



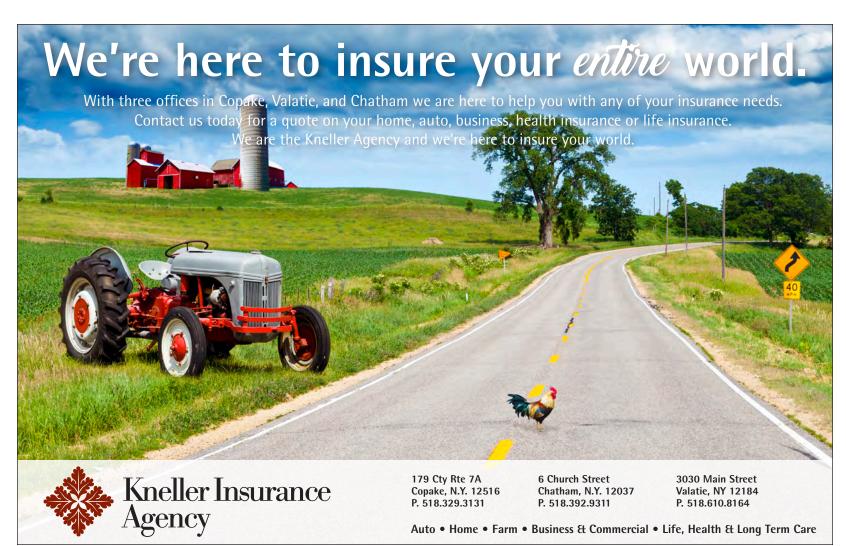


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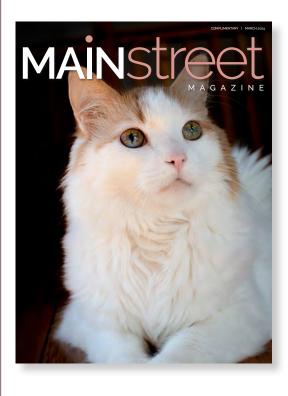
It doesn't seem like it's already been a year, but this time last year we celebrated our tenth birthday! That's a lot of years in the magazine world. I find it hard to believe that we've already made it another rotation around the sun and that this magazine is now eleven years old. Oh my, how time flies when you're busy having fun writing and spreading great stories.

Back in 2013, when Ashley and I pounded the pavement in the dead of winter, selling ads, interviewing people, making connections, and trying to convince those who didn't know us that we were actually going to do the damn thing! I'll eternally be grateful for those few who signed up on Day One, and who believed in us. With their support, we were able to publish our first issue, and then we were truly on a roll. This issue marks our 132nd issue, which is crazy, and I am grateful.

In these past eleven years, we have certainly grown. The magazine itself has progressively gotten larger, and our distribution area has grown. Additionally, we've revamped our website numerous times. Have y'all taken a look lately? We have daily content there that is exclusive to our website. It's quite robust and has articles that should be of interest to everyone. Additionally, we post links and teasers to our stories on all of our social media channels. If you're so inclined, please give us a follow, like and comment - we'll hit you back! And if you're wondering, we're on all of the main channels: you can find us on the old book of faces and its Instagram sister, professionals can find us on LinkedIn, and we are new on Tik-Tok - but no elaborate dances ... yet. Oh yeah, we have a YouTube channel too, but we don't post too much there.

I will also warn you that if you go to our website, you'll get a pop-up to sign up for our e-newsletter. I know, I can't believe that we too have joined the ranks with an annoying pop-up. I hate those. Buttttt, guys! Our e-newsletters are pretty awesome. I hope you'll sign up. We also drop a new podcast episode every month. If you're into podcasts, I hope you'll follow us. You can find Main Street Moxie on all the major podcast platforms. And yes, there's a separate e-newsletter sign up - if you're so inclined. But regardless of where you hit us up, you're guaranteed a great story! Thank you for the continued support.

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



#### **MARCH 2024**

For ten long, long years, our director of advertising, Ashley has been campaigning extremely hard to have this fluffy friend grace the cover. So without further ado, we'd like to introduce the world to the one, the only, Otis Joe.

Photo by Olivia Valentine

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# A TOUCHSTONE OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP AND CONVERSATION:

# **TRAVERSE**

- A COLLABORATIVE JOURNEY

By Leora Armstrong info@mainstreetmag.com

Horizontal and vertical become interchangeable allowing the circle square to be continuous and unending

Once initiated, the life traveler journeys in an everland of awareness Of past, present and future

Traverse p 124 Laurence Carr

I first saw the book *Traverse* at an exhibition at Furnace Art on Paper Archive, Falls Village, CT. The project unravels an embedded trust between two collaborators, visual artist Power Boothe and writer Laurence Carr. This archive is a touchstone of true friendship and conversation, journeying the visual image and written word handin-hand, bringing a unique sense of what a collaboration can achieve.

#### **Origin stories**

Boothe and Carr lived and worked in New York City for 35 years, crossing paths in life, the theater, and the art worlds. Boothe was originally from California, where he studied painting at the San Francisco Art Institute, then gained his BA in Colorado Springs, CO. He arrived in New York City as a student newly enrolled in the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program in 1967. He lived

and worked in a Soho loft in the downtown art scene for the next three decades, teaching and collaborating across theater, performance, and visual art. His work is represented in public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art. In 2001, he migrated upstate as Dean of the Hartford Art School, University of Hartford, CT, where he is currently a professor of painting.

Likewise, Carr settled into New York City after gaining his BFA from Ohio University and embarked on his MA at New York University. He is an award-winning author, director, and actor with over twenty plays produced in New York City and Europe. Carr has been a professor of creative and dramatic writing at SUNY New Paltz, NY, for 24 years, creating the SUNY Playwrights Project as well as serving as a writing mentor and producing an online magazine, *Lightwood Press*. He currently lives in the Hudson Valley, NY.

#### A musical score with its own visual language

After decades of dialogue and shared viewings regarding their practices, this project originated as Carr leafed through one of Boothe's many sketchbooks. Inspired, Carr sent back poems and insightful narratives written in response to Boothe's eight-inch by eight-inch drawings and paintings in

pen, ink, crayon, and graphite. These grid-like images skip through the pages of the original sketchbook, evoking a musical score and a language of their own. The images were made in a large older planner dated 2010, strangely shifting the sense of timelessness from the actual making date of 2015. Looking into an artist's sketchbook can feel like an intimate action, especially as this sketchbook is a planner; there is a sense of reading someone's thoughts. One's hand is delicate in touch, turning the sketchbook pages.

Herein started a collaboration of words and images, not one of description but instead of two disciplines brushing alongside each other. On opening night at Furnace Art on Paper Archive, Carr gifted the audience with a reading from their book Traverse. In synch, Boothe turned pages of the sketchbook, adding the sensation of performance, sound, and intonation. I picked up the conversation regarding collaboration with Laurence Carr, Power Booth, and Kathleen Kucka, who invited their performance of *Traverse* and new work at Furnace Gallery.

#### The tale of *Traverse*

Traverse unravels a playful, insightful conversation; this is not a tale to be read from start to finish but rather a collection of moments in time, each page allowing for a pause to reflect. Numerical references of eight skip from the title through phrase and grid, adding solidity while addressing

celestial, mythical, and anthropological experiences. Carr's sagacious eight-line poems lie on the opposing page of Power's contemplative images, totaling sixty-four pieces. The original sketchbook drawings and words chosen for Traverse attach to unearthed narratives and moments in time, discussing cultures spanning from ancient pasts to present happenings, creating another time lapse. Each image and word relate to a saga, an act, or a glimpse into a scene. Yet these works were made separately; Boothe's abstract images invoked in Carr words to be shared, encouraging the viewer to see the words and drawings/paintings as one whole.

#### Do you have advice when facing a blank page or canvas?

PB: A blank canvas is so charged that it can be overwhelming. An artist I knew, John Torreano, had to scuff up a new canvas to break the spell. I must jump in to get started, and something will show up. A line is a journey.

KK: If you have a block in the studio, it is usually the external distractions that block you, but once you are ready to explore work, you need to do as much of it as you can and use as much as possible, so it feeds the next project, like a domino effect.

LC: An energy is coming off this blank object; it is not intimidating but unnerving. When teaching, I discuss that there is no writer's block because there are too many entry points. Try another entry point, which may also be a feeling or dialogue. Do what you are doing, and do not stop.

#### There is an essence of squares and lines throughout this project; what does the grid represent to each of you?

PB: The grid opens the door, but it is a dead scaffolding; it is a way into the work. How it unfolds through dots and lines feels akin to moving pieces around, and then suddenly, you are in a different game. What is interesting is the mid-game, when every piece is in play. Winning is not interesting, but in taking part, the possibilities are exciting and endless.



LC: Words on a page are already a grid; you cannot move away. A beginning point is a start; a word is a point; an idea is a point; a feeling is a point - all jumping-off points.

#### What elements do you feel will forge a successful collaboration?

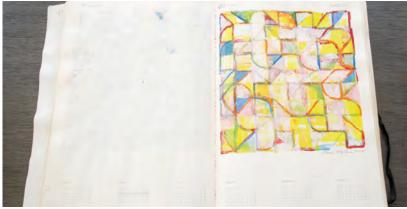
PB: I had the good fortune to witness a performance by John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, and Merce Cunningham in New York City. Seated in the theater, I heard Cage use a squeaky door, alternately running a flashlight along the walls and tapping onto objects within reach. I realized that the entire auditorium had become an orchestral instrument under Cage's

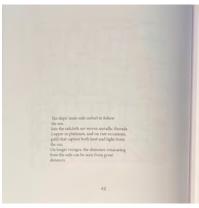
Meanwhile, Cunningham requested the dancers pick a random number from a hat, dictating how

Continued on next page ...

Above: Traverse 3. 2023. Ink and pencil on paper. Left: Traverse 4, 2023. Ink and pencil on paper.

Opposite page, left: Power Boothe sketchbook page, 2015. Right: Power Boothe and Laurence Carr inside the Bank Vault at Furnace Art on Paper Archive







Top: Power Boothe sketchbook page, 2015. Above: *Traverse* book, 2023. Below: Laurence Carr and Power Boothe with *Traverse* and the original sketchbook at Furnace Art Archive on Paper

they would perform around the constantly shifting stage, set in motion by Rauschenberg as objects were placed and displaced. Improvisation ignites energy within work. Cage and Cunningham often worked together yet independently; they only performed together but never rehearsed prior. I later worked with both Cage and Rauschenberg. This early interdisciplinary experience was so pure. I am constantly considering how to retain that purity.

LC: Improvisation donates freedom, allowing for a unique performance and an essence of fluidity within collaborative work. The writing does not describe the visual; our work is independent but pulls towards each other. Rehearsals are often more potent than performances; you need to allow the experience or work to happen, and you cannot force it. Poets and writers often work together, but only sometimes successfully. It can be stultifying and deadly if they attempt to synch it up too much, and there can be no hierarchy in a collaboration. This work is two worlds glancing off each other, sympathetic to each other, and both aware of the spaces between things that are needed within work,

allowing for a vibration. Attracting and repelling at the exact moment.

One thing that infuriates me when viewing art is the added captions for what I am looking at; I only want the name, date, and medium. Too much information can feel like interference, where the viewer is given an opinion before creating their own. At times, it can prevent the viewer from having a pure experience.

In *Traverse*, we are not explaining anything, which could infuriate some who need the narrative, but it is okay to get lost in each page to pause, read, and reflect, holding in the moment. I like the energy it feeds within the narrative; we are linguistic animals, and this book is about energy and movement. I did not want it to be openended. I wanted each page to stand alone. I requested the first and final pairing of writings and images to create the bookend, and Power wanted it to loop continually, giving it a circular sense. It is not a book to read to the end. It is akin to improvisation.



Carr and Boothe's previous experience in art, theater, acting, writing, and directing enabled them to understand interdisciplinary collaborations, allowing for spontaneity and freedom while respecting each other's practice. Carr's words uniquely latch to these images, bringing them further into a more three-dimensional existence.

Following the publication of *Traverse*, Kathleen Kucka invited Boothe and Carr to perform and create new work together at Furnace Art on Pa-

per. Initially, the building was a bank, so it is a unique experience stepping through the heavy metal doors to the walk-in vault at the back, where eight new collaborative paintings and writings on paper now hang.

This intimate space allows the viewer time to journey with these works in private, almost secretly; one cannot be seen from the outside. The fluidity of the ink marking the paper attaches to both the image and the written word. One is reminded of ancient scripts or runes carried on papyrus, images on walls, or scrolls continuing to journey, made in one era, and translated in another, not unlike this project.

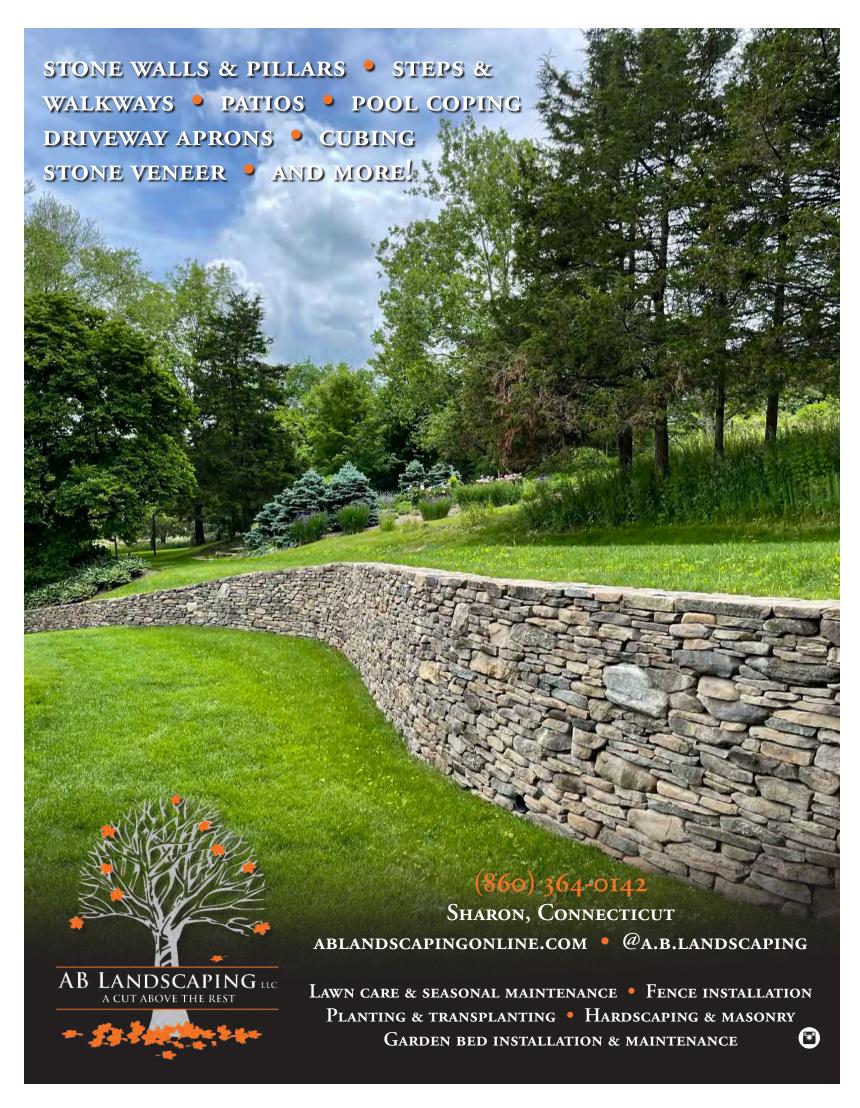
Once more, these new works were created independently of each other. Carr hand-wrote the scripts onto the blank pages, which were covered up. Boothe created a new painting above the words without knowing what the language contained below; one was not influenced by another. Yet once united, the image and words playfully stand together; each work gives a pause to savor. •

Power Boothe will be opening a show of new work at Lyman Allyn Museum, 625 Williams Street in New London, CT, in July 2024, where Boothe and Carr will give another performance of Traverse. I encourage you to venture forth.

