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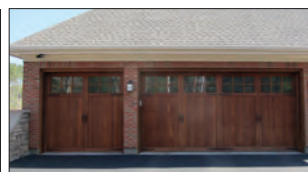
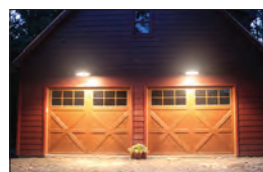
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YOUR FEEDBACK & WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN THIS MAY ISSUE

The experience of creating this magazine has been so tremendously rewarding and fun. The main reason is that I, along with all of our readers, get to learn about the many different people, businesses and curiosities within our distribution area through their stories that we publish here. And it seems that our readers are just as intrigued as I! We have received numerous comments, emails and so on from our readers with their thoughts on the different articles. Thank you for your feedback and keep them coming!

In this issue, we continue with our numerous series, beginning with the feature of Robert Butler in our artists' profile, a silversmith; in our healthy living column I had a lengthy discussion with Bill Burke, the owner of the North East Fitness & Wellness center about what is involved in maintaining a healthy lifestyle – the start of many discussions and articles with Bill; Christine Bates had a fascinating interview with Joan Osofsky, the owner of Hammertown about her many years in business and the new and exciting things she has coming up; we were hungry and satisfied our stomachs at the Oakhurst Diner in this month's restaurant review; Memoree Joelle, our official farm groupie, ventured over to Dashing Star Farm to witness the birth of a lamb and had an exhilarating conversation with Lynn Mordas; Christine also examined the truths about the real estate market in the town of North East – uncovering some fascinating figures; Mary O'Neill returned this month with an interesting article about Death Cafés, which I know sounds strange and even morbid, but is quite fascinating! For our May historical article we continued examining the history of Sharon, CT and the importance that iron played in Sharon's industry back in the day; and then of course we have four interesting businesses featured in our business snapshot feature – all extremely different, but great businesses; and in our columns, we continue to bring you pieces of information that we hope will be of use to our readers!

And as always, thank our advertisers, because without them this magazine wouldn't be possible. Please shop in their stores or use their services, or just stop in their establishments and say hi and thank them for advertising with us. We certainly appreciate their support!

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



MAY 2013

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Cover photo by
Steven Steele Cawman

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Thorunn Kristjansdottir Publisher, Editor-in-Chief, Designer

Ashley Fournier Director of Advertising

Steven Steele Cawman Contributing Photographer & Writer | **Christine Bates** Contributing Writer

Mary O'Neill Contributing Writer | **Memoree Joelle** Contributing Writer

ADVERTISING

Ashley Fournier Call 518 592 1135 or email info@mainstreetmag.com

CONTACT

Office 24 Main Street, Millerton, NY 12546 • **Mailing address** PO Box 165, Ancramdale, NY 12503

Phone 518 592 1135 • **Email** info@mainstreetmag.com • **Website** www.mainstreetmag.com

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chasing silver linings

ROBERT BUTLER, SILVERSMITH

Robert Butler
Crow's Foot

By Steven Steele Cawman
arts@mainstreetmag.com

There was a time in America when a trip to the silversmith to repair or purchase the instruments of daily life would have been an ordinary occurrence for many people. Today however, things have changed. We don't often get to see the craftsmanship of a fine silversmith at work. When you pay a visit to the workshop of silversmith Robert Butler in the hills of Ancramdale, you take a step back to a time when the smith played a key role in daily life. Many of the tools and methods he uses to create his beautiful works in silver are the same as those you would have found in colonial America. Simply remove the few electric lights, the twenty-first century TIG welder and a few modern instruments, and things would appear just as they would have in the eighteenth century.

Paul Revere and the origins of silversmithing

The history of silversmithing in America dates back to the 1650s, when John Hull and Robert Sanderson opened a shop in Boston. Both were English immigrants to the American colonies. Sanderson had worked as a silversmith in London while Hull learned the trade in Boston after his arrival. Together, they established the first successful silversmith in the colonies and produced the majority of colonial American silver, much of which still survives today.

Over the next 200 years, silver work in America took off. Interestingly, silversmiths of the time typically acquired their silver as coins, much of which came from the Spanish colonies in South America. Silver was not successfully mined in the United States until 1852. Prior to industrialization, mass

production and the development of modern materials, the silversmith played a key role in providing and repairing the tools for everyday life. In 1750, there were approximately thirty to forty silversmiths in Boston, a city of only 16,320 people at that time. A contemporary wrote that the silversmith: "employed in making all manner of utensils... either for Ornament or Use. His work is either performed in the mould, or beat into figure by the Hammer." Silversmiths such as Samuel Vernon and Jonathan Otis helped to form a distinctive American style during the early colonial years. This era saw the rise of America's most famous silversmith, Paul Revere. Paul, the eldest surviving son, was an apprentice to his father, also named Paul, in their family's silversmith business, Paul Revere and Sons. Paul Revere, the elder, died in 1754. While his son was not old enough at the time to inherit the business, he eventually headed the family business and was extremely successful. His is a household name to this day.

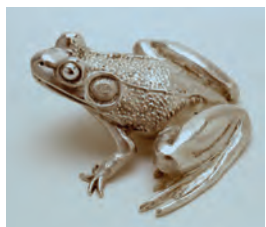
The American Revolution had an impact on silversmithing and the availability of silver, though both recovered in the decades following American independence. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, American silversmiths exchanged the refined, elegant neoclassical aesthetics of the late 1780s and '90s for a bolder, more substantial style. Later, new styles from the Rococo revival of the 1830s to French imperial inspired styles guided silversmiths. Silver had long been associated with wealth, ceremony and achievement, but during the nineteenth century the use of silver in public life became even greater. Political and civic suc-

cesses were celebrated with monumental gifts of silver. The industrial revolution was well underway, transforming the lives of millions and ushering the nation into a modern age of industry. Silversmiths followed the developments and industry increasingly moved from small workshops to larger factories. In this period, American silver manufactories were established, such as the Gorham Manufacturing Company in 1831 and Tiffany & Company in 1837.

The early 1900's were another heyday for silversmiths, with thousands of them working in America. Large shops like Tiffany employed hundreds of smiths and renewed interest in hand crafting and artistry also favored the success of master silversmiths in small workshops. With the onset of World War I and the advent of new materials like plastics, alloys, and stainless steel, the need for the silversmith in daily life was greatly reduced. Mass manufacturing and industrial modernization greatly reduced the number of skilled silversmiths in the country. Today, there are only 300-400 silversmiths in America and only about a half dozen large-scale studios like Tiffany and Company.

Finding his calling

With silversmiths on the decline during his lifetime, it is interesting how Robert Butler came to be involved with the craft. During his senior year at Simon's Rock high school in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, Butler needed to fulfill an eight-week work-study program in order to graduate. His grandmother put him in contact with a silversmith she knew in London. With this introduction and



Chasing tools
Penguin Bowl, private
collection, photo: Dean Powell
Frog

Fish Slice, Victoria and Albert Museum,
London, photo: Dean Powell
Animal Tureen, Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston, photo: Dean Powell



Coffee Set, private collection,
photo: Dean Powell
Acorn and Oak Leaf Wine
Bottle Coaster

Various studio pieces

the help of his sister, who lived in London, the work-study program was arranged.

Despite having no prior experience working in silver, Robert became part of Michael Murray's workshop in the Clerkenwell district of London in 1972. Clerkenwell has been a center of silversmithing in London since the seventeenth century. Almost immediately, Murray recognized that Robert had a knack for metalwork. After completing two practice copper pieces, Robert started crafting a silver tea set for his grandmother as a "thank you" gift. While Robert was working on the set, a group of silversmithing students visiting the workshop admired his work and asked him how many years he had been studying. He had found his niche. Robert returned to the United States and finished high school, but soon returned to England and spent an additional three years under Murray's tutelage. In 1976 he returned to America to work with Gebelein Silversmiths in Boston. The following year, he opened his own studio, which he has had ever since. There, his master craft can be seen every day.

Creating the three dimensional

To create one of his wine bottle coasters, Robert starts with a piece of silver measuring fifteen by four and only one thirty-second of an inch thick. He then transfers a preliminary one-dimensional sketch to the surface of the plate. Working in three dimensions, Robert is truly gifted. He visualizes the dimensional transformation of a piece and is able to see what the piece will become, as he looks at it. He takes the initial, flat design and bends it into its cir-

cular form. The form is filled with pitch and, using an assortment of tools, he hammers down the lower areas. The pitch is then removed. Using a snarking iron and striking the piece from the inside, Butler creates dimension. This process is repeated again and again, each time only changing the elevation of the piece by one-sixteenth of an inch. Chasing, used to create the indented areas, and repoussé, the process that pushes up portions of the metal, have been used for thousands of years. They can be seen in works such as King Tutankhamen's mask from 1300 B.C., ancient Greek bronzes and masterpieces of European silversmithing. It takes five or six weeks, working many hours each day, to create the final design.

In the past, Butler focused heavily on creating original commissions such as a spectacular animal motif tureen for the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The lid of the tureen features two giraffes in repose with their necks entwined. Further down the piece, there is a frieze of zebras migrating around the bowl. The base is supported by four elephant heads surrounded by a pool of alligators lurking in the water and just breaking its surface. He has also created very modern silver tea sets with strong angles and curves for other clients. Just like the silver he works in, Butler's style is beautiful and his creations are unique.

The Butler Style

In addition to his commission pieces, Butler's workshop also creates production work from castings made from rubber molds taken from his original designs. This reduction in the total time needed

to create a piece has allowed Butler the liberty to explore his craft and shift his focus as his interests develop. In recent years, Butler's style has moved away from traditional designs to a more contemporary style and aesthetic. Each year there are three major craft shows in America; The Smithsonian Craft Show, The Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show, and the American Craft Expo (benefiting Evanston Hospital, outside of Chicago). These curated shows are incredibly prestigious and highly selective. Butler is currently working on creating a body of innovative silver designs to present to the selection committees. In Butler's words, "attractive is no longer good enough, I want to make cutting edge designs."

