

MAINstreet

MAGAZINE





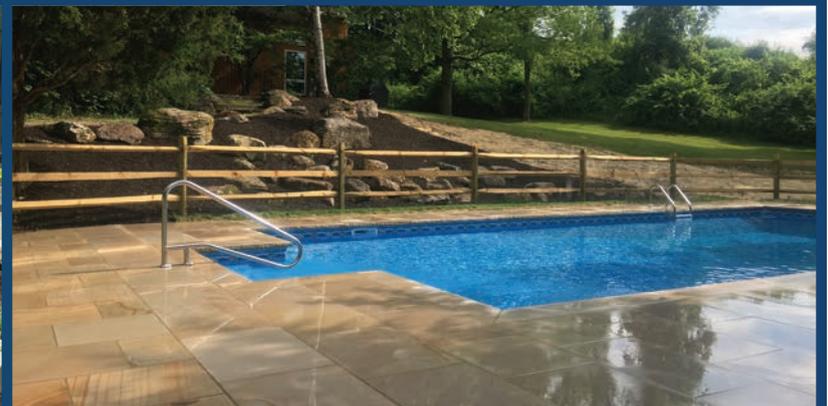
Before



After



After



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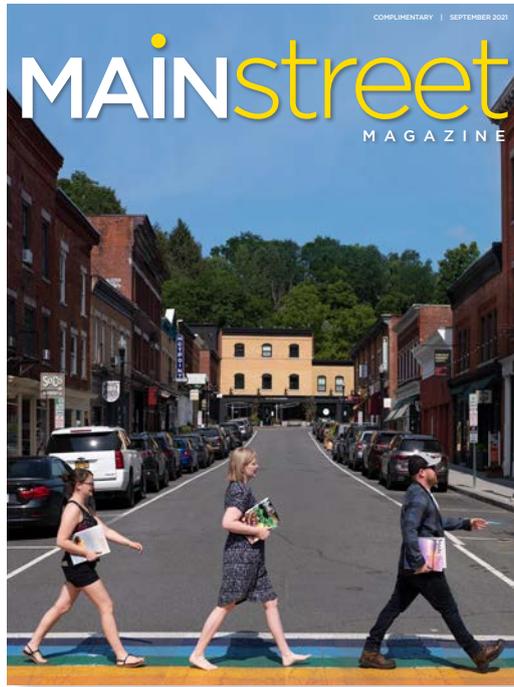
COME TOGETHER...

Ohhhhh, yes I'm fully aware at the plethora of play-on-words and symbolisms that we've got going on right now. Let's just start with the obvious - the cover - a nod to The Beatles, of course! Abbey Road has always been an inspiration and continues to be. But beyond that, did you notice that it's *Main Street* on Main Street? Get it? *wink *wink *nudge *nudge. Yeah, we thought we were kind of clever with that one (cue the laughing gifs). But as you read this, we'll actually have kicked off a little campaign with the theme of "*Main Street* on Main Street" that you will see on our website and social media. And we encourage our readers, fans and supporters to tag us when they're sporting some *Main Street* on Main Street! Hit us up at @mainstreetmag or email a pic or video to us at info@mainstreetmag.com and we'll be so thrilled!

But back to our cover. This is a concept that we've had since the start of 2021 and I'm beyond thrilled to FINALLY execute and share it with you. Besides the obvious nod to musical icons The Beatles, and the *Main Street* on Main Street tie-in that we're loving, and the fact that the picture is taken Great Barrington, MA, which is one of our local towns with a modern zebra walk (my European lingo for a crosswalk) painted in the colors of the rainbow - the three of us in the crosswalk are the steadfast members of *Main Street Magazine*. Griffin Cooper leads us, followed by none other than yours truly in the middle, with my sister-in-law and trusted right-hand person Ashley Kristjansson holding up the rear. It really doesn't get more *Main Street* on Main Street than this picture! And so we're pretty tickled pink about it. And if you hadn't noticed, yes, I am fully aware of the fact that I'm not in line with my two co-workers. Typical me, I can't follow instructions... you'd think that it doesn't get much more simple than "left, right, left, right" but somehow I had to march to the beat of my own drum. But in full disclosure, I kind of love (and am not surprised) that this happened because it is so typical. And again, this cover is fraught with so much symbolism and meaning from the blatantly obvious, to the more minute details.

The other point that I'd like to point out is that we have never really had people on our cover. We have on three previous occasions had a person, but it was always a glimpse or a blur. This is the first time that there is an obvious and clear person that you can see from head to toe. And for that reason, I thought that it was befitting to have it be the three of us. We are *Main Street* on Main Street and we march forward... and sometimes to the beat of our own drum.

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



SEPTEMBER 2021

We are *Main Street* on Main Street and are proud to be located on every Main Street in our Tri-corner area.

Cover photo by
Lazlo Gyorsok

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ARTIST PROFILE: ROBERT ADZEMA

HERE COMES THE SUN



By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

“I was fascinated by the sun as a child ... the way light and shadows would move on the wall as sunlight filtered through the venetian blinds.” Robert Adzema has a long and tender relationship with the way the sunlight appears to move throughout the day, how those changes cast precise shadows and the artistic spirit that combines light and shadow into elegant sculpture.

An accomplished plein-air landscape painter, Adzema is also internationally celebrated as the creator of intricate pieces of sculpture – sundials that adorn public places, private gardens and places of tender memorial. “I prize a good fit both aesthetically and physically for the sundial to its site,” he asserts, knowing that the precision of placement and design are extraordinarily important for a sundial to truly tell time.

With degrees in Industrial Design (Pratt Institute) and a Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture (Indiana University) his scholastic achievements matched his innate skills. No less a celebrated design firm as DeMartin, Marona, Cranstoun & Downes engaged Robert’s precise model making skills as he developed a global reputation as an artist of significance.

The mystery of time

The history of sundials as timekeeping instruments is likely the oldest iteration of humans’ desire to know the time of day. As the sun presumably made its arc across the sky, shadows changed and, when viewed day after day, could provide a reading of how the day was progressing. A sundial is a clock that is ecologically pure, using available light and requiring little more than an object to cast a shadow – the “gnomon” – and a plate marked to reflect the hours of the day.

At its most basic, a sundial can be created by merely standing in one sunlit spot and carefully measuring one’s own shadow. In *The Canterbury Tales*, 14th century author Geoffrey Chaucer allows one member of the clergy to escape with little criticism. It is in *The Parson’s Tale* that he underscores the humility of the pilgrim by having him become his own sundial.

*It was four o’clock according to
my guess,
Since eleven feet, a little more or less,
my shadow at the time did fall,
Considering that I myself am
six feet tall.*

Light ascending

Robert Adzema’s sundial sculptures seem as varied as the settings, the intent of their creation and his artist’s sense of balance, style and elegance. An impressive, commanding piece of Adzema’s work stands in front of the



Above, top to bottom: Adzema model for Oculus sundial. Robert Adzema. All images courtesy of Robert Adzema.

Samuel T. Chen Fine Arts Center at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT. The 20-foot-tall *Sheng* sundial utilizes the Chinese ideogram that means “ascending” as its primary feature.

“Accurate sundials are site specific,” asserts Adzema, “designed for the exact longitude and latitude of the site.” The precise measurements made by Adzema as he designed and installed the *Sheng* Sundial allow visitors to read the time during morning hours on the east face of the piece and on the west face during the afternoon.

Often placed in dramatic places, Robert Adzema’s sundial creations exist as true outdoor art forms, complimentary to their location, geometrically pleasing and magnetically engaging. “My designs are meant to be sculptures that are poetic but that also function scientifically.” A visitor to Harborside Financial Center in Jersey City, NJ, will experience those qualities in complete execution. A large piece of public art, the 11-foot, 6-inch brushed stainless steel Adzema sundial is set on the plaza with the Manhattan skyline as backdrop across the Hudson River. Combining an equatorial dial that marks the passing of the hours, the piece also features a

solar calendar that is perfectly positioned to illuminate each day at noon.

The use of light as well as shadow distinguishes types of sundial. The “oculus” can be almost a pin hole that focuses the sun’s light on the progression of markings on the dial to provide the same result as the shadow created by a gnomon.

Seven moments of inspiration

The juxtaposition of light and darkness runs through Adzema’s work. He credits that fascination by having seen, at an early age, the 1935 classic animated short film *The Sunshine Makers*. The film has continued to be an inspiration as it tells the whimsical story of elves dedicated to bottling the sun as they overcome the negativity of a neighboring group of elves intent on living in darkness. The film, viewable on YouTube, is a charming celebration of light ... and a fine tutorial on Robert’s devotion to light.

Light versus darkness. Good versus evil. The struggle is almost Zoroastrian in its presentation in sundials, and the results are often found in the memorial sundials that Adzema has created for very special, contemplative spaces. His *Arc of the Sun* piece uses the earth’s rotation to allow hour numerals to be illuminated by the sun as the hours move through the day. Light and fire were the ultimate embodiment of the eventual triumph of good over evil for Zoroaster, and the 5000 year history of that belief system has influenced communities of faith throughout history.

The Arc of the Sun piece first appeared in a landmark book – *The Great Sundial Cutout Book* which Adzema created with Mablen Jones in 1978. It is revered as an important milestone in not merely practical applications of the design and fabrication of sundials, but as an important moment in a global awakening to the possibilities for harnessing the sun’s constantly renewed source of energy.



No less a figure as R. Buckminster Fuller hailed the book, “I prophesize well deserved popular acclaim for this book.” He was right, and though out of print, the book is still eagerly sourced through used booksellers who will discover that Adzema encourages copying the designs on heavy paper rather than cutting up the prized pages.

The majestic, whimsical and profound sundials continue to be created by Robert Adzema, who welcomes the inquiries for commissions and meticulously researches the proposed sites, then designs singular pieces to fit.

His continued pursuit of the unique, the aesthetic and the practical have led Adzema to places as far flung as Slovenia and Mexico, to gardens throughout the United States and to the high honor of receiving the Sawyer Dialing Prize from the North American Sundial Society. Through his achievements, a consistent focus has been “to consider the place ... to embrace sentiment as science.” ●

A collection of Robert Adzema’s sundials, as well as a portfolio of his plein-air paintings are available for view on his website robertadzema.com.

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



Above, top to bottom: Jersey City Harborside. Arc of the Sun. Below, left, top to bottom: Sheng at Central Connecticut University. Sheng detail.





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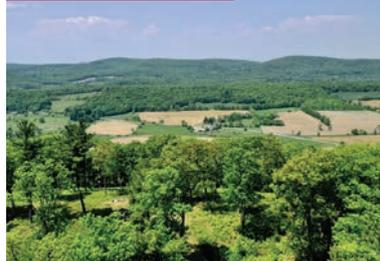
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After serving as National Design Director for decades with an international live events company, **Christopher Virtuoso** turned the page in 2020 and jumped into the real estate market and is now with Keller Williams, Hudson Valley North, and is loving it. "I am a people person so real estate is the perfect fit for me," says Chris. "My partner and I moved up to Millerton in 2008 and now I finally have the time to be more involved with beautiful village." Chris recently became a member of the Millerton-North East Climate Smart Community Task Force, which has introduced him to the many folks that make the town vibrant and successful. "Sustainability is something I felt strongly about in the design world," says Chris. "I enjoy spreading that important message."



The Village of Millerton was pleased to welcome its new Mayor, and tenth-generation resident, **Jenn Najdek** to the venerable office this past July. As a lifelong resident, Jenn has seen the growth of the village, past and present, firsthand. "I love the sense of community in both the old and the new." In addition to being the Mayor of the Village, Jenn has enjoyed a decade of dedicated work at Eco-Builders since 2010. Owned and operated by her brother Donald, EcoBuilders works with clients on the benefits of green, sustainable construction. Outside of work, Jenn is an avid golfer and enjoys hitting the links with friends. "I like being part of the solution," says Jenn. "That philosophy applies to both my career as well as my passion for community service."



Eric Skabry has worked at Ruge's Chevrolet in Millbrook, NY, as a sales consultant for three months. "What I love is excitement from customers when they sit down in the car they've been looking for and I know that I've helped them make one of the most important decisions a person can make." Originally from Buffalo, NY, Eric loves the mountains and hiking trails in our Tri-corner area, and in general, spending as much time outside as possible; all in addition to spending time with his wife and daughter. Eric is a US Marine Veteran, and was honorably discharged after eight years of service in the Infantry as a Sergeant. Thank you so much for your service, Eric. We wish you nothing but the best.



Fran Goodsell is a school psychologist for the Region 1 School District in Connecticut. She feels lucky to have worked in many different states and school settings over the course of her approximately 40-year career. "Working with the students is the joy of the work. There have been so many changes over the past years that have impacted children and families that more student support services are so needed." When she isn't working, Fran can typically be found enjoying a good mystery novel. She also loves to travel, cook, cheer on the Pittsburgh Steelers, and volunteer in her local community. Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, and having spent many years in Los Angeles, CA, Fran is a resident of Kent, CT, and truly appreciates what this area has to offer. "Although I still miss aspects of West Coast weather, I love living in such a wonderful, dynamic, and beautiful town!"



A registered nurse for 36 years, **Dorothy Bazzano** has spent 15 of those as a registered nurse with the team at Sharon Hospital, where she leads the cardiac rehabilitation department. Her day-to-day schedule includes orienting patients into the program, which evaluates their heart health and monitors their progress over time. In 2017, she was a recipient of the Nightingale Award for Excellence in Nursing, Connecticut's largest statewide nursing recognition program. The Norfolk, CT, native said, "My favorite part of my job is helping people understand what we are doing and making a positive impact on their experience." With two daughters and three grandchildren, family is a pinnacle of her joy outside the office. "We're also expecting two more grandsons very soon and are excited to grow the love and connections shared among our family," she said.



Megan Hay is an administrative assistant for Trast & Gyenes – accountants and tax professionals in Kingston, NY, and has been with the firm since September of 2017. "I love our office, we are small but mighty," she said. "We each share important roles in order to get the job done correctly. Plus, they are a pretty fun group of people to pass the time with." Outside of work Megan enjoys magnet fishing, bike rides, and hiking and camping with family. "I love where I grew up in Ancramdale because it is so very quiet and peaceful," she says. "This fall, I am looking forward to sweaters, pumpkin and apple picking, corn mazes, hayrides, and all of the holidays that come along with it."

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Keeping the land

TIM BONTECOU, TAMARACK PRESERVE LTD., AMENIA, NY

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

Before it started to rain and after the last Sunday lunch was served in the dining room, Tim Bontecou, President of Tamarack Preserve Ltd., took me for a SUV drive over the gravel roads and fields of the preserve, which have been in the Bontecou family since the late 1930s.

