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MAGAZINE





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A photograph of a baby sitting on a dark wooden floor, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and pink leggings. The baby is holding a large white daisy flower with a green stem. The baby is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, there are white stairs with wooden railings.

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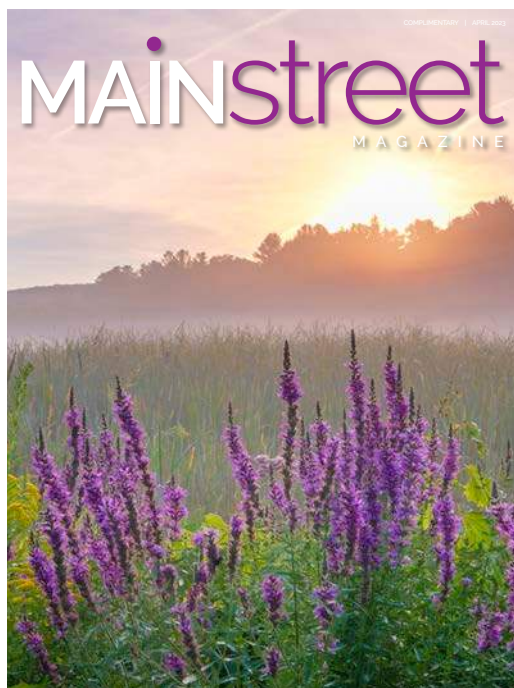
Did you know that Earth Day is celebrated this month? Saturday, April 22nd, to be exact. For the past however-many-years-now, we've focused on many Earth and environmentally related subjects in this issue for this reason. There are so many important issues relating to environmentalism and conservationism both locally, as well as nationally and globally. All of these impact each and every one of us. And so, at least with our thinking, why not allow ourselves this time to learn a thing or two, in hopes that we can perhaps – hopefully – adapt a new method that will help Mother Earth and each and all of her inhabitants?

Sounds pretty reasonable, right? Well, I hope so.

And with that, the first step is always knowledge. Knowledge is power, and why not harness that power and help spread knowledge to make a bigger impact? That's at least our take on the issue and just one way that we tackle it. Now, some of you might point out the obvious, that this is a PRINTED magazine. How environmentally-friendly is that? No, no, you're right. Perhaps not the most friendly. However, our printer is on top of this and uses best methodologies in its industry, as well as soy-based inks and recycled paper. That is the best that we can do in, short of having no printed product. But we also offer that: we're available virtually, as well as audibly. So I suppose by that diversification, we are as environmentally friendly as we can be, right?

That all said, this issue has a bit of something for everyone. Not everything is all-encompassing in the environmental fold. In fact, CB Wismar is back! He pitched me an idea about his various musings from the world. So with that, his new column is born, with the first edition talking about the Lasso Effect. But this issue is certainly enviro-heavy in content from far and wide, from local individuals to larger organizations – and everything in-between. And that is fitting, because you see, we are all in this together! Together we live and co-habitate on this planet, and so together we rise and fall. So please keep that in mind while you read. And my hope is that if each and every one of us can make a promise to change at least one thing, to become more environmentally friendly in at least one way... imagine the impact that together we will have? Wow! What an impact we can make. Here's to you, Mother Earth. Happy Earth Day.

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir



APRIL 2023

Happy Earth Month everyone! Every April we celebrate Mother Earth, our planet, our world.

Photo by
Lazlo Gyorsok

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PUBLISHER, EDITOR, WRITER, & DESIGNER: Thorunn Kristjansdottir

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Anna Martucci | CB Wismar | Christine Bates | Dominique De Vito | Ian Strever | Jesse DeGroot | Lorraine Alexander | Mary B. O'Neill | Olivia Valentine & Caroline Markonic | Regina Molaro | Pom Shillingford | Whitney Joseph

PROOFREADER: Viveca Gardiner. **PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Lazlo Gyorsok & Olivia Valentine

ADVERTISING Ashley Kristjansson 518 592 1135 or info@mainstreetmag.com

CONTACT

Office 135 Rt. 44, Millerton, NY 12546 • Mailing address PO Box 165, Ancramdale, NY 12503
Phone 518 592 1135 • Email info@mainstreetmag.com • Website mainstreetmag.com

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SUSAN BEE BECKONS US INTO THE UNKNOWN

By Anna Martucci
anna@mainstreetmag.com

On May 4 Bernay Fine Art will open *The Familiar Unknown*, curated by Sue Muskat Knoll and Phil Knoll and featuring 25 artists from the Hudson Valley, Berkshires, and New York City.

Behind every endeavor, whether it is selling art or curating shows, Sue Muskat Knoll and Phil Knoll's process always begins with the intention to support artists and build community. These past few years have brought about upheaval and changes for most everyone. For their upcoming show, *The Familiar Unknown*, Muskat and Knoll again bring it back to the idea of community by asking the participating artists to explore what people have had in common these past few years.

In this show, artists are asked to examine the things that we once took for granted yet are no longer assured of. The experience of uncertainty is something we all feel, and instead of displacing us or dividing us, it can in fact unite us.

Artists know only too well that when they are creating artwork they are making conscious decisions as well as opening their subconscious to convey meaning. There are familiar aspects to making art such as which materials artists use, how the materials

behave, and what steps it takes to get from the beginning of a work of art to the end. Yet there is also an unfamiliar, ineffable aspect that emerges through the artist's process of creating, often with a result that is different from what was initially intended. The unknown lives within the subconscious, and art can be a portal for its emergence. It is through this process that artists utilize the "mind's eye," which is where our intuition lies. We all have the ability to experience a reality beyond our senses.

One of the artists in the show, painter Susan Bee, of Brooklyn and Valatie, NY, delves deeply into the subconscious and celebrates her imagination, often recreating archetypes to investigate social and personal struggles. Throughout each of her paintings is an acknowledgement of pain and suffering, yet her mythical creatures, playful patterns, and bright, colorful palette also evoke optimism, humor, and whimsy. Bee mixes heartache with beauty and playfulness.

Ahava = love

For me this is most powerfully demonstrated in Bee's 2012 work *Ahava, Berlin*, which depicts a paint splattered, weathered building distinguished by its grand archway. To the right of the archway is a self-portrait of the artist, dressed in green pants and a polka-dot scarf, looking directly at the viewer. The painting was inspired by a trip Bee made to

Berlin with her husband in 2012. Unbeknownst to Bee at the time, they happened to be staying near the Ahava Kinderheim, a home for Jewish orphans where Bee's mother, artist Miriam Laufer, had lived from 1927-1934. After the Nazi's rise to power, the orphans were relocated to Palestine. When Bee came upon the former orphanage in what had been the East Berlin Jewish quarter, the building was graffitied and war scarred.

Bee uses dripping red paint on the facade to evoke a sense that the building itself has been wounded. The figure of Bee appears small and still, perhaps overwhelmed by the building's immensely tortured history. Yet, Bee contrasts this with the image within the archway, a scene that is new and clean and cared for. This juxtaposition is central to much of Bee's work. She acknowledges the pain and suffering of the human experience while simultaneously offering a feeling of hope, clarity, and optimism. The sign just above Bee's head, "Ahava," is the Hebrew word for love.

Embracing your demons and beckoning the unknown

Susan Bee's 2018 painting *Demonology* was inspired by a 1895 print by James Ensor titled *Self-Portrait with Demons*. In Ensor's image, the central figure is a man, seemingly struggling with and being overtaken by demons. In Bee's painting the central figure is a woman, creating a different relationship, particularly considering the ways women have been demonized in Western culture. Furthermore, in Bee's version, the demons appear friendly with the central figure, as if they are simply getting to know one another.

Again, Bee asks the viewer to reconsider and celebrate life outside the simplistic black and white. Her work encourages us to step into that which is fearful and unknown and embrace our demons. There is a realism here, an acceptance that the utopian life we all wish for does not exist. Instead,

Bee embraces the beauty and authenticity of that which is not always pleasant, both within ourselves and our environments.

Bee's 2019 *Weary Centaur* was inspired by Gustav Moreau's 1890 watercolor *Dead Poet Carried by a Centaur*. Moreau's painting, to her, represents "a reflection on the duality of man and the fate reserved for artists." The centaur and the poet display an opposition, a conflict that cannot be resolved. The death of the poet, both literally and figuratively is at once tragic and explicit.

Bee's painting, on the other hand, is a more tender and whimsical rendering. The bright blues, reds, greens, and yellows in the background swirl and flow, creating a mythical landscape. The poet, rather than being dead, appears to be sleeping or resting upon the centaur with gratitude, almost as if she is in the arms of her lover, lying upon him with tenderness. Here, Bee channels the angst of the archetype in a slightly more lyrical direction. She recognizes the challenges of being an artist but creates an alternative space to embrace romanticism and joy as well.

One of the three paintings of Bee's that Muskat and Knoll chose for the show is titled *Moonrise Over the Sea* and is based on an 1822 painting by Casper David Friedrich. Both Friedrich and Bee's paintings depict three people sitting on rounded rocks near the shore, seemingly transfixed by the rising moon, the quiet sailboats, and the gleaming light of the sky and the sea. It is a sublime view celebrating the glorious mysteries of the universe. But whereas Friedrich's work is painted with a dark palette, Bee's is bright, once again rendering an archetype in an inviting, hopeful way. She is beckoning the viewer to imagine the unknown.

Interview with the artist:

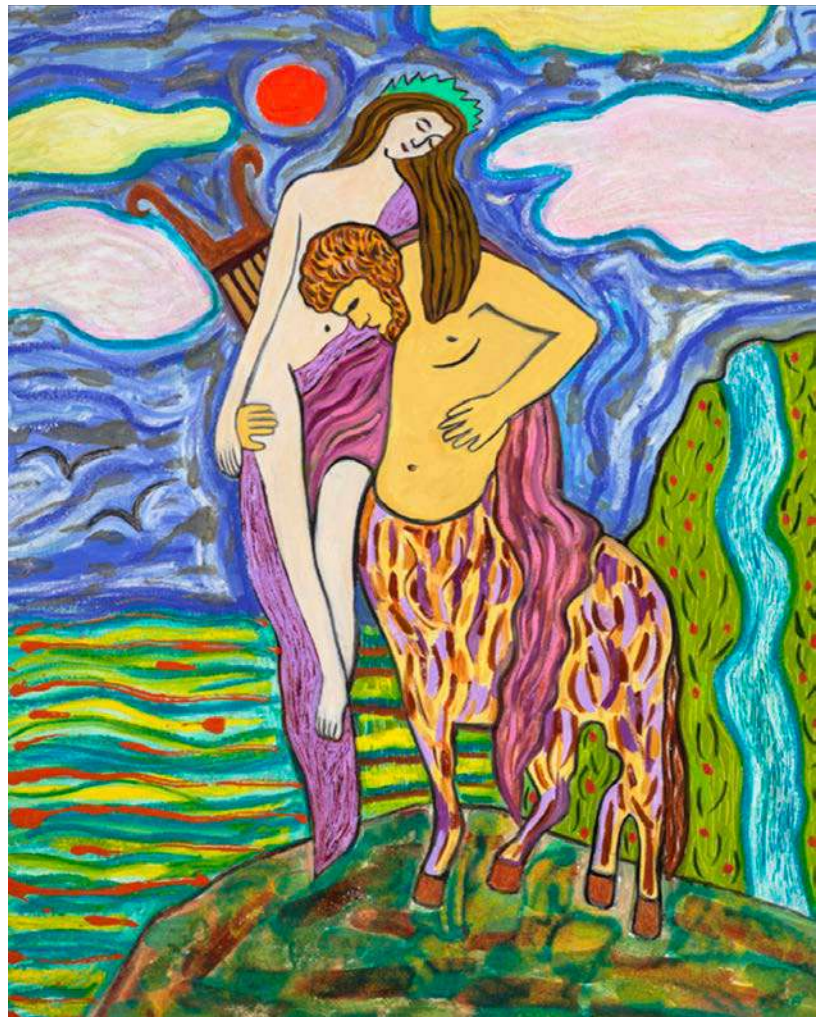
Tell us about yourself. When did you first know you wanted to be an artist?

I grew up in Yorkville, then a German-Irish neighborhood a few blocks from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. My parents

were Jewish immigrants who grew up in Berlin, relocated to Palestine, and then came to Manhattan in 1947. My father was a printmaker, and my mother was a painter. I grew up embedded in the art world; as a child I took painting lessons at MOMA and spent summers in Provincetown, MA.

I went to LaGuardia High School for art, then Barnard for my BA in art history, and then Hunter for an MA in art and art history. I worked as an editor and a graphic designer, and I married a poet, Charles Bernstein, who I met in high school. We had two children together.

I had my first solo show 30 years ago at a commercial gallery in Soho. I've had about 20 solo shows in different locations, universities, and colleges. Later on I started teaching at the School of Visual Arts, Pratt, and UPenn. I also had a magazine called *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*, which was an art magazine that mostly published



Above, top to bottom: *Weary Centaur*, 2019, 30" x 24", oil, sand, and enamel on linen. Artist Susan Bee in her Brooklyn studio. Image credit: Sue Muskat Knoll. Opposite page, L-R: *Ahava Berlin*, 2012, 24" x 36", oil, enamel, and sand on canvas. *Demonology*, 2018, 30" x 24", oil on linen. Collection: Phong H. Bui.

Continued on next page ...

writing by artists. In 1997, I joined A.I.R., a famous feminist cooperative gallery that was founded in 1972, where I have had ten solo shows.

Both your parents, Miriam and Sigmund Laufer, were artists. Can you describe how they influenced your work?

They influenced me in every possible way. My mother used a lot of color in her paintings, and my father did as well in his graphics, so I was used to seeing a lot of color, and my work has a lot of color. My parents took art very seriously, and we were always surrounded by artists. They thought it was a terrible way to make money, but despite their doubts they did it anyway. It's like being a monk, if you make the choice that you are going to pursue this lifestyle, then you stick with it.

My parents really didn't want me to be an artist. I don't regret anything, but choosing this path requires a certain willingness to put yourself and your work out into the public. You have to be kind of tough, you have to be able to take criticism and rejection. You don't control the context of how the work is displayed, and you have to be okay with that.

Why are you interested in using archetypes as the basis for many of your works?

I like to take source material that I'm inspired by and then change it based on what I'm interested in in the present-day context. I'm painting for an audience, and I feel like they might enjoy my references and seeing how I've changed them. Once I lose interest in a subject, I move on. I'm not good at repeating myself. I did a lot of work based on film noir stills for many years, and before that I used collage in my paintings. Right now I'm obsessed with medieval manuscripts involving apocalypses and saints. I love their iconography.

The saints are all heroic women, and they are always defeating the dragons.

You are also an editor, a book artist, and you are married to the poet, Charles Bernstein. Can you describe the ways that literature and art connect for you?

I married a poet, and my friends and collectors are mostly artists and writers. I often collaborate with poets and writers on book projects, including providing illustrations and book covers.

You have said that you identify with Morris Hirshfield's claim that his paintings are more true to reality than what a camera can do. Can you elaborate on this?

I like to think of my paintings as an enhancement to mundane, everyday reality – I add symbolism, patterns, fantasy, and dreamlike shapes. It's more true to my reality; my imagination is my guiding force. Being an artist gives you license to do what you want. If I want to make a pine tree red, I'll do it, and who is going to stop me.

How is your Jewish heritage integrated into your work?

One of my grandfathers was a shoemaker and actor in the Yiddish theater, and the other was a tailor. My parents also worked as commercial artists. My great grandfather was a scribe. I come from artisans, people who made things, and I think of myself as a maker. The outsider artist Morris Hirshfield made shoes and then went from designing shoes to painting. He brought a lot of the graphic knowledge from his shoe designs to his work as a painter. I bring my entire background into my paintings.



