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MAGAZINE





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Before

After



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WHAT'S A NEW NORMAL?

At the time of this writing, it is the third week in May, and things across our region are beginning to open. Phase 1 is being put in effect just this week. I so sincerely hope that by the time that you read this that we are all healthy and have been successful in re-opening. I know that many of our friends and fellow businesses, although extremely concerned for everyone's health and safety, have been longing to open up again to serve their customers. Our local businesses have been under a great deal of pressure since this all happened, and some are sadly in dire financial straits. With that said, I personally hope that the re-opening goes well and will be the savior of all of our local businesses who have been struggling for the past few months due to the pandemic.

We are optimists here at Main Street, and so we have been sending positive vibes out into the universe while giving the greatest of thanks to all of the essential workers. We have been doing our part, too: social distancing, staying home, and trying to help all of our neighbors. So when it came time to work on our June issue, I dropped the theme that we had planned earlier this year and instead we blanketed this June issue with stories of perseverance. I hope our cover makes that pretty clear! We're not going to let this pandemic get us down, life has given us lemons and so what else can we do but chop the crap out of them and make a ton of lemonade?!

But symbolism and joking aside, we have absolutely loved learning about- and sharing with our readers many of the amazing stories that have come out of this time. Stories about how communities have come together. Stories of how neighbors have helped neighbors. Stories of how businesses and organizations have banded together and gone above and beyond. And to me, that should be the biggest take-away for all of us after this pandemic. We are all connected, and we see that now more than ever. There was an immediate global chain reaction, and it affected every-single-one-of-us! So if you don't think that your neighbors' wellbeing affects you, this global pandemic should have changed your mind about that. So in the theme of making lemonade from lemons, what can we take from this? How can we grown and learn as a human race? What can we do better? And how can we all move forward in a better way once some form or "normalcy" returns to our lives? I implore you to look deep, and see what truly matters in life, and let's build a new normal based on those important things. #initttogether

— Thorunn Kristjansdottir



JUNE 2020

When life (and COVID-19) give you lemons you CHOP the crap out of them and make A LOT of lemonade! Have some lemons, Corona. #initttogether

Cover photo by Olivia Valentine

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PRINT, LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, & INSURANCE

Printed by **Snyder Printer, Inc.** • Legally represented by **Davis & Trotta Law Offices**

Accounting services by **Pattison, Koskey, Howe & Bucci CPAS** • Insured by **Kneller Insurance Agency**

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Renaissance man with a camera Florin Firimita



By *CB Wismar*
info@mainstreetmag.com

We live in a strange time – a moment when some of our trusted norms and traditions seem to evaporate with the slide of a “mouse” or the flick across a phone screen. Word processing allowed everyone to become a writer – no more laboring with pens, pads, typewriters and carbon paper. Finish the screed and hit “send.”

And, as for photography, the notion of lugging around the family Pentax and a tripod or hiring the local wedding photographer to memorialize the family reunion has evaporated with three lens iPhones that easily link to the internet and the printer in the family room.

Back in the day (a wonderful phrase that embodies nostalgia seasoned with a touch of lament) photography was something very special. The photo journalists who

braved wars and fires and hurricanes and late-night accidents brought the challenges of life to newspapers and magazines. Raising the flag over Iwo Jima. The Hindenburg in flames. A picture told a thousand words.

When Edward Steichen, F. Holland Day and Alfred Stieglitz elevated photography to new levels with their carefully designed, often staged photographs, the reliable communication medium moved boldly into the world of art. There was journalism ... and there was art.

Debate ensued, with voices raised on both sides of the “is it craft or is it art?” argument. Florin Firimita, whose website is an engrossing art gallery of carefully staged images, has grown out of the tradition of photography as art and continues to be one of today’s widely hailed proponents.

On a stool in the darkroom

“I suppose I was five or six when I crawled up on a stool and learned from my father how to develop and print photographs,” recalls Firimita. Growing up in Bucharest, Romania, in the years following the

Soviet takeover of the country, life was not easy. “All of our property had been confiscated. My mother worked as a seamstress in a factory and my father, an amateur photographer who captured weddings and funerals populated with professional mourners, had to be very creative when finding film and paper and chemicals. We were not Party members. Things were very different ... very hard.”

Both of his parents died at young ages, leaving teenaged Florin alone and struggling as the Berlin Wall came down and Europe began to shudder with the social and political changes. “I became a refugee,” he recalls, recounting his journey with nothing more than a suitcase to a refugee camp in Rome, then off to New York and into Connecticut. “This was a ‘right to work’ state and I was able to get jobs that kept me alive and allowed me to learn English.”

A teacher at heart

From childhood, Firimita had wanted to be a teacher. “I went to college without having learned how to master English,” he remembers with a laugh. But, working in a stockroom for a grocer, he discovered a way to effectively learn the new language. Reading the ingredients and directions on packaged goods, he was able to piece together words and images and concepts.

Armed with a college degree in arts education, he ventured into the teaching ranks, first in elementary schools, then in a state-funded program that brought art education to high school students. “I loved it. We were able to put together study trips abroad for the students ... giving them the chance to experience the work and life of artists from Trinidad and Tobago to Paris.”

Now a teacher at Pomperaug High School in Southbury, the 90-mile a day commute from his northern Connecticut home gives Florin the chance to muse, reflect, imagine and unwind. The results are striking.

“Although I have been an artist and a writer across several media, the return to photography has brought back the satisfaction I felt as a child – not only taking the photograph, but watching it emerge from the chemical bath to be a work of art in itself.”

Sensuality and sensitivity

Pillars of the art photography movement in the United States include recognizable names like Ansel Adams whose natural landscape photography hangs in museums around the globe, and Robert Mapplethorpe whose nudes are widely collected, and Sally Mann whose portrait photography is dramatic

and arresting. Florin Firimita’s work engages all of those elements and brings them together in a series of images that may capture a moment, but only insofar as that moment is part of a rushing continuum.

“I don’t have the patience and the genius to walk the streets and wait for something to happen. Instead, I invent scenarios and bring them to life. I try to infuse my images with a sense of mystery.”

Individual works of art, volumes that collect an entire series of work as in the five-year project *The Bookstore*, which has gained wide recognition and explorations of mixed media that combine art photography with other visual elements ... they are all part of the Florin Firimita portfolio. He is a writer, an artist, a teacher, a photographer, and force to be recognized and applauded.

Paris calling

When the Rodin Museum in Paris invited Firimita to do a multi-day photography session in their rooms and grounds, he was both humbled and eager to explore the homes of Rodin and Camille Claudel, his muse and mistress. The resulting works both challenge and charm.

Paris has become something of a second home for Firimita. The celebrated GADCOLLECTION represents his work and regularly sells out editions of his art photography prints. “When I started out, the idea of getting \$100 for a print was amazing. All that has changed, and for that I’m very grateful.”

In some quarters, thanks to the emergence of camera phones and seemingly endless online contests, the debate lives on whether photography is art or craft. For Florin Firimita, there is no question. He is an elegant artist who happens to use a camera to capture his work.

Perhaps he can share the irony and edgy humor of no less an artistic titan than Pablo Picasso who offered this bit of sarcasm – “I have



discovered photography. Now I can kill myself. I have nothing else to learn.”

Florin Firimita not only lives on, but learns something every day, drawing from his experience and vivid imagination to share his art with a widening, appreciative audience. ●

Florin Firimita’s work can be seen on his website florinfirimita.com as well as on Gadcollection.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.

Opposite page, top to bottom, L-R: *The Silence (Charlotte)*, 2018. *The Promise (Megan)*, 2019. *Megan, Paris*, 2019. Florin Firimita, Paris. This page, above: *The Lovers*, 2018. All images courtesy of Florin Firimita.

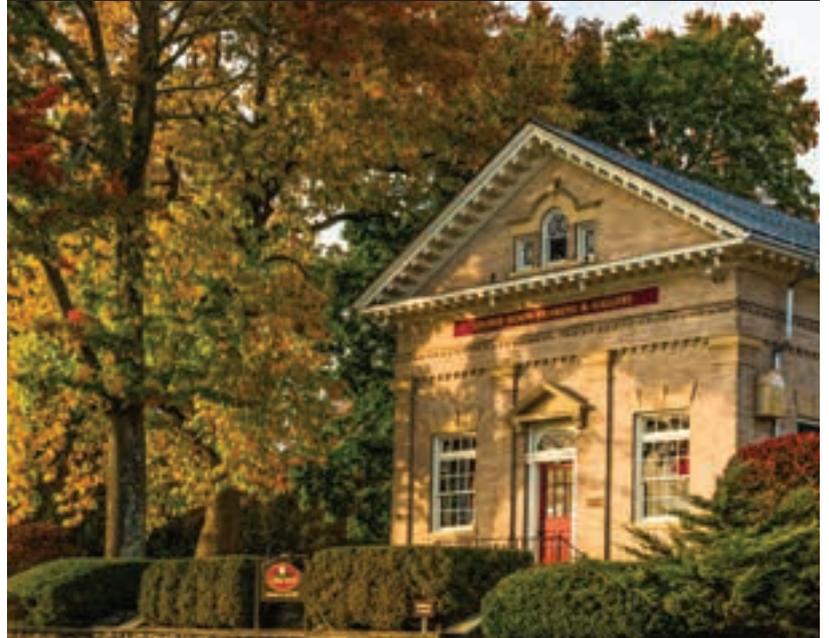
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Despite only having worked as a cashier behind the courtesy desk at the Hillsdale IGA in Hillsdale, NY, for seven months, Ancramdale, NY, native **Jennifer Oakley** has already felt the powerful sense of community her essential service provides. As well as the way her co-workers have responded to community needs. Jennifer says, "What I love most about my job is absolutely the people I work with." Outside of work, Jennifer enjoys spending time with her dog, and hanging out with her family. "I grew up in Ancramdale and my favorite thing about living in our area is how much space we have to do so many things." This summer Jennifer says she is looking forward to spending a lot of time outdoors, having barbecues, and hanging out with friends and family.



Clinton Corners and Stanfordville, NY, native **Matthew Zick** proves how rewarding community outreach can be when you dedicate your time to helping others. "I own a small lawn care and property maintenance business called Zick's & Stones and I am a member of the Pine Plains Town Board," Matthew says. "I feel a strong sense of civic duty to contribute to my community in a positive way. I'm also involved with the Pine Plains Lions Club where I organize an annual golf tournament to raise funds for scholarship programs for our local Stissing Mountain High School. Also, I volunteer with the Friends of Stissing Landmarks, which is the group that manages the Stissing Mountain Fire Tower and Trail. I'm very passionate about the local charity named Colton's XXXtraordinary Cause, which raises money and awareness around rare childhood diseases."



Hannah Gilpatric is a senior at Housatonic Valley Regional High School who, for a year now, has been working at LaBonne's in Salisbury, CT, four days a week. "I love the community in the area. We have local customers who are nice and always support us." While working has proven to be stressful during this uncertain time, Hannah recognizes the fact that work keeps her busy and allows her to help the local community. "I work not only for the money, but because I know the store needs as much help as possible." When Hannah isn't working at LaBonne's, she also cleans and does yard work. For fun, she enjoys working out and making art. Additionally, she truly appreciates the perks of the local region, including its natural beauty, and its rural characteristics. "What I love most about the area is that everyone knows each other."



Pamela Downs (left) began her career at Sharon Hospital in Sharon, CT, in 1981 as a nuclear medicine technologist and later became a computed tomography (CT) technologist. For the last 17 years, Downs has led magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) for the radiology department, a diagnostic exam that captures images of organs and structures inside the body using large magnets and radio waves. "Being a resource for education on MRI's is rewarding because I get to help ease patient fears and concerns so they have a positive experience," she said. A lover of the outdoors, she uses her free time to cycle, hike, paddle board, visit the beach, and spend time with her family.



