

MAINstreet

MAGAZINE





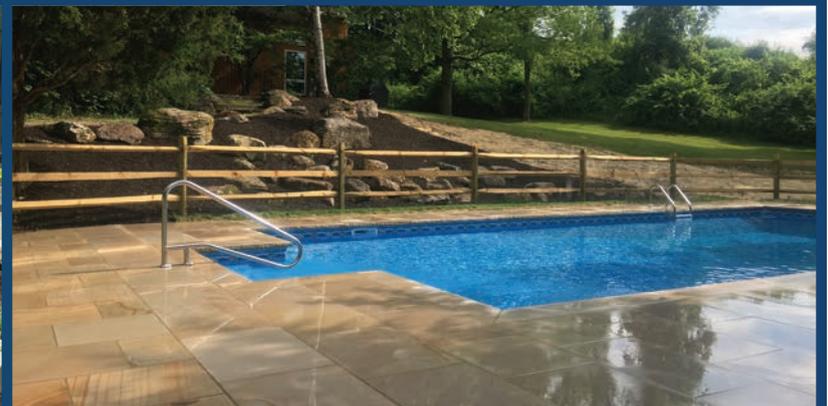
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EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS!

Good grief! How is it already August? Those dog days of summer are here, and I bet we're all scrambling - like usual at this time of year. It certainly feels like we couldn't wait for summer to start and then before we knew it, it has almost come to an end! That flew by quickly. And here we find ourselves, on the home stretch of summer, scrambling for those last summer activities, those last summer vacation days, all before we send the kids back to school.

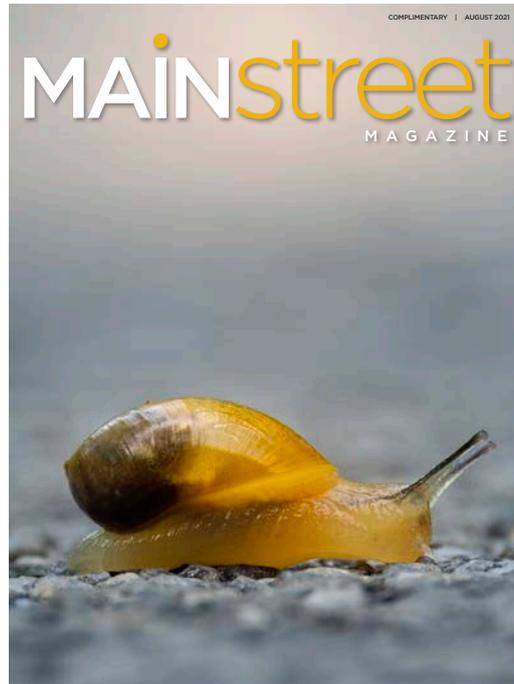
I feel that even for us adults, once school starts, that the freedom of summer kind of comes to an abrupt end. It's a little bittersweet... I do love fall though, so I'm not super sad about it, but still... And so I find myself contemplating that as I scratch my head in wonder over how it is already August and we're chipping away at the tail end of 2021! Good grief, this year has just flown by without warning.

As most of our readers are aware, a lot of our magazines through the year have themes - August always being one of the few exceptions. For that reason, the stories in this issue are all over the place. You're going to find things of interest to us, good stories, interesting perspectives, and just plain old things that we were curious about that we wanted to share with y'all.

I'm excited to share some big news with our readers at this time. We here at Main Street have partnered with the Millerton Business Alliance and are in the throws of organizing Millerton's first Food Festival! It'll be a Village-wide affair, to be held on Saturday, September 18. Activities will include specials at the local food and drink establishments, food trucks, an expanded Farmers Market, a Svendale beer tent (pending approval), cookie decorating at the Irontdale Schoolhouse, NECC potluck event, live music from local musicians, a Harlem Valley Rail Trail celebration will also take place - and much more! For all of the details about the event, you can visit www.millertonnewyork.com. We hope that everyone will check it out and see everything that Millerton has to offer!

We also have a few other exciting irons in the fire here at Main Street and I hope to be able to share some of our exciting developments in the coming months. So please stay tuned and keep an eye out for our big news come fall. I hope that you won't be disappointed, but we're pretty excited about our developments and are hinting at them here only because we can barely contain our own excitement! More about all of that as soon as we can share! Until then...

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



AUGUST 2021

Look at that escargot go! Just sliding on through summer like...

Cover photo by Lazlo Gyorsok

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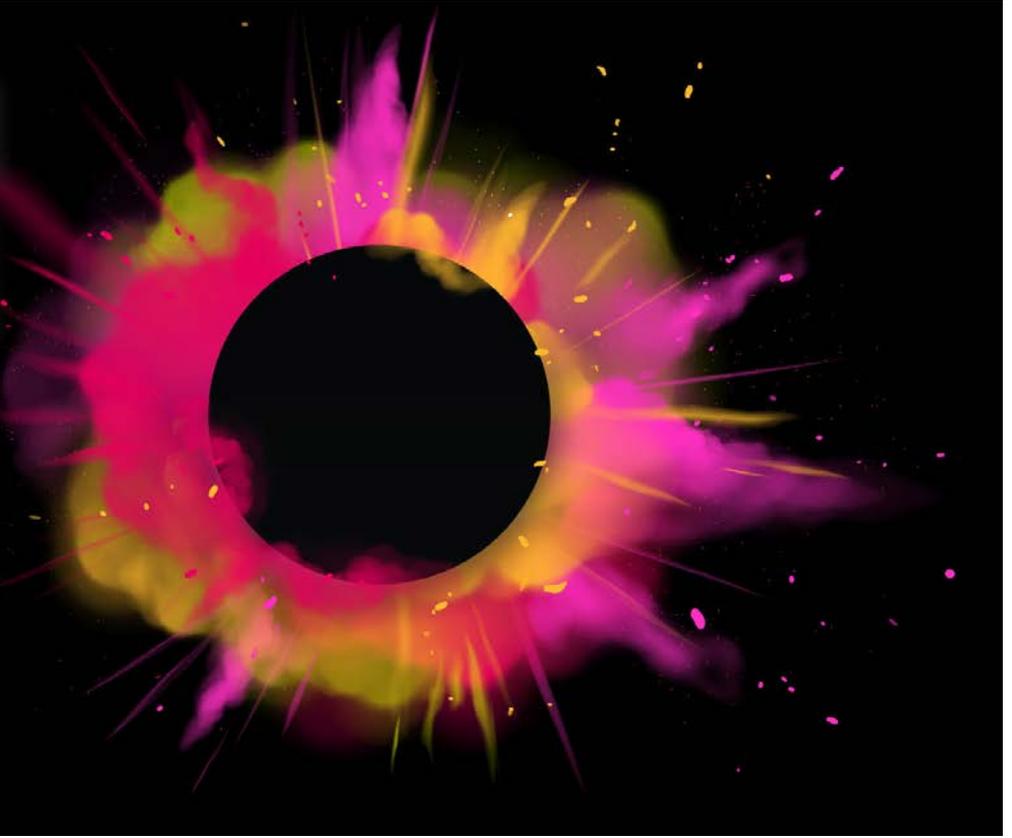
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Alive with the sound of music

ARTIST PROFILE: SHARON RUCHMAN,
COMPOSER/PIANIST



By *CB Wismar*
info@mainstreetmag.com

Sharon Ruchman is living proof.

There has long been the contention that nestled in the Litchfield Hills, the Berkshires and the Hudson Valley, there are literally armies of brilliant writers, artists, musicians ... most of whom found their separate ways to this bucolic part of the country to find the calm and quiet that allows creativity to blossom.

And so, Sharon Ruchman came to the area with her physician husband some years ago and allowed the creative energies of composition and performance to flourish. For some, age points to retiring – slowing down – sitting back and letting the world move on while they watch.

Not so for Sharon Ruchman.

“This past year has been really productive for me,” she offers with the energy of an artist caught up in the rollercoaster ride choreographed by a very active muse. “I’ve been composing new material, becoming more fully engaged with the music and getting ready for Sonoro to have its first in-person performance in a while.”

Sonoro is an eclectic group of very talented, very seasoned musicians who have gathered around Sharon, CT, to create a musical genre that is, likewise, very eclectic. “There’s a clas-

sical foundation, of course,” Sharon offers by way of explanation. “But we add some strong jazz influences, some deep blues and a flavoring of Latin rhythms. We’ve been fortunate enough to attract an intriguing audience – the age range is 20-45 – as our performances are included on social media playlists.”

The appearance of Ruchman’s work with Sonoro on Spotify and other sites is thanks to the album *Simply Sonoro* released in 2020. With all original compositions by Ruchman and a stellar assembly of musicians produced and recorded by Marc Wager Weisgal at his Roxbury, CT, recording studio, the “genre bending” recording continues to gain new devotees.

A lifetime of music

Sharon Ruchman’s journey began with composing melodies on the family piano at the age of five, and blossomed through voice training and music lessons that took her through the New England Conservatory of Music and the Yale School of Music. Performance was primary, but composition was also an important part of her maturing.

A casual scan of the albums created by Sharon Ruchman on Amazon reveals an ample cross section of her life-long engagement with performance. No fewer than six solo albums are available, with titles that announce

a range from *Chamber Music, A Bit of Tango and More*.

With a prolific recording career that came as the result of comprehensive training in performance and composition, being a celebrated musician would, for some, be a satisfying, complete career.

Then, there was the presence of Rudy.

The Gift of Rudy

“I had a great uncle, Rudolph Fuchs, who was a legendary violinist, and who died, tragically at the age of 25. There were only two recordings of his work ever made, and I’ve been fortunate through endless searching and a great measure of luck to obtain one of them.” The 1929 recording of *Berceuse* performed by Nicholas Vasilieff accompanied by Rudolph Fuchs can be heard on Sharon Ruchman’s website (sharonruchman.com) as can selected excerpts from *Simply Sonoro*.

Her reflections of the expected celebrity of her great uncle were not misplaced. Rudolph Fuchs died in 1930 when the plane in which he was a passenger crashed into Lake Michigan. His intended destination had been the Chicago World’s Fair and the opportunity to perform for an international audience.

The experience of having the spirit of her great uncle a constant presence in her musical career has had several dimensions. First, there was the arrival of sheet music and photos. A distant relative discovered Rudy’s library of photographs and sheet music and shared it with Sharon, which began a furtive search to learn more about the man.

Through the simple formula of hard work, Sharon was able to locate Rudy Fuchs’ first viola, an instrument crafted in 1920 and engraved to the budding musician. Then there was the

outreach to find the recordings. Bit by bit, the information and supporting documentation piled up in Sharon’s office until it became apparent that there was a book to be written. *The Gift of Rudy* is available on Amazon.

The journey goes on

It is certainly a tribute to Sharon Ruchman’s comprehensive love for and understanding of music that is currently manifesting itself in the work of *Sonoro*. The artists she has assembled to create the unique sound represent widely diverse but consistently excellent resumes.

Saxophone and trumpet player Bill Holloman has played behind Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, and Elton John, among many others. Frank Brockelhurst plays both acoustic and electric bass as he has in support of a variety of music’s elite covering Brazilian, Funk, Salsa, R&B, Country Rock and Jazz.

Percussionist Ryan Dunne is both a musician and an educator with strong roots in western Connecticut. The classical undertones of Ruchman’s compositions are brought to life by Jill Pellett Levine, a violist who plays with the Bridgeport, Waterbury, and New Haven Symphony Orchestras. Jennifer Berman, flutist, has performed internationally with symphony orchestras, lyric opera companies, and as a featured soloist.

Sonoro is completed by cellist Mary Costanza, a Julliard-trained performer who has appeared widely with prominent orchestras, received critical acclaim for her album of J.S. Bach Cello Suites and teaches at both the Kent School and The Gunnery in Connecticut.

And for our next selection...

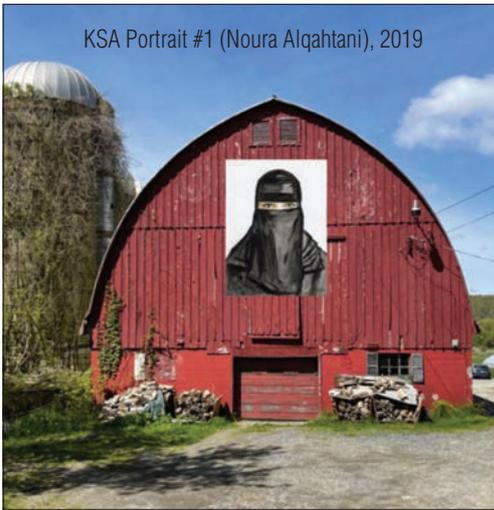
For a working artist, whatever the medium, the question of “What’s next?” is always appropriate. For Sharon Ruchman, the answer comes quickly and decisively. “We can’t wait to get back out and perform.” The magic of in-person performances with audiences showing their appreciation as



Above: Sharon Ruchman with Marc Wager Weisgal at Roxbury Station Studio. Opposite page: The cover art to *Simply Sonoro*.

immediate response is the energizing spark that encourages and sustains. “Music allows everyone to feel and examine the emotions. It touches the heart. It tells a story ... and it lingers in the heart.” Sharon’s constant motivation is to provide something for her audience to connect with – to relate to. “I want it to linger in their minds as a vibrant memory.” ●

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



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While **Meg Thomas** is busy raising her two little boys Mason and Colby, as well as Sophie, a ten-year-old White West Highland Terrier and Cooper, an eight-year-old “Borgi” Border Collie/Corgi Mix, she also finds time to do marketing and events for the Old Klaverack Brewery in Hudson, NY. “For anyone interested in trivia, I host once a month and it’s a blast!” she says. “I love the beauty of Columbia County, the Catskill mountains that I see from my backyard, and the farmland that surrounds me.” Meg also enjoys crafting including designing and making signs. Of her two pups, Meg says, “Sophie’s been my girl through first apartments, moving, getting married, having children – all of it. We adopted Cooper in 2015 on Valentine’s Day!”