Moonrise Over the Sea, 2011, 18" x 24", oil and sand on linen.

What drew you to the Hudson Valley?

I've come up here off and on since the 1970s. We have a lot of friends here, and my sister lives nearby. I'm a big fan of the Hudson River School painters. I like the idea of being in the place where these paintings were done. I love being able to look out the window and see the Catskill mountains and the sunsets – it's very inspirational. •

Apocalypses, Fables, and Reveries: New Paintings, opens March 18 and runs until April 16, 2023 at A.I.R. Gallery, Brooklyn, NY.

The Familiar Unknown opens at Bernay Fine Art in Great Barrington, MA, on May 4, 2023 and runs until June 4. The reception with the artists is on Saturday, May 6 from 5-7pm. Artists in the show include Max Miller, Faile, Amanda Marie Mason, Susan Bee, Jenny Kemp, Matt LaFleur, Wayne Koestenbaum, Katie Rubright, Giordanne Salley, Dan Perkins, Mary Jo Vath, Margot Glass, Colin Hunt, John Franklin, Lindsay Walt, Sally Saul, Peter Saul, Karen Lederer, Judith Braun, Kathy Osborn, Deborah Zlotzky, and Michael St. John.



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Joseph V. Cassarino for the past three years has been the president of Best Immune Support. “I bring awareness of a new scientific discovery made by Dr. Albert B. Crum, MD, DSc (Hon), MS from Rhinebeck, NY, that reduces toxins naturally,” he explains. “What I love most about my work is the feedback I receive from the public who are grateful for discovering the scientific formula to help improve health.” Outside of work Joseph stays busy, too. “I’m a nature nut. Most days, I’m in the fields hugging trees or walking barefoot in order to connect and ground with the hidden energy from the trees and dirt.” Joseph shares that he’s from Rhinebeck, NY, and that he loves the mountains, the open landscapes, and the surrounding small communities all which offer unique charm. “I believe everything in the universe is connected and that we should all treat every living being equally and with unconditional love!”



Cari Swanson is a horse trainer specializing in training horses for film and television production, training actors, kids and adults how to ride, matching horses with humans for many disciplines. “My life has been devoted to horses. The common thread throughout my life and work is the horse. They have taken me around the world training and studying the horse.” Outside of work, Cari says she enjoys writing journals and books, exploring the world through travel. “I am from Ohio and landed in the Hudson Valley in 1985 when I moved back from London. I am drawn to the beautiful landscape and eclectic people and horses. I founded a horse rescue to help unwanted horses. Everyone is invited to the farm in Amenia, NY, to meet the horses and learn about equine therapy. You can learn more at redhorserescue.org.”



Jason Loeb recently left a 20-year career as an equities analyst for a large mutual fund firm to follow a passion of his in the Hudson Valley real estate market. “I’m ‘launching’ my career next month! Very excited! I am most looking forward to learning about the communities and beginning to put down roots in the area.” Outside of work, Jason says he, “mostly spends time with my son, Nicholas, who is eight. We both love the outdoors, and we’ve been hiking and biking together everywhere upstate since he was a baby.” Jason just moved here full-time, but he has rented homes throughout the Hudson Valley and the Catskills for decades. “There is a cycling route around Hillsdale that I do every day. I love to entertain and to cook for large parties, and I’m really looking forward to hosting my friends and neighbors for a long day of grilling as soon as the weather turns.”



Claire Owens runs a consulting firm that helps nonprofits share their message with the world. “I have been working in the activism space for over a decade. I love educating people and inspiring change.” Outside of work, Claire says, “I love to spend time with my family and my stubborn beagle, Birdie. I volunteer on several town boards and am running for county legislature.” Claire has lived in Millerton, NY, for 15 years. She loves the community feel and how everyone looks out for each other. She also loves the restaurants and gorgeous scenery. She adds, “I am so grateful for the people that keep this town running. We look out for each other and the impact is incredible, and I’m just thankful.”



Lenore Mallett is a realtor with William Pitt Sotheby’s in Salisbury, CT. “I help people find homes in NY, MA, and CT. I am a mom of two girls and three dogs,” Lenore shares. She continues, “I’ve been a realtor since 2016 – I was born a connector and a matchmaker. I love nothing more than finding that perfect match for someone.” Outside of work Lenore loves searching for treasures at flea markets and estate sales, “I’ve found some really special pieces of art, even some postcards signed by Princess Di.” Lenore hails from Kingston, and she went to college in Hartford, “I would drive through Millerton and think ‘I need to come back and explore.’ We moved here in 2018.” Her family fosters dogs with Perfect Pets Rescue, “it’s a really rewarding way to make a difference in a dog’s life, and the whole family participates.”



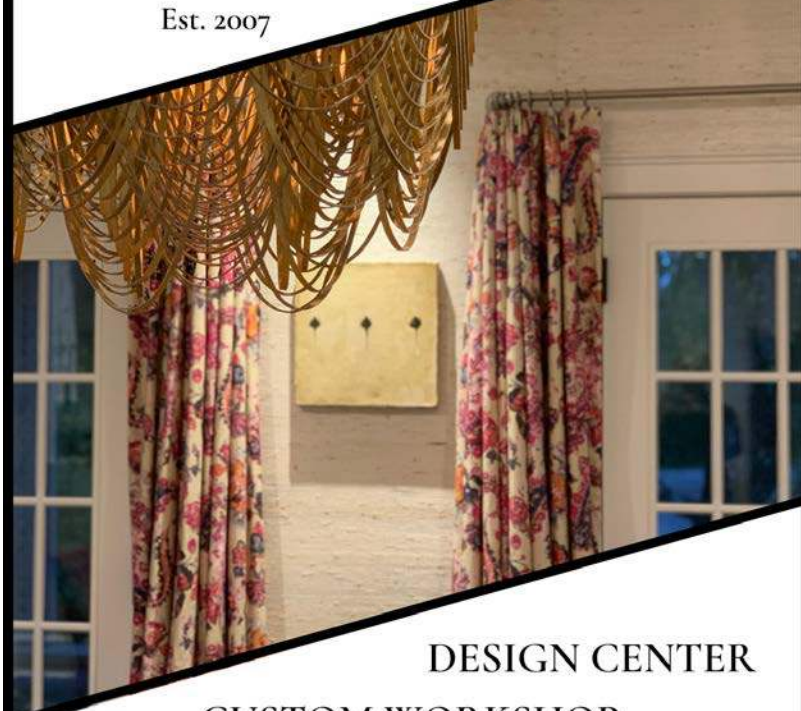
Patrick Trettenero is a producer/director/writer, but he prefers the term “creative entrepreneur.” After 20 years at a big media company, Patrick recently formed his own creative studio, Staro Industries. “I’ve been in entertainment for 40+ years, with various roles in theater, TV, and film. Storytelling is my passion; it allows me the invaluable privilege of collaborating with other artists.” When asked what he enjoys outside of work, Patrick responds, “First, I’m a dog lover. My husband and I are cultivating a wildflower meadow behind our home in Pine Plains, and I’m excited for the seasons changing as the cycle begins again!” Patrick moved to the East Coast from the Midwest nearly 30 years ago, “We fell in love with the history and beauty of the Hudson Valley. Living here is a gift, so we make giving back a priority. We enjoy volunteering our time, skills, and talents. The Stissing Center needs volunteers! (I’m the board president.)”



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Staged Ryte

Ashley Falls, MA
Dawn Trachtenberg, founder

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

As the real estate market gets ready for an uncertain spring season, savvy sellers and their real estate brokers are once again considering staging to present a property for maximum advantage and to outshine the competition. I spent a morning with Dawn Trachtenberg in her packed Ashley Falls, MA, warehouse learning about this creative business, which requires a large investment, the ability to respond quickly, an understanding of real estate buyers, and, most importantly, a creative flair. Main Street first discussed staging in 2015, seven and a half years ago, during a buyer's market, the same year that Dawn started her company.

Wow, this is a very big warehouse. Do you own all this stuff?

Before we leased this 5,000-square-foot facility a year and a half ago, we were actually renting 30 individual storage units. Everything we place in a home is from our inventory, which is constantly expanding. We have over 35 sofas. Twenty of them are in clients' homes. We own over 1,000 books, 120 dining chairs, and 500 pieces of artwork and are adding all the time. We can style any room in the house – children's bedrooms, bathrooms, offices – even butler's pantries.

Why did you start Staged Ryte?

My most recent position had been managing operations for my husband's technology ventures so I did have entrepreneurial experience running a business. After years of this, by 2015, I decided that I wanted my own business that would be visually creative. After looking at houses to flip, I saw the need for staging higher-end properties that were for sale in our region.

Our family has had a second home here since 1991, and I was surprised that, unlike New York City where staging had become common, brokers and sellers hadn't understood the advantages of staging to sell quicker and

for more money.

From the very beginning we made the decision to own our inventory. Right now I'd estimate its value at over a million dollars. We specialize in higher-end, unoccupied houses where staging really makes a difference. However, we stage virtually any priced home as we truly believe that every house can benefit from staging.

How did you grow the business?

The business began when a real estate broker I knew asked for my help with a house that should have sold and hadn't. After months on the market, we give that first house a staging facelift with all new furniture, and it sold in a week.

In the beginning we did mailings to homeowners, but that wasn't very productive. Next we bought ads in the *Berkshire Real Estate Guide*. At the same time, we were reaching out to brokers directly and in-person at broker open houses, explaining what we did face-to-face. Educating brokers about staging is critical because it is most often the broker that recommends staging to a client. Right now I have as many as nine houses staged at the same time. We have had as many as 15 staged at once. Around 85% of our business is direct referrals from brokers like Elyse Harney Real Estate and William Pitt Sotheby's.

How important is the Internet to your business?

We are active on social media and keep our website as current as possible. We try to write blogs on a fairly regular basis on topics we think are of interest to potential house sellers. We constantly point prospective clients and brokers to our website for examples of our work and our services. It takes a lot of time and hard work to keep our site up-to-date. We consider

Continued on next page ...



A dramatic staging catches buyers' attention when they are searching for a property. Photo by Sonja Zinke courtesy of Staged Ryte.



Above: Dawn Trachtenberg (left) and her visiting sister Kari Kroll, who is painting some new canvases for staging homes. Right: A corner of Staged Ryte's warehouse, which stores everything necessary for a staging assignment from rugs to bedding to lighting fixtures. Photos by Christine Bates.

it a constant work-in-progress, but it is crucial to the support of our business.

What don't you do?

Normally we don't paint or suggest any renovations. We work with what's there. We don't like to have TV's in rooms – maybe a laptop or monitor in an office. We never set a table because who does that today? We use real mattresses in bedrooms not cardboard boxes. Bedding is appropriate to the house style, with down, insert duvets and percale sheets. We do end up doing a lot of ironing.

Custom window treatments are usually too expensive for staging and would take too much time, although we did do that for a very high-end sale at Canyon Ranch.

I like color but typically only use white towels and white shower curtains in bathrooms. We never include photographs of anyone, so the buyers can imagine themselves living in the house. We also avoid anything with religious connotations that could be in violation of fair housing laws and seldom use nudes – there are children around. Landscaping is also not a typical part of our service, although it can make a major difference, and we will consult on exterior landscaping or cleanup.

What is your style?

We don't have a specific style, and no two staging projects ever look alike. We typically appeal to the sophisticated metropolitan buyer, so nothing we do is purely traditional. Our inventory is varied with antiques, vintage,

knock-offs, and modern pieces, with modern art and pops of color. We choose every item for a reason. For example, books on bedside tables suggest that a certain type of person lives there. Our titles are carefully selected to present a story.

How do you determine a price for a staging project?

Setting a fee is not a science. We look at the space and determine how accessible the house is; how many sofas, beds, tables, books, art, rugs will be needed and how much it will cost to move them in and out. We also consider the value of the furniture and accessories going into a house, and whether we will be using antique pieces, high-end or low-end, which all depends on the property, its style, and its value. Once we figure everything out, there is a fixed cost for three or six months and thereafter a monthly rental fee. We remind people that the cost of staging is a tax-deductible expense when selling a home.

What are staging challenges?

You mean stumbling blocks? Most difficult is when the seller has their own ideas about staging. Staging is not interior decorating, which is done for homeowners and reflects their tastes, interests, and desires. Sometimes a seller will ask if they can come to the warehouse and pick out things. No, they cannot. Sometimes owners drop by while we're working to express opinions before we are done.

It can also be difficult to get clients to get rid of furniture and possessions before staging begins. I try to

explain that they'll have to get rid of everything anyway when they sell, so they might as well do it now. I advise people to take everything out and, if necessary, store stuff in the basement or the garage. It's so much easier to work with an empty space. Staging is about making a house look fantastic for photographs, so the buyer wants to visit the house. During the actual showing, appropriate staging makes the potential purchaser feel good and understand the house.

How long does it take to complete a staging project?

Once an agreement is reached on the contract, we start immediately. Actually, by the time we put together the proposal, we've already begun conceptually. We move quickly from contract to completion – usually a week to prepare and three to seven business days from the time we move furniture into a house until completion.

Where do you get all this incredible stuff? Where do you shop?

We source locally whenever we can and often purchase from places such as Hammertown. Auctions are great for vintage antiques and accent pieces. Trade accounts with manufacturers are important. Stores like HomeGoods are a must for all staggers for a variety of accessories. Then there's outlet shopping – a great place to buy high quality goods, like Restoration Hardware, at a discount.

Cuddledown is our go-to for pillows and down comforters, while much of our bedding supplies such as duvets and pillow shams come from Annie Selkie at Pine Cone Hill in Pittsfield, MA. We're always looking for unique pieces to make a shelf look great. Estate sales are excellent for acquiring books and to help fill our collections of accessories. The large, abstract paintings are done right here by my sister Kari Kroll when she visits from California. Kari is working on some large green canvases with her signature mix of sand at the moment.

What is the best part of this business?

Staging is an incredible creative outlet. Every project is different, and in a few days a house is transformed.

What do you do for fun?

