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MAGAZINE





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## HERE'S TO YOU EARTH

This month we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. What a joyous, and yet sad, occasion. It's joyous because *of course* we should celebrate this planet that we simply wouldn't be alive without! But I find it sad that we need to remind Earth's inhabitants of how important the earth is to their very existence. The fact remains that Planet Earth is beautiful and bountiful – as long as it is treated with respect and not greed. And we ALL have to do our part to preserve, and in some cases, save it.

Many of us have inherited the state of the planet, and so we frankly don't know any different when it comes to certain matters. But in today's day and age, it has become ever more clear the damage that humans have done to the planet. And so, it is now our *duty* to do our part. And it is for that reason that we, for the second year in a row, have dedicated our April issue to the environment and environmental issues.

The articles you'll find on the following pages are as diverse as the ways are that we can do our part. As with everything else, there are many layers involved, and things can be very simple and also quite complex. We hope that our writers and the topics that they chose to research and write about in this Environmental Issue are a source of information for you, some act as a helping guide as to steps that you can take, and that this entire issue will help to raise awareness of how important it is that we all help to protect our home, our planet. Awareness and knowledge are the key factors, I believe, when it comes to environmental issues. Because without an understanding of the simple fact that there is a problem, how can we solve said problem?

I have always been an advocate, and have been a proud supporter of environmental initiatives for as long as I can remember. And so, I am always so grateful to the people who are so passionate and dedicate their time, resources, and heart to helping to save our planet and to make a difference in environmental issue. But you know what? It is not just on them to do what they do; it is the responsibility of every citizen of this planet. With that said, I urge you to take a close read of this issue, and perhaps you can find some helpful ways to make a difference, whether it be to recycle, or to reuse items instead of discarding them, or to stop using plastic, or to buy in bulk. The ways to make a difference are almost endless and so we have no excuse. It is time for us all to band together and to help preserve the beauty of Mother Earth. Happy Birthday Earth Day!

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir



APRIL 2020

For our “Environmental issue” we look at the Earth from above, from a bird's eye view. This is Mother Earth. Be thankful for her. Help protect her.

Cover photo by Peter Lorenzo

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# Citizen Artist:

Tom Zetterstrom

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Meeting photographer Tom Zetterstrom in his Canaan, CT, home is instantly reminiscent of encountering Henry David Thoreau's explanation for why he established a cabin in the woods overlooking Walden Pond and spent over a year of his life among the maples, pines, and elm. "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach."

What Zetterstrom has learned from his lengthy sojourns in the woods ... from his Connecticut home to the towering forests in the Rockies, the lush rainforest of Costa Rica, and the wind-blown plains of mid-America is a devotion to trees and the stories they tell.

Son of an arborist who had been an Olympic skier, Tom graduated from high school and journeyed to Colorado College in pursuit of a degree in botany, a direction that quickly morphed into a degree in sculpture and photography.

Back on the East Coast, graduate school was in his planning until the towering visage of the Vietnam war overshadowed his life. Pursuing what was identified as "alternate service," Zetterstrom found himself in Washington, DC for a two-

year stint teaching and mentoring citizens who used photography as a viable means of emerging from social and economic despair.

## Urban photographer

A recent reunion of the stellar faculty of artists, filmmakers, photographers, and writers who shared their estimable talents with those citizens has been captured as part of a museum event, *A Right to the City*, which continues to run at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Museum through April.

"I became an urban photographer," reminisces Zetterstrom, recalling the two-year effort in the 60s that ultimately yielded a collection of 300 of his photographs – a collection recently acquired by the Library of Congress.

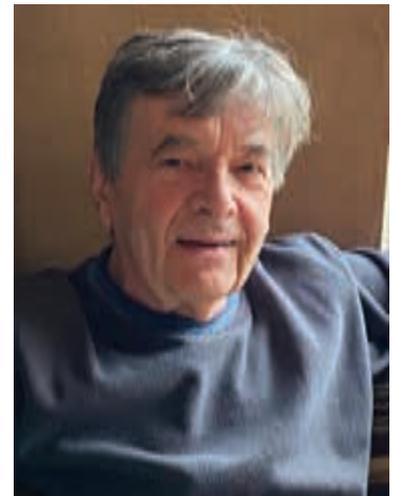
Two years of service completed, Tom returned home, taking occupancy of a cabin in the woods on the family property overlooking an abandoned quarry lagoon. It was his own, private cabin on his own Walden Pond. Surrounded by trees and increasingly fascinated with the drama and texture of his subjects, his portfolio work began, brought to almost luminous life in the dark room he established in his parents' basement.

## Photographs as social commentary

Professional opportunities seemed to materialize as Zetterstrom took his place as a permanent resident in the Northwest corner. Activist/attorney Ralph Nader was tapping into the social consciousness through his writings and advocacy. The Winsted, CT, native partnered with activist and eventual member of the US House of Representatives Toby Moffett to form the Connecticut Citizen Action Group.

Ecological issues were at the forefront of the group's activity and Zetterstrom soon became the photographic recorder of issues and concerns. When the widening and re-routing of US Route 7 into "Super 7" was proposed, Tom created a series of striking images that presented the negative impact of the road construction if completed. "Super 7" was defeated and Tom realized that he had gained a new and lasting title – "Citizen Artist."

Environmental issues specifically related to the preservation of the region's forests had become an intense focus for Tom, and the project that had, over the years, become *Portraits of American Trees*. 36 of the gelatin silver prints created in Zetterstrom's basement dark room were to appear



Above, top to bottom: *The Twin Oaks* from 1979. Tom Zetterstrom, the man, the photographer, the activist. Opposite page, top to bottom: *Pedestrians - Leningrad - 1973*. *Swann Liquor - 1968*. Images courtesy of Tom Zetterstrom.

from April 3 through May 31 at the Leonhardt Galleries of the Berkshire Botanical Garden in Stockbridge, MA, but has been rescheduled (go to Tom or the Botanical Garden's websites for new dates). The images are nothing short of striking, and the impact of delving into the "portraits" is to become intrigued with form and texture and, in some cases, tragedy.

**The twin oaks**

A familiar sight for many years greeted travelers motoring between the Hotchkiss School corner and the town of Sharon, CT. Off on the hillside, set between the road and the vista of Mudge Pond and the Hudson Valley beyond stood two mighty oak trees – the "twin oaks" as they became known. Standing in an otherwise well trimmed field, they had been allowed to hold their places amid the expanse of the field.

Many a photograph had been taken of those two stately trees when Tom Zetterstrom decided to capture their portraits for his collection. When one of the trees was struck down, leaving its nearby partner alone, Tom's lens caught the feeling of abandonment. And, when the seemingly inevitable happened and the remaining tree simply gave up, he was there to capture the tragic result.

Trees in stark winter profile,

close-ups that explore in brilliant sculptural detail of gnarled bark, a lone tree at the top of the infamous Donner Pass, they have all been subjects of Zetterstrom's portraiture.

And, what Tom Zetterstrom has seen over his decades of photographic precision has not merely found its way onto photo paper, carefully printed, and hung in galleries. It has resonated in his soul.

**Activist**

"I remember coming home from college and working with my Dad during the summers," recalls Zetterstrom. "We seemed to spend a great deal of time taking down dead elm trees. Dutch Elm Disease was laying waste to great numbers of the majestic trees."

And, the consciousness and the personal investment began. Tom felt the deep frustration of watching the native forests become decimated by the disease that spread across the country after the accidental introduction of the elm bark beetles. In 1999 Elm Watch was formed, a Massachusetts not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the elm trees throughout the region.

With trees such a critical part of the natural eco-system, it was only logical that Tom's interests and energies be broadened to include preservation of the natural environment. As he is known to quote in presentations made with full illustration created with his cameras, "nature is no longer self-sustaining ..." and the recognition of that fact is motivation enough to continue his activism.

As his photographs can clearly illustrate, the role of invasive species in the New England and surrounding New York landscape in the slow by steady destruction of the forests has become the basis of a widely delivered presentation ... *Whose Woods These Are*. With the inversion of a quote taken from the first line of a Robert Frost poem (*Stopping by*



*Woods on a Snowy Evening*), Zetterstrom lectures passionately about retaking the intricate beauty of the woods from the "Three Green Aliens." His devotion affirms one of the final lines of Frost's well-known poem, "The woods are lovely, dark and deep..."

**Museum collections**

Tom Zetterstrom's photographs have been acquired by museums across the country. Beyond the Library of Congress acquisition, his work is in the permanent collections of 37 museums including The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, The International Center of Photography, and The High Museum of Art in Atlanta.

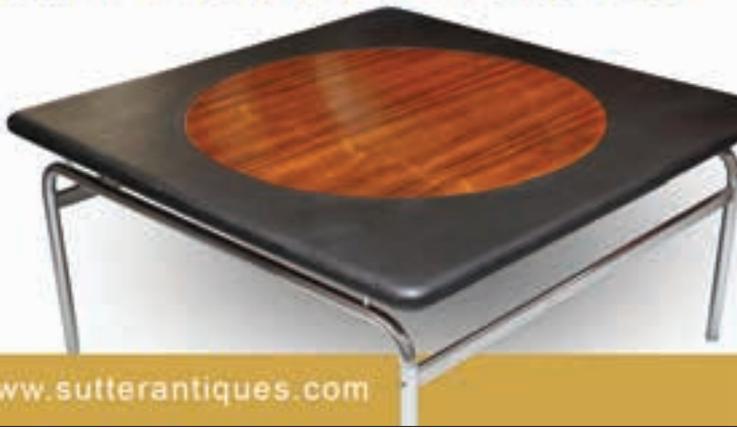
Zetterstrom's photographic explorations have taken him far afield, to study *The Faces of China* and to memorialize *White Russia* among others. With echoes of Thoreau still in mind, it may be fitting to offer the conclusion of "Walden" to represent the wanderings of Tom Zetterstrom. "I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live and could not spare any more time for that one." ●

*Beyond the Berkshire Botanical Gardens exhibit and accompanying lectures, Zetterstrom's work can be explored on his website, [www.tomzetterstrom.com](http://www.tomzetterstrom.com).*

*Are you an artist and interested in being featured in Main Street Magazine? Send a brief bio, artist's statement, and a link to your work through the arts form on our "arts" page on our website.*



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## Dear Friends,

It's a very strange feeling for us to be closing our doors, even temporarily, as The Moviehouse has always served as the community campfire where we all gather in times of uncertainty. We will re-open as soon as our local and state health authorities say it is safe to do so, which hopefully, will be very soon. We'll keep you updated via email and on our website and social media.

In the meantime, because we'll all need an escape and will be unable to get out to the movies, we invite you to join us on Facebook @themoviehouse.ny where we'll be posting weekly reviews, and recommendations for interesting new films and classics you can watch and enjoy at home!

This is such a difficult and unusual time; we will get through this together but apart.

Spring is arriving, the sun is shining, the robins have returned, and the buds are starting to burst, we are so lucky to live in this beautiful part of the world. Take a walk, breathe deeply, please embrace it as a community and support one another.

We are grateful for your support, wish you all well, and hope this is behind us all very soon!

Carol Sadlon and The Moviehouse Team!

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



Despite serving his community for the better part of three decades, Hillsdale, NY, resident **Fred Dimmick** continues to do his part for his neighbors, community, and the local environment. Fred recently retired from the Hillsdale Post Office where he spent over two decades delivering mail and cultivating lasting friendships with residents across the area. Ten months into retirement, Fred remains dedicated to having new experiences and has a number of unique hobbies, “I enjoy competitive shooting, hiking, skydiving and paragliding.” Fred also maintains a personal connection with the environment and has been personally picking up roadside refuse from the country roads that weave through his hometown of Hillsdale. He has recently been joined by other residents and neighbors in this noble gesture and hopes that the trend will gain momentum in the coming months.



It's folks like **Kasandra Hart**, who works as a nurse for Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health, that hold the keys to unlocking the positive human impact on our local environment. “Since I was a child, I have always tried to do my share in helping care for our environment. Now that I am older, I have tried to reduce my footprint. Recently, my husband and I had a conversation about all the garbage and recycling our household produces. We decided it was time for a change, while we still recycle when we need to, we have recently decreased the amount of waste our family produces by shopping at bulk stores like Honest Weight. We try to instill these practices in our kids. Teaching them the importance of being kind to the earth, for one day it will be theirs to protect.”



**Tom Whalen** is the owner of Whalen Nursery Inc., a business that grows trees and shrubs on approximately 100 acres in Great Barrington, Sheffield, and Egremont, MA. Tom began a landscaping business in 1987 right after college, and started growing plant material in the mid-90s. “I really like working with plants and understanding their individual requirements.” When he's not busy working, Tom enjoys spending an afternoon on the Twin Lakes, or traveling in the off-season. Born and raised in Great Barrington, MA, Tom has enjoyed the small town feel while raising his family there. He also appreciates the change of seasons, and recognizes the need to address the issues currently facing our environment. “We need to better understand climate change cycles and the human effect going forward. My biggest challenge is managing various new plant diseases and insects.”



You have one chance to make a first impression, and **Sandra Glickman** from Sharon Hospital has been mastering this craft for more than seven years as the switchboard operator. The Sharon, CT, resident directs calls from the hospital's main phone number, provides guidance to individuals looking for a patient room or specific department, and always has a copy of the weekly lunch and dinner menu to share with community members who enjoy dining in the cafeteria. “I am here to offer a relaxing and easy-to-navigate experience for everyone,” she says. In her free time, she kayaks on Twin Lakes in Salisbury and Wononskopomuc Lake in Lakeville. She's also a proud member of the Tri-state WeCanRow crew team, a co-ed group of cancer survivors who row on Lake Washinee. At home, she is an avid knitter, crafting sweaters, socks, and mittens for friends and donations to the St. Bernard Church in Sharon.



As one of the worker/owners at Random Harvest in Craryville, NY, **Robin Mullaney** finds herself doing a little bit of everything. From working the market counter and making coffee in the cafe, to bookkeeping, graphic design, landscaping, and facilitating Worker Owner Meetings. “One of my absolute favorite things is introducing customers to the farmers who grow their favorite foods.” This comes as no surprise to those who frequent the local market given Robin's communal way of interacting with both customers as well as farmers. Outside of work Robin is a mother of two and loves cooking, doing arts and crafts, and spending time in nature with her children. “My family has been in this area for four generations,” says Robin. “I love feeling connected to my family roots, the people, and the incredibly beautiful land.”