Copake Rapid Care's Radiologic Technologist, **Lindsey Roberts**, has been serving her community for three years and counting. "I live and work in the same town, and I'm humbled to be able to directly help my community. I also like being a familiar face to some of my patients, which when seeking medical help can be comforting." Lindsey also says being an essential worker is equal parts rewarding and terrifying. Like Lindsey, her immediate family are also essential workers in the health care field and are very much looking forward to sitting down together for a family dinner. Until then, Lindsey enjoys being outside as much as she can, and walking with her dogs. She is also hopeful to travel down the east coast with her fiancé and eventually make it to Tennessee to see a close friend this summer. In the mean time Lindsey wants to remind everyone to wash your hands!



Molly Tanner, Director of Nursing at Noble Horizons, has cherished her relationships with seniors for her entire life. Molly says, "I was raised by my grandparents, so my love for that population was already there." Molly began her nursing career as a Certified Nursing Assistant, but after raising three children, she decided to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. Along the way, Molly accumulated expertise in staff education. It's this expertise that she brought to Noble Horizons and Molly saves her deepest gratitude for her team who work tirelessly to ensure the safety and health of Noble residents. "My coworkers are so dedicated and committed. Their acceptance of and attention to procedures is critical. We are all about putting our heads together to keep everyone safe," she acknowledges.



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SHARON HOSPITAL IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

Many of my friends have described their very positive recent experiences at Sharon Hospital in Sharon, CT, during these last difficult months. Their enthusiastic comments made me realize how fortunate we are to have a local health care facility in our rural area. It made me wonder how the hospital adjusted to this sudden emergency. What were the tough decisions? And what about those tents? Dr. Mark Hirko, who became head of the hospital only in December, generously agreed to take the time to answer some questions.

When did peak COVID-19 virus admissions occur at Sharon Hospital?

The first and second week of April was our peak, but we still maintain a COVID-19 census between three and twelve patients at any time, which is essentially where it was at its peak.

Thinking of the last few months, what are the biggest changes at the hospital caused by the COVID-19 virus?

The change in health care delivery overall has been the biggest change. The use of telemedicine for remote appointments appears to be something permanent. This is very likely to lead to a major shift in the traditional delivery of primary/ambulatory care and the doctor-patient relationship. Right now, virtual visits are crucial to keeping people connected with their physicians for primary and specialty care needs that are routine and proactive, preventative health measures. As a health system, we've quickly adapted and ramped up our virtual visit offerings. We've converted our outpatient ambulatory services into telemedicine for more than 80% of all visits – and this is in just the last six weeks.

Our inpatient census, normally 20 to 40 patients each week, is lower because Emergency Room visits are down compared to last year, and elective procedures and tests were suspended in the second week of March.

Our Emergency Room continues to provide necessary services for critical conditions like strokes, heart attacks, lacerations, and other emergencies. Everyone should be aware of symptoms that might indicate serious medical conditions and seek attention when needed – don't delay. When someone is admitted for emergency surgery, they will receive a rapid COVID-19 test using the Abbott machine; however, there are limited testing materials and reagents for this, so it is only used in critical emergency situations.

How did Sharon Hospital prepare for the virus?

Executive leadership at Nuvance Health began contingency planning in January to stay ahead of the curve as the outbreak was progressing overseas. Connecticut's surge planning required all hospitals to increase their bed capacity by 50% and develop proactive contingency plans. Being a community hospital, we maintained our nine licensed ICU/critical care beds and added six more by restructuring those available in our post-anesthesia care unit. Any patient that required long-term mechanical ventilation was transferred to one of our sister hospitals in Danbury, Norwalk, or Poughkeepsie.

What were the major problems Sharon Hospital faced?

Actually we did not face many significant problems. The Nuvance Health system has been meeting since January, setting up contingency planning in case this grew and progressed rapidly. The proactive measures we've taken from the start have made all the difference. This was done in parallel with our health system learning how to connect as a larger group and assimilate our operations across each hospital. For example we were able to centralize all PPE, staffing, and medical equipment through our emergency command structure to



Above: Some of Sharon Hospital's finest. The biggest of thank yous to nurses like these and all other essential workers. Photo courtesy of Sharon Hospital.

ensure everyone was readily prepared and establish fair distribution based on need. As a result, Sharon Hospital did not experience any lack of PPE or necessary equipment.

How many corona virus tests did the hospital conduct?

I don't have a specific number but it is in the hundreds. If you count outpatients, we are doing 30 to 40 tests a day. We have had many people come to the emergency department as outpatients, and based on their symptoms, they are referred to their primary care physician or to one of our collection sites to be tested. Sharon Hospital does not have an in-house polymerase chain reaction-based (PCR) testing apparatus to analyze patient samples for COVID-19. We send all nasal swabs completed at the hospital to off-site labs for analysis using this test, which detects the presence of the active COVID-19 virus to determine if someone is presently infected. Anyone who presents to the Emergency Room with symptoms that fit CDC guidelines for COVID-19 receives a nasal swab test, as do

Continued on next page ...

employees who show symptoms that could be indicative of COVID-19. These samples are then sent to state-approved private laboratories or one of our sister hospitals that have the capability to test them for COVID-19. Most of those who are tested go home because they do not require hospitalization.

What was the average stay at the hospital for COVID-19 patients?

Critically ill COVID patients have been transferred to Danbury Hospital, Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie, and Norwalk Hospital. These three hospitals are Level 2 Trauma centers with advanced instrumentation, intensive care units, and the sophisticated critical-care tools to treat severely ill patients.

Here at Sharon Hospital we mostly managed outpatient observation, and now our focus has shifted to offering care for patients who need a place to safely convalesce and recover.

Where do your patients come from?

Some cases we see are local to this area and neighboring towns, while others have been non-critically ill patients who have been stabilized at our sister hospitals and brought here to recover. We are all interchanging patients depending on what level of care we can offer. It's working very well and we are doing our part by accepting patients from other parts in the system who had no place else to go.

How many COVID suspected patients have come to the hospital?

Most days, we have between four and seven patients coming in who are evaluated and anywhere from two to three are positive. However, most of these patients go home because they do not require hospital care.

Has the tent actually been utilized for patients?

The site is under ownership of the State of Connecticut and the office of Governor Ned Lamont. It will only be used at the discretion of the Governor

in the event of a statewide surge in COVID-19 cases. It has not been determined what type of patients would receive care in the field hospital, but so far it has not been utilized.

Have any staff been infected?

As of May 11, 2020, no employees have been knowingly exposed to COVID-19 at Sharon Hospital. If you have symptoms such as fever, sore throat and a cough, you are not able to come to work until you return to good health. We are screening all staff and patients who come into the hospital every day to ensure a safe environment for all.

Are COVID-19 tests available now?

Testing nationwide is in a quandary. We have capacity for the traditional nasal swab tests at four testing sites within the health system. If we discuss rapid testing (Abbott test), our entire system has been allotted approximately 200 tests per week to be distributed across all seven hospitals. We would love to test everyone, including our employees, with this modality, but there are limitations to testing materials and reagents to this day, so we remain limited. At this time, we are currently validating the serology antibody test that can help determine the antibody status of patients who are known to be COVID-19 positive and could possibly donate blood plasma for convalescent therapy.

When will elective procedures restart at the hospital?

All Nuance Health Hospitals have stopped elective surgeries, procedures and outpatient services that are not essential system wide. They will begin again as instructed by the state.

Were any employees furloughed?

We experienced no shortage of staff here and have not suspended any employees. Physicians, nurses, and other personnel were cross-trained in specialty areas, such as intensive and emergency care, to enhance our work force. Our system developed a centralized pool of employees and we placed them based upon their skill set and patient needs in each location.



Above: A field hospital has been set up in Sharon Hospital's parking lot which is under the ownership of the State of Connecticut. Photo courtesy of Sharon Hospital.

Does the staff feel appreciated for their work and dedication?

On a weekly basis, we receive an outpouring of small acts of kindness from the immediate community and region at large. This has included donations of personal protective equipment, food, flowers, letters, and artwork. The staff members are very grateful for this generosity, and it has been an honor to serve alongside this team. My own experience leading the hospital during this time has been an exercise in trusting your team, forgetting about pride, asking for help, and remembering that every patient is a statistic of one. COVID-19 has brought unexpected challenges for everyone, but it's also presented an opportunity for our communities to come together and help one another.

What will be the impact of the virus going forward?

It's changed our society. Our social network, places of employment, and interactions, which are second nature, are now being redrawn to fit an environment where we are coexisting with COVID-19. As an inpatient facility, we are now looking at the extended forecast to prepare and develop work flows to limit the impact and spread of COVID-19 in the future. On the positive side, the silver lining, the virus has reinforced the ties and bonds all of us share with family and our homes.

What about the \$1 million challenge grant?

An anonymous donor from the region has offered to match up to \$1 million in philanthropic support for COVID-19 emergency preparedness efforts at Sharon Hospital. In other words, every donation will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, to help us enhance and invest in technology, supplies, equipment, to safely care for individuals affected by COVID-19 and to prepare for potential future health emergencies. Significant gifts like this strengthen our ability to advance patient care and meet the health care needs of this region. ●

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: Sharon Hospital is part of Nuance Health, a family of award-winning nonprofit hospitals in the Hudson Valley and western Connecticut – plus multiple primary and specialty care physician practice locations, including The Heart Center. In addition to Sharon Hospital, Nuance Health hospitals include Danbury Hospital, New Milford Hospital, and Norwalk Hospital in Connecticut; Northern Dutchess Hospital, Putnam Hospital, and Vassar Brothers Medical Center in New York. Dr. Mark Hirko was named president of Sharon Hospital in early December 2019. A board certified vascular surgeon, he has been a physician and health care leader for over 25 years.



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Photos by: Olivia Markonic

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YEASTED OVERNIGHT

Waffles

By Jessie Sheehan
 info@mainstreetmag.com

In my humble opinion, or as the youth might say, IMHO, there is truly nothing better for breakfast than overnight yeasted waffles. They are airy and light with a slight tang from the yeast and it is impossible to eat just one – or even two – and yes, I speak from experience. I personally don't even add maple syrup to mine, just a pad of salted butter that ideally gets all melty prior to my first bite.

Now don't get me wrong, I also love regular waffles – the kind you make on the morning of the day that you want to eat them, with a batter remarkably similar to the one you assemble when making pancakes (except waffle batter tends to have more fat than pancake batter, but I digress). Yeasted waffles, however, are truly in a class all their own. First, I love that you make the batter the night before you are craving waffles for breakfast, and if you use instant yeast, as my recipe recommends you do, the whole shebang is made in a single bowl and is thrown together in about three-and-a-half minutes. There is something so infinitely satisfying, at least for me, about waking up and seeing waffle batter just waiting for me on the kitchen island – I mean I don't even have to open the refrigerator door and pull it out. And I know that may make me sound a bit precious – that opening a refrigerator door first thing in the am is a bother, but just hear me out – I promise you it is nice to not have to do so.

Left out overnight is OK!

And a word about the batter on the counter (for those that are feeling anxious). I get it: the idea of a batter filled with yeast and milk and melted butter remaining at room temp for several hours, is kind of off-putting. All I can tell you is that I have always made my overnight waffles this way, as have loads of others, with no problems. And the flavor that the batter develops during this room temp rest is off-the-charts yum. But, if this makes you uncomfortable, by all means place the bowl in the fridge overnight. No judgment here.