Nikki Greenberg moved to Millerton, NY, all the way from Louisiana three years ago and has since fallen in love with the small knit community. She enjoys cooking, going on adventures, and playing with her two beautiful cats – one a recent addition. Phoebe is the newest member of Nikki’s feline family after she was discovered at a local farm. “My boyfriend and I nursed her at all hours of the day and night via syringe and bottle,” she says. Today, Phoebe is a wild three-month-old kitten who enjoys cuddling on shoulders as would a parrot and antagonizing her feline sister Baby who was also a rescue. Her best friends are of course her two owners, as well as Sally the Salamander and her finger puppet named Sophie the fly pig.



Since October 2020, **Krissy Farnham** has worked as a veterinarian technician assistant at the Millerton Veterinary Practice. “What I love about the job is working with the animals, and also being part of something that helps out the community.” When she’s not busy working, Krissy attends Northwestern Connecticut Community College and makes an effort to enjoy the outdoors often. Krissy currently resides in Sharon, CT, which gives her the opportunity to appreciate the region’s serenity and natural beauty as she spends quality time with her dog, Clifford. The puppy is half pitbull, mixed with labrador, husky, and Australian cattle dog. Clifford loves to play ball outside, relax on stormy nights, and go on adventures with Krissy and her boyfriend, **Grant Snyder**. Krissy is thankful to have adopted Clifford, “We were lucky to have found him and given him a forever home.”



Charlotte Sheridan and her pup Hazel have been the best of friends for six years. Charlotte is the owner of Merwin Farm and Home in the Village of Millerton, NY, and while not running her shop, she enjoys taking in the sights and sounds of our area while out on long walks with Hazel. In her spare time, Hazel loves stretching out on the couch for a long afternoon nap and hanging out in the yard with her family on warm summer evenings. Hazel is currently basking in her role as the shop mascot and is looking forward to greeting each new customer who walks in the door. “She’s stuck by side through thick and thin,” says Charlotte. “She never leaves my side.”



As she nears two decades with Sharon Hospital’s radiology department as a nuclear medicine technologist, **Carolyn Watson’s** passion for service and education beams on. “It’s a privilege to help others understand what we do – from why certain tests are ordered to new ways medicine has advanced to keep you safe and on-top of your health,” the Goshen, CT, resident said. An avid outdoors adventurer, Watson partners with Boy Scout Troop 35 in Goshen for fresh air excursions and memorable moments with her family. “Though I miss the southern hospitality of my Florida hometown, I am grateful to be surrounded by the abundance of seasonal sights and arts the area offers,” she said. Watson plans to hike the White Mountains this summer, “which is my training for a 100-mile hike at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico come 2022, which reaches elevations as high as 12,000 feet!” she added.



Sarah Dingee is an interior and exterior residence painter who has been mastering the craft periodically throughout her entire life. “My favorite part of the career is doing my part to help transform a vision into a reality,” she says. Outside of work Sarah says she enjoys gardening, hiking, and evening campfires. “I’ve lived in the area my whole life,” Sarah says. “I simply love how beautiful it is here.” She also has two kitties whose names are Clover and Max. “They follow me into every room or every window as I water the plants outside,” she says. “They are my true sidekicks, and they are with me everywhere I go.”

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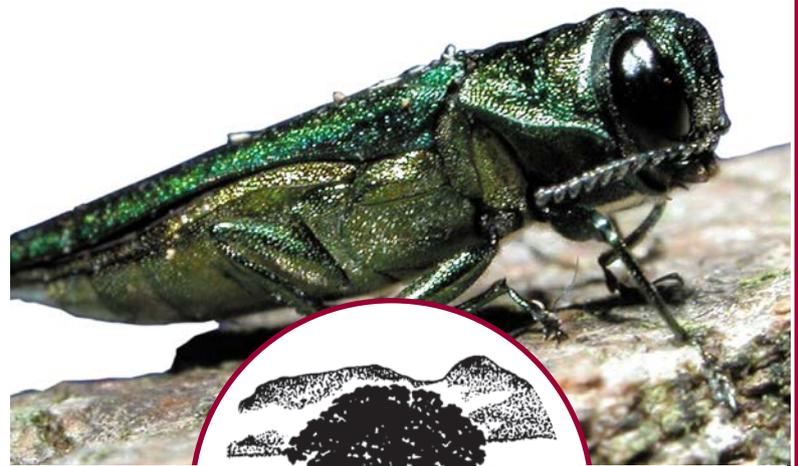
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Growing a business

TOM SCOTT, FALLS VILLAGE FLOWER FARM, FALLS VILLAGE, CT

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

Tom Scott, the founder and owner of Falls Village Flower Farm, sat down with me in his home office on a Sunday morning, to talk about the business he has built – or perhaps planted – over the last 24 years.

How did you arrive in Falls Village in this idyllic location?

I grew up in Dover Plains and when I was about ten years old I watched the Dover Fire Department carnival days parade. The Falls Village Department participated and sent about six firemen who looked like Appalachian Mountain men with long beards and white hair pulling an antique fire hose cart. I wondered what kind of place is this Falls Village. It intrigued me immensely. As an adult I heard about the great reputation of the Kellogg School and had friends who lived here. It must have been almost 30 years ago that Charlotte Kester's farm became available, and I bought it directly from her with the idea of starting my own nursery. There was an old collapsing barn and a spring house where farmers stored their milk until the milk train stopped by.

How would you describe your business?

We sell hardy, vigorous ornamental plants that are grown outside without greenhouses or artificial light.



These plants are grown from seeds, divisions, cuttings and starter plugs. We overwinter our plants and sell them the next year after we find out whether they are worth growing.

How did you learn about plants?

It started when I had a small vegetable plot on my grandmother's land. After high school and one year of college, which wasn't for me, I had a variety of jobs doing almost everything. My first job was at the Dover IGA. Then I worked as a carpenter, managed the store at Ellsworth Farms, grew vegetables for White Hollow Farm and worked for other nurseries. What people don't understand is that growing plants is only part of this business. It's also managing people, interacting with customers, maintaining equipment, marketing, and paying taxes and bills.

How did the business grow?

We started out very small as a wholesale nursery in 1997. Garden designer Marsha Kaufman was our very first customer. The business just ballooned, and we added more growing space, and more cultivars. We have wholesale and retail customers and they come from all over – Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York. As a group they are very knowledgeable about plants – that's why they come here. We have garden designers and garden services as clients, but about 99% of our business now is retail.

What's necessary to succeed in this kind of business?

Basically, you have to be a jack of all trades, mechanically inclined to maintain and repair equipment, be socially acceptable, and know all the legal aspects of being in business. You also have to know how plants grow. What is the physical structure



– the crown, roots, and stems? To understand how each plant is different. Where the flowers are formed, and the timing, different ways of pruning and how a plant reacts to growing conditions.

I've learned that marketing is helpful in growing a business. I now have a marketing consultant that handles all our social media, radio, and print ad placement and even special events. For example there is a regularly scheduled painting class that comes to the nursery to paint from nature. And we have a webmaster who supports our internet presence.

What's special about Falls Village Flower Farm?

We grow our own plants and always have plants in stock even when they aren't blooming. We offer unusual, tested plants that are hard to find, and we will find and cultivate plants customers are looking for. As I mentioned we also give customers a lot of advice and information about the plants they are buying.

Continued on next page ...

Above: Wagons are ready to be filled up with plants at the Falls Village Flower Farm. Below, left: Tom Scott enthusiastically describes *Hydrangea aspera subsp. Sargentiana* with its large velvety leaves. Educating customers is key to the farm's success. All photos by Christine Bates.

What's the most difficult part?

The hardest part is finding reliable, capable people who are serious about working here. Right now I have seven part-time employees and they are all great.

Are nurseries regulated?

We are licensed and inspected by the state of Connecticut because we grow plants. Regulators are checking for bugs and disease and want to make sure we produce a clean product.

What don't most people understand about plants?

The biggest misunderstanding is the importance of pruning, which encourages a plant to grow and become stronger. Fertilizing in spring, summer, and fall is also very helpful. We use a 10-10-10 fertilizer here. An easy thing to do is to leave the leaves in your garden in the fall. They retain the moisture, decompose, and hold down the weeds.

What do you find most satisfying about running a nursery?

I get the winter off – just kidding. Producing a good plant is the best part and experimenting with different methods of planting and pruning.

What's a typical day for you? What do you do in winter?

During the season from March until October a typical workday consists of two hours of watering starting at 6am. Then the staff arrives at 8 and we talk about what we are going to do that day. Usually, I get to come



home sometime around 6pm to 8pm. It's really a 24/7 business.

In the "off" season I visit my family in Maine every year for a big lobster Thanksgiving meal. For the rest of the winter, I take care of equipment, order supplies, and even clean my house – there's no time for that during the season. Then there's winter pruning. I start with fruit trees, move on to ornamental shrubs, and end up with roses and grapes in March.

Whom do you admire?

I admire those who are really knowledgeable about plants. Like Wenonah Webster in Sheffield – the family has been in the landscaping and horticulture business for generations. Adam Wheeler at Broken Arrow Nursery in Hamden, CT, has a wealth of knowledge. They grow plants there that won't survive here.

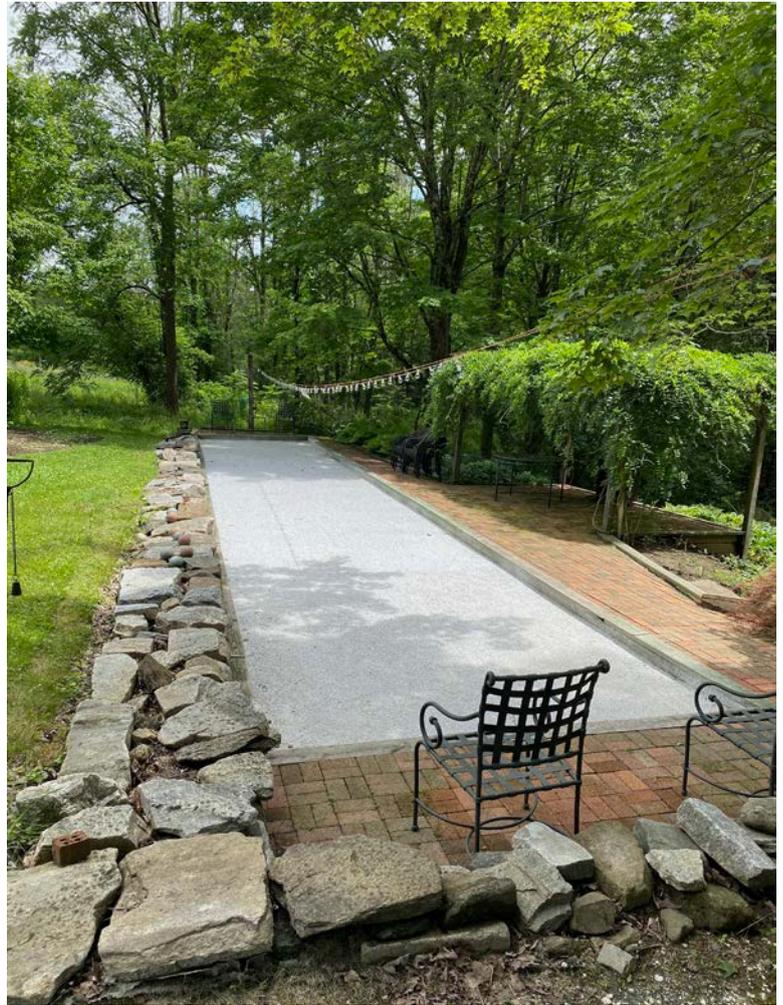
Have you had any disasters? What impact did Covid have on your business?

We did get hit by hail stones the size of ping pong balls and we almost had a big disaster when our irrigation pump went out on a Saturday night. Perotti's came over and saved the day, but the Falls Village Fire Department was standing by with tanker trucks and Century Cement was prepared to send help to supply water if the pump couldn't get repaired.

During Covid our business boomed. Our first three customers in 2020 said the same thing, "We're stuck at home and we're going to do some gardening." I think it will last as people realize that gardening is healthy exercise with great rewards.

What's next for the farm?

In the immediate future we're developing cut flower bouquets and stems for sale with a flower display garden for people to view. But we will be doing the flower cutting. The other big new effort was building a regulation bocce ball court and now finding enthusiasts who would like to play. You can bring



Above: The recently installed bocce ball court surrounded by gardens awaits players. The 60' regulation bocce ball court is available for rent on an hourly or daily basis. Bring your own fun. Below, left: Pink foxgloves wait to be selected and planted in the ground.

your own food and drink and up to eight friends and play on an hourly basis, half day or full day. Anybody can play and you don't have to be good to have a lot of fun.

Over the longer term I would like to find someone who would work alongside me, learn about plants and the business and then take over. Then I would work for them and take orders – I never intend to retire.

What do you tell customers when they ask you what to plant?

It's simple. I tell them to plant what they like looking at. As Duke Ellington said when someone asked about what's the best music, "It's the kind of music you like listening to. If it sounds good, it is good."

Have you noticed the impact of climate change?

Climate change has affected us here for at least the last ten years. It has shortened our winters affecting plants that require dormancy. Weather has become more severe – heavy rainfalls then drought. We're told that we shouldn't be planting hemlocks now because of higher temperatures. Our climate is definitely changing. ●

To learn more about the Falls Village Flower Farm, you can visit them at 27 Kellogg Road in Falls Village, or online at www.fallsvillageflowerfarm.com.

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Frozen Lemon Pie



By Olivia Valentine &
Caroline Markonic
info@mainstreetmag.com

It's summer. It's hot. And we feel we need to keep the no bake or minimal bake theme going.

Frozen Lemon Pie is a cinch to whip up. With very few ingredients and just a couple of minutes whisking egg yolks and sugar over the double boiler, you'll have a refreshing summer dessert in no time!

The filling vs. crust debate

When making a pie, yes, you need to have a delicious filling, but for us, it is equally important to have a delicious crust. Nilla Wafers elevate this pie to an entirely new level. We hadn't had Nilla Wafers in years and honestly forgot about the vanilla-y little wafer cookie. They sure are a yummy treat on their own, but make for an even yummiest crust for a dessert such as this! Next level, even.

