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ALL THE LOVELY THINGS

Did you know that we are just mere days and weeks away from the sun setting around 7 pm? I say this because as we find ourselves still in winter, we look forward to longer and warmer days. And maybe for that, February gets a bad rep. It is the shortest month of the year, and this year it is extra special because it's a leap year! Plus, February has lover's day - or Valentine's Day if you rather. The single ladies have also claimed a day, Galentine's Day. So see? February has a lot to offer. If you're one of those winter-loving folks, I'm sure you're delighted with the snow, and all winter activities. I'm personally sort of indifferent about them. I mean, don't get me wrong: I hate being cold. But hailing from the land of fire and ice, I know how to dress for the elements. Doesn't change the fact that I don't necessarily love the many long dark days with cold temperatures. The dreary days can get a bit ... well, let's just say that by the time February rolls around I'm so over them.

That all said, let's hope this February is full of sunshine and good snow for the snow-loving folks. Plus, we'll kick the month off with Groundhog Day and I have to admit that I love that Bill Murray movie. It is definitely one of my top five favorites. Hate on it all you want, but it's a classic! We'll have to see what Phil predicts this year. But regardless of what future he'll tell us that we can anticipate, we're sure to have some romance come mid-month. And of course - of course - we bring you some Valentine-themed suggestions for the big day as well as activity ideas for Galentine's Day. We had some fun with it too. Abby's penned a piece about dating in today's day and age. We've changed the names of those interviewed for the protection of the innocent and still dating. Whitney also shares a piece about divorce, because... well, divorce happens.

This February issue isn't all love and divorce though! No, no. We've got a little bit of everything, and there's sure to be something for everyone. Whether you're looking for a new recipe; interested in business or real estate; or curious about winter hiking, a local historical society, or a plethora of other topics, we've got you covered! We hope that this February is kind to you and that you stay warm. We certainly hope you'll cuddle up with a nice warm cup of something while flipping through these pages. Happy reading.

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir



FEBRUARY 2024

Snuggle up with a cup of hot cocoa, tea, or coffee while the snow (if we get any) falls around you. Spread the love and warmth this February.

Photo by
Olivia Valentine

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PUBLISHER, EDITOR, WRITER, & DESIGNER: Thorunn Kristjansdottir

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Abby Audenino | CB Wismar | Christine Bates | Dominique De Vito | Ian Strever | Jesse DeGroodt | Leora Armstrong | Mary B. O'Neill | Olivia Valentine & Caroline Markonic | Regina Molaro | Pom Shillingford | Whitney Joseph

COPY EDITOR: Viveca Gardiner. **PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Lazlo Gyorsok & Olivia Valentine

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

CONTACT

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

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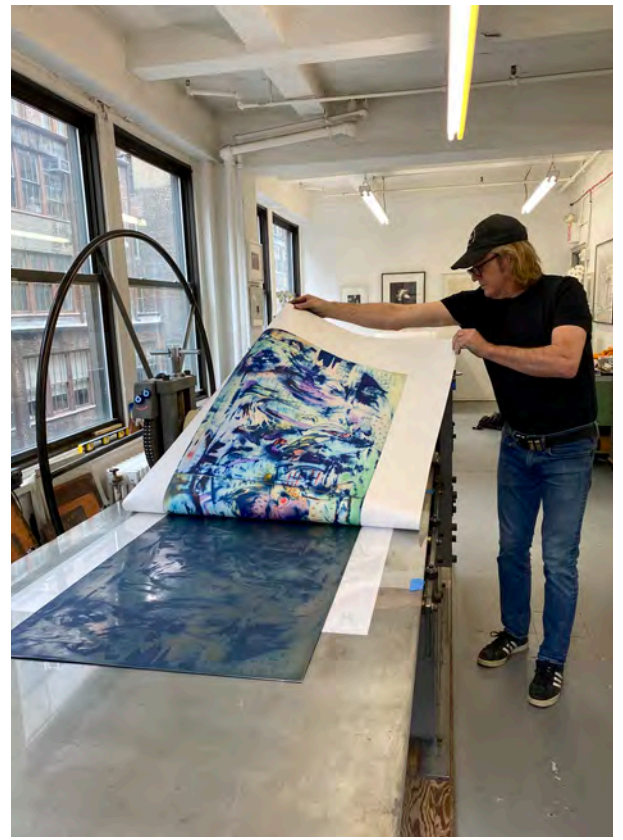
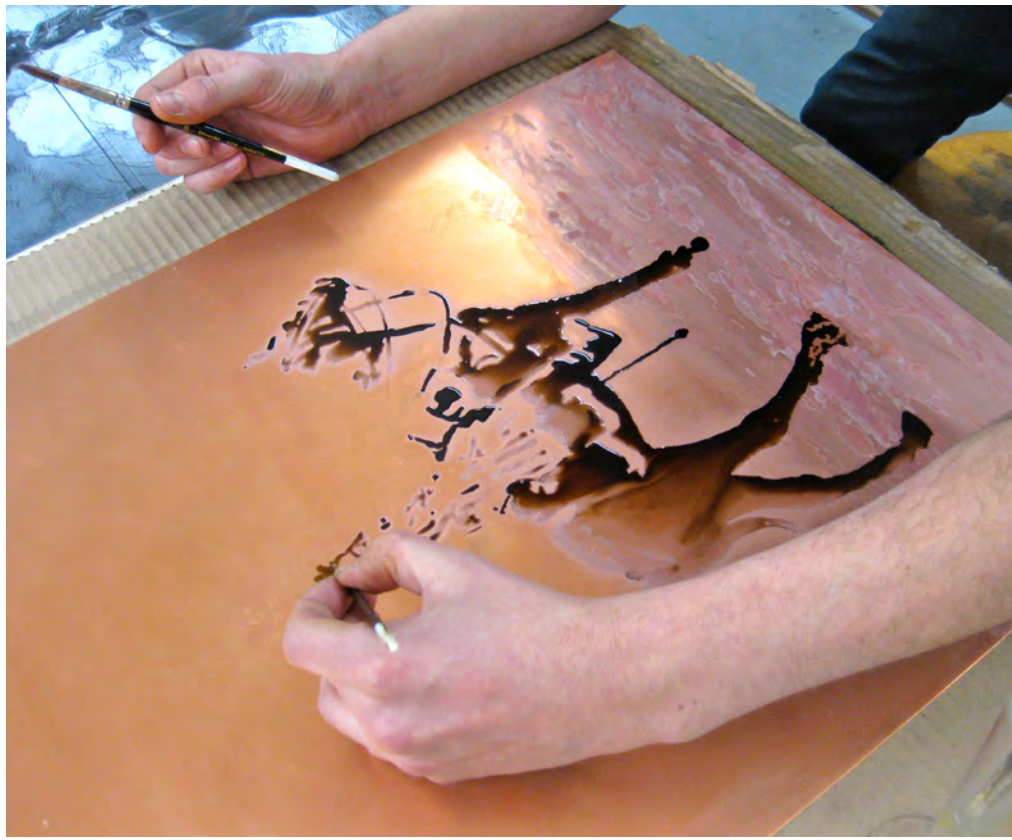
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FROM THE PLACE OF MANY CROWS

— GREGORY BURNET, MASTER PRINTMAKER

By Leora Armstrong
info@mainstreetmag.com

A line, or mark, etched onto a copper plate allows for the reproduction of images by transferring the embedded ink onto handmade paper through a printing press. This skill takes years to hone, bringing to life these hatchings, acid bite marks, and thoughts rendered by another for collaboration.

Master printmaker Gregory Burnet is a native Australian from the small town of Wagga Wagga, about a five-hour drive west of Sydney. To the local Aboriginal people, Wagga Wagga means “Place of Many Crows.” Constantly curious, his early backpacking days journeying through Asia, Europe, and Africa exposed Burnet to multiple art forms, planting the seed for him to become a painter. However, while majoring in painting and printmaking at the South Australian School of Art, he developed an interest in printmaking, nurtured by his college mentor, and became enticed by the tools, inking plates, and the possibilities of the press.

The start

Determined to be an artist, Burnet moved to the UK, where he lived in small squats in East London within a vibrant arts community. During this time, he followed a lead and was offered his first printing job, editing “some floral engravings.”

However, these were more than just old botanicals. The project turned out to be Joseph Banks’s *Florilegium*, 1771-1784, a collection of copper plate engravings, which the British Natural History Museum and Electo Historical Editions joined in collaboration to finally print in 1980. This series of 720 works originated from Captain James Cook’s 1768-1771 voyage aboard HMB Endeavour with renowned botanist Joseph Banks and artist Sydney Parkinson. This collaborative trio assembled the first Australian botanical records, collecting the original specimens transcribed with watercolor and flattened for preservation. One specimen, *Banksia Serrata*, named after Joseph Banks, only sets seeds after a forest fire. Greg’s own aged *Banksia* seed sits in his studio, like a memory from the origins of his work.

These detailed engravings were printed *à la poupée*, an intaglio printing method of painstakingly applying multiple colors to one plate using small wads of cloth, earning Greg the princely sum of £3.50 per print. Viewing the prints through a loupe reveals the intricate mark-making and minute cross-hatching along a leaf, a stamen, or seed head; it is hardly a wonder many engravers lost their sight in those early years. In this project, Burnet expressed his passion for printmaking through the crossover narrative of a love of botany and an embedded Australian history.

Next stop: America

Heading to the USA for further exploration, Burnet, a keen biker, found himself mapping the museums and galleries across the States, enjoying “his own Jack Kerouac” adventure. Ultimately landing in NY, Burnet worked for multiple small printshops, finally with Maurice Payne Print shop, where he worked alongside a unique library of artists, including David Hockney, David Salle, Robert Ryman, and Keith Haring. “I had fantastic printing experience with all the technical details of inking a plate and printing, but it was not until I went to New York that I finally interacted with living artists. Interpreting their work was the next big leap, trying to get into their heads, no longer translating the ideas of long-deceased artists.”

Burnet’s next move was a three-year stint at the University of Florida’s printshop Graphicstudio. He collaborated with Robert Mapplethorpe, Jim Dine, Chuck Close, Jim Rosenquist, and Roy Lichtenstein.

In 1991, “I took the plunge and set up my fine art publishing and printing studio Burnet Editions. Despite the financial crash erupting, I was determined to make it work and have been in business for 33 years.” During that time, Burnet has worked with numerous artists, including Glenn Ligon, Richard Tuttle, Julie

Mehretu, Richard Serra, Sean Scully, Kara Walker, George Condo, Adam Pendleton, John Currin, and Rashid Johnson. Fascinatingly, Burnet recently discovered his direct ancestors were also master printers. Thomas Ryder (1746-1810) was a master printer and engraver in London. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and British Museum both own his work. Ryder’s son also became a master printer and engraver, and his daughter married into the printing business. It was her child who traveled to Australia.

Q&A with the artist:

You must perceive an artist, their process, and work within a narrow time frame before you make a print collaboration; can you talk about that process?

There is a minimal period to interpret the artist and unearth the link of collaboration, a unique skill nurtured over the years, to immediately grasp their concept, mark-making, and the ultimate project. I gel with an artist through dialogue and their imagery, pulling on cross-pollinations of life with whomever I work with. An artistic commonality [of experience] allows the projects to remain fluid and preserves a sense of play. For example, when I interpret the prowess of Richard Tuttle, a conceptual artist, as he pushes the envelope, I pull the rigor

of technical aspects within the prints. Similarly, when teaching at Yale University, Trinity College, and Rice University, my approach to instruction, alongside the technical skills, was that I perceived students as artists coming to my studio. What are your images, and what are you trying to achieve? What is your goal? These are the stepping-stones to begin a project.

Your work hangs in numerous international museum collections, including SF MoMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art British Museum, and The National Gallery of Australia. Can you tell us about some of the artists you work with?

The last series of prints with Kara Walker, the *Resurrection Story with Patrons*, was technically one of the most challenging aquatints due to scale and mark-making. It was incredible to witness Kara’s concept emerge. Equally, Richard Tuttle’s, works are understated but intense. We were forcing the boundaries within printmaking while embedding fabric, silver or gold leaf, and wood block elements, both edgy and complex, into the paper. These intricate pieces were exacting, each series taking one or more years. Tuttle’s series – Line, Gold, Cloth, and notably the Engraving series – were initially

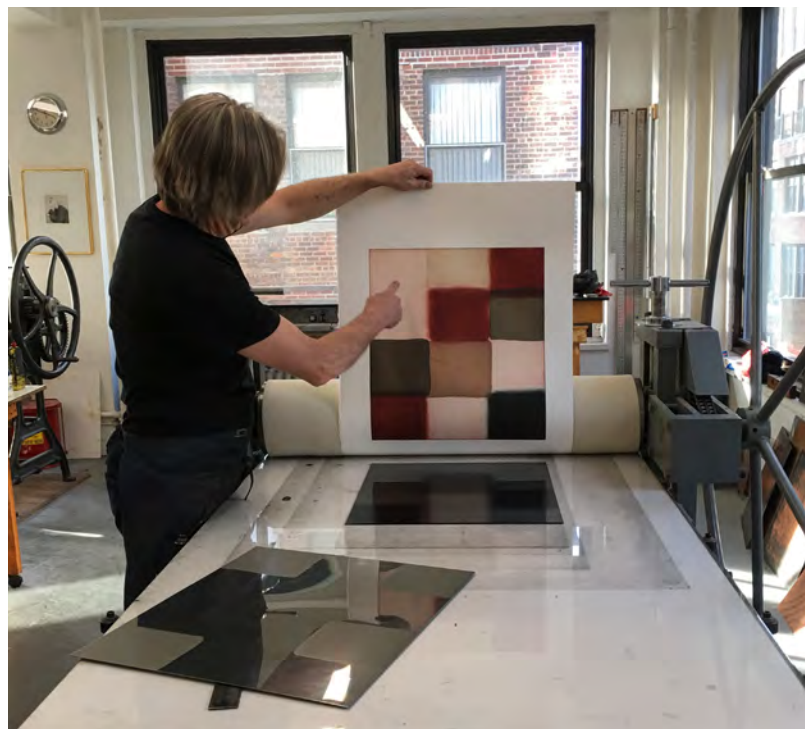


Above: Preparatory drawings and trial proofs laid out as the artist, Stephen Appleby-Bar (left), and Burnet start the collaboration process at the NYC Studio. Left: After the marks on the copper plates are established, the artist and master printer color proof the final image, before editioning. (Artist, Li Jin).

