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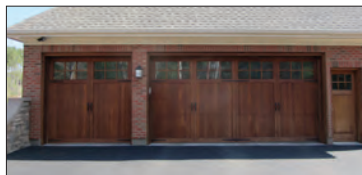
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HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM OUR MAIN STREET FAMILY TO YOURS!

On behalf of everyone at Main Street Magazine, I'd like to take a moment to wish you all a wonderful holiday month of December, and a great holiday season!

This is the time of year to give thanks, to reflect back, to plan ahead in anticipation of what the next year may bring, to be with family and friends, and to be happy. In reflecting back on 2013 in the life of Main Street Magazine – wow, what a year! It has been an amazing experience that's been full of wonderful people and stories, and has been so tremendously rewarding. I can only hope that 2014 will bring us more of the same, and I for one cannot wait to get to know more people and to learn their stories!

Special thanks

I'd like to firstly and especially thank all of our advertisers for all of their support. If it were not for them, this magazine wouldn't be possible! Please think of them this holiday season and shop in their stores and or use their services!

Secondly, I'd like to thank all of the people, businesses, farms and groups that have been the focus of our stories! Thank you for opening up to us, and allowing us to print and share your stories! You are all remarkable in your own right, and I've enjoyed getting to know the story behind each and every one of you!

Thirdly, I'd like to thank all of my people! Thank you to Steven Steele Cawman for his artistry when it comes to our cover images and to all of the amazing artist profiles he has written; thank you to Christine Bates for her in-depth examination of local businesses and real estate markets; thank you to Memoree Joelle for introducing us to all of the amazing local farms and farmers; thank you to Mary B. O'Neill for her unique stories that are so impactful in our lives; thank you also to our newcomers Melissa Batchelor Warnke and Sarah Ellen Rindsberg for their profiles and contributions. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to Ashley Kristjansson for all of her hard work and contributions to our Friendly Faces and Business Snapshots, as well as her hard work with all of our advertisers!

I'm so fortunate to have this great crew of talented people working on this magazine with me. Thank you to them, to our advertisers, to our story subjects, and thank you to you – our readers! Have a wonderful holiday season and “see you” in 2014!

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



DECEMBER 2013

Millbrook, NY

At home in the country for the holidays. Holiday greetings to one and all!

Cover photo by
Steven Steele Cawman

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a portrait of the artist as a young woman

JOCELYN GAYLE KRODMAN, PETITFELTER

By Sarah Ellen Rindsberg
arts@mainstreetmag.com

The first sensation greeting a visitor to Jocelyn Gayle Krodman's apartment is the warmth of a neutral palette gracing the decor. Next, the eye gravitates to bright spots of color nestled on a shelf. These shapeless clumps of wool patiently await their moment of transformation in the hands of the artist. Novelist Ben Dolnick's description of his art applies to Krodman's as well: "To be a writer is to spend a good chunk of your day processing raw experience into narrative."

Thirty-one-year-old Krodman sculpts raw wool into Petitfelts, delightful animals, each infused with her own personal style and enthusiasm. The figures take on a life of their own at the moment of creation. "People say it looks like they have a soul," Krodman muses. Some even perceive "a light behind their eyes." If one leaps into an onlooker's arms, nary an eye would bat.

Petitfelts have personalities

Human names are conferred on all Petitfelts, instead of those typically attributed to animals (think Fido), in recognition of their individual personalities. Nomenclature is derived from various sources, including customers. At one crafts fair, a young girl named Olive sauntered by. She was particularly taken with the owl. Her name is bestowed on an owl creation.

Sometimes a Petitfelt reminds the artist of a family member. Gazing at an angora goat, Krodman sees his wisdom shining through. One goat is named Eli, in honor of her grandfather.

The creative process, needle felting and the wool

The opportunity to witness a work in progress opens a window into the creative process. With a barbed felting needle poised in her right hand and the wool tightly gripped in her left, the crafter begins poking the mass at a feverish pace. Excitement mounts as a shape begins to form and a hint of the animal to come is gradually revealed. Even the artist herself continually marvels at her ability to "turn absolutely nothing into something."

A foam block holds another tool – a two-pronged felting needle. This one is used for the larger portions of the body, speeding up the process, ever so slightly. Krodman points out that although five-pronged needles do exist, they are not part of her toolkit. She prefers simpler needles which allow her to maintain more control when taming the wool roving and batting.

Needle felting is the process that first captivated the artist in 2003, during a chance encounter in a coffee shop. Another patron was busily exercising the craft of needle felting. Krodman sat down and asked the woman to explain her art. Bitten by the bug, she started creating little cats. Other activities took priority and felting took a hiatus until 2011, when she converted her jewelry making business into *Petitfelts by Jocelyn Gayle*.

This type of felting differs greatly from the technique used by knitters in which a finished product is laundered in hot water until the fibers are compressed. In needle felting the, "barbs [on the needle] tangle up the fibers and allow you to sculpt," Krodman explains.

An element of patience is also required. The creation of each figure takes from three to eight hours, depending on which animal is being configured. Hence, the sentiment that the creative process is, "a labor of love."

Krodman's growth as an artist parallels that of her creations. The original Petitfelts were designed as Christmas ornaments and only included members of the feline and canine species. At this stage, only the head is depicted. In the next phase, another piece of anatomy is added: the necks. Today, the range of sizes in the Petitfelt line includes several full-bodied creatures. This winter, Petitfelts will begin to dangle from mobiles.

The colors are also evolving, allowing the artist to choose from a wide array. Initially, Krodman utilized pre-dyed wool. Today, she dyes the wool herself to achieve the perfect variation. When time permits, natural dyes will be made from wildflowers and other plants.

Local animals, local models

To say that the crafter's choice of animals are inspired by her surroundings, greatly underestimates the magnitude of local influences – ideas are literally plucked from the fields around her home in Copake, NY. She has a particular penchant for creatures manifesting "a lot of contrast in their colors." The menagerie currently includes devilish foxes, graceful swans, adorable pigs, and majestic horses.

Features are informed by character and genus. Angora goats sport curls, horses free flowing manes. Chimpanzees, one of the newest additions to the line-up, are captured in a humorous pose; one



Depicted are an assortment of Krodman's Petitfelt creations ranging from a graceful horse (opposite page) to her playful foxes, curly-haired goat, cute pigs, and charismatic Chimpanzees. Image to left center depicts Krodman with Martha Stewart, who purchased a horse. Image center top shows Krodman at work on one of her unique Petitfelt creations.

arm scratching the head and the other rubbing the tummy. Whales, another recent innovation, are conceived as the result of a custom order.

A large fan-base

The appeal of Petitfelts is universal. They speak to everyone, from children to adults. "The market for these figures is so much larger than I imagined," Krodman observes. While children always gravitate to her display at craft fairs in great numbers, they are not alone in their admiration of her work. Grown men and teachers are also frequent customers. At the North East Community Center fair on the lawn of Simmons' Way in Millerton, a fellow exhibitor purchased three for himself and professed his desire to collect them all.

The evolution of the artist

The story of Krodman's development as an artist originated in childhood. "My mom says that from the time I could hold a crayon, before I did anything else in the morning, I would start drawing." She describes her mom as a very creative person and mentions that when her father retired, he began drawing a cartoon.

Next up: figurines made out of Sculpey, a brand of clay. Her proud parents still maintain a collection of these creations. In high school Krodman returned to drawing, and at Savannah College of Art and Design she studied silversmithing.

The crafter cites several major influences on her work, beginning with the sculptor Ron Mueck. The people portrayed in his hyper-realist sculptures stand poised, ready to step into society. Petitfelts

channel their realism, ready to spring into action. Krodman points to a display of colors made by local painter Joel Schapiro. On days when she's not felting, Krodman works as a studio assistant for Schapiro. "He's such an inspiration to me," she relates.

In October of 2011, the combination of a breakup and an unfulfilling job provided the catalyst for dramatic change. In the quest for a new environment, she moved from Georgia to Connecticut, joining a friend from art school at her parent's home in Falls Village. During the search for a place of her own, she decided to enlist the help of a friend who had offered to send out an email. Artist Terri Moore responded from Copake. Moore, who lives in the former schoolhouse in Copake where she actually attended class, sent news of a vacant apartment. Krodman was now happily ensconced in the schoolhouse as well.

The magnetism of the area stems from her memories of the picture book, *The Stranger* by Chris Van Allsburg. "It's set in rural countryside with fields and rolling hills" she recalls. Looking around her apartment and out the window, Krodman ponders her good fortune. "This is like being in the book, I feel like I can breathe here. I live in a place that inspires me."

Her fame extends well beyond the Tri-state region. In May, her wares were on display at Trade Secrets, a fundraiser for Salisbury-based Women's Support Services. One of the people who stopped by to admire her work was Martha Stewart. After playing with the goats, she settled on a horse for her granddaughter. During their conversation,

Stewart told Krodman about the American-made contest on her website and urged her to participate. Meeting Martha Stewart and receiving her praise was huge for Krodman who greatly appreciated this "validation."

A meeting of the crafting minded

Creating alone is convenient, but not always as productive as creating within a community. On Wednesdays, Krodman meets with a group of crafters to exchange ideas and to chat. Seven members of the group, all women, decided to combine forces to rent a space in Salisbury. "Our Studio," in the red barn behind LaBonne's, opened on September 1st and workshops on needle felting for children and adults have begun. Future gigs include teaching a class as part of the new series, *Make it Thursday*, at the American Folk Art Museum in Manhattan. In December, Krodman will venture south to provide instruction on making snowmen in anticipation of the holiday season.