Frozen Lemon Pie has been said to taste like an orange-cicle only in pie form and made with lemons. This recipe was found in our recipe book in Olivia's handwriting. It was probably written when she was a teen because the recipe was very vague, and instructions were missing. It was more like notes jotted down on a recipe card.

And so, after making the pie a few times, we think we have it perfected. The first time we made it, we chose not to freeze it, the second time we did freeze it. You can do either. Half of our taste testers preferred it frozen, half liked it refrigerated. We also baked the pie crust the first go around, but that is totally unnecessary. The crust held its shape very well refrigerated and frozen.

This pie is not too sweet, has a bit of tartness to it and is just super-duper refreshing.

Crust ingredients:

1 1/4 cup Nilla Wafers
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 stick of butter melted

Directions for crust:

Crush Nilla Wafers in a food processor or blender until course. Melt butter with 1/4 cup of brown sugar. Mix butter and brown sugar together with Nilla Wafer crumbs. Press firmly into a 9" pie plate and set aside.

Lemon filling:

3 eggs separated
2/3 cup sugar
Juice of one lemon and the zest
1 cup heavy cream

Filling directions:

Whisk the 3 egg yolks together with 2/3 cup of sugar, juice of one lemon and the rind over a double boiler until mixture thickens. Set aside to cool.

Beat egg whites with 2 tbs of sugar until stiff peaks form; set aside.

Beat 1 cup of heavy cream until stiff peaks just begin to form. Fold lemon mixture with egg whites and whipped cream together. Pour into pie plate. Refrigerate or freeze.

If you are freezing the pie, remove a few minutes prior to serving. It will make slicing so much easier! Serve with whipped cream (we added candied lemon rinds to garnish our pie, DM us for the recipe). •

Olivia and Caroline are enthusiastic foodies and bakers who are constantly in the kitchen, as well as explorers who create their own adventures in our area – and did we mention they are mother and daughter? Follow Olivia on Instagram to see her many creations at @oliviauvalentine.

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FLIP INTENT

Flip, flop, and fixing houses – for a profit?

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

According to national statistics an estimated 6% of homes sold in the US are flipped properties – although from all the flipping, flopping, and fixing shows on television, flipping fascination seems much higher. For this issue of Main Street Magazine, we decided to explore the flipping phenomenon in our region at this moment in time. Who does it and why? Do they make money? Can flips still be found?

Flip success or failure

Successful “flippers” are good at recognizing great deals in a specific market, finding or having the capital required to improve the property, and utilizing design, renovation, and construction expertise and relationships with the “trades.” A real flipper also has people management, budgeting, marketing, and scheduling skills. The mistakes that floppers make are the reverse. Floppers can end up losing money by underestimating the time and money it will take to complete the project or paying too much and spending too much time and money on renovations.

An unknown factor is always timing. The dynamics of a real estate market can change between purchase and sale, which is why full-time flippers move quickly. A sudden rise in interest rates, a collapse in the stock market, decline in employment, or a sudden disaster like 9/11 or Covid can swing real estate prices up or down.

Flipping is not for the inexperienced or the risk adverse.

How much can a flipper make?

Experienced realtors in our area calculate that a potential flip property should have an estimated upside of at least 25%. For example, if a home fixed up would sell for \$400,000 and renovations are estimated at \$100,000, an experienced flipper would pay no more than \$210,000 for the property. This would provide a gross return of 29% on the total investment of \$310,000.

But the bottom line on a flip is not just the sale price minus the purchase and renovation cost. There is the cost of buying and selling – commissions, lawyers fees, taxes, etc. Then consider the expense of financing the project, and paying ongoing expenses like utilities, insurance, and property taxes. These expenses can be as high as 10% to 15% of the final sale price and can half the profitability of a flip. And none of this is factoring in the risk involved. Bob Chieffo, owner of Bob Will Buy It (www.bobwillbuyit.com) and a successful full-time flipper operating in southern Dutchess County, estimated his average final net gain at 10%.

Accidental flips

Sometimes markets change along with owners’ priorities and something that appears to be a flip is just a happy co-



incidence for everyone involved. The sudden rise in home prices, particularly in Salisbury, CT, has resulted in sales that seem like genius flips but are really a result of market timing. An extreme example of this is a unique property in Lakeville, CT, originally listed at \$895,000 at the end of 2016 and eventually selling three years later for \$300,000 in late 2019. It was re-listed in October of last year after the new owners had a change of plans and closed at \$700,000 in April of this year in a red-hot market.

A modern farmhouse on Taconic Road in Salisbury closed for \$740,000 in February of last year and after extensive landscaping, the addition of a pool and interior renovation is now under contract at a listing price of \$1,250,000. It was not the intention of the owner to “flip” the property but having invested wisely to create a

Above: 21 Crescent Street before and after. The flipper said it actually looked worse when he bought it. Photo courtesy of Dutchess Parcel Access and Bob Chieffo of Bob Will Buy It. Left: As this issue went to press, 215 Belgo Road was listed at \$1,095,000. Photo by Christine Bates.



Continued on next page ...

move-in home for himself, he created a home that was in high demand at a time of very limited inventory.

Resales at Silo Ridge

Early buyers at Silo Ridge are also taking advantage of the strong real estate market as well as the continued build-out and addition of amenities at the exclusive gated community. According to the New York State Sales Data Base, some buyers who purchased in the summer of 2018 during the early stages of construction, doubled their initial \$2 million dollar investments by selling in the fall of 2020 without doing any renovation. One really lucky investor bought in January of 2020 for \$3.3 million before real estate prices rocketed upward and sold a year later for \$5.8 million – a handsome 75% return on a one-year investment.

Can you flip right now? Maybe

It's possible that in a real estate market where few buyers want to do any renovation flip possibilities exist; however, high prices even on distressed properties, the rising cost of building supplies, equipment shortages, overbooked contractors and trades (good luck trying to find an available electrician or plumber), the possibility of rising interest rates, and an uncertain direction in the real estate market make flipping seem like an even riskier proposition.

All of this may be true but astute flippers are still being successful like Bob Chieffo who purchased a run-down ranch in Millbrook for \$154,000 with over five acres of land on Crescent Road in July of 2020, did an *Architectural Digest*-worthy



Above: After three months of renovations, 50 Hammettown Road sold for \$695,000. Photo by Christine Bates.

gut renovation including staging, and closed in June over the asking price at \$933,300 after only a few days on the market (see before and after photos on previous page).

With so little inventory available buyers are still willing to pay top dollar for ready-to-move-into houses, especially ones in great locations. It's much faster, certain, and easier than hiring a contractor to renovate and waiting and waiting.

Another recent flip on a more modest scale was at 50 Hammettown Road in Twin Lakes, Salisbury (see photo below), which was purchased for \$300,000 in July of 2020 by investors, and after gutting and repainting dark grey (the color of the moment), the house was back on the market by October at \$725,000. An offer was accepted a few weeks later and the house quickly closed at \$695,000.

Both of these flips are examples of the importance of buying the worst house in a great neighborhood at an attractive price.

Low flips, fast flips

There are also flips at the lower end of the market. An example of a flip on a more modest scale which took a while to sell is 74 Beilke Road in the Town of North East, NY (see photo above). According to realtor.com the modest ranch was purchased in March of 2018 for \$88,500, and after ongoing a mid century modern redo, listed for \$410,000 in July of 2019, but not sold until a year later at \$345,000.

An example of a fast flip at the lower end of the market is a small 982-square-foot home at 41A Fowler Street in Lakeville (see photo above right). Purchased for \$136,000 in late April of this year, the house was freshly repainted and improved and listed the next month at \$309,000. There was an accepted offer at the time this article was written in July.

Mid-air flips

By exploring realtor.com for houses for sale and checking on property history, anyone can engage in real time flip watching. For example, the raised ranch at 215 Belgo Road was purchased for \$450,000 in September 2020 (see photo previous page). After



adding a new kitchen and bathrooms, it was listed for sale just before this article went to press at \$1,095,000.

Heads or tails - it's a flip

Some real estate professionals, like John Harney of William Pitt Sotheby's International Real Estate, believe, "Flipping is fine, but one issue is that it is eroding the current stock of affordable housing. These properties, once renovated, are lost forever to full-time local families. So, the question is where are the people who work in town and in our stores, who volunteer for the ambulance and fire companies, and where can they find affordable housing?" [See article about affordable housing on page 31].

On the other side, experienced full-time flippers like Bob Chieffo maintain that flippers like himself who buy directly from sellers provide a real benefit to those wishing to sell their homes quickly without fixing them up or cleaning them out. Once renovated, these houses are sold at a market price and improve the neighborhood and surrounding homes. ●



Above top to bottom: Before and after photos of Beilke Road property in the Town of North East. Photo courtesy of Dutchess Parcel Access. This home on Fowler Street behind the grocery store in Salisbury is in contract for \$309,000 a month after renovation. Photo by Christine Bates.

Christine Bates is a registered real estate agent with William Pitt Sotheby's International Real Estate in New York and Connecticut. She has written monthly for Main Street Magazine since its very first issue.

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GILDED MOON
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New traditions: *Dutchess County's beloved fair makes its triumphant return in 2021*

By Griffin Cooper
griffin@mainstreetmag.com

There is a lot to be said about the terms “routine” and “tradition” after the collective experience of 2020. For over a century, generations of local families have fastened themselves to the tradition of attending the Dutchess County Fair so much so that the annual event has ingrained itself as a cultural routine throughout the Hudson Valley. Each year, as August draws to a close and summer enters its twilight, locals find solace in the possibility of enjoying one final taste of the season's nectar as they collect friends and families and head to Rhinebeck to take in summer's traditional curtain call.

Whether its heading to the 4-H stand to savor a distinctly delicious milkshake while wandering through the variety of stables to get a one-of-a-kind visit with local farmers and their sheep and cattle, unapologetically abandoning our summer diet plans in favor of indulging in a variety of fried fare, testing our inner moxie on the many rides and games who's colorful neon light up the late-summer night, or perusing the latest creations from local artisans, folks unwittingly weave themselves into the fabric of local tradition simply by attending the fair each year. As with many traditions, 2020's unrelenting nature forced the Dutchess County Fair to shutter its

gates, making for a painful capstone on a woefully suppressed summer in New York State. The bitter taste of the fair's absence last year has served to foment an historic sense of excitement at the possibility of its return this year – and thankfully, that time has come.

The 1842 origins

According to the Poughkeepsie Public Library District, the fair originated from the Dutchess County Agricultural Society which was formed in 1842. The purpose of the society was and still is to “continue the development of agriculture, household manufactured items, and domestic produce.” The first official fair was held in Washington Hollow in 1842. Many followed in that same location which is currently occupied by the barracks of the New York State police. The fair was also held off and on in Poughkeepsie in the area of what is now Mill and Catherine Streets.

During the 20th century, the fair suffered from a considerable number of financial challenges. This caused the cancellation of the 1916 and 1918 fairs. In 1917, the fairgrounds in Poughkeepsie were used to mobilize people on the home front on behalf of the men involved in the war effort.

In 1950, the reincorporated Dutchess County Agricultural Society,



Inc. purchased Springbrook Park and renamed it the Dutchess County Fairgrounds. The facility has since grown to 147 acres. Construction on the fairgrounds over the years has been constant and impressive. Still, despite two World Wars and Hurricane Irene in 2011, the effect of cancellation was felt as hard as ever given the impact of 2020.

The fair's return in 2021 is not only a signal of one painful chapter being closed, it also remains a testament to the resilience of those communities that occupy rural New York. Vicki Imperati, administrative operations manager for the Dutchess County Fairgrounds, took a moment to ponder the fair's impact on the community, the painful decision to close last year and what to expect from this year's triumphant return.

How did you and your husband Andrew become involved with the fairgrounds?

Andy's father was both a farmer and a director of the Dutchess County Agricultural Society. Growing up, Andy enjoyed showing his beef cows at the fair for families in our area. Andy

went on to attend SUNY Cobleskill and graduated with an Agricultural degree. After college, he came home and ran the family drywall and construction business for a time. While Andy was working his way through college and starting a new career, I was working for the Red Hook Central School district and like many folks, used to take vacation time in order to work at the fair.

Our paths crossed at the fair in 1991 and we married in 1993 so the fair is undoubtedly an integral part of both our lives. We briefly moved to Montana but moved back after only a year. Soon after, fair manager Tom Odak offered me full-time employment as the superintendent of entries during the fair, and in the office during the off-season. Tom reached out to Andy when the existing horse stalls in the barns needed to be repaired. What was supposed to be a two-week job, turned into full-time employment for Andy so the fairgrounds feel like a kind of home for both of us.

Continued on next page ...



How would you describe the fair’s impact on the agricultural and artisan community locally?

The original goal of the Dutchess County Fair, and what has become part of its legacy, is its mission to bring people together to show off their agricultural products, be it livestock, vegetables, grains, quilts or homemade goods.

Today, the fair remains a showcase for people to learn about where their food comes from and how it’s produced. What makes the Dutchess County Fair such a constant tradition in our area is its presence as a place where people gather and bring the community together through the sharing of knowledge, products, and memories of fairs past.

How did you and the team come to the decision to postpone the fair in 2020? How difficult was the decision? Were there similarities to the events surrounding Hurricane Irene in 2011?

Together with management, our board of directors made the decision based on the safety of all of our exhibitors, vendors, staff, and patrons. Much of what played a role in our final decision had to do with what we knew in June of 2020, it was the only safe decision to be made. Given how the rest of the summer unfolded, we still feel as though safety was rightly our top priority.

Still, it was one of the most difficult decisions we’ve had to make. In 2011, after Hurricane Irene, though it was certainly devastating for many, we were able to keep the fair open



until that Friday evening before the decision was made to close and again was based upon the safety of everyone here. Last year, it was heartbreaking. Knowing that decision would affect so many livelihoods while understanding that the health risks were simply too many – it was devastating for all of us.