Starting out at the clubhouse and sporting clay stations, the narrow road followed the stream running through limestone canyons, and forests of hemlock and hardwood to the serene lakeside lodge. Another grassy trail led to the fishing ponds and fields planted with switch grass, corn and sorghum for the upland birds. Deer bounded in front of us. A heron took flight over the wetlands. The tranquility, beauty and variety of the natural landscape was inspiring.

How would you describe the Tamarack Preserve?

Tamarack is a non-proprietary private membership hunting and fishing club that we hope promotes good sportsmanship and a general love of the outdoors – plus some of the best food in the area. Within 30 miles of us there are many hunting clubs, but each one has their own little niche and flavor. I think we are a bit different in encouraging young people to become involved and being more informal than some other clubs. For example, here, if they wish, members can hunt with their own bird dogs.

Why did you create Tamarack?

My family created this preserve on land the family has owned for three generations to protect 1,700 acres from development and to help defray the expenses of owning land. We began modestly in 1991 housed in a small, old farmhouse. After deciding the farmhouse was just too rotten to save, we built this new clubhouse with the restaurant, kitchen, bar, and library in 1994. Our simple goal in starting the preserve to hold onto and protect this land has remained unchanged. The hunting and fishing club was the solution to profitably using marginal land.

How did you decide on the name?

There was already a lake in the swamp called Lake Tamarack that just seemed like an obvious choice. The tamarack tree, also known as a larch, is a deciduous conifer whose needles turn a brilliant yellow in the fall. Preserve is in the name because that is our mission.

What was the most difficult thing when you first started?

The early years were rough. Attracting members before we had facilities wasn't easy. But we had the land and that made everything possible.

How do you become a member?

Typically, a member brings you as a guest and then sponsors you if you decide to apply for membership. There are two levels of membership – an associate membership which allows you to shoot clays, fish, use the dining room and walk the property, and regular membership which includes all the foregoing plus hunting. There's not a formal board review process, just management's decision.

There's a one-time initiation fee when you join that will not be



Above: Tim Bontecou with his hunting dog Tweed. Below, left: The walls of the dining room are covered with trophies lent by members.

refunded if you discontinue your membership. Then there are annual dues and usage fees. The idea is to keep dues low and let usage fees cover the costs of any activity. Our goal is to keep fees affordable and maintain and improve our facilities. Our annual member turn-over rate due to death, lack of interest, or relocation is minimal. We have limits on the number of members because we want to be able to provide top services when someone calls up to reserve a field or have dinner. In a way we are like a gym.

What do you offer members? Do you need a hunting license?

The preserve covers 1,050 acres on this side of Route 44 and then another 700 acres hidden across the road. There are eight separate hunting fields for birds, three areas for hillside release, a five stand and 15 stations for sporting clays, a rifle range for target practice and gun sighting, a swampy section for

Continued on next page ...



ducks, a bass pond, wild game areas for hunting deer, turkeys, ducks and geese, and the stream for trout fishing.

At the end of the preserve's central road is a small lake which was created by the Thorne family who assembled this tract of land in 1905. They built the iron bridge over the stream and the 30' high, 150' long dam. There's a historic lake side fishing lodge that members can utilize for entertaining and a rustic log cabin for camping. We stock the ponds with bass and the streams with trout, and release birds in the fields. About 80% of the fish are catch-and-release and lots of the birds escape the hunters. Guides with trained dogs, mostly labs and springer spaniels, are provided for field hunts. Instruction is available for anyone wanting to learn how to shoot and fish. In our pro shop, you can rent a shotgun or a fishing rod if you don't have your own.

No licenses are required for upland bird hunting on the preserve; however, regular state permits and stamps are required for hunting wild game in season and, in most instances, for fishing.

It must be hard to keep this road open

The rainstorm two weeks ago really tore up the roads and we're still working to repair them. We have dumped many loads of gravel from our own bed to restore them. Maintenance of our infrastructure demands a lot of equipment. The preserve owns four tractors, a skid



steer, five pickup trucks, plus mowers, weedwhackers and chain saws, etc. There are about 12 miles of roads and trails to maintain plus all the buildings and structures.

How many employees do you have?

We have 30 full and part time employees. Many of our staff members have been here 15 to 18 years. I believe it's a good place to work, but like all businesses today it's hard to find people who are willing to work.

How did Covid affect the preserve?

We did apply and receive a PPP loan, which was forgiven, and all our employees continued to get paid. We were closed completely for two months. First golf courses were permitted to open, and then sporting clays about a week later. The restaurant remained closed during Covid restrictions, but we did a tremendous take out business.

How important is the internet to your business?

The internet is not important in attracting new members, but it does enable us to communicate easily. Our website is really for our members and only accessible to them to make reservations, view our weekly email blast, etc.

Is climate change affecting the preserve? What do you see?

Scientists at the Cary Institute have told me that our forests will definitely be affected by climate change



but they are not sure how. All they will say is that catalpa and hickory trees don't seem to be affected yet. Right now, the hemlocks are being eaten by the Japanese woolly adelgid insect. With warming temperatures these insects have extended their range north. All the ash trees are dying from the Emerald Ash borer. Beech trees are attacked by the beech bark beetle, oak trees by anthracnose fungi, and pine trees by the pine beetle. And then there are the ticks that affect people. The milder winters and wetter, warmer summers continue to provide increasingly large habitats for ticks for longer periods.

How is the preserve involved in the community?

Personally, I serve as a director of many local organizations and just joined the North East Community Center board which provides much needed social services from after school education to senior transportation for our region. I'm also very active in the Dutchess Land Conservancy where I was chairman for a long time and the Cary Institute. The preserve itself supports many local organizations financially, as well as contributing our facilities for special fundraising events like Ronald McDonald House, Ducks Unlimited, and some clubs in New York. We limit the number of these events so our members aren't affected. ●

To learn more about Tamarack Preserve, call (845) 373-7084, or visit them online at tamarackpreserve.net.

Above: The outdoor patio is a meeting place after shooting. Below, left: A rainy afternoon at the duck pond at the Tamarack Preserve. Photo by Christine Bates.



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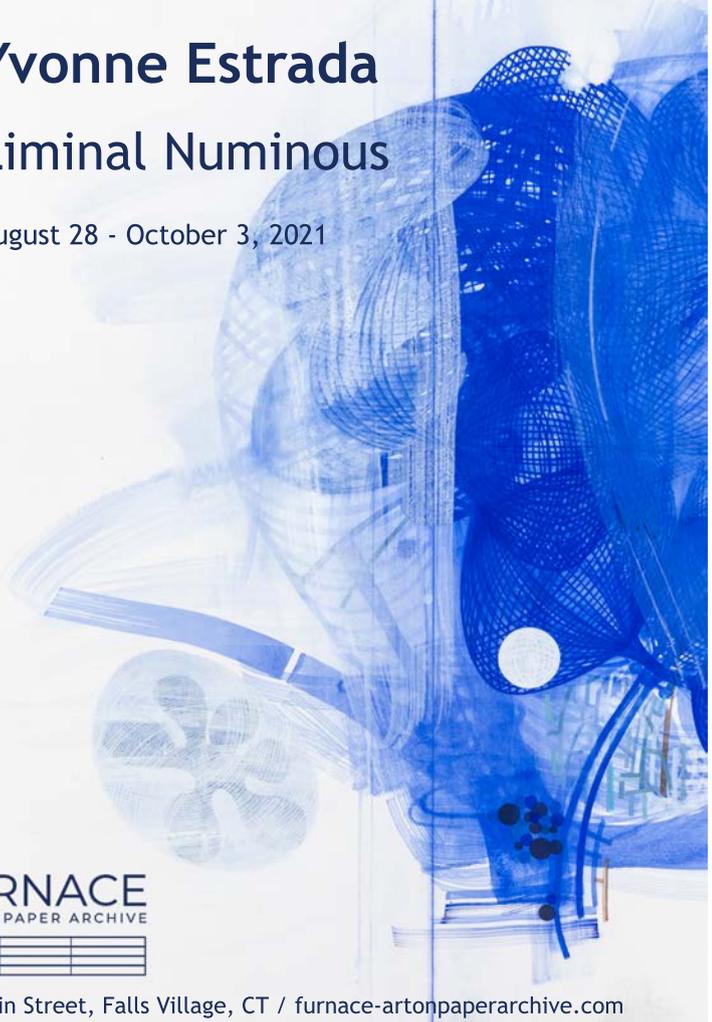


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Fresh peach cobbler

with Honeyed cream



By *Olivia Valentine & Caroline Markonic*
info@mainstreetmag.com

A cobbler is a deep-dish baked fruit dessert with a thick biscuit topping. Traditionally, the rich fruit stew is the base. Some like to bake a cobbler with the biscuit on the bottom too, but we feel that isn't a true cobbler. That's more like a deep-dish pie! It is believed that the name "cobbler" got its name from the biscuit-like topping resembling cobblestones. Cobblers were created by British American settlers who lacked the proper ingredients and equipment for pie. Lucky for us because cobblers are just as tasty as pie but half the work!

When we make a dessert, we always have plenty of taste testers happily volunteering to taste our baked treat. This cobbler was tested by two individuals that love a good dessert. It was such a hit that it was gobbled up entirely within minutes. So, we suggest if you are making this dessert, you make two!

Cobblers can be made with apples, blueberries, rhubarb, etc. It doesn't have to be made with fresh peaches, but we just happened to have a big basket of freshly-picked peaches sitting on our counter. We had already made peach pancakes and thought, "Hmmm, let's make a cobbler for the September Recipe of the Month."

Peaches are one of Olivia's absolute favorite fruits. There is nothing better than peeling a fresh, ripe peach and having the juices run down your arms while you bite into its deliciousness.

For the recipe, which is rather simple (we like simple), you'll need:

The base:

1 1/2 tbs cornstarch
 1/4 cup brown sugar
 4 cups peeled, sliced peaches
 1 tbs butter
 1 tbs fresh lemon juice

Batter topping:

1/2 cup sifted flour
 1/2 cup sugar
 1/2 tsp baking powder
 1/4 tsp salt
 2 tbs soft butter
 1 egg, slightly beaten

Honeyed cream:

1 cup heavy cream
 1 tbs honey
 1/2 tsp cinnamon

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

For the base:

Combine the cornstarch, sugar, and water in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the peaches and cook until mixture thickens, about 8-10

minutes, stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat and add in the butter and lemon juice. Pour into an 8" round baking dish and set aside.

For the batter:

Combine all ingredients and beat with a spoon until the batter is smooth. Drop spoonfuls of the batter on the hot peach mixture being sure to cover most of the top but don't worry as it spreads over peaches during baking. Sprinkle the batter with half a tablespoon of sugar and then pop it in the oven. Bake for 40-50 minutes.

Honeyed cream:

Beat 1 cup of whipping cream until slightly thick. Add the cinnamon and honey, beat until fully combined (be careful not to over whip or you'll have honey butter).

Serve warm, topped with the honeyed whipped cream. It is also great with vanilla ice cream. •

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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Buying and selling a business with real estate

YOU GET EVERYTHING

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

Even though the residential real estate market everywhere is booming with record low inventory, commercial real estate prices and activity remain sluggish. We wondered how to go about selling your real estate if it's attached to your small business. One local entrepreneur explained, "I didn't get much for the business, but I did really well on the real estate." Many thanks to Leslie Farhangi who wants to sell her vodka brand, Three Meadows and a Pony, who suggested this month's theme for our real estate column. If your business does not have associated real estate, using a real estate broker wouldn't be advisable but the rest of this information will be useful.

The challenge

Small businesses with or without associated real estate are not easy to sell. Owners worry that publicly trying to sell might adversely affect their customers, their vendors and their employees. Some owners decide to just close up shop when their lease is up or, if they own the real estate, sell their inventory and list the property for sale as Lou Saperstein did with his eponymously named, iconic store in Millerton, NY, or Gilmore Glass when it closed its glass works and sold the brick building. Tony Blair of Stone House Real Estate in Great Barrington, MA, estimates that only 20% of commercial real estate is sold with the business included. In his experience potential buyers look at the condition and location of the building as well as the historic and projected financials associated with the business. Typically, real estate brokers, lawyers, appraisers, and accountants work together to figure out the details of a sale.

Basics before selling

Think ahead if you want to sell your business. Examine your own motives for the sale. Do any family members want to take it over? Has anyone you know expressed an interest in buying your business? Are there any competitors that might be interested? Do you have a key employee who knows the business? Do you want to stay on in any capacity if you sell? Are you willing to help finance the purchase of the business? How important is it to you to have the business continue and retain its identity?

Next anticipate the questions any buyer or business intermediary, whether real estate broker or business broker, will ask. Be able to explain why you are selling the business and whether you will stay on to help the new buyer – or not. Sit down and honestly quantify what you are taking out of the business – salary, personal expenses, entertaining, travel, etc. and determine the cash flow any new owner would be buying. Think about the most valuable resources of your business. Trained employees, increasing revenues, high customer retention, brand name, reputation in the community, vendor relationships, excellent location, leasehold improvements, high margins, technology, etc. are all important. These will be your key selling points. Be sure that your tax returns and your financials are in order and that all employees are on the books. Try to promote the success of your business through advertising, your website, and social media clout and mentions. It's always a good idea to sell when your business is doing well.

Employee buyer

It's best to plan far in advance – years ahead – if you plan on selling your business to a capable employee. And, depending on the business, it's



Above: The White Hart Inn is once again the center of Salisbury, CT, after its sale to local investors. Photo: Christine Bates.

likely that the owner will have to finance a good part of the transfer. In *Main Street's* August 2013 issue, we asked Roger Elwood, "What's on the horizon for Sharon Auto Body?" He responded, "When I decide to leave the business, one of my trusted employees will take it over." Later that same year Jim Young, who joined Sharon Auto Body in 1988, purchased the business from his boss. They had been talking about it for years and Elwood financed the sale. "I just send him a check. That's how these things work. No bank is interested in financing this kind of sale." Key to the transaction was the help of Young's accountant and attorney. Nothing has really changed in the business. "When I get ready to retire, I'll probably do the same thing."

Sell to the competition

At the height of Covid, garden enthusiasm soared in 2020, and Hoffman Landscaping of Wilton, CT, announced the acquisition of Kent

Continued on next page ...

Greenhouse & Gardens. Hoffman, with over 160 employees, had been growing at 15% a year and was looking for geographic expansion into Litchfield County. Bruce Bennett, who built the Kent business with his wife Debbie, was becoming overwhelmed with the growing success of their business and called Mike Hoffman with a proposition according to an interview in *Litchfield County Times*. “I told him that I had two things: my people went with the business and that he would maintain the Kent Greenhouse name – at least for a while. He agreed to both and that sealed the deal.”