Opposite page, left: The artist Stephen Appleby-Bar, paints acid on an aquatinted plate to create tone and etch the image onto the copper. Right: Burnet removes a large multi-plate color print after its final run through the press. (Artist, Ali Banisadr).



Continued on next page ..



Top: Running a multi-plate etching through the press. Usually several plates each of different colors are used consecutively for a full color image. (Artist, Sean Scully). Above: Working proofs and their corresponding aquatint and drypoint copper plates lean against the wall before editioning begins. (Artist, Kara Walker). Right: After applying ink to an etched plate, Burnet carefully wipes the plate with tarlatan to reveal the image ready for printing.

inspired by his viewing the technicality of the earlier Florilegium botanical prints, a further cross-pollination.

Navigating Richard Serra's large prints, akin to road surfaces, while they were still emitting the essence of ink, felt exuberant. Julie Mehretu's etched copper plates use drypoint, aquatint, and engraving. Her mapped surfaces are amassed with lines, shading, and marks, equally as detailed as her expansive paintings and as challenging. Each project brings its unique narrative.

Maintaining focus on these large projects, can be intense. We often print editions of 30 or more. The process is repetitive yet intricate, incorporating multiple color plates. Still, it goes smoothly with rock and roll and a cuppa tea.

If you could beg, borrow, or steal a piece of work from anywhere in the world, what would it be and why?

I must mention Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. I love it; it is a form of religious art, otherworldly, hanging on their ancestors, stories, and dream time. I embrace the purity and

abstractness of it, particularly Dorothy Napangardi's work. It is walking work, tracing, and reliving memories through walkabout.

I admire Diego Velazquez's *Les Meniñas*; however, I would settle for the *Les Meniñas* etching by Richard Hamilton in collaboration with Picasso's printer Aldo Crommelynck; the aquatint has fantastic tone and quality. Rembrandt's *Hundred Guilder* print is also extraordinary. Picasso's *The Weeping Women* is a big, angry, dry point. Isn't it funny that what comes to mind are prints? Also, working with any of these artists would be a dream project.

What pulled you to this area from New York City?

Owning a motorcycle in NYC, I enjoyed exploring the old roads. Eventually I found Route 7, which terminates in Canada. I would ride up to Stockbridge, MA, and back regularly. Loving this area, I rented a house near Falls Village, CT, for a few years, and I finally purchased a home in Kent, CT, with my partner Catherine Harding. This home has an adjoining log cabin built in 1907, which I knew would make a suitable print studio. This building has fantastic light and a refreshing energy. I still publish and print out of the shop in New York, which is a larger space.

The Northwest Corner is a unique area. I enjoy hiking the Appalachian Trail; my favorite book shop, House of Books; innovative restaurants; and a growing art community. Now, some artists with whom I work live too far away, so the city still works for them, but I edition prints up here as well.

Any advice you can share for future artists?

My advice for any artist: Good luck. It's hard work. Try not to cry into your beer.

In the early days, being artist can be hand-to-mouth, but we are driven, and we love it. Our passion and motivation keep us on the road.

What is your next adventure?

I want to make another road trip on my bike. Sedona in Northern Arizona is on my list for Arizona dream time, with red rocks embedded with vibrating vortex vitality and sinewy trees growing out of the rocks, picking up energy from the stone formations.



Hearing this felt akin to his walkabout, as we artists often need to be with the rock, the tree, and the place. •

To learn more about Gregory Burnet, you can visit his website burnetedititions.com, email him at gburnet@gmail.com, or follow him on Instagram @burnetedititions.



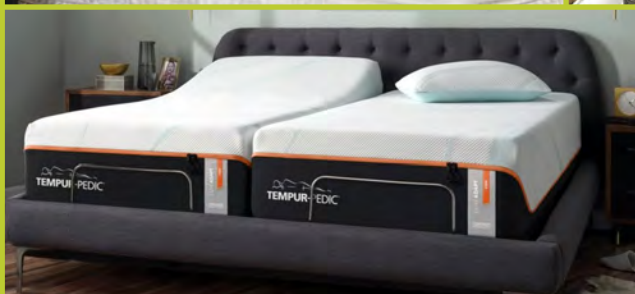
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Babette Fasolino is a professional lecturer in public relations at Marist College. “My courses generally focus on public relations writing, reputation management, layout and design, and media studies.” She has been teaching at Marist since 2009, and her favorite part of her job is “connecting with students and helping them prepare for careers in PR.” Originally from Los Angeles, Babette met her husband in college and then relocated to the area. “I love the green open spaces, art scene, and amazing area restaurants!” Outside of work, she loves to hike nearby trails with her husband, and she is currently learning Irish set dancing. She also enjoys going to visit her daughter in Seattle. Babette shared that she served as the education director at the Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck for 19 years. “We are so fortunate to have these types of resources. I hope everyone supports them!”



Jason Leonard is a chef at Willa Bar in Millerton, NY. He’s been working at Willa since its opening and his favorite part about the job is the people. “I used to come here as a patron when it was 52 Main, so when I heard that Jim and Alanna were buying it, I was immediately interested. It’s an awesome place to work.” Outside of work, Jay enjoys spending time with his family. He has two kids under the age of three, so he says there’s “lots of smiles and screaming, sometimes at the same time.” Originally from New Jersey, Jason moved to the area when his wife got a job at Hotchkiss. “It’s not quite as community-driven in New Jersey as it is here,” he said. “You get to know all of the people in the community around here. I really enjoy that. This Northwest Corner area is a tight knit group.” Jason wanted to share that folks should come to Willa for “the experience. It’s something a little different and familiar at the same time.”



Mary Yuter founded a nine-week results-oriented holistic cardiac wellness program that guides cardiac patients to recover, heal, and live life vibrantly. Mary has been doing cardiac work for five years. “I feel rewarded and validated by seeing clients reverse heart disease so they do not need surgery, they can get completely off of their medications, and they can enjoy life again.” Outside of her work, Mary enjoys a variety of physical activity, including 75 Hard, biking, hiking, yoga, and taking walks with her dog Tripawd at the dog run. She also enjoys reading, cooking for loved ones, and learning to play the drums. Mary just recently relocated to the area and “loves perusing health food stores, antique shops, culinary stores, and restaurants and exploring the Rail Trail and all of the beautiful hamlets in the area.” Mary added, “I’m thrilled to be a part of this sweet community. I would like to be a contributor to the health and well-being of its people.”



Nicholas Cote is a chef at Willa Bar in Millerton, NY. His favorite part about Willa, which he’s been at since the opening, is the atmosphere. “I love having another place besides home where I feel comfortable being myself.” Outside of work, Nicholas spends a lot of time with his daughter. “If I’m not at Willa, I’m trying to go visit my daughter in New Jersey.” He also enjoys binging his favorite TV shows – both new and old. Currently on rotation is *Game of Thrones* and the new *iCarly* reboot. Originally from Highland Falls, NY, Nicholas moved to Millerton when he heard that Alanna and Jim were buying the restaurant. “Alanna brought me here. We grew up together. She reached out and said they were thinking about buying the place, so I came up here while it was still 52 Main, got the feel for it, and said ‘I’m never leaving.’” Nicholas’ favorite dish to make at Willa is the smash burger. “It’s the best burger in the Hudson Valley! The vibe at Willa is different. It’s always fresh and you’re not going to get this anywhere else.”



Hailey Cookingham is a hairdresser at the Hair Lounge in Millerton, NY. She’s been working there since 2019, and her favorite part of her job is boosting people’s self-confidence and making them feel better. “I always say that if you look good, you feel good,” she laughed. “I love seeing how happy people get when you do their hair.” Outside of work, Hailey enjoys spending time with her family and her boyfriend and his daughter. “We like to go on fun little adventures! We’ve been going to the trampoline park a lot.” Hailey’s parents own Daisy Hill Farm in Millerton, and her favorite part about this area is the community. “Everyone really supports everybody else.” Growing up on a farm was something that Hailey took for granted. “I just moved out of the farmhouse in August, so I’ve basically lived there my entire life. It has a very special place in my heart, and I didn’t realize just how rare and special it was to have the privilege of growing up on the farm.” Daisy Hill Farm is currently running a fundraiser on GoFundMe to help save the farm.



Ryan Willette is the everything man at Willa Bar in Millerton, NY. He’s instrumental in doing regular maintenance, which can include anything from washing the dishes to stocking and providing general support to keep Willa up and running. He’s been at Willa since their opening and his favorite part about his job is the people that he works with. “There’s an energy that’s set here. We all mesh really well, we have a great sense of humor, and we work very well together,” he said. Outside of work, Ryan likes being outside. He enjoys hiking, photography, and skateboarding, which he’s been doing since he was 12 years old. “I watched a lot of skate videos as a kid, and then it stuck with me.” He was originally born in Manhattan, but moved up to the region when he was eight years old. “I love the natural beauty of this area and the slowed down pace of life,” he said.

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A serendipitous Beginning

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

{pretty to think so} – a fine farm-to-table restaurant in Rhinebeck, NY, may seem like a new venture, but there's a lot of history behind the eatery, which opened in May 2023.

The restaurant's inception was an act of "pure serendipity." Like a good book, the {pretty to think so} story began unfolding years ago when a chef, mixologist, and entrepreneur gathered on a Staatsburgh farm to create The Dutchess – a "secret" hotel and restaurant.

"The Dutchess was an interesting project. The three of us were living in different parts of the world just months before we were all brought together on this farm," said Eric Mushel, general manager of {pretty to think so}. After building a legendary experience, they sold the business to Six Senses Spa Resorts, an IHG subsidiary in autumn of 2021.

Why so many secrets? The retreat, which celebrated exclusivity, never advertised, didn't don any signage, and lacked a social media presence. The A-listers who were privy enough to experience this luxe escape only learned of this country hideaway the old-fashioned way – through word-of-mouth.

Mushel, along with chef Mark Margiotta and mixologist Madeline Dillon teamed up with London-based Rameet Chawla to build The

Dutchess. When it changed hands, this trio found that their culinary and beverage-related talents were still in demand.

The dream team

Several months after leaving The Dutchess, Margiotta, Mushel, and Dillon were busy scouting out a professional catering kitchen space for Stem + Revel, which was established in 2022.

Specializing in upscale events and weddings, the catering and event company launched via a partnership with Paulette Cole, the founder of ABC Carpet & Home, a luxury home retail destination in New York City. Cole is also the visionary behind the launch of Taghkanic House, a modern seven-bedroom accommodation tucked away on a 100+ acre property just beyond Hudson. It was built by architect Thomas Phifer of New York City.

The concept of {pretty to think so} emerged when this trio began discussions with several strategic investors in the hospitality and entertainment industries, along with lead investor Rachel Rouse, principal of Rouse + Co. Real Estate firm in Rhinebeck. They set their sights on unveiling a food and beverage business for the team to operate, but they envisioned a multi-year restaurant development project. "We wanted something that would be ours in the near term," said Mushel.

A literary beginning

Located in The Starr Institute Building, which was constructed in 1862 by philanthropist Mary Miller, the historic property was named after New York Congressman William Starr Miller. For more than 100 years, it housed a library that aimed to empower the community both intellectually and morally.

Before {pretty to think so} made its debut, the building was home to Liberty Public House. In another serendipitous event, that business was owned by Mushel's friend Sergia Rebraca. Over a decade before Mushel channeled his vision into the space, he spent a lot of time on the premises with Rebraca. "The opportunity to give the space new life was exciting," said Mushel.

What's in a name?

A "Lost Generation" of artists from yesteryear served as inspiration for the {pretty to think so} moniker. During the 1920s and 30s, writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway moved to Europe in search of a more artistically engaging lifestyle.

"Pretty to think so" is part of the last line of Hemingway's first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*. The statement recognizes that beauty and happiness can exist in a world where they often don't win the day. We wanted to offer a place where people could at least pretend they just might," said Mushel.

To honor that sentiment, the trio

aspired to create an unparalleled dining experience – one that would delight the palate while narrating a story about the Hudson Valley land and the people who nurture it. "I wanted the food to be elevated but approachable; quaint but evoke curiosity," said chef Margiotta.

A graduate of The Culinary Institute of America, Margiotta honed his skills while serving as an apprentice at his grandparents' Hudson Valley restaurant. Beyond having a hand in establishing Poughkeepsie's Brasserie 292, Margiotta also worked at Manhattan's esteemed Eleven Madison Park before landing at the helm of The Dutchess' restaurant and farm.

