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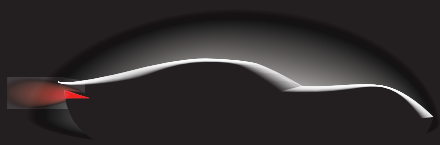
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PUMPKIN SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

Guess what?!? It's that time of year again! Pumpkin spice and everything's nice... or something like that, right? Moment of truth: I'm not one for the whole pumpkin spice this and pumpkin spice that but I am all for the amazing autumn days with the humidity being low, temps in the "this feels nice" range, bright beautiful days, and the hint of autumn in the air with its crispness as it hits your senses. Yup, I'm all about those things! Plus, as soon as the kids go back to school it seems that we regain some semblance of control over our lives with schedules going back into place. Am I right or am I right?

That said, I can't believe how quickly this summer zoomed by! Are we seriously already in September of 2022? Didn't this year just start? Or is that just me? I enjoyed every moment of my summer with extra time with my family, summer adventures and vacations sprinkled in with the normal day-to-day stuff. But the overwhelming consensus amongst everyone I spoke with was that everyone was just so busy this summer! Don't get me wrong, busy is good. It keeps us out of trouble after all... in theory at least! But this summer was chock-full of adventures, get-togethers, and all kinds of new chapters.

For us here at *Main Street Magazine* we had a really busy summer and we're starting a brand new chapter right now with a move to a new office space. We've been at 52 Main Street in Millerton for about eight years and we loved our time and space there, but early in the summer we secured a permanent space in the old Key Bank building in Millerton, across from the Grand Union shopping plaza. We're really excited about our new office space and the new adventures that we're sure to have there. So if you're stopping by to see us, pick up magazines, buy an ad, pay a bill, or just popping in to see us, please visit us at 135 Rt. 44 in Millerton starting in September. We will be located on the drive-thru side of the building - that's right, you can come to the drive-thru window and pick up the latest magazine! Ha-ha! ... but seriously, you can.

Magazine-speaking, this September issue is over brimming with stories. We don't have a particular theme this month, but as I started putting this issue together I noticed that a lot of our stories were community and event-oriented with a hint of art to them. I guess that September is the time for parties, and community get-togethers, huh? But it seems that we will have plenty to keep us occupied in the coming weeks, and if you're not sure what to do, just flip through our pages and you're sure to find something for everyone! Thanks for reading!

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



SEPTEMBER 2022

There are incredible views in Copake, NY, at the Over Mountain Conservation area.

Cover photo by
Olivia Valentine

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

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

Contributing writers:

Betsy Maury | CB Wismar | Christine Bates | Lindsey Clark | Dominique De Vito | Ian Strever | John Torsiello | Lorraine Alexander | Mary B. O'Neill | Olivia Valentine & Caroline Markonic | Regina Molaro

Assistant proof-reader: **Pom Shillingford**. Photographers: **Lazlo Gyorsok & Olivia Valentine**.

ADVERTISING

Ashley Kristjansson call 518 592 1135 or email info@mainstreetmag.com

CONTACT

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

PRINT, LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, & INSURANCE

Printed by **Snyder Printer, Inc.** • Legally represented by **Downey, Haab & Murphy PLLC**
Accounting services by **UHY LLP, Certified Public Accountants** • Insured by **Kneller Insurance Agency**

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LICENSE TO PLAY

*By Betsy Maury
info@mainstreetmag.com*

Walking into the Re Institute in Millerton, NY, during exhibition hours you're likely to find artist and founder/director, Henry Klimowicz mingling with visitors and enthusiastically explaining the current exhibition. The gallery, located in Klimowicz's studio in a former dairy barn sits just north of the village of Millerton, and it exists in many ways as an outgrowth of his unique vision of artistic process. In many ways, Henry is the Re Institute.

An art ecosystem

Located on Boston Corners Road among picturesque rolling hills, shoulder high with corn in the late summer, the Re Institute is an art laboratory of sorts, or a place where finished contemporary art is exhibited but also a place where artists connect with one another and intersect over shared interests. Those who know Henry credit him with building a supportive network of art enthusiasts in this region. He has done studio visits at ChaShaMa in Pine Plains and has frequently collaborated with LABspace in Hillsdale. Aside from fomenting an upper Hudson Valley art ecosystem, Klimowicz believes artists reap unique rewards from deliberate exhibition. Because of its location and unique dimensions, the Re Institute is the test lab for this idea.

Klimowicz seeks to exhibit artists for whom the public display of their art hastens some organic creative development for the artist. Sometimes

this takes place long after the labor of art making has been completed. An exhibition in the Re Institute is an intentional collaboration between artist and gallerist with the aim for the artist to learn something about their work through its presentation. This idea – of ongoing exploration of the creative space between the art and the artist – is one of the guiding ideas behind the Re Institute.

For Klimowicz, himself an accomplished sculptor, though an artist created the work and determined when it was finished, there is much more to the artistic journey for the creator. What can be learned through observation of completed work, or the exhibition of fragments of a body of work produced over a span of many years holds great promise for both artist and viewer. How art interacts with the exhibition space, and how humans respond to the experience make up the central dynamism of his gallery. Henry hosts three to five exhibits a year between the months of April and October, usually two artists at a time or occasionally, a solo show. Because of its location, design and intimacy, viewers can't help but thoroughly engage with the art.

The Re Institute gestalt

I learned about the Re Institute and its mission in conversation with Henry in his living room, where he showed me work he'd created during the pandemic. His medium is cardboard, which he uses to sculpt

intricate pieces with a utility knife and hot glue gun. He told me he likes the humility of cardboard; its familiar and functional qualities allow it to be transformative as a material. I saw this in action – lowly cardboard scraps made into stunning abstract wall hangings as well as delicately rendered dioramas. His large-scale work has been exhibited in the Berkshire Museum and at The Wassaia Project in the past. New work I saw on our visit consisted of diminutive square cardboard sculptures emanating outward in concentric rings. As new sculptures are added, a wall of his living room becomes covered with a patchwork of monotone squares that look from a distance like a cardboard-colored quilt in bas-relief. Klimowicz told me he was “testing pattern ideas to understand the larger piece.”

This kind of testing gets at the heart of the Re Institute gestalt. Klimowicz seems as interested in process as he is in product, both in his own work and work he selects for exhibition. He told me about his unique criteria for artists to show their work. First and foremost, they must visit the space before exhibiting. And then, they must come to the Re Institute with creative intent, or a willingness to allow that an exhibition here will advance an individual artistic journey in some way.

As I listened to Klimowicz explain his mission, he clarified that his goal is not to sell paintings for a lot of money, or garner review attention from art critics for shows he stages. His goal is for the Re Institute to play a role in how an artist comes to terms with his or her art through exhibition. He insisted he's not “judging artwork” but providing a space for purposeful sharing of artwork. He gets to know the artists he shows, and exhibitions are a collaborative process.

A license to play

To illustrate his point, Henry spoke to me about a 2015 Judy Pfaff show at the Re Institute. Pfaff, celebrated sculptor, MacArthur Fellow, and teacher at Bard College presented her work at Re Institute following a high-profile exhibition at a major gallery. Upon installing her work at Re, she moved in an unscripted way –

without first mounting and measuring the dimensions in her studio. Klimowicz was struck with the glee and spontaneity with which she went about installing her work, how much she enjoyed the process. Reflecting on this, Klimowicz feels he gives artists like Pfaff and others “license to play” in his exhibition space. By facilitating an open invitation for artists to have fun and experiment, he invites artists to be open to what can be learned and enjoyed through installation and exhibition. In his words, “Just because an artist saw the work of a baby plant as it grew doesn't mean they understand it as a finished fruit.”

Pareidolia

This idiosyncratic curatorial style makes exhibitions at Re unique. In a somewhat subversive way, it draws both artists and viewers who are looking for a more dynamic gallery experience, one rich with the potential for discovery and understanding. In keeping with Klimowicz's vision, the Re Institute will present the work of Tom Burckhardt in a solo show beginning September 3. Burckhardt has produced work in various oeuvres in his career and has a history of challenging ideas of pure abstraction in painting. He has made installations as well as a series of works painted on vintage book covers; he's also made ink-on-paper works of landscapes and seascapes using digital images.

The work Burckhardt will share in this show seems well suited to the Re Institute's exhibition model. The show will include large diptych paintings he created years ago but which he felt didn't get a proper showing in the small San Francisco gallery that originally exhibited them. He's curious about seeing them in a new venue. Burckhardt explores a big idea that

holds interest for him in this series. Pareidolia, a phenomenon made famous by the Herman Rorschach and his inkblot test is a psychological concept where human imagination instinctively looks for a defined pattern in abstract images. Burckhardt likened this phenomenon to the tendency to animate or see figurative images such as a face in the clouds or a dragon on a cliff. In this series, he's exploring “the space between figuration and abstraction” as he creates his diptychs in a very deliberate way.

He begins with a halved panel on one side of the canvas; the other panel is left blank at the start. Burckhardt paints the first panel in an intuitive and improvisational way, seeking something in the abstraction. He works in oil, mixing color as he's inspired, occasionally using a roller to cover the half canvas until he determines the panel is finished.

Then, he reverse-engineers the adjacent panel to match the first panel but goes about this in a directed and clinical way, executing it to mirror the first panel, doing this somewhat imperfectly. By working on two panels in separate sessions, and then uniting the two panels into a whole, Burckhardt presents a very strong first impression of a symmetrical image split down the middle. Upon closer examination however, the viewer notices that the mirror panel on the right doesn't quite sync up with the left panel – there are subtle differences in color and line between the two panels. They are similar but inexact, yet they create a symmetry where the whole painting suggests figuration.

Burckhardt told me this series captures an idea he's been exploring for while and it's one that's well-suited to the Re Institute. He said viewers “need time and space to fully appreci-

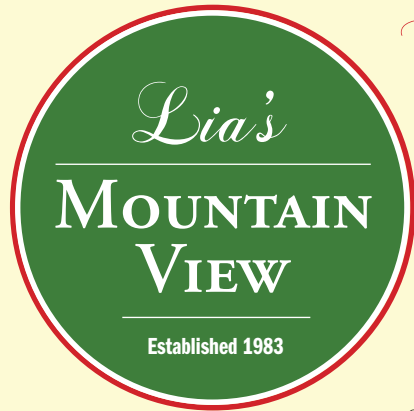
ate the energetic but static energy of symmetry.” These paintings will make a strong graphic impression from a distance but will demand closer examination of technique up close. The final paintings are themselves a bit of a mystery to the artist; he said he didn't know what kind of image the symmetry would collect in its final form upon making them. Burckhardt will get his chance to see come September, when he and viewers will get to see his large-scale diptychs hung from the walls of the upstairs gallery at the Re Institute. The show will also display of 15 smaller works on paper in the adjacent gallery where some of these nascent ideas were tested.

As summer turns into fall and we witness the subtle change in seasons, making time and space on one of these fall Saturdays for the Tom Burckhardt show at the Re Institute will be a perfect way to mark the end of summer exhibition season in the upper Hudson Valley. Seeing innovative contemporary art that explores symmetry without distraction seems in keeping with observing the seasonal evolution of the natural world. The work is visually pleasing at first blush but also appreciates on closer examination. For Klimowicz and Burckhardt, the final show of the season represents an opportunity to stand back and see process and product at work. Their collaboration will delight viewers to the gallery and inform both artists in how they seek new directions in their work in the coming year. ●

*Tom Burckhardt, Symmetry Works
September 3–October 29. Open Saturdays 1-4 or
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Meet **Alan O'Doherty**, a global real estate advisor. "I've had the great pleasure of doing this for twenty years and counting in London and NYC, and locally for over two years. I love meeting people and seeing some really wonderful properties!" Aside from real estate, Alan enjoys skiing and wakesurfing. "I wish I was able to share a video of me wakesurfing, because I was a novice 12 months ago but now I'm performing tricks! It's just so much fun!" Alan also really enjoys the surrounding countryside of hiking and dining in the many fine local restaurants. Hailing from Dublin, Ireland, Alan loves the chilled-out vibes in our local area. "There is a great variety of cute places to eat, drink, not to mention the beautiful scenery everywhere!" Thank you, Alan, for taking time out of your adventurous schedule to chat with us! Safe travels and have fun on all your future endeavors.



Sarah Zick had a very busy summer which included a few weeks spent at the incredible and very popular Pine Plains Day Camp (*shout-out to the PPDC*). When she was asked what her favorite thing from the summer was, Sarah was quick to answer, "Going to camp!" But she's also excited to be starting first grade at Pine Plains Central School and meeting her new teacher, Mrs. Poole. Sarah says she's most excited to learn first grade math, and she loves the 100th Day of School celebration. Being born and raised in Pine Plains, she's got firm roots in the community and Sarah shares that her favorite thing about Pine Plains is the new water fountain in the center of town. Turning it back to school, we asked Sarah what her favorite thing at school was and what she was most looking forward to, to which she replied, "Gym class!" Us too, Sarah, us too!



These two adorable kids are brother and sister **Hayden** and **Colton Dedrick** who hail from Germantown, NY. Hayden is excited to be going into Kindergarten and Colton is going into second grade at Germantown Central School District. When we asked them what their favorite thing about summer was, Colton was quick to answer: "Oh, that's easy! August beach!" (Their mom explained that that's what both kids have called the Outer Banks since they could talk). Hayden agreed with this as well. When we asked what they were most looking forward to when it came to school, Colton replied, "I don't know – I just love school!" Hayden agreed by sharing that she's excited to go to school and see all of her friends. She also added to her brother's sentiments about their favorite summer activities adding, "Going to the water park at August beach is awesome!" They're living the life!



Steve Bluestone, with his wife Kathy, owns and manages Roe Jan Brewing Company in Hillsdale, NY. The building where the brewery and restaurant are located dates back to 1851, and the couple began restoring it in 2018. Here, they also rent seven apartments to full-time tenants.. Additionally, Steve helps set up a shared table with Little Apple Cider of Hillsdale at the Copake Hillsdale Farmers Market. "The best part of being at the Roe Jan Brewery for me is that I get to work with our really dedicated, talented, and caring staff." When he's not busy working and befriending customers, Steve enjoys riding his bicycle and electric motorcycle, or doing projects around his property in North Hillsdale, where he is thankful they decided to move full-time almost six years ago. "I enjoy the beautiful scenery, the pace of life, and the great folks/neighbors that we get to share all of this with."



"Hello! My name is **Caleb May** and I am a rising sophomore at the University of Vermont where I am pursuing a Wildlife and Fisheries Biology major with a minor in Reporting and Documentary Storytelling," he shared. Caleb said that he really wanted to spend his minor on something that interested him and that he could eventually tie back to his major – reporting and documentary storytelling gives him that ability. "It was great being back home and recharging for the summer. Despite my major, I feel like I did not capitalize on the natural beauty of Vermont so I have really enjoyed being able to connect to my roots and get outdoors again. Sadly, my time back home ran out for the summer, but I am really looking forward to getting back to school to see my friends and take what I learned this summer into the classroom setting." Best of luck this semester, and don't forget to hit those books!



Check out this up-and-coming baseball player that played on the Crown Energy team in the Pine Plains league this past season. **Jack Tamburrino** is entering into the second grade at Pine Plains Central School District. Between school and sports, he stays pretty busy – plus he helps keep an eye on his twin sisters, Sophie and Charlotte. When we asked Jack what his favorite thing from this summer was, he shared, "The Pine Plains Summer Camp was awesome! I loved playing gaga ball with my friends." When it comes to the upcoming school year we asked Jack what he was most looking forward to and he said, "I can't wait to see all my friends. I'm looking forward to meeting my new gym teacher and to see what fun things we are going to do in gym." Well, I detect a pattern here amongst the PPCSD kids that gym class is a very popular subject at school!



Agriculture, industry, arts, community

*The rejuvenated Hamlet of Wassaic,
Amenia, NY*

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

What is it about the hamlet of Wassaic, NY, that has attracted industry and idealists for over 200 years? Wassaic's Main Street is nestled in a valley between the Metro North Train line and the confluence of the Wassaic Creek and the Amenia Stream bordered to the east and west by mountains. It's believed that the name derives from the Native American word *Washiak* meaning "land of difficult access."

The iron and farming industry arrived here first, and the hamlet was thriving in the 19th century with the processing of iron ingots that were turned into artillery and the Borden's condensed milk factory which supplied the Union Army during the Civil War. Milk, iron, cattle and grain were transported on Commodore Vanderbilt's Harlem Valley Railroad. Two hotels housed managers, and visitors to the thriving hamlet. The mix of the economy changed after the Gridley Iron Works' furnace shut down. The Tri-Wall box factory operating three shifts a day in the former Borden's brick building closed and Maxon Mills went out of business.

Route 22 bypassed the center of Wassaic in 1948 leaving "Old Route 22" as a quiet country road on the other side of the tracks. In 1972 Penn Central abandoned rail service north of Dover further cutting off the hamlet. During the 1930s the sprawling Taconic Developmental Disabilities Services Office (DDSO) opened and provided thousands of jobs for residents throughout the Harlem Valley. It was a huge blow to the regional economy when the DDSO closed its doors in 2014. Today over 740,000 built square feet of space stands vacant on the 320-acre site with magnificent views and infrastructure waiting for mixed use redevelopment to the south of the hamlet.