Petitfelts will be on parade at the eighth annual artisans' holiday sale during the first two weekends in December. The frolicking will take place in a structure dubbed *The Warehouse*, located behind the new firehouse on Brook Street in Lakeville. Alternatively, to acquire your new best friend, contact the artist. •

For more information about Jocelyn Gayle Krodman, she can be reached at jocgayle@gmail.com.

Are you an artist and interested in being featured in Main Street Magazine? Send a brief bio, artist's statement and a link to your work to arts@mainstreetmag.com.



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Sisters **Marcia** and **Michaela McAvoy** both work at the Oakhurst Diner on Main Street in Millerton. Marcia is a head waitress and has been with the diner for over two years. She's super friendly and loves to meet new people – talk about a good personality-work match! Michaela has been working at the diner since this past April and she loves the people that she works with, as well as her customers. Both sisters were born and raised locally and love to hang out with their friends and family. While Marcia likes to go hiking and to the movies, Michaela prefers to go out to dinner and spend quality time with her boyfriend. With the holidays fast approaching they're looking forward to spending time with their family and eating great food. To be more specific: stuffing, cranberry sauce, and of course apple pie. Yum!



Adam Lyman is off the market ladies! He recently got engaged to longtime girlfriend, Kerri Anne, and they're planning a September wedding. Congratulations! Adam has been working with his dad at the Millerton Service Center since he was 12 years old. Like father, like son, Adam became ASE master certified. When he isn't fixing cars he likes to do anything outside and outdoorsy like hunting, fishing, biking, and kayaking. He enjoys messing around with his four-wheeler and dirt bike, but said he wouldn't mind getting an old car to work on someday, too. As for the upcoming holidays, he's looking forward to spending some quality time with his family. He has a couple of young nephews and a niece, and Christmas is still new to them so Adam said that it's fun to get to see and experience the holidays through their young eyes.



All of the women on **Sabrina Sabben's** mother's side of the family have worked in an auto parts store. She's carrying on the tradition and works at Canaan Auto Supply in Canaan, CT. She's been with the company for almost two years and enjoys interacting with the customers – she's a people-person! Sabrina doesn't work on cars too much, although she will work on her car if it's something minor. When she isn't thinking about car parts she's focused on her horses and showing them, which she loves and finds relaxing. She was born into horses and has 10 of her own now. Sabrina likes to relax around the holidays when her family comes home – she misses her cousins and likes to catch up with them. Sabrina is also looking forward to New Years, because her family always has a big party. Whoop whoop! Party time!



Robbie Cooper works for Associated Lightning Rod in sales and project management. He's on the road all day, driving about 250 miles per day while working on four or so projects. He likes it because everyday is different and he has the pleasure of meeting new people. Three days out of the week, when Robbie gets home from work, his wife, their three dogs and he pile together to watch a movie and he then writes about it in his online blog. He launched his blog in January and it has been very successful (www.coopsfilmblog.com). Robbie likes to watch dramas and documentaries, but likes to watch a zombie movie every now and then, too. He's looking forward to winter and the holidays. He explains this is his time to relax, spend time with family, watch football, eat large meals, and indulge in a few adult beverages. But more importantly, he's most excited about the birth of their first child in March. Congratulations and happy holidays!



Mimi Ramos Harney works in the Millerton office of Elyse Harney Real Estate and is licensed in NY and CT. She loves working with buyers and helping them to find their ideal house. Mimi has a passion for interiors and loves to explore houses that she's driven by for years and always wondered what they looked like. She's excited to see younger generations moving into the area. "It's a great walking town with so much to offer. Everything from a great coffee shop to a movie theater and everything in between." Even though winter may not offer the most ideal weather, Mimi enjoys watching the holidays unfold through her six-year-old son's eyes. During the winter she also gets to focus on her band that was started three and a half years ago. Mimi sings, but also knows how to rock the electric bass –right on! She's one of the founders of *Spring for Sound* and is looking forward to the 2014 event.



Alex Cooper is a self-taught musician who's breaking into the entertainment industry. Although he admits that it's hard work, it's so much fun and well worth it. He recalls DJing at the age of 11 through the age of 16 using turntables. While he was doing that he was also writing poetry and learning instrumentals. Soon he put the two together and had a great beat with meaningful lyrics. Alex goes by the stage name *Mazement*, and his single *Be There* will debut on iTunes mid December with a "wintery" feel to it. Alex has the pleasure of working with many artists, which also inspired him to create his company, Rize Up Entertainment. It helps artists of all ages and genres to thrive. Their motto is "To work together to get to the top." Alex is proud of all that he has accomplished so far, and is excited about what the future may bring. As for us, we look forward to hearing his new single when it's released!



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MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE & AVOIDING

stress



By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

Chances are that everyone reading this knows what stress is, because we've all experienced it. Whether it involved tearing your hair out, not sleeping, not eating, or eating too much, living off of coffee and other caffeinated products, or developing an ulcer – we've all dealt with it in one form or another. And we are now on the brink of one of the most stressful times of year: the holiday season. So take a breather, you may find this helpful.

We put so much pressure on ourselves ahead of- and during the holiday season to make sure that everything is done: that the fridge is stocked and that you got every ingredient necessary to make sure that every holiday meal is just right; that all of the holiday decorations are put up, lit up and out-glowing the neighbors; that everyone has the most perfect holiday outfit; that you got everyone just the right present to open on Christmas morning or to fill their stocking with; and that you didn't forget to send anyone a holiday card, because god forbid that you left anyone out. Are you stressed yet? Because by just thinking about it, I am!

With our extremely busy lives, it feels that we are all getting progressively more stressed out. Why is that? I think it's a combination of life, society and the pressure and expectation that it puts on us, and the pressure that we then put on ourselves. But here's the bottom line: it's not healthy! Stress really can be detrimental to our health. So for this month's healthy living column, I'd like to define what stress is and then give you a few tips to help prevent and or relieve stress so that you can survive the holiday season – and beyond.

What is stress?

We have all felt stress, and we know what havoc it can wreak on our mind, body, and spirit. Personally, I get knots in my shoulders, which lead to stiffness that then goes up my neck and eventually lead to migraine headaches. Then my stomach starts complaining from the stress, and I end up getting really sick because my immune system goes haywire. I imagine that it is saying something along the lines of: "Hey! What are you doing? I can't deal with this! You've made yourself sick, so you will now be in bed for the next few days to try to undo the damage that you just did. Calm down!"

In technical terms, however, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines stress as this: "[1] a state of mental tension and worry caused by problems in your life, work, etc. [2] something that causes strong feelings of worry or anxiety."

Stress stems from such things as events, activities, pressure, work, family, expectations, commitments, and other such events and activities in our lives. Some of these are self-inflicted, while others are outside pressures. So now that we know what causes stress, how do we deal with it, or better yet, how do we prevent it?

How to deal with stress

There are numerous things to do to help lower your stress level, and ultimately to (hopefully) prevent it. The key to your personal stress is to know what triggers you, and how badly it triggers you, and then what helps to calm yourself back down, because we are all different. What may work for me, may not work for the next person.

A few examples: 1. Procrastination. If you know that you have a big deadline coming up at work or school, don't wait until the last minute to get your project/assignment done. What happens if you do wait until the last minute? You get stressed out! 2. Don't take on too much, because even though you certainly try, sometimes you just can't do it all. Know when to say no. 3. Plan ahead. Knowing that you've got a busy week (or month) coming up, by putting a schedule or plan in place, it helps take off some of the pressure you may put on yourself. But make sure that you give yourself more time than you think you'll need, because things usually take longer than expected (which stresses us out if we didn't give ourselves a cushion), and something unexpected always comes up – Murphy's Law. 4. Money can stress most of us out, and this certainly comes into play and has an impact when the holiday season rolls around. The best thing to do to prevent money-related stress-outs is to put a budget together (whether it be for the holiday expenses or for your monthly bills). Know what your income and expenses are, and then factor in a security cushion. For the holiday expenses, before you even leave your house to go to the grocery store or the mall, know how much you're willing to spend on each

person/item/event. By having a set spending limit, it helps you to stick to a set figure, and will help prevent a "Oh my god! How much did I spend, and on what?!" in January when you get your credit card bills. 5. Sleep is incredibly important for our minds and bodies to function. If you're starting to stress out, make sure that you get plenty of rest. 6. Exercise goes hand-in-hand with sleep. Your mind and body need outlets for pressure and for stress. Exercise is a great way to relieve stress and to keep it under control. 7. Me time. When things get hectic and crazy in your life, make sure that you also leave some time for yourself. Quiet "me time" can do wonders to bring your stress level down. But during this time, whether you decide to read a book, do breathing exercises, laundry, lay down, take a walk, or whatever it is that helps you to clear your mind, to return your inner calm, and consequently slow your breathing, make sure that you don't cheat yourself! Make sure that you're not thinking of your laundry list of items that are waiting for you, but that you're spending those 15 to 30 minutes on yourself and calming your system down.

Healthy habits

A lot of these things may seem like no-brainers, and the majority of us know all of this – but we forget! And there enlies the problem. We forget to take care of ourselves.

One big aspect that can really help us to not forget to take care of ourselves is maintaining healthy habits all year round. By doing so, when we're faced with stressful times of year (like the holidays), by more or less sticking with our healthy habits we are more likely to eat healthier (instead of having a gluttonous holiday free-for-all where we eat and drink everything in sight), maintain our sleep and exercise routine, and therefore we won't overindulge and consequently feel guilty and stress out even more. By sticking to your proven routine, with only minor alterations, you will have a better chance of avoiding unnecessary stress, and you won't wake up the next day with a food hangover and feel unmotivated to go about your daily routine.