We have a multi-generational family – it's a busy household where people gather. I enjoy cooking for everyone. On any given weekend, we could have from five to thirteen people sitting at the table. It is a great entertaining home where we have spent 25 years decorating and accessorizing. We have collected Scandinavian furniture, bird's nests, littala blown-glass birds, cookbooks, and various other items including lots of books! Note the bird in our logo. ●

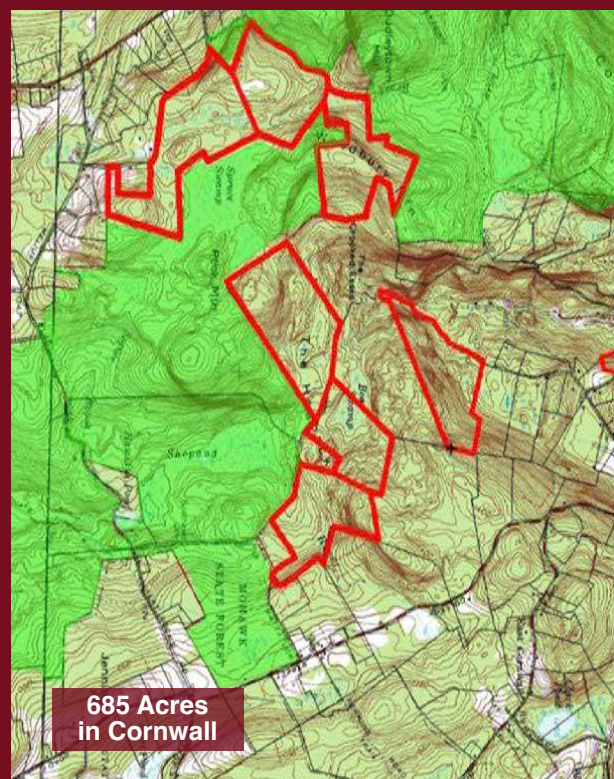
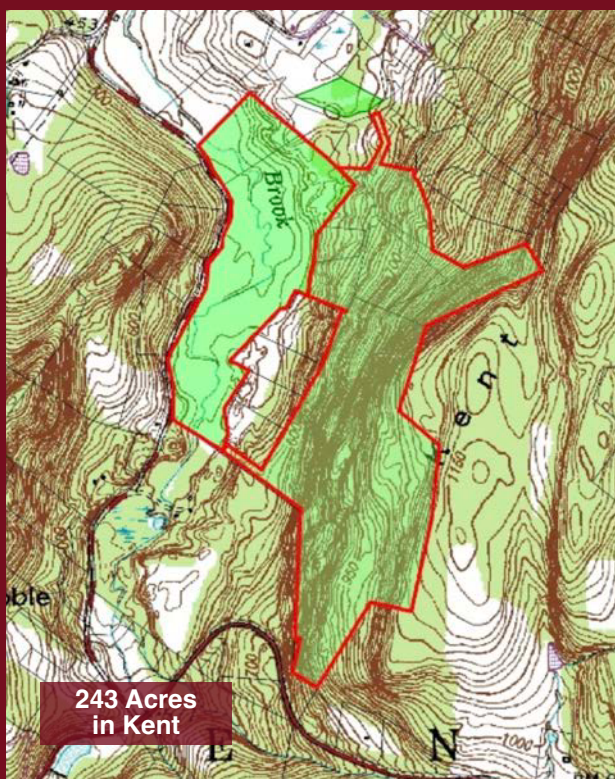
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MIXED BERRY
BREAKFAST

Enchiladas

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

We. Love. Breakfast. We could eat breakfast for every meal. Ranging from sweet to savory, the options are endless. We tend to prefer the sweeter option, especially on the weekends. During the week we try to eat healthier and save our sweet tooth for Saturday or Sunday – or both if we are able to get extra walks in!

Olivia was lying in bed one early Saturday morning brainstorming what she could do with a bag of frozen mixed berries other than turning them into her weekday morning smoothie. There were tortillas and a block of cream cheese in the fridge beckoning her to create something delectably sweet. A light bulb went off; a new breakfast idea was about to be born!

Warning! These are sweet! You can adjust the sweetness by reducing the sugar in the ingredients below. But if you are like us, who tend to have a major sweet tooth, these should be quite satisfying and have you joining the clean-plate breakfast club!

Mixed berry filling

4 cups of frozen mixed berries
½ cup sugar (you can substitute honey or maple syrup)
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp cornstarch
½ cup water
1 tsp lemon zest
¼ tsp vanilla extract

Flour tortillas

4 flour tortillas
2 tbsp of butter
4 tbsp granulated sugar
1 tsp cinnamon

Cream cheese glaze

4 oz cream cheese at room temperature
½ cup powdered sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
4-5 tbsp milk

Directions and assembly

Add the mixed berries, sugar, lemon juice, lemon zest, and vanilla to a medium saucepan. Combine the water and cornstarch in a small bowl and whisk until dissolved. Add the cornstarch mixture to the berry mixture and cook on medium-high heat while stirring occasionally until thickened, about ten minutes.

While the berries are cooking,

prepare the cream cheese glaze by adding all the ingredients to a mixing bowl and mix until smooth and creamy. You can adjust the amounts of milk and sugar to your taste preference and consistency.

Combine the cinnamon and sugar in a small bowl.

Warm the tortillas one at a time in a medium skillet over medium-high heat (flipping once) in 2 tbsp of butter; you may need to add more butter if necessary, but 2 tbsp worked for us. Fill each tortilla with the mixed berry filling, roll-up and then sprinkle with the cinnamon and sugar mixture. Drizzle each rolled tortilla with the cream cheese glaze and serve immediately. Makes 4 breakfast enchiladas. •

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 @oliviawvalentine.

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TEAR DOWNS, DEMOLITION REAL ESTATE

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

Recently it seems like houses, modest and grand, have been disappearing. Here one day and gone the next, including one of Main Street's mystery houses. For our environmental issue, this article explores why demolition is occurring, how long it takes, and how much it costs.

It's not worth saving

Why do owners make the decision to tear down a house or a barn or fill in a pool? Sometimes it is the careful calculation of the cost to repair and renovate versus building new. The structure might just be in the wrong place, like a flood zone, dangerously close to an intersection, or too far from the water. It could be too small, too big, too old, too expensive to maintain, or it just doesn't fit with the imagined lifestyle of a new owner. Typically, homeowners make this decision with their architect. For years Jennifer Dowley, a longtime resident of the Town of North East, had been unhappy with her modest, dark, drafty cottage, which didn't take advantage of the spectacular views on Moadock Road. It was old, in the wrong place, and had to be demolished once a modern house with large windows was constructed on the site. But it wasn't easy.

Not so fast

There is a legal process required to demolish any structure – you can't just bring in a wrecking ball. First it's a good idea to notify neighboring property owners of your intention to demolish a building. Next a qualified specialist must do a hazardous materials survey of the structure. These



licensed professionals are very different from generalized home inspectors and know exactly where to look for problems. Was the house built before 1974? Are there pipes in the basement wrapped in asbestos? Is there lead paint chipping off on the windowsills? What mastic was used to glue down the floor tiles? Is there radon?

If hazardous substances are found, guys in the white suits, gloves, and masks will be tasked with remediating and removing materials so demolition can proceed safely. That's when an experienced contractor/excavator with demolition experience arrives to take the structure down, put it in dumpsters, and have it hauled away.

Excavators that are qualified to take down buildings must have a demolition license in Connecticut. In order to qualify for an A permit, a potential licensee must shadow an existing registered expert for a year, watch how buildings are taken down, and then pass a stringent seven and a half hour written test. Most people don't pass the first time. In New York, where demolition regulations are much looser, evidence of proper insurance is enough.

Demolition can be expensive

Jack Baer, the owner of UCE Construction and a Type A licensed demolition expert, estimates the cost of removing a structure based on square footage, type of construction, and accessibility. For example, a timber frame home is easier to take down than a post and beam house, which is stronger. When UCE demolished the *Lakeville Journal* building in order to build new space for Salisbury Bank, steel I-beams were torched so they could be cut into sections and salvaged.

Nationally, the cost of demolishing an average-sized timber frame building ranges from \$12,000 to \$15,000. Locally, Salisbury's building



inspector estimated that it might cost \$20,000 to tear down a typical house without environmental issues, with an additional \$1,000 per dumpster to take it away. But before this happens, an environmental assessment must be completed at a cost of around \$1,500. If hazardous materials are found, they must be removed by specialized environmental firms. Baer has seen the cost of remediating hazardous materials exceed \$80,000. Jennifer Dowley's mitigation was a more reasonable, but still an unexpected, \$12,000; however, the delay set back completion of the

Above: The demolition of this house happened after a new house in the town of Northeast was constructed. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Dowley. Left: This vacant, old building at the center of Ancram, NY, was being restored by the Ancram Preservation group when a car drove it and into the backyard. The damage made demolition the only option. Photo by Christine Bates.

Continued on next page ..



Above, top to bottom: In Pine Plains, NY, a structurally unsound house was demolished, and a new guest house was built at the back of the lot. Plans are to rebuild on the front of the Church Street lot. In the Village of Millerton, NY, older homes like this one on Highland Street are being torn down and rebuilt. Right: Remember this *Main Street* mystery house on Route 22 in Millerton? It's not there now. The purchaser of the former Kaplan farm is building a new house far from the road. Photos by Christine Bates.

project several months. While waiting, Dowley made the vacant house available for training exercises by the North East Fire Department. Finally, the mitigation subcontractors from Albany arrived in hazmat suits and methodically removed asbestos materials bit by bit. Next, the excavators went to work smashing the concrete walls and floors and removing everything from the site. Porous fill was added to the site with grass seed on top. Three old trees next to the house were left untouched.

Total tear downs may be trending up

Most local building inspectors sensed that total demolitions are not becoming more frequent and said there are usually one or two a year in each town. But, James Finley, building inspector in the Town of Washington, referred to his records: In the last three years, six to seven demolition permits of various sorts have been issued annually. Since 2009, when the Town created a searchable database, 50% of permits were issued for exploratory demolition prior to renovation, 30% for removing accessory structures including swimming pools, and only 20% for complete demolition.

Nonetheless, some demolition firms are seeing an uptick in tear downs, especially on trophy properties. Baer observed, and real estate agents confirmed, that prime building sites are becoming harder to find and more expensive. This is especially true of properties with lake frontage. "They just aren't making them anymore. All the good properties are gone," said Baer.

Furthermore, many of these lake houses were built for seasonal occupancy and can't easily be restored. Some are located a distance from the lake and new owners want to be closer to the water. Other owners want a contemporary statement, not a traditional, historic home. An extreme example of this phenomenon is Oracle founder Larry Ellison's \$80,000,000 purchase of a Palm Beach mansion with 540 feet of waterfront and a helipad. The existing 10,000 Tuscan-inspired house will be torn down and replaced with Ellison's twice-the-size dream estate.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, tear downs can make economic sense for less expensive homes. Witness the activity in the Village of Millerton with the removal of a vacant trailer on a half-acre Mill Street lot that sold for \$30,000 and a tear down on Highland Street.

Potential tear-down buyers should remember the complicated, time-consuming and often expensive steps involved with demolition relating to zoning, permitting, deed restrictions, historic preservation, and building codes – not to mention time and money. Baer of UCE observed that nine out of ten homeowners have not conducted a hazardous materials analysis before buying a house and can be shocked to discover that demolition is not an easy solution. •

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 in 2013.



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Love, laughter, and the Lasso effect

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

There can be something mildly satisfying about standing in the check-out line at your go-to grocery store, waiting for Jill, or whoever your favorite checker might be. We can recognize that “self check” might save time and certainly save the grocery management salaries, but waiting (im)patiently in line allows us to listen in on a variety of casual conversations.

There are the predictable musings from a nearby couple about whether all the groceries on the list have been collected. There may be the fragment of discourse about an up-coming soccer game, dance recital, or science project or a lament about too much time on social media for the usually quite bored teenager.

But, every once in a while, before the cold cuts and frozen peas are loaded on the moving belt, one can catch a recommendation for an experience not to be missed – a mandatory bout of at-home viewing, a mention of a series currently streaming that is so magnetic that it deserves sharing.

Uniters, not dividers

And, so it was, that taking an informal poll over the last three grocery visits, we tabulated resounding praise for the third season of *Ted Lasso*. The name spoken reverentially, like that of a local hero, it was often prefaced by “have you seen the latest ...?” An experience to be shared. Common ground for conversation. The rare ability to find a subject that could unite, not divide.

The third season of the comedy is currently streaming on Apple TV+ which, if not available on your home set, may be well worth considering as an addition to your entertainment line-up. No, this is not a promotional message for the streaming service,

merely a friendly suggestion. Rather like a smile-bracketed comment made in a grocery store check-out line.

For those not familiar with the series, *Ted Lasso* is an 11-time Emmy winner that tells the story of an American football coach who is transported to England and engaged to coach a struggling professional soccer team. Viewers discover, early on, that he’s been recruited to make sure the team loses. Rebecca, the current owner, who obtained the team through an acrimonious divorce, wants to spite her philandering ex-husband by destroying the one thing he loved most. For her, AFC Richmond should be humiliated, and Ted Lasso is just the person to handle that chore.

Love. Belief. Hope.

The first season of the show shared the challenges, pitfalls, and foibles of Ted bringing his genial, comedic presence to an environment where laughter and mutual respect were quite foreign. Wins, losses, egos, anxieties ... the setting may be London and the through line the ups and downs of AFC Richmond and the assortment of characters surrounding the team, but the emergent theme that is reinforced again and again is hope. Ted’s homespun humor, his relentless optimism, and his undying respect for everyone he meets becomes infectious. He sticks a handmade “Believe” sign up in the locker room because he does – and he wants the members of the team to do the same.

There are love stories in the traditional sense, but there are also love stories in the sense of people honestly caring for each other, recognizing their own weaknesses, and reveling in the strength and ambition of others.

After the first season of *Ted Lasso* *Variety* writer Caroline Framke offered up a description that is truly apropos. “There’s something undeniably satisfy-

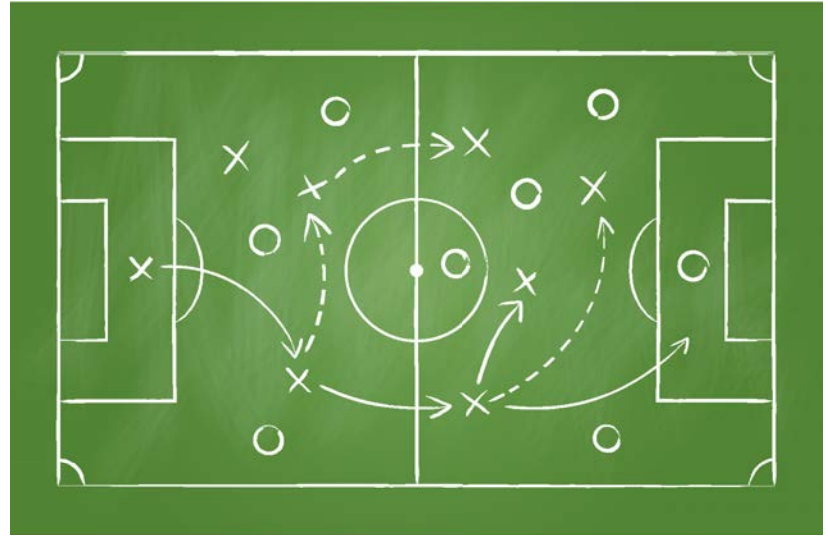


Image: istockphoto.com contributor StartStock

ing about spending time with good people who are just trying to be the best they can, on and off the field.”

Is it always right to be right?

We may have to slip into the imaginary world of a struggling London soccer team to be reassured that silly notions like hope and love and laughter can actually make a difference in life. There’s a consistent moral to the *Ted Lasso* story, and if we allow ourselves to be open enough to not only get the message, but also see if it fits, then ... well, we’ll leave the rest of the formula up to each of us.

During the most recent airing of the Academy Awards, the “Oscars,” the traditional “In Memoriam” segment featured the faces and contributions of those from the film community who had died in 2022. Those who watched saw the predictable mix of famous names and more obscure individuals – actors and directors who were well known and producers, writers, editors, technicians who had been important parts of the entertainment world but were not well known to the broader public.

Well into the montage of photos appeared the picture of a dear friend who left us this past October. Nick Bosustow, whose father had created

Mister Magoo, was a producer of animated films, who had won an Oscar for his film presentation of Dr. Seuss’ *Gerald McBoing-Boing*.

In the photo the Academy chose to remember Nick, he is holding his own “Oscar” won for a short film, the title of which ties this rambling discourse together. The title of the film? *Is It Always Right to be Right?*

Interesting question, and one that finds a series of intriguing answers in the jubilant segments of three seasons of *Ted Lasso*. There is abundant laughter. There are glowing moments of conflict and resolution. There are tears, of course, but in summary, the investment of leisure hours being immersed in the Lasso effect might help us all answer the question of whether being right is always right. Sometimes it may just as important to live, laugh ... and love. ●



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US FARM BILL UPDATE & SCENIC HUDSON

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

Congress is getting ready to shape the 2023 Farm Bill. Here's a snapshot of some of the agriculture industry's hot topics.

The 2023 Farm Bill supports family farms through conserving natural resources and promoting the agricultural economy. Approximately every five years, America's farm-related businesses are affected by this federal bill—a significant piece of legislation that is voted on and passed by Congress. Due to its sheer size and scope, this bill impacts many livelihoods, the economy, the food industry, and beyond.

