trails.
2020 was the year we hiked the Knofla Conservation area.
2020 was the year when we saw those white, pristine water lilies in the Knofla conservation area in abundance.
2020 was the year when I got enlightened and introduced to the teachings of the Buddhist monk “Thich Nhat Hanh.”
2020 was the year where I fell in love with the three most powerful words - Breathe, Smile and Peace.
2020 was the year I felt transformed completely.

And then 2021 is the year when I lost my dad back in India.
And then 2021 is the year when life seems to be getting back to normal in the US.
And then in 2021 the word “Peace” seems to give me a lot of comfort.
And then in 2021 the word “Breathe” seems to still have a lot of power.
And then in 2021 again my thoughts go back to Thich Nhat Hanh’s quote “No mud, No Lotus.”
It suddenly is making so much sense to me.
“No suffering, No happiness.”
If there would have been no pandemic, we would never have visited the Knofla conservation area.
I have almost waited one whole year now to visit this serene place one more time.
But this time it is going to be different.
I will not go there once but many many times.
I will remember to Breathe.
And I will Smile with the water lilies.
And I will Smile with the Blue Heron whom I witnessed landing so gracefully in 2021.
And I will Smile with the Beaver who we think is building a dam there in 2021.

And I wish that most of the Tolland residents and my friends will go and visit the Knofla conservation area in 2021 and the years to come.

So thankful to the Knofla Conservation trails for giving me one more reason to Smile and Breathe and maybe find my Peace and happiness in the water lilies!!
Entry 15: “Nature’s Cathedral” – Katherine Field

I walk Cleo at Crandall Park
twice a day,
every day, regardless of the season or the weather.
We’ve walked every path that winds through the woods, over rocks, across streams, around ponds and ballfields.
Cleo pauses often, her nose twitching, reading secret messages left by other dogs walked by other owners.
Cleo’s taught me the value of walking slowly, of remaining vigilant for small changes along our daily route—
a painted rock hidden among gnarled roots,
a lady slipper,
a flash of orange feathers.
Worries feel small here,
dwarfed by white pines standing steadfast and straight through even the worst of storms.
We step reverently across the mosaic of sun and shadow draped across the forest floor,
as if walking through a cathedral seeking God.
Entry 22: “A Mom’s Refuge” – Kathryn Hahn Deffely

IT’S STIFLING, I’M STUCK AGAIN
NEVER ALONE
NEVER SPACE
RESTLESS ANGST, BUILDING ANGER
FRUSTRATION, AGITATION
SLAM THE DOOR AND BEAT FEET
FASTER STILL, I CAN HEAR THE WATER
SUDDENLY...FREE

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES WASH OVER ME, GAMES OF POOH STICKS IN MY CHUBBY HANDS
MOM BY MY SIDE, SAFE
MY PARK, SO LIKE THIS ONE
IT WAS, THIS IS, MY STREAM
MY BRIDGE
MY HOME.

IT’S THE BRIDGE I TAUGHT MY KIDS TO PLAY POOH STICKS ON AFTER WE READ HOUSE AT POOH CORNER.

IT’S THE BRIDGE WE ALL RODE OUR BIKES OVER, THEIRS STILL RATTLING IN TRAINING WHEELS AT FIRST.

EACH YEAR PASSING THE BRIDGE TOOK NOTE OF NEW BIKES, FEWER STICKS, GROWING CHILDREN, HAPPY TEENS, INDEPENDENT YOUNG ADULTS AND OCCASIONALLY A VERY SAD MOM.

WHETHER COVERED IN SNOW OR RAIN OR WARMTH, THE TREES SHELTER ME, THE BROOK BLOCKS OUT THE NOISE
IT'S WHERE I GO IN MY HEAD WHEN SOMEONE SAYS THOSE INSIPID WORDS “FIND YOUR HAPPY PLACE.”

IT'S WHERE I GO TO CRY,
TO REMEMBER
TO SEEK,
TO DREAM,
TO BREATHE.

IT'S THE EAGLE SCOUT BRIDGE IN CRANDALL PARK AND IT IS
PEACE.