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MAGAZINE

The  
*Animal*  
issue

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## THE 2ND ANIMAL ISSUE

We premiered it last year, and we're doing it again this year due to popularity and demand. That's right, this is *The Animal Issue* – part *deux*.

Let me begin, with full disclosure, by saying that I'm an animal person. My two personal favorite animals are horses and cats, and in that order. Oh yes, I'm a cat person. But for the dog people out there, I have no problem with dogs – I like them, too. I have just always gravitated to the independent spirit and attitude that cats have, plus they're the only animal in history to have domesticated themselves. True story.

Horses are my favorite animal though. I grew up on a horse farm. I own horses. I ride. And I even breed them. Horses are pretty much in my blood, because my parents and grandparents are and were horse people. I basically didn't have a shot of being anything but a horse person – but I love it and wouldn't have it any other way! And for the horse people out there, you totally get what I'm talking about. It's said that we horse people are “a little different.” And with that being said, I'd like to share one of my favorite quotes which is by Helen Thompson, and it goes: “In riding a horse, we borrow freedom.” And for me, horses are my freedom, they are my sanity, they are my heart and my soul.

My belief is that animals can be the heart and soul of many. These creatures become a part of our lives, and they are members of our family. Some of them are the most special souls that you'll ever be lucky enough to know. And each animal is so very different – they have their own distinct character, just like every human does. I believe that it is our privilege and obligation to respect and honor the animals that we encounter, and we should consider ourselves lucky to have a wonderful animal in our life. They can shower you with unconditional love and they do it without prejudice or judgement. They can be your best friend in the world. They can bring you up when you're feeling down. They will protect and love you.

An animal can do so much for us, and for that reason, this issue is for them: we pay tribute to the animals in our lives. We thank them for their loyalty and love. So hug your favorite animal, play with them, talk to them, shower them with love and affection. They deserve their unconditional love to be reciprocated.

I will leave you with this Arabian proverb: “The air of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears.”

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



MARCH 2017

This Salisbury, CT resident smiled wide for the camera on a chilly winter's day. “Say haaaay!”

Cover photo by  
Lazlo Gyorsok

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By CB Wismar  
arts@mainstreetmag.com

Yes, this is a piece about David Valyou.

It's also a piece about the influence and encouragement of Tal Streeter, the sculptor and kite artist whose *Endless Column* first appeared in Central Park next to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and now resides at the Storm King Art Center in Mountainville, NY.

Streeter was a charismatic sculptor, influenced by the great Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi – a painter and fabricator of intricate kites who taught, for a time, at the State University of New York at Purchase. He was, by all reports, a man of great wisdom and casual influence over his students.

Artists influence artists. Lessons painfully experienced in one generation evolve into life lessons for ensuing waves of creative types.

Enter David Valyou.

#### Formation

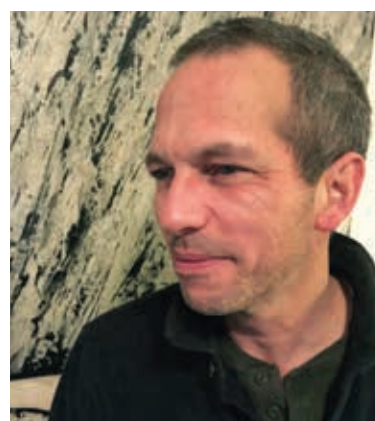
Sharon, Connecticut born and educated at the Tilton School in New Hampshire, David had returned home, eager to pursue the creative

muse that had become apparent at a very early age. While his classmates were scurrying to play “Capture the Flag” and “Red Rover” on the elementary school playground, David was organizing art shows in the school hallways.

While his works were featured, he was eclectic in his curatorial efforts and work by classmates was always included. It was a beginning, the evoking of a real talent that had found early expression.

Breadth of talent was never a question with David. He could draw with precision. He could paint with a flair for both movement and texture. He could assemble found objects into dynamic sculptures that project a sense of motion and intense energy. But, how to best channel the talent?

It was Streeter, the educator, who with the clarity that comes with experience, suggested that David not follow the approved and expected pathways of traditional education. Spending months and years in academic pursuit could have value for David – but concentrating on actually creating his art was a much more compelling force. Streeter encouraged David to travel “the road



less traveled” and in 1994 commissioned a collection of drawings and paintings from the young artist.

There were a few courses in print and graphics that he attended, but for David, the magic of art is creating art, and he pursued it with passion.

#### Appearances in galleries

By the late 1990s, David was being recognized and his shows presented by a number of galleries, both local and national. Galleries prospered in art-conscious Hudson, NY, and David's work was presented and well received.

Galleries as distant as Palm

## The Siren call of the artist: David Valyou

Springs, CA, found his work intriguing. He showed in New York at the Nexus Gallery and was presented at the Outsider Art Fair by Henry Boxer Gallery from Richmond, England.

For a time, David recalled his grammar school days and how in 1998 he had the Mandrake Belle Gallery in Millerton, NY. Although the gallery had a fleeting life, it was both instructive and cautionary for David. "I learned a lot about the gallery business. I began to understand how gallery owners think – what works and what doesn't."

Then, everything changed.

### The impact of 9/11

The aftermath of what we, as a culture, refer to as "9/11" rippled through many aspects of American life. The art world was no exception.

"It was amazing," recalls David. "From what you could do to who you were, the entire scene changed." David's artwork did not change, however. As the "art scene," as it is often called, has continued to shift, driven by cacophonous social media and the hunger for the sale at any cost, he has explored the variety of creative media open to artists.

Sketching, painting, sculpture, assembly, cut paper, plaster, and even marble dust figure into his compositions. He's even gone so far as to reconstruct stuffed animals into pieces of imaginative sculpture. Like many artists, David often finds it an encumbrance to individually title his pieces. "They just are..." he muses. "Some of them I name, but most just exist the way they are."

One notable exception is the work in progress in his Lime Rock studio. *Portrait of a Man I Used to Be* is a striking assembly that began with photos printed on parchment paper and layered with glue. "The wet glue altered the images ... kind of a 'conjuring' of the essential lines and forms." Adhered to the board that David uses as his canvases, the twin images became almost ghostly. The addition of acrylic paint and thin applications of modeling paste give the piece a cloud-like appearance – stark, yet engaging.



Opposite page, L-R, top to bottom: Artwork for the shawl. *Portrait of a Man I Used to Be*. The artist, David Valyou. This page, L-R: Wearable art, the shawl. *Composition for Air*. Imagery courtesy of David Valyou.

His *Composition for Air* uses found objects, constructing them into a wall sculpture that pays homage to early works by Louise Nevelson and Robert Rauschenberg.

### Views of history that shape the present

David Valyou is a student of history. Not only does he focus on the techniques and expressive forms of the masters, he is intrigued with the Aboriginal art of the South Pacific and Africa. "I find so much to learn in the artifacts of earlier cultures," affirms David. His appreciation for the unique, the almost perplexing detritus of culture partially forms his own view of three-dimensional art.

Even David's "boards" exhibit a unique dimensionality. He does not paint on canvas, but on wood, prepared with undercoating that allows him to use a variety of applied materials to create his work.

It should be no wonder that his chosen platform is wood. As so many artists before him, David pursues a parallel career – the day to day work that allows him to work

late into the night on his art. "I save old homes," is his direct way of explaining what consumes his days. "For the past 16 years I've worked on houses and barns and studios all over the area." Learning from exacting detail work on small projects, David has gained a reputation as a respected restorer – someone who will capture the essence of an old building and bring it back to its faded glory.

### The long view

Always intriguing when speaking with artists is to find out "what's next?" Since the pursuit of art is a driver that makes staying in one place (intellectually or creatively) impossible. There's always a new idea, a new discovery, a new question that haunts.

"I'm intrigued with the idea of converting art to clothing," comments David as his eyes flash with the prospect of a new and complex challenge. "I've started working on pieces that can be replicated in limited edition clothes. It's not easy, but seeing your work as wearable is great."

But, as the images indicate, the potential is intriguing. Working with clothing designer/manufacturer Vida, under his "designer" name David James, Valyou's imaginative paintings become elegant, imaginative shawls, scarves, and tops.

And, with it all, there is David's long term vision of what it means to be a contemporary artist. "I want to get into publishing," he says. "I have 25 years of archives – pieces I'd like people to see."

The table is covered with elegant books that showcase the work of serious artists. David wants his book to be part of the collection, "It's how I can share my experience," he affirms, with a resonant echo of the message of Tal Streeter after all these years. ●

David Valyou's work can be seen at [saatchiart.com](http://saatchiart.com), [shopvida.com/davidjames](http://shopvida.com/davidjames), and [davidjamesvalyou.com](http://davidjamesvalyou.com).

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



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~~friendly~~ faces: meet our pets, fur-babies and friends

Six-year-old **Gulli**, aka Gulli Gullisson, is one of the cutest barn cats that you'll ever meet. He "works" at the Thor Icelandics horse farm in Claverack, NY, and is a terrific mouser! Gulli is super friendly and everyone that comes to the farm loves him, that's to say when he takes time from his work schedule to socialize. "I may not look it (because of all my fur of course), but I'm always on the move. I inspect all new horse trailers that pull in, get my paw prints all over the cars in the parking lot, try to play with Grása (the other barn cat), take cat naps in the sun and hayloft, and visit with the horses – often times sharing a drink of water with them." Overall this yellow fluff ball is pretty laid back, but definitely dislikes flea collars and being brushed. That's when the claws come out. Meow!



Maggie McBroom adopted **Playbigorgohome** (or as she calls him, Play) about a year ago. Play was born April 13th, 2009 at Silvernails Farm in Pine Plains, NY. He is a Thoroughbred and measures in at about 16 hands (not a horse person and don't know what 'hands' means? That's OK. Let's just say that a 16-hand horse is a pretty tall horse). Play lives up to his full name for sure and has an impressive resume. He used to race at the Fingerlakes Racetrack in Farmington, NY, and he also earned five career wins. "Hayyyy, that's pretty impressive if I do say so myself!" He now lives at Copake Valley Farm in Copake, NY, where he enjoys a life retired from racing. "Retirement is great! I get a lot of love and tons of treats, but my favorite thing to do are summer evening trail rides with Maggie. Giddy-up!"



The name tag on her ear reads 549, but her full registered name is **Wilrose Clark Lorraine**. Lorraine was bred and born Walt's Diary LLC. in Copake, NY. She is a Holstein cow, which is a popular dairy breed yielding the black and white colors. Cows are nature's couch potatoes, and that's just what she loves being. She loves laying and walking around, eating, and making quality milk. "I am also a show cow, shown by Walter Kiernan at the Columbia County Fair in Chatham, NY. As you can see from the photo, Walter and I go way back. On this day I won grand champion as a heifer (teen)." The Kiernans are fourth-generation farmers, and third-generation at showing Holsteins. They train for months, or even the entire year, to prepare for a show. "Let's keep the show mooooving!"



**Rudy** is a three-and-a-half year old Newfoundland and resides in Copake, NY, with his owners Carolyn and Steve Dobrowski. He was the runt of his litter, but has grown into being the breeds' true "gentle giant" and "goofy Newfie." Rudy loves playing and using as much energy as a Newfie can. "I absolutely adore children and melt at the sight of anyone who gives me attention! I also like to play tug of war with my little big brother (a Boston Terrier), Roscoe. I am very gentle and don't even use my 130lbs as an advantage." True to the Newfoundland breed, Rudy loves his sleep and would dream the day away if he could. But when his "people" aren't home, he patrols the house, guarding and keeping watch of his domain.



**Cleo** is a non-poisonous Red Tail Boa Constrictor. Marguerite Miller-Nicastro purchased her from a reptile expo in Westchester. "I wasSsSs only about 12 inches long when Marguerite got me, and now I am approximately 12 ft long and nine yearsSsSs old. In captivity I could live to be up to 30 plus years old." Cleo is native to Central America and her beautiful pattern would enable her to blend right into the woods and tropical rainforest. "I am cold-blooded and am kept in a warm tank with lights and heat panelsSsSs." Cleo is large, extremely heavy, and is all muscle, therefore she is never handled alone. She is usually very docile and calm, except when she is hungry or going into a shed. "If I am disturbed, I sometimes hissSsSs." The hiss sounds like a large tractor tire losing air and is pretty intimidating to hear!