While a trip to the silversmith is no longer commonplace these days, a visit to Robert Butler's studio not only provides a rare opportunity to see a true master craftsman at work but also learn about the art and history of silversmithing. Butler is not only a master silver craftsman but also a historian with a wealth of knowledge about the traditions and story of his art form. Silversmiths have always forged links between the past and the future, honoring tradition while inspiring with new forms. Robert Butler carries on this proud legacy in his Ancramdale studio. ●

If you would like to visit Robert and his workshop, call 914.489.2261 or email butlersilver@fairpoint.net.

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Arleen Shepley has been a life-long resident of Dutchess County. She currently lives in Millbrook with her husband Mike. They have two children, Michael and Amanda. Arleen has been in the real estate business since 1996, starting her career in the southern end of Dutchess County, and in 2005 she relocated to Millerton to join Elyse Harney Real Estate. She made the move because of the small town charm and the relationships that make you a part of a community such as this one. She keeps herself very busy, but her favorite things to do besides work are to cook, bake, garden, and spend time with family and friends. If you are around Millerton, you will see her dog, a.k.a. Arleen's real estate sidekick, Cooter. He was a stray that followed Arleen home one day, and he loves to greet everyone that he meets.



Elizabeth van Diepen grew up in Central America and was educated in Canada and the United States. She lived and worked in New York City with her family, and then bought a home in Clinton Corners. Prior to her twenty years in real estate, Elizabeth worked for Institutional Investor Magazine and Forbes Magazine. She currently lives in Salisbury, Connecticut and works for Elyse Harney Real Estate in Millerton, like Arleen and Cooter. Elizabeth is an outdoor enthusiast and loves the proximity to the Appalash Trail, the lakes, and mountains. She especially likes working in the vibrant town of Millerton which she considers a fun destination offering something for everyone: the Rail Trail, art galleries, restaurants with live music, the Movie House, farmers market, and good shopping. What more could we want?



Born in Millerton, growing up in New York City, but never forgetting where his roots are from, **Hillel Lowinsky** returned to the area ten years ago. Hillel works at Irving Farm and explains that his job is simply fun. There are so many beautiful and friendly people and pets that pass through Millerton. Hillel's observation is that it is very easy to get caught up in the same routine in life, ordering the same large coffee every day. Hillel says this causes a loss, because he can't experience how the customer is actually doing and so he's unable to really care about them. His solution: he tries to get them to try something new, whether it is a cup of tea instead of the usual coffee. Life is too short and Hillel makes the most out of everything and encourages others to do the same. Hillel likes Millerton in the sense that it is a very artistic and creative, with a great intellectual community.



Arriving in the beautiful town of Millerton seven short months ago, **Peter Ramos** is still getting settled in and getting to know the area more and more every day. Peter lives and works in the village, making his commute an easy walk to and from work. Even when he's not working, Peter enjoys strolling the streets of Millerton; rain or shine. This is a good way to get to know the people and the community, he said. Peter says he has met many wonderful people here, and that everyone has been very nice and welcoming. In fact, we here at Main Street Magazine get the pleasure of seeing Peter walk by just about every day, smiling and waving. It's a pleasure seeing your friendly face, Peter, and we look forward to many more waves!



Father and daughter, **Brad and Georgia McDougall**, were enjoying the sights as they checked out Millerton for the first time. Eleven year old Georgia is on spring break this week and while her mom and sister spent the day in New York City, Brad and Georgia were by coincidence in New York, too. They explained that there isn't a Main Street in their hometown of Grandby, CT. Brad says it's an old farm town that doesn't hold any historic value like Millerton does. Georgia said she likes all the shops around Millerton. The two said they had spent a lot of time this past week riding Icelandic horses. Georgia said she has been riding since she was six. They both have a lot to look forward to: Brad is getting ready for his next art show. He's a metal sculptor. Georgia is going to a horse show this weekend and is looking forward to it. But first it was off to Salsa Fresca for some guacamole!



You may recognize **Bruce Valentine** from Valentine Monument on Main Street in Millerton, specializing in cemetery monuments, pet markers, and on-site lettering – to name a few. He is a fifth generation Valentine to occupy this field in Millerton! He says there is a lot of satisfaction in his line of work and has worked with a lot of great customers. Bruce lives with his dog, Jack, a Jack Russell Terrier, and two cats. Outside of work Bruce takes an interest in old cars and outdoors activities. Bruce likes how you can do anything you want around here. If you want to race your car, you can go to Lime Rock, if you want to ski, there are ski resorts close by, and the list goes on. But yet you still have privacy. Bruce likes how Millerton is a humble community. He feels this is especially important to families who have been here for generations, and hopes that that will never change.



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a healthy lifestyle

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

It is time to talk about exercise. In my last two articles I focused on nutrition and what it is that we eat, what we should and should not be eating. That is only half of the battle of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. I had a lengthy discussion with Bill Burke, the new owner of the North East Fitness & Wellness center in Millerton. Before becoming the gym's owner, Bill had a career in physical therapy, he is also an avid bicyclist, and so I thought he could help shed some light on the exercise portion of maintaining a healthy life.

You can't expect to see change in a month

When Bill and I began our conversation about fitness we quickly established that to talk about exercise is too broad a subject. Therefore, this article will be the first in a series discussing overall well-being, fitness, exercise, even nutrition – and everything that goes into maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In this first article, we'll examine a general overview, going into more specifics in future articles.

"It has to be a lifestyle choice," Bill began stating. "You can't expect to come to the gym and work out and then go home and eat whatever, and then expect to have a healthy lifestyle and increase your fitness level. It's multi factorial."

Bill continued by saying: "I'm always curious why people join the gym for one to three months, and expect results. You can't reverse what you've done to your body for the last five, 10 or 30 years in a month or three months. It took years to get to where you are, so you can't expect that that will change overnight. You have to expect that it will take time to see results. I want to see people making a commitment – a commitment to themselves. I want my members to receive the full benefit of their membership – and what's the benefit of coming for a month? That's also one of the reasons that I want to transform this facility from a gym to a fitness center. A fitness center is more comprehensive than a gym, and for that reason we have to differentiate between the two. I hope to be able to provide a wide range of services to my members in the future, adding chiropractic services, massages, acupuncture, physical therapy, and nutritional advice."

Our changing bodies and the need to eliminate excuses as we age

Bill told me that after we reach the age of 30 that every decade thereafter we begin losing 8% of our muscle mass. In addition, as we age our metabolism slows down, and our hormone levels change. All of these factors (and more), make it all the more important to stay active and to stay aware of the



importance of eating healthy and exercising. Bill explained that because of the loss of muscle mass that we are experiencing every decade, we have to compensate for that 8% loss. In order to do so, we now have to keep active just to make up for the 8% loss, and if we want to go above and beyond that maintenance level, we now have to work out differently than we did 10 years ago, or more.

"When people tell me that they don't have the time to work out, it just tells me that they don't want to do it," Bill said. "Everyone can find the time – if they want to! To put it into perspective, an hour of exercise a day is only 4% of your day. Or 30 minutes, that's only 2% of your day. We can all find the time. Wake up 30 minutes earlier, or watch an hour less of TV. If you want to, you can find that time."

A paradigm shift

"But people also have to realize that spending an hour at the gym, or 4% of their day working out, is only one aspect of their overall wellness," Bill continued by explaining. "They can't expect to see any results by working out for an hour, 3-4 days a week and then stopping at McDonald's for dinner. It's a paradigm shift, a mind set and a lifestyle that encompasses all aspects of your life. You have to exercise and keep active, you have to eat right and make the right food and nutritional choices. It's a whole mind and body experience."

Sleep is also a major factor in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The recommended amount of sleep is six to seven hours per night. When your body is sleep deprived, your metabolism slows down. In our society today, we are a very busy people. We try to do so much, and we sacrifice our sleep. The result from that is it affects our hormone

levels, blood chemistry and metabolic rate.

"People don't understand what it really takes to live a healthy lifestyle," Bill said. "It's also costly and more time consuming to eat clean. To prepare a good and healthy meal takes time and planning. And with our busy lives, we often take the easy way out by grabbing an easy and convenient option. And it is unfortunate that that is the route people take when they are stressed for time."

When we take the easy way out and may make mac and cheese, for example, which as Bill says is a complex carbohydrate, but has minimal nutritional value with a small amount of protein. So did we work out at the gym today? Yes, but we're not living the whole healthy lifestyle, because we're not making a full-out commitment when we opt to grab the easy mac and cheese, or fast food option.

"People have to realize that it is really hard. It is an evolution and it takes time," Bill continued. "You also can't go from having a lifestyle where you eat fast food a few times a week and totally do a 180° and just eat salad. That will last a few days and then you'll revert back. It takes time to change our habits and our mind set."

It really boils down to common sense. We know that we need to exercise, and we know that we need to eat right. And as Bill said, either extreme may not be the best, a middle ground leaning more toward a healthier lifestyle is ideal. So let's throw the excuses out the window, we can all find 2-4% from our day to go and enjoy a nice walk, and to substitute a complex carbohydrate with a healthier choice. No excuses. ●

Next month we'll examine the effects of sugar on our overall well being. Image source: Google Images.



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hammertown

DESIGNING A LIFESTYLE

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

On a rainy Saturday morning we sat down with Joan Osofsky, the creative visionary behind Hammertown, in her converted horse barn main store just outside of Pine Plains to talk about her 29 years in business and a new book coming out in September. This is Main Street's third interview with a local entrepreneur. All three John Harney, Michael Fallon, and Joan Osofsky share a passion for what they do.

How did you end up with three stores, a website and a book? How did you start?

I moved here 29 years ago with my family and began a country store in this barn in 1984. I had \$5,000 to buy minimal inventory and the business grew organically.