To learn more about Power Boothe, you can visit his website powerboothe.com or follow him on Instagram: @powerboothe

To learn more about Larry Carr, you can visit his website carrwriter.com and his own publication, Lightwood Press, at lightwoodpress.com.







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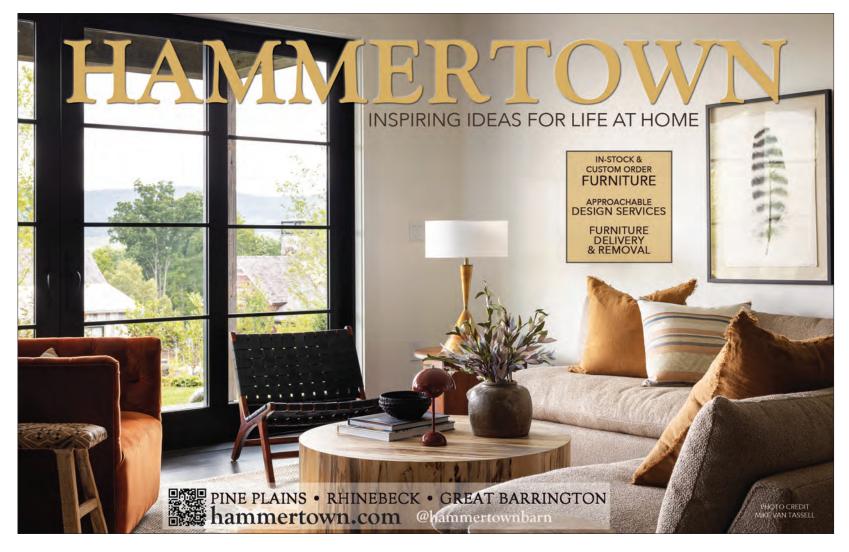
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### friendly faces: meet our pets, fur-babies, and furriends



Inca (10), Thisbe (8), Mowgli (6), and Togo (6 months) **Shillingford** live in Salisbury CT. Inca and Thisbe are sisters, and Togo is their great nephew. The pug just thinks he's a lab. They are terrible thieves, always up to something and generally live the life of Riley. Spoilt rotten, they spend their lives on long runs, long swims, and long naps on the sofa. They've never eaten anything they didn't find delicious or met a person they didn't love or another dog they didn't want to lure into mischief. They live with Mrs. Tibbs, an eight-year-old cat who is completely immune to their charms and refused to pose with them for this photo.



**Momma** (left) is a 25-year-old miniature donkey that was rescued from a breeding facility seven years ago. While the exact number of babies she has had throughout her life is unknown, she was bred often and had become quite stoic. She arrived at the farm in foal with her last baby, Albert (right). She now has a forever home where she enjoys a peaceful retirement. Trusting in her caretaker, she has become highly affectionate and now has a twinkle in her eye. Albert has tons of personality and curiosity and makes everyone's heart melt. Ear rubs, belly scratches, and carrots are his favorite things. On crisp winter days, Albert tends to get the zoomies and dashes about the farm braying.



Bonzi is a four-month-old male chihuahua, and Keneau is an orange tabby male. Bonzi and Keneau are best friends, and you can rarely find them apart. Both Bonzi and Keneau are up for adoption after being rescued from Puerto Rico by the nonprofit organization Hope for Dogs and Cats PR. Melissa Smith, one of the organization creators, said that both animals are "extremely sweet, outgoing, and playful!" If you're interested in adopting either Bonzi or Keneau - or both! - you can reach out to Hope for Dogs and Cats PR at hopefordogspr1@ gmail.com.



Cayjack is an unraced, 15-year-old grey thoroughbred gelding who enjoys a life of leisure with his donkey friends, Momma and Albert, at their farm in Pine Plains, NY. An old soul, Cayjack was born laid back and is very friendly. His owner, Karen, has kept him as a pet for 12 years, after he showed no interest in being a racehorse. According to Karen, Cayjack's only job now is to "go on the occasional trail ride and look after his donkeys."



Ozzie is a nine-month-old mini goldendoodle (although he's not so little!). He lives with his mom, Abby Audenino, in Pine Plains, NY. Ozzie's favorite pastimes include running after his frisbee in the backyard, going on long walks, and stealing socks out of the laundry basket. He also enjoys going for rides in the car and playing with his fur-cousins, and we recently discovered that he's a big fan of the snow. Friendly as ever, Ozzie has never met a human or canine that he didn't like – although he's not a very big fan of squirrels or rabbits. When you first meet him, he'll flip right over onto his back and show you his belly, and when he's really excited, he'll even peel his lip back and give you a smile!



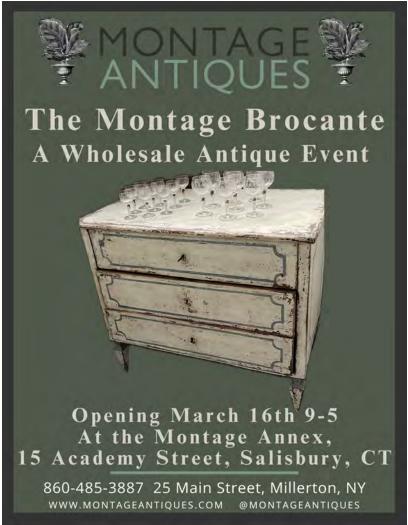
Nova is a two-year-old, black lab/border collie mix who resides with her owner Pete Calabro in Pine Plains, NY. He first got Nova when one of his friends was breeding two of their dogs. When asked if he wanted one of the puppies, Pete couldn't say no. A hunting dog, Nova can usually be found in the swamp with Pete during various bird hunting seasons – and she's quite the pro at retrieving geese. Outside of hunting, Nova loves swimming and roaming around in the woods. "She also loves anything to do with me!" Pete adds. "She's the best dog I've ever had. There's nothing but love in that little dog."











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ERICA WEINER. FOUNDER OF ERICA WEINER. IS THE

# JEWELRY HISTORIAN

By Christine Bates info@mainstreetmag.com

Erica Weiner's website clearly states "the weirder the better" when describing its the twentieth century. Weird? Maybe. Beautiful? Most certainly! We were able to catch up with Erica to learn about her company's origin story and the development of its jewelry designs and business.

#### How did you and your partner Lindsay meet and start your business?

It was New York City in the late 1990s, and she was my little sister's college roommate. After many nights of crazy partying, we remained peripherally in each other's lives until one day in 2006. She was working as a waitress at a Russian cafe, and I was bouncing between jobs as a theatrical costumer and an underpaid fashion stylist. Fed up with the fashion world's BS, I had begun making necklaces using scraps of chain, vintage charms, and a pair of pliers. A buyer from Anthropologie found me selling those necklaces off a folding table at the then-brand-new Brooklyn Flea, and emailed me with a *massive* wholesale order. After using the brand-new Google to figure out what "wholesale" meant, I took a 24-hour panic nap and then called Lindsay to come over and help me. "Bring a pair of pliers," I told her.

The next decade and a half was a blur of hiring, lease-signing, lessons in finance, lessons in failure, and wild successes. We made tens of thousands of pieces of brass and silver jewelry in various studios, all against the backdrop of the Lower East Side in the early 2000s. The soundtrack was excellent. The boyfriends were weird. Our clothes were weirder.

#### What inspired the shift in focus?

In 2010 I got engaged with a 1920s antique jewelry from the twelfth through diamond ring from Doyle and Doyle, then our neighbors, and we fell in love with antique jewelry. The transition from mass-market handmade vibes to high-end fine jewelry had begun. Our collection grew organically as we followed our interests and shamelessly schmoozed with the dealers we most admired. We read everything we could and researched incessantly. No antique shop within 100 miles was safe from us and our endless questions. We started to book regular trips to London to hit the suburban antique show circuit, and visited the V & A Museum more times than we can count. Our art history and anthropology majors had finally come into use.

> We love to translate the secret language that antique jewelry speaks. Context is important: what was happening in the world when your jewel was made? Who made it? For what purpose? The things we fall in love with aren't always the prettiest, or the most precious, or the most immaculate. We love a story: give us an obscure reference, an esoteric symbol, a bad repair, a strange color combination, a "what the hell is that?" moment. Magic is preserved in these funny little objects.

Lindsay and I always look at jewelry as a lens through which we can view human history. Through particular - and sometimes peculiar - ways, it expresses universal human experience: hope, joy, grief, regret, lust, nostalgia. We feel these feelings so strongly, but it's helpful to remember that people have felt the same things since the dawn of time. Humans hundreds and thousands of years from now will still experience them. And they've adorned we're gone." themselves, expressing their feelings through symbols, colors, and motifs that sometimes, after cultures change,







need a little translation. Our history nerd selves will help you out with that

You know that feeling you get when you go into the Metropolitan Museum, you see things that were made 2,000 years ago, and you feel time collapse? That's what we're going for. We aim to broker a feeling of awe; through our jewels, you can feel a sense of perspective on survival and beauty. These tiny jewels have endured lifetimes of good-knows-what. And like DNA, we can pass them on after

Continued on next page ...

Top: Two locusts perch on either side of a diamond in a French art nouveau custom ring. Above, left: An Erica Weiner selfie. Right: Snake rings were and are still popular, this one with a garnet head made in England around





Top: An elongated garnet is the body of this beetle broach crafted in the 1880s when interest in the natural sciences exploded.

Above: This diamond encrusted bat with a pearl body on a gold chairn was custom designed for Erica

#### What were these lessons in failure and finance?

When you're running a business that's 20 years old that early on that had two retail stores and 20 employees, you learn a lot of lessons. Our stores were wildly popular until they weren't, and then we shut them down.

# You completely changed your business from funky wholesale accessories to unique antique Victorian and Georgian jewelry? Why the change?

The world changed, and we changed. We were older and no longer our customer. We didn't shop at Urban Outfitters. With two young children, I could no longer work the hours with the intensity that had kept us in business. We both asked ourselves what we wanted our lives to be like. We had to rethink everything and found a great business advisor who guided us.

I had studied art history at Vassar with a focus on the 19th century – the beginning of the industrial age – and had begun collecting Georgian and Victorian jewelry. We followed our interests. Lindsay and I both believe strongly that you can't stay engaged if you chase dollars. We do believe strongly in what we are doing now.

#### Is your website important to your business?

We had a website from 2008, the earliest days of e-commerce, and invested tens of thousands of dollars

in our online presence when we were making funky jewelry. That continues today with social media driving clients to our site. We just hired someone to do a Pinterest strategy for us.

#### Where do you find your antique pieces?

It is getting harder and harder to find great stuff. 90% of our product is sourced from a network of trusted dealers that we have worked with for years. We seldom buy from people we don't know. We do like to attend the huge international show in Miami, but also the shops in Portobello Road in London.

### You and your partner live on opposite sides of the country. How do you make that work?

Lindsay, an anthropologist and a gemologist, does the photography and manages our one full-time employee, who handles all the order fulfillment, customer care, and inventory out of our operations base in a mansion — the third oldest building in Portland. We do special events there as well. I do most of the writing for the website. We also have fabricators who make jewelry from our designs in New York and in the small jewelry district in Portland.

Our own Victorian designs are about 25% of our business. There's a lot of FedExing going on. Our website has a robust back end where Lindsay and I share writing and pricing duties. Together we go on buying trips in New York, Paris, Miami, and London.

#### How did you end up in Pine Plains, NY?

I dated a guy who had a weekend house up here. We got married, had kids, and decided to live up here full-time. I'm still adjusting and trying to figure out how to do things. We were included in the wildly successful makers market at Stissing House before Christmas and were embraced by local clients. It was fantastic to deal with buyers face-to-face, and no one asked about prices.

#### Who is your customer?

We meet customers in person at the trunk shows and events like Stissing House. Our customer is an educated,

thinking woman shopping for herself, her female partner, or her daughter. They are powerful, confident women looking for timeless jewelry that is rooted in history, not necessarily something that makes them more physically attractive.

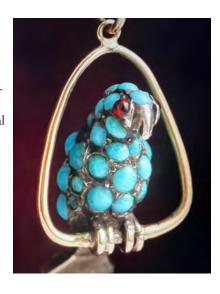
#### What are your most popular products?

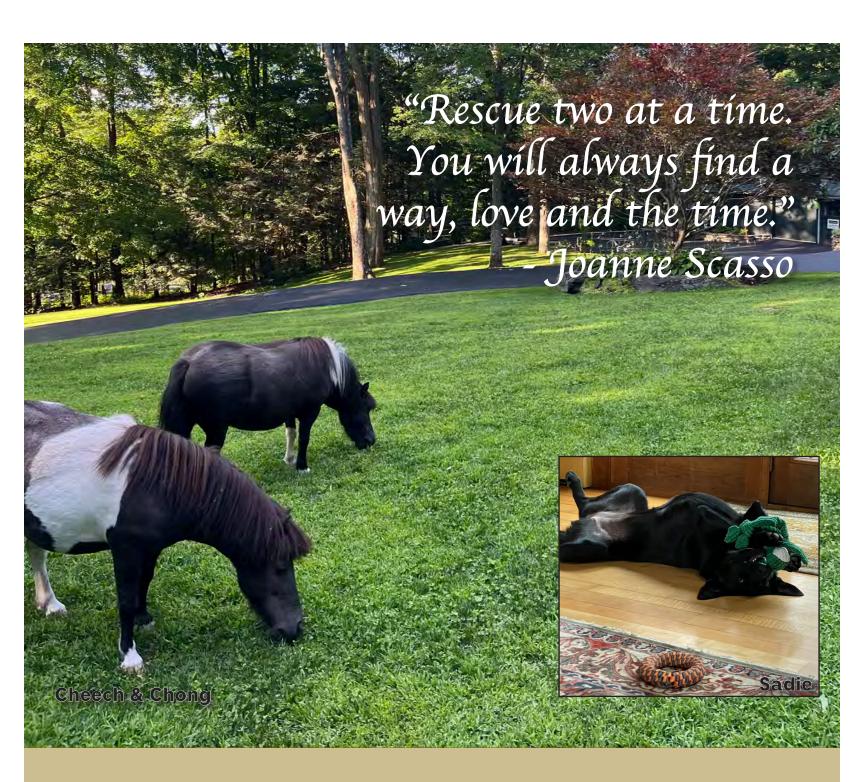
Snakes are always popular, and pins with little charms and pendants are suddenly doing really well. Signet rings, especially with occult imagery seem to be sought after. Lockets with sentimental texts are always popular. Our sale at the end of March is overwhelmingly popular. We offer huge discounts on merchandize we want to move.

#### You know some fun facts about parrots?

Yes! The Kama Sutra lists teaching a parrot to speak as one of the 63 things a man should master; in Pliny the Elder's writings he advises owners to hit the birds on the head to motivate them to speak (please don't do this); some varieties of parrot can live to be octogenarians! The first recorded pet parrot in the British Isles (an African grey) belonged to Henry VII, but modern parrot-keeping in Britain didn't really kick off until the 1800s. This unusual Victorian parrot (image below) is modeled in silver with pavé turquoise in lieu of feathers and red garnet eyes. The exotic fowl perches on a gold perch and hands from a new 18" 14k gold chain. •

To learn more about Erica Weiner, visit ericaweiner.com.





