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MAGAZINE







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## JONESING FOR JUNE

Is it true? Have we all survived that never-ending winter and found ourselves in the month that we dreamed about for months on end? Is it really June – the month that kicks off summer? Is that sunshine and warmth that I feel on my skin? Why yes, it's all reality and not just another daydream! I jest, but how many of us dreamed of this day all winter-long? I bet we'll think twice now before complaining about the heat this summer!

June is the month of celebration with graduations, the end of the school year, and it is the official start to summer – and all that that entails! It's a very joyful and warm month, too. Aren't we lucky? I feel blessed to find myself at this juncture, enjoying being outside and playing with my kids and husband, riding my horses, taking walks, making s'mores over the bonfire, going swimming, and eating plenty of barbecue! That's what summer is all about, right? Of course there's more to it, but we are all more energized in these months and spend much more time outside, doing all kinds of activities. And that is so healthy for us! So go on, get out there and channel your inner child.

Now that that summer-love fest has been gotten off my chest, this month's issue doesn't have a particular theme, unlike the past three months. June is just a free-spirit month all around here. But this is truly a jam-packed issue that's full of really fun articles. Christine has interviewed Kristin Swati of a local e-commerce business based on one of our local Main Streets. Christine also tackled the real estate issue of septic systems – you got that right, septic! It's not such an off-putting subject and I admit that I found myself quite intrigued by reading the article, and you might be as well! CB has interviewed quite the musical power couple, a true dynamic duo. While Ian brings us the history of a portion of our region: Amersville. Don't know where it is ... or should I rather say "was"? I bet quite a few of you have driven by it and never even knew! Regina meanwhile takes us on a museum tour to former president FDR's home in Hyde Park, as well as tells us of a cool little vintage boutique in Red Hook. Mary brings us the most fascinating story of two local men who are not just accomplished, but they could be likened to super heroes! The two gentlemen have been doing research and photographing the unicorn of the sea. Unicorn of the sea, you ask? Check out Mary's piece on the narwhals – you're sure to go, "Wow!"

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir



JUNE 2018

Just hangin' out! A young bear had climbed up a tree in Cornwall, CT when our photographer captured this endearing shot.

Cover photo by  
Lazlo Gyorsok

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# Art as context.. THE CONTEXT AS ART



By CB Wismar  
arts@mainstreetmag.com

Franc Palaia has managed to find motivation for his art in the world around him. Found objects. Photos of people and buildings and landscapes. Apples. Street art. The mundane, the profound, and the fanciful.

Franc Palaia is an artist in full, and a career that has spanned over 45 years has resonated with beauty, challenge, whimsy, imagination and celebration.

## It began with an apple

The apple appeared early in his career – in fact, it was the subject of a kindergarten drawing exercise. His rendering of form, light and shadow so impressed his teacher that she singled him out. With a moment as simple as a teacher providing positive feedback to a young pupil, the seed (if you'll excuse the play on words) was planted.

Child of Italian immigrants – a tailor and a dressmaker – Franc Palaia grew up near the New Jersey shore. Encouraged through his grade school and high school years to be serious about his art, he attended Keane University (at the time it was known

as Newark State College) and with a Bachelor's degree in hand, he took advantage of the scholarships, fellowships, and stipends as a teaching assistant to get his Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Cincinnati.

## A job that changed everything

Back in New Jersey, Frank pursued a career trajectory that was designed to allow him to also pursue his art. There were jobs in the post office, as a carpenter's helper, and in sales. None of those pursuits had any semblance of being a career. Those were jobs one took to survive while trying to solidify a direction and survive while in the process.

Frank was an artist, and one pursuit would influence his art for the rest of his career. "I got a job as a sign painter – something I ended up doing for years. I was painting letters on buildings, but I was also painting logos and pictures," he comments. "From sign painting to mural painting is not a big step if you have the artistic training, the vision, and the passion."

## The artist's imaginative mind

Piece by piece, bit by bit, he sold his work at art fairs and craft shows.

An exploration of his website ([www.FrancPalaia.com](http://www.FrancPalaia.com)) reveals unique and, at times, quirky pieces that have emanated from the imaginative mind of the artist. Stacked suitcases with backlit photos taken on world travels ... Puglia Olive Oil cans turned into lamps ... an inverted mailbox with a backlit photograph ... fancifully decorated bus shelters and colorful representations of Palaia's public art.

He developed techniques that were somewhat unique and explored the wider ranges of the art world. "I started making fake frescos, constructing walls of Styrofoam sheets four by eight feet, breaking them and adding elements," he recalls. "The effects were a total illusion, and they gained some interesting attention."

The attention was so focused that Franc ended up with a startling prize. He spent a year studying in Italy with all of his expenses paid. Proud of his Italian heritage, Franc was able to explore the country of his parents' birth and to feel the spark of imagination that travel can bring to an artist eager to assimilate what each unique place had to show ... had to offer.

Years later, Franc Palaia has taken his drawing, painting, and photographic skills to 25 countries and



Above, top to bottom: *Dos Hermanos*. The artist, Franc Palaia (right), with fellow artist Gaia (left).



found one subject that blends, seamlessly, into his own artistic expression. The Great Wall of China, the Berlin Wall, the buildings of Jersey City, Philadelphia, Havana, New York and north into the Hudson Valley. The use of walls as the foundation of art have captivated Franc.

### One of the largest installation of public art in the US

The year was 1995, and Franc Palaia was a fully engaged muralist. His massive Columbus Drive project in Jersey City (he project managed and painted a mural that was 350 feet by 60 feet) was one of the largest installations of public art in the United States at the time. "Murals can be transient art," reflects Palaia. "I met an internationally commissioned public artist, Gaia, when he was working on a project in the Hudson Valley. As we talked, he became excited about his next project – a huge wall in Jersey City. He had been commissioned to paint over the mural I had painted in 1997. The mural spanned 12 buildings and lasted for over 20 years. It was time to be refreshed."

### Photography and travels

His travels and his fascination with



the range of creativity found in public art inspired Franc to refine and rely on his photographic skills. Not only would he be able to capture images that he would see only in transit, he would be able to study them, take inspiration from the work of predecessor artists and share those images with an eager audience back home. His panoramic photographs of expanses of bridges and aqueducts, his multimedia pieces that incorporate his painting skills with imaginative photography are separate pieces of mosaic that is the unified portfolio that is Franc Palaia's work.

One such display runs until June 30, 2018, at the Cunneen Hackett Art Center in Poughkeepsie, NY. *Cuban Murals and Street Art* consolidates his work amassed during two trips to Cuba (in both 2013 and 2018) and presents not only photographs but mixed media photo works created by Franc. The exhibition will be open to the public during Poughkeepsie's Open Studios weekend June 16 and 17.

Palaia's focus on the public art in Cuba is worthy of its own volume. Traveling to places both in the cities and out in the countryside, he has seen and photographically captured a side of the reclusive island nation not often seen. From photographic murals on crumbling buildings in Havana to the massive "Dos Hermanos" hillside painting in Vinales, Pino Del Rio, he has captured the colorful soul of the Cuban people.

### Community Portraits

Because Franc Palaia is a prolific artist, his work has been presented in many forms. Public murals can be seen in person, they can be preserved and shared as individual photographs, they can be curated into multi-media shows and consolidated into books. Art can be captured and emblazoned on clothing, incorporated into found objects to make interesting lamps, furniture and *objects d'art* that are collected as sculpture.

A most recent creation of public art has been the "Community Portraits" project in Poughkeepsie. The 20 portraits of local citizens in poses of



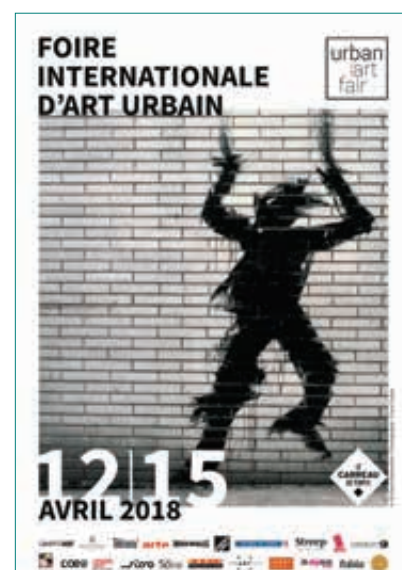
friendship and open communication reflect Palaia's desired effect. "I wanted to counterbalance racism in this country through art." By taking photographs of friends throughout the area and incorporating them into heroic images, he has made a clear and affirmative statement.

Widely known and respected in Europe, one of Franc's images was selected to be the cover photograph for the catalogue of an urban art fair held in Paris in April of this year (see cover image to the right). With a reach and influence that goes well beyond his native New Jersey or his chosen home in the Hudson Valley, Palaia has made a concerted effort to evoke thought, even change, as well as aesthetic appreciation for the compelling, sometimes overwhelming presentation of public art. "Murals are a catalyst that ignites the public to notice their surroundings," affirms Franc Palaia.

Now that the weather has turned warm, empty walls of abandoned buildings are being bathed by the sun – a proper preparation of the public muralist's "canvas." Look carefully. There may be artists working. Art is context ... and the context is art. •

See more of Franc Palaia's art portfolio at [www.FrancPalaia.com](http://www.FrancPalaia.com). "Cuban Murals and Street Art" runs through June 30, 2018 at the Cunneen Hackett Art Center – Theater Galleries 12 Vassar Street in Poughkeepsie, NY. For more information, call (845) 486-4571.

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).



Above, top to bottom: Detail of Palaia's mural on Columbus Drive. Palaia's cover photo for the urban art fair in Paris, France. Left: Stacked suitcases with backlit photos taken from Palaia's world travels.





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## friendly faces: meet our neighbors, visitors and friends



We were lucky enough to meet up with **John Kipp** – the hard-working owner of Columbia Disposal, a curbside residential garbage removal and dumpster services company. John has been working at it since October 2015 and says he loves working for himself, working in the community that he grew up in, but most of all he loves having more time to spend with this family. “When I’m not busy taking care of business, I enjoy spending time with my daughters, family, friends, going fishing in the lake close to my house, camping with the family, and riding my Harley or four wheeler.” John was raised in Niverville, NY, and he currently resides one street away from where grew up. “I look forward to many more memories in my hometown.” That’s pretty cool, talk about a small world!



**Patricia Best** is the co-owner of Best & Cavallaro Real Estate based in Salisbury, CT, and she has sold real estate in the Tristate area for 22 years. Pat also has a passion to renovate homes for resale. “I love meeting new people and sharing the beauty of our area with them. The renovation work is a great creative outlet.” Pat is an avid tennis player and loves playing at Twin Lakes Beach Club and Sharon Country Club. She also plays the guitar, sings, and was president of the Board of the Sharon Playhouse for many years, raising the funds to bring it from Pine Plains to its current location. “I love the area’s natural beauty, lack of suburban development, and the availability of a variety of cultural offerings!” Pat is looking forward to playing tennis every day, entertaining on her screened-in porch, and selling lots of houses! (Photo credit, Anne Day).



**Elizabeth (Lizzy) Bucci** is the proprietor of Elizabeth Bucci Esthetics. “I perform facial services, full body waxing, eyelash extensions, and professional makeup application – just to name a few of my many services.” Lizzy has been in the industry for nine years and says, “there’s nothing more rewarding than a client saying that they feel their best after coming to me.” When Lizzy is done making her clients feel great, she loves to spend time with her one-year-old daughter, Elliana, and husband, Dom. Together they enjoy small family trips, going on walks and hikes, or simply going out to eat. Born and raised in East Taghkanic, NY, Lizzy currently lives in Greenport, NY. “We have the convenience of restaurants, grocery stores, and much more at our fingertips. I think some days we take it for granted: the surrounding mountains, the valleys, the seasons. They’re all just so beautiful!”



**Gillian (Jill) Sims** started her banking career with Hudson River Bank & Trust years ago and is now the Bank Manager of the newly-opened Copake branch of The Bank of Greene County. “I am proud to help our hard-working community members, family, friends, and neighbors to make the most of their assets. Hometown banking is coming back to life again!” As a kid, Jill moved from north to south and when her family landed here, she knew that she was home. “The Roe Jan area offers it all when it comes to recreation. I like getting out there and enjoying it with my two boys and friends – it’s what I do. Skiing at Catamount, snow shoeing at the Roe Jan Park, golfing at Undermountain Golf Course, kayaking, biking, hiking – you name it!” Jill also donates her time as a member of the Hillsdale Town Board. You’re a busy lady, Jill! Keep it up.



**Andrew Phesay** is the Assistant Store Manager at Herrington’s in Hillsdale, NY, and also helps run the paint department. “I have been at Herrington’s for 18 years and enjoy working with my co-workers, vendors, and the customers, too.” When Andy isn’t at the Herrington’s headquarters whipping up paint colors, he enjoys spending time with his daughters. “Being a dad is a great feeling!” He also enjoys going on hikes, bicycling, and going to sports venues such as baseball, basketball, or hockey games. Originally from Levittown, NY on Long Island, Andy has lived in the Copake/Hillsdale, NY area since 1983 and says there is no place he’d rather be. “It’s a great area to grow up, work in, and not to mention the beautiful changes of the seasons, the peacefulness, and the people.” Well said, we agree, Andy!