Were there ever any doubts as to whether the fair would make a comeback this year?

Yes there were doubts, I would be lying if I said anything different. For a painfully long time, we were uncertain if restrictions would be lifted or not, how long that would take, and how we would go about navigating the fair even if they were.

While we did make proactive plans during the shutdown, everything was tentative. We waited for word from the state government that we could proceed, stayed positive and hopeful

and when the news finally came that the fair would be a possibility, we were overjoyed for the community.

Describe the process of planning the 2021 Dutchess County Fair. How important do you feel it was for the fair to come back?

Planning for the Dutchess County Fair traditionally begins while the previous year’s fair is still occurring and is subsequently a year-long process. We started preliminary planning in January in the hopes that we would be able to open. Everything that could be pre-planned, was done while we waited for guidance from the state to move ahead. Some decisions were made early on. A few of those included one way traffic patterns, the elimination of high-touch or hands-on interactive displays and of course, wider aisles will remain in place this year.

Through it all, everyone held on to one singular notion in order to help make this happen – like every other business that was affected by the pandemic, we needed to open.

Are there any other changes to the fair or its operations this year and what do you see for the fair moving forward?

The AgriVenture Tent, Hands on Horses and the Entertainment Tent have all been put on hiatus for this

year. Tickets as well are currently only available online at dutchessfair.com. Again, we made a high priority to limit the amount of high-touch activities while still keeping the spirit of the fair present.

Looking at fair attendance numbers from around the country, we expect to have large crowds this year and of course the weather will play a role in that as well. We hope that it will be a successful year for everyone all the way around because that is what we all need right now – a little fun, a little togetherness, a little community tradition. ●

The 2021 Dutchess County Fair will be held from August 24-29, for more information or to purchase your tickets, visit www.dutchess-fair.com. All images courtesy of The Dutchess County Agricultural Society.





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By *Dominique DeVito*
info@mainstreetmag.com

What was your family doing 100 years ago? That's four or five generations back. Past your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents, and on to your great-great grandparents. Think about it. How far back do your family stories go? If you're the average person who knows something about two or three generations back, that's significant. Now imagine that your family has been doing what it does for 100 years – or more – and imagine if that occupation is farming the land. Clearly, century farms and the family farmers who sustain them are very special people.

Emily Hay is one of them. Her family has owned and worked the Kemmerer Farm in Stanfordville, NY, since 1921, when the land was purchased by great-great grandfather Otto Kemmerer. "I'm fourth generation," she tells me with not just pride but very real passion. "Farming is a daily thing that keeps you working together and succeeding together," she says. "A family comes together to make it work. That's what mine has done."

Where it all started

Kemmerer Farm is a 100-acre hay farm. Emily is the oldest of five children in the current generation of

Kemmerers. John Kemmerer, Sr., and Clara are her parents, and her siblings are John Jr. ("Hansey"), Leif, Victoria, and Kristin, who tragically passed away in late 2019. She had a passion for all animals and helping others. She would be an immense part of the foundation were she here today," Emily says. "I know she's smiling down on us."

All of them were raised on and continue to work on the farm. Emily was in charge of the feed store in Pine Plains that was part of the operation until COVID came along. The store had to close, and like a lot of other people during the lockdown months of the pandemic, Emily found herself with time to think about things.

"I found myself wondering about how to make a change for farmers and their families. I started brainstorming and networking," she says, "and I realized that I could do something for century farmers in particular – help them pay off debts, of course, but also provide business planning, help with property taxes, even provide emotional support. Anything."

Farmers know about hardship, for sure. The weather can sabotage an entire year of a crop. Equipment breaks and needs to be repaired or replaced. Animals need attention every day of the year – morning, noon and night. Finding and keeping help can be especially challenging. It makes you appreciate what Andy Warhol once said about farming: "I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want to own."

Understanding what farmers face

"In my own life, I came to realize the extent of personal struggles that are particular to farmers, and also the struggle of family farmers not just in New York but across the country. The



Above: The Kemmerer and Hay families, L-R: Leif, Victoria, Addisyn, John Sr., Clara, John Jr with Mila, Brad, and Emily with Corbin. Bottom, left: Emily preps pots that will be wild-flower centerpieces for the event on August 21.



number of farms that can survive is diminishing year by year," she says. Her research revealed that an ever-increasing number of small farm owners are facing bankruptcy or foreclosure, forcing them to sell property or assets to survive. In addition, due to price fixing by larger manufacturers, farmers are forced to sell their goods at lower prices even while their expenses rise. Reluctantly relying on credit to stay afloat also incurs high interest. Loss of farms isn't just loss of livelihoods, either, though that's significant. It's also a loss of a way of life that is part of the foundation of this country – and the planet.

To begin to effect changes she hoped could bring relief to the farmers and farms she loves, Emily founded the Centennial Farms Foundation, a charitable organization for century farmers facing hardship. That was the first step.

It doesn't take long in a conversation with Emily to understand that she is a force to be reckoned with. When the concept for the Centennial Farms Foundation came together, she went full speed ahead to make it hap-

Continued on next page ...

pen. “I’m self-driven and self-taught,” she says, “and I got a strong sense of business from my parents working in the fields and in the feed store.” Emily verified the name and registered the Foundation with the requisite Employee Identification Number. She reached out to the Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan, whose mission is “connecting people who care with causes that matter.” By working with them, Emily is able to get administrative support and also start taking tax-deductible contributions without having to pay the hefty price to apply for full 501©3 status for her foundation.

Making help happen

When the partnership was secured, Emily created brochures to help get the word out. She did extensive grass roots marketing, going throughout the area to talk to people where she could and distribute the brochures. “I worked any avenue I thought could get results,” she says, “and donations started coming in immediately.”

Emily had the idea to host a fundraising event on her family farm because there had been weddings held there through the years, including her parents’ and her own. She met the super talented and well-loved jazz singer Wanda Houston through a mutual friend and told her about the Foundation. Houston and her band wanted to help, and the Centennial Hay Days Charity Music Event for the Centennial Farms Foundation was born. It’s

being held at the Kemmerer Farm on Saturday, August 21, from 4 to 9pm. Not only will Houston and the band be performing, but there will also be a farm-to-table dinner and a fireworks finale. “I did all the planning for my wedding,” Emily says, “so I had an idea of what a big event would entail – though it’s definitely been more difficult and time-consuming,” she chuckles. The farm is limiting attendance to 228 guests, who must be registered as sponsors. (Information about the event can be found at www.cff100.org.)

“An event serves a couple of purposes,” Emily says. “It’s a special occasion that raises money, for sure, but it also brings the farm to life, and that’s great for everyone.”

The girl and the farm

Favorite memories Emily has of farm life include an overall free and independent feeling; swimming in the pond; being able to drive a tractor at a young age; and the satisfaction of a full day’s work. Her husband, Bradley Hay, grew up working on farms, and they have three small children – Mila who’s nine; Addisyn who’s five; and Corbin, who’s three. They have a small homestead where they live in Pine Plains, and Emily and Brad nurture a caring for animals and interconnectedness with their kids. Emily hopes to one day move back to the Kemmerer Farm. She knows it’s hard to relate to farming and all it involves when you haven’t experienced it,



Above: John Kemmerer, Sr., poses with grandchildren Mila, Addisyn, and Corbin on a hay wagon. Below, left: A load of baled hay is brought back to the barn on a summer night, signaling the end of a typically long day on a farm.

and that the Hudson Valley is a very desirable location for people coming from the city to visit and then settle in. While that demographic can bring new businesses and jobs and additional wealth to an area, she worries that it becomes more tempting for struggling family farms to sell, which in turn makes it that much more important that family farms get the help they need to survive.

“Farmers make the world go around,” she says. “This is a life project for me. There are at least 30 century farms in Dutchess County alone, and from there I hope to make a difference with this foundation across the country. By 2031 I hope to have raised and allocated millions of dollars for century farm owners, helping to establish economic sustainability for today’s farmers and those of the future.” •

Learn more about the Centennial Farms Foundation, whose motto is “Reaping and Sowing for Good,” at www.cff100.org, and follow them on Facebook. You can also email Emily at emilyhay@cff100.org or call (845)902-8791. Register to attend the Centennial Hay Days Charity Music Event with Wanda Houston through the website. And remember to Thank a Farmer. Daily if possible.



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Social media:

THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

By Caleb May
info@mainstreetmag.com

Social media. It is becoming another constant in life right alongside death and taxes. It seems everyone has had an interaction with one of the many social media platforms. In recent years it has even sprouted some heated debates on whether it is damaging or beneficial to the people that use them.

Personally, I think that something can be said for both sides of the argument. Like many hot-button topics, social media is not a black and white issue. There are some huge benefits and some huge detractions and even those can be double-edged swords sometimes. So, I thought I might dive into the world of YouTube, Instagram, and all the other platforms to give you a teen's take on social media.

A lifeline of social connection

I use social media on daily basis. From the moment I downloaded Instagram about four years ago, it has become part of my routine. I wake up and check to see if anyone has sent me a message or a funny video or picture. The majority of teens share this habit with me. For people around the globe, logging on to check morning messages has become just as ingrained in our common culture as having a steaming cup of joe in the morning.

That brings me to the first benefit of social media. The ability to stay connected. I think I realized how important this aspect was when COVID-19 hit. Suddenly, I went from seeing my friends every day at school,

to only seeing their little box in Zoom meetings. Just as suddenly, social media was not just about intermittently posting updates about your life or recent events, but rather as a lifeline of social connection. Since I couldn't see my friends without risking our health and safety, social media platforms became a haven to keep those connections alive which, in turn, helped me through this pandemic.

Another benefit of platforms like YouTube is the easy access to information. It is like having the world's largest library at your disposal. Through my YouTube viewing, I have taught myself how to sing better, how to fish, gained bird knowledge, and grew a passion for cars. I even posted my documentary film on the burying of local black history on YouTube where anyone can see it and learn about a topic they would have never considered thinking about.

The double-edged sword

However, this ability to post and read anything that is out there is part of the double-edged sword of social media. I have seen a rise of people who watch a video or two on a highly complicated topic and begin to formulate their own opinion or spread false information. The accessibility of the information has led people to scratch at the surface of something and consider themselves experts. Anything can be posted and taken seriously, which has led to the rise of dangerous conspiracy theories on the current pandemic, vaccines, and climate change. On the internet,

anyone can have a voice on anything and I think, in its current unregulated state, that is a bad thing.

The darkest forms of social media

The same thing can happen with racism and other forms of discrimination. Recently, three black English soccer players by the name of Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho, and Bukayo Saka missed crucial penalties to lose England's first final in 55 years. Immediately people slipped behind the anonymous wall of social media and hurled deeply disturbing and racist comments towards the trio who are just 23, 21, and 19 years old, respectively.

It was social media at its very darkest. The uncontrolled anonymity is a breeding ground for things like this. However, in this scenario, social media gave birth to a wave of people coming to the aid and support of the young lads. Thousands of comments of support drowned out the horrific voices that fed off the feeling of not being traceable. It was a beautiful thing to watch as you could see the good in humanity band together through social media.

But keep this in mind:

Social media is here to stay. It has found a way to be a part of every bit of pop culture. Songs that become popular on social media from trends dominate the music charts and people who get famous off social media are celebrities. As it becomes even more popular and widespread it is impor-

tant to keep some things in mind.

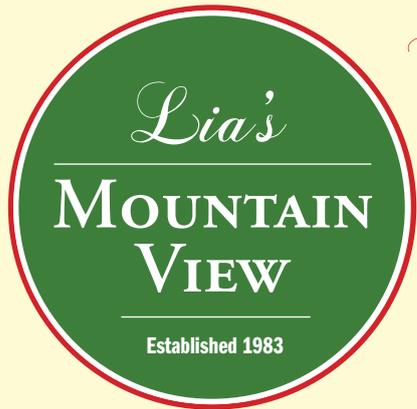
Social media is not inherently bad or good. Platforms can cause insecurities, house rampant racism and discrimination, and be at the center of conspiracy theories. However, at the same time, there are some incredible benefits. People can connect with others, promote their brand or business, and share their favorite moments with people around the globe.

I grew up in the last generation of no phones. When I was young, phones were not common amongst my peers and the internet was miles off from where it is now. Today, everyone has a device and most likely a social media account. That is why it is ever important to teach what social media can give and its effects on the world.

I may not be a leading expert on the topic, but I hope this article helps you understand social media from a teen's perspective. Social media is vast. There are good parts and bad parts. So, manage the time you spend and trying to spread positive change and feelings throughout the world because, at its best, that is what social media can do! ●

Caleb May is one of Main Street's "younger" summer employees, honing his writing, marketing, and video production skills before heading off to college in the fall. He will be attending the University of Vermont to study wildlife and fisheries biology.

Photo: istockphoto.com contributor ViewApart



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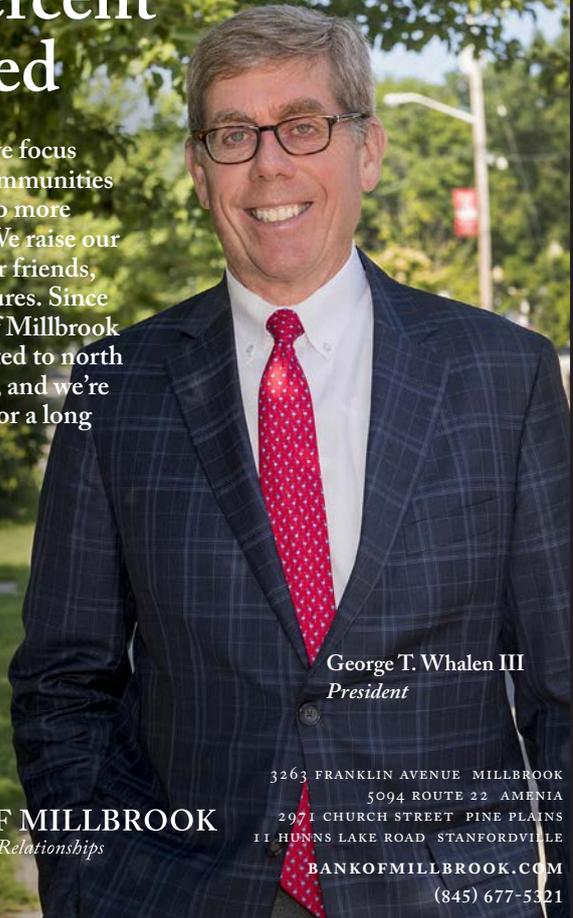
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Urgent progress towards prosperity:

Area initiatives seek to bring affordable housing close to home

By Griffin Cooper
griffin@mainstreetmag.com

“Home is a place not only of strong affections,” Harriet Beeche Stowe once said. “But of entire unreserved.” The famous sentiment has since encompassed the entirety of the nation’s romantic ambitions for home ownership. It is not only a place we value as a “dressing room” for the outside world, home has also come to represent our individual legacies, generational birthmarks, and youthful ambition – a physical representation of how we see ourselves.