Additionally, waffles freeze wonderfully, so feel free to place any leftovers in the freezer in a zippered plastic bag and then reheat in the toaster the day you are feeling waffle-y. Finally, if you have teenagers who sleep until 1:00pm, or you wake up early, but just aren't interested in eating waffles until several hours later, you CAN make the waffle batter the morning you want to eat them, as long as the batter sits for several hours (about 3 to 4) before you use it. And did I mention that a runny fried egg and a couple of slices of crispy bacon on top of one of these waffles makes for a splendid savory breakfast if you're not feeling syrup and butter? Well, it's true, just so you know.

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour
 3 tbsp granulated sugar
 1 tbsp instant yeast
 1 1/2 tsp fine sea salt
 3 cups whole milk room temp,
 or slightly warm
 3/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
 and cooled until just warm



3 large eggs
 A scant 1/2 tsp baking soda

Cooking spray or softened butter for the waffle maker

Maple syrup and salted butter for serving

The night before you want waffles for breakfast, combine the flour, sugar, yeast and salt in a large bowl and whisk to combine. Add the warm milk and butter and whisk again. Cover the bowl in plastic wrap and let sit on the counter overnight.

In the morning, the batter will have at least doubled in size and will look bubbly. Add the eggs and baking soda and whisk to combine. The batter will deflate. Don't be alarmed.

Prepare the waffle maker following the manufacturer's instructions. Use about 1/2 cup of batter per waffle and cook for about 5 minutes, until crispy and golden. Serve with syrup and pats of salted butter. •

Jessie is a baker and cookbook author; you can learn more about her through her website jessiesheehanbakes.com.



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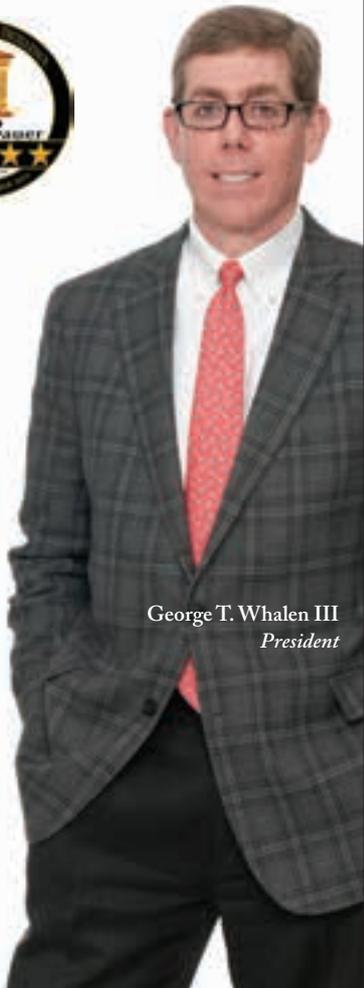
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COVID-19 IMPACT on residential real estate in our market

By Christine Bates
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As I write this article in mid May, restrictions on real estate agents in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut to physically show properties to potential buyers remain in force. Residents are still under distancing, masking and quarantine orders, busy village streets are empty, bars are closed, groceries are delivered. Everyone is wondering how long this will last and what the impact on our economy and the real estate market will be. Like COVID-19 test results, figuring out what is happening right now in the national and local real estate markets – or what the future holds – is at best thoughtful guesswork.

Will the viral economic storm affect national real estate prices?

Consider the grim economic news. Economists surveyed by the National Association for Business Economics expect a short, deep recession with the economy shrinking 26.5% in the second quarter with a turn-around in the last half of the year. Others, like the International Monetary Fund, expect the worst recession since the Great Depression. Stock market indexes, historically, a leading indicator of economic activity, hit bottom on March 23 and have bounced up and down, although still well below the high in February.

More than twice as many Americans lost their jobs in April alone than in two years during the Great Recession. The national unemployment rate in May is expected to reach 25% – a rate not seen since the Great Depression.

Consumer spending in March plunged 7.5%, the largest one-month decline since the government started tracking this measure in 1959. April's

decline won't be released until the end of May but is expected to be even worse. Consumer confidence has tumbled to its lowest level in six years.

An estimated one third of apartment renters didn't pay their rent the first week in April. Staples has informed its landlords it will not be paying rent in April even though stores

remain open. Other big retailers, like H&M are also refusing to pay rent. Many large businesses are discovering that working remotely saves money and intend to permanently shift at least part of their work force to home offices. Commercial real estate will clearly suffer short and long term as a result of COVID-19.

Nationally most real estate professionals are optimistic – as usual

Most frequently quoted real estate executives regard the COVID-19 response as very different from the financial crisis of 2008-2009, which was created, in part, by sub-prime lending. Right now there is no over supply of housing like a decade ago. There is actually a housing shortage, an imbalance of houses available for sale and great demand from buyers, especially in the low and mispriced market.

Vacancy rates across the country are at a 35-year low and falling. In contrast to 2007/2008, homeowners' equity is much healthier and housing prices aren't overvalued in general. The housing market nationally was strong as COVID-19 arrived with rising median home prices.



Above: 85 Sugar Hill Road in Salisbury, CT, was on the market for several years and sold in May for \$3,750,000. Photo courtesy of Elyse Harney Real Estate.

This optimism about recovery from lock down is based in part by government policies. The Federal Reserve Bank is expected to maintain near zero interest rates through 2021. This means attractive low mortgage rates, which should support real estate values. The government's offer of extended repayment options for homeowners with federally backed mortgages should minimize the domino effect that foreclosures can have on home values. The Cares Act applies specifically to the roughly 75% of all mortgages in America that are backed by Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, or other government agencies.

But there are also more cautious observers who offer a dose of reality. They ask if large national real estate firms like Compass and Realogy are cutting executive pay and furloughing employees, should we really expect a quick bounce back? These pessimists feel that both buyers and sellers will remain cautious for a while.

Continued on next page ...

In early April members of the National Association of Realtors said buyers were delaying home purchases for a few months and new listings on Zillow were down 40% from last year, reflecting the hesitancy of sellers to put their homes on the market. Zillow, which is forecasting a 4.9% decrease in US GDP in 2020 with a 5.7% increase in 2021, predicts that nationally home prices will fall 2% through the end of the year.

Realtor.com's latest forecast predicts that home sales will fall by as much as 15% by year end after a rebound in July. While real estate markets nationally may return to normal activity in the last half of the year as restrictions are gradually lifted, the hardest hit regions like New York and Connecticut may recover more slowly because of high unemployment and limitations on movement. This is especially true in New York City where real estate was already slow going into the spring season with record inventory and Manhattan prices falling for a third year in a row.

BUT "Never been so crazy busy"

Despite limitations on showing and even photographing houses, residential sales activity in just the first week of May saw five closings in the town of Salisbury compared to last year when there were seven in the entire month! Most agents in Connecticut and New York report that they have never been so busy fielding calls from buyers and sellers. Buyers who were on the fence before have suddenly become serious. New buyers have

appeared. Short-term and summer rentals have already been taken and increasingly, those who want to rent to get out of the city for a while are realizing they may have to commit to a year round lease.

The COVID-19 situation, like 9/11, combined with today's technology has brought increased interest in our local markets. The pandemic has accelerated the working remotely, working from home trend. Before this pandemic started, less than 4% of all Americans worked full-time from home. Now that figure has jumped to half of all employed workers, reaching 70% for those with desk jobs. Many companies, like Goggle, have already informed staff that they'll be home through Christmas. This is not a short-term phenomenon and urbanites are now seeking homes with more breathing space.

Working from home means a greater need for larger living spaces with flexible rooms to use as office space. We're doing everything from home now – schooling our children, exercising, cooking and working. The Millennial generation, after grazing on airbnb weekends, is finally searching for a permanent home. The country, two hours from New York City, seems like a very sensible idea. The desire to buy a ready-to-move-in home with no renovations has only grown stronger for two reasons. Buyers want to move in now and contractors are less available to do work

The brake on sales is low inventory of homes for sale in our region. In the corners of our four county, three state,



Above: Listed for only 31 days, this house on Rocky Lane in Salisbury, CT, sold for \$659,000 in May – close to its listing price of \$675,000. Photo courtesy of John Harney of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty.

real estate market there was no March or April rush to put houses on the market for spring selling season.

Three years of market activity in Salisbury, Sharon, and Kent in CT as a representative sample, demonstrates this trend. New listings in March and April in 2020 and end-April inventory are all 25% below 2018 levels. This year the buying season may shift from spring to fall as sellers decide what to do.

In response to the lock down, virtual showings and contactless sales are occurring. One high-end realtor said she has three closings scheduled in the next month and she has never met the buyers. Technology, not just the virus, is transforming the real estate industry.

The biggest wildcard is the unknown of how long it will take to control the spread of the virus and what the responses will be. In a way, uncertainty about what the future holds is actually positive in the long-term for our market. New buyers are flocking to our market. How long will social distancing and working from home last? What will be the long-term effect of today's unemployment rates? No one knows, but this seems a very good place to live. ●

Christine Bates is a real estate agent with William Pitt Sotheby's International in Salisbury, CT. She is one of Main Street's founding writers and has delved into real estate topics since Main Street's first issue.

NEW LISTINGS AND RESIDENTIAL INVENTORY

MARCH & APRIL 2018 TO 2020 IN SALISBURY, SHARON & KENT IN CONNECTICUT*

	New listings March & April	End of April inventory
2020	47	137
2019	54	180
2018	60	177

*Data from Connecticut MLS

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LaBonne's: Your hometown market

By Ian Strever
info@mainstreetmag.com

These days, there are some places you just don't want to go, and then there are places you just shouldn't go. In his recent interview with the master of macabre, Stephen King, *The New York Times*' David Marchese went to the latter.

He challenged the horror writer with an all-too-real scenario: you're a germaphobe, stuck at home during the current crisis, and you're running out of food and unable to get a slot in online ordering. What do you do?

King leisurely considered the options, finally settling on his house as the best option. It's Lysol-ed, and he's been fastidious about washing his hands and keeping clean. But he's just "so, so hungry. What am I going to do for food?" Then he looks around, and he says to his dog: "Fido. Come here, Fido."

Sick, yes. But the point isn't simple horror. King's ability to mine our psyche for our greatest anxieties is at the core of what has made him so successful. What, indeed, would you do if you ran out of food these days?

Right, right. We shouldn't go there. Fortunately, we don't have to, because throughout this pandemic,

we have been served by an armada of small, local grocery stores that have dramatically adjusted their operations to meet the needs of the communities they serve. Without them, Fido's days would be numbered.

Providing essential services

All grocery stores have provided essential services throughout the pandemic, but our local independent grocers have made swift alterations to their business to address the needs of the communities they serve. Case in point: LaBonne's Market in Salisbury, CT.

Since this era began, I've shopped at grocery stores in four states, and LaBonne's is the only one that has taken my temperature before allowing me in the store. I appreciate the extra measure of caution, and so do the residents (and temporary residents) of Salisbury. With one of the highest median ages of any town in Connecticut (55.1) and an influx of second-home owners from New York City, the concern about infection is great, and LaBonne's sensitivity to this situation makes it the market of choice for many residents.



It's easy to forget that LaBonne's exists, sequestered as it is in a modest building off of Main Street in Salisbury. No garish signs proclaim its location, apropos of its Norman Rockwell setting, yet it is renown among local gourmets and Appalachian Trail thru-hikers in search of fine food and groceries.

Business surged 300%

In the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis, however, LaBonne's customers were more concerned with finding even generic versions of products such as toilet paper and bleach. At that time, LaBonne's business surged 300% according to owner/manager Bob LaBonne – an unmanageable deluge of purchasing for any grocer, but one that, as it turned out, was easier for small chains like theirs to manage than larger corporations such as Big Y and Stop & Shop.

After the initial wave of stockpiling abated, stores with greater flexibility and autonomy in their

Above: LaBonne's unassuming exterior is in keeping with Salisbury's picturesque Main Street. Below, left: LaBonne's was an early adopter of infrared scanning to take the temperatures of patrons before they enter the store.