Have a wonderful holiday season where you can stay healthy, happy, and stress-free! ●

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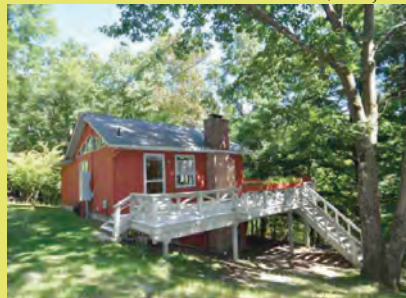
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AT BIG ELM BREWING IN SHEFFIELD, MA

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

This month Main Street adds Christine (CH) and Bill Heaton (BH) to our monthly column on local entrepreneurs. They opened Big Elm Brewing in Sheffield, MA in 2012 to pursue their shared passion for making beer.

How did you two get involved in the beer business?

CH: I was a chemistry major in college and enjoyed home brewing. Maybe it was the fermentation part that appealed to me. After college I worked in a lab and didn't like it, so I joined the Peace Corps and spent two years in Niger. When I came home I had to pick a career and followed my real passion – brewing beer. I sent resumes to everyone without luck, probably because of the combination of no experience and being a woman in a very masculine business. After working in a brewpub for a year, I enrolled in a three-month beer school, learning the process in Chicago at the Siebel Institute of Technology and then in Munich at Doemens Academy. When I graduated I managed to get a job with Victory Brewing outside of Philadelphia. Bill hired me.

Bill's story is similar. He went to art school but loved making beer in his spare time. After working as a photographer he also decided to pursue his real passion and wrote heartfelt letters to every brewer on the east coast. He landed a job in Raleigh, North Carolina cleaning kegs, that's literally the bottom of the barrel, and eventually went to Victory Brewing in Pennsylvania where he became head brewer.

When did you two become a couple?

CH: Brewers always hang out together after work and after about a year we realized we had something special. We've been in business together since 2005 when we started our brewpub in Pittsfield, MA.

Did you know anything about the restaurant business?

CH: We wanted to open a brewpub, despite the fact that neither one of us knew very much about the restaurant business. We knew that we wanted to be in New England and scouted out locations on weekends from Philadelphia. On one of these trips we tried to go out to dinner in a restaurant in Pittsfield and when we arrived there was a CLOSED sign on the door. We tracked down the owner of the restaurant and the owner of the property and found a great deal. The brewing equipment was already there. We reopened in three months.

Running a restaurant is exhausting. We worked day and night. We barely saw each other and we



Christine and Bill Heaton are Big Elm's brewers and founders. Photo by Peter Greenough.

didn't have much time to make beer. There are so many people to manage. We had some great employees who stayed with us for five years and, on the other hand, young kids who didn't show up for work. Sometimes it reminded me of baby-sitting.

How did you get from a brewpub in Pittsfield to a brewery in Sheffield?

CH: We decided that we could not run a restaurant and expand the brewing operation so we put our business up for sale in 2010. There were very few places available and Baba Louie's wanted to be in Pittsfield. It happened very quickly and we made money.

The money from the sale of the business was our seed money to start a brewery. We started looking for a location and deals kept falling through for one reason or another. We were working at part-time jobs to save our seed money and were almost ready to give up and find real jobs when we came to Sheffield to look at this building, which had been a plastics factory. It seemed perfect and even had a walk-in cooler. Another town had rejected us because of zoning, but Sheffield welcomed us and the staff in town hall helped us to fill out the forms to get the necessary approvals. The Sheffield Business Association was really supportive. There were everyday acts of random kindness. We were on our way.

Where did the name Big Elm come from?

BH: Have you ever looked at the town seal of Sheffield? It's a circle surrounding "The Big Elm" and the motto, "He who plants a tree plants hope." There was actually a huge elm tree at the end of Silver Street when the town was founded in 1733. It's right at the corner of Silver Street where we are and Route 7. Before there were large buildings in Sheffield, meetings and celebrations were held under the big tree. To us it was a name that suggested going back to your roots.

Where do your ingredients come from? Are they local?

BH: Our water is filtered town water, but our barley malt comes from Germany, England, Canada, France, the US, and the Czech Republic. Most of our hops come from the northwest of the United States, but also from England, the Czech Republic and Germany. We're making stout today which has dark roasted barley.

Why did you both leave great jobs in the beer industry and start your own brewpub and now brewery?

Continued on next page ...

BH: For me it just became too corporate, too routine. There were clipboard checklists and manuals for everything.

How much capital investment is involved in starting a brewery?

BH: The building, the equipment and working capital probably total \$750,000. We had to borrow a lot of money from the bank and they keep a close eye on us.

What's complicated about your business?

BH: The beer business is highly regulated. It takes three months to get a Federal license from the Tax and Trade Bureau. You have to provide ten years of tax information, you must be a US citizen with no felony record, and you can't have foreign investors. For the state the registration process takes another two months. They come and inspect you all the time and you pay taxes every two weeks on the beer you make – not sell, make. There are some tax breaks for micro breweries. We did all the paper-work ourselves.

What do both of you love about your business?

BH: I love the mechanics, and the machinery. I love packaging because it means you have product to sell. I enjoy the camaraderie between brewers. Sure, we're competitive but we help each other out with advice, spare parts for a broken machine and so forth. In Philadelphia there was a group of micro brewers called the Rubber Boot Society. We met every month and exchanged tips and shared experiences. An expert would usually give a talk about some aspect of brewing. This is an exciting, growing industry and brewers all over the world look to America for innovation.



Above: Big Elm Brewing cans their beer with the help of volunteers. Some of the equipment was moved from their Pittsfield brewpub to their new brewery in Sheffield. Below: Bill Heaton hefting a keg at Big Elm Brewery on Silver Street in Sheffield, MA. Photos by Christine Bates.

CH: My education was in chemistry and the chemical process of brewing intrigues me. Bill likes the canning and packaging process and I enjoy making the beer.

What is your least favorite thing?

BH: Definitely making cold calls although most people are pretty happy to see the beer guy. You get used to it.

CH: The worst is bottling seasonal beers one 22-ounce bottle at a time.

How have you seen the business change?

BH: In the 90's there were a lot of lawyers and doctors investing in micro breweries. They were in it for the money and didn't know what they were doing. A lot of bad beer was made and the industry declined. Now people who care about beer and do know what they are doing are entering the business. Micro brewers are springing up everywhere, producing a great variety of beers. It's fun and it's local.

Not one entrepreneur we have interviewed had a business plan, did you?

CH: If you need bank financing you need a business plan. We wrote our first one for this business in 2008 before we even sold our brewpub in Pittsfield. With every potential property and every increase in the cost of machinery we had to revise it. Even if you don't need a bank it's a good idea.

What about marketing? Who are your customers?

BH: Our marketing is organic word of mouth. We have no marketing budget, no advertising. It's all personal tasting and face to face. We do have a Facebook page. Because of our restaurant in Pittsfield we came into the business with a core group of followers. The restaurant was actually a springboard

for us. On Saturdays you can come here and taste our beer.

Our customers are package stores, supermarkets, and restaurants. Guido's [a gourmet supermarket] just picked us up and we will be in Connecticut by Thanksgiving.

What are your plans for the future?

BH: We believe in slow, organic growth. We have been working on getting all the paperwork together so we can sell our beer in Connecticut. We are gradually increasing our production capacity. We have no desire to grow nationwide. Our market is 100 miles around Sheffield.

What is your advice to anyone wanting to open a micro brewery?

CH: Work or volunteer at a local brewery. Learn the business. We post on Facebook when we need volunteers on canning days.

When you do a business plan add 10% to 20% to your expenses and underestimate your revenues. It's way better to be ahead of your worst-case projection than to be too optimistic. For example we projected that construction here would take three months. It took six months.

Take a course at a local community college in writing a business plan. We took one that cost only \$25 and got our money back when we handed in a finished plan.

Consult with a lawyer and an accountant.

Draw on the advice of friends and advisers. We received a lot of help from our banker, and friends contributed their talents to our endeavor like our website design. •

Big Elm Brewing has free tours and tasting every Saturday from 12 to 4 at their brewery at 65 Silver Street in Sheffield, MA.

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GREAT GASTRONOMY: mizza's pizza

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

Chicken Marsala has been on my mind ever since last month's visit to Lia's Mountain View Restaurant in Pine Plains where I feasted on their delicious rendition of this dish. Do you remember how I wrote that Mizza's in Lakeville also has great Marsala, and that now I might just have to compare notes? Well, ever since then I've had a hankering for it, so I thought it an opportune moment to head across the state line to Lakeville and place my order! And by the way, there's nothing wrong with some fantastic chicken Marsala during the holidays! *Hint *hint.

It's not just about the pizza

As far back as I can remember, 6 Ethan Allen Street, where Mizza's is located, has housed cozy, family-friendly restaurants where you could get a great meal that was sure to please every member of the family, and for a fair price. And Mizza's might be the best one there yet!

Whether you're craving a New York style pizza, any sort of pasta dish, hamburgers, wraps, salads, or some chicken wings and fries – you can get it all at Mizza's. But be prepared, because the choices on their menu are vast! I remember the first time that I went there after it became Mizza's and ordering pizza took on a whole new life of it's own! I mean how can you choose between a Tropical Tease pizza; a Hawaiian; a Chicken Cordon Blue; a Mona Lisa; a Skip Barber special, or any of the other two dozen pizza choices that they have on their menu?