From the time he was 15, **Joe Thibodeau** has possessed a strong passion for helping those in need and has been working in long-term healthcare in some form ever since. “I am the Physical Plant Director here at Noble Horizons in Salisbury, CT, and am responsible for overseeing the entire Noble Horizons campus as well as 50 cottages. I love the atmosphere and the help I am able to provide for residents and families in their time of need.” Outside of work Joe enjoys spending time with family, restoring classic cars, bowling, and camping trips to Rhode Island. “I am from Wolcott, CT, and have lived there my whole life. The environment is very important to me both at Noble and at home, and so recycling is a huge part of my job as well as my home life.”

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# Forester to arborist

RON YAPLE OF RACE MOUNTAIN TREE CARE, SHEFFIELD, MA

By Christine Bates  
info@mainstreetmag.com

## How did your appreciation for nature begin?

I grew up hunting and fishing in the woods in central Pennsylvania. As an Explorer Scout I planted white pine seedlings – sixty years later they are a 60 feet tall wind screen, oxygen producer, and erosion manager. When I was 14, I purchased my first tree identification book. All of that led me to studying forestry and getting an Associates of Applied Science Forest Technician degree from Penn Tech, an affiliate of Penn State in Williamsport, PA. After graduation I went to work for New England Log Homes in Great Barrington, MA, buying red pine logs for houses. After two years I went out on my own doing tree work, mowing lawns, and providing forestry consulting – advising the owners of forests how to most effectively grow trees as a cash crop. Over time I became disenchanted with this commercial view and started reading about arboriculture. Then I discovered Dr. Alex Shigo and that changed everything.

## Who is Dr. Shigo? Why was he so important to you?

Alex Shigo was a senior researcher at the US Forest Service. After retirement he began writing books on the biology and treatment of trees. I attended his workshops and fed my passion to learn about preserving trees. Shigo's approach was revolutionary in the sense that he debunked so many commonly held assumptions.

For example instead of trimming a limb flush with a tree trunk he showed us how to leave a branch collar which will seal naturally without paint or cement. He taught us to look at tree roots and soil where the tree gets its nutrition. By 1991, I became a certified arborist in Massachusetts and New York, and licensed in Connecticut. It took four or five years to transition my business from forestry consulting to working with trees in the human landscape as an arborist.

## How do you treat trees?

There are many techniques for improving tree health. There are the basics like tree pruning, cabling to provide support, and aerating soil so that tree roots can breathe. We also apply specialized fertilizers and bark treatments. One of our “patients” is the 120-year-old American elm in front of The Bank of Green County in Copake, NY (pictured on page 12). It's one of the heritage trees of the town. Every three years we inject it prophylactically with fungicide to prevent attack by Dutch elm disease, which is a fungal infection that killed most of the American elms in the United States. You could think of it as a flu shot for a tree.

## Are there associations for arborists? Would that be a tree huggers group?

There are two important ones. The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) focuses on the business side of running a tree care business while the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) focuses on scientific research, education and arborist certification. And then there are state associations like



the Massachusetts Arborists Association, the Connecticut Tree Protective Association, and the New York State Arborists Association. We are all members of all of them.

## Has the business changed much since you started?

The industry has evolved dramatically with increasing research and academic understanding. New solutions for caring for trees are a regular occurrence.

## How seasonal is this business?

We're always busy and have six full-time employees who work all year long. At this time of year we are busy pruning trees, responding to downed tree emergencies, cabling and removing trees – much easier to do when there are no leaves.

## Why might homeowners want to cut down a tree? What happens to the wood?

There are many reasons for removing a tree. It can be too close to the house or at the end of its life span. Owners can get tired of leaves on the lawn, acorns bouncing off their car, or pine needles on the roof. Or it's in

Above: Ron (standing beside his daughter and office manager Larissa) and their entire Race Mountain crew. The rest of the images with this article depict Ron and his crew at work in the Tri-state region. Photos courtesy of Ron Yaple.



Continued on next page ...

the wrong place for a new swimming pool. Sometimes an owner needs to cut down trees in order to sell a house. About 40% of our revenue comes from cutting down trees. Sometimes an owner wants to use the wood for lumber and we leave logs in place. We don't bid on projects like clearing trees from utility lines – we are a specialized firm primarily for home owners.

In our region it's still acceptable, i.e. within a homeowner's right to cut down a tree on your own property, but there is a trend in some progressive communities, like Wellesley, MA, to control tree removal on private property. Towns are beginning to understand the larger social, historical, and environmental context of trees in private as well as public spaces. Some towns require compensation to remove a large tree, in the form of payment or replanting.

**Is tree care more important to your business than chopping down trees?**

Over 50% of our business concerns all aspects of tree care including pruning, treatments, lightning protection, soil amendments like aeration with an air spade, mulching, assessing tree health and risk, etc. Trees have evolved over millions of years to thrive in the soil that they create themselves, a medium rich in organic matter and organisms that support symbiotic connections. Highways, leaf blowers, driveways, parking lots, and lawns interfere with this natural process of carbon cycling,

moisture retention, and temperature stabilization. Trees really struggle and need help.

**What trees do you recommend in our current environment?**

Today tree species have to tolerate low-oxygen soils, turf competition, higher heat and commonly used chemicals. It's important to select native species to preserve the food net. Insects have evolved to feed and reproduce on native plants. Our native fauna, particularly birds, have evolved with this ready supply of insect food for their young. Doug Tallamy's books *Bringing Nature Home* and *The Living Landscape* explain the importance of native species. They include lists of desirable native species by region. With global warming I would select species from the mid-Atlantic region for planting for the future. My personal favorites are red bud, pagoda dogwood, white oak, American elm, red maple, swamp white oak, tulip trees, and sassafras with its beautiful leaves, river birch and silver maples. Slow growing trees like black gum, *Nyssa silvatica*, are the longest lasting. For hedges I like little leaf lindens, eastern hemlock, and arborvitae. I don't recommend invasive non-natives like the popular burning bush, privet, or barberry.

**Do you plant trees?**

That's one thing we don't do. We leave tree purchase and planting to local, qualified nurseries.

**What sort of consulting do you do?**

I consult frequently on the value of a tree in legal situations – often when a tree on one person's property is killed by removal or over-zealous trimming or root damage by a neighbor. You can trim trees and plants overhanging the property line but not if it will jeopardize the health of the tree. There are formulas for estimating the value of a tree that start with the size – the trunk circumference, height and crown breadth – and take into consideration where it is on the property, its condition, and species. The estimate of value can vary tremendously from a large, historic tree in full health, which could be \$50,000 to as little as \$500.



**Who are your customers? How do they find you?**

Most of our customers are private individuals with a few exceptions like the work we do at The Mount, Edith Wharton's home in Lenox, MA, and caring for the trees at Berkshire School. About 50% of clients are in Massachusetts, 40% in New York, and 10% in Connecticut. Almost all of our business comes from referrals but the internet is increasingly important. My daughter Larissa is our office manager and is in charge of our internet presence and social media.

Our community involvement gives us lots of exposure. For example, in conjunction with Arbor Day we developed Race Mountain Career Day. We invite four area high schools to our shop where we spend a couple hours with speakers. Then our crew members set up outdoor stations to demonstrate tree climbing, rigging, tree injections, chainsaw safety, and tree ID. We then provide a pizza lunch and mingling question and answer time for up to 45 students.

We donate tree work as part of the Arbor Day of Service and the Berkshire County Arborists Day. We're supporters of the Berkshire Botanical Garden, the Massachusetts Arborists Association, the Tree Fund (research), and the Women's Tree Climbing Workshop.

**Could you comment on safety issues in the industry?**

Safety is a large concern in our work. Kieran is our dedicated Certified Tree Safety Professional and conducts weekly safety meetings with the

crew to keep their minds focused on safe practices. Each crew member is CPR & First Aid Certified. And we conform to the current safety requirements for our industry.

We are insured – Vehicle, General Liability, Workers' Compensation, and Umbrella. We are proud to share our Certificate of Insurance with our clients.

**Do you have a business plan? How has your business grown over the years.**

In conjunction with Entry to Entrepreneurship, a local group that supports business planning, Kieran developed a business transition plan this past winter. Here's a link that explains: <http://www.berkshares.org/business/5th-annual-entry-entrepreneurship-showcase>.

Our business has seen steady growth and evolution over the last 40 years. More and more we see the need to minimize chemical inputs to the extent possible and to begin managing invasive plants that are beginning to radically affect our beautiful native forest edges and disturbed lands.

**After creating a family business what is your next goal?**

I think I'd like to get my Bachelor's in arboriculture, explore the American West, and travel through Europe after my kids take over the business and before I die. ●





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## PURPLE-GLAZED CHOCOLATE CAKE

# doughnuts

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

Oh, gosh. There is so much to say about these baked chocolate cake donuts with lavender glaze that I hardly know where to begin. I first thought about developing such a recipe for these pretties when browsing through one of my cookbooks, which is honestly where inspiration is often found. I adore donuts – like they are basically my favorite food group. And although I usually dig yeasted and fried donuts, when I stumbled upon a recipe for baked chocolate cake ones, I paused.

## Sign me up!

Now just to make sure we are all on the same page, a cake donut is made from a batter or dough that is very much like one for muffins or tea bread or cake. And texturally speaking, that is what the finished donut is like – and thus very different from its yeasted brethren (which are more airy and light and pillow-y). I love making yeasted fried donuts, but not necessarily ones of the chocolate variety. My fave is probably a yeasted glazed vanilla – and honestly shaking things up and making chocolate ones has never even occurred to me (even though, I am very much team chocolate). I mean why mess with a good thing? But a chocolate cake donut? That sounded like something I could get behind. And one that was baked? With no need for a vat of hot oil and a pesky thermometer? Well, sign me right up.

Because here's the thing: besides sounding delicious (think *über* fudgy, dense – in a good way – loaf cake, with a tight, moist crumb) baked cake donuts are about a trillion times easier to make than yeasted, fried donuts. There is no stand mixer involved

and no tedious creaming of butter (oil makes for the most scrumptious of cake donuts). The whole recipe is assembled with nothing more than two bowls, a whisk and a spatula. And literally comes together in about five minutes. The donuts then bake for less than ten – which means you might just be eating donuts within about 20 minutes of craving them.

## Let me walk you through it

First, you whisk the dry ingredients and set them aside in a bowl. Though, honestly, if you wanted this to be a “one-bowl” recipe as it were, my personal favorite, you could just sift the dry ingredients over the wet at the end of the assembly process, and skip using this bowl altogether. You then whisk your wet ingredients together in another bowl, starting with the oil and sugars and then moving on to the eggs. Add the dry ingredients, alternating with the buttermilk and *voilà*: you are done. Transfer the batter to a donut pan – though if you do not have one and do not want to invest in one, a muffin tin will work – and bake for about eight to ten minutes until the donuts feel dry to the touch and spring back when you press one with your fingers.

The glaze comes together – dare I say – instantly: just confectioners' sugar plus buttermilk and a bit of salt and color. I like a thick, vibrantly colored glaze, but you may add more buttermilk for a thinner, less bright glaze.

Bottom line: the recipe is easy-peasy and the resultant donuts are bound to become your new go-to sweet treat – and certainly would make a lovely addition to an Easter morning feast.



## For the chocolate donuts:

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour  
 3/4 cup Dutch process cocoa powder  
 1 tsp baking powder  
 1 tsp baking soda  
 1 tsp fine sea salt  
 1/2 cup vegetable oil  
 1 cup dark brown sugar, packed  
 1/3 cup granulated sugar  
 1 tbs pure vanilla extract  
 1 large egg  
 2 yolks  
 3/4 cup buttermilk

## For the glaze:

3 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted if lumpy  
 3/4 tsp fine sea salt  
 6 tbs buttermilk, or more as needed  
 A few drops red gel food coloring  
 A few drops blue gel food coloring

To make the donuts, preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a donut pan with cooking spray or softened butter.

Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, soda and salt in a medium-sized bowl.

Place the oil, the sugars, and vanilla in a large bowl and whisk to combine.

Add the egg and yolks, one at a time, and continue whisking until smooth.

With a flexible spatula, gently fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients in three additions and

the buttermilk in two, beginning and ending with the dry.

Fill each donut mold about 3/4 of the way full with batter.

Bake for 8-10 minutes, rotating at the halfway point, until a toothpick comes out with a moist crumb or two and the donut springs back when you press it.