Where does the name Hammertown come from?

Hammertown is the name of this hamlet outside of Pine Plains with a few houses dating from the late 1700's and early 1800's. They used to make trip hammers and scythes here. The barn itself was probably built around 1850.

What did you do before Hammertown that helped you create this business?

I was an elementary school teacher. You have to be very organized and creative with visually interesting bulletin boards and projects to make things exciting, like teaching math through knitting. I loved my students and teaching, but with the demands of my family and young children I wanted to try something new where I would have greater flexibility and control.

Where do you buy what you sell? Who are your suppliers?

All of the upholstered furniture I sell is made in the United States by companies who treat their employees well and use nontoxic materials. Recently there was an article in the paper about toxic glue being used by some manufacturers. I immediately called all of my suppliers to make sure they weren't using it.

I like to include local artisans like Tim Jones (featured in Main Street's April issue), a local blacksmith that makes everything from bed frames to coffee tables for us. And I go to the trade shows in New York. If suppliers start selling to the big boxes we discontinue them and move on to something new. We have to stay ahead of the market.

I wish I could say that everything is made in this country. We try to buy American whenever we can. It's also important to us to buy from responsible

companies with fair trade practices that treat their employees well. Many of our suppliers have been with us for years.

Who is your biggest competitor and what is your biggest challenge?

Big home stores and catalogues entering the lifestyle market and, of course, the Internet merchants offering similar merchandise are our biggest competitors. There's always a business challenge and right now it's struggling to switch our management information systems to keep track of the inventory in our three stores. We are also trying to figure out how to handle e-commerce.

Can you explain about your new book, "Love Where You Live"? I know you've been working on it for a while.

What a long process! Let me see. My co-author, Abby Westlake from Gallatin, and I started with just an idea in 2009 and then Farley Chase, the son of my good friend Rosie Chase, became our literary agent and started working with us. It took us a year

to write the proposal, which included an outline of the book, table of contents, and a sample chapter with photographs. John Gruen, the photographer and Doug Turschen, the book's designer, believed in the project and worked for free at the proposal stage. By early 2011 our proposal was ready and within two and half weeks we had bids from three publishers. The day we signed our contract, Borders declared bankruptcy. Then we proceeded finishing the writing and the photography working as a team. Originally the book was supposed to be published this spring, but then Rizzoli, the publisher, decided mid-September was a better time for lifestyle books. Did I mention you can pre-order the book online or at Oblong Books? Big magazines are already contacting us for interviews.

There are 18 homes in the Hudson Valley and New England that are profiled. The interiors reflect the spirit of the creative people who live in them.

Continued on next page ...



Above:
Joan Osofsky with Etta, her mixed breed shelter dog who follows her everywhere. Photo by Christine Bates.

Left:
The entrance to the home design room on the second floor of Hammertown Barn. Photo by John Gruen.

Following page:
The old and new are juxtaposed at Hammertown.

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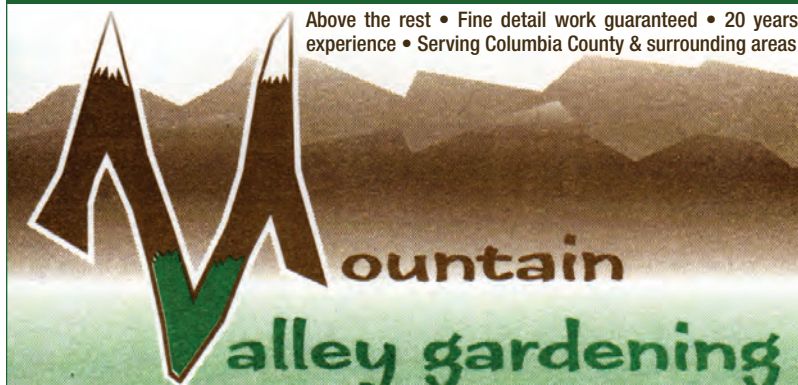
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What has changed since you began your business? How have trends changed?

A big change is the Internet and the creation of our website which reaches over 10,000 people. My son Gregg helped set it up eight years ago and encouraged me to start blogging. We have a community of people who follow our site. The Internet has also created pre-educated buyers.

Regarding trends, at the beginning it was very country, country with more antiques, teddy bears, quilts, dried flowers and hearts. The taste was for homespun décor. Overtime tastes changed to what I call modern country that has a cleaner, modern aesthetic, for example that emerald green velvet chair you're sitting on next to a zinc table. There's a strong ethnic trend right now with a global mix of elements. And sheepskin throws seem to be flying out the door.

Do you ever make any mistakes in buying? When do you decide to stop carrying a product?

Just recently we bought some side tables you have to assemble yourself. They were very difficult to put together and now we have them on sale. Also we stop carrying products when the big retailers pick them up.

You have a lot of books around the store. Are they an important part of your business?

Books do really well for us because their selection is carefully edited. It's not confusing like a bookstore and it creates an experience of home.

How did you decide to expand to Rhinebeck and Great Barrington?

About ten years ago it just seemed like a good idea, but, for personal reasons, it turned out to be bad timing and very difficult. We were saved by my talented son who stepped in as CFO and technology guru, our dedicated staff and by my daughter who pitched in on the design side.

Is the customer different?

Our original Pine Plains store is a destination store. People who come here are really focused and ready to buy. They come from Albany, Westchester and New Jersey to shop here and then they go to Milerton to Harney & Sons Tea.

Do you think of Hammertown as a family business?

My son and daughter support me, but have no interest in taking over this business. Hammertown has a community of employees, many of whom have worked with me since the very beginning.



What is your advice to people starting a business? Do you have any business books to recommend to entrepreneurs?

I don't think I could do it now, certainly not on \$5,000. You have to find a need and fill it. And of course capital is always a struggle.

I don't really read business books but the biography of Steve Jobs was inspirational. I especially liked his graduation address at Stanford where he talked about taking the best of you, your passions into what you do.

What do you think makes a successful entrepreneur?

You have to have good timing, a network, luck, an appropriate skill set, and an understanding of your strengths and weaknesses. You have to be passionate or there's no way to do the hard work. Right now I find myself working smarter. You have to have good management skills and delegate. You have to let go and let your people fly. You have to do your research, your homework and see where others succeed. You can't copy but you can learn. My biggest strength is the ability to mix and respect the new and the old.

Do you have a business plan?

No, I've never had a plan, but we do have a budget – sort of.

What do you like the least about running your business?

I don't like managing employees and leave that up to my store managers. It's difficult for creative people to manage and I see myself as the creative

director of Hammertown.

You now have three stores, a website and a new lifestyle book coming out. What is the secret to Hammertown's success and where do you go from here?

You have to be authentic to your own passion. Hammertown reflects that authenticity and spirit. In a store you have winners and losers and you always have to analyze your successes. Design and interest changes and you have to change. That's my talent. You can come into my store, sit down, look at a book, feel at home and reflect. I've also been fortunate to discover capable, loyal, local employees to manage the stores and let me do what I enjoy. Hammertown is a family of employees that I want to continue. Our next step is to continue to build and invest in our brand. We are not intending to expand into more stores.

Hammertown is very active in the community. What's coming up next that Main Street readers should know about?

Every Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend we have a tent sale and charge for early admission. All of the ticket sales to shop early go to Pine Plains groups like the firehouse, the schools, etc. Our biggest fund raiser is for the Berkshire Taconic Fund. This year it will be an auction on September 21st and will raise as much as \$50,000 to be given to local families in need. Also a percentage of our own sales that week will go to the fund. This first started out as a cocktail party and has just grown and grown every year. •



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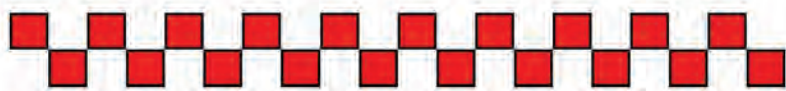
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GREAT GASTRONOMY: the oakhurst diner

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

For this month's restaurant review I had intended to spoil my boyfriend and I and go out for a nice romantic dinner for two. But when it came down to it and when it came down to the restaurant review day, I was simply craving lunch – a nice juicy diner lunch. And you can most definitely experience great gastronomy (which is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as the art or science of good eating) at The Oakhurst Diner in Millerton.

Many of us may still refer to the diner as The Millerton Diner, but this 50s style diner has undergone some changes since its days as The Millerton Diner. It was reopened a few years back, and it underwent a major face lift. The ambiance is retro-chique, is the best way that I can describe it. Yes, it's still a throwback to the classic American 50s style diner, but this one has a modern flair to it. And I love it.

Not your average diner menu

The menu also underwent a face lift thanks to the new owners. Yes, they still serve some of the traditional meals you'll find at a diner, but they add their own special twist to it. For example, what other diners do you know that serve organic burgers from the local Herondale farm? Or Meiller beef chili? And edamame dumplings – what in the world is that? I've been intrigued since my first eating experience. I had visited the diner a few times for breakfast before this restaurant review. And of course on those occasions, we indulged in some sort of egg concoctions. What can I say; diners and egg-based breakfasts go hand in hand. But what still sticks in my mind from those breakfasts was the orange juice. Wow! Fresh-squeezed doesn't even begin to describe.

On this day, however, I was excited by the plethora of lunch choices that lay before me on their menu. How to choose between the many different types of burger choices they had, like The Babe which is a third pound of burger, topped with sliced corn dog, bacon, American cheese, lettuce and tomato, or should I get the chicken vegetable soup, or what about those edamame dumplings? The only thing that I knew for certain was that I wanted french fries.

Ashley (the magazine's director of advertising) was much quicker to decide than I. She opted for the Grilled Chicken Sandwich with lettuce, tomato and mayo. She was staying healthy on this day, however, because she got the mixed green salad with sweet balsamic vinaigrette dressing as a side



dish instead of french fries. The sandwich came on a French baguette style bread, which she said was really soft and tasty. The chicken she reported was moist and very tasty as well. She enjoyed the salad tremendously and thought that the dressing complimented the fresh vegetables extremely well.