Continued on next page ...

supply chains were able to tap into multiple suppliers for off-brand staples. So while you couldn't get your hands on Clorox or Charmin, you could get 101 Bleach and Cascades Select Pro toilet paper, products available through the commercial cleaning industry that were not being used to restock the vast number of shuttered offices and stores.

That kind of creativity and innovation comes with running a small business, and LaBonne credits the Entrepreneurs' Organization of Connecticut with connecting him to other business leaders around the state to share ideas and solutions for these and much less daunting problems.

Three priorities

Those ideas, however, feed a much more intense and personal flame in LaBonne, himself. From the outset, he has maintained three priorities, in order: keep his employees and families safe, protect his customers, and look out for the store and profits. These concerns have oriented LaBonne's decisions, dictating the safety measures he has implemented in Salisbury. On March 27, just a week or two into the shutdown, LaBonne placed an order for infrared thermometers to assess every customer entering the store, long before the time when far less stringent measures would



be recommended by government officials. He installed curtain-style barriers at the deli and meat counters to allow continued service in those two popular departments, and most importantly, he listened to his employees. They appreciated the partitions at the check-out lines, but were concerned about infection from customers standing behind them. LaBonne's response was to hang clear shower curtains to protect his cashiers, one of several safety measures that he personally installed.

As a former heart-attack victim whose wife works in Charlotte Hungerford Hospital's Intensive Care Unit, LaBonne is intimately attuned to the stressors of front-line essential workers, and the wellspring of his leadership is his empathy. Among his financially questionable decisions are a two-dollar-an-hour raise for all associates, a ten-percent increase in the employee discount (to 30%), and his move to temporarily close the store on Sundays to the tune of \$150,000 in lost revenue each week.

The human gains

Against that ledger, however, he reckons the human gains in employee satisfaction and safety. In Salisbury, much of that workforce consists of high school students and recent graduates, many of whom



apply based on the word-of-mouth of their peers. It's not just that they want jobs, but they want jobs where they are respected. Couple that respect with the service LaBonne's provides for the community, and all of the financial losses incurred by the grocer dissolve in the spiritual sense, yes, but even in the financial sense. LaBonne's customers have continued to patronize their market throughout the pandemic, offsetting any losses with an eighty percent increase through May of 2020. The surge in shopping required additional on-site storage, and LaBonne worked in concert with First Selectman Curtiss Rand to waive zoning regulations and bring in a refrigerated unit for the purpose.

Another gesture of the town's appreciation for the store was the GoFundMe page that LaBonne's patrons created. It raised \$8,000 to provide a bonus to all sixty employees of the store, eclipsing their \$5,000 goal in less than a week. While crises such as this one often raise the specters of deprivation, loss, and suffering, it is more often the case that communities rally to support and comfort each other, calling on the deeper reserves of generosity and caring that make us human. Sometimes the acts are grand gestures, but more often they happen at a personal level, one to another, even at your local grocery store. ●

Above: Plexiglass partitions and curtain barriers are just two of the safety measures Bob LaBonne personally installed to protect employees and patrons. The idea for the curtains originated in a conversation with his employees. Below, left: Town officials worked with the store to waive zoning restrictions in order to allow additional storage capacity to address the surge in shoppers.

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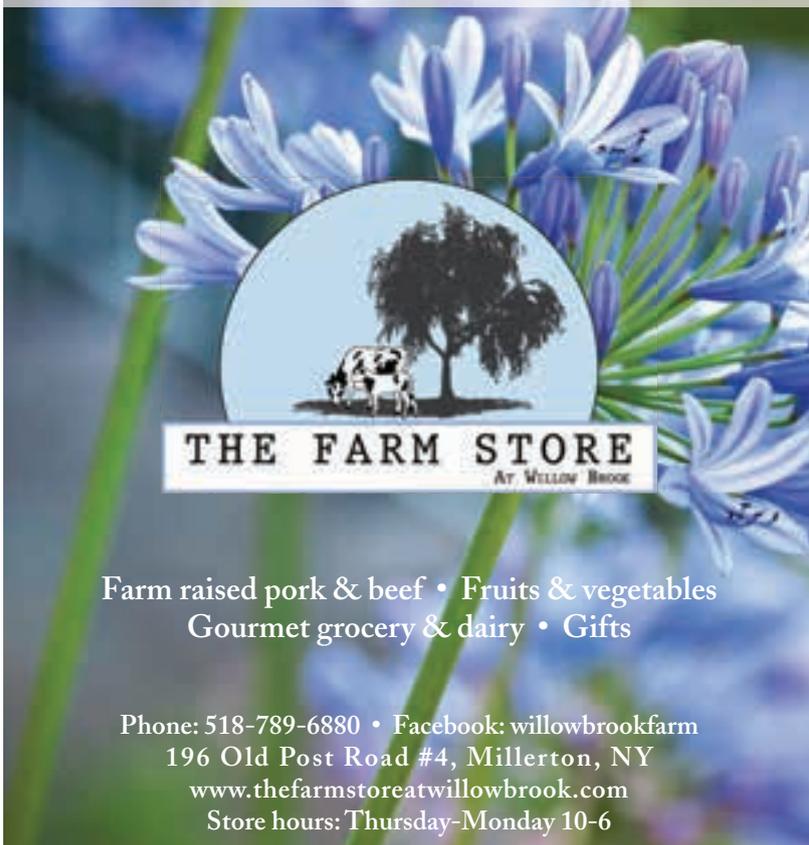
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Call of the wild

By Caleb J. May
info@mainstreetmag.com

We are in very confusing times. Social distancing, self-isolation, and quarantine make it difficult to stay occupied. If you are like me, you are slowly running out of activities to keep your mind and body sharp while going to school online.

Looking ahead, it seems like the summer we have come to know and love won't be the summer we will experience in 2020. It will be a season filled with tiny interactions, no camp, and no big concerts or gatherings. So, the real question is what are we going to do? How will we fill the void amidst this COVID-19 crisis? The answer lies in the Great Outdoors.

Salvaging summer with nature

For years I have been practicing two pursuits that have saved me in these indoorsy lock-down times. The first is birding or bird watching. It may not sound like the most glorious pastime but it is an excellent way to practice social distancing while observing nature's winged marvels. Plus, surprisingly, it's a relatively cheap hobby.

For the birds

To start, a simple feeder can be constructed from a washed milk carton filled with black oil sunflower seeds available at the Millerton Agway, which also carries real feeders and other accessories to attract birds to your yard. This is how I got into birding at the age of seven. This homemade feeder is all it takes to draw in about ten different species of birds. It's a great way to get familiar with some of the birds that are normally resigned to high in the tree canopy, but are drawn to the feeders at eye level.

You can use the Audubon Bird Guide app to help identify birds and their call and record the birds you see at the feeder through an app called Ebird where you can submit and see sightings in your town and all across the world.

Migration season

The flagship of the migration season are the warblers, colorful little song-birds that winter in the tropics. They come back to New England to refuel so they can go farther north or, in some cases, to breed. For the time that they are here in the spring, summer, and fall it makes for the best birding of the year. Thirty-nine species of warblers have been recorded in Connecticut alone.

There are plenty of other birds that come up with them, which expands the species count in the Tri-state area. You may be thinking to yourself: "How could I even see these birds? I have never noticed them in my life." Well, a lot of birds are not elusive or rare. Most are common to this area, such as Yellow Warbler, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-tailed Hawk, and Red-eyed Vireo. To see them you need patience, stillness, time, and a little luck. All of a sudden you realize the trees have been alive with activity all this time.

Looking for clues

Birding is a lot more exciting than people normally think. It unlocks a sort of primal competitive instinct. It's like a mystery waiting to be solved. You may only see parts of the bird at a single time so you have to piece it together from context clues.

For beginners, I would recommend grabbing *The Sibley Guide to Birds* from Oblong Books in Millerton. It is the bible to birders everywhere. Next, a pair of budget binoculars from Celestron or Nikon. Binoculars are a must as they will aid in spotting birds far away or in the treetops.

With these birding tools, venture outside (at a safe six feet, of course) and start looking. If you're up for an excursion, a great place to go bird watching is the Sharon Audubon Center, which has a network of trails through ponds, meadows, and wood-

lands. You will be surprised at just how many birds are hiding in the nooks and crannies of the woods.

Zen line tangle

My second outdoor activity is fishing. I'm not lying when I tell you it is one of the most zen activities you can do. Until you hook into a fish, that is. Then the adrenalin flows until you catch and release it.

A common misconception is a fact that fishing is an expensive endeavor. You don't need a boat or fancy equipment. A \$30 rod-and-reel combo will do just fine for you. We're not catching tuna anyway.

With that, a hook and bobber, and some real worms you have a simple set-up that can be used on lakes and ponds in the area. From there you can expand your repertoire. To help with that I recommend the monthly subscription to *Mystery Tackle Box*. Each month you receive five or six new baits and lures based on what you like to fish for. This allows you to dabble in different styles of fishing such as topwater, crankbait, or soft plastic.

Taking the bait

Once you know what you like and can catch fish, Tackle Warehouse is the one-stop place for everything you would ever need fishing. Just be careful because you can watch your shopping cart start to add up with items.

Cast your line in from the shore or docks of the lakes and ponds around here or climb into a canoe or kayak and you can hook anything from largemouth bass to tiny sunfish. For the times in between catches, there are minutes on end of calm water and peace and quiet. It is truly an escape from online classes, parents, and annoying siblings.



Natural connectivity

This is such a monotonous and stressful time. It's filled with hours of Netflix and Zoom calls. So why not carve out some time in the great outdoors? If we can connect a little more to our wild backyards and the creatures that inhabit them then we can finally see how we are destroying the habitat of a beautiful part of our lives and understand how nature can help us feel less anxious.

With climate change, some of the more temperature-sensitive fish and birds like Smallmouth Bass and warblers will not be able to cope with even the small increases of temperatures in Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts. Birds will instead pass right by us and make their way to Maine and Canada. Once a common sight in our woods some species could be uncommon here by 2050, according to the Audubon website.

Let's rekindle our love for the outdoors and the creatures in it because we only have one planet and right now. Thanks to COVID-19 we have the time to connect with it. ●

Caleb J. May is a rising senior at Salisbury School in Salisbury, CT.

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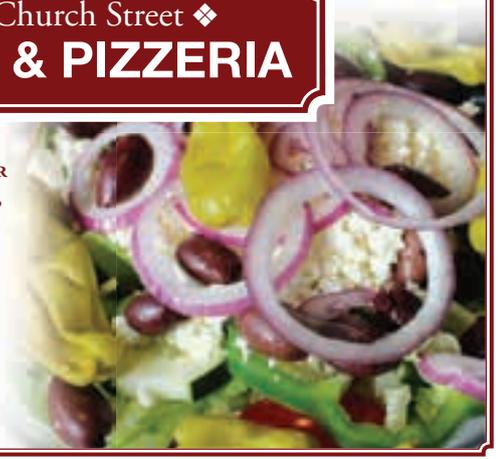
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Tri-State Chamber of Commerce:

CONNECTING
COMMERCE AND
COMMUNITY

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

Maps follow tidy boundaries that mark the borders between states in our Tri-state area, but up close those lines matter less. On the ground, our economies and businesses are serving people – regardless of where they are located. A coordinated strategy for our region is necessary and appropriate.

Making connections across boundaries

Part of this integrated approach for the past 25 years has been the Tri-State Chamber of Commerce (TSC). It serves the commerce, healthcare, education, and non-profit sectors in the blended borders between New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. Today, it has 180 members, 12 of whom are sponsors.

