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SUMMER'S LAST HOORAH

I think that every August I reference the "dog days of summer" in this editor's note. Wouldn't I be breaking tradition at this point if I didn't mention it? Well, consider it mentioned. Now that that's out of the way, how is it that we're already finding ourselves enjoying the last days of summer? How has this entire summer literally zoomed by so quickly that it gave us some nice whip-lash? Or maybe that's just me... I cannot believe that this is summer's last hoorah before (like it or not) September graces us with its presence. August always feels like the month that everyone realizes how few days are left of summer and scurry to do all of the summer activities before it's too late. I learned a long time ago not to start a project in August because everyone is so unfocused – except on their summer activities. It's like we all check out, except for trying to get in as much summer fun. But who can blame us for that, right?

So what have we got for you in this issue, you ask? Well, even if you didn't ask, I'll tell you. We've got a little bit of everything! We've got some art stuff, we've got food stuff, we've got some historical stuff, we've got some social media stuff, and we've got some environmental stuff. As with most of our "stuff," we've got something for everyone! And if you're not finding something for you, shoot me an email and tell me what you're interested in, or visit our website where we've got plenty of other stuff of interest.

Lately our writer CB Wismar has been very busy going to the many performances, music events, and the movies, and he's been sharing his reviews. You can read all of them – BTW – on our website. So scoot on over there after you read this print issue (unless you're reading this online) and visit us at www.mainstreetmag.com and perhaps take in a show or two. Or if you'd rather check us out on social media, we're over there, too. We primarily stick around on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. We have daily posts of our various *Main Street* "stuff" like our articles, Ashley's cat Otis, things that we're doing, all things that are fun and interesting, pretty pictures, food and drinks we're enjoying and are grateful for. Or if you're more audible, did you know we also have a podcast? True story. It's called *Main Street Moxie* and you can listen anywhere you listen to podcasts. We're just hitting all of the platforms these days. Well, all we're trying to do is spread some joy and good stories. So regardless of which platform you see or listen to us on, you can always rest assured that all you'll get is positivity! With that said, enjoy the last few days of summer... while enjoying some *Main Street* "stuff" – I hope! ;)

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir



AUGUST 2022

The view of the Catskill Mountains behind the Hudson-Athens lighthouse as seen from the banks of the Hudson River.

Cover photo by
Lazlo Gyorsok

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OPEN STUDIOS IN THE HUDSON VALLEY

*By Betsy Maury
info@mainstreetmag.com*

Summer in the country brings endless opportunities for weekend entertainment across the towns and villages of our rural area. Whether you like music or art, farmer's markets or yard sales, the Hudson Valley and Litchfield Hills offer something for everyone on nearly every summer weekend. We've had food festivals, book signings, and car shows already this summer but the lazy days of August still hold opportunities for more meandering at outdoor festivals. While many signature events from cultural powerhouses are ticketed, many arts organizations and volunteer-led community groups thankfully offer free or low-cost programs throughout the summer (check your local library!). Visitors and residents who appreciate music and art are especially blessed with the rich cultural offerings in summer here, some of which can be surprisingly accessible and intimate.

Walk that art!

For art lovers, one pastime that is especially popular in our region is the art walk. The concept of an art walk usually includes coordinated openings by galleries and artist workshops to show artwork throughout one or more towns, often in combination with live music or special restaurant menus. Commercial art galleries throughout the small towns of the Hudson Valley are almost always open for business on the weekends, but the connection between exhibited finished artwork and open artist's studios is a real draw for

visitors and residents alike. For artists working in rural areas around us, their work often reflects the native landscape or wildlife, or makes use of local materials. This makes a combination studio visit and gallery show doubly engaging as visitors to art walks can see the full scope of artistic process.

There is burgeoning interest in art walks. Lenox, MA, hosted an art walk in June that brought together 60 artists working around the Berkshires and included music, food, and ten participating galleries. Upstate Art Weekend, launched in 2020 with 23 participating artists and galleries recently hosted 145 participants based in Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, and Ulster counties across a self-guided art walk in July. The growth in art walks seems to herald a new summer attraction for towns and regions aiming to highlight art and artists. Art walks are extremely accessible as they are almost always free, self-paced, and family-friendly. Visitors can visit as many or as few galleries and studios as they like, making them perfect on some level for just about everyone.

Since 2008, Art Studio Views (ASV), a volunteer-led group of artists and arts professionals in Rhinebeck, NY, has been hosting a four-town art walk through Dutchess and Columbia counties over Labor Day weekend. This year they will host the two-day walk through Germantown, Red Hook/Tivoli, Rhinebeck, and Hyde Park on September 2 and 3 from

11am-5pm. Art Studio Views gives art enthusiasts the opportunity not only to visit participating galleries but also to visit the studios and interact with the many working artists who live and work in the northern Hudson Valley.

Take a peek

Now in its 14th year, Art Studio Views really focuses on studio visits as a highlight. Both seasoned collectors and casual art lovers get a chance to peek into the studios of painters, printmakers, sculptors, ceramicists, woodworkers, and photographers, all of whom use different equipment and materials in their practice. Aside from conversations with artists, visitors can view draft ideas and works in progress as well as finished work for sale. This year 30 artists will participate in the ASV tour. Along with many returning Hudson Valley artists, the tour welcomes four newcomers to open their studios over the Labor Day weekend.

The opportunity for artists to engage with the public was one of the things that drew painter, Richard Marr to participate in ASV again this year. After attending the ASV in 2018 as he and his wife were contemplating a move to the Hudson Valley, he found the tour a wonderful way to get to know the creative culture of the region by meeting artists and other art enthusiasts. When he decided to make the move to Rhinebeck, he felt like he had a good sense of the artistic ecosystem in the area. Now, after having participated in ASV for two years, he's found the annual event to be terrific exposure for his work. He sold five paintings through ASV in 2021. To him, ASV exposes artists to the public and the public to artists so it's a fruitful experience for both. As an artist who is working at his practice in the evenings while holding a day job, he finds the ASV Tour to be a reliable

deadline to work against to complete work.

"So many artists have different approaches to their work and half the fun is learning about how they got to their final piece. Ideas can come to artists in a number of ways," explained ASV director Joanna Hess. Artists on the tour are present in their studios over the two-day tour and visitors can get to know both the creator and the work. Some artists show their work in galleries, but some don't so the tour provides visibility to work that isn't always publicly accessible otherwise. The process of selecting artists for the annual event begins in January Hess told me, and artists are selected by an ASV steering committee who visits each studio. As an established art walk, Art Studio Views hosts many returning artists on the tour who are well-established or mid-career. Emerging artists are less represented, though the committee welcomes applications from earlier stage artists.

New artists

Among new artists represented this year is woodworker, Peter Wagner. As a recent transplant from Brooklyn, Peter found his way to ASV almost by accident. Last year, a neighbor of his was on the tour and a yellow sign directing visitors to his studio was placed close to Peter's house. Meeting art enthusiasts on the tour spurred him to reach out to ASV this year and apply. Peter's work straddles the art world and what he calls the "practical" world, creating bespoke wood furniture as well as cutting boards. "I make objects that will last into the future but whose component parts may already have a story to share. My respect for history fuels an extra level of intrigue when what I build comes from something with its own story.



Depicted with this article is a sampling of art that will be on display at the event. Imagery courtesy of Art Studio Views.

We live on an old farm, and on it are weathered oak paddock fences, fallen trees, and a venerable 1860s barn filled with timeworn wood. Some of these materials may yet play a part in stories to come. And I look forward to helping shape the narrative." As Peter gets settled into the creative community of the Hudson Valley, he's excited to see who pops into his studio on this year's ASV tour.

Richard Marr gives credit to Joanna Hess for organizing the event, and helping to create the dynamic art ecosystem in the Hudson Valley. Once the ASV artists have been selected, Hess brings them together for a brunch in June to meet one another and give them the chance to discuss planning and coordination for the studio view tour. While open studios give insight into artistic process and practice for visitors, many artists welcome the informal and intimate visits to connect with admirers. "Nature plays an important role in what I want to portray as well as the intricate emotions and relationship between people. The constant state of flux that is a shared in both nature and people make it important to me to hold on to the intensity of the moment," says printmaker, Melissa Katzman Braggins.

Braggins' work, along with several other ASV artists, is currently on display in the show *Exploring Paperworks* at the Tivoli Artist Gallery. Other artists include Marie Cole, Janene

Gentile, Linda Lavin, Ann Moring, and Demoy Shilling.

In August, the Betsy Jacaruso Studio & Gallery in the Courtyard in Rhinebeck will host an exhibit of sample artwork by each of the participating at the Art Studio Views with a kickoff event on August 20. Though many people hope to attend all open studios over the two-day Labor Day weekend, it's extremely ambitious to try to do all, Hess told me. Visiting the ASV exhibition in August at the Betsy Jacaruso Gallery will give visitors a good overview of each artist.

Art Studio Views represents artists working in four locations across the Hudson Valley: Hyde Park, Red Hook, Rhinebeck, and Tivoli. Though the studios themselves are the focus of the Art Studio Views Tour, meandering through the rolling hills and quaint towns that dot the Hudson valley provide plenty of opportunities to explore other summer attractions. Bright yellow Art Studio Views signs point the way of the tour and maps are available at participating galleries. •

For more information and ideas to help plan your visit, contact: Joanna Hess at (845) 505-6397, artstudioviewstour@gmail.com, or visit online at artstudioviews.com

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



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Stephen Waite is a USAF veteran and a graduate of Webutuck High School and Columbia-Greene Community College. "I coached soccer and taught a disability awareness class in the Rhinebeck School District for a decade alongside a long-time mentor and friend." Most recently, Stephen served three years as a Village of Millerton Trustee, and is currently one of the Chairs of the Eddie Collins Park Revitalization Committee. "I've made a few extended stops around the Hudson Valley following a wheelchair-confining injury 35 years ago, and I've met a lot of a kind people who have provided support and guidance along the way." Stephen enjoys reading, writing, listening to music, taking in nature, watching movies and sports; especially the Yankees and Rangers. "I've lived the majority of my life in Millerton where generations of my ancestors resided. It's a special place."



Eve Davis has taught at North Canaan Elementary School for 16 years, teaching 7th and 8th grade Language Arts. She has also been a Summer Learning Program supervisor at Region 1 Schools for two years. "What I love the most about my job is the students. I love working with these people who all need someone to see them for the best that they are." Outside of the classroom, Eve loves an adventure – whether it's taking care of a small farm with husband Brian (featuring four goats, about 30 chickens, and a miniature horse); maintaining her flower and vegetable gardens with stepsons Jake and Nick; reading with her toddler, Bill; or seeing local theater productions with friends. Born and raised in Burlington, CT, and residing in Thomaston, CT, Eve appreciates everything about the region's nature from swimming in the warmer months to the diversity of plant life.



You might recognize life-long Ancramdale, NY, resident, **Doug Dietter**. "I had the pleasure of meeting a lot of interesting people and forming some great relationships during my 44 years of working at the Ancram Paper-mill." Since retiring five years ago, Doug has more time to enjoy the simple things in life. "Walking, biking, and working in my garden, just to name a few." Doug also mentions how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful area where we get to enjoy all four seasons. "Ancramdale has some beautiful views!" Perhaps his favorite part of being rooted here is being close to family. "I love babysitting my two grandsons." Thank you for chatting with us, Doug. It sounds like retirement is treating you well.



Richmond (aka Rich) Shirlock is the service manager at Northwest Auto in North Canaan, CT. He has worked for the owner, John Considine, for over 30 years and is now helping to build this new auto repair and used car dealership business. Rich enjoys interacting with customers, troubleshooting vehicle issues, and exhausting all of his supplier resources to get his customers the best deals. He is a self-proclaimed "backyard mechanic" and has extensive experience in car repair which makes him a great service manager. On the weekends you're likely to find Rich out for a motorcycle ride with his girlfriend Patty, reading the newspaper, listening to music, gardening and doing chores around the house. Rich grew up in Goshen and moved to Canaan 21 years ago. "I appreciate the natural beauty of the Northwest Corner, the small town vibe and my quiet neighborhood." When getting out of town his first choice is to head to Maine.



Lindsay LeBrecht is the broker and owner of Copake Lake Realty Corp. "This is a second career for me. I was first licensed in 1999 and started my own company in 2003. Working with first-time home buyers is very rewarding, but there is also satisfaction with a high-end sale, not to mention introducing people to our beautiful area." Lindsay spends her spare time boating on Copake Lake or listening to concerts at Tanglewood, Mahaiwe or Infinity. Lindsay moved up from Westchester County in 1990 and will never go back. "The countryside and friendliness reminds me of growing up in the 50s and 60s. Before moving up here, I would visit family in the Berkshires. That was where I would find my 'inner peace.' I thank God every day that I am here."



Over the course of seventy years, **Robert (aka Bob) Riemer** served as an electronic specialist in the US Navy, having been engaged in the "Bay of Pigs" maneuver in Cuba, a pre-med student, physics and Chemistry teacher, drama coach, golf coach; taught black and white photography, worked with Minor White, Paul Caponigro, and Yousuf Karsh; he was a founding member of NECC; and taught the "Traveling Troop" many aspects of hiking locally, aeronautics, flying, and black and white photography; and last, but not least on his impressive resume is real estate broker. He hails from Rhode Island, moving to this area 55 years ago, settled in, taught school, raised two boys, and found this area a beautiful place to raise a family, and a special place to live and work.

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Collecting forgotten history

The Sampler Collection of Alexandra Peters at the Sharon Historical Society

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

Alexandra Peters gave me a private tour of her sampler collection on display at the Sharon Historical Society through October just after this enthralling exhibition opened in June. It was a very personal introduction to the art and meaning of needlework samplers which reveal the lives of American girls and their families from 1700 to 1850. The professionally hung show with informative explanations begins with English maps of the world embroidered on silk. Look closely at the borders of the United States or Australia labeled as New Holland. These girls were interested in the entire world. Another global view is a small, fragile, gray silk embroidered sphere meant to be held – one of only 38 embroidered American globes which have survived over two hundred years.

Detailed family records are a very common subject of samplers. Peters explained the fascinating history of an uncommon, sampler made by a free African American girl in Maine whose parents, Francis and Mehitabel Heuston, were “conductors” in the Underground Railroad. This sampler is complemented with a photograph of the Heuston’s family burying ground and a map of the underground railroad routes. Samplers could be political like the naïve one of a dancing couple embroidered on a pot holder, “Any holder but A Slaveholder,” sewn before the Civil War by abolitionists. A reproduction of a poster from an 1857 Anti-Slavery Fair puts the sampler in historical context. These fairs were held all over the northeast and Ohio and raised money to support the abolitionist cause and help free enslaved people.

National events like the death of George Washington were memorialized in complex compositions probably copied from artworks. Historic buildings, homes, and everyday life were also featured edged by decorative borders. Peters pointed out the missing letter J from many samplers. The

first samplers used the early classical Latin alphabet with only 23 letters and the letter J did not appear until the late 1700s.

What is the most valuable kind of sampler?

Any sampler pictured in the two volume *Girlhood Embroidery* published in 1993 will bring a very high price. Betty Ring, the author, was the sampler expert and built a definitive collection of 18th and 19th century schoolgirl needlework. In January 2012, one New Jersey 1807 sampler sold for over a million dollars in a Sotheby’s auction of Ring’s collection. Generally, samplers done by a girl with a well-known teacher bring very high prices. Like any other antique, the history of ownership, the provenance, the condition, size, and the historic importance also contribute to value. The design, originality, and information are also key factors. American samplers are more valuable than English versions because there are fewer of them and they are far more inventive – in comparison the English versions often seem a little boring.

Why were samplers made?

Samplers demonstrated the needle craft and educational accomplishments of young girls. Typically, samplers were done at girls’ schools where they learned reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and the critical skill of sewing. The maker’s name, place and date are usually included – they were important members of the family. Samplers were meant to be displayed, which explains why so many have survived as family treasures.

Some examples inventoried darning stitches used to repair clothing like Kezia Burroughs’s 1807 sampler done at Westtown School (then spelled “Weston”). Remember that when samplers were made people did not have a closet full of clothes. Instead of throwing torn or worn clothing away, garments were repaired by the



women of the house. The arrival of the Industrial Revolution with sewing machines, less expensive factory-made fabric and ready-made clothing contributed to the decline of samplers just before the Civil War.