**Val Lenis** is a sophomore at Housatonic Valley Regional High School. Val is not only an athlete, playing on her school’s volleyball and tennis teams, but she is also thoroughly involved in student government, the Envirothon team, and the American Field Service (AFS). Through AFS, Val plans on taking part in the study abroad program where she will go to Costa Rica for four weeks. “I am really excited for this opportunity to get out of my comfort zone and be exposed to different cultures.” Even though she longs to travel, Val feels lucky to live in Lakeville, CT, and finds the atmosphere of her home comforting. “Though I love it here, I plan on moving in the future. So I really want to make my time here worthwhile and contribute to my community in a way that I know will leave a meaningful influence once I’ve gone off to college.”



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*Kristin Swati of FawnShoppe.com*

# E-COMMERCE ON MAIN STREET

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

*Kristin Swati started her e-commerce business [www.fawnshoppe.com](http://www.fawnshoppe.com) in Lower Manhattan after leaving a career in finance. The internet-only shopping site offers high quality children's clothing and toys as well as home goods for all ages. She relocated her creative and fulfillment operations to Main Street in Millerton, NY, in 2016. Main Street Magazine interviewed her over coffee at Irving Farm.*

## How would you describe Fawn Shoppe?

We like to think of ourselves as a fun place to discover how to live with, play along, and dress someone small.

## What gave you the idea?

Shopping for children is filled with nostalgia and the desire to form lasting memories for the future. We wanted to create a curated destination for parents to imagine the beautiful things they want their children surrounded by.

## What was your background before starting Fawn Shoppe?

I worked on Wall Street prior to starting Fawn Shoppe. I really see this

business as a continuation of everything I've ever done. We are investing capital in the production of pieces that we believe our customers will be excited to buy. We work on a smaller scale now, no pun intended, but the overall strategy is similar in many ways.

## How did you learn about the business? Did you write a business plan?

Entrepreneurship is trial by fire. The internet and social media have opened the doors of information – it is now entirely possible to immerse oneself in any sphere and become an authority over time. In the offline world, trade shows were and remain a key place to interact with designers and other industry professionals. Business plans are important road maps, but nothing beats jumping in with both feet and building actual front line experience.

## What was the biggest surprise once you got started?

Even the best designed plans become obsolete quickly in many early-stage businesses, particularly in e-commerce. In the first year, we pivoted on seemingly everything: target audience,



product mix, marketing strategy, and internal processes.

## Where do your products come from? What is your product mix?

Our products come primarily from European and American small-scale producers. We partner with brands that share our values, like remaining conscious of environmental impact and adhering to standards of ethical labor practices.

## Was building an e-commerce website difficult?

We are in a period of rapid technological advancement where even the most daunting tasks are achievable. Our website is an ever-evolving and living-breathing thing. We are committed to giving our customers the best user experience possible, which means change and then more change.

## What brought you to building a fulfillment center in the middle of the Village of Millerton?

This collection of towns is such a unique and vibrant community as well as geographically ideal for our

Above: Kristin Swati of FawnShoppe.com at her fulfillment center on Main Street in Millerton, NY. Left and on the following page: Product shots of some of Kristin's offerings at FawnShoppe.com. Images courtesy of Fawn Shoppe.



Continued on next page ...



business. Our proximity to New York City facilitates buying and gives us access to a wealth of independent contractors, as well as a talented labor pool.

#### **How many employees do you have?**

We have four full-time employees and one part-time professional, all of whom are local, in addition to a number of external contractors. Early stage businesses are very much shaped in culture by early employees – we have been fortunate to be able to select and build a great team.

#### **Who are your competitors?**

Our larger direct competitors are mostly European. In the US, we partner with other retailers and brands to bring awareness to our guiding mission: sustainable production, clean and simple aesthetics, and an appreciation of quality over quantity.

#### **Who has inspired you?**

Our children inspire me to find products that are truly special and better for the planet. In business, I have many mentors, some of whom I know and others I've never met. Steve Jobs, for example, gave a presentation to Apple employees on the philosophy of marketing at the launch of the famous "Think Different" campaign – every business owner should watch this.



#### **Do you ever have any spare time?**

"Having it all" might be a myth, but I think everyone should seek balance, especially when it comes to children. As a family, we spend lots of time outside, in all weather. I find that children's play is actually incredibly relaxing. It's hard not to de-stress and laugh when you're on hands and knees in the grass.

#### **Do you have advice for young entrepreneurs?**

Planning is important, but real life working experience is paramount – the more experience you have, the better you'll be at navigating the inevitable ups and downs of entrepreneurship. Also, seek as much diversity of experience in the people you surround yourself with as you can. Our employees all approach challenges from different perspectives, drawing from varied backgrounds, and this makes us better in every case.

#### **What do you see in Fawn Shoppe's future?**

We are still in a high growth period, not just for ourselves but also for our brands and our niche in the market. We would like to continue to delight our customers, and over time perhaps change how people think about the types of things they should own. •

*To learn more about Kristin and Fawn Shoppe, visit them online at [www.fawnshoppe.com](http://www.fawnshoppe.com).*







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# Morning buns

WITH CINNAMON  
BUTTERMILK GLAZE

By Jessie Sheehan  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

It is difficult for me to imagine a more perfect breakfast than a morning bun (aka a cinnamon bun). What with its sweet and spicy cinnamon brown sugar swirl and its perfect size (not too small, in other words) and it's slightly tangy buttermilk glaze – cinnamon buns are nothing short of my idea of a good time. And if said buns call for chemical leaveners (baking powder and soda), rather than yeast, to help them rise, then so much the better. Yes, yeasted buns have a fluffiness and rich buttery flavor all their own, but buns leavened with baking powder and soda are so easy and fast to throw together – and yet still delicious. Therefore, in this instance, at least for me, speed trumps yeast. Apologies to those members of the slow food movement...

## Baking soda/powder vs. yeast

I first started making chemically leavened buns when I worked at Baked, the bakery where I got my start. I loved preparing the dough, spreading it with melted butter and filling, rolling it into a log and slicing away. It should come as no surprise that I love a thick sugary glaze, and I loved pouring it over the still-warm-from-the-oven buns and watching it drip down the sides. Cinnamon buns was one of the first bakery recipes I mastered and even back then I considered it a flawless breakfast treat.

Now, I won't lie: when I eventually learned how to make yeasted cinnamon buns, I summarily rejected the chemically leavened version, and went on a whole yeast-bun binge. But I'm back! I have come full circle – yes: a cinnamon bun leavened with yeast is super special, but these baking powder/soda ones will please the masses

– I promise. Not to mention the fact that if the masses give you any lip, I fully support eating them all yourself. Sharing is overrated anyway.

## For the buns:

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon table salt  
1 stick unsalted butter, cold  
3/4 cup heavy cream, or you can substitute buttermilk

## For the filling:

1/2 stick unsalted butter, melted  
3/4 cup light brown sugar  
1 tablespoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon table salt

## For the egg wash:

one egg  
1/8 teaspoon salt

## For the Glaze:

This makes a lot of glaze – feel free to prepare only half...  
2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted  
4 tablespoons buttermilk  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

## To make the buns:

Grease an 8-in-by-2-in round cake pan with non-stick cooking spray or softened butter. Line with parchment paper and grease again.

Add the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt to the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade and pulse until combined. Cut the butter into small cubes and add to the processor. Pulse until coarse crumbs form.

Slowly add the cream, while pulsing the machine, and pulse until the dough comes together in a large



clump or, until you can squeeze a bit between two fingers, and it stays together.

Dump the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and using your hands, bring it together into a large mass. Knead the dough once or twice. And then pat it, or roll it out, into a rectangle, with the long side closest to you, lightly flouring as necessary.

Now, fold the dough like you would a business letter. This fold makes for flaky layers. Lift one of the short ends of the rectangle and fold it about 2/3 of the way over the rectangle. Lift the other short end and fold that over in the other direction. Rotate the rectangle so the long side is closest to you again, and roll it out into a 14-inch-by-9-inch rectangle. Let it rest while you make the filling.

## To make the filling:

Brush the melted butter onto the dough and then combine the remaining butter with the sugar, cinnamon and salt, stirring to combine. Spread the filling over the dough, almost all the way to the edges.

Starting from the long edge of the rectangle closest to you, begin rolling up the dough, until a tight log is formed. Pinch the dough with your fingers to seal-in the filling along the

length of the log. Cut the dough into eight equal pieces and place them cut side-up in the prepared pan. Place in the freezer for one hour.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350-degrees. When ready to bake-off the buns, combine the egg and salt for the wash, and brush it on the tops of the buns. This is for shine and color – and although the glaze covers the tops of the buns, they poke out a bit, and so I call for egg washing despite the glaze...

Bake the buns for 25 to 30 minutes until the tops of the buns are nicely browned and if you stick a toothpick between two of the buns, it comes out clean. Invert the buns right side up onto a serving plate and make the glaze.

## To make the glaze:

Whisk the sugar, buttermilk, and cinnamon in a small bowl. Once smooth and thick, spoon over the buns, spreading the glaze so it drips (decoratively) down the sides of the buns. Serve immediately. ●

*Jessie is a baker and cookbook author; you can learn more about her through her website [jessiesheehanbakes.com](http://jessiesheehanbakes.com).*





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# What happens when you flush?

THE IMPORTANCE OF WASTE WATER WHEN YOU BUY OR SELL A HOUSE

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

## The “eeeeyu” factor

In the US one in five homes has a septic system to treat wastewater. In rural areas like ours the percentage is much higher. Even villages and hamlets like Millerton and Sheffield lack a municipal sewer system and on-site solutions must be designed and installed. Septic systems have no curb appeal but they can kill a sale. Sellers may think of repainting their front door but they seldom consider the viability of their septic system. Weekend buyers never think to ask about waste disposal and can be surprised to learn they just bought a property with a cesspool. Even the Bible addresses these issues in Deuteronomy Chapter 23 according to the King James Bible.

“Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse. For the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.”

## Municipal sewer systems protect water quality

An owner listing an existing residence, which has access to a public sewer system, has a strong, but infrequently mentioned selling point. Public sewer systems promote economic activity and protect drinking water quality and the environment. The resurgence of the hamlet of Hillsdale, NY, is an example of the impact that a sewer system can have.

Potential purchasers only need to calculate the periodic sewer usage charges to estimate the home's monthly operating expenses. For example, annual rates in Salisbury, CT,

are only \$275 for a house with three bedrooms and rise to \$825 for six or more bedrooms. Compare this to the cost for pumping a septic system at around \$300 to \$400 every few years, but remember that septic repair, replacement costs, and performance are difficult to predict.

If you are buying a property that has access to a sewer system without an existing line, establishing a hook-up can cost even more than installing a septic system. Depending on the distance to the house a new connection can be anywhere from \$1,500 to \$15,000 and typically involves an application process; permits; hiring a contractor to install a pipe from the sewer line to the residence; trenching from the sewer line to the home; inspections and approvals by the local building department and/or other agencies; refilling the trench; and properly destroying any existing septic system if one was used prior to the sewer connection. And then on top of all that you'll also have the monthly fees.

## Eliminate the septic surprise

If the home you are buying or selling has an existing septic system, most banks will require a special septic inspection as part of their financing approval process and purchase contracts, even for cash buyers, usually specify a satisfactory septic clean bill of health as a condition of closing. In Massachusetts Title V state law requires an inspection whenever a property is sold. Inspection costs are paid for by the buyer and usually run around \$300 to \$400, and wise sellers often have their septic systems checked before listing their properties. “I do think it's an excellent idea to have your septic pumped and inspected prior to putting your house on the market,” concurs Pat Best of Best & Cavallaro. “Especially if it has not been done for two or more years. That way you can avoid any unknown



problems that might come up and delay a closing.”

Keeping septic documentation about the system design, location of the septic field, and maintenance records is also helpful information for a buyer.

## Perc before you buy land

Unless a residential land parcel is BOHA (Board of Health Approved), which means that the engineering design has been completed and documented, any buyer of residential vacant land needs to determine the feasibility of wastewater disposal. Before closing on the property a perc test and deep hole test should be done, which can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$1,000. These tests will determine the water absorption rate of soil, how quickly the water drains into the soil, and the level of the water table in preparation for the design of a septic system and leach field. If you are a smart seller you will have already conducted these tests.

Every state, county, and municipality will have its own laws regarding

Above: Emptying a septic tank every two or three years is recommended. Photo by Christine Bates.

Continued on next page ...



the exact calculations for the length of line, depth of pit, and results should be checked against their specific requirements. In general, sandy soil will absorb more water than soil with a high concentration of clay or stone. The level of the water table can also be a factor. Look for soggy, wet spots. Also remember to include the required setbacks from neighbors, wetlands, and water.

### Separating the sludge from the scum

State licensed septic specialists can recommend what kind of septic solution is appropriate for a specific site. In a conventional septic system a sewage pipe collects all the home's wastewater and transfers it to an underground, watertight 1,000-gallon or larger concrete septic tank. Buried underground, the tank collects solids (known as "sludge"), which settle to the bottom, and floatable materials (known as "scum") that float to the top. Both are retained in the tank

and are periodically pumped out by a professional. The middle layer contains liquid wastewater (known as "effluent") that exits the tank to a distribution box, which directs the liquid through buried lines into a drain field where the wastewater disperses into the soil. The soil filters out contaminants and beneficial bacteria break down any organic materials.

### Size and cost of new systems

Here in the corners of three states and four counties there are different state, county, and town rules for approving the installation of new septic systems which affect cost, construction time, and design. Before installing a septic system check the exact process with your county or state Board of Health.