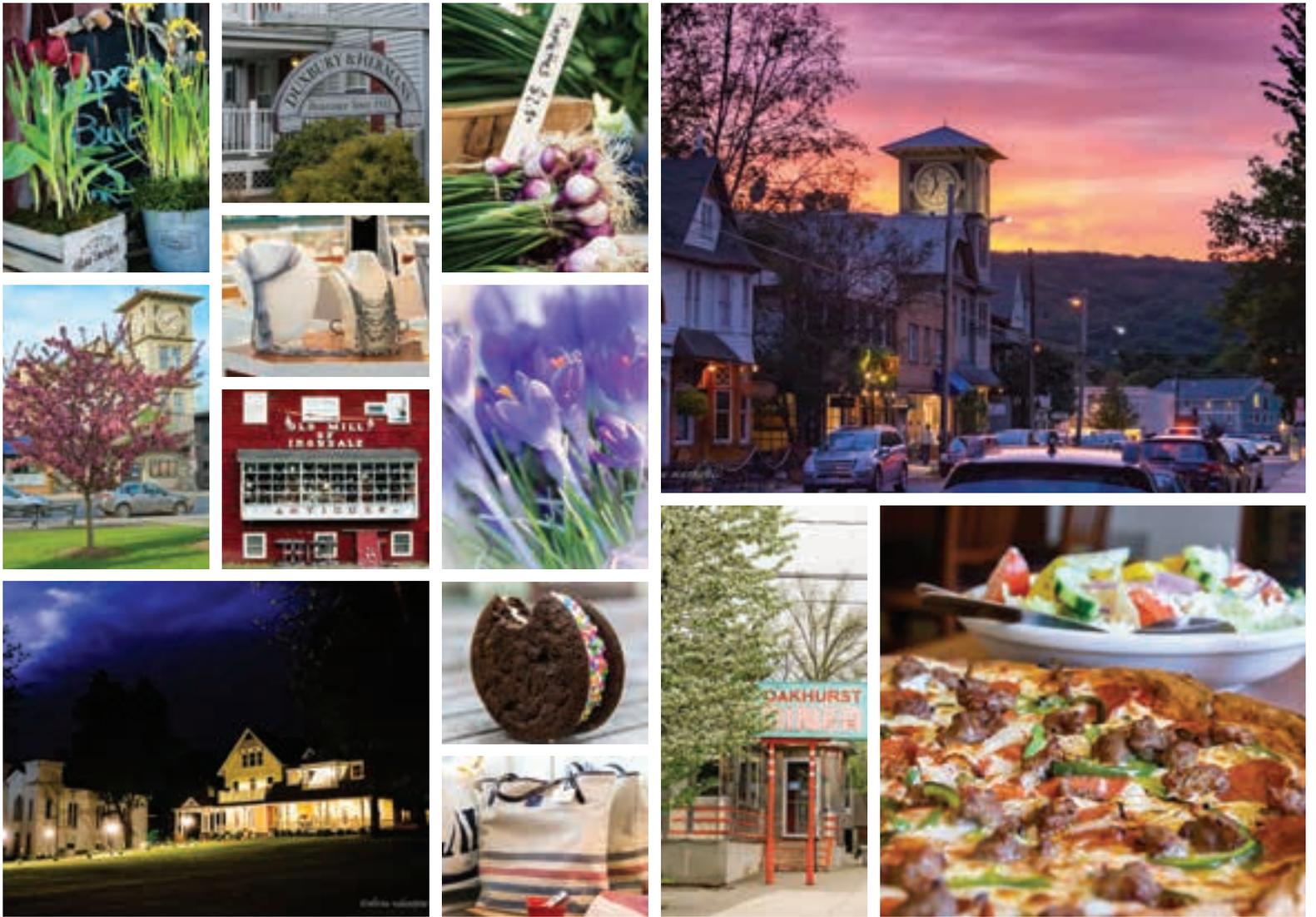
Let cool slightly and then remove from the pan to cool completely.

To make the glaze, combine all of the glaze ingredients in a small, shallow bowl and whisk until smooth and fully incorporated, adding more buttermilk if necessary, or sugar, until pourable and thick, and adjusting the food coloring until the purple color is to your liking.

To glaze the donuts, dip one side of each donut into the glaze and then lift it out, allowing the excess glaze to drip back into the bowl. Place the glazed donuts, glaze side up on a drying rack set inside a cookie sheet until set.

The glazed donuts are best enjoyed the day they are made. ●

*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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Photos by: Olivia Markonic

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# Money does grow on trees

## TREES IN YOUR FRONT YARD

By Christine Bates  
info@mainstreetmag.com

*For every month's real estate feature I try to find a topic that I want to learn more about whether it's flood maps, taxes, or real estate markets. This month's inspiration came from my experience as a real estate agent when a buyer was advised to have a 100-year-old maple tree removed before buying a house. In my research on trees and landscaping, I was amazed to see how much value trees can potentially add to a house in every way. And also the problems and expense they can create.*

The United States is home to about 250 billion trees. Despite increases in our country's population, parking lots, roads, and sprawl there are more trees standing today than a 100 years ago. Trees cover 34% of our country – 8% of all forest area in the world. But what about that tree in your yard? Some academic studies have shown that a handsome tree can increase the value of your property by 7%, 10%, or even 25% while a diseased tree or ones too close to your house can decrease marketability. According to HGTV, studies have shown that homeowners get a 100% or more return on their money when they invest in landscaping, particularly in trees, with shorter time on the market. That's much better than the negative return on a kitchen update or a bathroom redo. A recent University of Michigan study estimated that for every \$1 invested in a tree you'll see a 109% return and, if it's part of a beautiful well-kempt landscape, a tree can increase sales price by even more.

### But what kind of tree?

Trees with leaves and flowers are always a yes, and trees with pointy, sharp branches, trees that smell bad, attract unwanted insects like box elders, and trees that aggravate allergies are not a good idea. Northern red oaks, native dogwoods, and sugar maples are often recommended for our region. Remember to consider how big the tree will become before

you plant. And think about their mature root system. Slow growing trees typically have deeper roots, stronger branches, and are less likely to fall on your house in extreme weather compared to trees like white eastern pine trees, which are shallow rooted and can get top heavy. Visit local nurseries to see what trees will thrive in your location considering sun, soil, moisture, and climate zone. Consult books like Doug Tallamy's books *Bringing Nature Home*, which list native trees for different regions and conditions. Visit botanical gardens and local private gardens open through the Garden Conservancy for ideas and conversations with experts. This is a long-term investment.

Knowing that landscaping overall increases a home's curb appeal, some informed real estate brokers urge their clients to provide an inventory of plants and trees on the property. In the case of large trees that seem like they might pose a threat to the home, a licensed arborist can do an assessment attesting to the tree's health or recommending removal. And if you're contemplating selling your house, take photographs when your landscape is at its most magnificent.

### How much does a tree cost?

Young trees are not expensive. A young maple or tulip tree that might be 8 to 10 feet tall, which comes in a 7-gallon or 10 gallon container, will cost around \$100 to \$200. This size tree is easy to transport and small enough to plant yourself. As soon as the ground is soft enough to dig a hole this spring, you can plant a tree. Trees quickly become more expensive as they get larger and also require professional installation, which typically doubles the cost.

### Trees multi-task

Properly selected and placed, trees can improve energy efficiency, add privacy, filter the air, deaden sound, and even lower crime. Mature trees can offer



Above: An example of a tree limb falling in a neighbor's yard. Because it damaged nothing the owner of the property had to cut it up and have it carted away. Photo by Christine Bates.

immediate energy saving benefits to homeowners. A deciduous mature shade tree can block up to 90% of solar radiation and reduce air-conditioning needs by 75%. These trees are best planted on the south side of a building where the sun's rays are most intense. During the winter months, a leafless deciduous tree will permit passive solar heating. Planting evergreen trees to the north and north-west of your house can provide insulation and protection from wind during winter months.

Trees also absorb pollutants, and intercept particulate matter, like dust ash and smoke. If you would like to calculate the energy cost savings of that big tree in your yard go to the National Tree Benefit Calculator online and plug in the species and size of your tree and your zip code. The silver maple in my yard is estimated to provide \$270 in savings every year, intercept 7,000 gallons of storm water, conserve 234-kilowatt hours, and reduce atmospheric carbon by 1,107 pounds in a year.

Continued on next page ...

Trees and hedges also create privacy from the road and can effectively dampen sound if planted densely in three rows. The sound barrier needs to be about 20' wide and ideally on a raised berm. Begin with a dense row of shrubs with a taller hedge in the center and another planting of showy shrubs facing your house. Hollies and junipers are excellent choices.

**Where to plant?**

Trees that will grow over 30 feet tall should be planted 25 feet or more from overhead wires with at least 15 feet between each tree. Allow a minimum of 15 feet from your house and three feet from the street or sidewalk. Remember that trees planted in the ROW (road right-of-way), usually 10 feet on either side of the street, are the property of the municipality. A big tree growing too close to a house can create a problem at time of sale and buyers often insist on their removal because of the danger they may pose. Removing a large tree in an inaccessible location can involve a crane and as much as \$10,000 of expense.

**Trees require maintenance**

Like everything else on your property, trees require more attention than just raking up the leaves. If there's a dry spell most trees appreciate a good

soaking from the hose. Dead wood should be removed and trees should be trimmed. Fertilizing trees at the drip edge in the spring is helpful to their growth and health. The US Department of Agriculture publishes the free *Tree Owner's Manual* with everything you need to know – including don't trim a tree yourself if you can't reach the branches without a ladder. Homeowners may want to hire an arborist to check on the health of their trees every couple of years.

**Negotiating tree treaties**

Trees and large woody shrubs can also be the source of dispute and, occasionally, open hostilities between neighbors. The sycamore tree on the property next door is dropping branches, spiky seed balls, and gigantic leaves all over your yard. A huge pine branch is overhanging your garage.

What can you do? First start with a survey to determine whose property the tree trunk is on if that's not obvious. Next contact a licensed, insured arborist who knows the regulations in your town and can provide a work specification on how exactly the tree will be cut back. In most places you can prune the parts of a tree overhanging your yard as long as the work does not damage the tree's health.

Next, and most importantly, talk to your neighbor, and try to get their written consent, and, if necessary, permission to access the tree through their property. Or perhaps offer to pay to have the tree removed. Remember that outraged neighbors with a valuable, mature tree can legally seek monetary damages if this is handled incorrectly and the tree dies.



Above: This old maple was just too close to the house for the new buyer and had to be removed before sale. Below, left: An enormous beech tree accents this home in Millerton, NY. Photos by Christine Bates.

**Homeowners insurance protects your property against falling trees**

From an insurance point of view, trees are a potential menace, but they don't increase your premium. Kirk Kneller of Kneller Insurance explained that if a tree on your property falls on your house, your standard homeowner's insurance would pay for the damage. If the tree doesn't damage anything and merely falls in your yard, you will have to cut it up and take it away yourself. If a neighbor's dead tree damages your property then the neighbor's liability policy will reimburse you for damage; however, if it's your neighbor's live tree, which falls over for whatever reason, your own homeowner's insurance will pay because it is really an act of God.

When you buy a new home think about planting a tree to mark the occasion. During your years of ownership you'll watch it grow along with your children and grandchildren. A tree can become a family legacy and a valuable addition when it's time to sell. Remember the saying; the best time to plant a tree is 50 years ago. ●

*Christine Bates is a real estate agent registered in New York and Connecticut with William Pitt Sotheby's International. She has been writing about all things real estate since the first issue of Main Street Magazine in 2013.*

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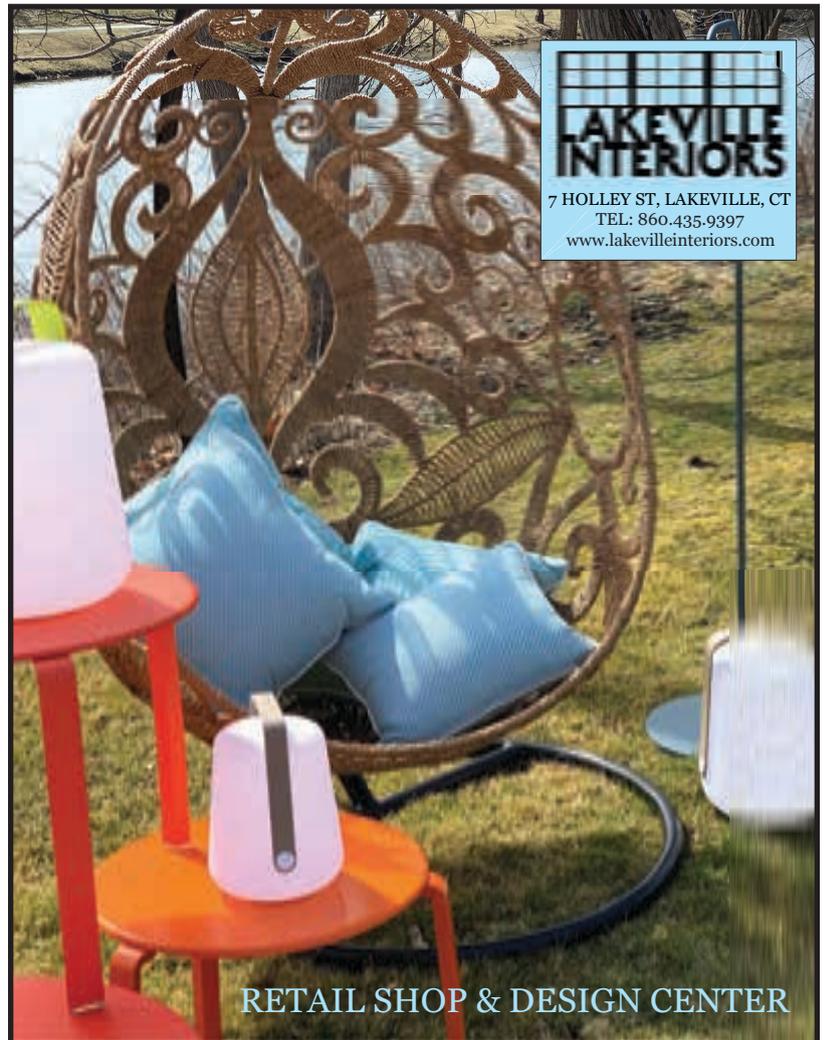
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# My transfer station: A COMPLICATED LOVE STORY

By Ian Strever  
info@mainstreetmag.com

I love my transfer station, and I'm not the only one. There is something cathartic and freeing about dropping off one's refuse at a site distant from one's own house, but not too distant. Most of my life, I lived in places with trash pickup, where the handoff of garbage took place at the end of the driveway and involved nothing more than wheeling a barrel down to the curb on Sunday night. Pretty thoughtless, really.

A transfer station recasts that process as a sort of ritual that requires a certain amount of mindfulness. The procession begins with the gathering of undesirables around the house, then the sorting and packing of them according to their destination, the early weekend morning drive (a time to meditate on things discarded, things retained), and the purifying catapulting into the dumpster. It is as if I have purged myself of a week's accumulations, its imperfections and concerns, and I drive off lighter in every sense.

## Someone else's problem?

But of course, it is a transfer station, so all of those imperfections and concerns are just shifted elsewhere, to become someone else's problems. In most cases, urban hubs such as Hartford and Torrington in Connecticut have facilities that process our waste in one way or another, and for towns in Massachusetts and New York, it's places like Springfield and Winddale.



Above: A rendering of the new transfer station reflects a clean, organized design. Below, left: Single-stream recycling will continue to be a defining characteristic of the transfer station.