Samplers are not just stitching examples and the alphabet. They include geography, buildings, people, elaborate landscapes, complete family records and genealogy, and popular romantic themes like Palemon and Lavine (see photo to the right).

In New England many samplers were made at Quaker boarding schools because of the value the Friends placed on education and the equality of the sexes. Curving leaf and vine motifs are one indication of a Quaker sampler. I’m not quite sure why but there are very few surviving samplers from the south.



Above, top to bottom: Alexandra Peters enjoys the company of her sampler collection every day in her dining room in Sharon. Selected examples are now on exhibit at the Sharon Historical Society. Photo courtesy of Alexandra Peters. This potholder sampler embroidered by an unknown girl was sold at an anti-slavery fair between 1830 and 1850. Photo by Martin Lewis.

Continued on next page ...

How did you become a collector of samplers?

I had always wondered about why we didn't hear much about girls in history and their accomplishments and became fascinated when I first discovered an English sampler at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. A curator let me look at storage drawers filled with samplers – they don't do that anymore. Over the last 25 years I have gradually researched and acquired over 120 samplers. I love investigating each one because of the hidden stories I have uncovered and can get lost discovering the makers and their time. Samplers are the only thing I collect – I try to avoid too much stuff. I purchased my first sampler just because I liked it – maybe it picked me. Then I started researching the girl who sewed the sampler, and her history came alive. This was a personal, tactile connection with women from another century. We had just purchased a 1794 house in Sharon and samplers belonged there – they were made to be displayed with pride. Samplers are a record of the lives and legacy of women and girls – they talk to us from the past and I am shepherding them into the future.

Where do you find them?

There are established reputable, knowledgeable dealers like Amy Finkel in Philadelphia and Carol and Stephen Huber of Old Saybrook, CT. Their websites are filled with informa-

tion about samplers. Then there are auctions, antique dealers, and online sellers. Now that I'm knowledgeable I buy many online. The internet has made it so much easier to research everything.

Are there other exhibitions of samplers?

In 2018 there was a show at the National Museum of Scotland featuring samplers from the enormous collection of an American, Leslie Durst, who has one of the largest private collections of Scottish samplers in the world. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York had a show of American and European samplers in 2015 and there have been small, regional shows in museums but nothing recent. Over a hundred people came to the opening of the show in Sharon – and it's attracting new visitors every day to the Historical Society. There's definitely a curiosity and an interest.

Are there any fakes? How do you know?

There are fake samplers made to look old, but they don't pass the "smell" test. Old things smell funny. The fabric itself is an indicator as well as the fading which should not be uniform. The textile should be brown around the edges not blotchy. After a while you just intuitively know.

How do you keep track of your collection?



Above: Lucy Winston stitched and water colored on silk the romantic love story of Palemon and Lavine. Notice the buildings of Hartford, CT in the background. Photo by Martin Lewis. Below, right: The Heuston family genealogy is captured forever in this unusual sampler made by a free African American girl in Maine. Photo courtesy of Alexandra Peters. Below, left: A detail from an English sampler map demonstrates young women's interest in the greater world. Photo by Martin Lewis.

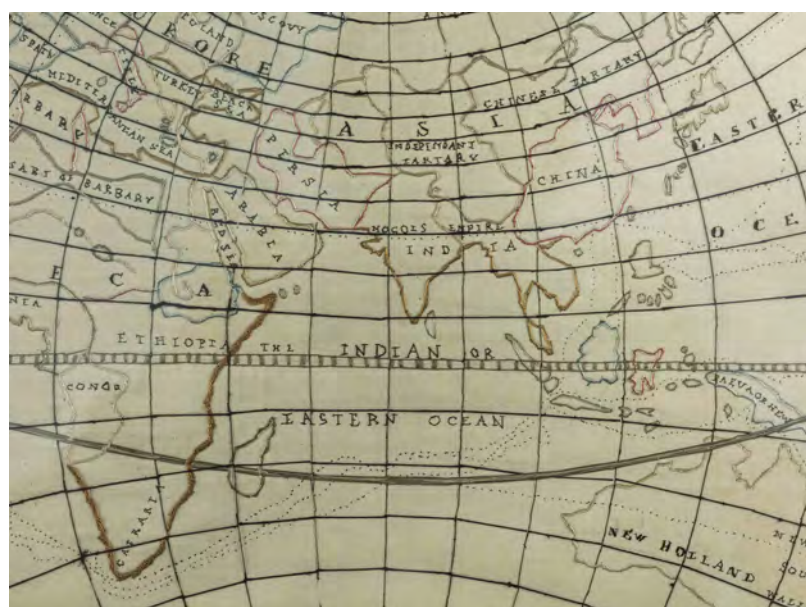
I keep a file for every sampler and each girl. At first, I didn't capture all the right information but now I know how to organize the collection and include my detective work and a paragraph or two about each sampler. With this information it was easy for me to create the educational labels for the show.

How do you preserve samplers? How do you clean them?

Unframed samplers should be placed in a box that has been lined with acid-free, lignin-free, buffered tissue that can then be folded over it. Never ever wash or press an old sampler. You might find suggestions online to wash with a "non-ionic" detergent – please ignore. Do not do this. I use the Textile Conservation Workshop to clean and restore my samplers, because they are highly trained professionals who know how to conserve textiles.

Are you still adding to your collection?

I am carefully adding to the collection, talking to dealers, watching at auctions and looking online. Once I buy, I never sell. •



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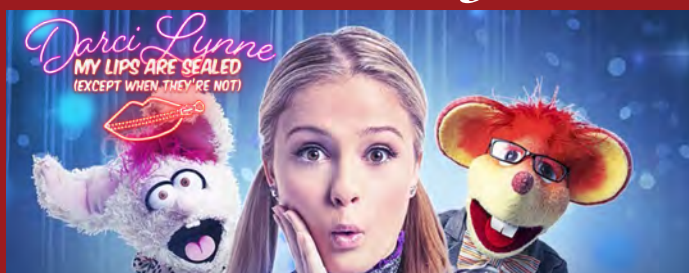


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TICKETS:



Blueberry crumb cake



By Olivia Valentine &
Caroline Markonic
info@mainstreetmag.com

What a perfect cake to have for breakfast or snacking. Perfect for a summer picnic and parties. Caroline and I made this after picking blueberries from a local farm in Red Hook, NY. I have been doing a lot of fruit picking this summer. Last month I picked some of the best cherries I've ever eaten. If you have never gone fruit picking, we highly suggest it. There's something about picking way more fruit than you even know what to do with, nearly getting sick from eating so much, then missing them as soon as they're gone.

Lost and found

This recipe goes back quite a ways. A lot of the recipes we share hold fond memories in our hearts and tummies. My mother got the recipe from her good friend's mom years ago and was passed down to me. It was lost for a while among the massive disorganized mess of recipe cards and print outs, but we found it and made it – it was gone in a matter of hours. This cake is incredible.

This cake is so moist and has just the perfect amount of sweetness. It is an easy cake to assemble and you probably already have all the ingredients. You can make these with frozen blueberries, just make sure you thaw them first.

Cake ingredients

2 cups sifted flour
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
¼ cup room-temperature butter
¾ cup sugar
½ tsp vanilla
1 egg
½ cup milk
2 cups blueberries

Crumb topping ingredients

½ cup sugar
¼ cup flour
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ cup room-temperature butter

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 8"x9" square pan. Sift flour together with baking powder and salt; set aside. Cream butter on medium speed, beat in sugar. Add egg and milk and beat until smooth.

Add dry ingredients. Do not over mix. Fold in the blueberries with a wooden spoon or spatula. Spread batter in the pan.

Mix with a fork or a pastry blender all the crumb topping ingredients and sprinkle evenly on top of the cake mixture. Bake for 40-45 minutes. Allow to cool before cutting. ●

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



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Maestros and Mountains at 93

MUSIC MOUNTAIN SUMMER FESTIVAL 2022

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

With the New England summer halfway through its creative arc, Music Mountain, the Falls Village, CT, treasure that has been celebrating live performances for 93 years continues to charm ... and to evolve. “We’ve brought some of the finest chamber music groups and legendary jazz musicians together for another great season,” offers artistic director Oskar Espina-Ruiz. “With free events for the family, intriguing complimentary pre-concert presentations and the celebration of Haydn’s Sun Quartets as the centerpiece of the season, music is alive and well on the mountain.”

... and all that jazz

Twilight Jazz performances mark the calendar every Saturday evening, with August and September programs that both welcome back groups that have built a loyal fan base and introduce groups new to the area. Bob Parker, longtime Cornwall resident, will bring *Five by Five* to close the Jazz season on August 27 while the internationally applauded Helen Sung Quartet will take the stage on August 13.

That stage is the focal point of Gordon Hall, a building created by none other than the Sears Roebuck Company as Jacques Gordon, Concert Master for the Chicago Symphony and founder of the Gordon Quartet placed a music festival on over 100 acres in the Litchfield Hills in 1930. With stunning views of the surrounding countryside

and an enveloping sense of pastoral calm, the Music Mountain campus has been a worthy destination for generations of music lovers. The acoustics of the building were the subject of great research and design detail. Much as the body of a classic violin is shaped to offer a resonance and tone that is both lively and pure, the “music shed” at Music Mountain is an acoustical delight. Season after season, groups have eagerly returned to perform in the musically satisfying environment.

A festival within a festival

“The Labor Day weekend will be an extraordinary experience,” adds Espina-Ruiz with the gentle modesty that is so typical of an artist who is an internationally celebrated clarinetist, a university professor, and the creative drive behind each musical season. Oskar will be one of the star performers during that weekend, appearing with the Merz Trio on Sunday, September 4 as they present Messiaen’s *Quartet for the End of Time*. “Messiaen was an ornithologist as well as a composer. He used bird calls and songs as motivation for the composition. The result is magical.”

To compliment the concert, Fran Zygmunt of the Litchfield Hills Audubon Society will offer a free pre-concert Birdsong Walk on the grounds, setting the stage for the ticketed performance. During the

Continued on next page ...



Above: The Merz Trio are performing Labor Day Weekend. Below, left: Interior of Gordon Hall.



season that required that concerts be “remote,” Zygmunt had created a lively online presentation by venturing onto the campus and recording bird songs to delight house-bound viewers. With pandemic restrictions relaxed to the point where in-person gatherings are permitted with a conscientious focus on audience safety, the chance to hear and identify the local bird songs can be done face-to-face.

Earlier that weekend, the food trucks will arrive at the property in time to provide local families the opportunity to picnic on the grounds and experience a free concert at 11:00am on Saturday that will certainly delight the youngest family member. “It’s a festival within a festival,” exults Espina-Ruiz as he highlights the appearance of two noted writers who will read from their works at 5:00pm that day. Barbara V. Bechtolsheim will share her poetic interpretation of dialogues with Haydn and Beethoven while Connecticut Poet Laureate Margaret Gibson will elevate humanity’s link with the earth as “one body.”

Classical concerts at the heart of every season

The long standing presentation of the world’s finest chamber music groups will continue to be the “through line” of the August and September concert series every Sunday at 3:00pm. The Cramer Quartet will continue the celebration of Haydn’s 6 Sun Quartets on Sunday, August 14 as well as pre-

sending a piece created by Alexandra Du Bois that is a musical response to Haydn’s Opus 20 Sun Quartets. Du Bois will be on hand to deliver a pre-concert talk at 1:30pm that day, offering concertgoers the unique experience of hearing from and meeting a composer even as her work is performed.

If the lure of hearing from contemporary composers and being able to experience their work offers appeal, then the September 11 program will delight. Composer/pianist Octavio Vazquez will speak at 1:30pm, then will take the stage with the American String Quartet during their ticketed 3:00pm concert to join them in performing his piano quintet.

The final concert of the 2022 season will signal the return of the Cassatt String Quartet to Music Mountain as they perform the 6th Sun Quartet and welcome guitar virtuoso Eliot Fisk to perform Godfrey’s Guitar Quintet and Boccherini’s Guitar Quintet.

Enduring art to celebrate a magical season

As the 2022 season was being fashioned by artistic director Oskar Espina-Ruiz to focus on presentation of the 6 Haydn Opus 20 Sun Quartets, the concept emerged to commemorate those presentations with two print pieces created by local artist Duncan Hannah. Offered for sale in limited edition on the Music Mountain website (music-mountain.org) they have emerged as

highly sought-after collectables. Just as the season was beginning, Hannah passed away, leaving behind him a rich heritage of paintings, collage, a fascinating autobiography (*Twentieth-Century Boy: Notebooks of the Seventies*) and a string of life experiences that influenced his art, which he once described as “a love letter to art history.” The two prints available to benefit Music Mountain Summer Music Festival might well be considered Hannah’s love letter to Haydn ... and to Music Mountain.

Tickets for concerts at Music Mountain are available online as well as by calling (860) 824-7126. The Music Mountain Summer Festival is presented every weekend through September 18. Tickets for the Twilight Jazz series can be combined with a *prix fixe* dinner at The Falls Village Inn with reservations made by calling the Music Mountain box office. Light refreshments are available at all concerts on the concert grounds. •

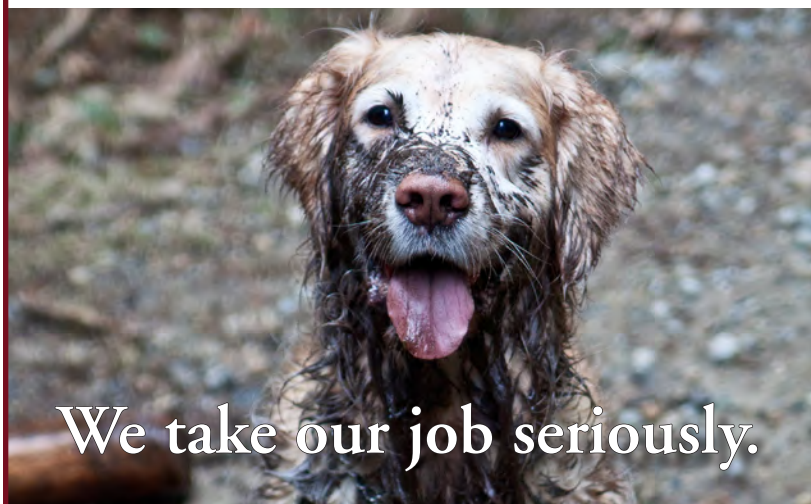


Above: Duncan Hannah Print #1.
Below left: Helen Sung, performing August 13.





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Bodies in motion: THE CLARK'S RODIN IN THE UNITED STATES

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

Inertia is a body's tendency to stay in motion. That principle is captured in the sculptures and sketches of Auguste Rodin, on view now at the Clark Art Museum. The exhibition, entitled *Rodin in the United States: Confronting the Modern*, has two sides: the scholarly aspect, which meticulously documents the American patrons who sought to bring Rodin's work to this side of the Atlantic, and the kinetic beauty of Rodin's masterful work. Both are worthy reasons to get your body in motion to see this rare collection of Rodin's art before it departs in September.

Rodin arrives in America

The exhibition is a journey through Rodin's body of bodies, expressively gesturing, pensively thinking, purposefully striding, erotically embracing, and resolutely facing what's to come. This expressiveness and an untethering from classical sculptural techniques and themes attracted American patrons' attention. Supporters and admirers, particularly women, including Katherine Seney Simpson, Loïe Fuller, Alma de Bretteville Spreckels, and Jules Mastbaum, worked tirelessly to establish Rodin in the US and to bring his work to the public.

The same holds today for this show. Numerous museums, cultural institutions, and collectors from across the country have loaned Rodin sculptures and drawings, lending credence to the importance of this show. International Rodin experts, including the exhibition curator Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, and The Clark leadership and curatorial team researched and culled Rodin's work to document his impact on sculptural art in this country.

The works on display are the legacy of those collectors who acquired Rodin's art for personal collections and then bequeathed those pieces to museums for the public to enjoy.

While pursuing their priorities and tastes, these admirers of Rodin's work established him here and led to a presence of his work in art institutions across the country.

Fulfilling The Clark's twin mission as both an art museum and center for art research and scholarship, the show weaves a narrative backdrop that examines the arc of Rodin's appeal in the US and the collectors who brought him here.