In all three states a new septic system requires a licensed engineer to design and size the system. The engineer will also handle the permitting and governmental approvals. The number of bedrooms in your home typically determines the size of your septic system. For example, in New York, each bedroom is estimated at 110 gallons per day, which would require a 1,000-gallon tank. The size of the drainage field is based on the type of soil and perc tests – sandy soil is always better than clay or rock.

The cost can range from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for installation and an additional \$5,000 for design fees. The approval process starts with a perc test and a deep hole test to enable engineers to design the system and obtain approval from the county, next the town issues a building permit and the health department will go to the site to review with the contractor what will be done. After construction and before filling back up with dirt, the health department will visit again to make sure that everything is in conformance.

In Massachusetts homes that use septic systems or cesspools, both of which are regulated by the state



Above: Septic tank pumpers are tops in puns! The Stool Bus is operated by Conn-Sept in Roxbury, CT. Photo by Christine Bates. Above top, right: Mark Hurlburt of Perotti Plumbing investigates the lines of a septic system with a special camera. Photo by Peter Greenough.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and local boards of health, require inspections of septic systems and cesspools prior to a home being sold or enlarged. Compliance with Title V is complex and potentially lengthy and costly.

In Connecticut the Department of Health is the authority in charge of administering subsurface sewage disposal systems for the 30% of homeowners with on-site sewage systems. Any construction of a new septic system, alteration of an existing system, or repair of a subsurface sewage disposal system requires an approval and a discharge permit issued by the local director of health. Homeowners have to apply for permission and submit the form to the local director of health along with the plan of the lot. Authorized personnel approved by the Commissioner of Public Health then need to inspect and approve the plans for construction. After construction, the system needs to be inspected, approved, and then will finally be given the permit to discharge or operate.

Whether you are buying, building, or selling, think about how sewage is or will be handled. Where does it go? Is there a buried septic system or a municipal sewer system? What are the annual costs? What would it cost to replace a failed septic system or hook up to a town sewer? How should these costs be factored into the value of a home or a building lot? •

### PROTECT YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

- DO NOT FLUSH flushable wipes, feminine hygiene products or diapers.
- Have your system inspected and cleaned regularly. Keep maintenance records.
- Control your water usage and avoid water surges. Stagger washing clothes, doing dishes, and taking showers. Using too much water within a short period of time can hydraulically overload the system. Repair leaking faucets and running toilets.
- Toilets, which account for as much as 25% to 30% of household water usage are not trash bins. Don't flush grease, dental floss, etc. and limit use of garbage disposals.
- Never use chemical drain cleaners – they interfere with the bacteria.
- Never park or drive on your drain field – it compacts the soil and can damage lines.
- Avoid planting trees to keep roots from growing into septic systems.
- Keep sump pump discharge and rainwater drainage systems away from your field.



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# AOH FYI

## something special's going on in Ancram, NY

By Dominique DeVito  
info@mainstreetmag.com

When the opportunity presents itself, sometimes there's nothing left to do but commit to it. Paul Ricciardi and Jeffrey Mousseau were living in Hudson for over ten years and loving it, having renovated and restored an older home there, but their lives in the theatre kept calling them to do more. Most of all, they dreamed of finding a place where they could house their own theatre/performance space. When they learned that the Ancram Opera House (AOH) was on the market, they couldn't resist checking it out.

What did they find? "Our imaginations were immediately captured," they explained, adding, "and relieved that the building only needed cosmetic changes." There are rooms above the theatre, and that's where we live, and there's an apartment downstairs for visiting artists. It was perfect. We bought it." That was in 2015, and they haven't looked back.

### The long and lovely road

When I catch up with them, it's a magical morning in early May when the roads leading to Ancram are lined with forsythia ablaze in full screaming yellow, apple and cherry trees winking pink, and one show-stopping emerald green field after another. The sun isn't out yet, but the day is warming up and all is well with the world. The Ancram Opera House is on County Route 7 just north of the main intersection in town – with Route 82. Not that you'd be driving fast at this point, but it comes up quick on your right. When there's a show, parking is just past the building. You need to pay attention or you'll get caught up in the beauty of the surround-



ings and miss it.

The Opera House is an unassuming building from the front, with a purposeful air about it. Originally built as a grange where farmers could meet back in 1927, it went through its first transformation to a performance space in 1972, when it was given its current name. Early shows tended toward light operatic fare and morphed into performances ranging from music to film to public gatherings, even yoga classes.

Jeff and Paul seem content with letting the building be itself. There's a nice porch, and big wooden doors front and center currently flanked by large posters announcing the most recent show. After entering, you go around a corner and, *voilà*, the space. Chairs are on risers facing an open floor in front of a stage. There's a round table on the floor where we sit with large, bare branches decorating the space above our heads. They were part of *Aunt Leaf*, the show that ran in February. It's a room that feels like it can

accommodate almost anything, that can facilitate transformation, that is ripe with possibility.

### The men behind the magic

Understandably, part of that energy comes from Jeff and Paul themselves. I've gotten to know a little bit about them from the information on the Opera House's website. Both have impressive résumés that could take them anywhere in the world.

Very briefly, Jeff's extensive background is primarily in producing and directing, including a residency at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. He's the General Manager of the Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists.

Paul is an accomplished actor who, besides his work at AOH, currently teaches acting and voice

Above: Paul Ricciardi (left) and Jeffrey Mousseau are doing great things at the Ancram Opera House in Ancram, NY.

Continued on next page ...



at CUNY's Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, where he is a specialist in the Linklater technique. They could be anywhere, and they are here in Columbia County.

What appeals to them? What keeps them here?

"The intimacy of this space is the culmination of our theatre desires," Paul shares. Those are based on their work and where they've seen theatre that for them is really compelling. New York City is a reference and a benchmark. Paul explains, "If Joe's Pub and PS122 in New York could have a baby, it would be the Ancram Opera House."

I am drawn to work that's smaller in scale," Jeff says. "Having an artistic home base is very important to me, too," he continues. "A place where I can create work from scratch, like *Aunt Leaf*, which was developed here and recently presented in Mexico."

### Performance with a pow

The kinds of theatre and performance they're doing and bringing to the AOH are remarkable. *Aunt Leaf*, for example, is a work based on a poem by Mary Oliver in which acclaimed Mexican artist-storyteller Indira Pensado tells a tale that takes audiences into the proverbial woods to ask for themselves what's real and what's not.

Other past performances included *We're Gonna Die* by Young Jean Lee, described as "part pop/ indie rock cabaret, part storytelling"; *Holiday Sauce* by Taylor Mac, which went on to be performed at Town Hall in NYC; and their premiere presentation, *Les Moutons*, a family-friendly piece in which the players were dressed as sheep and the work was staged outside.

A regular occurrence on the Opera House stage is *Real People Real Stories*. Based on NPR's *The Moth Radio Hour*, it taps into the stories that are happening all around us, to



Above: The exterior of the Ancram Opera House.

people just like us.

To put their shows together, AOH invites people to call in on a specially designated line and share their stories (information for this is on the website). Paul then chooses from among them and works with the storytellers for several hours to hone and craft the presentations, which are then staged on select Saturdays.

In addition to more of these in 2018, audiences can look forward to David Cale, a renowned British monologist and singer, bringing *We're Only Alive for a Short Amount of Time* to the AOH stage; an encore performance of an audience favorite, Barbara Jungr, who'll be experimenting with songs by The Beatles in this go-round (she did Dylan last year); and Diana Oh in *{my lingerie play}*.

This is some top-notch talent. What lures them to Ancram? "The location is good because it's near New York but it's in the country," Jeff explains, and Paul adds, "The artists want to work here. They see who else has been here and they're excited. David Cale said he knew about us already." Another essential element? "We have a terrific and loyal audience that appreciates the work."

"It helps, too, that there's a place for them to stay right here in the

building," Paul says, telling me how one performer was delighted that he literally could walk up a set of stairs from the residence to the stage.

### And more

Jeff and Paul offer workshops at their place, too, including An Introduction to Storytelling, and Crafting the Monologue, both hospitable to what they're all about.

I ask them what they find most exciting about what they're up to with the AOH. Their responses are immediate and complementary. "Bringing people together for a performance," Jeff says. "When the audience shows up ... greeting them, hearing their encouragement, and of course, the show," reflects Paul.

"Listening at the end of the show!" Jeff realizes and exclaims, and then confesses in an emotionally charged moment that he says is uncharacteristic for him, "Doing it together."

It doesn't get more intimate or real than that. ●

*Learn more about Jeff and Paul, the Ancram Opera House, past reviews of shows, what's coming up, and even their area dining recommendations on their wonderful website, [www.ancramoperahouse.org](http://www.ancramoperahouse.org).*



Above: Paul (left) and Jeff at the roundtable in the Ancram Opera House.





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LIFE &amp; HISTORY ON THE

# Sharon Green

By John Torsiello  
info@mainstreetmag.com

It was a spring afternoon at the home of Peter and Sally Pettus, located on the south end of the historic Sharon Green. Cars occasionally passed by and a gentle breeze blew through a massive old white ash tree that graces the couple's lawn in front of their *circa* 1804 home. Except for the blacktop on Main Street that passes through the center of this small northwest Connecticut town and the motorized vehicles, one could easily imagine back 150 years ago or more, when the sound of cars was not to be heard, only the clip-clopping of horse hoofs and the soft rumble of wagon wheels rolling over a dirt road.

Of course things have changed over the years on the Sharon Green. What was once a thriving central business area, filled with shops and various business enterprises of the 19th and early 20th centuries has transformed mainly into residences, save for a few instances, such as the Sharon Country Inn that sits across from the Pettus' domicile, the latter located officially at 2 Main Street.

"Greens like Sharon's continue to make small towns in this area representative of another era and are historic in nature," said Juliet Moore, of Elyse Harney Real Estate. "They are desirable places to live close to."

## The Green

Similar to towns in England, the classic village green in early New England was a meeting place for the community, a sacred patch of ground where residents could bring animals to graze and conduct business at fairs and other events, and around which everyday life whirled. The Green also served as a place where the local militia would gather and conduct military drills, a major cause of concern for the British when the country tumbled toward revolution in the 1770s.

"People referred to the greens as the 'commons,'" said Peter Pettus, displaying a keen sense of the history of the place where he and his family have dwelled for a number of years,

"because it was considered common ground." The couple is downsizing, moving on to a new home after raising children and grandchildren in this special sanctorum. "People don't graze their sheep anymore on the Green, but we still have fairs and concerts during the summer and people gather here. Anyone who lives on the Green feels a sense of connection to the very beginnings of the town."

Located along the mile-long Sharon Green (believed to be one of the longest greens in New England) are a number of historic homes and buildings, such as the Hotchkiss Library, the Sharon Historical Society, Christ Church Episcopal, "the Academy," and the famous Sharon Clock Tower, which anchors the very southern portion of the Green. The town of Sharon has a Green Committee that is responsible for overseeing care of the Green. This includes preparing a budget that covers mowing, feeding and pruning of trees, plowing of the sidewalks during the winter, fall and spring cleanup, and maintenance of equipment. More than 200 trees grace the Sharon Green.

## The Pettus home on the Green

The Pettus home served a number of uses during its long history, perhaps the most significant being the Woodward general store, which operated for a number of years. The dwelling has changed in configuration and appearance and is now a renovated four-bedroom home that sits on 1.45 acres with mature landscaping, most notably that imposing white ash tree the Pettuses have labored very hard over during their tenure in the home to preserve for future generations.

The property also boasts an additional five-bedroom house located near the property's in-ground pool and that currently houses Sally's studio, who is an accomplished artist who works in a number of mediums. Her paintings and sculptures grace a number of public and private homes and venues. Her husband was a skilled pottery maker who once operated a studio in New York City.

The Pettuses tastefully dressed



Above: The now-Pettus home has served many roles, including as a general store. Photos courtesy of Juliet Moore, Elyse Harney Real Estate.

the interior of their main home as an homage to its past, even delving deep through several layers of paint to expose the wood mantle of the home's original Rumford fireplace in a parlor. Paintings and sculptures by Sally and pottery by her husband are located in various rooms within the dwelling, which is bathed in sunlight on this day, rays streaming through large windows.

Other interesting aspects of the home include a Dutch door with original strap hinges in the dining room/study; southern pine floors in an updated kitchen; built-in shelves and cabinets and a window seat in a sitting room/dining room; a conservatory with atrium doors that leads to a brick terrace, and French doors that lead to a garden/family room with a lattice ceiling, antique chestnut floors, a chandelier and bead-board wainscoting. The bedrooms and several baths are located on the second floor. The main house is 4,226 square feet and has a front porch where Peter likes to while away time watching life pass by along Main Street, much the way it has for hundreds of years.

The guest house, which offers a close up view of the pool, features a living room, garden/family room, a kitchen and multiple bedrooms and baths. The guest house is 2,774 square feet. The property also has Italianate gardens with a Loi pond and a potting shed.

"One of the things we liked most about the home," said Peter, "is the human dimensions of it. The rooms

are intimate and the ceilings at a comfortable height, which creates a coziness to the interior. The home was in a bit of a rundown state when we saw it, but we knew what we could do with it, especially where it is located, and it didn't take long for us to decide to purchase it."

## The house's history

In historical notes on the property supplied by Moore, it is reported that in 1768 a Colonel Ebenezer Gay bought a part of Sharon home lot "number 25." On the lot, he built a salmon-colored brick house that is now known as the Gay-Hoyt House, the home of the Sharon Historical Society by gift of Miss Ann Hoyt. A photograph revealed that the rest of the home lot, facing the Town Clock, was once a busy site. It was crowded with shops, including the aforementioned general store, a lumber yard, a jewelry shop, and a ladies millinery establishment. Only the present Pettus house remained after other buildings were moved west of the Congregational Church by George Kirby, an innkeeper, who used them to house his workers.