My transfer station is located on the Sharon/Lakeville line, but a new facility will soon open closer to the state line next to Millerton, NY, and our towns will continue to ship our waste to the closest facilities in any of the three states.

## Your trash as energy?

Most weeks, your average consumer churns out trash and recyclable material, mostly in the form of plastic containers, aluminum cans, and paper. Let's start with the trash or, as it's known in the business, mixed solid waste (MSW). At Salisbury/Sharon, this includes everything from banana peels to branches, Saran Wrap to cellophane, and we shipped out about 3200 tons of it last year to the Materials Recycling and Innovation Authority (MIRA) in Torrington. That cellophane may be useful as an element of refuse-derived fuel (RDF) that stokes the resource-recovery facility, turning trash into energy that, in Connecticut, fuels about 35,000 homes.

That RDF requires processing, including the removal of non-combustible glass and metal, so not all of our trash ends up as energy.

Still, it's somewhat reassuring that we are able to divert our waste from landfills. In fact, a 2008 study by the Connecticut General Assembly found that only about 5% of our MSW ends up in landfills (although 8% was shipped out of state), and we are able to divert approximately 25% of our waste. That was over a decade ago, though, and a look at recent data shows that at least in Salisbury/Sharon, their recycling output has held steady at just over 1000 tons a year.

And even in 2010, when that aforementioned study was published, our capacity to handle all of the waste was strained. Since then, the state has proposed a goal of 60% waste diversion, and shifting from 25% to 60% is obviously going to require some Herculean efforts. In addition to an outdated processing infrastructure (the MIRA facilities are retrofitted coal plants that had to be temporarily shut down in 2018 for overdue repairs), the goal itself is something of a

Continued on next page ...



moving target. Since 2010, plastics have gotten thinner and consumer interest in decreasing waste has changed the composition of our waste stream in general. So although the ratio of waste to recycling has remained roughly the same in terms of gross weight, the recycled content is more dense in terms of recycled units.

In recent days, officials have been briefed on just how dire the situation is at MIRA facilities. The processing plants will require \$330 million dollars in repairs to remain viable, and the nearest landfills that would accept our waste are in Ohio and Virginia. Clearly, something has to be done about waste in our area.

A 2016 study by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) suggested at least one avenue to reaching their 60% goal: composting. According to that study, about 40% of MSW contains food scraps and compostable content, so composting alone would get us there. Fittingly, DEEP advocated for “the development and strengthening of state incentives for new technologies that generate electricity from waste such as anaerobic digestion and gasification,” processes that require organic materials such as food scraps.

**The new transfer station**

All of this brings us to the decision to build a new transfer station facility on the Salisbury/Millerton line. The existing facility had been open since 1975 as “a temporary solution to landfill challenges,” and over the course of its long-term land lease with Hotchkiss, it has become a collection point for all kinds of materials and waste.

More than that, however, it is a hub of community contact. If you hang around long enough, you’ll see everyone there, and the amount of information and gossip exchanged at the transfer station rivals the number of items we deposit. It is an interesting consequence of adopting a transfer station approach to waste disposal, but I’ve found it to be true in most small towns with such facilities.

While not the intended purpose of a transfer station, such considerations must be addressed in the design for a new facility. How will people move around and use the facility? What traffic patterns would they follow, and are those safe? What items will residents want to bring to the station, and in what quantity? These questions, as well as current environmental regulations, were all a part of the process in designing a new facility, which is



scheduled to open later this year. I recently toured the area, which is still in the final stages of construction. From the road, it has the feel of a new gas station: slightly futuristic, with vaulting metal canopies and antiseptic-looking concrete. Much thought has gone into the movement of residents and commercial vehicles around the area, and the increased capacity will meet the needs of these towns for the foreseeable future.

Functionally, however, it is not especially state-of-the-art. They will collect the same items, and in much the same manner. There is no plan for composting, anaerobic digestion, or gasification, and the planning reports attend to matters of usage, finance, and process more than environment (although a holding pond and shelters for equipment and materials will decrease the immediate local impact). This facility, while more capacious than its predecessor, will not change how residents dispose of their waste.

Whether or not that is the purpose of a transfer station is a matter of debate. Since the opening of the existing transfer station, residents have come to play an important role in diverting waste from landfills by sorting their trash, a habit that is encouraged by legislation, municipal infrastructure, and a certain sense of civic duty. As landfills close, we need to reckon with the 1,300 pounds of waste that each of us generates each year, and where that waste ends up. We can’t just continue to transfer it to someplace else. ●

Above: The majority of Sharon/Salisbury’s waste ends up here, at the MIRA trash-to-energy plant in Hartford, CT. 2,500 pounds of waste arrive each day for repurposing as refuse-derived fuel. Photo Credit Cloe Poisson for the *CT Mirror*. Below, left: Canopies such as this one will define the new station, keeping users and waste away from the elements.



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# Nature. Nurture.

FOR CENTURIES, ARTISTS HAVE FLOCKED TO THE HUDSON VALLEY TO CAPTURE ITS BEAUTY AND ADVOCATE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

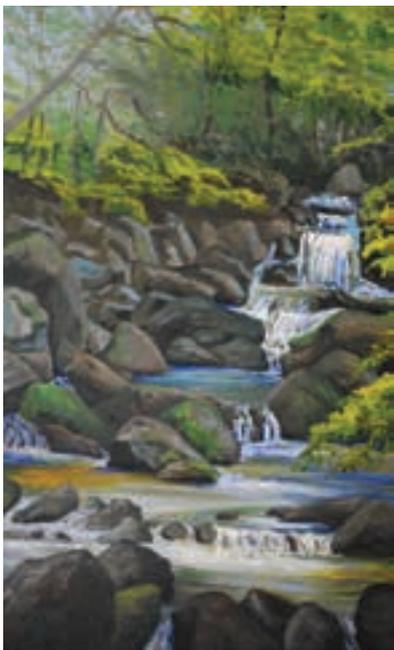
By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

April 22, 2020 marks the 50th Earth Day celebration. People all over the globe will be joining in to support this environmental movement. The Hudson Valley, which is brimming with lots of rivers, streams, and majestic mountains, is pitching in by hosting many eco-conscious events. Join in Rhinebeck's Bike to School Earth Day 2020 (April 22, [climatesmart-rhinebeck.org/events/bike-to-school-earth-day-2020](https://climatesmart-rhinebeck.org/events/bike-to-school-earth-day-2020)) in Rhinebeck, NY, and McEnroe Organic Farm's annual Earth Day Festival on April 26 in Millerton, NY ([mcenroeorganicfarm.com](https://mcenroeorganicfarm.com)).

## Artists. The Hudson Valley. And the environment.

Well before the seeds of Earth Day were first planted, many artists in the Hudson Valley were attuned to the region's pristine beauty as well as the need to promote conservation efforts.

For hundreds of years, the Hudson Valley has captivated the interests of nature enthusiasts and artists such as artist Thomas Cole. In 1825, Cole founded the Hudson River School – a group of American landscape painters whose aesthetic vision was influenced by Romanticism. Even back then,



Cole recognized the industrial development's impact on the wild beauty of the region.

Cole became well acquainted with the area when he established a rural studio in Catskill. It was located in a building at Cedar Grove, which is currently home to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site.

In 1844, artist Frederic Church came to the Catskill area to study with Cole. Their local sketching trips brought them to the hilltop that later became Olana.

"The same motivation that brings many people to the Hudson Valley today drew artists like Frederic Church in the first half of the nineteenth-century: seemingly unspoiled nature in close proximity to a major metropolitan area," says William L. Coleman, Ph.D., director of collections and exhibitions, The Olana Partnership – a non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire the public by preserving and interpreting Olana.

Although historians usually associate Church with his journeys to far-flung locales such as Ecuador, Newfoundland, and the Middle East, he was also devoted to destinations much closer to home. He enjoyed the vistas from Olana across the river to the Catskills and beyond.

In a letter to fellow artist Martin Johnson Heade, Church claimed, "I make a study from my studio window of a sunset or twilight nearly every day."

Olana's 250-acre historic landscape, designed by Church over several decades, is a National Historic Landmark. Over the years, there have been many restoration and protection projects. After the fields were cleared of invasives, native meadows were established to promote biodiversity. Invasives were also removed from the ten-acre lake. Landscape tours were also introduced to the public.



## You too can enjoy the locales that the artists drew inspiration from

Spring is an ideal time to visit these sites. The Olana State Historic Site and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site recently partnered to co-host, *Cross Pollination: Heade, Cole, Church, and Our Contemporary Moment*, which kicks off May 9 and runs through November 1, 2020. It's being presented as one exhibition, which can be experienced at the Olana State Historic Site in Hudson, NY, and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill, NY. The sites are linked by the Hudson River Skywalk – a scenic walkway that passes over the river.

The exhibition will feature 16 paintings from Heade's *The Gems of Brazil* – a series that highlights hummingbirds and habitats in Brazil. His focus and related writing on the over hunting of bird species aligns with Cole's message about deforestation.

The exhibition will include paintings by Cole and Church. It will include Cole's never-before-exhibited herbariums and a sampling of the Church family's collection of bird eggs.

Continued on next page ...



Above, top to bottom: *Kingston Point*, Staats. *Fields of Vision II*, Jacaruso. Below, left: *In the Wilderness*, *Hidden Falls*, Lynton.

**Contemporary artists**

Just like the Hudson River School artists, many contemporary painters share the same appreciation for the allure of the area and the spirit of conservation.

Artist Linda Lynton of Woodstock, NY, celebrates the natural beauty of her current home town. *Hidden Falls*, which is part of the *In the Wilderness* series, highlights the Sawkill River, which runs through the Woodstock valley.

“It has been a part of my life since I moved to Woodstock 12 years ago,” says Linda Lynton. A native of London, England, Lynton moved to New York City, before settling in Woodstock.

On her journey to create *Hidden Falls*, Lynton followed the river from Echo Lake through the forests of the Indian Wilderness to Woodstock, Sawkill, Esopus Creek in Kingston, and finally to the Hudson River at Saugerties.



While following the river, Lynton recognized reason for optimism. “Beavers are moving in upstream in the hills, which I feel is a wonderful sign of the resilience of nature, despite what humanity has been doing to the environment and the pressures the Catskills have faced over the past 200 years,” says Lynton.

She reminisces about the purchase of her first weekend home in what was then a rural, poor area of Woodstock. “My road was a sleepy, rural street that no one noticed. The frogs kept me awake on summer nights and the big excitement was a bear crossing the road. One day, a hedge fund company bought an adjacent barn and converted it to offices and a trendy restaurant opened on the corner. It wasn’t the same. My only consolation is the bears still walk by,” concludes Lynton.

**Field of Vision II**

Artist Betsy Jacaruso also recognizes the changes in the Hudson Valley. “We have lost a lot of the open spaces. However, we are fortunate to have Scenic Hudson and Winnakee Land Trust – two land conservancy organizations preserving some of our most cherished natural spaces,” says Betsy Jacaruso of the Rhinebeck studio and gallery that bears her name.

“Being surrounded by nature always grounds me. I am inspired by the changing season and beauty of the Hudson Valley landscape. It is an ever-changing muse through which I can express my feelings. Sometimes painting the essence rather than the detail inspires a deeper connection to the Earth,” she concludes.

**Kingston Point and Sawkill Dam**

Woodstock-based watercolorist Staats Fasoldt grew up along the Hudson River. He describes his soft, muted paintings as “interpretations of nature that stress spontaneity.”

“My psyche was formed in part by the Hudson River’s presence; it was a barrier and a highway, always in motion, always changing,” says Staats Fasoldt. For Fasoldt, light on landscape has always been a stimulus.



**Dakotah’s Flowers; Hutton Street; Moonflower**

Like Lynton, Jacaruso, and Fasoldt, watercolorist Kate Kester is also lured by the scenic vistas of the Hudson valley region. She relocated to the area from the Mid-Atlantic region. Kester’s work, which focuses on contemporary fauvist plant life, draws reference from photos she’s taken in the Hudson Valley area.

“I always associated upstate New York with intensely cold winters, flannels, and mounds of snow. When I experienced my first warm season here, I felt as though I had been let in on a secret: the Hudson Valley summer,” says Kate Kester. She enjoys the buds that debut during the warmer months and uses her paintbrush to capture the plant life and the rolling hills, which are blanketed with the green tint of chlorophyll.

The Hudson Valley is today, as it was in days past, a source of serenity and inspiration for many, including the many artists who call the Hudson Valley home and their muse. ●



Above, top to bottom: *Sawkill Dam*, Staats. *Moonflower*, Kessler. Left: *Bears-vill Gold*, Lynton. All images in this article provided by the artists.

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# Fighting for generations

SCENIC HUDSON DEFENDS ENVIRONMENTAL SANCTITY ONCE MORE ALONG THE RIVER'S EDGE

By Griffin Cooper  
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The year was 2005, President George W. Bush had begun his second term in office that January. The US' 11th Circuit Court of Appeals refused – by a vote of 2-1 – to stop the euthanasia of Terri Schiavo, who had been in a vegetative state since 1990, by not ordering the reinsertion of her feeding tube. And the concept of entire websites dedicated to internet videos was born in February when YouTube first went online. By April of that year, across the Hudson Valley, it seemed the national news media was camped in our collective backyards – or perhaps more appropriately, on our river's edge.

In the intervening years since, members of Scenic Hudson's vaunted coalition have spearheaded a swath of initiatives in the name of land protection and conservation across our area. From the christening waters of the Sawmill in Yonkers, further north and the lush interior of the Hudson Highlands all the way to Washington Irving's titular Rip Van Winkle Bridge in the foothills of the Catskill Mountain Range, the 57-year-old organization has cultivated an environmental reformation throughout New York State since those early months in 2005.

But Ali had to defeat the force of Sonny Liston in Miami Beach before he could be called the greatest – and after six years and nearly \$58 million spent by a massive industrial heavyweight, Scenic Hudson was on the verge of achieving a similar historic upset – a watershed moment for modern environmentalism in the Hudson Valley.

