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MAGAZINE







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## FUN IN THE SUMMER SUN

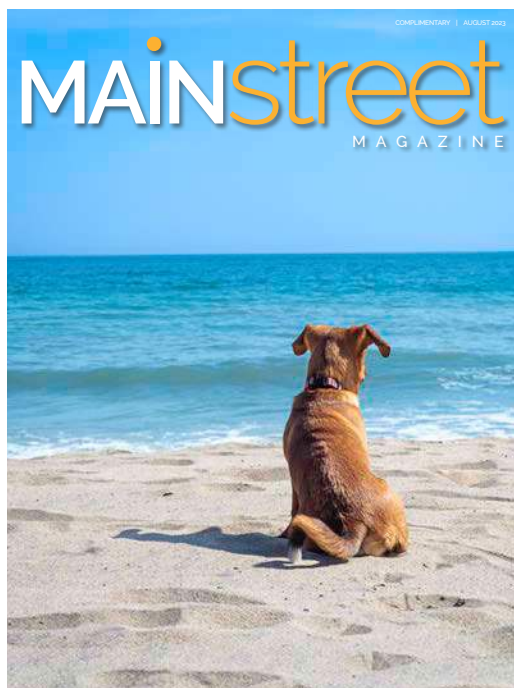
We've waited all year for summer and all of its fun. And boy have June and July been a ride! It seemed to take a few weeks for the weather to realize it was summer, but then it hit us with some heat, and we loved it! And then the rain came, followed by some more rain. But now we find ourselves in the final month of summer. I for one cannot believe August is already here. How can this be? It seems that school just got out! So how can these last few weeks be the last hoorah before the kids start a brand new year? But before we go there, we still have a few more weeks to enjoy ourselves and all that summer brings.

That said, we couldn't help but put Ruby on the cover, because for so many of us the beach is synonymous with summer. We're fortunate to have a lot of beaches on our local lakes, and we're within driving distance of so many other amazing beaches on the Long Island Sound and the Atlantic. No matter which beach, as they say, life's better at the beach – and Ruby agrees.

This issue is a mixture of all kinds of stories. We have no theme this month so our writers took it and rolled with it, sharing stories that interested them. We are quite literally all over the map. But isn't that fun? We go from an article on minimalism to another about read-a-romance book month to fun summer activities. We also have an article on some, ahem, personal musings on the game of golf (thanks Jesse). This month's recipe is a fresh take on s'mores, and believe me you're going to want to try it. Mary takes us on a trip through the Clark's new exhibit of Edvard Munch's work, an exhibit that everyone is raving about. Day trip anyone? And actually, speaking of road trips, if you're looking to do some hiking or hit a county fair or do something family-friendly, we've got ideas for you!

Also, just as a friendly reminder, if you want Main Street stories, we've got fresh content on our website on the daily. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for notifications and links, or just go to our website. We can only share so many stories here, but we've been busy creating more specific content on our website, and we hope you'll take a look and let us know your thoughts! We'll see you in the comments sections. Happy reading.

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir



**AUGUST 2023**

Ruby at the beach - where we all want to be right now. Whether at a nearby or far-away ocean retreat, or a local lake beach, at this time of year, life is just better at the beach. Happy summer.

Photo by  
Olivia Valentine

## CONTENTS

- |                                                                         |                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6   GARDENS OF THE ANTHROPOCENE<br>artist profile                       | 33   READ-A-ROMANCE MONTH<br>a deep dive into the genre and its authors                                |
| 9   FRIENDLY FACES                                                      | 37   ABOUT TO BLOOM: THE HIGH ROAD                                                                     |
| 11   SPLIT LIVES: DOUG & VICTORIA LARSON<br>entrepreneurs               | 39   GOLF YARNS                                                                                        |
| 15   TAKE 5 S'MORES BARS<br>food                                        | 43   THE POWER AND IMPACT OF TIKTOK ON<br>POP CULTURE AND THE ECONOMY                                  |
| 17   LIVE SIMPLY<br>real estate                                         | 46   RELAX AND REJUVENATE                                                                              |
| 21   THE SIDEWARD GLANCE, THE<br>NERVOUS TWO-STEP<br>at large           | 49   OBLONG RECOMMENDS...                                                                              |
| 23   ALIVE WITH ENERGY<br>edvard munch: trembling earth<br>at the clark | 51   MAKING SCENTS                                                                                     |
| 29   GET OUTSIDE!                                                       | 55   ONE LAST SWING AT SUMMER...                                                                       |
|                                                                         | 61   BUSINESS SNAPSHOTS<br>rob's records & audio<br>johnnycake books<br>hawk dance farm<br>joie maison |
|                                                                         | 62   MONTHLY TIPS                                                                                      |

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# GARDENS OF THE ANTHROPOCENE

By Anna Martucci  
anna@mainstreetmag.com

"I have to work from life. If I work from a photograph or make it up it's not the same." The life that artist Marilla Palmer is referring to is nature, and very often, the gardens she cultivates. Palmer comes from a long lineage of garden enthusiasts and nature lovers, in particular her father, who instilled in her a love for gardening and an esteem for the natural world. The Anthropocene, the period in Earth's history when human activity first began to have a significant impact on the planet's climate and ecosystems, is the subject of Marilla Palmer's most recent body of work.

## Accept and embrace what is

Much of Palmer's current watercolor collage work with flowers is a synthesis of native and non-native species. During her time in isolation in Lakeville, CT, Palmer turned to gardening where she "cultivated co-existence between native and non-native species." She notes, "While the pandemic was raging we weren't allowed to travel, but the foliage that I saw around me represented the gardens of the world: peonies from Eurasia, tulips from Turkey, nasturtiums from Mexico, and the native poppy, delphinium, and columbine."

Palmer represents what she sees happening globally through her garden and her work. She plants all native seeds, but accepts that the

garden is not going to stay that way. She believes eradicating non-natives is unrealistic. Instead, we should accept what is and work with what we have. What we have is like our gardens, and everyone's garden represents plants from around the world.

Palmer paints botanical watercolor collages in subtle shades of greens, blues, and pinks. They evoke a feeling of whimsy, gentleness, even kindness. In an essay on Palmer's work, art critic Carol Kino notes, "it seems to beckon the viewer into a better world, where Mother Nature has been primped, primed, and gussied up to become all that she should be."

And while Palmer's work certainly embodies a visually pleasing aesthetic celebrating nature, the incorporation of man-made materials in her collages hints at something darker. The beauty is seductive, but the purpose isn't just to be pretty for pretty's sake, it's to open the viewer to a greater awareness of the natural world. Palmer's work represents the anthropocene in showing how nature continues to try to survive despite technology's intrusion and mankind's attempts to contain it.

## In her own words

I was born in New York City and grew up in Brooklyn Heights. I grew up going to museums, and my grandparents had a great collection of Japanese art. My father was a family court judge, and his whole mission in life was to make people's lives better. My mother was an artist but during that time, in



the 60s and 70s, it was very hard for women to have any real exposure as an artist, so even though she was very focused, she always struggled.

I started college as a liberal arts student but after meeting an inspiring woman from Paros, Greece, I decided to leave school to study art in Greece. I was taught by artists from all over the world, it was a life-changing experience that completely changed my perspective. Eventually I returned to the US and graduated from the Philadelphia College of Art.

The start of my career was really slow and hard. The art world was still very white male dominated. The possibility of making good money doing anything in the creative field was pretty limited. But the bohemian downtown scene in New York City was completely integrated and interesting – art shows were in rock and roll clubs; the first show I curated was at a drag club. It was fantastic to be in NYC at that time. It was very appealing to me to not make decisions in my life based on money, to have just enough to get by. It was possible at that time because rents were one-tenth of what they are now. It was a great feeling that even though everyone was struggling, everyone was in it together. Now I feel like there is a little bit of that vibe happening up here in the Hudson Valley. There's a community feeling and a lot of start-up galleries.

### Process

I grew up with the understanding that being an artist was a struggle. Then when I went to college, I met people who made me realize that art was expressive and joyful. The lesson for me was that my process had to be as pleasurable as possible, because most of the time that I was trying to be a professional artist, it was still very hard as a woman. We were still very underrepresented in galleries. Gardening is a big part of that, it's pleasurable and healing, and that is a big part of my process. I want my work to reflect that.

### Evolution as an artist

I have always had this feeling that I wanted my art to be personally meaningful, and I liked having a sense of fragility and poignancy in my work. I come from a long line of people who seemed to know the Latin and common name for every single plant. I've always loved gardening, but it was separate from my art. My father was a true environmentalist, a real nature lover. When he died was when I made the shift to more nature-based work. I felt like I needed it personally to continue my connection to him.

### Anthropocene

Technology is here: we are in the Anthropocene. There is not one molecule on the planet that isn't impacted by humans. Growing up in Brooklyn and living in New York City, I've been surrounded by some pretty fabulous examples of what humans can do, but then I'll see a little crack in the pavement with a dandelion growing out of it. Humans can't conquer nature, and nature will never be able to obliterate human presence on the planet. Everything is interconnected.

My bigger point as an artist is to really look at nature, because appreciation starts with looking. I always work with living plants, many of which I grow myself, and my work is

in many ways botanical studies. One thing I like about using watercolors is that, like nature, you can't really control them. As I'm painting something, it has to be done really fast, because it dries quickly. I want my work to have that feeling of movement, of evolving. Photography, fabric, and other elements blur the distinction between the real and the artificial. Is there any place on the planet where man hasn't impacted nature? I want to draw attention to the beauty, power, and fragility of nature and the important role we have in protecting it. •

*Marilla Palmer's recent solo exhibitions include "Orchids of the Anthropocene" at Kathryn Markel Fine Arts, NY, and "Anthomania" at Furnace – Art on Paper Archive in Falls Village, CT. She has had numerous exhibitions in New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, and the Hamptons. Her exhibitions have been reviewed in The New York Times, The New Yorker, Time Out NY, ArtNews and The Lakeville Journal. To learn more about Palmer and her work you can visit her website at [www.marillapalmer.com](http://www.marillapalmer.com).*



Above: Marilla Palmer in her studio. Photo: Sergei Zarembo.

Below, left: *The Innocence of Flowers*, 2022, 41.5 x 29.5" watercolor, pressed flowers, sequins, stitching. Durabrite prints on Arches paper. Courtesy of Kathryn Markel Fine Arts

Opposite page: *In-toxicating (detail)*, 2022, 29 x 41" watercolor, holographic vinyl, velvet, glitter, Durabright prints, pressed flowers on Arches Paper. Courtesy of Kathryn Markel Fine Arts.





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# friendly faces: who let the dogs out?



**Cooper** is a handsome six-year-old golden retriever and one of the many friendly mascots for Elyse Harney Real Estate. Born in Copake, NY, Cooper lives in Lakeville, CT, with Elyse and Scott Morris, along with his feline buddy Nala. Cooper is very welcoming to all that he meets, always greeting with something in his mouth and a muffled bark. Cooper loves to fetch balls – always two at a time – both on land and in water. His favorite summer activity is hanging around the family pool, leaping in with grace, and swimming laps with Elyse. Cooper's second-best activity is cruising the town in the family's orange VW convertible. They say man's best friend is a dog, and to the Morris', "Cooper truly is our best friend!"



Everyone, let us introduce you to **Fred**. He's a little over a year old and happily resides with his forever owners Ryan, Kristina, Alex, and Wesley Proper in Claverack, NY. "Fred is a rescue dog from down south and when asked his breed, we respond with, 'He's a Fred.' Because he's a rescue, we don't know his breed, which makes him amazing." Fred is a smart cookie and learned "paw" and "lay down" super fast. The Proper's just adopted Fred in January, so they aren't sure what he likes to do in the summer yet. However, he runs with Kristina at least 3.25 miles every weekday and loves afternoon walks. He also loves to eat ice cubes on hot days. BTW, nice smile, Fred!



Inspired by her (human) grandparents dog's name, Puzzle, it was only fitting to name this beautiful English yellow labrador retriever, **Jigsaw**. Originally from Amenia, Jigsaw now calls Millerton home along with her owners, Alexandra Levy and Steffan Stern. You might recognize extremely well-behaved Jigsaw from sitting outside of Irving Farm or walking on the Rail Trail with Alexandra. Jigsaw enjoys many activities, but her summer favorites are swimming, hiking, and ziplining. Yes, ziplining. "She's obsessed and loves to zipline whenever she can!" Some of us here at *Main Street* have always wanted to try that. May I join you next time, Jigsaw? If you see Jigsaw around, be sure to wish her a happy (almost) birthday. This adventurous gal is turning five on August 26.



Who's a good boy? Fourteen-year-old pitbull, **King**, is! Born and raised for the first few years of his life in Millerton, King and his proud pet parents, Ashley Burdick and Matt Miles, moved to Ancram when he was three years old. King loves human food and will sit and give a paw without commands to get the tasty treat. "Chicken and jerky are two of his favorites," says Ashley. During the summer, you're apt to find King sunbathing on the deck or enjoying his favorite pastime – napping, of course. We hope you enjoy the rest of your summer, King, but we have one quick question before your next nap: Is it true you can't teach an old dog new tricks?



Four-year-old Havanese **Daphne** resides in Lakeville, CT, with her parents Michael Baldwin and Will Broyles. They say, "Daphne is our angel. She loves snuggling with her dads, going for walks on the Rail Trail, and sitting in the backyard to read with her dad." Daphne has been trying to befriend all of the squirrels on her street, but so far they've been too fast for her. Her mortal enemy is the Roomba, but they're trying to work out their differences. She loves to watch scary movies on the couch with her dads, but they suspect she's mostly interested in the popcorn. Perhaps what she's most famous for are her referee skills at the pickleball games on Pettee Street. Nice job Daphne – someone give this girl a treat!



Hailing all the way from San Antonio, TX, mixed breed **Otis** has found his permanent home in Millerton, NY, with owner Caroline Markonic. "Otis is perfect. He loves all humans and other dogs, especially his sister Lucy who is also a rescue." Grandma Olivia Valentine chimes in and says, "Otis is the happiest when he is with both Caroline and her boyfriend, Connor. You can just see it on his little face!" Amongst other things, his absolute favorite thing to do in the summer is to get as dirty as possible in the mud while hunting for frogs. According to Caroline, Otis is very successful at getting muddy, but hasn't had the same success catching a frog. He keeps trying though! Good luck, Otis.



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# SPLIT LIVES

## DOUG AND VICTORIA LARSON

By Christine Bates  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Victoria (Torrie) and Doug Larson arrived in Stanford, NY, seeking more space 15 years ago and created an extra rural life for their family and businesses. I first met Doug Larson, an architect, when he assisted the North East Community Center in obtaining a \$500,000 grant to expand its program space in Millerton, NY. Since then, these two entrepreneurs have started their own independent businesses splitting their time between New York City and Upstate. Doug took the step of starting his own firm, Larson Architectural Works, and Victoria founded VK Larson Communications, which specializes in strategies for tourism, culture, design, and business.

### How did you get here?

It's a long story. Torrie and I met at a theater company, the Blue Hill Troupe, in New York City where we both volunteered – I did scenic painting for sets and she worked on the costumes. I was starting my architectural career, and Torrie was working in publishing and communications. We got married, had

a son, and lived in a rented New York apartment. We couldn't afford to buy in Manhattan and so we found an old house to buy and renovate on a beautiful scenic road in Stanfordville. On weekends, as we worked on our house, we got to know our neighbors, whom we invited to a mid-construction party. It took two years.

Once the house was finished, various publications, such as *Metropolitan Home* and the *Wall Street Journal*, wrote about us. Around the same time, I entered a contest to paint a mural in Pine Plains and won. (I was the only entry.) It was in this way that I met Jack Banning, who, with his wife Irene, owned the former Pine Plains Platter along with some other buildings. (See *Main Street Magazine's* January 2017 profile of the Bannings on our website mainstreetmag.com).

In 2011, Torrie commuted to New York City, while I worked on the mural and rented office space next to it. I worked on an assessment, budget, and master plan for what is now the Stissing Center and eventually designed the renova-



Above: Larson renovated and expanded this home in Stanford. Photo: Richard Powers. Left: Larson designed this home in the Hamptons. Photo: John Gruen.

tion. Between the renovation of our house, St. Peter's Church in Lithgow, the mural, Stissing Center, clients and gardening, we have built another life up here. Two thirds of the projects of Larson Architecture Works are in Dutchess and Columbia counties. Now, we divide our time between the city and the country.

During the pandemic, we purchased and renovated a historic building in Ancramdale to use as our home office and a place for visiting staff to stay.

### Doug when did you start your own architectural practice?

I began by studying design and engineering at the University of Pennsylvania and then went to University of Michigan for graduate school in architecture, where I also taught architectural history. After graduation I worked for firms in



Continued on next page ...