“I’ve spent my entire career saying I wouldn’t do retail,” said Hoffman. “But then I met the people at Kent, saw the business and the traffic. Now I can’t begin to tell you how excited I am about retail. Their operation is amazing.” For background on Kent Greenhouse see *Main Street’s* interview with Bruce and Debbie Bennet in our December 2014 back issue.

Get the word out - quietly

Sometimes business owners get lucky and receive an unsolicited offer they can’t refuse, but usually that doesn’t happen – unless you’re a real estate broker. In the last few years, strong local brokers have been purchased by national, public players – Paula Redmond to Corcoran, Guernsey to

Compass, and Best & Cavallaro to William Pitt Sotheby’s.

More typically savvy business owners assess the value of their real estate, inventory, cash flow and brand, and then network confidentially with trusted influencers about their desire to sell. This network could include important clients, valued vendors, and trusted real estate and business professionals. One high profile regional business has created a confidential website which elegantly tells their story. This approach gives the owner ultimate flexibility in selecting a buyer, and pricing without listing with a business broker or publicly announcing a sale on the multiple listing service. Selling a business with real estate confidentially requires patience and sophistication and works best for successful, profitable businesses that are still too small to engage the active interest of a New York investment bank.

Let everybody know

The White Hart Inn in Salisbury, CT, is a high-profile example of the patience required to sell a business that involves real estate even when it’s public knowledge. The venerable inn had undergone a \$6 million makeover into a glamorous destination with 16 luxury suites and, after reopening briefly to public criticism, it was closed and put up for sale without management or employees. The inn was initially listed at \$5,000,000 in late 2010 by Pat Best of Best & Cavallaro and the asking price was gradually reduced to \$3,900,000 by 2013. After much spreadsheet analysis of potential income and expenses, a group of local investors purchased the inn for \$2,900,000 in 2014 based on the potential cash flow the inn might generate, and the importance of the inn’s survival to the community. Real estate records reveal that a value of \$2,150,000 was attributed to the real estate itself with the remainder allocated to good will, leasehold improvements and furnishings.

The 500-seat Moviehouse in Millerton, NY, is another example of a sale of a business using a real estate broker. In this case Raj Kumar, a film



Above: The sale of Babette’s, a fully built-out café/restaurant in Millbrook, NY, is being handled by Houlihan & Lawrence’s specialized Food, Beverage & Hospitality Group.

enthusiast and a realtor with Select Sotheby’s in Hudson, NY, listed the property and found the right buyer. The business included the renovated theater, state-of-the-art equipment, a central Library Management System and satellites that help bring National Theater and the Met Opera live to local audiences. The staff was willing to stay and help continue to operate once Covid restrictions were lifted. Between Carol Sadlon (the owner) and Sotheby’s marketing the potential sale of the beloved Moviehouse received a lot of public and press attention. Oscar-winning directors, Broadway producers, and people who loved the Moviehouse expressed interest. Before financial details were shared, qualified parties signed confidential non-disclosure agreements. The property was listed on October 29, 2020 and sold at its listing price of \$1,195,000 on February 19, 2021.

Using a business broker

The internet has changed selling your business and business brokers make active use of every site from Craig’s List to www.BizBuySell.com – the largest internet site for selling a business, with or without a real estate component. These sites are an excellent resource of information on selling or buying a business and include postings by sellers themselves and

by business brokers. These brokers normally charge 10% to 15% of the sale price for assistance in selling your business, more than the 5% standard real estate brokerage fee. Visiting these internet sites is a good way to get a feel for what businesses are asking, the names of business brokers, and commercial real estate brokers who handle business sales. While not as public as a real estate listing, business brokers reach large audiences, and many retain their own data bases of potential buyers. Business brokers will focus on the cash flow that the business generates, rather than valuing the business, good will, and real estate separately. Depending on your business there are also industry sites and business brokers who focus on only one type of property. For example, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and even airports have specialized intermediaries that are worth a look. ●

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.



Above: The Moviehouse in Millerton, NY, found a buyer quickly despite being closed by Covid restrictions. Photo: Christine Bates.

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Tara Sullivan: *First female to lead the New York State Bridge Authority, retires*

By Kathryn Burke
kburke@nysba.ny.gov

In the best of times it's important to recognize those who are good leaders. In these challenging times, it's even more important to recognize those who are selfless, smart, and committed to excellence, and encourage the best from others. Tara Sullivan was that kind of leader at the New York State Bridge Authority. Sullivan was appointed deputy director by former Governor Cuomo ten years ago; then appointed as the first female to lead the Bridge Authority by the NYBSA Board in 2019, with the departure of the previous executive director.

Local Hudson Valley roots

Sullivan knows the Hudson Valley. She has more than 30 years in public service. She grew up in Woodstock, NY, and served on their town board, and then on the Ulster County Legislature, which was followed by several state roles including serving as the Governor's regional representative for the Hudson Valley. As executive director of the Hudson-Fulton Quadricentennial, Sullivan traveled the Hudson Valley highlighting the significance of those two historic events and organizing major celebrations from the Battery to Albany.

In 2018, Sullivan was chosen as one of *Hudson Valley Magazine's* Women in Government, as the first female executive at the Bridge Author-

ity. As deputy director, Sullivan made it her mission to learn all aspects of the Bridge Authority, particularly its history and its long-held practice of serving the residents of the Hudson Valley by providing some of the safest long-span bridges with the lowest tolls in the country.

In addition to attending to her responsibilities at her office at NYSBA headquarters, Sullivan began visiting each of the five bridges regularly. She got to know the workers and how things ran. She listened and received feedback from those doing the maintenance and operations at the bridges. She quickly came to understand the uniqueness of this Public Authority, created in 1932 by then-Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, to fund, maintain, and operate the bridges of the Hudson Valley from the Bear Mountain to the Rip Van Winkle without being encumbered by the politics or budget cycles of Albany. NYSBA is one of the best run Public Authorities in New York State, if not the best run. Tolls collected at their five bridges account for almost 100% of the Bridge Authority budget, no state tax revenue is provided to the Authority.

Bridge education

To share her discovery of the uniqueness of the Authority with the people of the Hudson Valley, Sullivan



Above: Tara Sullivan, the now-former leader of the New York State Bridge Authority. Below, left: The Hudson River Skywalk on its opening day. All images credited to Olive Cadet at NYS Bridge Authority.

instituted the section of the Bridge Authority law that charged the Authority with educating the public on its workings and its bridges. Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley was formed with Sullivan as its first chair. The Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley board brought me on as director in 2016, and together we brought about the creation of a museum/classroom space at the Bear Mountain Bridge and a classroom at the Rip Van Winkle Bridge.

Our initial educator workshops were attended by New York State Master Teachers, with Sullivan greeting each workshop personally to tell the story of the Bridge Authority, and its role in developing the Hudson Valley community we enjoy today. She understood the importance of utilizing the Authority's bridges for STEM and STEAM education and encouraged the sharing of STEM curriculum materials, as well as welcoming class visits – including engineering tours of the bridges by Bridge Authority engineers – to provide authentic STEM experiences for many Hudson Valley students.

Continued on next page ...



The Hudson River Skywalk

One of Sullivan’s signature accomplishments is the Hudson River Skywalk – linking the homes and studios of 19th century Hudson River School pioneers Thomas Cole and Frederic Church across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. Under her leadership, the Authority improved the pedestrian walkway and added viewing platforms, offering today’s Hudson River artists and visitors the opportunity to enjoy the river and Catskill Mountain vistas that inspired Cole and Church.

Sullivan worked with many community partners, including Betsy Jacks, executive director of Thomas Cole National Historic Site who said, “The Hudson River Skywalk was a dream I thought would take a decade or more to realize. Instead, Tara Sullivan made it happen almost instantaneously. Her leadership skills are like nothing I have ever seen before, or since.”

Sean Sawyer, president of The Olana Partnership, is quoted as saying, “Tara Sullivan had the vision to see the potential of the Hudson River Skywalk and the remarkable leadership skills to literally bridge the river and unite all the diverse organizations and constituencies involved to make it a reality.”

The most challenging times

Sullivan was appointed acting director by the Bridge Authority Board in 2019, serving during what would prove to be some of the most challenging times for the Authority and

for the Hudson Valley. The largest capital project in Bridge Authority history was about to begin, cashless tolling would be implemented on all bridges in the next couple years, and then Covid hit. An entire new NYS-BA Board was appointed by former Governor Cuomo in August 2020.

Sullivan worked with the new Board, and others, to enable the Bridge Authority workers – engineers, maintenance crews, operations, and collectors – to continue to do their jobs keeping our Hudson Valley bridges some of the safest, and best maintained, with some of the lowest tolls in the nation for long span bridges. All while the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge north span decking project proceeded to a likely completion, way ahead of the originally scheduled date. Additionally, prior to Sullivan’s retire-

ment date, the cashless toll system went into effect at the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge. All Bridge Authority bridges should be cashless by early 2022.

The best person for the job

All of this illustrates that the best person to lead is not always the most obvious person. A good leader should recognize the value of the organization they lead, utilize the experience and knowledge of individuals within their organization, then work to achieve defined, common goals. Sullivan did all that and did it well.

As Sullivan retires, the Bridge Authority welcomes its second female leader in Maureen Coleman, appointed as the executive director by former Governor Cuomo in July 2021. Coleman has hit the ground running. All indications are that Coleman is eager to learn all about the Authority she now leads. She already has an appreciation for this well-run agency that only an insider could know. It’s become clear she is working to ensure the Bridge Authority continues to be a pivotal support, for many years to come, for the Hudson Valley and beyond. Many thanks to Tara Sullivan. And a warm welcome to Maureen Coleman. ●



Above: Tara Sullivan, at the ribbon cutting for the The Hudson River Skywalk on its opening day. Below, left: A classroom for the Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley, located at the Bear Mountain Bridge. All images credited to Olive Cadet at NYS Bridge Authority.



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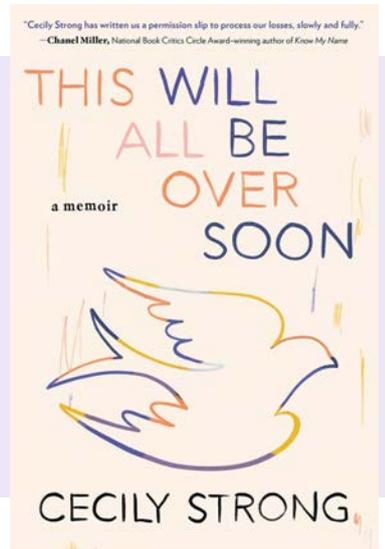
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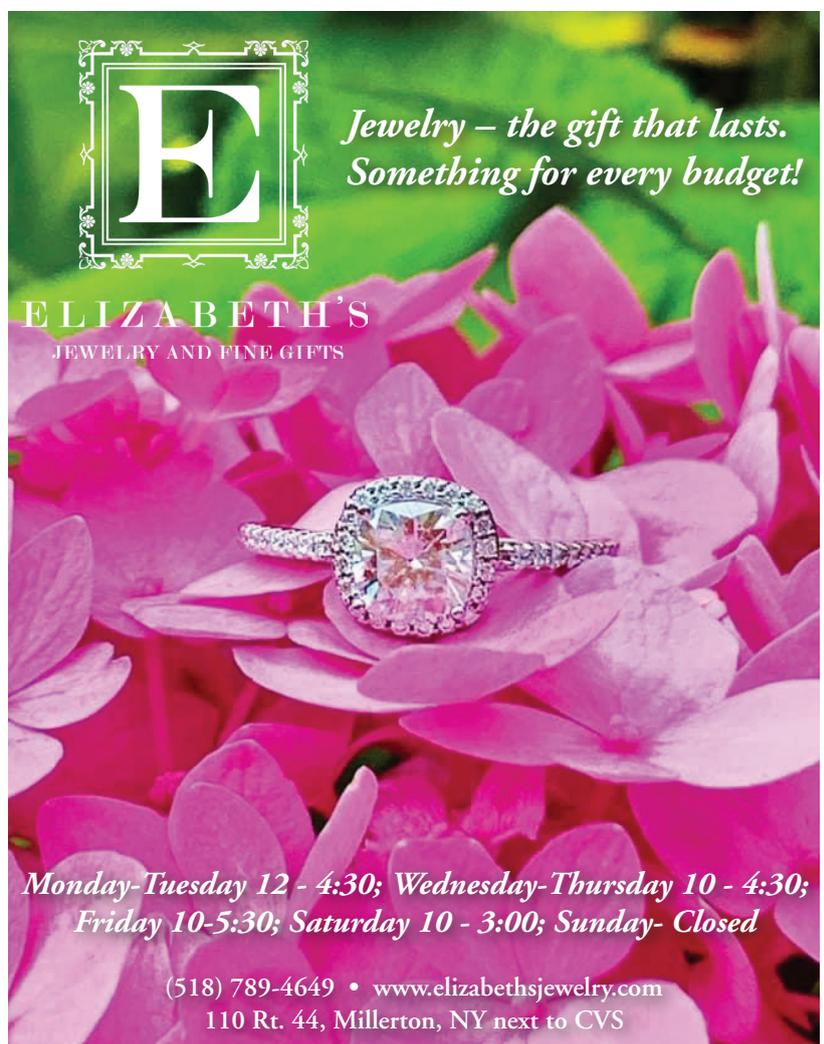
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SEL: why is my kid's school teaching about emotions?

Consider the following exchange I had with “Joe,” the owner of an unnamed inn in the western Adirondacks:

It was roughly 9am, and I was waiting for Joe’s wife, who served as hostess, waitress, chef, and (remarkably, still) a charming bartender, to put the finishing touches on the meat lover’s omelet that I had ordered nigh on an hour earlier. It happened to be Joe’s birthday, a coincidence he downplayed by pointing out that he was still “working,” an evident euphemism for ensconcing himself at a nearby table and launching disquisitions on whatever topic arose by virtue of his guests’ resumes. In my case, it was education.

Joe bemoaned the inability of young people to tell time on a traditional clock. He lamented the abandonment of cursive script. Had I nothing to do the rest of the day, he would have assayed his theories about the importance of learning Latin.

I find myself in these situations often. I doubt that principals in China find themselves pigeonholed by would-be curriculum experts, but everyone in America has a perspective about what ought to be taught in public schools. The notion of a free public education is foundational to a democracy and is more native to our society than

the notion of free public health-care (think about that one). It also entitles everyone to have an opinion on what schools should be teaching.