Sharon's town Green certainly isn't the only such space in New England, as almost every town and city maintains a treasured link to its past. But the mile-long swatch of grass and trees in Sharon is one of the more historic and interesting such spaces, and continues to enfold the town's residents, especially those who live along its green shores, in a special embrace. ●





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HUMBLE HEROES OF THE ARCTIC WORLD

## Narwhal Man & The Lens

Above: Traveling through Disko Island, Greenland.

It's the era of superheroes and their blockbusters – *Black Panther*, *Wonder Woman*, and *Justice League* to name a few. We know they're imaginary, but what if they were real? What if one lived right in our own town and we didn't even know it? How cool would that be?

It's not *Main Street's* M.O. to drop a journalistic bombshell – but it is now. I'm blowing the cover on two heroes in our midst. Dentist Martin Nweeia and photographer Joseph Meehan are scientifically, visually, and respectfully kicking butt and taking names for the sake of the mythic, but very real Arctic Narwhal.

### Dental amalgam

For the past 18 years, Dr. Nweeia has been blending research and dentistry in his collaborations with the likes of the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, National Geographic, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Woods Hole, and Harvard University School of Dental Medicine. These partnerships stem from a passion to explore the Arctic Narwhal, a one-toothed whale that has been likened to a water-bound unicorn.

### Filling in the gaps

Nweeia's dental research began with examining human teeth in the Amazon as a dental anthropologist. Much like medical examiners use teeth to make identifications, science can use dental clues to create theories about the migration of species and relationships between cultures.

From his work on human dental patterns, Nweeia became interested in animal teeth formations and morphology (the study of forms of and relationships between living things).

This line of study brought him face to tusk with the Narwhal whale. "What I had read about the function of the Narwhal tusk made no sense to me. I became devoted to finding out about the structure and function of this tooth that seemed so unlike those of most every other animal."

### Sensitivity to wonder – and salt

Since the early 2000s, Nweeia has been focusing his energies on investigating the male Narwhal's tusk. He built his credentials through independent and team research and careful listening, fueled by what he calls "a child's curiosity." His research into the function of the tooth, which was traditionally believed to be a tool for battling for the female, has shown it to be much more than that.

Nweeia's work led to the discovery that the tooth is a sensory organ riddled with nerve endings right to the surface – there's no hard enamel shell as in most other species. These nerves help the Narwhal sense changes in the salinity of the water. As water freezes it leaves the salt behind. When it melts the water's salt content is diluted. The Narwhal uses the tooth to navigate its Arctic environment and avoid getting caught under ice, where it is unable to surface and breathe.

According to Nweeia, because it is more commonly found in males, this extended tooth's salt detector likely has a function in sexual selection and providing for offspring. It potentially helps the male locate available females hanging out in specific areas defined by salt concentration and detect salinity in its prey.

Nweeia has also been involved in research to show that this tusk is one of the male Narwhal's two front teeth. The left one usually stays within the mouth, while the right one extends forth by two to three meters in length.

For those of you who might have thought that this tusk is used to spear large prey, think again. The Narwhal

By Mary B. O'Neill, PhD  
info@mainstreetmag.com  
Photographs by Joseph Meehan

Continued on next page ...





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can't chew all that well. The rest of the Narwhal's teeth are vestigial, meaning that they have become functionless over the course of evolution. The Narwhal feeds on small fish that it vacuums up through its mouth.

### Indigenous wisdom in a scientific world

One of the key aspects of Nweeia's research is the role that indigenous Inuit play in positing theories, collecting data, and drawing conclusions. "Indigenous knowledge in scientific research often receives a footnote treatment. My belief is that they are full collaborators in this research. I respect their experience and wisdom. While it might not be immersed in scientific method and repeatability, their knowledge comes from a deeper place," Nweeia continues, "Their lives depend on their observations and conclusions. Understanding the Narwhal is not an academic exercise for Inuit hunters. They need to know the animal and the environment. They need to listen and watch. If they don't, they may not feed their families or make it back home."

This observation illustrates Nweeia's integrative approach to scientific research. "Science is reductionist, meaning we remove variables to look at the meaning of one thing in isolation from others. Indigenous people, because of their intimate connection



with the natural world for the sake of their lives and livelihood, look at the world as one integrated whole. This model actually aligns with my view of the world."

His view seems to be working – and you can see the results of his research at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, where Nweeia has co-curated the exhibit, *Narwhal: Revealing an Arctic Legend*.

### Trading tees for teeth

How Nweeia combines two seemingly full-time jobs seems as mystifying as the Narwhal itself. Yet Nweeia identifies himself first as a dentist and second as a Narwhal researcher and collaborator. "I think of this as my golf game," he explains, "My

first responsibility is to my human patients. I love interacting with them, but I couldn't do one without the other. Narwhal research is integral to my life. In my free time, I'm making calls, submitting journal articles, and conducting research."

### Focusing The Lens

Part of Nweeia's integrative approach includes a visual record of the research, the Inuit partners, and their livelihoods. This aspect of his research calls upon the talents and skills of professional photographer and Salisbury, CT, resident Joseph Meehan.

Meehan is a fixture in these parts working and volunteering in our towns, photographing its events and citizens. He's a gentle giant, and despite his well-over-six-foot height, when he's taking pictures he somehow manages to be invisible.

Recently, he gave a community lecture about his Arctic expeditions with Nweeia to conduct Narwhal research. Speaking to a capacity crowd at Noble Horizons Retirement Community, Meehan showed himself as a master storyteller and teacher, tracing progress through the Arctic with humorous anecdotes while throwing out lens choices and shutter speeds.



Above, top to bottom: Male narwhal during spring migration, Arctic Bay Expedition, 2007. Mucktar Akumalik and grandson, Arctic Bay. Left: Joe Meehan self-portrait on the ice, 2002.



Continued on next page ...



With his calm demeanor, deep respect for his human and animal subjects, and sharp sense of humor, he prepares for every photographic eventuality, which comes in handy in battery-freezing temperatures of the Arctic world. But some things Meehan can't prepare for – like when that polar bear took a swipe at his tent, with him in it!

### Dental bonding

Nweeia describes Meehan as an “understated and wildly talented photographer.” Thankfully, serendipity brought them together in Nweeia's dental office, where he was showing Meehan his amateur photos of the most recent expedition.

Meehan casually offered that if Nweeia ever needed a photographer for an Arctic trip.... He didn't have to suggest it again. Nweeia recounts, “I knew Joe's work, knew what he was capable of. I've had other photographers make that same offer, but when Joe asked – suddenly it became relevant.”

### “I Got It”

Their partnership cemented over that first polar expedition together. “When we first went out, I'd ask Joe to get photographs of the Inuit elders. He'd be back in what seemed like minutes. All he would say was, ‘I got it.’ I wasn't quite sure how he could have shot the material in such a small amount of time.”



The incredulous Nweeia was soon assuaged. “What takes another photographer a whole day, Joe can capture in three or four shots. On that trip, I learned that when Joe says, ‘I got it,’ it means he has it.”

Since then, Meehan has been on three more polar Narwhal research expeditions with Nweeia, where he captured truly awe-inspiring images, told visual stories, documented discoveries, and bent his lanky frame into the tent version of a tiny house on an Arctic floe. It is his photos that populate Nweeia's website, articles, and presentations, as well as the Smithsonian exhibit.



### Hero worship

I can imagine that when Nweeia and Meehan read this article for the first time they might feel uncomfortable with being characterized as local super heroes. If you know them, then you know that they both exude a quiet humility and prefer to just get on with their work.

Here's the thing – they are the type of hero and role model we need today, and they are right here in our community. Both are smart and talented, serious with a healthy dose of self-irony, persistent, willing to share their knowledge, and able to respect and incorporate diverse perspectives.

They live lives of “and” – not “or.” A practitioner of Narwhal scientific research *and* community dentistry. A photographer of Arctic wonder *and* student athletes. They do what heroes are supposed to do: transcend self-imposed limits and leave the world better than they found it – with or without the capes. ●

*For more information on Narwhal research, visit [www.narwhal.org](http://www.narwhal.org). For details about the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History exhibit, visit [www.naturalhistory.si.edu/exhibits/narwhal](http://www.naturalhistory.si.edu/exhibits/narwhal). To explore the photography of Joseph Meehan, visit [www.josephmeehan.com](http://www.josephmeehan.com). Dr. Nweeia's dental practice is located at 6 New St., Sharon, CT. Phone number (860) 364-0200.*



Above, top to bottom: On the hunt, Pond Inlet, ice floe edge 2003. Joe Meehan (left) and Martin Nweeia (right) traveling inside a Qamutiik (enclosed sled) on the ice floe edge outside Pond Inlet. Left: Martin Nweeia and Inuit hunter Adrian Arnauyuma-yuq waiting to release a narwhal off Qaqqiat Point, Arctic Bay Expedition 2010.



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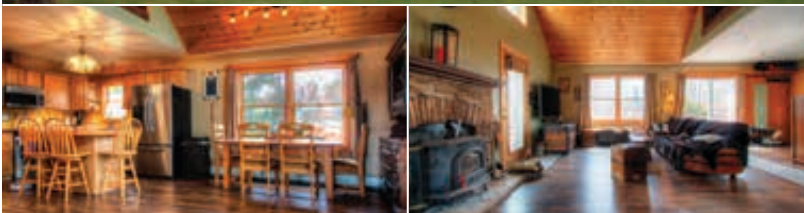
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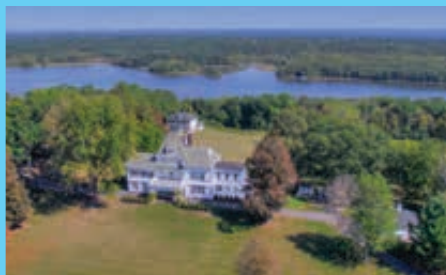
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Local museum and points-of-interest roadtrips:

# Embracing Roosevelt's Legacy

By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

"All that is within me cries out to go back to my home on the Hudson River" – Franklin D. Roosevelt

"It doesn't really matter whether you are Democratic or Republican. We as Americans all benefit from something the Roosevelts fought for or created. We have unemployment insurance and minimum wage. We have the FDIC and social security. The Works Progress Administration built schools and post offices. The Civilian Conservation Corps built roads, bridges, and improved National Parks. You can enjoy that glass of wine, mug of beer, or cocktail since he ended Prohibition. We all benefit in some shape or form," says Shannon Butler, Park Guide at Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site.

## Our 32nd President

The 32nd president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt is commonly known as "FDR." The Democratic politician led the nation from 1933 until his death in 1945. He is the only president ever to be elected to four terms.

FDR guided the country through the Great Depression and created the "New Deal," which fed and employed millions of men and women. He also built infrastructure and parks that are still in use today. FDR also led America to victory over Nazi Germany and its allies, and spearheaded the alliance between the US, Britain, and the Soviet Union. He also coined the name "United Nations."

## The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

Hyde Park is home to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. The sprawling grounds that the Museum and Library sit on represent a sixteen-acre tract of land surrounded by hundreds of acres of National Park Service land. Every year, nearly 200,000 visitors flock to this historical site to learn more about Roosevelt's legacy.

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum is America's first presidential library and the only one used by a sitting president. The Library, which opened in 1941, served as a model for the nation's presidential library system. Its design was inspired by FDR's interest in the style of the Dutch colonial buildings in the Hudson Valley. The aesthetic encompasses simple forms, scale, and steeply-pitched roofs.

The Library's 17 million pages of archival holdings include the President's personal and family papers, and documents that spanned his public career at both the state and national level. It includes Eleanor Roosevelt's papers, as well as the documents of the Roosevelt family's associates from public and private life.

## Exploring the Museum

The Museum guides visitors through the Roosevelt presidency. It begins in the depths of the Great Depression and continues through the New Deal years and World War II. Some highlights from the permanent collection include the Oval Office Desk, which FDR used throughout his 12 years of presidency (it was previously used by President Herbert Hoover). At this desk, FDR signed the declaration of war with Japan and Germany and the GI Bill. Also on view is the 1936 Ford Phaeton that FDR drove around the Hyde Park countryside.

Interactive exhibits engage visitors with touch screen experiences, trivia, and immersive audio visual theaters. "Confront the Issues" offers ten interactive touch screens that offer visitors an opportunity to explore digital "flipbooks" that contain documents, photographs, and excerpts from historians. Multiple viewpoints are presented on controversial topics from the Japanese American Internment to the Holocaust, and FDR's health.

In 1933, before television, the internet, and cell phones, FDR spoke directly to the public via his informal radio broadcasts, known as "fireside chats." The Museum includes two Fireside Chat environments that



enable visitors to listen to two-minute radio excerpts on topics such as ending the bank crisis, defending the New Deal, and creating Social Security. Visitors can also listen to readings of letters that were written to the President. They represent a variety of opinions.

A 500-square foot Map Room exhibit recreates the top-secret communications center, which is where FDR monitored global military activities. It includes projections of maps and timelines of key battles and decisions. Six interactive tables include animation, videos, speeches, and trivia quiz opportunities.