Not in the mood for pizza? Not to worry, they have plenty of appetizers and I do recommend the wings – they are delicious! And this self-proclaimed French Fry connoisseur gives the Mizza's fries a 9, no, a 9.5 out of 10: the texture is fantastic, the



flavor is divine – they've got it going on! Burgers, strombolis, grinders? They have an abundance of them on their menu, too. Chicken/veal Parmigiana, Francese or Cacciatore, and a number of shrimp dishes are all under the "dinners" on the menu, where a refreshing Greek style salad is included. But let's get back to the point at hand here: Chicken Marsala.

It's all about the flavor

On a cold November afternoon it was time to dive into a divine Mizza's Chicken Marsala dinner, and I couldn't have been more excited. We were expecting my brother and sister-in-law over to help us move some furniture so I thought I'd repay them with a great (and for me an easy) dinner. I called in my order (I love that you can pick-up such great food as well as dine-in), which turned out to be quite large. A large cheese pizza ... just because, a couple of Chicken Marsala dinners, and for the newcomers to Mizza's: a turkey wrap with fries, and a chicken Caesar wrap with fries – they didn't know what they were missing!

By the time I reached my house, I was starving! The aroma was absolutely divine. We began opening boxes and containers while everyone "oo-ed" and "ahh-d" at the food before them. The fries were right on, as they always are. My brother said that his chicken Caesar wrap was extremely good, and my sister-in-law conveyed the same sentiment over

her turkey wrap (pictured left). But that was child's play to me. No salad was needed at this time, because it was all about the Marsala in my mind's eye.

Mizza's does their Marsala a little differently, and I love it. The pasta is great, their sauce is fantastic with certain herbs and spices that I just can't put my finger on, the chicken cutlet melts in your mouth and only a fork is needed, the mushrooms are an explosion of flavor in your mouth and they certainly add to the flavor of the sauce. But what really differentiates this dish are the onions. Yes, onions.

The large segments of onion are so sweet, and they have soaked in some of the mushroom and Marsala flavor, and the combination of the three is like a holy trinity of flavor. It's just absolutely fantastic! (See large image above).

The Marsala match-up

Now, how does Mizza's Marsala compare with Lia's? Yes, they're essentially the same dish, but honestly they just can't be compared. They are amazing in their own right, but they differ on a number of levels so they basically create their own sub-Marsalian categories. For me, all other Chicken Marsalas will be compared to these two.

We wish you a happy and healthy holiday season. Eat well! And there's nothing wrong with taking a break from turkey and ham and having some Chicken Marsala! •

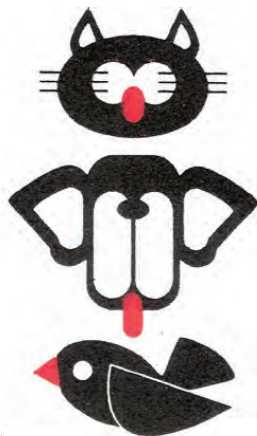
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Above: Carmella Quattrocio and her crew

By Memoree Joelle
info@mainstreetmag.com

Photos courtesy
Quattrocio family

If you've ever wandered into a family-owned Italian butcher shop in Brooklyn or the Bronx, you may have felt transported in time. Before big grocers and chain retailers took over and shrink-wrapped your chicken breasts, America was made up of family-owned small businesses. Walking to the neighborhood butcher for handmade sausages or a fresh chicken from a nearby farm was the way most people once ate, and even though family farms and markets have dramatically decreased in number, they are not a dying breed. Here in New England, small farms still abound. But it's rare to find one that not only raises animals, but where the farmer slaughters and butchers everything himself, and sells the meat in the family store. That is part of what makes Quattro's so very special.

Over 80 years of poultry farming

Quattro's is a family farm rooted in tradition. Sal Quattrocio is a third generation farmer, a Cornell graduate who now manages the farm, working alongside his wife, Joyce, and his mother, Carmella, who at eighty-four has been farming for over seventy-five years. Carmella's parents bought the one-hundred twenty-acre farm in the early 1930's, and it has always been a poultry farm. When she was younger, the family dabbled in livestock and pigs for a while, but returned to their true passion for poultry farming, which is what has made Quattro's legendary in the Hudson Valley.

When Sal became old enough to run the farm, he and his brother Frank added game birds to the fold, so in addition to the White Cornish cross chickens and domestic turkeys on the farm, there are also pheasants, ducks, and geese. Deer roam the enclosed fruit orchard, foraging the fallen fruit. Unlike the common deer you see roaming wild, these are Fallow deer, a European breed whose meat is much less gamey, and is more similar to veal in flavor.

Twenty-five years ago, Sal got approval from the state to raise the wild turkeys, and five years ago he also added Bourbon Red heritage turkeys, a beautiful bird that is known for being the best-tasting heritage turkey breed in existence. If your dinner party is relatively small, the Bourbon Red is a good choice, weighing in at seven to fourteen pounds. For a large family's Christmas repast, the more common New Holland White is the standard bird of choice, and can weigh up to thirty-six pounds. For those with more adventurous palettes, Quattro's wild turkeys offer a chewier, more robust flavor profile, with slightly darker flesh. If you like game birds, these are a delicious choice, and weigh five to ten pounds, on average. I am a personal fan of the ring-necked pheasant, a beautiful bird with very lean meat and a deep flavor that is best brought out using slow-cooking methods.

Continued on next page ...

Quattro's birds are free-roaming, vegetarian and grain-fed, and never receive antibiotics or hormones of any kind. Because of the fact that they don't receive medicines, the family is very particular about keeping their environment pure. They don't allow farm tours for fear of introducing foreign pathogens to their environment, and they never outsource. All of the birds are bred, hatched, raised, slaughtered, and processed right on the farm. An average of ten thousand chickens, over two-thousand turkeys, one thousand geese and ducks, and around ten thousand pheasants are raised each year. The Quattrociocchi family takes great pride in how the animals are raised, what they are fed, and even the water they drink, which comes from their property's Artesian wells. Their high quality feed imparts excellent flavor to the meat, and the animals roam freely outdoors, as nature intended.

The Quattro's Farm Store

While Sal raises, slaughters and processes the animals, Joyce manages the farm store. As an Italian who grew up in the Bronx, she was used to shopping in small Italian food stores most of her life. That is the way her own mother shopped, and she brought that tradition to Quattro's market. Inside you'll find a custom butcher shop, and a wide variety of gourmet specialty items, from dried porcini mushrooms to artisanal cheeses and premium olive oils. Joyce is committed to sourcing only the highest quality products, and what she chooses to sell in the store is based on her own taste and background.

"I fill the store with what I like to eat. I am very picky and so are my customers. We like to eat good food, and I only want to offer them the best."

As a regular customer, I highly recommend the



house-smoked Fontiago cheese, which they import from Italy and smoke in the store. Their poultry, including chickens, duck, pheasant, turkeys, and geese are always fresh, as they don't practice large-scale slaughtering and freezing. Flocks of several hundred chickens are processed every five weeks, and even though Quattro's is a relatively small family farm, they keep a consistently good supply of fresh birds all year-round.

Seasonal products like venison are sold in the Fall and Winter months only, so now is a great time to fill your freezer. I haven't yet tried the venison, but I couldn't imagine going without my bimonthly trip to the store for fresh chicken and house-made pheasant sausages.

Brian Pitcher, the head butcher, also offers smoked chicken, pheasant, and duck, which are all addictive. Even though my friend and I have a ritual of bringing home a smoked chicken for dinner on Sundays, she usually eats most of it in the car on the way home.

If you're planning a holiday party, I promise that the easiest way to impress your guests is by serving Quattro's smoked pheasant or duck, which are not only delicious, but eliminate the need to cook. Serve with the Italian imported ravioli from the store's freezer, and one of the craft beers Brian selected from local breweries. And if you don't see something that you need, just ask Joyce.

Happy Holidays! •

The farm store is open from 9-7 Wednesday-Saturday, and Monday, and 9-1 on Sundays. Closed Tuesdays. Products are also available at the Rhinebeck Farmer's Market and Union Square Farmer's Market. www.quattrosfarm.com.



Pictured above, clockwise: Inside one of the buildings at the Quattro's farm; the Quattro's butcher case; Catherine Quattrociocchi checks on the eggs; baby chicks. Picture left: One of the Quattro's staffers collects eggs.

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RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE IN THE TOWN OF SHEFFIELD, MA

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

In every issue, Main Street Magazine looks at local real estate markets and issues in our coverage area. For the first time, this month we crossed the state line into Massachusetts to learn about bucolic Sheffield and its historic hamlet of Ashley Falls.

Sheffield, Massachusetts occupies the southwestern corner of Massachusetts, just over the state line from Connecticut, and is situated in the fertile Housatonic River valley between Mount Washington, MA and the Taconic Mountains in New York in the west, and the Berkshire Hills in the east. Lined with antique stores, Route 7 runs through the center of the town, which regards itself as “the gateway to the Berkshires.” With only 3,393 residents, it may have the greatest number of antique stores per capita in New England, but it also has working farms. The town’s charms are off the main highway and down its country roads with open fields, historic houses and panoramic views. Founded in 1733, Sheffield is the oldest town in Berkshire County. With its designated historic district, the peaceful hamlet of Ashley Falls seems like it’s from another century. At the same time there are local industries like Sheffield Plastic, a subsidiary of Bayer Material Science, which employs more than 150 people, Sheffield Pottery and Berkshire Mountain Distillery, which is putting up a new production facility along Route 7. Joseph Carini, the president of Wheeler & Taylor Realty Company, bikes on the back roads and says, “The feeling is exactly the same as when I moved here 30 years ago.”