Classical confronting modern

Rodin's work is grounded in appreciation and deep knowledge of classical sculpture themes and methods. However, his work breaks that mold in pursuit of dynamism. Many of his sculptures, such as *The Walking Man*, *Female Figure*, *Half Length*, and *Iris*, *Messenger of the Gods*, are yearning to move and break free from the bronze that holds them. According to Clark's communications director Vicki Saltzman, they seem to defy gravity; in fact, significant engineering feats beneath the plinth assist in keeping them anchored and upright.

Many of Rodin's sculptures are fragmented. What time wrought on classical sculptures removing heads and arms, he purposefully molded. The absence of extraneous limbs diverts that energy into the remaining ones and focuses the viewer on the motion Rodin conveys.

You'll find this on full display in *The Walking Man*. Without head and arms, this statue's forward momentum is the focus. The mottled and unfinished torso stands in contrast to the sinewy, smooth, and powerful larger-than-life legs.

Other sculptural busts seem reminiscent of Michelangelo's slaves, emerging from rough-hewn marble. These interpretations, such as *Katherine Seney Simpson*, *Thought*, and *Ceres*, are complete in their incompleteness.

The most poignant example of the technique is *Christ and Mary*



Magdalene. They are married to the marble in a moment so tragic and personal that you become a voyeur. While rough and unfinished, it is also profoundly detailed, with individual strands of Mary's hair falling over her shoulder and the nails impaling Christ's hands in the stone.

Rodin was criticized and sidelined in shows and museums for his sculptures' sensual and erotic subjects. *Cupid and Psyche* required a separate viewing room at the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition due to its suggestiveness. Yet, *The Kiss* has been celebrated for its universal appeal. This couple is not a pair of stone-cold lovers. One can almost feel the heat radiating from them as they lock in a forbidden embrace.

The show also displays a collection of Rodin's sketches. Scattered in the hands of art museums and collectors, these quick drawings and washes create an impact and convey movement and fluidity. One sketch is a collage, a technique he used that Saltzman described as "sculpting with scissors." Rodin would mount paper on paper,

Above: *Cupid and Psyche*. Auguste Rodin (French, 1840-1917), before 1886. Marble with original wood base. Iris Cantor Collection. Photo: Bruce White. Below: *The Thinker*. Auguste Rodin (French, 1840-1917), original model 1881-82, enlarged 1903. Bronze, cast by Alexis Rudier, 1928. Baltimore Museum of Art. Jacob Epstein Collection, 1930.25.1



Continued on next page ...

cutting and posing the figures. Fifty years later, Matisse would adopt this technique after viewing Rodin's versions earlier in his career.

Copy and paste

Rodin's sculptural method included a technique known as *assemblage*. Think of this as your word processing "copy and paste" function applied to sculpture. His studio contained a library of plaster and clay body parts that he would reuse and assemble in different sculptural poses.

Several of Rodin's plaster studies of hands, of which he was a master, show his gift of imbuing emotional expression in fragments, such that those fragments themselves become complete works of art.

This approach of creating these focused plaster studies detached from an entire body required him to drive all the emotional force into that hand, foot, or torso to allow it to speak for the whole. When these parts are combined and assembled into a sculpture, the synergy is decisive and expressive.

Playing with scale

The exhibit also demonstrates Rodin's facility in creating on a small and large scale. His table-top statues translate motion as energetically as his large-scale works. The largest of the

show's sculptures is *The Thinker*. Even while sitting still, this statue vibrates with the force of mental movement. The tensed calves and torqued torso with an elbow resting on the opposite knee suggest hulking power and focus. It makes you want to know what's happening in that bronze head.

The medium is the message

Rodin created plaster and clay casts for his marble and bronze statues. Here, he exerted the full force of his creativity and genius. For the execution of these works, Rodin relied on foundries for bronze and expert carvers for the marble, which he meticulously oversaw. He was mindful of how the medium reflected light and created shadow, critical aspects of sculptural art.

He also experimented in other mediums, including *pâte de verre*, a paste made from ground glass that is brushed into the mold and fired. *The Mask of Rose Beuret, later Mme. Rodin*, his longtime companion and wife, glows with a rosy luminescence of the tinted glass, which gives her a natural but somehow otherworldly complexion.

Night at the museum

The Rodin exhibit spans several rooms that flow into each other. Diving deep into one sculpture in an intimate 360°-relationship is captivating. Still, it's also fun to pull back and look at the exhibit as a whole. Pretend you're in Rodin's studio, which you can see pictured in the gallery in all its chaotic and messy glory.

Scanning the rooms, visualize the movie *Night at the Museum*. You can imagine dusk falling, and the statues are about to come to life. You can see Jean D'Aire, the



Above: *Mask of Rose Beuret, later Mme. Rodin*, original model c. 1882. Ground glass retired in a mode (*pâte de verre*), executed by Jean Cros, c. 1911. Rodin Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Bequest of Jules E. Mastbaum, 1929, F1929-7-43. Below, left: *The Age of Bronze*, original model 1876. Bronze, cast by Alexis Rudier, c. 1910-20. Iris & Gerald Cantor Center for the Visual Arts, Stanford University, Stanford, California. Gift of B. Gerald Cantor Collection, 1983.300

subject of *A Burgher of Calais*, trudging through the gallery to his fate, or the muscular soldier in *The Age of Bronze*, relaxing from his pose and shaking his limbs.

Come for Rodin, stay for the day

If you haven't visited The Clark, let this exhibit be the reason for an excursion. The drive is easy and scenic. The museum's size and scale are a Goldilockean "just right." Yet, its collection is well-documented and varied, with more than enough to keep you engaged.

After you see Rodin, stay a while. Get a delicious bite at the adjacent café – viewing art is hungry work! Then explore its diverse collection of paintings and decorative arts. Schedule your visit around a guided tour or performance that regularly dots the Clark's calendar. Take a hike – literally. Beyond the glass walls and reflecting pool is a tangle of well-marked

and accessible hiking trails. Your walk culminates in a panoramic view of the valley below. Finish up with a visit to the artfully-curated gift shop, where you can purchase the gorgeous and informative Rodin exhibit catalog and other mementos of your day.

Rodin in the U.S.: Confronting the Modern is a rare artistic opportunity on your doorstep. Get to it soon because once might not be enough, and then it will be gone with all the works retreating to their home institutions. This exhibit deserves a place on your summer bucket list. ●

Find out more about *The Clark Art Institute and the Rodin in the "U.S.: Confronting the Modern"* exhibit at www.clarkart.edu, which runs through September 18, 2022.



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FINDING JOY THROUGH FLOW AND PLAY

After a challenging few years, many people are looking for new pursuits to spark joy

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

The last few years have certainly proved challenging for many. With COVID-19 circulating, and lockdowns and travel restrictions in place, many of us have felt “stagnant.” The term “languishing” describes the way many of us felt. The opposite of thriving, languishing leaves us feeling apathetic.

We can jumpstart our lives again. Each one of us holds the power to change our lives – to create interest and excitement. When I was a teenager, my mother shared a philosophy told to her by a woman she met at a gathering. She advised my mother to strive to “make Monday different than Tuesday.” What she meant was: Explore new things, take a different route, and embrace change and the unknown. The philosophy really resonated with me.

When an artist friend invited me to an event, I knew nothing about, I showed up. It turned out to be the American Academy of Arts and Letters (the academy recognizes superior achievement in the arts and literature). The limited membership of 250 includes Christo, Jasper Johns, and Stephen Sondheim. Past members are Duke Ellington, Allen Ginsberg, Henry James, and Frank Lloyd Wright.

When asked to sit in on a historical lecture with a college-aged friend (even though I was in my 40s at the time), I attended. When invited to spontaneously join a friend on a surf lesson, I said yes and soon experienced the thrill of catching a wave. What I also got was a close encounter with a pod of dolphins that were sharing their home with me.

In doing so, I’ve had many great life experiences and created lots of memories. It’s always possible to create more joy.

Being present

Even in this era of “mindfulness,” so many of us have difficulty truly living in the moment. That means freeing ourselves from thoughts about

the past or being preoccupied with thoughts about the future.

It’s about living in the present – really feeling the warmth of the sun on our skin on a hot summer day, feeling the grass beneath our feet when we walk barefoot through the park, and listening to the ripple of the water as it swooshes away as we kayak through a river or lake.

Many yoga teachers and meditation coaches encourage us to achieve a sense of presence by simply “being.” When I lived in Hawaii, I meditated with Tom Davidson-Marx of Aloha Sangha, who was a student of Early Buddhism. He asked me to simply sit and be aware of my thoughts. Davidson-Marx asked the group to label our thoughts and simply be aware of how much time we spend planning, preoccupied with the past, or fearful of what’s coming in the days ahead. It was quite an awakening.

“Meditation invites us to take a seat in a new relationship with experience: to shift from planning, self-congratulation or regret to touching, tasting, hearing, seeing, feeling. From a made-up world to the real world as presented by raw sensory impressions, moment by moment,” says Davidson-Marx.

Flow

How can we find more moments in which we are truly present? When we are really engaged with a pursuit, passion, or hobby, we can find moments of mindfulness and “flow.”

Psychologists refer to this as a mental state in which a person performing an activity they enjoy is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment. Flow is characterized by the complete absorption in what one does, and a resulting transformation in one’s sense of time.

Named by the psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi in 1975, the concept has been widely referred to across a variety of fields and is particularly well



recognized in occupational therapy, though the concept has been claimed to have existed for thousands of years under other names.

According to Csíkszentmihályi, flow is “a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter, the experience is so enjoyable that people will continue to do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it.”

According to the mindfulness app Headspace, “When you’re giving your fullest attention to an activity or task that you are incredibly passionate about, singularly focused on, and totally immersed in, you may find yourself creating the conditions

Above: Regina finds her play and flow surfing with friends. Photo by Peter Fish.

Continued on next page ...

necessary to experience a flow state of mind. The mind's usual chatter begins to fade away, placing us in a non-distracted zone. The feelings that would consume you under normal circumstances (inhibition, hunger, fatigue, or aches and pains) melt away, and all that matters is your dedication to your craft.

Those who regularly experience flow are more likely to develop positive traits, such as increased wellbeing, higher self-esteem, more creativity, stronger concentration, and increased productivity.

Csikszentmihályi describes the eight characteristics of flow as:

1. Complete concentration on the task
2. Clarity of goals and reward in mind and immediate feedback
3. Transformation of time (speeding up/slowing down)
4. The experience is intrinsically rewarding
5. Effortlessness and ease
6. A balance between challenge and skills
7. Actions and awareness are merged, losing self-conscious rumination
8. There is a feeling of control over the task

VerywellMind – a health and wellbeing website, states that, “Flow experiences can occur in different ways for different people. It often happens when you are doing something that you enjoy and in which you are quite skilled.” Many activities can spark a sense of flow – from painting, drawing, and writing to skiing to dancing or running.

“I’ve been painting for 50 years, and the beautiful part of this gift is that it makes me leave this planet. As soon as I put my brush to paper and see the paint smear, I don’t hear voices, lose awareness of time, and am transformed into a place where I am free of everything, including pain,” says Grace Volpe, an artist from the Catskills region.

Achieving flow

To enter flow, choose a task that you don’t find to be too easy or boring. According to *Medical News Today*, we

can achieve flow by:

• **Allowing enough time:** It takes time to enter a flow state. Therefore, it might be easier to use flow for longer tasks rather than shorter ones and to block off a set period to work on them.

• **Minimizing interruptions:** Distractions and interruptions make entering a flow state more difficult. People can ensure that they have uninterrupted time to work on something by going somewhere private, turning notifications off on their devices, telling others they will be busy, or blocking out time on their calendar.

• **Practicing mindfulness:** The skills that a person uses to become and remain mindful are similar to those involved in a flow state.

• **Adjusting the task:** Tasks that are dull, repetitive, or too easy may not induce a flow state. If possible, a person should try adjusting these tasks so that they are more enjoyable, meaningful, or challenging. Conversely, they can break down tasks that are too hard or complex into simplified steps.

Let’s play

Beyond flow, there’s also the importance of play. Humans have a biological drive to play and there are several different kinds of play.

Dr. Stuart Brown, a psychiatrist, dedicated much of his career to the study of human play. He is the founder of the National Institute for Play – a 501c (3) non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to advancing society’s understanding and application of play – a long-ignored biological capability that can lead to healthier, happier lives. It studies the scientific knowledge of play behavior and understanding its implications.

Research reveals that adults who play experience less stress and more optimism and wellbeing. Children who are allowed to play are faster learners, more creative, and more socially competent.

Dr. Brown says that each of us has an inherent play nature that is as unique as our fingertips. As we grow up, we develop strong preferences

for certain types of play over others. One person’s fun is another person’s boredom. Over the years, Dr. Brown has found that most people have one of eight “play personalities,” identified through thousands of interviews and observations.

Play personalities

Dr. Brown believes that most people see themselves in the eight archetypes and find them useful for homing in on their primary play personality. Here’s the list. What’s yours?

The Collector

The thrill is to have and to hold an interesting collection of objects or experiences – anything from coins to toy trains, antiques, wine, postage stamps, and beyond.

The Competitor

These people tap into euphoria and the creativity of play by participating in a competitive game with specific rules. They aren’t playing just for the game; they aim to win. Games and keeping score make them tick.

The Creator/Artist

For this type, joy is found in making things. Painting, printmaking, woodworking, pottery, and sculpture are well-known activities of creator/artists, but so are furniture making, knitting, sewing, and gardening. Creator/artists may share their creations or may never show anyone what they make. The point is to make something beautiful, functional, goofy, or to make something work. The creator/artist may enjoy taking something apart, replacing broken parts, and putting it back together again.

The Director

Directors enjoy planning and executing scenes and events. Though many are unconscious of their motives and style of operating, they love the power to make things happen. They are born organizers.

The Explorer

Exploring can be physical – literally going to new places – or emotional – searching for a new feeling or a deepening of the familiar through music, movement, or even flirtation.

Exploration can also be mental, such as researching a new subject or seeking out new points of view.

The Joker

The most basic and extreme player throughout history is the joker. A joker’s play always revolves around foolishness. In school, a joker may have found social acceptance by clowning around to make classmates laugh. Adult jokers carry on that social strategy in different ways.

The Kinesthete

Kinesthetes are people who like to move; some even need to move to think. This category of people finds themselves happiest moving as part of dance, swimming, or walking. They naturally want to push their bodies and feel the result. While kinesthetes may play sports, competition is not the focus – it is a way of engaging in movement.

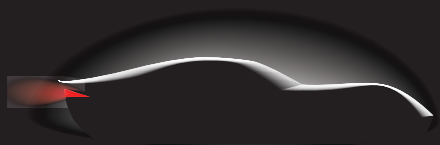
Juliane Randazzo, my surf partner on the New Jersey Shore may be a kinesthete. She says that after a session trying to catch some waves, she smiles on her short drive home from the beach. “Whether I caught any waves or just paddled around in the ocean, the accomplishment for me is just getting out there and moving. There’s just something about being in the waves,” says Randazzo.

The Storyteller

For the storyteller, imagination is the key to the joys of play. Storytellers may be novelists, playwrights, cartoonists, or screenwriters, or they may find their greatest joy in reading novels and watching movies created by others. Storytellers feel engaged in stories and experience the thoughts and emotions of characters in the story.

Get inspired. Start a new project, host a gathering, take a new class. In other words, “Make Monday different than Tuesday.” •

To learn more about the National Institute For Play, they are located in Carmel Valley, CA, can be reached by phone at (831) 659-1740, or visit online at nifplay.org/#Section_1



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The go-to social media platforms for younger generations “YOU KIDS ARE ALWAYS ON YOUR PHONES...”

By Lindsey Clark
lindsey@mainstreetmag.com

Social media plays a prominent part in most, if not all, of our lives. It might have been a Facebook post that brought you to this article online, or maybe an Instagram story reminded you to pick up a copy of *Main Street*. Even if social media did not play a part in your reading this, social media still influences so much of what people do and when or why they do it. As a 20-year-old college student, I know that social media has become essentially pivotal, hugely shaping the trends and general behavior of young people. Whether you've used these sites yourself, have only heard about them on the news, or know nothing about them, it's important to learn a bit about some of these platforms. I'm going to briefly cover a few of the older, more common sites, and then dive into two more recent apps that have been garnering attention.

Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter

Instagram has developed many add-ons since its establishment as a photo sharing app (not to mention a whole unspoken set of evolving expecta-

tions among younger users). Your feed is what you mainly see on the app, showing you all the pictures (or videos) that the people you follow have posted (along with some recommended posts or ads). Whether it's a friend posting about their beach vacation, a college posting about an upcoming event, a business posting about a sale, or a local channel posting about breaking news, these posts can vary vastly in topic. You can also make a “story” post, which is just like a main post but formatted differently and can be viewed by your followers for 24 hours only. Your profile shows all your posts, and your stories if you wish to organize them there. You can like other people's posts, comment on them, save them, or share them (by reposting to your story or direct messaging the post to someone else, among other ways). There are privacy settings you can adjust which allow you to have a private, public, or business account. The “Explore Page” on the app gives people a chance to search for content or profiles and shows users a never-ending grid of posts or “Reels” that they might

enjoy based on data collected about their preferences. Reels are formatted differently than regular posts, have their own page in the app, and are very similar to TikToks, which I will discuss later. Instagram also developed a shopping section where you can buy the items you see in a post.

Snapchat, on the other hand, is basically like texting through pictures. Mainly, you can send pictures or videos with text to talk with friends. Within the app, you can also text your friends as you normally would. Snapchat launched a “stories” feature prior to Instagram, where you can post pictures or videos to be viewed by followers in a 24-hour span. You can save Snapchats or stories to your “Memories” just like you would save photos to your phone's camera roll. Another notable feature is “Snap Maps,” a location sharing feature that allows you to show your current location to friends on a global map.

Like Instagram, Twitter has become a platform for people to share and learn information (adding a whole new, troublesome layer of having to vet sources and fact-check).

With a character limit that is now 280 per tweet, people can share their thoughts about essentially any topic (accompanied by the media of their choosing) in tweets and threads of multiple tweets. The trending tab on the app shows the hot topics being discussed the most at a given time, whether these are tailored to you, to your country, or to a certain topic, like sports. Twitter has become quite news-oriented, and unfortunately, out of habit, I turn to the app for breaking news often. As with Instagram, you can create your own profile; like, share, re-tweet, and bookmark tweets; and direct message others. Twitter also recently added a new feature called “Spaces” in which you can talk with other users about a specific topic through audio, like a live podcast.

TikTok

TikTok, from the perspective of my generation, used to be a bit of a silly platform at its inception. Stemming from the app Musical.ly, it was initially perceived as a place for pre-teens to lip sync songs ... and that was about it. But as more people flocked

Continued on next page ...



to TikTok – for a while, it was popular for people like my friends to claim they downloaded the app “as a joke” – it had such an increasingly large user base that it became serious for a lot of people, including myself.

The main attraction when you open the app is a never-ending “For You Page” in which the app’s algorithm develops a scarily accurate idea of what content you like, what content you dislike, and what content is popular or getting people talking – all developed by you scrolling past videos, staying to watch them, reading the comments on them, liking them, saving them, etc. The content here is videos only. These are formatted to take up your whole phone screen (which is also the case with Reels), and people can record audio, use music, or consult existing “audios” as the sound for these videos. You have your own profile as with Instagram where all your posts reside, alongside your likes and saved videos (your followers and the public don’t see these unless you allow them to). You can set your account to private or public, depending on if you want to try your hand at going viral! Also, within the app, you can send videos to your friends, and watch or launch your own live streams depending on the extent of your following. Besides the For You Page are the “Following” and “Friends” tabs where you see content from everyone you follow and the people you follow who follow you back, respectively.

One misconception to clear up about apps like TikTok is that just because someone has the app and uses it, does not mean they have to contribute their own content to the app. For the first year or so that I had TikTok, it was merely so that I could watch other people’s funny videos, share them with my friends, and be up to date on trends. Not having TikTok had become a social barrier for me, and by downloading the app, I was less giving into peer pressure, and more broadening my horizons to better relate to those around me. Eventually, I started posting videos to a private account, just so that my friends and I can laugh rather than so that I can get public attention (which is quite a scary concept to me!). The point here, then, is that you

can choose the level of involvement you wish to have and avoid anything daunting or too “public.”

The algorithm and overall atmosphere of TikTok is a more complicated story, and it can be quite an overwhelming experience when engaging with so much content (and by extension, so many varying ideas and perspectives) at once. Finding the right balance can be notoriously difficult with TikTok because of the way that a constant stream of content finds you the second you open the app. In my experience, I can be stuck in front of the screen for hours if I don’t recognize what I’m doing and put the phone down, and sometimes I even delete the app for a while.

BeReal

BeReal has emerged recently as a less “performative” social media option. In my experience, I still feel like it’s a performance. To explain what I mean by that, I’ll begin with the concept itself. Once a day, at any time, users of the app will get a notification that it’s “Time to BeReal.” Whether this appears on your phone while you’re eating breakfast, enjoying a concert, trying to get some sleep, or doing the world’s most mundane activity, the idea is that you open the app and capture your “BeReal.” You are given a two-minute span (or sometimes less depending on when you click the notification) to take a picture of what’s in front of you with your back-facing camera, and then a picture of yourself with your front-facing camera. The concept is about trying to achieve a realistic, unfiltered view of what people are up to all at the same given moment.

There are a few loopholes and details about this worth pointing out. The most important of these is that you can post late to BeReal – or, in other words, you can wait until you’re doing something cool, and all your friends will be notified when you post late. However, you can’t see anyone else’s posts for the day until you post your own. As with any app, you can delete your BeReal after you post it. During the two-minute span you are given to take your BeReal, you can retake it as many times as you want, and the number of retakes you have



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor pressureJA

is displayed below your picture when someone clicks on three dots in the corner. And if someone screenshots your BeReal picture, you can share your own post to find out who it was.

A fun feature of the app is that you can react to other people’s BeReal posts with “RealMojis” – basically a selfie in a little circle that will appear at the bottom of another person’s post. On this app, you don’t have a “profile” really, just your username and a profile picture. Your BeReal disappears and gets replaced with a new one the next time you take it, and only you can go back and see your previous posts. Like most sites, BeReal has options to caption your BeReal picture and leave comments on other people’s.

Whether BeReal will stay relevant like other photo sharing platforms remains to be seen. In the case of BeReal, I’ve found it’s more of a fun addition to all the other platforms. I ended up getting into it myself because all my friends had it, and it became a social thing. Whether you wish to download any of these sites is entirely up to you, and like any social media, they can certainly have their downsides and negative parts. Nevertheless, I find that it’s still valuable to be in the know about these platforms and what they have to offer. •

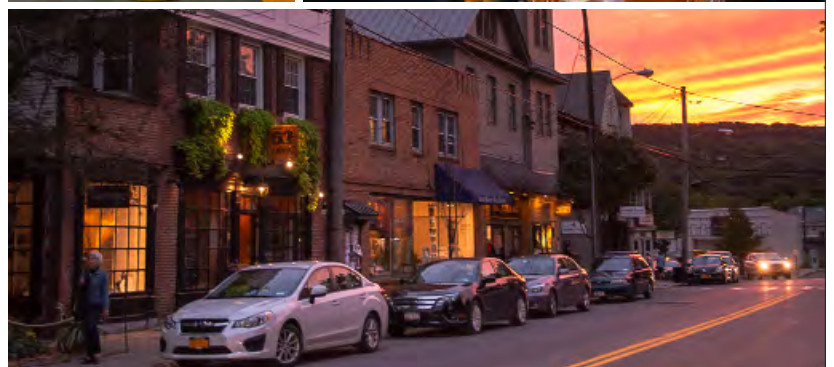
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Analyzing the impact of rural hospital closures:

SAVE SHARON HOSPITAL FROM CLOSING ITS SERVICES

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

In September, 2021 Nuvance Health announced plans to shutter the Labor and Delivery Unit at Sharon Hospital – a 78-bed general hospital in Connecticut’s Litchfield County. At the time, Nuvance announced that it would also make cuts to the Surgical Department and Intensive Care Unit. The reason: reduced patient demand and staffing challenges, which were further exasperated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 12,000 people are employed by Nuvance Health’s network, which includes seven hospitals, of which Sharon ranks highest in patient satisfaction and safety ratings. According to *Becker’s Hospital Review*, in 2019, the non-profit system’s projected annual revenues amounted to \$2.4 billion. Sharon Hospital’s physicians and RNs voted 25-to-1 against Nuvance’s proposed cuts to Sharon Hospital.

As a rural hospital, Sharon Hospital took pride in delivering “personalized, community healthcare” to just under 15,000 people residing in Region 1 of Connecticut as of 2021, not including patients who crossed the border from New York and Massachusetts.

According to the US Government Accountability Office, more than 100 rural hospitals closed between 2013 and 2020. When these hospitals shutter, those who reside in the community must travel, on average, about 20 miles further for vital services. When it comes to obtaining treatment for alcohol or drug abuse, that distance typically increases to about 40 miles.

A difference of life and death?

When rural hospitals close or limit their services, another key issue is that people must travel greater distances to receive emergency care in the wake of an accident, heart attack, or other critical situation. It’s important to note that the leading cause of death in Connecticut is heart disease according to the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention (CDC). This is a reason for concern.

Researchers at University of Kentucky and IZA Institute of Labor Economics (initiated by Deutsche Post Foundation) measured the effects of access to emergency care after a closure. Its findings revealed that urban patients in zip codes where a hospital closes have a small change in transportation time, but rural patients average an estimated 15.7 additional minutes. According to Dr. Mortman, an OB/GYN at Sharon Hospital, this additional time could mean the difference between life and death.

Maternal matters

Connecticut State Representative Maria Horn has addressed the potential closure of Sharon’s Labor and Delivery services. She pointed out that these services are a necessary part of women’s healthcare and closely related to Sharon’s ability to attract and retain young families.

It is important to note that the US has a disturbingly high rate of infant mortality, according to the CDC. To clarify, infant mortality is a death that occurs before the baby’s first birthday. This statistic is an important marker of the overall health of a society. In 2019, the infant mortality rate in the US was 5.6 deaths per 1,000 live births. In Connecticut, that rate was 4.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

Unfortunately, the US also has a high maternal mortality rate. The World Health Organization defines maternal mortality as “the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and the site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes.”

According to the CDC, in 2020, 861 women were identified as having died of maternal causes in the US compared with 754 in 2019. The maternal mortality rate for 2020 was



Photo above of Sharon Hospital by Lazlo Gyorsok

23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births compared with a rate of 20.1 in 2019. The fact that the rate is rising marks another cause for concern, and further cements how vital it is to have a hospital with services such as Labor and Delivery within a relatively short driving distance for patients.

Economic impact

Beyond the impact on health, there’s the toll hospital closures and/or limiting services take on their communities. Specifically, closures can have detrimental effects on rural communities. According to *The Effect of Rural Hospital Closures on Community Economic Health*, National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, the closure of a sole hospital in the community reduces per-capita income by \$703 or 4% and increases the unemployment rate by 1.6%. Closures in communities with alternative sources of hospital care had no long-term economic impact, although income decreased for two years following the closure.

Many community members are directly employed by local hospitals such as Sharon. Hospitals are often considered vital to local economies since they bring outside dollars into the communities via third-party payors, provide jobs, stimulate local

purchasing, and help attract industry, young families, and retirees.

Obligation and ethics

As rural hospital closures and/or limited services become more common, many patients are left without sources of care, raising ethical questions about hospitals’ and clinicians’ responsibilities during and after closures. In many cases, hospitals have been the economic hubs of their communities and we can only hope that they seriously consider the short- and long-term consequences that their decisions will have on community life.

An article entitled, *What Should Be the Scope of a Health Network’s Obligation to Respond After a Hospital Closure?* by George M. Holmes, PhD and Sharita R. Thomas, MPP, and published in the *AMA Journal of Ethics*, has shed a light on this issue. As stated in the article, “the last few years have seen an increase in the rate of rural hospital closures; from 2010 through 2013, there were 7.5 rural hospital closures per year, compared to nearly 13 per year from 2014 through 2018.”

Continued on page 35 ...

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According to Holmes and Thomas' findings, "the causes of rural hospital closure are varied [...] but can be roughly categorized into four broad groups:

1. Demographics: low volume due to declining or aging population or decreases in women of childbearing age
2. Economics: lower insurance coverage or lower household income, which reduces ability to pay
3. Technology and market trends: consolidation, decreasing use of inpatient services, staffing requirements
4. Policy changes: projected decreases in Medicare physician payment rates by 2025, although improved financial performance of hospitals in states that expanded Medicaid and Affordable Care Act provisions that shifted the financial costs of providing care from consumers to the federal government could reduce the likelihood of hospital closure."

Health care organizations faced with the decision of whether to close a rural hospital and/or limit its services should consider the potential emotional, economic, practical, and political impacts of closure for the community and for itself.

Dana Domenick had a baby at Sharon Hospital earlier this year and shared, "I understand why a privatized hospital would shut down some of its services such as if the maternity ward is being underutilized. I truly get it, but I also hate it. To me it seems that Nuvance is trying to make money rather than service the public." She continued by elaborating: "My entire experience at Sharon Hospital was incredible! I felt so taken care of and I think hospitals should strive to be like Sharon Hospital. Instead of closing the maternity ward, Nuvance should be trying to bring people to the hospital to have babies, and for them to have their own amazing experience like I had."

What is the Save Sharon Hospital group, why was it formed, and what is its goal?

Save Sharon Hospital (SSH) was originally formed during the summer of 2018 when Sharon Hospital announced its plans to close Maternity

services in less than a month. According to the group's website, "We were outraged by the decision to remove this vital service from our community and upset by the lack of communication from Sharon Hospital. Our hard work paid off, and Sharon Hospital announced that it would keep Labor and Delivery open indefinitely!"

As the group's website explains, later that year, HealthQuest (the NY-based company that previously owned Sharon Hospital) and Western Connecticut Health Network (WCHN), applied to the Connecticut Office of Health Strategy (OHS) to merge their two organizations. OHS made the decision that HealthQuest and WCHN could merge (eventually becoming Nuvance Health), and took the public testimony provided by SSH and other community members to heart – OHS required that Sharon Hospital maintain all services including Maternity for the next five years as part of its Certificate of Need (CON) process as a caveat for the merger.

Fast forward to September 2021, and once again Nuvance announced plans to close Maternity, this time in 8-12 months. However, according to the SSH group's website, OHS has yet to approve the closure, and Nuvance's five-year commitment is not up until April 1, 2024. "Rather than closing down our vital services, Nuvance should be using the remaining time in its five-year commitment to find sustainable solutions to maintain our hospital as a full-service operation," the group's representative stated.

They continued to explain: "Since Nuvance's September 2021 announcement, we have formed a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and hired an experienced healthcare attorney from one of Connecticut's major law firms. Our lawyer has helped plan our legal strategy and communications with OHS, and is responding to the legal filings in connection with the ongoing CON process."

In response to the letters from SSH and the medical community, on February 3, 2022, OHS opened an official investigation into Nuvance's compliance at Sharon Hospital with the initial agreement made in April 2019, citing: "Information received from the community and Hospital



Above: Dana Domenick delivered her first child at Sharon Hospital earlier this year and had an incredible experience, one that she hopes others will continue to have.

suggests that key discrepancies persist concerning the Hospital's compliance..." and that OHS "shall have the power to administer oaths and take testimony related to the matter of the investigation."

Nuvance on revenue loss

Sharon Hospital's owner, Nuvance Health, claims that since Nuvance bought the facility in 2017, Sharon Hospital has lost about \$40 million. It therefore plans to close the hospital's maternity ward and convert the intensive care unit (ICU) into a "progressive care unit."

Nuvance claims it plans to phase out Labor and Delivery because Sharon Hospital has seen fewer than 200 annual deliveries for the past four years – an average rate of fewer than one delivery per day. It claims that some days pass with no births at all, but a fully staffed unit is still in place. It states that an underused unit cannot be maintained while ensuring that Sharon Hospital can continue serving its patients and community in the long-term. It also states that the Sharon Hospital Emergency Room physicians are trained to deliver babies.

As for Nuvance's plans to convert the ICU into a progressive care unit, according to *CT Insider*, hospital officials say the change to the ICU wouldn't reduce services. This plan

intends to maintain the same level of service without losing revenue.