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# MY DAD'S French (Dnion Soup

By Olivia Valentine with Caroline Markonic info@mainstreetmag.com

Without any fuss or preamble, let's just jump right in!

#### Ingredients

- 4 tbs butter
- 2 tbs flour
- 3 lbs (6-8) sweet onions halved lengthwise and thinly sliced 1/4 cup red wine, preferably French 6 cups water
- 4 beef bouillon cubes, or 2 tsp Better Than Bouillon beef base
- 2-3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1-3 bay leaves

Dash of Kitchen Bouquet, Gravy Master, or Worcestershire sauce Salt and pepper to taste 1 French baguette 80z grated Gruyère cheese Chopped parsley or thyme (optional for garnish - thyme is in the photo)

#### **Directions**

Melt the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onions and cook uncovered, stirring frequently, until very soft and caramelized, about 40-50 minutes. If the onions brown too quickly, reduce the heat.

Once the onions are caramelized, add the flour and stir constantly for a minute or two.

Add the red wine and be sure to scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Turn up heat to medium high and cook until the wine is fully evaporated.

Reduce the heat back to medium and add 6 cups of water and the beef bouillon cubes. \*If using Better Than Bouillon beef base, I suggest pre-mixing the paste in boiling or hot water before adding it to the pot. (We prefer year. using Better Than Bouillon, but my dad uses bouillon cubes).

Add fresh thyme and bay leaf(s), a dash of Gravy Master, Kitchen Bouquet, or Worchestire sauce, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer soup for 30-40 minutes.

While the soup simmers, preheat your oven to 400 degrees, and slice the baguette into 1/2" thick slices. Arrange the slices on a baking sheet and cook until the bread is nice, dry, and toasty with golden edges; about 8-10 minutes. Set aside.

Arrange your oven rack about 6" from the broiler. Set the oven to broil. Place oven-safe crocks on a baking sheet and divide the hot soup among them. Top each one with a slice of bread and cover with Gruyère cheese. Broil until the cheese and bubbly and browned around the edges, approximately 3-5 minutes. Keep a watchful eye, as you don't want the cheese to burn. Garnish with a bit of chopped parsley or thyme. Enjoy!

#### A note from Caroline

Being a vegetarian for nearly eight years, I learned some tricks to give vegetarian dishes that would typically have meat in them depth of flavor. If you find that your onion soup is lacking, you can add a bit of liquid smoke or dark soy sauce. Either can really increase that umami flavor you want. Even now that I make it with beef stock instead of vegetable stock I still use this trick, and it makes onion soup that much better.

#### A note about Olivia's dad

Last month, I had the pleasure of making this soup with my dad, who was just about to turn 89! He still loves to cook, mow the lawn, fish, chop and stack wood, and throw a massive Fourth of July party every

When my parents got divorced in the early 70s, my dad literally couldn't



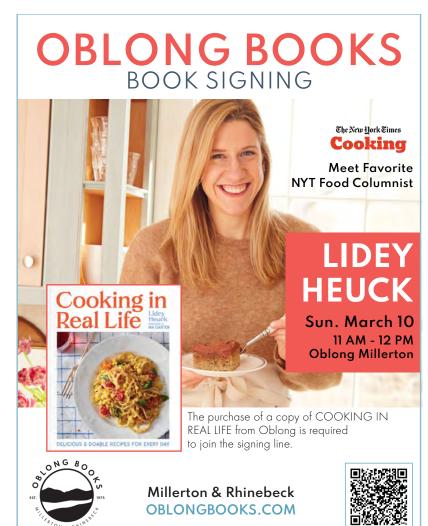
boil water! There had never been time for him to cook as he was busy running three businesses, volunteering as a fireman, involved in the Lion's Club, and helping raise four kids. Plus, he had my mom who was and still is an incredible cook at 86.

As my dad was learning his way around the kitchen, he had a few mishaps – one quite memorable. He had decided to make homemade tapioca pudding. Unfortunately, he didn't quite understand the concept of a double boiler. There was a bit of an explosion in the kitchen - it literally sounded like a bomb went off. Hot tapioca went everywhere. I swear, we were finding tapioca balls in the kitchen and dining room for months afterwards. The explosion also happened at the worst possible time: I would go to my dad's house daily after school, and my mom would pick me up there when she got off of work. So, Olivia and Caroline are enthusiastic foodas my mom was walking in the door into the kitchen, boom! She was covered with hot tapioca. Fortunately, she did not get burned, but I can still see the look on both of my parents' faces. Let's just say it wasn't the best moment in the kitchen. Another mishap

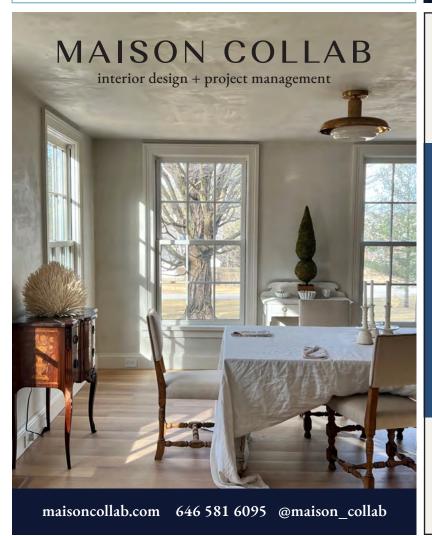
was that one time my dad cut his finger chopping something and wound up with stitches, not in his finger, but in his head! And despite the fact that he was a mortician, he did not do well with the sight of his own blood.

My dad had to learn to cook and learn quickly as he had kids that needed to be fed. Once he progressed from making ham steaks on the grill and creamed corn, which to this day I still can't stomach, he began to be a real pro in the kitchen. Not only were his dinners tasty, but he also enjoyed packing lunch boxes. Every day he added a special treat. To this day he makes his wife dinner just about every night. This Christmas he made a lemon meringue pie with meringue so high that it made me a bit jealous! I hope to share his stew recipe next winter as it is also pretty damn good! •

ies 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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### Summer Rentals 2024 WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU RENT A HOUSE THIS SUMMER





By Christine Bates info@mainstreetmag.com

up on realtors' websites and Zillow. They stand out from the yearly rentals by their attractive furnishings and monthly price, which is usually upwards of 100% more than an annual rental. No one wants to sleep on the floor for the summer. Seasonal immigrants have already started signing leases and will turn out in droves at the first sign of warmer weather and sunny days.

ummer rentals are beginning to show

#### Changes in the market

Realtors in our second-home markets in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts agree that 2020 was a year of peak demand, occupancy, and pricing. But by 2023 some agents estimate that half of their properties failed to find a renter, and many of the homes that did find a tenant rented at reduced prices. A few properties didn't get one phone call of inquiry while others rented immediately.

Some attribute this to lower demand as people travelled internationally after the COVID lockdown, increased supply as purchasers of COVID second homes decided to generate income and spend the summer elsewhere and, in some cases,

overpricing. All agreed that Airbnb and VRBO have increased supply and offered shorter rental periods. One broker counted 600 Airbnb rentals available short and longer term in the Northwest corner of Connecticut.

Holly Leibrock, an agent with Elyse Harney Real Estate, observed that the pricing threshold has changed and that it's critical to have a reasonable rental price. Liza Reiss, also of Elyse Harney Real Estate, observed that the rental market has shifted as summer renters commit to fewer weeks. "People used to lock in for the whole summer, but now they want shorter terms as they try out different areas, and owners have become amenable to one- or two-month rental terms."

#### What will 2024 bring?

Barring natural disasters, pandemics, or heat waves, real estate agents are anticipating that 2024 pricing will adjust to normal pre-COVID market levels. Monthly rentals on lake fronts will still command the highest prices, \$45,000 a month or more, and houses with glamorous gunite pools may rent for twice as much as houses without pools.

"There are two kinds of renters," observed Reiss, "Those who prefer swimming in a lake and those who want a pool."

Houses that are located in towns and within walking distance to restaurants, shops, and recreational activities are also in demand. "Without waterfront or pools, folks need some kind of wow factor," shared Steve Penner of William Pitt Sotheby's. Large houses with rooms for extended family and guests, spectacular views, and multiple bedrooms with en suite bathrooms are always sought after. Price also depends on timing. For example, one Cornwall property is asking \$3,800 a month through May, \$6,000 for June, \$7,000 for July and \$8,000 for August - always the most expensive and popular month.

#### Who is the tenant? Who is the landlord?

Not surprisingly, summer renters tend to be New York City weekenders who may also be looking at Nantucket, Vermont, Tuscany, or Provence or those returning to an area they know well. They are not the partying, attention and status-seeking crowd of the Hamptons. There is no singles scene here and no photographers.

Continued on page 21 ...

Above, left: Built in 2017, this 5,000-square-foot home with four bedrooms and its own dock and beach on Lake Waramaug will rent for \$45,000 a month in July and August. Photo by Michael Bowman courtesy of Peter Klemm, Klemm Real

appeals to many summer renters. Photo by Phillip Dutton for Posh Pads, courtesy of Stephen Brighenti.

Above, right: An infin-

ity pool with a view



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Renters are young couples, families, and grandparents who are all seeking country living with access to recreational and cultural activities. Nor are renters the downtown, cool types who seem to prefer the Hudson Valley and the Catskills, according to Peter Klemm of Klemm Real Estate.

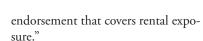
Most owners in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut who rent their houses in the summer use it during the remainder of the year, although some also rent or Airbnb during the rest of the year. That describes Stephen Brighenti, who owns and operates 20 luxury properties as year-round rentals in Roxbury and Washington. His shorter-term rentals are handled through Airbnb, where Brighenti is a five-star super host year after year, and Posh Pads, his website. His prime summer rentals range from \$15,900 to over \$60,000 monthly and are handled by Peter Klemm of Klemm Real Estate. These homes all boast Frette linens, original art, antiques, down comforters, and Sub-Zero refrigerators. While complaining about the dreadful winter weather, Brighenti claims that all of his summer rentals will be fully occupied. Unlike rentals that are used by owners the rest of the year, each of these luxury houses is like a chic hotel.

#### What owners should consider

Summer rentals in the country are close enough to the New York metro area to command premium rents that can pay an owner's taxes and cover a summer holiday someplace else. However, before thinking of calling a real estate agent or taking photos for Zillow, prospective summer landlords need to think through some basic issues.

Start with the rental period and how much you might charge for your home. In our area, July and August are the most popular months. In terms of pricing, check out Airbnb for the short-term rental market, as well as real estate brokers, like Elyse Harney Real Estate and Klemm Real Estate, which will have higher end, long-term rentals for the summer, and websites like Zillow, which include rentals by owners.

Owners should remember that for most people your home, whether primary or secondary, is a substantial asset that should be protected. "Owners should contact their insurance agent to make sure they have the right coverage in place for rental exposure," according to Jeffrey H. Cashman with William Pitt Insurance Services. "A new policy may need to be written or current policy amended with an

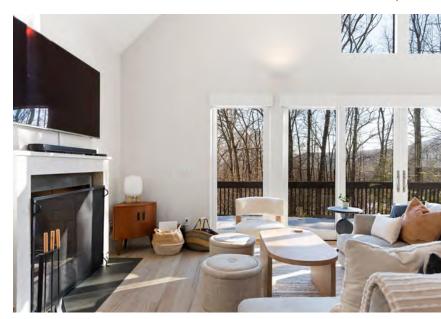


"Additionally, owners should ask their insurance agent and attorney what liability insurance the owner should request the tenant have in place during the rental term. In many cases the tenant can extend liability from their primary residence policy to the rental location for a small additional premium."

The next step is a call to your accountant to ask about taxes. Will the rent received be considered taxable income? If so, what expenses might be deducted? Typically, rentals up to 14 days are free from taxation, but beyond that it gets more complicated. For example, in Connecticut, you may need to charge the 15% hotel and lodging occupancy tax on rentals less then 30 days.

Summer landlords need to address the same issues as full-time landlords. Is smoking allowed? Are pets? Are utilities included? Who will mow the lawn and clean the pool? Is housecleaning included? Most importantly, who will respond to tenant phone calls when someone is locked out, the Wi-Fi doesn't work or the toilet is stopped up? You will also need to think about problems that landlords with unfurnished year-round rentals don't have to consider. How do you clean out the closets, store personal

Continued on next page ...



Above: The appeal of 33 Westmount Road in Salisbury, a threebedroom, three-bath, 3,000-square-foot home listed for \$15,000 a month, is its sophisticated "wow factor" design. Photo by Turn Key Media, courtesy of Lenore Mallett of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty.

Left: 15 Harrison Road in Lakeville, CT, was rented through July the first weekend it went on the market. This house offers a pool, outdoor relaxing, views, and six bedrooms for \$25,000 for the month of August. Photo by Sonia Zinke courtesy of Elyse Harney and John Panzer of Elyse Harney Real Estate.







Top: 36 Yuza Mini Lane in Kent, CT, with a pool and views in every direction is available for the summer at \$35,000 a month. Photo by Michael Bowman, courtesy of Steve Penner of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty.

Above: 10 Sunny Ridge Road in Washington, CT, is listed by Peter Klemm and owned by Stephen Brighenti, of Posh Pads. In the summer the sevenbedroom house with pool rents for \$44,900 a month, off-season for \$15,900. Photo by Phillip Dutton courtesy of Stephen Brighenti.

Right: The Lodge at Twin Lakes rents for \$45,000 from Memorial Day through Labor Day and comes with canoes, kayaks, and a sailboat. Listed by Elyse Harney Morris and Tracey Macgowan of Elyse Harney Real Estate. Photo courtesy of Elyse Harney Real Estate treasures and valuable items, and in general get rid of clutter? Renters want to feel this is their home. One experienced agent commented, "It's an educational experience. It's not for everyone."

#### Should you should use a real estate broker?

Seasonal rental landlords rely on real estate brokers to screen potential renters, show their house, promote the property with professional photographs and social media, and help with the lease process. Local real estate brokers know the properties and can answer questions about the area from the nearest supermarket to the best playgrounds for kids. Reiss advises landlord clients on how to make their home attractive to renters from cleaning out the pantry, and removing all things personal to leaving out new, wrapped sponges in the kitchen. "Think hotel, and provide bathroom amenities, fresh fruit, and flowers."

Renters can utilize agents to show them a range of properties and help them decide which property and location best meets their needs. Reiss suggested looking in Connecticut for short-term rentals to one client after showing them a rental in Hillsdale, NY. The family ended up shifting their whole life and moving full-time to Lakeville with their four kids. Agents representing tenants also understand the whole rental process of applications, rental contracts, and escrow deposits. Agents themselves regard the rental market as a way to introduce new clients to the area.

#### What should renters think about?

Potential tenants should view the property in person and ask questions about the rental contract - who will pay the utilities, maintain the property, and be available to handle emergencies? What are the restrictions on pets, guests, parking, etc. When are the rent and security deposits payable? Some properties demand the entire rent and security deposit be paid upon signing the contract with no provision for cancellation. Ask if there are any other charges? Remember that a summer rental from a resident owner is very different from a hotel room or an Airbnb. Each one is unique.