Philadelphia and then New York, ending up with Peter Marino for seven years where I had assignments all over the world. Next, I partnered with more established architects and learned how to run a practice. In 2017 I started my own firm, which has grown and now has 14 employees.

### What was the biggest challenge in going out on your own?

Capital. Banks don't lend money to young architects. There's always a lag between doing the work and getting paid by clients.

### Is there an architect who inspires you?

Spanish architect and winner of the Pritzker Prize, Raphael Moneo always surprises with different design solutions. I especially like his Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm.

### Do you have a favorite client or assignment?

I love residential clients because they are so passionate and involved in their projects. Institutional work is very different. The scale and demands make you ask how you can make a public environment better. Retail stores are quick and care about visual and behavioral impact — it's like the theater. I like having a diversified practice and not being known for just one style.

### What are you proudest of?

I'm very proud of the Stissing Center because it's for the people who live here. Another project I point to with pride is the New York Society Library in Manhattan. Not-for-profit institutional work has a very long gestation period and requires skill and patience in working with boards and other stakeholders.

### Could you explain the roles of interior designers and architects and how they intersect?

Interior designers and architects collaborate to meet the client's needs. One basic difference is that architects are selling their time, like attorneys, while interior designers are selling a product. Architects are better equipped by training and experience with building codes, space planning, circulation, and engineering. Interior designers work with the emotions of a space — the soft goods that create a mood. Of course, there's an overlap with selecting finishes and items like lighting fixtures. At Larson Architecture Works we don't have an interior design group. Clients select their own designers to work with us. That said, we are very sensitive to the interior design practice and appreciate a good collaboration.

### How do architects charge for their services?

It depends on the client and the project, but as I mentioned we are paid for the time we invest. This could be as a percentage of construction costs, a stipulated project fee, or an hourly rate.

### Do you have materials you especially like to work with?

I like traditional materials proven over time: wood, standing seam metal roofs, and mixing wood and metal. But there are also new materials like porcelain tiles and Boral siding which work well.

### How do clients find you?

At this stage, clients come to us through word of mouth, referrals, and reputation. For example, one of our projects was referred to us by a carpet vendor who enjoyed



Above: Larson Architecture Works staff with Doug and Torrie, in the back row left. Photo: Stephanie Diani.

working with us. Some of our retail work came about from working on a house for Jay McLaughlin in the Hamptons. Our collaboration with Darren Henault for TENT in Amenia was the result of a chance encounter with a colleague from New York City. Friends, other architects, publications, and press coverage all count — a little bit of everything.

Being out and about and involved with the community is also important and something we enjoy with friends and neighbors. Torrie helps out with press for the Stissing Center and local non-profits as the need arises as well as the Millbrook Garden Club. I am on the board at the Stissing Center, and we are both on the board of the St. Gaudens Memorial in Cornish New Hampshire. We are also active in our church and the community.

### Do you think that AI will impact your business?

I don't think so. Architecture still deals with the physical world; with materials you can touch. It's bricks and mortar based.

### How do you work together?

Torrie helps run the business side of Larson Architecture Works — marketing and office management — and runs her own PR firm that focuses on travel, tourism, and cultural organizations. From time to time, I will join her on one of her trips to see her clients in Baden-Württemberg and Saxony in Germany. We just got back

from Dresden, and I really enjoyed speaking with the journalists about the architectural orientation of the destination. Torrie also publishes a monthly website and blog *Side of Culture* about under-the-radar arts and cultural organizations that build community. Architecture and culture dovetail nicely. We're both entrepreneurs and understand and commiserate with the issues of having your own business. We act as sounding boards for each other. We both came from professional families, but working for yourself is a different paradigm. You're responsible for everything.

### What would you tell young architects just beginning their career?

I'd suggest first taking a break and travelling and looking. Then jump in and become a sponge in an architectural firm and learn everything they don't teach you in school. Architecture is a trade and a craft where you learn from experience. Our own college-age son is fascinated with black holes and subatomic particles so he may be a scientist, not an architect.

### Do you have time for fun?

We like to work out, play golf, swim, and spend time with friends. I like to sketch, and Torrie loves to be in the garden. •

*To learn more about Doug Larson and Larson Architecture Works, you can call his office at (646) 809-5009, or visit [larsonarchitecture.com](http://larsonarchitecture.com).*



Photo: Richard Powers



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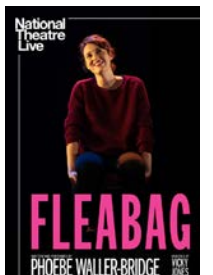


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# Take 5 S'mores bars



By Olivia Valentine with  
Caroline Markonic  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

Don't hate us for making you turn your oven on in the heat of the summer to make dessert! We promise that you won't be sweating much as you only need about 15 minutes of oven time to prepare these scrumptious s'mores bars. If you are craving s'mores and all the goodness that they have to offer but can't light a fire, this recipe is for you. You can use plain chocolate bars if you don't like peanut butter or plain Reese's if you don't like pretzels and caramel. However, the Reese's Take 5 bars add a terrific crunch and elevate these bars to a new level of yum! Dark chocolate with thin pretzels might be our next go-to version. You can try any chocolatey candy you wish.

We can guarantee that if you bring these to a summer picnic, they will disappear in an instant. Although making s'mores by the campfire is the ultimate summer dessert, oven s'mores are the next best thing. They are slightly less messy to eat too.

We brought these to a Fourth of July party, which had a potluck style dessert setup. These bars almost didn't make it to the table! Kids were grabbing them off the tray before I even had a chance to put them down. I tend to exaggerate sometimes, but trust us when I tell you that these were the first to be gone of the dozen or so choices. We definitely should have made more.

## Ingredients

1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs  
2 tbs sugar  
6 tbs melted salted butter  
12 snack size Reese's Take 5 Bars  
2 cups mini marshmallows

## Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

To prepare the crust, crush graham crackers either in a food processor or in a baggie and with a rolling pin.

Melt butter on medium heat or in your microwave.

Combine the sugar and the graham cracker crumbs together. Add the butter and stir until thoroughly mixed.

Pour the mixture in an 8" x 8" baking dish lined with parchment paper (no need to grease). Firmly

press the crumb mixture with the back of a wooden spoon, spatula, or your hand to compact the crust into an even layer.

Place in preheated oven and bake for 10-12 minutes.

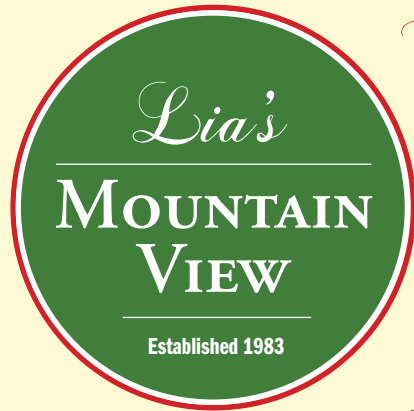
Remove crust from the oven and arrange the 12 Take 5 bars in a single layer. Place back in the oven for another three minutes.

Remove from oven and pour the mini marshmallows to completely cover the top. Broil until the marshmallows turn a golden brown. We watched ours like a hawk; the marshmallows can burn very quickly – we speak from experience!

For ease in cutting (and eating), refrigerate until chilled. Slice and enjoy! •

*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 @oliviavalentine.*





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# LIVE SIMPLY

By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

As we journey through life, many of us continue to accumulate more and more stuff. That colorful vase that perfectly complimented the decor in our dining room, that cuddly sweater we spotted while strolling through a charming country town on a crisp autumn day, or the many items we've been gifted to commemorate birthdays, anniversaries, and other milestone occasions.

Many of us have closets that are brimming with old clothing, jewelry, shoes and boots, coats, eveningwear, and other items that we no longer wear. Our attics and storage spaces also house old family treasures as well as unused ski equipment, bicycles from yesteryear, and boxes filled with tools – most of which we will probably never use.

Then there's the rest of society – the “minimalists.” They're the ones who disregard items as soon as they're no longer deemed functional or beautiful. When that favorite pair of jeans no longer fits, off they go. They immediately get handed down to a friend or donated to charity. They have closets that are organized and uncluttered. Simply put: the minimalists only have what they use, need, or what sparks joy. They don't tend to hold onto lots of extras.

## For art's sake

Beyond ascribing the word “minimalist” to a person's aesthetic or ability to live simply, the word has long been used in reference to art, literature, and music for someone who sparingly uses colors, parts, and materials.

According to Tate Britain – a family of four art galleries in London, Liverpool, and Cornwall known as Tate Modern, Tate Britain, Tate Liverpool, and Tate St Ives, minimalism is an extreme form of abstract art that was developed in the United States during the 1960s and typified by artworks composed of simple geometric shapes based on the square and the rectangle.

Rather than depicting reality – a landscape, person, item, or emotion – this type of art celebrates simplicity and form. “What you see is what you see,” said minimalist painter Frank Stella.

Evolving from the art world, the word has become widely used in discussions about today's home environment – specifically when it comes to decluttering and organizing. There are certainly some perks that go along with this type of sensibility.

Living as a minimalist may help improve wellbeing. People who live simply probably spend less time looking for their items since they have fewer pieces to navigate. They also tend to keep their belongings more organized. Bonus: there's also less to clean. A lack of photo frames, figurines, and other stuff means less dust accumulation. Buying only what we need and using less also makes a positive impact on the environment since it leads to fewer items being manufactured, and there's also less to dispose of.

## At home

“Life truly begins only after you have put your house in order,” according to Marie Kondo. Also renowned as Konmari, Kondo is a Japanese organizing consultant, author, and TV presenter. She believes that when people reassess their belongings and organize their homes, they set the stage for a huge transformation.

“Tidying is a powerful tool, but it's not the destination,” says Kondo. The true goal of tidying is to clear away clutter so you can live the life you want. The author of four books, Kondo penned *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*; *Spark Joy: An Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up*;

Continued on next page ...



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Artjafara



*Marie Kondo's Kurashi at Home: How to Organize Your Space and Achieve Your Ideal Life*; and *Joy at Work: Organizing Your Professional Life*. This last book was co-written with Scott Sonenshein.

A master organizer, Kondo has created the KonMari Method™, which encourages tidying by category rather than by location. She suggests people begin with clothes before moving on to books, papers, and other miscellaneous items in the home. The last and often most difficult category is sentimental items. “Keep only those things that speak to the heart, and discard items that no longer spark joy. Thank them for their service – then let them go,” she advises.

### The rules

The queen of clean living has defined six basic rules of tidying:

#### 1. Commit yourself to tidying up

This involves setting the intention to seriously tidy up – and resolving to put in the time and effort required. Kondo believes that when people approach tidying with a clear vision and can-do attitude, they'll find the energy and motivation to tidy all their belongings in one go.

#### 2. Imagine your ideal lifestyle

Kondo's tidying process is not about decluttering the house or making it look neat for visitors. It's about tidying up in a way that will spark joy and create long-lasting change. She advises people to think about what kind of house they want to live in and how they want to live in it. Those who like drawing can sketch out what that looks like. If you prefer to write, describe it in a notebook. You can also cut out photos from magazines.

#### 3. Finish discarding first

Discarding is not the point of the KonMari Method™, but it is an important part of the process because it provides an opportunity to learn

from your past experiences. If you let go of a belonging you never used, it teaches you that you have no purpose for something like it in your life.

Thinking deeply about each item you discard will affect how you live and acquire new things moving forward. She shares Japanese ideas about discarding sentimental items – one of the most challenging categories for many people.

#### 4. Tidy by category, not by location

It may seem logical for people to tackle one shelf, closet, or room at a time, but Kondo believes that tidying this way will doom you to a life of clutter. In order to tidy up completely – and create real change – you must tidy by category, not by location.

She says that people often store the same type of item in more than one place. When you tidy each place separately, you're repeating the same work in many locations. You can never grasp the overall volume of each type of thing you own – you're more likely to keep the paperclips in your office if you don't take into account the stockpile in the attic. The result is that you become locked in a never-ending cycle of tidying. Tidy by category – clothes, books, papers, komono (miscellaneous items), and then sentimental items – and you're on the path to success.

#### 5. Follow the right order

The order in which you tidy is also crucial. By starting with clothes, which are relatively easy, and ending with sentimental items, which tend to be challenging, you hone your decision-making skills; by the end, choosing what to keep seems simple. There's another reason clothes come first: Completing that category provides tangible proof of your efforts. Being greeted by your favorite clothes in a tidied closet each morning is motivation.

#### 6. Finally, ask yourself if it sparks joy

Only you can know what kind of environment makes you happy – this is the underlying principle of Kondo's

method. It's also what sets it apart from other tidying techniques that rely on strict guidelines instead of personal criteria.

In Kondo's method, your feelings are the standard for decision making, specifically knowing what sparks joy. The key is to pick up each object one at a time, and ask yourself it sparks joy. Tune in to how your body responds. Kondo says joy is personal, so everyone will experience it differently. Kondo describes it as “a little thrill, as if the cells in your body are slowly rising.”

Before you discard unwanted items, try to determine if someone you know can use them or commit to donating belongings to a charity organization. Those looking to generate some income can host a yard sale, sell online via Facebook Marketplace, or bring the items to a consignment shop.

### Tiny houses

Beyond organizing the home, there are other lifestyle choices that fit into this mindset of embracing simplicity. Living in tiny homes is one of them. This idea was popularized by Jay Shafer, who designed and then lived in a 96-square-foot house. He eventually began offering tiny house plans on wheels through his companies, Tumbleweed Tiny House Company and Four Lights Tiny House Company.

According to the National Association of Realtors, on average, a tiny home costs less than one-fifth what a traditional home would cost and it uses about 7% of the energy that a traditional house does.

The global tiny homes market size is estimated to grow by \$4 billion from 2022 to 2027, according to Technavio – a global technology research and advisory company with a focus on emerging technology trends. The market is estimated to grow almost 5% during the forecast period. North America is estimated to account for 57% of that growth. That's evidence that there are many people out there who yearn to live simply.

Growth is attributed to the rise in housing prices and consumer interest in investing in pre-built or

custom-built homes. In recent years, North America has witnessed a steady increase in the construction of tiny houses.

### Digital nomads

Another group who celebrates their freedom – digital nomads. During the pandemic, there's been a rise in people living this lifestyle. FlexJobs defines “digital nomads” as those who live a nomadic lifestyle, moving from location to location and staying connected digitally. They use technology and communication tools to work remotely in order to travel the country or jet set the world. They may stay in one place for a few weeks or months. They work from coffee shops, hotel rooms, coworking spaces, and other places.

ThinkRemote is a team of writers who provide news and content that empowers people to find success through working remotely. It cites a total of 35 million digital nomads worldwide; 23.2 million of them live in America. This is a 37% increase from the 16.9 million workers recorded in 2022.

These people move about with only a few belongings. Since they're not saddled down with lots of clothes and other items, they have ease in moving from place to place, so they get to see the world and experience new cities, towns, environments, and lifestyles.

Although there are many ways to live simply, we can all start by pairing down our belongings, donating unwanted items, and keeping our spaces tidier.

A clean, uncluttered space can do wonders for our wellbeing. So, if you're not ready to downsize into a tiny house or become a digital nomad, uncluttering the home Kondo style is a great beginning point. Start now. •



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# The sideward glance, the nervous two-step

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Near the end of the interview on *CBS Sunday Morning*, Dani Izzie put her life as a quadriplegic in clear, direct perspective: "I don't want to go to the grocery store and have somebody randomly come up to me and say, 'You're so inspiring.' Why? Because I'm at the grocery store? I want to be seen as normal. I want to be seen on the same level as everybody else. I don't need to be inspiring."

So many factors intersect in her statement that breaking it down offers a microscopic view of the way we're living life these days. Dani is in a wheelchair. She is the mother of twins. She is living her best life. She doesn't want to be singled out. She simply wants to be who she is "on the same level as everybody else." What makes this so profound is the setting for her statement, our latter day equivalent of what the ancient Greeks dubbed the *agora* – the marketplace.

Observed supermarket behavior can be an interesting, intriguing and, frankly, frightening snapshot of where our culture has drifted. How our fellow shoppers maneuver their carts, the common decency shown as we wait in scattered fashion at the deli counter to raise our hands when the "Who's next?" invitation is offered, or, reflecting on Dani's comment, how fellow shoppers respond to the presence of folks who physically, mentally, or sociologically are different says a great deal.

## Doing the disability shuffle

As the typical shopper turns the corner to enter the "bread and cookies" aisle, there approaching from the other direction is a mother accompanied by her child with Down syndrome.

Reaching for the avocados perched at the top of a compelling pyramid,

we may be aware of the person in a wheelchair, trying to navigate the process of testing and selecting a few of the gleaming green fruits, but having difficulty reaching without causing the entire display to tumble across the floor.