## The Art of War on display

Through December 31, 2018, a special exhibition, entitled, *The Art of War: American Poster Art 1941-1945* will be on display. It showcases the advertisements, radio programs, pamphlets, and films used to inform and guide Americans. Some of the artists include Norman Rockwell, James Montgomery Flagg, N.C. Wyeth, and Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss). The exhibit also reveals information on the stories behind some of America's posters including "We Can Do It," "Four Freedoms," and Uncle Sam's "I Want You."



Above, top to bottom: The Museum's collection includes the Oval Office Desk, which FDR used throughout his 12 years of presidency. Visitors can listen to two-minute radio excerpts at the Museum's Fireside Chat environments. Photos courtesy of the FDR Presidential Library.

Continued on next page ...



## Springwood, the grounds, and beyond

While visiting the Museum and Library, guests are encouraged to take a guided tour of Springwood – FDR’s birthplace and lifelong home. On April 12, 1944, it was designated a National Historic Site, but opened to visitors in 1946. Eleanor was there on opening day and hosted tours. Inside, visitors will see FDR’s boyhood and presidential bedrooms, as well as family photos, lithographs, paintings, and furnishings. FDR’s clothing still hangs in the closet and the iconic top hat he wore during the inaugural speeches is on display in the closet.

While on the site, stroll the grounds and trails, and visit the rose garden where FDR and Eleanor were buried alongside their beloved Scottish terrier Fala, and another dog, Chief.

The neighborhood is also home to FDR’s retreat home, Top Cottage. Access is offered via a shuttle bus from the Henry A. Wallace Center. While in the area, visitors can also explore Val-Kill Cottage – Eleanor’s retreat.

## Upcoming events

Saturday, June 16, Roosevelt Reading Festival, 9:45am to 5pm. Authors of recently published works, which drew upon the Library archives, will present talks and host book signings.

Thursday, June 21, Author Talk & Signing: Alexander Heffner, 7pm. PBS host and journalist Alexander Heffner, the author of *A Documentary History of the United States* will present an author talk and sign copies of his book. Registration is required.

Saturday, June 30, Family Fun Festival, 10am to 4pm. The day will include circus performances, a raptor show, a magician, face painting and balloon animals, as well as a live radio broadcast, music and dancing, a dunk tank, and food trucks.

Thursday, July 5, Film Screening, *The Great Escape*, 7pm. Registration is required.

## Wandering around Wilderstein

A short drive from the Library and Museum is Wilderstein – a Historic Site that traces its history back to 1852 when Thomas Holy Suckley purchased the property. For nearly 150 years, Wilderstein was home to the Suckley family, who were descendants of prominent families including the Roosevelts, Beekmans, Delanos, Livingstons, and Rutsens.

The last resident of the estate was Margaret Suckley, who was known as Daisy. She was FDR’s cousin and confidante, and traveled extensively with FDR during his presidency. She also helped him establish the Library, and gave him his beloved companion Fala. After her death in 1991, a suitcase full of letters exchanged between Daisy and FDR was uncovered at the estate. The letters are a significant resource for understanding the private side of Roosevelt’s life. The depth and significance of their friendship wasn’t known until the discovery of the letters.

The mansion, which was designed in American Queen Anne style, is regarded as the region’s most significant example of Victorian architecture. It marks the first truly national American style and is characterized by

a unique fusion of other previously established styles. The tower, steeply pitched roof, dominant front-facing gable, and decorative detail are representative of this style of architecture.

The estate’s Wilderstein moniker hails from a petroglyph on the property. In

German, “Wilder” means “wild man” or Native American and “stein” means stone. The carving depicts a man wearing a headdress with three feathers. In one hand, he holds a peace pipe and in the other, a tomahawk.

“Wilderstein is a time capsule of the Victorian era in terms of its architecture, furniture, and collections. Its entire contents are original to the house and family. The interior has remained virtually untouched since 1888,” says Gregory J. Sokaris, Executive Director, Wilderstein Historic Site. Every room on the first floor boasts a different architectural theme.

“What is refreshingly different about Wilderstein’s tours is the remarkable personal quality, which gives visitors the sense of being invited into someone’s home. The mansion feels very much like the Suckley family just went out for a walk and will return shortly,” concludes Sokaris.

Wilderstein’s surrounding landscape and trails were designed by Calvert Vaux, who was Frederick Law Olmsted’s business partner. Vaux designed the grounds in accordance with the principles of the American Romantic Landscape style. It has an intricate lattice of drives, walks, and trails adorned with specimen trees and ornamental shrubs.

Although the Suckleys weren’t known for lavish entertaining, it wasn’t unusual for a statesman, dignitary, or prominent member of the

Hudson River aristocracy to enjoy tea at Wilderstein.

On June 16, Wilderstein will host a guided hike at 2pm with the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK). It will be followed by tea and light refreshments. The event recreates one of the many hikes Miss Suckley hosted at Wilderstein. An outdoors enthusiast, she was a member of the Mid-Hudson chapter of the ADK. Tickets are \$15 (\$10 for ADK members).

Other events include a Summer Celebration to be held on July 7 at 5pm. The annual fundraiser will boast an old-fashioned carnival theme, and will offer carnival fare, cocktails, house tours, and a silent auction. Tickets are \$125 per person.

Summer is a great season for exploring these historical sites. Set aside a day or weekend to visit some of these locations for a more in-depth experience and to learn more about the Roosevelts and their contributions. •

To learn more: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, 4079 Albany Post Rd., Hyde Park, NY, (845) 486-7745, [fdrlibrary.org](http://fdrlibrary.org). Top Cottage, (845) 229-5320, [nps.gov/hofri/planyourvisit/top-cottage.htm](http://nps.gov/hofri/planyourvisit/top-cottage.htm). Val-Kill Cottage, 54 Valkill Park Rd., Hyde Park, NY, (845) 229-9422, [nps.gov/nri/travel/presidents/eleanor\\_roosevelt\\_valkill.html](http://nps.gov/nri/travel/presidents/eleanor_roosevelt_valkill.html). Wilderstein, 330 Morton Rd., Rhinebeck, NY, (845) 876-4818, [wilderstein.org](http://wilderstein.org).

The museum will host several free events that are open to the public. All events will be held at the Henry A. Wallace Center except the Family Fun Festival, which will be held on the Great Lawn. For events that require registration, visit [fdrlibrary.org](http://fdrlibrary.org).



Above: The Wilderstein estate’s moniker hails from a petroglyph on the property. Below, left: The Map Room recreates President Roosevelt’s top-secret communications center during World War II. Photos courtesy of the FDR Presidential Library.





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# AMESVILLE: *Balancing nature & industry*

By Ian Strever  
info@mainstreetmag.com

These days, it is a rare locale indeed that has not yet been plumbed to its bowels by the likes of Yelp, Google Maps, FourSquare, Wikipedia, or some other darling-of-the-moment social media outlet. Even in the greater *Main Street* distribution area, where cell tower placement is seemingly whimsical or performed to nominally fill in coverage maps, most brick-and-mortars enjoy their fair share of all-important reviews.

My job as a writer is to review these, um, reviews, and check the places out in person, hopefully either supplying you with fodder for your next weekend excursion or saving you the trouble of investigating that hole-in-the-wall you'd been wondering about for the past six months that may have since closed anyway.

## 41.9629° N, 73.3760° W

After a long New England winter, we all tend to look outward: tropical beach spring breaks, quiet summer vacations in the mountains. But my cause here, aided by a strained calf muscle and weariness of winter, is to look inward to extol the virtues of home – in my case, good ol' 41.9629° N, 73.3760° W. These are the exact coordinates of Amesville, CT, which, when Googled, returns all of ten hits, five of which deal primarily with Salisbury, with an

oh-by-the-way historical footnote of this little burg, deposited amnesiacally to the east of Smith Hill in Salisbury and adjacent to Falls Village but for the coursing Housatonic River that bisects the towns. Taxationally, residents pay their tribute to Salisbury, but they get their mail from the Falls Village Post Office, a quirk sometimes rectified by some hifalutin residents via a leased PO Box in Salisbury proper.

## The story of Amesville

Plug in the afore-enumerated coordinates, and you will find yourself smack in the middle of Puddler's Lane, which is as good a place as any to begin the story of Amesville.

"Puddler's Lane" is a designation that invites lots of questions ("Who would want to be called a 'puddler'?", for one), and like many places in Amesville, the name was selected for good reason. The six similar, modest homes on this street were built in the 1850s for the puddlers of Ames Iron Works, the business interest of one Horatio Ames, namesake of the area. The puddlers were skilled laborers who practiced a more advanced technique for creating iron that involved manually stirring the molten ore to effect the removal of impurities and, in turn, the production of high-grade cast



iron. Ames applied this technique to the making of the biggest cannon in the world, with the intent to supply the Union forces, but timing is everything: he completed casting his behemoth in late 1864, and the ending of hostilities meant the end of his business.

## Great Falls

The site of the Amesville Iron Works themselves is located a short walk down Sugar Hill Road to the top of the unimaginatively- but appropriately-named "Great Falls." The title makes slightly more sense, however, with the knowledge that there once was a "Little Falls" about a hundred yards upriver from the greater cataract (the succession of falls obviously led to the name "Falls Village," which was once the name for the area to the west of the Housatonic and which, despite nominally relocating across the river, continues to suffer from the same lack of creative christenings that seems to plague all of Amesville).

The Little Falls fueled the furnaces that drove not only the Ames Iron Works, but the repair

Above: The Little Falls as they were in 1900. Left: A photo from 1900 shows the old covered bridge that used to span the Great Falls before the current spillway was added in 1913. Images courtesy of the Salisbury Historical Society.



Continued on next page ...





Above: The top of the Great Falls was long a hub of activity, from Native American settlements to the Ames Iron Works to the repair shop for the Housatonic Railroad. Courtesy of the Salisbury Historical Society. Right: Today, a spillway gathers water for the hydroelectric plant that transformed the landscape.

shop for the Housatonic Railroad that subsumed the site from the 1870s until about the turn of the next century. The curious visitor can learn more about the immediate area thanks to a short historical trail that snakes through the now-quiet plateau that once produced so much industry. The incurious visitor can gawk at the falls (no judgment here, either. Their springtime deluge is among the most impressive in New England).

#### Shaping Amesville

There is a lot written about the iron industry in these parts, and there is no question that it shaped Amesville. Photos from the late nineteenth century reveal a denuded Sugar Hill – the one curious name in the area, given that so many trees were burned to fuel the blast furnaces – and iron slag can be found in a forgotten foundation near the current single-lane bridge that crosses the Housatonic near the hydroelectric plant. This is the kind of clue that can transform a trip around the neighborhood into a historical treasure hunt.

Whenever I walk around the neighborhood now, I look at it differently. Stone walls, foundations, stands of similarly-aged trees, or a graded car-wide path will cause me to wonder about a location, and our rich local historical societies often have bountiful archives and extremely informative volunteers that can enrich one's sense of place. Thanks to a pile of slag, my neighborhood has become something out of a Whitman poem: the ghosts of iron workers shoveling charcoal into furnaces all along my walk and puddlers traipsing down Sugar Hill with their lunch pails.

Industrial husbandry of the Housatonic in the nineteenth century laid the foundation for making power from the river in the

twentieth, and the story of Amesville over the next hundred years was about learning to live alongside these natural resources instead of simply consuming them.

#### Water power

An ambitious and mismanaged attempt to build a series of locks left behind a formidable retaining wall just uphill from the power plant and a flawed but salvageable canal along the top of the falls that became a blueprint for the current one that supplies water power to the plant.

In 1912, the Connecticut Power Company purchased the rights to the water that flowed over the two sets of falls (a curious legal concept: the ownership of an ever-transitory resource. It's like trying to own a moment in time), and in 1913, they dynamited the Little Falls to slacken the pace of the Housatonic, making it possible to construct a ten-foot tall spillway atop the Great Falls. Dynamiting one set of waterfalls and pouring concrete on top of a natural wonder like the Great Falls is contemporary environmental heresy, but to be fair, the plant – now over a hundred years old – has provided watts and watts of clean energy since before any of us were born.



And it's kind of nifty inside, too. Think lots of needle-flicking gauges in the control room above three rock-concert loud turbines of a Flash Gordon aesthetic. The technological achievement itself is staggering, especially considering the era in which it was built. Although most of the operation is now managed remotely by computer, talking with the two remaining technicians reminds a journalist of just how much he doesn't know in this world.

#### A homeostasis between man and nature

Amesville today symbolizes a kind of homeostasis between man and nature. The management of the Housatonic provides necessary power for the region, but it also regulates the down-river current, making it a playground for whitewater enthusiasts (including Amesville resident and Olympic contestant Devin McEwan) and anglers of all types (legendary carp and trout varieties are the trophies of choice). The Appalachian Trail in this area weaves through hemlock stands, past the site of an old horse track, alongside industrial artifacts, and eventually up Sugar Hill to Rand's View, a spectacular vantage of the Taconic Range and the distant Berkshires. Somewhere along the climb, hikers step beyond the boundary of Amesville – wherever that line may be – and enter Salisbury, with its acuminate steeples and ski jump, leaving behind a curious hamlet with a rich history and a trove of natural attractions. ●

*A special thanks to Lou Bucceri, Katherine Chilcoat, and Jean McMillen of the Salisbury Historical Society for their time, information, resources, and helpfulness in learning about the fascinating history of my neighborhood.*





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# The magic is in the music

KIM SCHARNBERG & GWYNN GRIFFIN

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

The Wikipedia definition seems so sanitized: “Music is an art form and cultural activity whose medium is sound organized in time.” What about “magic” and “emotion” and “mystery?” If you don’t believe those terms should be included in the basic definition, then check in with Gwynn Griffin and her husband, Kim Scharnberg. Time and sound are certainly part of their story, but so are magic, emotion, and mystery.