Dollar General is the hot issue

The issue dividing the town at the moment is the possibility of a Dollar General store opening amidst the antique shops on Route 7. A building permit was issued by the town and subsequently rescinded by the Zoning Board of Appeals in the summer



Above: This converted barn on Boardman Road was purchased in August 2012 for \$675,000 and is now on the market for \$1,990,000 after a dramatic renovation. Photo courtesy of Barnbrook. Below: This single-family residence on Main Street built in 1761 was sold for \$330,000 in July of 2013. Photo by Christine Bates.

of 2013 – officially because of parking and public safety violations. Many concerned residents feel that discounter Dollar General, a Tennessee based publicly traded company with over 90,000 employees, is not in keeping with the historic character of Sheffield, which has no other national chains or big box stores. The developer of the property is now suing the Sheffield ZBA and local supporters of the store want to prevent the town from spending money on legal fees. *Save Sheffield* and *Defend our town board* signs dot the front yards of those who oppose the store. More meetings and hearings are scheduled.

A curious tax on weekenders, but not so much overall

Unlike New York and Connecticut, Massachusetts has since 1918 added the estimated value of “personal possessions” (calculated as 5% of the assessed value of the house) to a property owner’s assessment if they are not full time residents. For homeowners that have a primary residence elsewhere, this increases their taxable base, but does not greatly affect total taxes paid. For example, on a house assessed at \$500,000 it would add \$25,000 to the property’s assessed value. Carini maintains that, “In twenty years no one has ever asked me about that tax. I don’t really understand where it came from.” But the number of property owners who must pay the tax makes it easy to estimate the number of part-time residents in the town.

According to the Town Assessor, Tammy Blackwell, out of 1,300 single family dwellings in Sheffield, 200 people pay this tax, meaning that

only about 15% of single family residences are occupied by part-timers, much less than the 30% to 40% estimated by assessors in nearby Salisbury and Sharon, CT. Many of the realtors interviewed agreed that Sheffield seemed to have more full time residents than many other towns in Litchfield County, CT and Berkshire County, MA.

Although property taxes are higher than Stockbridge to the north and nearby Salisbury, CT, Sheffield’s mil rate of 13.34 includes local property taxes and school taxes. This is in contrast with some towns in neighboring New York State where school taxes alone often exceed this mil rate.

Who buys and why in Sheffield?

“There are actually a lot of people who want to be no further than a half an hour from Guido’s [an upscale supermarket],” said Juliet Moore, a Massachusetts resident who is a broker with Elyse Harney Real Estate. “My clients want access to the Berkshires where there is so much going on all year.”

Culture and recreation are the allure of the Berkshires. There are four Actor’s Equity theaters, dance at Jacob’s Pillow, and music at Tanglewood. The Berkshires also offers year-round recreational opportunities: kayaking on the Housatonic, biking, hiking the Appalachian Trail, and skiing in winter. Located on the edge of the Berkshires and yet close to New York, Sheffield is “Not significantly further than Salisbury,” maintains Robin Leech, a

Continued on next page ...

OFFICIAL SALES TOWN OF SHEFFIELD SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES 2006-2013 *

PERIOD	# SALES	MEDIAN PRICE	AVERAGE PRICE
2006	17	\$343,000	\$437,759
2007	20	\$200,700	\$297,415
2008	13	\$342,000	\$366,200
2009	11	\$340,000	\$332,682
2010	14	\$215,000	\$226,643
2011	17	\$225,000	\$332,470
2012	28	\$245,000	\$394,943
2012 Jan-Sept	14	\$270,000	\$361,518
2013 Jan-Sept	11	\$263,500	\$295,167

Information provided by Town Assessor, Sheffield

ANNUAL SHEFFIELD SALES OCTOBER 1, 2007 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2013 *

12 MONTH PERIOD	# SALES	LOW SALE	HIGH SALE
Oct. 2007 - Sept. 2008	26	\$139,000	\$1,089,000
Oct. 2008 - Sept. 2009	19	\$150,000	\$775,000
Oct. 2009 - Sept. 2010	30	\$66,000	\$1,025,000
Oct. 2010 - Sept. 2011	30	\$70,000	\$1,825,000
Oct. 2011 - Sept. 2012	34	\$119,000	\$1,463,000
Oct. 2012 - Sept. 2013	27	\$75,000	\$1,295,000

Data provided by Elyse Harney Realty

RESIDENTIAL SALES IN TOWN OF SHEFFIELD 2007-2013 *

PERIOD	MULTIPLE LISTING # OF SALES	MEDIAN SALES PRICE
2007	34	\$276,250
2008	27	\$317,500
2009	20	\$305,000
2010	27	\$219,000
2011	33	\$266,000
2012	30	\$337,000
Jan- Sept.		
2012	26	\$276,000
Jan - Sept.		
2013	22	\$261,250

Closed annual sales 2007 - 2013 of single family residences. Data provided courtesy of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty based on Multiple Listing Service data.

Connecticut-based broker who also sells in Massachusetts.

"Buyers used to be from the Upper East Side, but now they're from Brooklyn," said Carolyn Fugere, who manages William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty offices in Berkshire, MA and Litchfield, CT counties. William Pitt Sotheby's entered the Southern Berkshire market in April of this year with an office in Great Barrington because of increased demand from both buyers and sellers. "Right now there is a hunger for new inventory for this market." International buyers are just beginning to consider this market.



Above top: The only million-dollar sale in 2011 was at 230 Rote Hill Road, which sold for \$1,590,000. Photo courtesy Elyse Harney Real Estate. Above: Listed at \$299,000, this bungalow with a pool, 6-car garage, and four acres listed at \$299,000 is an example of more modestly priced properties available in Sheffield. Photo courtesy of Robin Leech.

Real estate sales activity in Sheffield accelerated in 2012

Market activity numbers as calculated by the Assessor of Sheffield, Elyse Harney Real Estate and William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty may differ, but all show the same trend - steady improvement since the market hit bottom in 2009 when only 11 sales were recognized by the Assessor (see Wonk Note below.) By 2010 the number of sales had picked up, but both the median price of \$219,000 (according to William Pitt Sotheby's) and the average price \$226,000 according to the Assessor fell to the lowest level in the last seven years. In 2011 both price and volume started to rise and 2012 seems to have been a record year for the market with both volume and prices recovering. As for the slight decrease in median and average sales price in 2013, brokers contend it's just a fluke in a small market; however, data from all sources points to less activity and lower prices in the first nine months of 2013. Closed sale prices are still not back to the high point of the real estate peak in 2006 when the median price was \$343,000 and the average price was \$437,759.

"It's hard for sellers to let go," observed Taylor, "It's not what you bought it for or what you put into it."

What's happening right now?

The website www.realtor.com had 30 residential properties for sale in Sheffield in October ranging in price from \$189,000 to \$2,650,000. The average asking price of the listed properties is \$813,000 and the median price is \$550,000 - much above 2006 or 2012 price levels. Currently, the highest priced property is the estate located at 535 Sheffield Egremont Road, which came on the market in

February of 2010 at a price of \$4.3 million. After three and a half years without a buyer, its price has been reduced to \$2,650,000. Million dollar plus property sales occur less frequently in Sheffield than in adjoining communities, with the Assessor recording only four million dollar sales since 2006, two of which were in 2012. In 2013, year to date, there have been no million dollar plus sales recorded although there are seven properties on the market for over \$1 million.

Of the 30 properties listed, ten are between \$500,000 and one million dollars. "For the last several years it's been difficult to sell properties in the range of \$500,000 to \$900,000," observed Mary White of Barnbrook Realty, "But now that segment of the market is starting to move."

Leech feels that Sheffield has a broad range of listings, citing two current listings he has. One is a bungalow at \$299,000 and the other an estate at \$1,250,000. "Sheffield is still a farming town that hasn't developed as much, and there are potentially better opportunities there."

Indeed, friendly less well-known Sheffield has a great deal to offer: an ideal location between the Berkshire region and proximity to New York, affordable taxes and good schools, and quality properties. ●

** Wonk Note: Anyone examining the market activity numbers might wonder why the Assessor's numbers are so much different from those compiled by brokers using the multiple listing data. For example in 2010 brokers published 27 sales while the Assessor recognized only 14. The difference is due to the Assessor not recognizing sales which were foreclosures, sold to family members, sold by order of the court, or involved in an estate. The multiple listing service includes all sales handled by brokers where a sales transaction closed.*

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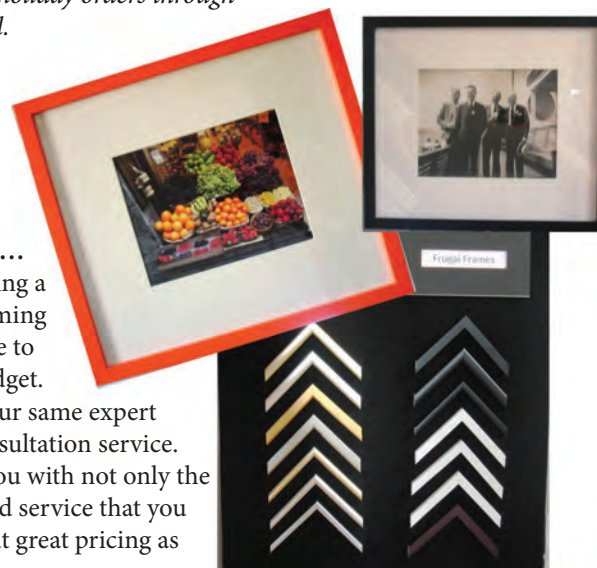
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Joan Osofsky and Abby Adams' *Love Where You Live: At Home in the Country* is a gem of a design book: elegant but unpretentious, aspirational but accessible. The eighteen homes in its pages illustrate the quirky "modern country" aesthetic long at home in the Berkshires. I was sorry to turn the last page, to lose the possibility of reading it again for the first time.