Past-president and current treasurer – and website designer – and newsletter editor – and press liaison Jean Saliter reiterates the mission of TSC, “We’re about connecting commerce and community. It’s that simple. We’re a membership organization that allows local organizations and their people to connect in several important ways.”

This impact is echoed by Caroline Burchfield, who is involved in the types of organizations that TSC serves. She is director of community relations at Noble Horizons, director of volunteer programs at The Hotchkiss School, a past board member of the Salisbury Volunteer

Ambulance Service and on the advisory board of the Jane Lloyd Fund. For Burchfield, “Being a member of the Tri-State Chamber is important on a number of fronts. Membership helps the Chamber support local businesses and non-profits, which has never been more important than now. COVID-19 has reminded us that we succeed together and membership in the Chamber fortifies our collective impact and reach.”

Business After Hours

One of the most important channels of connection for Saliter (and one that’s been on hold since COVID-19) is Business After Hours (BAH). Says Saliter, “These are casual – emphasis on the casual – networking events. They are not meetings. Member-hosted and attended, they’re opportunities to get the word out about their work, their needs, and upcoming events.” Saliter, to use the parlance of author Malcolm Gladwell, is a connector who sees relationships between people, sometimes before they do.

While BAH events seem casual and informal, the member-hosts put tremendous effort into creating a welcoming and festive ambience. And Saliter is serious about the good work they do. “There’s a lot of work that can be accomplished. Networking. Relationship-building. I’m seeing who needs to meet whom, then grabbing them to meet someone.” Posing a

question with no appropriate answer other than “yes” she works the room asking, “Can I steal you for five minutes? There’s someone you need to meet.”

Supporting local non-profits

Another way in which TSC supports members is sponsorship of non-profit



events and fundraisers and connecting non-profits with this area’s socially-minded business community. “We have a robust non-profit community in this area that needs to be supported,” Saliter asserts.

Burchfield, who’s active in non-profits that have benefited from the Chamber’s generosity, understands this firsthand, “The businesses and non-profits in our communities have always championed each other and the Chamber helps us expand our network and organizes initiatives that provide collective promotional benefits that enhance our visibility and reach.”

This support is also accomplished through TSC’s major fundraiser of the year. Punctuating the second Monday in June for the past 25 years is the Murphy Open Golf Tournament. The event donates net proceeds to a non-profit in the Tri-state area.

The 2020 tournament was to be hosted at the stunning Links at Union Vale in LaGrangeville and benefit the Jane Lloyd Fund, which serves cancer patients and their families with financial need who reside or work in the Connecticut towns of Canaan, Cornwall, Falls Village, Kent, Salisbury, and Sharon. However, due to social distancing requirements, the event has been canceled for the first time in its history.

Continued on next page ...



Depicted this page are images from the Hearts on Tour parade that took place on April 28. Photos courtesy of Tina Carpentier-Hogan, who is pictured in the Alzheimer’s car directly above.



Other events that TSC hosts are the Adopt-a-Tree program to add festive lighted trees through Lakeville, Salisbury, and Canaan in the holiday season and Hometown Holidays with hot cocoa, caroling, a visit from Santa, and the annual Parade of Lights at the White Hart Inn. There's also the Falls Village Car & Motorcycle Show and the Salisbury Fall Festival that anchor the annual line-up. For Burchfield, these community events "...are additional examples of their broad-based impact and vision for the small businesses and non-profits that are so vital to our region and its future."

New board, new reality

In March, the new TSC board was to make its first appearance at a Business After Hours and begin their tenure. With Mary Wilbur as president, Saliter as treasurer, Marie Castagna as secretary, and Linda Robertson, Marlane White, and Danielle Stevenson as directors, they were hoping to use the month's BAH as a photo opp for the new team.

Instead, they found themselves, like everyone else, in virtual meetings trying to pivot to the new COVID-19 reality. Saliter is proud of the work this board has been able to accomplish since then. "I am constantly humbled and dumbfounded by this board's combination of idea people and action people. We're a new board and every idea is met with 'How can I help? What do you need?'" It's that kind of sleeves-rolled-up approach that has allowed the Chamber to reorient itself to serve its members and the wider community.

Just the facts

Through the weekly newsletter, an obsession with the communication-thirsty Saliter, they have produced resource-rich compendiums of state and federal resources for local businesses and non-profits. The all-volunteer board dug in to locate and vet factual and accurate information to allow members to understand their options, what assistance they're eligible for, and how to apply for it.

Another newsletter featured restaurants in the tri-state area that are open for take-out. "Some of these restaurants had 24-hours notice about clos-

ing," Saliter observes. "In my mind, the restaurants are a driving force in our area. They are the beginning and end of this local economy. There's a reason they are deemed an essential service. Getting the word out about their offerings is expensive and they don't have the resources to advertise right now."

Hearts on Tour

On April 28, National Superheroes Day, TSC hosted the Hearts on Tour parade to honor our local health workers and those on the front-line of the pandemic. The brainchild of board member Marlane White, it was one of those all-hands-on-deck efforts. "Marlane is a big 'National Day of' fan," chuckles Saliter. "She has one of those calendars on her desk. When she saw National Superheroes Day, she knew the parade had to be then. That epiphany was on April 19 – we had less than two weeks to pull this together."

And pull they did. All working their day jobs as well, they labored round the clock to contact all the towns, the facilities on the routes, and plot the 40-mile circuit. On the day, following speed limits and traffic regulations, over 50 decorated vehicles waved and honked in salute to workers at Noble Horizons, Geer Village, Sharon Health Care Center, Salisbury Visiting Nurse Association, and Sharon Hospital. For the TSC board, there were many lump-in-the-throat moments as they paid homage to workers in full PPE regalia.

Burchfield was standing outside during that parade with her colleagues at Noble Horizons. She gratefully describes, "The Hearts on Tour parade is another example of the Chamber's proactive leadership and underscores their unique capacity to mobilize businesses, non-profits, and local citizens for the good of all." She further attests, "It provided a unifying and palpable outlet for the entire community to come together, giving grateful local residents a way to express their profound appreciation while honoring healthcare workers with a resonating testament to their courage, compassion, and commitment. Noble Horizons team members cherished the generous and thoughtful support



and welcomed the boisterous cheers, colorful signs, bright red hearts, and outpouring of love."

Looking toward the future

In October, TSC will sponsor a team in member organization's Connecticut Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association's annual Walk to End Alzheimer's. This year it will be hosted at Lime Rock Park, which has named Connecticut Alzheimer's as their Official Charity for 2020.

As is the case for everyone, the Tri-State Chamber of Commerce is trying to navigate uncertain times and a hazy new normal. With a resilient and resourceful member community and board, they're already responding to these times and discerning how their mission of connecting commerce and community will look in the days ahead. •

To find out more about the Tri-State Chamber of Commerce, read past newsletters, and become a member, visit www.tristatechamber.com or email Jean Saliter at jsaljsal71@gmail.com.

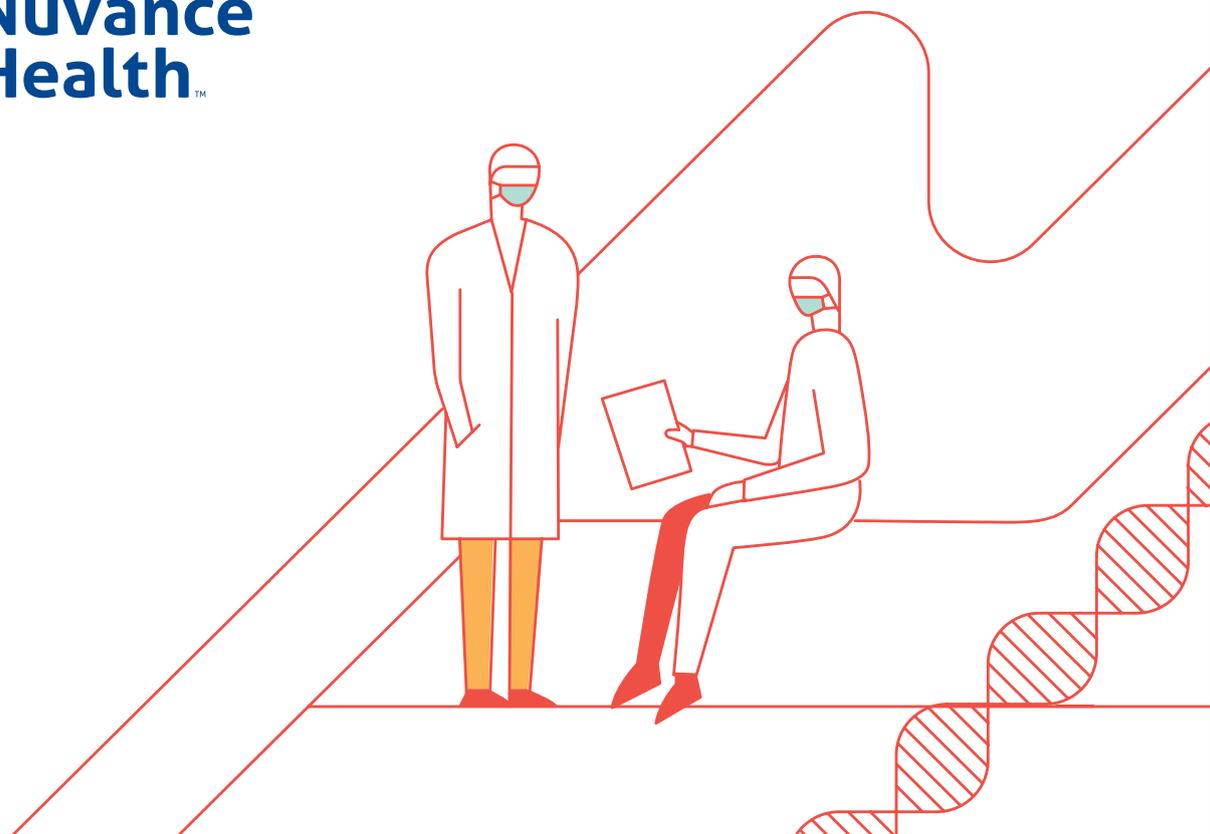
Above, top to bottom: Brian and Laurie Wilcox at Sharon Playhouse Business After Hours, June of 2019. All TSC members attending were invited to stay for the final dress rehearsal of the upcoming show, opening the next night! Adopt-a-Tree in front of Scoville Memorial Library on Main Street in Salisbury, CT. Photos: Jean Saliter.

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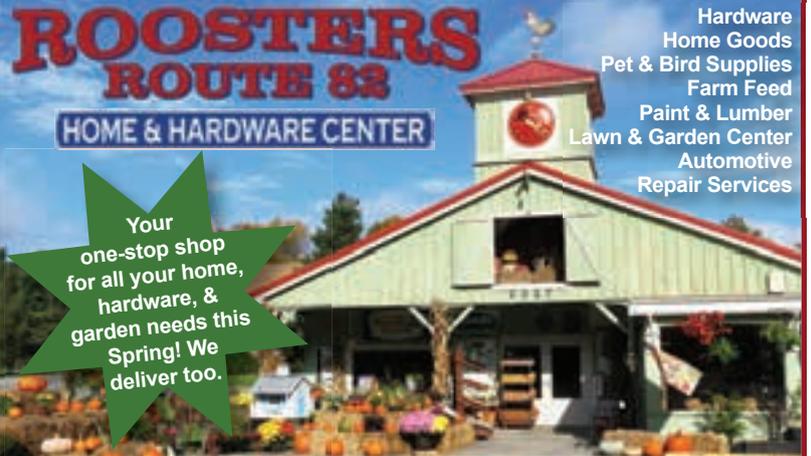
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Peace prodigy

David Taylor Ives's book *American Dreamer* reflects on his experiences in the Peace Corps and his lifelong role as a humanitarian

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

When President John F. Kennedy challenged every American to contribute to the public good by declaring “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” a ten-year old boy in Pierpont, OH heard the call.