The man moving toward the same checkout line that we have targeted is wrestling with what appears to be Parkinson's disease.

How do we react? Do we look away, pretend the people in front of us are invisible? Do we beat a hasty retreat, changing aisles so as not to intersect and interact?

And, how do we feel?

## Back to the present

On the summer viewing list, for one of those rainy nights in August when sitting in the yard is out of the question, may we recommend *Still*, the Michael J. Fox documentary streaming on AppleTV+?

Perhaps for the obvious reason that Fox was the explosive star of television (*Family Ties* and *Spin City*) and film (the *Back to the Future* trilogy) and so much of a beloved presence, that the public responded to the announcement of his Parkinson's Diagnosis with conviction. We had strength in numbers, so to speak, as we bore the shock, and didn't have to meet him head on in the produce aisle.

The documentary is Fox's story. He narrates the piece and invites all of us to watch his meteoric rise to fame,

the missteps along the way, the triumphs, and the ultimate tragedy. We are in the room as he works with a physical therapist and tries to conquer the basics of walking and turning without falling. We are not embarrassed and do not have to look away. This is streaming television, after all, and there is no judgement when we react. There is no "clean up in aisle three" or "buy one, get one free."

Like Dani Izzie, Michael J. Fox isn't interested in pity or being singled out because his condition is different. He's accepted his fate and wants to be treated just like Dani does – as a person. When in the later stages of the film, he walks down the street, passes some pedestrians, and unexpectedly falls, he greets the moment with a sense of humor that creates laughter all around. "You swept me off my feet," he offers and the moment is no longer awkward. It is simply real.

The media continue to give us ample opportunity to become engaged with lives that may be very different because of disabilities. Fox's film is a major example. Dani also tells her story in the captivating film *Dani's Twins*.

## Remembering Team Hoyt

For those who live near Boston or, from a distance, follow the international phenomenon that is the

annual Boston Marathon, media coverage of that event has, for the past decades always included a close-up view of a father/son team who personified the notion of being seen and welcomed for who they were, not what they looked like or what challenges they overcame.

Rick Hoyt was born with cerebral palsy, which rendered him a quadriplegic. For 32 Boston Marathon races, Rick's father Dick pushed him from start to finish, and the crowds along the course cheered louder each year. Both Dick and Rick have died, Dick in 2021 and Rick in 2023. The impact of their accomplishments, however, lives on – affirming the notion that we are all simply people with dreams and aspirations, regardless of condition.

In Dani Izzie's words, how we see ourselves, how we respond to the challenges that life presents, how we respond to others will never make us "inspirations." It will simply define who we are. •



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# Alive with Energy

## Edvard Munch: Trembling Earth at the Clark

By Mary B. O'Neill, Ph.D.  
info@mainstreetmag.com

The Clark is on a roll. Last summer, it gave us a spectacular Rodin exhibition, and this summer's stunning visual feast is *Edvard Munch: Trembling Earth*. In a word—go!

The collection will reward you with richly hued multi-dimensional explorations of Munch's relationship with the natural world that go far beyond his iconic and ubiquitous *The Scream*. Munch's ardor for forests, shores, and cultivated natural spaces transcends their physical beauty. His paintings, sketches, and prints reflect his spiritual and energetic connections to nature and acknowledge its healing powers.

### Back to Nature

Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863-1944) is better known for his somber and poignant explorations of separation, loss, death, and loneliness — those are not the subject of *Trembling Earth*. Clark Associate Curator Alexis Goodin elaborates, "This exhibition is an exciting opportunity for visitors to get to know a different side of Edvard Munch and enjoy viewing his paintings and prints closely. I hope our visitors will revel in the brushwork and color choices Munch made in his paintings. These aspects add meaning to the works, which appear strikingly fresh and vibrant in person."

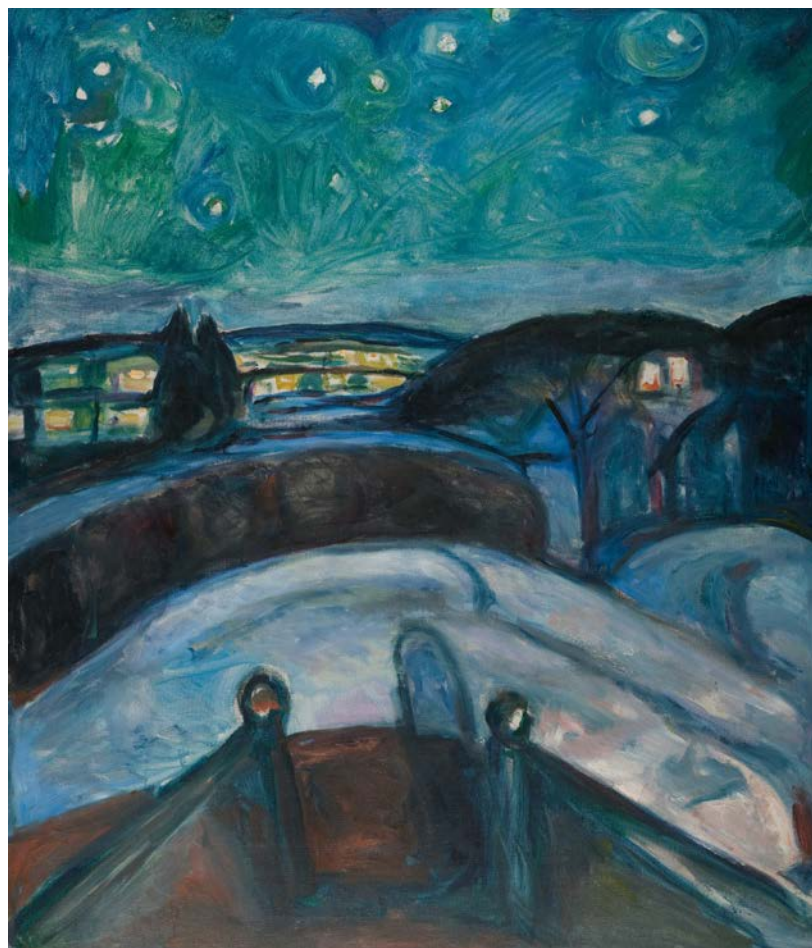
Goodin remarks that this is the first exhibition to focus on Munch's relationship with and interpretation of nature and his enduring attachment to the natural world. Indeed, part of the Clark's 2022 strategic plan involves a greater interweaving of its programming with the woodland and meadow it occupies. "Munch's connection to nature, as explored in the exhibition, makes sense for the Clark given its setting in the Berkshires and its 140-acre campus," says Goodin.

This exhibition has been ten years in the making, starting with the efforts of Dr. Jay Clarke, who, until 2018, was the Clark's Manton Curator. Her move to the Art Institute of Chicago didn't end her relationship with the Clark. She is the museum's guest co-curator for this exhibition, a powerful collaboration between the Munchmuseet in Oslo, Norway, and the Museum Barberini in Potsdam, Germany.

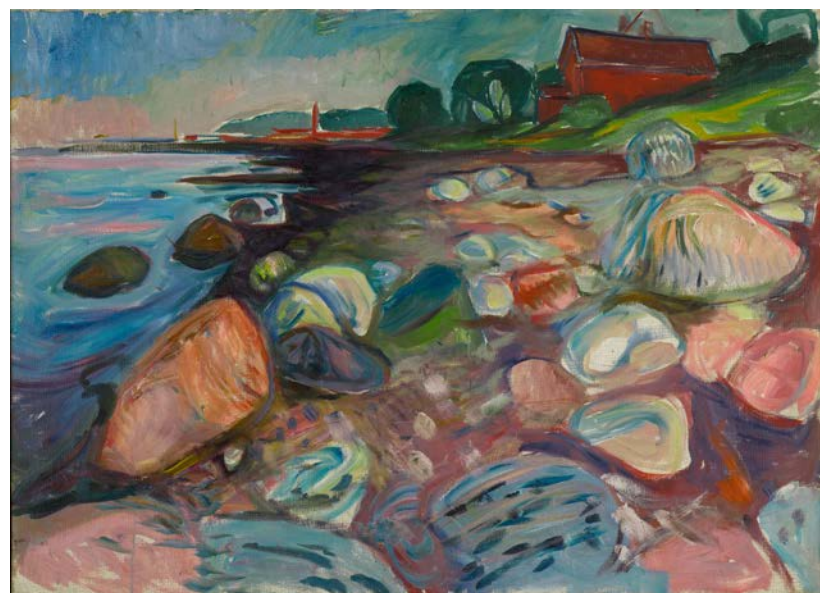
### Human and Nature

Edvard Munch was a prolific artist, producing thousands of works during his lifetime. He bequeathed his collection to Oslo at his death, giving birth to the expansive Munch museum, the source of many of the show's works.

Munch witnessed the industrialization of his home country of Norway.



Above: *Starry Night*, 1922-24. Below, left: *Beach*, 1904. All images courtesy of the Clark.



He experienced the cramped, airless city life juxtaposed with time spent in Norway's awe-inspiring forests, fjords, and shorelines.

Early trauma also influenced Munch as he endured the premature deaths of his mother and sister. These events found their way into his portrayal of human loneliness and separation, featured in his portrayal of human figures.

Munch battled mental illness and depression and turned to nature to heal himself. His art and writing explore the spiritual and scientific dimensions of the natural world and his belief in the energetic qualities of animate and inanimate objects.

Continued on page 25 ..





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### Into the Woods

Munch's paintings of forests are lush in color and lavish in their brushstrokes. He pays homage to a mystical and pragmatic forest, showing levels of interconnection between humans and trees. Goodin describes Munch's fascination with themes of nature's mysteries, links to myths and fairy tales, and the interplay of industry and aesthetics. She comments, "Some of his trees are abstract, immediate, and stylized, showing us the always-changing nature of trees."

*The Fairy Tale Forest's* towering and darkly painted trees, rendered against a darkening sky bruised with purple, exude energy, but is it foreboding or adventurous? Two small children pause in a clearing readying to take the next step into woods that are alive with possibility, mystery, and perhaps some danger. In the foreground, a hatted head watches on. Is it there for support as the children take that first step into the unknown, or is it afraid to walk with the guileless children, knowing what they might face?

*The Yellow Log* and *The Logger* show human activity in otherwise tranquil forest settings. The first painting that greets you in the exhibition is *The Yellow Log*, centered on a felled tree that

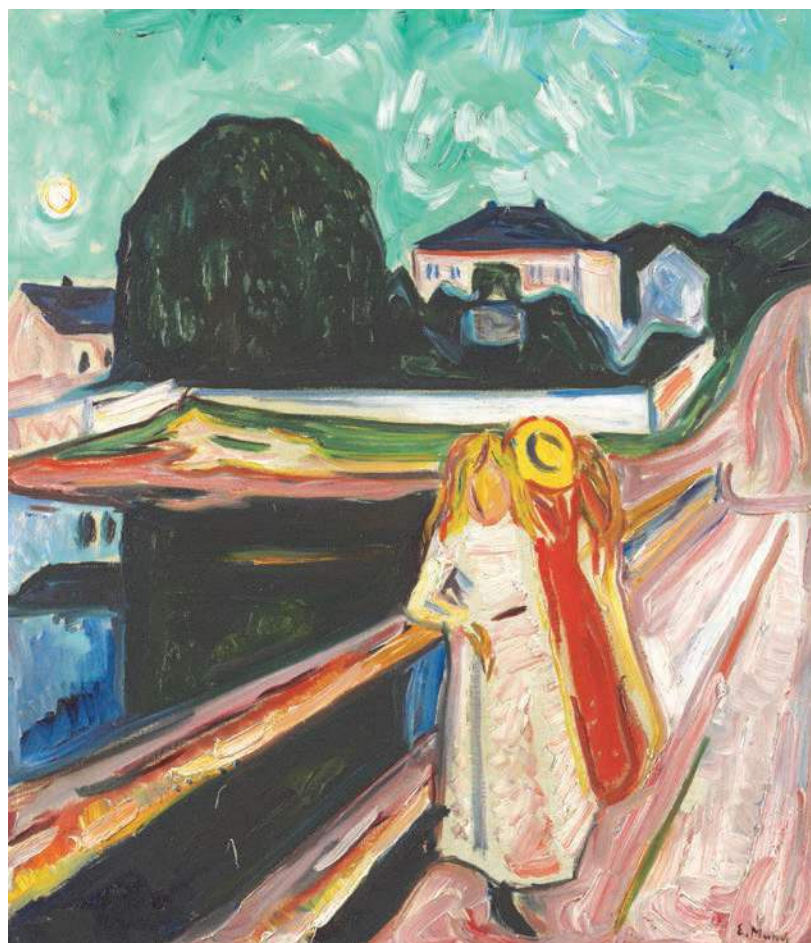
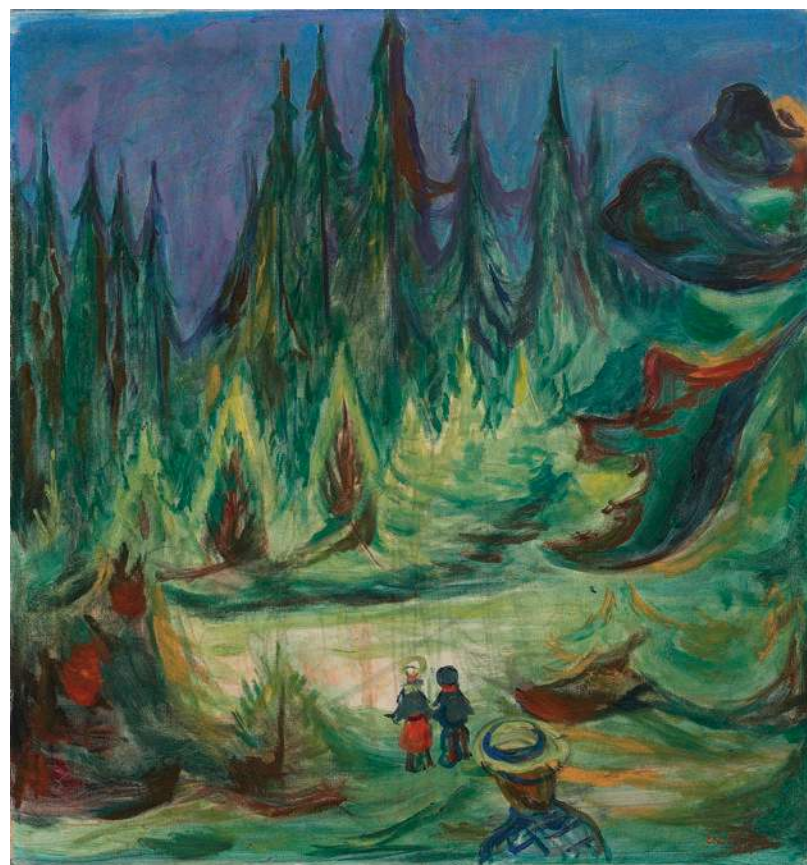
seems to extend into infinity. Munch understood how deep our reliance on forests ran, and witnessing the Industrial Revolution in Norway, he visually expressed how forests sustain us on every level, even if that means their destruction.

### Mixing Labor with the Land

Munch portrays how we use the earth to fulfill our physical and spiritual needs. He bought a cottage and property outside Oslo and relished planting and tending gardens and orchards. It sustained him body and soul.

In works such as *Spring Plowing*, we see a Munch that is "fluid and confident in his brushwork and generous with paint. Some areas of the canvas are also visible," describes Goodin. She elaborates on "Munch's desire for viewers to respond emotionally to his work and to imbue his paintings with a sense of quivering energy."

The painting gives a colorful carnival quality to the horses pulling the plow. For Goodin, "Munch was interested in turning the earth into something productive, and there is energy and movement in the horses." Their brightly colored and heavily painted muscles strain as they look to pass right before the viewer.



### Winter Whites

Several paintings pay homage to the long Norwegian winter. Munch uses cool blues and whites to give snow dimensionality as it covers the landscape. In winter, we must wait patiently for nature to emerge from its rest and accept our lack of control over this seasonal process.

*Winter in Kragerø* shows a dark green tree, the only sign of life, standing sentinel over a snow-covered town at rest. It was a view Munch returned to many times in his paintings.

### Sand and Shore

Munch grapples with his philosophical and spiritual sides through work representing shorelines. While viewing *Summer Night by the Beach* and *Beach*, Goodin observes, "For Munch, the border between land and sea was alive with possibility and was always shifting and changing." She points to the vibrantly colored and thickly painted rocks lining the shore, "They have a quivering, animated quality." In Munch's view, all beings and objects, animate and inanimate, are alive and connected. The shoreline is a liminal or thin space between worlds.



Above, top to bottom: *Girls on the Pier*, c. 1904, *The Scream*, 1895, Below, left: *The Fairytale Forest*, 1927-29

Continued on next page ...





