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A photograph of a paved road leading towards a bright, sunlit horizon. On the asphalt, the year "2022" is written in large white letters above a thick yellow arrow pointing upwards and forward. Below the road, the word "START" is written in large, white, textured letters. To the right, the "CROWN ENERGY CORP." logo is displayed, featuring a black crown icon above the word "CROWN" in large red letters, with "ENERGY CORP." in a smaller black box below it. A promotional message in bold black text encourages spring upgrades like heating systems and pool heaters, followed by a call to action to "Give us a call today!"

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## THIS IS THE YEAR 2022...

Another year has officially come and gone and we find ourselves in a brand-spanking-new year! Welcome, this is 2022 ... Please be kind to us.

Last year seemed to just zoom by and left us with a bit of whiplash - or at least it did me. The year just trucked on, ticking the days off, and I felt like I never quite caught up. It seemed like I was constantly trying to catch up with one thing or the other, and was playing a game of the eternal pivot. But alas, that seems to be the world that we live in. Despite those challenges though, there were plenty of great moments and silver linings, so don't get me wrong: this is not a complaint editorial or start-to-the-year whine. It is simply an acknowledgment of what has transpired and brought us to the present.

Speaking of the present, how many of you have just kick started the diet and the new you? The slate is clean, right? Well, we have a few things in this issue to go with that theme. We hope you find it helpful. But it feels as if many of us are able to take a cleansing breath and have renewed energy to tackle dreams and challenges at the start of a new year. This year shouldn't be any different - and maybe it'll even be better?

For me, both personally and professionally, I'm very excited for 2022. As I shared last month, we're expanding our Main Street world and are kicking off our podcast this month (find Main Street Moxie wherever you listen to podcasts), we're really excited for another great year of this magazine and accompanying website, and I worked all of 2021 so that I could focus more and better on my Main Street businesses. What that means is that I myself will be creating more content and looking for exciting opportunities for us to share awesome and positive stories with all of you!

Personally, I began early with working on my health. No waiting until January 1 for me - I started in late October. Making this commitment was well overdue and in all honesty, I was very excited to really get myself together and in shape - the stars had finally aligned and afforded me the time. So by the time you read this, I'm over two months in and I have to tell you, I feel really good. I feel powerful! And I feel more energetic and excited to take on whatever this year will bring us - all of which I hope is good. Ever the optimist I am. But I start this year very excited, energized with fervor to take on whatever challenges may come ... although I am not putting any challenge out in the Universe. Be kind, Universe... send good our way. We deserve it. Here's hoping 2022 is all that we hoped for.

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



## JANUARY 2022

Every snowflake is unique, as are we. Focus on the details, just like the details of this snowflake. Let everything else, on the periphery, be just that - the periphery.

Cover photo by Olivia Valentine

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### PUBLISHER, EDITOR, ADVERTISING, WRITING, PHOTOGRAPHY, & OTHER DUTIES

**Thorunn Kristjansdottir** publisher, editor-in-chief, designer, etc.

Contributing writers:

**Betsy Maury | CB Wismar | Christine Bates | Lindsey Clark | Dominique De Vito | Griffin Cooper | Ian Strever | John Torsiello | Mary B. O'Neill | Olivia Valentine & Caroline Markonic | Regina Molaro**  
Assistant proof-reader: **Pom Shillingford**. Photographers: **Lazlo Gyorsok & Olivia Valentine**.

### ADVERTISING

**Ashley Kristjansson & Griffin Cooper** call 518 592 1135 or email info@mainstreetmag.com

### CONTACT

**Office** 52 Main Street, Millerton, NY 12546 • **Mailing address** PO Box 165, Ancramdale, NY 12503  
**Phone** 518 592 1135 • **Email** info@mainstreetmag.com • **Website** www.mainstreetmag.com

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# THIS REALLY IS A LOVE SONG

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BRUCE SMITH, DRUMMER

By CB Wismar  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

"One of my first memories was being in my father's studio – music playing – him working on a large canvas." Bruce Smith has fond memories of his childhood, underscored by the experience of being the son of widely celebrated abstract painter Hassell Smith who, himself, was quoted as saying "I am concerned I'm bringing the painting into much closer relation with music..."

It was music, notably percussion, that captured Smith's interest, from using his mother's knitting needles to tap out rhythms to volunteering to play the snare drum in an early school band. When drum lessons were offered, he tried to fit into the discipline of playing along with known performers. "I hated it," he quickly offers. "Years later, I knew I had to re-engage with the rudiments of modern drumming, but I needed to find my own way."

That way led him, as a teenager to ride the British wave of "punk rock" and to create The Pop Group – a post-punk band that played in England until 1981, reforming in 2010. The inclusion of strongly political and ideological themes into their songs set The Pop Group apart from earlier punk bands. One of their performances was presented to 500,000 fans in London's Trafalgar Square as part of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament concert.

#### An admixture of reggae

"We'd go to London to play and to go to The Roxy where DJ Don Letts would play reggae songs between sets of punk rock bands." The blend may have seemed odd at first blush, but the raw energy, the rebellion and the sheer political force between the two genres resonated with Smith. "Reggae has had an incredible influence on my playing," he admits, a factor noted by critics over the years of his appearance as the drummer with "Public image, Ltd" (PiL) the band fronted by John Lydon ... famously "Johnny Rotten" from the seminal punk rock group The Sex Pistols.

Smith was a member of PiL from 1986 to 1990, when the band suspended recording and touring. "John Lydon called me up out of the blue in early 2009 and told me he wanted to get the band together, again. 19 years is an eternity in music, but the opportunity was exciting." Having appeared on countless recording sessions for other acts, Bruce Smith was back in a world famous group, and the performing, recording and touring began, again.

*This is Not a Love Song*, one of PiL's most recognized songs, grew out of an early suggestion by a record company executive that Lydon and the band come up with a "nice love song." The satire anthem was the response and its popularity (it hit #5 on the UK song charts) has made it a staple of PiL's performances.

## The world changes

"COVID-19 changed concert performances – completely killing them for two years," Smith laments. "I have a feeling that what's going to happen in 2022 and 2023 is going to be legendary. Promoters have already filled the concert agendas for these upcoming years. Finding open dates is going to be a challenge." As for PiL, they have two major festival appearances already selling (and selling out) in their future. One of the two May, 2022 dates at Pasadena, California's Cruel World festival has sold out and the second date finds tickets hard to find.

"Festivals have become a great way for fans to hear multiple groups over a few days, for one price. A single performance ticket can be very expensive," offers Smith. The May date on the West Coast will be closely followed by an appearance in Limburg, Belgium at the Sinners Day Special festival.

## The greying of the audience

With roots dating back to the punk rock days of the 70s and 80s, audiences for PiL concerts has evolved. "In the UK, our audiences tend to be older – folks who were fans early on who come back to reminisce. In the rest of the world, the number of younger fans seems much greater – people who knew us from recordings but never saw us in person who now get the chance."

While PiL gets ready to reassemble for rehearsals and performances (John Lydon lives in California, guitarist Lu Edmunds and bassist Scott Firth live in the UK) the process is intriguing. "We don't look at the music as static. It's very fluid. We've never played songs twice the same ... they emerge ... they reflect where we are. We're not locked in time."

## Ashes and diamonds

Musicians have loyalties, and they have the opportunity to form new connections, new interests. When a group books a tour, then loyalties return and the chemistry bonds

the performers together. When one group is on hiatus, other connections emerge.

"I've been working for almost three years on a group of songs with Paul Dentman who has been bassist for Sade for years and guitarist Daniel Ash who has been part of Bauhaus for years. I wouldn't call it an album ... that's no longer a commodity in these days of instant downloads and streaming services. It's group of really well produced pieces that we will begin to release in the next year."

In an age of digital streaming, file sharing and editing, the songs by Ashes and Diamonds, as the new group is called, have been individually recorded long distance, then shared between the band members. Each of them adds tracks and sends the files back to the other two. "I'm intrigued with the production aspect," affirms Smith, "because we can add vocal support when needed, change a phrase or a few bars of instrumentation to keep building the sound."

The evolution of performance will have an impact on Ashes and Diamonds just as it has on other groups emerging from lockdowns and cancellations. A February 2022 release of the first new track could signal a new chapter.

With three recognized and celebrated musicians coming together to create a new group, the notion of booking dates for performance, then considering a tour are all on the horizon. "There are great theaters all around this country that have 750-1000 seats, great production facilities and form a terrific backdrop for performers," offers Smith with an eye to his next chapter. The Bardavon in Poughkeepsie, NY, the Mahaiwe in Great Barrington, MA, and the Warner in Torrington, CT, come instantly to mind.



## This really is a love song

Bruce Smith and his partner, Chelsea Miller, live in bucolic Falls Village, CT, far from the grind and hustle of club scenes in London, New York, and Tokyo. The music of PiL, of The Pop Group or other bands that have been supported by Bruce's incredible drumming may be mixed by DJ's in those far flung venues, but the future for Smith is creation and performance of new work. "My father taught me an important lesson with his painting: He could work hours on a piece, then wipe it out with a sweep of a brush. He taught me that what you've done is not important if another, stronger idea has emerged. The past is fine ... but the future is exciting." •

*Bruce Smith appears on tracks from, among others, The Pop Group and The Slits through The New Age Steppers and Public Image Ltd. They can be found on streaming services and as both singles and full concert recordings on YouTube.*

*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: Bruce Smith on drums behind John Lydon. Opposite page: Bruce Smith, John Lydon, Scott Firth, Lu Edmunds. Images courtesy of Bruce Smith.

Happy New Year!

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# friendly faces: meet our neighbors, visitors and friends



Millerton, NY, newcomer **Geneva Morris** is the director of development at a New York civil rights organization called New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). "I lead a team that plans fundraising events, I am also involved with grant writing, and connecting with partners and donors," Geneva says. "I love working to support social justice and systemic change from city-wide policy to individual cases." Outside of work, Geneva loves spending time with her two daughters Cecilia and Zora. "We like to be creative on the weekends, we'll try to bake a cake we saw online or paint with watercolors," says Geneva. "The girls love to read (or be read to) so we spend a lot of time at the library or Oblong Books when we're in Millerton. I love being part of such a small village where I can make an impact."



**Ashley Burdick** has been working at Boundaries For Pets, an Invisible Fence Brand dealer located in Lakeville, CT, since November 2014. "As a huge animal lover, the most rewarding part of my job is knowing that I'm helping families and their pets live better lives together," she says. Outside of work, Ashley enjoys spending time with her dog and fiancé, taking walks and bike rides on the Rail Trail. "I also love to garden!" Ashley says. "It can be hard work, but when I get to admire the beauty of the flowers when they bloom, it makes it all worth it." This new year Ashley is looking forward to creating new adventures with her family, visiting more State Parks and exploring new places. "It's really the small things in life that make me the happiest," she says.



**Colin May** has lived in Lakeville, CT, for nearly 15 years after spending most of his early life in London, England. He recently became the IT Specialist for the Marvelwood School in Kent, CT, and says, "Information Technology is so broad and the school is so dynamic that I see new challenges that give me the opportunity to learn every day." Colin is also an avid fan of soccer, participates in fantasy football and enjoys a weekly Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) meet up with college friends. "Since I am 25 years old, recently graduating from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY, and coming out of the pandemic, my New Year's resolution is to be more socially adventurous and explore new ways to enjoy myself as a young adult in the area," Colin shared.



**Bob Stevens** (depicted right alongside his son) has been serving as the Superintendent of Highways for the Town of North East for the past 24 years and is responsible for the maintenance and repair of town streets and roads, including snow removal, drainage, traffic signing and other services for the town. Mr. Stevens is also responsible for the administrative activities of the Highway Department and overseeing all department operations, including preparing the department budget; approving bills for payment; planning, prioritizing, and organizing the various activities of the department. "I enjoy making sure the town highways are safe for the traveling public and emergency vehicles," Bob says. "When I'm not performing my duties, I enjoy spending time with family, especially my son. I am a lifelong area resident and grew up loving the local wildlife."



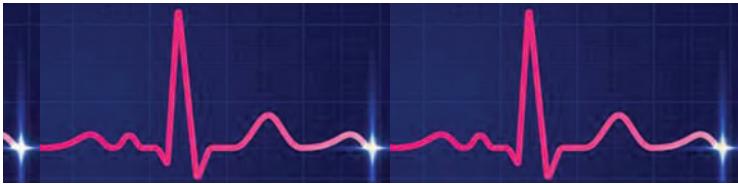
**Beth Gordon** is a certified career coach and volunteer with the Roe Jan Community Library as well as the Hudson Area Library. "I help people in communities with resume writing, interview preparation, and job searching," Beth says. "I am constantly rewarded by helping people who need career guidance and job help. People who are out of work or those returning to the workforce can be overwhelmed with how to write a resume or conduct a job search. I provide the tools to get them started and hopefully find employment." Outside of work, Beth loves working in her vegetable garden in the spring and summer. Having lived in Hillsdale, NY, for 13 years, Beth enjoys exploring the beautiful roads and trails in the area as well as discovering and patronizing local farms.



**Cole Bushnell** is the owner of Bushnell Painting, LLC, a house painting and remodeling company that he started in 2005. "I started painting back in 2002 when I graduated from Housatonic Valley Regional High School," Cole says. "I like watching projects come together and getting to put the final touches on everything to make it look perfect." Outside of work, Cole enjoys spending time with his kids and his dogs. "I love seeing them smile and have a good time," he says. "Watching my oldest play on the Southern Berkshire football team is one of my favorite things to do." This year, Cole says he is looking forward to the ski season and hopes for a snowy winter. He says, "My New Year's resolution is to spend as much time as possible on the mountain with my boys."