“This phrase always stuck with me and was an ideal to live up to,” says David Taylor Ives – a four-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee and resident of Rhinebeck, NY. A global humanitarian, David served as executive director emeritus of The Albert Schweitzer Institute of Quinnipiac University, which conducts programs that link education, ethics, and voluntarism with a mission to create a more peaceful and sustainable world.

He has also served as the senior advisor to the Permanent Secretariat of the Summits of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, and is renowned for his speeches about humanitarian issues.

David's book, *American Dreamer: Memoirs of a Peace Corps Volunteer in Central America and Beyond*, was released in March 2020. It reflects on his early experiences serving in the program, which was founded in 1961 by President Kennedy. Available on Amazon, *American Dreamer* is the No. 1 release in the War & Peace category. It's also available at Barnes & Noble and IndieBound.

Becoming a citizen of the world

A family trip to South America as a teenager ignited David's curiosity for other cultures. Since his father Leland was a pastor, the 1967 journey involved visiting missionaries. The trip took them to Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela.

“I found that the indigenous people we encountered in Bolivia and Ecuador to be so different in dress and mannerisms, as to be a

source of wonderment and curiosity for the rest of my life,” says David.

After witnessing the harsh poverty in the favelas of Brazil, David was moved by the inequities. Rather than being eager to return to the comforts of his American lifestyle, he found it difficult to leave South America. He yearned to help the people.

His spirit of activism never dimmed. Fueled by compassion, curiosity, and courage, David later decided to join the Peace Corps. In 1980, he began his two-year stint as a community and school gardens promoter in Costa Rica. Working in a remote area, he made arduous trips by horse, dugout canoe, boat, and motorcycle. His task: traveling to 22 rural communities to teach agriculture and nutrition to school teachers, students, and community members.

“I was interested in why people around the world were hungry when there were enough calories produced worldwide to make everyone fat,” reveals David.

While in the Peace Corps, routine daily work intertwined with the many historical and political issues that impacted the region. The many experiences David witnessed while serving there reshaped his views and prompted him to re-examine his family and cultural values.

“Living in a community of people who were not well off is different than driving through a slum area on a tour bus. I got to know families and their problems, and realized that we have more similarities with other folks than differences,” says David.

Continued on next page ...



Above: David Taylor Ives. Photo by Maureen Gates, www.sharpimages-photographic.com.

Post Peace Corp

Throughout his life, David has traveled to 56 countries around the globe. He's probably one of the few people on Earth who promoted peace on every continent except Antarctica.

Beyond serving the people of Costa Rica, he's made a profound impact on countless lives worldwide. Closely involved with the peace process in many countries, he says that in many ways, his position at The Albert Schweitzer Institute of Quinnipiac University in Connecticut has been the culmination of his life's work. He remains dedicated to promoting the values and ideas of 1952 Nobel Peace Laureate, Dr. Albert Schweitzer whose words truly resonate with him.

"The awareness that we are all human beings together has become lost in war and through politics. We have reached the point of regarding each other only as members of people either allied with us or against us and our approach – prejudice, sympathy, or antipathy – are all conditioned by that," said Dr. Schweitzer.

In Nicaragua, David's team at The Albert Schweitzer Institute raised enough revenue to save a man's hand from being amputated. His team also helped a young man in Guatemala walk again after being diagnosed with Guillain-Barré – the same disease David was diagnosed with in 1991.

His many lifetime accomplishments include working with President Jimmy Carter who became an honorary member of The Albert

Schweitzer Institute's Board of Advisors. Other collaborations include election monitoring in Latin America and working on nuclear bomb issues.

In the Hudson Valley, David served as executive director of the Louis Jonas August Foundation from 1989 to 2000. He was involved in Camp Rising Sun – an international leadership training program that taught young people from various cultures and countries to celebrate the richness of difference.

After establishing a program at Quinnipiac University in 2003, which enables students to spend ten days abroad assisting economically disadvantaged communities, David introduced a similar program around 2010 through the Rhinebeck Rotary Club and Rhinebeck High School. He's still involved with the Club, where he's been a member since 1990.

David also helped organize conferences with Nobel Peace Prize Laureates for young people around the world. He has served as adjunct professor of International Business, Philosophy, Political Science, and Latin American Studies at Quinnipiac University – a role he's had since 2003. He is also co-author of *Nuclear Proliferation and the Dilemma of Peace in the Twenty-First Century* and *Reverence for Life Revisited*. Other accolades include serving as executive producer of the 2005 Emmy-winning documentary *Albert Schweitzer: My Life is My Argument*.

David finds inspiration in Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Dr. Muhammad Yunus and Leymah Roberta Gbowee. Yunus is the founder of Grameen Bank, which targets poor women via a microcredit program,

and Gbowee is a Liberian peace activist. He also mentions Dr. José Zaglul, the founder of EARTH University, a non-profit dedicated to the sustainable use of the Humid Tropics, as a source of inspiration.

Reflections

When asked about being a four-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee, David says, "It is such an honor to be recognized in this way for my lifetime of dedication to peace and economic justice for all."

Reflecting upon his life, he's found himself wondering at times how someone with roots in a small town in Ohio ended up on stage in Greece standing alongside Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Betty Williams – cofounder of the Community of Peace People in Northern Ireland.

Along the journey from Peace Corps to Nobel Peace Prize nominee, David certainly had his share of struggles to overcome – and that he did.

"My mother was full of compassion for others and it was her life that I was always trying to emulate – and that of my dad," says David. He credits his mother Dot for motivating him, "to see what was around the bend and to celebrate other countries and cultures." He remains forever grateful to her for giving him the confidence to achieve his dreams.

As a child, David was diagnosed with polio. Although the doctor told his mother that her son would never walk without an aid, she chose not to share that information with him – a fact he found out later in life. Instead, she encouraged him to exercise and gain strength. David says it was his mother who helped him fulfill his first dream – to walk and play high school football.

Unfortunately, David learned forgiveness early on when his beloved mother died in a car accident after returning from the family trip to South America. Through that

experience, David learned forgiveness was as much about him as it was about the forgiven, and how important it is to living a life without bitterness and hate.

"Throughout my life I have had a lot of dreams to accomplish and obstacles to overcome for my family and friends and for the people I met and worked with around the world. I have shared them in any way that I could, and each one was an adventure. Sometimes I didn't accomplish my dreams and sometimes I did. But more importantly, I think I helped a lot of people to accomplish their dreams in the 56 countries around the world that I have visited," concludes David.

In his book, he refers to the lyrics of English rock band, Chumbawamba: "If I get knocked down, I get up again. You are never going to keep me down." After learning David's life story, we certainly know this to be true. •

To purchase David T. Ives' books you should visit your local bookstore like Oblong Books & Music in Millerton and Rhinebeck, and Merritt Bookstore in Millbrook, NY.

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SUPERVISOR PETER CIPKOWSKI'S LEADERSHIP PUSHES HILLSDALE THROUGH UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

By Griffin Cooper
griffin@mainstreetmag.com

While the seeds of the nationwide coronavirus pandemic response may have been sewn in Washington DC, and the hardline logistics of unprecedented mandates fleshed out on behalf of the most vulnerable within the halls of State Capitol buildings across the country, the brunt of the human response to this generational crisis has hit closer than ever to home. Leaders in county and town governments everywhere have experienced the virus's on-the-ground impact in a variety of both horrific, and hopeful ways while handling new responsibilities they could have never imagined before.

In the small town of Hillsdale, NY, where surnames define eras and neighborly bonds are forged into perpetuity, Town Supervisor Peter Cipkowski, whose roots run deep in the Roe Jan area, has taken this new burden upon his shoulders with help from residents and business leaders determined to endure. The landscape of Hillsdale has seen more than a few changes over the last half-century, and though the current transformation defines what is unexpected, Peter shares his faith in the immeasurable connection between the Town residents that will carry Hillsdale through the harsh rigors of uncertainty.

Growing up in the Hudson Valley, spending your youth in the Hillsdale area, and attending Roe Jan, you have seen decades of transformation in the area. Did that play a role in compelling you to get involved in town government? How did you find the path to Town Supervisor?

There were two primary factors that motivated me to get involved and run for the Town Board in 2005. The changing landscape had a lot to do with my decision. For example, Hillsdale was beginning to see some devel-

opment along the ridge of the Taconic mountain range that straddles our border with Massachusetts – a literal changing of our landscape. Suddenly, there were a couple of gashes along the top of the mountain that felt like an affront to the community – not to mention ecosystems. So a viewshed that had been pristine for millions of years was now vulnerable. I wanted to be part of a Town Government that would adopt laws that would help to protect the ridgeline ecosystem and also provide property owners with appropriate guidelines.

Another catalyst for me came about when I saw how our hamlet center, similar to that of many upstate New York towns, was folding up with each passing year. I knew that Hillsdale had the components to make a vibrant hamlet district – a sewer infrastructure that was already underway, a collection of historic structures, two well-traveled state roads, a village focal point with a handsome Civil War monument, underutilized green space, and plenty of residents who were determined to support local businesses. Who wouldn't want to be part of that? Though the Town had adopted a strong comprehensive plan from the 90s, there was no specific blueprint for the hamlet. We adopted one in 2010 and that has given us a vocabulary to guide our growth starting with sidewalks and lamp posts that were installed a couple of years ago. There's still more work to do but we have momentum.

You've spent much of your professional life taking on executive roles particularly in the educational field, is there a correlation in culture or management style when it comes to local government?

I have always believed in building consensus and servant leadership. That's my philosophy. Though a town supervisor presides over the Town's agenda, it only works when we support each other. We also have a strong



Above: Peter pictured with U.S. Representative Antonio Delgado on his visit to Hillsdale, NY. Photo courtesy of Peter Cipkowski.

community culture that, in my view, has to be heard and should inform the true direction of the town. Because the Town Board has budget oversight and oversees the big picture, there has to be a lot of prioritization. We can't do everything we want right away.

I'm also an educator at heart so I like to put all the facts on the table. I try to over-communicate. Everyone in the community should have access to Town issues and, if they feel compelled, the opportunity to weigh in. That can happen at a Town Board meeting or anyone can call me anytime to vent or share their point of view.

Have there been any particular Town issues that have taught significant lessons as town supervisor or that have changed your overall perspective in any way?

Continued on next page ...



Above: Peter pictured with Town Clerk and Town Attorney at closing for the Town's Bond Anticipation Note that funded the Hillsdale sidewalks. Below, right: Peter with his dog Fred. Photo courtesy of Peter Cipkowski.

A couple of things. As a supervisor, I get to be part of a larger conversation within Columbia County as a member of the Board of Supervisors. County governance is designed to get us through “this year” and “this year” alone. There is very little thinking about the road ahead. For example, we have yet to see a cohesive multi-year plan for economic growth. There isn't enough concern or planning to support housing needs in rural areas. There is no action plan in place to address the looming crisis in volunteer fire departments and other critical areas that help Columbia County function.

Some of us have suggested that Columbia County deserves a full-time, professional county executive who has experience overseeing a multi-million dollar business, has a vision for the county's future, and will hold county departments accountable to the highest standards possible. Very little of this comes up and is probably unlikely to anytime soon given the huge financial challenges the county now faces because of the pandemic.

At the town level there are also a few obsolete ways of doing things. There's too much of every town for itself. For example, I suspect there would be less burden on the taxpayer if town highway departments were restructured. What if the county had a greater leadership role in overseeing road maintenance on town roads? Town highway departments may do the best they can with their budgets,

but there are uneven practices and priorities across the towns.