According to a March 2022 article in *CT Examiner*, Nuvance came in with a .46% profit margin. Nuvance Health's president and CEO John Murphy, MD, took home \$12.8 million in fringe benefits, the *News-Times* reported October 21.

Save Sharon Hospital's stance

SSH countered those points stating that although Nuvance has cited low annual birth numbers and high operational costs for the reasons behind the cuts, SSH claims that Nuvance hasn't been transparent about the numbers. SSH also says that important data has not been shared with the public, including what the total number of births per year would need to be for Nuvance to break even financially, and what the total reduction in operating expenses and/or increase in revenues would need to be for Nuvance to break even. They also point out that according to the documents filed by Nuvance to OHS, not only has the annual number of births averaged above 200 at Sharon Hospital for the past four years, but the decline in birth rates at Sharon Hospital can be largely attributed to the lack of promotion of the birthing

Continued on next page ...

suites, along with the repeated announcements of imminent closure. As for the proposed replacement of the ICU with a progressive care unit, the medical professionals in their group claim that a progressive care unit cannot provide the same level of care found in an intensive care unit, and the loss of an ICU would definitely be felt by the community. SSH feels that the proposed changes would take necessary services away from residents. Additionally, both the members and supporters of SSH as well as numerous physicians like Dr. Howard Mortman, emphatically explain that limiting or eliminating services such as Labor and Delivery can be the difference between life and death for those in need of said services.

“I care about my patients like they are my family. And what is about to happen if Nuvance gets its way will threaten the lives- and the quality of my patients’ lives. The proposed closures and/or limitation of services is going to cause lifelong morbidity and overall bad outcomes,” explained Dr. Mortman.

Although Nuvance claims that its Sharon Hospital Emergency Room physicians are trained to deliver babies, SSH counters that by stating that despite how highly trained the Emergency Room physicians are, their experience delivering babies is unlikely to be matched by a certified obstetrician who has completed a five-year residency in obstetrics and gynecology and who is trained in obstetrical emergencies.

Nuvance on growth and ability to meet the evolving needs of the community

Nuvance says its plan focuses on growth and envisions a sustainable, vibrant future for the hospital. It claims that the strategic direction is the result of years-long planning by Sharon Hospital and Nuvance Health to analyze how the community seeks care and chart a sustainable path forward in meeting long-term needs.

It says that the plan includes expanding primary and ambulatory care to improve patient outcomes and reduce the need for hospital stays; investing in behavioral health to fill a gap in the region to better meet the

needs of the growing 65+ population and expand services to adolescents and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It plans to convene workgroups to evaluate opportunities for consolidation, and phasing out underused service lines that are available at other Nuvance Health facilities, which includes developing an operational plan to evaluate the days and hours of operating room availability to improve the efficiency of the currently practiced surgical schedule.

Save Sharon Hospital’s stance

To counter, the SSH group says that Nuvance’s plans don’t take into account the population growth that has occurred during the pandemic. School enrollment in Region 1 grew by almost 2.5% from pre-pandemic figures in the 2018-19 school year compared with the 2020-21 school year, a possible indication of the relocation of many families to this area as a result of COVID-19. Nuvance’s plans also don’t take into account the need for people within the community to have safe, local access to healthcare. For example, pregnant women would be required to travel 45-60 minutes to another hospital to deliver their babies, which may be too long during an emergency situation, and could be dangerous during inclement weather.

Regarding the plans to evaluate operating room hours, according to SSH any cut to hours would lead to times when people needing emergent surgeries would need to be transferred to another hospital for these surgeries – again, which could mean the difference between life and death. Sharon Hospital states that if the Labor and Delivery unit closes, it will no longer be required to pay anesthesiologists to be on call for births after normal operating room hours or to pay surgeons to assist with emergency C-sections. This also means that there will be no surgeons or anesthesiologists for all other emergency surgeries outside of normal operating hours.

The rallying cry

The community, along with the SSH group, has put forth the rallying cry against Nuvance’s repeated attempts to shutter the doors of Labor and De-



Above: Amy Scheim with her husband and newborn after she was released in 2021 after giving birth to her first child. She is one of many outraged patients at the proposed Nuvance closures at Sharon Hospital.

livery and limit other services. Some patients and community members have gone so far as to claim that Nuvance is “waging a war on women and women’s healthcare” by attempting to shut down and limit these services.

Amy Scheim of Millerton, NY, gave birth to her first child in 2021 at Sharon Hospital and she emphatically explained that, “I can’t say enough positive things about my experience, about Dr. Mortman and the entire Sharon Hospital staff. During my stay at Sharon Hospital, my needs and concerns were being heard and respected, which I can’t say is the case at most other hospitals.” When it came to the possible closure of the maternity ward, Scheim continued, “I am completely outraged that Nuvance is trying to close Labor and Delivery. Sharon Hospital and their birthing suites really stand out in terms of the level of care and support being offered, well beyond the day that you go home. Nuvance has an opportunity to stand out and support pregnant women and families, but instead they’re going to abandon them and walk away. They will be abandoning a large part of our population and will ultimately be putting them at higher risk because they now have to travel so much further, not to mention if they have possible complications. The closure is an abandonment instead of an investment in our community, and

Nuvance will be leaving our families high and dry.”

The community has shown up to have their voices heard in numerous ways such as by contacting local and state politicians, by signing letters and petitions, and by attending a number of rallies hosted by the SSH group. SSH is planning for community events in the near future, leading to the upcoming public hearing on whether or not Nuvance will gain permission from the state to close labor and delivery at Sharon Hospital. (The date for the public hearing has yet to be scheduled by the state). These events will be announced in the local media and on the SSH website.

As you can deduce from the information, facts, and opinions shared above, this is not a simple matter and there are a lot of variables involved. At the end of the day, we can only hope that when decisions are made that the sole focus will be on what is best for the welfare and health of the people that reside in the community. ●

To learn more about Sharon Hospital please visit www.nuvancehealth.org/locations/sharon-hospital.

To learn more about the Save Sharon Hospital group, please visit www.savesharon-hospital.org.

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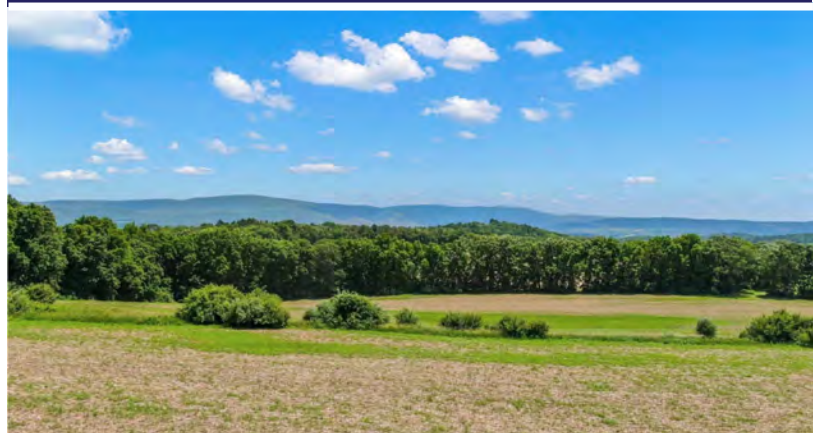



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TAKING THE WASTE OUT OF FOOD WASTE

By Caleb May
info@mainstreetmag.com

It is a dilemma that everyone has most likely experienced. You lean back from the table as your food baby protrudes in front of you. Your plate still features the remaining forkfuls of food. Despite your best efforts you can't bring yourself to finish the meal in an attempt to avoid the same fate as Mr. Creosote in Monty Python. Fear not, because the Food Waste Pilot is here!

The problem at hand:

Food waste has always been a serious problem in the United States. According to the USDA we waste about 30-40% of the food that we produce. Feeding America put a size to that percentage and it is something to the tune of 108 billions pounds of wasted food each year. To further put that into perspective, that is 130 billion meals that could have gone to people in need.

The EPA has marked the food we waste as the biggest component that makes up landfills and incineration sites. Naturally, they are always constantly searching for ways to limit this absurd amount of waste entering the wrong places. They have even created what is called the "food waste hierarchy" to detail the overall preference of where the waste ends up going. As you may have guessed, the landfill ranks at the bottom of the list. Next is composting followed by industrial uses, animal feed, food for hungry people, and source reduction.

The Solutions:

The state of Connecticut already has some initiatives in place to help divert food waste away from the landfills. Restaurants and supermarkets are a huge producer of food waste and are now being encouraged to start donating the food that they don't sell

or use to people in need. For places that produce certain amounts of waste and within 20 miles of a composting facility, they are mandated to divert as much as possible away from the garbage and landfills.

That brings us to the small towns of Salisbury and Sharon who were scrambling for a way to reduce the food waste that their towns produce. A need for a food waste recycling program was voiced by the Transfer Station Recycling Advisory Committee. The plan had the backing of the Transfer Station Manager, Brian Bartram, and the Selectmen of the two towns. So, in May of last year, the Salisbury-Sharon Transfer Station unveiled the program.

According to Bartram, who has been a strong supporter of the program, "the initial 120 household pilot began on May 1, 2021. Yesterday, (7/7/22) we began handing out containers for the expanded pilot. We will be accepting up to 400 households."

The whole process works a little bit like this: The participant will go about their normal lives and eat what they can. What they can't eat, will find its way into the BPI certified biodegradable bag that is handed out by the station. Acceptable foods include meat, dairy, fish, bread, leftovers, rotten food, and even paper towels. From there, the bags will be dropped off at the transfer station. That's it — that is all you have to do! The transfer station will take care of the rest. The waste will be picked up by New Milford Farms who uses the leftovers as compost, which in turn fuels sustainable food production.

Creating quite the buzz

The program is wildly popular and Barbara Bettigole, a chair of the Transfer Station Recycling Advisory Committee, is pretty sure of why that is. "People love that they make so little garbage, and that the collection of food waste can be tidy and not smelly.



Above all, they just feel good doing the right thing with their food scraps and leftovers."

Don't just take her word for it. There are many glowing reviews from the townsfolk that are seeing real results and watching their food waste get diverted to a more appropriate use. One user says, "I keep meaning to reach out and tell you how absolutely wonderful this food waste program is. Between the composting and my recycling, I have almost no other garbage. Almost none!" This has made it easy to keep track of how much waste each family is producing. This encourages households to try and produce less and less. Each time they show up to drop off their food waste, recycling, and garbage they want to show up with less and less.

Another user notes: "Just to let you know I find this program so easy and so valuable. My garbage is way down and I'm so happy not to use the sink disposal. I'm down to two bags of food waste, one bag of glass and paper and half a bag of household. Maybe I can even cut back more."

This is a time when the program is needed more than ever. In a moment when climate change is taking its grip, it is vital that we take as many steps as possible to reducing what we can. Food waste is an amazing place to start and this program gives the people the power to keep track of how much they produce and then provide them with a reliable place to divert that waste for a good cause. So next time you are getting ready for dinner, think about the impact of each uneaten bite and consider joining the Food Waste Pilot! •

You can sign up for the program by emailing foodwastepilot@gmail.com.

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In focus

Horses and nature themes are the focus of photographer Ellen Lynch's artistic eye

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

"The Earth took me in, held me and taught me the wonder of my senses: to see beyond clouds to fantastic beings, to hear the weather in the wind, to smell the stories of trees, animals, streams, and to feel the soft mosses, waxy leaves, and sun-warmed stones below the skin – to feel them with my soul," says Ellen Lynch a photographer in Stuyvesant, NY.

Lynch, who is renowned for capturing the grace, freedom, and beauty of horses, also connects with subjects that relate to nature. Raised in a rural community in Western New York, forests, fields, and the local dairy farm where Lynch worked, fostered her curiosity and innate embrace of the natural world. Trees and creeks were Lynch's playground, and dogs, cats, horses, and cows were her companions.

Her family of perpetual crafters and makers did a lot to nurture Lynch's creativity. Gifts and toys were made rather than purchased from the local shop and playing outdoors was the norm. Instead of complaining about the boredom that can accompany children on rainy days, Lynch welcomed opportunities to produce her own plays or create birdhouses made of popsicle sticks.

When Lynch entered college, she pursued the arts. In 1984, she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree from the State University of New York at Purchase. "Photography has always been a curiosity for me. I did a bit in school, but never enjoyed being in the dark room all day, so I switched my focus to graphic design," says Lynch.

Western expansion

After working in Manhattan as a graphic designer for more than a decade, Lynch realized that, thanks to the internet and express mail services,

she could work from anywhere. In 1996, she packed her bags and headed out west. Lynch landed by the Grand Teton mountains in Idaho. She believes that this region of the American West is the most beautiful place on Earth. It was the rugged, natural beauty that inspired Lynch to pick up her cameras once again.

While maintaining her client base in New York, Lynch wandered the mountains on horseback with her camera in tow. The focus of her eye: the grandeur of the granite peaks, the dramatic skies, and the animals who make their home there.

The beauty of the land and Lynch's sense of wonder about the cowboy lifestyle and horses, provided endless opportunities for her to practice her craft. Just as photography always captured Lynch's interest, horses always sparked her imagination. The serenity and stunning vistas out west are what kept her in Idaho for 15 years.

At the time, Lynch was still working in film – both 35mm and larger formats. She says that she is always grateful for the discipline the limitations of film have taught her – to learn to choose judiciously and when to press the shutter on a roll of film that only offered 24 images.

As technology evolved, Lynch switched over to digital cameras, which enabled her to use the photographic skills that she learned with film in combination with the Photoshop editing techniques that she developed as a graphic designer. It proved a powerful combination.

At home in the Hudson Valley

In 2010, Lynch returned to the east coast. She was drawn to the Hudson River Valley for its extraordinary light. The Earth and horses continue to be her key areas of focus.

The Earth showed Lynch that special things can happen at any time. "Ephemeral moments and light that will never exist in exactly the same way again, inspires me to savor and



preserve those moments in photographs," she says.

Lynch photographs the Earth simply because she enjoys being in the great outdoors, but horses continue to inspire her. "I enjoy the challenge of capturing that dusty turn, a glance, or a perfectly collected stallion galloping across a meadow. My goal is to share their essence and the admiration and awe I feel when they're present," reveals Lynch.

Gallery

Lynch's studio gallery opened this summer. The idea evolved from a previous venture – a pop-up space that Lynch launched in Chatham, NY, in 2017. At the time, friends loaned her a baby grand piano and each weekend over the course of three months, she offered concerts, readings, and other artist presentations.

"Once I had my first exhibition up, I knew I wanted to share it with other artists and create a community space for the town," reveals Lynch. "I knew the Chatham pop-up was temporary and not sustainable for one person, but I really missed the space when it closed."

Continued on next page ...

All images with this article courtesy of Ellen Lynch Photography.



Right before the pandemic, Lynch began networking and sharing her idea with others. The concept was met with much enthusiasm. Lynch's first exhibition and reception at her new studio gallery was a dual event for her exhibition, *Ephemeral and Cocktails with Cattle*, which celebrated the miniature Herefords at BenzWick Acres. The herd's impressive genetic background hails from high quality registered stock from Nebraska, Illinois, Ohio, and South Carolina.

The event was well received by the community. More than 120 guests attended the summer 2022 opening, which helped the BenzWick Acres promote the animals. The opening offered guests a rich experience in which they viewed photographs, enjoyed some libations and snacks, and visited and fed cattle. Lynch describes the event as "art in the yard and cattle out back."

"The reception was truly a community event that celebrated the Hudson Valley's agriculture and culture," mentions Lynch. Lush bouquets of blooms were provided by Stuyvesant's Damsel Garden and the wine was provided by The Kinderhook Bottle Shop. Lynch was grateful for Bray Kowalski of Royal Services Property Management and his girlfriend who filled in as bartenders. Locally prepared Mexican fare was enjoyed by all.

On view

Lynch's *Ephemeral* is still on view by appointment only through Labor Day at her studio gallery in Stuyvesant.

The collection of platinum/palladium prints expresses the ever-changing fluidity of horses, which includes their power and motion. "One of the things that has always fascinated me about horses is their duality – their wild spirit and power coupled with their gentle, grass-eating ways. They are ethereal beings, yet grounded firmly on the earth," she adds. Due to Lynch's deeply felt connection with horses, they proved to be easy partners and subjects for her.