## Serendipity

Gwynn Griffin grew up in Bogalusa, LA, a small town outside of New Orleans. When the family moved west with a job transfer, she ended up outside of San Francisco and, in keeping with the traditions of her family, pursued chemical engineering as her course of study at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Things were moving smoothly into her junior year when a moment of serendipity brought a point of inflection that would change her life, completely.

Gwynn had taught herself to play the flute and the instrument was her constant companion. When a roommate suggested that they venture into Santa Barbara to hear a concert by the emerging “new age” musician Paul Winter, not only did they attend the concert, but after having the opportunity to meet Winter after the concert, they decided to accept his invitation to attend the second night’s perfor-

mance. Chemical engineering quickly faded from view. Gwynn wanted to play the flute – and sing – for the rest of her life.

## A journey to Connecticut

So, what to do? Although music was “happening” all over, the lure of heading east to pursue her passion was so great that Gwynn used the tried-and-true method of making important decisions. She closed her eyes and let her finger settle on a map of New England. Avon, Connecticut. Why not? Knowing nothing about the place, its proximity to work or school, she could see that Avon was close enough to Paul Winter’s music compound in Litchfield, CT, that there seemed to be a bit of celestial geometry taking place.

## A duet with her idol

So, the journey began, but along the way, there was a moment so profound that it begged description. Heading east from the California Coast, it’s not difficult to set a course that allows some time to visit the Grand Canyon. It was there, her flute in hand, that Gwynn did some exploring and stepped out on a promontory only to discover that many yards away, on another outcropping, was her musical idol – Paul Winter.

There are no recordings of the duet that ensued. There is no detailed digital file that can be called up to marvel



at the notion of a flute and a soprano saxophone “calling” to each other across the vast Arizona landscape. But it happened. And Gwynn’s journey continued, with the house, the barn, the studio, and the cottage that is Winter’s compound – her ultimate destination.

Years ensued, as they always do. There was a marriage, a family, pursuit of the moments of a career in music – teaching and performing – always with the great love of both the flute and the songs that she would sing to the delight of her audiences. A person gifted with great generosity, Gwynn found one audience to be most receptive to her talents. In the independent and assisted living communities that dot the area, Gwynn became an eagerly anticipated celebrity. It was only when the appearance of a congenital physical ailment made her performance schedule prohibitive that Gwynn had to limit her performance to private moments at home.

Above: Kim Scharnberg is a conductor of note, and has conducted the Presidential Gala at Ford’s Theater in Washington, DC on several occasions and enjoyed several invitations to join the President at the White House. Kim pictured above with his wife, Gwynn, and former President of the United States, Barack Obama. Left: A current, very long distance orchestration project has Kim working with an arts group in Inner Mongolia to score an important local folk festival. Photos courtesy of Kim Scharnberg and Gwynn Griffin.



Continued on next page ...



### Growing up with music

The road to Kim Scharnberg's musical destiny was quite different than Gwynn's, but fate has a funny way of bringing people together. Born into a musical family, Kim grew up in Cedar Rapids, IA, and joined the musical currents of his brothers one of whom became fully immersed in classical music and the other who favored rock and jazz. Kim enjoys both.

An early indication of the future that would unfold, Kim bravely attacked the project of writing a musical arrangement for a concert band. His work was so successful, that it was performed at a public concert. Kim was in the seventh grade at the time. Through high school, regional and state bands and orchestras and the McDonald's All-American Band, Kim refined his mastery of the trombone while developing his innate arranging skills. Studying performance, conducting, and arranging at the prestigious Eastman School of Music, Kim Scharnberg was destined for stardom.

### From Iowa to LA to New York

Degree in hand and trombone packed carefully, Kim headed west to Los Angeles. The appetite for session musicians to play on commercials, recording sessions for albums, and the needs for musical scores supporting the countless television shows and feature films produced in LA provided ample opportunity to showcase his talents.



Above: Kim and Gwynn. Above top, right: Kim in session. Photos courtesy of Kim Scharnberg and Gwynn Griffin.

The occasional trip to New York punctuated Kim's career and the lure of Broadway became intoxicating. New shows needed skilled arrangers to take the melodic lines written for sprawling musicals that vied for success on Broadway – *The Great White Way*.

The list of Broadway titles Kim has orchestrated is impressive: *Jekyll and Hyde*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *The Civil War*, and *Little Women* among them. His compositions and scoring have also graced the big screen, including *A River Runs Through It*, *Quiz Show*, *Made in America*, *The Net*, and *Fly Away Home*. A current, very long-distance orchestration project has Kim working with an arts group in Inner Mongolia to score an important local folk festival.

Performers have been drawn to Kim's scoring and producing talents, and he has worked for years with celebrated performer, Broadway star Linda Eder on her many recordings. When Kim married Gwynn, Linda was the featured performer – quite a departure for a wedding, as Kim and Gwynn decided to make their day a concert in support of the Norfolk Music Shed. The star-studded affair drew national attention. For a truly magical moment, go to YouTube and enter "I'll Be" to watch singer/songwriter Edwin McCain perform with Linda Eder as his back-up and Kim Scharnberg on the podium, conducting the orchestra. Wait until the end, as Kim leaves the stage, the camera pans left and there are Kim and Gwynn dancing their wedding dance to strains of "I'll Be."

### From the White House to Rocktopia

Kim Scharnberg is a conductor of note, and has conducted the Presidential Gala at Ford's Theater in Washington on several occasions and enjoyed several invitations to join the President at the White House. He recently appeared on the podium of the great musical review *Rocktopia* which appeared on Broadway in March and April of this year. The imaginative fusion of classical music with rock anthems fit right into Kim's love of all musical forms and allowed him to



display his consummate talent as a conductor of orchestra, chorus, rock ensemble, and soloists.

"The sad thing about the timing," commented Kim, "was that I had to miss the latest presentation of *From Broadway with Love* to benefit the Parkland High School victims and their families. I was on the podium in New York that night, not on the podium in Ft. Lauderdale."

The orchestrator of the series of benefit concerts that have supported the survivors and families of the Sandy Hook, CT, tragedy and the Pulse Nightclub tragedy in Orlando, FL, Kim had the opportunity to provide the scoring for an original song written by a survivor of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School massacre.

### Fate ... and the internet

So, how did two exceptionally talented individuals find each other amid the swirl of so many experiences? Occasionally fate has some help from the internet. Reaching out to explore who might be searching for companionship, Gwynn and Kim found each other ... and agreed to meet. It was a very early date that led the two of them to climb the trails at nearby Dennis Hill State Park and for yet another moment of creative intersection that seems to have punctuated their lives.

Gwynn had brought along a bamboo flute. She knew that Kim was a musician of note, and she wanted to

get his opinion of a new ending she had composed for one of her favorite pieces – *Amazing Grace*.

"We had to wait until the motorcyclists decided it was time for their ride back down the hill," recalls Gwynn. "I really didn't want a wider audience. I just wanted Kim to listen and to let me know what he thought."

Perhaps it was the magic of the music. Perhaps it was the sweeping vistas that included the topography of three states. The relationship that became a partnership that became a marriage was in full bloom.

"I remember listening to the wonderful, lilting melody and saying to her 'I'm going to find a way to make sure you play much more music.'" Kim's commitment has been realized in moments when the two of them have been able to work together. Through recordings, carefully selected performances, and the intimate moments of music played in the confines of their home, the music of Gwynn Griffin and Kim Scharnberg soars on.

As painter Jackson Pollack once said: "Love is friendship set to music."●

To learn more, visit Kim Scharnberg's website at [www.KimScharnberg.com](http://www.KimScharnberg.com).



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3. Your website can act as a third party validation for your own business! So make sure that thing is up-to-date and accurate. Also, make sure that your website is technologically up-to-date and that you're not losing out when it comes to SEO!

4. When it comes to marketing your business, the items above are just a few of the pieces of the puzzle needed. Your identity, your businesses perception, your visuals and language are all necessary components to have in order before you start constructing your marketing plan.

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# Moving on:

## KEVIN SESSUMS RECALLS HIS PAST AND LOOKS TO HIS FUTURE

By Joseph Montebello  
info@mainstreetmag.com

His voice still carries the whisper of a southern twang. It's amazing to remember that the kid from Mississippi made it to the masthead of one of the most prominent magazines of the last century. Kevin Sessums was as famous as the subjects he covered for *Vanity Fair*. He smoked a joint with Heath Ledger in Prague, conducted an interview with Courtney Love while she was taking a bath, and crawled into bed with Cher. The list goes on: Madonna (his first cover story), Bette Midler, Barbra Streisand, Johnny Depp, Jessica Lange, Tom Hanks, Tom Cruise, Richard Gere, Roseanne Barr. If they were famous, Sessums covered them. But he not only wrote about the celebrity world, he inhabited it.

### In the world of stars

"Tina Brown was from the Barbara Walters school of journalism," explains Sessums. "You have to be part of the world you cover. That was very important to her and she wanted her writers to be stars. I became part of that world. But at the same time I have a blue-collar working class attitude about that part of my life. I was like a truck driver. I load glamorous cargo in the back and I haul it to deadline and I dump it out. Then I load more glamorous cargo and I get behind the damn wheel and cart it off again. I was just a long-haul trucker."

Sessums thrived in that world for fourteen years and then, seemingly in a flash, it was over. Tina was gone, replaced by a new editor with a new philosophy and he was no longer a part of that world.

"One of the things you realize when you leave a job like mine is that it's not *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* where work is family. It's not, it's a job," says Sessums. "When you are no longer part of that world, that's it. Not only do you tend to identify with a job like mine, but other people do the same thing. When you don't have that job anymore, who are you to

them and who are you to yourself?"

### Mississippi Sissy

After his run at *Vanity Fair* Sessums went to *Allure* where he worked for four years. While that magazine did not have as much glitz and glamor, Sessums' popularity and celebrity continued, fueled in part by the best-selling memoir *Mississippi Sissy*, which he wrote in 2007, a heart-wrenching memoir in the vein of Augusten Burroughs' *Running With Scissors* and Mary Karr's *The Liars' Club*.

It is the story of his childhood and teenage years in Forest, Mississippi. The American South of the 1960s was no place to be different and Sessums knew from a very early age that he wasn't like all of those other boys. It sets forth a youngster grappling with his sexuality during a time when no one used the word "gay."

"The first freak I ever recognized down south where I was born was my own reflection in a Mississippi mirror," he writes.

The oldest of three, Sessums was raised by his maternal grandparents after his father was killed in an automobile accident at age 33 and his mother died of cancer the following year. Effeminate boys were referred to as sissies and rough and tumble girls were known as tomboys. Sessums relates stories about what it was like knowing you were different and not trying to hide it. There are many vivid descriptions of how his own family reacted to him and how he learned to adjust and take things in stride.

After high school he spent two years at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, and then headed off to New York City to attend Juilliard's drama division. After a stint as an actor and a job working at Time-Life Films and Paramount Pictures, Sessums landed a job at Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine – the beginning of his stellar writing career.

At the time *Mississippi Sissy* was published, Sessums was riding high



and the success of his book only added to the enviable life he had carved out for himself. He had the world at his fingertips.

And then he didn't.

### From top, to bottom

Being at the peak of success was followed by a descent into a world of drugs and addiction, crystal meth, cocaine, nights of anonymous sex, the discovery of being HIV positive, finding himself homeless and on food stamps. How does one lose control and start that downward spiral into loneliness, confusion, and despair?

"I was always a pothead," says Sessums, "and that was never a problem. I don't like drinking, so I was never a drunk. But I was lost. I don't know why I became a drug addict. It was a blissful, wonderful feeling and part of my recovery is surrendering to the fact of it. I really don't want to know why, I just am. And I live with that reality."

Above: Kevin Sessums. Next page, top to bottom: Sessum's two books, *Mississippi Sissy* and *I Left It on the Mountain*. Sessums' living room in Hudson where he is settling, with his dog Teddy. Photos courtesy of Kevin Sessums.

Continued on next page ...