The Joes of the world

Debating the Joes of the world would be as Sisyphean an endeavor as trying to win him over to a Bitcoin economy, so I resigned myself to listening and mentally marshaling my retorts as he pontificated on the ignorance of younger generations. But the truth is, Joe’s business is dying. In between taking our omelette order and retreating to the kitchen to serve as her own sous chef, his wife deposited a photo album on our table that told the tale of halcyon days when snowmobilers encamped by the dozens and Joe was still a robust and active presence. Back then, cash was king, and word-of-mouth served well enough to keep the inn full. If I were to ask Joe to add an online booking feature and digital inventory management to his repertoire, he would seek out the first twenty-something college grad who would be willing to live in the middle of nowhere and push the whole enterprise onto them.

I suspect the Joes and I might share some common ground, however, if we could get past the trivia that each of us thought worth teaching and could discuss the common values that grease the treads of not only an economy, but a society. When Thomas Jefferson & Co. set us on the road to free public education, they prioritized literacy, but

they also indicated the importance of moral instruction and self-government as qualities that could be installed in all citizens and, more importantly, that were necessary to the perpetuation of democracy. Just to successfully coexist in a single classroom with a handful of developing humans, teachers must draw upon a common set of values for conduct and interaction that eventually become habits among those who enter into that social contract, making resilience, problem-solving, self-management, creativity, and the like part of a code that we may never realize we are transmitting in a classroom, but that underlie all of the interactions.

Written vs. hidden curriculum

What transpires between teachers and students is called curriculum, and by definition, curriculum prescribes a series of academic lessons that should inculcate youth and result in vigorous, sophisticated citizens who will be able to wheel us around the nursing home and pay their taxes on time. This curriculum necessarily changes to meet societal needs, so although schools today don’t generally spend much time learning Roman numerals just to read the inscriptions on old buildings and guess what Super Bowl is being played, we ought to be teaching them how to use spreadsheets.

Continued on next page ...

By Ian Strever
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In most schools, curriculum is accessible or rather evident: it is sometimes published, and always outlined in Course of Studies guides and board policies, and we all have some idea of what will be taught in a Biology course, even if we don't take the time to scrutinize the particulars. Since there have been schools, however, there has existed a hidden curriculum that scaffolds classroom and school practices, undergirding student success in school and, arguably, later in life.

When young Johnny and Tommy get in a spat at recess, a teacher will reinforce the values of sharing, negotiation, communication, and empathy because they are important qualities to develop in human beings. The teacher may not explicitly articulate those values, but they are a part of the lesson. Later on, when a student rewrites an essay, they are not only improving their learning, but also being rewarded for their diligence and self-advocacy. None of this has been traditionally codified in a curriculum, but that is starting to change.

Recent innovations in SEL

Even before the pandemic, functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI, was impacting our understanding of brain activity and learning, specifically in terms of the interplay between emotions and learning. The first and most immediately accessible part of the brain, the hypothalamus, located at the spinal cord and responsible for base needs and responses, admits learning and emotions to the limbic system, which then sorts information like a mailroom, comparing and contrasting incoming information with previous learning. Emotions and learning channel through the same organs, the hippocampi, which is why pouty third graders

won't learn anything until they can set aside their anger at the classmate who stole their crayons.

Enter the Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, or CASEL. In 1997, CASEL paired with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) to draft a set of guidelines for educators that promoted the pairing of social and emotional learning. This effort, now approaching its twenty-fifth anniversary, has gained traction in the past few years, and especially since the advent of cell phones and their ubiquity in the hands of teenagers.

By this point in this essay, it should be clear that Social and Emotional Learning, or SEL, is nothing new, but being transparent, explicit, and strategic in how we instruct in these qualities is a recent innovation. A few programs are leading the way in organizing SEL instruction around the five general themes set forth by CASEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Some districts have adopted the RULER program, an approach created by a team from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and its Director, Dr. Mark Brackett. The mere existence of a Center for Emotional Intelligence suggests the prominence of this scholarship at the college level, and Dr. Brackett conducts a kind of Chautauqua on emotional intelligence that employs the RULER acronym as a mnemonic for coaching emotional learners: Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, and Regulating.

Brackett designed RULER to teach students how to recognize and process emotions, starting with the physical sensations – increased heart rate, tightness in the chest, sweaty palms – that represent our body's response to emotionally-charged situations. In RULER workshops, participants actually engage in



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Yobro10

noticing these phenomena so the adults can empathize with what students will be asked to do, and it is an intimate and comprehensive approach that encourages systemic and developmentally-appropriate adoption by an entire district.

A less programmatic approach is Habits of Mind, developed by Drs. Bena Kallick and Art Costa, who identified sixteen habits that characterize how humans overcome challenges. While the sixteen habits are immutable, their universality lends them to applications in every subject and at all levels of development. “Communicating with Precision and Clarity” is a prerequisite for success and a hallmark of emotionally mature people, and “Persisting” could apply to working out a math problem or redesigning a science experiment to produce the desired results.

Both RULER and Habits of Mind require teachers to “layer” SEL on top of academic instruction, but in ways that just make sense. In preparing a lesson on *Romeo and Juliet*, a teacher would anticipate the challenge of learning Elizabethan English, so they might provide opportunities for students to prepare for the challenge, rest points to process their frustration, and celebrations of their accomplishments that reward their persistence. Gym teachers are more likely to include team building exercises in class instead of basketball, where native athleticism can trump teamwork and erase the impact of instruction in the fundamentals.

But back to Joe...

Although his overwhelming loquaciousness prevented us from having a real dialogue, Joe and I would certainly agree on the importance of these values. “Managing Impulsivity” is essential to appropriate conduct, and “Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations” respects the value of history and expertise in ways that would make even a Stoic proud. Rather than bury these values in Codes of Conduct and disciplinary harangues, SEL provides a vocabulary and an approach for instructing students in how to talk about their feelings and behaviors in constructive ways, and by making them part of our curriculum, the values are transparent for students and parents alike.

As I consider them now, I see opportunities for practicing some of them in the very interaction I had with Joe, where empathy and communication broke down, leading to frustration on my part while listening to his educational and quasi-political diatribes. If we are going to heal the divisions that characterize our country today, our citizens will need better tools to do so than he and I inherited. •

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By Laurie Kerr
info@mainstreetmag.com

We called it our “Winter of Valley Forge.” When we bought a big old house in Millerton, NY, two and a half years ago, we knew it was going to be hard to heat, given its old windows and minimal insulation. But we were not prepared for just how hard. On the coldest days, the boiler literally couldn’t keep up and we shivered, despite being indoors and swaddled in hats, scarves, gloves, and multiple layers of clothes. It was expensive, too. It seemed like every few days we received another \$500 invoice from the propane company.

Built in 1900, our house has 26 large historic windows, most of which have their old, wavy glass intact, which make the house delightfully light and airy. Unfortunately, those lovely double-hung, single-pane windows also excel at leaking heat. The warm air leaks out through the mullions, around the frames, and between the sashes, and the cold air blows in. More heat leaks out through the single panes of uninsulated glass.

Clearly, something had to be done. Should we replace the windows? Given the large window sizes and historic details, we were probably looking at about \$1,500 per window, or the scary sum of \$40,000 for the house. Moreover, replacement windows

would lose the fine lines and wavy glass of our old windows, and they would still leak because double-hung windows need small gaps to allow the sashes to slide past each other.

Alternative options

Was there a better, less expensive solution? I had recently learned about a variety of interior storm window products that are on the market, and this strategy of insulating from the inside comes well-recommended by the magazine *This Old House*. I wondered if they might be the right solution for our house. To my delight, I found that interior storms cost a fraction of what replacement windows would – more like \$300 a window or about 20% of the cost of replacement windows.

But are they any good? I learned that insulating from the inside offers several advantages. If exterior storm windows are too tight, they will trap the warm moist air escaping through the leaky double hung windows, and it will condense on the cold inside face of the storm. Interior storms don’t have that problem so they can be made extremely tight – virtually leak free. They can also be very light since they aren’t exposed to the weather and don’t need heavy frames – a distinct advantage for the “not getting any younger” crowd. This would make them easy for us to install and to store. And we wouldn’t need to climb a ladder to install or remove them from second and third floor windows

because of the huge advantage of interior installation.

Convinced, we decided to test two products. Both had compression fit frames, meaning that the frames of the storms are designed to push against the frames around the window to hold the storms in place and seal against drafts. One product had a glass panel surrounded by vinyl frames that were spring-loaded to provide the compression. The other product had a Plexiglas panel surrounded by a soft rubber frame that could squeeze tightly against the window frame. We greatly preferred the Plexiglas panel solution, a product called Indow, which is manufactured in Oregon. It was easier to install, provided more reliable air sealing, and was lighter. On the downside, Plexiglas scratches more easily than glass, so we would have to be more careful handling and cleaning the storms.

Ordering the windows was quite a production. Old houses settle and their windows don’t remain square, so the indoor storm companies require you to measure all four sides and both diagonals of each window. They also ask you to measure any bowing of the frames. To achieve a tight fit, they need high accuracy, so Indow sent us a laser measuring kit, and told us to provide dimensions accurate to within 1/16th of an inch.

We braved the laser and sent in the dimensions as per the instructions. A few weeks later, the storms arrived. After removing the protective layers,

it took at most ten or 15 minutes to install each window. Each one fit perfectly, including the ones in our alcove that had settled so much that they were no longer even remotely rectangular.

Energy savings

The results were immediate: our house was comfortable for the first time and our propane bills plummeted. Comparing our second to our first winter, our total propane bill fell by 30% and our heating energy use by almost 40%. We also significantly reduced our carbon footprint because propane is a fossil fuel and burning fossil fuels is by far the largest contributor to global warming.

We can’t precisely measure the impact of the windows alone, since we made other changes at the same time, such as insulating the basement and setting the thermostat higher because we could afford to be more comfortable with the storms in place. But I estimate that the interior storms are saving us about \$1,300 per year. The storms cost us just \$6,000 since we got a discount for placing a large order, so we will recoup our investment in energy savings in less than five years. But the increased comfort is priceless. •



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Nothing is impossible to her who will:

Senator Daphne Jordan embodies Upstate's fearless ambition

By Griffin Cooper
griffin@mainstreetmag.com

In 2018, when Republican Senator Kathy Marchione announced that she would not seek re-election in Senate District 43, the news immediately raised the collective temperature on a seat suddenly in play for a traditionally competitive district. But for Marchione's eventual successor Daphne Jordan – competition is in her DNA. As a competitive swimmer, softball and college lacrosse player, Senator Jordan has become accustomed to taking more than a few lumps throughout her life, coming back after each challenge and delivering a few of her own.

Jordan traveled upstate to the town of Halfmoon, NY, in 1997, a divorced mother of a four-year-old and, as has become her famous nature, got to work within her community in a relentlessly resolute manner. Before her election to the New York State Senate, Jordan served as a member of the Halfmoon Town Board. As town councilwoman, she ensured the growth of the Town's General Fund balance from \$70,000 to almost \$4 million, attracted new businesses, expanded recreational trails, and open spaces, and was part of the team effort to create a Veteran's Memorial.

Following in her family's tradition of volunteerism, Jordan served as a trustee, member of the Executive Committee, and treasurer for the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library managing a \$3 million operating budget and \$15 million construction budget for the new library. Today, as Senator of New York's 43rd District, Jordan serves as the Ranking Republican Member on the Senate's Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee, the State-Native American Relations Committee, the Libraries Committee, and the Women's Issues Committee. The Senator also serves on the Senate Agriculture Committee,

the Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee, the Procurements and Contracts Committee, and is a member of the Legislative Women's Caucus.

As she sits down to discuss her life's journey toward the New York State Senate, her fervor for communal preservation holds true with each indomitable sentiment. Staunch, defiant and firm, underpinned by her genuinely ambitious nature and undeniable sense for self-sufficient, rural life. In recounting her life story, Senator Jordan effuses will and as families and small businesses across New York have come to know in the last year – where there is will, there is a way.

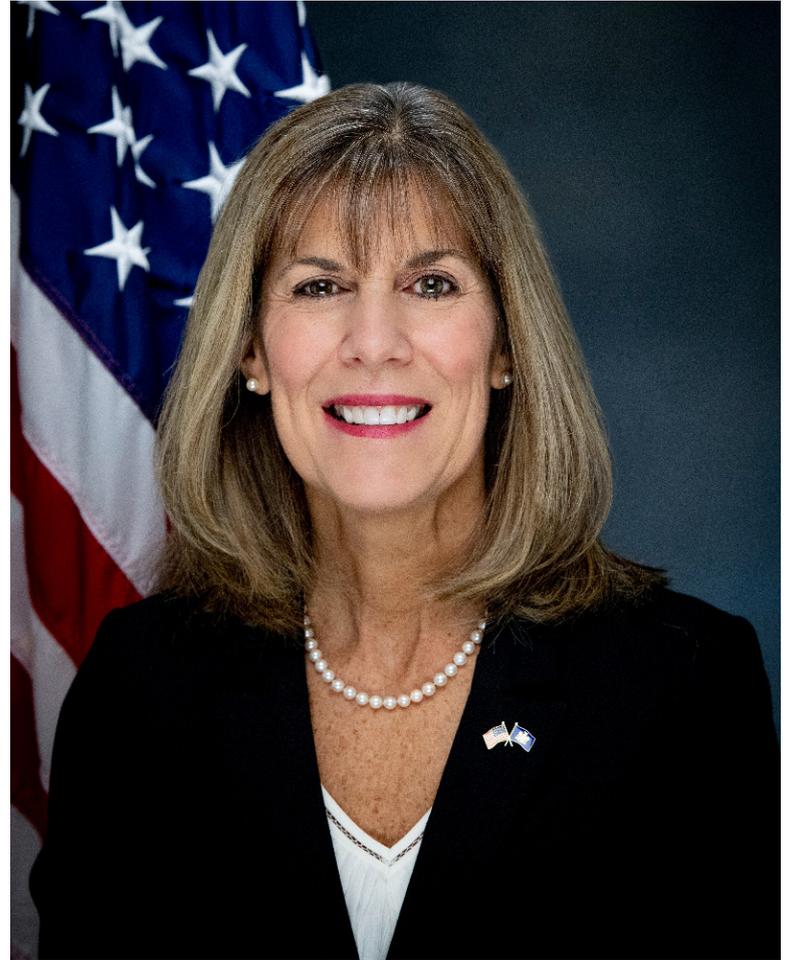
Can you describe your time in Halfmoon? Did you grow up in the area? What was the driving force behind your desire to get involved locally?