**BunBun** was rescued by Jeremiah and Rebekah Licis of Pleasant Valley, NY, nearly six years ago from Craigslist. She is a Dutch domestic rabbit and is eight years old (that's approximately 76 in human years). Her favorite things are papaya treats, playing in blankets, her tunnel, chew toys, watching TV, and listening to her dad play guitar. "Despite my age, I am quite spunky and still have plenty of spring in my step. I run around the house with impressive speed and catch a quick nap under the dining room table." Her pet parents say BunBun is their baby, their princess, and the boss of the house! But don't let her cuteness and size fool you (she weighs in at three-and-a-half pounds) she can be quite demanding and we're pretty sure she's hell-bent on world domination.

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# Making hay while the sun shines

SCOT GALLIHER OF SILVER MOUNTAIN HAY,  
TOWN OF NORTH EAST, NY

By Christine Bates  
christine@mainstreetmag.com

*For our Animal themed issue, Main Street interviewed Scot Galliher, the founder and owner of Silver Mountain Hay, in his 1835 house overlooking snow covered hay fields. We discovered the origin of the expression "making hay while the sun shines."*

## How would you describe your business?

Silver Mountain Hay sows, harvests, and stores hay of the highest quality for horse feed. The term "hay" is actually an imprecise catchall word for many types of grasses that are fed to animals.

I started the business in 2006 when I bought the 330-acre Lyle Farm when milk prices had hit a record low and the family decided to sell their dairy. Bruce and David Lyle are still farming the land they know so well. They are critical to our operation and run the business on a day-to-day basis.

## Why did you become a hay farmer?

I grew up around horses and understood the importance of good feed. This part of the world is beautiful because of its history of agriculture,

which is responsible for the fields and farms and open land in the valleys and trees on the hilltops. As I saw big developers buying up land I wanted to help preserve our traditional landscape. Much of my land has conservation easements to protect it forever. Agriculture keeps the wide vistas and prevents our land from growing up into forest, or becoming urban sprawl.

## Did you have a business plan?

Never written down on paper. I had it in my head and knew from experience that there was a need for high quality, mold-free hay, especially in this part of the country. Did you know that there are more horses per capita in New Jersey than in any other state?

## Is this a profitable business? Do you rent other farmers' fields?

It's only profitable because of the agricultural exemption. But unless you can be a lot bigger than Silver Mountain, it's not a highly profitable activity. We farm about 300 total acres on four or five farms and pay no rent to the owners because of the value of the ag exemption. It lowers the property taxes that are due and lets families hold



Above: Scot Galliher, owner of Silver Mountain Hay. Photo by Christine Bates. The inside of the big barn. Below, left: The North East Community Center and the Dutchess Land Conservancy have used Silver Mountain Hay's barn for large fundraisers. Pictured is the NECC's 25th Anniversary Benefit. Photos courtesy of Silver Mountain Hay.

onto their land.

## How do you set prices?

We set current prices based on historical prices, customer demand, and our costs. Fuel is the biggest variable and we put a surcharge on distant deliveries. We sell by the bale, not the ton. Right now our price for a 40-pound, first cut bale is \$6.00.

## How do you market your product? Who are your customers?

Initially we advertised in the *Penny Saver*. Now we have a stable, loyal customer base which buys all the hay we can grow. We no longer advertise and we don't have a website. Our entire crop is pre-sold for the next year by October.

Our hay is grown for horses and our market is pretty evenly divided between northern Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess Counties. Our range is about 60 miles from our barn.

## Did the 2008 recession affect your business?

We were just getting established

when the great down-turn occurred. There is definitely more demand now than six or seven years ago. People have money for horses again.

## Do you grow all your own hay?

We only sell what we grow ourselves. Overall we farm 300 acres within ten miles from our barn. We sell blends of hay. About one third of our volume is high protein hay containing alfalfa and timothy grass, which is fed to working horses like polo ponies, field horses, racehorses, and brood mares. The rest of our hay contains smaller amounts of that along with native American grasses like brome and quack, which are lower in protein and fed to riding horses, the horses most people have. Feeding these horses high protein hay would make them too jumpy and difficult to handle. Most of our hay is sold in 40 pound bales tied with twine.

Continued on next page ...



### Is “making hay easy”? What is the process?

Well it's easy to make bad hay. The process of harvesting hay takes three days of dry weather. Day one is mowing and crimping – cutting the stalks and then crimping them every four inches to release the moisture in the stem. The next day is tedding; a tedder has rapidly spinning tines that aerate the hay. The last day is raking the cut hay into windrows – rows of dry hay, so the baler can pick it up – and then baling. Each piece of equipment that is pulled behind a tractor costs around \$25,000.

### When do you harvest hay?

In late May or early June we harvest the first cutting when the seed head matures. That first cutting is full of nutrients because the plant is trying to reproduce through the seed head, and it's made easier for the plant by snow cover in the prior winter, nature's natural fertilizer. We cut the stalk at about four inches from the ground. When the plant recovers, usually about mid-July, we have the second cutting, which is about half the volume of the first. Sometimes there's a third cutting in September, but we rarely get it because of weather.

### Is weather your biggest challenge?

Like all farmers, weather affects us dramatically. We need three days of dry weather at the right time and the right moisture levels in the soil to harvest hay. We have to consider if there is lots of dew that will condense on the stalks. If it rains and the hay gets wet the crop is ruined. Moisture creates mold which is exothermic – that means it produces heat. I experimented by baling hay on the day it was cut without properly drying it. Within four hours the temperature inside the bale was 200 degrees, which destroys the protein in the hay.

On the other hand, if left in the field too long the UV light will break down the hay and it will turn brown. Our equipment has mois-



Above: Scot Galliher describes Silver Mountain Hay's 30,000 square foot red barn as a monument to agriculture. Photo by Christine Bates.

ture readers, which measures the moisture in every flake of every bale of hay. If it's much less than 10% it's almost too dry and can hurt the horse's mouth. If it's over 18% it will mold. We are always checking the weather models on the Internet.

Meeting demand is our other challenge. We can only meet about a third of the demand for our high quality product.

### Do you plant hay?

Most of our fields are converted from corn fields and we plant specific blends to meet our customers' needs. Grass is a perennial so you don't need to replant it each year. If a field has been left fallow you can just mow it repeatedly and the grasses will prevail. When we seed we usually plant cover groups like oats, wheat, or barley to prevent weeds from coming up and keep the ground moist. These annual plants germinate and grow faster than the weeds and prevent them from growing.

### What was the impact of last summer's drought on your crop?

Precipitation, snow or rain, pulls nitrogen from the atmosphere into

the soil as well providing moisture. Grasses need nitrogen. Lack of rain promotes the growth of broadleaved drought-resistant weeds and hinders the growth of hay.

### What was your biggest surprise when you started this new business?

I was surprised at how long it takes to grow your customer base and that some very satisfied customers want to keep where they buy hay a secret to protect their own supply.

Also surprising is the somewhat amusing diversity of opinions from horse owners about what is the best type of hay to feed their horse. Ask ten horse experts what constitutes the best hay and you'll get eleven completely different answers.

### What would you advise anyone thinking of going into the premium hay business?

First you need high quality, experienced employees. Any kind of farming only makes sense if you own land and can invest in the heavy equipment needed to plow, seed, harvest, and deliver. Storing high quality hay requires a large barn, which is an additional capital expense.

### Was Silver Mountain Hay's gigantic red barn built just to store hay?

I call it “my monument to agriculture.” It's over 30,000 square feet with a 94' unobstructed central span. The design is inspired by the classic New England expanded dairy barn, but it's actually built as a horse facility that can be used for hay storage in the meantime. It's large enough for 34 12'x12' stalls and an indoor Olympic sized riding ring. We then took extra steps to make it suitable for hay storage, for example there's a vapor barrier to protect the hay from the moisture in the ground ten inches under the dirt floor. At full capacity, we can store around 40,000 bales of hay in the barn.

### Do you plan on expanding your hay making operation?

Right now we are operating at full capacity. We have the right amount of land and the right people for the weather we have. I'm very satisfied that we can produce quality hay at a reasonable price for our customers. ●



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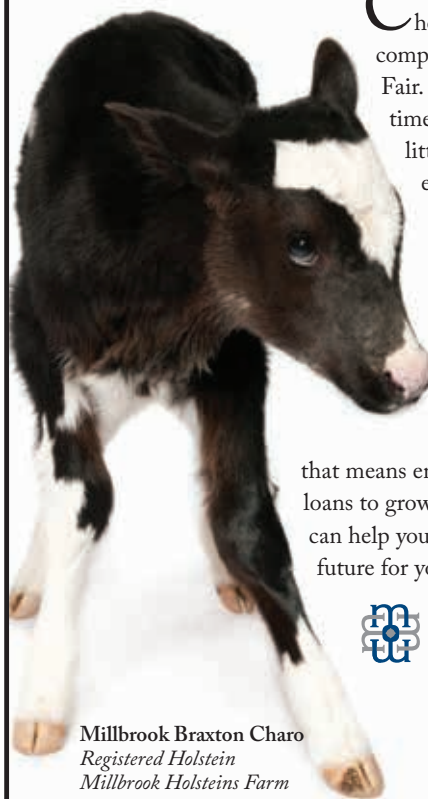
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## Your first steps may feel awkward but planning gets you there



Charo doesn't know she's a registered Holstein. She doesn't know she'll compete some day at the Dutchess County Fair. For now she may only know play time and feeding time, but we know a little planning will go a long way toward ensuring that Charo has her best shot at being a champion.

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# Field of dreams: THE REAL ESTATE OF FIELDS & PASTURES

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

*Pastures and fields, which supply food for animals and people, are the subject of this month's Main Street Animal issue real estate article. What are the challenges of acquiring a home with agricultural acreage and how do you go about it? Is it worth the effort?*

**"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."**

**- Psalms 23:2**

Sprawling fields and pastures on a hillside have a timeless appeal. They remind us of our dependency on the land and our rural past. A home with an open pasture vista is sunny and changes with the seasons. Agricultural land can also insure privacy, eliminate mowing a large lawn, and reduce property taxes. Generally speaking, planted crops from corn to cabbages are grown in fields while pastures are fenced to keep animals safe and confined. Often pastures are found on steeper slopes where planting and harvesting would be more difficult.

## **Nationally pastureland averages \$1,400 per acre - not around here**

Nationally the average value of a pasture is under \$1,400 per acre while crop lands are estimated at over \$4,000 an acre according to 2015 US Department of Agriculture research. In our tri-state region average sale values are much higher. In 2015 farm real estate, which includes land and buildings, was \$11,300 per acre in the state of Connecticut, \$10,400 per acre in Massachusetts, and only \$3,000 per acre in New York according to the same USDA survey. This is obviously not the going price around here. (See chart on the next page of selected properties on the market now which include a house and substantial land).

What accounts for the very wide price range for parcels containing fields and pastures? Clearly some

properties include grand houses, like the listing on East Klein Road, which distort any per acre calculation. Others are working farms with small, old farmhouses. The per acre value of the land itself is driven by its unique physical qualities. Does it have water? Does the property have a view? How is the drainage? Does it flood as many properties along the Housatonic do? Properties with open, flat land are more valuable than those with wetlands, or steep slopes. What activity does the soil type support? What kind of pesticides have been used on the property and is it certified as organic? Can septic lines be used? If it's pastureland is it fenced and for what kind of animal? Mainline Fence in Brewster, which builds fences for every kind of animal from giraffes to horses and cattle, estimates \$10 a foot for installed four-board horse fencing. Productive fields and pastures are much more valuable than land that has started to grow into scrub and contains invasive species. Location

and surrounding properties also determine value. Is the property located in a low tax town like Salisbury, CT with generous ag exemptions or in highly taxed New York? Are adjoining properties well-maintained or very mixed?

## **A field without an agricultural exemption is a lawn**

Agricultural exemptions have preserved our area's fields and pastures since the 1960s when states passed laws to protect open land and farmers. In most states an agricultural exemption can lower the owner's property taxes substantially. For example a 12-acre farm parcel on Hammertown Road in Salisbury, CT valued by the assessor at \$662,000 has an assessed value of only \$281,000 after the ag exemption is applied.

In Salisbury over 4,700 acres are covered by agricultural exemptions while the more rural Town of North



Above: Cattle graze on the Grasslands Farm's pastures listed by John Harney for \$4,995,000. Photo by Randy O'Rourke.

Continued on next page ...

East in New York has over 10,000 farm acres, paying reduced property taxes – one third of the town’s entire acreage.

Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut all have different agricultural exemption rules that can reduce property taxes; however, they all require the land to be productive and used in an agricultural activity. In New York there must be seven contiguous acres used in the past two years for agriculture with minimum product sales of \$10,000 to receive an ag exemption. The 490 Act in Connecticut provides guidelines but the application of the rules can vary from town to town depending on the assessor. There is no minimum acreage requirement in Connecticut and assessors can reduce assessments for open land and forests as well. Massachusetts’s Title IX Chapter 61A requires a minimum of five acres with gross sales of only \$500 but places a lien on the property to assure it remains agricultural.

In each state the tax savings are so significant to land owners that most farmers pay no rent for the use of the land. Unless you plan on harvesting hay or raising sheep prospective buyers should find a farmer willing to lease the land.

All three states have penalties on withdrawing the land from agricultural use. Depending on the state, roll back fees and conveyance taxes can be assessed if the property is held less than ten years. Mardi Cavallaro of Best & Cavallaro Real Estate sometimes advises buyers that an ag exemption may not be worth the trouble if there is a chance the property will be sold in less than ten years.

**Pasture today, subdivision in ten years?**

Price paid per acre is also affected by the land’s potential value to the owner in the future. The 153-acre Grasslands Farm on Hammertown Road listed by John Harney at over \$30,000 an acre reflects the existing development potential of seventeen subdivided lots that were approved decades ago. The purchaser has the right to gradually sell off estate-sized parcels or reduce their income taxes on current income by placing a conservation easement on the land, which would protect it from development forever. To understand the price impact of land without an existing conservation easement and intact development rights compare the Grasslands \$30,000+ price per acre with another Salisbury 113 acre farm with an existing conservation easement. This farm was listed for sale at \$995,000, \$8,800 an acre, with conservation restrictions, and then taken off the market because of lack of buyer interest.

Another possibility for unrestricted agricultural land is selling the development rights outright rather than taking an income tax deduction over a number of years. In New York the Farmland Protection Program pays farmers to place development restrictions on their agricultural land. There have been ten such purchases in Dutchess County with another five planned for this year. Recently Chaseholm Farms in Pine Plains received \$762,725 to permanently protect 175 acres of their dairy farm. And pastures can be protected as well. Caora Farm, a 78-acre sheep farm on Sharon Road in Millerton was purchased



Above: Look closely and you’ll see a view of the 26 acres of pasture at 51 Weatoque Road listed by Elvia Gignoux for \$795,000 with conservation easements in place. Photo by Ren Nickson.

for \$950,000 in 2012 and last year received \$371,850 in cash to place a conservation easement on the property. Coupled with an ag exemption, which reduces the assessed value for property taxes by \$462,500, buying a pasture seems like a good investment.

**Buying land is complicated**

Appraising and inspecting a house is easy compared to buying land. “It takes a team to buy a field,” according to John Harney of William Pitt Sotheby’s Real Estate in Lakeville. If you are contemplating buying a significant piece of agricultural land Harney recommends putting together a group of advisors including attorneys who

have experience with the intricacies of land purchases, and know how to evaluate and advise on the benefits of easements. You should also recruit an experienced land appraiser like Harry White who advises buyers and sellers. Experienced environmental engineers like Frank Wright of Berkshire Environmental Services, or Rob Rein of Enviro Consultants, are needed to analyze the soil for hydrocarbons, lead, and pesticides. Complete the team with contractors who have experience in building on agricultural land. Before putting together your team you might also want to consult with USDA Soil and Water Conservation and your state’s co-operative extension. They can advise on farm planning, pasture arrangements, crop rotation, reseeding and fertilizer. They welcome questions about soil composition and the best agricultural use of a particular piece of land. For example, Shawn Hayden of North West Conservation District in Connecticut is especially knowledgeable about wetlands. And don’t forget to talk to farmers and your local assessor.

Buyers who educate themselves and make a wise purchase of a home with agricultural land that fits their needs are rewarded with a personally satisfying investment. ●

**SELECTED HOMES WITH FIELDS AND PASTURES LISTED FOR SALE \***

Location	Acres	Price	\$ per acre	Year listed	Original price
State Route 82, Ancram, NY	150	\$1,450,000	\$9,667	2016	\$1,450,000
City Road #7, Ancram, NY	425	\$6,500,000	\$15,294	2015	\$6,500,000
East Klein Road, Ancram, NY	61	\$2,650,000	\$43,443	2016	\$2,650,000
Tishauser Road, Claverack, NY	267	\$3,200,000	\$11,985	2016	\$3,200,000
Penitent Way, Pine Plains, NY	286	\$12,000,000	\$41,958	2014	\$15,000,000
Route 83, Pine Plains, NY	156	\$3,113,499	\$19,958	2016	\$3,113,499
Hammerton Road, Salisbury, CT	154	\$4,995,000	\$32,435	2014	\$9,250,000
Weatoque Road, Salisbury, CT	26	\$795,000	\$30,577	2017	\$795,000

\*Realtor.com January 2017

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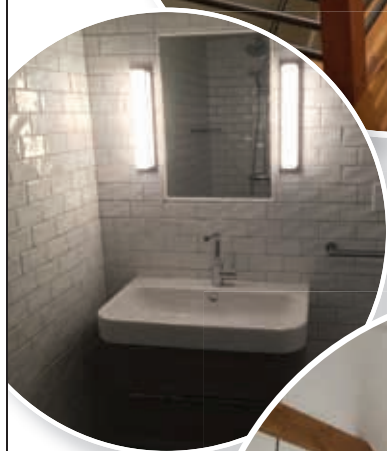
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By Dominique De Vito  
info@mainstreetmag.com

If we're lucky, our lives are filled with animals. Dogs and cats and horses, maybe birds, or rabbits, goats, chickens, hamsters, iguanas, fish or snakes. When you are home or when you come home from being away, your companion animal family members are often the ones you most want to be around – or at least the ones who are typically happiest that you're home. For so many of us, our lives wouldn't be complete without animals as part of our family and farm.

### Types of animal people

I've always found it interesting to see which animals people gravitate toward as companions. Some profess to being "dog" people, preferring canines to any other pet. Others are in the feline camp, proud that their pet of choice is one that is characteristically more aloof and conniving than a dog. Many of us are simply "equal opportunity" animal lovers, giving our hearts equally to animals with fur, feathers, or scales. A neighbor's daughter became obsessed with tarantulas when she was young, and had several of them. She loved them!

We all have stories of how the deep bonds we have with our animal companions nurture us. The cat or dog who snuggles up against you when you're sad; the horse who comes from across the pasture only when you arrive at the stable; the bird who nods and dances only for you. Our treasured companion animals seem to know what we're feeling and need, and respond in amazingly intuitive ways. It's the joy and comfort we share

with them that are especially satisfying, for both beings.

But there's more.

### Signal from another dimension?

You run the same loop almost every day, noticing the effects of the weather, or the season. And one day, out of nowhere, a bright red cardinal flies across your path. On other days, randomly, you see a small, bright blue bird. And amazingly, one late afternoon, there's a bald eagle in the trees in the distance.

Driving down the Taconic for the umpteenth time, succumbing to its hypnotic effect, you notice something in the middle of the road. It looks like a large cat. As you get closer, you notice it has a short tail and – yes – large pointy ears. A bobcat!

You haven't thought about the Poodle you had to put down over five years ago in several months until – bam! – there's one of the same size and color in the parking lot of the rest stop when you're on your way to visit your sister.

Are the animals that are appearing to us this way trying to tell us something? There are many who would say that they most certainly are. I, for one, am a believer. This doesn't mean that when your cat rubs against your leg it's trying to tell you anything more than it's hungry or wants your attention. If every interaction with an animal was a signal from another dimension that we needed to interpret somehow, we animal lovers would experience sensory overload on an hourly basis.

It's the unusual sighting, or the surprise appearance, that is worth noting as a sign. I asked an acquaintance who I knew to be an animal lover if she believed in spirit animals or messengers. She shared with me that her grandmother loved orange tabby cats. She always had them and was very fond of them. Shortly after her grandmother died, this woman noticed five of them at different times and in different places. She was convinced they were signs from her grandmother, and she was hugely comforted by this.

### Spirit messengers

I asked Prudence Theriault what she thought about spirit animals. Prudence lives in Columbia County, NY, and has been reading tarot cards and doing psychometry for over 20 years, and recently became a certified hypnotherapist. She has a strong association herself with the fox, even calling her business Tarot Fox. She has had many people talk to her about animals as spirit messengers.

"Any animal that crosses one's path very frequently could be considered a messenger," Prudence shared. "Consider how the animal makes you feel when you see it. For example," she noted, "I've had many clients say they feel the red cardinal is a sign from a deceased loved one. If this gives them comfort, I see nothing wrong with believing in this."

"The red cardinal," she continued, "will probably do something to get your attention. It may fly close to you or be looking directly in your window. Look for a little different behavior

from the bird as part of the sign."

Prudence agreed with the approach I take when I notice an animal that crosses my path in an unusual way – I research it. There's a fun website where you can look up all kinds of animals, and where you can even take a quiz to hone in on what your personal spirit animal(s) may be. It's [www.universeofsymbolism.com](http://www.universeofsymbolism.com).

"When we are looking at spirit animals," Prudence advised, "it's about learning from them. You need to research what wonderful skills, attributes, and abilities these animals have and how you may need to apply them to your life. Say, for example, your spirit guide is a Peregrine Falcon. With their keen eyesight and speed, they are amazing hunters."

"I'm not saying you should drive your car at high speeds and take up hunting," she exclaimed, "but the way an unusual sighting of this bird could be interpreted is that you need to pick up the pace of your life and go after what you want or need."

We who love animals know without a doubt that they have powerful influences on us. As messengers and totems as well as dear companions, they are essential in all ways. ●

*If you want to learn more about the significance of animals as spirits or messengers in your life, take a look at the best-selling book by Steven D. Farmer, PhD, "Animal Spirit Guides." There's a pocket version, too, so you can keep it handy. Both are published by Hay House Publishing, Carlsbad, CA. You can learn more about Prudence Theriault at [www.prudencetheriault.com](http://www.prudencetheriault.com).*

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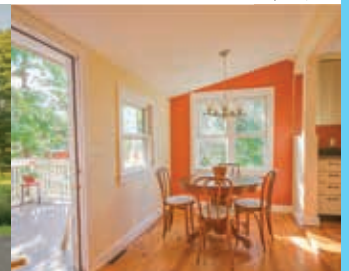
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By Mary B. O'Neill, Ph.D.  
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Above right: Dr. Ali Trotta supervises exercises on the underwater treadmill. Directly above: Therapeutic exercises strengthen muscles and earning a treat. Photos: Ian Johnson.

Recovering from surgery? Experiencing joint pain that limits movement? Need to strengthen core muscles to help eliminate back pain? While these complaints are all too human, animals can experience them as well. Now there's a rehab facility just for them in the center of Sharon, CT, which helps alleviate these ailments and puts pets back on their feet – all four of them.

## From vet to pet therapy

Dr. Ali Trotta is the owner of Veterinary Rehabilitation and Aquatic Center, and while she mostly works on dogs, once you visit her facility you're going to wish she could work on your stiff joints and achy muscles too.

Up until recently, Trotta was a practicing veterinarian. With 18 years of small animal care under her belt she decided to step away from that form of animal care and toward one that's more complementary.

Alternative modes of animal wellness have intrigued and excited her throughout her veterinary career, and over her nearly two decades caring for animals she has pursued additional certifications to add to her practice.

In 2000, she earned her Certification in Veterinary Acupuncture (CVA) and incorporated that technique into her care. Through her acupuncture work she learned that she relished the longer appointments and opportunities to get to know animals more intimately.

Then in 2004, she attended a veterinary rehab course. At that time it was just emerging as a discipline and although she wove what she learned into her healing philosophy, animal rehab was not yet "a thing." Fast forward to 2013. Trotta was working for Dr. Carolyn Cannon's Millerton Veterinary Practice in Millerton, NY.

According to Trotta, Cannon was interested in providing rehab services and allowed for Trotta to attend an intensive training course. Unfortunately, space constraints prevented Cannon from installing a rehab facility in her own practice. This gave Trotta the idea to strike out on her own and create such a place. "I owe such gratitude to Carrie [Cannon] for enabling me to train as a Certified Canine Rehab Therapist (CCRT). I wouldn't be doing this if it weren't for her."

## Feeling good

Trotta is very mindful of not stepping on the paws of local vets. She provides no traditional vet services, such as physical exams, shots, sur-

geries, or dental care. Her practice is similar to human physical therapy. She receives referrals from veterinarians and works closely with them to ensure comprehensive and complementary animal care.