During these transitions the independent Wassaic Fire District, established in 1935, has survived as the soul of the hamlet providing help to residents including pumping out homes often flooded by the creek and emergency medical assistance. Today the fire company continues to welcome newcomers and offers an opportunity to serve the community. Calsi's General Store and The Lantern remained open as the anchors of Main Street. Despite its history, this hamlet

has attracted visionaries, industry and, more recently, restoration architects, community activists, writers and artists from all over the world.

Revitalization

The dilapidated former Borden plant, later the Tri-Wall box factory eventually became the property of the Town of Amenia, which sold it in 1992 for \$500,000 to the Pawling Corporation. The privately held company which makes specialized architectural products invested over a million dollars in the historic property rescuing the 150-year-old building, sandblasting the brick, digging up 20,000 gallon buried oil tanks, repairing the chimney, and opening up the windows. The Pawling Corporation then donated a small park with historic signage, installed Victorian Street lamps, and brought back jobs.

Across Route 22, on Deep Hollow Road leading up to the Town of Washington, the unique Gridley charcoal kilns, initially owned and restored by architect Allan Shope, are now in the process of being donated to Dutchess County or the Town of Amenia as a park. The trees and plants that made it look like an undiscovered Mayan ruin have been cleared exposing a dramatic statement about the industrial past of Wassaic.

A contemporary arts destination

The restoration of Maxon Mills at the center of the hamlet as well as the Luther Auction Barns have transformed Wassaic into a contemporary arts

destination. The towering seven-story grain elevator was moved and reconstructed in Wassaic when the area was still very rural. The huge chestnut columns were repurposed from piers in the East River in New York and the solid “cribbed” walls are constructed of 2” by 6” wooden boards stacked on top of each other. The mill supplied grain to six surrounding counties and gradually went out of business as the farming industry in the area declined.

Led by Sharon Kroeger, a 501(c)3 was formed to save the grain elevator from being demolished as a fire hazard; however, funding for renovation was difficult and the tower and the former hotel were turned over to professional renovation real estate developers, Tony Zunino and Dick Berry, for the price of the fines the buildings had accumulated. At this point the abandoned buildings were in desperate shape. The roof was compromised and the interior was open to the elements.

Zunino and Berry began by removing the heavy iron equipment, emptying all the shoots of grain, and taking the buildings down to their structure. Stairs were rebuilt in the tower and rooms created. What now houses the Wassaic Project grew incrementally starting as a festival and exhibition space then expanding to other buildings, such as the renovated Luther Auction Barns, which were repurposed as artist’s studios. Other buildings, such as the Wassaic Schoolhouse, were purchased and renovated to provide housing for resident artists,



which brought new faces and energy to the town.

The Lantern, previously the town dive bar, was resuscitated and became a place for artists to mingle with locals and maybe play a game of pool. Berry explained that the mission was to bring old buildings back to life to be enjoyed by families and children.

Newcomers made the difference

Individuals from other places helped preserve and renew the small hamlet. Perhaps the small scale made it seem possible. Former university professor Sharon Kroeger found that Wassaic was “a little bit of a secret.” Originally she brought her family to Amenia for the summers and then settled into a farm on Leedsville Road. Drawn to the hamlet, she purchased the Calsi’s General Store building at the town center and has kept it open for the last 25 years. Along the way she created a non-profit to save Maxon Mills and after ten years found a developer to take it to the next stage – today’s Wassaic Project.

Other residents started to arrive in the 1980s attracted to the down at the heel’s hamlet with charming, affordable houses. Tonia Shoumatoff and her artist husband, Joel Foster, bought their home on Old Route 22 in 1987 thinking they could make a

Above: Stone kilns which produced charcoal to fire the furnaces of Gridley Iron Works are located on Deep Hollow Road in Wassaic. Photo by Christine Bates. Below, left: Installed at the top of Maxon Mills is artist Stephen Morrison’s 2022, *Dog Show #1: The (After) Party*. It makes everyone who climbs up the stairs smile to see human-sized dogs in a restaurant. Photo courtesy of the Wassaic Project.

Opposite page, L-R: This sign on Route 22 marks the entrance to Wassaic and all there is to see. The Wassaic Project is housed in the renovated Maxon Mills next to the Trail to the Train along the former Metro North Railroad tracks. The tall smoke stack of the former Borden Condensed Milk factory dominates the low skyline of Wassaic. Photos by Christine Bates



Continued on next page ...

difference in the small community. In the intervening years as a journalist Shoumatoff broke news, was co-producer of the World Peace Festival on Benton Road in Wassaic, headed the effort to extend access to the Rail Trail from the Wassaic Train Station to the hamlet, and also profiled the people and events in the area for the *Millbrook Independent* newspaper. Her fascinating book, *Tales of the Harlem Valley, Life at the End of the Line*, will be published next year.

Leo Blackman, arrived in Wassaic as a weekender in 2003 and, after retiring from his New York City architectural practice, became a full-time Wassaic resident actively involved in the Town of Amenia as a Town Board Member and has initiated and supported affordable housing for the town. Initially he was attracted by Wassaic's industrial character, topography and landscape, but quickly became involved as a pro bono architect helping local volunteers restore the Gridley Chapel.

David Rosenberg and his wife Robyn are other transplanted New Yorkers who moved full-time into their house in Wassaic in 2015. "I grew up in the City. I had done everything my whole life in the City. I didn't need it anymore," said David. "I wanted to get involved in a community, and I have a much better chance of making an impact up here than in Manhattan." He went

through the time-consuming training to become a fireman, served on the Amenia Planning Board, and was an early board member of the Wassaic Project.

Then there are the young co-executive directors of the Wassaic Project, Eve Biddle, Bowie Zunino, and Jeff Barnett-Winsby, with their own vision for the community bringing contemporary art and artists to the hamlet and sharing their creative enthusiasm with public schools in the region. The mission of the project is simple; to use the arts and arts education to foster positive social change.

Wassaic today

Dave Luther, whose family owned and operated the Luther Auction Barns, grew up in Wassaic when it was a busy farming town with weekly auctions of everything from eggs to farm equipment, an IGA grocery store, and jobs at the DDSO and box factory. He watched as farms were sold, jobs disappeared, and the hamlet declined. The Wassaic Project changed everything. "Used to be that I knew who lived in every house, but that's not true today." Luther is pleased that the hamlet is busy again. "When buildings are empty, they die. Our family's barns have been repurposed, not changed. Everyone that lives here appreciates the Wassaic Project. It has brought the hamlet back to life."

People are no longer embarrassed

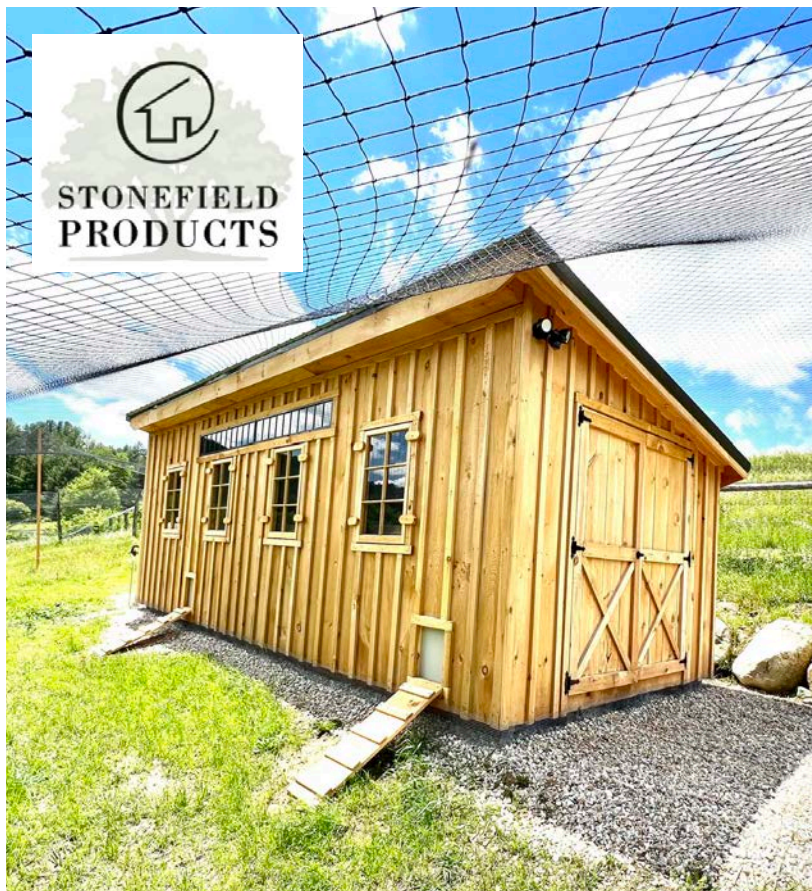



Above: The Lantern across the street from the Wassaic Project with its casual outside dining and exotic wood-fired pizza attracts visitors to Wassaic. Photo by Christine Bates.

to say they live in Wassaic. It's a cool place. Day trippers arrive at the Metro North Station opened in 2000 and walk or cycle into the hamlet on the Trail to the Train that connects to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. It's a quick drive over the state line from Kent or Sharon, CT, and a great place to eat after visiting nearby 10 Mile Distillery. There are still buildings available for restoration. While you're there, sit around a fire pit at the Lantern's casual outdoor dining area, check out what's happening at the Wassaic Project, or drop by Calsi's General Store on Main Street, and talk to Sharon Kroger about the community. •

Christine Bates is a registered real estate agent in New York and Connecticut with William Pitt Sotheby's. She has written about real estate and business since Main Street Magazine's first issue.

Above, top to bottom, L-R: Standing at the entrance to Wassaic, this magnificent Victorian on Route 22 was purchased in 2003 for \$250,000 according to county records. Completing renovation, this house at 18 Furnace Bank Road was purchased for \$32,000 in March of 2020 according to Dutchess Parcel Access. The President of the Wassaic Fire Company, David Rosenberg, left, and right, Jeff Barnett-Winsby, Fire Commissioner, one of the owners of the Lantern and co-executive director of The Wassaic Project, have big ideas for the future of the Wassaic Fire District. Photos by Christine Bates.





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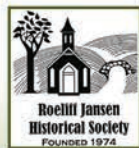
"The exhibit is an impressive compilation...an opportunity to look at the second World War from a local standpoint."

The Millerton News 7/20/22



This summer, visit The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Museum to experience World War II from the personal perspective of those who served at home and overseas — these remarkable stories are told through a vast assemblage of mementos, artifacts, correspondence, photographs on loan from residents of the Roe Jan area and beyond!

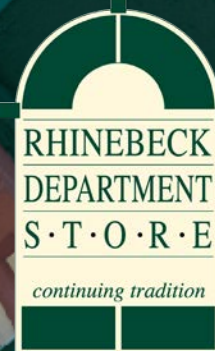
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Florentines



By Olivia Valentine &
Caroline Markonic
info@mainstreetmag.com

We feel as though we are letting down all you chocolate lovers out there! If you haven't noticed, we are not big chocolate fans in our house. No one liked chocolate chips added to pancakes or banana bread, and if we made chocolate chip cookies, we would always add fewer chips than called for. Jane and Caroline would always scoop the cookies to intentionally leave one or two chipless "special" cookies, which were eaten immediately after coming out of the oven. Don't get us wrong though; we do love some chocolate things. Desserts such as lava cakes, crinkle cookies, fudge brownies, and mousse are delightful. The problem is when chocolate is IN things. So with that being said, this one goes out to the somewhat neglected choc-o-holics. Our goal is to please everyone! So, no need to worry. We will occasionally throw chocolate desserts into the mix.

Meet Florentines

Claire (Olivia's oldest daughter) introduced us to these chocolate Florentines when she and her boss would travel back and forth to Boston. They would routinely stop at their favorite bakery and pick up these chocolatey, almond treats. She brought them

home to share with us and the first bite we took, we knew we had to attempt to recreate them. They were so delicious! I (Olivia) am not a chocolate fan at all, but I can't get enough of these chocolatey, nutty, delightful, thin cookies.

Helpful tip: We do recommend making these when the temperature is a bit cooler. We made them in our un-air-conditioned house during one of the hottest days in August! Thankfully, there isn't much time spent hovering over the oven.

We tested making them with dark chocolate, milk chocolate, and a combination of the two. Some taste testers were hard to pin down on a favorite. Some preferred dark, others preferred the combo, and some preferred milk chocolate. So it's all dependent on preference; choose the type of chocolate that suits your pallet. We do however recommend using a nice quality chocolate.

Big win!

This was a huge recreation win for us. These treats taste almost exactly like the ones that we love so much if not better! If you love chocolate (or not!) and nuts give these a whirl!

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup sliced almonds
- 1/4 cup + 1 tbsp granulated sugar
- 2 tbsp honey
- 3 tbsp heavy whipping cream
- 8 oz chocolate, melted
- Candy thermometer

Instructions

First, pour the sliced almonds into a bowl. Set aside. Then, in a small saucepan, add sugar, honey and heavy whipping cream. Place over medium heat and stir continuously until the mixture hits 244 F. Remove the saucepan from the heat and stir in the sliced almonds. Mix well. Spoon the batter into a bowl and set aside to cool for at least 30 minutes. Do not place in the fridge.

Next, pre-heat the oven to 350 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Once the batter is cool, place teaspoon-sized balls of dough onto a baking sheet about 3-4 inches apart. These puppies tend to spread out A LOT! The dough is very sticky, so it helps to have a bowl or glass of water nearby to wet your fingers to prevent the dough from sticking. Flatten out the balls once they are all on the cookie sheet.

Bake for 8 minutes. Remove from the oven and let them cool for about 5 minutes. Once they are cool, CAREFULLY peel them off the parchment paper (they are very thin and fragile) and invert them so the bottom of the cookie is facing up and the almond side is facing down. Form the remainder of the dough into balls and bake.

Use a pastry brush or a knife to brush on melted chocolate onto the bottom of each cookie, again, remember these bad boys are very fragile!

Set on a parchment-lined baking tray and place in the fridge for about 5 minutes. We had to place ours in the freezer as it was so darn hot! Store in an airtight container. Some of ours were perfectly round, one was heart-shaped and others were just wonky shapes. Whatever the shape they were YUMMMY! ●

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 @olivaiwvalentine.

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The roar of the engines, the delight of the crowd

40TH HISTORIC FESTIVAL, LIME ROCK PARK

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

For reasons, obvious to some and confounding to others, many of us are unabashed collectors. Well designed, beautifully executed objects hypnotize us into swirls of fantasy and, at times, an obsessive need to have these items for ourselves. Pens. Watches. Bells. Glass sculptures. And, perhaps the most consuming ... automobiles.

As adolescents, we gazed lovingly at a Chevrolet Corvette as it purred down the street in front of our house. In our 20s the perfectly tuned whine of a 911 snapped our heads around to appreciate the fullness of Ferdinand Porsche's enduring vision.

Even as we have matured, we observe an elegantly created vehicle and project ourselves, hands securely on the steering wheel, navigating the turns or the Mulsanne Straight of Le Mans ... a quaint French village few of us will ever visit. We sit forlornly in our minivans, waiting at a stop light, dreaming of what it would be like to see the snapping green starter's flag and invoke the sheer brute power of a 670 horsepower NASCAR.

Cars are in our blood. Sure, there are some among us who profess that we "don't care about cars ..." but for every non-believer, there is a devotee who can identify the distinguishing characteristics of a Shelby Mustang or recall the names of the winners of the Indianapolis 500, the Daytona 500, and the US Grand Prix. For them, "Hamilton" means Lewis ... not Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Festival of beauty and speed

Labor Day weekend in the bucolic hills of Northwestern Connecticut is a five day festival presented by Lime Rock Park in Salisbury, CT,

that dives deeply into the affections, passions and appreciation of car lovers who flock to days of racing, a unique race car parade and a car show that is simply mesmerizing.

September 1-5 will mark the 40th year that Lime Rock Park is presenting the Historic Festival. From pre-war, open wheeled sports cars racing bravely around the mile and a half road course to seemingly endless opportunities to see this plethora of mechanical sculptures on full display to programs designed to inform, engage and delight, this weekend has it all.

Each Historic Festival selects a marque – a brand of automobile – that has stood out for a variety of reasons in competition. 2022 is certainly no different, with an exhaustive bit of research and direct invitations providing a truly unique program saluting the Chevrolet Corvette through its creation to competition. The Corvette is approaching its 70th anniversary with all the deference and respect that motoring longevity can muster. Throughout the weekend, there will be a growing number of singular Corvettes on hand with the unique tales and triumphs of each car on full display.

Corvettes in full bloom

A moment of nostalgic pride must be recognized as the Corvette SS, a 1957 vintage racing machine that was piloted by local legend John Fitch at the 12 hours of Sebring will be on display. Other competition



Above: Racecars and sportscars can appear either as one word or two. Just checked common usage and that's the verdict. Photo credit: Classic Open Wheel Race, courtesy Lime Rock Park

Continued on next page ...



Above: 1963 Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport Coupe, courtesy Revs Institute.