Using the historic platinum/palladium metals process, which was developed 200 years ago, coupled with negatives made from her digital files, Lynch believes that this process is a harmonious fusion of old and modern technologies.

"Coaxing an image to come to life through this process feels quite similar to the patience required when working with a young horse – trying different things to achieve a desired result. Both are equally rewarding. Even watching the images appear in the developer tray feels like horse magic to me," says Lynch.

As the most archival photographic process – because the image is embedded in the fibers of the paper – the images offer a reflection of the enduring trust and connection Lynch has been fortunate enough to experience with horses. "If I could infuse the smell of them into the images, I

would," she adds.

The photographer welcomes individuals as well as school and youth groups to her studio gallery space. Last month, she partnered with Ilze Earner, who runs Safe Haven Rescue in Hudson, NY. It offers a two-week "Ride and Read" program, which educates children on how to take care of horses. They also spend time reading stories with horse-centric themes. The camp took a field trip to Ellen Lynch Photography to talk about horses and view the photos.

"I love having children in the studio gallery. They are so curious and engaging. I hope to have more students come in with their classes in the fall," says Lynch.

Next up

The next exhibition, which will launch this autumn, will present a new series of giclee photographs captured this past spring in Idaho where Lynch still maintains a tie to a working cattle ranch. Some of the photos capture the beauty of her own horses. The exhibit will be paired with a concert performed by acclaimed pianist Robert Logan.

Also in development is a monthly salon, a casual gathering of creative minds and hearts with artist presentations and forums. "The goal of this studio gallery experiment will continue to bring together and celebrate the talent and community that is abundant in the Hudson Valley," concludes Lynch.

"In offering my images, I share my veneration for our home. I share that place in myself that is of the Earth. I share a reminder to look up, to look down and to look within, a reminder that we are all the Earth. As the Earth is, we are." •

To view the current exhibition, please contact Ellen Lynch at Ellen Lynch Photography, Stuyvesant, NY, or by calling (208) 390-9088. You can also visit her online at ellenlynch.com.



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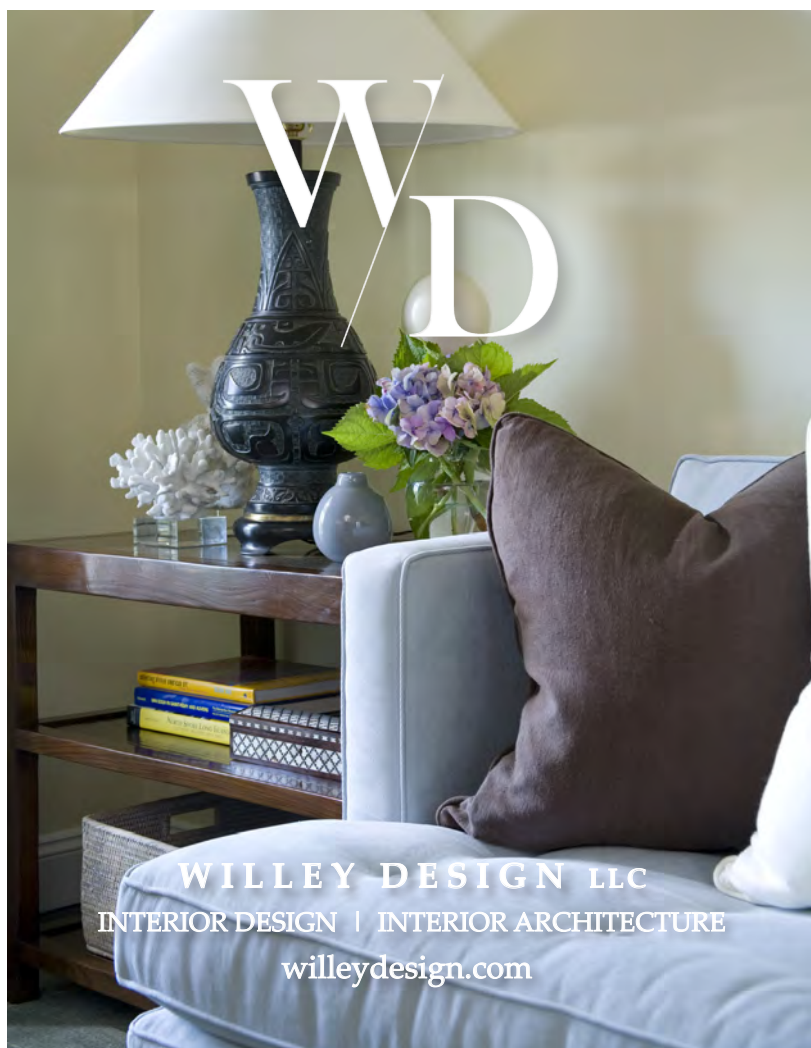
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TIME TO GO TUBING

By Dominique DeVito
info@mainstreetmag.com

Picture this: Blue skies, warm sun, a tree-lined river gurgling and beckoning. It's the ultimate outdoorsy lazy landscape, and all you need to enjoy it is a large tube.

The folks at Farmington River Tubing (FRT) in New Hartford, CT, understand the lure and appeal of a river float. They've been in the business of providing this recreational experience for several decades, and have seen thousands of smiles from delighted tubers, from first-timers to repeat floaters, single, in pairs, and in larger groups.

When I stumbled upon Farmington River Tubing's website in search of this kind of adventure, I was reminded of the joyful experiences I had of white water rafting in Chile and also tubing down the Pickering Creek in Pennsylvania at day camp. These experiences led me to believe that tubing on the Farmington would be everything I wanted it to be – scenic, sporty yet lazy, contemplative and quiet in some spots yet swift and challenging in others. And let's face it, what better way to spend a sunny summer day off from work? I noted that FRT operates daily between 11am and 5pm. The forecast for the day I wanted to go looked perfect. I blocked it out on my calendar.

Be prepared

I was impressed with all the instruction and information on FRT's website. Since I was coming from over an hour away, I knew I had to plan accordingly. The site explains what to expect, what to wear, what can or can't be brought along on the float, the cost, the registration process, and much more. Ultimately, you need to consider whether tubing is something you'll really enjoy, and how to approach it to have the best experience. The very first sign on the website (and on site, as all the signs are) states in large letters: If you can't swim, then you can't

go. This seems like an almost silly warning, but it's prophetic. You have to bear in mind that you are going to be on a river at the mercy of the water for several hours.

If you're new to tubing, it's important to review all the suggestions and precautions FRT offers carefully and thoroughly. Once you're in the tube and on the river, there's no turning back. Most important is what to wear. You're in the water, so a bathing suit is best. Something comfortable and practical, not just a suit for sunning. FRT also recommends tubing in shorts if you don't have a suitable suit. I brought along a T-shirt just in case, but I didn't need it. You must wear a life vest (which FRT provides), and it covers your chest and around your neck. Footwear is also critical. I was very happy I wore an old pair of running shoes (I don't have water shoes). They got soaked immediately (getting into the tube on the river), but I didn't have to worry about them falling off or not being adequate should I need to push off from rocks either in or out of the water.

The website very clearly states that you should call on the day you want to go tubing to check on current conditions. Even if the forecast looks fabulous, weather is unpredictable, and you don't want to be out on the river if a summer thunderstorm moves through. When I called as instructed on the day I planned to go, a very friendly and enthusiastic employee assured me conditions were ideal. Yay!

Satan's Kingdom?

Farmington River Tubing is located in a park called Satan's Kingdom (I kid you not!), part of "Wild & Scenic" Farmington River and all it has to offer. Long ago, the mountains in this part of western Connecticut blocked water flow and formed a large lake. Over time, erosion formed a deep gorge through



which what is now the Farmington River flows. The river itself is nearly 50 miles long through its main stem in northwestern Connecticut. How and why part of the gorge got the name Satan's Kingdom is part of the area's myth and magic, but it dates back to the early 1800s. It's claimed that a Native American tribe leader in the area was nicknamed Satan, and since he was a leader his influence was far-reaching. In the mid-1800s the area was populated by people who adopted an "Indian lifestyle" (whatever that means) and were described as social outcasts and ex-slaves. It's an evocative name, for sure, and it's fun to think about those who lived there and how they lived nearly 200 years ago, but there's nothing Satanic about it now – at least not on a picture-perfect summer day.

Above: A couple sets out on their tubing adventure on the Farmington River.

Continued on page 47 ...



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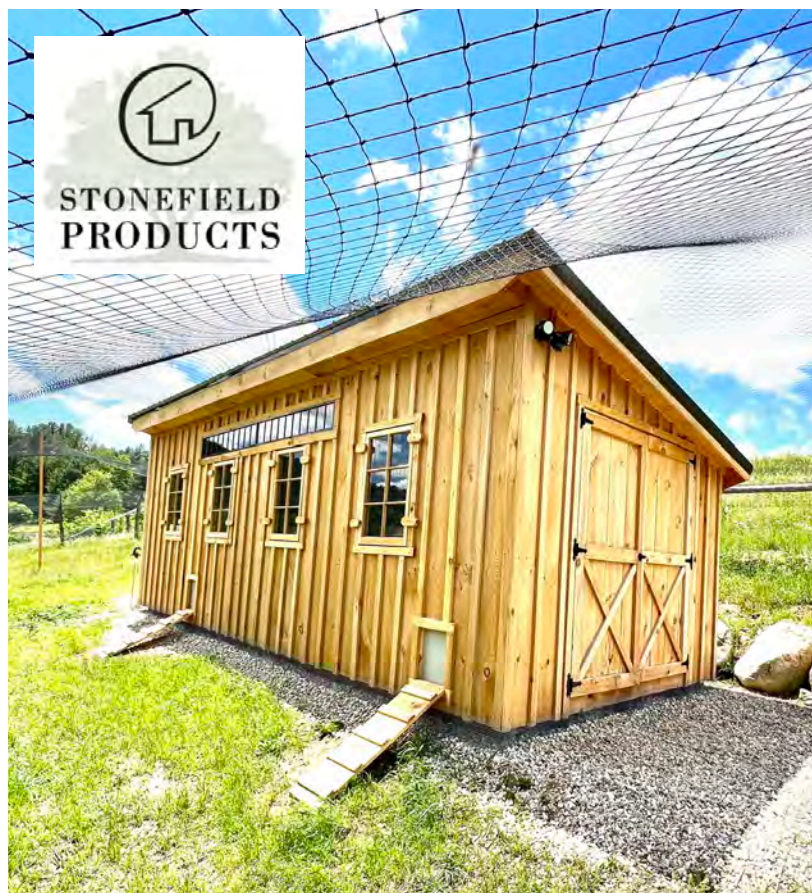
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There are all kinds of scenic routes that get you to Satan's Kingdom and FRT, whose official address is 92 Main Street, New Hartford. Sounds like the address of a coffee shop, doesn't it? In fact, there's no mention of Satan's Kingdom on FRT's website, though there's a big sign for it when you pull in. I'm not sure the association is a good one for family-friendly recreation!

I followed Routes 22 and 8 out of the Berkshires down to Rt 44 (Main Street), and the drive was lovely the whole way. Parkland and areas to pull off and picnic or explore were plentiful, and this was its own kind of "float" for me, taking in the beauty of the area as I drove along the winding roads.

Readying for the River

I arrived around 11:30 on a Wednesday morning and was surprised to find many cars already parked in the large lot. I had brought my bathing suit to change into, and there were lots of porta-potties there. I changed, went back to the car, locked it, and went to check in. FRT recommends leaving behind anything that can fall off you and be lost in the river. It's quite freeing, actually, to deliberately leave your cell phone behind and set out only in your bathing suit. Your keys are kept safely in an

area only employees can access as a "deposit" of sorts, and as a safety precaution. When I checked in I was told that two cars had to be towed the previous weekend when the people didn't leave their keys behind and they fell into the River and were lost. You do not want that to happen!

After you sign a waiver and pay the fee of \$25 (cash only) – and leave your car keys behind – you move on to where there's a giant pile of colorful tubes and what seems like hundreds of life vests hanging from clothes lines, separated for children and adults. There are guidelines about what size tube is best for your height and weight. I chose a bright blue tube with an inflated back rest, thinking it was a kind of "luxury model." The life vests were clean and dry, and there were guys around to help you gear up.

It was a short walk from where you picked out your tube and put on your life vest to where you entered the river. Most people there were with at least one other person, and the awkward stage of getting into the tube, getting situated somewhat comfortably, and then moving along was punctuated with laughter and exclamations of surprise by everyone at the river's edge – as any adventurous outing should be!

Away we go!

Even though there were a lot of cars in the lot, and people getting outfitted to get on the river, there were no lines or waits to get into the tube and set off. I suspect this is not the case on a warm weekend. One thing I learned quickly is that you travel along at pretty much the same pace as the others who are setting off around the same time. Pay attention to the group sizes and decibel levels of the others around you. This mattered more to me when I was floating along by myself than I think it would – or did – for people who are in pairs or groups.

A very pleasant surprise to me was that the water felt great. I was told it was about 62 degrees, which



Above: Dominique enjoying her flight of beer after a fun-filled tubing outing. Below, left: Tubes galore for tubers. Below left: There are lots of choices for tubes for all heights and weights at FRT.

to me sounded very cold. But it didn't feel too cold at any time; in fact, it was delightful. In the information about how best to navigate the river, the advice is to stay in a seated position with your arms and feet sticking out, and to try to stay facing forward to see what's coming up. There are also warnings about not standing up in the river at any time, as your feet can slip on the algae on the rocks or get stuck between rocks. The reality is that the river turns you around in the tube, and that's OK. Sometimes you face forward, sometimes backward. And there were parts of the river that were very shallow (on the day I went), and people were standing and stretching where it was only ankle deep.

Things that came up

The staff is clear that the float lasts 2.5 to 3 hours and includes a few rapids but is mostly calm. That doesn't seem like a long time, and in the beginning you don't think about it at all – especially if you have no way to check the time because you left your cell phone safely in the car. That's supposed to be part of the whole thing, right? To forget about other things you have to do and just be on the river. I did experience those moments. There

were ducks and geese along the river who are oblivious to us floaters, so you see them in ways you otherwise couldn't. Being able to lean back and feel the sun on your face, close your eyes, and just listen... to the breeze in the trees, the water bubbling and rushing, the voices of other tubers... this was really nice.

What became a problem for me was how much paddling I had to do. In order to steer yourself both toward and away from parts of the river, and to face forward as often as possible, you have to extend your arms behind you into the water and use them as paddles. This is fine for the first hour or so, but if you don't use your arms regularly or if you have any kind of shoulder strength issues, it becomes almost debilitating. The inflated back rest that I thought would make the float more comfortable for me proved a detriment as I had to reach around even further behind me to paddle well. The large plastic plug where the tube is inflated was in the area I needed to put one of my arms, and it was sharp. I had to work around that, too.

Continued on next page ...



In all honesty, just when I thought I couldn't take any more time on the river because my arms were spent and my patience was wearing thin, I could see people getting out at the spot where the bus comes to pick you up and take you back to the launch site. It seemed to me that people who were together could share the paddling and navigation, making it less strenuous. As I was paddling and floating toward the shore to get out, I was in the area of three other tubers, all women. There were two younger girls and one older woman. They had all been floating down fairly close to each other, but then one got farther ahead. The oldest woman was farthest back. The one in the middle was paddling furiously to try to catch up with the first one. The older woman (and I) were doing our best to move along, but we could not match their energy. I heard the girls say, "Come on, mom! Paddle!" After the third or fourth time of calling this out to her she replied, "I'm doing the best I can." I could completely relate. She and I made it to the shore at about the same time, dragging our tubes up the embankment. I commented that my arms were very tired; she confessed to having a hurt knee. We were both in good shape. Which is all to say that this activity is more physically challenging than I anticipated, and I was heartened

to see the mom, younger than me and clearly athletic (as were her daughters), also feeling the effects of the float.