Trotta's goal is making animals, mostly dogs, walk out feeling better than they walked in. "I love making animals feel good," beams Trotta. Her favorite patients? "Old dogs – I love old dogs. They're sweet and stubborn. Trying to figure out how to help them move more easily and with less pain changes with each dog. Some love acupuncture, some don't. Some love water therapy, some won't go near it. I'm always challenged to creatively find ways to work muscles and joints in a way the animal will allow."

## Dog whisperer and sugar mama

Her real motivational secret to get dogs to lie down, roll over, and allow acupuncture? Treats, and lots of them. Her patients' "parents" will tell Trotta that their pets step more lively and tails wag more enthusiastically when they arrive at her practice.

Continued on next page ...

Then there's also the fact that Trotta is a dog whisperer of sorts. She has a calming, gentle, reassuring and positive demeanor. Even people feel more at ease in her presence. Add to that her veterinary experience and technical knowledge and one can see why animals and humans alike seek her care and company.

So what exactly does Trotta do? Well, that depends on what the dogs let her do. She has an array of techniques and equipment in her arsenal.

### Everybody in the pool

Aqua therapy is a large part of Trotta's treatment. She has an underwater treadmill, which allows patients to strengthen muscles and work joints without the stress of gravity. Then there's the pool. Set in a fragrant cedar lined room with a vaulted ceiling, this lap pool is where dogs can have some fun and float freely. "Swimming is fun for dogs and so good for helping them strengthen and increase range of motion with no stress on joints and muscles. I even have some dogs who come just to swim."

She employs a therapeutic laser that sends light energy through the skin. It speeds up cell metabolism and circulation to the joints. This helps to rid toxins and reduce

arthritic symptoms.

Along one wall there are cavalettis, or hurdles, and pylons to help dogs stretch out their gait through spacing of the bars, as well as a land-based mini-treadmill. Scattered throughout the room are exercise balls, therabands, and other rehab accoutrements.

### The whole dog

During the first appointment, which usually lasts 90 minutes, Trotta performs an initial evaluation of the whole dog. She wants to assess how the sore joint, or post-op recovery plays itself out in other

parts of the dog's body. "If you also take away aches, pains, and inflammation that are consequences of an injury or condition, then the whole dog feels better."

From that assessment Trotta lays out a care plan, which varies in duration and use of healing modalities. For post-operative patients, that can mean sessions once or twice a week for several months. Older dogs with difficulty moving will have regular sessions until they can move with more ease, then the appointments become more infrequent.

Trotta deeply believes that rehabilitation, long known to have value for humans, is finally coming into its own for animals. "This is an up and coming field for animal wellness and is slowing becoming the standard for post-operative care."

While her facility is spotless and sanitary, her enthusiasm for her work is infectious. "This is the happiest I've ever been in my work – aside from learning Quickbooks. To see my patients move better is so rewarding to me. I can really see the progress over time. I'm so grateful to everyone who helped me get to this place." •

*The Veterinary Rehabilitation and Aquatic Center is located at 29 Low Road in Sharon CT. Phone number: (860) 364-2200. Email: [ali@vetrehabac.com](mailto:ali@vetrehabac.com). For more information about Dr. Ali Trotta and the services she provides, visit [www.vetrehabac.com](http://www.vetrehabac.com).*



Above, L-R: Receiving therapeutic laser therapy. Doing the doggy paddle in the heated pool. Below, left: The underwater treadmill works weak and injured limbs with low impact. Photos: Ian Johnson.

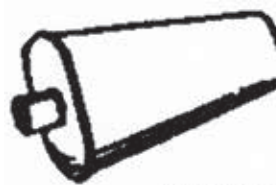


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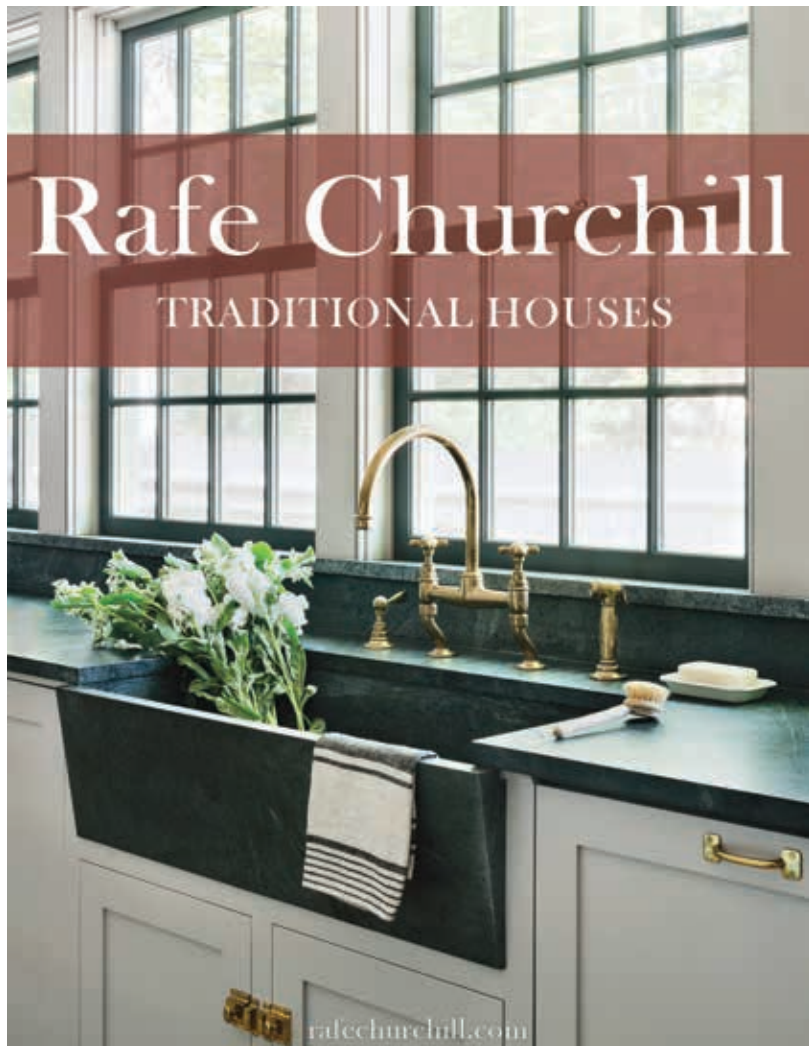
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# Spruce Ridge *not your average alpaca farm*

By Allison Guertin Marchese  
info@mainstreetmag.com

## The mystical alpaca

Alpacas are part of the camel family, which also includes llamas, guanacos, and vicunas from South America, and the Bactrian and Dromedary camels from Asia and Africa. These animals date all the way back to prehistoric times and are believed to have been domesticated some 6,000 years ago in the Central Andes, a process that began with shepherding.

Almost all of the pre-Inca cultures used camels (camelids) for food and clothing. Archeological evidence suggests that alpacas were worshiped in Inca society, and native legends identified the alpaca as a gift from Pachmana, the Earth Mother, a gift loaned to humans for only as long as they were properly cared for.

Inca weavers made everything from bridges to roofs from the fibers, and the people recorded their wealth in patterns of knots. Among the Andean people, cloth was currency, and the fleece of the alpaca was one of the most prized. The loyalty of nobles was rewarded with cloth made of alpaca.

## The prized alpaca fiber

Alpacas generally have more fiber than llamas, producing anywhere from 3.75-11 lbs. per year. Al-

paca fiber averages 25 microns in diameter, but the fineness of its fleece is directly related to the age of the alpaca. The finest alpaca fiber comes from the first shearing and is known as "baby alpaca." Alpaca fiber, considered a luxury fiber, usually rivals the popularity of such fine fibers as cashmere and pashmina among fashion houses in America and around the world. As fibers go, the alpaca is extremely strong, more than merino sheep wool, and the alpaca fiber has no rival when it comes to softness and silkiness. It is often considered more valuable than angora and cashmere wools. It is also naturally hypoallergenic and waterproof.

The animals themselves are also given high regard in the industry. According to most statistics, the average sale of a breeding quality ribbon or banner-winning alpaca is \$10,000, and some sell for as much as \$30,000, making the breeding business quite lucrative. The occasional "super stud" will sell for even higher, with one fetching a price of \$175,000 and another selling just a half share for a record \$750,000. If that price is too steep for some first-time farmers, a baby alpaca (called a "cria") could sell for \$1,500-\$3,000.

Breeding alpacas is complex, and the Alpaca Owners Association



urges owners to register each animal to validate its pedigree and track its bloodline, which is done through DNA testing. Much like the AKC for dogs, registration allows owners to register for alpaca shows and to preserve breeds.

One very interesting fact is that alpacas are very smart animals, and therefore easy to train. Like all animals, if owners are looking to train their alpacas, it's best to start early. Many owners teach their alpacas to navigate obstacle courses and some even compete with their alpacas at shows where they walk over, around, and or through objects and even take jumps or small hurdles. Alpacas are happy to take road trips and can be trained to ride in small trailers. And despite the fact that they look like comfortable animals to ride, this is not at all recommended.

## The Spruce Ridge Farm

Spruce Ridge Farm stands out among alpaca farms not only because of its idyllic location in the quaint town of Old Chatham, New York, but because of its eclectic mix of animals and enterprises.

The farm began back in 1997 when Jeff Lick and his partner, Steve McCarthy, moved from New York City to Columbia County to begin an encore career raising registered alpacas for fiber. The two entrepreneurs focused their farm's efforts specifically on fiber to make glorious sweaters, blankets, gloves, and of course to sell the yarn to amateur knitters and professional producers alike. They also set their sites on creating a retail store on the

Continued on next page ...



Above top: Spruce Ridge's retail store on Warren Street in Hudson, NY has quite the selection of alpaca products. Above: The alpaca's fiber, or fleece, is considered a luxury fiber. Photos courtesy of Spruce Ridge Farm.

farm, and now have a second location in Hudson, NY. Spruce Ridge goes to great lengths to care for its herd of alpacas, which includes diverse bloodlines and colors.

"I always loved animals, but got involved with alpacas after reading an article in *Organic Gardening* magazine 20 years ago about how good the alpaca manure was for the garden. I started helping out at a farm near where we used to live in Rhinebeck, NY," said Steve.

"I would help with the animals and would take manure home for my gardens. I then started researching raising alpacas. I bought the 48-acre farm in Old Chatham in 1997, and added alpacas shortly after that."

Since the very beginning, Steve said that the farm grew steadily. "I added meat chickens and cattle after reading Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma*, *The Search for the Perfect Meal in a Fast Food World*, a book that examines what Americans eat."

"I knew I wanted to have more control over the meat I ate and the conditions under which those animals were raised." At that point, Steve and Jeff added pigs to the farm so that they could add that choice back to their diet. Pork was a food that Steve said, "I really missed."

In the early days of the farm, Steve said a lot of the challenges surrounded

a lack of general information in raising alpacas. "Almost 20 years ago, there was not a lot of information regarding herd health, and the veterinarians often didn't have the training or experience with camelids. Now there is much more information and research available."

Currently, Spruce Ridge has 40 alpacas on the farm, which is down from a high of 120. The team at the farm has a long view regarding the future of the farm activities. "Since alpacas have a natural life of 15-20 years, and we are both in our mid 60s,

we stopped breeding two years ago." In recent months, Steve and Jeff have placed a bit more of their time focusing on their retail store.

The Alpaca Shop, Spruce Ridge's retail outlet on Warren Street in Hudson, NY, features alpaca sweaters, hats, coats, socks, scarves, purses, wraps, stuffed bears, and more. "People can also see items on our website, and call or email us to purchase an item. We have shipped items all over the world."

The store on Warren Street carries products made by Spruce Ridge's own alpaca fiber as well as products from a fiber pool and other American and South American-made alpaca products. The Hudson store will undergo renovations in April for about six weeks while Steve and Jeff are busy birthing piglets, shearing alpacas, and shipping their fiber off to a variety of mills.

The farm today enjoys opening up its doors twice a year to visitors. Spruce Ridge will be open this year on April 22nd for Shearing Day, and again on September 23 for an annual Farm Day where visitors can enjoy tours, entertainment, and refreshments. Bring the whole family! •

For more information, visit Spruce Ridge online at [www.spruceridgefarm.com](http://www.spruceridgefarm.com), or their Hudson retail store at 521 Warren Street, Hudson, NY.