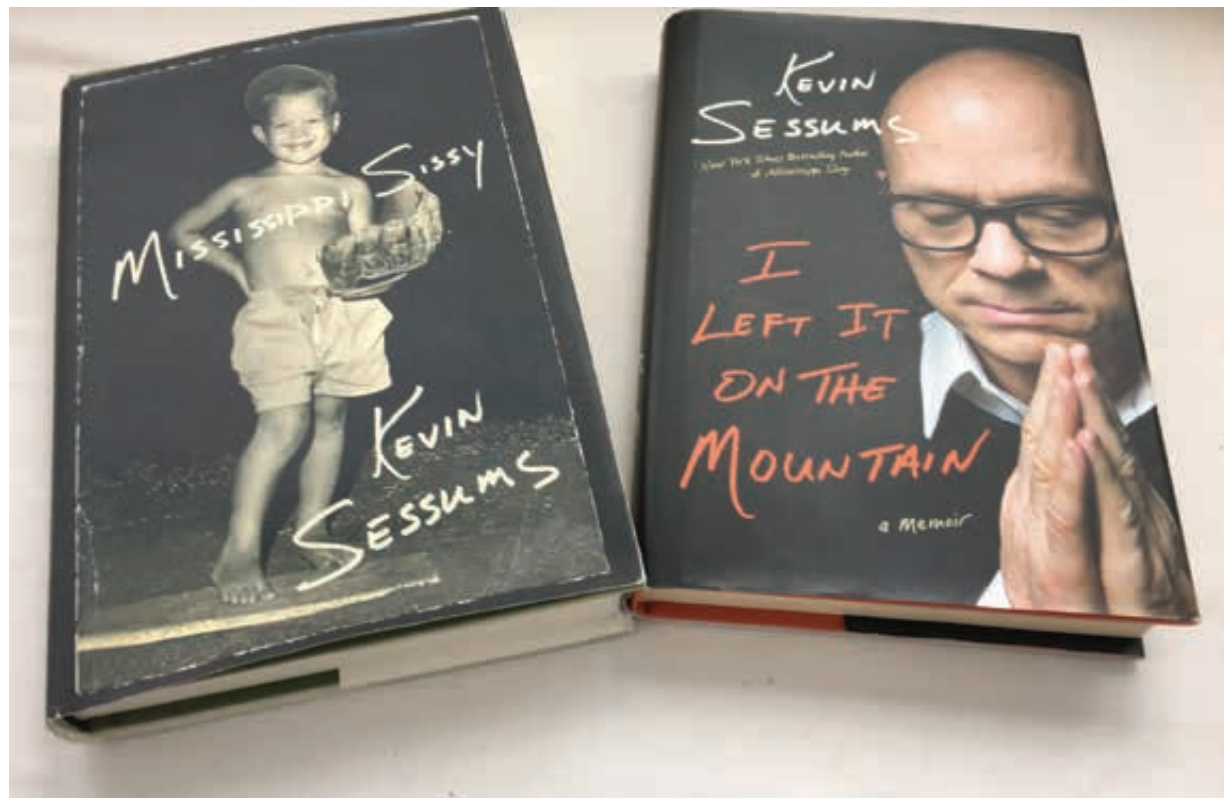


## I Left It on the Mountain

It's hard to imagine the self-deprecating, soft-spoken Sessums being anything but charming and gentle and caring. Taking control of his life and overcoming the obstacles thrown in his path has been an extraordinary journey, not only metaphorically but physically as well. That trip would culminate on his second memoir *I Left It on the Mountain*.

He writes on the first page: "I realized it was my fifty-third birthday. As a kind of birthday present to myself I had decided to walk the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. The Camino is a spiritual pilgrimage of over five hundred miles across northern Spain that pilgrims have walked for over two thousand years. Maybe that was why I was having so much trouble getting out of bed that birthday morning – not that I was another year older, but that my body had already begun to rebel at having to walk those five hundred miles of a trek my depleted spirit was demanding of it."

While that trek was revelatory and led to a successful memoir sequel, the rest of Sessums' journey has not been as tranquil. From lonely winter beaches in Provincetown, to taking advantage of the kindnesses of friends to being forced to take his dogs to a foster home, to attending 12-step meetings (which he still does) Sessums has developed such strength of purpose that, even in his recent darkest moments, he has managed to hold onto all that he has recovered.



## Getting back on his feet

In an interview Sessums confessed, "In that moment of so much pain, my life began again. I grieved for lots of stuff. I grieved for the person I'd lost, my past, for the drug addict. I just let it all go."

Sessums found his way to San Francisco after answering an ad for editor-in-chief of a new magazine called *FourTwoNine* (the numbers spell out "gay" on a telephone keypad).

"That opportunity got me back on my feet and believing in myself again," Sessums explains. "It gave me the San Francisco experience. It's a beautiful city but it was never my home. I lived there for four-and-a-half years and I am grateful for that. My

dog Archie died in my arms while I lived there. I will never think of San Francisco without thinking of Archie. He left me when he knew I was okay."

## The voice told me to move to Hudson

Re-entry to the east coast was not without its problems. Finding an apartment in New York City had become even more difficult. Sessums did not have limitless amounts of money to spend on rent; even Brooklyn was problematic.

A chance meeting with one of his Facebook fans illustrates the kindness of strangers. The man offered to help him get settled by guaranteeing the money for his rent. But the question of where to live was still not resolved.

"It had been a very rough year and I went online searching for places to live. I heard a voice say 'Move to Hudson.' I had heard this voice before, but I had never even been to Hudson. I always had a fantasy of having a loft in a small town. So I checked out available places there and I saw this loft. I heard the voice again say 'That's your home, that's where you are going to live.' I told the landlord my story – everything. He and I have a few mutual friends and he accepted me. I signed the lease and the universe turned for me. Everything began to unfold with a lot of grace and kindness."

Sessums describes Hudson lovingly: "It's Mayberry as directed by Wes

Anderson. I've been Andy, Opie, then Otis, now I'm in my Aunt Bee phase. I went around introducing myself to everyone I met and they asked if I was running for office. I'm trying to make this home for me and for my dog Teddy – to be happy. When I get depressed I look around the loft and I bask in the gratitude of it. I am grateful I have landed here."

Sessums has been through a lot but he hasn't lost his sense of humor or that vision of the boy from Mississippi trying to make his way. He is thankful for every good day.

"Whenever I feel down and really depressed and I decide that I'm not a good person, I have to get in touch with gratitude. To recognize the grace that's been in my life. Last year was one of the worst years of my life, but it was filled with grace and generosity. No matter what happens to me, no matter how bad things get, I pray that I deal with it in the exact same way – with grace and some humility. The reaction is always the same. That's the balancing act I try to keep in my life. It's not easy. I just can't be an ungrateful person. With all the things that have happened to me, there has been some very good stuff and I have to focus on that. Just always be grateful." ●





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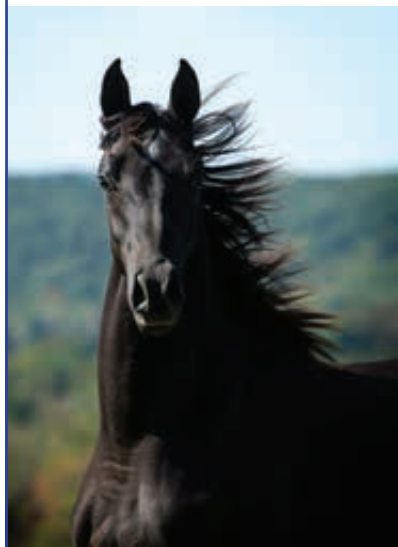
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THE MULTI-TALENTED

# Julia Butts

By John Torsiello  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Amenia native and Webutuck High School graduate Julia Butts enjoyed a stellar season as a member of the Hartwick College field hockey team last fall.

The freshman helped Hartwick to an 11-6 record, playing in all 17 games and starting 13. She took 36 shots on goal and scored on three. She tallied the game-winner in 3-2 victory over conference rival Elmira College, and had a pair of goals in 6-0 victory over Wells College.

## Back in high school...

At Webutuck High School, Butts lettered in field hockey and track and field all four years for the Warriors and lettered in cross-country as a senior. She was named a Mid-Hudson Athletic League (MHAL) Scholar Athlete as a senior, recognized as the 2016-17 Webutuck High School Athlete of the Year, was a MHAL First-Team All-Star (field hockey) as a junior and senior, a MHAL Honorable Mention in cross country and won the New York Section IX Class D Sectional Championship cross country meet as a senior. She played club field hockey for the Cross River Combo and Futures.

"Playing field hockey in high school and college has shaped me as a person," she said. "It has taught me time management, and most importantly I have made so many relationships through playing over the years. Being a part of a team was very important to me and dear to my heart. I have so much love for the sport and all it has taught me over the years. Hannah Peters was my coach since seventh grade, and she truly shaped me as a player

and taught me everything I know, preparing me to play at college level. Anna Meyer and Erin Smith were amazing this past year in college."

Butts is the daughter of Mike and Gina Butts and made the decision to attend Hartwick in Oneonta, NY, "because it is a small school like my high school, it is not too far from my home, and the atmosphere is extremely friendly."

## A pianist

So, it seemed as though an outstanding college career in field hockey was a given for Butts. But her life is more than playing sports, even though it was a passion and she was very good at it. There was another love that has drawn her away from the field and taken hold of her life in a most meaningful way.

"I have decided not to play field hockey next year because it conflicted with my music schedule. I was not spending as much time as I would have liked to on piano. It was a very difficult decision not to play next season, but I know it is for the best, so I can succeed in my major."

Butts' primary musical instrument is piano and is currently the only piano major at Hartwick. "I get to play in a lot of ensembles, and in a wind ensemble, a rock ensemble, and a jazz combo. Because I am a music education major, I am learning every instrument. Last semester I learned violin, viola, cello, and bass. This semester I have learned voice, trumpet, trombone, French horn, and euphonium. I also have played some percussive instruments, including marimba and chimes. Music is something I love and something I am extremely passionate about."

We can see why Butts has put her field hockey stick in the closet.

## The road to Carnegie Hall

Butts recently had what she termed "an amazing opportunity" to play at Carnegie Hall. "The experience still



Above: Butts has many talents including being a stellar field hockey player as well as an accomplished piano player. Photos courtesy of Julia Butts.

seems unreal to me. Standing on that stage and looking out was breathtaking. At Carnegie Hall, I played clarinet, marimba and chimes, which are not my main instruments. The experience is something I will never forget and I am so grateful to have gone."

Butts began playing the clarinet in third grade with Jay Bradley as her teacher. Soon after, she started taking piano lessons with Nan Herow and later played saxophone in the high school band.

"I would like to teach music one day. Currently, I teach a nine-year-old girl and she is my first student. I tutor several peers on piano and help with vocal accompaniment. I am not sure which grade level I would like to teach yet, I am thinking middle or high school. I would like to teach band, and give private piano lessons. This summer I will be working with Nan Herow giving piano lessons."

## Those who inspire

She mentioned Bradley and Eric Wiener as her biggest inspirations for music. "Mr. Bradley taught me how to play and showed me his passion for music, he truly inspired me as a kid.

In sixth grade I knew I wanted to be a music teacher just like him. Mr. Wiener gave me so many opportunities in my last years at Webutuck. He helped me to accompany the elementary, middle, and high school choirs, and helped me so much with applying to school for music. I can't thank them enough. Hannah Peters was my biggest inspiration for sports. She was so inspiring and enthusiastic about field hockey, she always pushed me to do my best and made field hockey fun."

Butts is a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, an international music fraternity. "I have gained so much musical knowledge through SAI throughout this semester, during which I went through the process of joining. SAI holds concerts, does community service, including singing at the local nursing home. The goal is to 'uphold the highest standard of music.'"

If past history is any indication, Julia Butts will do just that in any pursuit she undertakes. ●





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# SECOND CHANCES:

IT'S THE SECOND TIME AROUND FOR THE FASHIONABLE FINDS OFFERED AT VAUX VINTAGE IN RED HOOK, NY

By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Many modern-day fashionistas enjoy updating their wardrobes with chic fashions uncovered at vintage shops. Treasures from yesteryear can be discovered at local shops such as Red Hook's Vaux Vintage.

Aly Barohn, proprietor of Vaux Vintage, opened the doors to the brick-and-mortar shop in September 2017. The store, which is light and airy, boasts a boutique-like vibe. The displays are carefully curated and the clothing is neatly organized by color. A large window, hardwood floors, and several plants set the scene.

## Minimal and practical

Vaux Vintage's aesthetics are minimal and practical, and the shopping environment fuses vintage and contemporary in a livable way. "We carefully select pieces that are sensible and accessible, so they can be incorporated into our customers' everyday lives," says Barohn.

Shoppers will uncover vintage clothing, accessories, and jewelry from the 1900s through the 1990s. Vaux Vintage also offers contemporary jewelry from eco-conscious company Machete and handcrafted jewelry by Pieces by Paloma – created by designer Libby Paloma at her studio in Peekskill. Vaux Vintage also offers stylish sunglasses from London-based Spitfire, and Hansel from Basel's vibrant socks, which are sure to make a statement.

At press time, some of Barohn's favorite finds in store included a collection of more than 90 pairs of deadstock (unworn and with the original tags still attached) costume earrings that hail from the late 1970s and early 1980s. "It was incredibly fun to go through the collection because the designs are all very maximalist and loud. A good portion of them are surprisingly in-line with current trends, too. I

love when that happens," reveals Barohn.

Other favorites include Edwardian-style cotton blouses, 1970s deadstock, painter-style pants, hand-made amateur pottery, 1970s jute market bags, and vintage denim from the 1970s through the 1990s.

## Fashion encore: Recycling

Shopping at vintage boutiques holds appeal for many of today's consumers who are both budget-conscious and eco-conscious. Beyond the voguish fashions, style savvy customers can snap up garments that are well-made and crafted from high-quality fabrics.

Shopping at vintage stores also works into the recycling movement. Instead of stocking up on "fast fashion" – designs that move quickly from fashion runways to chain stores such as H&M and Zara – the fashion-minded are updating their wardrobes with apparel and accessories that have endured for decades (some of the great fashion finds I've snapped up include a 60s-era minimalist top made of 100% wool and a summery straw clutch bag crafted in Bermuda).

"We believe that buying vintage is the most sustainable way of shopping in a society that encourages materialism and a lack of mindfulness in fast-fashion purchases. By providing vintage pieces that already exist in abundance in the world, we are saying 'no' to unfair production practices that involve cheap labor and inexpensive materials. It's our way of promoting reuse and recycling in the fashion community," believes Barohn.

The timeless vintage finds that Barohn brings in date back at least 20 years. When purchasing items for the shop, this fashion guru scouts out pieces made of quality fabrics. She also seeks pieces that



Above: Denim fans will find a range of blues from various eras.