The Hammertown store & decor

I knew Joan's distinctive style from visits to her beloved lifestyle store, Hammertown Barn. As a child of the area, I was used to the occasional antique store crawl with my mother; I would often wait in the car or tucked away safely in a corner where I couldn't break anything. But in Hammertown, I always followed her in. The sunlit space was friendly and the perfectly haphazard arrangements – vintage globe mobiles, hundreds of cookbooks, spools of rugs – always begged to be touched, read, or sat on. When I returned to the store a few weeks ago to interview Joan and Abby, that same sense of motion and possibility was in place. All were abuzz, making last minute tweaks before the arrival of a client. The Beatles' *Hey, Jude* played in the background, as one of the shopkeepers jokingly scolded a customer for buying all of the Christmas ornaments she'd just put

out. Two dogs lay next to me, chewing on a throw's handwritten pricetag.

The inspiration for the book

Joan's vision for the book was to capture spaces that were similarly lived in, where "the owners lounge on their sofas, the dogs are up on the couch, they cook in their kitchens. There's a lot of your own soul and personality that goes into creating that atmosphere."

As different as the co-authors are – Joan, the conceper, is direct and animated, Abby, the writer, is gentle and spare – they have an easy chemistry. Abby got Joan's vision immediately. No tall vases of calalilies, no rearranging the libraries, no lucite chairs. The shots should reflect the laid-back energy of this part of the country. And they wanted the book to generate ideas, creating a record readers could keep going back to as they designed their own spaces.

So they started with what they knew – local homes they loved – and started networking. Farley Chase, a literary agent and the son of their close friends, agreed to represent them. Matthew Smyth, a decorator friend with a home in Sharon, had used

By Melissa Batchelor Warnke
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Photo credits John Gruen

Continued on next page ...



Abby and Joan will give a book talk and sign "Love Where You Live: At Home in the Country" on Saturday, December 14th at 4 pm at Oblong Books & Music located at 26 Main Street, Millerton, NY. All are welcome.

their photographer, the Lakeville-based John Gruen, for his interior design book. He suggested they work with famed book designer Doug Tershen. They connected with Sandy Gilbert, the editor of Bunny Williams' Falls Village-based classic *An Affair With a House*. In the world of interior design, they'd assembled an all-star team.

Abby and Joan attended each of the photo shoots; then they'd brainstorm – at The Farmer's Wife [a restaurant in Ancramdale, NY], Abby's house, Joan's house, in New York City, in cars as they were driving from shoot to shoot. They realized that their own spaces had valuable stories to tell. Abby's husband had recently passed away, while Joan was downsizing. They were keen to write about how life changes affect interiors, as well as the "growing revulsion against too much clutter." Three of the eighteen homes featured would be their own, with their stories, collections and particularities woven into the text.

Love Where You Live took three years to build. Since the book's launch this fall, they've been doing press events non-stop (one visitor to Hammettown remarked: "Hey, you're actually here!"). "The most challenging part is now: promoting the book, going to signings, getting the word out there," said Joan. "But the more that we do it, the more interest we see."

While the book is a product of local energies and talents, they believe the style is flexible, that it works just as well in California or Jackson Hole. And book tour hustle has helped bring their vision to national attention, getting pickup in *The Washington Post* and *Vanity Fair*. The morning I visited, *Love Where You Live* had been just listed as one of the top design books of the year by a magazine in Austin, Texas. •



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Present tense:

giving without stressing

By Mary B. O'Neill
info@mainstreetmag.com

It's that time of year again and the feeling of gift dread is descending upon you. Since mid-October stores have been plying their holiday wares and employing marketing stratagems to get you to buy them. Out of habit you create that two-column list – names on the left and gift possibilities on the right. Maybe you have even gone all out and created an Excel spreadsheet or downloaded some kind of gift app onto your smart phone, making your gift list only a keyboard stroke or finger swipe away. The problem with these lists, whether low tech or high tech, is that the left side fills in quite easily but on the right, not so much. It is riddled with question marks, some really bad gift ideas, and lots of doodling. Out of sheer desperation you turn to the oracle of our times, the sorceress of the smartphone known as Siri. You pleadingly inquire, "Siri, what should I get my husband?" Her flat and measured response is, "Let me think about that." Then she palms you off on internet websites. Thanks for nothing Siri.

The psychology of gifting

If the last paragraph in any way resembles your holiday gift buying routine then maybe this year it's time to stop the insanity. Before you plunge into the emotionally-charged domain of present pur-

chasing it might be wise to consider what research says about the matter.

Gift giving is a complicated psychological affair. We give for a myriad of reasons including the needs and wants of the recipient, the desire to strengthen bonds and relationships, and the pleasure we get from giving and being generous. Studies even show that it is the giver that derives more positive psychological impact in the gift exchange than the receiver.

When giving gifts it is often hard to really know what the other person would truly like. Gifts dwell purely in the realm of subjectivity with regard to the giver and the getter. One must be incredibly self-aware to distinguish between a present the recipient would actually treasure versus the gift we would like the recipient to appreciate. This last type of gift walks a fine line between saying, "I know what you would like better than you do" and "I know you might not normally buy this for yourself, but just maybe you might enjoy it."

Other factors that enter in are the amount of thought you put into the gift – you do get credit for that in the eyes of the recipient and the amount you spend – expense does not guarantee gratitude.

Continued on next page ...



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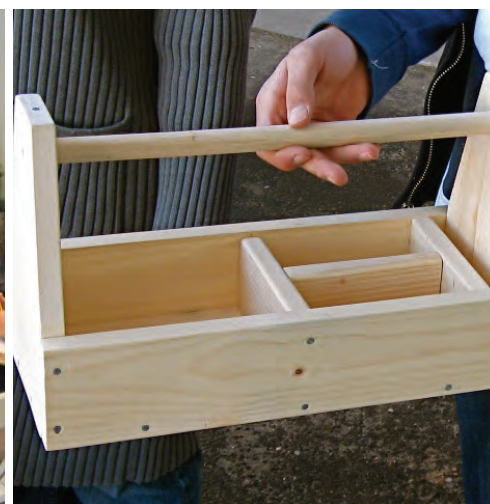
One last thought to keep in mind is that people derive more happiness from experiences than from possessions. Receiving things fails to create the same impact for our happiness that receiving an experience might. We carry our experiences around inside us. They can't be lost, stolen, broken, technologically outdated or worn out. By buying more, bigger, and better we are actually on a treadmill. This is not the machine of torture covered in layers of clothes, belts and neckties in the corner of your bedroom, but the hedonic treadmill. This one keeps us running in the same place with regard to the relationship between well being and amassing possessions. We tend to want the next big thing, but when we acquire it, there is no appreciable long-term gain in happiness. Yes, it spikes for a while but then settles back down again, leaving us wanting more stuff to produce that same effect.

With all this in mind I have compiled an assortment of ideas that might make your gift giving a little easier and enrich the life of your recipient in a thoughtful way. All are local and focus on experiences or the capturing of memories. I hope they help....

The art of giving

Tucked in Sharon, in a small shingled Cape Cod house in the center of town, is Northlight Art Center. Founded by artist Pieter Lefferts in 2010, this school caters to artists of all levels and media from pencil to water color to oil. Lefferts, a classically-trained artist in the methods of the Boston School, studied at the Art Students League. He fervently believes that classical training can ultimately give you a springboard to create your own expression. By learning to see and accurately observe what is in front of you, in time you can become more expressionistic in your approach. He has accomplished this in his own work, which is comprised largely of award-winning landscapes in pastel and oil that capture the nuanced interplay of color, light and dark.

His classes are intimate and congenial and his demeanor is supportive, knowledgeable, and



Above, clockwise: Students work on their still life drawings at the Northlight Art Center. A toolbox from one of Joe Brien's Lost Arts Workshops, and below it are completed spoons fashioned with steel and fire. A tiger maple sideboard crafted by a Lost Arts student. A still life set up at the Northlight Art Center, ready to be drawn and or painted. Below left: One student's drawing in progress at Lefferts' studio.

professional. Lefferts is proof that one does not have to be tortured to be a talented artist. With his keen sense of humor he keeps classes light, yet serious. Students work in their chosen medium, at their own pace and expertise level. Having taken classes with him I can attest that he knows when to leave you alone to sort out a problem of perspective and when to swoop in if your brow becomes too furrowed. He also offers individual instruction and takes commissions. New classes begin in 2014 and gift certificates are available. Combined with some basic art supplies he can advise you on, these classes make a perfect holiday gift for the budding or seasoned artist.

Tool school

Joe Brien of Lost Arts Workshops provides several gift giving opportunities for that special someone or a group of someones. Brien is a graduate from the Rhode Island School of Design and a skilled and talented woodworker. In his Falls Village workshop, he can design or create from wood just about any idea you present him with. When he is not hand crafting impeccable furniture or sculptures he can be found offering classes in subjects such as making puppets, weaving survival bracelets, carving spoons, cooking over a campfire, surviving in the wilder-

ness, and building tool boxes, milking stools, and bat houses. Brien can design these classes for an individual, family or group that caters to specific ages, interests and skill levels. He brings all supplies and teaches you how to use the tools involved while patiently and expertly coaching you through the building process.