Above: The display window at Spruce Ridge's retail store on Warren Street in Hudson, NY. Below, left: The alpaca herds at the farm, including the "cria," or baby alpaca, which can be seen in the bottom image. Photos courtesy of Spruce Ridge Farm.



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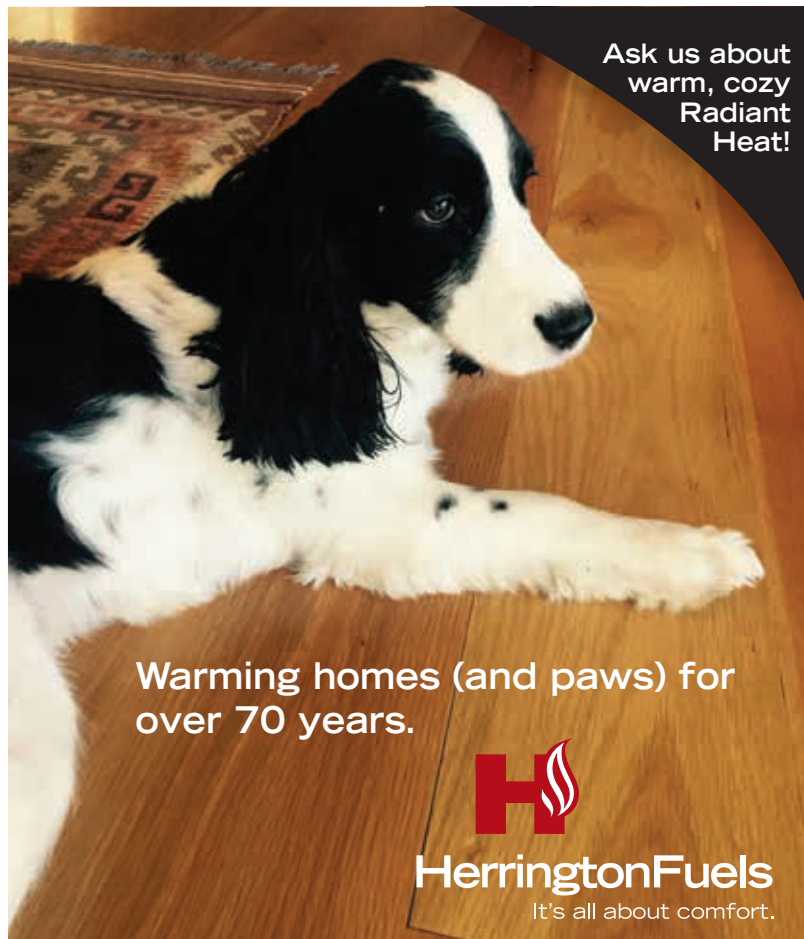
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# Oh, the turtle...

By Claire Copley  
info@mainstreetmag.com

“And the turtles, of course ... all the turtles are free, as turtles and, maybe, all creatures should be.”

– Dr. Seuss

Some of our most precious lands here in Dutchess County are our wetlands. The term wetlands includes ponds and lakes, bogs, springs and seeps, streams, swamps, marshes, wet meadows, fens and intermittent or seasonal pools called vernal pools. Each of these supports species of animal and plant life. Turtles are among those animals dependent on our wetlands. Some of our wetland species are becoming rare as more and more of these areas are fragmented or destroyed by construction, agriculture, and climate change. Proper habitat is essential to the survival of all animals, and as the wetlands change, plant and animal species that depend on them, including turtles, will die off and disappear.

Many of us may think of tiny pets in aquariums when we think of turtles. In fact, turtles are one of the oldest known reptile species, dating back some 270 million years. They are classified as amniotes, meaning that even though they might live in or near water, they lay their eggs on land. Turtles can breathe in and out of water and typically eat plants that grow in the water, small insects, snails, worms, and even dead marine animals and fish. They are symbolic of perseverance and longevity in many cultures and are popular characters in a wide range of cultural myths.

## Our common turtles

The most common turtles to our area are the snapping turtle and several varieties of painted turtle. We also have some rare turtle species and even a few endangered turtles. The common snapping turtle is the largest New York freshwater turtle, reaching shell lengths of nineteen



inches and weighing up to seventy pounds. When out of the water, they display a fiercely combative disposition and, with their powerful beak-like jaws and highly mobile head and neck, can be very dangerous to humans. Trying to capture a snapping turtle is a bad idea, as they can be very aggressive and have a strong enough bite to easily take off human fingers.

Snappers are never as old as they look, but they have been known to live for sixty years or more. To me, they look like they are related to dinosaurs. They rarely leave their aquatic habitat except during the breeding season, at which time females travel great distances in search of a place to dig a nest and lay eggs. Some turtles have been found as far as a mile from the nearest water source. Many female snappers never make it to breeding as they are killed on roads while searching for an appropriate site. Preferred nest sites include stream banks, lawns, gardens, road embankments, and sometimes muskrat burrows. I have found them several times around my home in freshly dug garden beds. I have even watched as they dig a hole and lay a large quantity (between twenty and eighty!) of

ping-pong ball-like eggs.

Hatching of the baby turtles takes approximately eighty to ninety days, but the hatch date can vary depending on temperature and other environmental conditions. Generally, between August and October, hatchlings emerge from their eggs using a small egg tooth to break open their shell. When the young hatch, they dig out of the nest and instinctively head downhill to water. The baby turtles, about an inch long with soft shells, must make it to water without being eaten by raccoons, skunks, foxes, dogs, birds, and snakes. When they reach water, the young turtles may be snapped up by fish or even other snapping turtles. Once the turtles have grown some and their shells harden, they are virtually predator-free.

## Painted and spotted turtles

Another common turtle in our lakes and streams, the painted turtle, is smaller than the snapper, reaching about six inches along the shell. These are also mainly aquatic turtles, and they have colorful yellow and red stripes on their head and limbs. They are harmless and are often sold as pets. Painted turtles

can frequently be seen basking in the sun on partially submerged logs and rocks, but usually head for deep water when they detect visitors. Painted turtles are quite long-lived, perhaps reaching sixty years or more in the wild. While habitat loss and road killings have reduced the painted turtle's numbers, their ability to live in human-disturbed settings has helped them remain the most abundant turtle in North America. The painted turtle has a very similar appearance to the red-eared slider (the most common pet turtle) and the two species are often confused. The painted turtle can be distinguished because it is flatter than the slider. Also, the slider has a prominent red marking on the side of its head (the “ear”) and a spotted bottom shell, both features missing in the painted turtle.

In our area, we have a mix of the eastern painted turtle and the midland painted turtle which are difficult to tell apart. In winter, the painted turtle hibernates by burying itself, either on the bottom of

Continued on next page ...

a body of water, near water in the shore-bank, or even in wet woods or pastures. Hibernation in winter is important to turtles as food is less plentiful. As reptiles, they are also incapable of producing their own body heat. For these reasons, turtles cannot function well during cold months. When hibernating underwater, the painted turtle prefers shallow depths but it may dig down an additional three feet. In this state, the turtle does not breathe, although if surroundings allow, it may get some oxygen through its skin. Adaptations of its blood chemistry, brain, heart, and particularly its shell allow the turtle to survive while oxygen-deprived. The turtle's shell is an extremely complex body part and serves many functions. Breathing however, is made harder by the existence of the shell, and so the North American painted turtle can breathe from both ends. Butt breathing is unique to turtles, and greatly enhances their ability to survive on land.

Other turtles in our area include the box turtle, the spotted turtle, and the wood turtle. The box turtle can be recognized by its domed shell. The shell is hinged at the bottom, which makes it possible for the turtle to close it tightly to protect itself from predators. The spotted turtle is, as its name implies, polka-dotted all over with yellow spots. The wood turtle is easily recognized by its sculptured shell with a radiating yellow pattern.

The box turtle is not aquatic, but will sometimes spend long periods of time in shallow water or mud. Its brown coloration and high shell, adorned with a yellow sunburst pattern, makes it look more like a tortoise. Box turtles can occasionally be found in dry regions, but they tend to thrive best in moist, forested areas with lots of brush. Box turtles are sometimes kept as pets since their ability to live on land makes them attractive.

The wood turtle is thought to be one of the most intelligent turtles, being able to complete simple mazes in captivity. They can find their way home from long distances, and find food within a broad area. The wood turtle spends a great deal of time in or near the water of wide rivers, preferring the shallows, and in clear streams with compacted and sandy bottoms. The wood turtle can also be found in forests and grasslands, but will rarely be seen more than several hundred meters from flowing water.

### Turtles at risk

Turtles of all types are very complex and delicate creatures who are very habitat dependent and do not do well as pets. They can carry diseases such as salmonella and herpes. Many turtles now are either at risk or endangered which should greatly discourage casual pet ownership. It is difficult to fathom that the pet trade in turtles has had such a large impact on their population, but it is one of the top three causes of population decline.

The wood turtle is one of many turtle species considered a "vulnerable species." Given the turtle's specific and complicated habitat needs, loss and fragmentation of habitat are the greatest threats to survival. As habitats are divided up, turtles are isolated from one another by human-dominated landscapes. Forced to venture farther and farther from appropriate habitat to find mates and nesting sites, turtles are more likely to be run over by cars, attacked by predators, or collected by people as pets.

At present our turtle population is suffering. Two types of local turtles are at risk: the bog turtle (state status: Endangered, Federal status: Threatened), and Blanding's turtle (state status: Threatened). The bog turtle is New York's smallest turtle, reaching a maximum length of 4.5 inches. A bright yellow or orange blotch on each side of its head and neck are a distinctive feature of this species. The body color is dark with



Above: A painted turtle.

an orange-red wash on the inside of the legs of some, and the shell is domed. In New York, development and changing conditions are the major threat to bog turtle habitats. As sites deteriorate, bog turtles normally move out of their old sites to new open wet meadow habitats created by fire, beavers, agriculture or other causes. Development, especially roads, residential, commercial and reservoir construction inhibits the species' ability to move to new, potential habitats. Consequently, as old sites deteriorate, new populations are not being established.

Blanding's turtle is a medium-sized semi-aquatic turtle with an average shell length of seven to nine inches. A distinguishing feature of this turtle is the bright yellow chin and throat. It is very difficult to tell the age of Blanding's turtles because they have almost no aging symptoms or age-related decline. Blanding's turtle is a timid turtle and, when alarmed, may plunge into water and remain on the bottom for hours. If away from water, the turtle will withdraw into its shell. Blanding's turtles are very agile and good swimmers. Its timidity may contribute to its status as endangered as it has many predators. But the real problem for the Blanding's turtle, like the bog turtle, is fragmentation of its habitat.

### How you can help

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) recommends developing new attitudes and habits when it comes to protecting our rarer turtle species. Conserving riparian (the interface between land and a river

or stream) habitat is key. Maintaining a buffer strip of natural vegetation (minimum of 100 feet) along the banks of streams and rivers will protect turtle habitat and help improve the water quality of the stream system. Stream banks that are manicured will not be used by turtles or most wildlife species.

Always leave turtles in the wild. They should never be kept as pets. Whether collected singly or for the pet trade, turtles that are removed from the wild are no longer able to be a reproducing member of a population. Every turtle removed reduces the ability of the population to maintain itself. Never release a captive turtle into the wild. It probably would not survive, may not be native to the area, and could introduce diseases to wild populations.

As you drive, watch out for turtles crossing the road. Turtles crossing roads in June and July are often pregnant females. You can pick up turtles (not snappers) from the road and move them onto the side in the direction they are headed. Never relocate a turtle to another area that is far from where you found it. Snappers are relatively fast moving for a turtle so if you simply wait a few minutes you can assure that they get to the other side without getting too close.

We don't often think about turtles. Maybe we are just prone to avoiding reptiles. But every spring they appear on the roads, and in our gardens, and on banks near wetlands, and we remember that they inhabit the same natural world that we do. At least for now. •

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DANIELLE MAILER &amp; PETER McEACHERN:

# Art and life and all that jazz

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

The mural of swimming trout that enlivens the wall overlooking the Naugatuck River on Franklin Street in Torrington, Connecticut draws in the casual observer to swim along with the fish, carries them forward and deposits their imagination at a point of further discovery. It's like a free-flowing piece of great American jazz that builds, does it's best point/counterpoint and elevates the observer to being a participant.

It should be no wonder.