An entrepreneur, Mushel enjoyed foundational and leadership roles in London's technology and financial sectors before spearheading operations at The Dutchess. Before crafting the cocktail program at The Dutchess, Dillon was a member of the team at Washington D.C.'s Rare Steakhouse.

Turning the pages...

After working inside the space for nearly a year with the windows boarded up, the trio started to run low on investment capital and needed to open. "It went from a project of passion to a bustling restaurant. The project had a distinct shift from

Continued on next page ...

something that was intimately and privately ours, to suddenly belonging to everyone,” said Mushel.

After a soft opening April 20, 2023, the team found a photo from the first time they collectively visited the space. It was taken exactly one year prior to the day they officially ran a restaurant dinner service there. Another serendipitous event.

The fare

The restaurant’s food philosophy is rooted in a deep appreciation for the land, its farmers, and the ingredients they cultivate. “I love calling the Hudson Valley my home. The natural terroir of the area is very special and so is the seasonality of what we’re able to grow. I’m trying to raise as much of our own produce as I can and supplement from local growers. This is a true farm-to-table experience,” said Margiotta.

Driven by the changing of the seasons, the local bounty guides Margiotta’s dishes. The dishes flaunt the natural flavors and textures inherent in the ingredients. The team prioritizes sustainable farming practices and proudly supports local farmers who share their commitment to ethical and responsible agriculture.

A master at crafting duck dishes, one of Margiotta’s standouts is duck confit and dry-aged duck breast. His scallop crudo and seared scallop are also among the specials that nabbed rave reviews. One critic commented that it was the “best

thing” he’s eaten all year.

The only exception to hyper local ingredient sourcing is the high-quality raw bar elements that {pretty to think so} offers as caviar service and seafood towers. “I felt we were taking a risk offering dishes with caviar and truffle, but it seems we found a niche in the Hudson Valley as many people are traveling from a distance to experience these elements on our menu,” says Chef Margiotta.

Margiotta and his team take pride in curating a menu that caters to various dietary needs such as dairy and gluten restrictions. Another customer favorite is the homemade gluten-free bread. “It’s interesting how people have fallen in love with it, as there is nothing sophisticated or glamorous about it; it’s just damn good,” said Margiotta.

Libations

There’s always a seat at the {pretty to think so} bar. The restaurant’s fashionable bar welcomes guests for a cocktail-only experience or a full multi-course meal. The house accepts reservations for its lineup of 12 bar seats, as well as its tables for more intimate dining. Its interior captivates with a sleek green tiled bar that has accents of gold. On its glass shelves are the ingredients one would expect – lots of liquor bottles and elegant glasses for sipping.

A seasonal beverage menu features fresh ingredients. A collaboration between Dillon and Keshonn Hatcher, it



All photos in this article are by and courtesy of Harrison Lubin.

celebrates the history of cocktail culture and leans into classic French and French Quarter mixology.

Utilizing classic spirits and liqueurs, house-made creations such as goat cheese-washed gin and strawberry-infused pink vermouth, and ingredients such as 24 carat gold leaf, each drink is as suffused with narrative as it is infused with rich flavor.

Its signature cocktail is The M – a dirty martini washed with goat cheese. Served in a vintage style martini glass, it includes an olive stuffed with goat cheese. The menu also features non-alcoholic and low-ABV options.

“My concept came from thinking about the Bohemians in Paris in the late 19th century, the idea of finding beauty in unexpected places and surrendering to it, and this intersection of nature and sin, temptation and discovery, imbibing and revelry, and nourishment taken directly from the earth,” explained Dillon.

A Parisian-style bar experience from a bygone era wouldn’t be complete without absinthe. The service impresses with blown-glass fountains and house-made sugar cubes.

The beverage team also curated a unique wine list, with support from Angela Kahn for Bonhomie Wine Imports in New Jersey. It offers French, Italian, Portuguese, and American labels, which include bottles from women-owned vineyards.

Branding

Designer Bradford Louryk can be credited for the {pretty to think so} brand identity and for leading the interior design efforts via a collaboration with Dillon and Mushel. Local

artist Tomasz Low, who doubles as an architect and contractor, led the build process and provided additional design and custom fabrication.

Low and Mushel devoted six months to the construction of the dining space, while Margiotta rebuilt the kitchen. They received a lot of help from Mushel’s father, Robert Mushel and Margiotta’s mother, Terry Sheehan. “It was an unforgettable experience to build our first restaurant with our own hands and our own sweat and blood,” said Mushel.

The team believes that one of the reasons the space is so special is because they didn’t take influence from anyone or any place. “We’re a perfectly balanced team. We brought confidence and swagger to the project from five years of working together.”

Last notes

Even after the launch of {pretty to think so}, Stem + Revel remains a large part of the team’s livelihood. The catering business specializes in setting up remote kitchens in picture-perfect locales much like they did at The Dutchess. Margiotta cooks over a wood fire and they offer a bespoke bar menu. For these projects, the team often works with wedding planner, Monica Relyea.

While {pretty to think so} marks Margiotta and Mushel’s first restaurant, the team is working to expand into a hospitality group. It looks like there will certainly be more chapters to read. •

To learn more about {pretty to think so} you can call them at (845) 516-4556. Visit them in person at 6417 Montgomery St. in Rhinebeck, NY, or online at prettytothinkso.com.



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WARM DEEP DISH

Chocolate chip cookie SUNDAE BOWLS FOR TWO

By Olivia Valentine with
Caroline Markonic
info@mainstreetmag.com

I know we should be offering you something healthy as we are only two months into 2024, and I'm sure a fair amount of you (us included) are trying to cut back a little bit after the holidays. But it's Valentine's Day this month, and we feel it would be a disservice not to share with you a recipe that contains something sweet and chocolatey! When we think of Valentine's Day, we think chocolate and flowers. We've got you covered in the chocolate department. It's up to you to get your sweetheart the bouquet.

Quick, easy, and delicious

What is so great about this recipe is that it takes no time at all to assemble and is fairly quick in the oven. So in less than 30 minutes you have a warm, ooey-goey, yummy dessert. Another big plus, depending on your mood I suppose, is that it only makes two! There won't be a jar of cookies beckoning you to grab one or two all week as you pass through the kitchen. Another plus is that you can make this in a countertop toaster oven and, you can save a little time not having to preheat your oven. It'll leave more time for smooching!

Valentine's Day is considered by many to be a Hallmark holiday. This year, skip the Hallmark card and make this instead (sorry Hallmark). They say the way to a person's heart is through their stomach, and in our opinion, homemade gifts and experiences are always the most heartfelt. Custom make this sweet treat for your bae and add fillings and toppings they love. Reese's fan? Use mini Reese's cups or pieces instead (or even in addition to) the chocolate chips. Add some Valentine's Day sprinkles on top of your whipped cream. Go wild!

Enjoy and have a Happy Valentine's Day <3

Ingredients

3 1/2 tbs melted butter
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg yolk
1/2 tsp vanilla
1/3 cup flour
Pinch of salt
1/8 tsp baking soda
1/4 cup chocolate chunks (dark or milk)
Around 10-12 mini marshmallows (divided evenly between two ramekins)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Mix together in a small bowl the sugar, melted butter, and vanilla. Add egg yolk and whisk until combined. Stir in remaining ingredients (except for marshmallows) and then divide batter evenly into the two ramekins. Plop the marshmallows in each of the ramekins and smooch down a bit.

Bake for 18-23 minutes. You want these cookie bowls to be light golden and a tad crispy on the edges and gooey in the middle. Serve immediately with vanilla ice cream, a little whipped cream, and some chocolate sauce. MmmmMmmm good! •

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



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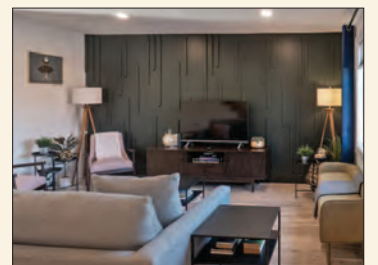
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2023 RESIDENTIAL SALES

in Northwest Connecticut towns

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

After the real estate boom years of 2020 to 2022, some buyers expected that 2023 home prices would decline. That did not happen everywhere in the Northwest corner of Connecticut. The high, low, and median prices of recent sales vary enormously from town to town. Here we examine the 2023 residential real estate market in six Northwest Connecticut towns and, just for vicarious fun, the highest sale in each town.

Overall, 2023 results in each town were affected by low inventory, which continued into 2024. In four of these towns, 2023 median sales results were lower than the previous year, but in Salisbury and Canaan median prices were strongly above. Cornwall was 35% below 2022. Prices in Kent and Cornwall have still have not reached the levels of the real estate bubble of 15 years ago.

It's possible that with declining interest rates, a healthy stock market, continued demand, and low unemployment sellers will be tempted to put their properties on the market this spring – possibly at even higher prices.

North Canaan

Laughing Willow was the most expensive property sold in North Canaan in 2023, but the least expensive compared to other towns in the Northwest corner. Stephen Drezen and Phil Fox of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty were the co-listing agents of this property and Phil Fox represented

the buyers in this \$805,000 sale in March 2023. The sprawling stone home with 4,200 square feet sold at \$805,000, over its asking price of \$795,000.

Originally built as a hunting lodge, the spacious one-story home was enlarged over the years to include five bedrooms and three full baths and four half baths on one floor. Prospective buyers responded to the home's privacy, its placement with 20 acres in the back and four acres in front, its unique storybook character, and its rustic interiors.

A total of 24 single family homes sold in North Canaan in 2023 with a median price of \$257,750, slightly below December's 2022 median of \$285,000. During 2023 only two homes sold above \$400,000. North Canaan's market low was in June of 2013, when a median priced home could be purchased for only \$112,500. The number of houses sold in the previous 12 months peaked in August 2021, when 47 houses were sold at a median price of \$252,000.

Canaan

Meticulously renovated, 119 Under Mountain Road in Falls Village on 18 acres was the most expensive house sold in Canaan in 2023. It was listed by Bill Melnick and Elyse Harney Morris of Elyse Harney Real Estate, with Elvia Gignoux of William Pitt Sotheby's International Real Estate representing the buyer. It sold for



Top: Photo by Michael Bowman courtesy of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty. Above: Photo by Sonja Zinke courtesy of Elyse Harney Real Estate. Left: Photo courtesy of Patti Guarantano of William Pitt Sotheby's International.

\$2,125,000. The 3,000-square-foot antique main house, built in 1748, was transformed with luxurious, contemporary upgrades. Two renovated slate-roofed barns added garage, studio, and office space to the property purchased in November 2020 for \$823,000.

Only 12 homes sold in Canaan in 2023 with a median price of \$719,000, a 20.8% increase over December 2022 of \$595,000. Since the low point of only \$176,000 in December of 2017, prices have steadily risen in Canaan to well over their real estate bubble high of 2008 when prices briefly reached \$576,000. Currently there are only five homes for sale, ranging from \$315,000 to \$2,126,000.

Cornwall

Narrow Valley Pottery at 299 Great Hollow Road was the highest sale in Cornwall in 2023 at \$1,680,000.

It was listed by Patti Guarantano of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty and sold by Chris Garrity of Bain Real Estate. The east section of the home was once a potter's cottage for the historic Cornwall Castle. Over the years the stone cottage has been enlarged with craftsmanlike attention to renovation. Guarantano explained that "The original kiln was turned into a kitchen, but pieces of the original potter's work remain. The pottery found the right buyer, who valued a 3,000-square-foot stone chateau with four bedrooms that required no further renovation."

Median prices in Cornwall fell to \$498,000 in 2023 after reaching their peak in December 2022 of \$800,000. The previous median price peak was \$850,000 in December of

Continued on next page ...



Top: Photo by Brian Wilcox courtesy of Elyse Harney Real Estate. Above: Photo by Connecticutphoto-drone.com courtesy of Juliet Moore of Elyse Harney Real Estate. Right: Photo by Michael Bowman courtesy of Klemm Real Estate.

2007, meaning that Cornwall, even after the COVID run-up, has still not exceeded median prices reached during the housing bubble. Cornwall's low point was \$190,000 in December 2015. Since then, prices rose slowly into 2020 until falling back by over 60%. There were only 17 houses sold in 2023 compared to 43 in June of 2021.

Sharon

Known as Mole's Hill Farm, 201 Millerton Road, an English-style manor, was the most expensive house sold in Sharon in the past three years. It was listed by Liza Reiss and Bill Melnick and sold by John Panzer and Elyse Harney Morris, all of Elyse Harney Real Estate, for \$5,482,694.

Originally built in 1809, the 5,800 square foot main house sitting on 28.7 acres has five bedrooms and six bathrooms, five fireplaces, a gunite pool, a tennis court, and an orchard. The gardens were designed by Penelope Hobhouse, a noted English garden designer, and the architectural elements, including the pool, pavilions, walled garden and obelisk folly, were designed by English architect, Sir Anthony Denny.

"This property is so special – an iconic property for this area," remarked Morris. "The land is magical, with small bridges over the stream. The greenhouse, gardens, and orchard were a big draw for the buyer."

Forty-three houses were sold in Sharon in 2023 with a median price of \$645,000, only slightly below December 2022 at \$650,000, but still above the real estate bubble peak of \$615,000 in April 2010. In Sharon the recent real estate market appears to have peaked in August 2022 at \$705,000 rising from a low of \$279,700 in April 2016. Currently there are 15 houses on the market ranging in price from \$285,000 for a farm house on Hospital Hill to a large colonial home on Amenia Union Road for \$5,000,000.