Corvettes with celebrity ties will also be on hand, including the 2008 car which was the last competition car driven by actor/driver Paul Newman who competed on the Lime Rock track for many years.

The festivities begin on Thursday, September 1st when the Vintage Racecar and Sportscar Parade begins at Lime Rock Park, winds its way through 17 miles of local roads, visiting villages, gliding past farms and forests, ending up in Falls Village, where the drivers will park their cars and be greeted by a family-friendly fair.

The race is on

Friday is the moment the “roar” begins to echo through the hills. Drivers will be taking to the track to refine their skills, determine the best “line” through the seven corners of the track and make sure their classic racecars are tuned and ready. This is the day of practice and qualifying as drivers engage their skills to find a place on the starting grids of two days of racing. There will be early sports cars with their limits being tested in counterpoint to thundering Mustangs, Camaros, Firebirds, Javelins, and Cougars that will relive the Trans Am races of the 1960s and 70s.

Saturday, September 3 is wall to wall racing – Day One. Arranged by class – determined by the size of the car engines – the day will be filled with moments of consummate skill, bravado and grace. With a range of vehicles and types that span over six decades, all meticulously maintained, each race will delight. Crowds will find it just as easy to cheer on a vintage MG as it will to stand and salute a triumphant Camaro.

Sunday is a quiet day at Lime Rock Park ... as far as the roar of engines is concerned. The sounds that will emanate from the track will be those of amazement and delight. Sunday in the Park places 600 amazing vehicles along the straight away named for legendary driver and local resident Sam Posey and extends the assembled vehicles around the curves of the track. With easy access from both Lime Rock Park entrances, the display invites spectators to walk from car to car, take photos, talk with the proud owners and indulge in that wonderful fantasy of dreaming of themselves, hair blowing in the wind, motoring through the countryside. At the close of the “concours” there will be recognition of the meticulous work that owners have put into keeping their sculptures in spotless condition. “Best of Show” is no small designation, and the beauty of the contestants is enduring witness to their efforts to be identified as “best.”

On Monday, it's back to work. Race Day Two. The Labor Day race card brings the classic racecars back to the track for a full day of competition that ends, as all motor races do, with winners atop the winner's stand, trophies in hand and the applause of a crowd that has been fully rewarded in their devotion to the moving sculpture of the automobile.

Something for everyone

Along with racing, parades, and car shows, the Lime Rock Park Historic Festival offers a variety of diversions for participants that begin with camping on the track infield, a Gathering of the Marques that assembles cars by manufacturer to create seas of Porches, BMWs, Corvettes, Alfa Romeos, MGs, Jaguars, Austin Healeys, Ferraris, Lamborghinis ... and many more.

And, there is food. With a full complement of catering choices, visitors can pick and choose the cuisine of their choice, washed down with their favorite beverage. Displays of “automobilia” will offer everything from stylish wearables to collectables and a “swap meet” will attract the attention of those dedicated aficionados who are looking for that special part to complete that special car that might, with some luck, be on display when the 41st Historic Festival appears next year and automobile fantasies bloom, again, in the Litchfield Hills. ●

Full information is available on the Lime Rock Park website, www.limerock.com. The main entrance to the park is 60 White Hollow Road in Lime Rock (Salisbury), CT.

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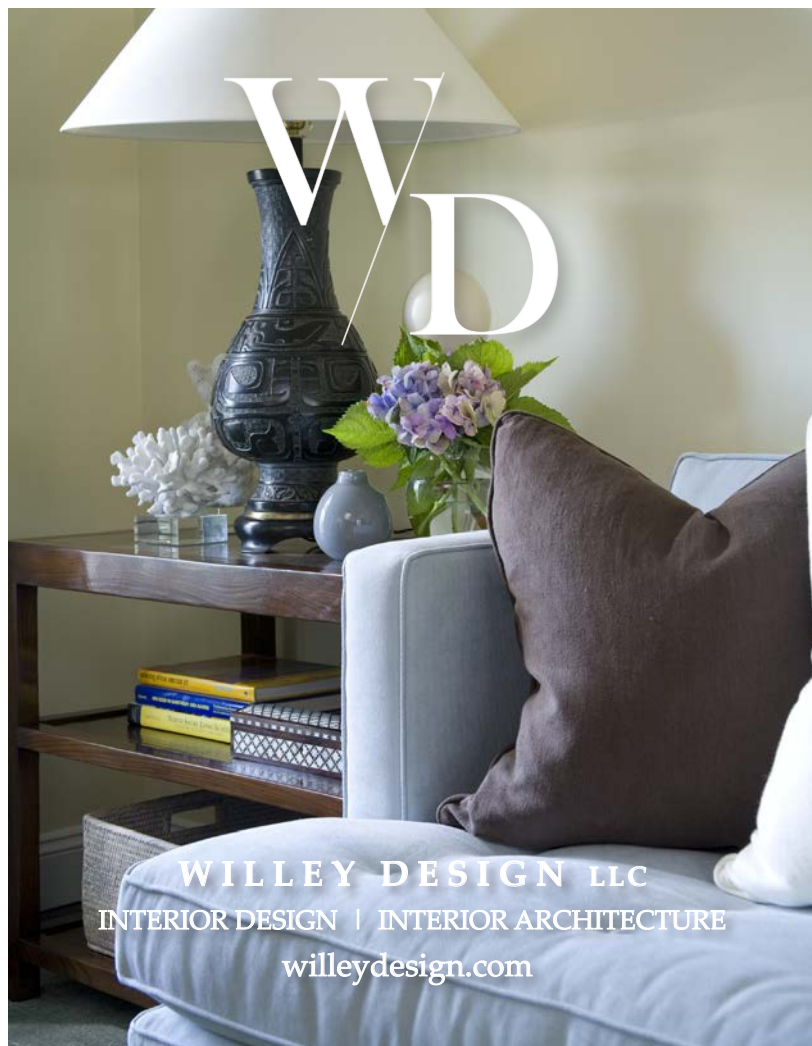
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Pine Plains Community Day returns

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

When you think of the quintessential small American town, what comes to mind? Pine Plains, NY, comes to the mind of many. Perhaps it is the fact that it's a one-stop-light town; it has a committed fire department in the heart of the town as well as a beautiful library; it's got numerous amazing restaurants; everyone knows Peck's grocery store where you're sure to bump into someone you know; the entire town is filled with cute streets that are lined with well-loved homes that are perfect for Trick-or-Treating; it's one of the few communities in our area that has both an elementary and junior/senior high school located in the heart of the town so that kids can walk to- and from school; and it also has an amazing recreation area with baseball fields and basketball courts with a backdrop of Stissing Lake and Stissing Mountain... what's there not to love about Pine Plains? This town screams community and Americana.

To secure that status even further, the community (not the town's government or organizations, but the community) has come together to bring back the well-loved Pine Plains Community Day. It will be a fun-filled day for the entire family, that is entirely free!

Come one, come all to Pine Plains, New York

The Pine Plains Community Day is set to take place on Saturday, September 10 in the heart of Pine Plains. You know where that one and only stop light in town is? That's where all of the activities will radiate out from, so you can't miss all the hubbub! This was purposefully planned so that it would be easy for families to navigate.

When we asked the organizers of the Community Day what brought about the idea to bring this event back, they shared that it all stemmed from a brainstorming session this past

March, "A diverse group including the library, the recreation department, the Stissing Center, the Lions Club, the Stissing Theatre Guild, the Fire House, Town Hall, Friends of Stissing Landmarks and more, came together to explore ideas to bring the town together," explained Patrick Trettenero who is part of the group spearheading the festivities.

"We wanted to bring the community together – bring folks of all ages and all walks of life together – to meet their neighbors and have fun," Trettenero continued. "It was also important to us that the entire day was FREE! At this time of year there's a lot going on and associated costs for families in our community with back-to-school shopping, the Dutchess County Fair, and then Ag Day just around the corner, so we wanted to make sure that everyone could come out and enjoy themselves, for free."

The Community Day used to be a tradition and the event was always held in the spring. The last Community Day took place in 2017, but then with Covid, priorities shifted. As previously mentioned, the driving force behind bringing the day back came from the community: this event is not presented by the Town of Pine Plains, but is the result of a bunch of volunteers and organizations brainstorming to bring people together and bringing them to Pine Plains. "The people are organizing this event and it feels like there's a real grass roots effort here," explained Trettenero. "The goal is literally to bring people together! And the fact that we have things for people of all ages with free food, historic tours, and music all day long is incredible!"

Getting involved

It always takes an army of volunteers to get things done, and the fine folks of Pine Plains weren't afraid to roll up their sleeves and get to work to bring this day back. Sarah Lyons Chase and Patrick Trettenero have brought



Image courtesy of Patrick Trettenero

together a corps of volunteers, clubs, organizations, and businesses to make this happen. Thanks to some generous donations and funding from local businesses including Crown Energy, they have ensured that the entire day is free for all.

What to do, what to expect

The day's activities will radiate out from the town's center: there's a free pancake breakfast at the Fire House on South Main Street from 9-11am. The Kids' Zone will be full of fun, arts, crafts, and games from 10am-3pm and will include a bounce house and local elected official reading stories to the children at The American Legion lawn on North Main Street. From 11am to 3pm there will be two locations in town that will have live music, on the porch of the American Legion on North Main Street and at The Stissing Center office on Church Street. There will also be a jazz concert featuring The Bridgeport Trio at The Stissing Center at 4pm, you can't miss that!

Did we mention that the whole day is free? Because there will be a free light lunch from 1-3pm at El Guacamole, Rosey's, and Tower Pizza – again, all thanks to the generous donations of local businesses. There

will also be historical tours of sites in the center of town including The Graham-Brush House and Stissing House. Local businesses are also in on the festivities like Demeter Home will be holding a raffle for a gift card and the Pine Plains Pharmacy will be giving away bottles of water. "Everyone is jumping in without exception!" said Trettenero.

This is the dress rehearsal

The Community Day steering committee shared that they're viewing this year's Community Day as the dress rehearsal to Pine Plains' big Bicentennial event that's set to take place in 2023. "We hope to learn from this year's event so that we can make next year even bigger!" said Trettenero. "We're really encouraged and proud how everyone has stepped up and come together."

"We hope that everyone will come out and celebrate a fun-filled day in Pine Plains on September 10!" exclaimed Trettenero. Here's hoping we'll see you all in Pine Plains. •

To learn more about Community Day you can visit their Facebook page, "Pine Plains Community Day 2022" or email PPCCommunityDay2022@gmail.com.

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A truly XXXtraordinary cause

By Lindsey Clark
lindsey@mainstreetmag.com

When Colton was less than a year old, he was diagnosed with a rare genetic condition. I spoke with Michelle Hutchinson, Colton's mom, all about her son's story, how Colton's XXXtraordinary Cause came to be, the incredible outcomes they've seen, and what lies ahead for their organization.

Colton's story

When speaking with Michelle, she underscored first and foremost the importance of an early diagnosis in Colton's journey: "We were very fortunate in that we got an early diagnosis. That's not the case for a lot of kids with his syndrome." When the family from Red Hook, NY, was referred to a geneticist when Colton was only nine months old, they learned that he had 48XXXY. This rare genetic condition can impact various aspects of development and health for boys with the syndrome, often causing physical delays due to low muscle tone, speech delays which later manifest into language-based learning disorders, and behavioral struggles. It was critical, then, that they received the diagnosis when they did, as this allowed Colton to begin occupational therapy, speech treatment, and physical therapy as soon as possible.

Furthermore, Michelle recognized the importance of a particular hormone treatment for Colton. Boys with extra X chromosomes tend to skip a mini puberty, and therefore an extra mini surge of testosterone, that XY boys undergo. She described, "That's a hormone that is believed to help whittle out cognitive skills, help the brain develop, and help with strength and motor coordination." Because of their fortunate timing, they were able to mimic this mini puberty through a series of three testosterone shots over the course of three months when Colton was a baby. "A lot of kids are missing that window of opportunity to do that, so we were lucky."

In light of these treatments and their timing, Colton has experienced less of the impacts that his condition

can potentially have throughout childhood. Michelle explained, "He has not been impacted in the ways that we've seen for a lot of other kids with the syndrome, and I do credit that to the early diagnosis." Besides struggles with social anxiety in school, which were undoubtedly amplified by the effects of the pandemic, she noted, "He has a lot of friends outside of school. So, he's really kind of lived a normal childhood so far. I know his milestones are hit a little bit later, but really, he's doing great."

The making and mission of Colton's Cause

Following Colton's diagnosis, it became clear that the local region was incredibly accepting, creating a support system for Colton and his family. "What we've learned that wasn't obvious to us before was how amazing our surrounding communities are, and how willing they are to help and support. It really is a unique area," Michelle pointed out. "It really has been wonderful to see how incredible the community here is – accepting Colton and being his cheerleader – and knowing that we have so many people behind us, which ultimately

will be the reason why he is so successful in the future."

Unfortunately for many other families, this isn't always the case, and the isolating effect that families can experience when their child has a rare disease or syndrome can be compounded by a lack of resources and a prevalence of inaccurate information. "You know, a lot of the support groups have blossomed in the last couple years, so back eight years ago when we first got his diagnosis there was really nothing out there as far as support," Michelle noted. Luckily, Colton's family was able to find a specialist in Maryland, where they brought Colton. At this point, Michelle explained, they felt super fortunate to have the ability to see a specialist and learn valuable information about Colton's diagnosis, and thought, "Every parent should have the ability to do this for their child."

Here, the wheels began to turn about what the family could do to help other children and families experiencing this same dilemma. They especially wanted to ensure that the



Above, top: Crown Energy is a big supporter of the cause, promoting and raising awareness with one of their propane trucks. Pictured are Colton and his sister Ella with all of the student volunteers at A Rare Affair. Directly above: The young man who inspired it all, Colton Hutchinson. Next page: Colton with his family. Images courtesy of Michelle Hutchinson.

Continued on next page ...

many families in the local community with children who have a rare condition can find and access the care they need. “The rarer the diagnosis, the harder it is to find doctors, there’s nothing local, and less doctors know about it,” Michelle added. With this in mind, the mission of the non-profit foundation, Colton’s XXXtraordinary Cause, was formed. Not only would they raise awareness and funds to help children with XY variations like Colton, but they would also “support and bring awareness to conditions that children in our community are faced with, and then raise money for the foundations supporting those conditions.”

The impact of the cause

Spreading awareness at a time when, as Michelle highlighted, there was little to no information out there about XY variations, was critical. Just by launching the non-profit and a website for Colton’s XXXtraordinary Cause (coltonxsycause.com) meant that the organization came up in Google searches when parents started researching their children’s diagnoses. “I’ve had tons of moms from across the country and world – I’ve had moms reach out to me from Poland, and the UK, and all over the place, saying they stumbled across our website, they’re having trouble finding doctors that know anything – they’re looking for answers – they’re curious about how Colton is doing and what we’ve done for him. So, I’ve been able to help others that just couldn’t find the information out there,” Michelle explained. “In recent years, though, thankfully there have been more people who are coming out and sharing their stories. And I’m hoping that there’s a lot more awareness for it coming down the line.”

A Rare Affair

The other main effects of Colton’s XXXtraordinary Cause are directly thanks to “A Rare Affair,” the non-profit’s annual fundraising event. The original plan, Michelle described, was that rather than trying to raise funds all year, they would put on an annual gala-style event that prioritizes accessibility for all of those who want to support. Each year, a child with a rare

diagnosis in the community would be honored. Half of the money raised in the event would be dedicated to the foundation that funds research, raises awareness, and provides support to families of children with the honored child’s diagnosis. The other half of the funds raised would go to the Focus Foundation, which funds research and provides support for families of children with XY variations. Raising funds for these foundations is especially important, Michelle noted, because there is no federal funding for researching these rare diseases and syndromes. “The only way to get research and cures and awareness is through the families that fundraise. All these foundations that I’ve mentioned that we raise money for, they all at one point in time were started by a family who had a child with the condition.”

A Rare Affair has been held at Globe Hill in Pine Plains, NY, donated to the foundation each year by Ronnybrook Farm. At past events, they’ve had live music, dinner, a silent auction, and dancing. In 2017, the first year of the event, Maddie Clements was honored. Over 350 people attended this event, raising \$40,000, half of which was donated to the Focus Foundation, and half of which went to the Cure JM Foundation, which researches juvenile dermatomyositis (JDM), which is Maddie’s condition, and supports children with the disease.

In 2018, Aevary Kiernan was honored. Aevary was one of the first to be diagnosed with Tatton Brown Rahman Syndrome (TBRS), and half of the over \$65,000 raised that year went to the Tatton Brown Rahman Syndrome Community, which Aevary’s family founded. Her mother, Jill Montgomery Kiernan, has done incredible work to raise awareness, bring people with TBRS together and provide support to them, and make information about this condition accessible.

The honorees for 2019, Dominick and Vincent Nasi, are twin brothers with their own distinct sets of rare diagnoses. Over \$100,000 was raised that year, and to reflect the twins’ resilience and love of sports, half was donated to Special Olympics NY.