The colorful piece is the work of the very fertile, creative imagination of Danielle Mailer – artist, teacher, mentor, and entrepreneur. The fact that she is married to internationally celebrated jazz trombonist and head of the Music Department at The Salisbury School, Peter McEachern, makes it very easy to join the movement of music with the engagement of image and come up with a celebration of the town and the river.

## Back to the beginning

Danielle Mailer is the daughter of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Norman Mailer and his second wife, artist Adele Morales. Throughout Danielle's childhood, art was the steady undercurrent. "When we'd visit my father on weekends, he'd take us to MOMA and present private lectures about the painters, their work and it's significance." Danielle recalls her childhood

with a smile. "Our house was like installation art ... always chaos, but always welcoming."

"I remember answering the phone one day," she muses, "... and it was John Lennon calling for Norman." Indisposed at the time, Norman Mailer told Danielle to let Lennon know that he'd call him back. "That made an impression," she adds. "Not only did John Lennon call, but my father very casually said he'd call back."

After attending City and Country School in the West Village, it was off to Music and Art High School and then to Bowdoin College in Maine. "Art was so much a part of my life, I realized I had to get a broader base, I studied writing ... and Latin."

Degree in hand, it was back to New York. Danielle studied graphic design while pursuing her painting. A job with *Art News* followed, then marriage and a child. From artist, Danielle segued into being a stay-at-home mom.

## Welcome to Cornwall

When city life became too much of a burden, the family decided that the country life would be more appealing, and they moved to Popple Swamp Road in Cornwall, CT. It was quite a change, and very soon, Danielle felt the loneliness of having a husband often on the road and bringing up a young daughter in the



Above: Peter McEachern and Danielle Mailer. Below: Danielle standing in front of her mural of swimming trout on Franklin Street in Torrington, CT.



country.

Painting. It had been her life for so many years. Now with time and opportunity, she moved back into her art with a passion. And, when it came time for her daughter to go to school, Danielle joined with a group of interested parents in exploring the potential for bringing a Steiner School to Sharon. It was in those exploratory meetings that she met Peter, who was also married at the time.

The school did not materialize. Connections made drifted apart. The stresses on marriages took their toll and, some years later, when Danielle and Peter met again at a local party, their circumstances were quite different.

## Local boy makes music

Peter, a "local," grew up in Torrington. Music was a big part of his life from his earliest memory, perhaps not as a career, but as a great interest. He's a born naturalist

and has been passionate about the environment and its preservation his entire life.

It wasn't until a friend dropped the phonograph needle on John Coltrane's "Greatest Hits" album and Peter encountered *After the Rain* that the creative flame ignited – and there was no turning back.

"I wanted to be a drummer, but when I got to music class there were too many drummers already." Fate can be an odd orchestrator. "I was impressed with the 'gestural' nature of playing the trombone – moving the slide," he recalls in a moment of insight. "My music teacher suggested that since I had long arms, the trombone might suit me. When I tried to play, it somehow matched my psyche." And a great partnership was born.

Continued on next page ...

A degree from the University of Massachusetts was followed by advanced study at Berklee College of Music in Boston, one of the country's great music schools. Peter was an accomplished jazz trombonist.

### Lifestyle decisions

A life of being a musician on the road or settling into one of the great jazz capitals – New York, Chicago, New Orleans – beckoned. But, Peter is a local who prefers the lifestyle in the Litchfield Hills to the chaos of city life. His family had a summer cottage in Goshen, and with no small investment of imagination and hard work, he and his brother gave it a foundation, winterized it, and made it home.

From Goshen, Peter was in contact with the music world. Performances with groups in New York followed, working with jazz greats like the late saxophone virtuoso Thomas Chapin and renowned bassist Mario Pavone. Albums have followed, as have local performances with the cleverly named *No Chordtet*, so named in recognition of the absence of the chords provided by a piano in a jazz ensemble.

Great as a musician Peter is, he also has a natural talent as a teacher. For years he has been the mainstay of the music program at The Salis-

bury School, instilling in students not only a full appreciation of music, but teaching them the finer points of mastery and performance.

As digital music and recording emerged as the state-of-the-recording-art, Peter made sure he studied and explored the implications – for his own artistic career and that of his students.

Summers find him on the faculty of the Litchfield Jazz Camp, working with the dedicated young men and women who intently pursue the allure of jazz performance. "If I can accomplish anything," offers Peter, "it's to transfer some of my excitement about music to my students."

### Fish tales

And, in a very real way, that echoes Danielle's assessment of her teaching experience as well. For 15 years, she led the art program at Indian Mountain School in Lakeville. As her involvement with *Fish Tales*, the massive 186x22 foot mural in Torrington progressed, she was able to devote fewer and fewer hours to her academic career. "It took all of three years to make the mural a reality," says Danielle. From the raw idea through the maze of permissions and permits and grant applications and individual fund raising to enlisting the volunteers – over 100 of them – who helped paint panels

and bring *Fish Tales* to life, the mural truly became a community project.

As the mural moved from concept to realization, Danielle experienced two shifts in her life. First, she decided to re-enter teaching on a full-time basis and is currently head of the art department at The Salisbury School.

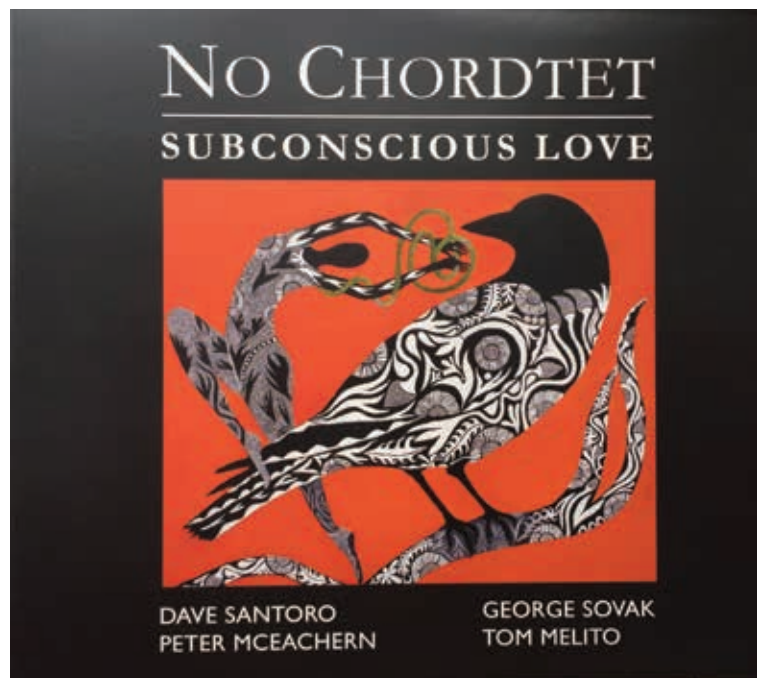
The second realization is that from the great pattern filled work of her public art – she has several murals that adorn the walls at the Boston Children's Hospital, work at the All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, Florida, and *The Lioness of the Library* standing guard in front of the Scoville Library in Salisbury – she has been drawn back into what she terms "painterly art."

And so "the beat goes on." When Danielle is not teaching, she is in her Goshen studio, following the artist's muse in new directions. And Peter continues to fashion the music program at school, managing weekend appearances at places like the newly opened "Hanq's" in Torrington – where avid fans can swim in the river of his music, just like the fish in Danielle's massive mural, but a few blocks away. •

Further explore Danielle Mailer's work at [www.daniellemailer.com](http://www.daniellemailer.com) and sample Peter McEachern's virtuosity on YouTube at "Peter McEachern – 'Requiem for a Boxer' – Norman Mailer Memorial" recorded at Carnegie Hall in April, 2008.



Above: Peter performing at Hanq's in Torrington, CT. Below, left: The cover of one of Peter's albums, titled *No Chordtet*, art for the album was done by Danielle Mailer.



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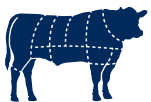
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# Alternative pet medicine

By Ian Strever  
info@mainstreetmag.com

We've all seen him: the obese old retriever who spends most of his day in bed, dragging himself to the bowl for the occasional drink of water or limping to the window to disinterestedly growl at some birds. The life of an older pet can be difficult and sometimes painful. Chronic afflictions and genetic flaws threaten their quality of life, and with no means of articulating their pain, we are left to guess at the cause and intensity of their suffering.

In recent years, human doctors have begun to appreciate the value of alternative medicine, and they have begun to adopt a more comprehensive, holistic view of how to manage pain and improve quality of life. This has led to a parallel increase in the number of veterinarians and pet owners who would like to do the same for our furry friends. As Americans have become more comfortable availing themselves of alternative treatments, our great affinity for pets has led us to explore them as an option for them, too.

## Where alternative pet therapies began for Cannon

So do these approaches work for Fido and Whiskers? When pets suffer from a debilitating affliction, do treatments such as acupuncture, chiropractics,

and laser therapies work? According to Carolyn Cannon, veterinarian and owner of the Millerton Veterinary Practice, a growing body of research supports the belief that animals can experience the same benefits as humans, and that a holistic approach can often diminish pain and suffering and improve the experience of our four-legged companions. More and more customers are requesting these remedies recently, making her practice a destination for forward-thinking pet owners.

Cannon grew up in New Milford, CT, around multiple pets and horses, and knew early on that she wanted to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. After earning her DVM from Purdue University, she worked at the Sand Road Animal Hospital in Canaan, CT. It wasn't until 2000 that she first learned of veterinary acupuncture through a lecture by Sherman's Alan Schoen, who began developing the techniques in 1981. His research and innovations inspired Cannon to enroll in a five-week acupuncture course in 2001, and when she came to Millerton, NY, she brought her experience with her, purchasing the business in 2011 and adding other services such as herbal medicine, food therapy, chiropractic, and laser therapy.

## Dog acupuncture – say what?

Acupuncture for small animals operates in much the same way as it does for humans. Needles are inserted into the patient where nerve bundles and blood vessels converge. Chinese practitioners developed maps of these points around the body on meridians or energy channels, and many of the acupunctural treatments are transposed onto animal physiologies from the human versions. While most of her clients are pets and small animals, these treatments can be applied to larger animals, too. Without the danger of a placebo effect, however, the proof of their efficacy is often much more evident and direct than it can be with humans.

There are limits to these medicines, though: if a dog has a broken hip, no amount of needles will fix it, and on a less structural level, Cannon still believes in traditional vaccinations to prevent common pet problems. She maintains “a healthy respect for the immune system” and the importance of allowing natural antibodies to cure common illnesses. She reviews blood

Continued on next page ...

tests to assess a patient's titers, or the concentration of antibodies in the system, before administering additional vaccines, thus avoiding excessive and unnecessary immunization. She also steers clear of adjuvanted vaccines (those that are altered with agents that modify the patient's response to the vaccine), which can sometimes result in adverse side effects.

### Animal herbal medicine

In a similar vein, Cannon has incorporated Chinese herbal medicine into her work as part of a holistic, preventative approach to pet wellness. Some of these treatments are as much as 2,500 years old, and when paired with acupuncture, can be used to treat arthritis, muscle spasms, ear infections, and even some acute injuries. Tinctures, teas, extracts, washes, and salves made from herbs and medicinal plants can be used to combat gastrointestinal problems, skin and fur afflictions, and even obesity and behavioral problems. Cannon continually takes a comprehensive view of a patient's health, incorporating these treatments alongside dietary recommendations and behavioral training to ensure the greatest quality of life for animals and their owners.

In addition to these ancient and contemporary practices, Cannon is also alert to emerging technologies such as laser therapy. Her practice includes three trained technicians who administer treatments under her direction, applying a high-wattage laser beam for short periods of time (five to eight minutes) to speed the regeneration of cells. The treatments, which

may happen two to three times a week at the outset, are gradually decreased depending on the level of need. This relatively recent technology can be used to heal skin afflictions, inflammation, hip dysplasia, and tears to a pet's pinnae (ear flaps). Cannon has seen impressive results from this approach that were simply not possible with other treatments.

### More emerging technologies

While Cannon offers these alternative treatments through her Millerton location, it is difficult to keep up with the number of emerging technologies that are becoming available to veterinarians. Genetic therapy, electromagnetic pulsation, and even 3-D printing are beginning to offer new solutions to the challenges faced by older pets.

Purebred animals often suffer from genetic flaws in their breed that could be addressed through genetic therapy in profound ways, and initial studies show that pulsed electromagnetic fields may relieve pain and discomfort and increase circulation.