Salisbury

The most expensive house sold in 2023 in the six towns in the Northwest corner was 130 Taconic Road listed by Juliet Moore and Elyse Harney Morris of Elyse Harney Real Estate and sold by Heather Croner of Heather Croner Real Estate of Sotheby's International Realty for \$6,025,000.

Professionally landscaped with far western views, the estate on 41 acres with a five-bedroom, eight-full and three-half-bathroom main house offered not only an indoor pool but also a gym, a pond with a dock, a tennis court, a guest house, a gate house, and a multi-car garage with an apartment above.

The sellers, who had purchased the 245-acre property in 2021, decided that such a large formal home wasn't ideal for their young family, sold 35 of the acres for \$1,000,000, and put the houses and 41 acres back on the market, retaining 160+ acres for their future use. The family is in love with Salisbury community life and contin-

ues to live in the town.

As usual, the Town of Salisbury was the most active and most expensive market in the Northwest corner with the highest median price – 58 houses were sold and 26 cost over one million dollars. The median 2023 single-family-home sale was \$904,000 compared to \$817,500 in 2022, and \$715,000 at the height of the housing bubble in November 2007. Prices just keep going up – in early January there were 20 houses on the market, eleven of them asking over \$1,000,000. The lowest median price in Salisbury was in 2011 at \$370,000.

Kent

Very private, 100 Treasure Hill Road in South Kent was the most expensive home sold at \$3,975,000 in Kent in 2023. Listed by Graham and Peter Klemm and sold by Maria Taylor, all of Klemm Real Estate. In addition to the four-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bathroom house, the property offered western views on two parcels of almost 32 acres.

The Kent real estate market has always offered homes in a wide range of prices. Last year thirty homes were sold with six over a million dollars and a median price of \$502,250 – 18% lower than December 2022 of \$616,140. Over the last twenty years, single-family home prices in Kent peaked at \$657,500 in January 2011, and then fell to \$267,000 in September 2012, a twenty-year low. Like all of the Northwest Corner towns the number of homes listed for sale has fallen since 2016, when Kent had 74 homes on the market and Salisbury had 76. At this moment Kent has only four homes for sale. •

Christine Bates is a registered real-estate agent in New York and Connecticut with William Pitt Sotheby's. She has written about real estate and business since Main Street Magazine's first issue in 2013.



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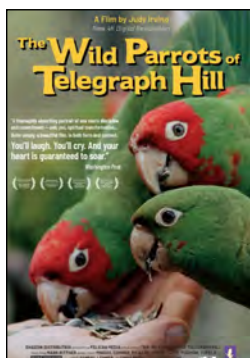


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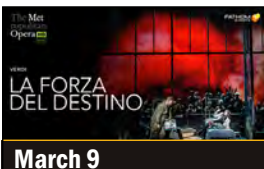


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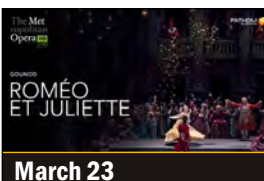


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Treasures across time at the DCHS

By Dominique DeVito
info@mainstreetmag.com

Historians understand better than the rest of us that there is nothing in the present that hasn't been in the past. For the Dutchess County Historical Society, that goes back to the inquisitive nature of Helen Wilkinson Reynolds (1875-1943).

Born and raised in Poughkeepsie, NY, from a young age she developed a deep love of the history of Dutchess County. She was a researcher and a writer, and found her life's work with the Historical Society, which was founded in 1914. Soon after its formation, Reynolds was elected a trustee and went on to serve in every capacity. She was appointed editor of the DCHS Year Book in 1921, and was responsible for overseeing its content and publication up until the time of her passing. So fundamentally important was her influence on the DCHS through the decades that a Helen Wilkinson Reynolds Award was created in her honor. It's presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to the "necessary and accurate pursuit of historical truth."

The power of local history

The pursuit of historical truth is what drives the DCHS today. Bill Jeffway is its executive director, and his passion parallels that of Ms. Reynolds. "I am personally dedi-

cated to research and publishing," he said when I visited with him and Melodye Moore, the DCHS collections chair, recently in the Society's new home on Route 9 in Rhinebeck, NY. They shared with me a statement that's also on the DCHS website about why they believe local history is so powerful:

"The things that we can see and touch awaken the imagination. Local history touches off these things that have happened on the spot; and the facts of local history become parts of a person's own life to an extent that is rare with scenes and incidents one has taken solely out of books and secondhand accounts." The historian and philosopher, Louis Mumford, spoke these words to the DCHS membership at the Amenia estate of Joel and Amy Spingarn in September of 1926.

What's the truth?

Bill pointed out that the area's earliest populations were defined by the waterways that dissect the county in all directions, and that consequently and naturally diverse populations found their homes in common places. "Dutchess County has always had a rich diversity of people," he said, sharing that it was home to the largest population of Quakers outside of Philadelphia at one time and that Hyde Park was a place where many different groups settled side by side.

"It's an area that can teach us how diverse people can get along," he said. "We have all this information, and we're always asking ourselves, 'What's the truth?'" He added, "While truth is based on fact, parts of it will always be subjective. It's people's stories that bring history to life."



Melodye agreed that history comes alive in stories and not just facts. Her passion is collections. "I love the adventure of going down the rabbit hole of learning from the objects that are here and that come in to us," she said.

Melodye mentioned with admiration and pride how exploring a collection can bring someone's life to light, as it has in the exhibition of the paintings of Caroline Clowes, the niece of Benjamin Hart. The Hart Hubbard Collection is one of many housed at the DCHS. Clowes lived with the Hart family at "Heartsease" in LaGrange, an apple and citrus business started in 1836 that operated into the 1960s and was internationally renowned. The farm is still in the Hubbard family. It was through the Hart Hubbard family archives that the paintings of Caroline Clowes were discovered, prompting the extensive project of re-introducing her work to the public. The DCHS mounted a beautiful exhibit of her paintings in the new space (Learn more at dchsn.org/fertileground).

Above: Melodye Moore, left, and Bill Jeffway, right, flank the portraits of Eliza McClelland Stoutenburgh, left, and Judge Richard DeCanton Stoutenburgh, right, painted circa 1840s. The paintings were the gift of a family member and are hung in the main room of the DCHS's new home in Rhinebeck.

Left: Bill Jeffway reviews documents that arrive unsolicited, as happens frequently and to his great pleasure. Everything that comes in to the DCHS is reviewed and evaluated for its potential for the collections.



Continued on next page ...

Persistent passions

Bill's background is in advertising, where he represented companies around the world. He understands how to bring stories to life; how to get to the heart of them, and how to share them. "I'm especially interested in the lesser-told histories and voices that aren't dominant," he said. In the Society's new home, a large central space showcases objects from collections and rotating exhibitions, and there are three digital areas for multi-dimensional self-learning that further help to bring the stories to life. Bill has been instrumental in implementing these projects, which are supported by a grant. He has also continued the publication of DCHS's *Year Books*, which date back to 1914, and published two *Encore Editions* focusing on single topics. One is on Black history and the other is Hudson River sports.

Melodye has been involved with the DCHS since 1979. She was its first executive director, a term she held until 1986. From 1986 to 2010 she served as historic site manager. She rejoined the DCHS as a board member in 2010 and, in the spirit of Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, has served the Society in nearly every capacity.

The new site

Melodye took me on a tour of the building, explaining that the Society was outgrowing its space in the

Clinton House in Poughkeepsie, which is owned by New York State. Most important to DCHS is the preservation of the collection and its accessibility to the public. The current building was an appliance store with its own family history in the county – it was owned by the Hobson family from the 1950s until 2016. There were plans for it to open as the site for a year-round farmer's market until COVID came along. By 2022 the focus was elsewhere, and the opportunity for its long-term lease and use by the DCHS seemed ideal. "It suits so many of our needs," Melodye explained. "It's visible right on Route 9. It's handicap accessible, there's a new heating system, there's a great exhibition space, and there is a lot of storage space. The stars aligned," she said.

I was so impressed with everything I was seeing and hearing that I almost forgot I wanted to include a few specifics like a little something on Dutchess County's Black history for this issue, since it's Black History Month. I had already looked at Bill's wonderfully engaging presentation on the website titled, "Poughkeepsie: A Local Path Toward Racial Equality." It's an interactive map where you can click on 20 different spots to learn about their significance to racial equality in the county. (Find it at the DCHS at dchsny.org/pet.) It's an excellent resource.



The Butts Library in the DCHS's new home gives a sense of the extent of the information the public can access to learn about any area of interest in Dutchess County - and in a cozy and conducive space.

Looking back for Black History Month

Bill gave me a book that's part of the DCHS *Yearbook 2022 Encore Edition* titled, *Writings from the past issues on Black History Since 1914*. It's over 200 pages of compelling reading. This short excerpt is from the chapter, "Separate Black Education in Dutchess County: Black Elementary Schools and a Proposed Black College," by Dr. Carleton Mabee, Emeritus professor of history at SUNY New Paltz:

"In the 1820s and 1830s in New York State, many children, black and white, did not attend school at all. Public schools were not yet well developed. In both public and non-public schools, blacks were often refused admittance, or if admitted, they might be made so uncomfortable they would prefer to leave. ...

"The earliest school for blacks in Dutchess County of which a record is available was the African School in Poughkeepsie, evidently a private school. It was taught in 1829-30 by Isaac Woodland, a black preacher from Baltimore.

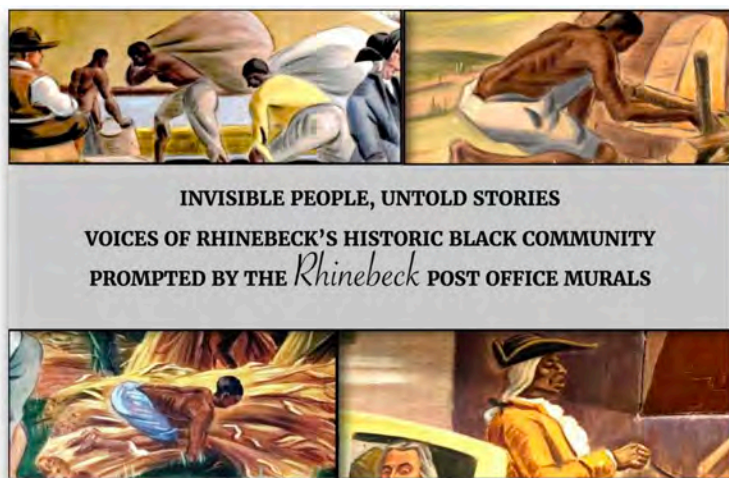
"Following Woodland, from about 1830 to 1839 Nathan Blount, a young black educated in a Presbyterian school for blacks in New Jersey, taught a black school in Poughkeepsie. ... While teaching in Poughkeepsie, Blount helped to found the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He also was furiously active as an abolitionist, being on the executive committee of

the predominantly-white Dutchess County Antislavery Society, attending national abolitionist conventions, and serving as an agent for such abolitionist papers as the *New York Colored American* and the *Boston Liberator*."

Mabee's research and writing, preserved by the DCHS, turns a time period and a teacher into a window on what it was like to be a person living a life of purpose in dangerously challenging times in our own back yard. I'm reminded of Melodye sharing how Helen Wilkinson Reynolds took it upon herself to inventory the graveyards of Dutchess County, and how her knowledge of the place was so deep that she became a go-to person for Franklin Delano Roosevelt's early builders around Hyde Park. Stories coming alive across time.

There are truly treasures to be explored at the beautiful and welcoming Dutchess County Historical Society, and on its website. Helen Wilkinson Reynolds's spirit is alive and well there, and Lewis Mumford's prophetic words will ring in your ears: "the facts of local history become parts of a person's own life."

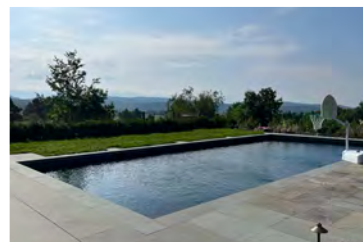
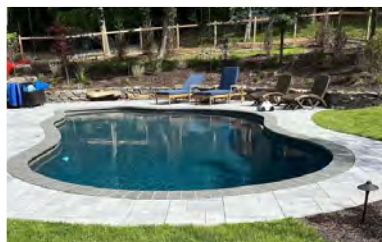
The Dutchess County Historical Society is located at 6282 Route 9, Rhinebeck, NY. It is a not-for-profit organization that relies on support from memberships, gifts, grants, and donations. Learn more (a lot more!!) at dchsny.org.



An example of a publication by the DCHS to bring history alive.

