

The Boston Globe

Venture into a labyrinth and find yourself

A purposeful walk through any of the many sites in New England is an exercise in mindfulness, author says

By Diane Daniel GLOBE CORRESPONDENT. July 7, 2020

... recommends the one in Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway in Boston because “it’s huge and beautiful, and even has a fountain in the middle.”

If there is a perfect season for walking labyrinths in New England, this would likely be it. A free outside activity close to home that invites meditation sounds like an antidote for living under the cloud of COVID-19. “The timing is fortunate in that labyrinth walking is a safe and relaxing activity not too far from home,” said Bill Ludwig, author of the newly released “Chasing Labyrinths: A Field Guide to Labyrinths of Connecticut and Rhode Island.” (Hotchkiss Publishing, \$16.95). The book details 65 labyrinths open to visitors, most in Connecticut. Each listing features visitation information and back stories, as well as an aerial color photo taken by Ludwig using a drone. Ludwig, who lives in Branford, Conn., a coastal town near New Haven, first happened upon a photograph of a beachside labyrinth when he was searching for images for a cover of a book he was publishing on weekly meditations. He learned that labyrinths, based on ancient patterns, gently lead one down a twisty, turning path to an end, unlike mazes, which are filled with dead ends and disorienting angles. “A maze keeps you from finding the center, while a labyrinth is designed to help you find your center,” he said. Through the World-Wide Labyrinth Locator, Ludwig was excited to spot one in his birthplace of Woodbridge, Conn., at First Church of Christ. On Jan. 1, 2017, he walked his first labyrinth, with dozens more to follow. “I’d recently started learning more about mindfulness and moving meditation,” said Ludwig, 71. “I like the fact that the labyrinth makes you focus on where you’re walking, and the repetition really creates a mindfulness situation.” He also thought that labyrinth hunting, and eventually documenting, would be a fun way to experience regional travel. Many of the labyrinths are affiliated with churches, while others were built as Eagle Scout projects or privately. They contain all manners of surface, including grass, gravel, and stone. One of Ludwig’s favorites, at Norwalk Community College in Connecticut, is rebuilt yearly. The annual Goose Feather Labyrinth, designed and constructed by professor Renae Edge and volunteers, contains around 1,000 primary wing feathers that have been molted by Canada geese. In Rhode Island, the Sacred Labyrinth at Turning Point on Block Island is a standout for its spectacular view and impressive construction, he said. The popular destination features a medieval design with 11 circuits. It overlooks New Harbor and Block Island Sound. Ludwig hopes to write a standalone guide on the more than 100 labyrinths in Massachusetts. Meanwhile, **he recommends the one in Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway in Boston because “it’s huge and beautiful, and even has a fountain in the middle.”**

Diane Daniel can be reached at diane@bydianedaniel.com