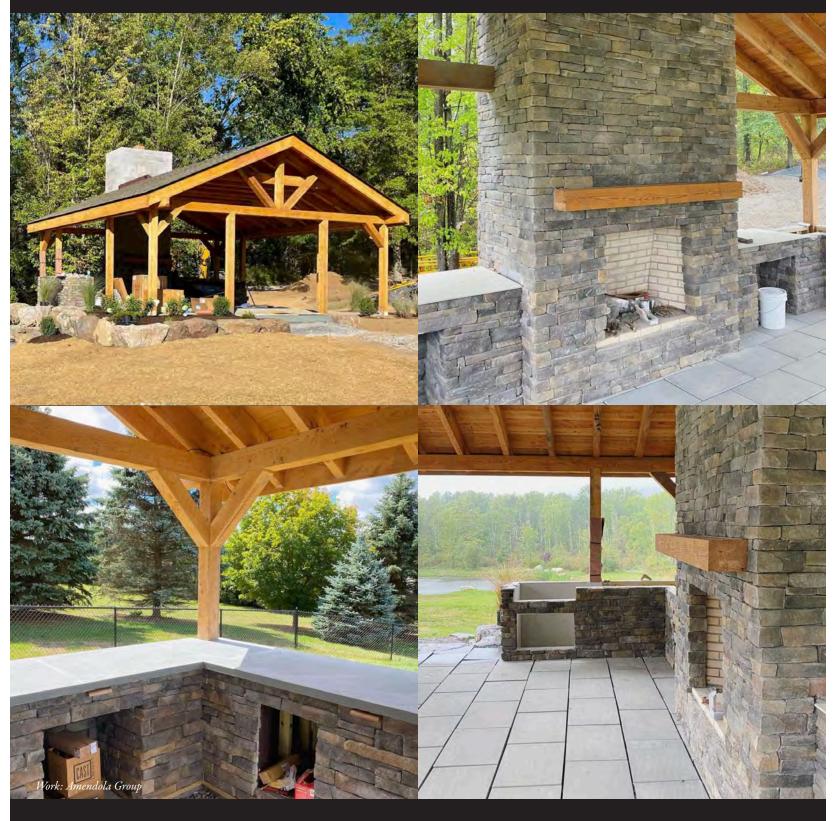
When you view the house, check out what is important to you. If you're a cook or will be entertaining, check out the pots and pans and china. If you're a parent, is the house safe for children? Are cribs available? If security is an issue, check out the system. Turn on the TV. Is there a sound system? What about the Wi-Fi?

Think of renting a home for the summer as a travel opportunity to explore our area from the Berkshires to the Litchfield Hills to the Hudson Valley. Visit farmer's markets and villages, hike trails, attend summer theater and concerts, watch a polo match, or check out a car race at Lime Rock. You might end up buying a house or changing your life. •

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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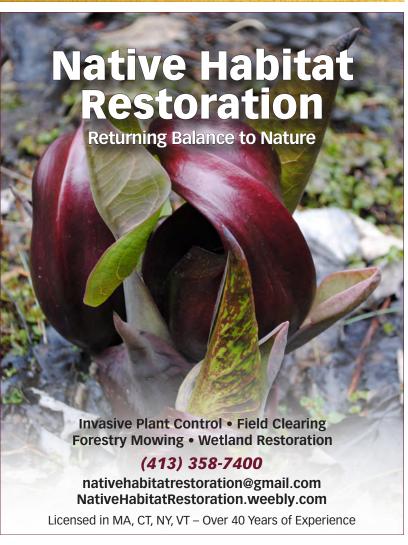
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#### HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARMSCAPE ECOLOGY PROGRAM

# THE SPACE BETWEEN





Above, left: Hawthorne Valley Farm in the center of Columbia County is the home of the Farmscape Ecology Program. This 900-acre, diversified, organic, biodynamic farm provides a mosaic of habitats and is home to many species of wild plants and animals. Right: FEP staff sampling insects in an experimental wildflower plot at the Hudson Valley Farm Hub.

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

Columbia County's landscape is represented by farming and nature. We tend to look at those twin features of the area as distinct, separated by fences, stone walls, and field borders. Where the corn stops is the end of the farm, and where the trees start is the beginning of the woods. Yet, the animals, insects, trees, and plant life don't see things quite that way.

Working to expose the permeable and overlapping borders of farmland, meadow, woodland, and wetland is the Farmscape Ecology Program.

FEP is one of several programs of Hawthorne Valley Association, an umbrella nonprofit organization founded in 1971 by Waldorf teachers and fashioned in the tradition of Rudolf Steiner. Located in Ghent, NY, HVA promotes social and cultural renewal by integrating agriculture, education, and the arts. It comprises Hawthorne Valley Farm, including an organic CSA, dairy, and farm store; a K-12 Waldorf School; a place-based learning center offering children's programming on the farm; FEP; and several other initiatives.

Having just celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2023, FEP has grown from two part-time volunteers and borrowed desk space to a six-person

team and a cadre of seasonal interns headquartered in its dedicated building on HVA property.

#### Blurring the lines

Two of the coordinators, Conrad and Claudia Vispo, have been at the helm of FEP since the beginning. Partners in work and life, they complement each other with PhDs in wildlife ecology and land resources. They share a fascination for FEP's dedication to the space between – between field and farm, animal and plant, insect and amphibian, past and future. The third FEP coordinator, Anna Duhon, who is a social scientist, joined them

To stay in that space between worlds takes a certain kind of constitution. Both Conrad and Claudia have a calm and reflective demeanor. They are comfortable with existing in a place that is neither one thing nor another but many things at once. These are requirements for the work they do as ecologists whose goals include understanding the borders that occupy the natural and agricultural landscape of Columbia County.

#### Occupying the middle ground

Woven through the work of FEP is

the "ecology of the middle ground," which encompasses land that is "neither completely dominated by human hand nor in pristine wilderness." This characteristic defines much of Columbia County. Humans are part of this ecology, and our decisions ripple into the animal and plant communities we coexist with. FEP is all about the middle ground and urges us to be as well.

FEP strives to conduct research relevant to people and the land around them. Their research and associated outreach provide ways for the community to interface with the local landscape.

They outline three questions that guide their work: What do farms provide for nature? Conversely, does native biodiversity influence farming? Lastly, how can we catalog the biodiversity of that shared landscape?

Additionally, FEP's work on land use history explores how land was used in the past, how it's used now, and how it might be used in the future, depending on the decisions we make today.

#### **Habitat exploration**

Next month, Black Dome Press will publish The Ecological and Cultural

Field Guide to the Habitats of Columbia County, New York, which is the culmination of many years of research by FEP and their colleagues at Hudsonia Ltd. The research involved visits to 500 sites, including forests, old forests, meadows, and wetlands to assess the biodiversity existing within each site. The guide also draws upon countless interviews and focus groups to uncover how people value the land around them and their aesthetic appreciation of it.

Habitats are defined as a community of different types of organisms that self-select into areas of the landscape. These landscapes have vegetative and geographical conditions to satisfy species-specific needs for food, shelter, reproduction, and interrelationships with other species. They are the cornerstone of native species conservation - destroy the habitat, destroy the

The field guide explores how to identify habitats, maps of public areas where you can engage with those habitats, an inventory of plant and animal species you can expect to find,

Continued on next page ...



Above: These tent-like structures are Malaise traps deployed by FEP as part of their insect monitoring in an experimental wildflower plot at the Hudson Valley Farm Hub.

suggestions on how to steward these habitats, a history of the habitat overlaid with human history, perspectives on the habitat derived from interviews and public feedback, and suggestions for how one might interact with the habitat.

Tying into their middle ground philosophy, the guide describes not only wilder habitats but also cultivated ones, as a way of emphasizing that all parts of our landscape are habitat for certain species.

Like much of FEP's work, the guide is not one thing or another but a combination of many things – scientific discovery, historical analysis, field guide, and exploration of the human experience in relation to the habitat in which people live. After all, we are part of the habitat. We occupy space in the natural world, and our actions have an impact on it.

Looking back in time, the guide helps document how we have interacted with the land in the past, and looking forward, it encourages people to think about their contribution (or depletion) to the landscape as it exists today. It also explores the different human perspectives that influence how that habitat is perceived and used.

#### Agroecology

Farmland doesn't end at the property line or fence post. There is a blurring of boundaries between the field and the forest. What happens there is in keeping with FEP's study of that liminal space. This is one aspect of agroecology.

Their projects at the Hudson Valley Farm Hub allow them to experiment on land plots with different vegetation types: seeded wildflowers, seeded native grasses, and whatever grows without seeding (but with an otherwise similar management regime).

The research aims to determine if wildflowers planted in farm fields or surrounding areas can influence the number and diversity of "beneficials," the "good bugs" such as bees, parasitoid wasps, and ladybugs, that benefit pollination and help control pests.

FEP performs similar work on land where forest borders planted fields, also known as the "edges," to see if insects journey from woodland to planted environment or vice-versa. This is an explicit effort to describe how porous the farm/non-farm borders are.

#### The magic of mushrooms

Mushrooms are new to the FEP data collection. FEP's botany technician, Josie Lang, has been cataloging the fungi she found at Hawthorne Valley and in the surrounding Columbia County. Her work in progress provides images and descriptions on the FEP website, and she has been documenting her findings on iNaturalist.

#### Misunderstood wasps and ants

One group of beneficial insects of particular interest to Kendrick Fowler, FEP's entomology lab manager, is parasitoid wasps. These solitary and often relatively tiny wasps feed on their host as they grow, ultimately killing it. Of interest to FEP is that some of these wasps feed on "bad" bugs that damage crops. The wasps perform a valuable yet hard-to-calculate ecosystem service and contribute to reducing the number of insects harmful to crops.

Another small but mighty insect that plays a vital role in agriculture is the humble ant, which is the subject of study for FEP's conservation biologist Kyle Bradford, who observes ant behavior and is on the prowl for rare ant species – two of which have been documented at Hawthorne Valley Farm in lightly managed, dry pastures.

#### **Public engagement**

The FEP website is brimming with information, photos, resources, and maps to help community members engage with Columbia County. Throughout the year, FEP hosts presentations, workshops, and guided walks through the surrounding area. All its events present the natural environment up close and personal.

The FEP team is adept at taking the significance of those minute observations and marrying them to the larger implications for the natural community in which we live.

Their wonderfully informative blog called *Progress of the Seasons Journal* is well worth subscribing to. Written in turn by each of the FEP staff, it's like taking a guided nature hike from the comfort of your armchair. The blogs are newsy, conversational, observational, and scientific. They are the next best thing to being there.

Reading about the wonders of nature may one day motivate you to follow in the footsteps of Claudia, Anna, Josie, Kendrick, Kyle, and Conrad and see Columbia County through their eyes. It's a county of farm fields and forest in a relationship, small miracles making their way through the soil, complexities of the edges on full display, and opportunities for we humans to learn how to be good neighbors — without the good fences. •

For more information about the Farmscape Ecology Program, visit hvfarmscape.org. To learn about the work of the Hawthorne Valley Association go to hawthornevalley.org.









Top, left: Red efts are occasionally attracted to mushrooms, not to eat them directly, but in search of invertebrates found on the mushroom. Right: Wildflowers seeded in experimental plots on former corn fields at the Hudson Valley Farm Hub to evaluate their effect on insect populations. Above, left: Hawthorne Valley Farm in the center of Columbia County is the home of the Farmscape Ecology Program. Right: A tiny parasitoid wasp caught in the act of trying to lay its eggs into a flea beetle. Parasitoid wasps are generally considered beneficial insects, because they can help farmers control pest damage to crops.





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# Animal smarts

By Jesse DeGroodt info@mainstreetmag.com

My name is Lily and I am a dog. Yes, it's my real name, but I do my best to keep up with whatever Grampy calls me, be that Willie, Shorty, Beans, or Stinkweed (I unequivocally do not stink, unlike the other doggy here, who smells like a dead goat half the time). Sometimes, he calls me The Brains of the Operation, although that gets to be a mouthful, and I pretty much cease listening after "the brains." Apparently, I am all of those things he calls me. For the curious, there is a photo of me under "staff" on this magazine's website, by the by. I'm the brainy, cute one licking the ol' geezer's face. Today, he tastes like spicy hot chicken wings. Maybe later on he'll taste like ice cream ... and maybe he will share.

#### A day in the life of

Although I haven't entirely gotten my head around how this works, the place where we eat and sleep (on what Grampy calls my lily pad) is a magic box. It has everything I need. It's warm in the winter and cool in the Define intelligence summer. It has food (ears up - there's activity in the kitchen area!) and water. I don't have to punch a time clock or sign into a Zoom meeting. Grampy loves me. What else could there be? And most afternoons, we climb into the silver box with wheels,

leave the big magic box, and at times return with a doughnut for me and the stinky dog. That's a lot of fun.

Some words and phrases I recognize: Snow. Rain. No. Excuse me. Walk. Want some of this? Get in [ed. note: the car]. Come up. Kitty (ewwwww). Hang on. Water. Deer. Window. Few minutes. Over here. Ride. That's it (ordinarily Grampy accompanies this one with a palms-up gesture, like you'd see at the casino when a dealer is leaving or joining a blackjack table). Train. Luna (Grampy's twolegged granddaughter). Cow. Brought you something. Sometimes Grampy calls me a snake, usually reserved for the times he's eating and I affix upon him my big, brown eyes filled with abject heartache.

Then there are such things as (you may sense a theme here) chicken. Chocolate chips. Milk. Ice cream. Cheese. Peanut butter. General Tso's. Meatballs. Sketti.

There are many words and/or phrases that I understand. These are words that I let Grampy know I know because, you know, it's not always the best strategy to let on that you know what you know. But the fact that I can identify and act upon a few people words doesn't particularly impress me. While this might be considered burying the lead, let's remember this small yet intriguing fact: Unless I'm missing something, it's humans that have defined what is meant by "intelligence." How would that definition appear if we, as in dogs and (I repeat, ewwwww) cats and crows and lizards, for instance, had been tasked with cooking up the definition? Hmmmmm?

So I'm lacking Broca's area of the brain. Well, darn. Humans could do a lot worse by speaking a whole lot less, if you ask me. Except, of course, when it comes to me. I like it when Grampy talks to me. (What would really come in handy are opposable thumbs, if that could somehow be arranged.) I heard this somewhere and I

forthwith and with great alacrity apologize for my inability to recall exactly where: Buffalo give the impression that if they are not speaking, it is because they understand the value of silence. Maybe once upon a time I was a buffalo. However this all works, y'all realize it's rather twisted to try to define me and my friends against the intelligence of humans, right?

Maybe try looking a little deeper? Philosophers way back when thought only of humans, and humans only, as sentient. René Descartes, no simpleton so far as I can ascertain, maintained that animals are automata, unable to feel pain or suffering. Hogwash. Clearly, he was off his rocker, but what of it? Let's think about this for a second: It wasn't so long ago that doctors were of the mind that babies were incapable of feeling pain until they reached the age of one or so. Anyhoo, this seems like a good time to go see if anything tasty was recently dropped on the kitchen floor and give Grampy a chance to pipe in.

#### Grampy

Grampy here, in living color, which, I might add, Lily failed to mention she is not so great at seeing, but conversely I'm not so great at smelling and I'm certainly no match for her hearing abilities. Because of the latter, let's think about the times all's quiet and Spot is seated alongside you on the chesterfield, when suddenly his ears perk up and he adopts that headtilted listening position. You don't hear a thing. What is it? A chipmunk in the attic? A family of mice in the wall? Chances are, Spot can make an

Continued on next page ...





excellent, informed guess, while you sit there thinking he's lost his marbles.

When we're in the silver box with wheels and happen to drive by a spot at which we ordinarily stop, such as a coffee shop, and we don't, Lily, from her position in the front seat, will watch it go by, then look quizzically over at me, clearly bamboozled over why we didn't stop. Try telling me animals have no memory capabilities or understanding of their surroundings. Going by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, right from the top, intelligence can be defined as the ability to learn or understand or to deal with new or trying situations and/or the skilled use of reason; the ability to apply knowledge to manipulate one's environment or to think abstractly; mental acuteness or shrewdness.