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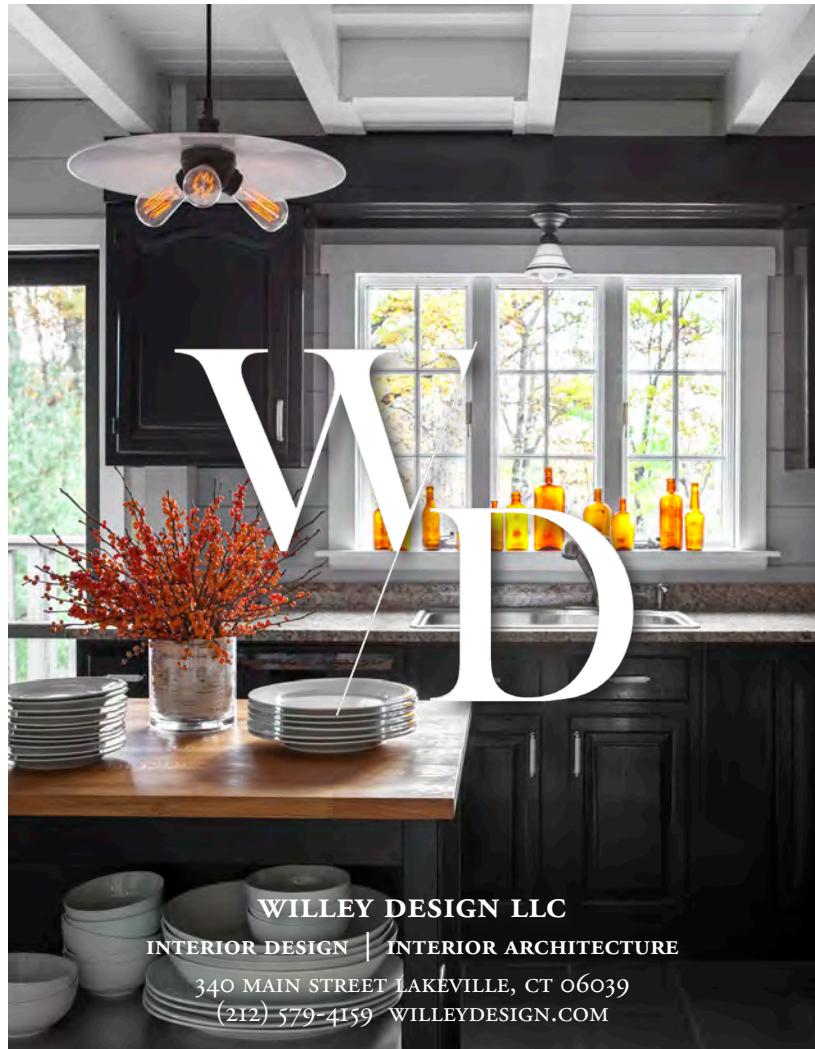
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# Creation through inspiration:

CHARLOTTE SHERIDAN OF MERWIN FARM  
AND HOME, MILLERTON, NY

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

*Over the past 20 years, the Village of Millerton, New York's commercial Main Street has transformed itself into the Hudson Valley's epicenter of antique shopping. Despite the populous nature of design-inspired shops in town, Millerton native Charlotte Sheridan, owner of Merwin Farm and Home, has managed to carve out her own unique identity within the community. After nearly four years of ownership under her talented belt, Charlotte describes her design inspirations, her evolution in Millerton, and the challenges she has faced as a small business owner in the face of uncertainty.*

#### **How did the inspiration for your shop come about?**

I grew up in a home filled with hard working people. My father was always looking for ways to improve the beauty of our home. He was a skilled professional as well as a talented artist. He, in many ways, inspired me to venture out on my own, take risks and trust in my intuition – design or otherwise. He has since passed on but, for me, my ambitions as a small business owner exist to honor his memory.

My design inspiration came to me when I began working at Country Gardeners Florist here in Millerton. That was my first real hands-on experience with design and how beautiful objects can help architect space into

a motif. Country Gardeners owner Joanne Scasso, her eye for floral design and her determination as a female small business owner really helped build my confidence to try and create my own niche in town. After learning floral design and working on beautifying weddings and holiday households with Joanne I began to realize that I loved design on a deeper level. It wasn't long before I felt the urge to expand my own style into the home on a larger, more conceptual scale.

#### **How would you describe your design style?**

It's not an easy or straightforward question to answer. For me, design and style depend so much on individual expression, their kinship with the home as well as those who occupy the space. Though I am inherently drawn to farmhouse motifs, I love venturing into different styles as well. From rustic country to modern and clean, there's something personal that can be found anywhere and I enjoy meshing different styles together.

#### **How did you find your way to your current location on Main Street in Millerton?**

I came to my current location on Main Street, across from the Oakhurst Diner and next to Taro's, through a mix of pure luck and motivation.



Above: Charlotte Sheridan in her shop. Below, left: Charlotte's workshops are one of the unique factors of her store and its offerings, including these autumn pumpkins.

The joy of coming from, and living in a small town like Millerton is that most opportunities are discovered by the communal act of word-of-mouth. That is exactly how I landed in the spot I'm in now. Millerton is a village built upon generations of families relying on each other for their collective endurance and that idea continues to this very day. That tradition has created a small wellspring of opportunity for many small business owners. It's almost as if the village itself is a living, breathing function of its residents and it's them I have to thank for the survival of my shop.

#### **How would you describe your shop?**

My store is a small, unique shop that features found treasures, old and new, as well as many handmade and local products. I have spent the last two years collecting a wide variety of farmhouse and cottage-style home and garden decor that I feel accentuate both my style as well as the spirit of our area. I also offer DIY workshops both in-store as well as private bookings. I love helping customers



Continued on next page ...



Above: Charlotte teaching one of her workshops. Below, right: A glimpse inside Merwin Farm and Home.

get hands-on and discover their own hidden talents for creating wonderful individual pieces.

#### **What are some of the challenges you've faced as a small business owner over the past two years?**

Obviously, the biggest challenge that I, and many small businesses everywhere, experienced over the past two years and one that few saw coming was the world-wide pandemic and its effects on people and the economy. There were times when I was completely gripped with anxiety over what uncertainties were waiting for me in the future. The feeling of helplessness and complete lack of agency is something I wouldn't wish on anyone and yet, we all experienced it on some level. I found myself faced with those stresses on top of the fact that I was still a young owner of just two years and was still working out the kinks of owning a business for the first time.

As with many small business owners, I am not out of the proverbial woods yet. However, it is my customers who have supported me and my two children who have kept my focus clear and my resolve unbroken.

#### **What do you see in the future? How creative do you feel you can get with your business?**

The future of businesses of every size seems to exist within the trappings of convenience and speed and I would love to expand my shop with more of

an online presence. Life has invariably changed over the past two years and I feel like it is my time to evolve with those changes. I must admit, I never wanted to sell online previously. I was content staying put as a brick-and-mortar shop, and that will always be an important aspect of my business, but after the pandemic I've realized that allowing customers access to my store in an online format will definitely improve my business as well as the relationships with potential customers. That is not to say my shop will ever be fully digital, I feel I must still meet folks in order to gain a better understanding of their design sensibilities as well as how I can adapt mine.

#### **How do you find inspiration?**

My inspiration revolves around creating a lifestyle for people, a way of letting one's inner self out and existing in those spaces that are most personal and lend themselves to self-expression. Those ideas need not only pertain to the home, but in everyday life as well. We all want to surround ourselves with those things that help us define who we are to the outside world and that's what I want to help folks accomplish. From housewares to jewelry, clothing and workshops that appeal to the community of rural people near and far, I want to reward everyone's imagination. I am con-

stantly finding inspiration in my own life that relates to how I want to live and that spills over into my business.

#### **What's it like to own a small business while managing a family life?**

Owning a business while raising a family means my job doesn't end when I close the shop in the evening, I just punch out of one and punch into the next. Thankfully, though it can at times be overwhelming, it's not something I do alone. I have great support from my partner in life and without that I don't think I could manage everything.

I miss my father terribly and wish he were here physically to see how far I've come in the past three years. However, I see his light in my children every day and feel his spirit of ambition within me each time I open the doors of my small shop. I'm proud of my dream and I hope to continue to have the opportunity to share it with my community for years to come. •

*Merwin Farm and Home is located at 20 Main Street in Millerton, NY, across from the Oakhurst Diner. For more information or to receive updates on the latest in-store workshops, follow Charlotte on social media @merwinfarmandhome. To inquire about hosting your own private workshops, email merwinfarmandhome@gmail.com or call (518) 567-6737.*



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# Boiled Raisin Cake



Happy New Year! This month we're bringing you the recipe for Boiled Raisin Cake, but don't let the name stop you from making this yummy cake! This is a recipe that goes waaaay back to my paternal grandmother, Little Gram (1894-1993). She stood about 4'11", hence the name. She would make this cake for the grandkids quite often due to popular demand. It's an "oldie but goodie" as some say.

It always seemed to grace the table this time of year along with her... Scalloped Oysters. Now, I can assure you that the Scalloped Oysters were not requested by ANY of us kids and we always tried to pass that dish by as quickly as possible as it made its way around the dining room table. Although she was lacking in the height department, her eyesight never failed her when a dollop of the dreaded oysters wasn't plopped onto our plates. But we knew there would be the raisin cake for dessert, so we obliged and begrudgingly scooped the oysters from the dish onto our awaiting plates. Thank goodness for Corky, the family dog, who was always eagerly waiting underneath the table for a treat to be sneakily handed to her.

Caroline and I found it fitting that we share this recipe as we both love it and have also both requested it be our birthday cakes as kids.

What makes this cake taste so good is the cream cheese frosting. It adds a nice sweet, but not too sweet balance to the raisin cake. The orange zest is a must!

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 cup seedless raisins
- 2 cups of water + 3 tbs
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 egg at room temperature
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp cloves
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- Pinch of salt

#### **Cream cheese frosting:**

- 8 oz room temperature cream cheese
- 1/2 cup room temperature butter
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 cups confectioners sugar
- 1 tsp orange zest

#### **Directions for the cake:**

Line a 9" square pan with aluminum foil (sides and bottom). Heat oven to 350. Boil 1 cup of raisins in 2 cups of water until 1 cup of water remains (8-10 minutes). Make sure there's at least 1 cup of the water. Let cool. In a large bowl, mix or whisk the sugar and the egg. Add 1 tsp of baking soda dissolved in 3 tbs of water to the

sugar mixture. Add cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, vanilla, and a pinch of salt. Add cooled raisins alternately with flour, then add vegetable oil. Mix well and fold in walnuts. Bake for 45 minutes until tester in center is dry. When cool, frost with cream cheese frosting.

#### **Directions for the cream cheese frosting:**

Beat together the room temperature cream cheese and butter. Add 1 tsp of vanilla and 3 cups of confectioners sugar. Add on 1 tsp of orange zest and mix well.

PS: Scalloped Oysters recipe available upon request! •

*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 @oliviavvalentine.*

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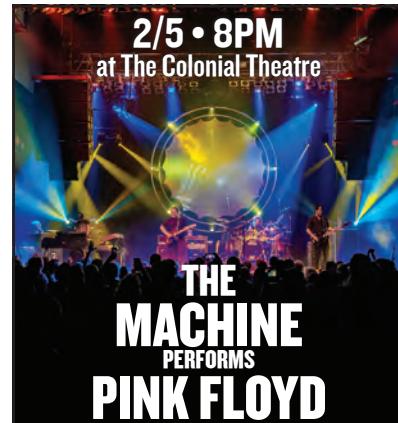
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# What it takes to move a house Building in the wrong place?

By Christine Bates  
info@mainstreetmag.com

*Real estate buyers frequently tell me that the house that fits their every need is “just too close to the road, too noisy, not private.” In Main Street’s May 2017 issue, I asked other realtors about the “road” discount on a home’s price. Experienced brokers estimated a discount between 5% to 30% with double the time on the market. Road proximity can be particularly true of antique houses which were purposely built close to the road for easy access. This made me wonder why more homeowners with sufficient land did not relocate their homes. How hard could it be? How much would it cost? And what about climate change? With new flood zones and higher FEMA insurance premiums, should more houses be elevated?*

## Relocating buildings is not new

Even before motorized vehicles and steam engines, people have relocated buildings because they were just in the wrong place. (See photo above of the “Beehive” in Millerton, NY, moved a hundred feet with horses to make way for the creation of Highland Drive). Moving buildings may be the world’s largest and oldest recycling industry. Barns, greenhouses, light houses, summer cottages, 11-story buildings, gas stations, churches, historic buildings and houses have all been moved horizontally to satisfy a need for a better

view, to lessen noise from a road or protect historic structures threatened with demolition. Waterfront homes can be elevated to combat the threat of rising water levels.

## How do you move a structure?

Moving any major structure takes a team of experts: a general contractor, structural movers, electricians, plumbers, and a concrete foundation company. Joe Nicholas, the sixth generation of Nicholas Bros Building Movers in Hopewell Junction, NY, explained the basics of moving a building today.

Steel I-beams are placed under the sills of the house, unified hydraulic jacks lift the structure, and then pneumatic dollies are placed under the building to move it to its new location on a new foundation facing the right direction. The Henry Frank house Nicholas moved across Route 44 in Poughkeepsie in October 2021 as part of the Eastdale Village development project and cost \$60,000 for the move alone (see photo next page). The trip across the highway took only 30 minutes but the prep, permitting, and new site preparation effort were the expensive part. You can view the house crossing Route 44 on YouTube – lots of people turned out to watch.