The Roast Veggie Sandwich it is

I finally made my choice and ordered the Roast Veggie Sandwich which consisted of house made roast veggies, American cheese, lettuce, tomato, and a fried egg on a bun. Well, minus the tomato that I asked them to leave out – tomatoes are a no-no for me. And my side choice were sweet potato fries.

As you see in the picture above of the sandwich, it looks not only juicy (which it is), but looks fairly healthy, too – which I don't know if it is. But it has to be, right? All those roasted vegetables?

When I bit into the sandwich, the first thing that I noticed was how savory the roasted vegetables were. Each one of them was so fresh and tasty with their own distinct flavor. Next I tasted the sweet bun, was that potato bread? The egg was cooked just right, too. The edges weren't dry or too crispy either. Yum, this was one of the more savory

sandwiches that I had had in a long time. And I absolutely couldn't get over how amazing and tasty the vegetables were.

Next it was time to indulge in my guilty pleasure: french fries. They do say that sweet potato fries are better for you than regular french fries, but I like both equally as much. And these perfectly cut and cooked fries were good! There was no need for salt, pepper or ketchup. They were so sweet and delicious all on their own. It made me wonder what their regular fries taste like – next time!

I have to add that the pickle was even fantastic! It wasn't your typical soggy type pickle either, but this tasted almost more like a cucumber that had just started its voyage to becoming a pickle. It was crisp, fresh and very tasty.

The overall experience at The Oakhurst Diner was really cool. Now I understand why the place is packed for not just breakfast, but for lunch and dinner, too! In addition, their prices are pretty reasonable. Our two sandwiches with all of the fixings came in well under twenty bucks. Not bad at all. Now the big question is what shall I order next time? Maybe I'll have to try those Southwestern Chicken Egg Rolls, or maybe... ●

tales of a farm groupie

DASHING STAR FARM IN MILLERTON, NY

By Memoree Joelle
info@mainstreetmag.com

“You may be just in time!” Lynn shouted as she energetically made her way toward me from her house in Millerton. I had been photographing several very proud-feathered chickens in front of her barn across the street, which is the home of Dashing Star Farm. Lynn Mordas, who founded the farm back in 1993, had her gaze focused on the pasture just behind me. After a quick greeting, we were inside the gate and headed to the scene, our path paved by a flurry of feathers and dirt. There, at the far end of the pasture, the event I had hoped for was well under way. A mother ewe was in the final moments of giving birth to a lamb, which suddenly appeared as a small, unsteady creature, in need of a good wash.

The growing flock

Lynn guided me through the barn and into the adjoining pasture, where we could visit the rest of the flock and allow mother and baby some alone time. The 60 or so sheep that surrounded us were calm, but curious. Many were young lambs, born just in the last few weeks. Timid at first, most of them warmed up to the stranger in their presence after a while, and my hands and ankles were soon being nibbled by fuzzy little faces. The rest frolicked in the midday sun, enjoying the first signs of Spring. Their quick movements made keeping up with them difficult, and deciphering between them seemed impossible. But Lynn keeps careful records of her flock, so she knew there were 35 (now 36!) lambs, 27 ewes, and a single ram, who observed us stoically from a distance.

The journey from a program analyst to a sports photographer to a sheep farmer

Lynn hasn't always farmed sheep, or any other animal for that matter. Like most fascinating people, she walked many paths before taking the one that led her to Dashing Star Farm. A native to Dutchess county, she has spent most of her life here. She acquired her B.S. in Geomathematics at Syracuse University in 1977, and then relocated to Boston where she worked as a programmer and analyst for Boston University. In Boston, Lynn held positions as a physical scientist and systems analyst for the Environmental Protection Agency in the hazardous wastes department. She also spent time doing sports photography for the NBA, a passion she continues to pursue on a freelance basis. In 1984 Lynn returned to her Dutchess County roots and settled with her family in Millerton, but it would be nine years before she would acquire sheep.



I asked Lynn how she decided to transition from her previous career into tending sheep, and she confided that it was a stroke of fate. A neighbor had asked her if he could leave 30 sheep on her pasture while he traveled, and she agreed. When he never returned, Lynn kept the sheep, bought a ram, and began breeding them. In 1993, Dashing Star Farm was born. Although she had no previous experience, she had many mentors to help her along the way, and today she has several prized breeds of sheep, including her own unique crossbreed. She selects for specific wool characteristics so that she can offer a wide range of beautiful, natural colors in her wool products. In addition to roving wool, yarn, batting, and sheepskins, Lynn also offers custom bedding, hand sewn throws, blankets, clothing, and pet futons. All of the wool is processed naturally, and her sheep are shorn at the farm by Mike Gates.

Raising sheep and fowl

Dashing Star also offers various cuts of lamb, and all animals intended for meat are slaughtered at 7-10 months, right here in neighboring Pine Plains. Close proximity to the slaughter house ensures the animals are not stressed by transportation, which is essential. Until that time, all the sheep graze on pastures that are rotated regularly to allow for grass regeneration, and are supplemented with



Above top: the newborn lamb comforted by its mother, with the chickens checking out the new addition to the farm.
Above: a curious little face.
Opposite page: Lynn with one of her (smiling) lambs, and pictures of the animals in the barn yard and in the pasture.



locally grown grains. Lynn is proud to farm in a humane and sustainable way, and in doing so she is rewarded with animals that are happy, healthy, and resistant to parasites. Her chickens, geese, and sheep thrive in a symbiotic relationship with each other, in that the chickens, following their instincts, feed on the larvae provided by the waste left on the ground by the sheep. The sheep in turn benefit by these unborn pests being eliminated, thus enriching their quality of life. That may not conjure up pretty images, but by nature's standards it's a beautiful thing. And at least on the day of my visit, sheep and chickens seemed to be harmoniously content.

Lynn's education and high standards

Her approach to farming was shaped in part by her experience with Cornell's LEAD program for agricultural professionals, where she learned every facet of New York State agriculture. She had the opportunity to travel to Washington D.C., Canada, and Europe to learn about agricultural policies, and was heavily influenced by the superior agricultural regulations she observed while in Spain. Lynn applies E.U. standards at Dashing Star, and it is evident that she truly cares for her animals, the land, and the people in her community.

Besides being healthier, the lamb from Dashing Star Farm is deliciously mild and superior in taste, which is why it is coveted by local chefs and

restaurants in our area and in New York City. I am personally a regular at Lynn's stand at our local markets, and appreciate that she offers amazing lamb in portions small enough for singles as well as the larger cuts. She also sells some of the best quality eggs around, from both chicken and geese when available.

Lynn is deeply committed to New York agriculture, and in 2012 she was appointed to the Town of North East Agricultural Advisory Committee, where she developed a Farmland Protection Plan for the town of North East which has since been approved by the New York State Department of Agriculture. This year Lynn was further appointed to the Scholarship Committee of the Dutchess County Sheep and Wool Growers Association, which awards an annual undergrad scholarship to a student who has participated in a sheep youth program. Besides her community service in the agricultural sector, Lynn also works as a historic preservation consultant. Her barn in Coleman Station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Thriving despite obstacles

Dashing Star Farm is a success story, but it hasn't been without its challenges. In 2008 Lynn lost half her flock due to copper toxicosis brought on by contaminated feed she had bought from a national

feed company. Watching her animals suffer was even more difficult than the laborious five years of litigation that followed, which is still underway. Years of crossbreeding were undone, and she is still in the process of building back her flock. Despite this, the farm is thriving, and Lynn has plans to increase her flock to 100 sheep. Knowing Lynn, she will surpass that number.

At the end of my visit, Lynn and I worked our way through dozens of multi-colored hens to pass back through the barn, where the still nursing lambs slept away the afternoon. In the other pasture, the farm's newest arrival was now clean, dashing, and ready to face the world – or at least Millerton. Lynn carefully picked him up and carried him to the barn with his mother following. The ram and I stayed behind, watching. I could tell we were both thinking the same thing: this one's going to be a star. ●

Lynn sells her lamb, eggs, and wool products at the Millerton farmers market, the Amenia farmers market, and at numerous sheep and wool festivals throughout the year. You can also find her lamb on fine restaurant menus in NYC. For more information or to make an appointment to visit the farm, contact Lynn Mordas at dashingstarfarmer@gmail.com, and visit her website www.dashingstarfarm.com.

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the real estate market

IN THE TOWN OF NORTH EAST, NY

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

In every issue of Main Street Magazine we examine the dynamics of a particular local real estate market in our coverage area. We will talk to Assessors, bankers, building departments, and real estate professionals, and collect and analyze sales data to present an accurate, objective picture of each town.

The Town of North East, officially spelled as two words, is tucked like a puzzle piece in the north eastern corner of Dutchess County, New York, with a panhandle sticking north into Columbia County. It's unusual for the people who live here to say they live in North East. Instead they say I live in Shekomeko or Smithfield Valley in the south of the town with beautiful views and horse paddocks, or Millerton, meaning the busy village and surrounds, or Boston Corners.

Three school districts serve the town – Pine Plains, Taconic Hills, and Webutuck – and there are four post offices – Pine Plains, Amenia, Millerton, and Stanfordville. Everyone is confused about the difference between the Village of Millerton with its own mayor, and the town of North East, which has a supervisor and separate offices a block away from the Village Hall.

Over the last twenty years the area has changed dramatically. The gritty village has become chic and the dairy farms are becoming country estates.

The Village of Millerton

The Village of Millerton was voted one of the coolest small towns in America by Frommer's Budget Travel Magazine in 2007. Elyse Harney's realtors on Main Street say they still get calls as the result of the article. This village of 283 residences and 958 people has a tea parlor, a four-screen movie theater, a glass studio, two florists, an independent bookstore, a hardware store, and 14 places to eat.