In 2020, Jim Jim Mulcahy was honored through an online event, a shift that was made because of the pandemic. With the move to a live virtual format, many people were recognized for donating items for an online raffle and sponsoring the event. Michelle emphasized, “That just goes to show how amazing the community is – people raised over \$65,000 that year just having an online live event.” With this, half was donated to the Cure GM1 Foundation that supports research to find a cure for Jim Jim’s condition, GM1.

2021 brought uncertainty about planning a gathering, and with the help of Colton’s physical therapist, Colton’s XXXtraordinary Cause was able to help a girl named Olivia who was born with sacral agenesis. Because of this condition, Olivia’s family consistently travels to see specialists, which has caused significant financial strain. To help, a friend of Michelle’s who sells athletic wear donated 84% of her profits, Crown Energy in Millerton, NY, (owned by Colton’s father, Erik) matched the donation, and a silent donor matched it as well. The result: over \$20,000 raised that went directly to covering the family’s rent for a little over a year!

Moving forward

Looking to the future, Michelle

hopes to reimagine and reinvent A Rare Affair. After the pandemic made planning for 2022 difficult, Michelle is considering what A Rare Affair will look like in 2023. The goal, she explained, is to continue having one main event each year and maintain the core of what A Rare Affair has been, but make little changes to adapt to the current situation. “We want our guests to not feel like they’re coming to something because they have to support it, we want them to really want to be there, too. If you want to be there, you’re going to take the time to learn about these kids and their conditions. So, that’s really important to us, that it’s an event that people want to come to and support. And we’re hoping to get back there in 2023!”

How to help and get involved

Michelle stated it best: “The best way people can help is just teaching their kids that, ‘Hey, there’s kids that are different,’ and teaching them to be inclusive and accepting. They just want to feel like they’re part of something, too. I think that’s the biggest thing anyone can do for these kids right now.” ●

To get involved with Colton’s XXXtraordinary Cause, learn more about past A Rare Affair events, and find more information about rare conditions, please visit www.coltonxsycause.com.

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THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE BERKSHIRES:

The Josh Billings Runaground Triathlon

By Ian Strever
info@mainstreetmag.com

"To finish is to win." — Josh Billings

"If you're not first, you're last,"
— Ricky Bobby

This year's season at Tanglewood will end with a flourish: back-to-back nights with Van Morrison and Ringo Starr is about as impressive a finale to their concert season as anyone could conjure, short of the ghost of John Lennon sitting in on lead vocals.

After the wine bottles and lawn chairs are packed away, however, Tanglewood and the surrounding Berkshire Hills settle into fall like a sleeping cat. For those who stick it out for another week or two, the quietude of early autumn rests on the hills until tourists and weekenders return with light down coats and pricey sunglasses to populate fall events.

Window of opportunity

Back in 1977, the Berkshire Hills Committee identified that window of opportunity and set out to design an event that would draw people to the area to take advantage of the lingering warmth and the ebbing traffic on roads and lakes. Their brainchild was the Josh Billings Runaground

Triathlon, a quirky multisport event that ditches the swimming leg in favor of anything row-able.

Legend has it that Josh Hitchcock of Williamsport christened the race after Josh Billings, a nineteenth-century humorist in the vein of Mark Twain who was born in Lanesboro, and whose house stood along the race route when it took place in the northern part of the county.

Because his house stood along the race route? That's not much of an origin story.

A celestial chuckle

It must be pretty great to have any kind of event named after you, especially two hundred years after you died, but Billings must find it curious, indeed, to hear his name in currency every September in connection with some bizarre competition that features running as a sport, velocipedes that had barely been invented during his lifetime, and non-wooden water conveyances.

Billings likely has a celestial chuckle over the absurdity of it, just as he probably guffawed at the apocryphal description of the sacrilegious treatment of his entrails in Steinbeck's novel, *Cannery Row*. Discarded by the town doctor, his innards were slated for deployment as fish bait by an enterprising young boy before the locals stumbled upon the dishonor and preserved every last bit of Billings for interment.

So there is some irony in naming a triathlon after him that purposefully keeps bodies out of the water.

The spirit of the event and sweet mugs, too

But I'd like to think that the organizers set out to create an event that honored the words of Billings: "To finish is to win." And truly, this is the spirit of the event. There are no fewer than 44 race categories, ranging from "Ironman/Ironwoman/Ironperson" solo competitors to "Family" and "All



Berkshire" teams. Parsing the field into so many categories means more trophies, and so while not everyone will win, at least 44 competitors can claim to have won the Josh Billings. That gets you a sweet mug. They are ideal for holding pens, too.

At the sharp end of the race, however, "The Josh" is a zero-sum game in the spirit of Ricky Bobby (if you haven't seen *Talladega Nights*, lower your nose next Friday night and forgo the French-language Cannes-winner in favor of this wonderfully inane Will Ferrell vehicle). Since 2011, the team of Josh Lipka, Tom Keefe, and Steve Monsulick have maintained an iron grip on the Josh, often winning by more than ten minutes and claiming the course record. Lipka, a cycling coach based out of NYC and Pittsfield, has stood atop numerous podiums and often arrives alone at the end of the first bike leg, several minutes ahead of his nearest competitors who have been myopically training on the course for weeks in preparation for the event.

Continued on next page ...

Above: The field usually breaks into numerous groups, so everyone can find their tribe. Below, left: Steve Monsulick has the distinction of wearing the number 1 bib most years as the returning champion. Photo credit Brad & Beth Herder





Above: If you can row it, you can race it. Below, right: To the winner go the spoils. In lieu of a trophy, winners get fine, locally-made mugs. Photo credit Brad & Beth Herder.

Yet a strong paddler can often make up for subpar times on the bike. Competitive kayakers and canoeists are harder to come by, and technique goes a long way on the water, especially in a crowded field. Keefe is usually first or second in that leg, too (as is Monsulick on the run), but the handful of minutes they gain on the water allows a margin of error on the run that virtually locks it up by the middle of the race.

Honing fitness

All of which begs the question, “Why bother?” As a competitive road cyclist for many years, I readily concede that I will not even see Lipka on the course, but for many competitors, The Josh is The World Championships of the Berkshires. It serves as a focal point for training that hones our fitness to a sharpness we might not achieve without a target, even if the goal of The Josh is just to finish.

So just how does that work?

For decades now, endurance athletes have embraced the concept of periodization. Instead of trying to maintain high levels of fitness throughout the year, athletes target a small window of time when they want to attain peak performance. Race results and scientific studies attest to the human body’s ability to reach those extraordinary peaks through deliberate, scheduled workout routines, but those studies also show that it is

impossible to maintain such a state of fitness for longer than a few weeks, at best, without the onset of injury, fatigue, or burnout.

For those of us with jobs, families, and other commitments, maintaining a basic level of fitness can be a challenge, and we schedule workouts around weekend barbecues and soccer games. Still, that kind of haphazard approach to training could achieve a basic level of fitness from which to build toward a competition like The Josh.

Periodization

The details of such preparation will vary greatly from person to person and require much more elaboration than a magazine article, but the idea is to plan backwards from the date of the event (in this case, the middle of September) to gradually build your level of fitness to the demands of the event. Regardless of whether you are paddling, running, or cycling, The

Josh offers opportunities for high anaerobic challenge that can only be sustained for minutes at a time. The premise of periodization is to establish a solid base of relatively long aerobic efforts that are conducted at a rate of perceived exertion (RPE) of 2 or 3 out of ten, and then to use that base as a platform for establishing more intense, briefer efforts such as those found in The Josh.

RPE is the simplest measure of effort, and even with more sophisticated tools like heart rate monitors and power meters, perceived exertion is an important metric for fitness. All-out sprinting should be a 10 on the scale, and if you are just getting started with zone training, it is possible to determine approximate aerobic zones by this method.

To do it well, however, it is advisable to consult a physician or personal trainer to establish your current level of fitness. Joe Friel’s Training Bible series for cyclists, mountain bikers, and triathletes offers a comprehensive examination of training that applies to most aerobically-based sports, and do-it-yourselfers can use Friel’s guides to prepare for everything from The Josh to multi-day stage races.

Or you can just do The Josh for fun – just to finish. The organizers offer clinics on each stage of the event to help anyone who wants to compete, and they even offer equipment rentals to take away that excuse. Can’t pull together a team? Put your name into their “Matchmaker,” and they will team you up with others in search of a member. What’s more, the event has raised nearly \$100,000 for the United Way, so even if you finish last, you will still feel good about it. ●



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Millerton's community park revitalization

THE HEART OF A COMMUNITY

By Stephen Waite
info@mainstreetmag.com

When Millerton, NY, reopens its recreation park October 1 following the completion of the first phase in a multi-phased revitalization plan, it will unveil designs for the next phase, and mark the 20th anniversary of its handicapped accessible playground. The playground was the vision of Sharon Will, an area resident at the time. Will, now a resident of Florida, got the idea for the project from watching a segment on *Good Morning America* featuring a mother and her child born with cystic fibrosis. The mother had developed the concept of “Boundless Playgrounds,” playgrounds for children with and without physical disabilities. “Oh my God, this is what I’m going to do,” Will said.

She connected with then Mayor Mariley Najdek, who Will described as having been “down-to-earth and very caring,” through her attorney Michelle Haab, and Village Planning Board Chair Cathy Fenn. She then pitched a plan to the Village Board, offering to buy a piece of land and build a “Boundless Playground” for the Millerton community. The Board enthusiastically approved and identified an ideal location for the innovative playground.

Encouraged and energized, Will reached out to her former Wall Street contacts and a few residents for donations. Her efforts proved so successful that she secured over \$425,000, enough money for the playground

and improvements for the entire park, including purchasing an electronic scoreboard for the Little League field. Between 2001 and 2002, an old swing set, steel slide, and rusted merry-go-round were removed from Eddie Collins Memorial Park and replaced by a sprawling, carnival-colored play area complete with new swings, slides, tunnels, a ramp, picnic tables, and a pour-in-place, soft surface to protect children from serious injury in case of falls. Will praised the support of the donors and the Village but said, “If it hadn’t been for Mariley, Cathy, and Michelle, it never would’ve happened. They embraced it and allowed it to happen.”

The Park today

Two decades later, under the leadership of Mariley’s daughter, Mayor Jenn Najdek, the weathered playground is being repaired, upgraded, and expanded as part of a complete overhaul of the entire recreation park. Najdek has been involved with the redevelopment process since its inception in 2016, either as a member of the Park Revitalization Committee or as the Committee’s liaison to the village board.

A mother of two grown children, she believes recreation is essential to a child’s development, whether that be learning how to be a good teammate, getting along with others, or simply relieving stress. The former



Images courtesy of Jeanne Vanecko

Siena basketball player spent a lot of time honing her skills on the court in Millerton, paving the way for a full scholarship and a college education. She also served as Millerton’s summer camp director for several years and personally witnessed the benefits of the swimming pool – permanently closed in 2016 – and the popular playground. It was not uncommon to see cars from neighboring states in the parking lot. “The playground brought people from all over the place,” Najdek said.

At 9400 square-feet, the playground contains a mix of rain gardens, shade trees, green spaces, cast-iron and ipe wood benches, winding concrete sidewalks for wheelchair access, extended multicolored rubber surfacing, and lots of equipment for children to enjoy. Two new basketball courts, a soccer field, repaired and repainted bathhouse and pavilion, new vehicle entranceway and parking will accompany the restored playground.

Reflecting on her mother, who passed away in 2014, Najdek says, “She invested her life in children and the community. She always believed that children should play; there should be a safe and welcoming place for children and families. Children or teens with disabilities should have as much fun as little kids running around next to them.” Najdek added,

“I think it was really important to her to see that through and make sure that it [the playground] was something to have and be used for a very long time.”

Accessibility will continue to be a theme in phased plans for future additions to the recreation park. Designs for those additions, such as a new bathhouse, community room, and zero-entry swimming pool, will be revealed at the reopening celebration, a Party in the Park, on October 1.

Although there has been no timetable set for the completion of the additions, Najdek is optimistic they will get done, and she looks forward to the day when Millerton has a new pool. She envisions the final product, with the proper programs and events, being a special asset. “It’s important not only to those who live in the community and surrounding communities, but I think it’s important for tourism and the economic stability for the Village of Millerton.”

For now, she’s just happy and proud to give the public back the recreation space it’s been missing for the past 16 months. Undoubtedly, her mother would agree. ●

To learn more about the park and its efforts, please visit www.millertonpark.org



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The New York Times

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How to survive – and enjoy! – the Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival

By Dominique DeVito
info@mainstreetmag.com

It's September, and that means festival season! One of the biggest (and best) in New York state is in our backyard. It's the Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival, held at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds on September 10 and 11, 2022. This year is the 21st anniversary of the festival. If you've been before, you know what the buzz is about – it's an event where you can visit favorite wineries and new wineries without traveling farther than Rhinebeck. If you haven't been and you love wine (and craft beverages), clear your calendar for that weekend.

You may wonder how it's possible not to enjoy a wine and food festival. You get a group of friends together, arrive, get your tasting glasses, get a program that lists all of the attendees, and get started. This is a simple and direct approach, and it works. You'll taste some great wines wherever you decide to start, and you and your friends will soon be toasting and tasting and having a ball.

Where it gets challenging is when you've reached the tenth or so (who's counting?) winery for more tastings, with perhaps a couple of distilleries, too, since they're sprinkled among the wineries, and you realize you're already pretty looped,

and you really can't "taste" anything anymore. And yet there are still sooooo many more wines and wineries to visit (not to mention cideries, more distilleries, and breweries). There are some wine and food festivals that are do-able this way. You grab some food and get back in the lines, figuring you'll get a second wind. The Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival, however, is one of the largest on the East Coast, and you'll have a much better time if you and your friends go with some kind of a game plan.

Perspective on the Festival

The festival is celebrating 21 years at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds in Rhinebeck, NY. It's a beautiful site, with lots of parking, bathrooms, and open space. When it was first held in 2001, there were fewer than 100 farm wineries in New York State. Today there are nearly 400! Back in 2001, there were even fewer distilleries, cideries, or craft breweries. In fact, it wasn't until 2016 that craft beverage producers besides winemakers could sell directly to consumers by the glass. When that happened, the HVWF Festival organizers rightly allowed these producers to participate.



While it's still called the Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival – and wineries are dominant – it is actually a New York state craft beverage festival. This is a great thing for festival-goers, but be forewarned: the choices are staggering. According to James Martin, the festival's event coordinator, participating craft beverages include about 50 wineries, a dozen distilleries, several cideries, and about 30 beers on tap in the beer tent. The wine, spirits, ciders, and specialty food vendors are spread throughout four massive buildings, with assigned spots clearly marked and listed in the program.

As the number of craft beverage producers has increased, so has the number of participating food trucks, which are conveniently located just outside of the halls and by the beer tent. This year's choices range from traditional burgers and dogs to Jamaican, Thai, Middle Eastern, Mexican, Polish, and more, including plenty of vegetarian and vegan dishes. There are also specialty food vendors among the wineries and distilleries, so you

Above: It's great fun to go to the festival with a group of friends. Bottom, left: A selection of wines from Three Brothers Winery in the Finger Lakes. All photos courtesy of the Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival.



Continued on page 35 ...



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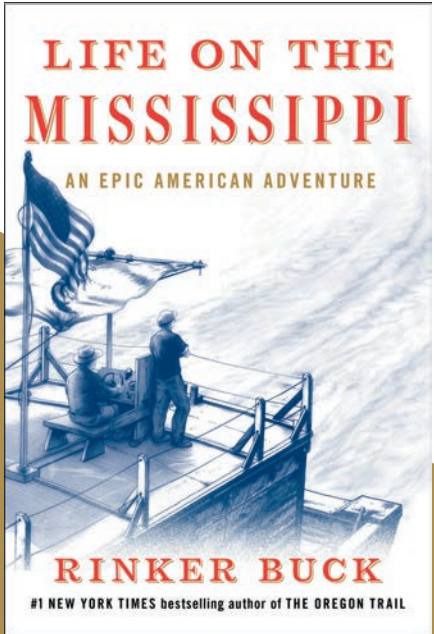
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can snack on the goodies they sell. Water, lemonade, sodas and other non-alcoholic beverages abound, as well. This is important, as eating and staying hydrated are important to making it through the day.

I've been to festivals as both a consumer and a vendor. I've gone into the experience as someone excited to try new wines and easily won over by the pretty bottles, the enticing descriptions, and the quick buzz you get early on. I've also been one of the wineries selling wine, making my products as attractive as possible and talking up the wines to help people appreciate and enjoy them – and also buy them. As a consumer, you may already be too buzzed or too distracted to really “taste” the wines, but as a seller, you want people who taste your wine to buy it, which means pouring on the sales talk, offering and encouraging additional tastes, reminding them of promotions – whatever it takes. This adds up to a lot of tasting.

Help!!

As fun as it is to take chances on some new wines, it's very disappointing to bring them home, look forward to opening them, and



Above: There are lots of places to gather, chat, rest, and refresh on the fairgrounds. Bottom, left: Harvest Spirits from nearby Columbia County is a regular attendee; Debbie Gioquindo leads seminars at the festival.

discover that you don't really like the wine after all. It's also no fun to wonder if you're going to make it through the afternoon because you're so buzzed already, but everyone around you keeps drinking. How can you both enjoy AND SURVIVE the massive, rowdy, delicious and, yes, intoxicating Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival?