All my life, as with many of us, I've been around dogs and cats and whatever else. Early in life, it was dogs, then cats midstream, now back to dogs. At this ripe old age of I-forgetwhat, having observed them and other wild critters (I could do without the fisher screeching out at the creek, but fishers gotta screech or they cease being fishers, is my guess) around me go about their daily lives, I continue to grapple with the question of what is meant by "intelligence" and what might be labeled "instinctive" when it comes to animals. If all animal behavior is instinctive, driven by their DNA and whatever other magic chemical

stew is comprised within their beings, then what's the scoop with humans, who take years to so much as grasp many of the fundamentals essential to their existence?

#### **Individualizations**

If there's one understanding that age brings with it, it's that all the dogs and cats that have lived life alongside me were all individuals in their own right. That's not to mention the highly sociable skunk who, back in the day when I engaged in such an activity, would join me on the back porch when it was cigar time, this prior to me handing him pieces of kitty food, when he showed up simply to hang out by my feet. He soon acquired a name, Ambrose, short for ambrosia. Once the kitty food entered the equation, I'm guessing I could have easily induced him to climb up onto my lap, but I do have standards, limited in scope though they may be. We were quite comfortable in our arrangement. And then we got a dog. Buh-bye, nightly assignations with Ambrose, who no doubt filled the air with X-rated skunk words at this revolting development.

Years before meeting up with "my" friendly skunk, a phrase – "the implication of intelligent design" – uttered by Carl Sagan on the *Tonight Show* worked its way in through an earhole and has lived inside my head ever since. As I recall, he'd said it as part of



Jesse as a wee lad with his dog Trixie.

a response in regards to what might be running through the mind of someone from outer space approaching the planet Earth for the first time. What if the first thing he/she/whatever were to spot was the bear out in my yard, lifting the lid on the trash container, perusing the contents, and finally reaching in to remove a bag, ultimately to liberate its contents and settle in for breakfast? Not knowing anything about anything, why wouldn't that outer space being be led to believe that bear simply had to be the brightest being extant?

#### Plan ahead. Be like the squirrel.

Okay, none of the denizens of the animal kingdom will be parsing the mysteries of quantum mechanics (can we really be sure about that?) anytime soon, but how many among us will? Settle down, people. If there's one thing at which homo sapiens almost universally excels, given our raging anthropocentrism, it's our certainty of our utter brilliance and how desperately convinced of our superiority we can be. One can tell a lot about someone by the way they walk their pooch - stuff you see on virtually a daily basis makes this human shake his head, stuff like people hurrying their dogs along on a walk, yanking

on their leash and such when they're stopping every two feet to smell what's new in the 'hood. Telling them to get their business done *now* because they, the human, needs to get somewhere wildly important, like back to their video game. "Plan ahead," I envision filling the dog's thought bubble, which might be the mild version.

Be like the local squirrels, who have trained me to plan ahead and expect a less-than-mild winter by carefully piling pine cones around the bases of the copious pine trees here. Initially, this was confusing, as my human thinker told me they really should shelter them away from pine cone thieves and the weather, so I have no idea how to explain it, but over time it became a surefire indicator to keep the snow shovel nearby and the plow guy on speed dial for that particular winter.

You know, following the conception of this story and the go-ahead from the Big Cheese, I ordered up a pile of books from the library and began banging around the inkernet in search of words of wisdom from people who know about such things as animal intelligence, in order that this might turn out to be at least a halfway scholarly look at things. Ha. And then Lily took over. And here we are. •







Above: Lily the dog. Above, right: Killer the kitty with Dan, the stinky dog below.

# Dave to landscape differently

















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SARAH CHASE TALKS

# Regenerative Faming AND THE UPCOMING SEASON AT CHASEHOLM FARM

By Abby Audenino abby@mainstreetmag.com

It's a balmy Friday in the beginning of February. The sun is shining, the air is unseasonably warm, and Sarah Chase is about to milk the small dairy herd at Chaseholm Farm in Pine Plains, NY.

Each cow has a sign above its individual stall with its name on it. Names like "Tuesday" and "Burrata" decorate the signs.

"The names have to be matrilineal, meaning that each cow's name has to start with the same letter as its mom's name," Sarah explained. "In big calving groups, we'd pick a theme and name the cows after a theme, but mostly we just try to have fun with it."

#### Back to the roots

Sarah Chase took over at Chaseholm Farm in 2013 after she returned home from college. "I didn't think it was possible to be a dairy farmer," she said. "Growing up here and watching my dad, it was clear that the old ways wouldn't work forever. I never really thought I would be farming to make a living."

But when she moved home from college, she had friends that were getting into organic farming. "I had held onto this idea that I would have a couple of cows in my backyard when I grew up, and then seeing my friends starting their farming businesses, I was like wait a second, maybe I could do this with dairy cows," she said.

From there, she did extensive research about the different kinds of regenerative farming methods and

dove in head first. "I thought that it was going to be a way to farm more cheaply because the cows would be eating grass and we wouldn't be buying as many inputs, but that was a flawed thought process," Sarah explained. "I love the cows, and I love this place. Figuring out how I could be here and participate in the family legacy, while putting my own spin on things on a small scale meant a lot."

Being able to preserve the farm as open land, as well as have a place for people to come and connect is incredibly important to Sarah. "Bringing people closer to their food is a big part of what I value about this work."

#### Round the clock work

A day on the farm today looks significantly different than it does in the summer. "Winter is fun for me because it gets to be routine, and it's nice to have a little break from the crazy chaos of summertime," Sarah laughed.

This winter, Chaseholm has made a few changes in the way it operates. For one, the cows aren't living in the tie stall barn like they used to. Now, they have more room to roam around and be free.

In November, it also altered the milking schedule to be once per day at nine in the morning. "Before this, for four years, we milked the cows twice a day, every other day, so there would be 18 hours between milkings," Sarah explained. "Because we're 100%, grass-fed organic, the cows don't make as much milk as conventional cows. By milking them less, we actually reduced our overall cost of milk production. And it's been much easier on us, too."

It's been a bit of an adjustment for Sarah, who was used to coming to the farm at five o'clock in the morning to start the day's work. Now, she gets to come into work around eight o'clock instead. "I feel like a normal human," she joked. "I exercise in the morning now. I've never been able to do that, and now I have time in my day to do the other things that I need and want to do, too."

In the winter, the farmers still do all of the same tasks, including taking care of the cows, the pigs, and manning the farm store, which is open seven days a week from 8am to 8pm.

But in the summer, there's far more to do. For one, they're moving electric fencing daily to ensure that the cows are getting on fresh pasture. They typically have more cows in the summer, so the daily tasks of taking care of them multiply. Chaseholm also produces all of its own hay and frequently hosts events at the farm, including Burger Nights and live music.

"Luckily it's way nicer to be outside in the summer, but the days are long, and it's very easy to fill those days up."

### The biggest rewards and the biggest challenges

"My instinct is to say that watching the animals grow and being excited for new babies is the biggest reward," she said. "Watching the cows develop from who you think they're going to be and then to who they actually turn into."

Outside of the animals, the biggest reward is watching the community surrounding Chaseholm grow. "It's hard to take time to think about these things sometimes when you're in the middle of doing it every day, but to think back to where we were ten years ago versus now, it's just crazy," Sarah said. "The number of customers that

walk through our doors daily, or the relationships that we have with people who care about Chaseholm and bring their kids – it's all so special."

For Sarah, being connected to the people that Chaseholm is serving is one of the most valuable parts of farming.

As far as challenges go, the "every-dayness" of farming can occasionally be overwhelming. "Sometimes you want a break," Sarah said. "That's part of why we're having conversations about making quality of life decisions and having fewer cows in the winter. If you can figure out ways to make it a little bit quieter and facilitate taking time off for everyone, it lightens the load significantly."

#### Weather and inflation

In addition to the daily challenges of running a dairy farm, Chaseholm has also encountered the additional challenges of unprecedented weather conditions and increased inflation in the past eight months. "It's been so wet this past year. It was a little wet to have the cows on the pasture sometimes, but we can prioritize what areas to use when it's raining. That type of system has worked well for us."

In addition to the pasture flooding, Chaseholm has also struggled to make hay when the weather is too wet. Similar to the wet weather in the late summer and early fall, the milder winter weather has also created muddy conditions in the pasture.

Mild weather in the winter is also cause for concern when it comes to the health of the cows. "Cold weather kills bacteria and helps the cows' respiratory systems," Sarah said. "Fortunately for us, our cows are in













Life at Chaseholm Farm is rich in history and always busy. Between every day tasks caring for the animals and land, to creating events like Burger Nights, to being integral members of the community, the Chaseholm family is constantly on the go. Photos courtesy of Sarah Chase.

a pretty low-stress environment, so they're healthy anyway. But ethically, that's why we have fewer cows in the winter and are making more decisions based on quality of life."

Like everyone else, Chaseholm has struggled with inflation. "Costs go up, for sure. Costs of shipping have gotten very high, but for the most part, we don't have very many inputs. We're and love Chaseholm, but can't come not at the whim of the commodity markets as much as some other farms might be."

Though Chaseholm's prices have increased slightly, Sarah noted that the price of local food is still near the price of food in the grocery store, specifically when it comes to produce and meat. "Our prices haven't changed very much because they were already reflecting the true cost of doing business," she said.

Since the pandemic, Chaseholm has seen an uptick in locals purchasing foods directly from them with more regularity. "People are excited to be buy local food and support local business. We create a lot of food here in the Hudson Valley, and it's cool to think about how we're able to support our population in times of food scarcity."

#### **CSA Program**

Community Supported Agriculture is a type of direct marketing that provides a way for people to buy local food directly from farms. Individuals can purchase a "share" of the farm and become a "member," and the farm will then deliver a box of seasonal goods.

"Some people want our products to the farm every week. We wanted to bring the farm store to other people," Sarah said.

Thus, Chaseholm's CSA program, HolmGoods, was born.

Currently, Chaseholm serves delivery locations in Pine Plains, Red Hook, Kingston, Lamontville, Poughkeepsie, Gardiner, and Yorktown Heights in New York, and Sharon in Connecticut. Chaseholm is looking to expand its delivery locations in the upcoming season.

If you're interested in signing up for HolmGoods, you can fill out the form on Chaseholm's website. It also allows you to share your preferences so that it can customize each delivery to encompass the products that you want the most. Don't want beef? No problem - that just means you'll get more pork in your order. No cheese? No biggie, you'll still get yogurt.

Chaseholm also partners with

Rocksteady Farm in Millerton to offer a dairy and beef add-on share to its vegetable and flower CSA.

#### Prepping for the upcoming season

"February came, and I was like, 'Oh my god, it's almost time. What am I doing?" Sarah laughed.

The first steps to prepare for the summer season include pasture planning, ordering seeds, and determining what changes need to be made for the CSA program and the marketing schedules. "We make a lot of deeper business decisions now and try to set ourselves up for growth and success because once the full-on farming is happening every day, it's a lot harder to do the planning.'

Arguably the most fun part to plan is the events that Chaseholm hosts during the summer. "Before I was farming, I worked in bars and booking music shows. It was just what I liked to do, so when I came back home and started working here, I figured why can't I do the same thing here?"

Chaseholm hosts a variety of events, including Burger Nights, Dairy Drag, and live music. Sarah also ensures that the animals are included,

often having them graze in pastures near to where the event is happening so that the folks in attendance can see them

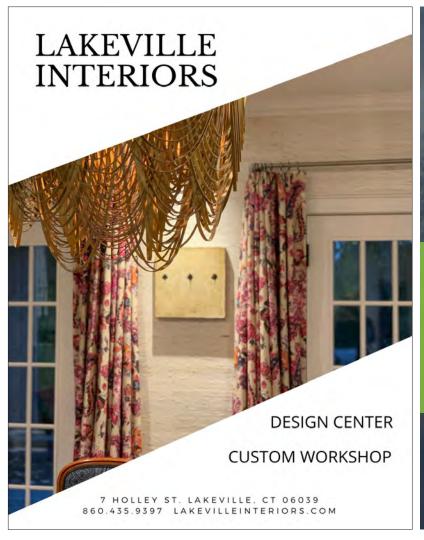
"It's been a great way for us to showcase how we farm without talking about it or trying to get people's attention," she said. "It's also a way for us to have fun."

#### Always available

If there's one thing that Sarah wants the community to know, it's that Chaseholm is always available to help.

"If you need milk on a Sunday afternoon and you don't feel like driving to the grocery store, we're here and we're open," she said. "I hear people all the time say, 'I ran out of this!' We have all sorts of local stuff, not just our own products. We're a real resource in that way. Come down and visit us!" •

To learn more about Chaseholm Farm, visit chaseholmfarm.com. Better yet, stop by in person at 115 Chase Road in Pine Plains, NY. To follow them on Instagram, visit @ chaseholmfarm.















+ Q&A with film editor Brian Gersten

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## BETTER ANGELS. BROKEN WINGS.

By CB Wismar info@mainstreetmag.com

Childhood memories of black and white television. The Lone Ranger. "Hopalong" Cassidy. Wyatt Earp. Gene Autry. Gabby Hayes. Bass Reeves.

Who?

Bass Reeves. He was not on the list of western heroes who filled the screen with 30-minute installments of fantasies about the taming of the frontier. His moment came many decades later when, after a lengthy development process, the limited series drawn from the deputy's biographies finally made it to a streaming service near you.

Bass Reeves shared the distinction of being, like Wyatt Earp, a real, historic character who actually did the things that are filling the HD screen in front of us. It simply took 100+ years for his story to be told. Why the wait? Is it possible that a latent undercurrent of prejudice kept his story from being told? After all, Bass Reeves was a Black man.

#### The Oscar race

At the time of this writing, we are in the midst of the swirl of speculation about this season's Oscar nominations. The night of March 10, tens of millions of viewers will watch as the envelopes are opened and the fortunes of the already famous and the newly discovered will be announced.

Although *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* seem to be dominating the conversations, we've been enthralled with the justified attention being given to two films that confront racism and prejudice. They are both very much worth seeing, and since the pervasive nature of streaming services grants access to big-budget movies shortly after they make their theatrical runs, settling onto the living room sofa and allow-

ing the cinematic magic to embrace you has become very easy.

Killers of the Flower Moon is a long film. It needs to be. The story it tells cannot be neatly wrapped up in 100 minutes. Legendary film auteur Martin Scorsese and screenwriter Eric Roth adapted the non-fiction book David Gann had written about the Osage murders committed in the 1920s in Oklahoma. The pointed inclusion of footage of the 1921 Tulsa race massacre reinforces the nature of the horror. It is about race, about ethnicity, and about greed. The underlying truth of the story is telling. Surely one of the primary, systemic causes of bigotry is greed.

American Fiction seemed to come out of nowhere. There was very little buzz before the film opened in theaters. What conversation there was seemed to revolve around the performance of Jeffrey Wright, who plays a character who wrestles with the notion of being an intellectual author and a Black man. Far-fetched as the premise of the film might be, the steady beat of the conflicts within the story ensures that we are never too many frames away from facing up to prejudice, reverse prejudice, struggle, and resolution.

#### The sins of the fathers

Many of us grew up in families where the understood equality of all people was a signature of our home conversations and the way we lived. That was not true for all of us.

Recently, the FBI announced a chilling bit of data. Between 2018 and 2022, reported hate crimes in schools and colleges nearly doubled. Targets of these crimes, in descending order, were Black students, LGBTQ students, and Jewish students. Since the report ended in 2022, the recent Gaza conflict was not included. University presidents have lost their jobs as the result of accusations of hate speech

and hate crimes on some of the most prestigious campuses in the country.