In rural America, home ownership has become an especially important way of life. Since the turn of the 21st century, that way of life has gone from permanent to unsteady thanks to economic crises, market collapses, and most recently, a global pandemic. The unprecedented surge with which the coronavirus swept through the streets of New York City provoked similarly jaw-dropping waves of migrations northward along the banks of the Hudson River and east toward Litchfield County’s foothills – and beyond.

In a desperate attempt to put some distance between themselves and the city’s growing infection rates, Manhattanites suddenly found themselves imbued with both the area’s natural beauty, as well as its convenient proximity to careers now allowing for “remote” work schedules. While it always feels somewhat satisfying for the historic beauty of our area to be appreciated, the newfound haven for city-dwellers did little for locals in search of a home of their own – particularly for first-time buyers. “The process of buying a home for the first time is stressful enough,” said one resident



and small business owner in the Village of Millerton, NY. “This past year made what was already tense, downright scary for me and my family.”

Accounts like these have unfortunately become more dense as inventory and sales prices have remained historically volatile since the spring of last year. According to the New York State Association of Realtors’ May 2021 report, New York state’s average home sales prices have increased from \$384,259 to \$481,456 since May of 2020. A May report from the *Albany Times Union* stated, “If no additional single-family homes were listed for sale in the Hudson Valley Catskill Region Multiple Listing Service, the available home inventory – just 275 units – would sell out in just about five weeks in Ulster County.” For locals, particularly those aged 25-40, the unexpected bidding wars between cash buyers and those with generational wealth has caused tensions to rise as the housing market continues to boil at a confounding rate.

The complex issue has yet to deter non-profit organizations and local leaders who have spent the

past year working toward solutions for locals feeling the financial pinch. Leaders in the Village of Millerton, the Town of Salisbury, CT, and even in the cities of Hudson and Poughkeepsie in New York are keenly aware of the possibility of an exodus of longtime residents, a possibility that will undoubtedly change both the fabric and the economy of rural life. In order to combat this, those at the forefront have taken on initiatives that may lessen the burden while remaining cost-effective. That may mean tearing the scab off the perceptions of a few long-standing terms and redefining how home ownership is achieved.

History of affordable housing

Historically, the term affordable housing has conjured up images in the American lexicon of poverty-laden, poorly built shanties, something to be shamed not celebrated. The truth however, is that affordable housing is a broad mosaic of a subject that is intertwined with the

Above: Sarum Village 2 in Salisbury, CT, where eight new units were added in 2017. Photo courtesy of The Salisbury Housing Trust.

Continued on page 33 ...



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spirit of the American dream and relates to many disciplines including finance, economics, politics, and social services. In the early 1930s, construction and finance programs were designed to alleviate some of the housing hardships caused by the Great Depression. The most recognizably derogatory portrait that has been mistakenly tied to affordable housing programs is that of Hoovervilles. A “Hooverville” was a shanty town built during the Great Depression by the homeless in the United States. They were named after Herbert Hoover, who was President of the United States during the onset of the Depression and was widely blamed for the economic collapse.

An act of Congress in 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration, which made home ownership affordable for a broader segment of the public with the establishment of mortgage insurance programs. These programs made possible the low down payments and long-term mortgages that are commonplace today but were almost unheard of at that time. In 1965, Congress elevated housing to a cabinet-level agency of the federal government, creating the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), but soon the cost of operating public housing eclipsed the revenue brought in from resident rents. In turn, Congress passed the “Brooke Amendment” in 1969 codifying a limitation on the percentage of income a public housing resident could be expected to pay for rent. The original figure was 25% of income, which was later raised to the 30% standard that exists today.

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 brought a different kind of connotation to the term affordable housing as it focused on block grants and an increase in the authority granted to local jurisdictions. This act was the



origin of the tenant- and project-based Section 8 rental assistance programs, and it created the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from seven existing housing and infrastructure programs.

In the prevailing four decades, there has been little in the way of significant investment in affordable housing for those who exist in the lower income brackets. Since the onset of the pandemic, the difficulty for locals in the pursuit of home ownership has been relatively indiscriminate in terms of economic class. Residents in both working and middle classes, who have spent years building careers and families in Columbia, Dutchess, Litchfield, and Berkshire counties have entered the fray for those in need of more affordable options. Housing advocates and local leaders have worked for years toward the establishment and funding permanent homes as well as affordable rentals. The recent rush on home purchases has only exacerbated the issue and expedited its urgency.

The rural effect: Pine Plains and Millerton in New York

Pine Plains Town Supervisor Darrah Cloud pulls no punches when discussing barriers of entry for folks in the middle and lower classes when it comes to home ownership in our area, she says emphatically, “Down payments and availability.”

For those in the “millennial”

generation who have reached the age in which purchasing a home traditionally should be viable, down payments have become especially hard when competing with student loan debt and the new influx of cash buyers. “I think (affordable housing) is very feasible but we need to secure available land as well,” says Cloud. “An organization called Rural Build has a design they are willing to share with municipalities so they can build affordable, passive-energy homes on rural lots for people to buy. Zoning changes can help with these projects. Housing needs to be in walkable areas, built for what we call Workforce Housing, for people who are working but can’t afford the high prices in the area.” Another aspect that has somewhat silently crept its way into the local housing crisis is its effect on local wage-earning jobs. While wages remain stagnant, home prices continue to rise and in the Hudson Valley those looking to be employed in the local businesses that survived the pandemic are finding it more difficult to live in commuting distance.

In North East, a town encompassing the Village of Millerton in Dutchess County, local officials are experiencing the balancing act of

Above: Warren Street in Hudson, NY, acts as the City’s Main Street and center. Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Chris-Boswell.

Continued on page 35 ...

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housing and the economy firsthand. “Access to safe, lower cost housing definitely affects the local economy,” says Edith Greenwood the vice-chairperson of the Town’s Zoning Board of Appeals. “People want to come and work in the numerous service businesses in Millerton, but they can’t find a place to live that they can afford.”

As part of the Northeastern Dutchess Initiative of Hudson River Housing, the Tri-Town Coalition is a collaborative group of Amenia, Millerton, and Pine Plains residents and stakeholders actively working to advance solutions to shared concerns for affordable housing and inclusive economic development in the region. Their studies have helped advance the notion of sustainable, workforce housing in the region though there remains much work to be done. “The main issue is where do you put new housing and will the neighbors object? What does it take to incentivize a developer to take on such a project in Millerton or nearby? Multi-family or modular probably makes the most sense currently, but you have to deal with septic systems and in most places wells,” reiterates Ms. Greenwood. “There is a delicate balance between the scale needed to make a project viable to a developer and what the community will tolerate.”

Christopher Kennan, the Town’s supervisor remains optimistic, “There is some affordable housing in our area, but not enough and often of poor quality. It’s a huge challenge for our small local governments like the Town of North East to create more affordable housing,” he says. “But with smart, creative zoning we can make sure we’re at least not discouraging affordable housing from being built.”

City governments weigh in
According to the *Albany Times Union* last year, Columbia County



saw a 204% increase in relocations from New York City with Hudson and its Ulster County counterpart Kingston leading the way as the two local cities experienced the biggest influx of relocations in the entire nation. The City of Hudson, which has long been faced with difficult redevelopment and aspects of gentrification, may be on the precipice of the first local breakthrough for affordable housing.

Mayor of the City of Hudson Kamal Johnson, who has made housing and displacement a priority since he was elected in 2019, is spearheading a new plan that will hopefully bring relief for local residents. In April, the city announced a partnership with Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, a not-for-profit policy, planning, advocacy, and research organization to create an Affordable Housing Development Plan (AHDP). According to a report, Pattern for Progress will study developable properties, funding opportunities, and site feasibility in order to create a plan for the operations, timeline, and partnerships necessary to develop affordable housing in Hudson.

“Too many of our residents are struggling with housing in Hudson,” Mayor Johnson relayed to the public. “Creating an affordable housing development plan is an important step to meet Hudson’s housing needs.”

Recently appointed housing justice director for the City,

Michelle Tullo sees the opportunity for equity as well. “Hudson is unique because it is a very small city facing the same problems as many larger cities,” she says. “This position interested me because it was an opportunity to work on housing justice in a holistic way with a diverse coalition of residents, activists, and government officials. This coalition won an Anti-Displacement Grant from Enterprise Community Partners, which funds my position. With this grant we are working on both short-term fixes to housing justice, like providing emergency rental assistance through the Hudson Roots Program, as well as long-term solutions like creating a Housing Trust Fund and a Housing Justice Organizing Fellowship.”

Further down river

Similarly, on the lower rim of Dutchess County, the City of Poughkeepsie has seen the effects the pandemic has had on the stability of local housing options. For attorney Shane Egan, who is running for the Fourth Ward seat on the Poughkeepsie Common Council and as a lifelong resident of Poughkeepsie previously served as a commissioner on the city’s Historic Preservation Commission, the issue is complex in more urban areas. “I certainly think affordable housing

Above: The City of Poughkeepsie, the largest city in Dutchess County. Photo: istockphoto.com contributor nancykennedy.

Continued on next page ...

needs to be a part of Poughkeepsie's comprehensive plan along with other types of development," he says. "But the devil is in the details. Poorly conceived affordable housing statues can often have the opposite outcome. Forcing developers to include one or two units of affordable housing into a development project causes the developer to increase the price of the remaining units. Working towards broader access solutions rather than just an affordable unit here or there is the right approach."

Mr. Egan looks forward to a more collaborative effort in this regard saying, "The City has seen development on portions of the waterfront, but more focus needs to be paid to the Main Street corridor and other areas that have been neglected for too long. Working with all the stakeholders, developers, residents, and community groups, to ensure at least some of the developments in the pipeline include affordable housing is key for the City's long-term success."

Salisbury in action

Perhaps the most well established affordable housing initiative in the Tri-Corner region, The Salisbury Housing Trust was established as a result of a forum in the year 2000 that found affordable housing to be a very serious need in the area. The Housing Trust is a 501c(3) non-profit sustained by donations. In the past two decades, residents of the small Litchfield County town in Connecticut have contributed more than \$900,000; all of which has gone to support home ownership. The town has also assisted with grants totaling \$30,000.

Through sustained community efforts, The Salisbury Housing Trust has built or renovated 14 homes at six locations in Salisbury over the last 18 years. Of those homes, seven are new; seven are renovations. The homes are owned and occupied by residents and have sold for between \$120,000 and \$200,000. As part of its commitment, The Salisbury Housing Trust retains ownership of the land and enters into a contract with the owner limiting resale amounts, so these homes will remain affordable as "lease restricted." Members of the trust say they have on occasion renovated older homes more than once, as needed, when they were resold.

Chair Leo Gafney, who has been a member of the Salisbury Housing Trust for the better part of two decades, feels as though it is what is unseen that is the biggest obstacle in the way of providing more housing options to more folks. "There is a kind of lethargy and 'no hurry' approach because the need is not obvious," he says. "People are not sleeping in their cars. But young people and families are choosing to live elsewhere and we need them here."

An even older staple of Salisbury's affordable housing initiative is the Salisbury Housing Committee, which has been committed to building and managing affordable rental housing in Salisbury since the 1970s. Today, they own and manage Faith House and Sarum Village located on Cobble Road and contains 33 units, which include a mix of one, two, and three bedroom homes. Monthly rents range between approximately \$500 and \$1,300 based on number of bedrooms and household income, and tenants pay no more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities.

Co-president Peter Halle feels the urgency for affordable rentals now more than ever despite his presence on the committee for nearly 30 years. "The need for affordable rentals has always been present here in



Salisbury," he says. "Now, there's no supply at all." Despite the void of reasonably affordable living spaces growing each week, Peter and his fellow committee members still feel pushback from those who retain the now century's old perception. "Momentum matters right now, for the work our committee wants to do and for the folks who work here and keep our community and economy vibrant," he says. "People fear the unknown, and that can foster negative views. But like Sarum Village, which has been home for residents for so long now, fair, equitable, and reasonably priced housing can become part of the fabric of our community." •

Historic Research made possible by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, visit nlihc.org for more information.

For more information on Hudson River Housing, visit hudsonriverhousing.org.

Check Hudson's Affordable Housing Development Plan at cityofhudson.org

For more information on Hudson Valley's Pattern for Progress, visit pattern-for-progress.org.

For more information on both the Salisbury Housing Trust and the Salisbury Housing Committee, or to find out how you can help, visit salisburyhousing.org.



Above, top to bottom: Inge Dunham stands beside a sign that honors her late husband, Richard Dunham, who helped create the affordable housing properties in Salisbury with The Salisbury Housing Trust. Photo by Carole Dmytryshak with caption appeared in *The Lakeville Journal* in November of 2008. The Clark family, SHT owners. James works for the *Lakeville Journal*, Jennifer directs the summer camp as Silver Lake.

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A tour through local car shows



By Lindsey Clark
info@mainstreetmag.com

Across the country, warm weather and sunshine encourages car enthusiasts to come together and showcase their vehicles. This area is no exception, with many car shows to offer!