Here's some insider advice.

Debbie Gioquindo is the Hudson Valley Wine Goddess. She came up with that title for herself when she started a blog on Hudson Valley wines nearly two decades ago. She's passionate about wine – Hudson Valley wine in particular – and she's been actively promoting it at the festival from very early on, offering wine education seminars on site, and coordinating a competition for Hudson Valley wines that's held at the festival and is judged by an esteemed panel of more than a dozen wine professionals.

“It's true that the festival gets bigger and bigger every year,” she said, “so there is more and more for people to taste and consume. If you really and truly want to experience the wines and learn some things, you can't be buzzed by the fourth winery you come to.” To avoid this, she cautioned, there are some simple things to do before you get to the festival, and some things to remember to do once you're there.

Research and prepare

The first thing to do is your behind-the-scenes research. The festival has a website and a Facebook page that are updated regularly with participating craft beverage producers and food trucks. Take a look. Are there wineries you've visited already and whose wines you know you'd like to stock up on while they're there? Wineries from all over the state are at the festival, and you can save yourself a trip to their distant tasting rooms by visiting them here. Make a list of the wineries whose wines you already want, and put them at the top of a “must not miss” list that you'll take with you. Keep it in the Notes app on your phone so you don't forget.

If you're familiar with New York State wineries and other craft beverage producers, you may see some new names on the list of participants. Get a mini behind-the-scenes peak at these businesses to see what they're about by visiting their websites and social media pages. You'll get a sense of which ones appeal to you. Make a list of these, too, so you don't miss out on visiting them at the festival.

What kind of beverages do you like best?

Another consideration before just jumping in to taste any and everything is to really think about the kinds of wines, spirits, beers, and even ciders you like best. If your tastes run to big, dry reds; brown spirits; double IPAs; and

off-dry ciders, don't kill your palate in the first hour by trying off-dry whites, dessert wines, or porters, for example, along with the beverages you know you'll really enjoy when you bring them home at the end of the day. Your wallet will thank you, too! “Go with what you know you'll like at the festival,” Debbie advises, “and ask the producers for recommendations based on your tastes. Don't waste your time or theirs trying something you know you won't enjoy,” she says.

What to bring and wear

Go prepared with a water bottle that's easy to carry or will hook to a belt loop; a purse that can go over your head and doesn't weigh a ton (pare down what you carry in it to your driver's license, a credit card, some cash, lip balm, the car key, and a pen); comfortable shoes with thick soles (the floors get dirty and sticky); a shirt or dress that's not white (these attract red wine like bees to honey!); and a collapsible travel cup that comes with a loop for attaching it to things (more on that later). Try to be as hands-free as possible going in. “Everyone gets a fabric bag when they get to the festival,” James told me, “that includes a glass, a program, and a beautiful magazine.” This is great, but it's another thing to carry.

Continued on next page ...



Deciding on a day

Festival hours are 11am to 6pm on Saturday and 11am to 5pm on Sunday. “The festival typically draws 10,000 to 16,000 people,” James said, “and most of them come on Saturday. If you’re attending with older or less mobile people, you may want to choose to come on Sunday when it’s a bit quieter.” There’s an option to get a weekend pass to the festival, too. Knowing you have two days to explore and shop can take the pressure off and make for more informed choices.

On the grounds

While you and the people you’ve come to the festival with are waiting to get in, share your strategies and thoughts. Think about planning for regular breaks where you compare notes and decide where to go next. Think about when and where you might want to eat. Will some of you want vegetarian while others want barbeque? Take a designated lunch break. There’s live music by the beer tent, and taking a break there is a nice idea. Is there a seminar you’re interested in? Set an alarm on your phone so you get there in time.

“While everyone may be pouring into the closest building to get started,” Debbie said, “go to the one that’s least crowded first, which is usually the building farthest from the main entrance. Are some of the new places you want to try there? Get to them. You’ll avoid bottle-necks at the booths, you’ll get to ask questions, and your tasting experience will be better.”

Remember the suggestion to bring a collapsible travel cup along? Here’s why: “You can take tastes of the beverages without having to drink them all,” Debbie reminded me. “Bring along a spit cup,” she said, “and use it.” This is tricky at a festival when you’re with friends,

because you have to very consciously do this, and spitting out your tasting sample can be both awkward and appear rude. But if you really want to try a lot of stuff and you don’t want to get too toasted, you have to make your peace with this and really do it. A collapsible travel cup is just right. Use it, rinse it, fold it, and start over at the next booth. With your own water bottle, you won’t have to shimmy among many others trying to get to the rinse water and dump buckets. Just pour a bit into the collapsible cup, swish it around, dump it, and move on.

Remind yourself to get to the producers whose craft beverages you know you want to stock up on, and place your orders. You don’t want to risk getting to them at the end of the day and finding out they sold out of the one thing you wanted. You don’t have to lug your purchases around with you, just the claim tickets, so don’t worry about being loaded down with bottles for the rest of the day.

“Drink a lot of water between tastings,” Debbie advised, as well. “You want to stay hydrated. Having your own water bottle is great, and you can refill it with bottled water if you need to. Try a lemonade or get an iced tea or coffee. Be sure to eat, too,” Debbie said. (I don’t have to remind myself of that wherever I am!)

Are you remembering to try the wines you’re most interested in first, or maybe exclusively? If you’re there to find something really worth bringing home, make your tastings count.

Know when to fold

You’re a person, not a machine, and as such you have a limit. Recognize it and respect it. There’s a fine line between good time and too much. Remember that you have to get home, that you may be going out to dinner where you’ll have more wine or cocktails, that you want to enjoy the rest of your weekend or not feel sick at work the next day. That you want to remember what you bought.



Speaking of which, give yourself time to collect your purchases at the end of the day. It’s a bummer to stand in line with lots of folks who are all starting to feel the effects of too much and wait for your bags or boxes of bottles to be found and brought to you at the claims area.

Festivals are fun

By the end of the day – or the weekend if you want to do it that way – you will have tried some craft beverages that expand your knowledge of what’s possible here in New York State, you will have made some new friends, you will have walked a lot, and you’ll be tired. But happy. Put your purchases away in a cool place when you get home, wash your souvenir glass and put it among your collection, and start planning some dinner parties.

Oh, and mark the calendar for next year – the Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival is always the week-end after Labor Day.

Cheers! ●

The 2022 Hudson Valley Wine & Food Festival is at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds in Rhinebeck, NY, September 10 and 11, 2022. Learn more and purchase tickets online in advance at www.hudsonvalleywinefest.com. Follow the Festival on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



Above, top to bottom: The festival draws 10,000 to 16,000 people! You’ll discover all kinds of wines and wine-related products at the festival!

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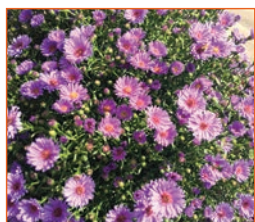


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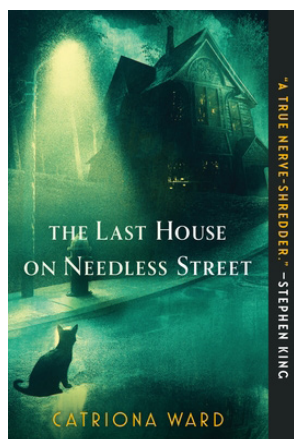
SEPTEMBER STAFF PICKS FOR OUR READING PLEASURE



Attack of the Black Rectangles
by Amy Sarig King

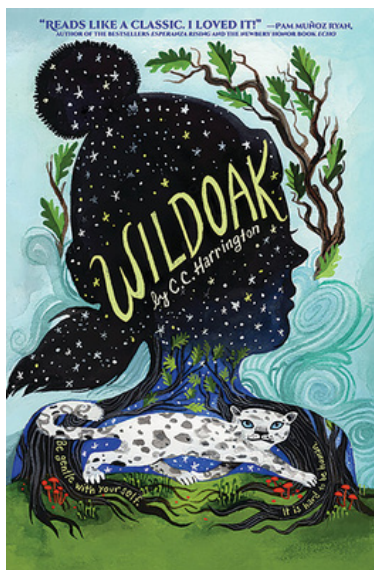
Censorship and book banning is (unfortunately) happening at schools across the country, and this book is a fantastic, age-appropriate way to address the subject with kids. Excellent!

—Suzanna



The Last House on Needless Street
by Catriona Ward

This is probably the most incredible book I've read this year. Definitely one of my favorites, and I think it'll become an all-time favorite as I re-read it in years to come—because I will definitely be re-reading. A third of the way into this book, I realized that I didn't want it to be a horror novel, because I cared about the characters too much. I had to put it down several times from the sheer force of the emotions it gave me. This is a novel about trauma, abuse, survival, and definitely murder. This ticks all the boxes for not only horror, but for a great novel. It's horrifying and spooky and beautiful and I loved it so much. — Frederick



Wildoak by C.C. Harrington

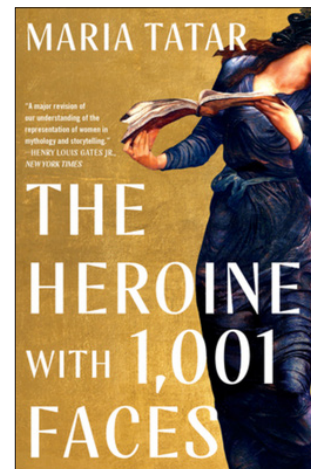
When Maggie's parents send her to her grandfather's house in the hopes that fresh air will help her stutter, she never expects to find a snow leopard cub in the forest – or to be the only person who can save him. Set in 1960s England, this dual-narrative middle grade debut is both powerful and charming. A perfect read for fans of Katherine Applegate and Sara Pennypacker.

— Nicole



Stay True by Hua Hsu

Hua Hsu's memoir about his college years leading up to the sudden death of his friend is quite beautiful, and a moving exploration of friendship between young men. Excellent. — Suzanna



The Heroine with 1,001 Faces
by Maria Tatar

For most of human history stories were written by men so it is not surprising that most of the heroes were men. Maria Tatar asks us to look more closely at the old stories and the new. There are heroines everywhere. She gives them a chance to step out of the shadows and speak for themselves. Once women began writing stories of their own, all kinds of female heroes emerged: heroines who don't need to use violence to solve problems and who aren't afraid to ask for assistance, who are just as brave as any man before them. Loved it! — Lisa



Beatrice Likes the Dark
by April Genevieve Tucholke

Beatrice likes the dark dark dark... but her sister loves the sunlight. A sweet, beautifully illustrated story about trusting your sister, even when you like different things. — Nicole

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Banned Books

CELEBRATING LITERATURE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST CENSORSHIP

By Lindsey Clark
lindsey@mainstreetmag.com

Book censorship, especially in recent years, has become an increasingly prevalent topic in both national media and local regions where book challenges have arisen. According to Unite Against Book Bans, an American Library Association (ALA) initiative dedicated to standing up against book censorship, “there were more censorship attempts in 2021 than at any time since the American Library Association began tracking more than two decades ago.” This same source notes that in 2021 alone, the ALA kept track of over 700 cases in which materials in libraries, schools, and universities were challenged. It is difficult to refute, then, the gravity of this problem today, and the importance of celebrations like Banned Books Week, which will be taking place this year during the week of September 18-24. Insights about how book challenging is manifesting itself today and the many implications of book censorship are equally significant in today’s climate.

Recent book challenges and banned lists

Suzanna Hermans is the co-owner of Oblong Books, which has locations in Millerton and Rhinebeck, NY. Having celebrated Banned Books Week at Oblong for as long as she can remember, Suzanna noted, “Our number one question from customers was, ‘Oh, are books still banned? Is this a thing that happens?’ And the answer has always been yes.”

While these challenges and bans happen every year, as Suzanna described, it seems like this topic has just now come to the forefront because of some recent cases that are drawing attention across the country. Rhiannon Leo-Jameson, who is the director of the NorthEast-Millerton Library and has worked there for 12 years, pointed out, “I’ve been in libraries for 17 years, and this is the first time you’re hearing about it more outside of the library circle.”

Suzanna directed me to one case in Virginia, which is detailed in a June 1, 2022, press release from the ALA entitled “Library, author, bookseller groups condemn legal action attempting to censor books in Virginia.” This release denounced an attempt by a Virginia congressional candidate and Virginia delegate to question the legality of selling *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe and *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas in Virginia based on obscenity claims. The ALA’s release highlighted that “[t]his legal action could profoundly limit the availability of books in the Commonwealth of Virginia. No book has been banned for obscenity in the United States in more than 50 years.”

PEN America is an organization celebrating its 100th year of defending freedom of speech through writing and expression. It reported in a press release on August 1, 2022, that Utah’s largest school district, the Alpine District, had moved to ban 52 titles from its libraries, with 42% of these books presenting LGBTQ+ topics/characters. As of August 11, an update to this release noted that these texts would only be restricted for the time being, not banned, considering the students’ right to freedom of speech.

PEN America sent out another press release on August 5, reporting that the Collier County School District in Florida put digital and physical warning labels on more than 100 books in the district’s library. According to PEN, a notable proportion of these titles involved LGBTQ+ characters and the experiences of people of color.

A CNN article released on August 17, 2022, by Andy Rose and Elizabeth Wolfe reported that in the Keller Independent School District, located near Fort Worth, TX, books that have been challenged in the past year are being temporarily taken off the shelves for review in light of updated guidelines. The article, “A Texas school district is removing and



reviewing dozens of challenged books, including the Bible and an Anne Frank adaptation,” explains that if the books align with the new policy, they will be returned to libraries, according to a statement from the district.

In this area, it might come as a surprise that challenges can occur here, too. While it is much rarer in this region, when I spoke with Suzanna, she mentioned a case she knew about in the Hudson Valley. When I looked into it, not only did I find an instance in Wappingers Falls, NY, but another case right across the river in Marlboro. According to a *Hudson Valley Post* article, “New York Students Blast Hudson Valley School for Banning Book” by Bobby Welber, this spring, *Gender Queer* was banned by the Wappingers Central School District due to sexual images. While discussing the book, Suzanna explained, “If you read *Gender Queer*, it is actually the sweetest, most wonderful memoir of sort of figuring out what it means

Depicted with this article are a number of books that have been challenged and or banned in certain places/schools. Oblong Books was kind enough to loan them to us for our photographer, Olivia Valentine, to create these visuals.

Continued on next page ...

to be a nonbinary person. It's really an incredible book, and really sweet, and it does have a few explicit images in it. Sure, it absolutely does. But does that override the value that the book brings?"

Additionally, in a *Southern Ulster Times* article, "Marlboro bans two books from high school," Mark Reynolds writes that in February, titles *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone and *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo were banned by the Marlboro School board. A month later in a follow-up article, "Board approves books, blames media," Reynolds writes that these titles were later approved by the board after community members rightfully spoke out against the initial decision. It is clear, then, that this issue is not isolated to just certain parts of the nation.

Representation matters

A common thread throughout all my discussions on this topic was that it is highly concerning that books representing the LGBTQ+ community, people of color, and marginalized groups who have spoken out about their lives are being removed from shelves. The consequences of this censorship are damaging for everyone.

"I think so much of what we are seeing happen – it is fueled by parental fear of exposing their kids to the existence of queer people, and the existence and the lived experiences of people of color. And it's one thing if a parent decides that their own child can't read something. Okay, fine. But it's when that parent says, 'No child should be able to read this' – that is where we're encountering this censorship," Suzanna explained.

Adding on to this, Rhiannon stated, "We all have to remember that we get to make personal choices for ourselves and sometimes our families. You don't get to make them for everybody."