Whether the divide was ethnic, social, religious, economic, or political, it has existed in dinner table conversations, ill-timed attempts at humor, and ugly acts such as pushing a grocery cart so that it blocks another shopper or angrily elbowing our way to the front of the line to buy a movie ticket. For reasons that were likely tribal in origin, some families needed to exert their "betterness." Bigotry and prejudice are endemic ways of doing just that. African-American, Irish, Polish, Chinese, Muslim, Roman Catholic or Jewish, to the bigots, it didn't matter. Anyone different was just "them."

#### To change the way people think and behave

Viewing a film or binging a limited television series that has caught our attention and demands that we see it through has the inherent potential for us to see people in a different way. The same family that may have made crude comments about members of ethnic minorities can find themselves perched on the edge of their recliners hoping that Bass Reeves will, in fact, eradicate the evil that has been stalking him.

In so many ways, film and television can hold up a mirror and allow (force?) us to see a different side of who we are. What we do with that information, of course, is up to us. Are we still uncomfortable strolling through a crowd of individuals who look and speak differently from us? Are we eager to crawl behind repressive legislation that barely shrouds the bigotry and fear that prompted its writing?

Ours to answer. Ours to act.



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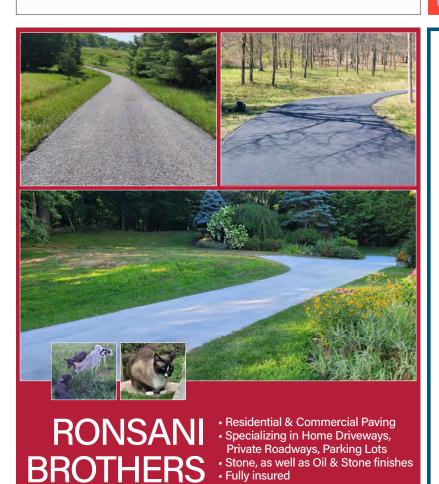
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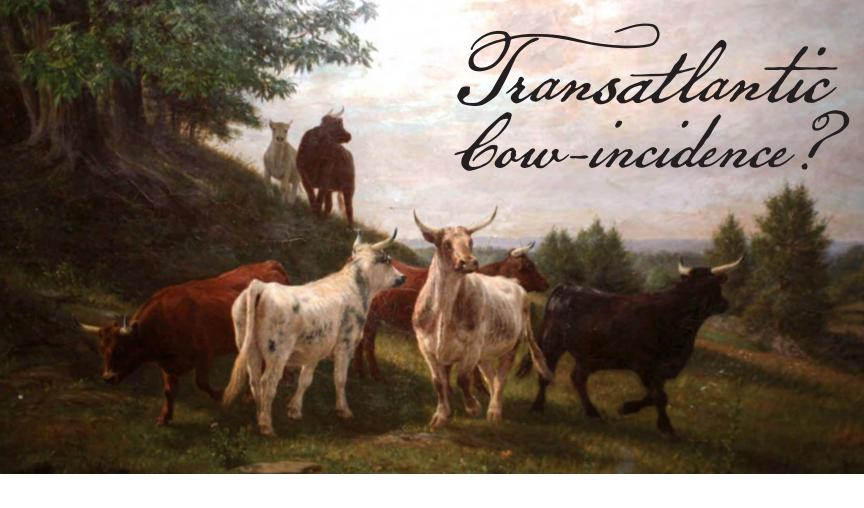
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**PAVING** 





By Dominique DeVito info@mainstreetmag.com

recent visit to the Dutchess County Historical Society has haunted me. In a good way. I was so impressed with the amount of information there about anything and everything Dutchess County, a reservoir of resources dating back over 100 years, that I haven't stopped thinking about it. While I was there to write about the DCHS for last month's issue of Main Street Magazine, I couldn't help but notice some paintings that were part of an exhibition called Fertile Ground: The Hudson Valley Animal Paintings of Caroline Clowes. I was so glad that Bill Jeffway, the DCHS executive director, gave me the printed catalog for the exhibition. It's been on my desk, and I look and marvel at it every day.

### A connective thread

I was also recently at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, MA. I hadn't been in years, and it was a great trip for an overcast and chilly day in January. There were two wonderful exhibitions that featured works on paper and of course the extensive permanent collection. I stumbled upon a work by the French artist Rosa Bonheur, and I was immediately reminded of Caroline Clowes. Off to the Internet I went, and as I learned more about

each of these 19th century painters of livestock and other animals in beautiful country settings, I started wondering if these two women, working on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean, might have possibly known of each other - or may have even been in touch.

### Two lives, two worlds

The theme for this, the March issue, is animals and farms, so I couldn't resist asking if I could write about the works - and lives - of these women who were both born in March! Thank you, Thorunn, for saying yes.

- Caroline Morgan Clowes: March 3, 1838 - November 16, 1904
- Rosa Bonheur: March 16, 1822 - May 25, 1899

They were born 13 days and 16 years apart, Rosa (Marie-Rosalie Bonheur) in Bordeaux, France, and Caroline (Caroline Morgan Clowes) in Hempstead, Long Island.

Both took earnestly to their art as teenagers, smitten with animals as their subject matter. Both exhibited in high-profile places at fairly young ages. Clowes's work was at the National Academy of Design by 1865 (age 29); Bonheur had a painting shown at the Paris Salon when she was just 19 (1841).

While from very different backgrounds, both were independent women whose art was their first love. Neither married. Both afforded houses paid for by sales of their paintings. Both painted and drew animals in ways that are as evocative and personal now as they were over a century ago.

### Clowes's upbringing

Caroline Clowes's early years were tragic. She was the second daughter, William Jones Clowes and Elizabeth Ann Hart. They were married in 1834. Lydia was born in 1836 and Caroline in 1838. The family moved to a farm in remote Sullivan County in 1839 hoping William could earn a living on the land. On Christmas Eve, 1840, Elizabeth died giving birth to a third daughter, who didn't survive a year. In 1851, it was decided by extended family members that Lydia and Caroline should find homes elsewhere. Lydia, then 15, went to Virginia. Caroline was sent to Heartsease farm in LaGrange, Dutchess County, where her uncle Benjamin on her mother's side had six children about her age.

Continued on page 39 ...



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For Christmas that year, 1851, Caroline's aunt gave her a gift of drawing books and the promise of lessons. She attended the prestigious Poughkeepsie Female Collegiate Institute and started private lessons with Frederic Rondel, a French artist who was in Poughkeepsie to work on commissions for Mathew Vassar. Rondel was an accomplished landscape painter and is best known as a teacher to Winslow Homer.

Clowes later studied under Henry Van Ingen, the first professor of art and art history at Vassar College. In 1872, a studio was constructed for her at Heartsease. She came to know Federal Point in Florida through her uncle's investment of land in the state, and in the late 1860s, bought her own land there, where she had a working orange grove and a studio.

### Reaching new heights

Clowes's big career break came while her painting Cattle at the Brook was featured at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, which was also the first official World's Fair held in the US. It drew international attention. There was a gallery at the Exhibition featuring just the work of women artists, but Clowes's piece hung in the main gallery alongside works by Albert Bierstadt, John LaFarge, Sanford

Gifford, and other well-known artists of the time.

While Clowes seems to hold a particular fondness for cows, she also painted sheep and horses in the landscapes she knew from living in the Hudson Valley. In the catalog created for the exhibit, Fertile Ground, at the DCHS, Caroline Culp, PhD, adjunct assistant professor at Vassar College, notes, "It was, in fact, paintings of cattle in their many and varied attitudes that helped Clowes establish herself as one of the first professional female artists in the Hudson Valley." The income generated from sales of her work "allowed Clowes to remain comfortably self-sufficient - and unmarried – all her life," Culp added. "Self-directed and self-driven, Clowes overcame innumerable obstacles faced by women in the constrictive society of 19th century America. She did so by finding a certain rare beauty in the cattle she observed in her backyard."

Clowes's works were exhibited in New York City and in and around Poughkeepsie, and some paintings on china were exhibited at the Royal Albert Hall in London in 1879. She passed away peacefully at Heartsease in 1904, at the fairly young age of 64.

#### Bonheur's background

Bonheur was born in March of 1822

into a creative family in Bordeaux, France. Her father was a painter of landscapes and portraits, and her mother taught piano. Rosa was the first born. She had three younger siblings, all of whom were successful artists, all taught by their father, Raimond, and all of whose subjects were animals. Raimond Bonheur introduced Rosa to the Saint Simeon

Society as a child. This group was

and Raimond encouraged Rosa's

unconventional in its societal beliefs,

independence. She was a tomboy as a child, exploring nature freely.

"I became an animal painter because I loved to move among animals," Bonheur is quoted as saying, "I would study an animal and draw it in the position it took, and when it changed to another position, I would draw that."

The family moved to Paris in 1829, when Rosa was seven. Four years later, her father abandoned the family, and her mother died. Rosa moved in with family friends, the Micas, and occasionally lived with her father. She never stopped drawing and painting, and she still focused on animals, venturing to farms outside of Paris to study them close up.

### Subject matter and notoriety

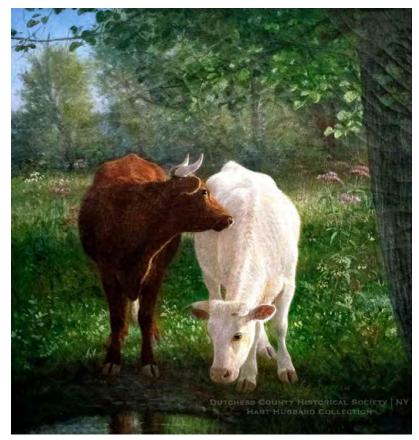
Paintings of animals weren't considered particularly collection-worthy in France at the time, and Bonheur started selling her works on the private market abroad. They became quite popular with the English, who admired her attention to detail and connection to her subjects and their surroundings.

Continued on next page ...





Top: A signed carte de visite of Rosa Bonheur that is among the belongings of Caroline Clowes in the collection housed at the Dutchess County Historical Society. Above: Another carte de visite from Rosa Bonheur, also signed, that Caroline Clowes had. It's a photo of Bonheur's painting, "Morning in the Highlands,





Top: "Two Cows at the Wappinger Creek," by Caroline Clowes. 1882 oil on canvas. Hart Hubbard Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society. Above "Untitled (Cow Grazing)," by Clowes, not dated, pencil on paper. Hart Hubbard Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society. All images reprinted with permission from the Dutchess County Historical Society. View Rosa Bonheur's work on numerous websites and look at the pieces in The Clark Institute's collection at www. clarkart.edu/microsites/women-artists-inparis/about-the-artists/

The painting that catapulted Bonheur's career was The Horse Fair, completed in 1855. It's a massive painting (over sixteen feet long and eight feet high), depicting a horse market in Paris with an energy and expressiveness reminiscent more of a battle scene than an average market day. The piece was scooped up by an art dealer and changed hands a few times before I breathe." being bought by Cornelius Vanderbilt II, who acquired it at auction in 1887 for what was considered an exorbitant amount at the time – over \$50,000. Vanderbilt was the brother of Frederick William Vanderbilt, who built the mansion in Hyde Park, NY. Cornelius immediately donated the piece to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan.

I can't imagine that this occurrence in the international art world would not have come to Clowes's attention. She would have been four years into her art lessons by then, surely seeking out and soaking up potential influencers. Clowes studied under a Frenchman early on. Would he have known about The Horse Fair or other works by Rosa Bonheur?

#### **Bonheur's Bohemia**

Bonheur was a presence in and out of the art world. While her work was described as "traditional in nature," her personal life, by Victorian standards especially, was quite unconventional. Bonheur defied gender expectations, wearing her hair short, learning how to shoot a gun, riding astride instead of sidesaddle, and rolling her own cigarettes, which she smoked profusely (a habit considered disrespectable for women in the mid-1800s). She spent a lot of time outdoors and wanted to wear pants, which were forbidden for women. She applied for a cross-dressing permit from the French prefecture - something given for medical or health reasons only - and she got one in 1857. Some claim she was a symbol for the emancipation of lesbians, living like a man and having lifelong friendships with women who lived with her. She championed gender equality for herself and her art, saying, "Women should seek to establish their rights by good and great works, not by conventions," but whether she was a lesbian has been disputed. Again, defying conventions, she emphatically declared, "I wed art. It is my husband – my world – my life-dream – the air

### Art above all

Bonheur's legacy wasn't just her lifestyle, however. It really was her art. A 2020 article in Smithsonian magazine said, "There were other female painters in her day, but none like Bonheur. Shattering female convention, she painted animals in lifelike, exacting detail, as big and wild as she wanted, studying them in their natural, mud-and-odor-filled settings. That she was a woman with a gift for self-promotion contributed to her celebrity - and her notoriety. ... Her paintings brought her colossal fame and fortune during her lifetime. She was sought after by royals, statesmen, and celebrities. Empress Eugénie, the wife of Napoleon III, arrived unannounced at the château one day and was so impressed with Bonheur's work that she returned to pin the medal of Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur on the painter's bosom. Bonheur was the first woman to receive the honor for achievement in the arts. "Genius

has no sex," the empress declared. (In 1894, Bonheur was raised to the rank of officier.)... A porcelain doll was made in her image and sold at Christmas. A variegated red rose was named after her."

In the fall of 2022, the prestigious Musee d'Orsay in Paris exhibited a retrospective of Bonheur's work on the bicentennial of her birth – the first major show of hers in Paris for a century. An article in The New York *Times* about the retrospective was headlined, "Rich, Famous and Then Forgotten: The Art of Rosa Bonheur." The gorgeous piece, Plowing in the Nivernais was among the nearly 200 works on display. Completed in 1849, it was commissioned by the French government and won a gold medal at the Paris Salon that year.

#### Heartsease in Paris

Next time I go to Paris I will be sure to plan a visit to the Château de Rosa Bonheur at 12 rue Rosa Bonheur in Thomery on the edge of the Fountainbleu Forest. It's a long way from Heartsease in LaGrange in Dutchess County, but I know I will find the kindred spirit of Caroline Clowes there, and whether it's true or not, I like to believe these two exceptional artists - and women - influenced each other, admired each other, and maybe even knew each other personally. And I like to imagine them in the company of their beloved animals, whose spirits live on in their beautiful art.



Postscript: When I reached out to the DCHS for permission to reprint Clowes's paintings for this article, Bill Jeffway sent me photos of two cartes de visites that were among Clowes's things. One is a photo of Rosa Bonheur, the other is a photo of her painting, "Morning in the Highland." Both are signed by Bonheur! Et voila - the transatlantic cow-incidence is real. What a happy ending for this story and even more incentive to visit the Château de Rosa Bonheur. •

While the exhibition "Fertile Ground: The Hudson Valley Animal Paintings of Caroline Clowes" is no longer on display at the DCHS, you can view the works and learn more about the art and artist at www. dchsny.org/fertile-ground-01.