I was born in Philadelphia and in my very early years lived in suburban Philly. From kindergarten through fourth grade, we lived right in the Village of Stony Brook, Long Island, within walking distance of the Village Green and the small yacht club and beach. I recall that as the most fun place we lived.

With my dad's horrible commute to work on the Long Island Expressway (way back then, in the 1960s), we moved to my dad's home area in Northeastern Pennsylvania where I spent the rest of my formative years until I graduated from law school and got married and settled in my former husband's home town of West Chester, PA.

I moved to Halfmoon in 1997 after being separated and divorced for two years, to marry my husband, Phil. He lived in Clifton Park at the time. I laugh now because I

Continued on page 33 ...



Above: New York State Senator for the 43rd District, Daphne Jordan. All images with this article are courtesy of Daphne Jordan.

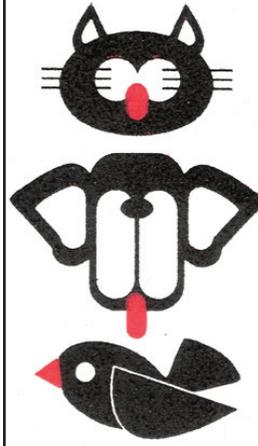
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didn't even realize that the house we picked was in Halfmoon since the mailing address was Clifton Park. Nevertheless, Halfmoon reminded me of the Back Mountain in Pennsylvania where I spent those formative years. It was primarily agricultural and even more rural than Halfmoon at the time, but similar. Of course, the topography was different as well, because we were in the mountains. Like Halfmoon, the Back Mountain has grown immensely over the years.

Halfmoon is a great place, full of wonderful families that have been here for generations. Getting involved was not always easy because I was considered a "newbie." When referred to in that way, I would remind people that I lived in Halfmoon because I chose to live there because I liked it so much. Therefore, I had a vested interest in it and cared just as much as they did. There are plenty of new residents now, as it has become one of the fastest-growing towns in the state.

I grew up in a family where volunteerism was a way of life, local and national politics was important, a thriving economy was to be shepherded, and patriotism and family values mattered and so, throughout my life – wherever I lived – I always participated accordingly.

Was it specifically your time at university that propelled you into government or is this something you have wanted to pursue for a majority of your life?

When I went to Lehigh University, I wasn't sure which path I was going to take. I was divided between marine biology and going down the path that would take me to law school. My passion was really the marine biology route. I always had a large aquarium in my bedroom and read the whole set of Jacques Cousteau books that I wanted for

Christmas one year. I think all of this goes back to my young life in Stony Brook. The ocean is still my favorite place; being so busy the last several years, I've not been able to visit it.

During the first year of college, my courses were split between my two career choices. My dad was instrumental in helping me to make the law school decision. At the time, it seemed to me that studying government and english were good disciplines to study as an entrée to law school. Only in the last ten years have I come to really appreciate that decision.

Given your time serving as a trustee, member of the Executive Committee, and treasurer for the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library – have those experiences carried over into your methods or philosophy as State Senator?

My time serving the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library opened my eyes to the realities of the many nuts-and-bolts of actually getting a project done in government. Studying something in books and lectures versus actually going through the many processes are two very different things. Experience is the best teacher.

Lessons learned from my library experience that are relevant to what I've carried through to my Senate experience can be broadly summarized as follows:

- Having all stakeholders at the table in decision-making is a must. The Library Board was successful on this front especially in building our new library. The New York State Legislature has not been successful on that front during my time as Senator.
- Every single vote counts! The referendum to bring Halfmoon into the Library District passed by only one vote!
- Taxpayer money is precious. Spend it carefully and wisely and always with the taxpayer and the future in mind. The New York State government does not cherish how



Above: Senator Daphne Jordan speaking.

hard taxpayers work for the money they have to pay in taxes; hence, we unfortunately, are the number one state in outmigration!

- Libraries are important community centers. Libraries are welcoming community spaces of learning and literacy, special places where people can visit to grow and gather as individuals and a community. Libraries also fill the technological void for many people especially when broadband is now a necessity and so many areas across our state lack adequate broadband.
- If you want to know something, ask a librarian. Librarians are the original "search engines" and trusted resources for honest, accurate, unbiased information.

I look back fondly at my time as a trustee of the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library, with the mission of building a new library, as a key learning experience that has been extremely useful to me in my job as Legislative Director for my predecessor and now as the State Senator serving and representing the 43rd Senate District.

I'm especially pleased to serve as Ranking Republican Member of the Senate's Standing Committee on Libraries, as I truly understand and

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appreciate their vital role. I remain a proud, passionate advocate of libraries, literacy, and lifelong learning!

Is there a specific issue that has taken precedent in your mind or within the state's GOP?

While bread-and-butter issues such as the need for tax relief, reforming government, protecting the Second Amendment, and growing our economy remain major concerns for Republicans, the issue of public safety – ensuring the safety and security of all New Yorkers – has taken precedence not only in the Republican Party but also among all voters, regardless of political affiliation. This is, sadly, a logical progression given laws like the so-called bail “reform” that releases dangerous criminals back into communities to re-offend, reckless efforts aimed at defunding the police, and violent assaults on law enforcement. Public safety has emerged as a leading issue that’s above partisan politics, and rightly so. I’m proud to stand with the men and women of law enforcement and I’ll always back the blue.

How important is the reform for changing the way New York draws its legislative and congressional district maps for voters in the state?

Reform is absolutely a vital part of the redistricting process! The creation of an Independent Redistricting Commission took power away from politicians and put it in the hands of citizens to help ensure that no region of the state, special interest, or political party gains an unfair advantage, and create balanced government and representation for the next ten years.

This historic reform, overwhelmingly approved by voter referendum, creates a redistricting process that’s more open and transparent. While these reforms are welcome, they only work if citizens stand

up and make their voices heard as the Commission begins redrawing district lines. As part of its charge to revise district lines, the Independent Redistricting Commission must consider impacts on existing neighborhoods and communities, based on the information it gathers from its public hearings and written testimony. I’ve urged my constituents to join with friends, neighbors, community groups, and others to make their voices heard and be an important part of this process.

How have you seen the nature of state politics change in the last three years?

One of the most notable changes in state politics is how Democrats in the state legislature have become even more radical and extreme, being completely dominated by New York City special interests and left-wing political agendas. Both the Senate and Assembly Democratic Conferences are led by downstate Democrats and have been captured by radical activists that want higher taxes, more government red tape, less freedom, and for our police to be defunded and dismantled. This is the wrong agenda for our state and our hard-working, law-abiding taxpayers. The Democratic Party now entirely does the bidding of New York City political bosses, and that is a shame.

What do you see for the future of politics in New York? Is there a transformation or evolution taking place?

There is a transformation taking place in New York State politics where the “silent majority” are making their voices heard and speaking out on the need for real change. Whether it’s the rise in violent crime, the growing upstate-downstate divide, Albany’s broken, bloated bureaucracy that penalizes job creators, stifles innovation and drives up our cost of living, hard-working, law-abiding taxpayers are fed up and frustrated with one-party rule and Democrats in the state legislature being dominated by New York City special interests. I



Above: Senator Jordan is a supporter of the police.

believe we’ll see this transformation take root during the elections next fall as voters can have their say and demand that our state government change course and begin serving their needs.

Are there any lessons to be learned from your athletic background as a swimmer?

Athletics and music have taught me many lessons. I’ve played piano since the age of eight. I played violin in orchestras and small ensembles up through the end of college (the violin now hangs on the wall in the piano room because, without regular practice, the sound is not so nice). I swam, and was a first baseman in softball in high school, and through college played lacrosse and was a cheerleader. I was always available to play touch football as well (I can still throw a bullet pass).

In my adult life, I trained hard and raced in triathlons for over ten years when women were just getting into the sport. All of this experience has been a teacher in life’s lessons. Here’s some of what I’ve learned:

- Some people have natural talents that really help them to succeed; however, they need to hone their skills and practice. This is two-fold,

Continued on next page ...

accept that you may not always be the best, but know that hard work can overcome anyone else's natural talent!

– Great results don't come easy! Do your best, not only to be the best you can be, but to help your team as a whole.

– Cooperation, communication, and teamwork are key for any kind of success.

– Budgeting time smartly and concisely is necessary when you have a full schedule. It also allows you to do more.

– Something my triathlon coach used to say to me when it was raining and cold outside and I didn't want to ride my 25-mile bike loop (but did) has really stuck with me: When you don't win the race, the excuse that it was raining and you didn't train because of it, doesn't matter, because you've lost. Think about that, it can apply to any excuse!

Has your time as a small business owner emphasized the importance of the small business economy especially now?

Entrepreneurship, personal finances, the local and broader economy have always interested me. It's all about the American Dream and what it takes to make that dream a reality. My grandparents were champions of that dream, having come over each by themselves at the ages of 12 and 13.

The best story I can share is of my Papou (grandfather) Jimmy who came from Mytilene, Greece on a boat and ended up in Dunmore (Scranton), PA. He lived in a room with a cot above the candy store where he was hired to work. By the age of 16, he saved enough money to purchase that store, the Dunmore Candy Kitchen. He married, had four children who worked in the store (it was also an ice cream-

soda fountain hangout after football games back in the day). He was so successful that during the Depression, he purchased land and built the Greek Orthodox Church in Scranton, PA.

My dad's pursuit of the American Dream was a great influence to me. My dad, an electrical engineer with patents involving the early development of vacuum power interrupters now used by utilities throughout the world, left corporate America to pursue his American Dream. He ultimately had a variety of businesses with the most successful being his construction company where he built the finest custom-built homes in our area.

Other businesses included an aluminum window and door factory, a business that brought Broadway shows to Northeastern Pennsylvania, a realty company, car washes, and a couple of shopping centers. I used to sit in his office with him to keep him company while I did my homework and listen to his phone conversations. I learned a lot about the struggles and successes of businesses and the economy. It also spurred me into my own business.

There is nothing like being your own boss, but like anything else, it is also a risk and wise decisions and hard work are essential for success. I opened my first retail store at the age of 25 with a hefty bank loan and guidance from my dad. The store was successful and within two years, I opened up a second location. I had 14 part-time employees and traveled to each location, usually splitting up my time. With a divorce and a two-year-old, I sold out after 11 years to move back to my home area temporarily. I left the businesses I loved with all loans paid and enough left over.

Having a business is like having a child. You put your resources and whole self into it to grow it and to make it thrive. There are no guarantees even when you do the right thing because you can't always control outside forces, like economic recessions or the pandemic that has shut down so many businesses.



Today, I like to celebrate businesses that are having their grand openings and offer encouragement and my help. I keep a close eye on legislation and policies that will affect businesses, both large and small, and do all I can to weigh in on whether a policy is good or bad for business. There have been too many anti-business policies and laws advanced by the majorities in the past few years. As a minority member, what ultimately happens is not always in my control, but I always do everything in my power as Senator to advocate, speak out, and work toward a positive outcome. I have, and always will stand up for taxpayers and small businesses across my district. •

To learn more about New York State Senator Daphne Jordan, visit www.nysenate.gov/senators/daphne-jordan



Above, top to bottom: Senator Jordan supports veterans, and is depicted here with one. Senator Jordan meeting with- and listening to fellow New Yorkers.

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A Village delight *The Falls Village Café*

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

There is almost a *Brigadoon* moment when one wanders off of Route 7 into Falls Village, CT, these days. To be sure, this town will not disappear after one day, to wait 100 years to reappear as in the Lerner and Loewe musical. The resurgence of the town, however, is magical in its own way. With the steady growth of 100 Main, the Bunny Williams energizing store that features work by local artisans to Furnace (Kathleen Kucka's art gallery featuring works on paper) to the stalwart Falls Village Inn that has emerged from the pandemic with a beautifully turned out patio that has been welcoming diners for the summer, the town seems to have awakened, once again.

The recent opening of The Falls Village Café in a building that has housed everything from the Town Hall, Hamzy's Grocery Store and Kirkpatrick's Plumbing (some of us have a very long memory) to the Senior Center is yet another sign that this town is coming back.

Owner Adam Sarosi and his wife, Szabina, have persevered through the twists and turns of birthing a new idea, working through the logistics of nurturing that idea and finally opening a café that looks like it might have been magically transferred from SoHo

to just down the road from South Canaan.

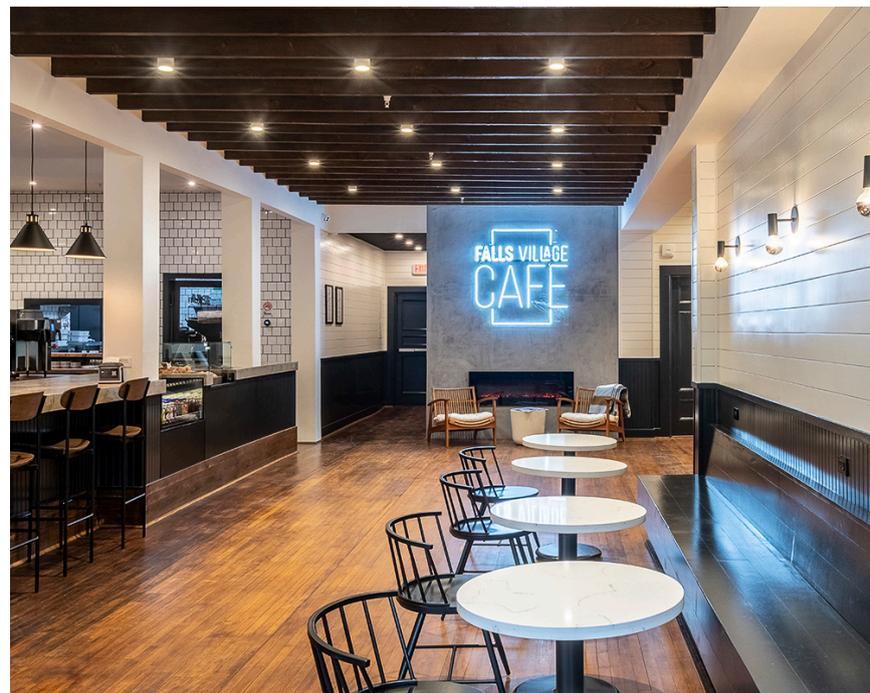
"We love Falls Village," proclaims Adam as he takes a much needed rest from the 120-hour work weeks that have been required to make the new café a reality. "We were in Brooklyn for eight years and we had found a small weekend house in Winsted ... but when we came to Falls Village, this was it."

Building on a dream

"It" started out as a simple café. Coffee, light baked goods, a place for customers to meet, talk and relax. With a successful building renovation and property management business background, Sarosi was ready to create a space that would make the town proud, provide steady employment, and build the cache of a small town becoming reinvigorated.