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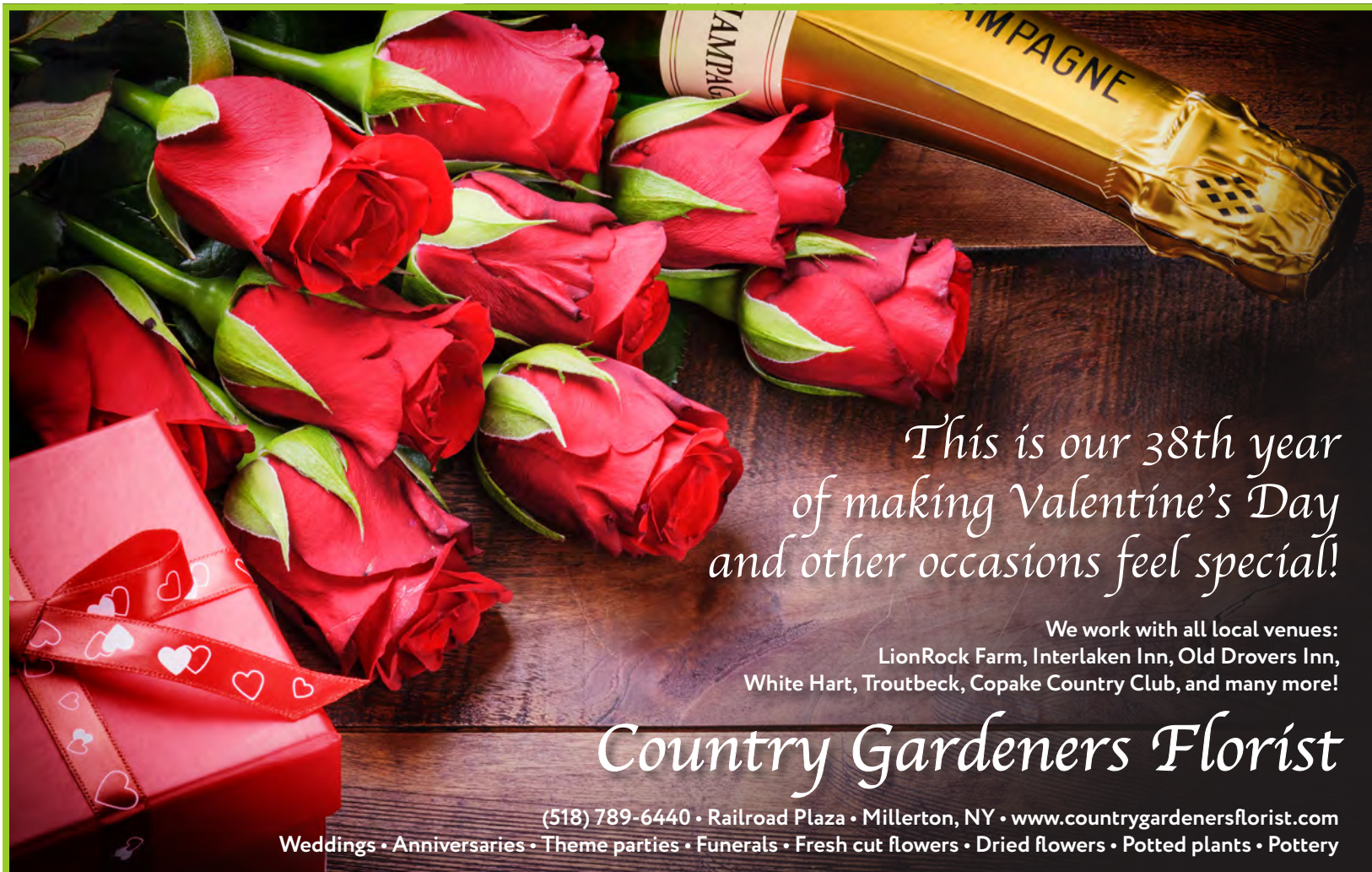
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LIFE IMITATES ART IMITATES LIFE

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

With the shorter days and early darkness of winter, the screening of *Napoleon* began as an afternoon matinee and ended as night fell. It is a long film, spanning years of turmoil and combat in the early years of the 19th century.

The “Reign of Terror” had finally come to an end and the new “rock star” of the French people, Napoleon Bonaparte, emerged to become both emperor and brutal general. Estimates of three million dead as the result of his various campaigns appear on the screen as Bonaparte dies ... and the film slides into darkness. What was the price of victory? What limitless arrogance.

Ridley Scott, the brilliant director responsible for *Gladiator*, *Alien*, *The Martian* and a list of other major films, selected Joaquin Phoenix to become Napoleon and Vanessa Kirby to embody the love of his life, Josephine. He sets their tumultuous love affair at the center of this historical fantasia, surrounding their intense conversations with battle sequences that are simply staggering in their portrayal.

There have been a tsunami of critiques and reviews about the film ...

and this is not one of them. For the moment, allow us to use the film as a springboard and our reaction to the film and its tragically flawed central character as merely the backdrop of some musings about, of all things, the New Year.

Imitations and the ego

It was Oscar Wilde who insightfully noted that “life imitates art far more than art imitates life.” Watching, absorbing Scott’s depiction of Napoleon realized by Phoenix, we wonder if a more accurate rendering of the cycle would be life imitates art imitates life imitates art ... and on and on. Once on the merry-go-round, we never seem to be able to dismount.

Exploring the mind of an individual who would willingly sacrifice three million souls on the altar of his own ego is a tall order. In the end, emerging from the theater into the early evening darkness, the effect is almost numbing. Why did no one stop him? Actually, they tried.

Exile. Driven by ego.

And therein, in the heart of the retelling, is the ember that will simply not be extinguished. After the crushing, brutal disgrace of a campaign in Russia that left 80 percent of his army dead, Napoleon was hustled

off to Elba to live in exile. And there he lived comfortably, until driven by his own ego, he decided to return to France to see Josephine.

He had lost. He had been banished. He had been defeated. He had been told never to return to mainland France. And yet, there he was with a small group of followers, moving back toward Paris, only to be stopped by an entire French legion that managed, in almost irrational behavior, to put down their weapons, side with Napoleon and begin what would end up as the march to Waterloo.

How could one individual so hypnotize the masses that with full knowledge of the pain, the suffering and the slaughter he had caused, they decided to side with him?

Hoodwinked

We came across a description of a fallen leader – not Napoleon – that seemed to provide a characterization that is truly fitting. British writer Nate White offered this summary, “he has no class, no charm, no coolness, no credibility, no compassion, no wit, no warmth, no wisdom, no subtlety, no sensitivity, no self-awareness, no

humility, no honour, and no grace.”

Napoleon hoodwinked the French army into fighting the British at Waterloo and lost, miserably. His second banishment, this time to the small, remote island of Saint Helena, would be his last.

Is there a New Year’s resolution in all of this? As we unlock the car, fire it up, and drive toward home, are there resolves within us that can make sure we do not march to our own Waterloo? Can the relentless cycle of art and life imitating each other be adjusted, if ever so slightly, that the wheel still spinning takes us in a different direction?

These are simply some whispers of ideas to share over the “early bird special” on a chilly January evening. •





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"DATING APPS ARE WACKY"

AN ANALYSIS OF MODERN DATING

By Abby Audenino
abby@mainstreetmag.com

For the protection of those still dating, all names in this article have been changed.

There's no denying that dating has changed. With everything moving online, it's become increasingly difficult to meet potential partners in person. Sure, perhaps you can still meet people in bars, through mutual friends, and at other kinds of events, but dating in the modern age almost requires that you join at least one – if not multiple – of the dating apps. It begs the question, in what ways has dating changed? In what ways has it remained fundamentally the same? We spoke to some folks who are still dating and one couple that has been married for over ten years to get their experiences and opinions on modern dating.

Modern-day dating terminology

Before we get started analyzing the way dating has changed, we first have to do a quick crash course on the modern day dating terms that are going to be used throughout this piece.

Ghosting is the practice of ending a relationship suddenly and without explanation by cutting off all communication.

Breadcrumbing is the practice of feigning interest in another person and having a relationship with them even when though you aren't actually interested. Breadcrumbing is very similar to leading someone on and giving them the impression that there is a deeper level of interest than there really is.

Situationships are romantic or sexual relationships that aren't exclusive, even though one partner usually wants it to be. *The New York Times* states that situationships are "a way for one party to enjoy the perks of a relationship without the associated accountability."

Love bombing is sending "compliments, gifts, and other gestures of affection without a promise of exclusivity," per *The New York Times*. Love bombing is typically done early on in a relationship, typically while two people are still in a "talking stage" and not yet exclusive.

Dating then

Can you believe that back in the olden days you actually had to – gasp – meet people in real life? Sounds horrendous.

Technology has progressed so rapidly in recent years that it's hard to remember what life was like without it. Certainly since the pandemic, technology has become so ingrained in our day-to-day lives that we rely on our phones to connect us to people in a variety of ways.

But in the 2000s and prior, you had to meet people face-to-face and hold a conversation with them. It's awfully hard to ghost someone who's standing right in front of you.

Jill and Jack, ages 34 and 36, met while they were in high school in 2006 and celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary this past year.

"We had homeroom together at school, so that's where we met. We ended up getting each others' screen names on AIM and he asked me out

on a date, so I guess technology did play a role in our relationship," Jill said.

Dates for Jill and Jack consisted of going to the movies and visiting the Kingston mall. They spoke on the phone a lot but mostly saw one another in person. "We didn't text much because back then, texting cost minutes," she laughed.

They did, however, talk frequently on AIM. "It was texting before texting really existed," Jack said.

Case studies in modern dating

Debra, age 21

Debra, currently a senior in college, mainly meets people through dating apps, classes, and parties. She is active on both Tinder and Hinge, but said that dating apps have made her "a little brain dead."

"We're living in an era of self-importance and validation," she explained. "I've caught myself going on Tinder just to check my matches so that I can feel that sense of validation. Sometimes my friends and I airplay our phone screens onto the TV and we 'play' Tinder and swipe through the options as a group. In that way, it feels like a game."

Debra said that she's found herself creating preconceived notions about people she's only recently started

Continued on page 31 ...

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texting, as well as overthinking and questioning behaviors.

"There was one guy that I went on three dates with, and we didn't text or message much except to make plans. That was totally fine and normal, but I found myself questioning whether or not he cared or was really interested in me because we were seeing each other in person rather than messaging on our phones all the time," she said.

Things went relatively well, but after a few dates, Debra felt like they weren't really clicking and decided to end things.

In a different situation, she matched with a man who lived about an hour away from where she was. They immediately hit it off via text and found themselves talking constantly, joking, and even following one another on social media platforms. "We kept joking that we were love bombing one another and were going to end up ghosting each other," she said.

After about three weeks of talking, they got together for a date. While she had a good time, she decided that it was time to ask the hard questions: "What are we?"

"I was like okay, enough beating around the bush. It's time for clear communication," she said. "I was ready to be exclusive, but it turned out that he had a bad experience with long-distance and didn't want to do that again."

Debra said that she was honest with him and shared that that wasn't going to be enough for her, as she was looking for an exclusive relationship. They ended very cordially, with both respecting the other's perspective.

She very easily could have looked at this experience as wasted time, but Debra chooses to believe that each of her dating experiences have served a purpose. "It's been positive for the development that it's given me personally. Each experience taught me something about myself. The more you put yourself out there, the more you respect yourself, and you're able to develop expectations going forward."

Debra said that her experiences have given her a point of reference for dating in the future. Now, she's able to look back on experiences she's had, recognize what she liked and disliked about her previous partners, and formulate what she wants going forward.

She's also created a new benchmark for herself as it pertains to dating as well. "If I haven't met you in person, I'm not going to be crying over you or dramatizing the connection."

Will, age 20

Will's experiences are a bit different, as he is no longer on dating apps and isn't actively seeking a relationship. A sophomore in college, Will said that he used Tinder and Bumble during his freshman year, but has since stopped using both.

"I think we're in this weird transition period where the older generations grew up actually talking to people, while the younger generations have been on their phones their entire lives," he said. "Dating apps are wacky."

Similarly to Debra, Will shared that he and his friends have also "played Tinder" or one of the other apps and swipe through matches as a group when they're bored. "It makes



you boil people down to one thing and dismiss them really quickly," Will said. "If you meet people in person and you have conversations with them, I don't think you judge them as quickly as you do on the apps."

Will primarily meets people through his classes at school and through mutual friends. So far, he's found dating to be more on the difficult side.

"I'm not actively seeking a relationship right now, so I'm not going on dates at the moment, but from what my friends have said, it sounds incredibly difficult," he said. "One of my friends was talking to this girl and found out that she was talking to five other people, so it's hard to know what people's intentions are. Everyone is looking for something different."

Linda, age 49

Linda was initially resistant to dating apps but has since acquiesced and found them to be quite successful.

"When I was in my 20s, people were still putting personal ads in the paper for dating. I always had a negative connotation with that and felt like it had this air of desperation," she said. "When the apps first came out,



Continued on next page ...

I was very against them for that same reason, but now it's just standard operating procedure and I'm okay with it."

Linda has previously been active on Tinder and Hinge but currently only uses Bumble. She says that apps are the primary way that she meets people now.

While she says that apps might make some people more dismissive, she believes that the level of dismissiveness depends on the person. "I've found that when I'm a little more open-minded about people and not dismissive of them based on a couple of pictures and a few sentences on a profile, I meet some really nice people," she said. "You just have to give people a chance. Have an open heart. I've found that most people are good."

She does note that the apps are based on appearances, which makes it difficult not to judge a book by its cover. "It takes away the ability to meet someone that you might not necessarily find physically attractive, but once you start talking to them, you're attracted to their personality," she explained. It's difficult to do that on apps, since physical appearance is the first thing that people are judged by their dating profile.

Linda has witnessed dating change throughout the years but also said that it's remained the same in many ways. "I think that when you know yourself and you know what you want, you're naturally attracted and drawn to people who are going to provide that for you on multiple levels. In that context, I don't necessarily think that dating has changed that much."