Originally a railroad center, the village streets are lined with Victorian houses from the late 1800's. People are attracted by the walkability of the village, and its proximity to everything from the rail trail to Kristie Schmidt, the only doctor in town. New buyers like the idea of walking down to Irving Farm for a cup of coffee, or to Terni's General Store for a Pendleton shirt or a copy of the paper.

There are few lots available to construct new houses within the village and homes are priced modestly, although most require some fixing up. In the Main Street analysis of 35 public, non-distressed sales in the village in the last five years, the



The north side of Barton Street is lined with Victorian houses. A postcard (small picture at top) of the Barton Street mansions dated 1921 describes Millerton as "a very pretty village." Only the trees have changed in a view taken from the same vantage point 92 years later.

highest price paid was \$275,000 and the average price was \$172,150.

"There are many reasons that people buy in the village," according to Brad Rebillard of Dutchess Country Real Estate. "There's proximity to the rail trail and the village center, and large, well built Victorian houses, especially on Barton and Simmons Street. Everything you need is right here. My clients love the walking aspect of the village that other places don't have."

"New Yorkers want to be in the village," observed Elizabeth van Diepen of Elyse Harney Real Estate in Millerton. "They are able to purchase for cash, and they want to walk. Many are working from home. A lot of them are coming from Greenwich Village and Brooklyn."

Two different markets

"There are two distinct markets," according to Ron Steed of Steed Real Estate, "and it has always been that way. The village market has fewer buyers and

tends to be investors or urban people resettling full time. Outside of the village 80% of buyers are from the city and privacy is their primary concern."

Taxes are also an issue. "People who are worried about New York taxes can buy in Connecticut and pay more for a house in better shape and less land, but pay less in property taxes," said van Diepen.

The area's options and offerings

The surrounding Town of North East shows "Incredible variety within the same neighborhood," according to Katherine Johnson, the town's Assessor since late 2007. "There's a country estate next to a trailer. You feel welcome everywhere."

North East has views of the Taconic Mountains

Continued on next page ...

HOME & LAND SALES TOWN OF NORTH EAST, NY

RESIDENTIAL SALES

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
# of homes & lots sold Village	15	4	11	3	7
# of homes sold Town	17	15	6	6	8
\$ total sales Village	\$2,276,779	\$572,000	\$2,048,591	\$464,000	\$1,342,000
\$ total sales Town	\$8,159,600	\$6,497,987	\$1,777,000	\$3,773,393	\$3,482,691
Total \$ Town & Village home sales	\$10,936,379	\$7,070,221	\$3,825,591	\$4,237,393	\$4,825,111

LAND SALES

# of parcels sold	5	6	3	3	5
Total \$ land sales	\$3,598,500	\$4,883,000	\$242,500	\$2,304,580	\$3,212,000
TOTAL TOWN & VILLAGE	\$14,534,879	\$11,953,221	\$4,068,091	\$6,541,973	\$8,037,111
Value of Million \$ sales	\$6,964,000	\$6,550,000	\$0	\$4,322,080	\$3,150,000

A note on Main Street numbers

Main Street calculations of North East residential and raw land sales were compiled based on data recorded by Dutchess County Real Property Service received by Town Assessor Kathleen Johnson. Residential and raw land sales have been separated based on New York State property class codes. Foreclosures, estate sales, bank sales, sales to relatives, etc. are included if the purchase price is not less than 75% of the assessed value.



Over 530 acres including views in every direction has just come on the market for \$9,500,000. The ancestral burying ground pictured here is not included.

and of the Catskills on the other side of the Hudson River. A sweeping 360-degree vista can double the value of a property. Unspoiled large tracts of land are increasingly in demand by part-time residents whom Johnson guesses constitute half of the market.

What happened from 2008 to 2012?

A look at the sales numbers prepared by Main Street (see chart above) shows that 2010 was, in retrospect, a terrible year to be a real estate broker.

"No one even called on the phone," according to Elizabeth van Diepen. Although there was a flurry of activity in the affordable village market, total sales volume plummeted to less than 28% of 2008 levels. Million dollar sales normally account for 40% to 60% of total sales, but in 2010 there were none – zero. The weekend buyer stayed out of town.

Town home sales recovered in 2011 and 2012, but they still remain half of their peak levels compared to 2008. Homes in the Village of Millerton have also slid from 2008 highs with 2011 representing a low point with only three properties sold in the entire year. Comparatively speaking, 2012 overall was active with the highest sales volume since 2009 even though sales of million dollar properties were half that of 2008.

The clear upward trend in North East is the market for raw land, which recovered to almost 2008 levels and in 2012 constituted 40% of total real estate sales. Johnson maintains that total sales may be down but that actual prices paid for

individual properties are relatively stable and selling near their assessed values. Some realtors Main Street interviewed estimated that price levels have fallen at least 20% from previous highs in 2008, while Drew Hingson thinks that the price for elite properties has remained firm.

"There are buying opportunities," but he cautions, "You are kidding yourself if you think that prices will go down further. Some large tracts are purchased as investments with low carrying costs given agricultural exemptions and farm field rental of \$35 to \$40 an acre."

Financing IS available – for some

"I think we've worked through the foreclosures," said Johnson. "The crash was in 2008 and then it took the banks awhile to foreclose and sell. The worst of the foreclosures from the bubble are behind us."

Amy Raymond, VP of Retail Lending at Salisbury Bank, a local community bank with brand new offices in Millerton, says that financing is available and that community banks can be more flexible than the Wall Street giants.

"It's true our qualifications are more stringent and the credit score cut off is now 700 compared to 620 at the top of the market," said Raymond. "Right now our 30-year fixed rate mortgages are at 3.5% with 20% down. We are one of the few banks that has a special product to finance raw land and

Right: Realtors and the Town Assessor agree that this village home at 14 South Maple, which sold for \$100,000 in December, was the buy of the year. It is assessed at \$264,400 but requires extensive renovation.

Below: 18 North Maple is typical of a recently purchased village home that required a little fixing up.



building lots. We also work with home buyers on budgeting and saving, sometimes for years, to get them to qualify for a mortgage. Qualified first time home buyers can now get a mortgage for as little as 5% down.”

Current market inventory is over \$100 million

Combining information from two multiple listing services plus listings from realtors, Main Street estimates there is currently over \$100 million dollars worth of properties on the market in the Town of North East. This is almost FIVE times the value of all real estate sold in the last five years.

Over 80% of this inventory is \$1 million dollar properties, many of them hundreds of acres of raw land. Some, like the Perotti farm pieces have lingered on the market for years, but others have been listed since the beginning of the year. Right now there are over twenty million-dollar properties, five of which are over \$5,000,000, including 532 acres at the top of Winchell Mountain Road with 360-degree views for \$9,500,000. At \$17,857 an acre, listing broker Drew Hingson, calls it a “bargain.” Johnson says the recent revaluation increased the assessments of raw land, but that values still seem to be going up.

Weekend buyers continue to want the same features: acreage, privacy, a mix of fields and woods and views. “People from New York have already probably spent time and money fixing up their apartment and they don’t want to go through it again,” reasons Arleen Shepley of Elyse Harney

Real Estate. “Everyone wants a turn-key home. And now they are interested in contemporary homes with high ceilings, like New York lofts. Unfortunately we don’t have many of those.”

Realtors report being very busy, and Salisbury Bank supports their optimistic view. “Mortgages are up 20% in the first quarter of 2013 compared to 2012,” according to Amy Raymond. “There were a lot of foreclosures and short sales in 2012, but now we are seeing regular sales prices. The only way is up.”

“It finally seems to be moving forward,” according to Paula Redmond. “We are very, very busy and selling properties.”

Brad Rebillard sees, “a definite up-tick in 2013. Last week there were multiple offers on a property and a bidding war. It could be isolated, but I haven’t seen that for a while.”

On the other hand there were no permits issued for the construction of new homes in the town for the last 15 months, compared to the typical four or five annually from 2008 to 2011. Millerton’s Elyse Harney Real Estate brokers Shepley and van Diepen reported a flurry of activity at the beginning of the year, but an apparent paucity of buyers in March and April. Assessor Johnson takes the longer view and believes that the market is stabilizing. ●

FORECLOSURES AND BANK SALES BY YEAR IN THE TOWN OF NORTH EAST

YEAR	FORE-CLOSURE	BANK SALES
2008	1	1
2009	3	2
2010	4	1
2011	2	4
2012	3	1



death cafés

ARE COMING TO LIFE

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

Go ahead, admit it – your sense of morbid curiosity has been piqued by the words “Death Café.” Your imagination is running wild and perhaps you are now picturing a strange riff on an Addams Family episode...

You walk into a dimly lit café and approach the barista, who is sporting copious Goth tattoos and piercings and seething with ennui – so far things seem normal. You step to the counter and peruse your offerings – mocha morta-latte or Harney & Sons herbal mortali-tea blend. Yum, there’s your favorite – cinnamon coffin cake. As you turn to take your order to a table you are faced with a scene directly from Sartre’s *No Exit*. The only seat available is next to a pompous business executive speaking into a cell phone, and definitely not in a library voice. Across is a tantrum-throwing toddler screaming from a stroller while over-indulgent parents ply their progeny with cellphone games and promises of future rewards. As you trudge toward the empty table you find yourself agreeing with old Jean Paul, hell really is other people.

Birth of Death Cafés

The reality is that Death Cafés are alive and anything but a social option for the moribund and morose. Originally founded by sociologist Bernard Crettaz in Switzerland, they were known as Café Mortels. From there, the idea migrated to Paris and then to London, where it is gaining purchase through the efforts of Jon Underwood, who coined the name Death Café and has held them in venues as intimate as in his home and as grand as in the

Royal Festival Hall.