Another aspect of Brien's services is working with individuals in their homes to pursue their own inner crafts person. He offers one-on-one tutoring for beginners or experienced carpenters for a specific project or one that you and he come up with together. Brien structures the tutorials based on your needs, whether it's learning to execute home repairs that have stymied you in the past or creating a fine piece of woodworking the old fashioned way. He will also help individuals set up a home workshop in their basement, garage or barn. Instruction in which tools to purchase and how to use them is part of this service. For a unique gift, consider a new power tool and a gift certificate for Brien to share his time, good humor and fine woodworking prowess with that special someone – male or female.

Continued on next page ...



Above left: One of Gilded Moon's Pop Art compositions sporting two of man's best friends. Above: The Village Herbalist has a wide array of products and services available, from spiritual classes and workshops, to natural soaps, candles and make-up.

Frame of preference

Millerton's own Gilded Moon Framing and Gallery, run by Jill and Paul Choma, combines high-quality materials, craftsmanship and attention to detail with small town customer service. They have several unique options to frame your memories into holiday gifts. One of these is to create a Pop Art composition of beloved people and pets. You provide them with a photo or computer image and they will work with you to turn it into a fully-framed Warhol-esque masterpiece full of color and whimsy. Hung prominently, this is surely a conversation piece.

Gilded Moon also offers a service called Frugal Framing. Capitalizing on economies of scale, they purchase a selection of high quality frames and mats in quantities that allow them to pass on those savings to you. You receive the same bespoke framing expertise and level of service, but the price tag makes it a bit easier to stretch your dollar in this season of giving. They will help you create a special gift by thoughtfully framing a shared memory.

Herbs and healing

The Village Herbalist (TVH) in Millerton can be a one-stop shopping experience. Not only does herbalist and owner Terri Lundquist carry all manner of natural and healing products, she also offers a variety of workshops run by individuals carefully vetted for their training and experience. Give the gift of inner peace for the New Year at her Wellness Studio with offerings such as reiki, self-empowerment workshops, shamanic healing, yoga and meditation. Gift certificates for products and classes are available. Lundquist is also offering a gift making workshop on December 8 for handmade herbal holiday crafts and gifts.

Feeling overwhelmed at the thought of spending time with relatives and navigating tenuous interpersonal relationships? Give yourself the gift of forgiveness with forgiveness coach Eileen Epperson. On December 6 and 7 she offers a workshop on the subject at TVH. While giving to others, it's also important to give to oneself. Otherwise the holidays can become associated with feelings of guilt and anxiety and leave you feeling depleted as you begin the New Year. What could be a better present to you and those around you than letting go of past resentments?

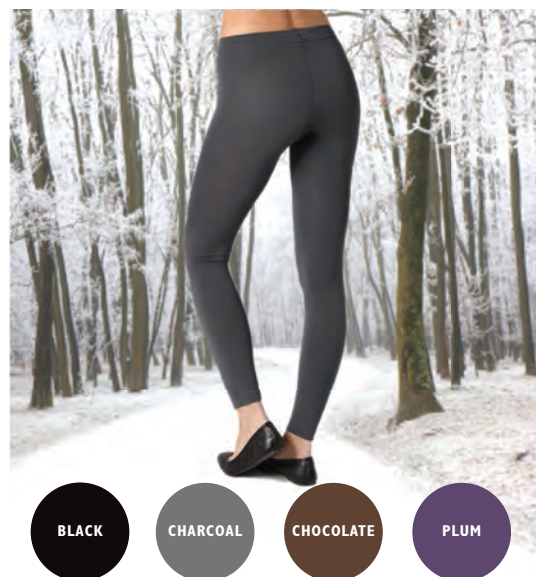
Practical indulgence

Being the pragmatic person that I am, I can't create a gift giving guide without highlighting something useful. Millerton's B.W.'s Eagle Eye is a gem of shop on Main Street offering an eclectic mix of vintage and new. Celebrating its 20th anniversary in town, they carry a range of clothes, jewelry, knit scarves, hats, sweaters, wraps, and imported soaps and creams from Norway, Sweden, and Italy. However, the ultimate gift of luxury comes in the form of iLux Wonderlegs fleece-lined leggings. Sleek and form fitting they provide warmth without the bulk. Every time your gift recipient pulls on a pair this winter she will think fondly of you and be thankful you did not get her one of those cold, hard, icy diamonds instead!

We are blessed in this area to have a range of talented artists, crafts people, and shops. Make use of their expertise to hand tailor a gift that possesses thoughtfulness and creativity in this season of giving. You won't be disappointed and neither will your recipient. •

For more information:

www.northlightartcenter.com, www.lostartsworkshops.com,
www.gildedmoonframing.com, www.tvhmillerton.com,
www.bwseagleeye.com



Above: B.W.'s Eagle Eye recommends the ultimate gift of iLux Wonderlegs which are fleece-lined leggings that are not just soft and warm, but quite trendy, too!

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Terni's

Clothing and Sporting Goods Store. (518) 789-3474.
42 Main Street, Millerton, NY 12546.

Terni's Clothing and Sporting Goods Store is part of Millerton's fabric. Phil Terni was practically raised in the Terni's store, and he has so many wonderful memories that start with his grandparents when they began the business. There are a number of original pieces of furniture in the store including the original cash register from 1919, with the highest digit being \$3! To most this would be unique, but to Phil these simple registers are contemporary. It's crazy how times have changed over the years, but one thing that has stayed the same is the hard work of the Terni family. When Phil's father suddenly passed away in 1971 and after discussing it with his siblings, he agreed to run the business for six months. "Mind you this was in 1971," Phil laughs today. Here we are 42 years later, but he has enjoyed the company of many friendly people through the years whether locals or folks passing through town. "Millerton has been very kind to my family and we appreciate all of the support through the years." Phil continues to sell great quality items such as Pendleton and Woolrich. These brands are probably his top sellers and consist of socks to flannel shirts. Of course you can find sporting goods, your local newspapers, a soda pop, candy bar, cigars, and lotto tickets, too. Phil looks forward to seeing you, and the entire Terni family wishes everyone a happy holiday season!



Sharon Country Inn

Hotel accommodations. 1 Calkinstown Road, Sharon, CT.
(860) 364-0036. www.sharoncountryinn.com

Many of your friends and family member may be coming to visit for the holidays and throughout the year, but where can they stay? There is no need to look any further. Edi, the new owner, took over the Sharon Country Inn a year and a half ago. He's made numerous renovations and brought the building back to life, and has improved the curb appeal to make all of his visitors feel welcome. Reservations and unexpected visits are both welcome with the option of a single king, double queen, and single queen rooms. All rooms are meticulously clean and include modern furnishings, 500 thread count cotton sheets, down comforters and pillows, LED flat screen TVs with 80+ channels, Keurig coffee maker, iHome clock radio and dock, stainless mini fridge and freezer, complimentary Wi-Fi access, luggage rack, iron and ironing board, and hair dryer. The Sharon Country Inn also has a complimentary continental breakfast consisting of products from local bakeries, delivered fresh daily. During the day there are many wonderful local attraction complimented by Sharon's beautiful landscape. Edi is happy he could impact the community in a positive way and provide his guests with a clean and quiet place to stay. His staff is friendly and personable and encourages you to contact them for special ski and holiday discount packages.



Murphy Crest Tree Farm

Choose and cut Christmas trees weekend, Thanksgiving through Christmas. 170 Depot Hill Road, Amenia, NY.

Cutting down your very own Christmas tree is a holiday tradition for many families. Bill Murphy at Murphy Crest Tree Farm helps to continue to make that possible. He went to work in 2005 planting trees on the last 13 acres of the once dairy farm. He started out with 500 Norway Spruces and 500 Douglass firs. Today, he has over 7,000 trees, which include two different types of spruce trees and six different types of fir trees. Murphy Crest Tree Farm is open Thanksgiving through Christmas on weekends 9:30am to 4pm. Finding the perfect Christmas tree is the easy part. Bill has trees that are large or skinny, short or tall. The tallest trees are approximately 10 feet tall. Setting it up when you get home is the tricky part. Along with a purchase of a special tree stand, Bill has a tree drill machine that allows for easier set-up. Bill admits that it's a lot of hard work from April through the holidays, but it's rewarding to see something he has worked so hard at growing that is now going into someone's home where they can enjoy it through the holidays. Bill has a bit of advice: once you get your tree home and before you put it in the stand, make sure that you cut a ¼ inch off the bottom. This will allow the tree to take water in better and it will have better needle retention. This year, choose and cut your Christmas tree and purchase a wreath from the boy scouts.



D's Salon & Spa

Full service salon for ladies and gentlemen. 15 Academy St.,
Salisbury, CT. (860) 435-8700. www.dsalonandspa.com

Whether you want to be pampered before or after the holidays, you're sure to find the attention you're looking for at D's Salon and Spa, a full service salon for ladies and gentlemen. Services include hair, nails, facials, massage, body waxing, eyelash extensions, tanning, and more. Dina, the proud owner, has years of experience perviously working in NYC, and now owns a salon in Salisbury. She loves the beauty field and stays current with styles, trends, and techniques. Special gift packages are available Thanksgiving through Christmas. If you get a facial and pedicure, you can get a free manicure. Dina is very good at nail art designs, too. All of her employees are licensed and professional. And of course everything is sanitized at the salon. She carries lines such as opi, china glaze, and essie, and even has a line that allows you to mix and match – meaning you can get regular polish for your pedicure and match it with gel polish for your manicure. (Gel polish is more durable than regular polish and will last up to a few weeks). Dina even has mood gel colors which are the latest trend. Bridal parties can easily be accommodated. Walk-ins are welcome and appointments can be made, too. Get pampered today!