The Rhinebeck Antique Car Show & Swap Meet

The Rhinebeck Antique Car Show & Swap Meet is an event with a lasting history. Herb Lorenz, who has been Hudson River Valley Antique Auto Association president for 14 years now shared the details with us. The endeavor began in 1970 when six local car clubs joined forces to start a car show. The six chartered organizations – the Mid-Hudson Region AACA, the Early Ford V8 Club, the Woodstock Motor Club, the Model A Restorers Club, the Red Hook Car Club, and the Orange County Antique Auto Club – grouped together to form the Hudson River Valley Antique Automobile Association. They appointed four executives from these clubs and delegated responsibilities for the show to each separate organization. The proceeds of this event go back to these clubs, who donate the money to charities that uplift local communities.

The Hudson River Valley Antique Automobile Association initially held the event in the Village of Rhinebeck, NY. However, after just two years, the show's growing size necessitated a larger venue, and thus it moved to the Dutchess County Fairgrounds where it is still held today. Incredibly, Herb highlights, "[Shows like this] are usually put on by people who are salaried for events of this size and nature. It takes over 400 volunteer positions to run this event."

With the show spanning three days – the first full weekend of May from Friday at noon through Sunday afternoon – Herb emphasizes that the event has a variety of offerings to suit anyone who visits or participates. On Friday, the main event is exclusively car vendor sales. Herb states, "There are no car shows going on during Friday's operations. It is for those people who want to get out and get that part before anyone else." With almost a thousand vendors at the show both indoors and outdoors, guests can find anything from rare car parts, car tools, car waxes, car insurances, and more.

On Saturday, the Rod and Custom Show is held. This event showcases modified cars that have been altered in some way from their original build. The change could be in the paint, wheels, interior, engine – the vehicle just has to be customized in some way. Saturday's show also allows for late model entries that are less than 25

years old, meaning that virtually any car can go to this event, and the show has seen up to over a thousand cars. Sunday's show has an entirely different set of rules, regulations, and judges, as it is the Classic Car Show. Herb notes that these cars are judged on their condition and closeness to the original model from the dealership: "The ideal car is the one that came off the showroom floor, [and] sat for 25 years – and that would be the best in show for that car."

A Car Corral is also held throughout the entire length of the event, giving people the opportunity to buy and sell classic cars. Notably, the show has also brought in specialties in the past, like Skip Barber driving experiences, cars featured in television or film, and even a 2019 feature on the television show *My Classic Car*.

The past two years of the show could not be held as a result of the pandemic. While this meant that the 50th anniversary show had to be postponed in 2020, people can now look forward to the special commemorative event, as it is scheduled to be held May 6, 7, and 8 of 2022!

The Falls Village Car & Motorcycle Show

The Falls Village Car & Motorcycle Show started in 2010 as a way to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Jacobs Garage. Judy Jacobs told us how this event came to be and what it's like today. Her husband's grandfather founded the garage in 1930, with the business now having been passed

down through four generations of Jacobs men. About the first anniversary show, Judy explains, "It was very successful. I think we had about 180 cars show up which was a lot more than we expected. But, everybody in town loved it so much so they asked if we could do it every year." In fact, this event was so successful that it grew into the annual show now held every second Sunday in July.

Originally, the event took place in the vicinity of Jacobs Garage, but it has now grown immensely, encompassing essentially the entire downtown area of Falls Village, CT, and closing down the center of town. Featuring displays about the history of the garage, the show stays true to its appreciation of the business. All proceeds from past Falls Village Car & Motorcycle events have gone to the Falls Village Fire Department, while the most recent show on Sunday July 11, 2021 instead benefited the Housatonic Valley Regional High School FFA.

The range of cars shown at the event varies from race cars and drag racing vehicles to street rods, with muscle, classic, antique, and foreign cars also found among the selection. The show features many motorcycles, and it has even showcased antique tractors and bulldozers. Judy notes, "It's a really, really big variety, and I think that's very appealing to the people." Beyond the vehicles at the show,

Continued on next page ...

there is also live music, food, and various vendors throughout the event. The Hunt Library is very involved with the show, putting on an upscale tag sale and, for the first time at the most recent show, a craft fair. Tying into the small-town atmosphere, the historical society has also opened up for tours at past shows.

Event organizers have often organized special features that draw in immense crowds. One year, they showcased the original truck featured in the 1970s television show *Sanford And Son*, while also having some members of the show's cast present – one of whom actually lived in Falls Village at the time and was able to help coordinate. At the show that celebrated the 85th anniversary of Jacobs Garage, another major event occurred: the special guest appearance of Shirley Muldowney, a champion and revered figure in the drag racing world who broke many barriers for women drivers in the 1960s and 70s. This drew in thousands of fans. Furthermore, the show was also featured in the television program *My Classic Car*, which, according to Judy, brought in huge numbers: “We had about 900 show cars, and I don’t know how many thousands of people were here. But, needless to say, the show got huge!”

Community is a main component of the show, as many local non-profits and organizations are encouraged to use the space for fundraising, and car raffles have taken place as well. Judy emphasizes this community aspect: “We’re very, very lucky to have a small town that is so supportive of doing this.” Considering the excitement at

the 2021 show, everyone is certainly waiting patiently for next year’s event!

The Great Barrington Fire Department Main Street Car Show

The Great Barrington Fire Department Main Street Car Show began as an initiative by Adam Mead in 2008, with the support of his brother Brian. The show is held annually in honor of the brothers’ late father, Rod Mead. A member of the Great Barrington Fire Department for more than 25 years and a local businessman, Rod had a positive impact on both his family and the greater community. His unexpected passing motivated Adam to come up with an event to honor him. Brian states, “We wanted to create something so that our father’s legacy could carry on – something that would have had meaning to him, [that would] be a little different than your typical spaghetti dinner.”

Adam approached the Firefighters Association with the idea for a car show on Main Street, with its proceeds going towards a high school scholarship in Rod’s name. With this initial proposal, the fundraising event would encompass the family and community aspects that Rod cherished, while also involving the fire department and facilitating an event where everyone could have fun. Brian emphasizes, these are “all of the things that would make our father proud.”

Held on the first Thursday in August and beginning on just a small section of Great Barrington’s Main Street and Railroad Street, the event has grown significantly since its incep-



Above: The Falls Village Car show. Photo by Lindsey Clark. Below, left: The Great Barrington car show. Photo courtesy of Brian Mead. Previous page: The Rhinebeck car show. Photo by Herb Lorenz, courtesy of the Rhinebeck Car show.

tion. The show currently spans from the intersection of Main Street and Bridge Street to beyond St. Peter’s Church. Brian highlights, “We have easily quadrupled in size and most years find ourselves trying to find places to park cars.”

The Main Street Car Show exhibits a wide variety of vehicles, with muscle, antique, and exotic cars being among those featured. Along with the cars that are shown, the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce arranges food vendors that appear throughout the area of the event. Meanwhile, local restaurants and businesses thrive, staying open later to cater to the crowds.

A significant aspect of this event is its connection to the community; as Brian puts it, “This being a community event is what makes this such a success!” With a free admission to guests, and a \$10 charge to register a car, the show is appealing to all. This is especially true for locals, who may be more inclined to skip going to town

on busy weekends and have a better opportunity to enjoy the event on a weeknight. Brian continues, “This is an event where you will see friends you have not seen in years, and it will take you two hours to walk a quarter mile because you stop and talk to so many people. There is just such a freedom to being able to walk around on a closed Main Street, look at cars, visit with friends – make new friends. As great as the car show is itself, it is the crowd of spectators (thousands) and car owners (hundreds) that make this show the success and community event it is.” Held on Thursday, August 5, 2021, in accordance with the latest CDC guidelines, this event certainly isn’t one to miss! ●

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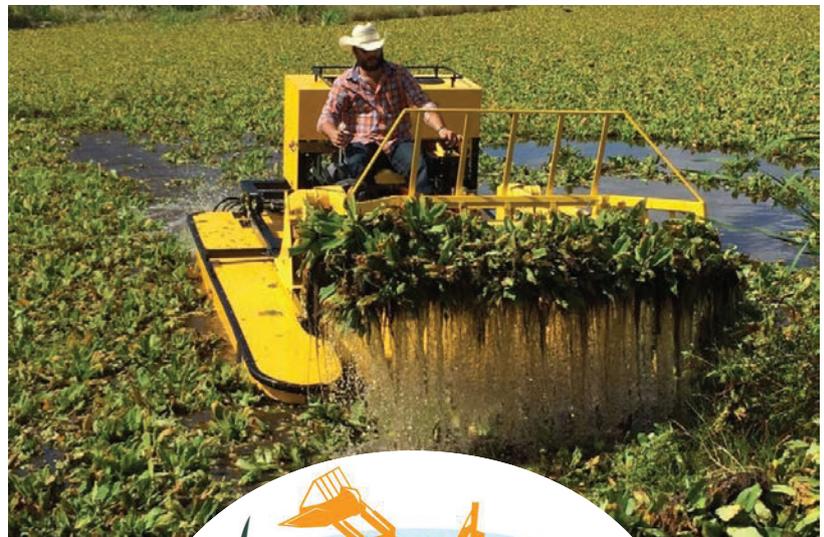
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Day tripper

EXPLORE THESE HUDSON VALLEY HISTORIC SITES



By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

The Hudson Valley is brimming with activities and towns to explore. Whether your idea of an ideal summer or autumn weekend includes engaging with the arts, delving into history, hiking, or spending the night in a lighthouse, opportunities are certainly plentiful.

This year, *Travel + Leisure* named Hudson one of the Best Small Towns in America. Once a 1700s whaling port, Hudson reflects an array of different architectural styles. Beyond the many antique shops, it boasts more than 300 proprietor-owned shops, bars, bakeries, and restaurants, cultural venues, and accommodations, which range from charming B&B's to mod hotels. After strolling the town, visit one (or more) of these destinations, which are all located within a short drive of the town.

Thomas Cole National Historic Site

This historic spot marks the place where Thomas Cole founded America's first major art movement – the Hudson River School. The site was designated a National Historic Landmark and affiliated area of the National Park System.

The interior of Cole's 1815 brick home offers an immersive experience for arts and style enthusiasts. Cole's decorative paintings embellish the walls and various multi-media installations convey his focus on preservation and the environment.

The home's wrap-around porch boasts panoramic views of the Catskill Mountains. The 1839 Old Studio is the where Cole created some of his best-known works. The 1846 New Studio now functions as a museum gallery that hosts traveling exhibitions.

218 Spring St., Catskill, (518) 943-7465, thomascollection.org.

Hudson River Skywalk

Indulge in panoramic views and get some exercise in while strolling across the Hudson River Skywalk –

a scenic walking path that traverses over the Hudson River via the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. It journeys from the Thomas Cole National Historic Site to Frederic Church's Olana State Historic Site. This scenic pathway marks the destination where American landscape painting began. hudsonriverskywalk.org.

Olana State Historic Site

Perched on a hill above the Hudson River is Olana – another historic home and 250-acre landscape that offers sweeping views of the Valley and beyond. Built in 1872, the site was once home to renowned landscape painter Frederic Church – a key figure in the Hudson River School of American landscape painters.

Its ornate aesthetic was influenced by Church's travels to the Middle East. Although the artist originally hailed from Connecticut, he took up residence here so he

Above: Olana State Historic site located just outside the City of Hudson has incredible views of the Hudson River. Image courtesy of Scenic Hudson.

Continued on next page ...



Above: The Saugerties Lighthouse. Image courtesy of the Saugerties Lighthouse. Below: The Thomas Cole Historic Site. Image courtesy of the Thomas Cole Historic Site.

could study under painter Thomas Cole.

Recognized as one of America's most prominent painters, Church's work captured the golden glow of the sunsets and majestic mountains that dot the region. Although Church worked with architect Richard Morris Hunt on the home's design, he was the sole talent behind the picturesque gardens and orchards.

Church later hired architect and landscape designer Calvert Vaux to design the main house. Construction began in 1870. Olana's architecture reflects a fusion of Victorian elements and Middle Eastern

decorative motifs. One of the attractions includes a self-guided outdoor exploration of private landscapes with singular views on both sides of the Hudson River.

Open daily, year-round from 8am to sunset, there is no admission fee to access the landscape, which is used for leisurely walks, dog-walking, and beyond. 5720 NY-9G, Hudson, (518) 828-1872, olana.org.

Saugerties Lighthouse

A landmark beacon on the Hudson River, the Saugerties Lighthouse traces its history back to 1869. Located at the mouth of the Esopus Creek, the restored, red-brick lighthouse offers a picnic spot, Bed & Breakfast, and tours. Beyond the lighthouse's keepers' quarters and two guest bedrooms, there's a small museum, gift shop, parlor, and kitchen. An operational light-tower offers vistas of the valley and Catskill Mountains.

The lighthouse can be reached via the half-mile nature trail (open sunrise to sunset) at the end of Lighthouse Drive in the village of Saugerties. The trail winds through willow and maple trees, along tidal pools, and through patches of wildflowers. Picnic facilities are available on the riverside deck adjacent to the lighthouse. Outdoor enthusiasts can

explore the area by canoe or kayak. They may be launched at Tina Chorvas Park in Saugerties on the lower Esopus Creek below Cantine Dam at the end of East Bridge Street.

Other popular activities include bird-watching, fishing, photography, and relaxing by the riverside. The lighthouse is owned by the Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy – a not-for-profit organization. Its purpose is to maintain and operate the lighthouse for the benefit of the public as well as to educate visitors of the value and heritage of the treasured landmark of the Hudson River.

168 Lighthouse Dr., Saugerties, (845) 247-0656, saugertieslighthouse.com. ●





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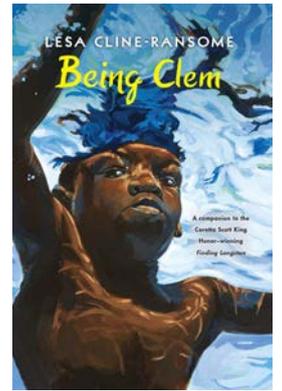
by Leigh Stein

With nihilist humor and controlled despair, Leigh Stein's poems about pop culture, mortality and the internet written during the Coronavirus pandemic explore fears of death and grocery shopping, stress cleaning and drinking and everything we took for granted before the catastrophe.