The recent Inflation Reduction Act committed \$20 billion to fund conservation programs in the bill, including those focused on addressing climate change. This funding provides a significant new opportunity to enhance the connection between strategies that provide fresh food, support our agricultural economy, and address climate change.

The bill is the largest source of federal funding in history – \$867 billion when last updated in 2018 – to support US agriculture and conserve farm and forest land. It is currently being shaped for reenactment in 2023.

Separated into 12 sections or

“titles,” the bill includes a range of topics that relate to farming livelihoods, conservationism, commodities, nutrition, forestry, energy, rural development, and beyond.

Farming in America

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, the agriculture sector extends beyond the farm business to include a range of farm-related industries. In 2021, agriculture, food, and related industries contributed 5.4% to US gross domestic product and provided 10.5% of US employment. Americans' expenditures on food amounted to 12% of household budgets on average.

The USDA's Economic Research Service defines gross cash farm income as annual income before expenses. It includes cash receipts, farm-related cash income, and government farm program payments. In 2022, the USDA forecasted GCFI at \$600 billion.

The Northeastern part of the US, which includes New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, is home to 56 million people. This area contains an extraordinary network of family farms that are on the cutting edge of sustainability and market innovation.

In 2017, the northeast region's 430,350 agricultural producers contributed an estimated \$78 billion to the nation's agricultural industry. The Hudson Valley's extensive farming industry is included in this estimate.

The Bill

Many parts of the Farm Bill directly impact farmers in the Hudson Valley region. Here's how:

- They fund federal conservation programs such as Environmental Quality Incentives Programs and



Conservation Stewardship Program and support growers in using climate-smart practices.

- They enhanced access to USDA programs for under-represented producers and economically distressed farmers.
- They expand programs and farmer- and forest-owner outreach for forest protection, agroforestry, urban farms, and community gardens that contribute to nature-based industries and the food economy.
- They provide resources to Hudson Valley communities through the Nutrition Title, which reauthorizes nutrition and domestic food assistance programs, making up nearly 76% of the Farm Bill's mandatory spending.

Scenic Hudson helps

Given the importance of farms in rural settings, and increasingly in more urban territories, Scenic

Continued on page 27 ...

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Hudson – an organization committed to preserving and strengthening the region's assets – is working with its allies to ensure that the Farm Bill provides the necessary support.

The Poughkeepsie-based organization continually strives to achieve its mission to preserve the many open spaces, working farms, and historic cities and town centers that make this region so special.

Scenic Hudson's engagement with regenerative agriculture includes: regenerative agriculture demonstration areas, which work with farmers to pursue regenerative practices that will inform research and soil health monitoring; the Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project, which includes supporting the legislation that led to the pilot and providing future outreach on outcomes; and organizational engagement with growers that have agricultural easements on their lands associated with Scenic Hudson land trust.

NECA pitches in

The Northeast Carbon Alliance unites land managers, scientists, and public policy experts to realize the power of natural climate solutions to combat climate change. Its range extends from “mountaintop to ocean floor” in the Hudson Valley, other parts of New York, the Northeastern States, and beyond.

The organization engages with farmers, forestry professionals, forest owners, and the scientific conservation community through:

- NECA member events, which cover relevant topics ranging from forest carbon management to biochar,
- An active NECA website, which provides valuable information and research for stakeholders interested in climate-smart farming and forestry practices.



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor allow.

Both Scenic Hudson and NECA will continue to work with farmers to help them sustainably adopt and implement regenerative farm practices.

Farmers of the future

Many farming/agriculture graduates accrue a lot of debt from their studies. People from various sectors of society are working to help those potential farmers reduce that debt.

Another key issue lies in attracting people to the industry. In the US, the average age of our farmers is 60 years old. As our farmers age, many yearn to retire. Unfortunately, there aren't many people interested in taking over their businesses. Helping people discover how rewarding a career in farming can be is essential to the success of the industry.

Bill and Kathy Emmrich own a second-generation farm in Holmdel, NJ. The farm's day-to-day responsibilities rest solely with this retired couple. “All of our family members enjoy the woods and the produce we grow, but they will not continue to work the farm when we're unable to do this work. This trend is unfortunate for our family farm,” said Emmrich.

Some solutions

Scenic Hudson and NECA plan to help sustain the next generation of farmers by promoting diversity,

racial equity, and justice through agricultural policy.

“An increasing number of farmers are approaching retirement age, and we want to increase access to farmland for BIPOC (Black, indigenous, and people of color) farmers, and other historically under-represented members of the region, including women, young farmers, and beginners,” said Peter Lopez, executive director of policy, advocacy, and science, Scenic Hudson.

Climate change

“As Scenic Hudson and our partners focus on solutions, we embrace the critical role our farms can play in supporting society's efforts to fight climate change. We fully recognize that increasingly, we are asking our farms and farmers to do more. We are calling on them to be environmentally sustainable within their own operations; key resources for reducing carbon in other sectors of the economy; producers of safe, local, nutritious food; socially just and equitable; and economically viable,” said Ned Sullivan, president, Scenic Hudson.

While Scenic Hudson and NECA are focused on helping farmers and other land managers adopt

Continued on next page ...

practices that sequester carbon, it recognizes that to be part of the climate solution – and meet growing demands for locally-produced food – farms must remain viable.

“Scenic Hudson recognizes that the number and diversity of farms in the Northeast, coupled with their proximity to metropolitan areas, positions this region to be a national leader in advancing climate solutions as well as strengthening equity, opportunity, and economic stability for current and future farmers, while meeting rising demands for fresh food,” added Sullivan.

Grazing tactics

Chaseholm Farm in Pine Plains, NY, is also doing its fair share to battle climate change via its Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Pilot Project. It set up a system that leads cows to “rotationally graze.”

Farmer Sarah Chase explained that in a continuous grazing system, the grass can’t keep up with the cows. In a prescribed system, farmers set up areas where cows can and can’t graze. “The cows do a clean job taking down all those plants, and then that zone can regrow. The farm is now ‘grazing taller,’ which means not turning the cows into it until the grass is taller than it had been when we were first grazing the cows,” she added.

That way, Chase can control the amount of energy the cows are getting. Beyond getting protein from the lush grass, which is generally down lower on the plant, they’re eating “higher-energy, top-of-the-plant, photosynthesizing, very green and active forage.”

Leaving a little more residual helps the plant grow back faster; carbon is sequestered by the plant photosynthesizing and sending carbon dioxide down into the soil, where it is traded with the microbes through the roots and exudates.

“We call our system not just rotational grazing, but adaptive planned grazing because it feels really important that the grass managers are responding to weather events,” said Chase. This strategy provides more resilience. It’s part of the tool set for managing a forage-based farm in a time when climate change is causing all sorts of chaos in the way farmers were used to doing things. It takes a real change of management style.

That means spending a lot more human time setting up fences and taking down fences. It means designing your farm in a different way. “Besides the time and learning, there’s not a ton of investment, and I think that it does pay dividends long-term for farm health, animal health, and, in our case, both milk and meat quality. I would absolutely endorse some version of an adaptive grazing plan that works for you,” concluded Chase. •

Scenic Hudson outlines some guiding considerations and principles for the 2023 Farm Bill:

- New and beginning farmers, under-represented producers, and economically distressed farmers require greater and enhanced access to USDA programs to unlock their environmental and economic potential.
- Science-based research and technical support is essential to provide practical, cost-saving solutions to producers to help them respond to emerging management issues while maintaining and/or increasing production.
- Forest protection, agroforestry, urban farms, and community gardens are important contributors to the future of natural resource-based industries and the food economy.
- Delivery of technical assistance and support is strongest when conducted in partnership with state governments, not-for-profit organizations, and academic institutions.



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Martijnvandernat.

Strategies

Scenic Hudson has also identified several key strategies for supporting climate-resilient agriculture.

1. Payment for Practices

Farmers can effectively advance federal policy objectives through their management of farm soil, but require government-backed incentives, as few, if any, private market mechanisms exist. This work will promote early adoption of new and innovative practices with an eye on ensuring these practices are successfully incorporated into family farm businesses.

2. Packaging and Accessibility of Targeted Technical and Financial Assistance

While funding is critical to incentivize best-practice management of farmland, forests, and natural resources, it is strongest when accompanied by expert knowledge, delivered by extension services, soil and water conservation district employees, and organizations familiar with, and responsive to, the local culture and economy.

3. Local Networks and Demonstration Projects

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To learn more about Scenic Hudson and its affiliates, you can visit them online at scenichudson.org.

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MEADOWSCAPES: *shifting our vision of lawn & land care*

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

We have a lot of lawns in our predominantly rural tri-state region. Keeping those plots and rolling acres verdant and orderly has a high cost – not just to our wallets but to the health and diversity of our land and ourselves. However, the lawn-based paradigm of beauty we've inherited from past generations is shifting, and Matt Schwaikert of Matt's Landscaping can help you shift your lawn from monoculture grass and tidy mulched borders to meadows and nature scapes based on diversity and native plantings.

Paradigm shifts

Matt's been around every block related to lawn care for over ten years and provides the full menu of traditional services, including mowing, planting, pruning, garden installation, and plowing. He's a thinker who questions the status quo of traditional lawn care.

While he'd been pondering how to shift gears, he started paying more attention to the carbon footprint of his trucks and lawn equipment – and it was high. He began analyzing the inputs of costly lawn care, e.g., labor, fertilizer and chemicals, time, and equipment. Clients, who were part-time residents, morphed into full-time ones during COVID and started asking him questions about the “guys in white suits” spraying their lawns and, for the first time, observing the hours it took to mow their acres into submission.

With these thoughts swirling in his head and amid his own attempts

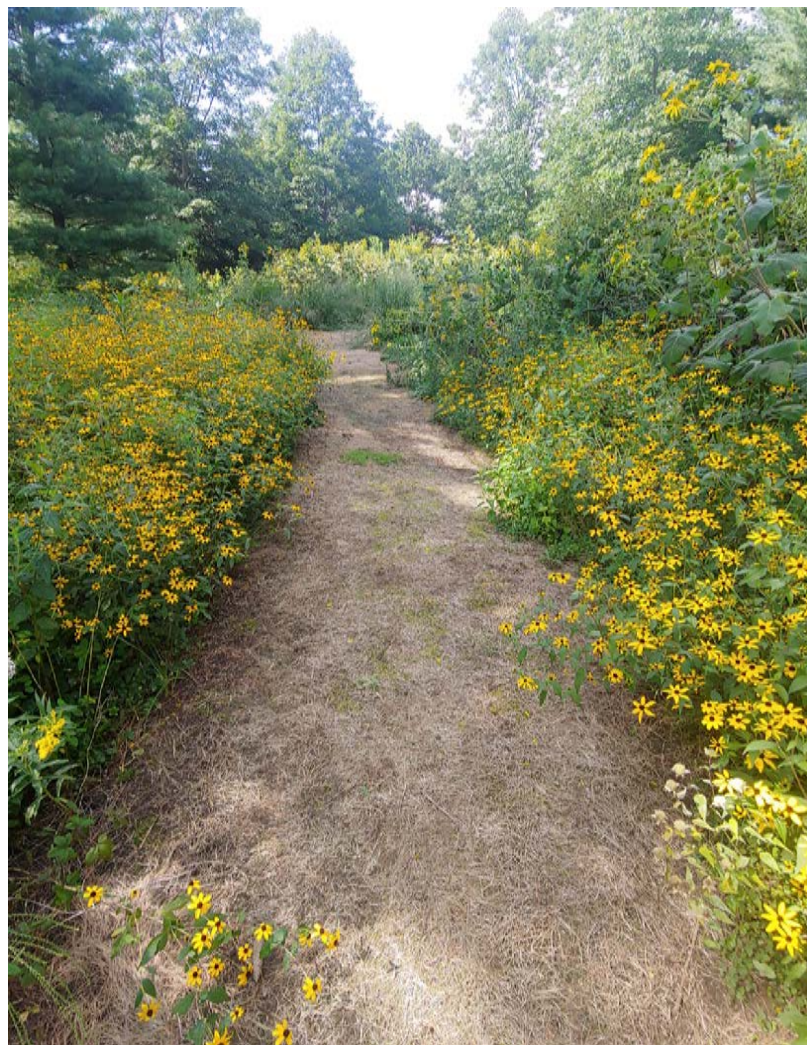
to change from work as usual, the universe connected him with Mike Nadeau, a reformed chemical landscaper who had his come-to-Mother Nature moment decades ago. Mike emerged as a holistic landcare consultant and organic landscaper. His work is dedicated to helping others relinquish their lawn to nature so it can do what it does best – sustain the natural world through healthy soils and native species. At the same time, Mike supports clients in cultivating a land ethic based on care, healing, and stewardship.

Eco-landcare Yoda and Padawan

When Mike and Matt met on a landscaping job, they began sowing seeds of a partnership. Further along the arc of his career, Mike was looking for a fast-learning, deep-thinking, capable younger landscaping professional to who he could impart his considerable knowledge. Matt was looking for someone with the expertise and wisdom to help him with his nascent explorations into a different kind of landscaping. Fertilized with their genuine respect and affection for each other, their partnership has organically grown into something beautiful.

Their meeting of the minds resulted in a division of Matt's Landscaping called Meadowscapes, which is dedicated to helping customers create meadows and native plantings on properties of all sizes.

Mike recounts, “I was looking for genuine practitioners to collaborate with in ecological landcare and native habitat restoration. Matt was the first landscaper not to run away when I approached him with my ideas. I wanted someone to do a Vulcan mind meld with so I could transfer the knowledge that has been gifted to me over the decades. For Matt, “No one I knew was doing what I wanted to do in property care. I wanted to make it part of my business to make a living restoring the land through property



care, not depleting it. Mike is the person helping me do that.”

Mother Nature's biological clock

Much of Mike and Matt's work involves educating interested clients about what meadows are – and aren't. While the artificial order we impose through monoculture lawns is what Mike terms “an ecological desert,” meadows represent a different kind of beauty alive with processes happening above and below the soil. These processes represent nature's order that we can appreciate with education and attention.

Continued on next page ..

Above: A summer meadow path. Left: One of Meadowscapes special-ists conducting a vinegar application to a meadowscape. Photos courtesy of Mike Nadeau.





Above, top to bottom: A Meadowscares staff member rolling seed into a new meadow. A monarch butterfly on a NY ironweed. Right: A spring meadow. Photos courtesy of Mike Nadeau.

A meadow is a complex and dynamic collection of grasses and forbs (broadleaf flowering plants) that intuitively provide competition and mutualism of species. These species interactions benefit all life forms and produce high-functioning, stable, and aesthetically pleasing habitats.

When creating meadows, you're on nature's clock. It takes commitment and patience to allow the land to switch gears and regenerate over the course of seasons. Mike says, "A meadow is a process, not an event." Matt adds, "We also work incrementally to convert sections of the client's property to meadow to plant native and indigenous eco-landscapes. This can be done by starting with the areas most overtaken by invasives or with a property section important to the client because of location or use."

Costs and benefits

They also outline how the expenses of creating a meadow decrease dramatically over time. The return on that investment is an aesthetically pleasing, diverse, and healthy ecosystem. "We're working one property at a time, educating clients, who often have done their homework, and we're there to help make it happen," observes Mike.

"We assure clients that we're not zealots trying to save the world with their property and money. Our number one priority for the client is aesthetic value. My secret desire is that we create biodiversity and increase habitat for pollinators and birds,"

Mike explains. He likens the swaying movement of a meadow as the breeze moves through it to a Calder kinetic sculpture that is both soothing and visually appealing – and brimming with life and vitality.