This concept is especially relevant considering my discussion with Jen Segalla. Jen is transitioning into the Salisbury Central School library this year, and out of the English/Language Arts (ELA) classroom, after getting her master's degree in Library Science. She noted the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), a federal law which "ensures that all patrons of a

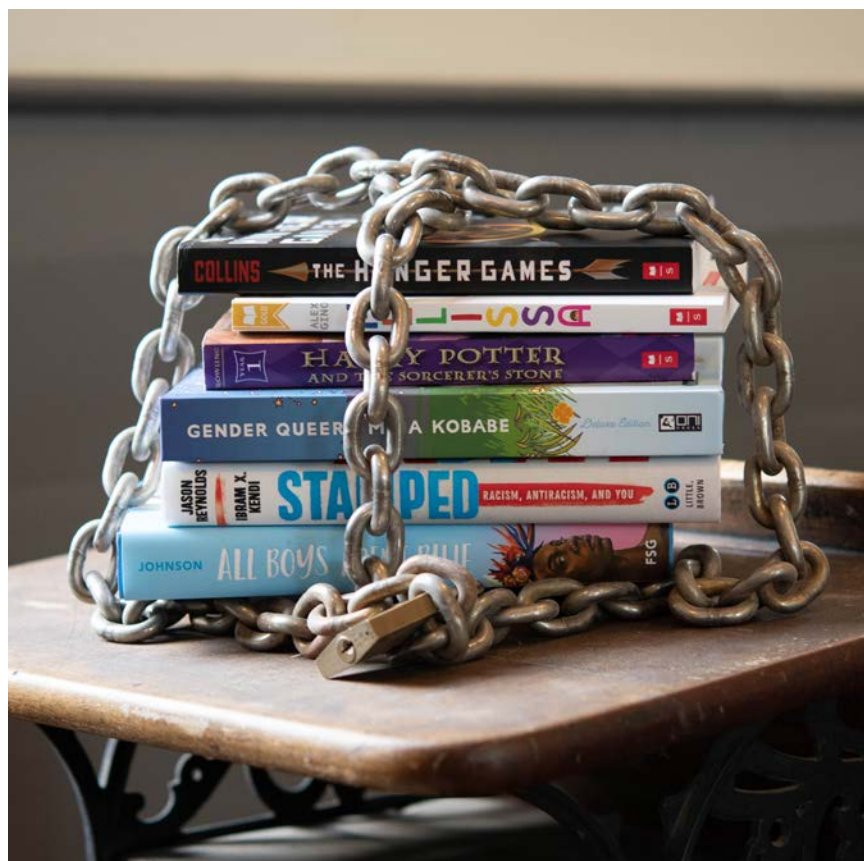
library – whether it's a public library, a college library, or a public-school library – have the freedom to access any information that they want." Whether this be a young student or an adult, this right applies, and plays an important role in discussions about censorship. As Jen illustrated, not only does censorship restrict the freedoms of people wanting to read these books, but it also attacks the communities of people whose stories are being shared through literature. "They're trying to deny the true issues that are faced by marginalized communities. So, it's sort of just the microcosm of the nation as a whole, right? Like, 'Let's ban this book because it portrays a situation that's happening all over the country, and we don't want to deal with it,'" Jen explained.

Rhiannon shared these same sentiments: "Representation matters. Everyone should be able to see themselves in a book somewhere and be able to see every facet of their life. Books are kind of a safe haven. If you can go and you can read about different things and have that barrier that it's not happening to you necessarily, and you can explore different facets of your personality, or what you think could be a part of your personality without fear of judgment – it's so important. I really wonder why people would try to [censor these books]. It's heartbreaking."

Can't you just go buy the book somewhere else?

Sure. With "banned" essentially becoming a book category of its own, with lists of banned books readily available online, and with banned books displays seen in libraries and bookstores, the concern with book censorship in a time of the Internet coupled with this sort of "banned books" enthusiasm might make the issue sound "overstated."

However, this is far from the truth. The restriction of freedom the situation creates can be extremely harmful, and of course, cases like that in Virginia go beyond the scope of just a one-off book ban. Not only are the experiences of marginalized communities often targeted in this censorship, but accessibility becomes a huge concern as well. Suzanna underscored,



"It's still really important that we fight these bans because there are a ton of kids who aren't going to find out about that book, who won't learn about it because you took it out of the library – kids who need it. Kids who don't have access in other ways, they don't have a library within walking distance or their parents don't take them to the bookstore."

Furthermore, this can severely impact education and the capacity for teachers to discuss significant topics. Jen, while clarifying that she fortunately has not encountered any of this in her district, explained, "If you're an ELA teacher in high school or middle school and you want to teach *The Hate U Give* [by Angie Thomas], or you want to teach *Dear Martin*, you might have someone say, 'No, that's on our list of books you can't go over with the kids.' You definitely lose teaching moments when books are banned." Sacrificing the potential for powerful, meaningful conversations simply because literature covers difficult subjects, Jen noted, is extremely detrimental to students' learning experiences.

Banned Books Week and beyond

All year round, you can take part in the fight against book censorship. Suzanna recommended keeping the

discussion active if book challenges happen in your own community and speaking out to ensure people know it's happening; you can also report challenges and bans on the National Coalition Against Censorship website (ncac.org). Rhiannon observed the importance of reading the books in question to know them first-hand, and participating in local elections, as positions on the town-level and board-level are the ones typically making the decisions about book challenges. Jen pointed out that reading diverse books, keeping an open mind, and supporting children in choosing what they want to read are all pivotal steps you can take. ●

Oblong Books, the NorthEast-Millerton Library, and Salisbury Central School will all be participating in the Banned Books Week festivities with displays and other activities. Be sure to stop by Oblong Books and the NorthEast-Millerton Library during the week of September 18 and get involved if you can!

To learn more about Banned Books Week and how you can participate, go to banned-booksweek.org. Visit the American Library Association's website at ala.org, the ALA's Unite Against Book Bans initiative at unite-againstbookbans.org, and PEN America's website at pen.org for more information, updates on this topic, and more ways to get involved.



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By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

Life is about following our dreams, creating happy memories, achieving personal goals, and simply enjoying the many moments we're gifted. It's also about pursuing interests and activities that make us feel truly alive. Many people enjoy the act of exploration. Driven by a sense of curiosity, they're on a quest for knowledge and novel experiences. Many years to wander the world. These explorers enjoy engaging with people of other cultures, turning strangers into friends, and all of the stimulation that comes along with their journeys.

World traveler

Jessica Nabongo is a writer, photographer, and entrepreneur. She's also a world traveler, travel expert, influencer, and public speaker. If Nabongo's name sounds familiar, it's because she recently made headlines and many media appearances when she released her inspiring travelogue entitled, *The Catch Me If You Can: One Woman's Journey to Every Country in the World*.

This adventurer marked a milestone when she earned the title of the "first Black woman (on record) to visit every country in the world." Her journey whisked her off to all 195 United Nations-recognized countries. Nabongo completed this goal in October 2019.

A first generation American, Nabongo was born and raised in Detroit by Ugandan parents. When she was

four years old, she received her first passport. Growing up in a home with hundreds of books, two sets of encyclopedias, an atlas, and a globe, Nabongo was raised to believe that anything was possible. She proved that to be true.

Her book, published by National Geographic Partners LLC, a joint venture between The Walt Disney Company and the National Geographic Society, whisks readers through 100 countries, entertaining them with stories of adventures and activities (climbing Japan's Mount Fuji); culture and favorite restaurants (Astoux et Brun in Cannes); and travel musts (hike a glacier in Iceland or visit the center of the world in São Tomé and Príncipe). Nabongo's story includes her many experiences meeting new people and fostering connections. Beyond using words, she describes her journey through hundreds of bold, colorful photos. Many were taken by Nabongo.

The Book

"My goal is to expand people's understanding of the globe and make it more accessible to everyone. This book is a collection of countries that make my heart smile. I hope my stories make you laugh, cry, and ultimately think differently about the world in which we live," explained Nabongo.

The Catch Me If You Can: One Woman's Journey to Every Country in the World details some of Nabongo's unique experiences, including swimming with humpback whales in Tonga; exploring Nauru (the world's least visited country) by scooter; dog sledding in Finland; white-water rafting on the Nile; and beyond.

Nabongo's story is also about the kindness of strangers – from the people who supported her journey on social media to those she met along the way. "Former" strangers often opened their homes, tables, and hearts to Nabongo, offering insight and tips



Above: Richie Gawron at Mount Everest. Photo courtesy of Richie Gawron. Below, left: Kendra enjoying a recent trip to Italy. Photo courtesy of Kendra Leach.

on where to go and what to see.

Beyond anecdotes from Peru and South Africa, the book includes tales from far-flung corners and seldom visited locations, including North Korea, Tuvalu, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

Nabongo flips the script, showing that off-the-radar destinations can be just as welcoming, safe, and remarkable as everybody's favorites. Her stories are a tribute to diversity, beauty, and culture – and, most of all, to the many friends she met along the way. "I have visited the world's 195 countries and ten territories, and I came away with two key lessons. First, most people are good. Second, we are more similar than we are different. I hope what other Black people see from my story is that you should feel comfortable traveling anywhere you want to go. My journey is about showing everyone, not just Black women and men, that your dreams are achievable," shared Nabongo.

Proud to have achieved her dream of seeing every country on the planet, Nabongo is eager to share the lessons learned during her travels and speaks about how to overcome the fear of traveling to a foreign place; how tourism is different post-pandemic; issues and misconceptions Black, African, and female travelers encounter; tips for cutting travel costs; understanding COVID-19 revenge travel; and why 2022 is forecast to be the year of the GOAT—Greatest of All Trips.

About Nabongo

Ultimately, Nabongo is a dreamer crafting a life and career that connects her passions and talents. She aims to use her story to educate and inspire others to travel and experience the world. Nabongo uses her blog, *The Catch Me If You Can*, to share her travel adventures and build a global

Continued on next page ...



community. She is also the founder of The Catch – a luxury travel lifestyle brand. Nabongo attended St. John's University in New York where she earned a degree in English Literature. She later completed a graduate degree in Development Studies at the London School of Economics. When Nabongo is not on a plane, she's home tending to her plants in Detroit or in Los Angeles.

The global guy

Beyond Nabongo, there are other inspiring jet-setters with their own approaches to travel. Richie Gawron is a technology and legal consultant who does contract work. When he's not locked into a project, Gawron travels the globe. Most recently, he spent six months in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands during the pandemic and then another several months in Italy. He has called Italy, Ecuador, Thailand, and Turkey home, but doesn't necessarily require a land residence to claim a country on his "countries I lived in" list. Fusing passions in sailing and cooking, Gawron lived on a sailboat in the Mediterranean and worked as second mate and chef, visiting ports in Cyprus, Turkey, Israel, and Lebanon. He even (accidentally) crossed the Syrian national border during the Revolution.

Gawron said that the seeds for his wanderlust were planted when he was just a kid. "My godfather, Frank lived next door and his daughters, who both worked for airlines, hosted 'airline parties' in their yard," said Gawron. That's when Gawron first became acquainted with pilots and flight attendants. He enjoyed listening intently as they discussed their



Above, L-R: Richie Gawron at the salt fields of the Pamukkale in Turkey and at the Gobi Desert in Mongolia. Below, left: Richie diving in the Galapagos Islands. All images courtesy of Richie Gawron.

worldwide adventures.

When Gawron was 17, he became even more inspired. That's when Frank took him on a trip to Frankfurt, Germany. "We toured castles in Switzerland. I had 'real' hot chocolate (made with melted chocolate rather than powdered chocolate) for the first time and that was the first time I took an overnight train," says Gawron. On the train to Venice, Gawron began practicing his Italian language skills and he was hooked.

To date, Gawron has been to 61 countries. "It's important to note that I don't include transits or simply standing on the soil of a new country for a few hours as a visit. In my opinion, you must spend time in a country, meet the locals, and learn how to say 'hi,' 'bye,' and 'thank you' for it to count," added Gawron.

He noted that one of his biggest travel takeaways was learning to be thankful and to reward other people's kindness.

On Gawron's first backpacking trip after college, England was his starting point. "A friend from New York was staying with a family in Lowestoft, England as part of a student exchange program. They gave me room and board and John, the father of the family drove me all around London – proudly explaining everything we saw," said Gawron.

To show gratitude, Gawron tried to offer the family money, but they declined. He felt that a simple "thank you" wasn't enough. After finding out that John's favorite Italian dish was Fettuccine Alfredo, Gawron called his Italian mom in New York for the recipe. "I went to the specialty market

for the best Parmigiano-Reggiano I could find and cooked a super meal. I still remember him exclaiming, 'This is the best fettuccine I have ever had,'" added Gawron. Cooking gourmet meals as a thank you is a formula that seems to work as Gawron has done this many times in various countries.

After all, Gawron's travels and world experiences, he cautions others to consider their own world views before traveling. "The lens through which you view the world was entirely formed in and influenced by the country you grew up in. When you visit your first foreign country, it's nearly impossible to view that country without being profoundly influenced and biased by your own cultural lens," added Gawron. He recalled a trip to Italy when he headed out midday to purchase batteries. When Gawron reached Avella – a tiny mountain village outside of Naples, all the shops were closed. "I found this extremely frustrating, especially because I came from 'The City That Never Sleeps.' It wasn't until several years later, after a few more trips to Italy, when I realized that this was a wonderful part of Italian culture. It means that after a copious Italian '*pranzo*' or lunch, the shop staff were at home with their families, relaxing and resting. I found that, instead of looking for batteries during lunchtime, the better option was to enjoy a glass of wine and take a nap," concluded Gawron. *Aaaah L'Italia!*

Following her wanderlust

Kendra Leach has journeyed to 12 different countries, but has enjoyed stints residing in Ghana, Hawaii, and Sydney. She currently lives in Phila-

delphia. "I've always had a passion for seeing new places and meeting new people, and then sharing those experiences with others. I love immersing myself in new places. It really provides perspective when you connect with people from different places worldwide," said Leach, proprietor of The Kendra Studio – a digital marketing business that assists small business owners and entrepreneurs in growing their businesses/brands.

Leach began traveling at a young age with her family. "My mom loves road trips. When I was younger, we took quick trips to the beach since we lived near Myrtle Beach, SC," said Leach. An avid reader, it was through reading that Leach was first able to 'travel' to other destinations as a child. "As soon as I was able to travel on my own, I began to go on trips, and I always took my books with me."

Her tally of 12 countries spans four continents. "An interesting fact about me is that the first place I traveled to outside of the United States was Ghana. I lived there for six months during a study abroad with New York University. It was one of the best experiences of my life and I met some of my lifelong friends there," said Leach. Her newest venture is *The Exclusive Style* – a lifestyle and travel site for women of color.

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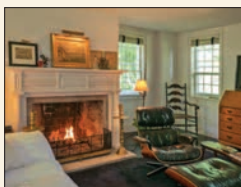
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Dahlias



By Pom Shillingford
info@mainstreetmag.com

'All hail' the glorious queen of the late summer garden – the magnificent dahlia! If ever there has been a garden flower that has undergone a 180-degree makeover in popularity it is the dahlia. Long dismissed as the flower your grandpa used to grow, recent years have seen an explosion in interest in people growing dahlias, both commercially and at home. These days it seems no summer garden or vase is complete without a dahlia – or ten, with even the **chicest** hipsters boasting a rainbow display come late August on their social media accounts.

What has caused this resurgence? Well, I blame Instagram – and one certain dusty pink dahlia in particular. The ability to see post after post of these beauties has brought this flower to a whole new audience who once might have thought dahlias meant basic primary-colored supermarket-style blooms and who can now appreciate the kaleidoscope of shades, shape, and size that are now on offer. From 12-inch dinner plates to one-inch pompoms, from decorative to cactus to anemone to singles to double, from pure white to almost black, stripes and ombres, there really is a dahlia for everyone. The subtle tones of Café au Lait may be the ultimate flower for many but give me the scarlet and yel-

low ruffles of a Sir Nick or the purple and white stripes of Tartan and I'm in heaven.

Plant and do... nothing

Dahlias are, up to a point, really easy flowers to grow. You need a sunny, well drained spot. Depending on their size, they can actually be grown in pots as well as the ground, although it's best to limit these to varieties that do not grow beyond three feet tall. Plant the weird looking potato-like tuber after the last frost date and then... do nothing. At least until after the tuber has begun to shoot up out of the soil. You do not want to water before this as the tuber needs to set roots that can take up the moisture or else it will rot. Once they appear, keep the soil consistently damp. As they began to put on height, you will need to stake all but the very shortest varieties. Don't stress about this – it doesn't need to be anything more complicated than some bamboos and twine. Just keep the plant stems heading skywards and not sideways. I feed my dahlias with a foliar fish food spray once a week. Using a granular feed is fine too. The important thing to remember when feeding is to use something low in nitrogen. You want buds not more leaves!

So, keep watering, keep feeding, keep staking and then... keep cutting. The more flowers you cut, the more flowers your dahlia plant is going to put out. Even if you are not using

your flowers as cuts but solely as ornamental garden plants, keep deadheading. This way your plants will not set seed and will keep blooming until the first hard frost.

To store or not to store is the question

Now we get to the slightly tricky stage. Dahlia tubers will not survive over the winter here with our ground temperatures. If you want to keep your tubers to use again the next year, you will have to dig them up and store them over the winter. Yes, it can seem a massive faff especially if you are not the lucky owner of a root cellar that can store said tubers at the perfect 40 degrees and 80% humidity. It can be a juggle to find the right storage location and still then not all your tubers will make it through. Is it worth it or is it easier just to start from scratch the next year? That boils down to the question of time vs money. However, add in that when you dig your tubers up in the fall, you will see that what went in as a single tuber is now more like a bunch of bananas. What was once one can now be up to eight tubers ready to plant next spring. Free plants, friends, free plants! And that in my book means it is always worth the faff.

We'll save the nitty gritty of dividing and storing tubers for another month. Suffice to say for now there is no one right way. Some people like to divide in the fall before storing,

others leaving it until the spring. One thing you don't want to leave until the spring though anymore is ordering any new tubers you might fancy growing next year. What used to be as challenging as ordering a book on Amazon has become the online shopping equivalent of the *Hunger Games*. The explosion in interest in growing dahlias has led to demand for tubers that commercial growers have struggled to meet. Add in the fact that it's the newer varieties that often generate the most excitement but are harder to come by, the hyping up of sale openings on social media and the fact that a successful dahlia farmer may not have a matching IT skill set to their green fingers and you've got the perfect storm for online meltdown. My advice? Patience, tolerance, and a wish list twice the size of the space you have to plant.