However, she's noticed that there's been a trend towards non-monogamy and casual dating. "For me, it's just not really something I'd ever be interested in. I also think that it's so ingrained in us as women not to date multiple people at the same time and to be committed to a relationship that the idea of non-monogamy is just incomprehensible to me," she said.

Linda also believes that dating changes as you age. When she was in her 20s, she wasn't necessarily searching for a life partner, so in many ways, she was more open to dating different people because she wasn't hyper-focused on the relationship working out long term.

"Then you hit your 30s and as a woman, the whole 'biological clock' thing definitely starts affecting dating," she said. "It's not necessarily for the better, either, because there is this undercurrent of how if you're going to have kids, then you have to meet someone soon. I think that can negatively affect finding partners because women sometimes settle with someone who maybe isn't the

her relationships.

"I think I was always so concerned about whether or not they liked *me* that I never really considered if I even liked *them*," she said. "Now, I may still get bummed when it doesn't work out or a bruised ego if they don't like me, but I'm proud of myself for asking direct questions and staying true to my values even though I may lose the guy because of it."

Thoughts on modern dating

Will thinks that sometimes ghosting is necessary. "There are definite reasons to just stop texting someone. I think you have to take it with a grain of salt and consider whether or not you said something that caused that person to

story. Will described it aptly: "Situationships are like communism. If you see the collective spirit, patriotism, and uniting towards a common goal, it seems great on paper, but it's almost always corrupted in practice. I'm not someone who can partake in a situation like that without developing feelings or getting attached. Too often friends-with-benefits and situationships can turn out awfully for at least one person, if not both."

However, Will believes that the accepting nature of dating today has opened up the ability for people to have different kinds of relationships that were previously deemed "weird" or "unacceptable." This claim is perhaps supported by the number of "ethical non-monogamists" that Linda has been seeing on her dating apps in recent months.

Jill and Jack agreed that their relationship is built on respect and communication, which is something that they think is sorely lacking in the dating world today. "People always think that the grass is greener somewhere else and they take for granted what they have," Jack said. "There's no respect in general. Jill and I never argue about anything and there's no animosity because we communicate openly."

Jill agreed. "I would be scared to death to date in this day and age," she laughed. "The thing I admire most about our relationship is the amount of respect we have for each other. I admire how hardworking he is and how he takes care of our family. He always puts our family first. I genuinely wish that all the ladies can find their own Jack."

Final thoughts

The outlook seems rather bleak, with many folks becoming overwhelmed with the process of dating. However, both dating and technology will continue to evolve as they always have, and perhaps they will bring about a better system for meeting potential partners. Until then, whether you're finding people face-to-face or through the apps, good luck. •



right person for them long-term just because they're running out of time to have children."

Linda never had children, and she found that while she was dating in her 30s, there was a lack of suitable partners because many people had already coupled up.

"Then you hit your 40s, and it's like a whole new world because everyone's gotten divorced," she mused. "As a woman, you're past the point of having to worry about having children too, so that pressure is gone. It was incredibly liberating for me personally."

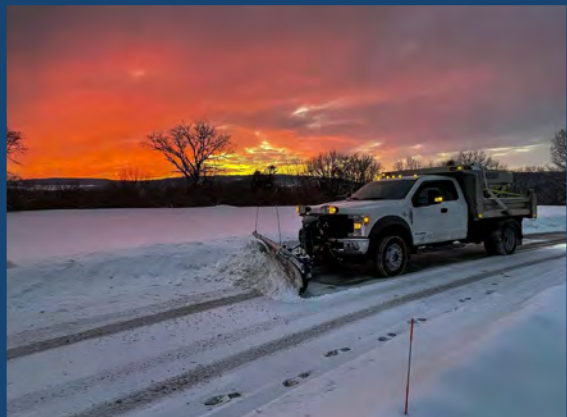
Linda shared that when she was younger, she let her partners get away with more and spent more time hoping that they would change, rather than putting her own needs first and championing communication within

cut you off or lose interest," he said. "But if everything is going well, and they completely cut you off without giving you an explanation, that's not cool."

Linda previously thought that ghosting was necessary, but has discovered that more often than not, it's just easier to be honest. "I've ghosted in the past, but I don't do it anymore because then they keep texting you," she laughed. "It's better to be up-front and communicate."

Will believes that breadcrumbing is something that everyone partakes in, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Leading someone on is obviously not a great thing to do, but Will believes it to be lower on the ladder of romantic offenses than some others, "There are ways to amend it."

Situationships are a whole other



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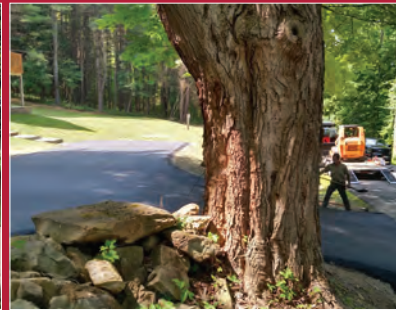
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Moving, death, and divorce

TWO DOWN, ONE TO GO (NOT THAT I'M RUSHING...)

By Whitney Joseph
info@mainstreetmag.com

This is an op ed piece. In it Whitney discusses the topic of stressful triggers, primarily divorce and moving. She then shares her personal life experiences in dealing with these two stressors. This article is purely based on her experiences and opinions. Although it addresses heavy topics, she tries to bring levity to these stressors now that she's on the other side of them.

Human nature is such that year after year, people tend to anxiously anticipate the New Year, all hopped up about how they'll abandon their negative habits in favor of adopting only healthy and admirable new ones. Of course, come 12:01am January 2, a large majority of those mere mortals have already deserted their New Year's resolutions and reverted to their lifelong, less positive practices.

No one is to blame, really, as those of us made of flesh-and-blood are fallible. As the 18th century English poet Alexander Pope wrote, "to err is human..."

Top stressors

Those words were very much in mind while I was browsing the web recently, musing over my past year or two. I coincidentally came across what I thought was both a funny and apt article on verywellmind.com: *What Are the 5 Top Stressors in Life?* Among life's most stressful events, death, divorce, and mov-

ing rounded off the top three. The headline struck a particular chord with me because as of two years ago, I've been dealing an awful lot with two of the three topics.

Divorce

Let me take you back to 2022 to explain: After numerous months of making plans, phone calls, and

and superhero-of-a-middle-sister, who flew up to the Hudson Valley in a flash with my likewise-superhero-of-a-brother-in-law. It was April 29, 2022. My sis and bro-in-law grabbed a couple of state troopers from the Dover barracks for good measure and arrived "unexpectedly" at my front door to ensure my safety as I fled my home of 20

Time to move

After 20 years of mostly-married-misery, Freedom Day had finally arrived! Many expressed their sorrow to me upon learning I was filing for divorce, and my response was always the same: Insistence that they wish me congratulations!

Leaving my marriage was the best decision I ever made, and the day I left my husband was the happiest of my life.

Post-divorce

My exodus led me south to Tallahassee, FL. I moved in with my loving sister and her incredible family, making me more joyful and content than I'd been in years. That was move number one.

On my 50th birthday, my BFF since second grade visited. She immediately put me on Facebook, re-introducing me to the world and to old friends. I instantly reconnected with people I hadn't seen or spoken to in years. One of them was Jason, the man with whom I am now deeply in love. We've known each other since fifth grade, even going to the same summer camp in the Poconos. I was actually his very first crush, and every year I would think about when he gave me a chocolate heart for Valentine's Day.

Our messaging on Facebook quickly turned into calls, which would last for hours. Those calls soon turned into a flight from Tally to Ft. Lauderdale. Flights soon



many, many prayers (all under cloak-and-dagger conditions unbeknownst to my then-husband) I summoned the courage to leave him. This bold move coincided with my turning 50, a gentle-as-a-bulldozer-nudge from my bestie (for which I will be forever grateful), and an overdue epiphany that I did not have to put up with being treated, in my opinion, poorly day after day.

That revelation led to undercover plans coordinated with my bestie

years. We grabbed a few essentials, squeezed everything we could into an SUV, and about an hour later the three of us hit the road – headed toward what I knew would be a happier future.

It certainly came as a shock to my ex when those troopers knocked on our front door, especially when he saw my sister and her husband standing behind them. However, I can't remember ever feeling so happy as when I turned to my then-husband to say, "We have to talk."

Continued on next page ...

turned into my moving further south, to Broward County. That was move two.

The three of us made a happy home. Yes, I said three, as I finally had a pet again. I quickly adopted Jason's dog, Bailey, as my own – something that made my heart swell with joy.

I felt like a teenager again, happier than I'd been in my entire adult life, experiencing the world and doing things with someone who enjoyed my company and respected me and my ideas. We loved spending time together and exploring both old haunts and new spots. That wouldn't last forever, though, as after several months, Jason transferred his business to the Treasure Coast. That was move three.

On the road again

So, here we are, having now set up another house together, but this time from scratch as a couple. It was rather fun doing so, I must admit. While the article I read describes moving as one of life's main stressors – and don't get me wrong, I can absolutely understand why with the logistics and the boxes and the amount of stuff (I mean, how does one accumulate so much stuff?) – moving with Jason was not nearly

as stressful as moving with any other person on the planet would or could be like for me. I think that's just because I was and continue to be so excited, so genuinely happy, at the prospect of sharing my life and my living space with him (and Bailey, of course!).

We have move number four planned in the near future, as we merely rented this first year to get a feel for the community and to see which areas in the Treasure Coast we prefer and where we'd like to plant roots permanently. You may want to check in with me after that move to see if I'm still so rosy-eyed, as my belongings seem to have tripled after my property was shipped down from New York post-divorce!

The biggest stressor

That, of course, leads me to what was really the greatest stressor of 2023: the divorce itself. My ex was neither cooperative nor communicative throughout. When initially served, he refused to grant me the divorce. Thankfully, New York is a no-fault state, meaning his refusal was merely ceremonial.

Yet his obstinacy caused delays, frustration, and expense. What could have been completed within a couple of months took nearly



two years. I would not be surprised if it also took decades off my life considering the sleepless nights, angst-ridden days, and uncharacteristic rageful outbursts peppered in between. Happily, that's all behind me.

These days I can grab the stress ball purchased for Jason for Chanukah, perhaps with great foresight, and take a deep sigh of relief. Most importantly, I can scratch divorce off life's most stressful events list.

Those who know me well have heard me say time and again that "I ain't no mathematician," but let me make a quick calculation.

Divorce can be checked off the list, and we can certainly check off moving. I guess that means I've only got to face down death to make it three for three. If the powers-that-be are by any chance reading this, since I've only just found my true love late in life, perhaps you could give us a little extra time on that last one? Thanks! ●

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THE KEY TO THE 2024 SEASON IS: *Garden planning*



Congratulations – we made it through January! Now we’ve just got February and March to get through and we’re home free and back out in the garden. I’m guessing most people have not yet given a huge amount of thought to the garden so far this year. As I’m writing this, mine is deep under a foot of snow. It’s easy to think of winter as the down, even dead, time for gardening.

*By Pom Shillingford
info@mainstreetmag.com*

Physically, yes, it is. But it’s a fool who will live to regret wasting this golden time in the gardening calendar. Because we’re currently not bent double rushing around at a million miles an hour out there trying to get everything done in our zero-to-60 truncated gardening season, now is precisely the time when great gardens are really made. For these winter months are the gardener’s secret weapon. Now is the time for reassessment, planning, and the under-the-radar actions that we never have the time or focus for once the temperatures and the pressure start heating up out there.

Make a plan!

For this month’s column I’m giving you some hard-earned, tried-and-tested tips and tricks for things to do now and have firmly in your wheelhouse before the outside garden picks up the pace and the wheels fall off!

First up, seed sowing time will soon be upon us. Get those catalogues, make a plan and then start ordering. Do not look at all the lovely pictures and imagine your garden instantly filled with everything. Sowing from seed takes time, and looking after your germinating seed and nurturing your seedlings requires a lot of consistent care and attention. Even the most proficient gardeners can be guilty of killing their offspring by lack of /over watering. Know your limits and push them only gently. Repeat after me: we are only going to grow what we can cope with.

Avoid the tomato tsunami

That includes at the harvesting stage. I certainly don’t want a repeat of the two-week tomato tsunami we ‘enjoyed’ last September! So, a) think about sowing a variety of seeds that will spread the joy throughout the

harvest season, and b) you do not need to sow the whole packet at once. Remember, seeds store really well and can be used over multiple years. Plus, sharing is caring: find a friend and divide the packets between you.

Again, make a plan

This year, I’d also like no one buying anything from a garden center without a plan in place. By all means go and gather inspiration to your heart’s desire. But do not turn up intending to spend money without a shopping list in hand. I know I’m sounding repetitive here, but great gardens are based on plans, not one-off flights of fancy. That’s just how messes are made.

How do you know what you need? This is the year you are going to assume you will have complete amnesia by the time you actually need to remember something however much you feel it is currently etched in your memory. Take notes, keep records,

Continued on next page ...

Photos: You don’t go from this (center) to these (left and right)... without some long-term planning. Now is the perfect time start.

draw a sketch, keep a diary, take a million boring photos that no one but you will ever need to see, or if they do understand, that show the perfect spot to plant fritillaria bulbs in six months. And if all else fails, bury an empty pot in the ground where you want to plant something at a later date and avoid disturbing any neighbors. (A very handy trick when you are planting fall bulbs where you want to add perennials that won't be available to source until the following year.)