## Stop the plant

In the fall of 1998 St. Lawrence Cement (SLC), a large player in the manufacturing and distribution of cement and subsidiary of the Swiss-based Holcim company, the largest cement producer in the world currently generating north of \$21 billion in annual revenue, announced plans for a 2.2 million ton coal-fired cement plant in Greenport and Hudson, NY, to the tune of \$300 million. Two years later Scenic Hudson joined a coalition of environmental groups including Friends of Hudson, a group formed by concerned residents specifically for the purpose of raising awareness about the potential plant's harmful impacts to the local environment.

Scenic Hudson president Ned Sullivan recalls the impact the David vs. Goliath battle had on the people of the Hudson River Valley and the turning point amidst contested regional debate. "Despite the volume of discourse in the area and the many misleading ads published by St. Lawrence, I believe the battle united the entire region. The Hudson Valley, Northwest Corner, and Berkshire

regions all became aware of the harmful impacts by the time we were able to help spread the word. I remember the turning point when St. Lawrence brought in an expert from Harvard to an open forum meeting. One of the arguments they assumed would work in their favor was regarding the proposed 400 foot stacks on site. The gentleman from Harvard attempted to reassure the public that the prevailing winds would in fact move any air pollution north and, in six hours, everything would end up in Maine. I had formerly spent time as the Environmental Commissioner for the state of Maine so I contacted Maine's then-governor Angus King regarding this new development meant to pacify any environmental concerns in our area and he of course was unaware of this potential threat to his state. He told me to draft a letter and we subsequently contacted New York Governor George Pataki. We then went from state to state in New England and started an editorial movement of sorts, that's when the tide turned in our favor."

Spurred by the storm of editorials from local publications as well as those from *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *CNN*, the winds of change would soon lift the sails of the grassroots organization as St. Lawrence was dealt a fatal blow when the Pataki administration rejected its

Continued on next page ...

Above: The Quarry waters property in Kingston. Image courtesy of Scenic Hudson.

proposal application in part because it would “mar the natural beauty that has helped ignite a resurgence in the area.” Secretary of State Randy A. Daniels, whose approval was necessary for the plant to obtain permits needed from the Army Corps of Engineers, provided the final knockout punch when he ruled the project was “inconsistent with the state’s coastal management policies.”

Scenic Hudson’s fortuitous victory has led to a transformative environmental movement across the Empire State over the last 15 years. With support from Governor Andrew Cuomo’s administration, who signed into law The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act last July mandating all electricity come from carbon-free sources by 2040, Scenic Hudson has led a number of initiatives driven by community advocacy designed to “preserve land and farms and creates parks that connect people with the inspirational power of the Hudson River, while fighting threats to the river and natural resources that are the foundation of the valley’s prosperity.”

### Unleashing the Hudson’s power in defense of its inland neighbors

Though the 2005 victory over SLC may have ignited New York’s 21st century environmental movement, it did not come without precedent. Scenic Hudson was established in 1963 when six citizens banded together in order to combat Con Edison and its industrial plan to blast the face off of Storm King Mountain just south of Cornwall-on-Hudson. The energy giant planned to destroy the structure of the historic mountain in order to install a pump facility that would funnel water into a reservoir located in the Hudson Highlands, putting ecosystems in danger of destructive change.

In what has come to be known as the Scenic Hudson Decision, the organization’s six founders were successful in halting ConEd’s industrial designs and established citizens’ legal standing to defend the environment in a court of law even if they had no economic recourse. The Storm King initiative also proved to be the first time scientific data was considered in order to determine the overall impact of such a project.

For the past five decades, Scenic Hudson and its team of environmental advocates have spread their successes on the Hudson River across the area and have been responsible for preserving more than 48,000 acres of at-risk land across the region, including more than 18,000 acres on over 125 family farms. “We have a transformative impact on the ground,” says Mr. Sullivan of Scenic Hudson’s many community branches that reach inland of the river. “We are involved with purchasing development rights to farms and leaving the ownership rights in the hands of the farmer. We utilize a practiced system of criteria based on climate change when purchasing property, asking ourselves what we can do to preserve the ecological systems that are in place. The farmers generally receive a cash payment that they can do as they please with, this helps bring resources



to bear with both state and federal grants that are woven together to hold easements. We work with a variety of local environmental institutions including the Salisbury Land Trust and the Columbia and Dutchess Land Conservancies.”

Scenic Hudson’s robust list of land-protection achievements grows with each year, further establishing its roots in the area’s broad environmental movement. In the fall of 2019, Scenic Hudson acquired a 508-acre post-industrial parcel of land located on the City of Kingston’s Hudson riverfront. The site was previously part of a massive housing development project that has languished for the past 12 years. The preservation of the site will lead to a project that will eventually link

Above, top to bottom: Lands that Scenic Hudson protected in Columbia County along the Stockport Creek in 2019. Soil testing at the Scenic Hudson Soil Lab. Left: Stop the Plant St. Lawrence Cement campaign logo. Images courtesy of Scenic Hudson.

to New York State's Empire State Trail and Kingston's Greenline trail system currently being developed to connect disparate neighborhoods in the city.

In the town of East Fishkill, Scenic Hudson dedicated its efforts toward removing 130 tons of debris and repaired roads in order to conserve Lake Walton, making it possible for Dutchess County to plan the creation of its first universally accessible park.

The organization is also responsible for protecting nearly 1.5 miles of the Stockport Creek in Columbia County. The creek has long been an important tributary of the Hudson River itself. Scenic Hudson's acquisition of this 117-acre stretch will help monitor pollution along the tributary, which will prove critical for maintaining water quality and sustaining fish species including sturgeon and shad.

For the last seven years, Scenic Hudson has also safeguarded 27 riverfront acres in Ulster County that sit between its Esopus Meadows Preserve. The 2013 acquisition has since protected the sublime vistas that draw visitors to Mills-Norrie State Park and other outdoor destinations, and will allow the organization to double the size of its existing preserve.

Every land acquisition comes with a carefully ordained environmental purpose according to president Ned Sullivan. "Every transaction catalyzes positive development in the community, giving people a stake in the river and connects it to the world around them."



### Gearing up for round two

The shocking defeat of the SLC plant a decade and a half ago has affirmed Scenic Hudson's status as the state's number one environmental watchdog. With its metamorphic impact on the Hudson Valley's many ecosystems and role in New York's modern environmental push, it should come as no surprise that plans for a new natural gas plant in Newburgh have already landed firmly in Scenic Hudson's crosshairs.

Hayley Carlock, an attorney and Scenic Hudson's director of environmental advocacy, who possesses a familiar fervor to stunt the presence of corporate industrialization in the Hudson Valley, says, "Danskammer Energy, developer of the proposed Newburgh plant that sits in the shadow of Storm King Mountain, is deceptively attempting re-industrialization at a time when the valley is decidedly moving away from those purposes."

After Superstorm Sandy, the plant sustained significant structural damage causing the previous owner to declare bankruptcy in 2012. Danskammer was slated to be sold for scrap until 2014 when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) created a financial incentive for industrial locations to be sited by corporations in the lower Hudson Valley. This effectively placed a target on the Danskammer plant, enticing developers to swoop in and bring the plant back online in hopes of a financial windfall.

"Developers will get paid even if the plant doesn't run," says Ms. Carlock, "in the form of capacity payments for millions of dollars just for making the plant viable." The new incentives quickly lead to Danskammer reopening though as it stands currently, the old plant runs seldomly.

In 2019, a new developer, backed by international companies, entered the fray and purchased the plant for the purpose of building a new natural gas-fired plant to the south. The proposed plan for the new Danskammer plant will cost approximately \$500 million to build the 535-megawatt facility along the shores of the Hudson, and will likely be the last



Above: The Danskammer Power Plant in Newburgh. Below, left: Students visit Scenic Hudson's Juniper Flats property in Kingston. Images courtesy of Scenic Hudson.

fossil fuel plant to be built in New York. "That is not the legacy we want to leave here," says Carlock. "We have already intervened to make sure there are no more coal-fired facilities here, we should be investing in clean energy and infrastructure to preserve the health of future generations."

Undoubtedly, the proposed new plant would contribute to ground level ozone (or smog), potentially causing respiratory problems in an area of the Hudson Valley that has already been graded a C for air quality. Members of the Danskammer initiative and proponents of the new plant claim its operation will not be nearly as 'dirty' as the former 68-year-old plant. However, the new plant will surely run much more often, meaning air pollution will increase 25-40 times more than the previous plant with greenhouse gas emissions also rising 40 times more annually.

Ned Sullivan feels a similar looming concern that propelled him into action in 2005, "I have little doubt that this new plant will lock us into many more years of pollution in the Hudson Valley. Why would we allow a fracked-gas plant to run in a state where fracking is illegal? Renewables are growing worldwide as well as right here in the Hudson Valley, that is where the future of clean energy lies."

As Sullivan and his coalition of activists at Scenic Hudson lace up their gloves in preparation for another battle against a corporate titan, they will enter the ring with more than a

plan to simply stop the plant from being built. "We certainly want to stop Danskammer from building its proposed new plant, but we are also strong supporters of generating some other job-creating activity." A plant in the city of Kingston with some ancillary battery storage might provide an alternative solution. Large ancillary battery storage facilities have the capacity to take energy off the grid and store it when it is not needed, and subsequently discharge energy back into the grid when required.

Stand-alone battery storage facilities like these might provide the Hudson Valley with a renewable energy resource that will also generate much needed job growth. "Environmental threats like these are a big motivator. Ultimately our goal is to engage people first where they find fun and pleasure," says Ned. "Whether through social media or other forms of grassroots campaigning, it's about showing people the wonderful places this beautiful area presents visitors. Getting the word out, getting people focused on us as a resource for the fun things to do in the Hudson Valley, and getting people involved that way will surely lead to the realization that we must preserve what we love." ●

*To learn more about Scenic Hudson and their work, or to get involved, please visit [www.scenichudson.org](http://www.scenichudson.org).*

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# Sustainable sustainability

BABY STEPS TO SAVE OUR PLANET



By Mary B. O'Neill, Ph.D.  
*info@mainstreetmag.com*

I'm going to start this article with some important science because we all know attention wanes pretty quickly a few sentences in, and before I lose you I need to justify why small – and large – actions on behalf of our planet are scientifically necessary.

## What's the matter with the planet?

The Earth is a closed system. Essentially nothing enters or leaves the system, unless we get hit by a meteor. Then something is definitely entering. This means that we have finite natural resources at our disposal and nowhere for our waste to go after we use them.

The atomic matter that composes our planet and biosphere is all that we have. And according to the Law of Conservation of Mass, matter can't be created or destroyed – it can only be rearranged to form other things. The total amount of matter doesn't change.

This essentially means that the quantity of elements, such as carbon (a key player in environmental issues), won't increase or decrease. However, it can change how it is bonded with other elements and where it resides, e.g., safely sequestered in the ground or in our plastics, fuel, and atmosphere.

## Frankenstein's monster

Being that humans are so intelligent, we have figured out how to alter atomic matter to suit our purposes in ways that make them unable to naturally decompose or re-enter the Earth's

system in another form. Carbon and petroleum-based plastic is an example of this.

Because we've made plastic through bonding carbon with other elemental ingredients in unnatural ways it's a new combination introduced in our closed system. There are no bacteria that can decompose it and no animal that can digest it, which is why we are awash in it today.

## Spaceship Earth

Additionally, the Earth is thought to have a carrying capacity, which is the number of people we can support with the finite natural resources we possess. There's only so much to go around. Currently, we're overusing and mistreating these finite resources, such as air and water, for the number of people who occupy the planet now and will occupy it in the future.

## Baby steps and giant steps

These facts leave us with the need to live in ways that lessen the strain on Mother Earth. I believe that small acts, sustained with intention, will over time snowball into bigger more meaningful acts. Once we start discovering the positive impact we can have, we'll be hooked and want to do more.

Let's start with some of these baby steps toward a more sustainable life. I'll share some ways I'm trying to do better. Believe me, I'm no enviro-saint. I make mistakes, choose convenience over conservation as I go through my hectic day, and let complacency crowd out intention. But I'm working on it and learning as I go along.

## Don't be tare-ified of bulk shopping

One day I'll discover in therapy why I've been so intimidated by the thought of bulk shopping. The process has seemed mysterious, overwhelming, and hard. Well, guess what – it's super easy and now I'm wondering why I waited so long!

My first foray into bulk shopping was in Great Barrington, MA, first at the Big Y and then the big leagues at the Berkshire Food Co-op. The Big Y has a well-stocked bulk section with dried beans, rice, granola, nuts, trail mixes, and more.

Brown bags with clear cellophane windows are available to use, making it unnecessary to bring my own containers. Plus, being in a larger grocery store I felt a little less conspicuous when I had some lentil spillage due to a misaligned bag and rice overflow when I didn't close the chute fast enough. Pencils were available to write the product code and these were entered at check out when the product was weighed.

Next, I tackled the Berkshire Co-op bulk section. This time I came armed with various sized jars that I saved from jams, sauces, pickles and the like. To not feel overwhelmed, I arrived bright and early on a Saturday morning. The thought of bulk shopping at peak hours filled me with terror.

Continued on next page ...

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But this was my morning – I marched to the checkout register and announced myself as a virgin bulk shopper. The young clerk looked at me quizzically and then kindly weighed, or tared, my assortment of empty jars. This is done so that container weight is deducted at checkout so you're not paying for it.

From there I made my way to the bulk aisle and surveyed my choices. A vast wall of dry selections were on offer, including a comprehensive spice area. In addition, there was bulk olive oil, vinegar, shampoo, conditioner, body cream, and Dr. Bronner's castile soap.

I filled my jars with whole oats, Arborio rice, sunflower seeds, and as a reward for my bravery – dark chocolate-covered raisins. Having labelled the jars with product codes written on masking tape I breezed through checkout without a hitch. I now have a tote filled with empty jars in the back of my car for the next time and an incrementally smaller plastic packaging footprint. When I return to the Co-op, the anticipation of refilling empty shampoo and conditioner containers makes me giddy.

### Hanging them out to dry

My laundry room is one place I've been able to reduce my environmental footprint. While I've been using biodegradable laundry detergent in my high-efficiency machine, since August I've set my washing machine to tap cold and have left it there, except for the occasional hot wash with some of my sons' more questionable additions to the load.