INSURING YOUR WORLD

With December upon us and winter closing in, it only seems fair to start getting our proverbial house in order! One of the often overlooked insurances is LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE. This is a coverage that provides a daily payment to either a nursing home or a health care provider for in home care as we get older and cannot perform the essential daily functions of living. We all know of or have a family member that has needed this type of care only to give a lifetime of savings to a health care facility or provider until they finally pass on to the higher life in the sky. Long term care not only provides capital for these types of expenses but can also shield ones assets from attachment should the plan be part of the NYS Partnership program. The Partnership program, allows ones assets to be protected as long as a creditable policy is written to provide nursing home benefits within the guidelines of the Program. Once in place, all assets are protected. Many folks think that one has to be older to get such a policy, yet in fact, the sweet spot for pricing seems to be between the ages of 40-60. There are marital discounts and some of the new plans allow a policy to be paid up in 10 years thereby eliminating the need to pay after retirement. Another popular way to pay for such a plan is to make a single deposit into an annuity account and let the monthly income take care of the premium. So call your agent today to explore safeguarding your hard earned assets so that your family will be better off in the next generation!!!

Kirk Kneller
Phone 518.329.3131
1676 Route 7A, Copake, N.Y.



Brad Peck, Inc.

What is a Veterinary Specialist?

Veterinary specialists are veterinarians who have completed an internship and residency after graduating from veterinary school, and have then passed a difficult exam in their specialty. There are a multitude of different specialties in veterinary medicine, from surgery to radiology to dentistry. Within the specialties, the doctor can focus his training on a particular species or type of animal. For instance, a veterinarian can be an equine surgeon or a small animal ophthalmologist.

Veterinarians earn their Bachelor's degree before attending four years of veterinary school to earn their doctorate. Specialists continue their education by spending a year as an intern, followed by three years as a resident training in their specialty at a university hospital. By the time they are Board certified, specialists typically have 12 years of higher education! You can recognize a specialist by the letters after their name: DACVS (Diplomate American College of Veterinary Surgeons), DACVIM (Diplomate American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine), etc.

When your animal has a serious health problem, a veterinary specialist has the education and resources to help your primary doctor provide the best care possible.



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Holiday drink pairings

As the holidays approach it's time to think about what wine to serve with Christmas dinner. Although red is recommended with turkey when you are serving all of the rich side dishes with it, some will prefer white wine.

Here are a few suggestions for both:

Red with turkey: Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Syrah

White with turkey: Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Gewirtztraminer

If beef is your main course red is the choice: Cabernet, Zinfandel, Syrah, and Tempranillo.

With ham try: Syrah, Grenache or Rose.

But please always remember to drink what you like! Our staff at Trotta's will always be happy to help you with your choice and here's a fun punch recipe to get you started.

Prosecco Party Punch

1 bottle Prosecco

½ cup Brandy

Juice of 1 lemon

A little fruit as an accent (strawberries)

Add fruit juice sparingly for a little color (Cranberry juice is a good choice)



(518) 789-3535 • Route 44 • Millerton, NY

Be prepared for winter!

The thought of owning an emergency standby generator seemed preposterous just a few years ago. Now, living without electricity is all too common, especially in rural areas like ours. Many homeowners simply cannot afford to ride out another power outage. Instead, they are installing home standby generators in record numbers to protect their families and investments.

Portable generators vs Standby generators: Mainly the decision of deciding between a portable generator and a standby generator will be determined by the amount of power you will need to replace the power companies power for the essential electrical items you want to have available during a power outage. Smaller power needs can be handled by portable units that need to be manually started, fueled, stopped, and hooked up to a transfer switch when power is needed. Standby units handle larger power needs, they automatically start/stop when needed, have their own large fuel source, and are already wired to an automatic transfer switch for your house.

A standby generator is permanently installed outside of your house and will automatically start and transfer power to your house as soon as the transfer switch detects a loss of power. Standby generators are connected to a fuel source (usually liquid propane) as well as to your house's electrical system, there is no need to worry about power loss whether you are home or away, the generator will turn itself on moments after the power company's power goes out, and it will turn itself off as soon as the power company restores the power. Some generator brands, like Kohler, offer the option to remotely monitor your generator from your smartphone, tablet or PC, so you'll know if you've lost power at your house, when the generator is running and when the generator stops running!



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WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

It may seem amusing to be sarcastic and perhaps even a little mean, but it'll work against you in your attempts to achieve your goals. A moment's carelessness can result in a heavy burden that you will have to drag behind you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

You're lucky and you don't even know it! Don't worry about what other people may think, even if you turn down their invitations and requests to hang out.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

You're holding onto a grudge. A joke or an event rubbed you the wrong way and it evoked an unconscious reaction within you, which in turn is the big lesson here. Strive for your happiness.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Others depend on you to be organized. So it's within your right to expect to get your way. Give yourself a chance and expand your horizons.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

All that glows is not gold. Avoid decisions that involve deeper meanings, but at the same time, commit yourself in some way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You can't put it off any longer. It's not a question of how many dates you've been on, but how many dates have had you as an unengaged and inactive passenger?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

You already parents and enough parenting that you need in your life. Time with them is necessary to recharge your batteries and enable you to continue full steam ahead.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Today is an ideal day to reconsider old ideas about job opportunities. Remember that you are blessed with the talent required to succeed in what you choose.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Be careful and enjoy the good, which may involve an unclear accomplishment. Your dreams are beautiful and that is why your life will slowly take a turn for the positive.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

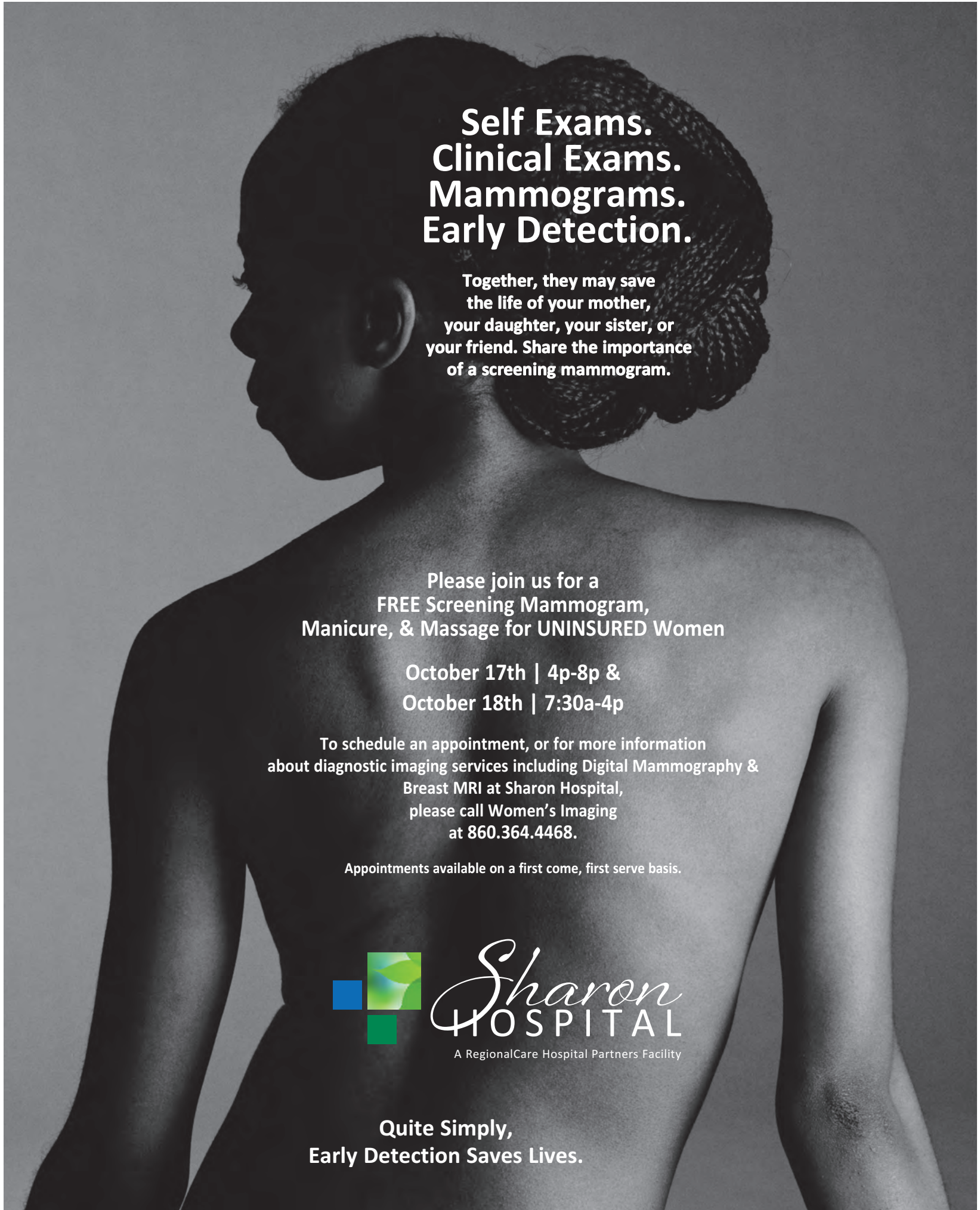
Your work and accomplishments will speak for themselves - in the end. But it's possible that someone that's your opposite will appeal to you at this time.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Avoid the situations that cause you stress, because you're not prepared to take on such matters at this time. But whatever may happen, remember that you've made up your mind about it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Your social life is blossoming right now. Don't let that affect you because your feelings and emotions are what truly matter.



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