Now they are here in the United States. Lizzy Miles, social worker and thanatologist (someone who studies death and dying), launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise funds for the first U.S. Death Café in Columbus, Ohio. Having reached her goal she hosted the café in July 2012. According to her Kickstarter page she presented a paper on the concept in April at the Association for Death Education and Counseling in California. Death Cafés are now popping up in locations all around the country.

The goal of the Death Café is to positively reconcile us to the idea of our finitude and then use that as a catalyst to live our lives more fully and authentically. These sessions are primarily designed for people who, according to Underwood, “...are not immediately dying or in the white-heat of bereavement.” Rather, it is for those of us who are moving through life a little like the walking dead, going through the motions without really thinking about our own mortality. The idea is that if we were alive to the possibility of our own death we would approach our lives more thoughtfully, make different choices, and stop limiting ourselves. Paradoxically, this new view of death enhances life.

In the United States, death has evolved into a taboo subject, kind of like how no one ever seems to go to the bathroom on TV shows. We know it must happen but we do not want to see it. Our strange concoction of a fragmented health care delivery system and profit motive has created an environment where the approach to death is seg-

mented, administrative and clinical – something to be planned and budgeted for and then placed in a drawer until such time as we need it.

In addition, the human need to control the future, regardless of our actual success in doing it, makes planning for our death or that of loved ones appealing and satisfying, albeit at some times illusory. The work we do with DNRs, living wills and Five Wishes is so important, but still only part of what we can do with regard to death. Enter the Death Café.

How they work

So what does happen at a Death Café? Well, first and foremost it is facilitated by a professional in counseling or hospice who helps guide discussion or offer a few starting thoughts. Then over tea, coffee, and cake the floor opens up to conversation and sharing about fears, experiences, theories about afterlife, the existence of an afterlife, and spiritual-



ity – whatever is on the minds of the individuals there. Time at the end is devoted to reflection on what the discussion has to do with our time here on earth. This is critical to the process. What would be the point of dwelling on death if it were not for the purpose of making our lives richer while we live it? The underlying structure of a Death Café is formulaic and if you are intrigued enough to host one you can avail yourself to a free Death Café how-to manual on Underwood's website www.deathcafe.com.

An intimate group exploration of death can allow us to explore an emotionally-charged experience with some distance and perspective. This could be a productive way to help us explore questions regarding our finite existence. For example, my first exposure to personally grappling with death was when my dad passed away 18 months ago. With the help of a wonderful hospice team I was able to experience his death in a very poignant and healing way. I had questions and they answered them – about the dying process; how the body shuts down; the power of music and touch; the fact that the ability to hear lasts almost until the end; and when to say my good-byes. The day my dad died it was as if there was a hole in the world, like when you lost a tooth as a kid and all you felt was the gap.

To me, his death gave birth to all kinds of questions that were not in the realm of hospice. I wondered if death was as final as it felt. Or is there a world of spiritual energy swirling around us? What did it feel like for him to die? Did he have any regrets? What were the silver linings of his 17-year decline from Parkinson's Disease? Did he see the light? Is there a heaven? Many of these questions may well be beyond the limits of human reason, but maybe not. Even if they are, does that make them any less worth asking? Inquiries like these make excellent fodder for a Death Café.

Being philosophical about death

We are generally so fearful of our death and the death of those close to us. Because of this we do less than logical things to avoid contemplating it. Take a mid-life crisis for example. Recently my 10-year-old son asked what this was. He must have heard it on an episode of *Top Gear*. My husband and I, precipitously close to the age of having one, answered that it is when people do silly things because they are afraid of getting older and dying. I had to bite my tongue to avoid adding, "... and if your father has one it will be his end-of-life crisis."

This denial of something as certain as death leads to some self-destructive acts that in the end do not enhance our time here on earth. I can see no downside to embracing our death – except perhaps a decrease in sports car sales and cosmetic surgery. We might actually live more to our true potential and order our priorities



The goal of the Death Café is to reconcile us in a positive way with the idea of our finitude and then use that as a catalyst to live our lives more fully and authentically. Image source: Google Images.

in a way that nurtures our mind and soul and eschew things that ultimately leave us feeling more empty and hollow.

In the brief but thought-provoking book *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Mitch and Morrie talk about death. Morrie starts the conversation with, "Everybody knows they are going to die, but nobody believes it." The dying Morrie urges Mitch to learn how to die so he can learn how to live, and that if Mitch were to accept that he can die at any time it might change how he conducts his life. Mitch might be less ambitious, more spiritual and more appreciative. We all might be.

For a more weighty examination of death we can turn to Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher who made death and mortality a central theme of his 1927 opus *Being and Time*. Heidegger calls us a "being toward death," who lives a finite existence after having been dropped into an historical and temporal world. He writes that, "As soon as man comes to life he is at once old enough to die." Yet we pretend that the fate of dying experienced by others may somehow elude us, and this pretense leads us to live less authentically. For Heidegger we must come face-to-face with our mortality and understand that our death is ours alone. This produces an existential "anxiety" which instead of paralyzing us can give us freedom toward our death, since we can then choose to engage with it and meet it head on.

Death Cafés can be a step toward this acceptance at a time in our lives when we are hopefully not faced with an imminent demise. They can give



us the space and distance to question how we want to live our finite lives. Ask yourself, would a more thoughtful relationship with mortality change the way you approach life? If you truly, openly, and honestly accepted death as a part of life would you get more out of the life you have?

Put it this way, we know there are only two certainties in life – death and taxes. Heaven knows we have talked taxes to death. Now it's time to start on the other one. Any takers? I'll bring the coffin cake. •

sharon's iron heritage

THE INDUSTRY OF THE SHARON VALLEY

By The Sharon Historical Society through exurbs from their "Archaeological, Historical & Architectural Resources. Town of Sharon." Updated 2005. www.sharonhist.org.

Last month we learned all about the founding of Sharon, Connecticut. One of the most important parts to Sharon's history has to do with its industry, from being the "Mousetrap Capital of the World" to being a major contributor to America's iron industry, in particular during the Civil War. But as with everything; as events end and things change, it has consequences, and with the end of the Civil War, the iron industry of Sharon changed, changing the face of Sharon forever.

Sharon Valley & Industry

Between 1780 and 1890, Sharon Valley supported a wide range of industrial activity. In 1829, Asahel Hotchkiss began production of home, farm, and utilitarian items from local iron – rakes, ox bow pins, harness buckles and snaps, mowing machine fingers, monkey wrenches, wagon shaft couplings, and currycombs. By 1850 the Hotchkiss factory employed nine hands and produced \$25,000 of saleable goods. In addition to the Sharon Valley Furnace and the Hotchkiss factory, Sharon Valley was also home to the Jewett Manufacturing Company, which had been formed initially to produce the mousetrap invented in the early nineteenth century by Joseph Boswick. Sharon Valley soon earned the nickname "Mousetrap Capital of the World." The Jewett firm was succeeded on the same site by the Noyes Malleable Ironworks. Several other small machine and fabrication shops specializing in small metal goods operated here as well.

Calkinstown

The Calkinstown road runs in an easterly direction from Gay Street (Route 41) to the junction of White Hollow Road (the Lime Rock Road). The earliest reference to the road now named Calkinstown Road appears in the town record of land transfers in 1780 when Stephen Calkin, Sr., the original owner of home lots #31 (and #35) when Sharon was founded in 1739, granted "forty acres including the house and barn where I now live" to Amos Calkin. In the description he refers to a "boundary line running west by the highway that goes by my house."

The term Calkinstown describes the area of about a mile along that highway where Lt. Stephen Calkin's home was built, and about 1/5 of a mile

around the bend of the road toward West Cornwall where Amos Calkin built what seems to be the last of the Calkins' houses in 1808.

By the nineteenth century, Calkinstown was a manufacturing center, with factories making stoves and tools operating at several locations on the north side of the road along Beardsley Pond Brook (then called Sprague Pond Brook). Calkinstown became an iron-making center between 1845 and 1856 when Captain Hiram Weed operated one of two blast furnaces in town using water from Beardsley Pond to power the blast. Captain Weed's home on the north side of Calkinstown Road later became the first Sharon Hospital.

Oblong Valley (Amenia Union)

Another important manufacturing hub developed in the southwestern portion of Sharon along Mill Brook and Little Falls known as Hitchcock Corners (later Amenia Union). Straddling the Connecticut-New York line, Hitchcock Corners supported the activities of many firms at 15 industrial sites, powered by the rushing Webatuck Creek (Ten Mile River). These included two foundries; manufacturers of the Buckley plow, milking stools and pails; John Burnham's cigar factory; blacksmith shops, a wagon shop, grist and saw mills, and others. There was also a satinet factory on Beebe Brook, a tributary of Mill Brook, which produced cotton material from which stockings and other items were made. Hitchcock Corners/Amenia Union buzzed with activity in the mid-nineteenth century, especially following the arrival of the Harlem Railroad in neighboring Dover Plains and Amenia.

Sharon's Northeast corner and the Clay Beds

The northeast corner of Sharon was the site of four important activities: charcoal making for fuel for the local blast furnaces, including the Lime Rock Iron Co., Barnum and Richardson, Weeds Furnace and the Sharon Valley Iron Co.; farming; the quarrying of quartzite for the production of hearthstone for blast furnaces; and the mining of kaolin (clay produced by the weathering of quartzite). Kaolin from the "Clay Beds" was used primarily to make porcelain ("China"), pottery and paper. Large portions of Mine Mountain and Mount Easter became

part of the Housatonic State Forest following the cessation of local iron production in 1925.

Sharon's Iron Heritage

In 1740 Joseph Skinner began producing iron at a newly completed forge located near a dam standing just south of Mudge Pond (later the site of Benedict's Mill). Three years later he sold the forge, tools, and stock or ore to Jonathan and Samuel Dunham of Sharon, Thomas North of Wethersfield, and Jonathan Fairbanks of Middletown. Jonathan Pratt was also an early partner. Two decades later the Hutchinson brothers constructed a forge on the east slope of Sharon Mountain, near present Smith Hill Road. Samuel Hutchinson was from Lebanon and served as a magistrate in Sharon. John Gray from Scotland, Connecticut, operated yet another forge off Tanner Road. Ore was mined on Silver Mountain and Buck Mountain in Ellsworth and Skiff Mountain on the Sharon/Kent border.