The project to move the Irondale



Schoolhouse to nearby Main Street in Millerton, NY, took eight years and \$120,000 to complete but included the acquisition of the historic structure, land permitting from the county, and renovation. Ralph Fedele, the community visionary behind the project explained, “First the building must be carefully measured, and the route checked. The vertical profile once loaded on a flatbed must be lower than the overhead wires. Tree limbs and anything else that might restrict movement must be carefully checked. The move itself down Route 22 and around the corner to Route 44 cost only \$29,000.” (See photo left of schoolhouse rounding the corner of Routes 22 and 44, the building is now located next to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail and Brick Block Auto Parts).

Above: Known as the “Beehive,” this Victorian house at 27 Barton Street was moved about 100 feet west by horses to permit the extension of Dutchess Avenue and the creation of Highland Drive running between Dutchess and Maple Avenue at the edge of the Village of Millerton, NY. Unfortunately, no photos could be found of the actual move. Photo: Christine Bates. Below, left: The Irondale one-room schoolhouse was moved down Route 22 to its current location on Main Street in Millerton as a result of a years-long effort to preserve and relocate the building. Photo courtesy of Ralph Fedele.



Continued on next page ...

## How much would it cost to move my house?

There is no price per square foot estimate when it comes to moving a building. Every move is unique. The total cost will be determined by the size, shape, type of structure, and type and height of the foundation. Crawl spaces under three feet and houses built on slabs are more costly to move than homes sitting on full basements. Building accessories like porches, fireplaces, and decks can be moved with the building, but will add to the cost.

Sufficient room is required around the house to use standard mechanized equipment. Before the move all utilities must be shut off, all pipes, plumbing and duck work removed from underneath the floor joists, not to mention shrubbery that might be in the way. And then there is the move route. How far will the house travel? If the house is moving to the back of a property, the move cost is much less than moving the house across the road or down a highway. Clearing the route is a very large price factor. The cost of lifting utility lines, traffic signals, and signs, and permitting keeps most moves in the Northeast under one to two miles.

So really how much would it cost to move a simple structure 100' back from a road on level ground? Nicholas estimated that moving a small structure like a garage might only cost \$9,000 to move on the same property while a house might cost \$40,000 to \$45,000 without much difference in

price between a distance of 100 feet and 200 feet. On top of this is there is the cost of a new foundation, disconnecting and reconnecting mechanics, and a longer driveway.

## Moving up and up

Structural movers in our region observed that they are getting more and more work elevating structures affected by flooding; 100-year storms seem to be happening every ten years. Hurricane Sandy damaged or destroyed over 650,000 houses and affected over six million Americans. An estimated three million older and historic buildings in US are in flood zones and vulnerable to storms.

Elevating a home in advance of storm surges or flooding will also lower insurance rates which are expected to increase dramatically for properties at risk. Areas of Dutchess and Columbia counties in NY have a moderate flood risk over the next 30 years while Litchfield and Berkshire counties in CT and MA respectively are estimated to have a major risk. The Long Island coast where Nicholas elevated Katherine Hepburn's former house in Old Saybrook, is especially vulnerable. Raising a house is less expensive than moving it, but involves the same type of specialized equipment and expertise. Houses are also elevated to repair or replace existing foundations.

The "Flying Church," the oldest church in Great Barrington, MA, was raised 6'9" to add square foot-



Above: The historic house on Route 44 in Poughkeepsie, NY, was moved by Nicholas Bros from one side of the highway to the other. The preservation and move were required as part of the approval process of the Eastdale Village development – seen in background. Photo courtesy of Joe Nicholas of Nicholas Bros. Below, left: New modular houses are moved in sections as wide loads on flatbed trailers to their new foundations. This house on Carpenter Hill Road in Pine Plains, NY, was assembled on new foundations in one day. Photo: Christine Bates.

age to the building to allow retail development. The remnants of the town's Pumpkin Hollow Road bridge were added to the north side after the building was elevated to provide disabled access to the building. The repurposed church will house residential, office, retail and restaurant spaces.

Raising roofs is another service offered by structural movers. Some property owners seek to add space on the same footprint by lifting the existing roof and securing it to support columns to add another story. This can double or triple the cubic space economically and is usually done for commercial and warehouse facilities.

## Moving a house in pieces

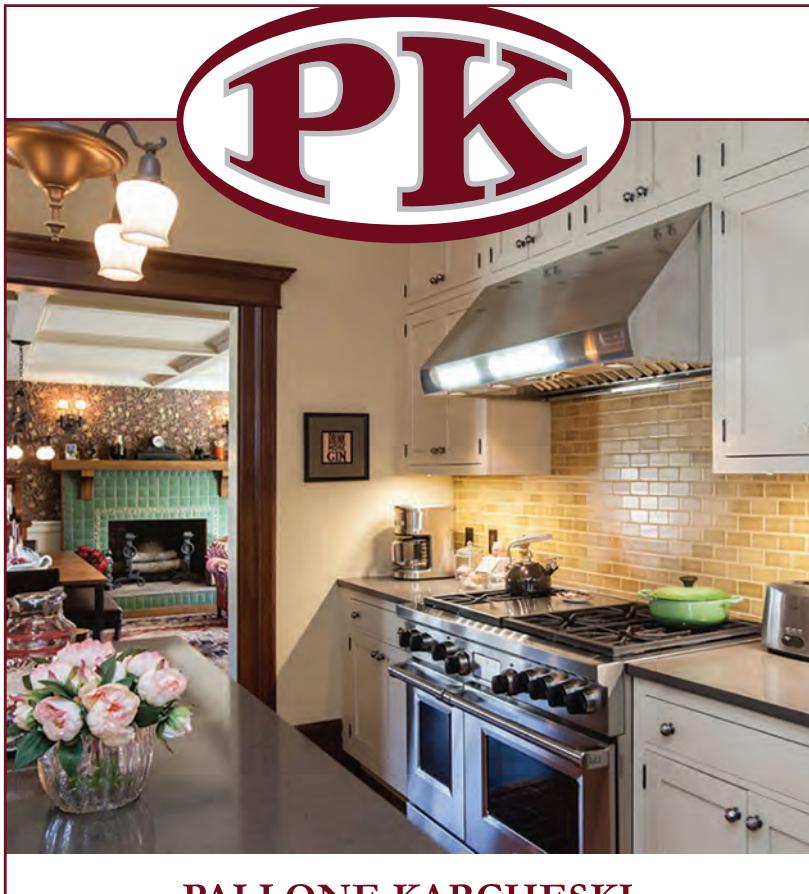
Today's modular houses are designed to be able to move on flatbed trucks as wide loads avoiding the problem of overhead wires and other obstructions. Westchester Modular builds houses in their facility in Wingdale and transports them in pieces to the house site where they are lifted by crane, placed on new foundations and joined together (see photo below left).

This type of house could be disassembled and trucked to a new site if necessary.

The decision to move a house up or over is a bold and imaginative one and anyone contemplating it should carefully research all the costs involved. Most likely it will make economic sense for valuable or historic structures or if the foundation needs to be replaced anyway. And remember there's the additional cost of living somewhere else for a few months while the building is prepared for a move and you'll have to clean out your basement. •

*Christine Bates, a real estate agent in New York and Connecticut with William Pitt Sotheby's, has written about all things real estate since the magazine's first issue.*





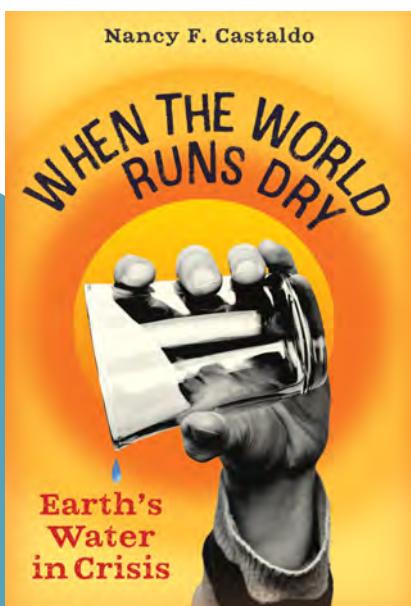
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# 7 WAYS TO ACHIEVE YOUR RESOLUTION:

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir  
info@mainstreetmag.com

So many of us have in the past, or perhaps not-so-distant past, made New Years resolutions. Many of us have probably failed them too (supposedly only about 12% succeed). I hope more of you have succeeded at them than failed though. But there's also a reason that gym memberships surge in January, and then slowly dwindle off... it's hard to make changes. BUT this is an article about empowerment and a way to achieve those resolutions! So please keep reading, because we set off at the start of the year with the best of intentions, full of ambition and drive, and I want to help to keep that momentum so that we can all achieve our goals. Here are some tips:

## **Be goal-specific**

Most of us set a goal in our resolution: lose weight, eat healthier, get in shape, or things like spend more time with family and/or save more money. Regardless of the goal that's set, what will help you better achieve it is if you make it specific and achievable. For example, instead of setting your goal as "losing weight," make it realistic and specific such as "lose 10 lbs." That way, you are better able to plan and keep your eye on the prize.

## **One is better than two**

Remember above how I mentioned having achievable goals? Well, to go in line with that, it is better to set one clear goal, rather than two or more. By so doing you are putting all of your energy and focus into the one clear goal. This helps with focus and you won't get spread too thin. As we all know, when we take on too much it can overwhelm us and then it just becomes too much. Who wants to deal with that when you're trying to create a new habit? Because remember this: it takes at least three months to create a new- or change a habit.

## **Make a plan**

Here we go again with having a plan. How does that work for us "wingers" out there, the ones who prefer to wing

things? Well, I suppose being well-prepared has its perks... it certainly makes things easier, more clear-cut, and does eliminate any questions and stress because you have a strategically put together plan. Having a well thought-out plan is one of the keys in achieving success and any goal, or so they tell me. So perhaps us "wingers" and procrastinators should take special notice of this tip: be prepared, and prepare early.

Again, making major changes to your behavior takes time (at least three months). And so, in order to achieve your resolution and the goal you set forth, crafting a well thought-out plan will be nothing but helpful for you. Brainstorm, write down your goal and its step-by-step plan, mark things on your calendar – whatever planning that will work for you to help you achieve your specific and achievable goal.

## **Baby steps**

Yes, baby steps are a thing. You can't just jump into the deep end of the pool and expect to be an Olympic swimmer. Slow and steady always wins the race... right? Sure, we're going with that analogy.

Most New Years resolutions actually fail when people take on too much and too quickly. They set their expectations too high (and unrealistic) and they end up burning themselves out and discouraging themselves at the same time. So start with small steps (that you'll plan out in your planning process), and then grow from there. Perhaps in your first week you're going to start by spending ten minutes a day meditating, then in week two you're going to move up to 20 minutes – whatever it may be – plan it all out and just remember that there is no such thing as too small of a step – as long as it is a step in the direction of achieving your goal.

## **Learn from your mistakes**

You know how "they" always told you that history was important because



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Galeanu Mihai

it was a way for us to avoid repeating mistakes? Well, the same rule applies here. When it comes to your resolution and goals, avoid your past failures. That also means trying to avoid repeatedly setting the same goals. Or if you do set the same goal, before you dive in, evaluate the goal and the reasons why you failed before, and then come up with a plan that is doable to help you achieve your goal this time around. But be honest and realistic with yourself. These things take time, and change is hard.

## **Like everything, it's a process**

You know how everything you do is a process? Well, this is no different. Changing your habits, that have probably taken you years or even a lifetime to form, will take time to change or modify. Am-I-right? So be patient and give yourself a little slack. Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither will achieving your goal. Even though I wouldn't mind losing 20 lbs. and being my healthiest self by the time I wake up tomorrow, it just isn't going to happen! Instead I've put together a realistic goal of how I'm going to lose those 20 lbs, with a timeframe that allows for success as well as the many multiple steps that are required to help me reach that specific goal. I have to put in the work. I am also honest with myself that it has taken me years to, in this case, gain these

extra lbs. and so it will take me time to lose them. But that's just me.

## **Keep working and being held accountable**

I have found two more things to be very helpful and that is: 1. just keep working at it, and 2. being held accountable. If I just keep working at it, just keep chipping away at it every day, it is amazing how many little actions will result in a big one. That work ethic is so important, not just for achieving a New Years resolution, but this should be applied to everything in your life: just do the work, every day. Do the work.

I also find it incredibly helpful when I'm held accountable. Sometimes this means involving other people, like having a workout buddy because it is harder to skip the gym when you've committed to showing up and working out with another person. But sometimes you need to hold yourself accountable too. You just have to find what works for you.

And with that said, these are just a few tips that can help anyone achieve their goals. There are countless others (go Google crazy!), but these are a few of the ones that I use and will be using in to achieve my goals in 2022. So here's to a great 2022 where we will achieve as many of the goals that we have set forth. Good luck!

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# Area caregivers tackle new era of challenge



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor insta\_photos

*By Griffin Cooper* Exploring the healthcare crisis in 2021 can be compared to taking a treacherous voyage toward the center of the Earth. There are layers upon layers of complex challenges that, despite their sturdy exterior, must be dug through and the closer one gets to the core, the hotter it gets until a molten level of anxiety is reached.

Born out of a global pandemic, hospitals and healthcare institutions across the country (and the globe) are in many ways still reeling in the face of ongoing volatility. The Covid-19 virus and its subsequent variants have brought with them an onslaught of not only illness and death, but a mass of confusion, uncertainty, and anger as well. Underneath the weight of all this tragic upheaval and struggling to carry the mountain of rubble that was 2020, are the healthcare professionals and caregivers.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in March of 2020, nurses and other staff from hospitals throughout our area have been inundated with fluctuations in patient numbers, numbers of beds, policy changes, and staff shortages. With winter here, flu and Covid cases are once again on the rise, and hospitals

are – once again – bracing themselves for similar surges. As a result, familiar concerns are being raised on state-levels and hot-button issues are again finding themselves at the fore in society.