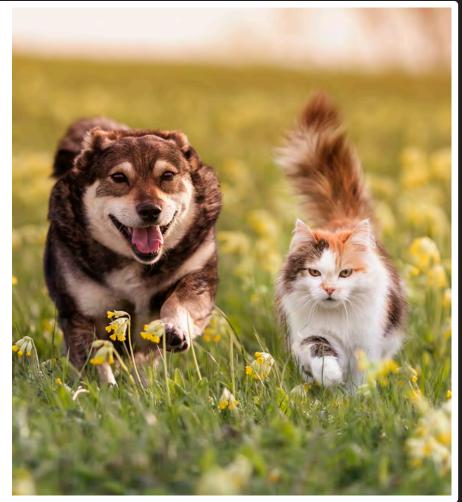


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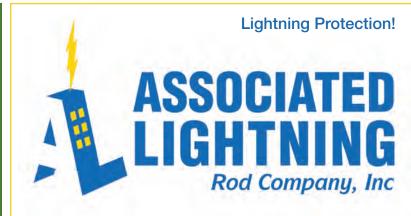
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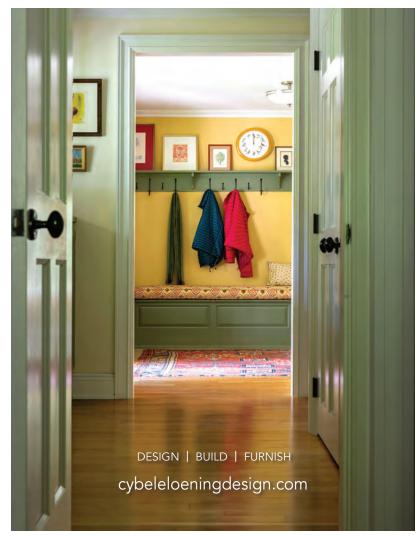
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### BIG FLOWERS & **BIG HEARTS AT**







By Pom Shillingford info@mainstreetmag.com sk any flower farmer what is the most common misconception they hear about their business and nine times out of ten it will be "your fields must look so beautiful when they are all in full bloom."

The thought of a field of billowing flowers? Well, that's enough to make a flower farmer cry. Flowers blown fully open are flowers that are not going to harvest, store, or ship well – and are certainly not going to last long in the vase for the customers who buy them. A flower blown open is a flower sale blown.

For any flower grower worth their salt, the worry of being able to harvest their flowers at the right time i.e. before, and in some cases, long before they fully open, is what can keep them up at night. The romantic notion that flower farmers waft about with a basket over their arm skipping between rows of flowers as the sun sets gently beyond the horizon could not be further from the truth.

#### One delicate stem at a time

Completely at the mercy of Mother Nature, there is no such thing as a "scheduled" harvest. No year is ever the same and once it starts, no day is ever the same. Some years harvesting the same size crop may take over a month. In others, every single stem needs to be pulled in ten days or less. And, while farmers of other arable crops have the luxury of using machinery to help bring in their harvests, flower farmers are required to do this carefully by hand, one delicate stem at a time. And when I use the word crop,

### **Tiny Hearts**

One person who knows this better than anyone is Jenny Elliott. Along with her husband Luke, she is the flower-whispering founder and owner of Tiny Hearts Farm in Copake, NY. What began as an idea and one acre of borrowed land has morphed over the last decade into a thriving 25-acre organic flower farm, boasting four greenhouses, a flower shop in nearby Hillsdale, NY and, as of 2021, a Bulbadome. (A what you may ask?

Hold on, we'll get to that in a bit!) Offering farm-fresh flowers, arrangements, dahlia tubers, CSA subscriptions, workshops, event floristry, and dried flowers, there is nothing floral, seasonal, and farm-to-vase grown that Tiny Hearts does not offer.

It is through the combination of Jenny and Luke's back-breaking hard work and ingenuity that the farm has grown to be the phenomenal success that it has become. It is the mothership for flower lovers for miles around. Wholesalers, florists, brides looking for either DIY flower buckets I'm talking tens of thousands of stems. or a la carte arrangements for their weddings, or just flower-loving individuals, be it for holidays, celebrations or gifts, we all flock to their door for our flowery needs.

> I first discovered Tiny Hearts during the pandemic, when faced with a suddenly empty calendar of cancelled weddings and events, Jenny pivoted to an overnight CSA model to sell all her long-planted bulbs that inconveniently hadn't got the memo that the world

> > Continued on next page ...

Photos above: Luke and Jenny Elliott growing their many, many, many tulips.

had shut down. Her tulips lightened a lot of dark days for many of us.

#### Tulips to the rescue

It was also her tulips that led to the aforementioned Bulbadome. Farmers grow what customers want. And Jenny's customers want tulips. Lots of tulips. Which is great. Until you have to harvest them. Harvesting field-grown tulips by lifting each stem with the bulb intact from our less than slip-like soil here in the Northeast is back-breaking.

But that wasn't the only problem. As Jenny explains, "It was the timing of the harvesting that was a huge issue for us. We'd get a sudden run of warm sunny days in early May and the entire crop of 30,000 tulips would start bursting open at once. We just could not keep up. While it is possible to dry store tulips, especially when pulled with the bulb intact, we would have such a glut of them. The cooler can only fit so many, and then we would be done. Stems were getting left in the field. We were losing a big chunk of our crop. And what many people don't appreciate is that every bulb is expensive and is one-anddone. The bulbs cannot be reused the following year. Our tulips, while wildly popular, were not proving to be as financially viable as we needed."





### Manipulating tulips

While most of us would feel deflated, if not defeated, by this, Jenny decided to find a solution. In her mind if you could force other spring bulbs inside, manipulating their flowering through light and temperature control, surely you could do the same to control the harvest time of tulips? Never one to let the wariness of others deflect her from a mission, in the fall of 2021 she ordered 10,000 bulbs to give it a go. Fortuitously, at the same time a spot became available on The Tulip Workshop, a course run by tulipgrowing experts Linda D'Arco of Little Farmhouse Flowers in upstate New York and Emily Von Trapp of Von Trap Flowers in Vermont.

To put this in simplified layman's terms, the bulbs need to be planted in crates in the fall and then put into cold storage at around 40 degrees for a set amount of time. They are then held in a cooler to hold back their flowering. A few weeks before the flowers are needed, the grower can bring the quantities required into a greenhouse where, by again controlling the temperature, the bulbs can be brought to harvest point in a manageable way. No more of the naught-to ninety overnight stresses as with the field-grown tulips. This process also allows growers to speed up the whole







Above: Giving their dad a helping hand at harvest. Luke and the couple's two sons. Below: Tulips galore, in the field, growing in the Bulbadome and for sale in the Tiny Hearts Shop.

growing process and be able to offer locally-grown fresh flowers in the depths of our New England winter. All that was missing for Jenny and Luke was a cool, dark storage space to chill the bulbs.

#### The Bulbadome

As luck would have it, there was the perfect structure for this right alongside their farm operation in Copake. Having started out life as a greenhouse, thanks to the DIY efforts of previous owners, it had been converted into a mushroom-growing facility that ticked all their boxes. It was dark, insulated, and had concrete floors. Best of all, it was for sale.

It did not take Luke long to convert this structure into the perfect Bulbadome. Connecting a 50-foot greenhouse to one end created a seamless, efficient growing space where racks of crates could be easily wheeled about and tulips harvested from tabletop height. From the initial 10,000 bulbs in 2021, this year they are already harvesting the 80,000 tulips that went into the Bulbadome last November.

Jenny claims they still have much to learn from the data gather every

year on how temperature control and holding times can be tweaked to make their harvest management even more accurate. At the same time, they are discovering there are some varieties that even with the inherent harvest vagaries, remain better field grown. With each harvest comes greater knowledge and greater enthusiasm to continue the farm's tulip-growing journey.

Those of you who have read this column before will know there is nothing I like to bang on about more than the importance of sourcing local seasonal flowers. So, the fact that we have Jenny and Luke on our doorsteps with the dedication, ingenuity and knowledge to be able to provide us with these almost all year around is truly a cause for celebration. And what better way to celebrate? My advice would be to get yourselves over to their shop in Hillsdale pronto and enjoy these beautiful flowers for yourself. •

For more information visit The Tiny Hearts Flower Shop online at tinyheartsfarm.com, or in person at 2643 NY State Route 23 in Hillsdale, NY. Winter hours: Thursday to Saturday 10am to 4pm.











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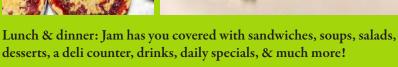
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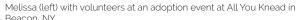




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# RICAN STRAYS







Jake playing with some of the dogs in Puerto Rico.



Melissa, Kylie, a friend, and some rescues

By Abby Audenino info@mainstreetmag.com

When Melissa Smith and her son Jake were on vacation in Puerto Rico in 2019, the last thing they expected was to bring home three stray dogs.

"We knew the stray animal situation was bad in Puerto Rico, but I don't think we realized just how bad," she said. "We got lost one of the days we were there and ended up at a deserted beach on Roosevelt Roads in Ceiba, which is a big dumping ground for dogs and cats."

According to the SATO Project, which is an organization that works to rescue and rehome strays from Puerto Rico, there are approximately half a million stray dogs and over a million stray cats in the commonwealth.

Melissa and Jake came across a woman named Maria who had been feeding the dogs, and they very quickly hit it off with her. Jake immediately took to three of the dogs. "I just remember that I yelled at him to put them in the car," Melissa mused. "We smuggled them into the hotel under towels and gave them a bath. I had no idea how we were going to get them home, but I knew that we couldn't leave them."

#### The start of it all

When they got back from vacation, Melissa, who lives in Pleasant Valley, NY, and is a school counselor for North Salem Central School District, began devising a plan to save the strays with one of her coworkers, Kylie McCarron.

Kylie, who is an English teacher for North Salem, was immediately on board. Thus, Hope for Dogs and Cats PR was born. "It was friends and teachers who were adopting at first, nothing too big or crazy," Melissa

Following the pandemic, Melissa, Kylie, and Jake began networking with other local women who were rescuing strays from Puerto Rico. Through this, they met a retired police officer who introduced them to a handful of nonprofits - Flight Angels, Flight Dogz, and Flight Nanny Pet Transport - that work to allow tourists to travel home with a dog or cat on the airplane. From there, someone from the organization picks the dog or cat up from the airport and then brings them to a foster home until they are adopted.

"Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States, which makes it easier to transport animals," Melissa said.

Prior to transport, the pets have to be medically cleared, have all of

their age-appropriate vaccinations, and have a flight certificate that clears them to fly. From there, Melissa, Kylie, Jake, and a handful of volunteers will meet the tourists at airports all over the Tri-state to pick up the strays that people have brought back with

Currently, both Melissa and Kylie are fostering dogs and cats in their houses. "It's very rewarding, but it can also be very emotionally and physically exhausting," Kylie said. "It's hard not to hate people when you see animal abuse and abandonment."

Melissa and Kylie said that Facebook has been instrumental in their operation. "It's a very grassroots campaign," Kylie said. Primarily, they network with other people and organizations through word-of-mouth and Facebook. They're a part of multiple tourist groups that are based in Puerto Rico, as well as rescue and adoption groups in the Tri-state area.

"We have a great foster located in Kent, CT, and I have to give a shout out to one of our flight volunteers, Caroline. She adopted a dog from us and connected us to a new foster, as well as to people that she knows are traveling to Puerto Rico and are willing to transport animals back," Kylie said.

Kylie also shared a story of a wom-

an who posted on one of the Puerto Rico tourist pages on Facebook who tried to catch a stray cat but couldn't.

"I reached out to her and we came up with a plan, but she wasn't able to catch the kitten and then she had to leave the next day. She asked me what I thought the chances were of her being able to get the kitten somehow. I wasn't optimistic, but I started reaching out to some locals, and it worked! I got connected with one of the rescuers, and she went and caught the kitten, got her vaccinated, and flew her up to the United States. It was a great story that I didn't think was going to happen."

### **Biggest challenges**

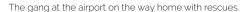
Naturally, the biggest challenge is money. Hope for Dogs and Cats PR just received their nonprofit status and up this point, Melissa and Kylie have been footing the bills themselves.

"By the time you pay for the flight, the vetting, boarding, gas, and food, no one's making money on this," Melissa explained. "We do it because it's a true passion for us."

Another challenge is screening potential adopters. Melissa and Kylie

Continued on next page ...







New friends at the Vieques Animal Shelter in PP



Jake at an adoption event at Candlewood Lake in Danbury, CT.

agreed that they've been very lucky up to this point and have had good experiences with adopters. "Every once in a while we have someone who's challenging and causes us a lot of stress. 99.9% of our adopters have been amazing. They send us photos and keep us updated afterwards," Melissa said.

Arguably their biggest challenge is trying to decide which animals to bring home. "It's so hard," Kylie said. "Everybody wants young kittens. There are a lot of Siamese on the island, and thankfully they're very easy to adopt. It's hard to have to choose among the animals, but we can't save them all no matter how hard we try."

An unexpected challenge that they've also encountered is many people questioning why they are bringing dogs and cats back from Puerto Rico, rather than working to help animals in the states. "I've gotten questions like, 'how come you can't help the animals here? Why do you have to go to Puerto Rico?' That's been an interesting thing to deal with," Kylie said. "I think that helping animals is helping animals. I've had to defend myself as to why I'm taking cats and dogs from Puerto Rico instead of here on more than one occasion."

Melissa has encountered something similar. "Many people think that Puerto Rico is another country. It's not; it's a territory of the United States," she said. "If you're helping an animal, you're helping an animal, and that makes all the difference in that animal's life. Many of the ignorant comments have come from people who aren't rescuing any animals."

Melissa also said that there's a cultural lack of understanding of how to treat animals in Puerto Rico. "On the other hand, there's also a percentage of the population that's so desperate to save them that they'll spend their money on the strays instead of taking care of themselves."

They work closely with the Vieques Island Animal Sanctuary, a no-kill nonprofit organization in Vieques, PR. "They've been very successful and have a great program for spaying and neutering to control the population," Kylie said.

### **Biggest rewards**

What's the most rewarding part? Finding the animals loving homes.

"It can get depressing at times, but you're actually making a difference," Kylie said. "I've always been an animal rights person, and this is a chance to put that into practice and create action. I think that's the most rewarding."

Rescuing and fostering animals is a family affair for Kylie as well. "I'm teaching my daughters about service, and they're seeing how rewarding it is firsthand," she said. "The first time we had to adopt out a kitten, my daughter cried and cried. It was very hard. But the more we can adopt out, the more we're helping and affecting change."

For Melissa, the rewards are twofold. On the one hand, of course it's about helping animals, but on the other, Melissa said that it's also about helping humans.

"As hard as it can get here sometimes, I just know what the ladies go through in Puerto Rico. They're on the front lines and getting the sick animals that they have to treat. It's hard," she said. "It's also rewarding to know that we're not only helping the local animals, but also the local rescuers."

She also notes that a lot of the reward lies in the fact that oftentimes in this endeavor, total strangers come together for one common cause. "It's so powerful because the world is such a mess right now," she said. "It doesn't matter who you are. It's tourists helping tourists helping animals."

### Looking ahead

What's next? Well Jake and his girlfriend Kate are traveling to Puerto Rico next month to pick up a few puppies to bring home. "They've been so great through all of this," Melissa said. "Most kids don't drive to Hartford on a Saturday night to pick up dogs," she added.

As for ways to help, Hope for Dogs and Cats PR is always looking for volunteers. It offers community service for high school and college students as well. It also needs people willing to foster cats and dogs before the animals get adopted.

"Getting animals adopted is our number one priority," Melissa said. "That's the center. Finances, volunteers, and community connections are all vital in helping us get animals adopted."

The organization is also looking to have at least three fundraisers each year and to partner with schools and local businesses. "We want to educate people, and we'd love to see more

people involved," Melissa said. "We'd love to partner with organizations like the Girl Scouts and the Dutchess County Office for the Aging to get people of all ages involved."

Melissa and Kylie would also like to host fundraisers to collect items to help take care of the animals, including leashes, beds, food, dewormers, etc. They're always looking for volunteers to transport pets from Puerto Rico to the States, as well as for people to do pickups at the airports.

"If you do happen to go to Puerto Rico, we're always looking for ways to fly pets back safely," Kylie said. "You pick them up in a carrier, tuck them under your seat, and then someone will be there to meet you and pick them up when you land. It's so important and significant."