For those of you who need help feeding your dahlia addiction, the appropriately named www.Dahliaaddict.com (maybe my favorite website ever) lists every variety, grower, and sales opening date in North America. •

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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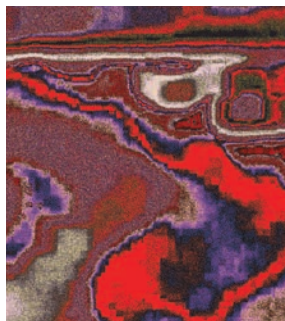
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Rodin in the United States: Confronting the Modern is made possible by Denise Littlefield Sobel and Diane and Andreas Halvorsen. Major funding for *Meander* is provided by Agnes Gund and Katherine and Frank Martucci, with additional support from Thomas and Lily Beischer, and Margaret and Richard Kronenberg.

TOP: Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker* (detail), Original model 1881–82, enlarged 1903. Bronze, cast by Alexis Rudier 1928. The Baltimore Museum of Art. The Jacob Epstein Collection, 1930.25.1 MIDDLE: José Guadalupe Posada, *Calavera Catrina* (detail), c. 1890–1913. Relief print. Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.11. BOTTOM: Tauba Auerbach, *Heat Current VII* (detail), 2022. Enhanced infrared photo printed on wallpaper. Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. © Tauba Auerbach [photo: Steven Probert]; Yuji Agematsu, zip: 08.01.21 . . . 08.31.21, 2021 (detail: 08.31.21). Mixed media in cigarette pack cellophane wrapper. Private collection, Zurich. © Yuji Agematsu [photo: Stephen Faught]

ENCOURAGING THE PASSAGE FROM STEM EDUCATION TO STEM CAREERS

By Kathryn Burke
KBurke@nysba.ny.gov

September is the traditional time to put summer fun behind us and get back to school. Fun is relative. Summer activities are fun because we enjoy them; we do them with others; they engage our minds and our bodies. While students are still enjoying summer fun, many educators are focused on looking toward a new school year and developing ways to engage their next groups of students.

The most effective curriculums utilized by educators include authentic experience for students. Educators who understand and provide ways to teach skills and incorporate some authentic learning experience, in which the skills they teach are applied, help to open the eyes and minds of their students to the need for students to excel in STEM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Students, particularly in the early grades, must recognize the value of learning literacy and math skills to maximize their future opportunities. STEM education should be provided to all levels K-12.

STEM workshops for educators
Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley (HBHV) has been providing educator workshops at New York State Bridge Authority bridges since 2017. Educators, particularly New York State Master Teachers, of all STEM subjects, have attended workshops at the Bear Mountain and Rip Van Winkle Bridges. The workshops make

authentic connections between STEM education and STEM careers. The most obvious career connection to make with our Hudson Valley bridges is engineering. The six Bridge Authority bridges, from the Rip Van Winkle in the north, to the Bear Mountain Bridge in the south, and including the structure of the Walkway Over The Hudson, are great examples of a variety of engineering design over the last hundred years. But there are so many more STEM careers connected to our bridges. Maintaining the bridges requires very skilled labor.

Between the highly-skilled maintenance crews at each bridge and the many contractors hired to perform needed projects, large and small, a wide variety of skill from advanced technologies to welding is covered. The bridges cross the Hudson, a vast river flowing into an estuary that supports an incredible assortment of marine life and vegetation, in an area that is a challenge to balance our community needs while ensuring a clean environment. The bridges themselves are each habitats for the endangered peregrine falcons, the fastest flying predator on earth. Their numbers had been depleted to almost extinction, but have been brought back with the help of habitats under bridges of the Hudson River and bridges of metropolitan New York City. Just about any subject in Science and Math can find a focus on our bridges.



STEAM workshops

The most recent New York State Master Teacher workshop provided by HBHV, was this past June at the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. Educators came from



Images courtesy of Kathryn Burke

four regions of New York State to experience authentic STEM to empower them to provide authentic experiences for their students. A steady down-pour all morning did not deter these educators from enjoying the STEAM experience! The day began with an introduction to the history of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, which included a presentation on its construction in the early 1930s. Subsequent changes to the bridge structure involved the use of cantilevered structures to install a sidewalk on the south side of the bridge, with additional overlooks cantilevered off the sidewalk to create the bridge section of the beautiful Hudson River Skywalk that connects the historic homes of Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, of the Hudson River Painters, in the “birthplace of American Art.”

An engineering tour of the bridge by NYSBA chief engineer, Jeffrey Wright, is always a hit with educators. Teachers love to learn, and they rarely pass up a chance to ask questions about things they’ve always wondered. Getting out on, and going under, the bridge is often what’s needed to start the questions flowing. One person’s

question gets another person thinking more deeply, the same way it can be in the classroom for students. Learning is often best when we can interact and think out loud.

While Jeff’s group is studying the bridge structure, another group is meeting with Katherine Kelly, professional engineer and underwater dive inspection team leader. Katie is an expert on the parts of bridges below the water. She has inspected many of the piers of our Hudson River bridges. Katie is a wealth of information about the river, its flow and its effect on the bridge piers, the make-up of the bottom of the Hudson, and often has stories about what she has encountered in its murky, near zero-visibility depths.

Katie was also keynote speaker at a Girls Rock Stem event in Kingston, providing not just a connection between STEM education and STEM careers, but showing that working

Continued on next page ...



hard and following your dreams will enable you to work in a challenging career of your choice.

Including Art in a STEM subject or study, will capture the focus of those creative students who might think they hate science and math. An art educator can help students see detail and learn how to visually represent a STEM project. Jennifer Sweeney provided educators at the workshop with the opportunity to experience the ability to be creative and notice detail. Creating art can be frustrating and often requires the same kind of trial and error as problem solving. Working through that process, resulting in a satisfactory product helps students learn that making mistakes is a necessary part of learning.

Stasia Fernandez, another art educator, enabled the young students to paint the Rip Van Winkle Bridge complete with the surrounding landscape. The students had to focus on the details of the bridge, which began

their connection to the structure. They can now be taught about the math and engineering of the bridge that they had painted. STEM with Art, or STEAM, can encompass and engage those left-brained, creative students.

The last presenter at the STEAM workshop was Annie Mardeney of Wild Mountain Birds, who rescues injured birds with the intent of helping them heal and return to their environment, whenever possible. Birds in flight capture our attention. Annie was able to provide understanding of ways for us to live in a way that does not impact the lives of these birds, and she expressed concern about caring for the environment that supports these amazing creatures.

Class visits to the Bear Mountain Bridge

In addition to providing workshops for educators, Historic Bridges of the Hudson Valley provides opportunities for classes of Hudson Valley students to visit the Bear Mountain Bridge.

At the Bear Mountain students learn about the construction and structure of the Bridge. They learn about the long history of maintaining this iconic structure, enabling it to celebrate its centennial in 2024. When they visit the Bear Mountain Bridge they are visiting the Hudson Highlands, one of the most beautiful areas of New York State and one of the most historic areas. Bridge visits to the Bear Mountain Bridge can focus on all sciences from engineering to botany to environment. The visit always includes an engineering tour and can be designed to focus on the current curriculum being studied by that class. As visit opportunities are limited, they are working on providing remote experiences.

Ways we can help connect STEM education to STEM careers

So why write about the teacher workshops and the class visits and STEM and STEAM? The last couple school years have been very difficult for students, for teachers, and for parents. Those with access to technology and with family or individuals who could

be present while students learned remotely, probably did fine. But there were many students who did not learn what they could have learned. We all need to step it up to ensure our young people are well-educated and can step into STEM careers. Educators, although most do well teaching STEM subjects, often don't know what STEM careers their students can enter with the skills they teach. It's up to those in STEM careers to make the important connection between STEM education and STEM careers.

Our world is full of big problems in need of big solutions. Let's help ensure today's students are fully prepared to have the skills, the ability to problem solve, and the ability to work cooperatively to solve problems as adults. If you are currently in a STEM career, step up for your community. Volunteer to provide your local schools with authentic STEM experience. Consider providing internships for middle and high school students to get a sense of careers that are available to them.

Parents can provide authentic, real world STEM experiences for their children. Give students a break from their video games and provide them with things to build and plant. Go outside to watch a meteor shower or on a night when planets are aligned. Ask your child what is of interest to them and help them learn more. And please, no matter what you do, don't tell them you hated math so you're not surprised your child has difficulty with math. Saying you hate math is like saying you hate candy because you don't like licorice. Math is full of interesting and varied processes. Find the math you enjoy and you'll likely be determining career possibilities. Science and math help us live in the world. The more we learn, the more skills and information we acquire, the more exciting possibilities await us. ●

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Nature

on repeat

By Anna Martucci
info@mainstreetmag.com

"You're off to great places, today is your day. Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way." – Dr. Seuss

When I first moved back to New York after almost 20 years in Oregon, I felt like the outdoor scene in New York City was never good enough. The rock climbers weren't badass enough, the buzz of cars from below grated on me while I was climbing in the Shawanagunks, and there aren't any snow-capped peaks in the Adirondacks. I spent my weeknight evenings training at The Cliffs in Queens and my weekends at the Gunks – jamming my Brooklyn friends into my car after picking them up from the 2 train at 96th St.

6am really means 5:45am

No one took climbing seriously enough as far as I was concerned. I would sit fuming in my VW Tiguan, backpack carefully organized with climbing gear, lemon and honey infused tea in the cup holder, high protein breakfast eaten and lunch packed, only to be waiting for my slightly hungover friends to text me that they had just missed the train and would be a few minutes late. Of course, inevitably they wanted to stop for coffee and maybe, if I wouldn't mind, could they take a few minutes to organize their gear before we did the hike in?

My Oregon friends on the other hand knew that if we were meeting at 6am that really meant 5:45. Climbing, like the knots that we tied to ensure our safety, was organized, neat and efficient.

The reality was, at the end of the day, I was nearing 40 and these Brooklyn kids were like, 25, maybe. I don't even know what to call them. Millennials? Gen Z? Couldn't say. They liked me because I could lead climb and had a car. As my climbing friend Marnix put it, if you've got a car in NYC and know a thing or two about climbing, everyone wants to be your friend. Not sure my taskmaster style suited the 20-somethings either, but, hey, I didn't even ask them to chip in for gas.

What am I doing?

One Saturday afternoon when I was sitting in the salon chair of my super hip and ridiculously expensive hairdresser in Gramercy, he asked me what my weekend plans were. I found myself excitedly explaining the minute details of my rock climbing "project" and the weeks I had spent trying to "send" it. I had literally spent the last few weekends analyzing how to move from one 3 millimeter hold to another one a foot away.

He stifled a yawn.

At that moment it hit me that I had been living in NYC for four years, and yet, could not even tell you one interesting thing that was happening that weekend. I hadn't been to The Met or the MOMA, I hadn't walked on the highline, I hadn't had a martini at a rooftop bar, I didn't go to Broadway shows or Madison Square Garden for

Continued on next page ...

concerts or Rangers games, I hadn't even ridden a citi bike.

What, in god's name was I spending a ridiculous portion of my meager teacher's salary on NYC rents for anyway? I was almost 40, I wasn't going to the Olympics, no one cared if I could lead 5.9 trad, and I seriously needed something else to talk about. So, I gave it up. I sold my rack (climbing gear) to my 20-something Brooklyn friend Katie and started enjoying the city. I saw jazz in the West Village at Smalls, I got tickets for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Hadestown*, and *Network*, and I watched the sunset over the Hudson from the Top of the Strand.

I also started spending more time in that lovely little corner of the world we all call home, the Hudson Valley. I gave up climbing, yes, and began to discover the myriad of hikes in the areas around Millerton and Salisbury including my two personal favorites, Alander Mountain and Lion's Head.

Lion's Head

If you are in the mood for a quick bit of exercise and some fresh air and views, Lion's Head is absolutely the best hike in the area. The Berkshire Hiking website states that "Lion's Head in Salisbury, CT might have the distinction of being

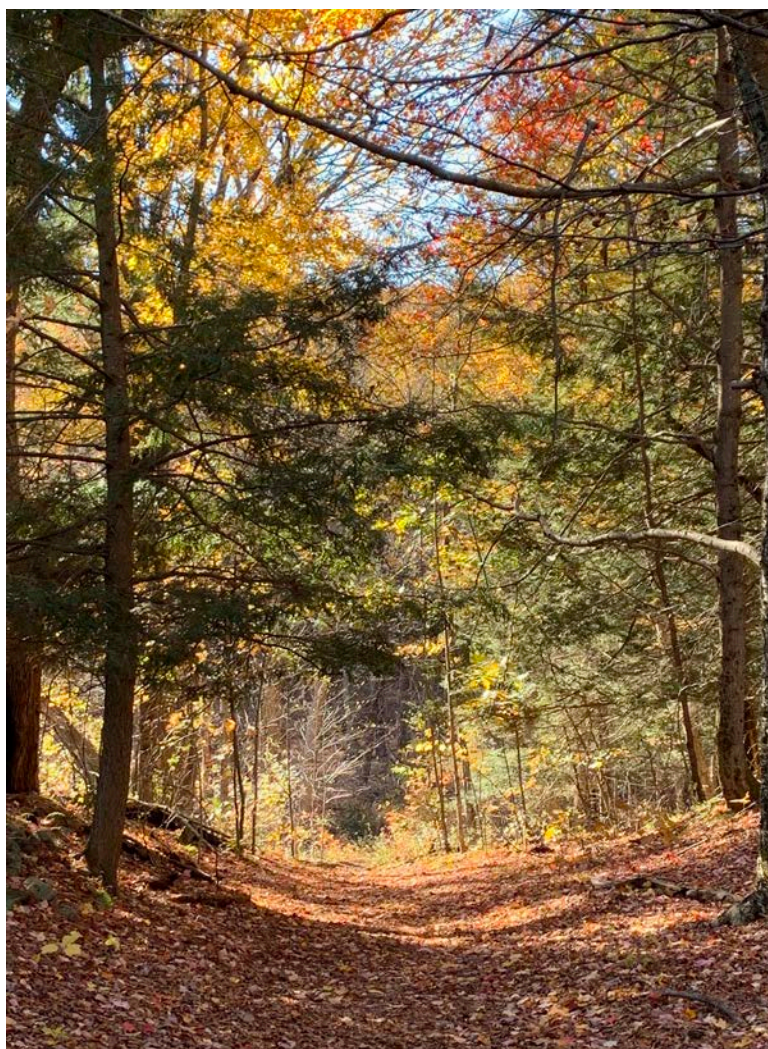
the shortest hike with the greatest views in western Connecticut." (<http://berkshirehiking.com/hikes/lionshead.html>).

I'll often do this hike in the evening after work as I can make it up and back in just over an hour. This is especially convenient because it is located just outside the village of Salisbury which means you can swing by LaBonne's for groceries or Sweet Williams for a coffee and a pastry when you're done.

Alander Mountain

If you have more time and are looking for something longer (eight miles round trip) and more challenging (gradual uphill the entire way), then I highly recommend Alander Mountain. There is more than one way to access the summit, but my favorite route is from the parking lot of the Mt. Washington State Forest Headquarters. (<https://myhikes.org/trails/alander-mountain-trail>).

Part of the appeal of going this way is that you drive through Copake Falls where you can check out Bash Bish Bicycles as well as Bash Bish State Park. And, on your way back after eight miles of hiking there is nothing better than a cold beverage and some live music at The Taconic Wayside Inn.

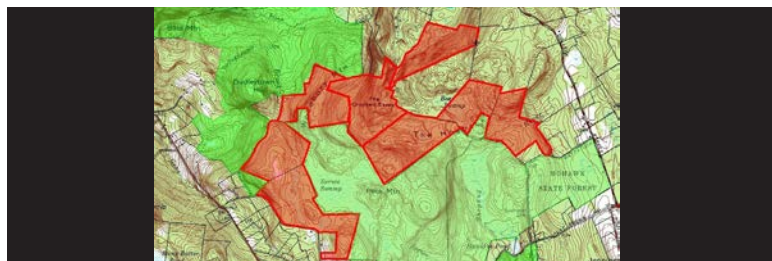


The perpetual quest

I have lost count of the number of times I have done these two hikes over the past few years. Perhaps that will seem unoriginal and redundant to some. And, I get it. I used to be on a perpetual quest for something new, more challenging and unknown. But time and let's be honest, age, now prevent me from being the "badass" I always aspired to be. Most of my time when I was younger was spent training for a short slice of time in nature. Now, I just try to enjoy it. On repeat.