I purchased two drying racks and have reserved the dryer for very large items and those occasions where time is of the essence. When I do use the dryer I use wool felt dryer balls instead of dryer sheets.

In good weather, these drying racks are outside on my deck, lending the spiritual calm of Tibetan prayer flags as the kids' colored T-shirts sway in

the breeze. This winter the racks have been a fixture in my living room. Who's got time for company anyway? And so what if I settle down in crisp clean sheets that smell like the curry dinner we ate across the room.

Hanging laundry has encouraged adulting in my own children. Yes, this is a word. It means behaving like an adult, especially when it comes to doing necessary everyday tasks – like laundry. I enforced the no-dryer rule and they're responsible for doing their laundry, hanging it on the rack properly and with enough time for it to dry before they need it. A few occasions of wearing damp underwear have taught them to plan better.

I've also educated them that just because clothes are lying on the floor, it doesn't mean they're dirty. Chucking once-worn jeans and sweatshirts in the laundry bin in lieu of folding and putting them back in the drawer is strongly discouraged.

### Not shirting you

For years, we've been sending my husband's white button-down work shirts to be professionally laundered. While I recycle hangers back, I've been chagrined at the big piece of plastic wrap that covers them and ends up in a large ball in my garbage bin.

I started washing, hanging, and ironing them myself. Yes, I know this sounds very traditional but here's the good part – I keep a tally and literally pay myself \$3 (the cost of sending them out) for every shirt. Lest this sounds a little strange, there's an app called Tip Yourself that encourages the same kind of behavior.

Since the summer, I have earned over \$300, reduced my footprint again, and streamed countless shows during my weekly ironing time. Slow plodding series like *Doc Martin* are the best since action-based plots like *The Walking Dead* can lead to brown burn spots from an iron left too long – you can take your eyes off Martin Clunes but who can take their eyes off a zombie?

### Bring your own

There are many bring-your-own items that can reduce your plastic footprint. This requires organization and forethought. I confess I'm not perfect



Above: The bulk shopping section at Berkshire Co-op.

in my record on this but I am moving along the continuum.

Bring your own water bottle and for goodness sake stop buying the plastic bottles. We are drowning in plastic and as we learned it doesn't disappear, it just gets broken down into microbeads that are finding their way into everything – including our food and water.

Stop putting your leftovers and lunches in plastic bags. Use empty jars and containers instead. There's also reusable and washable beeswax food wrap for keeping food fresh. Buy a set of metal travel cutlery that goes into your lunch box or pick up spare ones at a thrift store or garage sale.

Ditch the plastic straws and sip from the cup, or buy the paper or metal versions.

When eating meals out, bring your own containers for leftovers. I confess, I have never done this. Our family has

Continued on next page ...

a collective huge appetite and what one person can't finish, another will.

When shopping, don't forget to BYOB – bring your own bags. Leave them in your car and after you unload your groceries, put them right in front of the door so you'll trip on them on your way out.

### Save what you love

Jacques Cousteau declared, "You can't save what you don't love, and you can't love what you don't know." If we don't feel connected to or knowledgeable about the natural world, we will feel less inclined to be concerned about it.

One way to love the environment is to get out into the natural world and appreciate its beauty and proven therapeutic effects. Take a hike, bathe in the forest, swim in a lake, camp, dig a garden, birdwatch, look out your window – do something that incorporates you appreciating what's around you and gets you feeling better because of it.

Environmental sustainability is one of the key civic issues of our time and we need to be educated about it from all angles – science, history, arts, literature, and religion and spirituality. It requires a cultural shift from Earth as an unlimited treasure chest for human use and abuse to Earth as a system that we're part of, like every other organism on the planet.



### Glocal action

Individual action can sometimes make you feel like you're on a lonely planet. If that happens, just look around and see the number of local initiatives in our towns.

For example, in New York State, the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program supports local governments in reducing greenhouse gas and adapting to a changing climate through technical assistance and grants. Many towns in our area are part of the CSC network.

In February 2018, the Town of North East passed a resolution to become a Climate Smart Community and appointed a task force to take action on the pledge. This task force, headed by Kathy Chow, has been busy evaluating environmental assets, concerns, policies and procedures.

In celebration of Earth Day, Chow and fellow task force member Jennifer Dowley, who is spearheading Earth Day festivities, have a line-up of events to celebrate the Earth and educate us on ways we can make an impact. Seed libraries, bee hotels, community clean up, clothing swap, and electric car show are just some of the programs that highlight the town's efforts to build a "strong commitment to preserve the environment and ecosystems."

### VOTE GREEN - at the ballot and with your wallet

The environment is a high-priority item for all of us. To help educate yourself about candidates and their green track record, take a look at their League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard. It rates how well that person represents the environment – and you. There's also a chapter in your state that addresses more local and regional environmental issues.

Make a donation to a conservation or environmental advocacy group in your local area or one with a more national or global reach. Local land trusts, Audubon Centers, nature preserves, environmental education organizations, and working forests abound in our area – support them. On a larger scale, educate yourself about issues through websites such as Sierra Club, World Wildlife Fund,



Above: Laundry swinging in the breeze. Photo source istockphoto.com contributor BrianAJackson. Below, left: Tared jars with bulk items at the Berkshire Co-op.

National Audubon Society, and Natural Resource Defense Council and then donate or advocate.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a non-partisan organization that conducts research and educates consumers about the products we use. EWG's site is a rife with analyses of products we use in our home and on our bodies. It explores the impact of these products on our health and the health of the environment. Seek out those products that make environmental sense and buy them when your budget allows.

### Intentions and acts lead to a better planet

We're all busy – too busy. Incorporating green behavior allows us to claw back some of our attention from convenience and consumerism and put it toward conservation and conscious living. Doing this is an act of rebellion every day against those who tell us it's business as usual and everything will be fine and marketers who convince us our emotional needs will be satisfied if we buy this, give our children that, and amass possessions that demonstrate status.

To recenter yourself and give you a crash course on environmental sustainability in easy-to-understand terms, read *The Lorax* by Dr. Suess. If

you've read it before as a child, read it again. It's a cautionary tale about capitalism's unchecked ravages to the environment, delivered with whimsical illustrations and catchy verse. It ends with a whisper of hope – "UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not."

Go on, take one small step for the planet, then another. Your baby steps will lead to giant steps, larger acts, a better informed and caring citizenry, and a sustainable planet. •

*The Millerton Earth Day will be on Saturday, April 25 from 10am to 3pm in various locations around the Village. For a schedule of events, visit [www.millertonnewyork.com](http://www.millertonnewyork.com).*

*Here are the websites referenced in this article: League of Conservation Voters [www.lcv.org/](http://www.lcv.org/); Environmental Working Group [www.ewg.org/](http://www.ewg.org/); NY Climate Smart Communities [climatesmart.ny.gov/](http://climatesmart.ny.gov/); Sierra Club [www.sierraclub.org/](http://www.sierraclub.org/); World Wildlife Fund [www.worldwildlife.org/](http://www.worldwildlife.org/); National Audubon Society [www.audubon.org/](http://www.audubon.org/); Natural Resource Defense Council [www.nrdc.org/](http://www.nrdc.org/); The Lorax Project [www.seussville.com/educators/the-lorax-project/](http://www.seussville.com/educators/the-lorax-project/).*

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*Saturday, April 25, 2020*

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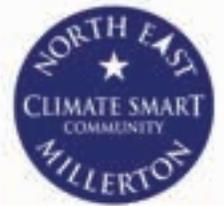
- > Main Street recycle bins in the Village
- > What, how and where to recycle
- > Welsh recycling truck

## RETHINK

- > Plant with backyard compost, seeds, seedlings
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# Life on the fly

PRESERVING AN AMERICAN LEGACY

By Griffin Cooper  
griffin@mainstreetmag.com

To be an angler is to make acquaintance with the surrounding world. The rivers, lakes, and streams that lie placidly unrevealed behind the ancient hemlocks of the Catskills and the marrow lush cradling the Housatonic wait for the intrepid explorer, rod in hand, and a serene respect for the natural wild to woo them like a weary lover. Emerging from the brush and wading into the softly bristling waters, the angler stays with them until becoming part of the landscape, like an extra brush stroke in one of Frederic Church's famous scenes. This is the kinship with the natural world that divides the angler from the outside world's perception of "sportsman."

Though the community of fly fishermen and women might be small, it remains tighter than one of the expertly crafted ties created by Miller-ton, NY, resident Ben Alex, who has been imbued with the spirit of a true Catskill fishing naturalist since childhood. The sport itself makes what was once a stranger on the street become a silent neighbor among the morning mists that slowly burn off the waters' surface and a salutary greeting in a local tavern accompanied by an intuitive understanding of the life outside of mechanized society – on the water, in the deep.

## The Quill Gordon dry fly

Before the dawn of the twentieth century, the natural reclusiveness of the trout itself prompted famed sporting magazine columnist Theodore Gordon to pen a letter to renowned English fly fishing author Fredrick Halford in order to gain further understanding of the indomitable fish. Gordon was also in need of fly suggestions for the wild glacial waters of the Catskill Mountain range. Halford returned Gordon's note with a cache of flies he had used to master the chalk streams of the English countryside. Gordon's initial excitement was soon quelled by the realization that Halford's flies didn't quite imitate the insects found in the Catskill's steeper riverine habitats. He would go on to amend Halford's design, eventually creating what has come to be known as the high-floating Quill Gordon dry fly giving birth to the iconic "Catskill style" or "Catskill Tie." Gordon's invention would prove revolutionary for the sport and what has pervaded fly fishing across the globe began right here in the Hudson Valley.

The culture of fly fishing has since flowed like a Hudson River tributary into each reservoir of the Northwest Corner. Today, lifelong fly enthusiasts like Ben offer their collective

knowledge to anyone whose ambitions beckon them beyond the world of tech-infused malaise and toward the iridescent hues of the many species of trout that populate the waters of Berkshire county and Connecticut. However, looming on the banks of the communal life involving mankind's give and take with the natural world is a predator who has specialized in



Above: Ben with a northern pike from the Housatonic. Below, left: The Housatonic river at dusk. Photos courtesy of Ben Alex.

disrupting this cycle for nearly half a century. A predator in the form of industrialization disguised as three letters: PCB.

## Ties that bind

"My father may have gotten me into fly fishing when I was a child, but my love for the sport has developed through the friendships I have made over the years." Ben, at only 26, has already enjoyed a prolific career in the world of outdoor sportsmen. His quest to satiate an enigmatic desire to create the perfect connection between tie and catch – something akin to a composer in search of a harmonious symphony – began as a child growing up in Millbrook, NY. His parents would obligingly drop him off in Dover, NY, so that he could take the train to Pawling, and the neighborhood tackle shop (known as the Anglers Den) where Ben took his inaugural steps in the world of fly fishing. Like many of the childhood friends he made while gathering together in the small shop, Ben is currently a local sporting guide.

It wasn't long before Ben's passion for fly fishing helped to refine his skills in the ancient past-time and at 18, while attending college full-time, he taught for the Orvis

academy including one- and two-day crash courses in fly fishing, clay target shooting, and knot tying in Millbrook. "All I ever wanted to do was be a fly fishing guide and through some kind of luck it's all I've ever done."

Today, Ben lends his expertise to guests of Ten Mile Preserve in Dover Plains where he enjoys access to acres of lakes and streams. Ben also runs the fly fishing program, meeting clients at Ten Mile River via shuttle and, depending on their experience level, leads trips that are either learning focused or experience driven.

"Fly fishing itself is a little more challenging because the nature of the sport relies heavily on trying to mimic the instincts of a trout. This means the shape, color, and size of the flies are fundamental to the success of each outing." Despite the difficulty between tying flies, the act of fly fishing, and the more modern style of rod and reel angling, it's the native aspect of fly fishing that Ben maintains keeps the traditional form alive in 2020. "Anyone can learn how to fly fish because it brings the angler's experience

Continued on next page ...





Above: One of Ben's homemade flies. Below, right: Ben with his latest catch. Photos courtesy of Ben Alex.

full circle. There is no manufacturing involved in the truest form of fly fishing. For me, it's a little bit more of an artistic experience, I can't draw, sing, or dance – but I can tie flies. Fly fishing represents the complete life cycle of fishing and it's the closest thing to wild fishing that exists today.”

Moreover, it's the communal nature of the neighborhood of fly fishermen and women that Ben believes would draw in even the most avid modern shut-in. “I think what makes fly fishing one of the most underappreciated sports is our tendency to prefer quick experiences. Any type of fishing takes practice, patience, and a willingness to experience days on the river that pass by without the opportunity for a photo op. You must apply yourself while enjoying living in each moment. I will always be amazed how this one activity continues to bring even the most uncommon people together in a sort of kinship, an understanding of the natural world.”

### The Housatonic and Rest of River

Alongside his work at Ten Mile Preserve, Ben spotlights with Berkshire Rivers Fly Fishing. It was here where Ben and his brethren have noticed an encroaching modern trend that continues to threaten the very nature of the sport itself.

Beginning in the final years of the Great Depression and lasting until the mid 1970s, perhaps the most prominent landmark in both Western Massachusetts and Western Connecticut was subjected to one of the worst forms of corporate pollution. Spanning approximately 150 miles,

the Housatonic River has long helped shape the character of the Berkshire Mountain region, and for nearly 50 years received dense PCB pollution via discharges from the General Electric plant in Pittsfield, MA.

In 1997 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated the defunct plant a superfund site and ordered GE to begin plans for its remediation two years later. For nearly two decades the issue languished in litigation until recently a settlement agreement was reached between the EPA and GE meant to accelerate the EPA's original 2016 cleanup plan. As of last year, GE has officially completed remediation of the ten plant areas within the city of Pittsfield. And though additional remediation has been planned for areas downstream, including Woods Pond in Lenox which contains the highest concentration of PCBs in the entire river, many residents remain skeptical of the corporation's commitment to the health of the river and its wildlife.

The original cleanup plan outlined by the EPA in 2016, dubbed the “Rest of River” plan, has since been modified by the recent settlement agreement and will include the following significant components per the EPA:

- (Most) Contaminated material transported out of state and the remainder consolidated ‘on-site’ in a lined Upland Disposal Facility.
- Immediate commencement of cleanup investigation and design work.
- Significant cleanup enhancements.
- Economic development package provided to local municipalities (Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge, Great Barrington, Sheffield, and Pittsfield) to the tune of

\$63 million.