Perhaps the most exciting and emerging technology, however, is 3-D printing. "3-D scanning and printing will revolutionize the field," says Denis Marcellin-Little, a professor of orthopedic surgery at the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Presently used primarily for prosthetics and orthotics, scientists are starting to explore the use of this technology in other applications. In one instance, surgeons were able to fill a hole in the roof of a dog's mouth by measuring the hole in his palate and printing a piece to fill it. Clearly, as medical technology evolves for pet owners, pets themselves will benefit from the advances, living longer, happier lives, too. •

*To learn more about Millerton Veterinary Practice and their alternative medicine, call (518) 789-3440 or visit them online at [www.millertonvet.com](http://www.millertonvet.com).*



Above, top to bottom: Peter the Labrador receiving a laser therapy treatment. Cannon maintains a full supply of herbal remedies as part of traditional Chinese medicine. Left: Little Kitty receiving an acupuncture treatment – she likes it so much that she usually falls asleep during her treatments! Photos courtesy of Millerton Veterinary Practice.

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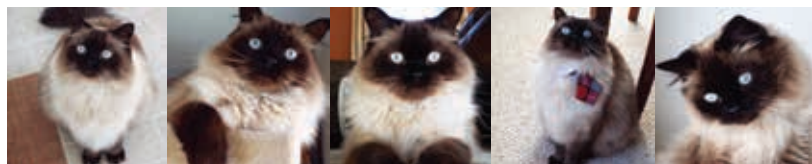


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# Beyond the post

SADDLE UP & GIDDY UP,  
PART II

By Paige Darrah  
info@mainstreetmag.com

I'm really getting into this horse riding thing. It's nice to have a hobby, you know? That way when your colleague Nancy from marketing asks you what you do in your spare time, you're not forced to mumble "Um, I like to go to the movies?" when in fact you haven't made it to Upstate Films in seven months. So, on a chilly but not freezing Tuesday evening in December, I headed back to Ancramdale's Cricket Hill Farm (CHF) to ride Ricky – a furry, 24-year-old Arab with a "beautiful canter." Ricky is fancy ... or at least he used to be. He was Sue's (CHF's proprietor) competition horse many years ago. He also answers to "Ricky Ticky Tavy."

You'd think my Texas roots would've infused me with some innate flair for horsemanship – not so. After a year of concerted effort, I'm finally getting into the canter.

## Cricket Hill Farm and its geographic context

New York's Columbia County's adorable and increasingly vibrant Ancramdale, a hamlet southeast of Ancram, is chock-full of farmhouses and, of course, horses. CHF is neighbors with Thompson-Finch Farm, and the popular Farmer's Wife (does anyone else find this restaurant's name a tad provocative?) is three miles up County Route 3. "We've had a lot of new people move into our rural area recently – to Ancram, Ancramdale, Copake,

Hillsdale. And I have a whole new crop of eight-year-olds for some reason," said Jami Wallace, a senior instructor at CHF. "We have a couple of new adults here who event, so we'll be doing a lot more eventing in 2017. And I have a lot of new adult female riders who've been riding for five years and have bought themselves horses – nice horses."

I love how democratic this sport is, age wise. Unlike, say, gymnastics or ballet or football, you can hop into the horse game for the first time aged 25, 37, or 52 without feeling utterly ridiculous. You need some cash ... but it's okay if you're old. For example, Paddy Rossbach, a British expat in her late-70s, trots her Arabian dressage horse Sienna around CHF's indoor ring at 8:30 most mornings.

## Sally Swift: the Dalai Lama of New England horse riding

After deciding to ride on a consistent basis (call it three times per month), I did what any American would do; I bought the book. Oh, and the DVD too. Enter Sally Swift, New England's 20th-century equestrian guru and founder of the philosophy known as "Centered Riding." Sally spent the first 12 years of her life in a body brace due to scoliosis, and used horse riding as a medium for physical therapy. "Sally's family had a compound in Vermont with horses and the whole thing. They were, you know – seriously middle class," Jami explained. Nothing wrong with that.

Sally's horse lesson business started small, then flourished throughout the 80s and 90s, which justified their formal system of levels. The Centered Riding program has steadily become more rigorous. "If I were to decide to become a level 3 now, it would be a lot harder than when I did it in 2004." Level 3s can give Centered Riding-brand-



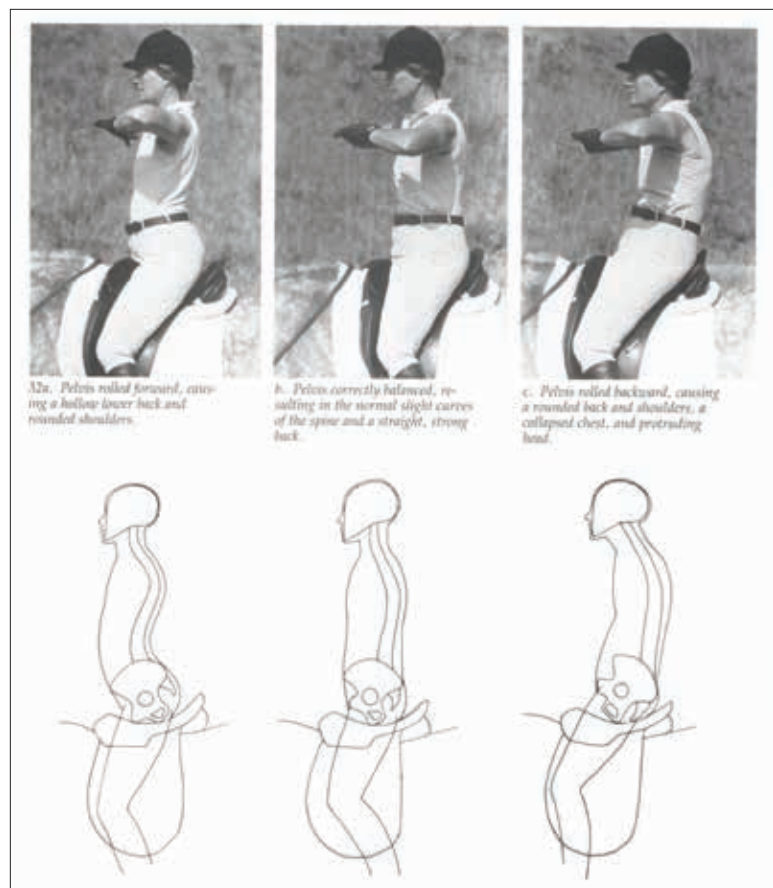
ed clinics (like the one Jami is doing at Cricket Hill Farm in April). Now Jami's trying to advance to Level 4, which entails getting into their selective apprenticeship program. "Level 4s can instruct instructors, so you've got to be at the top of your game. You submit videos of yourself teaching and riding to convince the other 17 or 18 instructors that you're worthy of becoming an apprentice," Jami explained as I laid Ricky's saddle pad on his back.

Sally, who died in 2009 just shy of her 93rd birthday, amassed a loyal band of followers and apprentices. Seeing as Sally's heyday was pre-social media, these people had to literally (as opposed to digitally) follow her around the northeast to take her clinics, which are now held everywhere from Kansas to Abu Dhabi to the Netherlands. Her two instructional videos, *Centered Riding: Part 1* and *Part 2* were filmed in Connecticut circa 1985. So you see wood-paneled station wagons passing behind the riding ring where Sally's braless protégés trot away on Thoroughbreds (this seems a rather painful moment to embrace the era's tenants of feminism, but you've gotta admire their commitment).

Continued on next page ...

Above: Cricket Hill Farm's indoor arena. Below, left: Sally Swift pulling a *National Velvet* in the late 1930s with her horse Douchka, the Russian word for dearest. Photo courtesy of Trafalgar Square Publishing.





The timbre and vocal intonations of Sally's (teaching) voice remind me of a Depression-era radio announcer, which Jami says is "very Vermont."

"She was a very wise woman. People used to say she had magic hands because she could touch you ... and you could feel yourself change," Jami explained. It's clear that Jami idolizes Sally's teachings. So did she know the great horse-woman personally? "Yes I did get to meet Sally, but I never got to take a lesson from her. She wasn't terrifically mobile at that point."

### Riding anatomy

Both Jami and Sally Swift feel that proper placement of one's seat bones is key. "Now, when you found your center of gravity that time, your belly went in and your back got soft and slack. The time before that you were sitting on your pubic arch. Ouch! Your lady parts are going to be very unhappy with you. I want you to sit softly and flat with your seat bones down and your tailbone tilted inward," Jami said as Ricky and I attempted to improve my posting trot.

"Yea, really soft. Don't push your legs. Gravity takes them, so allow your legs to just hang down," Jami said, pushing my quadricep toward the horse.

I'm supposed to think about letting my breathing happen in motion with the horse, and feeling his hind legs move my hips. "You have to breathe in rhythm with the gait. Think to yourself: 'right left, right left. Tick tock, tick tock.' And you don't have to do that silly little noise to get Ricky to trot either." (You know that clicking noise people do with their tongue to try and cajole a horse/dog/chicken to come to you? It's a hard habit to break).

Just then, Ricky started trotting a bit funny, adding a little hop in his gait. "Oh, Ricky's pooping. But it's okay because they're trained to poop as they're moving," Jami explained.

"Well that's a useful skill," I said. Maturity is often called for in this sport.

### The elusive, oh-so-alluring canter

"Think about it this way: Ricky's outside hind leg has to start the canter. So you're walking or trotting along, then you do a half halt. Then you think 'it's a three-beat gait,'" Jami said.

Right. To be fair, this stuff is difficult to internalize, let alone visualize. So what's a half halt again? "I read that part of Sally's book but I couldn't figure out what the heck she was talking about," I told Jami.

"I know. I like to think of the half halt as a little bit of whoa, with a little bit of go. The go has to be bigger. It's like someone gives you a little poke in your belly and you let out a short breath." There's this thing called the "following seat" – you want your seat to follow the horse (I know I do).

"Pretend there's molasses on the saddle and slide, slide, slide. There! Did you feel that? It's hardly any work at all. Your job is to follow. Let your body give in to the motion of the horse and just hold yourself up with your core."

### No cowboy stuff

Once you've decided to get serious to very serious about horse riding, you should get yourself some pretty Ariat paddock boots – they even have a little ridge on the heel to hold your spur in place.

"Oh ... spurs off," Jami said, pointing at my boots.

"No one wears spurs here?"

"No, we carry a whip instead."

"Uh, Jami, I believe it's called a 'crop.'" I said, proud of my equestrian vocab.

"Whips are long, crops are short," Jami clarified. Apparently the longer ones are used in dressage – that complicated horse dance thing.

"Oh, yeah dressage. That's that horse dance thing right? Did you watch it during the Olympics last summer? Those horses have rhythm..."

"No, no. The Olympics were all during the afternoon. And where was I during the afternoon?"

"Here at the stables. But there's this thing Jami, this modern thing..."

"I don't have that."

We laugh.

I have this image of my instructors reading *Black Beauty* under the covers with a flashlight as children; having pony riding birthday parties; cuddling equestrian American Girl dolls; that kind of thing.

"What was your favorite horsey movie as a child, Jami? *National Velvet*?" I asked.

"I remember watching *Black Stallion* with Mickey Rooney and reading *Misty of Chincoteague*."

There you have it.

After about a year of riding consistently, here's what I can tell you: it's a really difficult sport, and it takes a while to make sense of all the metaphors and jargon ... but then it's awesome. ●



Above, top: The Centered Riding book showing how posture and the position of your seat bones impacts your seat. Courtesy of Trafalgar Square Publishing. Above: A pair of brand new Ariat boots and a classic velvet helmet made by the British brand Charles Owen. The upside-down bow is an old fox hunting convention. If you were a member of a hunt you could turn your bow the other way around after your first blooded fox.