All OK at the end

Old school buses with one row of seats and one row cleared out for tubes come frequently to collect folks and bring them back to the launch site. The driver of our bus was all smiles as he welcomed us aboard and helped haul the tubes in. I overheard the girls telling their mom how much they liked it even though they were tired at the end. I had a bit of an epiphany around the time I thought I must be at least a couple of hours into the float, when I was on a calm, wide stretch of the river with other tubers some distance from me, so it was peaceful and quiet. It occurred to me that beginner meditation is like this float: You set yourself up to have a transformational experience, you struggle and struggle to quiet the chatter in your head about doing it "right," and when you finally realize you're actually only in the moment, serene and accepting, there is a flash of joy. This happened for me in that stretch. I stopped trying to control where I was going, I put my tired arms by my sides, and I gave it up to the river. As blissful as this was while it lasted, for me it was a bit too little, too late. Close to three hours of navigating the river in the



Above: Matt (the brewer) with Michelle and Alexis at the fine and friendly Little Red Barn Brewers in Winsted, CT. Below left: Once on the river, the water takes you away.

tube with the life vest on was, in the end, too much for me.

After-float brewery stop

By the time I changed out of my bathing suit and got in the car to go, I was tired, and I was hungry. I had checked the area for what could be a good post-float late lunch, and knew that the Little Red Barn Brewers was just nine miles northwest in Winsted, CT. I called to make sure they had food, and they confirmed there was a food truck there. Bingo. The day was still beautiful and warm, and I ordered a flight of four beers from an extensive beer menu, and sliders and fries from the food truck. I sat in the sun and enjoyed every bite and every sip.

The folks there were very friendly, too, and proudly told me they were celebrating the brewery's third anniversary. I chatted with Matt, a brewer and one of the owners, as well as Alexis and Michelle behind the bar. Matt started making beer with his twin brother and a friend about ten years ago after his wife got him a beer-making kit and they got hooked. They entered competitions and got great feedback. The rest, as they say, is history, but in the three short years since Little Red Barn opened, COVID and all, business is booming. Matt shared that the town has been "great" helping them get their old building outfitted to be a brewery and in every other

way. Alexis shared that she came when the brewery opened, "loved the beer, started working here, and never looked back."

"Everyone knows each other here," Matt said. "On the weekends it's packed with kids and dogs and people from all over. We close at 9, so it's a family place. There's live music on Wednesday and Sunday nights." This is a MUST post-tubing spot when you're in the area – or just a great place to visit even if you don't go tubing.

Yup, a great day

As I drove another scenic route home, through Sheffield in the Berkshires and Austerlitz in Columbia County before jumping on 90 to the Capital Region, I marveled once again at just how much beauty and adventures and discoveries abound in our area. I'd been to Satan's Kingdom, shared a stretch of the Farmington River, met people who were excited and passionate about what they do, and truly gotten away from the worries of the world. It was a Great Day. •

Learn more at www.farmingtonrivertubing.com and www.lrbrewers.com. I love expanding the maps of the places I'm going to visit so I can see what else is around that I might want to visit. Happy Summer!

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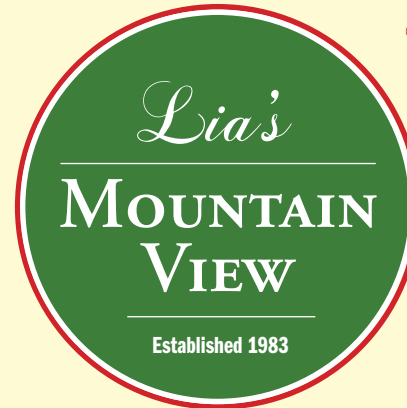
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Cosmos



By Pom Shillingford
info@mainstreetmag.com

Flower friends it's time for a full confession: for years I was not a seed starter. Didn't do it, couldn't do it, didn't want to try. Too much faff, uncertainty, mess – and anyway what was there to grow from seed that I actually liked? As a child of the 1970/80s who'd been traumatized by the horrors of the English bedding plant border, no way was I having a gaudy annual in an actual flower bed of mine. In a pot maybe at a push but that was my limit. Shrubs, trees, perennial, and bulbs, yes. But annuals, no way!

Well, all I can say now is thank God I had my horticultural road to Damascus conversion! It might not have been quite as dramatic as being struck by a thunderbolt but more the timely confluence of Instagram inspiration, a dearth of varieties to actually buy and actually reading the instructions on the packet and next thing I knew, I was a seed starter. And like all good converts, I am now zealous about it.

Let me count the reasons why

Well #1 count your pennies. A packet of seeds will set you back just a few dollars. For the price of six pre-grown starts at the garden center, you can get yourself 100 of the same plant. But furthermore, and reason #2, it wouldn't be just the same plant but literally hundreds of varieties that professional growers never bother with and you won't be able to buy anywhere else. Then #3 there are few things as satisfying as taking a tiny seed and with a little bit of TLC watching it turn into a full-blown garden beauty. And #4? If you sow what's known as 'Cut and Come Again' flowers, it won't just be your garden but your also vases that are overflowing with affordable seasonal beauty.

This month's cut flower – the ethereal beauty that is Cosmos – is the perfect example of all of above. I have a particular soft spot for her as it was my initial success with cosmos a few years ago that got me hooked on seed starting. Cosmos comes from the Greek word *kosmos*, which means beautiful and harmony. The flower represents peace and love – and couldn't we all do with a bit more of that right now?

There are over 25 species of cosmos. However, the most common type to grow in our neck of the woods is *cosmos bipinnatus* which will grow

well in just about any sunny space. The choice of beautiful colors, flower shape, and heights is endless. And while they are annuals, meaning they do not come back every year and you will have to resow to ensure plants where you want them, I have found that mine self-seed wonderfully and every year I will have cosmos 'Volunteers' popping up all over.

They are super easy to grow – not an ounce of prima donna-ism about them. You can sow these direct but not until after the last frost (around Memorial Day). I like to get a head start on them before then (plus I find the weed pressure here when they are first germinating if sown direct, is a nightmare) so I start mine inside in April. After a few weeks on a sunny window sill or under the lights, I pot up from the seed tray to a larger pot. They then sit in my cold frame hardening off waiting until I'm ready to plant them out. Aside from watering and a ten-second good pinch out (literally as it sounds, pinching off the center stalk once the plant has three good sets of leaves to encourage multiple side shoots for multiple flower stems) they ask nothing of me until it's time for the flower bed.

Give them space

Cosmos can get very bushy and prefers a little extra room to spread out,

so space plants 12 to 18 inches apart. Once in the ground, cosmos will grow rapidly, so be sure to stake them early, while they are still young. Once established, there's no need to water your cosmos plants unless there is a prolonged drought. Where water is limited – and, in case you hadn't realized, we are having an exceptionally dry summer so far this year – these are the last plants that require irrigation. Like everything in my garden though, I do give mine a seaweed soak every once in the while when I get around to it.

Now, as I write this in early July, mine are just starting to pop and will continue to flower until our first frost if I cut or deadhead them. Be sure to cut long stems when picking to encourage the plant to push out more flowers. If you pick them just as the buds are about to bloom, the flowers will last seven to ten days in a vase. ●

Top recommendation for locally cut cosmos flowers A&M Flower Co, Pine Plains NY, www.amflowerco.com

Pom Shillingford is an obsessive gardener originally from England and now based in Salisbury, CT. She offers seasonal cut flowers through English Garden Grown. Find her on Instagram @english_garden_grown.



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DECAY, THE GOOD WAY

By Lorraine Alexander
info@mainstreetmag.com

There is something poetic, almost lyrical about compost, I've decided. True, most of the compost-conscious world focuses on prosaic matters like the ratio of nitrogen to carbon, feedstocks, and NYS DEC 360 permits. It elevates creatures that I'm guessing are voracious, called detritivores, and their taste for rotting food to levels that imply they are essential. And it gets worse. Many budding earth scientists spend entire internships studying the composting capabilities of blue soldier flies, next to which the red wiggler worms enlisted for one style of tried-and-true composting seem almost cuddly. I still carry the scars from a Cary Institute program on worms that featured a full-color high-resolution photo of an 8"-long banded nightcrawler. (No wonder scientists take refuge in Latin nomenclature). When, only days later, I nearly stumbled over one on a gravel path, I fled, shrieking, as if being chased by the creature from the lagoon.

Sane people, however, consider composting the logical, proven way to repair soil and simultaneously tackle waste management. What too much tillage, which destroys the habitat of micro-organisms and increases the risk of erosion, and reliance on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides have removed from soil, compost replenishes. It improves soil's structure, which in turn improves its growing capacity and health, and thus the quality of our food.

Think: Black gold

Composting in various forms has existed as an amendment for soil for millennia, and yet it remains, for many of us, a mysterious process, and maintaining a compost pile at home can seem like one task too many. But that has been changing. Think of it this way: Composting is organic waste matter's avenue of escape from the degradation of entombed landfills. It snatches what will become life from the bottom of the dumpster. Look-

ing at a perfectly reborn pile of rich, odorless, aerated 30 : 1 pH-balanced compost is, for a soil ecologist or gardener or farmer, something akin to contemplating Keats's Grecian urn. The shorthand farmers often use for compost is "black gold."

Becoming familiar with what Emily Rueb's 2017 article on composting in the *New York Times* called "the primal chemistry of decay" is the first hurdle for many of us. What nature's process of decay makes is called humus; the heart and soul of soil, humus crumbles softly in our hands. Compost is nothing more than humus that has been created, painstakingly, by our imitation of that natural process, for which ingredient #1 is decomposable organic matter, or feedstock. Among the article's revelations was Rueb's singling out of McEnroe Organic Farm, just south of Millerton on Route 22, as "the largest recipient of New York City's feedstock." Meaning that massive quantities of organic refuse were being shipped to McEnroe's for conversion into top-notch compost. Mayors Bloomberg and De Blasio championed the composting cause – as early (or late?) as 2013 countertop buckets and rolling bins were being handed out to residents of Staten Island – but Covid interrupted these initiatives. And now Mayor Adams's 3% budgetary cuts are set to end such efforts altogether, including a burgeoning curbside pick-up program.

While America's largest city has hit a serious snag, McEnroe's, which began implementing its transition to organic practices in 1987, continues undeterred. It is one of numerous farm operations that offer a drop-off service for household scraps that will be added to the farm's own mixture of food scraps, leaves, and manures and plowed back into its own fields. What's left is sold back to consumers. For anyone eager to give composting a chance but not quite ready to plunge into the creative-practice part, McEnroe's details what is and is not



Above: Dr. Jane Lucas, Cary Institute community ecologist, and Lori Quillen, director of communications. Courtesy of the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies.

acceptable as drop-off material at www.mcenroeorganicfarm.com/programs/compost-drop-off.

Ecosystem research center

But what about those of us who are curious about the process; unfazed by existential questions of life, death, and billions of invisible microbes; and lean toward hands-on rescue of our patch of present-day paradise? Not every community is fortunate enough to have an ecosystems research center, but ours is, and Millbrook's Cary Institute recently produced a virtual "how-to" for composting that dispensed the relevant science in the helpful context of an indispensable demo.

Dr. Jane Lucas, a microbial ecologist with expertise in global-change ecology and plant-insect-microbe interactions, specifically how antibiotics fed to livestock affect soil's storage of carbon, drove the presentation alongside Lori Quillen, Cary's director of communications. "Composting," Dr. Lucas began, "is the accelerated decomposition of organic matter. Pure and simple. It can be seen as each individual's way of mitigating our human impact on the environment."

In fact, she drilled down, residential households are the biggest part of the [wasteful] problem. The National Resources and Defense Fund's pie

chart does not lie. We in our houses and apartments waste more food than grocery chains, restaurants, factories, and such institutions as schools and hospitals. If you are looking in the mirror, you are looking at a prime suspect. And while we are at it, consider the increasingly compromised resource of water: 250 cubic kilograms of water, the equivalent of all the water contained in 100 million Olympic-size pools, are wasted producing just the food that we waste.

"Greens" and "browns"

What goes into a compost bin – the most common stylistic approach to composting – is a mixture of "greens" and "browns," or nitrogen-heavy and carbon-heavy items respectively. Greens can be green leaves, grass clippings, shrub prunings; cooked or uncooked fruits (avoid citrus) and vegetables; and non-color-conforming coffee grounds, tea bags (plus the tags), and the manure of herbivores (for small households, that would be chickens and goats). Browns can be untreated wood shavings, crushed egg and nut shells, shredded paper and cardboard, lint from your dryer or vacuum cleaner, hay or straw, and

Continued on next page ...

WHAT CAN I COMPOST?



GREEN

(Organic material rich in nitrogen)

Fruit and veggie scraps
(except citrus peels & onion)

Coffee grounds

Tea bags (if made with
natural materials)

Loose leaf tea

Soy/rice/almond or
coconut milk

Cooked rice or pasta

Flowers

Grass clippings

Weeds

Leaves trimmed from
house plants

Pits from fruit (cut up so
they don't sprout)



BROWN

(Organic material rich in carbon)

Yard waste (dead leaves,
small branches, etc.)

Saw dust/wood chips from
untreated wood

Uncoated paper products
(ripped up)

Crushed eggshells

Dry cereal and breads

Nut shells

Oatmeal

100% cotton balls

Dryer lint

100% Latex products
(balloons, etc)

Uncoated cardboard
(ripped up)

Wine corks (chopped up)

Graphics this page
courtesy of Botani-
cal PaperWorks.

other desiccated (or nearly) bits and pieces. The bits and pieces are a clue; microbes have a harder time dismantling cardboard than they do tomatoes, so the smaller the browns' dimensions, the faster the entire process. NB: meat, oils, and dairy products do not belong in household compost.

What is the most common mistake in making compost that aspires to the lyrical? Overdoing the greens. We all have a mental picture of fruit peels and bread crusts slipped virtuously into our dedicated jar or bin, but that can be misleading. What you need is, ideally, 30 parts brown to 1 part green. If you err on the side of the greens, you will be looking dispiritedly at wet, slimy, smelly ... stuff. And you will give up, or at best talk yourself out of giving up. Yes, there has to be air, and temperature counts too, but if the basics are too heavy on the more exotic greens (nitrogen) your compost will be a mess.

So how much is too much or too little? What does an acceptable balance look like? Dr. Lucas began by lining her container – a glass aquarium for the sake of demonstration – with twigs and bark. In reality,

a dark, heavy plastic 55-gallon-or-so container with a tight-fitting lid is recommended. (Plastics pollution will be discussed another day). To ensure air flow, holes are made in the bottom and around the upper edge of the top. Do not make holes in the lid, which will only hasten the descent to a wet mess when it rains. Propping bins up on bricks or concrete blocks also promotes aeration.

Some bins are equipped with turners for tossing the contents, or “fluffing” them with air, which leavens with oxygen the activity of the microbes. As the microbial life becomes excited with purpose, the heat increases, ideally up to about 150° F., which also kills any upstart seeds from sprouting; when it's exhausted, the heat decreases. What follows is a period of maturation, after which you have your long-awaited (six to nine months) compost, what impacted or impoverished soil needs most.

It's all about balance

But back to the bin, which we last saw lined with 1-2” of twigs. Next comes 5-6” of more browns. Curiously, newspapers were not always allowed among the browns. They were excluded because the ink was petroleum-based, and thus toxic, but now newspaper ink is soy-based. Also, be sure your browns do not include parts of diseased plants, for obvious reasons. And, in case you are tempted to divert all your fallen autumn leaves from municipal pick-up to your own compost pile, reconsider; before they fell, leaves had most of their nutrients removed as trees sucked back

their stored energy in preparation for winter – so they have fewer micro-organisms and, again, could slow down the composting process. Unless, say, you throw in a handful of chopped broccoli. It's all about balance.

Next comes, at long last, the greens layer, which should begin, illogically, with egg shells, for their calcium; cut-up banana peels for their potassium; and on down the list. Pet hair and fur are okay; their feces are not. Garlic is a touted anti-microbial, so its addition would work against everything we are trying to encourage. And, if you are tempted, do not try drying your damp greens to make them acceptable in a mix that is already trending toward wet. Drying them will make them brown, sure enough, but also destroy the organic matter that made them valuable in the first place.