Proper prior planning prevents failed meadows

So, what is involved in creating a meadow? Matt and Mike explain that the first step is understanding the area the meadow is to occupy. How does the sun travel across the land? What are the soil composition and acidity? How much shade does the area get? How moist or dry does it tend to be? Is it flat or hilly? The answers to those questions will dictate how to approach the meadow and ensure the land is listened to. If you're not listening to what the land is telling you, your meadow won't thrive.

Then they neutralize the existing monoculture grass with an organic 30% acidity vinegar mix to have a clean canvas for meadow planting. The next critical step is choosing the seed mix that will thrive in the setting, properly seeding the area, and then being patient while nature gets to work. Some plants mixed into meadows are black-eyed Susans, bee balm, purple coneflower, butterfly weed, switchgrass, bluestem, and wild rye.

Proper meadow maintenance is the last step. Mike counsels, "Proper and timely control of non-desirable plants, using a varied approach that includes selective mowing, manual removal, smothering, and spot treatment with

organic herbicide is critical. Early detection and a rapid response is imperative. This requires people trained to know the difference between a weed and a wildflower seedling. This is where Matt and his Meadowscares crew, client education, and my tutelage come into play."

Mike warns, "Meadows can fail, and that's why adherence to site preparation, seed selection and seeding, and proper maintenance is crucial. If a meadow is not done well, it can become a weedy mess."

Roots and shoots

Both Mike and Matt appreciate their roots in chemical landscaping. With that background, they are fluent in traditional lawn care language and can teach clients new property care vocabulary and practices. With Meadowscares, the partners can guide clients to a new vision of landcare and beauty that celebrate nature's diversity and rhythms.

Despite our artificially created and maintained grassy borders, our properties intimately connect to and impact the larger natural world surrounding us. Meadows and eco-landscaping are the bridges back from traditional modes of property maintenance to wild beauty, biodiversity, and healthy ecosystems. •

For more information about the Meadowscares division of Matt's Landscaping, visit mattslandscapingct.com. For more information about Mike's Wholistic Landcare Consulting, visit michaelnadeau.org.



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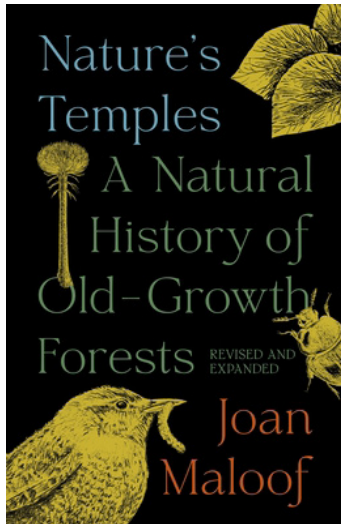
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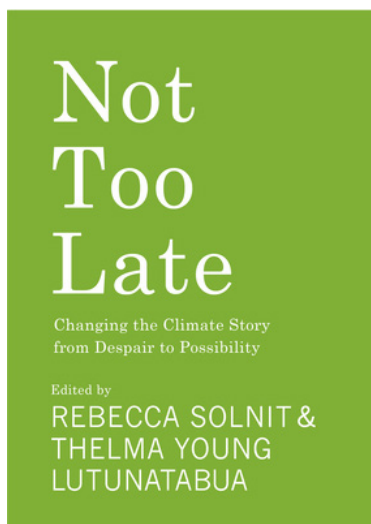
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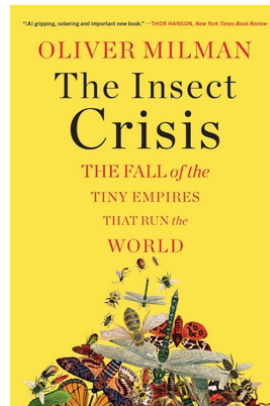
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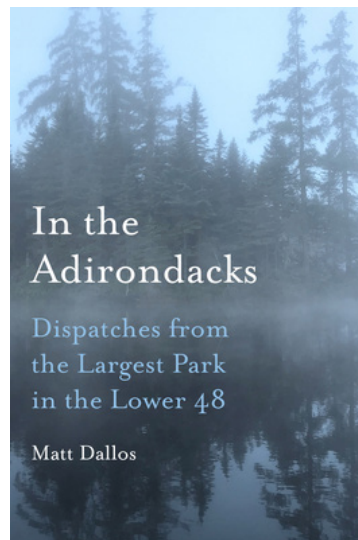
Not Too Late: Changing the Climate Story from Despair to Possibility by Rebecca Solnit

Not Too Late brings strong climate voices from around the world to address the political, scientific, social, and emotional dimensions of the most urgent issue human beings have ever faced. Accessible, encouraging, and engaging, it's an invitation to everyone to understand the issue more deeply, participate more boldly, and imagine the future more creatively.



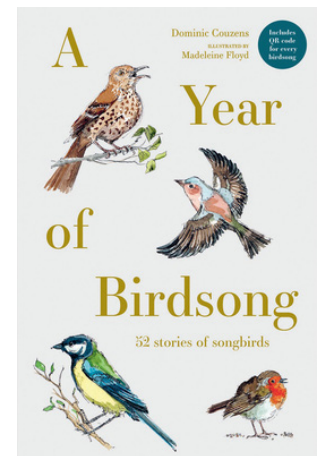
The Insect Crisis: The Fall of the Tiny Empires That Run the World by Oliver Milman

A devastating examination of how collapsing insect populations worldwide threaten everything from wild birds to the food on our plate. From ants scurrying under leaf litter to bees able to fly higher than Mount Kilimanjaro, insects are everywhere. Three out of every four of our planet's known animal species are insects.



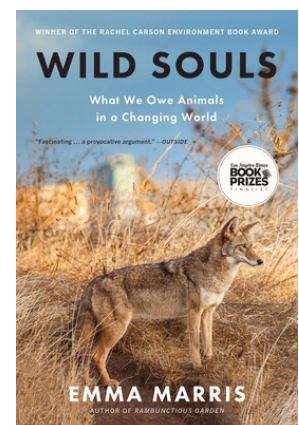
In the Adirondacks: Dispatches from the Largest Park in the Lower 48 by Matt Dallos

An immersive journey into the past, present, and future of a region many consider the Northeast's wilderness backyard. Out of all the rural areas of the United States, including those in the West, which are bigger and propped up by more pervasive myths about adventure and nation and wilderness and freedom, the Adirondacks has accumulated a well-known identity beyond its boundaries. Untouched and unspoiled, it is defined by what we haven't done to it.



A Year of Birdsong: 52 Stories of Songbirds
by Dominic Couzens

Fascinating stories about birdsong for every week of the year. Leading bird expert Dominic Couzens takes us on a journey around the world to enjoy an authentic year of birdsong, from the influence of the blackbird's song on classical music to the amazing imitations of the lyrebird. A myriad of topics are covered, including bird nature and behavior, literature inspired by birdsong, the musicality of the sounds, and what different songs communicate.



Wild Souls: What We Owe Animals in a Changing World by Emma Marris

From an acclaimed environmental writer, a groundbreaking and provocative new vision for our relationships with – and responsibilities toward – the planet's wild animals. Protecting wild animals and preserving the environment are two ideals so seemingly compatible as to be almost inseparable. But in fact, between animal welfare and conservation science, there exists a space of underexamined and unresolved tension: wilderness itself.

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Forests of the Northeast AND CLIMATE CHANGE

By Lorraine Alexander
info@mainstreetmag.com

For at least 15,000 years, we residents of planet Earth have been living in a relatively stable and warm world. Before that, five ice ages came and went. “Glaciologically speaking,” the BBC’s online Science page tells us, we are experiencing an “interglacial” age, defined as such because the Arctic, Antarctica, and Greenland still exist – more or less (actually just less), as time-release photography of the two polar caps is documenting.

We know that the ice caps are melting much faster than anticipated, that oceans are rising, and that corals (living creatures sensitive to the slightest change in deep-sea temperatures) are dying, their colorful branches turning a ghostly white from the Pacific to the Caribbean. But let’s move from the depths of our oceans to the heights of our forested expanses, specifically in the Northeast. Are they showing signs of disturbance related to climate change? They are, but it’s complicated.

From trees to lakes to acid rain

As the glaciers of the last current quarternary ice age were receding in what would become, 14,000 or so years later, New Hampshire, herbaceous pioneer plants – the first, hardy colonizers of the newly formed rocky tundra – took hold. During the ensuing millennia, spruce emerged and receded and the present-day White Mountains were covered in conifers, aspen, oak, and white pine, soon – in geological terms – to be followed by sugar maple, hemlock, and beech. We know this from studies of the pollen imbedded in the sediment of Mirror Lake, within New Hampshire’s Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest.

Founded in 1955 by the US Forest Service as a site for hydrology studies, Hubbard Brook landed squarely on the scientific map in 1963, when Gene Likens, fresh from Dartmouth,

and his team calculated acid levels were up to 100 times those expected in freshwater samples. Nine years of research later, they published their discovery of “acid rain,” confirming the link between the combustion of fossil fuels and the increased acidity of precipitation as an accelerator of environmental change. (For this work, Likens was awarded the 2001 National Medal of Science by President George W. Bush.)

The most heavily wooded

It is no accident that two preeminent forest study centers – the nearly 8,000-acre Hubbard Brook and Harvard Forest, the university’s 3,500-acre research site in central Massachusetts – are located in the Northeast. With 80% tree cover, this nine-state region is the most heavily wooded in the US. It wasn’t always so.

A paper by lead author Jonathan Thompson, a Harvard Forest ecologist and Smithsonian researcher in conservation biology, summarizes land-survey records over four centuries from Maine to Pennsylvania. Anything but dry reading, it’s a story that picks up after 10,000 years of settlement by native peoples, who burned relatively small forested areas to plant food, and extends through the Colonial era; from 1650 to 1850 logging and agricultural clearing removed more than half of the region’s forests. The enormous geo-database compiled for the study is a record of resilience – “The Northeast wants to be a forest,” says Thompson – as well as of significant change. Maples have exploded while oaks, beeches, and chestnuts have declined, depriving wildlife of the tree nuts they depend on in winter.

As the Erie Canal became a commercial gateway westward and large-scale farming moved to the open (easier to cultivate) plains, some northeastern woods bounced back. This rejuvenation was counterbalanced, however, in the mid-19th



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor
Alexander Fattal

century by tree removal to make way for the railroads and increased development. The Hudson River School of Painting, America’s first formal school of art, celebrated natural landscapes as divinely ordained. Decrying the denuding of nature in the service of industrial progress, these artists were early environmentalists. A local anecdote has it that President Theodore Roosevelt’s commitment to conservation was spurred when, returning to New York City from a visit to the Erie Canal, he passed through a devastation of logged trees.

There’s no new old growth

Though forests, however transformed by man and climate, can rebound, one category of forest by definition does not: old growth, which in the Northeast represents only one percent of standing trees. Chris Roddick, for many years chief arborist at the

Continued on next page ..



The Harvard Forest Fisher Museum's historical diorama of a typical New England landscape: 1700, pre-European settlement; 1740, wilderness cleared and domesticated; and 1830, the peak of deforestation for farming, fuel, and timber. Courtesy of the Harvard Forest Archive.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden, tells us, “In the old-growth forests, you had hemlocks that were six or seven feet in diameter and chestnut trees 200 feet tall.” Today very little east of the redwoods looks remotely like those ancient trees. But a recent discovery in the Catskill Mountains has made old growth seem new.

In 1870, pieces of petrified wood and fossilized tree stumps were unearthed in a stone quarry near Gilboa, NY, west of Albany. Nothing much happened of any note until, in the 1920s, the quarry was excavated for the construction of Gilboa Dam, after which the quarry was backfilled. At that critical moment, pioneering paleontologist Winifred Goldring (1888-1971) identified fossilized seed ferns, which led to her creation, for the New York State Museum in Albany, of the first diorama of ancient plant life.

More time passed. During a dam-maintenance project in May 2010 that quarry was partially emptied and researchers monitoring the project along with New York City’s Department of Environmental Protection found preserved remains of tree roots and trunk bases that were identified as going back 386 million years, when this part of the Hudson Highlands was where Morocco is today. (Don’t ask.)

Gilboa’s petrified forest is now considered the oldest on the planet. One of the reporting authors of *Nature’s* March 1, 2012, cover story, William Stein*, a professor of biological sciences at the State University of New York’s Binghamton campus, has described the impact as “like discovering

the botanical equivalent of dinosaur footprints.” (Note for nitpickers: this forest preceded the dinosaurs by 150 million years.)

And – now?

And what of the present? Growing seasons for canopy trees – trees tall enough that their crowns cast sufficient shade to cool local environments – are lengthening, which should increase plant productivity and nutrient cycles. However, warming has already begun to affect the geographic distribution of certain conifers, like red and white spruce, and sugar maples, whose ranges are predicted to shift farther north while southern species of oak and pine do the same. Such shifts in forest composition, noted the late Gary Lovett, a fervent champion of trees who worked with Millbrook’s Cary Institute and the Hubbard Brook forest, will affect food webs, which in turn will disrupt wildlife as well as alter forests’ ability to buffer air pollution and store carbon.

The idea of shifts is a scientifically potent one. The greatest, most consequential forest of all, the boreal forest, circles the globe just under the Arctic, and its concentration of trees is our world’s prime carbon sponge, nature’s key defense against climate change. It was once thought that, with warming, the boreal forest would just expand northward, but new “Earth system models” from the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab predict shifts instead, much like those in our hardwood forests. The result: carbon absorption from the atmosphere will be reduced as the boreal forest itself is reduced, with grasslands taking over the abandoned southern range; and, while grasslands do store carbon in their soils, they cannot compensate for the amount of carbon that fails to

be sequestered when trees are fewer.

According to forest ecologist Charles Canham, the most vulnerable trees in the Northeast will be the balsam fir, white spruce, and northern white cedar, whose mortality rates rise with temperature. But for the time being 60% of adult trees in the eastern US die from being cut down. “I am less hopeful than some people are about our ability to mitigate climate change, due to its irrefutable impact in the Arctic,” says Canham, “but the temperate forests of North America are likely to be the most resilient of any biome on the planet.”

Habitat fragmentation

More immediately destructive to our great Northeastern forests are habitat fragmentation and loss due to pests. While forest-management experts work to prevent long-term ecosystem collapse – in human terms a generation is 25 years; in tree terms it’s a century – the clearest and most present danger to trees is imported disease. Naturalist David Burg, founder of NYC Audubon, ranked the proliferation of non-native pathogens as third – after encroaching development and environmental toxins – among the biggest threats to our forests.

Although today’s pathogens enter our ecosystems via a relatively new vehicle – the container ships of global trade – there’s nothing new about the scourge of invasion.

In the early 20th century, chestnut blight, a fungus transmitted via wind-borne spores, entered North America on Japanese nursery stock and by 1940 had obliterated the American chestnut from its eastern range. The gypsy moth was deliberately imported in 1868 to create a hybrid silk-spinning caterpillar that would be more resistant to disease than native silk

worms are. Twenty years later the first outbreak occurred, and a hundred years later nearly 13 million acres of forest (primarily oak but other hardwoods too) had been defoliated.

Dutch elm disease was introduced by an Ohio furniture-maker in the 1930s, and beech bark disease, which entered Maine in 1929, has migrated to North Carolina and Tennessee. Recent infestations – of the emerald ash borer, the hemlock woolly adelgid, and the Asian longhorn beetle – have continued the rampage.

As trees are increasingly stressed by both pests and warming – and less snow insulating their root systems – some tree species may be either greatly reduced or eliminated. And with those disturbances others will follow, as birds and hibernating animals seek, quite literally, higher ground. The beauty and dynamism of our northern forests are intimately connected to their complexity, and protecting that biodiversity is not only the work of forestry schools, labs, and ecologists but of us all. ●

This article was adapted from the author’s original, first published in The Bulletin, the Garden Club of America’s national quarterly, in spring 2017.