"I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order." — John Burroughs •





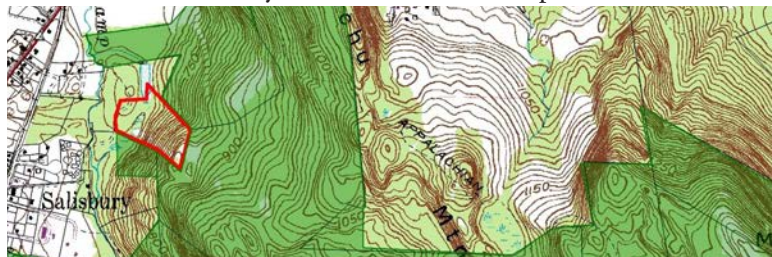
PRESERVED IN CORNWALL: Over 671 acres in the middle of a very large tract of open space was foreclosed 3 years ago. The 7 parcels are incredibly beautiful and varied. Abandoned town roads, old trails, old pasture, very mature woods with stunning out-crops and views. Listed and sold by **David Bain** for \$1,390,000



UPPER MERRYALL: Restored antique colonial with 25 acres, a large pond, writers' studio and bank barn! Open and airy main house. The antique bank barn was renovated in 2012. The pond connects to the West Aspetuck River, great for canoeing and kayaking. List and sold by **Elisa Waysenson** for \$1,095,000.



NEW PRESTON: Charming cape located above the hamlet of New Preston. New kitchen, three new bathrooms, primary bedroom suite with private balcony. A spacious three-car garage with a workshop is attached. Move-in condition. Listed and sold by **Debbie Bain** in 3 days \$20,000 over its list price for \$595,000!



SALISBURY'S INDIAN CAVE: 15.46 acres about 1.2+ square miles of open space. The Moore Brook runs through this location and the land offers much to wildlife enthusiasts. Work needed; 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, family room, living room with fireplace, a eat-in kitchen, and attached garage. Sold by **Amy Longley** for \$625,000!



LAKE WARAMAUG: Rare building lot with frontage and dock on Lake Waramaug. 1.2 acre views that stretch across the lake and to Tinker Hill. Southern exposure provides incredible sun from sunrise to sunset. Site work preserved white oaks, stone walls and open meadow. Listed and sold by **Chris Garrity** for \$850,000.



NEW MILFORD'S BROWN'S FORGE: Cozy and move-in ready! Formal living room and an open kitchen with brand new appliances overlooking open dining with a large fireplace. Above ground pool and heavy flowing brook running beside a large back yard. Listed and sold by **Toni Soule** in 57 days for \$500,000!



KENT'S GEER MOUNTAIN: This contemporary home is nestled at the base of Geer Mountain in a mature landscaped 4 acres. The kitchen is the centerpiece and has large sliders off to an expansive deck. The living room above the kitchen features a fireplace. Sold by **Amy Danis** in 32 days \$25,000 over list price for \$675,000



SOUTH KENT HILL TOP: 23 acres of high woods with amazing long views. Beautiful trees and remnants of stone walls. 1000' elevation can be accessed with a long drive through a mature forest. The eventual drive will be costly, but worth the effort. Listed by Erin Hull and sold by **Elisa Waysenson** for \$420,000

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Sports enthusiasts are finding themselves in a pickle, *pickleball that is*

By John Torsiello
info@mainstreetmag.com

The US Pickleball Association, reported the sport grew in 2020 to 4.2 million players in the US, a growth rate of 21.3% from 2019 per the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's 2021 Topline Participation Report. The average age for core players 47.5 and casual players 33.6, with 60% of core players 55 or older.

Pickleball was reportedly created during the summer of 1965 on Bainbridge Island in Washington. A family was bored and wanted to set up a badminton net. They could not find the ball (called a shuttlecock), so they improvised by lowering the net and grabbing a wiffleball. Pickles was the family dog that would chase after the errant shots and then hide in the bushes, thus was born "Pickle's ball," which was later shortened to the namesake of pickleball.

The official rules

A pickleball court is 20 feet by 44 feet for both singles and doubles. The net is hung at 36 inches at the ends and 34 inches in the middle. A non-volley zone extends seven feet back from the net on each side, commonly called "the kitchen." The game is played with a perforated plastic ball and composite or wooden paddles about twice the size of ping-pong paddles. It is played indoors or outdoors.

The five basic rules of pickleball are that the ball must stay inbounds, there should be one bounce per side, serving must be done at the baseline, the serve can't land in the no-volley

zone, and the game ends at 11, 15, or 21 points. There are some additional minor rules.

Nick Warren, fitness manager at Berkshire South Regional Community Center in Great Barrington, MA, said dozens of people take part in the program at the Center with many attending clinics and taking lessons from certified pickleball instructor, Tony Richards.

Warren said he gets two or three phone calls every other week asking about pickleball and how the program works. "I believe this sport continues to grow because of the varying nature of play. People that are very competitive and 'sporty' can play at a high level and really try to beat their opponents. On the other hand, people can also play for fun and light exercise, which really makes the sport accessible to any range of skill, ability, and athleticism."

As far as gender goes, Warren hasn't noticed any large discrepancies one way or the other. "I believe there is a very healthy mix of men and women that really enjoy the sport, at least at our facility.

Taconic Sport and Racquet in Hopewell Junction has two indoor and four pickleball courts, and one air conditioned show court. The courts were resurfaced this year. Chris Rand, Taconic Sport and Racquet pickleball coordinator/instructor said, "Our clientele has shown they prefer mixers and drop-in sessions over leagues but we do have a few of the latter. We



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor BHPix

also have periodic clinics with visiting stand-out player/instructors for all levels. Our players can usually find a court to rent from 7am to 10pm, rain or shine. Our members do take priority booking."

Andria McKenna, director of marketing and member relations at Taconic, said, "During the indoor season there is play on the indoor courts daily. Summer time, it depends on where players choose to play. The demographic of players is typical of pickleball at other venues."

She added, "We have pickleball pickup games designed by level, pickleball lessons, and an introduction to the sport. Our outdoor courts are converted tennis courts from decades ago while the indoor courts are new within the past two years."

She further added, "We have experienced a rapid increase in our pickleball camps over the past two years. Since the start of this outdoor season, we have had a one or two night clinic every week each with from seven to 16 participants. And we have similar participants booked throughout the summer."

Joining the fun

More people are playing the game for a few reasons, added McKenna. "Pickleball is easy to learn and play, it is very social, and it is a lot less physically demanding than tennis. A

pickleball court is one-fourth the size of a tennis court, so players have less court to cover."

Total Tennis in Saugerties is the Northeast's only year-round tennis camp, said director Ed Fondiller. "We offer instruction in pickleball clinics. All of our programs include meals, lessons, and accommodations. You can join us solo or with a group for tennis, but for pickleball or platform tennis must come as a group of at least three or as many as 16."

The Interlaken Inn in Lakeville, CT, created two courts for pickleball in 2020. Said Michelle Bousquet director of sales and marketing, "We decided to go with pickleball two years ago, as more and more families preferred pickleball over tennis. They are filled every weekend. For insurance reasons, the courts are for registered Interlaken guests only."

It might be noted that plans call for pickleball courts at the revamped Eddie Collins Memorial Park in Millerton. There are courts at Loughran Park in Kingston, Red Hook Recreation Park, and Lime Kiln Recreation Center in East Fishhook.

Pickleball is certainly the fastest growing sport in the US and area residents are joining in the fun. ●



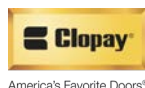
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Hall of Fame Fitness

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After working in the fitness industry in different capacities over that last decade, Spencer Hoffman had been waiting for the right opportunity to open a fitness studio. Hall of Fame Fitness (HOFF) opened in February of 2021. As a pro natural bodybuilder, Spencer has learned discipline and diligence with training that he loves to share with others. HOFF offers personal fitness training, group fitness training along with the opportunity to book private gym sessions. Located in Millerton, NY, HOFF proudly serves clients in Dutchess and Columbia Counties in NY and Litchfield County in CT. The biggest advantage to Hall of Fame Fitness is the privacy and customizability that clients can have while reaching their fitness goals. Everyone is an individual and has his or her own unique way of building muscle, strength, or losing fat. Spencer understands these differences and this allows him to provide each client with an individualized plan based on their specific goal while considering the individual clients' background, biology, stress, etc. Getting the client to their end result will be the ultimate reward! Spencer hopes to become a staple in Dutchess County and the surrounding areas in providing private and exclusive fitness services. "I know how important fitness is and the impact of living a healthy lifestyle has on someone. I hope to be able to provide positive changes to others through Hall of Fame Fitness."



Millerton Naturopathic Acupuncture

Naturopathic doctor, acupuncturist, and registered herbalist. (518) 592-1033. Millerton, NY. millertonnaturopathicacupuncture.com

Dr. Brian Crouse studied to be a chiropractor in his early 20s, but after starting a family his plans changed. After owning and operating a restaurant on the east end of Long Island for 20+ years, he promised himself to go back to school. Feeding people over 20 years, Dr. Crouse could tell the impact that diet and lifestyle had on health, so he decided to go to naturopathic medical school instead of chiropractic, where he also discovered acupuncture. It took six years to achieve a doctorate in Naturopathic Medicine and a Master's degree in acupuncture. He then opened a practice on Long Island and in Norwalk, CT. After deciding to move to this area, Dr. Crouse opened his practice in Millerton in May 2022 and is also practicing one day a week in Salisbury, CT, at the offices of Dr. Rachel Lowe ND, Commune Natural Health. Dr. Crouse is an Acupuncturist, a Naturopathic Physician, and a Registered Herbalist. These different perspectives allow him to integrate western, eastern, and traditional health paradigms. Servicing our Tri-state area allows Dr. Crouse to provide a naturopathic physician diagnosis and treatment, acupuncture diagnosis and treatment, homeopathic treatment, and also a well-stocked herbal, homeopathic, and supplement dispensary. "I love helping my clients get to where they would like to be and look forward to becoming part of the fabric of life here."



Demeter Home

Home décor, furniture, art, antiques, and design services. 2980 Church Street, Pine Plains NY. (518) 771-3282. demeter-home.com

Demeter Home started when Alex Athanasiadis was ready to realize his dream of opening the home décor store he was always in search for. In September 2021, Alex moved from NYC to Pine Plains and opened the storefront. Demeter Home strives to carry unique and exciting products for every home: furniture, décor, antiques, gifts, books, design services – Demeter Home has exactly what you are looking for! Products from regional artisans are highlighted and showcased alongside carefully curated items from international and luxury brands. The products at Demeter Home are constantly changing. No two visits to the store will ever be the same. Alex is always finding new artists, local products, and seasonal décor. Everything at Demeter Home is hard to find anywhere else, helping make your home and gifts more unique. Since its inception, Demeter Home was always envisioned as more than just a store. Demeter Home loves the local Pine Plains community and is constantly searching for ways to give back to its neighbors. They actively work to build a welcoming and supportive community. Demeter Home just doubled in size and is excited to continue growing, including expanding their design services. They are also finding new ways to support the community through local charities, organizations, and the Pine Plains School District. They're ready for the return of Community Day this fall!



October Design

Equestrian-themed décor and design. 501 Oak Hill Road, Hudson, NY. steph@octoberdesign.com. octoberdesign.com

After a lengthy corporate stint in NYC, former graphic designer/art director Stephanie Reppas moved to Hudson Valley to transition into a full-time business of her own. Founding October Design in 2010, originally as an upcycling venture, creating industrial lighting from reclaimed materials. Since then, she's handcrafted a line of equestrian-themed décor detailed with new and vintage leather saddlery (mirrors, home goods). Stephanie can take custom orders from equestrians who provide their own tack (bridles, bits, riding helmets, etc.), creating a unique memento that honors a beloved horse or a special time in their life. "I've built a business that is very much an extension of me. I believe in creating décor that contributes to a warm, inviting environment, and lets my customers express their passion for horses." Feeling fortunate enough to combine several of her interests into her work, she loves learning the stories behind the objects she finds, and the challenge of working with different materials. Since launching October Design, Stephanie's creative energy goes into her own ideas rather than someone else's. "I've gone back to school for a degree in Industrial Design, and pursued some new skills to use in my work, like welding and Shou Sugi Ban. This year I'm learning blacksmithing!"

INSURING YOUR WORLD

Health insurance open enrollment is just around the corner on 10-1-22 and there have been some crazy renewal rates being bantered about by all the major carriers. Suggested rate increases of 14-26% is what we have been seeing submitted to the NYS Department of Financial Services by most of the local carriers. These suggested increases are dependent upon the plan that has been taken by the insured. Keep in mind that these are only SUGGESTED increases and must be approved by the NYS DFS based upon an individual carrier's loss experience as well as profit margin per type of plan. The State should be releasing their approved increases shortly if, in some instances, they may already have. I know of a number of plans where the State reduced the increases to high single to low double digit percentages. For example, a plan that may have had a suggested increase of 20% by the carrier was only approved by the State for a 11% increase. So the point of my column is not to be too concerned regarding suggested increases since they invariably are reduced to a more palatable number by renewal time. Check with your broker to see what the final approvals are coming in for the plan that you currently carry.



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Is your car ready for school?

The end of summer is approaching and that means it's time to go back to school. Are you or your children heading off to college? It's the perfect time to make sure your car is in tip-top shape before you head out on the road. A little preventative maintenance beforehand can give you some peace of mind during an already stressful time for many.

Will your New York State inspection expire before you get back? How about those tires? Brakes making a funny noise or feeling a little strange? These are just a few of the things that should be inspected before heading out on any long trip. And let's not forget about creature comforts. Is your air conditioner blowing cold? When was the last time you used your heat or defroster? It might be hot right now, but chilly fall nights are quickly approaching. Maybe change out that cabin air filter?

So before leaving home and heading off to school, have your car professionally inspected and perform any recommended maintenance or repairs so you and your loved ones can have a safe and hopefully a little less stressful back to school season!



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Giving yourself a presence

We've all met these people who exude presence. We see it and wish we had it. According to social psychologist Amy Cuddy, you can develop presence. She suggests several hacks, and science and my own anecdotal experience prove they work.

Next time you're up in front of an audience of two or 20, try these tips:

- **Go for authentic:** Presence requires being present. That means staying in who you are and not who you think you need to be for your audience. To help with that, write down what words best describe you, your strengths and what makes you unique as a human.
- **Say it loud and proud:** Right before the next time you're in front of a room, read the words on the card to remind yourself of why you're amazing and authentic. This will carry into your presentation.
- **Strike a pose:** Before you speak, for two minutes, strike a power pose in your office. This can be your arms raised in a victory V or Wonder Woman's hands on your hips with legs planted wide.
- **Be expansive:** Be expansive and take up space. Stand erect, use arm gestures and make eye contact, slow down, and move around.
- **Use your breath:** It's your secret weapon to lessen performance anxiety. Deep breathing short-circuits your fight or flight instincts. It keeps you grounded in your body.
- **Don't read it; own it:** Practice what you want to say to the point where you can do it without reading it, if possible. Use an outline to keep you on track.

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



Summer Hair Care!

Summertime is the best time of the year (in my opinion) but it can do a doozy on your hair! Here are a few tips on keeping your hair looking the best through the summer heat:

- **Condition! Condition! Condition!** Conditioner, conditioning masks, and treatments are a great way to keep your hair well hydrated. I recommend the Redken Acidic Bonding Concentrate line, they have great pre treatments, shampoo and conditioner, leave in treatments, as well as a great 6-minute protein treatment you can add on to any haircut or color service at the salon.
- **To combat summer frizz, The Brazilian Blowout is magic!** It takes away frizz and significantly reduces drying time, leaving you more time for fun in the sun. They also have a leave-in smoothing serum that has UVA/UVB to help keep your color lasting longer. It's like liquid gold for your hair!
- **If you are battling green tresses from chlorine,** Malibu C Swimmers Wellness is a great way to prevent and help get rid of unwanted green pigment.
- **Chlorine and salt water can strip your natural hair oils.** It's always best to wet your hair with fresh water or saturate with a leave-in conditioner before going into the water, as well as rinsing with fresh water when you are done. This can also help prevent color fading!
- **And lastly,** it's always best to get a good trim to get rid of split ends and keep your style looking it's best. Hair really does grow faster in the summer!

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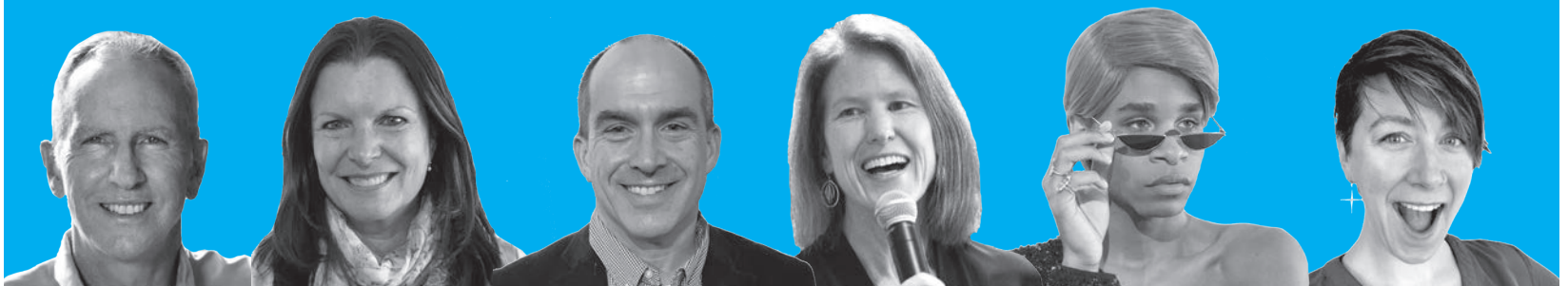
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