## Executive decisions

State lawmakers in New York and Massachusetts are considering, and have made a number of decisions that will once again have an impact on daily life both for hospitals as well as for the public at large. In early December, Massachusetts State Governor Ned Baker said he would be considering looking into the possibility of activating the National Guard to help with hospital staffing, but remains unsure if or how that might work.

Maine and New Hampshire have already activated their members of the National Guard to help alleviate capacity constraints at hospitals in their states. For Baker, the possibility remains but the logistics need to be ironed out, “If there’s a way that we can bring the Guard in and involve them as an ancillary and supportive group to support what’s going on in the healthcare system, we’ll certainly pursue that and try to put it in place,” said Baker.

## Numbers and shortages on the rise

Since November, hospitalizations in the State of Massachusetts have

risen dramatically. Covid hospitalizations alone went up by 134% in just the last month.

Sweeping changes in various forms of local healthcare aren’t relegated to legislation alone. In Connecticut, executives at Windham Community Hospital, Sharon Hospital, and Johnson Memorial Hospital have- or are planning to halt their hospital’s birthing services, citing a mix of financial challenges, patient safety concerns, and difficulty recruiting OB-GYN healthcare providers.

“At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, we saw unprecedented shortages of equipment and supplies, including medications, protective equipment, and ventilators,” says Mark Marshall, chief medical officer at Sharon Hospital. “We had to be creative to assure we had what was needed to care for both Covid patients and non-Covid patients. As the pandemic wore on, we began to experience staffing shortages which placed even greater pressures on remaining staff. This ‘great resignation’ affected all areas of the hospital, but it was most acutely felt among our nurses.”

Continued on next page ...

## Masks and more in New York

In New York, the decision to help stem the tide of hospitalizations has filtered out of the realm of healthcare once again and into the world of small business. New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced that masks will be required in all indoor public places unless the businesses or venues implement a vaccine requirement as of December 13. New York previously instituted a mask mandate way back in April 2020 that lasted over a year, ending in June 2021 for vaccinated individuals. The new mask mandate applies to both patrons and business employees and will be in effect until January 15, after which the State will reevaluate.

At a recent public appearance, Governor Hochul said, "We're entering a time of uncertainty and we could either plateau here or our cases could get out of control."

The Governor claims the decision to reinstate a mask mandate was based on a rising number of cases and hospitalizations, which has been especially pronounced in parts of upstate New York. While there's no question that the mask mandates themselves are certainly a hotly-debated issue, their efficacy remains unclear – especially with what little information lawmakers have provided thus far. While the state has said that violators could face civil and criminal penalties, including a maximum fine of \$1,000, local health departments will be in charge of enforcing the requirements.

Nearly 3,500 people are hospitalized with confirmed Covid-19 cases in New York and Hochul said in a statement, "We are heading upward in a direction that I no longer find sustainable." While the mandate

claims to help ease the capacity issues occurring at state hospitals, not every legislator agrees with the notion of policing public responsibility.

### **"I cannot support the State's new mandate..."**

In a statement released shortly after the announcement of the new mandate, Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro said, "I cannot support the State's new mandate. I do not come at this from a partisan or political perspective, and I live with the pain of losing my father to this virus. Dutchess County has used considerable resources navigating this pandemic to help keep our residents safe and informed. From a practical perspective, the State's newest mandate is unenforceable and will become confrontational – and they know it."

He continued, "We have provided calm and consistent leadership during very difficult times. Our health department has and continues to provide broad access to testing, vaccinations, and resources. Our residents have chosen to be vaccinated – now 81% of adults – and thousands make use of our testing resources. Beleaguered small businesses have implemented common-sense measures to protect their employees and patrons. As we educate and inform residents to take the necessary mitigation steps to protect themselves and those they love, we will not escalate tension or conflict or further burden our local small businesses by allocating resources we do not have to this impractical and unenforceable measure."

Though Dutchess County's vaccination rate is comfortably high, state-wide data is mixed given the differences in population density from county to county. According to federal data, New York has the seventh highest rate of fully



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Ridofranz

vaccinated residents. Still, reports say that upwards of thirty upstate hospitals have had to limit performing nonessential elective surgeries because of capacity issues.

### **Caregiver's perspective**

"As a healthcare worker, I know that hospitals have never been more prepared to tackle any healthcare challenges than they are today," was the determined sentiment of one area healthcare professional from New York who has endured a wealth of new challenges during the past year. "There have been so many challenges at the hospital where I work that we have faced in each department since the beginning of the pandemic," she says. "Many of those challenges stem from shortages of every kind including important protective equipment such as masks and gowns, ventilators, and, of course, staffing shortages."

As with many small businesses in the Tri-state, hospitals have struggled to fill positions and keep up with inventory demand in the face of several surges in patients throughout the last two years.

"There have been innumerable challenges that we have encountered because of the pandemic. One of the most notable obstacles was the ever-changing state mandates when it came to both vaccinations and supplies," says Dr. Ron Pope, vice president of Medical Services and Care Centers for Columbia Memorial Hospital (CMH). "The State

required that hospitals have three months of proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on-hand. In the beginning, everyone seemed to have trouble keeping up because normally, supplies were low due to infrequent use. Most hospitals burned through their supplies pretty quickly as a result. Other states started stockpiling, which created an even greater shortage."

To cover staffing shortages, many hospitals deployed staff from testing units to bedside care for Covid patients. Surgeons were in charge of running intensive care units instead of operating rooms since the temporary displacement of elective surgeries. "Everyone worked together to make sure our standards of care were never affected," said the New York-based professional. "We didn't have all the supplies we needed so we got creative and figured out ways to safely recycle equipment. Beds in the hospital were in short supply so temporary hospitals went up, some as big as 1,500 beds, and were built in just a matter of weeks. These are just some of the ways the hospitals have adapted to the challenges we've faced, and continue to face, on a daily basis."

### **A lucrative opportunity**

In many ways, the pandemic not only ravaged the healthcare industry practically, it took its toll on the healthcare worker professionally. As a result, travel nursing has proven to be a lucrative opportunity for many, while continuing to strain the professional working in hospital care. "The reasons for the shortage

of hospital staff include provider burnout, personal safety concerns, and a rapid rise in competition among hospitals for the few remaining workers. At the same time, companies that hire temporary traveling nurses raised their pay rates dramatically further exacerbating the shortage," said Marshall. "To adapt, Sharon and other hospitals have had to become much more flexible in their staffing models, even temporarily closing units with low census to better care for the patients on other units."

According to a report from the *Washington Post*, 2020 was the year travel nursing took off, with 35% growth over the pre-pandemic year of 2019, and an additional 40% growth expected this year. The conflict has touched nursing in the Northeast as well illuminated by a professional working at a Connecticut area health center, "In my position in the Intensive Care Unit, staffing is limited because many staff members are leaving for higher paying travel RN assignments," he says. "That has forced the hospital to hire more travel RNs to fill those vacancies."

The deepening shortage of healthcare professionals has made travel nursing one of the most critically-sought after professions in the industry. Nurses' unions say there would be no shortage if nurses were adequately paid and afforded better working conditions.

#### **Pay rates vs. workload**

"My hospital is one of the lowest paying hospitals in terms of nursing wages," says the Connecticut-based nurse. "We work in a high risk, high stress environment and are mandated to work overtime because of short staffing, have high patient-staff ratios as a result, and our ancillary staff (CNAs) are constantly floated out of our unit to assist other units, basically increasing the nurses' workload."

For the traveling nurse, the most lucrative opportunities seem to be available for those with experience in specialized hospital units such as the various types of ICUs, those willing to move to remote locations

for extended periods of time, and those willing to respond immediately to emergency needs.

"During the height of the pandemic, everybody stepped up to pitch in," says Pope. "Retired workers came back, folks delayed retirement, and we consolidated services in order to get more caregivers involved. Since then, we've had even higher surges than 2020, but staff has dwindled. Furloughed workers never came back and now we are being hit with a staffing crisis. In the healthcare industry, we aren't afforded the ability to increase rates to offset costs. Hospitals pay a fixed amount from insurance companies and that has dramatically put our industry in financial straits. Administrators have to be more creative than ever before when it comes to staffing."

The demand trend has continued for healthcare workers outside of nursing as well, such as respiratory technicians. "Despite the financial challenges, if administrators could find an equitable way to increase pay rates and make the hospital a more 'desirable' place of employment, they would have higher staff retention rates," reiterates the Connecticut-based nurse.

#### **Holding each other up**

Still, the resolve of the hospital-based health-care community remains determined to adapt to the constant need for change. In New York especially, where infection rates hit densely populated areas the hardest, caregivers found the most support among each other. "For me, the most amazing part of the past few years is how the healthcare community came together to help fight this virus," said the aforementioned New York-based healthcare professional. "Nurses, doctors, respiratory therapists, and many other hospital staff members came from all over the country to help with the staffing shortages in New York. We all held each other up during the hardest and darkest moments which was an amazing thing to be a part



of. No one was in this alone and everyone knew it."

As winter closes in, and uncertainty re-enters the fray, healthcare professionals will continue to balance the mutating virus with an adaptive care approach – while relying on their mutual bond to persevere. "I believe the future of hospital medicine will include a smaller in-patient footprint, especially for small community hospitals," says Marshall. "We have seen an explosion in telemedicine utilization. This service improves access and efficiency for people who are unable to see their doctor in person. I do not expect a return to pre-pandemic practices, but hopefully, when this crisis abates, we will be able to optimize what we have learned and become a safe, efficient, and sustainable system of healthcare for generations to come." •

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# Immersed in nature

By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Within the last few decades, technology has certainly kept the pace buzzing. While access to a wealth of information on our phones certainly has its advantages, we're also continually distracted and interrupted by the constant flow of emails, texts, and phone calls. During our leisure time, we often scroll through Instagram or check Facebook or Twitter rather than enjoy the reality of the world around us. While we scroll our devices, we're missing out on connecting with those around us or just taking in the beauty of what surrounds us.

Many people yearn to hit the pause button, so they can take a much-needed time out from this frenetic pace. This is evident in the increasing number of Americans who are practicing yoga and meditation. Many are also taking to the trails for some quality time immersed in nature.

## Forest bathing

In recent years, people worldwide have embraced forest bathing, which originally hails from Japan and is referred to as *Shinrin-Yoku*. The practice encourages people to simply spend time in nature – no actual bathing is required. Also known as nature therapy and ecotherapy, forest bathing describes a broad group of techniques or treatments that harness the serenity of nature to boost mental or physical health.



Brooke Mellen, founder of Cultured Forest – a nature-based mindfulness business in New York City, sheds some light on this practice:

*"Shinrin-Yoku* is a wellbeing practice that translates to ‘Taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing,’” says Mellen. The term, which dates back to 1982, was coined by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

Mellen explains that forest bathing was developed in response to a public health crisis, which involved high burnout rates in Japan's densely populated cities such as Tokyo. As a result, the Japanese government invested millions of dollars in investigating the health benefits that emerge from spending some time in nature.

Mellen, who has led walks in the Hudson Valley region, first became engaged with forest bathing when she came across a book on the topic while she was browsing a shop on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

Inspired, she decided to venture to Japan to train and explore the forests and trails there. “While training I met people from other countries who were starting their own practices, so I then travelled to Finland, Australia, and the Netherlands to further study the programming,” says Mellen.

The outdoors enthusiast also explored forest bathing as a means of helping to cope with love and personal life stress of living in the city and the burnout that resulted from that. “I found it to be effective. I've developed my own nature mindfulness practice to help me live in the moment while walking in nature. Since starting this practice to help myself and others find a bit of calm and peace in nature, I've since taken people on forest therapy walks throughout the world, developed a forest therapy and nature mindfulness coaching program, and provide virtual nature connection



workshops,” she adds.

There are now 62 dedicated *Shinrin-Yoku* locations across Japan. Practitioners meet with medical professionals to test their heart rate, pulse, cortisol, and mood.

Of course, the last few years have ushered in an entirely new set of challenges when the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. “During the pandemic, Harvard Medical and Cleveland Clinic both featured articles about forest therapy, so it is now gaining more traction in the medical community,” concludes Mellen.

In the Hudson Valley, Mellen has practiced in Ferncliff Forest in Rhinebeck; High Falls Conservation Area and Olana State Historic Park, both in Hudson; and beyond.

## Health benefits

By conducting studies in forest therapy, Japanese doctors discovered increased killer T cell activity. It can

Above: Olana State Historic Site. Photo courtesy of Brooke Mellen of Cultured Forest. Below, left: The book on the subject, *Forest Bathing*, available at Oblong Books.

Continued on next page ...

kill certain cells, including foreign cells, cancer cells, and cells infected with a virus. It also improves immunity through mindfulness and exposure to phytoncides – a chemical produced by trees to ward off disease.

Doctors have also witnessed elevated moods and a decrease in heart rate and blood pressure. Other discoveries include lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and improved concentration. Some say that even a few minutes spent in a natural setting – the beach, forest, or lake, boosts mood, self-esteem, and motivation. Others believe that two full hours in nature weekly, could really elevate health and wellbeing. Interactions with nature can also decrease stress and depression and may help stress management for all age groups. Engaging in this practice can also lead to reductions in stress, anger, anxiety, depression and sleeplessness.