**Now Professor Emeritus, Stein has co-authored a book, The Catskill Fossil Forest, based on recent discoveries about what has become the expanded forest and new definition of “world’s oldest.” See binghamton.edu/news/story/3780/the-first-trees-preserving-the-worlds-oldest-forest-in-upstate-new-york for more details.*

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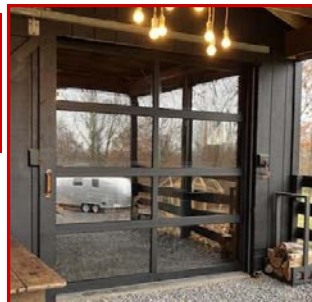
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Narcissus, daffodil, or jonquil?



By Pom Shillingford
info@mainstreetmag.com

Some might argue that the sight of the shouty, look-at-me forsythia is the harbinger of spring. For me though, it is the arrival of the first nodding heads of daffodils that fills my heart with joy, announcing that the new garden season is here – and bringing a wave of relief that we made it through the winter. All it takes is one brave little bloom, bobbing against a probably still sharp wind, and I feel the weight of winter drop from my shoulders.

So, forgive me if I am biased in loving these heavenly-scented beauties and wanting to celebrate them. However, you do not have to be a winter Grinch to welcome daffodils into your garden. They are brilliant flowers to grow for many reasons.

To be clear...

Before we get into that, let's clear up any confusion about their name(s). Daffodil is the common English name for these flowers. *Narcissi* is their collective botanical Latin name. According to the Greek myth, the name

comes from Narcissus, the handsome youth who blew his chances of immortality by falling in love with his own reflection and where, at the site of his demise, the first *narcissi* are said to have sprung up. Jonquil, as they are often known in the south, refers to the multi-headed varieties of daffodils.

The least fussy of flowers

But why grow daffodils, aside from their obvious timely beauty? For a start, even as the first flowers on the spring block, daffodils are left alone by all but the hungriest deer, rabbits, and other annoying critters. If there is anything else to munch on, daffodils will never be anyone's first choice to eat. Even better, daffodil bulbs will multiply on their own and naturalize areas around where they are first planted. Over time, without our help, Mother Nature helps them form beautiful drifts. It's not often I can say this about a flower, but with daffodils, just sit back and enjoy.

Here in our horticultural corner of the world, daffodils can give a good long dose of floral color, starting to flower in early April. Depending on

the mix of varieties planted, early, mid or late, these can go on blooming well into May. They are also one of the least fussy flowers you can grow.

This is non-negotiable

Daffodils will happily flourish just about anywhere: in sun, part-shade, in woods, in grass, in flower beds. Just don't plant them anywhere too wet. The only other major requirement they have is that after they have bloomed, you should let the foliage die back naturally. This is how the bulb gathers its energy for next year's flowers so it's non-negotiable. Therefore, before you plant, it's a factor to take into consideration.

In a flower bed, you may want to plant them farther to the back so later blooming perennials can screen the yellowing foliage as it dies. In grass, you won't be able to mow them back until at least July. We have planted hundreds of daffodils around our orchard trees, and we leave the grass

Continued on next page ...



to grow meadow-like for months. It's far more beautiful and easier than having just more mown grass and far, far better for encouraging insects and bird life in the garden.

So, brilliant bang for your buck, self-sufficient with no requirement for helicopter gardening, and good for the environment AND saving our sanity from winter's grip. Win, win, win!

Run the color spectrum

Now we get onto the exciting bit if you are a cut-flower fan. Long gone are the days when the daffodils we could source were just school-bus yellow variety. Nowadays, it is possible to run the spectrum of colors from the purest white through clotted cream, buttermilk, egg-yolk yellow, peach, melon, apricot, and all the way to salmon pink. The flower head of a daffodil is made up of a trumpet (or cup) and its petals. These each come in toning or contrasting colors, shades, and shapes. There are literally hundreds of varieties. So don't write them off just because you say you don't like bright yellow. There is a daffodil out there for everyone.

Cut and color

When it comes to cutting and arranging daffodils, it is important to know that their sap can be an irritant to human skin and downright deadly to

other flowers. If you are susceptible to irritation, wear gloves and be sure to wash your hands immediately after handling.

The trick to mixing with other flowers is to cut them to the height you want and place them on their own in a bucket of cold water for six to eight hours. This allows the stem ends to callus over, leaving them non-toxic to future vase-mates.

The best time to cut your daffodils for the longest vase life is when they are in what is known as the gooseneck stage, just before they open. This way they will last up to a week in the vase.

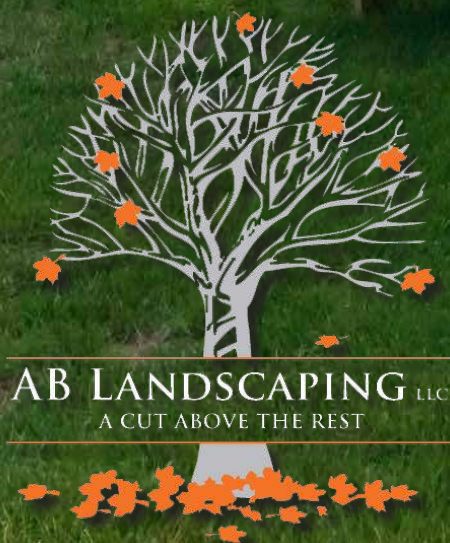
Plan now. Plant later.

Daffodil bulbs need to be planted in the fall once the ground temperatures have dropped below 55 degrees – usually after two weeks of sweater weather or a hard frost. But don't slack off until then. Now is exactly the time to plan which varieties you would like to grow and where you will plant them when the time comes. Bulb suppliers will be sending out their fall catalogues in May, so make your list now and "Add to Cart" early to avoid disappointment. •

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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Nuclear energy and grid security

By Jesse DeGroodt
info@mainstreetmag.com

We're all aware by now of the old saw that states that if something seems too good to be true, it quite likely is. As much of the intuitive portion of my being screams out that turning to all-electricity all the time sure sounds like a brilliant solution to scrubbing the planet of fossil fuel use and thereby — presumably — slowing the nasty effects of climate change, this panacea approach won't cease nagging at me in ways I'm not particularly fond of being nagged about. Rushing headlong into pretty much anything, except maybe a DQ Blizzard, has never been the best approach. But let's assume in this case that going all-electric is the magic potion. For purposes of this confabulation, two critical issues stick out: 1) sourcing all this newly required juice, and 2) grid security.

Going nuclear?

Experts seem to agree that much of the energy of the future will be generated by a patchwork of renewable sources that include wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, and nuclear power. I'll take a leap here and surmise that, for the most part, the first four on that list generate yawns, while the fifth has a tendency to cause an immediate spike in blood pressure. We know why. But why?

This one may be simple. Let's start with such instantly recognizable names as Chernobyl, Fukushima, and Three Mile Island, the latter coming but a scant 12 days after the debut of the movie, *China Syndrome*, the worst possible confluence of cinema and reality for an industry I can think of that instantly drove public sentiment against nuclear power lower than a snake's belly. However, as world-nuclear.org noted in 2022, "these are the only major accidents to have occurred in over 18,500 cumulative reactor-years of commercial nuclear power operation in 36 countries."

Personally, I'm thinking there's a better chance to find one's self in an airplane crash than there is to suffer

the effects of a nuclear reactor incident. What gives nukes such appeal is the ability to function apart from fossil fuels, while spewing less radioactivity than coal-fired plants and absent the vagaries of oil prices. Further, according to PBS Frontline, no one has ever died from radiation exposure because of a commercial nuclear reactor incident, aside from the 1986 Chernobyl catastrophe caused by the dictionary definition of human error.

Closer to home, is it only me that's been troubled by the thought that the 2021 closing of the remaining two reactors at Indian Point resulted in an increased use in natural gas power plants, which *The New York Times* pointed out "emit pollution that contribute to climate change" as renewable sources race to catch up? I'd be willing to wager that the closing of Indian Point has, at least in the short term, had more than a little to do with the sharp rise in our monthly electric bills.

Grid security

What troubles me far more at the end of the day than forking out more hard-earned cash to keep the lights on is the question of electric grid security. What brought this into sharp relief, after years of wondering which nation-state wishing us ill would tamper with our energy supply via malicious cyber activity, was the late-2022 episode in which targeted gunfire shut down two substations that supplied power to nearly 50,000 North Carolinians. That was easy, as they say in the commercial.

In a remarkably shameless case of mastering the obvious, around 99.9% of the country raised their hands when polled on whether grid security needed to be revisited. Well, in the case of shooting substations, there's simply no way to protect every single one of them 24/7/365. Not sure there's a viable answer here.

Is there any way to stop a foreign power or a terrorist action from



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor vencavolrab

compromising the grid to one degree or another? If you ask the US Government Accountability Office, an October 2022 report offers up such eye-openers as "the federal government does not have a good understanding of the scale of the potential impacts from attacks," and "the lead federal agency for the energy sector, the Department of Energy, has developed plans to implement a national cybersecurity strategy for protecting the grid. However, we found that DOE's plans do not fully incorporate the key characteristics of an effective national strategy."

I'm fully cognizant that we're barely skimming the surface here. This is one of those stories that could occupy every single page of this *Main Street Magazine* and the ensuing seven issues. As Michael Douglas speechifies in *The American President*, "We have serious problems to solve, and we need serious people to solve them." Any time now would be good. •

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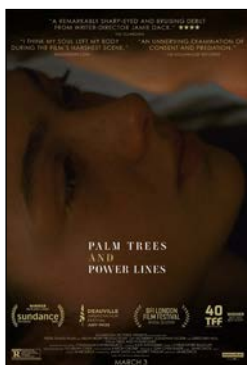


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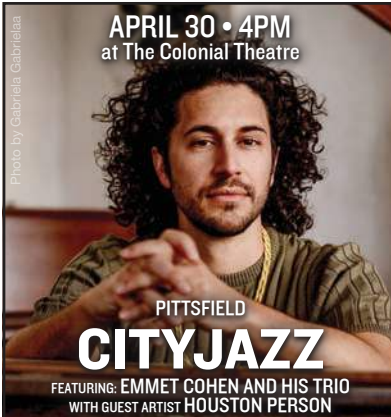
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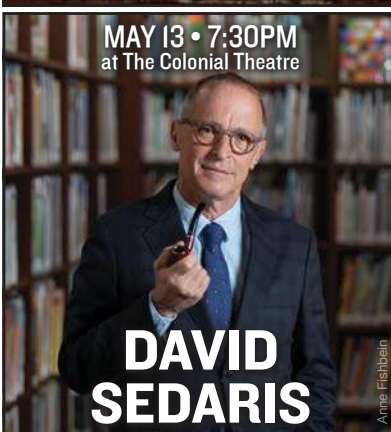
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Balance needed AS DEVELOPMENT ENCROACHES ON THE ENVIRONMENT

By Whitney Joseph
info@mainstreetmag.com

There's a truism in life: Once a piece of land is developed, built upon, altered, exploited – feel free to insert whatever verb you think describes the scenario best – it's gone forever. It can never be reclaimed, returned to the wild. No matter how a person feels about change and its inevitability in the modern world, there is no arguing the above fact.

Which compels us here at *Main Street Magazine* to look at the certainty of progress and the consequences of such advancement on our planet. Progress comes at a cost. How can it not? After all, to build something new, something old must be destroyed ... Usually.

Out with the old to make room for the new?

When something is intentionally destroyed, it's typically to make an improvement. A battered old barn might be razed to make way for a brand new state-of-the-art barn, which could then house and feed dozens if not hundreds of dairy cows or other livestock. An old, defunct railroad bed could be ripped up to pave the way for an expansive new rail trail that could attract thousands of tourists and locals annually. A squalid, condemned building – a local eyesore – might be demolished to make room for an eye-catching, up-to-code commercial establishment that could draw shoppers, diners, and residents



from around the region – all with plenty of cash to inject into the local economy. Perhaps, an overgrown field of grass and weeds could be mowed to erect a shopping plaza or a fancy city park.

Checks and balances

As much as the above actions may have a positive impact on their communities, whether in terms of economic development or simply by broadening their appeal, they could also potentially have negative repercussions – oftentimes environmental. That's why certain projects in New York State require applicants go before local planning boards and through the State Environmental Quality Review Act process.

SEQRA mandates agencies in New York balance environmental impacts with social and economic factors when deciding to grant approval or undertake any action. The environmental review is a safeguard to ensure applicants with projects both big and small don't cause unnecessary damage to local lands, waterways, habitats, flora, fauna or wildlife. It offers extensive guidelines and checklists to guarantee a given project is done properly before earning final approval.

If any red flags appear, say a bog turtle habitat is discovered in or bordering a project site, that could ultimately put an end to a proposal. However, if a review is given the green light, it may get approved and move through the engineering and construction phases to completion with relatively few roadblocks.

Change, aka progress, will come; it's a fact of life, it's unavoidable. It's knocking – make that pounding – at your front door, regardless of where you live. Whether that's for better or worse is not a question to be decided here and now. In the interim, God's green earth – the



beautiful natural world that surrounds us – will continue to evolve.

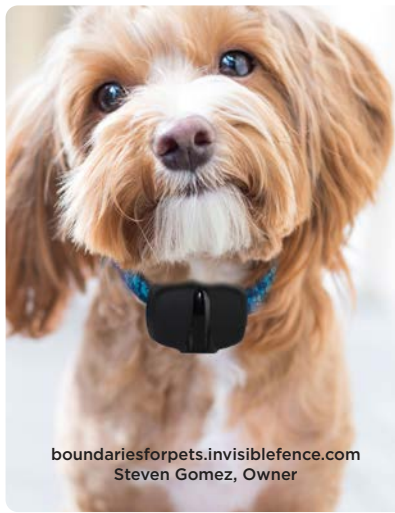
The woes

Like many who are fortunate enough to live in the still-rural Hudson Valley (as I once did), those who reside in South Florida (as I do now) understand what a state with development woes looks like. Florida has been dealing with such issues for more than 50 years.

According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Sunshine State was granted 500,000 acres in 1841 along with every other state in the Union by the US government. Combined with land Florida acquired through the Swamps and Overflowed Lands Act of 1850, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund – an agency the state government created in 1855 – had more than 21 million acres under its control.

Above: The Sawgrass Trailhead of Atlantic Boulevard is a popular attraction in South Florida, as it allows for a great vantage from which to watch the sunset. Located in Coral Springs, it allows onlookers to walk along the Everglades. One of the risks, of course, is that oftentimes rain showers accompany hot summer afternoons in the Sunshine State. A creative couple used their beach chairs for cover from the brief storm while waiting for the sun to set. Left: Mangled roots can ensnarl hikers and enchant poets and artists alike at Tree Tops Park in Davie, FL, located in the increasingly popular Broward County. The lush parkland includes a 23-mile boardwalk through a restored freshwater marsh that boasts an equestrian center, fishing, nature trails and an observation tower.

Continued on page 49 ...