Work smarter, not harder

How else to cement your plans? Learn from others. Visit gardens. The Garden Conservancy Open Days are a joy to all. At \$5 for members and \$10 for non), they are a really affordable way to guzzle up inspiration from fellow gardeners across the country (garden-conservancy.org). Other major local gardens Innisfree, Wethersfield, and all those on the Trade Secret Garden tours on May 18 are just waiting to be added to your calendars.

Listen to others: the Bad Grass speaker series is back at the White Hart in Salisbury, CT, this winter with a roster of local garden experts willing to share their knowledge (visit silvaetpratum.com for tickets). Likewise, aside from having the most wonderful garden, Hollister House in Washington Depot, CT, hosts a series

of barn talks on all topics gardening by a range of speakers all season long (hollisterhousegarden.org).

But be practical

Now let's think about the practical gardening tasks coming up this year. Know your windows of opportunity. Take a bit of time now to write a schedule of all those things you saw on other people's Instagram accounts and thought you want to do but damn it, you've missed the window!

Want to divide your irises this year so they bloom better next (something I swear is so easy to do)? Google right now when the best time of year to do this is and put it on your calendar. When to feed your peonies? Prune your hydrangeas? Chelsea chop your perennials? Know which perennials to Chelsea chop? Know what the hell is this Chelsea chop she's talking about? And should I be doing it? Look it all up now while you have a bit of time, put it on your calendar now and we'll have no more missing the boat in 2024!

Thinking fall

And talking of recognizing real windows of opportunity, make a note to order your fall-planted and winter-forcing bulbs in June. I know, I know! Some of them have barely even finished flowering, maybe even



Get as much of the thinking about your garden done before the doing starts.

started blooming by then. But this is exactly the time to place your order. Everything is fresh in your mind, you can literally see what you're missing, and when you go online to place your order, you will not find the dreaded *Sold Out* message. Only one tiny caveat to temper your enthusiasm while doing this, the time will come when you actually have to plant the bulbs. Many a year has there been slight buyer's remorse/a complete freak-out in my barn come mid-October as the UPS guy pulls up with his mountain of boxes and the reality of what I have committed to becomes apparent.

Dahlias for everyone? Maybe not.

Many of us have been bitten by the dahlia bug in recent years. Full disclosure I'm a full-blown addict, having gone from planting five to five hundred tubers in as many years. While this explosion in interest has made dahlia knowledge and breeding so much more prolific, it has turned actually buying tubers into the living hell that is *The Hunger Games* come to life. Let's just say it can be easier to get your four-year-old into a tony Manhattan pre-school than get your hands on a Hollyhill wicked witch dahlia tuber – regardless of how much you are willing to pay for it. Which is why the person I would most like to nominate for the Noble Peace Prize

is the brains behind the aptly named-dahliaaddict.com website.

To say I worship at the altar of this woman is no understatement. If you want to make a dahlia plan – and don't you dare say you don't having read this far – this is the mothership to which you must head. A database of every dahlia tuber known to man – and almost every dahlia grower in the country who grows it, with the dates of their sales.

So, while you're waiting for the snow to melt, now is also the time to get out your laptop and start trawling through the supplier lists and signing up for their newsletters. I know you might not have the time/interest to read their year-round missives – neither do I, that's what the email delete button is for – but early access to their tuber sales? Gold dust right there!

So there you have it. Just a few ideas of how we can usefully put this time of enforced gardening hibernation to good use. I promise some careful planning now will make the world of difference to your garden this year.

•

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



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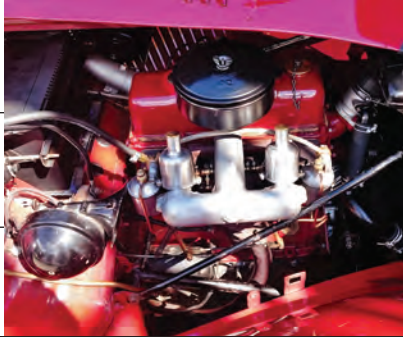
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BUSTED: THE GREAT SNOW MYTH

By Ian Strever
info@mainstreetmag.com

It's time to confront the great myth about Christmas.

No, not that one.

The one about it being white. Perhaps the most persistent and potentially misleading lie we tell about Christmas is that it is accompanied by snow. Despite the increasing rarity of an actual White Christmas like the ones Bing Crosby "used to know" in the 1940s, an avalanche of mythological, rhetorical snow continues to blanket car commercials and flutter down in Jacuzzi Lawson e-cards throughout the holidays. It's a lie. Possibly a conspiracy.

Ski resorts thrive on the hype, entreating us to test out their pre-Christmas snow with discounted lift tickets that tantalize parents who are desperate to get their children off of screens. The family will load up the SUV, hit a handful of available slopes, and feel good about a day of fresh air. But the entire ski industry perpetuates the Great Snow Myth, and we are all complicit in burying our heads in the sand while an army of groomers works through the night a la Sisyphus to reinforce their bulwark against global warming.

No snow necessary

This is not a eulogy for snow or skiing but an encomium for winter activities that don't involve it. We will continue to get the occasional dumping of six plus inches of powder but nothing approaching the daily suggestions of it that arrive with every LL Bean catalog. Instead, think cold and wet – a "shoulder season" – that lasts for most of

four months. That is winter now.

But that doesn't mean we should spend all of it indoors, longing for a Caribbean escape or a snowbound cabin in British Columbia. No, we can lace up our boots right here and find adventure at our doorsteps.

Let's start with those boots. One of the best purchases I've made in the past decade is a pair of winter hiking boots. While pricier than their summer equivalent, winter boots are insulated and waterproof, the former being the critical feature for those of us whose foot temperature directly relates to our level of misery. Even in the absence of snow, good winter boots instill confidence in slogging through mud and swollen stream crossings. The penalty in their weight pays dividends in their functionality.

Don't neglect what happens inside and outside of the boot, either. Usually a thin wool sock will manage the moisture well within an insulated boot, but waterproof gaiters are a nice addition to the wardrobe when hiking especially in wet conditions or high snow (when it does come). Paired with a waterproof boot, they stack up favorably with a pair of Wellingtons for trudging through the muck.

Throw on another layer

Next up, clothing, which can be summed up in one word: layers. This is probably not news to anyone, but the material of those layers can dramatically impact the experience. And while some items may seem expensive, an educated hiker can find deals on

Continued on next page ..

Photo: A snowless New Year's Day hike from Beckley Furnace features a brilliant view of the Housatonic River Valley below North Canaan.



Above: You can still find snow at the Salisbury Ski Jumps. Right: Geese on an iceless Housatonic near Bartholomew's Cobble.

long-lasting garments that can last for generations. I scored a toasty merino sweater from UniQlo for thirty-five dollars, and REI has some incredibly functional layers that go on sale at least twice a year.

Wool and down are the most important materials in winter attire, but knowing how to dress for the conditions requires experience. A layer of merino wool closest to the skin is practically a commandment, as it manages moisture better than synthetics, keeping you dry where it counts. I've also been impressed with the versatility of bamboo for all-season protection against cold and excessive sun. Working outward, a vest of down, wool, or at least a windproof synthetic will keep the core insulated against frigid winds and fluctuating temperatures.

Running hot and cold

It starts to get a bit personal after that. I like the cold, but I run hotter than most, and many of my winter hiking companions shake their heads at the relative paucity of clothing it takes for me to feel warm in all but the most frigid conditions. While I might hike in just a wool layer and a vest, most hikers will opt for more layering, possibly a mid-weight wool layer or a down sweater underneath a water-

proof shell. A good metric for assessing your level of comfort is to go out feeling "comfortably cool," knowing that the exercise will quickly move the needle to "warm" or even "hot."

Just to be safe, I stash a few additional layers in my backpack, along with a few essentials for any hike: phone, compass, headlamp, first aid kit, extra food and water, a multi-tool, and a space blanket. The most essential item these days is the phone, loaded with Gaia GPS, a navigation app that works without a cell signal. One of my first *Main Street* articles threw shade on GPS reliance, but the technology has saved me numerous times in backcountry hikes in the Rockies with its ability to locate trails that seem to vanish into thin air. Just as importantly, it has helped me find new trails that are barely marked (more on that later).

Drink and dash

As for hydration, I pack two insulated HydroFlasks: one for water and the other for some kind of warm beverage. Hot cocoa or tea is incredibly rewarding during a cold weather hike, and if you are trying to convince your hiking partner of the wisdom of heading out when the mercury drops, a little imported heat goes a long way. Mulled cider is the gold standard when it comes to that. For shorter hikes, I will sometimes just pack a traditional cycling water bottle with an electrolyte mixture that keeps the liquid from freezing at temperatures just around freezing.

Where to go

Winter is a time for stillness and in-

trospection, and quieter trails provide backdrops for contemplation. Mohawk State Forest includes a designated state park in Cornwall, but there are tracts of the forest throughout Litchfield County. One of my favorites is on Swaller Hill Road in Sharon, where a jeep road loops around the Pine Swamp, flirting briefly with the Appalachian Trail. There is no marked trail, which adds to the spirit of adventure, but with the pond as a reference point and the Gaia app as a fail-safe, it is easy enough to navigate.

Some of the best hiking in the area, can be found just around the corner in town preserves and nature sanctuaries. Most town websites include links to land trusts and town preserves, many of which are highly organized, as the towns actively maintain extensive trail networks. The Sharon Land Trust exemplifies that level of organization, and locals have recently started to realize the incredible natural beauty that is showcased on their trails. Within the same town, the Sharon Audubon features several equally rewarding sets of trails.

I've made afternoons of hikes in Cornwall, Salisbury, Millerton, and Amenia in open-space areas and land trusts that are lightly trafficked, yet rewarding for the small effort one expends in getting to them. Armed against the elements, hikers can stride comfortably and bug-free toward expansive and unobstructed views of the Hudson Valley, Housatonic River Valley, and the Berkshires, making use of what amounts to almost half a year of underappreciated hiking opportunities. Too cold to hike? That's the greatest myth of them all. •





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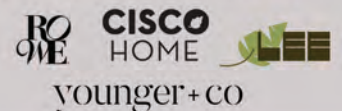


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By Jesse DeGroodt
info@mainstreetmag.com

On May 29, 1780, subsequent to the fall of Charleston, SC, to the British less than three weeks earlier, Abraham Buford's Patriot forces suffered an overwhelming defeat at the hand of British commander Banastre Tarleton's men at Waxhaws, SC. When they attempted to surrender, a number of Buford's troops were attacked and killed by Tarleton's men. While the British may have carried the battlefield on that occasion, what would soon become known as Buford's Massacre ultimately resulted in a propaganda boo-boo that overshadowed any momentary advantage that the British might have accrued.

"The effect of the event in 1780 was dramatic," notes battlefields.org. "Patriot ranks swelled in response to the battle, and it served as a rallying point for the cause of independence. Just months later, as the Overmountain Men attacked a Loyalist force at King's Mountain, their battle cry was 'Remember the Waxhaws' and 'Give them Buford's play!'"

Propaganda's effects are not always quite so breathtaking or immediate – in this case, the fight for America's independence clearly benefited from an adversary's overplay that resonated throughout the rest of the conflict.

Propaganda, standing the test of time

Since the beginning of human history, there has been propaganda. The word 'propaganda' carries negative connotations, no doubt well earned, although I've taken to regarding it as persuasion

without the use of a sharp stick. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell's 2011 book, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, describes propaganda as "the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist."

Edward Bernays, widely recognized as the father of modern-day propaganda, opened his ground breaking and aptly-named 1928 book, *Propaganda*, with this: "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country."

This, with its undercurrent of "Oh, #&\$%#*@##," may strike some as frightening. Sadly, it may also come as non-fake news to those who might be of the mind that the Joe McGinniss classic, *The Selling of the President 1968*, based on the successful presidential campaign of Richard M. Nixon, presented some new political propaganda breakthrough. Not quite. But it did result in this comment from the *Washington Post's* David Broder: "McGinniss has given us a damning but terribly amusing picture of the flackery in one campaign. The problem will be around longer than Nixon will. You can read this book

and laugh – or maybe weep a little at how you were sold a president."

Politics and religion

No, no, no, a thousand times no, we – as in yours truly and the little doggy that sits behind me and serves as my adult supervision – will not be discussing the age-old third rails of politics and religion here, other than perhaps tangentially and altogether inadvertently, but rather the use of propaganda – and associated techniques – in the molding of public opinion.

"The word propaganda itself," states Britannica.com, "as used in recent centuries, apparently derives from the title and work of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Congregation for Propagation of the Faith), an organization of Roman Catholic cardinals founded in 1622 to carry on missionary work. To many Roman Catholics, the word may therefore have, at least in missionary or ecclesiastical terms, a highly respectable connotation."

Now we're cooking

However, as Miles' Law posits, "Where you stand depends on where you sit," and by the time World War I got cooking, the art of propaganda was in full bloom. When it was beyond clear in 1917 that the United

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By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

Love is in the air! This month it's all about passion, the color red, paper heart cut-outs, and cupids drawing their arrows. In the days leading up to Valentine's Day, which is celebrated on February 14, partners search for the ideal gifts to express their devotion and convey their love. In the busyness of the season, many forget the history of this holiday.

Valentine's Day occurs every February 14 in the United States and in other destinations worldwide. On this day, loved one's exchange candy, flowers, and gifts in the name of St. Valentine.