Rhinebeck's Omega – a non-profit, donor-supported, educational organization at the forefront of holistic studies, addressed this nature-based practice way back in 2014. Since 1977, more than one million people have visited Omega to spark creativity, explore spirituality, improve wellbeing, and connect to a community of lifelong learners.

Omega's website referenced a June, 2019 study that stated "a growing body of epidemiological evidence indicates that greater exposure to, or 'contact with' natural environments (such as parks, woodlands, and beaches) is associated with better health and wellbeing, at least among populations in high income, largely

urbanized societies," according to the study's authors. The study appeared in *Nature Briefing*.

### Hudson Valley practices

Luckily, the Hudson Valley is brimming with serene destinations that are ideal for forest bathing. There are also a few local practices, including Hudson Valley Forest Bathing and Hudson Valley Forest Therapy. The latter offers forest bathing and hiking activities through Meetups in the Hudson Valley.

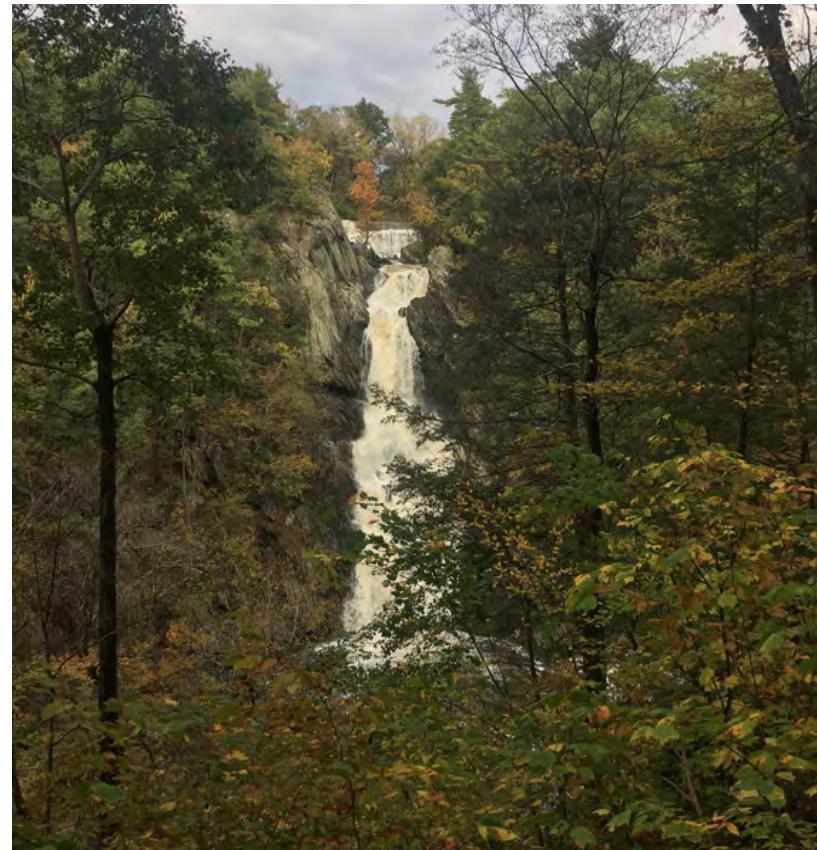
Hudson Valley Forest Bathing helps people experience nature's embrace as they develop their own paths to peace and tranquility. Walks are led by Debi Young – an outdoors enthusiast who enjoys sharing her life-long love of nature with others. She happily guides guests through this peaceful woodland journey.

An avid hiker, Young started hiking and camping when she was just a child. She has been practicing yoga for many years and is trained in mindfulness meditation. Young is also a black belt in Goju Karate – a Japanese martial art that hails from the Okinawan peninsula. In addition, Young has hiked the Appalachian Trail – all the way from Georgia to Maine.

In the Hudson Valley, there's also Hudson Valley Forest Therapy, which eagerly meets people's need for self-care. It organizes sessions from New York City to the mid-Hudson Valley region. Services include forest therapy, walks and hikes, transformational coaching, meditation primers, and retreats.

These sessions are led by John Polemis who packed up and relocated from the Bronx to the scenic Hudson Valley. He was lured by the many trails and mysteries that the region has to offer. With nearly 20 years in information technology management experience, in the fast-paced news industry, Polemis has long relied on forest therapy and hiking to build his resilience to the stresses that come with this type of work.

Polemis is also the founder of You Are Why You Create, which is dedicated to building a supportive community for those seeking to further their personal growth by facilitating support groups and providing



Above: High Falls. Below, left: Ferncliff Forest. Photos courtesy of Brooke Mellen of Cultured Forest.

transformational coaching services. As a coach, Polemis works with people who are struggling to make needed changes by helping them bring focus and set practical goals. He believes that, as a society, we've become habituated to distraction and information overload. In so doing, we've become stressed out and uncomfortable with silence and stillness, all of which takes its toll on our health.

Polemis's business offers both the traditional (short walk) forest therapy experience and a longer experience which includes incorporating hiking. Besides its public group walks, those wishing for a more intimate experience can book private sessions that cater to their needs. Corporate accounts are also welcome. The public group walks are generally limited to ten to 15 people, depending on the location of the walk. All participants are entitled to a free 30-minute coaching session via phone.

### Book nook

Before you venture out to the forest, you may want to browse a book on the topic. Oblong Books, which has locations in both Millerton and

Rhinebeck, offers *Your Guide to Forest Bathing – Expanded Edition*. The shop also recommends, *Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You Find Health and Happiness*, *Forest Bathing: The Rejuvenating Practice of Shinrin Yoku*, and *Forest Bathing Retreat: Find Wholeness in the Company of Trees*. Rough Draft in Kingston both recommends and sells *Forest Bathing*, by Qing Li. •

If you're interested in learning more, here are a few sources:

- *Hudson Valley Forest Bathing*, [hv-fb.com](http://hv-fb.com)
- *Hudson Valley Forest Therapy*, [hudsonvalleyforesttherapy.com](http://hudsonvalleyforesttherapy.com)
- *Oblong Books*: 26 Main Street, Millerton, NY, call (518) 789-3797, or visit them in Rhinebeck at 6422 Montgomery Street, call (845) 876-0500, or visit them online at [oblongbooks.com](http://oblongbooks.com).
- Join Brooke Mellen's email list at [culturedforest.com](http://culturedforest.com) for announcements on upcoming walks.



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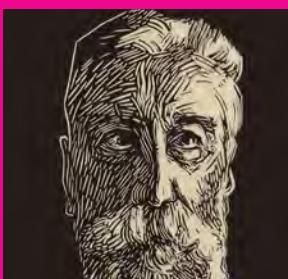
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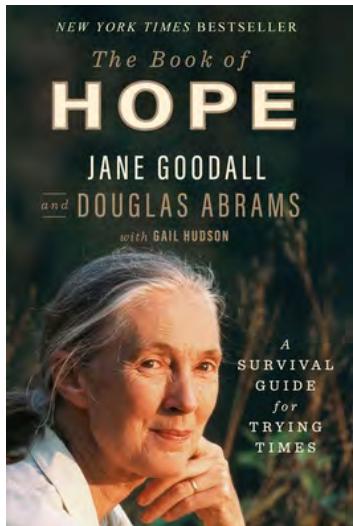
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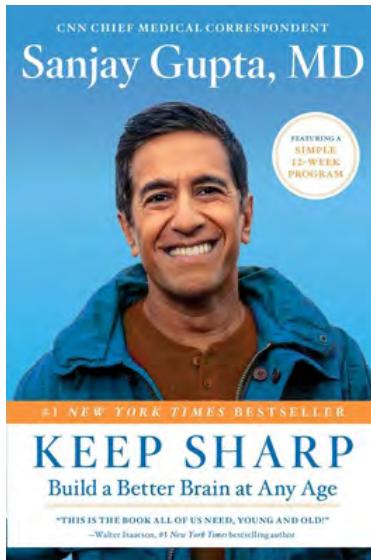
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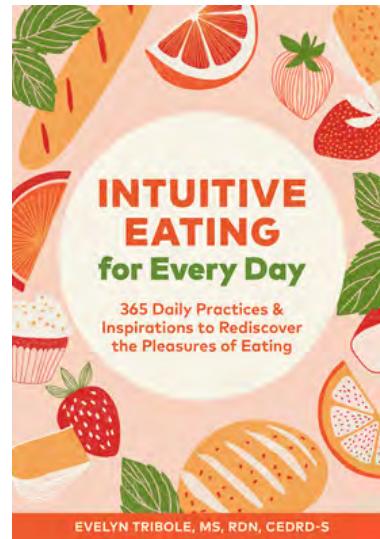
**The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times** by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams with Gail Hudson

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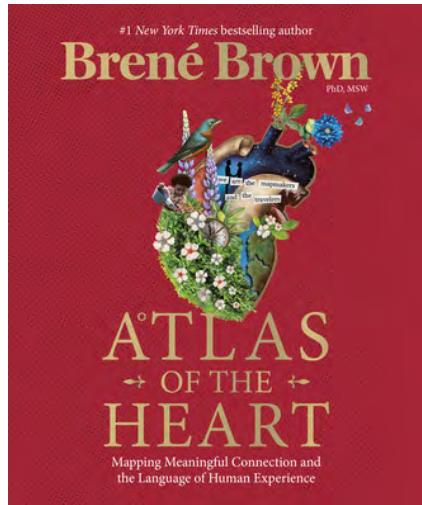
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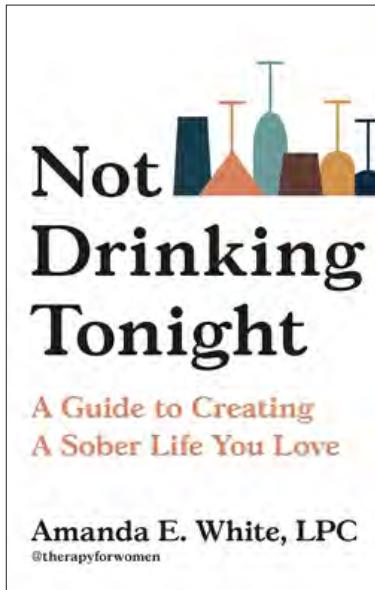
**Intuitive Eating for Every Day: 365 Daily Practices & Inspirations to Rediscover the Pleasures of Eating** by Evelyn Tribole, MS, RDN, CEDRD-S

Award-winning dietitian, bestselling author, and co-founder of the intuitive eating movement, Evelyn Tribole, offers an inviting and practical introduction to intuitive eating – which Parade calls “the anti-diet to end all diets.”



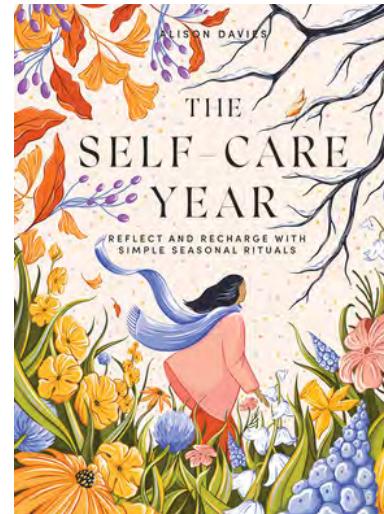
**Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience** by Brené Brown

In her latest book, Brené Brown writes, “If we want to find the way back to ourselves and one another, we need language and the grounded confidence to both tell our stories and be stewards of the stories that we hear. This is the framework for meaningful connection.”



**Not Drinking Tonight: A Guide to Creating a Sober Life You Love** by Amanda E. White, LPC

In this honest discussion of mental health, the founder of *Therapy for Women* explores our reasons for drinking alcohol – and the benefits of taking a break.



**The Self-Care Year: Reflect and Recharge with Simple Seasonal Rituals** by Alison Davies

*The Self-Care Year* reveals how to re-connect with your body and mind and engage with your surroundings, how to slow down, live in tune with the seasons, and pay attention to the present moment.



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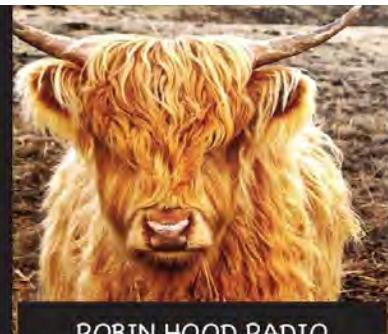
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# Homegrown leadership:

## Dutchess County Legislator Gregg Pulver

By Griffin Cooper  
[griffin@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:griffin@mainstreetmag.com)

In a letter to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson once wrote “Agriculture ... is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to wealth, good morals and happiness....” and, as he sat overlooking his famous gardens from his home in Monticello, NY, wrote to a friend saying, “I am entirely a farmer, soul and body, never scarcely admitting a sentiment on any other subject.” There was good reason for our country’s foremost political leader to feel so connected to farming and the agricultural way of life. As generations of folks in our area have come to know, the customs of rural living have a way of bonding our spirit to the land as well as our fellow neighbors.

### **Homegrown leadership**

Perhaps there is no town in Dutchess County, NY, that embodies that sentiment more than Pine Plains. The town began as part of the Little Nine Partners Patent of 1706 and the land was first settled around 1740 by Moravian missionaries to the native Mahican village of Shekomeko. Since its official inception in 1823, the town has long been driven by agriculture and farming in various forms. Pine Plains’ natural resources like Thompson Pond helped support generations of farmers whose families have navigated the sometimes turbulent waters of the industry all the way up to today and now include organic farms and the artisanal production of cheese and other foods.