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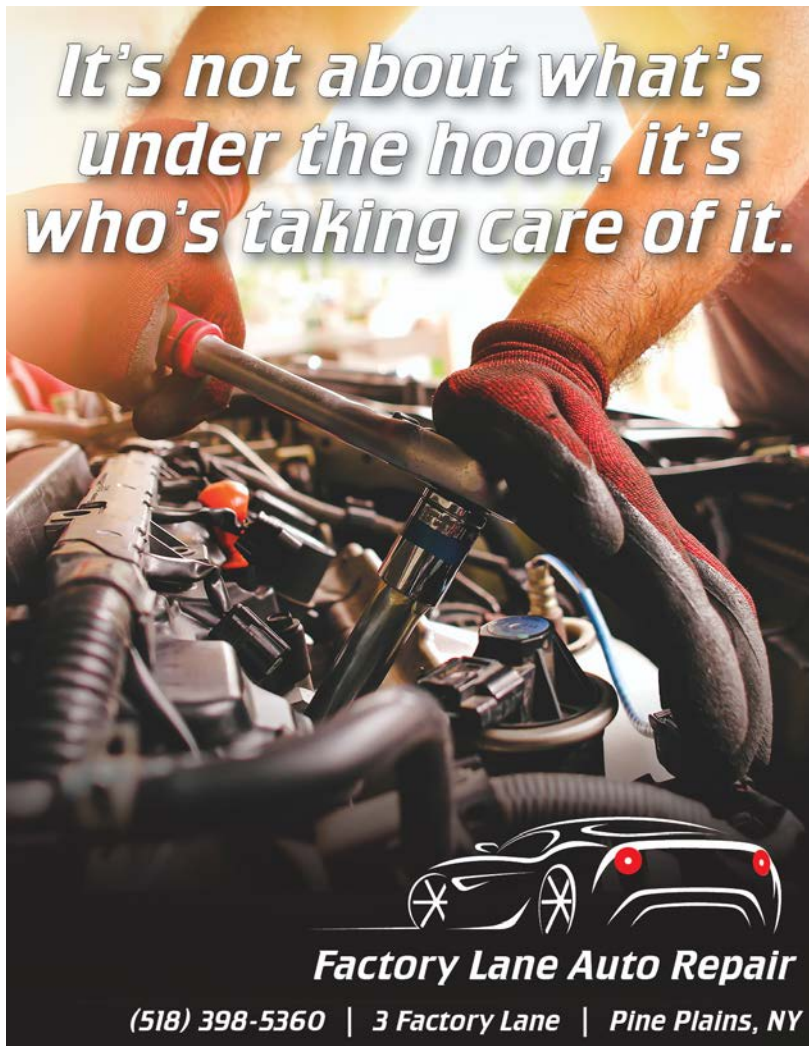
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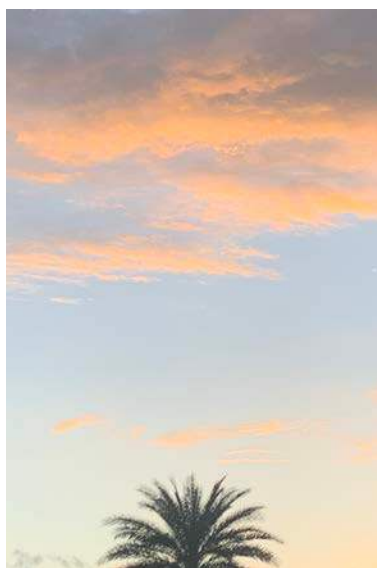
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Above, top to bottom: The sunsets at the Sawgrass Trailhead of Atlantic Boulevard do not disappoint. Here, both the setting sun and the rising moon were captured at the railhead along the Everglades, which is located right off of the Sawgrass Expressway (State Road 869) and Atlantic Boulevard in Coral Springs. Royal palm trees are a common sight in South Florida, lining many streets — both commercial and residential. Many of the trees have been replanted over the years, as a number of native palms had been uprooted and removed to make way for new development. This royal palm seems to be reaching upward toward the pillowy clouds above, kissed by golden light.

As the 22nd largest state in the US, Florida is the third most populous state — with more than 21 million residents. Many are snowbirds from New York (including this writer's parents). It's one of the few states in the eastern US that still has much of its natural landscape intact.

The problem in the Everglades

As encouraging as that statistic sounds, many of Florida's native lands have been swallowed up by developers. Take the Everglades as an example. The famous swamp covers 4,300 square miles statewide, which equates to roughly 1.5 million acres. It is actually the "largest subtropical wetland ecosystem in North America," according to evergladesholidaypark.com. In fact, the website notes it's the third largest national park after Yellowstone and Death Valley.

However, the Everglades have been drained for decades by builders, to be filled and then built into new developments. Some of those developments have grown so large they've actually become their own incorporated cities, like Weston, west of Fort Lauderdale.

Another example is the town of Davie, just minutes from upscale Weston. It was also built on what was once Everglades swampland — home to the American alligator and the American crocodile (the only place in the world where the two species co-exist) and the Florida panther (one of the world's most endangered species with fewer than 100 remaining). The Everglades

provides habitats for countless snake, bird, and fish species; it's the breeding grounds to myriad birds and other tropical animals; it's host to at least nine ecosystems; and it provides daily water to nearly eight million Floridians.

Everglades National Park was established in 1947 to preserve South Florida's biologically diverse wetlands and other natural resources. Yet large portions of the environmentally sensitive Everglades are now gone. In fact, 50% of the wetlands have disappeared thanks to development, with only half remaining today.

Eager builders began draining the Everglades as far back as the 1930s, and the deluge of development has only gained traction in the 90 years since. It's no wonder, as the DEP says the state's population has grown by about 4% annually since 1950.

The DEP also notes that in the last 50 years, more than eight million acres of forest and wetland habitats in Florida — roughly 24% of the state — have been developed. If development continues at this rate, it won't be sustainable; Florida could run out of physical space to house all of its residents.

Davie, meanwhile, has a population of nearly 107,000 and is roughly 35,000 square miles; it's located in central Broward County, adjacent to Miami-Dade County. Davie was named after developer Robert Parsell Davie in 1916, according to the *Sun Sentinel*; he had helped drain the Everglades to build a local school. Residents voted nine years later to incorporate the town, but after the taxes were levied, they petitioned to have the government retract its status. It was formally incorporated again in 1963.

During a recent drive through Davie, I caught sight of a vacant lot primed for construction. The sign boasted information about The Oaks of Davie luxury housing development, with homes starting at \$1,049,000. The Rhino Homes ("a group of professionals with over 30 years of experience in the construction business in Latin America and the US") website states the houses

sell for up to \$1.4 million, for a home with five bedroom and five bathrooms. They look lovely, but they don't come cheap.

It should be noted that it's not only the more recent, trendier parts of South Florida where communities like Weston and Davie have cropped up after sensitive environmental areas like the Everglades were dredged and filled to create desirable areas and build anew. It's actually been a trend since Florida was first pegged as a destination decades ago.

In fact, Miami Beach itself is the result of such actions. Marine engineer John H. Levi worked with millionaire businessman Carl Fisher to develop a number of man-made islands, including Star, Palm, and Hibiscus Islands, as well as Sunset Islands, parts of Normandy Isle, and all of the Venetian Islands (minus Belle Isle), which were created in the 1920s when Biscayne Bay was dredged at their command; of course, there's also the coveted Fisher Island (named after Fisher).

We're at maximum capacity

A recent informal survey among Florida natives, transplants, and visitors came to a consensus: South Florida is at maximum occupancy.

Drive down the street of any random town or walk through any given neighborhood and it's fairly apparent that much of South Florida's natural domain has been replaced by multimillion dollar condominiums, apartment buildings, housing developments, and every possible plaza, shopping center, professional building, high rise, or other commercial enterprise imaginable.

Take the town of North Miami Beach, just a hop, skip and a jump from Collins Avenue, the iconic ocean-front roadway dotted with once-famous beach motels and tiki bars that back up to the sandy strip. Twenty years ago, one could drive down Collins, gulp in the

Continued on next page ...

salty ocean air, and catch sight of the waves crashing along the shore. Today, you can't even get a glimpse of the azure blue ocean from the road, no less inhale anything other than toxic fumes from the heavy traffic that clogs Collins for hours. It causes anxiety and frustration instead of creating the peace and freedom once felt while driving along the beautiful beach boulevard.

The Planning Boards and Building Departments reversed zoning laws in the late '80s and early '90s, allowing high rises along the beach. That gave developers the leeway to squeeze extremely tall and very expensive buildings onto every possible square inch of open space, allowing towering oceanfront properties where charming two or three-story hotels and apartment buildings once stood. Now, roughly 30 years later, we're reaping the rewards... or is it the penalties?

Bringing it back home

Which circles us back to the Hudson Valley. Until last year, this lovely part of New York had been my home. It is inarguably one of the most picturesque parts of the US, likely why an entire style of painting – and an American art culture – was named after it: The Hudson River School (heavily influenced by Romanticism and founded in the 1850s by Thomas Cole and other landscape painters from New York City).

Those artists valued the Valley's scenic beauty and its natural resources. That beauty is still valued, as seen by the number of developers knocking on the doors of those who live in the region with property that whets buyers' appetites. Many in the area who have observed the rapid rate of development in places like South Florida have expressed some concerns about guarding local resources. Understandably, they want to protect the pristine nature of the Valley before it's too late.

Hence the benefit of laws like SEQRA and other local resources created to make sure man's influence does no harm. Of course, there's no way to guarantee that, but knowledge brings power, as does foresight. That's why a glance southward might be wise for those lucky enough to live in regions that have remained relatively rural or partially undeveloped. Certainly, there are still such pockets in Dutchess and Columbia Counties and its environs.

So, while Florida may seem a world away from the Hudson Valley – especially as northerners remain at risk of grappling with snow shovels and roof rakes while southerners are dealing with sunscreen and bug spray – the fact is once the welcome gates open to developers and their dollars, there's always the potential for irreparable harm.

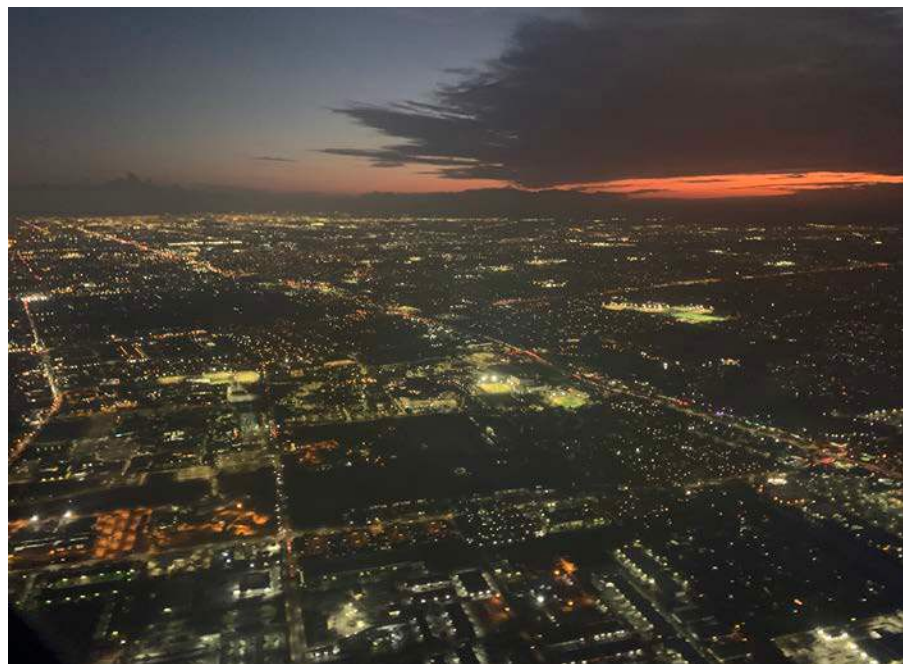
You can never go back

Case in point? Damage has been done to the Everglades as a result of the massive amount of development in South Florida. Once done, it's often difficult to undo such damage, although these days steps are typically taken to try to mitigate environmental harm.

Environmentalists did not have any luck with this in the Everglades, where high levels of phosphorus have been recorded. The nonmetallic chemical element belonging to the nitrogen family seeped into parts of the subtropical wetlands' ground and water causing agricultural and stormwater runoff and degrading water quality as far back as the 60s.

Because native species and flora and fauna in the Everglades developed under low-phosphorus conditions, dangerously high levels of phosphorus caused loss of algae; loss of oxygen vital for fish populations; and changed native plant communities, affecting feeding areas for wading birds.

As a result, it's believed that more than 40,000 acres of the public Everglades parkland were negatively affected by 1990. The Environmental Protection Agency



has noted the loss of such vital wetlands, motivating the state to take steps to protect the Everglades from further phosphorus degradation.

"Better water quality will support tourism, recreation and wildlife, and protect the Everglades for future generations," posted epa.gov.

My translation of the EPA's statement above: When the world around us is healthier, more robust and more beautiful, everyone benefits. Sadly, it's also a statement on the reality that we often wait until something goes awry until we fix it.

Let's just hope that most builders and developers concur that our native habitats are worth protecting, because most of us would probably all concur that the world in its natural state is amazing, and few would want to see it destroyed. Yet we can all also likely accept that we need places to live, to work, to shop, and to play – and without developers and builders helping us progress, such places will cease being created.

The takeaway here is that the natural environment and the man-made environment must coexist; the key is that they do so harmoniously. •



Above, top to bottom: A view of Fort Lauderdale, FL, from many miles above just moments before landing at the airport shows the vast the development in South Florida, as much of the coastal community was aglow with the hustle and bustle of activity — despite it being nearly midnight. Residents from around the region regularly visit the Sawgrass Trailhead of Atlantic Boulevard in Coral Springs, FL with or without their pets, to walk the trails during sunset to get some exercise while enjoying the gorgeous views of the Everglades.

All photos from this article by Whitney Joseph.



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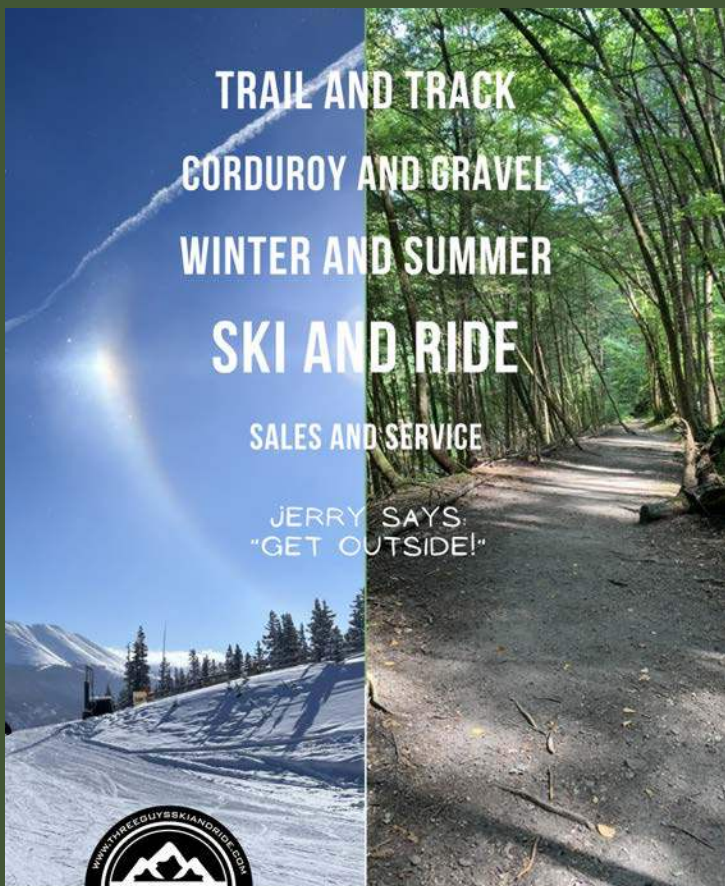
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GOING ORGANIC



By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

Organic practices are better for us, and they're also a safer alternative for the environment. Here's some information for a crash course on the organic industry.

Within the last few decades, we have been hearing more and more about organic farming. Compared with conventional agriculture, organic farming uses fewer pesticides, reduces soil erosion, decreases nitrate leaching into groundwater and surface water, and recycles animal waste back into the farm.

Mounting evidence shows that food grown organically is rich in nutrients, such as vitamin C, iron, magnesium, and phosphorus, and lower in nitrates and pesticide residues.