None of this is revolutionary. In fact, most New York State counties already have appointed or elected county managers, appointed (non-elected) town highway superintendents, and shared district courts. I'm inclined to support change if it makes us more efficient, more accountable, and saves taxpayer money. But we need more supervisors to take it on at the county level.

Your husband Bill has landed a big job in Los Angeles and as such you both have recently made the move to Los Angeles. How are you finding the transition and has it changed how you delegate town issues?

Bill started his job in Los Angeles in January and I've been transitioning. COVID is rewriting everything. I just spent six weeks working from Town Hall every day. Carrying on with town business is much easier because Hillsdale has an incredibly supportive town clerk and deputy supervisor. They just want to get the work done in a professional, productive, and positive way. Hillsdale will remain my top priority until the day I leave office.

You have been one of the most reliable resources for updates on how both Hillsdale and Columbia County are managing the COVID-19 pandemic. How has the current state of the pandemic affected your outlook on local government?

It has been a “hair-on-fire” situation for everyone. County leaders have done a great job of distilling the

Governor's executive orders, preparing for and managing the ongoing impact of COVID – especially with respect to health concerns and financial matters – and distributing relevant information with town supervisors. My job has been to support my community, educate where I have to, alert the board and highway superintendent about new financial risks, and do everything I can to protect the town.

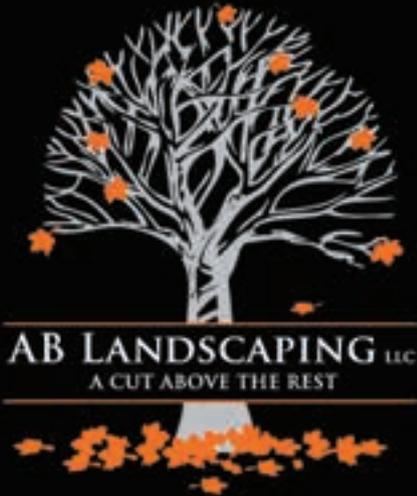
Like many of our neighboring towns, Hillsdale happens to have a great support network. Seniors and the most vulnerable are being monitored by our Safe at Home Committee, high school students organized an effective delivery service, masks have been made and distributed, and our Roe Jan Food Pantry is working overtime to serve people in need. We have also received an astonishing amount of financial contributions for the sole purpose of distributing to families who have lost income due to COVID-19. I'm so proud to be part of this community and I'll be very sorry to step away from being part of it when the time comes. Bill and I are already imagining how we will want to participate when we come home to Hillsdale full-time in the future. •

To reach Peter Cipkowski, Hillsdale Town Supervisor, you can call (518) 325-5073 x6 or email hillsdaleny@gmail.com.



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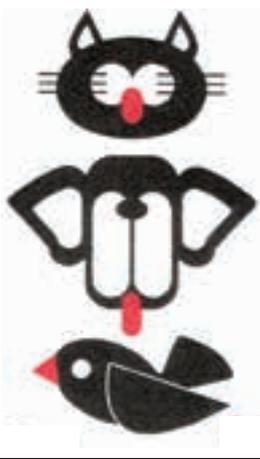




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The Berkshire Woodworkers Guild

BEAUTY, EDUCATION, SERVICE

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

One of the standard images in introductory art history classes is Rembrandt's *Syndics of the Cloth Guild*, a 17th century portrait of six distinguished gentlemen who shared a common vocation and were proud members of the local guild. In existence since the early days of the Roman Empire, guilds had become the professional refuge of artisans of like mind and interest. Traditionally independent in business, they were bound in interest and skill.

Flash forward to the 21st century, and the concept of a guild lives on, embodied in the Berkshire Woodworkers Guild. Over 60 members of this unique group were initially informally convened to support a fellow woodworker who had experienced personal and professional tragedy and, when their philanthropic efforts were completed, decided to stay together as a mutually supportive, educational and nurturing organization.

Membership in the Berkshire Woodworkers Guild is refreshingly diverse. Cabinet makers and house builders are side-by-side with furni-

ture makers, boat builders, sculptors and makers of musical instruments. The Guild website aggregates the incredible work of every member, offering a showcase to individual practitioners who may not have showrooms, but share a common effort to reach out to existing and new customers with images of their fine work.

Professionals, amateurs, friends

Jim Law, president of the Berkshire Woodworkers Guild, views the monthly gathering of fellow wood-working aficionados as a chance to both learn and share. "Under normal circumstances, we'd meet in one of our members' studios for a presentation on a new tool, a new technique, or a discovery that could be shared, then a wide-ranging and engaging discussion would result." From staining techniques to the latest jig application are appropriate discussions and learning is based on sharing.

"We're primarily professionals, but we have some incredible hobbyists who join us, as well. It's really interesting. When somebody 'green' decides to join, they find all of the other guild members eager to help and encourage. We've all become good friends."

The new world order

That was then ... this is now.

With the national impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the idea of monthly guild meetings has had to be supplanted with furtive efforts at Zoom gatherings that encourage members to stay in touch and stay



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Above, top to bottom, L-R: JK Custom Furniture & Design Joshua & Kristen Kanter, Great Barrington, MA. Turned Works, Warren Vienneau, Pittsfield, MA. Jeffrey All, All Woodwork, Spencertown, NY. Left: Joel Mark, Joel Mark Furniture, Hillsdale, NY

informed. The impact on the guild's annual fundraising effort is also quite profound.

Guild event organizer and media contact Kristen Kanter has been in charge of coordinating and promoting the Berkshire Woodworkers Guild Fine Woodwork Annual Show and silent auction that feeds all of its proceeds into a scholarship fund supporting emerging woodworkers. Normally, the weekend event is hosted at the Berkshire Botanical Garden in West Stockbridge, MA. "A highlight of the show is a silent auction," recalls Kanter. "Each member of the Guild contributes a piece to the auction with a value greater than \$50."

Last year's event presented a wide range of work by 20 exhibitors and attracted a weekend crowd of over 1,000 attendees.

The result of the auction in 2019 was \$11,000 in scholarship funds used for aspiring professional woodworkers to pursue their skills training at such notable institutions as North Bennett Street School in Boston, Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, ME, and The Krenov School in Fort Bragg, CA.

Since the silent auction is a critical part of the Guild's outreach



each year, efforts to coordinate, populate, and market the auction for 2020 are well underway. The once arcane worlds of online conferences and fundraising efforts have become more common on a daily basis. What has been a gathering of friends and a social outing in celebration of immense talent and skill will become a function of "mouse" clicks and credit cards filed on secure sites.

The Guild auction will go on, however, and four worthy, aspiring woodworkers will benefit from the generosity and support of an online audience. The interested, the curious, and the devoted are encouraged to log onto the website at berkshire-woodworkers.org anytime, but more specifically starting on July 1 to savor the artistry, envision how the work of these talented people might brighten their own lives and to bid on fine samples of the woodworkers' art. ●

Above: Frost White, Copake Lake, NY. Below, left: Jim Law, Undermountain Joiners, Sheffield, MA. All photos with this article are courtesy of The Berkshire Woodworkers Guild.



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Retail therapy

Retail strategists provide tips for independent retailers looking to boost revenue in the wake of COVID-19

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11. Soon thereafter we were all asked to stay home. By so doing, so many of our local businesses had to close their doors – and then they had to adapt. They had to adapt where they could in an attempt to keep their businesses alive. It hasn't been easy, and as things are just now starting to re-open, more than two months later, many of our beloved local businesses are still adapting and making daily changes. Even though the experts quoted in this article aren't local to our area, all small businesses in the United States are facing many of the same challenges, and so their advice certainly applies. Hang in there, we'll get through this.

Summer is one of the best times of year for exploring the charming towns and enchanting country scenes that dot the Hudson Valley region. There's a bounty of enticing restaurants, vibrant boutiques, art galleries, and friendly farms where people can snap up all types of local goods. The Hudson Valley is an ideal place to scout out local food, farm products, art, artisanal

wares, home furnishings, apparel and accessories, and sporting goods. Rather than shopping big box retailers, these mom and pop shops offer personality, a sense of community, and lots of local charm.

Unfortunately, non-essential businesses throughout the region were shuttered in the spring when the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the nation and the globe. This period of economic downturn made a deep impact on local businesses, which are regarded as the backbone of America's economy.

The nation's 30 million small businesses employ nearly half of America's workforce. "Out of the total 1.1 million retail establishments, small retailers with fewer than 20 employees make up nearly 60% of that total, and virtually all (98%) are single-store operations," said Pamela Danziger, founder of Stevens, PA-based Unity Marketing.

Through the years, other events have taken a devastating toll on retail, but it's how each small business adapts that is key. "Nobody prepared for their revenue to drop so significantly and unexpectedly. We couldn't have anticipated that there would be a pandemic, but now we know that the unexpected can happen," says Liz Illg, owner of Liz Illg Consulting in Phoenix, AZ.

Now is the time to brainstorm and strategize. "Uncertainty is guaranteed when it comes to operating a retail store. Brick-and-mortar stores that haven't offered online sales need to identify ways to reach consumers online and gain sales in new avenues. One selling avenue generally isn't enough," says Nicole Leinbach Reyhle, author and founder of Retail Minde – a Denver, CO-based blog and publication for independent retailers.

Moving forward

"It takes a combination of resiliency to move faster than the big retailers, ingenuity arising from being forced day-in, day-out to solve unexpected problems with creativity and inventiveness, and resourcefulness learned from operating a small business when everything seems stacked against them," said Danziger.

At Retail Minded, it's Leinbach Reyhle's role to support all types of businesses – from gift shops and apparel retailers to tourist- and resort-based businesses, pet shops, cannabis dispensaries, and beyond. The retail diva advises business owners to tap into the power of

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Photo: istockphoto.com
contributor Blue Planet
Studio

customer service as a means of generating revenue and fostering connection. It also offers a great way for smaller shops to compete with big box stores.

“During the COVID-19 crisis, smaller merchants, more so than big box merchants, have the opportunity to be more nimble and creative,” says Reyhle. Since there’s no corporate protocol to follow, in many cases, smaller retailers can be quicker to react. Many have adapted by making personal, local deliveries at their leisure since they aren’t reliant on traditional carrier options.

There are certainly other ways they can differentiate themselves. Now’s the time to personally reach out to customers by phone or with a handwritten note. Gifting small giveaways is another idea.

Independent retailers have the luxury of being able to build relationships. “Big box stores don’t have that. Right now, people are feeling more connected to their communities than ever before. Start building relationships even when it must happen remotely. If you give back to your community, and show

concern and care for others, your community will support you,” says Liz Illg.

Take action

During times of economic downturn, small business owners can look to create new revenue streams. It’s also a time for revamping websites, planning social media schedules, sprucing up the digs, and identifying story ideas for pitching local media.

“I’ve seen people get so creative. I recommend staying connected to clients in any way whether that means sending a card, a self-quarantine care package, or showing up for them when they need it the most,” says Illg.

With massive unemployment comes uncertainty. Consumers will be more price conscious, so it’s wise to offer installation payment options such as Klarna. “It’s a great way to welcome customer dollars without having customers compromise,” says Reyhle.

Liz Illg advises business owners to meet clients where they are. “That may not mean slashing prices. Instead, it may involve changing your service model or the things you have in stock in order to provide more value to clients. If you’re offering something they need, they’ll buy,” says Illg.

Especially now, when every loss counts, it’s important to have a clear process for managing inventory, making sales, and welcoming clients back. These efficient, well-planned systems enable shop owners to save money that can be invested back into their businesses.

When it comes to marketing, reach out to your small business neighbors. “Think about what businesses near you may share a similar client base and start shouting them out on social media. Send them messages and see if you can plan a giveaway or promotion together,” says Illg. Shop owners can do a lot for relatively little if they get creative and utilize their connections.