Enter the various regulatory bodies that hold sway over safety, sanitary, and structural adherence. "We went from having a small kitchen to building a commercial kitchen that can support full meals." There were neglected septic issues that needed attending to and the matter of how the town-owned space would be re-configured.

"We were asked to provide



renovation schematics," Sarosi recalls, "which led us to some designer friends who captured what we had in mind." The interior design is understated in its elegance. Black and white accents with an open feeling enhanced by the high ceilings and the tasteful use of light make the space conducive for sampling the imaginative breakfast menu (the BLT Quinoa Bowl with fresh basil, olive oil, white wine vinegar, avocado, and the expected participants, arugula, bacon, and tomato is a stand-out) to venturing into the "All Day" section of the menu which features several panini options, wraps, and salads.

The keen interest of the town is not only understandable, but has brought its own set of tangential support. Set in the common area toward the back of the café space, a town-supplied computer with accessible free internet connection invites folks to come in, coffee or not.

Continued on next page ...

All images depict the newly opened Falls Village Café interior decor along with a number of dishes on its menu. All images courtesy of Lazlo Gyorsok.



Understandably, there have also been a few “speed bumps” along the way that come with creating a new experience and bringing it to fruition. “Bears.” The dumpster needed to handle restaurant trash quickly became an inviting late night cafeteria for the local bear population until a “bear-proof” model was provided by the café’s trash removal company.

Bringing a taste of home to the Village

A native of Miskolc, Hungary, Adam is eager to bring a touch of home to a dinner menu that will – depending on the day of the week – offer goulash, veal paprikash, beef stroganoff, and several soups with exotic names like Husleves (chicken), Zoldborso leves (green pea), and Kariol leves (cauliflower). Strongly encouraged will be a side order of Langos, Hungarian deep fried bread with sour cream and cheese.

The clientele that has been attracted to the Falls Village Café is a delightful mix of residents stopping in for a coffee featuring Irving Farms locally roasted beans or a quick lunch during a midday break to urban refugees who have pivoted as COVID-19 changed lifestyles and weekend homes became full-time residences. “We wanted to offer something for everyone,” allows Sarosi as another carload



of first-time visitors step into the café and become oriented to the clean design, the great coffee smells, and a staff that has quickly adopted Adam and Szabina’s welcoming demeanor. “We have things on the menu that are designed to be very affordable, all of them made with locally-sourced ingredients. Our dinner menu will be a bit more up-scale, but still within a very reasonable budget.”

Reaching into the community to source ingredients has been its own journey. The café has been so well received that some providers have found they cannot keep up with demand, so the sourcing lines have had to reach further. “We’ve found a great baker in Massachusetts that supplies our bread and an egg provider that can keep up with the morning demand for sandwiches, paninis, and burritos.”

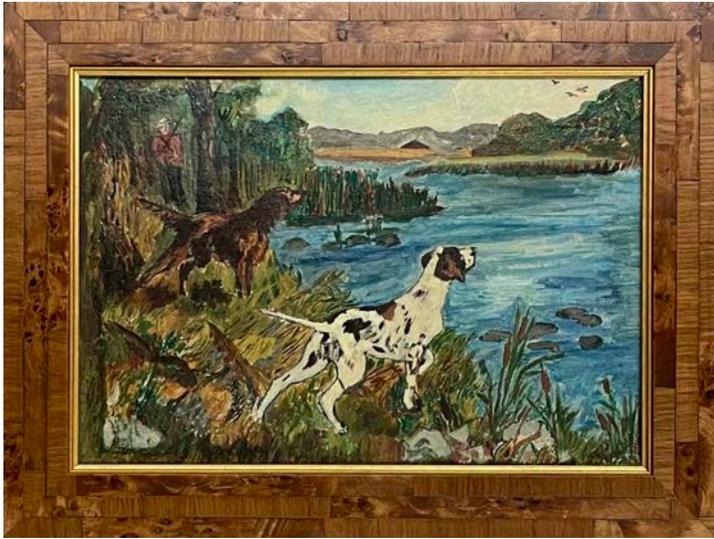
During the summer months and into September, the café is open from 7am to 9pm. Established with a computer system that can track business minute-to-minute, Adam will be able to review operating hours based on customer response and adjust as

fall turns to winter in Connecticut’s Northwest Corner.

For those who may not recall *Brigadoon*, it has been a stalwart of American musical theater for over 70 years and considered a classic film with Gene Kelly and Cyd Charisse. Alan Jay Lerner’s story could have ended with the mythical village disappearing for another 100 years, leaving two young lovers with no hope of seeing each other. It did not, however. There was a happy ending (as there should be to any true musical). With the grand start exhibited by The Falls Village Café, satisfied customers seem to echo the sincere hope that this venture, too, will enjoy a happy life in a village reborn. ●

The Falls Village Café is located at 107 Main Street, Falls Village, CT. Online orders can be selected from the menu at www.fallsvillagecafe.com or called in to (860) 491-1188.

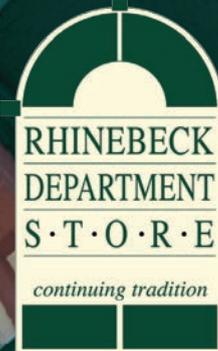
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A graceful life *Set in stone*

By Griffin Cooper
griffin@mainstreetmag.com

One of the most impossibly difficult aspects of the human experience is not only death itself, nor comprehending the idea that those we love will at some point no longer be with us, but how our enduring ability to love transforms death into something tragically beautiful. When the car Shea Cohn, age 16, was riding in on Route 44 going into Canaan, CT, crossed over the median and into the path of an oncoming pickup truck on the evening of March 27 of 2020, his family would be pressed in the vice of shock and anxiety for the next two days. What can only be described as an immeasurable, heartbreaking tension-filled 48 hours would painfully give way to the ultimate tragedy when Shea passed on March 29.

Like a stone cast upon still water...

So it was for the Cohn family (parents Doug and Denise, and sisters Grace and Emma), as it is for too many who are suddenly burdened with life's cold, stony realities. The seemingly impervious halo of love we surround those close to us with can be penetrated by the unrelenting world at any moment. In the void of sadness and the dull numbness of loss, the lives of those who knew Shea would indelibly change – like a stone cast upon still water. Much like the stones we search the muddy bottoms of our local streams or the rocky shores of the Housatonic River for, time and experience has shaped our form.

For the Cohn family, no amount of time could properly heal the wounds tragedy would ravish. But their collective experience and the uniform outpouring of love from their community would shape the Cohns just one year later, making Shea's memory last forever. As it turns out, Shea himself enjoyed a

good stone, calmly searching for the perfectly shaped rock as would a poet surveying the landscape in search of inspiration. Just as poetically, Shea has since been memorialized by stones all over the world. What began as a local ode to the young man's life, soon became an international phenomena.

A lasting memory

Shea Stones were created in honor of the young man and who he was. As the family would go on to describe, "Since he was a toddler, and right up to the very last load of laundry, Shea collected rocks and stones. We found them all over the house, nooks and crannies, pockets, socks, shelves – everywhere. In remembrance, friends and family have painted thousands of stones and even more have left stones in places that remind them of Shea. Every stone is a memory of Shea – a young man who touched the lives of so many."

The idea of Shea Stones soon caught fire and today folks are urged to create their own Shea stones, each with a unique design and the Cohns encourage folks to leave them in places that bring Shea to mind. After the Stones are placed, people from all over the world have been sending pictures to the family's social media accounts with locations of all kinds tagged.

Like the communal nature of skipping stones on a warm summer evening, briefly disturbing the calm waters of our lakes and streams, the Cohn family anxiously awaits the next unique image with a new design for Shea stones. Folks from all over have been sharing images on their social media every time a stone



Above: Shea Stones was created by Shea Cohn's family as a way to keep his memory alive and to continue his legacy. Shea Stones, such as this one, can now be found all over the world.

Continued on next page ...

is found. Like the memory of Shea himself, the Cohns hope to have Shea stones throughout the United States and in as many international locations as possible.

As the Cohn family comes together to share his, and their story, the running water of time, tragedy, experience, and love take shape. A testament to the grace of one young man and his short walk in life.

Sitting down with Shea's family, they shared more of their story and that of Shea Stones.



Can you tell me a bit about how Shea Stones came to be? What ties do the stones themselves have to Shea's life?

The idea for Shea stones was created by my mom (Denise) shortly after Shea passed. Shea collected small stones his whole life that we would regularly find all over the house, so we thought it was fitting. Each one has his name written on it with any design that people choose.

How do you feel the stones help preserve Shea's memory?

Shea was a very curious young adult, but especially as a child. He loved to explore new places and discover new things. Many times as a kid he would collect little stones or shells that he thought were cool and put them in his pocket. The whole idea behind this was to leave stones in places that reminded us of him or a place where we wanted to leave a memory of him. Shea Stones has allowed us to preserve his memory by keeping his curiosity going, allowing his memory to explore places he may have ventured to if he got the chance.

Did you ever think the stones would be present around the world? What does it mean to see them reaching so many people?

We hoped to leave Shea stones in places that either reminded us of him or where we would like to leave

a piece of him, but we never imagined that the stones would travel so far. It means the absolute world to us that Shea can go to so many places. He was fortunate enough to travel quite a bit at a young age and we believe he would have continued to travel if he had the opportunity to. Seeing these stones being placed all over the world feels like we can continue the journey that he started.

Tell me a little about Shea and what made him such a wonderfully loved young man?

Shea was an ambitious, curious, and innovative young man of many talents. He was known for his athletic, musical, and intellectual capabilities. He was even often nicknamed "The Piano Man" for his incredible piano-playing skills. This also applied to the many other instruments he regularly picked up and taught himself how to play. Although these capabilities were typically put to productive use, Shea was also incredibly curious and even, at times, mischievous. We often found him at the top of a tree, swinging from the drapes, or doing flips as he skied down a mountain. With all of these adventures, Shea often collected different interesting items he found along the way. Much of the time, these items were small stones.

Are there any other ways the Cohn family is honoring Shea?

Our family started the "Shea Cohn Memorial Fund" in his name to

provide financial support for young musicians and kids wanting to travel abroad. Both were passions of Shea's that we hope to continue for other people in his honor. There is a memorial rock at Housatonic Valley Regional High School for Shea, facing the river. Shea stones are the biggest project at the moment.

How can folks participate in the Shea Stones phenomena? How far do you think the stones will go?

Shea stones can be mailed to anyone interested, and we encourage people to place them in states or other countries around the world that they travel to. They can be places that remind them of Shea, or just a cool spot to leave a memory of Shea behind. When they place the Shea stone, we would love a photo to post on our social media to mark a new spot. Our Instagram page is @sheacohnstones, our Facebook is @sheacohnstones and our website with more information is sheacohn.com. The farthest Shea stone we currently have is in Rwanda, Africa. Several stones have also been left in Europe, Asia, and we hope to cover as much of the world map as we can! •

To learn more about the legacy of Shea Cohn and Shea Stones, visit the website at www.sheacohn.com.



Above, top to bottom: The Cohn family. Shea Cohn. All images courtesy of the Cohn family.

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Summer 2021: *To Europe...and back?*

By Dominique DeVito
info@mainstreetmag.com

Our trip to France was planned for late March 2020. My younger brother, Michael, and I needed to get over to see our mother in the Maison de Retraite that she had been transported to the previous December because her cognitive deterioration made it impossible for her to live on her own any more. She had moved to France on her own over 20 years earlier to live in the small but charming house that her mother had built in the French Pyrenees. It seemed an idyllic situation at first. But as she and her circle of friends there aged, things became increasingly difficult. Her doctor had told us there was nothing we could do until it was clear she would need to be hospitalized, at which time she would be admitted to an appropriate facility. That had finally happened. Now, all we knew about where our mother was and how she was being cared for was the name of the facility, the minimal information the place had on its website, a telephone number, and the assurance from the French government representative overseeing her case that “*tout va bien.*”

The pandemic nixed the travel for March. Optimistically, we rescheduled for June. Needless to say, that didn't happen, either. With our tickets fully refunded and the prospect of travel to anywhere – much less Europe – a remote possibility for 2020, we waited and wondered, like the rest of the world. We called the Maison de Retraite frequently, both of us relating to each other that we were always pleasantly and efficiently connected to our mother. If something untoward was happening there, it was impossible for us to know. We also had to trust that her small house was being checked on occasionally by her Basque neighbors with whom we exchanged cryptic emails.

We understood very well that while this was unfortunate and sad, it was a far better situation than many experienced with their elderly family members in 2020. One of our friends

needed to put on protective gear from head-to-toe so she could come to her mother's bedside to hold her hand in her final hours. There were so many heartbreaking accounts of people dying alone, and they made having to wait to get to France feel like a petty inconvenience. (Tell that to our hearts).

Making plans

Fast forward to spring of 2021. Fully vaccinated and with restrictions lifting, my brother and I talked seriously about getting to France. Our older brother, Robin, wasn't able to join us, but he agreed it was a good time to go. As places around the country and the world started to open up, we were ready. We were both fully vaccinated, so that wasn't an issue. We didn't want to quarantine when we arrived there, and we hoped to not have to do it upon our return, so we waited until the mandatory quarantining in France was lifted. Our objectives with our time there were to go visit our mother as frequently as possible, and also to go through her house to salvage what we could and decide what to do with the rest.

Researching flights, we decided the option to go through Spain was more affordable and involved less travel time overall, so that's what we chose. We would be renting a car at the airport in Bilbao, our final destination, and spending nine of our ten days in France. We didn't find anything around COVID restrictions for Spain, so we felt comfortable with our choice. We booked tickets to leave in late July and return at the beginning of August.

About two weeks after making the reservation, I got an email from the airline letting me know that one of our scheduled flights had been cancelled and we needed to confirm an alternative. I got on the phone as soon as I could and the agent was very helpful. Fortunately, the new flight left around the same time but had



Above: Dominique and her brother Michael, sans masks, drop their masks to take a selfie on the flight from New York to Madrid.

a much shorter layover in Madrid, which was a bonus. Michael found an Airbnb for us with plenty of room and lots of charm, and secured the rental car. I made phone calls and emails to the people we would need to see to line up appointments.

Rules and regulations

When I emailed to say we were coming, we received more information from the Maison de Retraite in early July than we had in the past year. Throughout 2020, France had imposed very strict regulations for people, and while things like needing an official document in order to be out of your home between 10pm and 8am, or not being able to travel farther than ten kilometers from your home were no longer being enforced, the situation was still being taken seriously. We were sent a document detailing strict visiting hours, the requirement of full vaccination plus a negative test within 72 hours before the visit, and the need for additional negative tests while continuing to visit for any extended time. The interim tests could be performed at pharma-

Continued on page 49 ...