Above, top to bottom:  
*Meeting in Space*,  
1925-29 *Metabolism*,  
1916.

Munch used a roofless outdoor studio to blur the lines between his painting and the natural world. He sought the opportunity for “chance and accident to inform his paintings. He frequently left canvases outdoors exposed to the elements,” explains Goodin. These close encounters of the natural kind pose challenges for conservators today. An example is *Bathing Men*, painted at the beach with evidence of sand affixed to the canvas.

#### Here Comes the Sun

Munch’s grand and kinetic *The Sun* shows the sun radiating and boring through the landscape. Munch saw the sun as the life force in all things and believed that organic and inorganic objects are intimately and energetically connected. Any divisions between living and non-living are arbitrary and created by a human need for categorization.

Other works in this section expose Munch’s attempts to grapple with religion and spirituality, his pious upbringing, his exposure to Darwinist theories, and his experiences of awe and healing in the natural world. It includes the sketch *The Human Being and its Three Power Centres*, his description of which gives the exhibition its title.

#### Dropping a Pin

Munch shows himself to be a lover of place. His homes and gardens became the subject of themes he reworked, experimenting across seasons, with changing light and perspective, and with and without human subjects. He experienced these places as retreats from people and the crush of urban living.

His numerous studies of girls and women on a bridge near his cottage in the fishing village of Åsgårdstrand, located on the Oslo Fjord, vary in seasons, times of day, and clusters of figures conspiratorially huddled, their backs to the viewer on a long bridge.

#### Yes, It’s There Too

If a Munch exhibition would only be complete for you with *The Scream*, then *Trembling Earth* has that, too, in the form of a black and white lithograph. When you view it, instead of focusing on the howling visage, focus on the undulating lines and shapes of the land, sky, and seascape behind him. These are juxtaposed with the straight lines of the human-made bridge extending to the left, leading two figures away from our field of vision.

#### Make a Connection

As you wander through the show, ponder the profound connection between all beings and objects in the natural world that defined Munch’s work in this show. Then carry those thoughts out of galleries to the reflecting pool and network of woodland trails. It will make the show even more visceral and impactful.

See what Munch saw – healing, connection, glimpses of the sublime, impermanence, and an experience of awe. *Trembling Earth* is a show we need. It’s Munch’s call to connect with the sublime, heal what’s broken, be one with the natural world, and get in touch with our deeper selves. ●

*Edvard Munch: Trembling Earth runs through October 15 at The Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, MA. Visit [clarkart.edu](http://clarkart.edu) for more information. You can also explore the exhibition on the Bloomberg Connects app at [bloombergconnects.org](http://bloombergconnects.org).*





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# GET OUTSIDE!

## BEST PLACES TO SPEND TIME OUTDOORS WITH YOUR FAMILY

By Abby Audenino  
abby@mainstreetmag.com

With school out and vacations abounding, summer is arguably the best season to spend time outdoors. With August also being National Family Fun Month, it's only appropriate that we round up some of the best places to spend time outdoors with your family to end summer the right way. From state parks to outdoor adventures and museums, we've got you covered.

### Nature / Hiking

#### Mount Everett State Reservation

143 East St, Mt Washington, MA.  
(413) 528-0330.

Mount Everett offers a variety of suggested paths, including introductory hikes, which are typically short and appropriate for hikers of all ages, and signature hikes, which are typically longer and more difficult but highlight some of the best views and features of the park.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation recommends the Guilder Pond Loop Trailhead, which clocks in at 1.0 to 1.7 miles round-trip and is of moderate difficulty, as an introductory hike. Guilder Pond is the second highest pond in Massachusetts and features blooming azalea in the spring and gorgeous foliage in the fall. The Massachusetts DCR also recommends two signature hikes: the Race Brook Falls Trail and the Mt. Everett, Mt. Race, and Sage's Ravine Trail. The Race Brook Falls Trailhead is 4.0 to 4.8 miles round-trip, is rated as difficult, and is three-tiered. The Mt. Everett, Mt. Race, and Sage's Ravine trail is 7.0 miles one-way and is rated as difficult.

The Mt. Everett/Mt. Race trail has a five-star rating on AllTrails, with many users calling the falls "impressive," "absolutely gorgeous from start

to finish," and "like an enchanted forest." Users noted that there aren't as many views from the summit: the best view is during the elevation climb.

#### Mohawk Mountain State Park

79 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike, West Cornwall, CT. (860) 424-3200.

Mohawk Mountain State Park encompasses over 4,000 acres in the southern Berkshires and is used for hiking, picnicking, and various winter sports including cross-country skiing. While Mohawk Mountain can be accessed by car and a short hike, it has one main longer hiking trail – Mohawk Mountain and the Pinnacle via Mohawk Pond – that is 4.0 miles and rated as moderately challenging. The trail has an overall rating of 4.3 stars on AllTrails, with many users describing it as "peaceful" and "beautiful."

An additional sight to see at Mohawk Mountain is the Black Spruce Bog, which is located near the forest headquarters. Connecticut's official website states that, "the area was probably formed as a 'sink hole' after the last glacial period, by the melting of a large block of ice that left a depression about 40 feet deep, which filled with water." The bog has been recognized as an unusual and unique environmental sight, partly due to the fact that the specimens of black spruce and larch trees have achieved "a stature rarely found in the state."

#### Taconic State Park

253 NY-344, Copake Falls, NY.  
(518) 329-3993.

Taconic State Park encompasses an area of more than 5,000 acres and spans between Dutchess and Columbia Counties in New York. The park offers a variety of activities, including biking, swimming, fishing, camping, and of course, hiking.



Photo courtesy of:  
The Catamount Aerial  
Adventure Park.

Taconic State Park boasts many trails of varying levels of difficulty. Start off easy with the Bash Bish Falls trail, which is only 1.5 miles and provides views of the highest waterfall in the state of Massachusetts. For moderately challenging options, consider the Sunset Rock Trail, which is a 3.9 mile loop, or the Quarry Hill Trail, which is a 1.3 mile trail that is steep and more densely wooded. Finally, for a challenging option, head over to the Brace Mountain Trail, which clocks in at 3.6 miles and is very steep and rocky.

Continued on next page ...



## Outdoor Adventures

**Catamount Aerial Adventure Park**  
17 Catamount Rd, South Egremont,  
MA. (413) 528-1262.

The Catamount Aerial Adventure Park is one of the largest aerial parks in New England and features nine courses of varying difficulty. The obstacle courses includes bridges, ladders, and ziplines, and each ticket allows for three hours of climbing.

Catamount also offers a Zip Tour, a two-hour experience that includes three dual ziplines and a chairlift ride up the mountain. The Catamount website states, “Our unique braking system allows you to control your speed – race each other down our dual spans at speeds of up to 55+ mph, or take it nice and slow while soaking in the magnificent views of the Berkshires and the Hudson Valley.” The final portion of the tour is the longest zipline span in America at just over one mile long. It is appropriately called the “Cata-monster.”

**Norrie Point Paddlesport Center**  
Norrie State Park, Staatsburgh, NY.  
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Norrie Point Paddlesport Center offers a three-hour kayak tour of the Hudson River that is perfect for first-timers. The Norrie Short Tour is designed for people with limited to no paddling experience, as well as for those who are more experienced who

are just looking for a short day on the water. So long as the weather is good, the tour typically encompasses Black Creek, Esopus Island, and Mills Mansion and also goes past the Poughkeepsie Yacht Club and Bard Rock at Vanderbilt Mansion and to the Payne Mansion Boat House.

## Outdoor Museums

**The White Memorial Conservation Center**  
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White Memorial is the largest wildlife refuge in Connecticut. The refuge features birds and other wildlife in a variety of diverse habitats.

The conservation center also has a nature museum, which provides a deeper look into the wildlife and biodiversity in the refuge. The museum features hand-painted and photographic murals, dioramas, live animals, a honeybee hive, a digital microscope, and interesting exhibits such as “The Art of Taxidermy.” The

museum also has an indoor and outdoor scavenger hunt – something that is sure to keep the kids busy!

**The Trevor Zoo**  
282 Millbrook School Road, Millbrook,  
NY. (845) 677-3704.

The Trevor Zoo at the Millbrook School encompasses more than six acres, houses more than 170 exotic and indigenous animals, and is home to 11 endangered species. The zoo features animals from around the world, including lemurs, Japanese sika deer, red-necked wallabies, and chinchillas. Additionally, the Trevor Zoo hosts a variety of animals native to North America including bobcats, arctic foxes, turkey vultures, and river otters.

**The Berkshire Botanical Garden**  
5 West Stockbridge Rd. Stockbridge,  
MA. (413) 298-3926.

The Berkshire Botanical Garden is open April through October and spread across 24 acres in Stockbridge, MA. There are paths throughout the majority of the garden, making it easy to walk through and also mostly wheelchair friendly. Some of the garden areas are only accessible by stone steps, but the areas are viewable from multiple different points, so you don’t have to tackle the stairs if you don’t want to. Guided tours are scheduled daily from June to September. Additionally, the Anna and Frederick Henry Leonhardt Galleries offer seasonal art exhibitions from regional artists as well as world-renowned artists. Entrance to the gallery is free with garden admission. ●



Above: Mt. Everett. Image courtesy of Mass.gov. Below, left: Red pandas at the Trevor Zoo. Image courtesy of the Trevor Zoo.





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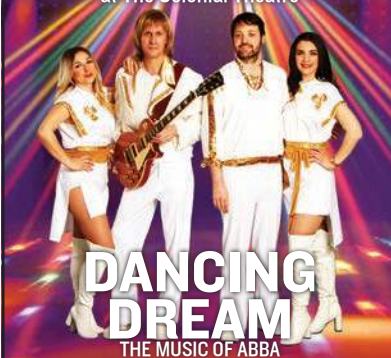
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# Read-A-Romance Month

## A DEEP DIVE INTO THE GENRE AND ITS AUTHORS

By Lindsey Clark  
info@mainstreetmag.com

You may not know this, but among the many observances and holidays in the month of August, there are two celebrations perfect for all the romance lovers out there. When I discovered that August is dubbed not only Romance Awareness Month, but also Read-A-Romance Month, I immediately thought about the recent uptick in the popularity and sheer quantity of romance novels out there. Whether this rise can be attributed to TikTok or to a general shift in perceptions of the genre, it is undoubtedly relevant to talk about these books, especially this month! To learn more, I spoke with independently published romance authors AK Landow, Brooke O'Brien, Jade Dollston, and Maggie Rawdon about their experiences writing in the genre.

### Getting started and getting inspired

Whether they were prompted to start writing because of online reading communities or a long-held hope in the back of their mind, all of the authors I spoke with had their own unique reasons for picking up the pen or consulting the keyboard. For Maggie, it began as an experiment to see if she could complete a novel for fun; for Brooke, it was a bucket list goal that finally came to fruition. However, the main point they all seemed to get across was that becoming a novelist requires a bit of a leap of faith – you just have to begin, somehow. AK

recalls a piece of advice she got from author T.L. Swan's private Facebook group for readers: "Her number one message was just to sit down and start writing. So, one day that's what I did. I was addicted from that minute on."

While Jade says that writing was always something she loved and was known for loving, she notes that her husband had expected maybe a mystery, not necessarily a romance novel, for her first book. It felt natural for Brooke and Maggie to fall into the genre, but AK didn't aim for the romantic comedy category when she began; when readers began to praise her humor, she adopted the label with open arms.

How these authors approach their writing is a story in itself. Maggie and AK write scenes and chapters based on what occurs to them in the given moment, while Jade is committed to chronology. And regardless of their authorial methods, inspiration for these novels can arise from just about anywhere: Brooke, for instance, draws insights from song lyrics.

Oftentimes, while keeping things entirely fictional, real life can be a huge inspiration, too. AK explains that her own humor and personality shines through in her work more and more, and Brooke clarifies scenes in her novels by recalling emotions she

herself felt in similar experiences. Jade notes, "I think most authors write what we know. Whether I'm thinking, 'What would I do in this situation?' or 'This character is totally different from me, so what's the opposite of what I would do here?' there's something from my own life and experiences in each of my characters."

### Establishing the main features and tropes

These influences play a big role in deciding many of the basic details about a book that we first encounter as readers. When it comes to titles, Maggie and Brooke normally use a play on words related to the novel's theme (i.e., sports-related terms). Jade and AK typically consult and collaborate with fellow authors in this effort. The process can be similarly varied for character names, which can be sourced from the brain, selected from baby name lists, or intentionally plucked from real life for their uniqueness or rarity.

The chosen tropes – ways that the plot unfolds – are also a fundamental aspect of a novel. There are, of course, many tropes that can be popular at a given moment or particularly beloved by readers, like enemies to lovers; though it is clear that for many authors, there is a balance to be struck

between exploring a variety of themes, writing tropes that they personally enjoy, and putting their own spin on tropes they know readers enjoy, too. Brooke explains, "There's something so exciting about putting the characters in situations where the passion and chemistry between them brings out the most honest and raw parts of themselves."

Additionally, Brooke and Jade both underscore the role of research in handling these themes correctly; whether it's the Stanley Cup playoffs or a life-changing medical condition, gathering the facts of the topics they're writing about has proven extremely important for accurate storytelling.

Another major decision when crafting these novels is figuring out whether the characters and stories within them will carry on into future books. After speaking with the authors, I'd say this is in large part determined by the characters themselves, whether these are side characters practically begging to come into focus or groups of characters with complex dynamics to be explored further. Additionally, it can become difficult for authors not to write more about these characters, as they can become incredibly real over time. "I love writing friend groups and found families. I won't say that I'll never write a true standalone, but I really enjoy writing a world, and a friend group and building that in the background through a series of interconnected standalones.

Continued on next page ...





It makes it hard to leave the world, though, because by the end they feel like old friends,” Maggie says.

### Curating the book's look

We might all claim not to judge a book by its cover, but often, when it comes to actual books, we do, even subconsciously. The visuals and cover art associated with a story can be a deciding factor for someone pick up a book or not, and these aesthetics are also super important for authors who want their vision actualized in a fulfilling way.

To attain the right cover art, whether through stock photographs or professionally photographed models, takes time and collaboration to find people that match the look of written characters. As the authors point out, cover designers can really bring the photos to life and connect them to the essence of the story. Brooke explains that it's worthwhile to examine market trends and consider what other books in the genre are doing to let readers get a sense of the story. While it is definitely an investment, as AK notes, and research is a key component, as Jade emphasizes, taking the time to put together this imagery and create merchandise from it helps to cohesively tie together the themes from a series, while giving fans ways to show their support.

### Doing it on your own (sort of)

These authors, though independently published, are thoroughly connected with a rich network of people who assist and encourage them throughout their writing process. The significance of these author groups and their ability to relate to and collaborate with each other is enormous. Brooke says, “I stand by the phrase, ‘It takes a village.’ It's so true! ... I lean on and learn a lot from my peers, especially those who have been doing this for a while. That's something I love about the book community, how wonderful

everyone is in supporting each other, sharing advice and knowledge, and lifting each other up, too.” Jade shares these sentiments, pointing out that social media has been an awesome way to form these friendships and gather perspectives from around the world.

Furthermore, beta and advanced reader copy teams, who read early copies of the novels and contribute their thoughts on the piece before publication, are also critical to shaping the final product. They provide authors with keen insights and refreshing angles on their work in addition to helping share their books with others.

These connections could not be more important when independent publishing leaves authors taking on many responsibilities – beyond writing – by themselves. Brooke notes that collaboration helps her to make wise decisions about her work and her writing as a business. Despite its many advantages in terms of creative control, vision, and direction, which Maggie and Jade describe, publishing your own stories requires time and energy dedicated to tasks outside of the typical authorial realm: designing, promoting, managing, etc. Furthermore, pirating and copyright issues are now rampant online. AK and Maggie, among many other independent authors, are making every effort to keep their books on Amazon, because if too many sites illegally provide their books for free – through no fault of the authors themselves – their books get removed from Amazon's site.

### Hearing from readers

With the advent of social media, not only have authors been able to befriend and support each other, but readers can now connect with authors directly through a variety of platforms. These sites have given these authors the power to promote their books and reach a larger audience via digital content. Thus, beyond being a major source of encouragement, as fans can reach out and express their love for a novel, social media has been an important mode of marketing: “I probably wouldn't have sold a single book outside of my family if I hadn't started marketing on social media. It's definitely an invaluable tool for self-published authors,” Jade adds.

Naturally, having a fanbase also means that authors come face to face with lots of feedback from readers, both good and bad. In light of negative reviews, Brooke and AK try to remember that a novel can't always please every single reader or be a best seller. Even when reviews are positive, praise can add pressure. “I want each book to be better than the one before. When readers tell me that they feel my fictitious family is real, that's extremely rewarding. I know I've done my job,” AK responds.