July marks Independent Retailer Month. Now’s the time for dedicated shoppers to head in store to explore local collections while supporting local businesses and communities.

According to Civic Economics – Andersonville Study of Retail Economics, for every \$100 spent at locally-owned businesses, \$68 remains in the community. These businesses are also credited for creating higher-paying jobs for the community.

Local shops and businesses also make less of an imprint on the environment. It’s important to note that snapping up goods from locally-owned businesses conserves energy and resources due to less fuel for transportation and reduced packaging.

As the adage says, charity begins at home. Let’s vote with our dollars and make an effort to celebrate local businesses. They generously donate to community causes at more than twice the rate of retail chains. That’s certainly something to feel good about. •

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The recent PAUSE in NYS due to the Corona Virus has seen the use of recreational vehicles skyrocket. Four wheelers, dirt bikes, ATVs, etc., these vehicles are certainly a welcome form of recreation, yet do pose a significant liability hazard. Most folks don't realize it but a homeowner's policy only covers these types of vehicles while they are on one's premises. Once they leave the premises, there is no coverage under any standard homeowners policy, hence no coverage for the rider or the driver! The answer is to get a recreational vehicle policy which will provide the appropriate coverage both on and off premises, as well as satisfy any underlying umbrella requirements should a person have a liability umbrella policy. These are great fun to ride on trails as well as power line easements, yet present huge liability exposures should an accident occur. Generally speaking, for less than \$250/yr., a person can purchase a liability-only policy and not have to worry! Another example of a potential uninsured exposure is taking a ride on your lawn mower and doing the neighbor a favor by mowing their lawn. The old saying that "a good deed never goes unpunished" is correct. If you kick up a rock and break a window, or worse yet, hit a person in the head, you have no coverage if you are off your premises. So, as we've said in the past, people don't plan to fail, they fail to plan! Call your agent today if you have any of these exposures and get them insured.



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How to speak so people will listen

Public speaking can put you in fight or flight mode. It doesn't have to be that way.

Find out about your topic, the attendees, and the occasion. Now you can focus your remarks, pull in the audience, and keep their attention. Is the event formal or informal? Knowing this will impact your comments, body language, attire, and the words you use.

Consider the speech's goal. Don't lose sight of this. The success of your words depends on staying true to it. Are your remarks a call-to-action, a persuasive pitch, to educate, or to entertain?

In writing your remarks, assess what you know and what you need to find out. Research your topic from reputable sources and attribute them as necessary. Don't plagiarize.

Remember, the audience will be listening, not reading, which limits the amount of information they can absorb. Start with a compelling hook, tell them what you're going to say, say it, support it, and conclude by reiterating your points and their relevance to them.

Practice – a lot. Film yourself and assess nervous habits and use of fillers such as "um" and "like." Stick to your allotted time. Avoid being long-winded. Be ruthless in cutting words that get in the way of your clear message.

While speaking, look up, make eye contact, and use props to help you pause. It's doubtful you can talk too slowly. Sip from a glass of water. Breathe deeply in critical spots. I write the word "breathe" in the transcript to remind yourself to do it. Why? Deep breathing short circuits those fight or flight instincts and keeps you calm - along with practice and preparation.

Mary B. O'Neill, Ph.D.
mary@mbopraxis.com
860 318 5140



Working out at home

What happens when all of a sudden your plans change and you have to get your workout done at home? You can switch it up and get a great workout with little-to-no equipment! Here's how.

We can break down the home workout in to a few sections. The first can be body weight exercises like squats, pushups and lunges. The second section can be your abs section in which you could do sit-ups, crunches, planks or any other ab exercises you know and love (or love to hate). The third and final section can be HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) style where you perform an exercise for :20 and then resting for :10. Pick 3-4 exercises for the HIIT section like jumping jacks, burpees and bicycle crunches, and do them one after another for 3-4 rounds.

So here's a quick breakdown and guide to follow:
Section A: Body Weight Exercises. Section B: Abs.
Section C: HIIT.

*Pick 2-3 exercises for Sections A and B. Complete 10-12 repetitions of each exercise for 3 sets of each exercise.

*Pick 3-4 exercises for Section C. Complete 3-4 rounds, working for :20 while resting for :10 between exercises.

With this easy template, you will be able to get an awesome workout in no matter what happens. Home workouts may seem monotonous, but with the right mindset to just get it done, you'll blast through it and come out sweaty and glad you did it.

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Patio pots during a pandemic

Many of us have found ourselves with extra time on our hands these past few weeks and possibly, for a few more weeks to come. When planning your patio or pool pots, always consider the time you have to maintain them. Deadheading, watering, and fertilizing take the kind of time which you may have some more of this coming spring.

Knowing your location, whether it has sun-shade or partial sun are both factors in keeping the plants from burning from the summer heat or not flowering from too much shade. Keeping the same requirement plants potted together is ESSENTIAL (yes - pun intended).

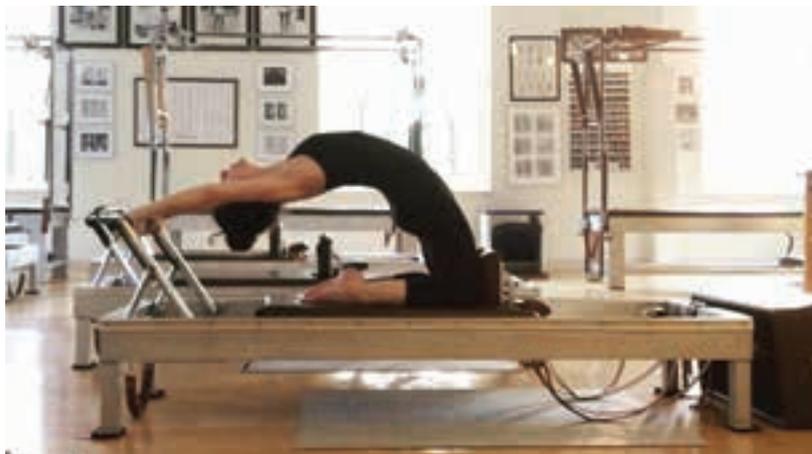
When choosing color combinations, do what you like and what makes you happy. Some like white, some like lots of color, but remember to add texture! Plants like dusty miller, thistle, ornamental grasses, Irish mosses, etc. add dimension too. This year, perhaps try rooting Curly willow, which can easily be found at your local florist and are one of my personal favorites! Curly willow will leaf out giving those pool pots a little needed shade by your lounge chair. And next year you won't have to plant it, it's hardy and will return with size and vigor, one less job to do next spring!

Above all this planting season, remember: Shop local, shop at small businesses you can easily social distance, call ahead – your local favorite is willing to do the combination for you and set it curb side.

Happy planting, stay healthy, enjoy that new garden and patio pots you are working hard at this year!

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Rhinebeck Pilates

Bringing authentic Pilates to the Hudson Valley area, offering group and private classes, and workshops for teachers. rhinebeckpilates.com

After opening in 2003 with a small studio and having very little equipment, Rhinebeck Pilates has since grown into an 1,800 sq.ft. space and is currently the only fully-equipped Pilates studio in Dutchess County, NY. Owner Elaine Ewing says, “As a native from Rhinebeck, it’s been exciting to grow my business in my hometown.” In response to the pandemic, Rhinebeck Pilates has gone completely virtual and is now offering virtual private sessions, as well as virtual mat and equipment classes. They are also providing Pilates equipment rentals for students who wish to take part in virtual classes that require equipment. When their doors are able to re-open, they will again offer all of these services in studio, as well as continuing online virtual classes since they have become so popular. Rhinebeck Pilates also hosts The New York Pilates Studio Teacher Training Program, which is the oldest and first teacher training program in the world. One of the few silver linings for businesses like Rhinebeck Pilates during these times of mass closure is that they are now able to reach Pilates students around the world with the introduction of virtual classes. Elaine says, “The most rewarding part of teaching Pilates and running a studio is helping people feel great – whether recovering from an injury and getting back to moving naturally again. After class, when people tell me how amazing they feel, it reminds me of the value of Pilates!”



Crown Energy Corp.

Energy for your lifestyle. Energy sources, service, and installations. 3 Century Blvd., Millerton, NY. (518) 789-3014. crownenergycorp.com

When Edward Hutchinson purchased a small propane cylinder exchange company in Hopewell Junction back in 1976, propane was just hitting the scene as a clean new energy. Edward would immediately get to work building and expanding his young business with the help of a team of bright, dedicated professionals who shared his strong work ethic. Over the course of the next 37 years, Crown LP Gas had begun to evolve in exciting new ways in order to meet the demands of a growing Hudson Valley region. In 2013, Crown LP Gas purchased a business with deep roots in Millerton, NY: Dutchess Oil and Propane. With this acquisition, Crown LP Gas diversified into a full-service energy company. Today, Crown Energy Corp. offers propane, oil, gasoline, diesel, and kerosene. Crown now has over 60,000 gallons of propane storage so that they can provide quick turnarounds on service requests and optimize their capacity to serve the area. Crown has also contributed to some extraordinary community causes over the years including their own Colton’s XXXtraordinary Cause, a non-profit that honors, raises money for, and brings awareness to rare diseases and syndromes that children in the Hudson Valley have been diagnosed with. Crown has produced a delivery truck with the Colton’s XXXtraordinary Cause logo painted on it and a percentage of the profits from the Colton Truck are donated to the Cause.



Doorstep Deliverers

A local volunteer group offering free, store-to-door delivery of groceries and medications. doorstepdeliverers.com

In what has become the truest form of a modern grassroots movement, Doorstep Deliverers was launched in March of this year after organizer Reed Lessing learned that housebound seniors needed help accessing food while in quarantine. Within a week, the group of young volunteers established a contactless delivery system, designed a website, contacted local businesses and town government officials, recruited volunteers, and reached out to neighbors in need. Currently, Doorstep Deliverers is a local volunteer group offering free, store-to-door delivery of groceries and medication to housebound seniors and immuno-compromised community members across Berkshire and Columbia counties. Simultaneously, the group also supports local businesses without the capacity to offer delivery themselves. The volunteers have experienced the unexpected privilege of getting to know the surrounding communities in an entirely new way. Reed explains, “It is tremendously meaningful to know that our group has been able to help neighbors in need, and even more rewarding are the individual relationships formed – that a helping hand will always be available should they need it.” Though the group was born from an urgent need during an unprecedented time, they hope to continue to help people as long as the need exists and have been continually amazed by the tremendous support of the communities and eager volunteers.



Fishes & Loaves Food Pantry

A food pantry in Canaan, CT, whose mission is to feed the community. Canaan, CT. (860) 824-7232. northcanaancongregationalchurch.org

What began as a modest operation in 1992 whose mission is to feed the community they live in, has become one of the most beloved community service organizations for the towns of North Canaan, Falls Village, and Norfolk in CT. The Fishes & Loaves Food Pantry is a non-profit food pantry and is a mission of the North Canaan Congregational Church that operates out of the church’s Pilgrim House. Fishes & Loaves distributes free food on a weekly basis to the food-insecure, regularly picks up food from Stop&Shop, and brings items no longer suitable for clients to local farmers in the area. Since early 2018, Fish & Loaves has been open on Tuesday evenings from 5-7pm in addition to Thursday afternoons from 12-2pm. The selfless service provided is perhaps as critical a need now for the residents of the Northwest Corner than ever before. Pantry director Louise Riley says, “At this particular time, it is especially rewarding as we help families weather the economic COVID-19-related crisis and we have seen an increase of roughly 30% in usage of our services over the past few weeks.” Fishes & Loaves thrives on providing nourishment for those in need and will assist residents in registering for their service. Fishes & Loaves’ success is due to the dedication of its volunteers and their tireless pursuit to feed their community.

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