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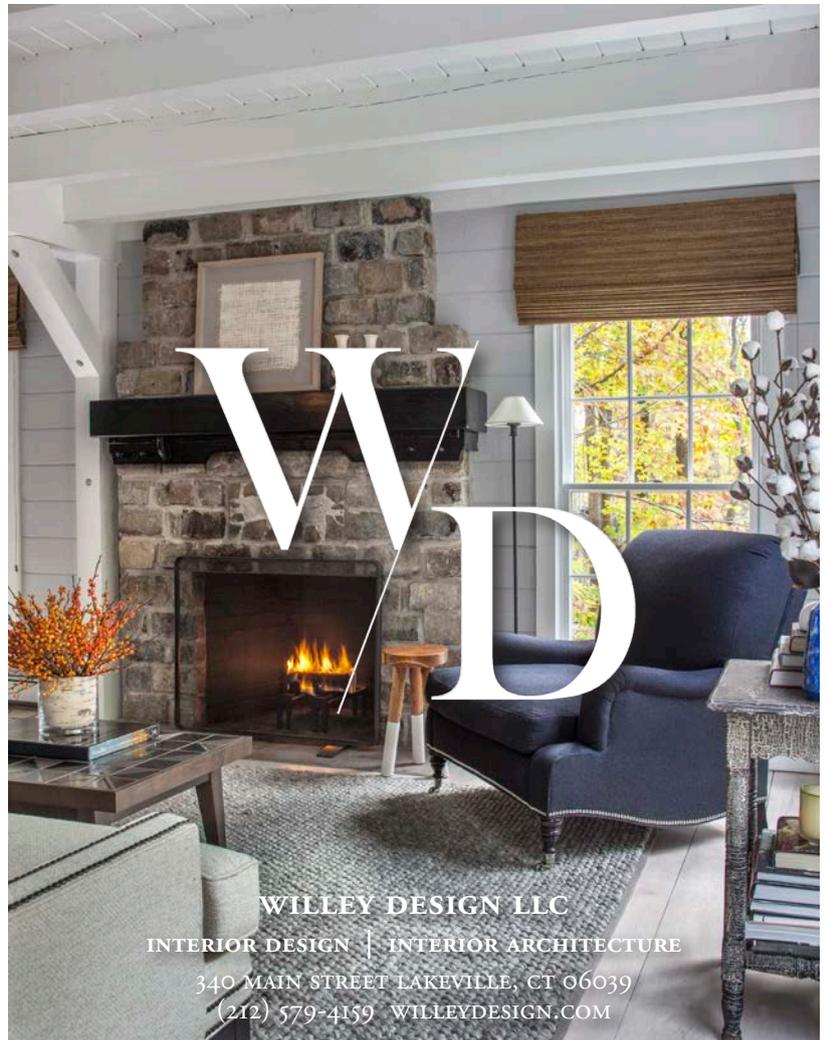
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Undermountain Golf Course

By John Torsiello
info@mainstreetmag.com

Jack Shakshober fell in love with the game of golf in the 1970s, long before players like Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson energized the masses. He wanted a place to practice his skills and he figured what better place to do that than on his sprawling property in Copake, NY.

So, Shakshober, who passed away in 2019, turned what was basically his front yard into a few practice holes. He then figured why not let the public join him and those holes became a total of nine as he created one of the most unique little courses you'll find anywhere.

An executive course

Undermountain Golf Course, tucked away under the shadows of Bruce Mountain of the Taconic range, is what is termed an "executive course," as it plays shorter than regular nine-hole layouts at slightly less than 2,000 yards. There are four par-fours, a few less than 200 yards in total distance, and five par-threes. But Shakshober imbued his little course with a ton of challenges, as was evident when I and an accomplished playing buddy visited in July.

One of the par-fours, the 233-yard (again, short for a par-four) plays dramatically uphill, which adds distance to the scorecard.

The greens are small and several are "table top," making it difficult to keep the ball on the putting surface when hitting from the tees or fairways. Take the third hole for instance. It only plays around 220 yards from an elevated tee, which, by the way, affords a stunning view of the Taconic Mountains.

Seems like a snap and long hitters can reach the par-four in one shot. But the green is oblong and small and shots roll off to either side unless perfectly placed. This leaves the player with a difficult chip shot to get up and down for birdie or par.

Unique challenges

Check out the scorecard and you see that both the sixth and seventh holes, par-fours, play under 200 yards, again very unusual. But the greens on both holes are sunken from the fairway and are protected by trees. The seventh hole has a green that slopes away from the fairway, making it almost impossible to make a shot stick on the small putting surface. By the way, the layout is also easy walkable.

Another spectacular view can be had from behind the sixth green. Peering over a stone wall (a number line the course) and through mature trees one can gaze at the Catskill Mountains and a valley beyond. It's



about as pretty a look as you will find on an area golf course.

The par-threes are all very good and feature those dastardly sloping greens. The tee shot from the 160-yard par-three ninth hole, the green for which lies close by a modest clubhouse, restaurant and pro shop, must be precisely hit over a tree and steer clear of woods to the right and left. What a fun and challenging way to end what we considered to be a most enjoyable and different golfing experience.

A sense of community

A group of 36 golfers playing a weekly league were beginning to tee off on the first hole when we ended our round. Jeff Dunleavy, a Millerton, NY, native who moved to Goshen, CT, has been coming to Undermountain Golf Course for 23 years. He makes the hour drive from his home each Tuesday to play with his buddies.

"We love this course, it's a lot of fun. It's not as easy as one might think looking at the scorecard. I had a friend who is a very good player come here with me and he wound up shooting a 421 (par is 31).



Above: The man behind Undermountain Golf Course, Jack Shakshober. All other images in this article are from John Torsiello's day at the course.



Continued on next page ...

There's a feeling of community and the owners are friendly and do a lot for charity. My brother, Thomas, got married here and my two daughters took lessons at a junior clinic here."

Zach Funk and his friend Zach Strange both residents of Pine Plains, NY, play the course occasionally. "It's pretty, it's a fun course and it's inexpensive," said Strange. "The conditions are always good," offered Funk.

The reviews are in:

Online posts are flattering (the course gets 4.5 stars on Yelp): "Well kept executive course in the Taconic Mountain range. Challenging greens and wide-open fairways. A fun time."

Another said, "Well maintained and a fun, if simple, little track right up against the mountains. Greens roll well and are tiny, undulating and challenging. Most holes are 150 to 200 yards, with the notable second hole measuring in at 223 uphill (so you can hit your driver here after all). Good practice for bump and run. Friendly, chill, old fashioned golf and inexpensive. Hard to beat."

My friend, Vin Serella, and I had a blast. There were a few birdies, lot of birdie chances, pars and a few bogeys caused by the tricky, slick greens. A highlight for me was when I struck a fairway wood

tee shot within two feet of the hole on the ninth. A hole-in-one would have certainly been icing on the cake. Vin said, "This was one of the most unique courses we have ever played." I couldn't disagree, and we've been on some mighty fine courses.

A true labor of love

On the conditioning Funk referenced; the fairways and greens are kept in fine condition by superintendent Jack MacArthur, husband of owner Trish, the daughter of Jack Shakshober. He has one other person helping him manage and care for the course, which features landscaping on several holes that is also meticulously cared for. The sand traps that dot the course are well kept, something you don't always find even at good daily fee courses.

"We cut the greens pretty much every day when it isn't raining," said MacArthur, as he relaxed in an outside dining area off the wooden clubhouse. "It's pretty much me and a young man I have working during the summertime and some occasional help. It's a lot of work keeping up the conditions, especially when we have three and a half inches of rain like we had the other day. We try to do the added touches that people enjoy about the course. We even have fairways on the par-threes because we get a lot of older



players and those that don't hit the ball that far, and we don't want them hitting from high grass, unless they wander too far left or right."

Trish MacArthur recalled helping her dad, along with her mom, Pat, and her bothers, make Jack Shakshober's dream come true. "Mom, (a retired librarian at the Taconic Hills Middle School now living in Florida) was the driving force behind dad. She worked at the clubhouse and in other areas."

"People love it here because we are friendly and we don't attempt to put on the country club persona and an elitist attitude. It's a unique course and it's all about controlling your short game. It really brings out the point of how important to your score chipping and putting are. It's really a labor of love for us. My husband is a member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. We are also very fortunate to have Dan Waite on the grounds crew. He's been a great help and is very knowledgeable. When we play other courses we remember little things that we liked and implement them here."

Giving back

Going back to the fundraisers mentioned by Dunleavy, the course holds a number of such events, as well as private tournaments to bene-

fit various organizations and groups. A look at the 2021 schedule showed that prior to August, there were events for Battalion #3 Columbia County Firefighters, an outing for the Spencertown Fire Company, a Craryville Rod and Gun benefit, and a Roeliff Jansen Community Library benefit event. Coming up in August are the Ancram Fire Company and the Salisbury Winter Sports Association benefit tournaments.

Rates are very reasonable; \$15.25 for nine and \$22.75 for 18 holes weekdays and slightly higher on weekends and holidays. There are special rates for those in the military, veterans, firefighters and EMS workers, as well as group rates. The course opened in late March this year and MacArthur hopes to stay open the first few weeks of November, weather permitting. ●

To learn more about Undermountain Golf Course, please visit www.undermountaingolf.com.



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Photographs by Kristján Maack

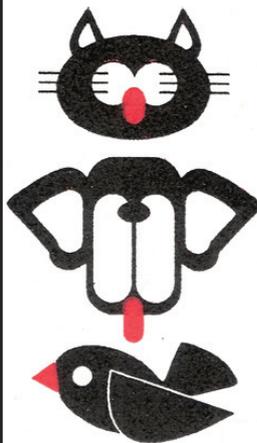
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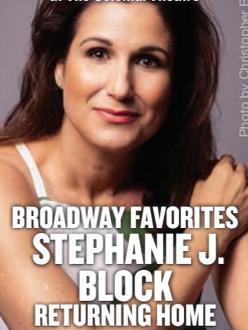
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Business: starting or expanding?

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

The fabric and backbone of America are its small businesses, and lucky for us, we have an abundance of them in our area. It's the American dream after all. But when it comes to starting and or expanding a business, the devil is in the details. It is the minutia that can become cumbersome, and may seem overwhelming at times. But fret not, as long as you keep working it can all be resolved – and in the process you create and grow a dream.

I thought that I could share some wisdom when it comes to starting and expanding a business, whereas I've quite literally spent my entire life surrounded by mavericks and entrepreneurs, ultimately becoming an entrepreneur myself at the first opportunity. With that said, I am not claiming to be a business expert. But I've had to figure it out, have had help, and have put in the hard work and long hours to build my dream. And I find myself in the throws of it yet again. That said, I thought that I could share some of that wisdom in hopes of sparing a budding entrepreneur a little work or having to learn the hard way.

First things first

One of the first things that I learned, and one that keeps getting reinforced, is having a great team around you. When I say team, I mean experts in their fields that you trust and are (often) vital to your business. Those experts include your lawyer, accountant, and insurance agent for starters.

Beyond that trio, there are business and financial advisors, marketing experts, and so much more. But I have found that seeking counsel from my trio has proved time and time again to be not just helpful, but has guided me down the right path at every turn.

When starting a business, you first obviously need to know the type of business you're starting. Beyond that, discussing with your lawyer and accountant what kind of business you should form is the next step: should it be an LLC, or a DBA, or should you form an Inc.? They will guide and advise you with that decision. After deciding that, my next step has always been to call my insurance agent to discuss my insurance and liability options, to make sure that I am covered in all aspects.

Then comes step two

The second step in starting a business is a competition between numerous things that need to seemingly get done simultaneously: create a brand, get all supporting materials for the type of business (website, business cards, brochures, social media accounts, signage, etc.) – and this is beyond setting up the actual business whether it be a storefront, retail shop or a service. For the purposes of this article, the actual setting up of your business is a given – and that setup varies greatly depending on the type of business and everything involved in doing so. So I'll be leaving that portion out of this.

In putting together all of the “stuff” for your business, you are crafting the iconography, the “type” of business that you'd like your customers and clients to perceive when they come into contact with it. What I mean by this is that the visuals and language that you put out there (in whatever form necessary for your business) is interpreted by your audience and they form an association. So what is that association you'd like them to make with your business?

Network and spread the word

I have found that networking can be one of the most crucial parts of running a business in our area. We know that word-of-mouth is quite literally the best form of marketing, advertising, and brand reassurance. Networking plays a part in that, because community is so important in our area. At the end of the day, to network and talk with folks about your new venture could mean all the difference to your young business.

Expanding your business

Growing and expanding any business is multi-faceted and the type of growth should be directly related to your business goals. Sometimes expanding your business means you need a larger space to operate out of, or that you need to hire more people, but sometimes expanding your business means staying

up-to-date with the ever-changing world of technology. This could mean updating your website (as a result of Covid, it could mean offering your products and/or services for sale through your website), creating or updating your Google Business account, it could mean using such tools as Geo-fencing, paying for Google AdWords or boosted ads/content on social media – to name just a few examples.

When it comes to expanding your business, I always find it helpful to get out the good old pen and paper; do the numbers, write down the dream, write down the challenges, write down the “what ifs” so that you are prepared if they happen. In doing this, I find that I prepare myself for the work, the obstacles, as well as the possible upsides so that I can then weigh my options and make sure that expansion – in whatever form it may take – is the right decision for me and my business at this point in time. I emphasize “point in time” because where you and your business are now could be different in six or twelve months, and being able to answer the easy and hard questions at this juncture, as well as figuring out the nitty-gritty is always the best way to be prepared for any situation, at any time.

At the end of the day, whether you are starting a new business or expanding an existing one, once you have somewhat figured out all of the pieces and the details – it's just work. What I mean by that is, if you put in the work, you will make things happen. This sadly won't guarantee the success of your business, but by doing the work, you are doing everything that you can to make your business a success. So roll up those sleeves and get to work at making your dream a reality. •

Disclaimer: In addition to being the owner and publisher of this magazine, Thorunn is also the principal of Thorunn Designs, LLC, a design and marketing firm.