### Perceptions of the genre

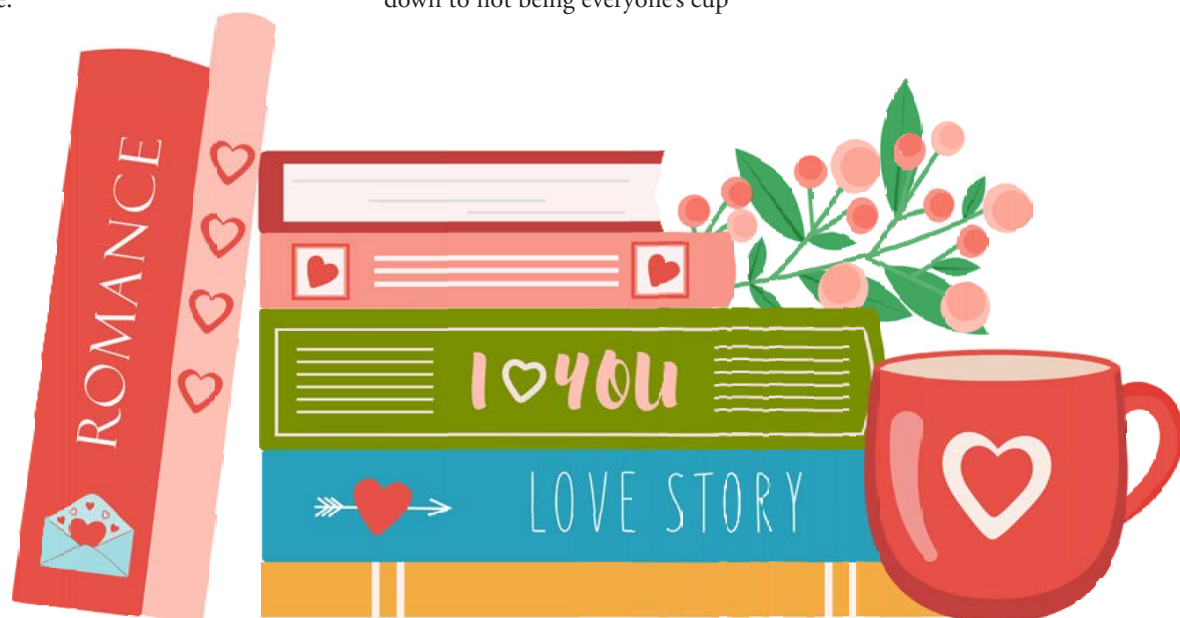
Romance novels have held a stigma for a long time, and these dismissive frameworks tend to reduce the genre to its steamier content without considering the vast complexities of these works. While it in some ways boils down to not being everyone's cup

of tea, it is significant that romance works are seen as just as “literary” as anything else on bookstore shelves. The growing realization that these books can be empowering and authentic, illustrating both real-life obstacles and actual relationship dynamics, has been pivotal to the genre's growth.

Oblong Books co-owner Suzanna Hermans emphasizes that it is significant for booksellers to engage with and be non-judgmental toward these books, as they can offer essential acceptance and understanding for many. “There is such a beautiful range of diverse stories being told in romance these days! Many of our most popular titles feature queer stories and BIPOC protagonists. It's been wonderful to see the inclusivity in these books, and it has brought a more diverse readership to the genre.” Brooke echoes these thoughts, and the importance of characters that people from all walks of life can relate to and immerse themselves in.

So, if you find yourself strolling around a bookstore or library this month, don't shy away from the romance aisle if you feel like exploring the world of fictional love. You might just discover a story worth falling for.

*To learn more and read the full interviews with AK Landow, Brooke O'Brien, Jade Dollston, and Maggie Rawdon, you can access them on the home page of our website [mainstreetmag.com](http://mainstreetmag.com). There you will also find where to connect with the authors online.*





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# About to bloom: THE HIGH ROAD

By Ian Strever  
info@mainstreetmag.com

The “high road” is one of those brilliant rhetorical turns of phrase that simultaneously depicts a useful metaphor and manipulates an audience. Politicians love to tag legislation with similar flourishes that practically guarantee passage of something like the No Child Left Behind Act, because who could possibly vote to leave a child behind?

Similarly, no one ever wants to take the low road. It's longer, the views are unremarkable, and, metaphorically speaking, it lacks character. Anyone looking to attract hikers would never name their trail “The Low Road,” anymore than they would name it “The Mosquito Path,” although that is a more accurate description of many trails.

## You build it, they will come

So although the Berkshire Natural Resources Council may not score points for originality, their name for a new long-distance hiking trail gets the job done when it comes to attracting recreational hikers to the Berkshires. The High Road was opened in 2021 with a “Field of Dreams”-style vision to build a trail network that would connect the many BNRC properties à la Vermont's Long Trail, drawing hiking enthusiasts to the area and providing a sanctuary for permanent residents. According to former BNRC President Tad Ames, the idea developed in pieces. “It's a project that we knew would last longer than our lifetimes, but that's what we're all about – conservation is perpetuity.”

The first section consists of Yokun Ridge, a section of the west central

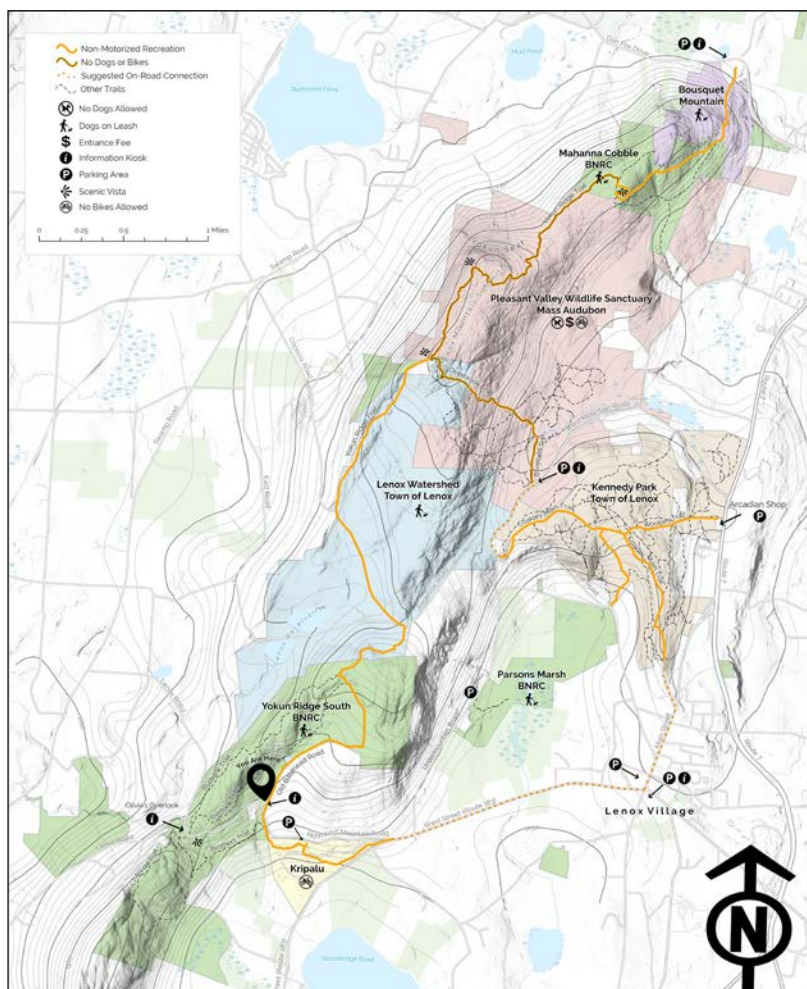
Berkshires that affords views of Mt. Greylock and eastern New York State, running south from Bousquet Mountain Ski Area to Kripalu. Along the way, the primary route passes through the Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, Lenox Watershed property, and several BNRC properties. There are several views along the eight-mile ridgeline, as well as several quiet ponds.

The establishment of the connecting trail through Mahanna Cobble after a three-year legal battle suggests that the realization of a completed High Road will take some time as BNRC acquires property and rights-of-way to link together each section of trail, but plans are in the works to extend the trail into south county and properties such as Threemile Hill and the Thomas and Palmer Brook reserve, just outside of Great Barrington.

A recent trip to the area helped put the trail into context. The overall distance of the High Road is not great yet, but the BNRC has managed to thread it through some pricey real estate and connect choice plots of open space, and it is that vision that is probably the most significant achievement so far. It must have been like finding a cloud in the shape of a unicorn when designers realized that somehow, all of these preserves might be connected with a trail system.

## And off we go...

The starting point at Bousquet is humble, yet well-marked, with signs inviting hikers not only to explore the trails but also to enjoy the on-site cafe that is open for dinner and Sunday brunch (plus soft serve, for those in



Above: The genius of The High Road is in gathering together open space properties into a walkable, cohesive unit. Map courtesy of the BNRC. Below: The High Road offers extensive views of the central Berkshires and promises to become a true hiking destination. Image courtesy of the BNRC.

need of bribes for younger hikers). Prepare to earn the calories, though, as the trail launches up the ski slope for the better part of the first mile. Once atop Yokun Ridge, however, the trail undulates southward to Kripalu and the Stockbridge Bowl, skirting some precipitous hillsides that provide excellent views to the west of Lenox Mountain. An end-to-end hike will require leaving a car on one end, but a moment's planning is well worth the

effort.

On the day I visited, mountain laurel was about to bloom – one of the wonderful but fleeting events of the calendar. Every year, I try to time some hikes to coincide with the floral display, and this year, I was a little bit early. Like The High Road, the flowers needed a little longer to come into their own, but with some patience, the display will be spectacular. •







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# Golf Yarns

By Jesse DeGroodt  
info@mainstreetmag.com

It was 1974 at the old Westchester Classic at Westchester Country Club in Harrison. My teenage self had spent the third round alternately following the fortunes of Lanny Wadkins and Ben Crenshaw, hardly household names at the time and not much older than myself, but on the golf course, they were my focus. This was my version of heaven. Prior to the round, my uncle would drop me off near the clubhouse, and for the next eight or so hours I would be free to traipse unencumbered around the grounds.

## It was Crenshaw

But now the round had, for all intents and purposes, wound down and I still had some time before meeting my uncle at the appointed time and place. And there I was, leaning against a fence by one of the putting greens, next to a table festooned with empty beer bottles, when suddenly someone was leaning there with me and, with a Texas accent, exclaiming, “Damnnnnn, look at all those bottles.”

It was Crenshaw.

Startled I was, yes. “I saw you out there,” he said, adding, followed by a low whistle, “Did you see that blonde?” Why, yes. “I’m meeting her and her father in a little while. I’m hoping she’ll go to dinner with me.”

And thus, as later noted in *The New York Times*, began the life of young

Polly and Ben, who would go on to be married for nine years. I have never been sure what brought about that interaction, other than I suppose he had to say something to somebody who might have half a clue what it was he was carrying on about.

## A different time

Let’s take a trip down the yellow brick road of golf, shall we? Oh, right, I see we’ve already begun. Onward.

The world of golf – professional, amateur, what-have-you – was a far smaller universe in the 1960s and ‘70s than today, before junior tours around the country and countless levels of professional tours. Further, the technology had not yet materialized that would vanquish the game with which I’d grown familiar and send many of its tools into museums. Let’s live in this space for a spell today, eh?

You know, or I guess you probably don’t, this whole conglomeration of words initially began life as a proposed trashing of LIV golf thing. The traditionalist side of me – an avowed LPGA fan – has sided with the PGA Tour all the way. All the way, that is, until the PGA suddenly counted the money and capitulated, whereupon it dawned on me that I had less than zero desire to crawl into that particular cesspool. Golf should be fun. None of that stuff is within a 50,000-terajoule nuclear strike of fun.

For those of us here who grew up only children, you can no doubt appreciate this. Having had a cut-

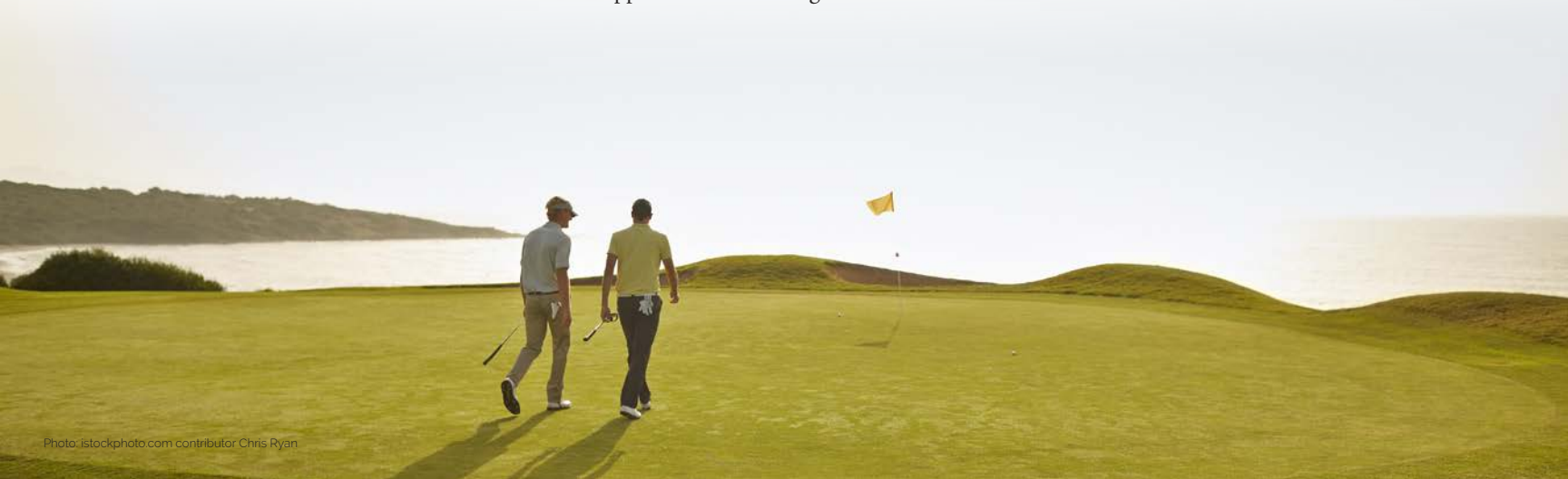
down golf club placed in my grubby little mitts at age five by my golf-mad dad – who bore more than a passing resemblance to Arnold Palmer, far and away his favorite player – and with a large, long, open field adjacent to our house, I was on my way to a full-blown golf curse. That particular patch of lawn from where I launched those brazillions of practice shots, weather permitting and oftentimes not, would, over time, find itself transformed into one massive divot, as junior here turned himself inside out in pursuit of the ultimate goal of landing himself on The Pro Tour.

## On the trail of Nicklaus

I’d staked out my spot at least a half-hour earlier, seated patiently on the grass behind the tee box at what was then known as the Pleasant Valley Classic in Sutton, MA, watching such luminaries as Kermit Zarley, John Lister, and Cesar Sanudo uncork their tee shots on the relatively short par four. Then, it was blatantly obvious he was coming, the ringleader of a thundering horde. Jack Nicklaus, in the flesh, suddenly no more than six feet away.

In the same group was Lee Trevino, the counterweight to Nicklaus’s Mt. Rushmorian mien. Nicklaus would hit first. Okay, to be fair, to call what Nicklaus could do to a golf ball back

Continued on next page ...





in those days a “hit” is more than a tad lame. Let’s go with detonation, persimmon meeting balata (okay, friends, this era predated magic balls, magic clubs golf, with laser-based measuring devices, and the whole thing becoming an industry) in a way that one need hear in person to fully appreciate.

Trevino would step up and hit his trademark uhhh, well, what some might call a power fade but most often looked like an honest-to-goodness slice. But no matter. As he would be quoted, “My swing is so bad I look like a caveman killing his lunch.” The trick is he’d do it every single time, and when one does the same thing every single time, it becomes a reliable way to go about your business. No wonder Trevino would ring up 29 career victories, including six major championships.

However, pro Craig Stadler deserves credit for one of the most humorous lines ever: “Why am I using a new putter? Because the last one didn’t float too well.” Then there was my philosopher dad: “There’s nothing like ruining a \$50 pair of pants while hunting for a two-dollar golf ball.”

### Maker of ace

For those seeking an unvarnished version of “life” beginning at a youngish age, might I suggest – if indeed you get a choice of your first job – one somewhere at a country club? Better yet, make that in the pro shop, frequently the nerve center of the operation. Oh, baby. Somewhere around here is a half-written novel that makes what might seem to the uninitiated an extravagant use of the shenanigans that go on around a country club, but most assuredly are not exaggerated in the least. No need. The wholesome *Main Street Magazine* will not be excerpting any of it anytime soon, I’ll just bet.