- Reduced community impact and enhanced coordination with stakeholders.
- Commitment to further research on innovative technologies, demonstration efforts and pilot studies.

“The river has come a long way in the past 50 years,” says Ben, who has seen the transformation of the Housatonic firsthand. “According to certain agencies, the river is ‘healthy,’ yet it remains strictly a catch and release situation. The Housatonic used to be home to Atlantic salmon as well, but the man-made dams and the poor water quality haven't allowed them to breed and ultimately survive. Today, it's the dams that prevent both spawning and migration even more so than the water quality itself.”

Unlike the great Atlantic salmon that have been effectively purged from the historic waterway, the legacy of the fly fishermen endures. Resisting the urge to succumb to the modern temptation of the quick fix or social media photo trophy, and instead it maintains the patient integrity of its small community spread out over thousands of acres of rivers, lakes, and streams. Like the legend of the cerebral trout, fly fishing might seem an obscure activity from above the surface – imperceptible to most eyes. However, hidden beneath the modern murkiness lies the wondrous wild tints that deserve to be rewarded and more importantly, preserved for the future generations of silent acquaintances. •

*All statistical information gathered for this article was curated from the Environmental Protection Agency [epa.gov/ge-housatonic](http://epa.gov/ge-housatonic).*



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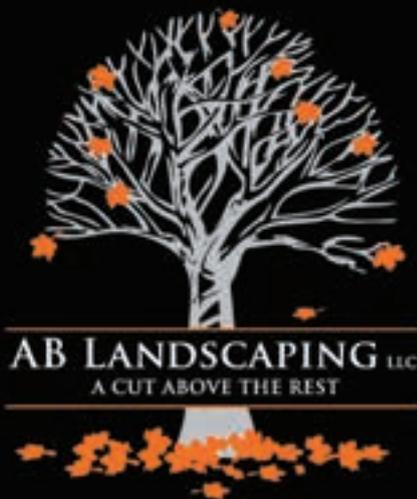


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# Setting her own precedents

Maria Horn affirms the next generation of leaders

By Griffin Cooper  
griffin@mainstreetmag.com

It was a sunny day in the Capital on Wednesday, March 4 1885. As the newly elected, 22nd President of the United States, Grover Cleveland placed his left hand on the Bible his mother had given him when he was 15 and took the oath of office under pleasant skies and in front of a congenial crowd in Washington, DC.

History remains quite uncertain where Belva Ann Lockwood was during the historic gathering, though it cannot forget the struggles she endured in her efforts to stand in President Cleveland's stead. Lockwood herself was one of the first female attorneys to practice in the country and after petitioning Congress for the right to practice before the US Supreme Court, she became the first woman to become a member of the Supreme Court in 1879. Despite being told repeatedly that God himself would rebuke her participation in Democratic government, Lockwood would go on to run for President in 1884. As the candidate for the National Equal Rights Party, Lockwood's grim campaign would be marred by waves of resistance including professional indignities, voter fraud, and a national media that commonly referred to the iconoclast as "old lady Lockwood."

Despite massive resistance, Lockwood's resolve would successfully plant the seeds for cultural revolution in the decades to come and she is perhaps most remembered for saying, "the glory of each generation is to make its own precedents." For those gathered on that perfectly pleasant early March day in 1885, her words couldn't have been more prophetic.

## The time is now

132 years later the weather was decidedly more dreary in the nation's Capital for the crowds who amassed in Washington, DC, on January 21, 2017, one the day after President Trump's inauguration, to partake in what is now known as the Women's March on Washington. The largest single-day protest in the country's history was a moment for many to speak up, speak out, come together, or simply have fun. But for Maria Horn, the moment provided the accelerant for her fiery ambitions and precipitated a successful run for State Representative as a member of Connecticut's 64th Assembly district.

"I remember I had thoughts of running for office before that day at various points in my life, it was something that was always on my periphery, but that day I had more fun standing in one cubic square foot of space than I had experienced in a long time. It was then I thought, this is it – the time is now."

After earning her Bachelor's degree from Princeton in the mid 80s, Representative Horn attended the University of Chicago Law School where she earned her Juris Doctor Degree in 1993. For most of her professional career, Representative Horn found herself in New York where she worked for the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York as an Assistant US Attorney for the Criminal Division.

As a proud member of the Salisbury, CT, community, where she lives with her husband and their three children, Representative Horn has served on behalf of a variety of local causes including chairing the Board of Trustees of the Indian Mountain School in Lakeville, a member of the Board of Directors for the Domestic Violence Preven-



tion Agency and the Women's Support Services in Sharon. Today, in addition to being a member of Connecticut's 64th Assembly district, she has been voted onto the board of the Northwester Connecticut YMCA.

Though Belva Ann Lockwood's bid for the highest office in the land may have fallen on ignorant ears, generations later her indomitable spirit has been fully realized in the precedents set by women like Maria Horn who carry the torch for political leadership into the twenty-first century.

Continued on next page ...

Above: Maria Horn recently spoke at Noble Horizons in Salisbury, CT, about her initiatives in the 64th District. Photo: Olivia Markonic.

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**Was there something specific that drew you to the Northwest Corner and Litchfield County when it came time to seriously consider running for office?**

MH: Though we met when I was living in New York, my husband went to the Hotchkiss School in Salisbury, CT. I grew up in rural Northeastern Ohio and despite the geographic distance, there are lots of similarities between the cultural fabric of the Midwest and that of the Northwest Corner. One of the things I really enjoy about this region in general is that it's an area that reveals itself to you gradually. The longer you live here, the more there is to discover. There are certain issues that people hold so dear here that they become part of the character of the many towns in the 64th district. The fact that there is a culture that is so ingrained into the heart of the area is something I just love. The more time you spend here the more you become naturally committed and feel compelled to become involved in the many non-profit organizations and committees.

I have had the privilege of working with schools, domestic violence and women support services in Sharon, and that involvement has connected me with even more residents. That web of community support became critical for me to experience and the interconnectedness of all these non-profits touched me and began to build something within me – a drive to serve on a proactive level.

**The Midwestern United States has been home to many conservative political ideals, yet you remain a member of the Democratic Party. How did your political ideals transform over time?**

MH: I grew up in a conservative family, my mother was a fervent Republican. This was during a time when a woman could more easily be considered both a feminist and

Republican and she certainly was. My mother was also very active in our community, standing up for the rights of women while still maintaining what we might characterize today as a politically conservative perspective.

During my youth and in college I saw firsthand much of the 20th century sexism and misogyny that pervaded our culture and I thought then that it was only temporary, I would tell myself to give our culture twenty years or so and everything would change and, to some degree, many things have. I do feel however that the Republican party of today has shifted a great deal to the 'right' and, in some ways, it left me behind. I maintained my Republican beliefs throughout college though they were strained. After college, I began to realize the issues that were important to me and those ideals I wanted to advocate for lined up with those on the other side of the proverbial 'aisle'. I admired my mother tremendously and she still has an enormous influence on me. Sometimes I think we rebel against our parents' political beliefs as a natural part of maturation, but I also think that's a bit derivative as well.

Reproductive health issues, among others, became very important to me as time went on and that was something that also drew me to the party I serve today. When I moved to New York I started to really become aware of the distinct differences in advantages and disparities that primarily fell along gender and racial lines. Eventually, these issues became undeniable as I surveyed my own cultural landscape. I firmly believe – regardless of party affiliation or political ideal – we need to look more deeply into our institutions and systemic attitudes in order to truly proactively broach social inequities.

**As your professional career progressed, your path lead you through several traditionally male-dominated fields including corporate finance, criminal law, and now politics. Have you seen a transformation in any of these arenas?**



MH: It's true [laughing] I have worked in many male-dominated environments and I enjoyed them and acclimated to them in ways that I look back at very differently today. I thought then "this is what you do, you need to acclimate yourself to this kind of environment." I am a pretty quantitative person by nature so I could handle the analytical part of my past jobs, but I certainly didn't possess an intrinsic interest in corporate finance.

When I worked in criminal law I was heavily influenced by a female judge who I worked for and she would not let me forget how important it was to have female prosecutors and female judges. I guess you could say I really cut my teeth working as a federal prosecutor and getting to know different government agencies. The women I worked with were truly at the vanguard of the revolution in criminal prosecution and we remain good friends even to this day.

As far as the political arena is concerned, particularly when it comes to the state of Connecticut, I was astonished to learn that there were more women in the Connecticut state legislature in the year 2000 than there were in 2016. That all changed in 2018, because I think there exists a major fundamental difference in state politics versus federal politics.

Continued on next page ...

Above: Maria Horn speaking at the 2019 Progressive Press Conference. Photo courtesy of Maria Horn.

**Have you noticed a significant difference in bipartisanship in local politics given the national divide that seems to pervade the current overall atmosphere? What are some of the aspects currently taking place in CT that are helping to foster that bipartisanship?**

MH: I'm still only a freshman, but I feel the divide in Washington doesn't necessarily reflect the same attitudes at the local level. There still exists an encouraging amount of bipartisanship in the legislature and that cultivates further diversity in politics. In 2019, 69% of legislative votes were overwhelmingly bipartisan in Connecticut. Many of the processes that make state legislature function are driven by tradition, fortunately in our area, tradition means community and a healthy respect for those around you.

Currently, the state budget is having perhaps the most impact on our two-year cycle, which is broken down into long and short sessions. Despite being a part-time legislature, my colleagues and I sit for five months in the first year and three months in year two. During the long session essentially anything is possible when it comes to passing legislation. Our short session specifically addresses the budget because it deals mostly in state revenues and expenditures. The budget itself is very quantitative, extensive, and must be as comprehensive as possible to properly serve voters. When you cut a lot of state employees like CT has over the last decade, you wind up with a lot of overtime in these necessary fields. Sometimes revenues are in surplus, so budget adjustments are fundamental to state execution.

During the short session – despite the budget passed last year – representatives are only supposed to propose bills that are fiscal in nature. As a vice-chair of appropriations there

plenty of days where I feel more like a body and not a brain. I am persistent however in my pursuit to follow through with committee chairs and fellow legislators in regard to bills that I have been advocating for since I began my campaign.

**What are some of the pursuits you find to absolutely critical to the overall health of the State of Connecticut?**

MH: Since 2008, CT has cut 16,000 jobs and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has been one of those agencies most affected by this. We must be aware of the legislative obligations placed on organizations that are so critically understaffed. State tolling has been another very passionate issue raised by Connecticut voters recently. Firstly, it's important to rebuild voter trust when it comes to tolls because when you're talking about fees state-wide people want to know that their money and resources are going toward something substantive. There has been a somewhat visceral opposition when it comes to tolling and I can understand both perspectives. Infrastructure is so important to the state of Connecticut, our obligation is to come together and decide whether this should be paid for by taxpayers or shared with people who pass through our state.

A critical aspect to my campaign, and an issue that I am deeply invested in is the current state of our solid waste distribution. We currently have 50 towns that utilize Materials Innovation Recovery Association (MIRA), a burn facility outside of Hartford. This facility is currently on the verge of collapse and would require somewhere around a \$350 million investment to upgrade. On top of the financial commitment it requires, there are environmental justice issues associated with the facility itself. Today, local households pay \$85 dollars in fees and those will rise to \$145 if we make this investment and most of us don't want to go out of state or use landfills.



Above: Maria Horn recently spoke at Noble Horizons in Salisbury, CT, about her initiatives in the 64th District. Photo courtesy of Maria Horn.

When voters hear about investing in more sustainable resources they sometimes tend to associate these initiatives with higher taxes or fees, and think that perhaps the state is simply looking to draw a profit. The point of new initiatives, like Connecticut's recent ban on plastic bags, is to change behavior more than generate government profits. We need to do better collectively in terms of how we actually recycle.

**As someone at the forefront of local politics, a leader and a woman, can you say with certainty that our political structure is trending toward a more equitable approach?**

MH: Human behavior, from my perspective, is trending in a positive direction and our local legislature is truly invested in the best interests of constituents. Even if we totally disagree on policy, the heart of Connecticut's resident interests remains. Relationships must be built, moreover they must be decided to be built. I can see the national mood beginning to factor in a little bit more, but it remains up to those of us who consider themselves moderate compromisers to maintain a working bipartisan relationship.

I love having friendly conversations with people who disagree. Everything takes work – but you

must work at it. Put yourself out there and make yourself uncomfortable.

I purposefully chose the last democratic office in the legislature so the people who surround me are Republicans in order to build that connection with the people who may disagree. It is essential that representatives choose to work through things that are hard and participate in proactive discourse without demonizing people.

You can listen to people and hear what they say without sacrificing your principles. Maybe you won't agree with anything, but relationships are the foundation of democracy. •

*To learn more about Representative Maria Horn or to speak with her, you can reach her at Legislative Office Building, Room 4000, Hartford, CT, by calling (800) 842-8267 or (860) 240-8585, or by emailing her at [Maria.Horn@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Maria.Horn@cga.ct.gov).*



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# The Minister of Music

## THE SALISBURY SINFONIETTA

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

When conductor Jack Bowman settled in Salisbury, CT, it was a moment of inflection in his already colorful career. Classically trained as a performer and conductor at Ohio Wesleyan University and the University of Michigan, he had dedicated his career to the academic pursuits of music.

After spending several years as the Dean of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Minnesota campus in Duluth, Jack was drawn to Turkey, where a professional acquaintance had made a standing offer for Jack to take up residence in Istanbul at any time.

There had been a change in presidency at the University, and the entire cohort of deans across the Minnesota's campuses was expected to step down, which left Jack with a moment in his life where pursuing music and music education could take him to the other side of the world.

"It was a tremendous time," he offers. "I was asked to set up a 'western-style music conservatory' at Maltepe University in Istanbul, taught four days a week, then spent weekends exploring the great cities of Europe."

It was when the political climate in Turkey and Syria began to deteriorate that Jack Bowman decided to return to the United States and, having stepped away from the domestic academic track, relied

on his expertise as a musician and conductor to find a suitable place to land. "I was drawn to Salisbury and the opportunity to work in a local church with great resources and resident talent."