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Art Omi, Ghent, NY

A walk in the woods and meadows



By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

Mark Twain is credited with the pronouncement that “Golf is a good walk spoiled.” Truth is that the judgment was first rendered 38 years after Twain’s death ... but the presumption continues. True or not, the balance to that invective might well be that Art Omi in Ghent, NY, is “A great walk made amazing.”

Monumental sculptures that delight and engage

The evolved concept of literary agent and entrepreneur Francis Greenburger, the 120-acre reserve is a series of winding trails, gentle streams, and an explosion of monumental sculptures that delight, challenge, engage and amuse. From towering forms that dominate a field (*Blast Furnace* by Atelier Van Lieshout, pictured left, a tribute to the simpler days of the industrial age) to whimsical scatterings of acrylic painted rocks (*Yellow, Brown, Red And Orange M&Ms* by Dan Colen, pictured above), the rolling park presents discovery at every turn.



The notion behind Art Omi is notable for its inclusion and positive intent. “Art Omi believes that exposure to internationally diverse creative voices fosters tolerance and respect, raises awareness, inspires innovation, and ignites change. By forming community with creative expression as its common denominator, Art Omi creates a sanctuary for the artistic community and the public to affirm the transformative quality of art.”

On any given day (the park is open daily from dawn until dusk with few exceptions noted on their website) the trails welcome families out with children whose only prohibition is climbing on the pieces, dog walkers with their charges on leash, and art students from around the world who spend hours moving from piece to piece.

To truly take in all that is offered at Art Omi, one would need a sturdy pair of walking shoes and a full day of time to view, contemplate, and reflect. Fortunately, the experience begins and ends at the architecturally commanding Benenson Center, which houses the indoor Newmark Gallery, a modest shop offering requisite t-shirts, caps and books, and a café with light refreshments. For those within easy

driving distance of Art Omi, spending a few hours visiting and re-visiting favorite pieces is a restful and rewarding way of spending a few diversionary hours.

To highlight all of the pieces would require a book, but for the first time visitor, a few of the 60 easily accessible pieces reflect the international flavor, the wide diversity, and the carefully accomplished curation of the collection.

Ever-changing art

While moving through one of the forested trails, the imposing *Sallie* (pictured on following page, bottom left) appears, a wonderfully eclectic construction by Donald Lipski. Discovering a cache of unused prohibition era whiskey bottles in a Brooklyn warehouse, Lipski fashioned a large basket, mounted it on wheels as a pedestal (reminiscent of a shopping cart on steroids) and filled the bottles with anti-freeze. The resulting pink hue catches the light as it changes through the day, filtered by the overhanging trees.

Continued on next page ...

Further down the path, Dennis Oppenheim's *Marriage Tree* (pictured below, far right) is an arresting look at the various social structures and assumptions of contemporary America. Originally created in 2000, then restored in 2012 with the approval of his estate, the assembly of what appear to be heroic sized wedding cake figures was fashioned well before same-sex marriage became part of our societal fabric. Prophetic? Perhaps ... but entirely engaging and central to Oppenheim's prolific career as a conceptual artist.

Coming full circle

Set in a glade behind the field that houses *Blast Furnace*, Brian Tolle's towering façade *Eureka* (not depicted) appears to be a town house with a subtle twist. Created as an homage to the "canal houses" of 18th century New York City, the piece reflects the rippled effect commensurate with sitting at the edge of a canal. The piece was originally displayed in Ghent, Belgium and now resides in Ghent, NY ... coming full circle.

Not far from Tolle's work is *Arcs In Disorder* (pictured directly below), a major installation by French conceptual artist Bernar Venet who used an overhead crane to bend the



CorTen steel into arcs that have rusted into a pleasant patina. Walking around the piece, it changes with each angle and becomes ever more engaging.

Interrupting space

Not only does Art Omi present the work of internationally celebrated artists, it has also commissioned pieces to be part of the permanent, sprawling collection. *Smoke* (not depicted) by ethnologist Richard Nonas allowed the artist to create the sense of the perceptions of space as well as the interruption of space. Comprised of carefully placed railroad ties stretching up a gentle hillside, the piece accomplishes the artist's aim to capture the tension between environment and form.

A remarkable point/counterpoint experience awaits the walker emerging from a forested patch at Art Omi to realize that two works – both quite different – are by the same artist and, together, challenge the viewer to reflect on their own assumptions and notions. *Set Notions* (pictured at the top of this page) by Bard College educated Anna Sew Hoy places solid cement block

figures opposing each other on the far side of a colorful amalgam of powder-coated shapes that might have been a giant's wands for blowing bubbles. *Set Notions* two components seem to be in conflict, until they are seen as a whole ... cement hard framed by playful color.

A cultural gem

Getting to Art Omi is best accomplished if one makes judicious use of the GPS function on their smart phone. Set close to the charming New York hamlet of Ghent at 1495 County Road 22 it is west of the Taconic Parkway and close to NY 66, which runs north and south through the Hudson River Valley. The park requests that registrations be made on weekends and, although there is no set admission fee, contributions are encouraged and appreciated.

The Art Omi website, www.artomi.org, is a richly illustrated introduction to the entire campus, which includes an architectural park as well as educational pavilions and houses for the residency programs which, upon successful application, invite artists, musicians, architects, dancers, and writers from around the world to live and work at Art Omi.

A cultural gem in the Hudson Valley, Art Omi serves as a magnet for international creative exchange, learning and growth. The benefits for the visiting public are readily apparent. This is art that is accessible and engaging, set in the rolling hillsides of Columbia County. ●



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Salisbury resident Terre Lefferts started her massage therapy business in 2013 and has incorporated therapeutic exercise, which she has been practicing herself for decades, but now with a more personalized approach since obtaining her physical therapist assistant license in 2015. Previous to her massage expertise, Terre enjoyed a career in dance where she gained first-hand experience in the benefits of exercise and massage therapy to stay resilient. Today, Terre provides Swedish massage for relaxation, deep tissue massage for muscle injury or overuse, reflexology as well as aromatherapy. Terre also provides advice for specific stretches and exercise, if needed, for better therapeutic results. Her office is located in Salisbury, CT, and she takes clients by appointment only. For her clients, Terre sets herself apart from other massage therapists by employing her comprehensive knowledge of the anatomy and kinesiology of the human body, which began when she was a dancer, and is now enhanced by the physical therapy work that she does. Terre says the most rewarding thing about her field is helping people feel better. Going forward, Terre hopes to grow the continuation of what she is doing by applying her skills and knowledge of the body, which are the culmination of her life's work.



RiverTown Trade

Boutique featuring regional artisans and curated collections. 3300 Route 343, Amenia, NY. (914) 234-2345. [@rivertowntradeshop](https://www.rivertowntradeshop.com)

The latest creation from mastermind Samuel Gold and his long-time creative collaborator Aimee Rabinowitz, RiverTown Trade is a new concept-boutique located in the heart of Amenia, NY. Starting in June of 2020, the two celebrated design specialists bring their unique curated design sensibilities to the town of Amenia with a bit of humor and a hint of playfulness and unmatched customer service. Perhaps most importantly, there are no rules when it comes to curation for Gold and Rabinowitz, and they are constantly searching for new ideas without forgetting elements of the past. After more than a year of isolation, owners say they are more than delighted to engage and socialize with the community once again. In the coming years, the folks at RiverTown Trade look forward to developing relationships within the community while becoming a retail destination. They are also in the process of creating both a monthly street style blog as well as a live website for customers to shop and enjoy. For locals and visitors alike, who love the thrill of discovery, of entering a space and being transported or are longing for a space where exclusive design products and unique jewelry commingle with bespoke beauty products, original art, rare books, whimsical gifts and uncommon leather goods, then look no further than RiverTown Trade.



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Robinson Leech Real Estate is a family-owned firm, started in 1955; Robin Leech joined his father in 1972 and has carried the business forward to the current year. Leech's agency specializes in selling or purchasing advice, representation of buyers and sellers in the process as well as residential rentals for vacation homes, seasonal and year-round rentals. Robin is licensed to sell in CT, MA, and NY, and is the principal person that most of those who reach out will deal with throughout the buying or selling process. Mr. Leech does have two associates who are highly knowledgeable as well, but enjoys keeping the business deliberately small and personal. Robin says one of the highlights of his profession is getting to be outside, on the land, and work in a part of the three states that is second to none, an incredible place to live and work. Robin says he loves his work and the people he works for and points out that it is indeed an interesting time to be in the real estate business. Robin hopes to see stability return to real estate values. If anyone, who could be a potential client, wants a small personal firm, who works pretty much every day, Robinson Leech Real Estate is one agency that has become a must to connect with.

INSURING YOUR WORLD

CLAIMS: We've all had one or two in our lives, whether it be a homeowners claim or automobile claim. There are a few that stick out in my mind after 38 years in the insurance business that prove my point to all my clients: always call your agent, even if you think there will be no coverage! 1. A woman was in a park having a picnic lunch with her fiance. She decided to take her engagement ring off while she was preparing the lunch when an inquisitive goose wandered by looking for some scraps, not only did the goose get a full belly of their scraps but also the bride-to-be's engagement ring! Good thing she had taken out jewelry coverage or she'd be out of luck. 2. This second example was a really interesting claim. While a gal was sunning herself in a rural area by her pool, she fell asleep in a lounge chair, a neighbor's cow had gotten out and decided to investigate the pool area but found the open door to the house a bit more interesting and decided to help herself to the fruit bowl on the kitchen sink countertop. Since it was so delicious, the cow took a stroll throughout the house looking for more...as you can imagine, the cow left numerous cow pies as well as puddles throughout the house and knocked over tables, chairs, and lamps. The homeowner woke up and entered the house for a cool glass of water to find a huge mess! Their homeowners policy paid and then collected from the farmer's liability policy. 3. Then there's the tale of the gentleman who had just purchased a shiny new sports car and encountered a group of loose goats in the road. Upon honking his horn they became agitated and decided to ram the car with their horns as well as climb on the new car causing excessive damage! This was thankfully covered by the owner's comprehensive coverage. The morale of these stories is to always call your agent, should you have any type of claim.



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Tiny trouble: When to take in stray kittens

When you see stray kittens outside, your impulse might be to capture them as soon as possible to get them to safety, but that may not always be the best thing to do. Under some circumstances, kittens should be left with their mother. Before bringing a kitten inside, ask yourself these questions:

- What is the location like where you saw the kittens? Is it safe from traffic and is it sheltered from the elements and other dangers? If not, TAKE THE KITTENS immediately from that situation. They would not be left in danger unless mom was forced to abandon them.
- Is it one kitten all by itself? Does the kitten seem injured or ill? If so, TAKE THE KITTEN. It may have been lost or abandoned. Several small kittens in a relatively safe place may have been temporarily left by mom, so wait and see if she returns.
- How old are the kittens? Are their eyes still closed and they are not walking around? If so DO NOT TAKE THE KITTENS. The kittens are too young to be separated from their mother. She can protect them, and she is probably nearby waiting for you to leave. If you want to help, leave soft cat food and fresh water for mom to help her produce milk for her babies. Then, once the kittens are older than five weeks (eyes open, walking around, eating solid food) they can be taken from mom and turned into happy house cats.

If you have taken in kittens and either they need medical attention or you can't find good homes for them, call Dutchess County SPCA for help. We can also help with trapping the mother cat for spaying, so that she won't continue to produce more kittens that could be in danger.

The Dutchess County SPCA provides services to the community including a pet food pantry, free rabies clinics, pet retention assistance, low interest loans for pet medical care and safety-net pet housing.

For more information: www.dcsPCA.org



A guide to summer lawn care

When summer time arrives, many people become motivated to keep a pristine lawn. As homes and outdoor spaces are covered in sunshine and framed by natural beauty, it becomes all the more vital to follow the right lawn care practices. This can be achieved in just a few simple steps!

Firstly, feeding and fertilizing lawns is key in the summer months. In being given the proper nutrients, your grass will have a great chance at prospering. Next, it is important to remember that as temperatures rise, the height at which the grass is mowed should increase to a minimum of 3 to 4 inches. This technique reduces stress on the grass, promoting unhindered growth in warmer months.

Finally, if possible, installing an irrigation system or running a sprinkler on stressed areas of the lawn is also helpful. A lawn is unlikely to flourish when it is cut too short or kept in abundantly dry conditions. That being said, it is also significant to remember what not to do when it comes to lawn care. For instance, summer grass does not respond well when it is left to grow for too long. Letting the grass go for an extended time, and then cutting it short all at once, will stress the grass and impede healthy growth. Also, it is important to note that limiting unnecessary traffic on lawn spaces relieves pressure from the grass, too.

Grass is a habitual plant, and it likes habitual maintenance. By staying consistent with a couple of basic methods, your lawn will be green and thriving!

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Time to restart your finances?

August has been called nap-time for personal finance planning. Work is quiet, vacation time is relaxing and plenty of time to gear up for post Labor Day schedules. It is this calm that makes August a stellar month to restart your personal finances. Here are 3 steps:

1) Revisit your budget.

Seven months have passed and you can now see how your spending and savings are going. Is it time to trim costs? Maybe less takeout, fewer premium channels and monthly fee apps. Then there are the end of the year costs. Especially the holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's. They may now include travel costs, too. Best to plan for all that now.

2) Assess whether to rebalance your investments.

Take a look at your monthly brokerage account statements. How is your asset allocation? Has it changed. Do you have under performing assets that may want to reconsider? Move onto your retirement accounts. Do these need to be rebalanced and possibly use new contributions to increase under weighted positions? You can discuss all this too with your less busy investment advisor.

3) Plan for your next tax bill.

August is also a slow time for accountants and other tax experts. It might be a good time to meet with them for tax planning. Find out what steps you can take in the next several months to reduce your 2021 tax bill.

Consider discussing your August financial dreams while relaxing in your hammock with a fee-only financial advisor and start your plan to meet your goals.

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