From the fertile ground of agrarian conviction and communal determination has sprung a band

of local leaders who rely on those principles to guide them through public office. At the forefront of this harvest of homegrown leadership is Dutchess County Legislator Gregg Pulver who has served District 19 in this position since 2014.

Mr. Pulver’s path to county office includes time serving as Pine Plains Town Supervisor for 12 years. Gregg was a member of Pine Plains school board for six years, and a member of the Pine Plains Planning, Conservation Advisory Committee and Board of Assessment Review.

Growing up on a family farm in Pine Plains himself, Gregg’s ideals harken back to those very same sentiments Jefferson touted on behalf of the American farmer. Patience, hard work, and an unbending neighborly reliance upon those within the tight-knit community have guided Gregg throughout his career. As he sits down to discuss his time in the community one can’t help but be reminded that, while seasons may change, the farmers’ work is never done.

### **Talk about your time growing up. Was there something about growing up in Pine Plains that inspired you to seek public office?**

Growing up in Pine Plains has undoubtedly defined who I am today and it is certainly interesting looking back on that time as I sit here today. When I was younger, and in many ways today, Pine Plains was all about agriculture. Back then, it wasn’t hard to tell what we were

Continued on next page ...



All images with this article depict Gregg Pulver working within his community as Dutchess County Legislator and as a farmer. All photos are courtesy of Gregg Pulver.



about with Agway, Duel's hardware, and two machinery dealers in town. Still, Pine Plains is very much an agrarian community. That culture has been a huge part of my life considering I grew up on a farm hauling milk and doing a good fertilizer business as well. The entirety of my first twenty years of life were completely immersed in agriculture.

The Future Farmers of America organization (FFA) played a crucial role in my pursuit of leadership by fostering many skills including public speaking. I served as the chapter secretary for three years then as state vice president. My love of leadership comes from that time because that was when I was introduced to Parliamentary procedure.

#### **How has your experience as a farmer influenced your career in politics?**

Farming itself is a community, especially years ago when it was my sole way of life. The entire community relies on each other, whenever you need something you ask your neighbor. It's how you survive and how farming builds communities.

Farming pulled out the most important qualities I try to live by holding public office. As a farmer, you must make decisions, crops need to be planted before the harvest – you must be prepared. You mustn't waiver or you will not make it. Not every decision will turn out to be the correct one, but having the conviction to make difficult choices has helped me in my career and still does as I lead the communities in my district. Those traits will continue to follow me throughout my political career. My father would say the only bad decision is the one you don't make – and it helps to be a bit self-referential if that decision turns out to be an unpopular one.

My father was a major influence on my life as well. He was a charter member of the Lions Club in Pine Plains, he got together with other folks to create that chapter and was a member of the Fire Company for 50 years as the commissioner. He drove those trucks until he couldn't any longer. Those were my examples and the experiences that have inspired me since.

#### **Talk about some of the other community leadership roles you've been involved with over the years and what impact they've had on you.**

I always wanted to do something broader, so I got involved with the Pine Plains Planning Board and the Conservation Advisory Committee early on. Following in my father's footsteps, I became captain of the rescue squad in the mid-80s and similarly, am a life member of Pine Plains Hose Company as well as the Pine Plains Lions Club. Soon, a couple members of the Pine Plains school board asked if I was interested in running and so I did that for six years and eventually became the vice president of the Board of Education. Way back in the year 2000, I was elected as the Supervisor of Pine Plains.

#### **What has changed within the 19th district of Dutchess County since you've become involved with the legislature?**

As I said before, today, when I look back at my time as Town Supervisor beginning in the year 2000, it seems to have been a much simpler world. Since becoming Dutchess County Legislator in 2014, I can't help but feel as though I've seen the dissolution of simple bipartisanship.

Folks from every party used to go out together after legislative sessions and casually converse with each other all the time. The divide has become much greater, and more personal today and it's a bit frustrating – we used to have both parties on our local boards – but I feel what happens on a national level has finally seeped into every aspect of democracy.

For me, the only litmus test, regardless of party affiliation, is willingness to do the job. Somehow, we have lost ourselves a bit. Both sides are guilty of the animus, we need more outreach and more communication between one another. I've devised a plan during our next legislative session to do some kind of team-building exercise so that we can continue to get to know each other.



**What do you see for the future of some of those issues that are most important to you?**

I think the Youth Opportunity Union is going to provide an exciting opportunity for Poughkeepsie and the county as a whole. The Youth Opportunity Union, formerly known as the Youth Opportunity Center and referred to moving forward as the YOU, is a state-of-the-art facility that will serve communities throughout the county and be located in the heart of the City of Poughkeepsie. We want to be able to provide multiple counties with the opportunity to utilize that space.

The Dutchess County Stabilization Center has been a huge success and is a place I feel is a model for the entire nation. The Stabilization Center provides a haven for those experiencing, or close to experiencing a mental health crisis or substance use issue. When you have the opportunity to positively affect a young person's life early on, those impacts can last for a lifetime.

We have to change with the times as well. Currently, we are seeing many commuters who don't, in fact commute. Remote work might be the wave of the future and we have to be able to support that with high-speed internet. We want close to one hundred percent connectivity in Dutchess County because it's equally as important in our rural areas as it is in the City of Poughkeepsie. We need broadband to the last mile.

Volunteerism is incredibly important as well, from rescue and fire, to rotaries and other clubs. The Learn Play Create grants were the first step in helping these kinds of organizations and we want to be able to continue to support them. We recently invested \$2 million in the The Municipal Investment Grant (MIG), for purchasing and equipment but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Of course, we remain ongoing with our COVID response,

Dutchess County has done an outstanding job thus far but we need to keep it up – especially with winter here.

**What do you feel are a few of the most important item lines on the county's new proposed budget?**

As far as the county budget is concerned, I remain steadfast in my support for local fire departments and the continued bolstering of community health programs. We also need to focus on lowering taxes.

The county's sales tax revenue has been incredible over the past year, nobody expected these kinds of gains. We learned that when people stay home, they enjoy shopping. As some normalcy returns, people are spending. Dutchess tourism and bed tax revenue is also very high and that is a testament to our tourism board and their marketing efforts.

**What informs you as a leader, how can local communities become more involved in government?**

Go to meetings, attend leadership committee meetings, it's that simple. Speak up, offer comments with respect and you'll get answers and become more informed. I become slightly disconcerted when folks with a lot to say don't attend meetings where their voice could provide a real impact especially since attendance has become much easier than ever before with the proliferation of virtual meetings. We need volunteers to get involved and stay involved. It's the only way to get through this. •

*To connect with Gregg Pulver, you can reach him at (845) 486-2100 or by emailing him at CountyLegislature@DutchessNY.gov.*



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# Make a January jump-start on your writing

By Dominique DeVito  
info@mainstreetmag.com

The holidays are over. The lights will soon be coming down. The dreariness of January, February, March, and – yes – even April looms like a black hole of *bah humbug*. And yet, this seemingly dreary time of year in our beloved Northeast can be a great gift. A new year symbolizes hope and beginnings. It's time to leave last year behind and be present to what's possible now and going forward.

Days and weeks that are characterized by cold temperatures and early nights are ideal for indoor projects. Do you want to knit a sweater? Build a birdhouse? Bake sourdough bread from a starter? Do you want to finally do the writing you've been dreaming about getting to? Getting started on a memoir, perhaps, or a novel? There's no better time to start than now.

## What are you afraid of?

That's a silly question! Tucker Max is a co-founder of scribemedia.com, one of a multitude of online resources to help people start and finish their books. He cites these six fears as the demons that keep us from putting pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard):

- Fear 1: "I don't have a book in me."
- Fear 2: "I'm afraid my book isn't original enough."
- Fear 3: "I'm afraid my book won't be good enough."
- Fear 4: "I'm afraid no one will care about my book."
- Fear 5: "I'm afraid my book will upset people."
- Fear 6: "I'm afraid my book will make me look stupid."

You probably recognize yourself in several if not all of these excuses. I know I do. The fact is that everyone does. Oh, and for me there's another one that looms very large:

- Fear 7: "I'm afraid of the blank page."

Admittedly, that's a whole lot of fear to work around and through. It's

uncomfortable. It's relentless. It takes courage and compassion to get started. Don't despair or be discouraged. Jump into the boat with the rest of us and be assured that there's assistance for the fearful naysayers in us all.

## Start where you are

Someone who understands courage and compassion when it comes to connecting to your creative self is Suzi Banks Baum, a writer and creativity coach based in the Berkshires. I don't remember how I was introduced to her, but it was several years ago, and from the moment I saw and read through her website I knew I wanted to learn more from her ([suzibanksbaum.com](http://suzibanksbaum.com)).

At the very beginning of her *About* page is the declaration, "Here Is What I Want for You," stating definitively to use your voice and hands and express your truth. Her lovely definition of herself is:

"I'm sprinkled with stars.  
Look at my skin, I'm freckled by time.  
Every book, billboard, poem, song on  
the radio, my babies' cries and vee's  
of geese flying over the laundry line  
are still within me, echoing. Even  
my father's voice calling my name  
in reprimand and the sound of car  
tires in snow at the lake still  
murmur within me.  
I dream of ice and people and plans.  
I taste my dream in my mouth, like  
Nehi Root Beer. I have come upon  
roadblocks, barriers, abuse, with  
holding tax, and diverted momen-  
tum and still, I am unstoppable.  
I am uncontainable joy."

If you can spend January arriving at a definition of yourself that expresses who you really are, you're off to a great start in the new year. That's what I'm going to do. But I digress.

## Suzi's suggestions

"There is nothing better than begin-  
ning," Suzi shared when I spoke with  
her about getting a writing habit

going. "Invest in a decent notebook,  
something that feels good in your  
hands. Line up some sharp pencils  
and a pen," she said, "and find a  
regular time in your schedule and life  
in which you can write for 20  
minutes a day to get started." That  
sounds simple enough until you look at your calendar  
and see the work schedules and ap-  
pointments and other activities  
crammed into it...

If you're serious, though, set the  
groundwork. For a week or so, keep  
a log of how you spend every hour  
between waking and sleeping. Think  
about what you can give up so that  
you can give yourself the time. Suzi  
advises, too, that "if you think of  
writing time as only the minutes you  
spend with a pencil in your hand, you  
will become frustrated very quickly.  
Many people say that washing dishes  
is writing time," she said, adding,  
"paying attention in your daily life al-  
lows you to gather details which you'll  
use in your writing."

When you've identified the time  
and place you want to block out to  
write, commit to it. "You build your  
desire by repeatedly writing in small  
doses. If you work diligently but not  
over-vigorously, your power of atten-  
tion will increase. Also," Suzi added,  
"pass over your digital reliance and  
write by hand. Having a device in  
your hands is too distracting. Start  
with a pencil or pen on paper and,  
as the poet Myra Shapiro says, 'First  
thought, best thought.' Whatever  
pops into your head to write about,  
go with it."

## Working with a deadline

If you're the kind of person who  
works best when there's a very real

Continued on next page ...



deadline, there's a writing challenge that could be right (write?) up your alley: National Novel Writing Month (known as NaNoWriMo). The challenge is to write a novel of at least 50,000 words in the 30 or 31 days of a month. That's approximately 1600 words a day. A community of fellow writers facing the challenge can be extremely helpful, and as you can imagine, it's firmly established online. From the NaNoWriMo website, you sign up for the challenge and receive all the support you might need.

I discovered this challenge when I found the book *No Plot? No Problem! A Low-Stress, High-Velocity Guide to Writing a Novel in 30 Days*, by Chris Baty. Baty was the founder of the movement, way back in 1999, though it has evolved past his involvement. When I saw it, I was immediately attracted to the concept. It was around this time of year (mid-December) with long, cold months looming, and though the official month for this challenge is November, I couldn't imagine taking it on with the holidays looming. I thought the dreary and long month of March would be perfect.

The book explains how to prep yourself with a novel "road map" of sorts based on what kind of story you want to tell, and there's lots of solid information about how to stay focused and keep going. I was pumped, and I'm proud to say that I got a group of friends committed to trying this several years ago, and that two of us completed the challenge. It was a challenge, for sure, but what a thrill to finish.

### **Keeping it real**

A novel-writing challenge can be intoxicating, but it can also be deflating, turning into yet another way for your inner critic to send you right back to the *Seven Biggest Fears* mentioned in the beginning of this piece. Writing – like making art or music – is by necessity a solitary act, and that act of meeting yourself on the page can be really scary. It helps to be disciplined and persevering, but it helps to have support, too. If you're serious about your writing – and you'll get there if you're committed to doing it – you'll want to find a group of fellow writers. A writer's group is typically four to eight people who get together regularly to read and discuss their works in progress. Ask at your local library if there's one there or nearby.

The pandemic led to more and more writers meeting together on Zoom, and writing coaches nationwide now offer workshops that can include people from around the world, though they typically include people from a particular area. If you're really shy or reticent, this can be a great forum for you, as you can participate in all ways oral, but you can turn off the video so that people can't see you (or you can select when you might want it on or off).

"A writer's group is a place you can find kinship," Suzi said, "but start slow. It's helpful to ask for specific feedback, as this lessens the pressure on everyone participating to sound judgmental about the work as a whole. 'Tell me what you think' is a burden on everyone. 'Is the character believable?' is something people can

weigh in on with clarity," she said. "Participating in a good group or workshop is like playing really good tennis," Suzi said. "It ups your game."

### **Seeking inspiration from other authors**

We all have favorite authors whose books have stayed with us long after reading them. Turn to them for inspiration. Remind yourself that the only way their books made it to your shelf is that they faced their fears and did the writing. Study their style and try it on for size as a launching-off point to experiment with. Part of the preparation for the novel-writing challenge is to identify the styles and genres of favorite authors. Do you love to read mysteries? Romance novels? Memoir? Historical fiction? Embrace what feels right, don't try to be someone you're not.