And so, as he became the Minister of Music and organist at Salisbury Congregational Church, a nascent idea began to blossom. Talented musicians – both instrumentalists and vocalists – were close by in the corridor from New York City to Boston. Why not create a chamber orchestra of professional musicians with great skills and excellent resumés, combine that group with a core of trained vocalists and introduce world class music to the Litchfield Hills, the Berkshires the Hudson Valley ... and beyond?

### Salisbury Sinfonietta

The network of connections that Jack had established and nurtured over his years in academia lit up when invitations went out to become part of this exciting cultural venture. Friends told friends. Musicians performing in groups as impressive as the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic shared the opportunity with their orchestra mates.

By word of mouth, the network of interested musicians grew and thrived. There were considerations, of course. Proximity to the North-western Connecticut was a plus,



Above: Salisbury Sinfonietta and Festival Chorus Asylum Hill Congregational Church Hartford. Below, left: Executive director Robert C. Kelly and founder and artistic director Jack Bowman. All images in this article courtesy of Jack Bowman.

as was the ability to be part of Salisbury Sinfonietta rehearsals and performances while still maintaining a professional career.

When Robert Kelly joined the Salisbury Sinfonietta, it was as a skilled timpanist. His career includes appearances with The Leipzig Philharmonic, Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Munich Chamber Orchestra, and Jordi Savall & le Concert des Nations. He quickly became fascinated with the idea of this chamber orchestra that seemed "feels like family."

The infectious nature of being part of the Salisbury Sinfonietta led him to become more and more involved in the intricate process of balancing the creative side so fully embodied in Jack Bowman with the organization and management requirements of managing personnel, venues, dates, marketing, and the myriad details of putting on concerts. As executive director, Rob continues to lend his talents to the orchestra while pursuing the essential management functions.

Continued on next page ...





Above: The Salisbury Sinfonietta. Below, right: Salisbury Sinfonietta and Festival Chorus Salisbury Congregational Church.

**International reach**

Jack Bowman's international connections continue to bring surprising talent to performances by the Salisbury Sinfonietta and the Festival Chorus. He has conducted with the National Ballet of Russia, in Paris and a dozen other countries. When, in casual conversation with an old friend, Bowman inquired as to the performance schedule of the Paris Sinfonietta, they shared mutual amazement when Haydn's *Creation* appeared on both schedules.

"Why don't you bring your people to Connecticut and sing with us?" Jack offered, half in jest. Dominique Fanal, director of the Paris Sinfonietta shared with his performers the invitation that seemed a bit of whimsy. It turned out to be a significant international feat. Fifty members of the French group journeyed, on their own account, to be part of the Connecticut performance under the direction of Jack Bowman. Over a dozen of the local group returned the compliment and journeyed to Paris for the second set of concerts.

"The one challenge we had was that Dominique's chorus sang the lyrics in German while we presented the piece in English." Bowman smiles gently as he recalls the pleasantly negotiated settlement. "So we divided up the eight choruses – 1, 3, 5 and 7 were sung in English. 2, 4, 6 and 8 were sung in German." Since the original libretto for *Creation* was inspired by both the books of *Genesis* and Psalms from

the Bible as well as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a fusion seemed only natural.

Response to the combined orchestra and chorus was so strong that in addition to a performance in Salisbury, the group journeyed to New York City for a second presentation of the Haydn piece.

**The Passion According to St. John**

Among the great works for orchestra and chorus are the *Passions* of J.S. Bach. Both the *St. Matthew Passion* and the *St. John Passion* have been widely performed with orchestra and chorus around the world. On April 26 in the United Church of Christ Congregational in Norfolk, CT, at 3:00pm, Jack Bowman and the Salisbury Sinfonietta will present the entire piece with guests from the Sinfonietta de Paris, Dominique Fanal, director and the Marc-Antoine Charpentier Choir under the direction of Jean Martin.

"It's a truly incredible piece,"

asserts Bowman, "and with the addition of the wonderfully talented musicians from France, the performance should be magical."

The magic continues when the prospective audience realizes that through the gracious funding of a congregational fund, the performance is free. The church is located at 12 Village Green in Norfolk.

**Happy Birthday Ludwig**

The musical world is commemorating the 250th anniversary of the birth of Ludwig von Beethoven with concert programs in every major musical venue. The Salisbury Sinfonietta plans had been focused on a presentation of Beethoven's *Ninth (choral) Symphony* – the composer's final complete symphony, often heralded as his greatest work, in the hallowed walls of Carnegie Hall. Although scheduling conflicts have forced a delay in that performance, both Bowman and Kelly are committed to bringing the majestic work to an eager audience and to capitalize on a Carnegie Hall performance. "Stay tuned is all we can say at this time," offered Kelly who is focused on bringing the elegant performances of Salisbury Sinfonietta to the widest audience possible. •

*For more information about the Salisbury Sinfonietta, the performance of "The Passion According to St. John" in Norfolk and any future performances, visit their website at [salburysinfonietta.org](http://salburysinfonietta.org).*



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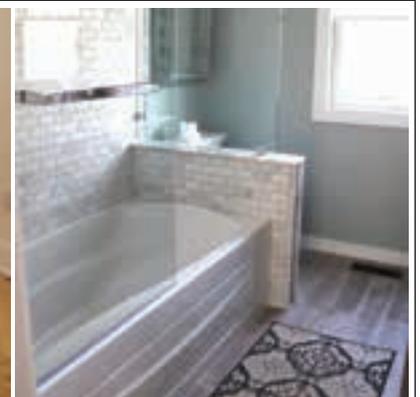
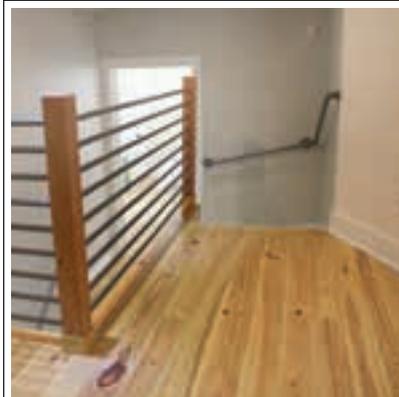
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Ryan Cooper's love for the natural landscapes of the Northwest Corner developed when he first moved to Salisbury, CT, at nine years old. "From that point on, I assisted my father with the grounds maintenance at a private estate property and fell in love with being outdoors and everything involved with keeping properties looking their best. At the age of 16, I purchased my first pieces of equipment and founded TriState Landscaping in 2002." Four years ago Ryan rebranded his company to reflect the growth and renaming it TriState Landscaping and Property Management, LLC. Today, Ryan provides landscaping maintenance and construction, lawn care, excavation, property and snow management for both residential and commercial properties, bringing knowledge and experience to each property in the towns of Northwest CT and Dutchess County, NY. Ryan says that outside of starting a project and seeing it transform for each of the clients he serves, one of the most rewarding parts of his job is simply being a part of our wonderful local area and its many evolving communities. "As our beautiful area continues to not be such a secret, I see the need for the services I offer to be a valuable asset to each property. Construction is happening everywhere and the need to keep up on existing properties as well as new construction won't be changing anytime soon."



### Peerless Since 1945, Inc.

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For the past 75 years, Peerless Since 1945 has provided some of the highest quality tree care and pest control services throughout the Berkshires, Northwest CT, and parts of Dutchess and Columbia County in NY. Founder William Koneazny held one of the first Arborist licenses in Connecticut, making Peerless the oldest tree care company in the area. Today, Peerless remains a family run business, now owned by Jim Koneazny, son of William. While celebrating its 75th year in business, the folks at Peerless continue to expand their extensive list of services by including tree care, planting, fruit tree pruning, fertilization, tick control along with other insects such as the Japanese Beetle, Grub and Emerald Ash Borer. Despite its long established history of quality and trust with area residents, Peerless remains resolute in being the absolute best in the business and takes immense pride in the work they do and consistency in the level of service they provide. Peerless has bolstered its skilled roster by adding licensed Arborists, Horticulturists, and Turf Specialists all with extensive knowledge of tree care, planting, fruit production, and other green industry-related information. They have extended a helping hand to homeowners and their lawns, offering mechanical core aeration and dethatching services to help alleviate soil compaction and heavy thatch build-up, helping to rid lawns of unwanted weeds while allowing air and nutrients to reach the entire root zone, which helps turf grass better compete for space.



### Santora Brothers, LLC.

Masonry, excavating, contracting, and landscape design. (203) 536-0808. [santorapaul@yahoo.com](mailto:santorapaul@yahoo.com)

What began as a small mason company over 70 years ago after the end of World War II, has since expanded into one of the most reliable family-owned businesses in the greater Hudson Valley and Connecticut. Following in his father's footsteps and in collaboration with his brother, owner Paul Santora is moving up the Hudson River corridor while improving homes as far as Greenwich, CT. Santora Brothers, LLC. provides a variety of different types of mason work including stone, brick, concrete, and landscape design. Though his roots have firmly been established in Westchester County, his two decades working in Columbia and Dutchess counties has given locals a chance to experience Paul's friendly nature and for Paul to fall in love with the character of the upper Hudson Valley. As a result, Santora Brothers' unmatched reputation for quality work and personalized customer service has spread into our region. "Apart from making and keeping my customers happy, I enjoy being identified as something of an artist for the work I do," Paul says of the feeling of accomplishment he gets from a completed project. "After I build a stone fireplace for example, the combination of happiness the finished product brings the customer and feeling as if I have crafted a practiced piece of artistic expression is what brings me the most satisfaction."

## INSURING YOUR WORLD

First-time home buyers, please beware of the pitfalls of buying a home, farm, or business property and having to deal with possible pollutants in or around your new property. My column generally addresses how a policy impacts covering your possessions in a positive fashion, yet when dealing with environmental issues 99% of policies exclude anything related to pollutants. Let's start with asbestos-wrapped heating pipes, insulation within walls, or siding. Your building insurance will not pay to have these items removed: you must hire a qualified contractor to do so with the appropriate insurances that do cover liabilities associated with the removal. Buried oil tanks on the property? In order to get them out, you will need a qualified contractor that can remove and dispose of the tanks as well as remove the old oil or kerosene in the tanks. Make sure you have a certificate that shows in writing that the contractor has pollution coverage as part of their general liability policy should they rupture the tank and spill the contents. If you are purchasing a farm, is/was there an old farm dump? Have it checked by NYSDEC to see what should be done about getting the dump removed. And lastly, if purchasing a commercial rental building, make sure that there is no lead paint. If there is, it needs to be removed by a qualified and insured contractor endorsed by the NYSDEC. Make sure that all paperwork surrounding the contractor's insurance is in hand and validated prior to any work beginning.



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## THE BENEFITS OF SOIL REMEDIATION AT HOME

As industrial activity increases alongside the rise of mechanized agriculture so too does the pollution of our natural soil caused by the presence of man-made chemicals. While the largest effects come on behalf of large-scale agricultural corporations, we all have the potential of contributing to this toxic cycle when we improperly dispose of our waste. On a larger scale, soil pollution comes as a result of the dumping or leaching of harmful chemicals into the soil via the use of pesticides and heavy metals. The storage of underground tanks can potentially lead to dangerous leaks and the hazardous waste produced by landfills has been an environmental issue for decades. In addition to the harmful effects on the environment, soil pollution can have a hazardous effect on human health as well. Threats to our individual health as well as the water we drink remain imminent threats as long as large-scale soil pollution practices persist. Despite the scale of this environmental issue, there are several habits you can change from home that can help contribute to the overall health of our soil – namely soil remediation. The process of home soil remediation includes recycling home waste, excluding meat, and, of course, composting which adds critical nutrients to the soil. Soil remediation on an individual level helps to alleviate household waste in dumps and landfills preventing the possibility of harmful leaching. Every proactive step taken, no matter how seemingly small, helps improve the environment that surrounds the communities we call home.



Gino Robustelli  
Beekeeper and owner of  
Uncle Gee's Bees  
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## Your Water System

As the winter draws to a close and you begin the process of getting your home ready for the spring/summer, it is a good time to think about maintenance on your water system. Often forgotten and taken for granted, a failure of your system can have a significant impact on your daily life. Annual servicing can help to identify any issues and allow for correction before any expensive repairs are required. You should ask yourself:

- When was the last time I had my water tested for bacteria and minerals?
- When was the last time a technician looked at my system?
- Have I noticed anything out of the ordinary such as pressure loss, intermittent water outages or anything unusual?
- Do I know anything about my well and water system? Things like depth of well, well yield, pump size and setting depth? All this information can be very helpful.
- Do I know where on my property the well is located? Is it accessible?
- Do I have conditioning or filtration units and when was the last time they were serviced?
- Do I know who to call if I have any issues with my system?

Often catastrophic failures are preceded by more subtle indication of potential problems. A little preventative maintenance and early action can save money and reduce the stress and inconvenience of dealing with a home without running water. There are also times when water systems fail without any warning, so give your nationally certified and licensed water well technicians a call. They can help with both preventative and emergency water system needs. Water systems are generally very reliable and provide many years of trouble-free service. Please take the time to understand and maintain yours.



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## Creating an outdoor living space

When spring approaches, many homeowners feel the need for an outdoor space to enjoy the warmer weather and the beauty of the landscape surrounding them. If this sounds like you, you're in luck. Fortunately, there are a handful of simple steps you can take when creating the ideal outdoor area that is comfortable and functional, as well as complimentary to the natural environment.

Depending on the extent of space you have to work with, this living space could be a basic seating area with a small patio, or a large-scale patio with all of the amenities for entertaining. These could include, and are not limited to, a fire pit for stories and s'mores, an outdoor kitchen to gather family and enjoy food, various complementary plantings, the right lighting, and an outdoor water feature. While this may seem like an imposition on the land, it is vital to keep in mind that there are many natural products that should be used to attain this set-up.

For example, a great way to compliment nature is to use organic material for the structural components of your patio. Bluestone is great for the patio itself, and fieldstone can be used for any retaining walls. To add to the effect, various native plants should be added around this space, blending the area into the existing landscape.

These outdoor living spaces will add not only beauty and function to your lifestyle, but value to your home.

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