History of the holiday

Who was St. Valentine? According to the History Channel, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus – all of whom were martyred.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Roman Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice, defied Claudius and continued to secretly perform marriages for young lovers. When his actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that Valentine be killed.

Other historians claim that it was Saint Valentine of Terni, a bishop, who was the true namesake of the holiday. He was beheaded by Claudius II outside of Rome, possibly for attempting to help Christians escape Roman prisons.

According to yet another legend, while Valentine was imprisoned, he sent the first "valentine" greeting to a young girl – possibly his jailor's daughter – who visited him during his confinement. It is alleged that before his death, he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine" – an expression that is still widely used today.

Although the real story behind St. Valentine's Day is unclear, the stories emphasize this saint's appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and romantic person. By the Middle Ages, he became one of the most popular saints in England and France.

More legends

Another explanation claims that in an effort to "Christianize" the pagan celebration of Lupercalia, the church placed the St. Valentine's feast day in mid-February. Lupercalia was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, and to Romulus and Remus, who founded the city of Rome.

To kick off the festival, members of the Luperci – an order of Roman priests – gathered at a sacred cave where Romulus and Remus were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests sacrificed

a goat for fertility and a dog for purification. According to the legend, Roman women welcomed the touch of the hides from these animals since it was believed that it would make them more fertile. Young women in the city were invited to place their names into an urn. The single men from that city would each choose a name from the urn and become paired with their chosen woman for the year. The matches often ended in marriage.

Although Lupercalia survived the initial rise of Christianity, it was deemed "un-Christian" and outlawed at the end of the fifth century when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day.

It was not until much later that this day became associated with love. During the Middle Ages in France and England, it was commonly believed that February 14 was the beginning of mating season for birds. This added to the idea that Valentine's Day should be dedicated to romance. English poet Geoffrey Chaucer was the first to record St. Valentine's Day as a day of romance in his 1375 poem *Parliament of Fowles*. He wrote: "For this was sent on Seynt Valentyne's day / Whan every foul cometh ther to choose his mate."

As far back as the Middle Ages, valentine greetings were popular, but handwritten valentines didn't debut until after 1400. The oldest known valentine is part of the manuscript collection of England's British Library. It was written in 1415 by Charles,

Duke of Orleans for his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London after he was captured at the Battle of Agincourt.

An old holiday with new ideas

Regardless of which version of the legend resonates with you, many of us share a common wish to make our partners feel cherished and to remind them just how much we love them on this day.

Although dinner reservations, and gifting flowers and chocolates is common practice, there are also many innovative ways to celebrate. Get creative and craft your own Valentine's Day experience based on the interests of you and your partner. Here are some ideas for weekday or weekend celebrations:

Re-create your first date

We all remember the details about how we first met, how we fell in love, and where we went on our very first date together. Maybe it's been a few years or even a few decades since then, but it would be fun to re-create that first date and remember just how it felt to fall in love.

Continued on next page ...

Couples hike

Go for a romantic stroll through a picturesque park such as Poets' Walk Park in Red Hook, NY. Celebrating the union between landscape and poetry, it offers nearly two miles of trails and vistas designed by Hans Jacob Ehlers, who worked chiefly in the Hudson Valley region. The park's name draws inspiration from Washington Irving of "Rip van Winkle" fame and other writers who reportedly strolled about the grounds there.

Waterfalls

Take a short road trip to Kaaterskill Falls – a dramatic two-tier waterfall in the Catskill Mountains. Sure, the weather may be chilly, but you'll draw warmth from bundling up and strolling arm in arm with your partner. There's a reason why this landmark has been the epicenter of Catskills tourism since the early 1800s and is the most popular and highly visited destination in the Catskill Park Forest Preserve.

Romantic flicks

Not the outdoorsy type? Plan a cozy evening indoors baking cookies together and cuddling up on the couch while watching a movie. Some Valentine's Day faves include *Notting Hill* (1999); *Valentine's Day* (2010); *When Harry Met Sally* (1989); and *Casablanca* (1942).

Mohonk Mountain House

Founded by the Smiley family in 1869, this grandiose Victorian castle resort in New Paltz is tucked away, surrounded by acres upon acres of pristine forest. Activities abound. Glide across the ice at its rustic-style outdoor skating rink, which is perched above the lake in an open-air pavilion. Between skating sessions, warm up to your valentine while sipping hot cocoa in front of the stone fireplace. Lovers can also hike the winter trails or try getting a reservation at its on-site farm-to-table restaurant. The hotel was granted a Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Award for 2023 and was voted the #1 Resort in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

Couples spa retreat

Rain Spa in Rhinebeck, NY, was founded on the idea that rain is good luck, representing a fresh start, new beginnings, and a cleansing of the past. Maybe your relationship is exactly where you want it to be, or maybe it's time to unite and embark on a new beginning together.

Candle craft

Couples can create together at PCB – a pour-your-own candle bar in Hudson, NY. Choose from more than 70 fragrances before paring your choices down and crafting a candle, room spray, or reed diffuser. Experience this olfactive journey together and leave with a meaningful token of time well spent with one another in Hudson.

Museum day

If your partner is an arts enthusiast, visit the Clark in Williamstown, MA. The museum is offering free admission throughout March. February is the perfect time to stay warm indoors while exploring its permanent collection galleries or wandering hand-in-hand through the walking trails across its 140-acre campus. The Clark is hosting a free valentine art-making activity on February 11 from 2-4pm. Stop by the valentine-making station on the lower level of the Clark Center and create a unique card for your sweetheart, friend, or special family member using images from the Clark's collection.

David-Jeremiah, *I Drive Thee* opens on February 10. The exhibition represents an overview of and conclusion to the artist's cycle of large circular reliefs, or tondos, collectively

titled, *I Drive Thee*. In this series, the artist is concerned with agency and appetite, asking both who drives and who is driven.

Yoga together

Release those endorphins while practicing yoga together at Rhinebeck Yoga Center, which offers yoga classes for every level of practitioner. Classes are held seven days a week. It also hosts workshops by expert teachers, live music yoga classes, kirtan (call and response chanting), and yoga retreats.

Galentine's Day

Calling all the single ladies. Celebrate your friendships on Galentine's Day – February 13, 2024. According to an article in *USA Today*, it traces its origins back to the television show *Parks & Recreation*. An episode entitled *Galentine's Day* saw the show's lead Leslie Knope celebrating the holiday with a group of her girlfriends at a local diner.

Enjoy a nice brunch or lunch at the Amsterdam in Rhinebeck, and then watch a fun chick flick, such as *Bridesmaids* (2011), *Clueless* (1995), or *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* (2005).

Wine enthusiasts can clink their glasses to cheer their friendship at a wine tasting at Millbrook Winery. Other ideas include baking together or hosting a ladies-only charcuterie night. Pick up some fixings at Adams Fairacre Farms. Other ideas include planning a tea or coffee outing at Harney & Sons Tea or Bread Alone Bakery.

If that doesn't suit your style, have

a pedi party at home or visit a nail salon, host a clothing swap, or practice yoga together. The most important thing is to celebrate and just have some fun!

Flower readings

Sue Adams, vice president, Adams Greenhouses is hosting a lecture and flower reading on February 11 at Paula's Runway Cafe in Wappingers Falls, NY, at 2pm.

Adams will provide a brief history of flower readings, share information on love-themed bloom varieties, and perform a few complimentary flower readings in front of the group. Everyone in attendance is entitled to a reading. The floral aficionado will work individually with guests and share results via email.

She has some advice for people looking to gift flowers. "Choose flowers in colors you think they'll love. You can never go wrong with flowers, and florists can help with choices. It's a good idea to consult them a few days before Valentine's Day," said Sue Adams.

Aside from roses, Adams said other popular blooms include alstroemeria. Those seeking potted plants should consider orchids, which are quite popular and convey love.

Adams shares some of the meanings of today's most popular floral choices.

- Alstroemeria: This conveys friendship, devotion, and prosperity and is a symbol for following your dreams
- Tulips: Red represents love. Purple expresses admiration for a loved one's accomplishments, and white represents an apology. Yellow symbolizes friendship.
- Daisy: This is a happy flower. It also conveys loyal love, cheerfulness, and new beginnings. •

The list of suggestions here are just that, suggestions. These few suggestions are just a drop in the ocean of local places where one could go for these types of outings and services. Enjoy!

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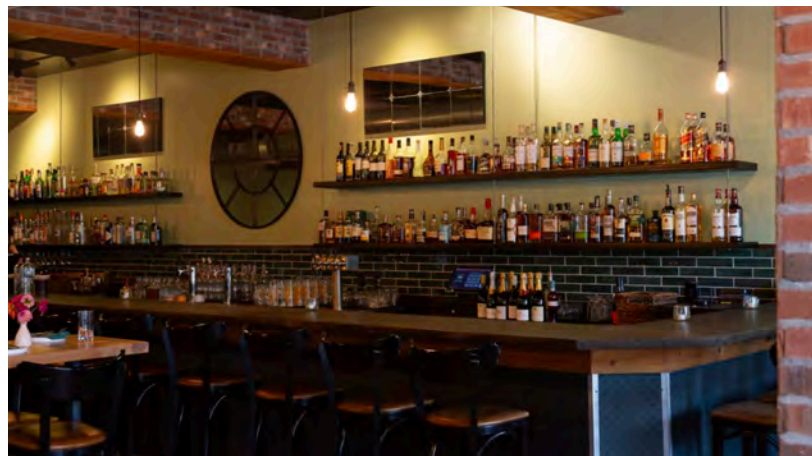
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Willa Bar

52 Main Street, Millerton, NY. (518) 789-0252. willabar.com

Willa Bar, formerly 52 Main, opened in Millerton on October 1st. Willa is run and owned by Jim Buhs and Alanna Broesler, both of whom had been working at 52 Main for years before their purchase. “It all kind of fell into place,” says Jim. Executive chef Daniel Meissner said that his inspiration for the dishes is a desire to “showcase what this area has to offer. We live in such a beautiful place, and we have a very prominent agricultural scene here.” What sets Willa apart? “We want to create an experience that’s welcoming to all walks of life,” Daniel says. “We’re focused on creating beautiful food in a beautiful setting where you feel taken care of.” Alanna says that the most rewarding part is watching all of their hard work come to fruition. “There are so many little moving parts. When they finally come together and you see everyone look happy, it makes it all worth it.” Going forward, Willa is aiming for longevity and sustainability. “To me, that’s the definition of success,” says Daniel. “You can get all of the accolades in the world, but being a business that stays open for a long time and is well received by the community is most rewarding.”



East Mountain House

PO Box 1686, Lakeville, CT. justsitting1@gmail.com. eastmountainhouse.org

East Mountain House is an end-of-life care home in the Lakeville/Salisbury area in Connecticut. “This is a not-for-profit organization, and we do not charge fees for our guests,” said Craig Davis. “We have been working on this for a decade.” East Mountain House provides services such as emotional and spiritual support for those who are dying. “The focus is on contemplative care in a residential environment.” Craig said that what sets East Mountain House apart is that there are no similar businesses nearby. “The nearest residential hospice is an hour and a half away. We have received the green light from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, and this will be the first of its kind in the state.” For Craig, the most rewarding part about being in the business is “developing relationships with those who are at the end of their lives and their families.” Going forward, East Mountain House hopes for massive community support.



Terre Lefferts Therapeutic Massage

199 Main Street, Salisbury, CT. (860) 435-0723. terrelefferts@yahoo.com

Terre Lefferts Therapeutic Massage started in 2013 after Terre finished her required clinical experience and was licensed in both Massachusetts and Connecticut. “As I already had an exercise business in Salisbury, started in 2002, this was an adjunct service that could benefit a lot of clients,” Terre said. She is trained in Swedish massage therapy and also provides deep tissue and trigger point release techniques. Additionally, Terre offers manual lymph drainage to pre- and post-surgical patients, reflexology, aromatherapy, and soundscapes as well as therapeutic and preventative exercises to complete at home. What sets Terre apart from similar businesses is her background in dance, Pilates, and physical therapy, which gives her “a very comprehensive knowledge of the musculoskeletal structure and kinesiological workings of the human body.” Because of this, she can recognize client’s patterns of muscle overuse or overcompensation. The most rewarding part of the business for Terre is helping people feel better. “I have many clients who get so much relief from one massage and some who use my services to prevent future chronic pain. I also enjoy getting to know people from different walks of life.” Going forward, Terre foresees continuing her business for as long as possible and “for as long as people derive benefits from it.”



Storybook Cafe

2987 Church Street, Pine Plains, NY. (518) 771-3102. kenzie@storybook-cafe.com. storybook-cafe.com

Storybook Cafe is Pine Plains’ newest addition! Owners Mackenzie and Jessica Killmer have vast experience in the restaurant business. Mackenzie worked at her family’s Italian restaurant for 20 years, and now she puts her expertise to work at Storybook Cafe. The breakfast menu offers classics – eggs any way, pancakes, French toast, and the like – as well as personal favorites and spins on classics, such as avocado toast three different ways, pancake dippers, and eggs Benedict. Storybook Cafe is not yet offering lunch, but it plans to do so in the near future. Until then, it will be offering grab-and-go sandwiches and salads in the cooler by the counter. Looking ahead, Mackenzie and Jess are thinking of possible future opportunities. “We’re hoping to host book clubs, kid’s story time sessions, trivia, karaoke, open mic nights, and other events like that. We’re also hoping to have a Lia’s Mountain View feature, so keep your eyes peeled!”

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