As with anything new, it really comes down to getting started and then sticking with it. Suzi's three essentials for starting and keeping a writing practice are:

- A clear, clutter-free place to work;
- A room with a door that closes; and
- An agreement with the people who share the house or with whom you're in regular phone contact that you will be unreachable for a specific period of time every day.

"The powerful action of daily writing is to digest and integrate our life experiences," Suzi said. "Daily life flies by and we lose the integration of our thoughts and feelings. The 'end' of one year and the 'beginning' of

another provides a natural time for reflection; a time to take stock."

### **Favorite resources**

We are blessed to have so many resources that support creative work locally, nationally, and even internationally. Here are some to get you started.

*Main Street Magazine* would love to read the descriptions of yourself that you develop through your writing in January. Please send them to info@mainstreetmag.com.

Learn more about Suzi and her offerings, including how she supports a Daily Creative Practice: www.suzibanksbaum.com.

Should you want to explore the "novel in 30 days" challenge: www.nanowrimo.org.

The author of the best-selling book *The Memoir Project*, Marion Roach is a generous memoir coach and who offers lots of online learning tools. Take a look at www.marionroach.com.

The novelist Jamie Cat Callan sends a weekly newsletter to subscribers with thoughts and prompts to keep you writing and thinking. www.jamiecatcallan.com.

There's a Hudson Valley branch of The Writers Institute that offers workshops for all levels of writers. www.writerstudio.com.

The International Women's Writing Guild offers "a global village for mighty, soulful women writers." They're at www.iwwg.org.

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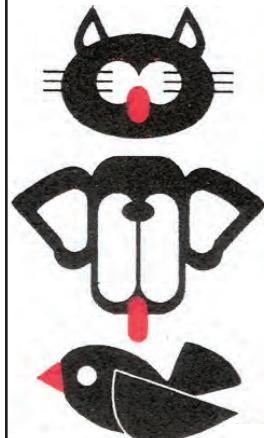


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# Reading the cards: Intro to Tarot

By Mary B. O'Neill, PhD  
mary@mainstreetmoxie.press

It's Sunday, and I'm on a walk and casting about for something to do. A manicure? Nah. Hmm... what's this? A drop-in tarot reading? Why not?

I'd been seeing posts about tarot on Instagram and in articles here or there. This year, Dior launched its spring/summer collection with an opulent tarot-inspired video, and the UK's *The Sun* has a daily tarot card interpretation on its website.

Significant upheavals in my life and the never-ending COVID cloud have me wondering about the bigger picture, a universe beyond what is traditionally knowable, and heeding calls less from the head and more from the heart. And I'm not alone. Tarot card purchases and readings have seen a noticeable uptick during the past few years. So, what's the draw? For me, tarot cards seem like the perfect combination of mystery and metaphor but are just on the safer side of fortune-telling or psychic predictions. I'm curious but skeptical and probably more open than ever to access points other than religion to the spiritual and the divine.

Again, it's not just me. A 2018 Pew Research Center survey found that 60 percent of both Christian and non-religiously affiliated adults believe in at least one of the New Age practices and ideas of reincarnation, astrology, psychics, and the presence of spiritual energy in physical objects such as mountains or trees.

## Tarot history

Tarot's roots go back to 15th Century Italy as playing cards. Hand-painted and elaborate, upper classes used them for entertainment, not divination. The oldest surviving set of tarot cards is the Visconti-Sforza deck commissioned by the Duke of Milan Filippo Maria Visconti and his successor Francesco Sforza. The Morgan Library in New York City possesses 35 cards in its online collection.

In the late 18th Century, Jean-

Baptiste Alliete, also known as Etteilla (the mirror image of his surname), designed and adapted the deck as a tool for fortune-telling.

In 1910, William Rider published the tarot deck most recognizable today. The Rider-Waite deck, commissioned and created by Arthur Edward Waite, was illustrated by Pamela Colman Smith. It's one of the early mass-produced fully-illustrated decks.

## Majors and Minors

A tarot deck comprises 78 cards with four suits. Twenty-two numbered cards are the Major Arcana. These cards represent archetypes, characteristics, virtues, situations, and journeys you face in your life as a whole. They are the big guns of the tarot deck and carry heavy symbolism. Beginning with the number zero, The Fool card, and moving through The Hermit, Strength, Justice, The Wheel of Fortune, Love, and Death (symbolizing transformation), they culminate in the 21st card, The World.

The Minor Arcana are 56 suited cards that focus on our daily lives with situations, characteristics, encounters, and choices that regularly confront us. They are similar to the order of playing cards with a sequence of aces through ten of each suit and the court cards containing a page, knight, queen, and king. Each of the four suits represents one of the four elements that compose the universe:

- Wands (Fire) represent sparks of creativity that inspire action.
- Cups (Water) represent emotions, love, and relationships
- Swords (Air) represent intellect, logic, and analytical thinking
- Pentacles (Earth) represent our physical being and the needs of everyday life

## Uses of a tarot deck

Since this article introduces tarot, slowly delving into the cards is critical. I purchased the *Easy Tarot Kit* with



Above: Rebecca Guanzon of Wild Soul River.

handbook by Josephine Ellershaw, a deck of cards illustrated by Ciro Marchetti, and a template for the Celtic Cross Spread, a more complicated drawing and arrangement of the cards. The book gives general meanings of the cards, and Ellershaw explains how she uses them and orients the reader to tarot.

Closer to home, Rebecca Guanzon was my guide. Guanzon is co-owner of Wild Soul River, with her life partner Justin Adkins. Located in Williamstown, MA, Wild Soul River is a community gathering space that offers energy healing, herbal consults, workshops, crystals, tarot readings, and most of all – space for passers-by (like me) and practitioners to explore and gather together. It was here that I had my first tarot reading with Guanzon's longtime tarot mentor, Cat England.

Guanzon read tarot for herself for many years before reading for others. Working with trauma survivors for over 25 years, Guanzon characterizes her approach as trauma-informed tarot. Is that a thing? Well, maybe not. But it's her thing.

Continued on next page ...

She views tarot as energy work, akin to Reiki, another healing art she practices. "A tarot reading is a sacred relationship between you, the cards, and the person guiding the reading. This relationship creates energy and movement. Tarot allows exploring our intuitive side, making sense of our own experiences, where we are the expert."

### Reading the cards

As a reader, Guanzon begins with a grounding meditation. "I do this to create a place of space and trust and to connect with precious human sitting across from me. In my reading practice, I'm not a fortune teller. I'm creating an energy relationship with a person using the images and metaphors presented in the cards. I feel the energy, think about traditional meanings and explore what the imagery and metaphors might mean to the person sitting across from me."

Guanzon uses tarot to bring her clients into their bodies, moving more into their gut and heart and away from a cerebral, intellectual way of processing experience. She observes that her clients want more meaning and connection to others and the Earth. She wants them to connect to their energies and intuitions and sees tarot as the perfect medium for that.

Each tarot reading brings its own unique dynamic between her and the client. Guanzon has observed that "Some folk have a specific complex situation that they are navigating and looking for direction. Some prefer to be more on the silent side and just see what the cards are bringing and others have a desire for dialogue. Some folk utilize this method as a therapeutic form of processing and understanding themselves more deeply. And all of those approaches are perfect. Each person seeking the reading is sitting in their own intuition and asking for what they need, want, or desire."

When reading, she's looking for how cards play off of each other when drawn and laid out. This relationship between the cards is an integral part of tarot reading. The cards work in tandem, forming an intuitive narrative of the person's past, present, and potential future.

Guanzon explores the duality presented in each card, which represents our own lives and personalities, and contains the continuum of experience in between. Guanzon explains, "The sun card has a happy, warm and joyful side. It can also mean depletion and feeling the imposter syndrome. I think about how might this relate to the person I'm reading for and the other cards that also came up." She's also looking at the card's image's artistic elements, trusting that what draws her eye carries meaning.

### Tarot for self-care

Aside from participating in a reading, there's another way to use tarot — self-readings. According to Guanzon, tarot is an excellent tool for meditative self-care and self-affirmation, guiding your intentions for the day and becoming more in touch with your intuitive gifts. "We are intuitive beings, and I find there isn't the space in our culture to talk about a deep knowing and reconnecting with that part of ourselves — and that part in others."

Beyond reconnecting with ourselves is the possibility of connecting with what Ellershaw describes as the super-conscious or universal consciousness. "Think of it as a stream of pure energy; it is the link between us all, the field of interconnectivity. This is where inspiration, invention, ideas, and creativity manifest," she writes.

Guanzon suggests that another way to use the tarot is to prompt creative writing and journaling. In the *Easy Tarot Handbook*, Ellershaw offers a tarot diary as a way to begin exploring the deck. While a working tool for connecting the deck to your own experiences, it also familiarizes you with each card's meaning. Start with one card at a time and record the card's traditional meaning, as outlined in the book. From there, write what the card might signify in your experience or the experiences of those around you. For example, The Tower card in the



Above: The interior of Wild Soul River in Williamstown, MA.

*Handbook* represents beliefs and philosophies that undergird our lives. The lightning strike that begins the tower's demise signifies the light of the truth — an awakening or awareness to things as they truly are. While this card may be jarring or unsettling, it brings with it the possibility to rebuild a tower on a firmer foundation. How could this card relate to your life? How could it give you the courage to pull down a tower you've seen cracks in, knowing on some level that what it represents isn't part of your authentic, deeper self? Could that crumbling be a relationship? A job? A belief?

The goal is to use the card to write about what you're feeling, but uncensored, unfiltered, uncut, and no second-guessing. There's time to go back and reflect later. Don't let the judging mind get in the way of that glimpse into the deeper knowing Guanzon refers to. This tarot journal provides space for reflection and includes time for "tarot to marinate. The messages on the card resonate more deeply as time goes on."

### Ethics of tarot

For Guanzon, "A tarot reading is no party trick. It's a moment to hold another person and bear witness to them. It's a sacred relationship that allows me to be both teacher and learner. I'm constantly going deeper into the cards through each reading."

She advises clients to ask about a practitioner's experience, how they approach readings, what they believe tarot can do. Beware of anyone willing

to opine on medical issues or specific future events. Stay away from active solicitations on the internet.

Ask the practitioner about aftercare. Guanzon describes her approach, "I have my clients take pictures of the cards. I offer ways to reflect on them after the reading, and I advise them to be gentle with themselves. We're working with energy and letting the cards seep into areas of our minds and bodies we might not be used to seeing the light of day."

While the efficacy of tarot to predict your future might be a stretch, its use as a tool for self-care and accessing energy and intuitive knowing is real. It can provide the reflective prompt for a slower, more profound examination of our lives, relationships, and how we respond to situations we're presented with. If that's the power of tarot, deal me in. •

You can find Wild Soul River at 248 Cole Avenue, Williamstown, MA, and reach Rebecca and Justin at [info@wilsoulriver.com](mailto:info@wilsoulriver.com) or (413) 597-1172 or visit [www.wilsoulriver.com](http://www.wilsoulriver.com).

Moonwake Yoga Studio in Millerton, NY offers an online introductory tarot mini-course. For more information and to register, visit [www.moonwake.life](http://www.moonwake.life).



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## Zinnia's Dinette

Serving fried fish and chicken with salads and soft serve ice cream.  
1843 Rt. 23, Craryville, NY. (518) 325-0342. [zinniasdinette.com](http://zinniasdinette.com)

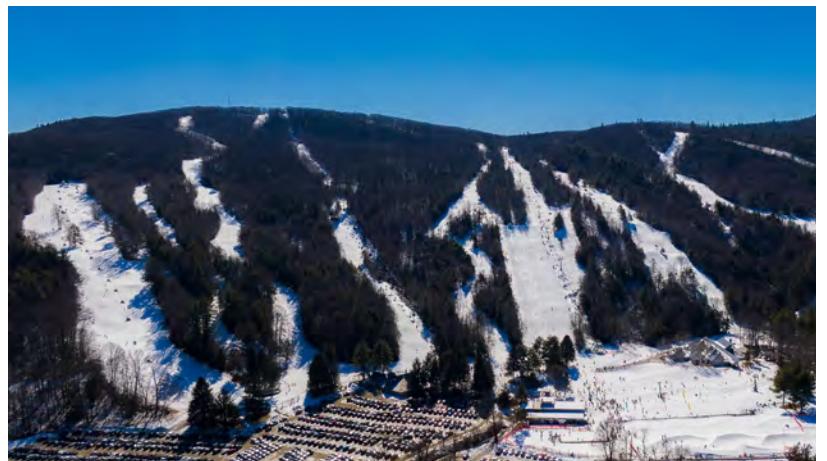
Zinnia's Dinette opened its doors to the public in August, 2021 amidst a global pandemic and a nationwide hiring crisis and staff shortage. Owner Amy Lawton was able to purchase a building that had previously housed the beloved Dutch Treat in Craryville, NY, and wished to fill it with life once again. Zinnia's is not your everyday diner-style restaurant, but they are for everyone. Zinnia's is a fish fry, mushroom loving, crispy chicken, playful kind of spot – serving lunch, dinner, weekend brunch and stellar soft serve sundaes (seasonally). Amy quips that the Zinnia's family likes bad jokes and really good chips. Diners can expect a wide variety including fish and chips, basket of fried smelts, bitter greens/kale salad or whitefish salad melt as well as the wildly popular homemade chowder. Zinnia's online ordering is up and ready for take-out and they plan to offer some hearty take and bake items at checkout for folks who want to stock up for winter or are not feeling comfortable with the indoor eating vibe. Zinnia's is based on a vision of warmth and joy. They don't take themselves too seriously, but are serious about people having a delicious time and are passionate about making connections over food and ingredients. From people passing through town, to farmers dropping off food, to friends gathering for the first time in a long time, Zinnia's hopes to see more people, parties, ingredients, shellfish and eventually, take it on the road.