From these humble beginnings the area prospered as one of America's most important early mining and refining centers. Blessed with the critical resources of waterpower, iron ore, limestone for flux, and lumber to provide the necessary charcoal, the industry flourished. Sharon's iron industry, already many decades old, received a great boost in 1822 when Leman Bradley of Falls Village obtained land and waterpower rights in Sharon valley along Webatuck Creek for the purpose of constructing a blast furnace, the first in town. Beginning with an initial purchase of \$7,000, he later acquired additional land containing ore (just east of Indian Mountain), timber, and lime. By 1825 Bradley's workers had built a large dam, creating a ten-acre pond, along with a 1,500-foot race with overshot wheel and pumping station to power the blast. The furnace was built of Stockbridge marble and fueled with charcoal.

Bradley operated the site for only a few years, however, and by the late 1820s began selling off his holdings. The furnace later passed to Salisbury's Horace Landon who maintained production until 1872. In 1863, the furnace was enlarged and converted to hot blast, a more efficient process. In the early 1870s, the Sharon Valley Iron Company (owned by the Barnum and Richardson Company) acquired the furnace. Hiram Weed opened a second

furnace in Sharon in 1845, located 0.4 miles from the west terminus of Caulkinstown Road. It was not long in blast after 1856.

Ultimately, the iron industry faced severe and finally insurmountable obstacles. The close of the Civil War brought an end to government orders, however the Sharon Valley Iron Company continued to produce iron for railroad car wheels. Iron for wheels alone was not enough and furnaces began to close, including the ironworks in Sharon Valley in 1898. Introduction of the Bessemer process, expansion of the Midwestern iron and steel industry, and the high cost of ore and fuel all made Connecticut iron increasingly uncompetitive in national markets. The Barnum and Richardson Company/Salisbury Iron Company, which consolidated almost complete control over the region's furnaces and mines during this period, struggled against the odds finally declaring bankruptcy in 1925.

Turnpikes & Transportation

Sharon, like all wilderness communities, required the creation of a basic infrastructure of roads and bridges. Early roads, no more than rough trails and paths, often followed older Indian routes. As surveyors mapped new towns, they made allowance for roads between proprietary allotments, often in a rectilinear grid pattern (inevitably disrupted by geographic realities). The town highway committee established in 1739 proposed that in addition to Sharon's principal north-south road (Amenia Union Road-Gay Street), side roads about one-half mile apart and running in an east-west direction be laid out. Additional north-south highways, also one-half mile apart, would complete a grid system. A small number of through routes included roads from Litchfield to Poughkeepsie and Hartford to Albany; the latter passed across the upper end of Sharon Green, while the road to Poughkeepsie crossed Sharon Mountain. Present-day Route 41 also existed in vestigial form.

In the 1790s, Connecticut's modern roadway system of turnpikes, improved toll roads owned by private investors, came to Sharon in the guise of the Goshen and Sharon Turnpike (chartered

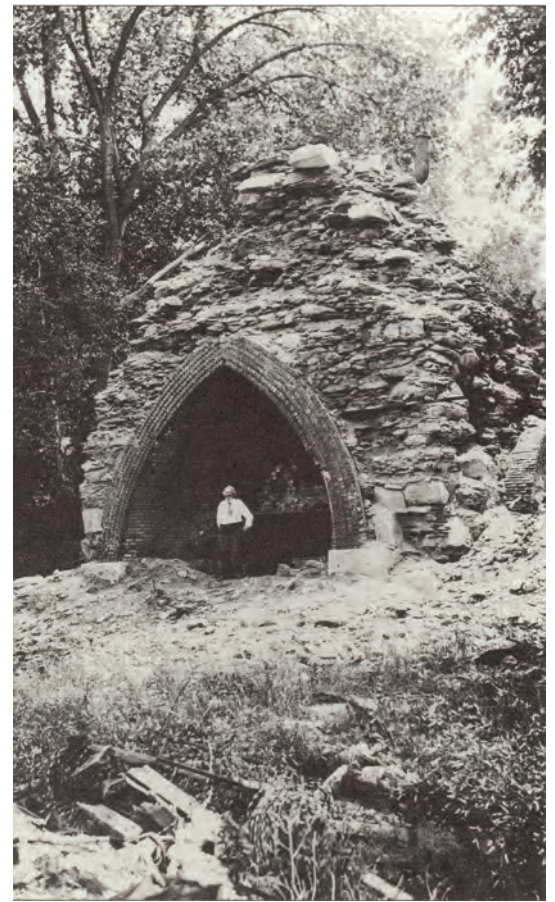
in 1803) and the Sharon and Cornwall Turnpike (begun in 1809). The roads had a marked impact on the town. In 1807 Kellogg Berry built a home on the corner of Main Street and Route 4 (Goshen-Cornwall Turnpike). In 1817 he sold the house and property to Major David Gould who recognized the site's business prospects and over the years established a store, lumberyard, and other shops. Construction of railroads through the region in the late 1830s and 1840s accelerated the push to turn private turnpikes into public roads.

The modern regional road network, which includes Routes 4, 41, 44, and 63, wasn't finalized until 1909. In 1924 the General Assembly allocated receipts from gasoline taxes to road construction, including road-paving projects. Both Sharon village streets and several through routes were paved in the 1920s. Many of the small concrete bridges still in use were constructed as part of this initial road-paving campaign. By 1917, 150 automobiles traveled local roads, this number increasing within one year by 30! School buses appeared in town circa 1920, replacing the horse-drawn wagons that had transported schoolchildren previously. The road network in Sharon remains much the same as it has been since the 1920s, a system composed of two-lane rural roads and small bridges that exert relatively minimal impact on the environment. Periodic improvements have been largely confined to upgrading safety features, straightening dangerous curves, installing occasional passing lanes, and replacing deteriorated bridges. In addition, Sharon maintains many miles of unpaved roads.

Initially settlers traversed the region's many streams by utilizing fording places where they and their animals could wade across. One of these was located about one mile south of the current Salisbury town line. Primitive bridges followed. Upper, or Hart's Bridge, was first erected c.1760-1762. Middle, or Youngs, Bridge followed c.1770, as did Cornwall Bridge, or Lower Bridge, which replaced the Chidester river ferry of 1741. Still farther south, Swifts Bridge was the last major Housatonic crossing to be completed.

Bridge building accelerated in the early decades of the 19th century. Connecticut's first long-span covered bridge crossed the Housatonic at Sharon-Cornwall Bridge in 1806 and went out with the ice breakup in 1936. The 242-foot Hart's Bridge which utilizes both Town lattice trusses and queen-post trusses survives today in West Cornwall. The Kaolin Company exporting clay from Sharon Mountain built a footbridge across the Housatonic referred to as North Bridge, and used to transport clay to the Railroad cars.

The creation of railroads in the second quarter of the nineteenth century greatly accelerated the processes of economic and social change. The Housatonic Railroad began construction in the summer of 1837, and was projected to run from Bridgeport



Sharon Town Clerk James Wilbur at the ruins of Weed's Furnace, Calkinstown, Sharon, c. 1915. (Courtesy of William Wilbur, Sharon). Scanned from *Seldom Told Tales of Sharon* by Ed Kirby.

to Sheffield, Massachusetts. Though the financial panic of 1837 temporarily delayed construction, the rails reached Canaan in 1842. Just to the west the Harlem Railroad (later New York Central) reached Millerton in the following decade. Both provided Sharon with access to rapid transportation options. Service along the routes continued for passengers and freight until the late 1920s. After 1930, passenger service on the Connecticut Western and Housatonic Railroads ceased and freight service declined significantly. In New York service on the Harlem line was discontinued beyond Dover Plains (now reestablished to Wassaucott). •

Next month we will examine a local woman's search for her ancestors, going back well over five generations. We examine her voyage in discovering her forefathers, and how she uncovered some mysteries and perhaps even solved the murder mystery of her great-great-great grandfather!



Sharon Valley Ironworks (CT). 1878 (Salisbury Association). Scanned from the brochure called "The Iron Heritage Trail."

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To design is to create, execute or construct according to a plan. We design by creating according to your very specific needs. There are many design solutions, but by getting to know you and your needs, the solutions become fewer and clearer. Our design bias and passion is always to strive to create the "wow" factor. Our design bias is fairly Euro in that we like clean lines, beautiful typography and a clear hierarchy. That being said, every client's needs are different and we design based on our client's needs.

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Simply Clean

Weekly home cleanings, corporate and specialty cleanings, etc. Kelly Sherlock. (518) 821-6000. simplyclean518@gmail.com.

Servicing Columbia, northern Dutchess, and Litchfield counties, for both residential and commercial cleanings, and everything inbetween; Kelly Sherlock of Simply Clean is more than just your average cleaning lady. She laughs while admitting that she's been cleaning since the age of six, and that she actually enjoys cleaning and then showcasing a clean and tidy household. Simply Clean offers such services as vacuuming, dusting, mopping, and doing laundry, and is fully insured. But perhaps you are looking for a full top-to-bottom cleaning, or something in between such as staging (i.e. setting up for a realty showing). No job is too big or too small for Simply Clean – Kelly can handle it all. You want Kelly to come in for fall and spring cleanings, bi-weekly, or weekly cleanings? She will come at your convenience and cater the cleaning to your specific needs and desires. If you have products that you prefer to be used, no problem. But if you aren't sure that you have the right cleaning product to do the job; leave it to the professional. Kelly will bring her own products. Kelly is very trustworthy and responsible with many years of experience, and references are available upon request. So stop putting off your household cleaning! Call Kelly at Simply Clean, and let her come in to help you make your home shine again.