Finally, consider adding, to be safe, just a little water. I know, I know. But even compost is enhanced by a judicious helping of inconsistency. As Dr. Lucas says, “Compost should feel like a wrung-out sponge.” ●

For more information: Dutchess County, NY: www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Solid-Waste-Management/Composting-Solid-Waste-Management.htm. Columbia County, NY: <https://sites.google.com/a/columbiacountyny.com/columbia-county-solid-waste/stations>. New York City: www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/services/food-scraps-and-yard-waste-page/nyc-food-scrap-drop-off-locations. For a schedule, by borough, of drop-off sites and hours: www.grownyc.org/compost. Connecticut: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Waste-Management-and-Disposal/Organics-Recycling/Food-Residual-Composting-Facilities>. Western Massachusetts: <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=free+compost+drop-off+in+Massachusetts&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

DO NOT COMPOST:



Fish, meat and whole eggs

Dairy products

Citrus peels (too acidic)

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Kenver 2.0

the coolest outdoor shop in new england

By Ian Strever
info@mainstreetmag.com

Standing at the threshold of Kenver, customers should be forgiven for thinking they had just entered a ski lodge. Natural slate floors, heritage wood beams, a fire crackling somewhere to the left, and hot cider on tap to the right, Kenver never feels like a retail outdoor goods store, which has always been part of its charm. For over fifty years, the store has made the most of its historic colonial home on Main Street in Egremont, MA, outfitting the stone basement as a boot fitting space and decorating its rustic niches with inventive displays.

Ever since it opened in 1959, local skiers have literally known the first and last name in outdoor gear: Kenver. The store's name is a portmanteau of its founder's name, Kenneth Vermeulen, and it has anchored the center of town with its stately, unassuming brick facade for decades and quaint, family-run operation, even as online behemoths began to elbow their way into sales. Proper fit is the sine qua non of ski equipment, however, and Kenver has always been the place to go when you want to dial in your setup.

Becoming a four-season shop?

With the passing of Ken in 2012, Kenver, led by Ken's widow, Lucinda, faced the challenge of replacing not only a patriarch, but an outdoor enthusiast with decades of experience in local skiing and fitting. It also faced the reality of a rapidly-warming environment and a curtailed ski season that made a year-round business model more appealing. And while the business had made overtures toward becoming a four-season store in the past, it had yet to discover a sustainable niche during warmer months. With other successful bike shops and outfitters in the area, it was unclear where Kenver could stake its claim.

Enter the Ovare Group. Located in Los Angeles, CA, the group has invested heavily in outdoor brands that include Bridge Bikeworks, Pulse Boot Lab, BE Outfitter, Gull Lake Canoe Works, Blacksmith Cycle, and several companies that are targeting the growing demand for pickleball. After partnering with Kenver, Ovare brought on a new general manager, J.C. Duryee, to curate a selection of additional product lines to round out their



offerings with a goal of ambitiously positioning the store as “the coolest outdoor shop in New England.”

Boutique and bespoke

When I first visited the new Kenver in April, my impression was that they were well on their way. The aforementioned brands are not only high-quality, but truly boutique and bespoke. Everywhere I looked, I saw top-of-the-line merchandise that, over decades of acquiring outdoors equipment, mostly struck me as the final word in durability, comfort, and utility. Whether it was the unexpected presence of Rapha cycling apparel, Campagnolo bike components, Snow Peak titanium backpacking accessories, or several exquisite, handmade Gull Lake Canoes, Kenver had clearly pivoted to a performance-oriented customer who appreciated high-quality outdoor goods and would be willing

Above: Classic Kenver facade, but a different approach inside. Below, left: Winter sports enthusiasts can still find the best in all-weather apparel for skiers of all ages. All images with this article courtesy of Kenver.



Continued on next page ...

to pay for them. I even wondered aloud to Duryee whether they ran the risk of selling such durable goods that customers would never need to purchase replacements. Such a dramatic shift in strategy could only be accomplished with a substantial investment of capital from a company like Oware, and as word of their makeover spreads, Kenver will continue to evolve their business model. They are currently seeking a technician to support their cycling division, which will eventually include comprehensive fittings and custom-made frames, weekly rides, and bike rentals. Signs of things to come include a bevy of drool-worthy carbon components, exotic DeRosa bikes, custom frames from Fifty-One Cycles and Blacksmith, and the Rapha Ride that is planned to depart from the shop on August 27. Kenver's longevity in the area has always relied on its ability to bring new, young customers into outdoors activities, however, and there are more long-range plans to incorporate kids' and recreational bikes at family-friendly price points as well.

More than just hiking, biking and skiing

It stands to reason that a store with such easy access to the Appalachian Trail should offer trail-worthy

equipment from Nemo, Jetboil, and SealLine, so whether a thru-hiker wanders in from Undermountain Road or a neophyte needs to be outfitted, Kenver can help with both needs. Those looking for the best in car camping and tailgating gear will not be disappointed by their inventory of Mountainsmith coolers and Eureka stoves, too.

The store is also conveniently nestled between Catamount and Butternut ski areas, and Kenver will continue to offer the same great outfitting for powder hounds from around the Tri-state area, but with the kind of augmented attention to boot fitting and binding adjustments that are the hallmark of performance-oriented ski shops around New England. They will shift their focus to winter at the beginning of September with an expanded number of snowboard offerings that will be commensurate with their ski inventory. My personal affinity for Kenver began when they set me up with a set of Fischer cross-country skis, and they are still one of the only shops in the area that stocks planks for that sublime sport.

Kenver's plans also envision kayaks and tennis equipment, and their website now embraces online ordering. So clearly, this is Kenver 2.0. But will it work? As always, that will depend on their ability



to adjust to the demands of the market. Ours is a community with pockets of wealth as well as families who need to live on a budget, and recreational equipment is a discretionary expenditure, especially in a downturned economy. The new Kenver hopes to meet the needs of outdoor enthusiasts who have an eye for head-turning, boutique equipment, yet they also recognize the customer base that has kept them here for over half a century. It is a bit of a gamble, but with careful management, it can pay off. Stop by – now throughout the year – and see what they have in your size. ●

Kenver is open Wednesday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm. Call them at (413) 528-2330 or visit them online at kenver.com.

Above, top to bottom: Custom bike frames from Blacksmith Cycles characterize Kenver's new look. Kenver's rustic interior invites customers to pull up a rocking chair and stay awhile. Left: Artful displays inspire reveries of outdoor adventures.

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Tess Balleau wanted to find a way to financially provide while being a stay-at-home mom, so she began growing her own microgreens and shared them with family and friends. They were very well-received, and knowing they were a product that wasn't readily available in our area, Tess jumped on the opportunity to change that. Blue Willow Acres opened in June 2022, offering several varieties of organic microgreens including peas, sunflowers, and radishes in addition to custom orders, which give customers the opportunity to be creative with their dishes. Blue Willow Acres has a roadside stand in Hillsdale, NY, most weekends and offers pick-up and delivery of custom orders to Columbia County, Northern Dutchess County, and Western Berkshire county. Tess states, "What sets us apart are the products themselves. Microgreens are gaining popularity as more people are becoming mindful of the food they are consuming. Being able to introduce them into individuals' homes for daily use is a huge advantage." Tess is humbled to have the ability to easily connect with her local community members and is hoping to expand into local retail spaces as well as restaurants very soon! Check Blue Willow Acres out on Facebook and Instagram for regular posts with information about their microgreens.



Designer Finds

An upscale consignment boutique. 50 Main St., Millerton, NY. (518) 582-1888. designerfindsofmillerton@gmail.com

On April 15, Dana launched Designer Finds located in Millerton, NY, after her previous shop, Encore Consignment Boutique in Salisbury, CT, was sold following about three years of business. The interest from consignors hoping to get involved in Designer Finds was so overwhelming that Dana was able to open earlier than originally planned! During two scheduled appointments each day, consignors can bring in "like new" clothing, shoes, handbags, and accessories that are clean and all set to be sold. With consignors coming from right here in the Hudson Valley, the Berkshires, and Litchfield County, and even from farther places like Westchester, NYC, and New Jersey, Designer Finds takes the time to thoughtfully select the products they acquire. With brands spanning from Talbots, Vineyard Vines, and Ralph Lauren, to Burberry, Chanel and Hermes, Designer Finds curates incredible products for their shop. Not only is this boutique rewarding because of the fascinating stories attached to the items being sold, but also because of the recycling. This aspect not only helps consignors make money while cleaning out their wardrobes, but it helps get these wonderful clothes and accessories in the hands of appreciative customers who save money in the process. In the future, Dana hopes to put together an online store for Designer Finds to reach people all over the globe, and boost the boutique's social media presence.



Northwest Auto, LLC.

A full-service automotive repair shop, tire store, and car dealership. 32 Railroad St., North Canaan, CT. (860) 824-4000. northwauto.com

Owners John Considine and Roger Hedman fully renovated the old Breyer Brothers dealership in North Canaan, CT, to open Northwest Auto in 2019, installing all of the latest and best automotive service equipment. They pride themselves in offering a full-service shop that provides automotive maintenance, repair, and pre-owned vehicle sales to the Northwest Corner and beyond. They have excellent resources for finding car parts and a knowledgeable staff to guide the way. Northwest Auto is invested in building a reputation for its professionalism and personalized service. At Northwest Auto, customers can expect to leave the shop knowing about their upcoming maintenance schedules for brakes or tires, which is critical to safety on the road. The team at Northwest Auto finds it most rewarding to have happy and satisfied customers that keep coming back. We strive to make car buying and car maintenance an enjoyable experience. Come find out for yourself!



Budd Modern Mechanical LLC.

HVAC contractor in Columbia County, NY. 47 Rockview Rd., Hillsdale, NY. (518) 965-1084. buddmodernmechanical@gmail.com

In August of 2020, after having their first child, Eric and Cecilia Budd made the decision to take what they were passionate about and make it work in an official business capacity. Budd Modern Mechanical LLC is a full-service plumbing, heating, and air conditioning company and a participating partner with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). Their services are focused mainly in Columbia County, as they are a small family-owned and operated business. They feel fortunate to be able to fully engage personally in every installation or service from start to finish. "We have the whole family involved from our children doing photos in their business attire for advertising, to Cecilia running the office work, to Eric doing the installations. We all play a part in making it truly a FAMILY business," agree Eric and Cecilia. Eric prides himself on always learning and utilizing new technology and keeping up with customers' electric, solar, or geothermal needs. Budd Modern Mechanical is looking forward to what the future holds: expanding their horizons as business owners and continuing their education as the new technology creates more efficient equipment and improved quality of life for their customers.

INSURING YOUR WORLD

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



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Designing and building is stressful. BUT, there are some strategies that can help get the project headed in the right direction. When we start working on a design with a new client, the first thing we do is to really understand the land - views, solar orientation, access, soil conditions and local land use regulations - to name a few. This gives us an idea of the potential of the site and its limitations.

So, what about the building? How do we proceed in a way that gives you, the client confidence that we are making this YOUR house. At this point we like to create a document that we call a PROGRAM. The program becomes a road map to help focus our decisions. In order to create a useful program, we need to know everything! We have countless conversations with you, the client. The goal is to tease out as much info as possible - the obvious room requirements but also the weird stuff. The stuff that makes you, you. It's a very personal experience but is critical to make sure the house we design becomes your home.

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The August Challenge: A Cash Diet!

A cash diet is similar to a regular diet, instead of cutting out carbs, you cut out credit card spending. Cash only. Since cash is harder to give up than swiping a credit card. It makes spending more deliberate and watchful.

You don't need to start with a complete cash only diet. Pick a few spending categories. For example cash only for: takeout, personal items, and/or possibly groceries.

The easiest method is to use envelopes for each category. Fill each envelope up with the amount of cash you have allotted for that category. Try not to spend more than the cash in each envelope. You will follow as the cash goes down and then know when it is gone in an envelope. Spending stops and you have not overspent.

If you continue cash only into September, refine the amounts and you may want to add other cash only categories. Cash only is now part of your 2022 household budget!



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Dog Days of Summer

You can see public service announcements everywhere about leaving animals in hot cars, but still every summer DCSPCA gets dozens of calls alerting us about dogs passed out in locked cars, and we treat many dogs suffering from hyperthermia or heat stroke. Not all of them can be saved. In general, a dog should not be left in a car for more than five minutes and only then if the temperature is not over 70 degrees. Cracking the windows will not prevent hyperthermia. The interior of a car on a 70-degree day can heat up to 99 degrees in 20 minutes. On an 80-degree day, it will be 109 degrees. Presumably you would not leave a human being in a car as hot as that - dogs are even more sensitive than humans because they can't sweat. Flat-faced breeds are even more vulnerable. If you see a dog trapped in a car, call the police FIRST, and then try to locate the owner by alerting whatever stores or businesses are nearby. Police officers are the only officials who may break windows to save the animal - animal control officers are not allowed to do that. If you are considering leaving your dog in your car, ask yourself, is your errand so important that your pet has to die for it?

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

For more information: www.dcsPCA.org



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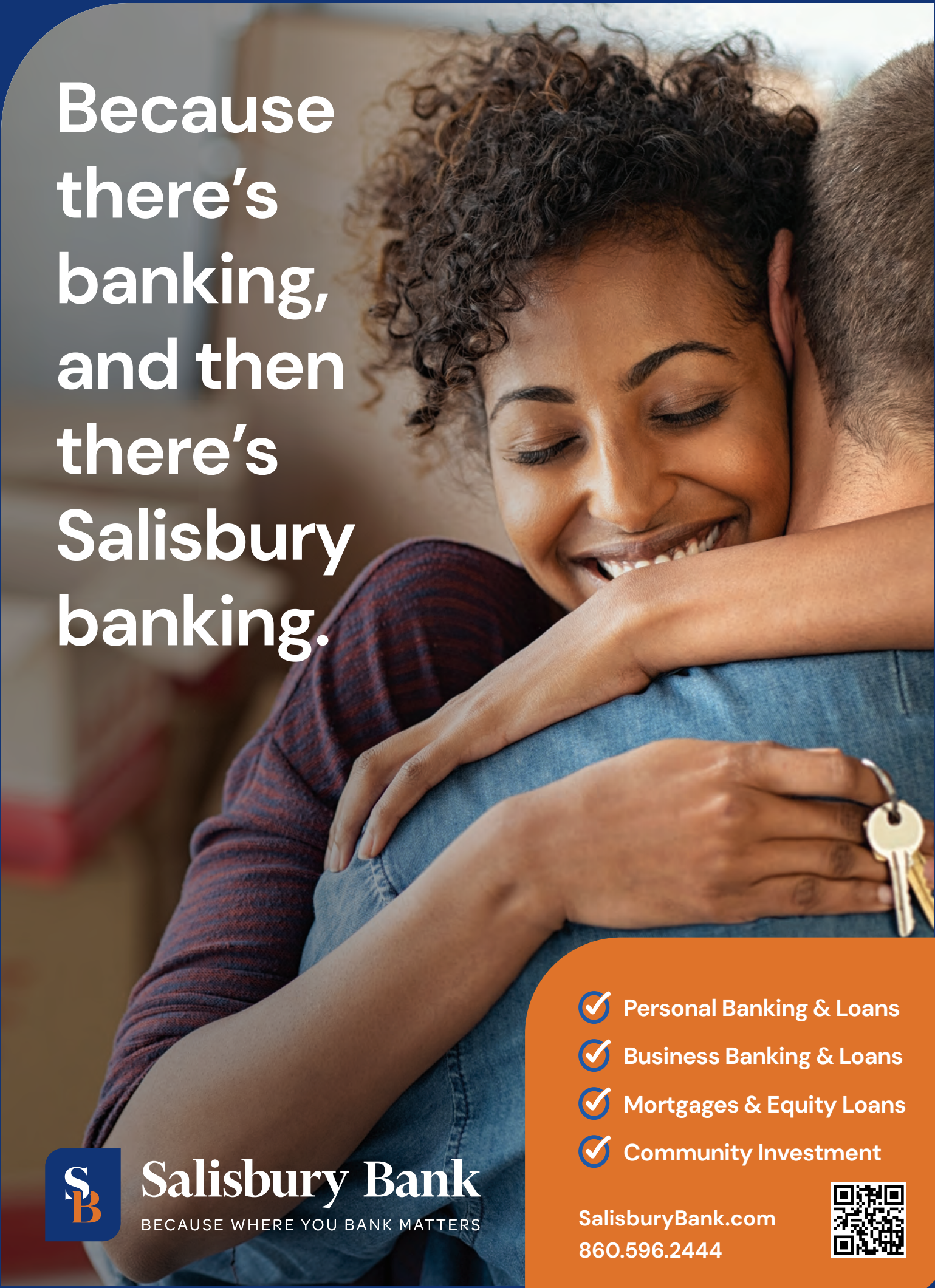
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