## Dr. Soot 'N Cinder Chimney Sweeping

Professional chimney sweeping company. 54 Main St., Chatham, NY.  
(518) 766-3601. [drsootncinder.com](http://drsootncinder.com)

Dr. Soot 'N Cinder was established in 1980 by Kurt Straub who started out in a small town, in a very old profession not knowing what to expect. Over the next 28 years Dr. Soot 'n Cinder has become one of the most well-known chimney sweeps in the area. With Kurt's professionalism, and incredible knowledge of the industry he was able to pass the torch to Bob Balfoort and his wife Marie in 2008. George, the stepson of Bob Balfoort and son of Marie, became the new owner of Dr. Soot'N Cinder in 2017. In August 2020, George, his girlfriend Elysia and their daughter Maya, opened the new showroom located at 54 Main Street in Chatham. Dr. Soot 'N Cinder not only specializes in many different chimney services, they also provide different types of installation work. Whether it's a new fireplace insert, a gas unit, a wood stove, or even a pellet stove, Dr. Soot 'N Cinder can get the job done. They also sell the kinds of products they help to install, like gas and wood stoves. The folks at Dr. Soot N' Cinder are not about the glitz and glam, they are about getting the job done. They enjoy helping the community stay safe and warm, and only grow as their community grows. There are many new faces in town and the team at Dr. Soot N'Cinder hope to be of service to them and their families for years to come.



## Butternut Ski Area and Tubing Center

Ski resort located on Warner Mountain in the Berkshires. 380 State Rd., Great Barrington, MA. (413) 528-2000. [skibutternut.com](http://skibutternut.com)

After the marriage of a corporation called Butternut and the Department of Environmental Management of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1962, the Butternut Ski Resort has evolved into an award-winning ski area that has become the favorite of many Northeast skiers and riders. Butternut's lifts, trails and base facilities compliment a beautiful natural setting of evergreen and hardwood forests. Though located in the majestic Berkshire Mountains in Great Barrington, MA, Butternut welcomes skiers, boarders and tubers from around the world. Butternut possesses comprehensive snowmaking abilities so when there isn't snow in the backyard, Butternut will still have several feet of snow on its trails. The groomers at Butternut take pride in their work. Recognized as some of the best in the business, they work through the night and early morning hours to perform their magic. The folks at Butternut enjoy sharing their passion for skiing and riding with guests and say being a part of a lifetime of family memories is the most rewarding part of the business. They also feel privileged to welcome new-comers to a life-long sport that promotes physical and mental wellbeing. This year, they are looking forward to an amazing snow-filled season, and have invested in replacing the 2-person Paddy Wagon Chair with a brand new 4-person chair from Skytrac Lifts. This will increase the capacity of Butternut's learning area and should be enjoyed by all for many years to come.



## Noa Lessing

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Noa Lessing's fee-only financial planning services business started in 2008 and is designed to help individuals, couples, and families better understand and improve their finances, and achieve short-term and long-term financial goals. Noa does not sell any products, accepts no commissions or fees and is solely paid by her clients. Her services are all-inclusive, whether they be comprehensive financial reviews or hourly consultations. Noa says the most rewarding part of her business is to see clients improve their financial life, make smarter financial decisions and be able to achieve their short- and long-term financial goals. Noa looks forward to helping more young professionals gain a better understanding of their everyday finances and learn to take control with less overspending and more savings for their future. Everyone at some time in their life can use financial advice and planning. Whether it be for one hour and a single concern or a comprehensive objective review of one's whole finances, Noa knows every bit will always help and January is an excellent time for an objective financial checkup to start 2022 off right.

# INSURING YOUR WORLD

A recent survey from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners found that 54% of consumers lacked confidence that their life insurance coverage would provide adequate coverage for their family and/or beneficiaries. Most of the respondents all agreed that the current benefits would not be enough coverage to ensure that their loved ones could cover necessary future living expenses. I thought after reading this study, it would be a great time to discuss the two most recommended types of life insurance coverage available. After coming through a "once-every-100-year-Pandemic," it only seemed fitting that this important coverage is probably on everyone's minds? The most cost efficient type of coverage is called Term Life Insurance. It can be purchased in various amounts at various guaranteed time frame levels, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 30 year terms. This type of life insurance is typically used to cover term liabilities such as mortgage amounts, business loans, the future cost to raise children, and lastly, college and living expenses. The next type of permanent protection is whole life insurance, which offers cash accumulation as well as a death benefit that can be used for the same aforementioned reasons. Nothing beats a good whole life policy that earns dividends and never fluctuates in premium from the day it is issued like a term policy will do as you grow older. Whole life cash values can also be used to supplement retirement assuming a policy is written correctly as well as being used as an asset in one's overall financial statement. Lastly, make sure that everyone knows where your policies are stored, many folks' policies go unclaimed since relatives don't even know they exist! Let's face the facts, we will all pass on at some point so let's make sure our loved ones are properly insured!



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# PANDEMIC PANDEMOMIUM

Overwhelmed? Stressed? Anxious? Sleep issues? Brain Fog? Increased aches and pains? Angry or sad? Appetite changes? Welcome to Pandemic Pandemonium! You are not alone. What is the common denominator for all these symptoms? Stress! But what is underlying all these stressors? The feelings of loss of control. While we may not always control what is happening, we CAN control our reactions to what is happening. How? SELF-CARE. This entails a variety of approaches, several of which include obtaining more consistent and restful sleep, eating more healthy and balanced meals, regular exercise, taking breaks to decompress and recharge, and maintaining proper fluid intake and hydration. Self-care helps to revitalize the function of the immune system which plays a large role in combatting all aspects of stress. Remember, some stress can be quite useful in everyday life. However, when a major life changing event occurs, an overload of stress can result in a multitude of negative reactions within the body. As cited, the pandemic can affect work, finances, social, travel, family, and most significantly, health. Additionally, stress permeates the physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing at every age level. The experience of having Covid, dealing with long term effects, losing a loved one, quarantining, isolation, and dealing with reactions to vaccines and boosters simply magnify the effects of stress. Useful coping strategies to decrease stress and its reactions include proper breathing methods, relaxation techniques coupled with meditation, and visual imagery. Exercise, acupuncture, biofeedback, body work, and more are but a short list of coping skills available to everyone. An example of a simple hands-on approach: While seated, place one hand at the bottom of the ribs across the back (use the back of the hand). Place other hand over any area holding stress or has discomfort, i.e., chest, ribs, heart, stomach, forehead, temple, or back of the neck. Hold each position for at least 5 minutes. A sign that indicates relaxation includes taking a deep breath or the area holding stress feels a little bit less tension. Repeat as often as symptoms decrease. This technique has been used for headaches, back/neck pain, upset stomach, achy joints (such as knee, ankle, shoulder, and low back), menstrual cramps, and more.

(413) 528-0887  
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greatbarringtonintegrativewellness.com



## What's under your roof?

As we are in the dead of winter, I want to take this opportunity to discuss some energy efficient insulation options for your attic space. As much as 85% of the heat lost in a house passes through the attic. In fact, the US Department of Energy estimates that boosting attic insulation can lower heating and cooling costs by 10 to 50%, depending on the current level of insulation. Most homeowners would consider adding more insulation to the attic floor. I would like you to consider a more energy efficient approach that saves you money during the heating and cooling seasons. Converting attics into a semi-conditioned space using spray foam insulation by closing off soffits, gable, and ridge vents is a positive design approach accepted by the building code in reducing moisture and energy loads in your home. This can be achieved by moving the insulation from the floor of the attic and applying spray foam to the underside of the roof deck. This design prevents heat from escaping into the attic through poor insulation or penetrations in the ceiling from lights, wires, and plumbing, as well as keeping hot moist air, during the summer months, from entering the attic and, subsequently, into the home. This approach also reduces additional strain on mechanical equipment and duct work that would normally be working in the extreme attic temperatures of winter and summer, effectively increasing the life space and efficiency of that equipment. Installing spray foam insulation against the roof deck in the attic eliminates air infiltration and conductive heat transfer, and it greatly reduces, if not totally eliminates, destructive ice damming.

Mike Eiffert  
[mike@advantageinsulation.net](mailto:mike@advantageinsulation.net)  
118 North Road, Red Hook, NY 12571  
(845) 758-8544 | Fax: (845) 758-8549  
[advantageinsulation.net](http://advantageinsulation.net)



## WORRIED ABOUT NEW YEAR'S WEIGHT GAIN?

The holidays are here and gone, and along with the family gatherings came the inevitable temptation for overindulgence. Did you enjoy the holidays but now are worried about the extra pounds? There's no need to worry, there's always an exercise plan that works for you. Here are a few tips:

- Never go hungry: You're setting yourself up for failure. Make sure to have a meal. Have some protein throughout the day, the carbs and fats will be plentiful.
- Exercise: Start slow, find a workout routine that works for you. There is always an awkward stage when it comes to fitness, be patient.
- Build your plate strategically: When it's time to eat. Start with protein and vegetables then add in the items you'd like to try. A fuller plate of the good stuff will please your mind's eye and will less likely involve sugary sweets.
- Enjoy a treat or two: There's no law against enjoying the things you love, moderation is key.
- Think moderation over restriction: It's all about not restricting yourself to over-eating (like having the whole pie or cookie platter), think small, not nothing at all.
- Remember it's not about the food: Losing the holiday weight is often less important than enjoying time spent with friends and family. So don't feel guilty about indulging last month, make a plan and stick to it.

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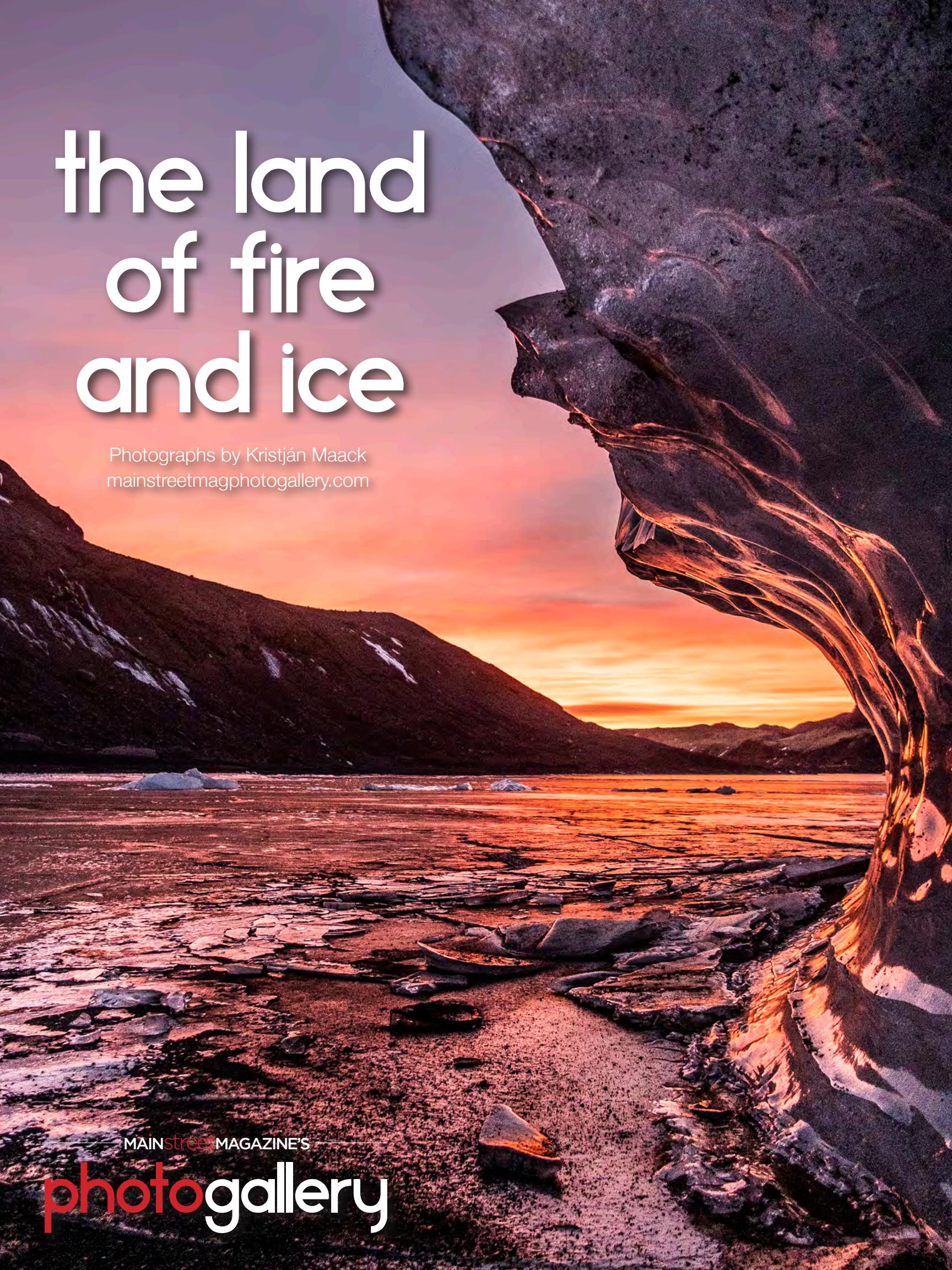
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