Defining organic

The Environmental Protection Agency defines "organically grown" as food that is grown and processed without the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. It's important to note that pesticides that are derived from natural sources such as biological pesticides may be used in producing organically grown food.

According to the EPA, organic production has been practiced in the US since the late 1940s. Since that time, the industry has grown from experimental garden plots to large farms with surplus products, which are sold under a special organic label.

Food manufacturers have developed organic processed products, and many retail marketing chains specialize in the sale of organic products. This growth stimulated a need for verification that products are, indeed, produced according to certain standards. That explains the origins of the organic certification industry.

More than 40 private organizations and state agencies, certify organic food, but their standards for growing and labeling organic food may differ from one to the next. There may be differences in permitting or prohibiting different pesticides or fertilizers in growing organic food as well as differences in the language contained in approved seals, labels, and logos.

By the late 1980s, in an effort to standardize production and certification, the organic industry petitioned Congress to draft the Organic Foods Production Act defining what organic is.

The National Organic Program

The National Organic Program is a Department of Agriculture marketing

program within the Agricultural Marketing Service. The NOP's mission is to develop and implement national standards that govern the marketing of agricultural products as organically produced; facilitate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced; and assure consumers that such products meet consistent standards.

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 requires the secretary of agriculture to establish a national list of allowed and prohibited substances. This list identifies synthetic substances that may be used and non-synthetic substances that cannot be used, in organic production and handling operations.

Benefits

According to the Mayo Clinic, a nonprofit academic medical center focused on integrated health care, education, and research, potential benefits of organic food include:

- **Nutrients.** Studies have shown small to moderate increases in some nutrients in organic produce. Organic produce may have more of certain antioxidants and types of flavonoids, which have antioxidant properties.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids.** The feeding requirements for organic farm animals (livestock) usually cause higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids. This diet in-

cludes feeding cattle grass and alfalfa. Omega-3 fatty acids are more heart healthy than other fats. These higher omega-3 fatty acids are found in organic meat, dairy, and eggs.

• **Toxic metal.** Cadmium is a toxic chemical naturally found in soil and absorbed by plants. Studies have shown much lower cadmium levels in organic grain, but not in fruit and vegetables, when compared with crops grown using usual (conventional) methods. The lower cadmium level in organic grain may be related to the ban on synthetic fertilizers in organic farming.

• **Pesticide residue.** Compared with produce grown using conventional methods, organically grown produce has lower levels of pesticide residue. The safety rules for the highest levels of residue allowed on conventional produce have changed. In many cases, the levels have been lowered. Organic produce may have residue because of pesticides approved for organic farming or because of airborne pesticides from conventional farms.

• **Bacteria.** The overall risk of bacterial contamination of organic food is the same as in conventional food, but meat produced using conventional

Continued on next page ...

methods may have higher amounts of dangerous bacteria that may not be treatable with antibiotics.

A local organic farm

There are many organic farms and wineries in the Hudson Valley region. One of them is Fruitful Harvest Farm, which is based in Kingston, NY. It traces its roots back to 1995.

Headed up by Denise Paschall, Fruitful Harvest Farm specializes in the growth of heirloom vegetables, herbs, and flowers. In 2000, the farm became NY State Organic Farm Certified. In 2002, Fruitful Harvest became certified by Ron Khosla, founder of the Certified Naturally Grown program.

This US-based farm assurance program certifies produce, livestock, and apiaries for organic producers who sell locally and directly to their customers. Founded in 2002 by Ron and Kate Khosla, these organic farmers yearned to provide a simpler and less expensive alternative to the USDA's national organic program certification.

In 2002, Fruitful Harvest Farm began operating as a CSA farm, which meant that it is "Community Supported Agriculture." USDA defines a CSA as a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation, so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing food production. Since becoming a CSA, Fruitful Harvest has gone through several iterations, always organic.

Growing up

"I've always grown organically. Farming just felt right to me," said Denise Paschall, owner, Fruitful Harvest Farm. Her interest in farming extends back to her youth and city upbringing — an likely starting point for a farming career.

When Paschall was a young girl, she lived in Brooklyn with her grandmother. Together, they enjoyed tending to, and eating from, the bounty grown in their spacious backyard garden. This special plot of land produced lots of colorful, gorgeous flowers and delicious vegetables that were used to make family meals. Paschall says she always enjoyed spending time outdoors in the summer air with her grandmother. Immersed in nature, she indulged in the sweet scent of the flowers and the aroma of freshly picked vegetables.

Of course, being in that garden was a sharp contrast to the lifestyle experienced by most Brooklyn residents. "I felt peace, joy, and very much at home in this garden, and I fell in love with the feeling and lifestyle," added Paschall.

Moving up

Many miles from Brooklyn, Paschall now uses that city garden inspiration and her skills for the farm market she helms at Fruitful Harvest Farm.

She currently runs a small quarter-of-an-acre farm. In addition to giving seasonal help, Paschall's son helps his mom with farm duties. "It's no till permaculture and produces an enormous amount of food on a small footprint. That way, is easier for me to manage and enjoy," she added.

Fruitful Harvest's current business model involves selling specialized produce via online sales. "It's not a CSA, but rather a bi-weekly online order format where folks can order what they want and really be more involved in what they purchase and how to enjoy it without a lot of food waste," said Paschall.

Her current focus and vision was to combine all of these "wonderful God-given gifts," as a holistic health advocate, professional chef, and organic farmer to help empower folks to take authority over their health, both spiritually and physically.

This creative businesswoman certainly has loads of talent and entrepreneurial spirit. Thanks to those skills, Paschall has enjoyed a variety of creative stints. Beyond managing



her own home decor business, she was a landscaper, professional chef and caterer, and contractor. Regardless of which hat she wears, Paschall always had a garden or farm in the works.

"Farming is a challenge. There are so many variables that change day to day, but it keeps me learning and always growing," she added.

Paschall believes that toiling the land, tending to flowers, and caring for the earth and animals is an incredible gift and blessing. "Everything we need to farm in the most healthful (organic) way was given by God. We have herbs, which have incredible health-sustaining properties, flowers for pollination, and grains and seeds for healthy soil," concluded Paschall. When it comes to nourishing ourselves, what more can we ask for?

Fruitful Harvest Farm will open its market on June 7. It will run through November 1. Look for updated information via the farm's new website, fruitfulharvestfarm.com.

Drinking it in

There are plenty of other organic farms in the region. In Hudson, there's the Farm at Miller's Crossing and Ironwood Farm. Stop in to any of the region's organic farms or visit one of the area's many organic wineries.

Organic wine is made from grapes grown in accordance with the

principles of organic farming, which exclude the use of artificial chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides.

According to Grand View Research, the global organic wine market was estimated at \$8.9 billion in 2021 and is anticipated to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 10.2% from 2022 to 2030. Grand View Research is a market research and consulting company headquartered in San Francisco.

When purchasing organic, you'll enjoy great taste and the many benefits of organically grown, but you'll also be making strides to create a healthier environment that will be here for future generations to enjoy. •

To learn more about Fruitful Harvest Farm, you can call them at (845) 334-0380 or visit them online at fruitfulharvestfarm.com.

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Kari Lorinson shares, “KHEM Studios originated from our desire to find refined sophisticated contemporary designs made with solid hardwoods and built to last a lifetime. We started in 2016 by translating that vision into a line of homewares and furniture collections designed and made in our studio with regionally sourced materials.” She explains, “We use only the highest-quality woods and processes to bring our clients long-lasting builds that reflect natural materials, clean lines, and refined silhouettes. For us, the most rewarding part of the business is that we push ourselves to be dedicated to performing at our best and building a legacy for our family. We cannot always control everything happening around us, but we have the skills to pivot and understand scalability. Being in business means knowing your mission.” Looking ahead, Kari affirms, “We love working with our retailers, doing markets and shows. Our collection from furniture to homewares keeps getting more refined each year and seeing that evolve and finding meaningful partnerships is core to how we want to build our brand.”



Harvey Mountain Alchemy

Crystal candles with strong intentions. harveymountainalchemy@gmail.com. harveymountainalchemy.com

Harvey Mountain Alchemy was officially born amid the 2020 chaos. Having always been interested in scents, magic, and deep healing, Mimi Folco combined these things by creating crystal candles with strong intentions. Each product is strongly infused with love, reiki, and healing energy. Mimi Folco explains, “I offer astrology readings including an assessment of your natal chart, a look at the year ahead, and many other techniques. I also create custom candles as needed for their specific purpose. Additionally, I teach tarot and astrology to those interested in tapping into their intuition.” When it comes to what makes Harvey Mountain Alchemy unique, Mimi Folco says, “Each one of the candles I create are incredibly unique. If they’re not in a up-cycled vintage glass piece, they’re still bathed in unconditional love and intention. Each candle has its own personality and it’s own purpose.” Mimi Folco loves, “Seeing the customers’ faces light up when they receive their unique creation. There’s nothing like knowing I’ve been of service while using my creativity and spreading love.” As for the future, “I see Harvey Mountain Alchemy becoming a more solid piece of the community, as a means of self-expression and creativity.”



Supreme Soft Serve

Creating the best soft serve ice cream and toppings for your special event. Claverack, NY. supremesoftserve.com

Megan Kitsock shares that, “It all started with a trailer and a dream. Creating the best soft serve ice cream and toppings for your special event!” Megan provides full service packages that include two custom flavors, two to six custom toppings, two hours of exceptional service from her ice cream trailer. “Self-serve ice cream machine rentals include vanilla and chocolate and natural rainbow and chocolate sprinkles, custom ice cream cakes, and jars of bourbon caramel sauce.” As to how her business is different from all the rest, she explains, “There is no elevated soft serve around, especially not mobile soft serve. Furthermore, complete customization of your flavors and toppings sets us apart.” Megan shares that her favorite part of the business is seeing the joy on people’s faces when they try their first delicious bite – then seeing those same faces over and over again. What does the future hold for Megan and Supreme Soft Serve? She shares that dream with us: “A fleet of trailers and possibly a brick and mortar location.”



Highland Farm

Pasture-raised game meat and specialty ostrich and emu eggs. Germantown, NY. sales@eat-better-meat.com. eat-better-meat.com

Highland Farm was founded by the MacNamaras in the mid 1980s. The husband and wife duo brought a decade of experience caring for exotic animals in the zoological setting to their new deer-farming venture in the Hudson Valley. They share, “We offer customers a wide variety of pasture-raised game meats such as venison, elk and bison as well as specialty eggs (ostrich and emu) locally via farmers markets, through our online website store, and via farm pickup, by appointment.” What makes their business unique is that they offer top-notch customer service and fresh and unique products. “Our products are not typically found in traditional grocery stores. Farm-raised game meat is both incredibly health and full of flavor.” As for what is most rewarding about the business, they share, “Bringing healthy and tasty products to our local customers is incredibly satisfying. While game meat has gained in popularity in recent years, we are still working with customers that are new to these meats.” As for the future? “We are fortunate to be part of the vibrant farm-to-table movement here in the Hudson Valley. We have a customer base that truly believes in us and our products! Our vision is to continue sharing our passion for farming and healthy and tasty meats.”



Want to be featured here? Scan the QR code!

INSURING YOUR WORLD

Last month I wrote about how the cost of all policies would be going up as well as some industry reasons for the increases. This month I would like to explain some ways to make sure you are getting the best pricing from your carrier. To begin with, about 90% of the personal lines carriers promulgate rates with predictive models, which are purely data driven. Gone are the days of rate cards and manuals... to that end, there are many factors that drive rates up and down, yet one of the main drivers is credit score. Carriers do what's called a "soft hit" when they quote a new risk, which means it doesn't show up as someone doing an actual credit hit so it doesn't affect one's credit. The better your credit score, the better your premium will be, so make sure you know where you stand with your personal credit. Secondly, claims are a big driver of higher premiums. The more small claims submitted, the higher the premium, so if it is a claim of \$1,500-2,000 or less, consider paying the claim out-of-pocket to avoid large increases in your premiums. Do not call your carrier directly to report a claim without speaking to your agent first since even a claim that was reported and then withdrawn will go against your record as an incident and can adversely affect your premium. So if your credit has improved and your claim history has been great the last five years, give your agent a call and ask to be "rescored." You may have a pleasant surprise with your current carrier's pricing!



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1676 Route 7A, Copake, NY

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CLIMATE AND COMMON SENSE

Certain paths are paved with good intentions but lack common sense. Here in NYS, the CLCPA is full of such good intentions of reducing GHG emissions but lacks the common sense that every New Yorker deserves.

"Electrifying Everything," NYS's CLCPA will accomplish the following:

- Eliminate all traditional fuels and any innovative biofuel or renewable propane energy.
- Force conversion to electric so your heat/hot water, cooking, generators, or cars will need to be replaced.
- Impose new energy taxes.
- Cause potentially catastrophic changes to electricity generation and distribution.

Common sense tells me that the following would better serve us all: homeowners, municipalities, business owners, and families.

- Add electric heat pump technology to supplement your existing heating/cooling systems.
- Encourage the use of biofuels and renewable propane, both of which reduce GHG emissions without adding any additional equipment expense.
- Provide tax credits and incentives for those who choose renewables or heat pump technology, including biofuels and renewable propane energy.
- Encourage a combination of wind, solar and natural gas for the reliable production of electricity.

Mitigating climate change is important. Let us approach reducing GHG emissions with common sense so everyday families, businesses, and the environment will benefit. If we electrify everything, we suffer the consequences of a plan that is too narrow, too rapid, too costly, and untested. Learn more at SmarterNYEnergy.org.



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Keeping your well water contaminant free

Wells should be checked and tested ANNUALLY for mechanical problems, cleanliness, and the presence of contaminants, such as coliform bacteria, E. coli bacteria, nitrates/nitrites, and any other contaminants of local concern, (for example, arsenic and radon).

Possible sources of contamination include:

- Septic tanks and leach fields not being the proper distance from your well. Depending on your location, guidelines are 50-100 feet minimum distance.
- Organic material and vermin entering your well due to the well cap not having a proper seal. A sanitary well cap should be installed.
- Ground water. If your well head (casing) is ground level or below grade, contaminants can get into your well. Always check the well cover or well cap to ensure it is intact. The top of the well should be at least one foot above the ground.

You should always consult with a certified professional for any of your water-quality concerns.



8960 State Route 22, Hillsdale, NY 12529 • (518) 325-4679 • info@eswps.com
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Stress in today's world: part 3

Managing stress in a fast-paced, ever-changing world takes time, patience, and practice. In order to promote optimal well-being, first ask yourself, are you balanced inside and out? Are you restless or rested? Are you lacking in energy or energized? Are you healthy or unhealthy? Are you in pain or out of pain?

There are many ways to promote your health: meditation, relaxation techniques, mindfulness, exercise, tai chi, Feldenkrais, Chua Ka, yoga, or pilates to name a few. We have found an effective approach that is simple and involves a minimum of two hand placements, either yours or someone else's, on different areas of the body. The technique can be done seated or standing. Seated seems to be easier in the long run. Take one hand and gently place it over a stressed or painful area. Place the second hand with the palm outward across the lower rib cage in the middle of the back. This does require some flexibility of the shoulder joint, so if it's too restrictive, get someone else to help by placing one of their hands on that area. Sitting or standing minimizes the stress on the hand behind the back. Once in that position, all one has to do is wait for a minimum of ten minutes. You can watch TV, chat, listen to music, or watch nature. No extra effort is required.

The body has a keen sense of self-balancing, which it does with this approach. Anyone can place their hands on any two different positions on the body, and it automatically attempts to balance the nervous system's input to the area. For instance, if you have a headache, place one hand over the painful area on the head and the second hand behind the back. Repeat this same procedure for any malady you might encounter that doesn't need immediate medical help. Hold for a minimum of ten minutes, longer if desired. Remember, pain is not a prerequisite for living.

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