8 Landscape and Maintenance

Lawn, landscaping, stonework and more. Keith Perrino, owner. (518) 325-1501. perrinokeith08@me.com.

The late Tony Perrino started TP landscaping in 1978. Son Keith Perrino started working for the family business at age 14. As most do, Keith went off to college. A few years later, Keith came back to work for the family business in 2000. Soon after a new farm market – Black Grocery Farm Market – was added to the family business. Tony's passing left Keith with his legacy. Keith has had a great support system from his wife, mother, and a group of wonderful people such as the Herrington family. The business is still known as TP landscaping to some, but with the new corporate name is 8 Landscape and Maintenance. People ask, why eight? Keith explains this is an infinity number, where there is no end. Keith and his crew mow lawns and maintain properties from one acre to a hundred. Working closely with Herrington's, Inc., they also build and design bluestone and paver patio stone walls. Keith and his crew also plant small bushes to giant trees that are 20 foot or taller! Jobs are done to 110% of their ability and use every resource they can to get the job done. Keith has had the pleasure of working with great clients and would like to work for you, too. If you're thinking of changing your landscape, contact 8 Landscape and Maintenance today.



Tristate Antique Restoration

Antique furniture restoration. 191 Wiltzie Bridge Road, Ancramdale. (518) 329-0411. www.tristateantiquerestoration.com.

Conall Haldane is the proprietor of Tristate Antique Restoration, based out of Ancramdale, NY. With a decade of experience, but with over 25 years combined experience in the shop, your worn and or broken furniture will come back to life in their hands. Tristate Antique Restoration specializes in antique furniture restoration. Learning from John Taylor (whose workshop used to be in Oblong Books & Music store's current location for many years) Mike Beecher and Conall still use John's techniques. Now working from a renovated cowbarn turned workshop on Wiltzie Bridge Road, repairs are treated properly and returned to the owner in a timely fashion. Mike and Conall work on both old and new furniture. Tristate Antique Restoration has had the pleasure of primarily servicing New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, but they've worked on pieces from all around the world. They work with both antique dealers and individuals alike. Conall says it is a fun business to be in. "You may see a lot of the same types of furniture, but it's always a new project that has a different story to tell." If you have been putting off fixing that table or chair, don't wait any longer. Tristate Antiques Restoration would like to help you, contact them today. Pick-up and delivery is also available.



Oblong Books & Music

A general book store, with Oblong Jr. focusing on the younger ones. 26 Main Street, Millerton, NY. (518) 789-3797. www.oblongbooks.com

Founded in October of 1975 and named after interesting historical facts, Oblong Books & Music has become a staple in the community. Today Dick (photographed) and daughter Suzanna Hermans own and maintain the beloved book and music store. Keeping up with what is new, Oblong provides access to any book in print. In fact, there are about 30,000 titles to choose from, for adults and children. You should be able to find something that will spark your interest. If not, no worries! The friendly and helpful staff can special order anything. Music strikes a chord with Dick, and he felt it was equally important to have a music section. He said the most popular genres are rock and roll, classical, jazz, and folk. He says it has been fun to watch Millerton evolve over the years, and feels there are only good things to come. Recently Dick took on the project of renovation, adding a large book remainders section where the music room used to be upstairs, and with new book shelves stacked up and ready to go, he hopes to have the project completed by June 1st. Oblong has had the pleasure of serving many wonderful customers over the years and it would be their pleasure to help with your reading and listening needs. Stop in or visit them on the web.

INSURING YOUR WORLD

Lawns are getting green and leaves are getting mulched, gardens are getting plowed and rototilled, so it is always a neighborly gesture to extend a hand to your neighbors and friends should you have the good fortune to own a garden or sub compact tractor! The big question is, ARE YOU INSURED? The answer, as you can imagine is not what you may think. If you take your garden tractor to help the next door neighbor mow their lawn and a rock kicks up and hits a car, or worse yet, a person, will your homeowners policy respond and pay the damages? The answer is a resounding, NO. All homeowners policies are written to cover vehicles that, "are designed to maintain ones property," and only "while they are servicing the residence premises" which means once they leave your property, you are on your own unless you've made other arrangements with your agent. Think about taking your tractor down the road to plow a friends' garden and get into an accident with another vehicle, who will pay the other parties' damages, NOT YOUR HOMEOWNERS – again, you are on your own. So, before leaving your own property with a motorized piece of equipment, contact your agent to see if you can secure coverage before a claim happens and it's too late. Happy Spring.

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



Brad Peck, Inc.

Soil germination...

Soil temperature, moisture, and emergence:

Germination is dependent on soil temperature and available soil moisture. Most cool season species will not start the germination process until soil temperatures are above 50° F. Warmer soil temperature results in a faster germination rate. A consistent supply of soil moisture is critical to the germination process. Once the germination process has begun, a lack of moisture sufficient to allow the seed to fully dry out, will kill the germinating seed. Good seed to soil contact helps supply a consistent supply of moisture to the seed, hence the need for good seed bed preparation.

When germination is discussed, what we are usually referring to is emergence. Emergence occurs when the first plant part, usually some form of a leaf, breaks through the soil surface. For most species, emergence occurs several days to a few weeks after the germination process begins, again depending on temperature and moisture.

By going to Agway's website and selecting the germination article, you will find a lists of several species and mixtures along with an average number of days to emergence. Keep in mind that there can be a wide variation in this range depending on several environmental factors. Also note that the mixtures typically have wider ranges than the pure components. This is because components have different germination rates. Eventually, all the components will germinate, emerge and contribute to the mixture.

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Health and Beauty

There are numerous health benefits from many of the foods we eat. Here are 9 of the health benefits of avocados from www.healthonlinezone.info:

1. Maintain a healthy heart: Avocado contains vitamin B6 and folic acid, which help regulate homocysteine levels. High level of homocysteine is associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Avocado also contains vitamin E, glutathione, and monounsaturated fat, which help maintain a healthy heart.
2. Lower cholesterol levels: Avocados are rich in a compound called beta-sitosterol which has been shown to be effective in lowering blood cholesterol levels.
3. Control blood pressure: Avocados are also a great source of potassium, which helps in controlling blood pressure levels.
4. Anti-Inflammatory properties: Phytonutrient compound found in avocados, such as polyphenols and flavonoids have been found to have anti-inflammatory properties, thereby reducing the risk of inflammatory and degenerative disorders.
5. Promote eye health: Avocado is an excellent source of carotenoid lutein, which known to help protect against age-related macular degeneration and cataracts.
6. Regulate the blood sugar levels: The monounsaturated (good) fats in avocados can reverse insulin resistance which help to regulate blood sugar levels. Avocados also contain soluble fiber which keep a steady blood sugar levels.
7. Protect against cancer: Many studies have shown that avocado can inhibit the growth of prostate cancer. The oleic acid in avocado is also effective in preventing breast cancer.
8. Anti-aging properties: Being rich in antioxidants, avocado is beneficial in preventing aging symptoms. The glutathione in avocado may boost immune systems, slow the aging process, and encourage a healthy nervous system.
9. Skin Care: The avocado oil is added in many cosmetics because of its ability to nourish the skin and make your skin glow.

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WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Your sensual, caring nature will be appreciated whether you actively pursue it or sit back, you will receive the love and good fortune you desire. Your creativity is also at a peak. You should take advantage of this energy and actively use your talent to create something beautiful and meaningful.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Being married to someone for many years takes work. No one said it was going to be easy. Hollywood promotes a fantasyland that can make your life look drab and boring by comparison. Realize that your life can be good and interesting, too - reality is even better than the movie version.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

It's a great day to make your big move. If there's something in the love and romance department that you feel you need to act on, it's time to do it. It's now or never. Approach all situations in a practical, caring manner. Plow forward with confidence and don't look back. Indulge in those things that give you pleasure. Get a massage or take a bubble bath.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Take your focus off you and concentrate on someone else for a day. This doesn't mean focusing so the person will stop and pay attention to you. It doesn't mean getting their attention so that you have someone who will listen to you talk. Get someone's attention because you really want to hear what he or she has to say.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You will find that the more honest you've been with people, the more payoffs you will receive. Being dependable and trustworthy are key issues to focus on. Act strong and proud with regard to who you are and the rewards will come. Bring a certain amount of tenderness to all your actions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Don't try to fit into a mold you simply don't belong in. You may have gone through a major transformation lately in which you went from being a square peg to a round peg. Other people might still be trying to push you into the square hole. Don't let them. Let people know that it upsets you not to be treated the way you want to be treated.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

There may be subtle messages in people's words that you need to attend to. Other people could be trying to send you hints in order to push your buttons. Confront them on this behavior. Tender, loving messages may be laced with thorns intended to provoke you. Don't let this action go unnoticed.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Don't keep playing along with the games if you no longer want to repeat the same drama. By placing yourself in a victim role, you're opening yourself up to manipulation and control by others. To stop the repetitive pattern, it's crucial for you to stand up and recognize that you have the power and courage to change.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You should be encouraged to take action in any artistic realm. Cook a scrumptious dinner and share it with a loved one. Give your heart a chance to speak and act on what it says. Your feminine and masculine sides are on the same page now. You're a magnet for love and romance.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Go weed the garden. If you don't have a garden, start one. It's important for you to get into the Earth, so roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty. Feeling a connection with the ground is an important step in manifesting your dreams.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Love the people you're with, but don't smother them. The more you loosen your grip on a situation, the more you will gain control of it. Cutting chains to the past is the first step in moving forward toward a goal. You might not realize how much a past situation holds you back until you make the effort to release it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

The active and receptive natures of your being are coming together. There's a balance. You're able to attract the prosperity and love you desire by the way in which you handle yourself around others. Make sure there's a healthy balance between you and your loved ones.

Source: www.horoscope.com

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