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cies. Wow. We assured the *directrice* that we would follow the rules.

A week or so before our flight, we received an email alerting us to complete an online health form in order to travel to or through Spain. As we had done when making our flight reservations, we set up a time to call each other, pulled up the emails, clicked on the link for the form, and went through each question while on the phone together to ensure we were providing the same information. When completed and approved, we were sent emails with QR codes that we would need to be presented at the airports in Madrid and then in Bilbao. We both printed them out so that we would have hard copies as well as electronic versions.

Last but not least, we had tests done within 72 hours of our travel date to confirm that we were negative for COVID. We felt confident since we were both fully vaccinated and neither of us had been sick, but with so much on the line, awaiting those results was nerve wracking. When a coworker said “I hope you fail” – which is the result you want – my first reaction was dread and disbelief at the prospect of testing positive and/or not getting the results in time. Fortunately, we both tested negative. Sigh of relief.

Bon voyage!

With passports, vaccination cards, boarding passes, the email with the negative test result, the QR codes for Spain, and our small carry-ons packed and ready, we were on our way. Our flight was leaving from JFK on a Thursday night. We made sure to arrive in plenty of time. The airport



was busy, but not overly crowded. Everyone in the terminal was required to wear a mask unless eating or drinking. While showing boarding passes and passports was required to go through security and to get on the plane, we were only asked for our vax cards and proof of the negative test to go through security. The flight was full.

Michael let me know we would need to hustle our way through the airport in Madrid to make our connection since the terminals were connected by a train and we would need to get through customs, too. I didn't know he could walk so fast! The Spanish were all over the QR codes generated through the online health form, and we had to show them at several security checkpoints. This connector flight was also full. People were traveling.

Once in Bilbao, things were more relaxed. We made our way to the rental car check-in, Michael took care of the paperwork, we found the car, got in, programmed our destination into Google maps, and headed northwest into the French Pyrenees. We worried about being stopped at the border, but there were no security checks between France and Spain at any of the times or places that we drove between the two countries.

Finally, the Maison de Retraite

We had made the requisite reservations for visiting hours at the nursing home, which were *15h a 16:30h* (3 to

4:30 pm). We arrived a bit early on our first visit, thinking we would be met by someone who would review our documents before letting us in. It was a beautiful, sunny Saturday (one of the few sunny days we'd have). Just as towns in the US have fairs in the summer with rides and games and music, so do towns in France, but on a much simpler scale. We were there during this town's *fête*. At the Maison de Retraite that afternoon, there was a group of musicians in blue and white folk costumes playing for the residents, many of whom were seated outside to see them.

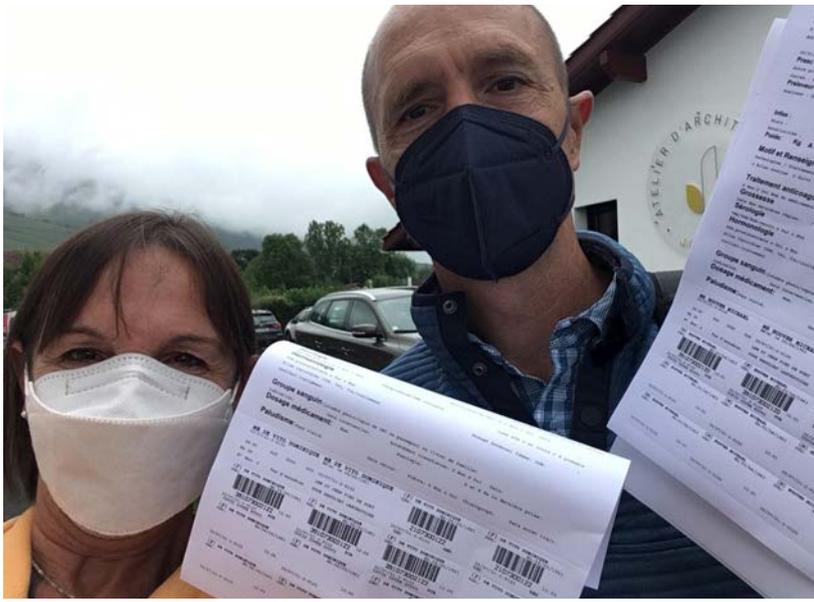
Our mother was in a secure wing of the home, so we didn't expect she would be among those sitting outside, and she wasn't. Still, the anticipation of seeing her finally after so long and so much had our nerves on full alert. The front doors slid open automatically and, to our astonishment, there was no one there to check documents. On a small table was a sign-in sheet and a large dispenser of hand sanitizer, both of which we dutifully utilized. We asked the first person dressed in a uniform where to find our mother's unit, and she pointed us down a hall. I had spoken with one of the aides before we left to confirm that we were signed up to visit every day, and he had given me the code to enter the area for the patients who, like our mother, couldn't be trusted to be on



Above, top to bottom: A view of the little town in the Pyrenees where Dominique and her brother stayed. Dominique raises a toast to Michael as they do a side-by-side tasting of local Irrouleguy rosés. Below left: Michael in an old church cemetery where they had a French picnic complete with bread, cheese, and wine, *bien sûr*.



Continued on next page ...



Above and below right, top image: Dominique and Michael at the Covid testing site in France before their departure, where the person administering the test was in full protective gear. Below right, bottom: Dominique and Michael loved the staff at the Maison de Retraite.

their own. We pressed it into the key pad and walked in.

OK, we figured, it was a Saturday. Again on Sunday there was no one at the front door to greet or check our vaccination status. Ditto for Monday and every day thereafter. We didn't try to hide or avoid anyone, either. We became friendly with all the staff in the special unit where our mother lived with about a dozen others. We met a nurse. We had a special appointment to meet and speak with the doctor. We talked to the secretary (all in French, of course). Everyone working at the retraite was masked, but the residents were not. They had all received Pfizer shots as soon as they were available. We wore our masks while speaking with staff, but took them off when alone with our mother.

If you've read this far you are surely interested in my impressions of the French health care system. That could be a whole separate article. Suffice to say that Michael and I both agree that even though we wish it was easier to visit, we are so happy our mother is in France. There is a pervasive sense of kindness and dignity in the care given by the French.

Don't leave France without it

We were relieved to not have to get multiple rapid tests during our visit, but an awareness of COVID restrictions and requirements was always with us. We turned down an invitation to have dinner with the Basque neighbors even though it was quite

an honor because they had said they weren't vaccinated. The chances were extremely slim, but what if doing that resulted in a positive test within 72 hours of our return flight? We wouldn't be able to return to the US until we'd quarantined and been re-tested. This was out of the question.

We made sure to get to the only lab that was doing rapid testing on the only day and time we could – a Friday morning between 11am and 1pm. Our flight was Sunday morning. There was already a line and things were moving very slowly. Everyone had to take a ticket to be admitted into the building to register for the test. Families could go in together, fortunately, but each individual was registered separately, of course. Masks were required. Results would come via text. *"Dans les 24 heures, vraiment?"* I asked? *"Mais oui, sûrement,"* I was assured. But what could we do but trust that this was so?

Paperwork in hand, we went outside the building to join the socially distanced line awaiting turns to have the testing done. What an experience! There was a tent set up with a long table of tools to be used by a single nurse, who was dressed in full protective gear. People getting tested were asked to sit in a chair and lower their masks just below the nose. There were two young girls in line in front of us, and both were clearly pained by the procedure, the younger one starting to cry after the first nostril. I was amazed that she calmed down quickly (with hand-holding and reassurance from her mother) and allowed for the

second nostril to be done. Her older sister's seeming bravery evaporated when it was her turn.

So what was worse, getting this clearly painful procedure or not getting back home? I didn't need to think twice about that. I'm a wimp about shots and things and I knew I would be rattled by this, as well. Michael seemed stoic. I told myself that when I was in the chair I would think about the ocean, and the mountains, and my cats – anything to take my mind somewhere calming. It took great resolve and nerves of steel. The nurse sent the long pipette way up each nostril and counted to ten, swabbing all the while. I was proud of myself for not moving during the procedure. Michael got through it, but barely. His way to describe it was that she was reaching for neck hairs. Is this what being able to move about in the world had come to?

Bien sûr, we got texts in less than 24 hours, directing us to a website with a link in which we had to enter the number assigned to us at the lab to access the results. **NEGATIVE.** We saved the form as a pdf and sent it to ourselves so access to it would be easier at the airport.

Homeward bound

We were flying out of Bilbao with a connection in Madrid. We got to the airport at 6:30am to board the flight leaving at 9:30. We were the second and third people in the check-in line to get our boarding passes. Passports, yes. Online health form, yes. Negative test results, yes. "Where is your passport number on the test result?" we were asked. "It's not there," we answered. "It has to be to verify your identity," she said. Panic. What could we do? She left to ask a manager, and when she returned ten very long minutes later, she asked if our dates of birth were on them. Yes, they were. Very clearly. We were clear to get on the plane. Security was no problem, and with great relief we were at the gate.

Making the connection in Madrid was no problem. Once at the gate for the flight, our passports and negative results were checked and confirmed, and we were asked to sign a Passenger Disclosure and Attestation to the

United States form that we were told would be collected in the US. The flight was full again. Lots of families, babies in tow. Besides needing to be masked, being on an international flight felt very similar to flying pre-COVID. Getting to the seats was a regulations ordeal that was very stressful.

Home at last

At JFK, when we got to a customs officer, we had only to show our passports and have our pictures taken. Our Attestation forms were not collected. The last leg was the drive back to my place in Green Island, where Michael would spend the night before driving to his home in Maine the next morning.

Was it all worth it? One thousand percent. Was it stressful? Very much. We dodged a restriction currently in place in France, though, that would have made things far less pleasant. The French now need to present a *Passé Sanitaire* to eat at cafés and restaurants and travel on intercity trains. It'll be in effect at least through November, and tourists need to get them through their embassies. *Mon Dieu!*

Bon courage if you plan to travel to France any time soon, though she is *toujours la France*, and for me there is nowhere nicer to visit. •



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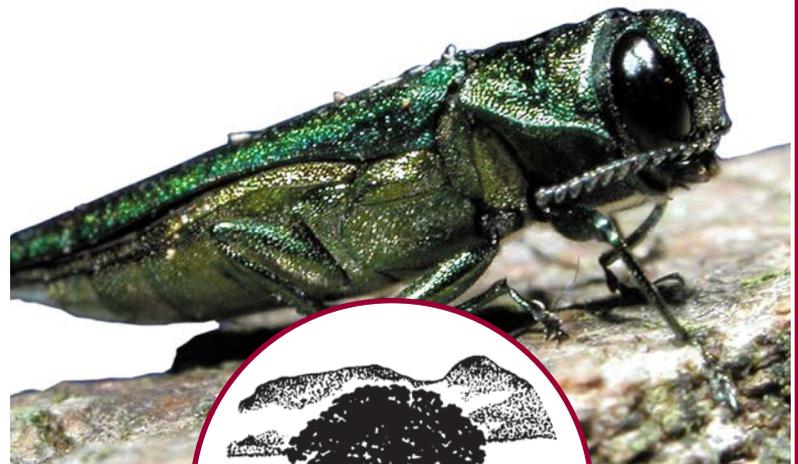
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Join the group

JOIN A MEETUP GROUP TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE OVER A SHARED INTEREST, ACTIVITY OR GOAL

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

Whether you're new to the region or just visiting the Hudson Valley, the Litchfield, CT, area, the Berkshires, or beyond it's always fun to meet people over a shared interest, activity, passion or goal. Combining an interest with an opportunity to get acquainted with others seems like a win-win especially after all the isolation we've experienced during the height of the pandemic.

Thanks to Meetup – a social media platform for finding and building communities of people who meet about common interests – connecting is an easy feat. Through the platform, which can be accessed through a phone app or via Meetup.com, people can join groups, learn things, explore interests, participate in activities, and expand their comfort zones.

Established in 2002, Meetup remains true to its mission to help people grow and achieve their personal or professional goals through authentic, human connections. To date, the social media platform has 55 million registered members that span 330,000 groups in 193 countries. Beyond English, Meetup is available in Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish. More languages are planned.

Members can also turn to Meetup to find all types of support. There are Meetup groups for widows and

widowers, career-related groups, and more. There are also lots of educational groups. Learn photography, public speaking skills, computer analytics, and more.

It's free to join Meetup and there are many complimentary events. However, there is a fee to become an organizer – some organizers choose to charge a nominal fee for events.

Let's connect

Every day, through Meetup, thousands of events are hosted online and in person. There are lots of different options to choose from. You can join a group, find an event, or start a group.

“Meetup is the leader in connecting people, fostering friendships, and building community,” says David Siegel, CEO of Meetup. “When Meetup brings people together over a common interest, or to participate in an activity, we are providing them with a straightforward way to converse easily and connect authentically. Everyone at a Meetup event shares something in common, which is a clear starting point for new friendships.”

When I arrived in Rhinebeck, NY, in 2017, I joined a Meetup group so I could attend organized hikes in the Hudson Valley. That's when I took to the trails with the Hudson Valley History Hikers – a group that explores vanished hamlets, mines, homesteads, farms, and other unique places.

The Hudson Valley and surrounding areas have lots of opportunities. For off-road biking adventures, there's the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Riders. Newcomers and locals in the Rhinebeck area are welcome to attend the Annual Potluck Picnic in August or they can join the Fast Path hiking group. Fitness enthusiasts can also enjoy Litchfield, CT's Litchfield County Explorers hiking group. In Hudson,



Above: Meetup connects people to meet about, or participate in, a shared interest. Pictured here is the Denver Social Climb group during one of their Meetup events. Anyone can organize a Meetup group, and Meetup will announce the new group to any of its 55 million members who share that same interest, and are in the same area if meeting in person. Below, left: In 2009, avid biker David Griess started The Hudson Valley Rail Trail Riders group, which now has nearly 900 members.

there's the Real Estate InvestHER – a women's group that was created to help local real estate investors meet, connect, and learn together. Visit Meetup.com to find about more opportunities in the surrounding areas.

After buying a new bike and taking it for a test run, David Griess realized he didn't enjoy riding in traffic. After hearing about rail trails, he discovered that when riding on the rail trails, something was missing – people to share the experience with. After searching the internet for ways to meet people who enjoyed similar pursuits, he found Meetup.

“I discovered that I could start my own Meetup group, become an organizer, have people join, and schedule weekly rides.” In 2009, he established The Hudson Valley Rail Trail Riders in the Wappingers Falls area.