The 11th hole on the course on which I grew up is a very short, straight par three. This is where I witnessed my first hole in one. However, it was not a shot in the classic sense, as in beginning life airborne, landing on the green, bouncing a time or two, and plopping into the hole, but rather was a worm burner that never got more than two feet off the ground ... and into the hole. It was hysterical in its own peculiar way. Is everyone aware of the tradition that calls for the maker of the ace to buy a round for the house once back in the clubhouse for post-round libations? The author of this particular hole-in-one was, let’s say, a rather penurious chap. Ergo, he played the remainder of the round white as a sheet, all the while no doubt quietly plotting his escape, nearly ran off the 18th green, made a beeline for his car, heaved his clubs in the trunk, and screeched out of the parking lot.

### And that’s not all

It gets better. One fine day, the three business dudes and I forming our group came to a very long and treacherous par-three with a respectable-sized pond fronting the tee. One particular gentleman, who wasn’t lacking in either loot or a smoldering temper, promptly knocked his first shot into the water. Ever-so-casually, he pulled a second ball from his pocket, elaborately teed it up, again took his warm-up swings, and, you guessed it, sailed it directly into the water. Steam is now rising from his ears. He asks his playing partner to toss him another ball. Splash! With no further adieu, quite deliberately he returns to the cart, unstraps his bag, walks to the front of the tee, and heaves the bag – clubs and all – into the pond. The next day, there he was in the pro shop, re-outfitting himself prior to heading out to the first tee. Clearly a thing of beauty.

This one I’ll tell on my callow, quite-earnest-about-his-golf young self. My aforementioned dad and I played in foursomes together frequently over the years, although rarely as partners. It never stopped being fun taking him and his partner for a little



Photo: istockphoto.com  
contributor Jiyi

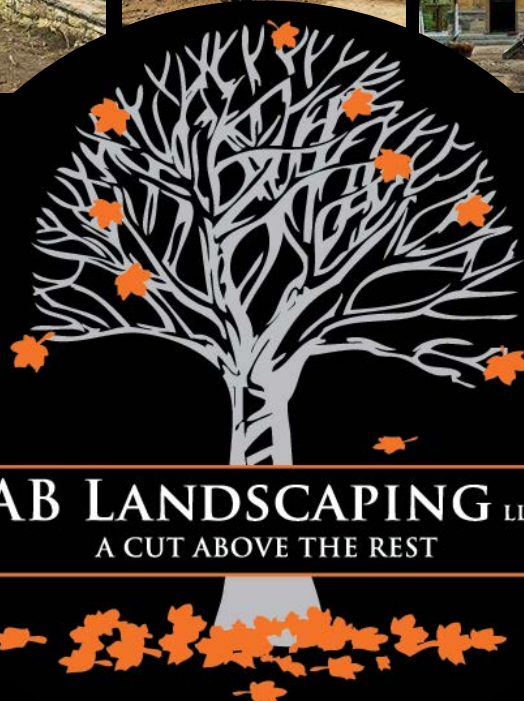
folding money in a friendly Nassau. But my dad never stopped teaching, never stopped taking the opportunity to administer some random lesson that would not only come in handy on the golf course, but also, eventually, in life in general.

One lovely morning on the seventh green, he decided he’d have a little fun by stepping in my line prior to a putt, an act, for the non-golfers among us, strictly verboten in the gentlemanly game of golf because of its possible influence on the course of the putt. I failed to see the humor. So much so that as we proceeded to the next hole, I gave voice to the notion that he’d look good with my putter wrapped around his neck. Not my proudest moment, but hey, things happen.

At any rate, on this occasion his playing partner put his arm around my shoulders as we proceeded to the eighth tee and convinced me it was probably not in my best interest to commit patricide over a 10-foot putt, and perhaps I should dial down my internal temperature.

And I learned. Yes, I’d likely be more clever the next time, but never more so than he. ●





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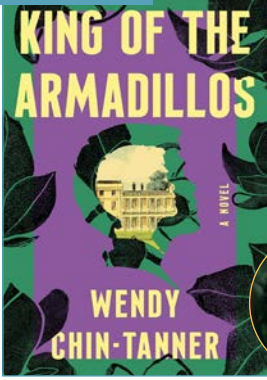
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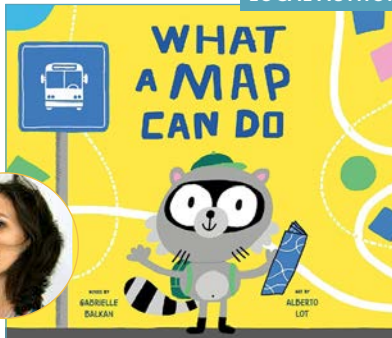
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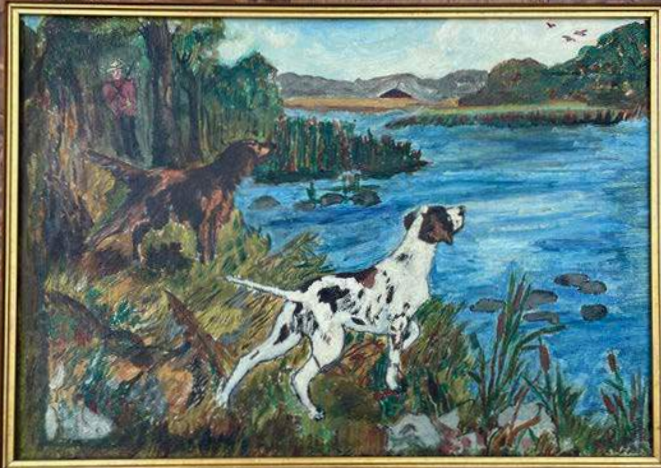


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# THE POWER AND IMPACT OF TikTok on pop culture and the economy

By Caleb May  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Social media platforms are a dime a dozen in today's world. New ones rise and fall but there is one certain app that continues to grow and grow in popularity: TikTok. Since its release in 2018 the social media platform has grown to a usership of over one billion which puts it at number five on the most-used social media platforms beating out Twitter, Snapchat, and Reddit among others.

The app is a diverse place of artistic, culinary, educational, and entertainment endeavors in addition to countless other subcategories that I couldn't hope to cover in this article. It also just surfaced on the front page of newspapers as the company underwent a large hearing in front of Congress as part of discussion to ban TikTok in the country.

## Trending now

The purpose of this article is to discuss a rather peculiar phenomenon that has been happening on the platform. TikTok, unlike Instagram or Facebook or other social media, relies heavily on trends and memes to keep users coming back for more. While Instagram might be used to document a person's life and keep up with friends, TikTok utilizes soundbites of songs, movies, TV shows, and user-recorded audio that people can create almost anything with. That is the recipe for TikTok success.

Often certain sounds, trends, or memes will go viral and have millions of videos. This means that songs that have come and gone out of the public spotlight can suddenly find themselves as the centerpiece for a new trend. *Dream* by Fleetwood Mac, *Love Grows* by Edison Lighthouse, and *Let's Groove* by Earth, Wind, and Fire saw



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Kar-Tr

huge renaissance periods after success on TikTok, with Spotify streams (the modern metric for song success) shooting up by the millions.

For new songs that come out, TikTok is a proving ground. If a song can gain traction and become viral on TikTok then the chance of it becoming a bona fide radio hit goes up exponentially. "TikTok song" has become a common term to describe a song that has either become popular or been repopularized through the app. However, beyond the music there is a different industry that is being heavily impacted by the activities going on inside TikTok.

## Influencing the movies

Last year marked the release of *Minions: Rise of Gru*, the latest addition to the *Despicable Me* universe. In the lead up to its debut, hoards of users on TikTok began to spread plans to wear suits to the theaters for the screening. Thus, the *Rise of Gru* meme was born. Over the course of the opening weekend TikTok was flooded with

videos of teenagers walking into the theaters in sharp tuxedos and suits. Suddenly, these movies were not just kid and family movies. It was cool and fashionable to see *Minions: Rise of Gru* in theaters. The box office numbers ultimately revealed the true impact. Over 200 million dollars were made in the opening weekend on its way to just under a billion dollars in total. What was once the least anticipated movie of the series turned into a box office hit.

More recently, TikTok users are awaiting a new meme to come to fruition. Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* and Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* were to be released on the same day (July 21). Both were expected to be great movies in their own right but the unique contrast of these two movies on the same day was simply too much to pass up on for TikTokers.

Soon videos began flooding in to point out the comical difference between Nolan's gritty biographical thriller centered around Robert Oppenheimer's creation of the atomic bomb and Gerwig's live-action Barbie movie whose set design led to an actual shortage of pink paint.

## Impact on pop culture and the economy

The result is too predictable. Masses of Gen Z and Millennials flocked to the theaters in order to catch the double header movie event partly for the love of the art and partly due to the immense social pull that TikTok can have on malleable consumers of pop culture.

This is not an inherently bad thing though. The success of movies, songs, and other art forms has always been swayed by what is trendy or popular. Now, what is trendy and popular is easily found in one central location for all to see. A new age has been ushered in, and song writers, directors, artists, and even politicians should be well aware of the power that TikTok can hold over their success. TikTok is more than just a place for dancing and lip-syncing now, it is an economic force. •





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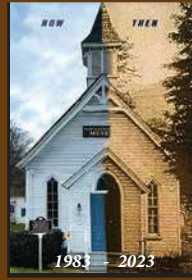


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# Relax and rejuvenate

By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

It's always a good idea to schedule time to pamper yourself, unwind, and indulge in some serenity. Haven Spa in Rhinebeck, NY, is the ideal destination for the art of self-care.

Annika Barriteau, PA-C is the visionary behind the recently revamped spa, which has been serving the Rhinebeck community for 21 years. She now serves as owner of Haven Spa and La Lume Concierge Aesthetics – where day spa and med spa services mingle to create a one-of-a-kind experience under one roof.

Barriteau knows a lot about care. Born and raised in New York, she received her undergraduate training at St. John's University before she graduated from Touro College with a bachelor of science in physician assistant studies. She then went on to complete a post-graduate surgical residency program at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx.

For nearly two decades, Barriteau has worked extensively in vascular, cardiothoracic, and plastic surgery. Highly skilled in surgical technique, she has always had a passion for aesthetics. A working mother and busy professional, she understands the stresses of life and the importance of self-care.

Haven Spa's philosophy is to treat the mind and body as a whole – to achieve an overall sense of well-being. While at the helm, Barriteau continually stays abreast of spa treatments, natural healing techniques, and technologies related to her areas of work.

This haven serves as a tranquil retreat – to whisk guests away from the stresses of life. Described as a sanctuary, the spa and its staff share a mission to relax, recharge, and refocus clients, so that they can take better care of themselves.

## Tough times

Of course, there have always been stresses in life, but the pandemic certainly ushered in a lot more chaos. Beyond the fear and political divide, the last few years have seen an uptick of mental health issues. It has also prompted people to struggle even more to balance family life and work with remote and hybrid situations and children learning from their homes rather than the classroom. In the wake of the pandemic, people have been seeking ways to relax and rejuvenate.

“What we have realized post-pandemic is the overwhelming appreciation for life. The understanding that time is fleeting and we must value our time here on earth. At Haven, our services focus on health and wellness. Our massages, facials, and med spa services are not only for relaxation, but all have a therapeutic element that feeds an overall sense of wellness,” said Barriteau.

Barriteau believes that achieving optimal wellness and relaxation should be something more people should prioritize. “Mental wellness is the cornerstone to overall physical wellness. Prioritizing relaxation gives your body moments to rejuvenate and repair,” added Barriteau.



Above: Annika Barriteau, owner of Haven Spa in Rhinebeck, NY. Below, left: You can pamper yourself – indulge in some relaxation. Images courtesy of Haven Spa.

## Anniversary milestone

Haven Spa and its team recently celebrated one year of success while under new ownership, which began in June 2022. In that time, Barriteau, has adeptly expanded the business with the addition of a med spa, La Lume at Haven Spa. She believes that this business model has created a one-of-a-kind experience in the Rhinebeck area. While there, clients can receive spa and medspa services all under one roof.

“When I purchased Haven Spa and added La Lume, my mission was to bring together the peaceful, luxurious, and relaxing feeling of a day spa and the transformative treatments of a med spa. This first year has been amazing and we are looking forward to continuing our excellent services for many years to come,” said Barriteau.

## Services list

On the menu for relaxation and rejuvenation is skincare, massage therapy, body treatments, hand and foot, laser therapy, waxing, eyebrows and lashes.

Continued on next page ..





The menu at La Lume's med spa includes Botox and Xeomin, fillers that help address deeper lines not treated with neurotoxin, reduce facial hollows and provide mild facial augmentation for a desired improved aesthetic appearance. Haven uses hyaluronic fillers solely as they mimic the natural hyaluronic acid produced in the body and decreases the chance of allergic reaction.

It also offers microneedling, which causes micro abrasions of the skin that stimulate cell turnover and new skin cell growth. It addresses fine lines, stretch marks, hyperpigmentation, uneven skin tone, and it is also a great maintenance procedure for overall good skin health. Another service is a protein-rich plasma that boosts the healing cascades due to its high concentration of growth factors. This stimulates new healthy skin cells and produces a more youthful glow while decreasing fine lines. Men's services include Neurotoxin, which is the same as Botox and Xeomin, fillers, and microneedling.

"Our signature massage and Environ facials are the most popular," revealed Barriteau. Weekly, she and her team analyze the top five services and consistently, the signature massage and skin-specific facial are the most popular.

"This tells a story that our guests are seeking us for an hour of respite in wellness and relaxation as both

services are executed in a way to target your skin/body areas of concern, but in a manner that allows you to completely decompress," she added. Each of these one-hour services is priced at \$125.

The med spa services also fit well into this wellness/relaxation category. "The need to look and feel better about yourself is so important to wellness. Self-confidence feeds our inner fire to pursue the ultimate goal of good health," said Barriteau.

Botox and microneedling are the med spa treatments that are currently in demand. These services are popular, however very unique in their utilization by La Lume. "Botox is used as a tool for skin elasticity presentation mostly. The skin is like a rubber band. As we stretch it daily with facial expressions, it loses its tightness. When we use Botox, it's to help preserve that tightness and reduce early signs of wrinkles so the skin remains more youthful longer," explained Barriteau.

Although the demographic for the med spa services has historically been between the ages of 40-65, Barriteau witnesses a trend among younger clients who are well-versed in the benefits of preserving skin integrity earlier in life. They realize that with the help of these services, they can reap the benefits in their later years.

"The rise in information technology in platforms that connect to a younger audience has propelled this demographic to our spa. These younger, more educated guests come to the spa with the goals of improved skin through benefit-rich services, results-driven products, and education through service experience and that is what we provide," concluded Barriteau.

The response from clients through La Lume has been overwhelming. Every woman has a story. They all want to feel better about themselves. They want the confidence to tackle life's challenges, and that starts with how they present themselves. La Lume helps them on that journey. •

*Haven Spa is located at 6464 Montgomery St., Rhinebeck, NY, or you can visit it online at [havenrhinebeck.com](http://havenrhinebeck.com).*



Above: Haven Spa recently celebrated its one-year anniversary under the direction of Annika Barriteau.

### Top trends in self-care and beauty

Barriteau and her team are always attuned to client needs and up on the latest in the spa and med spa industries. They've identified a few key facts that point to the future of care.

- Skincare is the fastest-growing segment in the beauty industry and is expected to continue to grow exponentially in the coming years. During the pandemic, people didn't have access to outside professionals for their skincare routines, so they were "forced" in a sense, to research best practices. On Zoom, everyone saw you as you were in the moment, and it was a time of self-analysis to watch your face in real-time.

- Skincare products, especially the anti-aging segment, rose to the forefront in recent years. Haven has created new facial services in response to that elevated knowledge, and it's seen an increase in requests for a more benefit-driven facial with supporting at-home skincare to complement it.

- Finally, Haven is in a perpetual state of education and research to continue to offer up-to-date products and equipment for its services and experiences. A few of its featured facials recently implemented are the fountain of youth facial, laser rejuvenation facial, and hydrating and brightening facial. There are so many benefits to a full-scope at-home skincare routine; however, the simplest and most important factor in healthy skin is using a daily SPF (even when it is cloudy) and drinking half your body weight in ounces of water daily.



Above: Hydrangeas and white flowing curtains welcome guests.