Continued on next page ...



are easy to pair with other items that exist in a modern wardrobe. Barohn strives to provide an extensive range of sizes to accommodate a wide range of body types.

“This can be tricky at times since we never know what items we’ll find, but it’s important to provide for all. We believe that our brand is inclusive to all genders, plus non-conforming. We want customers to buy what they like and what they feel good in,” states Barohn.

### Debuted on Etsy

Although Vaux Vintage is a relatively new shopping destination in the Hudson Valley area, the brand name and company history date back to 2009. That’s when the Vaux Vintage brand initially debuted on Etsy.

At the time, retailing vintage finds online was a part-time hobby for Barohn who was working as a costume designer in the film industry in Chicago. On the job, she frequently uncovered highly coveted vintage wares that she just couldn’t part with. When Barohn started to accumulate too much, she had the good instincts to start selling online.

“I loved the hunt and idea of

collecting, but felt the pieces needed to end up with those who would put them to use and return them back into the world again. I liked the idea of repurposing vintage finds into modern homes,” says Barohn.

### From online to brick-and-mortar

After nearly a decade of selling online, Barohn decided to pursue the brick-and-mortar concept. “I dreamed of opening a brick-and-mortar shop, but couldn’t settle on the location. When my husband and I moved to the Hudson Valley, we felt it was the right time and location,” reveals Barohn.

What sets Vaux Vintage apart from many other vintage stores is the shop’s ambiance, artistic merchandising, and lack of clutter. Shoppers don’t have to scour racks upon racks to locate top finds. The items offered at Vaux Vintage are cleaned and mended, and Barohn is highly selective about the inventory she brings in.

When asked if she ever hears fascinating stories about yesteryear’s fashionistas – those who wore these items before – Barohn responds that

it’s not often that she hears stories associated with the garments.

“I wish it happened more – unless we’re purchasing from a private seller or directly from the people who owned the items, we have to dream those stories up ourselves, which can sometimes be more fun than the truth,” states Barohn.

### Why shop vintage?

The reasons why some people prefer shopping vintage certainly

differ from person to person. “I think and hope that customers who shop with us feel good about repurposing and recycling fashions. Sustainability is a major aspect of our mission. Now-a-days it’s nearly impossible to shop contemporary fashion responsibly, and I personally have dealt with strong self-reproach on the issue,” concludes Barohn.

Most of the garments offered at Vaux Vintage are better-made and have longevity even though they’re between 30 and 60 years old. Barohn hopes to encourage customers to make better choices whether it be learning more about the manufacturing of specific brands, simplifying the wardrobe to consume less, or purchasing pre-worn. ●

*In addition to the Vaux Vintage brick-and-mortar shop, Barohn is still selling her treasures on Etsy. Visit Vaux Vintage at 21 W. Market St. in Red Hook, NY, or visit them online at [vauxshop.com](http://vauxshop.com) or [vauxvintage.etsy.com](http://vauxvintage.etsy.com).*



Above: Vaux Vintage boasts an airy, boutique-like atmosphere. Left: Jewelry and other accessories are artistically displayed at Vaux Vintage.







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## INSURING YOUR WORLD

When was the last time you reviewed your Homeowner's Policy? Whether you own your own home or rent an apartment, homeowner's coverage is essential in protecting, in most cases, the single largest asset most folks own. Have your agent check the replacement value of the home since building costs have increased sharply in the past 2-3 years. The current average cost in the Columbia and Dutchess County area is \$200 per square foot. A 2,000-square-foot house will cost \$400,000 to rebuild, no small amount, and this assumes no special luxury kitchen or baths. Other important endorsements include water backup coverage, which will reimburse should heavy rains cause your septic to backup in your house, causing damage in your basement or perhaps utility line coverage, which provides insurance against damage to your septic or underground power lines should tree roots raise havoc with these parts of your home. If you are a collector of guns, art, jewelry, stamps, or coins, are your collections endorsed and insured separately on your policy? These added coverages are very inexpensive, yet at the time of loss will bring tremendous peace of mind. Call your agent today to discuss your policy ... remember people don't plan to fail, they fail to plan.

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



**Brad Peck, Inc.**

## *Avoid the red this summer*

After this past winter we're all looking forward to summer vacation, and just like a little sunblock goes a long way towards helping you save your skin, a little planning can help you keep your finances out of the red. "This is a fun-filled, family time of year," says Stacey Langenthal, executive vice president of the Bank of Millbrook, "and it can be even more carefree when you budget ahead of time."

The Bank of Millbrook has these tips to help you maximize your fun and minimize the impact of those bills when they arrive:

- **Budget now.** Set a dollar amount based on your current savings, income and other expenses, accounting for expenses beyond travel and lodging, like meals, snacks, souvenirs, and park or attraction fees.
- **Keep it local.** Find wonderful staycation ideas at [www.DutchessCounty-Tourism.com](http://www.DutchessCounty-Tourism.com).
- **Plan early.** Booking or scheduling last minute can lead to overspending or paying a premium.
- **Avoid traps.** Be careful of extras when vacationing, spur of the moment souvenirs or attraction add-ons.
- **Limit the use of credit for vacations.** Pick a date to pay off your vacation credit card bills and stick to it. Always check statements for unauthorized charges and report them immediately.
- **Save your receipts.** Use them to compare to your credit card statement, track your spending, and plan for next year.

Enjoy your summer! Bonus tip: It's not too soon to open a Christmas savings account. It will be here before you know it – but not too quickly, please.

Stacey M. Langenthal  
Executive Vice President  
(845) 677-5321 x102



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## THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO IT...

When it comes to marketing and advertising, there's so much more to it than meets the eye. First off, marketing and advertising are not synonymous nor interchangeable terms; advertising falls under the marketing umbrella. When it comes to marketing you have to actualize what it is that your business stands for, and what you want it to stand for. Then you have to get that across to your audience (which is marketing), using such tools as advertisements (to name one). But marketing is more than just ads and some social media posts. I'll give you an example: I work with the Millerton Business Alliance on marketing the Village of Millerton, and in our marketing meetings we work on – and discuss everything from the graphics that we use to showcase the Village; to the voice and language that we use; to the signage in and around town including parking signs and the perceived parking issues (which is also a marketing issue); to how the buildings and shops look; to how well the sidewalks are swept in the summer and shoveled in the winter. What does the cleanliness of the sidewalks have to do with marketing the Village of Millerton, you ask? It has everything to do with marketing! All of these things are part of the marketing! Here's where your audience/client's/customer's perception comes back in. If Millerton's visitors perceive that the sidewalks are not approachable because they aren't shoveled in the winter, that may make them not want to visit, which would be a problem all around. So you see, marketing is so much more than just coming up with an advertising and social media schedule. In marketing you have to consider the negatives and positives of your business and the perceived negative and positive attributes, then you have to work on those things as well as work on how your customers view you and your business. The how of working on that perception is the execution portion of your marketing, and that may include visiting your branding, rejuvenating your website, refining your social media posts, advertising, blogging – to name a few. But every business is different, and so the marketing challenges differ for everyone.

**thorunn** *Designs*

518.592.1135 | [thorunn@thorunn designs.com](mailto:thorunn@thorunn designs.com)  
[www.thorunn designs.com](http://www.thorunn designs.com) | 52 Main Street, Millerton, NY

## *Graduate to professional care*

Spring may be here and indeed, many of us are feeling like we just crawled from beneath the winter snow. Dry skin, dry hair, and so tired of static cling and endless moisturizing. This is a perfect time to dive into the pool of Professional care. Many of the over-the-counter products that we use to keep winter dryness at bay simply buffer against the elements by putting up a barrier, but don't truly moisturize or penetrate either skin nor hair. Our salon has lots of tricks for rejuvenating winter-beaten hair and distressed skin. Under-the-dryer treatments can chelate minerals off hair and fill in the protein gaps. Glazing the hair with or without color can protect and revive by resetting the hair's pH, hydrating and bringing shine again. And our specialized micro-dermabrasion facials are a noninvasive exfoliation treatment that stimulate the production of new collagen and skin cells and can bring smoothness and alleviating the dryness brought on by the effects of indoor heat and outdoor cold. It's fantastic and our most popular!

Professional products mimic the makeup of hair and skin, so ingredients actively engage instead of simply coating the surface. We've come a long way in our ability to nourish both skin and hair, and a good salon experience can also nourish the soul. And who doesn't need that after the winter we've had! So, shake off the winter darkness and freshen up for Spring. We promise you will look and feel great after some tender loving care for your hair and skin. We have so many options to choose from. Go ahead ... treat yourself! You deserve it.



**Janice Hylton & Bonnie Hundt**  
Route 44 East, Millerton, NY  
518.789.9390. [hyltonhundtsalon.com](http://hyltonhundtsalon.com)





## J. Wildermuth Contracting

A one-stop-shop for excavation and concrete services. 401 Rt. 217, Hudson, NY. [jwcontracting88@gmail.com](mailto:jwcontracting88@gmail.com)

In 2013, after ten years of working for several concrete and excavation contractors, Josh Wildermuth started his own business, providing concrete and excavation in one package. His services include excavation, site work, drainage, utilities, driveways, clearing, grading landscapes etc., and his concrete services include poured foundations, footings, floors, slabs, sidewalks, patios, retaining walls, stamped concrete, driveways, etc. He's headquartered out of Columbia County, NY, but proudly services the Tri-state area. Having Josh and his team as "one stop shop" ensures that both phases of construction will be covered with one company – saving time. They're certainly more than happy to work alongside any other company to provide their clients with concrete or excavation services. In the five years that Josh has been in business, the business has grown every year, and they look forward to building new relationships with more customers and builders. Everyone at J. Wildermuth Contracting enjoy meeting new people, working on different projects, and seeing the final product of their craftsmanship. "It's very hard work, but in the end, seeing the finished product whether it be a foundation for a new house, an addition for an old home, or new sidewalks leading up to your front door, make it all worth it." To learn more and for a free estimate, contact Josh today!



## RetirementGuard, LLC.

Life insurance planning and long-term care insurance exchanges. (860) 435-6622. 14 Bostwick St., Lakeville, CT. [retirementguard.com](http://retirementguard.com)

Sandy Dennis, Keavy Bedell, and Craig Davis are the team behind RetirementGuard. They've successfully helped colleges, universities, and teaching hospitals in the Northeast to implement long-term care insurance programs for their employees for decades. RetirementGuard also works every day within the local community helping their neighbors with life insurance and long-term care insurance. Free life insurance reviews are an integral part of the business, the peace of mind that these reviews establish is priceless. In addition to life insurance reviews, RetirementGuard brings its unparalleled background in long-term care insurance to the local community. The mission of long-term care insurance consulting is to help each person find coverage in order to maintain their dignity and lend support to families in the midst of catastrophic disabling events. With decades of experience and an outstanding reputation within the industry and employee benefit arena, RetirementGuard can provide a level of sophistication and expertise that would be difficult to match. Craig, Sandy, and Keavy look forward to connecting dots for more individuals, with added-value services to ensure they meet their ongoing insurance and retirement goals. RetirementGuard is here to serve and support anybody and everybody in the NY, CT MA Tri-state area.



## Tails & Trails

Professional and affordable services for your furry family members. (845) 240-4971. Like us on Facebook. [tailsntrailsll.com](http://tailsntrailsll.com)

Tails & Trails started two years ago when Melissa Brady was going through training with her dog – and really enjoyed it. She ended up attending Animal Behavioral College and obtaining her certificate in obedience training. Tails & Trails' services include Basic and Advanced Obedience, doggy day camp, fitness hiking, Canine Good Citizen, Puppy S.T.A.R Program (a puppy class for introduction and socialization), and will soon be offering K-9 fitness and therapy dog classes. These services are offered in the comfort of your own home or at one of the local facilities that Melissa and her right-hand man, Cassie Brewer, work out of. They service not only our region but the entire Hudson Valley, as well as Manhattan. Most of the training conducted at Tails & Trails is done through positive reinforcement, "I believe dogs learn quicker this way, too," says Melissa. All breeds, sizes, and ages are welcome. Their main goal is to have everyone safe and playing nice, and the only requirement is that your dogs' vaccinations are up to date. Recently Tails & Trails was awarded the Headliner Award for the best customer service through the Dutchess County Chamber of Commerce. Although Tails & Trails is a brand new business, they look forward to growing and offering more services, as well all as continuing to help you and your dog.



## R&R Servicer

Quality excavating services and more. 3 Attlebury Hill Road, Stanfordville, NY. (845) 264-1070. [randrservicer.net](http://randrservicer.net)

Mother Nature is beautiful, but when it comes time to move her around it's time to call in the reinforcements! Proprietor Steve Mosher started R&R Servicer in 1983 as an agricultural equipment repair and restoration business. As the local farmers retired and sold, the business transitioned to excavation. Today R&R Servicer provides full excavation services from land clearing, site prep, water and septic, roads, driveways, ponds, and much more – no job is too small. In addition, Steve and his crew offer materials from screened topsoil to item 4, bank run, and stone. These services are all provided in Dutchess County, Southern Columbia County, and the Northwest corner of CT. "We are GPS-enabled for grading and land mapping. We work with our clients to understand their vision for their land and to help create that for a beautiful end result that they are thrilled with." As business continues to progress, R&R hopes to continue to grow their family business as their grown children join them. One thing will always remain true with R&R: they take pride in their work and will continue to value the importance of developing a trusting relationship with all of their clients. To request a free estimate for your next project, visit R&R Servicer on the web, or call. "Let us put our experience to work for you!"





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