“The towns and communities see this as a win-win. It's recreation for the people and it brings money and visitors in. What started as a handful of folks has grown into a group with almost 900 members. Whether it's five riders or 12, it's a nice way to spend a Saturday or Sunday,” says David Griess.

Continued on next page ...



Getting social

Due to the pandemic, there's been a surge in people relocating from cities to more rural areas. "Many people have become more interested in living a more relaxed lifestyle in the country. It includes gardening, visiting farms, and hosting intimate dinners with friends. There are so many places to bike, hike, and go to be surrounded by nature. Covid has also opened up the possibility for more people to work from home. This created a migration to the Hudson Valley," says Julie Donbroski, licensed real estate broker and owner of Rhinebeck Real Estate and Mainly Rentals.

With that came an uptick in people seeking new friendships and authentic connections. Meetup recently announced that online and app registrations are soaring. For the first time since Meetup's launch, "friends" is the top searched term on the platform. By contrast, "hiking" was the most searched keyword in 2020.

Since January 2021, there was a 22% monthly increase in membership. In May, there were 350,000 new registrations and in June 370,000 new people became Meetup members.

A recent study from ImpactED at University of Pennsylvania revealed that 80% of people who go to Meetup events feel more connected to others. 72% reported an increased number of friendships through Meetup. As for the organizers, 89% of them reported an increased ability to impact the lives of others, and 78% reported an increased impact on their self-confidence.

What's more, the company's blog, Community Matters, has seen increased page views on supportive themes. Since May, its *5 Ways to Promote your Mental Health Every Day* received 17,000 pageviews and *Resume your Social Life on Pause* received 12,000 pageviews.

Career minded

Beyond using Meetup for connecting with others and joining them for leisurely pursuits, there are a host of

career-related and educational groups. Use the platform to team up with others to create podcasts, write screenplays, discuss art, or get feedback on your work.

Tech enthusiasts can join the more than 250,000 women who gather in Meetup groups worldwide. They unite over a shared goal to sharpen their software development skills. Organizers can establish their following through Meetup.

I first discovered Meetup when I moved to Honolulu, HI, several years ago. That's when I joined Yoga for My Homies – a group hosted by Courtney Wexler.

"90% of my students come from Meetup. I always ask new students where they heard about my class. Most of the time, they say Meetup. Word-of-mouth is the second most popular answer. People rarely mention that they find my yoga class through Facebook or Instagram," says Courtney Wexler.

Meetup can assist organizers in locating new members however, those who organize events have the ability to vet new members to confirm that they'll be a good fit for their communities.

Thanks to organizer tools, event organizers have the ability to schedule events within minutes. They also determine when, where, and how often their groups meet. Organizers can also recruit others to help them host and manage their groups. For enterprise business solutions visit Meetup Pro (meetup.com/pro).

New initiatives

Although the pandemic certainly brought many businesses and endeavors to a halt, creativity has led to some new initiatives. At the beginning of March 2020, Meetup shifted to offer online events so that people could still see friendly faces and feel less isolated during COVID-19 shutdowns.

"Meetup's DNA and emphasis is to meet in person when safe to do so, but online and hybrid events remain," says David Siegel, CEO, Meetup. During the pandemic, Meetup headquarters also launched its own public group, Meetup Live. Its purpose: to keep connected with members and



organizers during a difficult time. The group has already garnered 83,000 members and the online events have lured up to 10,000 attendees. Meetup Live currently produces two live online video events weekly. Topics vary from education to entertaining. They feature experts, authors, executives, and event organizers.

"This is the most popular Meetup group right now. We bring in experts to host entertaining events from cooking or yoga classes to finding happiness and helping dismantle social injustice. These are always free," says Eileen Gilbertson, VP of Marketing, Meetup.

Meetup's most popular live event was *Making New Friends as an Adult*. It lured 11,500 RSVPs for a live, online video conference.

In January 2021, Meetup introduced *Keep Connected* – a podcast dedicated to the positive power of community. It has 4.9 out of 5 stars (with 55 reviews) on Apple. It invites others to hear inspiring stories about how connections have changed other's lives and learn from experts who will explain the real impact of community.

The *Keep Connected* podcast reports that its top three most downloaded podcasts share a theme of friendship and happiness. They include *How to Hack your Happiness*, *An Introverts Guide to Friendship*, and *How to Live a Meaningful Life*.

To join Meetup, visit meetup.com. Those interested in exploring the social media platform may also follow Meetup on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook at @Meetup.

Above: A group of people gather for a yoga Meetup in Honolulu. Yoga Homies was Regina's yoga group when she lived in Hawaii. Photo: Alexi Drouin.

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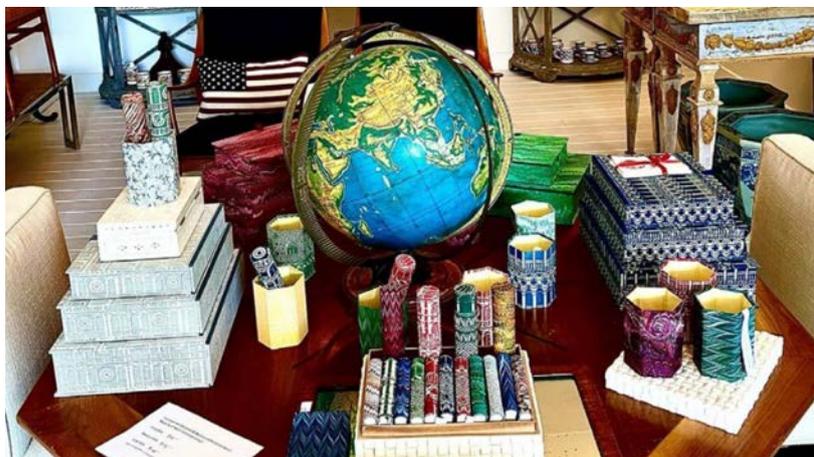




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Tissé Designs was born from owner Anne Cameron's weaving passion six years ago. The word "Tissé" means "weaving" and Anne loves to create and weave and was producing far more handwoven crafts than could reasonably be gifted to friends and family. She began selling her designs in Taos, NM, and at a museum gallery in Dallas, TX. Today, she designs and crafts heirloom-quality handwoven textiles of all sorts: clothing, accessories, purses, home decor, tea towels, and table linens of all styles, shapes, colors, and sizes at her new location in Sharon, CT. Anne also teaches handweaving on both rigid heddle and multi-shaft floor looms, as well as fiber dyeing, shibori dye techniques, and silk resist painting. She sells wovens directly from her studio, as well as online. Two area shops (100 Main in Falls Village, CT, and Millerton Redux in Millerton, NY) also display her work. Every piece is unique; no one piece is ever replicated. Nearly all of her work is done with natural fibers. Teaching, and igniting in others a passion for weaving, gives Anne great satisfaction. Though she discovered weaving late in life, Anne loves all aspects of the weaving process, and particularly values interacting with customers who prize handcrafted work. Anne looks forward to establishing a weaving presence via lectures, pro bono demonstrations, children's programming at the Hotchkiss Memorial Library, and adult lessons.



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After graduating from the New York School of Interior Design in 2008, Todd Page began his design firm in North Carolina in 2011. With the economic collapse of 2008, and little jobs available, Todd started his retail shop with design services. Todd moved to Millerton in 2014 – he left and then came back in 2021 and started Millerton Redux. Although Todd is a trained interior designer, Millerton Redux can provide design services though they are moving away from the industry as it's gotten too rarified and silly. Retailers fundamentally provide entertainment for people thus Millerton Redux is a visual treat which is crucial to the brand. Todd has shipped things as far as London and locally to New York City and is happy to assist with local deliveries. Millerton Redux customers say the store possesses a showroom feel where the displays are intended to inspire clients. Todd says he ensures the shop will never look like a dusty antiques mall and imports giftware from Italy and other antiques, but a major push is representing the Thibaut showroom brand of fabrics and wallpaper at the retail level, the Thibaut brand being a major investment for Millerton Redux. If you are in need of upholstery fabric for that old sofa, think Thibaut and then think Millerton Redux.



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In Spring 2021, former audio engineer Tim Hall started Pure Audio Consulting after seeing a need for a knowledgeable and high-quality bespoke audio service in the Northwest corner of Connecticut. Today, Tim thinks of himself as an "audio store on wheels." He travels to a client's home or office, measures the room, and recommends systems that will work within the desired budget. Most people don't realize that the most important part of a stereo system is the room it is in. What you hear in an audio store showroom is no guarantee of how the system will sound in your home. In fact, it will likely sound very different. Tim makes every effort to get any brand he doesn't carry or will refer clients to the best resource. Tim says there is no greater feeling for him than being able to connect people to their music in a deeper, more emotional way. Thanks in part to services like those provided by Pure Audio Consulting, it's now possible to have studio-quality audio for your home, at a tiny fraction of the price of a professional system. During the most exciting time to be investing in home audio, and while wireless technology is getting better all the time, a world without wires will be a joy without sacrificing audio quality thanks to Pure Audio Consulting.



Leef Glo

A sunless tanning salon, also offering mobile tanning services. 23 E Main Street, Canaan CT. (203) 308-6845.

Beginning in 2019 as a mobile-only business, Leef Glo, a locally popular tanning salon in Canaan, CT, has since expanded to a studio while still providing mobile services. Owner Marcia McAvoy says she has been obsessed with sunless tanning since her first experience back in 2004 and has spent the better part of nearly two decades doing the research to learn everything there is to know about the industry. Leef Glo offers in-home or in-studio spray tans, as well as professional LED teeth whitening. Leef Glo services most of Dutchess, Litchfield, and Berkshire counties. What sets Leef Glo apart from similar businesses is that they use the most natural and fresh ingredients available. Because she only books one-on-one appointments, Marcia is able to offer clients her undivided attention and tailors the experience to their needs (even in their own home if they choose). Marcia says she loves watching her clients grow with confidence after they've had a tan, or after they've had their teeth whitened. Some of her clients have had melanoma scars from UV tanning and seeing them convert to sunless-only tanning is extraordinarily satisfying for Marcia. Going forward, Marcia says her goal at Leef Glo is to expand and add another location and to continue to serve the community.

INSURING YOUR WORLD

CREDITS: are you getting all the credits on your homeowners and automobile insurance policies that you are entitled to? Chances are you probably are not since within the last few years there have been many new possible credits added to policies that are recently issued, yet not added to renewal policies since the respective carrier must be told by the agent which ones are applicable to each renewing account! To start, we can look at the obvious and that is having your auto and homeowners policies with the same carrier, which creates a bundled or account discount, which can add up to real savings – between 10-30% discount on both policies depending upon your carrier. Then you need to examine and refine the individual discounts on a per policy basis. Homeowners for instance may offer a loss free discount, non-smoking discount, no pet discount, discounts for alarms, sprinklers, and dead bolt locks on your doors. Restoration credits if all systems and roofs have been replaced and of course a new home discount. Regarding your automobile insurance, you may be entitled to a loss free or safe driver discount, good student discount if you have a child listed on your policy and maintains a "B" or better average, AAA discount, Veterans or fraternal organization discount. Progressive Insurance even gives a credit if you own a home and it's not insured through their company. And lastly, if you are a young person getting your own auto policy for the first time, you should inquire about a tenant homeowners policy for your first apartment with the same carrier. Usually the discount from your auto policy will almost pay the entire premium for the tenants policy because of the multi-policy discount given! So, call your agent today to see if you are getting every discount that you are entitled to!



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Want to be Insta-famous?

Nowadays it's not unusual to know of- or follow a celebrity who became a "celebrity" thanks to social media, whether it be through YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, or something else. So, that's cool for them – I guess, right? For those looking to be a social media celebrity, become an influencer, or just want to be famous on some level – check that box, mission accomplished.

But for the rest of us, who don't so much care about the attention or becoming a celebrity on some level, but would like to gain traction on social media to grow a business – how does one go about achieving that goal?

Nothing is easy or guaranteed, but begin by finding your niche: What's your business all about? What is the message that you'd like to get out to your audience? What is the impression you'd like to make? After answering those questions, give your audience content that is visually-engaging with the right messaging that conveys the answers to the above questions. Remember, high quality photographs and videos DO make a huge difference! And then set a posting schedule, find the sweet spot for when your posts get the most engagement. Track your metrics. Find trends. Create hashtags specific to your business and use other hashtags that apply. But be patient and consistent because results do not happen overnight. Set a goal at the start and compare progress with your metrics on a regular basis. Then adjust accordingly. Wash, rinse, repeat. #InstaFamous

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Fitness makes you feel better

Fitness is a great way to feel better about yourself. What you do with it can make it an even better challenge. Let's dive into this a little more on why it can augment different areas in your life.

Getting stronger and healthier can help in all aspects of life. As we age, cardiovascular training with strength training will help with your daily activities. Think about when you went to lift a heavy object and you had the strength to do so. Gaining muscle and preserving it will help fight osteoporosis, because when the muscles and tendons pull on the bones, the body will begin to create more bone. When you go out for an evening walk, or a light jog, you help the heart do its job and keep it strong. Both the muscular system and cardiovascular system work hand-in-hand to keep moving efficiently. This doesn't just happen in a gym. Every time you move, both systems have to work and keep you going. When you start to exercise more regularly, your non-exercise activity thermogenesis, or NEAT, increases and you will see changes happen. Pair this with a healthier diet that is comprised of less processed foods, more protein, vegetables and healthier carbohydrates, and you will reap even more rewards. By simply moving more, eating better, and exercising at least 150 minutes a week per guidelines, you will feel better and move better.

Fitness isn't just about what you do in the gym, but how you use it in every day life to make the days count and your life better.

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Arranging from your garden

When it comes to home gardens and landscapes, perhaps the most common flower is the beautiful hydrangea. Hydrangeas come in a variety of colors which derive from the pH in the soil in which they are grown. When arranging with hydrangeas, be sure to cut them either early in the morning or late in the evening when the sun is not strong.

Bringing a bucket of cold water with you while you gather flowers for your vase is also a good idea to prevent wilting. When cutting, you should have a vision of what you want your vase to look like. You are going to need a hook knife or sharp paring knife for re-cutting the flowers before putting them into your vase. This is so important if you want your cuttings to last a long time. Flowers stems are like straws and when they are cut with scissors or clippers it cinches the stem and inhibits water uptake. Getting a good sharp cut the first time, recutting the flowers and changing your water regularly will help your flowers last.

Once your hydrangeas are getting to the end of their bloom you can cut and dry them and create dried arrangements to enjoy all year long!

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