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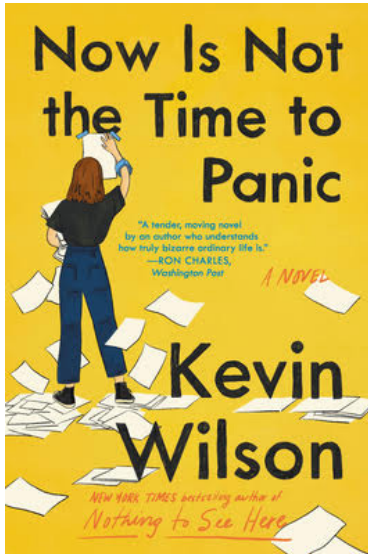
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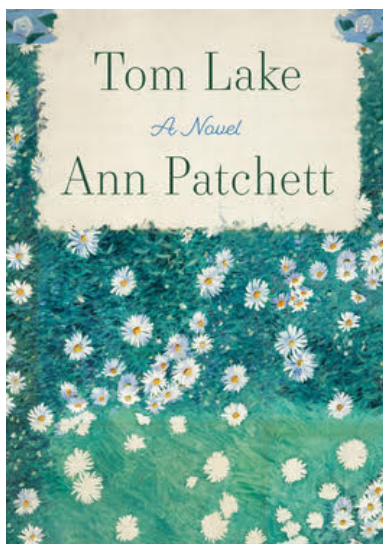
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## RECOMMEND THESE GREAT SUMMER READS



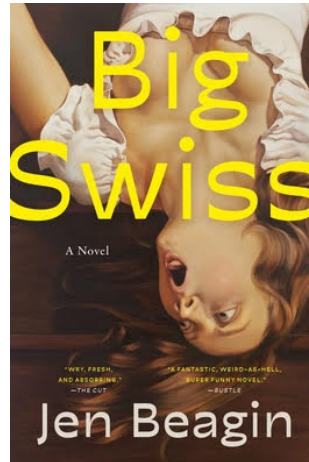
**Now is Not the Time to Panic**  
by Kevin Wilson

Suzanna says: “An act of public art develops a life of its own and irrevocably changes its creator, our narrator, Frankie. This is my favorite book of Wilson's yet. Phenomenal.”



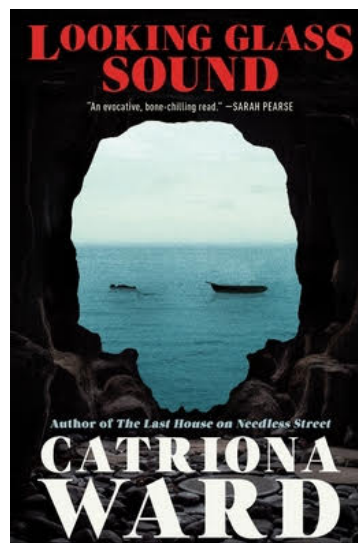
**Tom Lake** by Ann Patchett

Suzanna says: “Patchett crafts a novel here in which her main character is a storyteller – who shares the history of her love affair with a soon-to-be movie star during her time in regional theater. Just wonderful, it seems Patchett can do no wrong.”



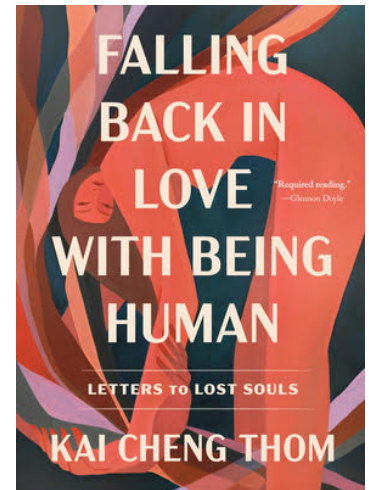
**Big Swiss** by Jen Beagin

Allie says: “This is a laugh-out-loud hilarious, incredibly clever, and spicy book. It has very open, honest, and raw depictions of these unique, damaged, imperfect, and yet lovable people.”



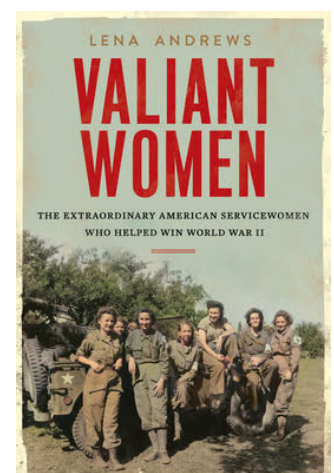
**Looking Glass Sound** by Catriona Ward

Frederick says: “This is my favorite kind of book and the kind that Catriona Ward is a master at: it leaves you questioning at every turn, flipping back through the pages to try to figure out the mystery, then rewards you at the end for being a careful reader. Catriona Ward is one of our best modern horror/thriller writers, and this book is her crowning achievement.”



**Falling Back In Love With Being Human: Letters to Lost Souls** by Kai Cheng Thom

Frederick says: “This little book is a balm for the soul of anyone who has ever been wounded or felt alone (everyone). It's raw and vital and filled with forgiveness and boundless love – heartbreaking in a way that leaves space for growth.”



**Valiant Women: The Extraordinary American Servicewomen Who Helped Win World War II** by Lena S. Andrews

Lisa says: “Engrossing, eye-opening, infuriating. This is the long-overdue history of American women in the military in World War II. Essential reading for historians and feminists alike.”



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# Making Scents



It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. While Charles Dickens may well have been talking about two cities, my tale of hope and despair is about two scents – or rather one distinct lack of scent. However, the shared moral of both our stories is that things are not always what they seem.

By Pom Shillingford  
info@mainstreetmag.com

We spend a lot of time on the visuals when planning gardens and sowing seeds – how plants look both in the garden setting and in the vase, their color, shape, height, and how they blend together. While sight followed by taste may take priority, it's important to consider all five senses to determine what makes the cut. Think of the velvet bliss of rubbing Lamb's Ear leaves or listening to the sound of the trees in the wind. And what on earth, pray tell, would a garden be without scent?

I'm inspired to ask because of two recent flowering events in my garden and how they each highlight the crucial importance of scent when planning our gardens.

## Philadelphus

The first was the bloom of my philadelphus shrub, or as it is often known, mock orange, outside my kitchen window. This was one of the very first shrubs to be planted here when I started our garden ten years ago. Certainly, it is one of the oldest surviving plants in our garden. (It took me a while to realize that recreating an English garden in the New England climate might not be as easy as just replicating my grandmother's planting plan.)

In it went under our kitchen window and there it stayed, seemingly happy as Larry, putting on growth every year and flowering like a maniac every June. Beautiful floriferous blooms – it looks stunning. A huge win one might think. Apart from one major downside.

I call it a downside to be polite. For what it actually represents is a travesty of epic proportions. In fact, I think it's fair to call it a crime – a crime against all gardeners, perhaps even all humanity! For, when purchasing this plant back when I wasn't quite so garden savvy, I was completely unaware that there existed an unscented mock orange – because why would there be? The whole point of a mock orange is its scent! I clearly didn't read the label properly – *philadelphus inodorous*. Somehow, sometime, someone had thought it clever/appropriate, actually God only knows what they were thinking when breeding this plant, to sacrifice its heart and soul, its very essence in return for more brash showy flowers. My grandmother would perfectly describe it as "all fur coat and no knickers!"

Continued on next page ...

Above, L-R: Climbers, forced winter bulbs and garden shrubs, think beyond the traditional garden flower when introducing floral scent into your garden and home.



I cannot tell you the disappointment its blooming evokes every year. The "if onlys," the "what might have beens," the whole house, upstairs and down, filled with its deep delicious scent. Balmy June evenings sitting on the terrace enveloped by its heady aroma. Snatches of it caught on the breeze at the far end of the garden. Instead? Nada, nothing, not even the faintest whiff. We've got to the point now that its show-stopping visual beauty is as good as a malicious and torturous poke in the eye.

### The power of smell

Yet, around the same time, at the other end of the garden comes a single ten-inch stem of ethereal delicacy – my first sweet pea of the season. Just one single flower and I'm in olfactory heaven, seemingly catapulted back in time to so many ages, events and places in my life. My grandmother's garden, our kitchen table at home growing up, my wedding day, lazy summer lunches.... one inhale can transform me into my own version of a time-travelling Dr Who.

How? Why? What? Because that is the power of smell. It is way beyond me to explain the intricacies of the brain and how this happens, but suffice it to say the group of brain areas that process emotions, learning, and memory also process odors. This gives smell a stronger link to memory and emotion than any other sense. Hence one sniff can immediately trigger a

detailed memory or intense emotional reaction. Thus, my unadulterated joy over a sweet pea flower – along with my sense of loss/outrage of the what might have been for my scentless mock orange.

Studies have shown that smell triggers 75% of our daily moods. I talk a lot about the mental health benefits of gardening. (Truly there is no greater reminder that "this too shall pass" than being at the mercy of the seasonal shifts of the gardening year.) So, ensuring we include as many mood-boosting scents in our outside as well as our inside spaces seems like a pretty fail-safe and easy way to tap into these.

### Problem? Here are solutions.

Aside from packing our traditional flower beds with our favorite roses (that is if you can grow them – for whatever reasons, I cannot), how can we introduce more scented wonder into our growing space? The options are endless.

What if you don't have a garden? Scented geraniums in a window box. It's the depths of winter? Forced hyacinth bulbs. Run out of horizontal bed space? Try a climbing honeysuckle. Shady area with little sun? Plant some lily of the valley. Only grow vegetables? Tell me the scent of a vine-ripened tomato shouldn't be bottled.

So, no excuses! Be it shrub, perennial, annual, bulb, or climber, don't miss the opportunity they each present

to turn your garden into a scented, joy-giving, emotion-rich haven.

I think it is also worth saying here for those of you who might consider yourselves lacking a green thumb or who get overwhelmed by the seeming myriad of elements to gardening, focusing for now on just scent could be a good way to start your gardening journey. Keep



things simple – literally a scented pelargonium by your door – and build from there. You'll be amazed how easy it really can be.

But one absolute word of warning before you start. If you see the word "inodorous" on the plant label, place it back on the shelf, turn, and run! ●

*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.*



Above, top The guilty mock orange in question - just imagine the glory if this was actually scented! Directly above: Simple scented geraniums by a garden door. Left: Sweet peas, the favorite scented flower of many.





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# ONE LAST SWING AT SUMMER...

By Whitney Joseph  
info@mainstreetmag.com

No matter what your age, no matter what your status in life, and no matter what your vocation, I am willing to do something I seldom, nay make that never do: Roll the dice and place a wager (that's called a "hop bet" for those who may not know the lingo, although I profess I needed to refer to a sports gambling glossary for that one!). My hop bet is that just about everyone reading this article – young and old alike – wants to hang onto the last whispers of summer with everything they've got.

## Younger and older generations

Throughout my 50 years (according to my 70-something-year-young bestie that makes me a babe while my still-in-their 20s nephews and nieces say that qualifies me as a relic), I have yet to come across anyone anxious for summer to come to an end.

Some of those who most cherish this time of year are school-age children. They especially relish their lesson-free months during which, if they're fortunate, they get to romp around with their friends and/or siblings, attend summer or maybe sleep away camp and make new chums, or perhaps go on sometimes dreaded family vacations that often turn out to be the best and most memorable times of their young lives.

Then there are the slightly more mature but still-under-their-parents'-roofs teens and young adults. Some of those in this age bracket may still be in primary school; others may have graduated on to college, trade school, the military, or perhaps already become a part of the work force. With today's economy, however, coupled with the attitudes and philosophies of Gen Z and now Generation Alpha, many parents are finding their children either returning

or never having left the familial home. Many find the larger family unit that now exists in many American homes a source of support (both financial and emotional), love, and learning – not to mention fun. Older and younger generations that live together may continue to enjoy their summer vacations together, which is something that many empty nesters often miss. Some have even spoken with this very writer about feeling wistful for those days gone by.

## In need of respite

Then there are those adults who have been a part of the working world for many years and are just plain worn to the bone. They – and you know who you are – work hard during the year and get few vacation days (typically two weeks, plus the standard number of sick days, a floating holiday or two, and that's about it). Summer represents a time to relax, hang out by the beach or the pool (if one is so fortunate), barbecue with friends and enjoy a cocktail or two, listen to some good music, and unwind. Although those in this category are clearly no longer children who can take a summer break from school and do nothing for two to three months anymore, we

(yes, I count myself among you!) still need a respite. The couple of mental health days we're encouraged to take during the year but most likely don't clearly are not enough in today's high-pressure and even higher-stress world. We need our summer! Even if we don't have the entire summer to unwind and decompress, even if we don't have an official summer vacation off from work, even if all we have are our evenings and weekends, we need to be able to soak in and savor whatever bit of summertime that we can.

That's because summer represents a time in most of our lives that equates to relaxing. Summer, in the minds of most Americans, I believe, correlates to being in vacation mode.

Life in a large percentage of America happens to be very turbulent right now. I also believe, therefore, that it would benefit people to take a moment to really unwind – even if they only have a day or two to do so. We hope those reading this will be able to enjoy a few last licks of the summer season, as it's such a great time of year



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Clayton Piatt

Continued on page 57 ...





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Photo: istockphoto.com  
contributor Merrimon

— especially in northeastern Dutchess County, southeastern Columbia County, southwestern Massachusetts, and northwestern Connecticut.

### Explore the area

So, with that in mind, we thought we would look at some fun activities here in the Hudson Valley and its environs to enjoy before those autumn leaves begin to fall. This region between New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut is especially gorgeous, and whether a resident or a visitor, one couldn't ask for a lovelier area to explore. Even if all you want to do is go for a simple stroll, bike ride, or swim, there are ample trails (the Harlem Valley Rail Trail can't be beat!) throughout the region, as well as local swimming spots (Lake Taghkanic, for one). Additionally, there are several fairs and activities planned to round out the summer season.

### Dutchess County Fair

The 177th Dutchess County Fair runs from Tuesday, August 22, to Sunday, August 27, at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds at 6635 Route 9 in Rhinebeck, NY, from 10am to 10pm Tuesday through Saturday; and 10am to 8pm Sunday. The rides and the main carnival area open at 11am. Tickets may be purchased at the gate or online, at [dutchessfair.com](http://dutchessfair.com) (organizers encourage buying tickets online as they expect long lines).

The fair will offer all of its usual agricultural components — always a huge draw for those from the Harlem Valley. There will be an open beef barn, sheep/pig barn and show ring, sheep barn and wool work room, dairy cattle barns, livestock show ring, milk house, poultry building, goat barns and show tent, llama and rabbit barn, wildlife exhibit, a horticulture building, 4-H exhibit hall and Think Differently! area, A Fair Shake — Best MilkShakes Ever!, Fairgrounds Café & Horticulture Crossroad, Two by Two Animal Haven, Salute to Agriculture and dairy birthing tent, Commeford's petting zoo pony and camel rides, Rosaire's Racing Pigs, horse arenas, horse barns, and more.

Then there are all of the other wonderful rides, activities, food stations and more to check out, like the woodlife chainsaw carving, the Kiddie Land & Children's Fun Zone, the State Police dive tank, a Sheriff's K9 demonstration, the Century Museum Antique Village, the one room schoolhouse and firefighter's tent, Dock Diving Dogs; Andy Rotz Wild West Show, Pawstar's Frisbee Dogs, the Cider Mill, the Sugar House, and a train station.

Let's take a closer look at the food — well, fair food is a cuisine all onto itself. The fried dough, the hot dogs, the pizza, the fresh lemonade. The gyros and the lobster rolls, the Kielbasa, the Philly cheese steaks and the French fries, the kettle corn, and the Italian ice. The cotton candy. The pretzels. Need I even mention the famed 4-H milkshakes? I'm told they also sell salads...

For more information, go to [dutchessfair.com](http://dutchessfair.com) or call (845) 876-4000.

### Columbia County Fair

Just days later, a bit further north in the town of Chatham, NY, the 182-year-old Columbia County Fair will take place between Wednesday, August 30, and Monday, September 4. Like the popular Dutchess County Fair held roughly an hour south of it, the CCF is full of family activities, entertainment, food, fun, and of course, events highlighting local agriculture.

Among the many offerings at the CCF, which is one of the oldest county fairs in the US and seeks to connect fairgoers to Columbia County's "farming roots and wholesome community spirit," according to [columbiafair.com](http://columbiafair.com), are booths and competitions featuring 4-H programs led by adult volunteers of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia County and their youth members. Some of their projects include club creations and working on and showing livestock in the friendly competition at the six-day fair. There is also an amateur craft beer, wine, and cider competition, open to anyone 21 years or older who makes those items and lives within 50 miles of Chatham. There's also a beef cattle show, where onlookers will see Angus, Herefords, Shorthorn, Simmental, and others vie for the region's best beef cattle to win the coveted titles. Then there's the famed antique tractor pull, drawing the best of local farm tractors from 13 classes competing with weights between 2,500 lbs. to 11,500 lbs. Don't let the age of these classic pieces of farm machinery fool you — they'll pull those weights and then some!