*Logistics: Cricket Hill Farm's upcoming Centered Riding Clinics are on March 11th and April 7-9. April 23rd is CHF's Spring Show where riders from a variety of farms come to participate in the Youth Dressage Festival qualifier. For more information, visit [www.crickethillfarm.org](http://www.crickethillfarm.org) and [www.centeredriding.org](http://www.centeredriding.org).*

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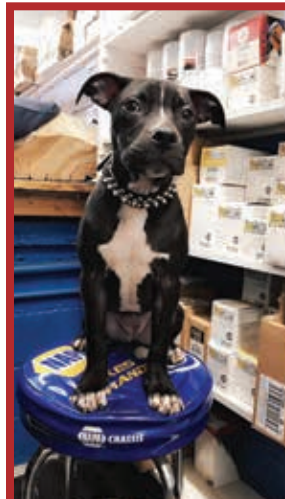
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Photo by Olivia Markovic

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## The Columbia-Greene Humane Society

Caring for animals in all types of situations. 111 Humane Society Rd., Hudson, NY. (518) 828-6044. [cghs.org](http://cghs.org)

Every pet deserves proper care, love, and a forever-home where they feel safe. Unfortunately this isn't the case for some pets. Thank goodness The Columbia-Greene Humane Society was founded in 1955 and continues to proudly serve Columbia and Greene counties. With open arms they provide adoption and surrender services, low cost spay/neuter and veterinary care, food bank for the public, offer a "safe haven" for animals whose owners are being re-homed because of domestic violence, animal cruelty investigation, and children's birthday parties – encouraging humane education. At CGHS/SPCA animals are not just a number on a list. They stay there until they get adopted, and this can mean they are there for several months until they find the perfect forever home. Animals are never euthanized for space constraints. The entire staff at CGHS say the most rewarding element of their job is rehabilitating animals that have been victims of cruelty or neglect. Going forward, they believe that Humane Societies and SPCAs will rapidly be playing a larger role in offering affordable veterinary service. Don't forget they also offer dog boarding, day care, and grooming to the public. They are open seven days a week, 11:30am to 4pm. Boarding and day care hours are 7am to 7pm. Please stop by to make a donation or call to meet and adopt your future fur baby.



## Belle Meadow Farm

Quality pork and custom farming. Clermont, NY. (518) 929-5364. [bellemeadowfarm@gmail.com](mailto:bellemeadowfarm@gmail.com).

Belle Meadow Farm started in 2004 as just a hobby – raising a few hogs for 4H. A few years later, Jackie and Evan started to expand their hobby and branch out into raising beef cattle and growing crops. In 2012 they filed for a DBA to accommodate their expanding farm. In the past few years, Belle Meadow Farm has rapidly grown from raising a few finished hogs a year, to having a weekly supply of roaster and finished hogs for local butcher shops and customers. Their quality pork is the result of making their feed and raising their own piglets. Jackie explains, "We grow and harvest our corn then source out the other ingredients from neighboring farms for our livestock feeds." Belle Meadow Farm offers pork in halves or whole, as well as roaster hogs of any size for your special event. In addition to their pork, they offer custom farming in all aspects of hay-making, planting, and harvesting in Columbia and Northern Dutchess Counties. They agree it's very humbling to be able to look at your finished product knowing what was put into it, and that is the most rewarding part of the farming lifestyle. It's a lot of hard work, but their plans for going forward are to continue to branch out to other local customers with their pork and services.



## Copake Veterinary Hospital

Small and large animal care. 7915 State Rt. 22, Copake Falls, NY. (518) 329-6161. [copakevethospital@yahoo.com](mailto:copakevethospital@yahoo.com)

There's always a soft spot for animals in our hearts, and that's how Copake Veterinary Hospital began in 1946 with Dr. John Mettler caring for animals from his home on Maple Lane in Copake Falls, NY. CVH serves clients in the NY, CT, and MA tri-state area, as well as many second home owners from New York City. Currently CVH provides on-site veterinary care to the farming community with two large animal veterinarians (excludes equine care), while the small animal community (cats, dogs, pigs, rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets, etc.) is served by a team of four veterinarians lead by the partnership of William Rasweiler, DVM, and Jonathan Duryea, DVM. (They do not, however, do "exotics" such as lizards and birds). CVH also offer a 24-hour-emergency service to their existing clients, digital X-ray, ultrasounds, laser therapy, acupuncture, orthopedic and general surgery, dental care, and they have an in-house laboratory. Just like us humans, our pets don't like going to the doctor either, but the entire staff is super knowledgeable. Regardless of the possible health issue your fur baby may have, they are in gentle and caring hands and are sure to go home happier and healthier than when they arrived. In the years to come, the staff at CVH look forward to continuing to take care of your pet and hope to expand their hours and services.



## Gina's K-9 Bed and Breakfast

Quality care pet sitting for dogs. 349 Farm Rd., Copake, NY. (518) 329-4675. Like us on Facebook.

What once started as a favor in 1996, later lead Gina to officially open her K-9 bed and breakfast. After connecting with the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters Foundation (which gives you your creditation, kennel licence, and insurance), Gina started welcoming dogs of all ages and sizes into four rooms on the first floor of her house that are equipped with pet-friendly furniture. Gina asks that before dog sitting, she interview the dog to make sure s/he will get along with other dogs and that your dog be spayed/neutered and housebroken. Upon arrival you will need to bring your dog's food, their bed, and a list of emergency phone numbers. Gina has dogs from all over, and their owners find it convenient to drop off and pick up since she is in close proximity to the parkway and train station. Gina is home 24/7, and during the holidays too, taking care of your K-9 companion. Pick up and drop off are available from 7am to 9pm. "It's like going to grandma's!" says Gina. The dogs come over, get to play and socialize with other dogs, and are in a home environment. Gina tosses the ball around with them, and takes them out 7-10 times a day. Aside for the K-9 B&B, doggie day care and play dates are available, too.

## INSURING YOUR WORLD

So you want animals on your property? They are nice to look at and they can create a very pastoral look to a property. Think of cows or horses grazing in a pasture – such a beautiful sight...but what about the liability they can cause to others should they hurt an innocent person trying to pet a horse, for instance, or better yet a cow, that gets outside of their fence and gets hit by an oncoming car? Perhaps those sheep escape and eat the neighbors' award winning flower garden, whose going to pay for those damages when they happen? If all you have is a standard homeowners policy, you will be out of luck unless you own only one large animal, a cow or horse, or two half animals, a sheep or goat. Otherwise you will need to let your carrier know of the animals on your premise and may have to change your homeowners policy to a "country estate" policy or for bigger operations, a farmowners policy to pick up all the liability exposures not covered by a homeowners policy. If you are renting land to a farmer, make sure you are named as an "additional insured" on the farmer's policy, having limits of at least \$1 million. Remember, animals are great, just make sure you have the proper coverage!

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## Leash problems?

Walking properly on a leash can be a serious struggle for many dogs and their human companions. Current products on the market may help, but do not always completely solve the problem. A reputable dog trainer may be consulted for moderate to severe issues.

For pulling issues, harnesses are very helpful. Be sure to purchase a "no-pull" harness. True harnesses, where the leash connects to a ring on the strap on the back of the dog, typically will elicit pulling. The leash attaches to the strap of a "no-pull" harness on the chest, which causes the dog to automatically turn toward you when he pulls. Head halters, another safe and gentle option, applies pressure from a strap on the bridge of the nose. When the dog begins to pull, it naturally turns the dog's head down and toward the walker.

When leash-walk training (heeling), start with your dog in a sit position on your left side and your leash collected. Treats can be used as a lure to teach the dog to remain at your side. Hold the treat level and slightly in front of your dog's nose. Reward them with a treat and your positive marker word when they take the correct steps. If your dog is beginning to pull, stop and put your dog into a sit position to refocus them or lure them with a treat back into the heel position. Once they begin to stay at your side for a few consecutive steps, slowly build on that by taking more steps before stopping and adding slight distractions. On a long walk, it takes a lot of concentration for a dog to remain in a perfect heel. Remember to let your dog have a few extra steps. Envision a large hula hoop around you and have your dog walk within that area. Use "with me" for this boundary and "heel" when you want your dog to walk perfectly by your side.

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## How to prevent dry skin in your pet

Dry skin is a serious condition for many animals; causing itching, flaky skin, and a lot of discomfort for your pet. Here are some common causes with simple solutions.

- If your dog is itching more than normal or his fur coat has lost its luster, he may be suffering from a deficiency in his diet. A lack of protein or an improper balance of essential fatty acids in your pet's diet could cause dry skin. An imbalance in your pet's nutrition is a common cause for dry skin in pets because pet foods are notoriously low in certain proteins and fatty acids. Pets that are on a dry food diet are more at risk for dry skin problems because there's a lack of moisture in the food. The moisture helps to keep the essential nutrients from breaking down before digestion. Feed your pet a balanced diet of both wet and dry food to maintain a healthy coat.

- Giving your dog regular baths with high quality shampoo is a major factor to the overall health of your pet's skin. If you're using a shampoo that is composed of lots of synthetic ingredients, you can strip your pet of his/her natural oils that will keep it moisturized. If your pet is short on his/her essential oils, it will cause his/her skin to become flaky and itchy. The best type of shampoo you can use to help combat and prevent dry skin is a natural shampoo containing Colloidal Oatmeal.

- All pets need to be groomed and brushed frequently to get rid of dead skin that accumulates over time. If you don't groom on a regular basis, the dead skin will build up on the surface of the skin and cause more scratching and flaking. Depending on your pet, you may need brush daily or up to 3-4 times a week.

With these tips, the only scratch your pet will have is the one you give them.

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## Battle of the bed

I'm sure that most pet owners have experienced what I like to call the "battle of the bed." It's that moment when you're fighting for your place on your own bed because your dog and/or cat are stretched out to the max right alongside you. How do you reclaim your space for a decent night's sleep? Well, perhaps it's time to provide your pet with their own cozy, comfy bed.

These days, there are so many varieties of pet beds with some of them being as well made and comfortable as our own furniture! Not to mention that many upscale brands provide fabric swatch books, which rival those of any home furnishings store, allowing you to choose a fabric which will completely compliment your living environment. Today, beds run from donut-shaped with tufted center pillows and supportive bolsters which provide a 'couch-like' sleeping experience, to thick orthopedic memory foam mattresses, fleece-covered foam basket nests, as well as, traditional pillow beds. And let's not forget the plethora of mats available.

So, how do you choose the right one for your pet? Well, that all depends on their sleeping habits. Rectangular shaped beds and mats are best for those who like to stretch out, round or oval, both with and without sides, for those who like to curl up into a ball. Older pets will benefit more from a firmer or more supportive bed, making the traditional pillow bed a less than ideal choice. Cats tend to appreciate beds with high sides, which allow them to snuggle in deeply, but keep in mind that many felines tend to be nomadic in their sleeping patterns. They may find one corner of the house to sleep in for a few months and then completely abandon that space for another. This makes mats a great choice for cats, as well as dogs. Mats can be used in crates, carriers, cardboard boxes, and cars and they can be easily washed.

Providing your pet with a bed of their own may not stop them from sneaking onto yours in the middle of the night, but it will most definitely give them a comfortable place to rest all of their own.



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# Grow your business with the proper tools!

## Don't suffer from the cobbler's child syndrome!

This is the best time of year to focus on your own business' needs and gear up for the coming year. That may include a multitude of things, but don't forget about the importance of your graphic and visual needs. They may include revisiting your website for updates or a face-lift, new ad and or marketing campaigns for the coming quarter or season, new brochures to give to your customers, or perhaps it is finally time to give your business a complete makeover in the form of an entirely new identity system – there's no change like that which is apparent after all!

When running our own business, we are all guilty of focusing on running the day-to-day functions of our business and keeping our clients and employees happy, but don't forget the importance of keeping your business current with the times, technology, and appearance. Successful informational materials (like brochures, websites, business cards, etc.) help to instill confidence in your customers and clients. Those materials provide

your customers with needed information and it is another service that you provide them with.

But don't feel overwhelmed at the thought of yet another thing that you have to do. I am here to help with all of your design and marketing needs. Have a happy and prosperous 2017!

## And here's a little bit about what I do:

To me, it's all about aiding you and or your business in achieving profitable growth. I am here to serve you, my clients, whether you have design, marketing, branding, photography, web, web hosting, or social media needs.

I will not talk over your head by throwing corporate jargon at you. Instead I work WITH you at a human level to better understand not only your business but your very specific needs. Every business is different. And I approach every business' needs with that in mind – there is no such thing as a cookie-cutter solution. My design, marketing, branding, and web solutions are as individualized as you are.

## Design

To design is to create, execute, or construct according to a plan. I design by creating according to your specific needs. There are many design solutions, but by getting to know you and your needs, the solutions become fewer and clearer. My design bias and passion is always to strive to create the "wow" factor.

## Marketing

Marketing is done by a process or technique of promoting, selling, or distributing a product or a service. There is no one marketing solution that works across the board – that is my belief at least. Every client's marketing needs are different, and so the marketing plans that I develop for my clients are all custom-made for them and their business to try to achieve their desired outcome.

To learn more about design and marketing go to my website [www.thorunn designs.com](http://www.thorunn designs.com).

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