One of the more popular events is probably the Columbia County's Got Talent show, which has county residents of all ages performing their hearts out on the stage — from dance to song to comedy — much to the audience's delight! There will also be the far-from-standard exhibitors and vendors, live music, a monster tractor pull, a watermelon eating contest, a demo derby, rides, and entertainment and even racing pigs — now that's hard to beat!

For more information, go to [columbiafair.com](http://columbiafair.com) or call (518) 392-2121.

Both the Dutchess and Columbia County Fairs will take place rain or shine.

Continued on next page ...



## Lasticks of summer

While the county fairs in these parts are always sure to please, we at *Main Street Magazine* realize with so many amazing amenities and resources in the region it would be nice to share some other summer spots and events you might want to enjoy – on your own, with a friend, or perhaps with the entire family – as you relish the last moments of the season. We hope our list can help you hold on to the feeling of relaxation associated with summertime as you make your way through your annual calendar and soak in everything about this time of year that inspires you before those crisp autumnal leaves crackle and pop beneath your feet and remind you that winter will soon be on its way.



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Foot Too

## Barton Orchards Farm

63 Apple Tree Lane, Poughquag, NY, (845) 227-2306, bartonorchards.com.

Fifth Annual Sunflower Festival: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, August 25, 26, and 27, and Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, September 1, 2, 3, and 4. The Sunflower Festival offers hayrides up to a glorious five-acre rolling field with roughly 100,000 sunflowers of various sizes and colors. Visitors may cut flowers, take photos, and then come back to the main festival to enjoy live music, wine and beer, entertainment, and a variety of craft vendors. Dogs are welcome on leash, or off leash in the dog park. Open until 9pm on Fridays and Saturdays, so enjoy the sunset! The Tap Room offers 20 local breweries on tap, plus wine and spirits. There is also a Fun Park for the kiddos, with a petting zoo and slip 'n slide (so bring a towel if the weather is nice). Guests are encouraged to bring their own small gardening shears to cut their sunflowers, as the orchard owners have a limited supply to hand out.

## Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park

Entrances: Ulster County, 87 Haviland Road, Highland, NY. Dutchess County, 61 Parker Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY. Upper Landing Park (Elevator Entrance): 83 N. Water St., Poughkeepsie, NY. walkway.com.

7am-sunset; elevator hours: 9am-90 minutes prior to park closing. Number to confirm elevator status: (845) 834-3641.

The Walkway over the Hudson is the world's longest elevated pedestrian bridge, stretching across the Hudson River and connecting walkers, runners, and others traveling on their own volition from Highland, Ulster County, to Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County. Built roughly 135 years ago, the bridge opened in 1889 as a railroad bridge. Trains crossed over it until 1974, when it was destroyed by fire.

Thanks to some fervent and determined community members and philanthropists, a grassroots effort gave the railroad bridge new life, and in 2009 it reopened as the Walkway Over the Hudson. Since then, more than seven million people have walked, ran, biked, skated, or simply

sauntered across the 1.28-mile-long and 212-foot-high bridge, enjoying the breathtaking views of the Catskills, the Hudson Highlands, and the river itself along the way. Open year-round, about 600,000 people visit the bridge annually, which is not only ADA compliant but also boasts an ADA-compliant 21-story glass elevator to the top, along with trams for those who need assistance making it from one end to the other. It is easily accessed by the Metro-North Railroad for those who would like to visit from NYC for the day, as well as any others who want to come from elsewhere in the Empire State or beyond.

## Wethersfield Estate & Garden

257 Pugsley Hill Road, Amenia, NY, (845) 373-8037, wethersfield.org.

We just couldn't leave Wethersfield off our ever-lengthening list. According to its website, it is "unique in America for its inspired interpretation of Renaissance ideas of the garden." This idyllic site in the town of Amenia has much for visitors to enjoy. There's a formal garden and a seven-acre wilderness garden with commissioned statuary and trails for riding and hiking. The Wethersfield also "feeds more than 20 miles of trails for equestrian sport." Those trails are also enjoyed by hikers and cross-country skiers, as the scenic routes are known to have "hidden surprises for birders and nature

enthusiasts," noted wethersfield.org. Those who simply want to enjoy the beauty and peace of Wethersfield's meticulously well-thought-out formal garden, which is known for its interpretation of the thematic differences between the Renaissance garden and the bosco, along with the miles of wilderness and trails at and adjacent to the Wethersfield Estate, should make sure to add this to their summer sights to see list.

Wethersfield, which is a nonprofit organization, is open on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from noon till 5pm and closed during the rest of the week. Special events, such as concerts and other performances, are periodically held at the estate, as are summer camps and special outdoor activities. Please check the website or call for more information.

If you have any photos of special summer spots you visited in the Hudson Valley that you would like to share with *Main Street Magazine*, feel free to send them to [info@mainstreet-magazine.com](mailto:info@mainstreet-magazine.com), and we may share them with our readers in a future publication. •



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### Rob's Records & Audio

Curated vinyl records, turntables, speakers, and stereo systems. 286 Main St., Great Barrington, MA. (413) 854-7972. @robsrecordsgb. robsrecordstore.com

Rob Brannock first opened Rob's Records & Audio on May 22, 2021, fulfilling a long-held aspiration to offer people a welcoming, organized, and enjoyable record store experience. "When I was a little kid – I was in sixth grade – my teacher said to the class, 'What do you want to do when you grow up?' And I said, 'I want to own a record store.'" After recovering from a serious case of COVID-19 in 2020, Rob recognized that the moment was right to take the leap. "I thought, 'There's no time like the present.' I had been collecting records and selling records online for a long time with the thought that at some point I would open up a business." Now, that idea has become a reality, and the store has relocated to its bigger, brand-new location at 286 Main Street in Great Barrington. Here, you can find vinyl, turntables, speakers, stereo systems, turntable repair, and anything else you might need for your turntable, like cartridges, cleaning solution, and cork mats. Right away, the shop will greet you with a rocking sound system and an easy-to-navigate layout where you can discover your favorite new, vintage, collectible, and high-end records! When asked about the most rewarding part of owning this store, Rob doesn't hesitate to respond, "Building relationships and providing people with music that brings them joy. 100%."



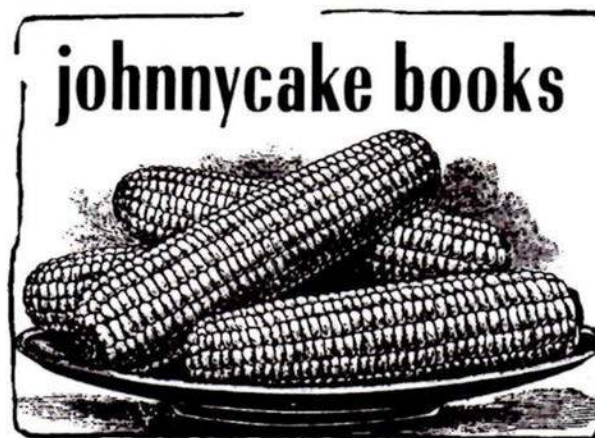
### Hawk Dance Farm

Sustainably grown food and beeswax candles. 362 Rodman Rd., Hillsdale, NY. hawkdancefarm@yahoo.com hawkdancefarm.com

Damon Clift and Diane Creed are the folks behind Hawk Dance Farm. "We started our business in 2009. It was our dream to have a small market farm, and we finally found our place after two years of looking, in beautiful Hillsdale." They explain that they sell sustainably grown food at the Copake Hillsdale Farmers Market as well as at Random Harvest store along with beeswax candles and home-made organic jam. "We also have a CSA that sells monthly vegetable shares in season." What makes their business unique is that they don't use any chemicals, pesticides, or herbicides in their farming practices. "We are not mechanized and do everything sustainably by hand. We are committed to non-toxic methods. We grow a variety of heirloom vegetables, herbs, and flowers and by doing so we are conserving the heritage of our forefathers. Our heirloom vegetables, herbs, and flowers are available at local farmer's markets, through our CSA shares, and at our farm stand. We also handmake 100% beeswax candles using only local beeswax as well as salves and balms. By using local wax we help to support our fellow farmers." They shared that growing food for people is an indescribable honor.



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### Johnny Cakes Books

Versatile collection of antiquarian and print books. 12 Academy St., Salisbury, CT. johnnycakebooks@gmail.com johnnycakesbooks.com

"We were one of the first booksellers to put our collection online in the mid-1990s," Dan Dwyer shared. "We opened our shop, which resulted from our Internet success, in 2000. Before that it had been a bookshop called Lion's Head Books from 1970-2000, and before that it was Housatonic Bookshop from 1930-1970. I offer a versatile collection of antiquarian and out-of-print books. All of the books are available here, and some are available online on my website. We ship worldwide." When asked what makes his book business different, Dan shared: "If you are familiar with rare booksellers – we are an idiosyncratic group with a lot of distinctive personalities and intellect. Each individual book on my shelves is personally curated by me, which gives it a personality like no other." He continued to explain what he finds to be most rewarding, "Whether you are a bookseller or a collector, amateur or professional, what motivates everyone is the moment of discovery of something special. When you find a book that you've never seen before or you've been looking for for a long time, that's what motivates me." As for the future, Dan said, "At the moment I'm oversupplied, so in going forward I hope I would have more discipline to limit myself to buying rarer things rather than all the things that interest me."



### Joie Maison

Accessories, clothing, housewares, children's items, and more. 2 Main St., Lakeville, CT. chrissy@joiemaison.com

Christine Tellalian is the owner of Joie Maison, which she opened in 2015. "Prior to that I managed and did all the buying for At Home in the Country here in Salisbury. We had such a loyal customer base that when it closed I wanted to continue providing the same kind of experience in this town. I provide an array of different items from children's items to women's accessories and clothing to housewares, I cover a lot of different bases. I'm open every day because I feel strongly about being available for customers in this town and the people that come to visit." When asked what makes her business unique, she said it is the personalized customer service. "I'm very hands on, whatever my customers are looking for I find it. I do a lot of shipping since we have so many people that visit from out of state. I provide unique one-of-a-kind items from all over the world." She shared that getting to see her customers and talk with them is the best part of her day. "I also get to work with artisans, craftspeople, and owners of businesses from all over the world. Some of these businesses may seem like big conglomerates, but there's always a person behind them." As for the future, Christine said, "I'd like to continue to do what I do to the best of my ability and continue to be a part of this community and this town."



## INSURING YOUR WORLD

The high winds and flooding of late have made me think that everyone needs to revisit their flood and wind coverage sooner rather than later. All standard property and liability policies specifically exclude flood coverage. There are endorsements that can be added to offset such losses, such as "water backup" or "sump pump failure" endorsements, which provide specific limits within a basic policy. Limits can range from \$10,000 to over \$100,000 should your sump pump fail and water cause damage to a finished basement for example. Another example in the cities is "backup of sewer and drains" coverage, which essentially will pay for a floor drain that is connected to a city drain that backs up into a basement and causes damage. This is an especially good coverage to have in cities with older infrastructure that fails on an ongoing basis. If you are new to the area, ask around since people will be very forthcoming if it is a usual occurrence. If so, be sure to add this to your policy. Moving to wind, we have had numerous calls asking if tornado or sheer wind coverage is excluded from a policy. The answer is that as long as you are not near a coast, you should be fine. Wind is just that, wind, and will always be covered. The moral of this story is to check your policy and add the needed coverage. If you are in a flood zone, ask your agent to get you a quote so you will be prepared should a flooded stream ruin a foundation. Getting a flood zone determination is easy and doesn't cost you a cent, so call your agent today to make sure you have the appropriate coverage.



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## Tipping 2023

As the cost of living rises, tipping requests are more widespread and suggested tipping amounts have increased. Digital tipping methods have also proven to encourage higher tips. To help navigate 2023 tipping, here are some guidelines:

**Restaurants:** It is customary to tip between 15-20% of the bill at restaurants. Be sure to check if gratuity has already been included in the bill.

**Hairdressers and barbers:** Tipping hairdressers and barbers is customary, with a suggested range of 15-20% of the service cost.

**Delivery services:** For food or package deliveries, tipping is increasingly common. Consider tipping between \$2 and \$5 for small orders. For larger orders or complex deliveries, a tip of 10% or more is appropriate.

**Coffee shops:** Tipping at counter-service is optional but appreciated. A common practice is to leave a \$1 or more, in the tip jar or box.

**Other services:** Tipping may also be appropriate for hotels, spas, taxis, and tour guides. Amounts vary by location.

Remember that tipping is intended as a gesture of appreciation, rather than an obligation and should never be a source of stress.

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## Orchid plants: easy care or difficult?

The most common orchid plant used in the floral industry is the Phalaenopsis. They come in a large variety of colors, sizes, and number of stalks. Orchids are extremely popular and provide a simple, but showy elegance for any occasion. Phalaenopsis orchids are grown for their stunning colors, large show, and durability, although durability is somewhat controversial.

Due to lack of understanding of these orchids, many people believe them to be very difficult to care for. On the contrary, they are extremely easy with just a few tips.

Orchids are epiphytes, plants that grow anchored to other plants. They absorb most of their water and nutrients from rain and air in their natural habitat. Therefore, it is very important not to overwater your orchid and to give it plenty of air circulation. We recommend a quarter cup of water (or a shot glass) only once a week. This provides enough water to keep the orchid happy but not enough to invite issues. The most common problem for orchids is over watering.

In the rainforest, most orchids grow in the canopies and shadier areas. This means that they actually do not prefer direct sunlight: in fact early morning light and afternoon shade is best in an indoor setting. Likewise, even though orchids grow in a humid environment, there is usually plenty of time between rainfall for them to dry out. In our homes, they will thrive in a cool, dry environment where you can provide regulated humidity through misting and watering. With proper care, orchids can be a fun and rewarding house plant that provides many months of enjoyment.



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## Airport travel tips

We have over 25 years' experience traveling to local and New York City airports. Whether you decide to use for hire transportation or drive yourself, traveling to an airport is one of the most stressful human experiences ever. Have you ever heard someone brag about how much fun it was to clear security and customs? Here are some tips to help you create a smooth day of travel from home to your airplane seat.

- Travel light. You will not regret it. Most corporate travelers only use a carry on, which avoids luggage delays and loss issues.
- Add an additional hour to travel from the upper Hudson Valley to NYC area airports. The traffic can be unbearable on the Van Wyck to JFK: there is construction on the roadways and at the airports.
- When you are being dropped off ask the service to drop you at curbside or in the parking lot. There is a sign at JFK that directs you to drop off in the parking lot. It is so much safer and faster than being stuck in traffic or uncomfortably exiting in the mess of vehicles at departures.
- Do your homework if you choose to park your vehicle at an airport. There is a new premiere parking level at JFK. If you do not reserve parking online, they will tow your vehicle. The cost can be from \$40-\$65 a day for parking at NYC airports. If you are lucky enough to be using Albany airport, parking is much easier on the wallet.
- Consider hiring a service to drive you to the airport. Your stress will be less because you can take a nap instead of driving. If you have a long flight, you will not be driving home from your trip tired. The little bit more you spend will be worth it in the long run.

– By Danielle Camacho

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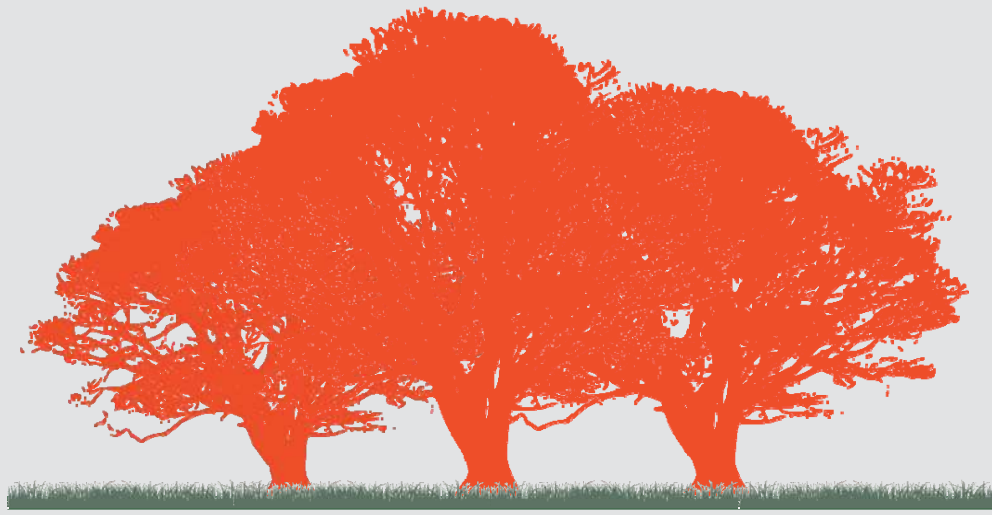
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