In total, Melissa, Kylie, and Jake have adopted out more than 500 animals. "That's a number we're really proud of," Melissa said. "We plan on continuing what we're doing and helping as many animals as we can."

Additionally, they were featured in a documentary, For SATOs Sake, about the plight of the dogs in Puerto Rico and their dedicated rescuers. "The documentary will hopefully be coming to the Hudson Valley and Litchfield County theaters in late spring and summer," Melissa said. •

You can follow Hope for Dogs and Cats PR on their Facebook page. If you're interested in volunteering or collaborating with them, you can reach out to Melissa at hopefordogspr1@gmail.com.

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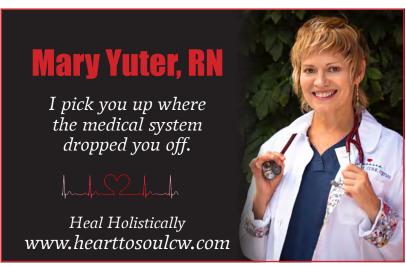
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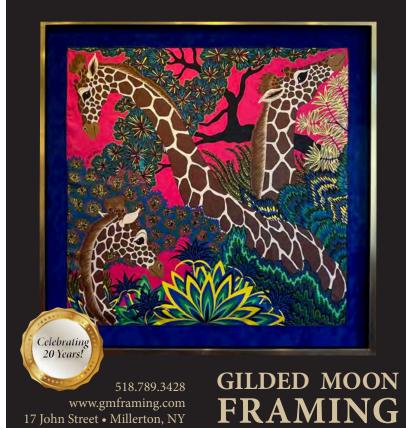
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## Moments frozen in time







By CB Wismar info@mainstreetmag.com

ll our lives we have been inundated with moving images: television, film, social media. We are so inured to the constancy of the motion, color, and sound, that when an image holds still, it causes a momentary catch - the need to register what we are seeing.

It was a moment like that that captured the attention of Garth Kobal, inveterate volunteer at the David M. Hunt Library in Falls Village, CT, when, at the invitation of Judy Jacobs at the Canaan-Falls Village Historical Society, he came face-to-image with still photographs from the first decades of the 20th century. "My interest was fixed, my attention riveted," said Garth.

The year was 2015, but time and a pandemic paused the response that Garth had envisioned. After a nineyear delay, a display on the library's art wall will soon invite contemporary viewers to be part of those moments in time.

### Moments in time

The images, some of which are represented here, were of no dramatic historic moment. There were no train wrecks, fires, or natural disasters. They are images of people who lived in the area over a century ago - not celebrities or scoundrels – just people.

A child feeding chickens. Two men playing fiddle and banjo on a wellworn front porch. A distinguished gentleman in a bowler hat proudly displaying his bicycle. A woman in a gingham dress holding the reins of a horse.

The images and the silver nitrate film and glass slides that were in that intriguing box had been donated to the Historical Society by the estate of Mabel Hallaway from Falls Village, CT. She lived her entire 98 years in the family home - the Dean farm on Undermountain Road. Mabel had been an avid collector as well as having become enthralled with photography. Which of the many images in her collection had she made? Which of them had been collected from other photographers? Those issues remained unsolved as the notion of a presentation evolved.

Photography had emerged in the first part of the century as an infectious hobby. Some of the art form's most prestigious practitioners rose to international fame during the time. Alfred Steiglitz, Edward Steichen, Paul Strand, and a towering figure who brought his talent to Canaan.

### The Clarence White School of **Photography**

Clarence H. White was a photographer who shared the notoriety of his colleagues and used a combination of talent and generosity to not only take and display award-winning photographs, but open a school for photography that for some years conducted classes in East Canaan.

White was a sought-after professor and artist in residence in New York during the academic year but favored first Maine, then Connecticut for the setting of his Clarence H. White School of Photography. While in summer sessions in East Canaan, White and his family lived in a home

Continued on next page ...

they purchased – the Burall-Belden House that sits directly across from the South Canaan Meeting House, the same church that for many years resounded with the organ playing of Mabel Hallaway.

Would it be plausible that since White and Mabel Hallaway lived in walking distance of each other during his years in the area that their paths would cross? Was Mabel a student of White's? Did they meet at one of the frequent picnics that White hosted for students and neighbors?

It is worth noting that White had a well-earned reputation as an instructor who encouraged female students to become engrossed in an art form that had been, in its earliest stages, the realm of male photographers. It was Steichen, himself, who said of Clarence White, "his poetic vision and sensitive intuition produced images that insinuate themselves deeply into one's consciousness."

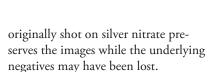
Sadly, along with the fact that the photographs in the library's "From the Great Falls to the Hilltops" are without attribution, no record of such a meeting exists. It is pure conjecture

to think of the two of them meeting or working together.

### From the Great Falls to the Hilltops

What should not be left to conjecture is the value, artistry, and humanity of the David M. Hunt Library's exhibit, which runs from March 16 to May 3 at the library on Main Street in Falls Village. The opening reception, at 3pm in the library, will feature a presentation on glass slide photography by Daniel Karp of Bard College at Simon's Rock.

Along with silver nitrate film, the use of glass slides was at the very heart of photography in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many of the best images in the upcoming show have been printed from glass slides – the same entities used for magic lantern shows. Silver nitrate film, which was very sensitive to light, was delicate and degenerated over time. Many early motion pictures, shot on silver nitrate film stock, have been lost to both natural degeneration and the more dramatic fact that silver nitrate can easily catch fire. Having prints



A second presentation tied to the exhibition will be a discussion of "Early 20th Century Fashion" presented on Saturday, March 23 at 3:30pm by Michele Majer, internationally celebrated author, curator, professor, and authority on clothing and textile history. Her presentation will closely tie in the images presented in the exhibit, many of which include women photographed at Great Falls and near Canaan Mountain.

As curator, Garth Kobal would be quick to point out, the creation of the exhibition could not have been possible without a veritable village of supportive individuals from both the library and the historical society. Fortunately, the catalog created to support *From the Great Falls to the Hilltops* lists all of the contributors.

The David M. Hunt Library is located at 63 Main Street, Falls Village, CT. Library hours are Tuesday, 10am to 5pm, Wednesday, 1-5pm, Thursday 10am to 7pm, Friday 1-5pm, and Saturday 10am to 1pm.





All images courtesy of the Canaan - Falls Village Historical Society.







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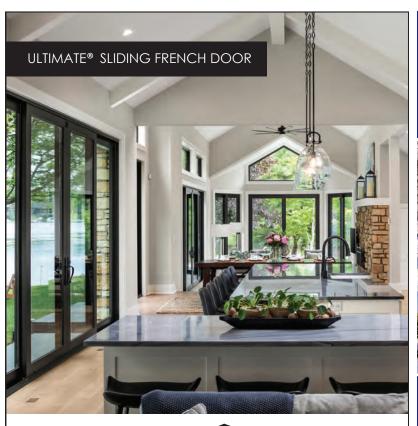
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## ANIMAL KINGDOM

By Regina Molaro info@mainstreetmag.com

Many people are drawn to the Hudson Valley for its booming food culture and variety of farm-to-table restaurants. The region is also home to The Culinary Institute of America, which honed the talents of David Burke, Todd English, Michael Mina, and the late Anthony Bourdain, among other luminaries.

Agriculture has a long history in the region and remains vital to the Empire State's economy. Every year, it ushers in more than \$5 billion in sales. To maintain a viable future, it's imperative that younger generations continue to become educated about agriculture and farming as well as learn how to be stewards of the land.

### Historic farm

The Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center, a 754-acre farm in Wappingers Falls, NY, helps sustain the future of agriculture in the region. The farm is located on the ancestral land of the Wappinger - an Eastern Algonquian Munsee-speaking Native American people. The land was also once home to the Verplanck Family.

On July 23, 1942, James DeLancey Verplanck and his half-brother John Bayard Verplanck graciously granted 754 acres of land to the NYS Department of Education to be used as a teaching farm by SUNY Farmingdale in Long Island. In 1973, the farm and land were transferred to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

In 1977, Stony Kill Foundation was formed as a nonprofit organization to support the DEC's work, and the farm and education center thrived for three decades. In 2010, amid the Great Recession, the DEC ceased environmental education activities at Stony Kill and proposed closing the farm.

The Foundation responded with a campaign to save Stony Kill, and the nonprofit was eventually able to negotiate that Stony Kill would remain open. In January 2011, Stony Kill Foundation became responsible for operating the farm and running its education programs, and the DEC began maintaining the grounds and supporting Stony Kill in other ways. In 1980, the farm was added to the National Register of Historic places.

### **Explore and educate**

The historic farmstead sits on 754 acres of land, which include thick forests and sprawling meadows. There are lots of enticing things to do and learn for people of all ages. The site boasts a 19th century barn with livestock, several ponds and hiking trails (one is wheelchair accessible), a greenhouse and blooming gardens, a historical 18th century tenant farmhouse and manor house, and classroom facilities.

Calling all fitness buffs and nature enthusiasts. The property is open to the public daily year-round, and its grounds continue to operate as a working farm. From February through November during Open Barn weekends, the public is welcome to visit the cows, sheep, and other livestock. Visiting the farm is free and doesn't require a reservation.

Those interested in witnessing the animals outside of the regularly scheduled Open Barn times, can often spot the cows and sheep grazing in the down, explore, and connect with pasture. They can also catch a glimpse by peeping through barn windows.

Welcoming the public, organizing activities and programs, and hosting volunteers enable Stony Kill Foundation to achieve its mission to educate the public and cultivate environmental stewardship through interpretation of the rich historical, environmental, and agricultural heritage of the farm.

The Foundation strives to connect people of all ages and backgrounds with rich, hands-on experiences in



Photo courtesy of Stony Kill Foundation.

the outdoors. In addition to offering small-scale agriculture, it fosters community through farming, volunteerism, and celebration. It also spearheads efforts to preserve and restore historic structures and equipment on the property.

Every year, more than 30,000 people visit Stony Kill. Beyond being used by the local community, Stony Kill Farm's programs are tapped by visitors from New York City and

"Stony Kill Farm is a place to slow hands-on experiences in nature and small-scale agriculture," said Erik Fyfe, executive director of the Stony Kill Foundation.

### Heritage breeds

"At Stony Kill Farm, we raise heritage breed animals, which are the kinds of animals you would have found on small farms historically. They are vigorous, forage well, and would have provided farmers with multiple products concurrently. The breeds we

raise are particularly well-suited to our climate and to being raised on pasture," said Kim Pennock, a volunteer and outreach manager at the Stony Kill Foundation.

Stony Kill Foundation recently implemented a new system of rotational grazing to promote livestock health and sustainable agricultural practices. This novel system reduces exposure to harmful microorganisms and other pathogens and disrupts parasite life cycles, resulting in better animal health and well-being.

Supported by the Dutchess County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Foundation used portable fencing to partition its 12-acre pasture into smaller grazing paddocks. Rather than grazing the entire pasture at once, the animals are guided through the paddocks to heavily graze each section before being rotated to the

Continued on next page ...

next. This system prompts the animals **Programs** to eat more evenly over the pasture. It also spreads manure more evenly and improves forage quality and soil

#### Let's count sheep!

In 2019, Stony Kill Foundation purchased its first two breeding stock of registered Tunis sheep. The breed was selected due to its historical relevance to American agriculture and for aligning with Stony Kill's goal to provide education about the plight of heritage breed animals that are vanishing from America's farms.

The sheep have a long history in the region. In 1799, George Washington was gifted two sheep by Hammuda Ibn Ali, Bey of Tunis. Thomas Jefferson also kept a flock of Tunis sheep. This "dual-purpose" breed is traditionally raised for both wool and

In 1896, the American Tunis Breeders Association was established. In 2006, the Tunis Registry recorded 1,475 sheep (up from 605 in 1990). This moved the breed from the Livestock Conservancy's "threatened" list to the "watch" list. In 2011, Tunis flocks were recorded in 32 states.

While visiting Stony Kill, you'll recognize the Tunis by observing their tan and red faces and wool-free cheeks. They also have white on the crowns of their heads and the tips of their tails.

### Community effort

There are so many ways that the community can become a part of America's history and help sustain its future. Every year, Stony Kill Foundation engages more than 100 active volunteers who promote sustainability by educating visitors.

The farm operates environmental and agricultural education programs for people of all ages. In addition to Homeschool on the Farm, it hosts field trips, a summer and winter camp, educational birthday parties, workshops, and nature walks.

Every year, its team hosts events and festivals; coordinates community science projects related to bird and pollinator conservation and water quality; and maintains perennial, pollinator, and demonstration vegetable gardens.

Stony Kill Foundation Summer Explorers Camp empowers kids (ages four to twelve) to explore the outdoors and experience a sense of curiosity and appreciation for nature. The camp offers a balance of structured and free play with environmental exploration, arts and crafts, and age-appropriate learning activities.

Homeschool on the Farm is designed to be fully outdoors except in times of inclement weather. Mornings kick off with a hike followed by homesteading lessons, which include caring for livestock, learning to sew and mend clothes, tracking wildlife, and recording weather patterns.

School field trips also enable students to participate in programs that will foster a better understanding of the farm's agricultural history and environmental ecology. Stony Kill Foundation also hosts other youth programs throughout the year.

Hosting a birthday? The farm is an ideal site for fetes for ages two and up. Have the wee ones explore the barnyard and meet some furry friends. They'll also learn about the roles of animals at the farm and enjoy a hands-on experience with the sheep.

Get the buzz on bees. They play a key role in balancing the ecosystem. In fact, one of every three bites of food comes from the pollination of honeybees. That's why the Foundation has an active bee apiary and observation hive. Through its Stony Kill Beekeeping Program, adults and children can learn about honeybees. Hurry! The season kicks off in April.

#### On site

The farm is also home to Stony Kill Foundation's Organic Community Garden, which was established in 1977 and is one of the longestrunning gardens of its kind in the Hudson Valley, according to Fyfe. It invites community members to cultivate the soil while connecting with others. The garden's 130 plots are utilized by more than 70 families. For a minimal fee of \$50 for the season (March 1 through February 28 of the following year), growers can put food on their own tables. No trip to the supermarket is necessary.

The Verplanck Memorial Perennial Garden traces its history back to 1997 when the relatives of sisters



Photo by Kim Pennock, courtesy of Stony Kill Foundation

Elizabeth, Suzanne, and Wilhelmina Andrews donated funds to establish this blooming garden. In the early 1900s, the Andrews sisters lived in the Manor House under the care of their uncle John Bayard Rodgers Verplanck and aunt Susan VanWyck Andrews Verplanck.

The garden features plantings that were specifically selected to lure butterflies and birds. Bees and other insects also flutter about. Every spring, bluebirds and wrens descend upon the garden.

The Greenhouse is a destination for educating people about all things agriculture. Every year, students from as far away as the New York City school system make the trip up to the farm to learn about where their water and food come from.

The Foundation's field trip programs empower kids to learn about the life cycle of plants. Kids also have an opportunity to touch and, in some cases, taste the bounty in season.

The Greenhouse is periodically opened on weekends (check Stony Kill Foundation's social media for announcements). Stop in and browse its range of succulents, hanging plants, and flowering plants.

Each spring, Stony Kill Foundation also runs a spring Plant sale. Through March 15, the Foundation is collecting orders for the a variety of vegetables and herbs grown organically in the greenhouse. Pick-up for the plants will be held in May.

### Trail time

Year-round, Stony Kill Farm's trails are open daily from sunrise to sunset. Every season offers an abundance of reasons to meander the farm's nearly

nine miles of trails.

Wander the Woodland Trail – a wheelchair accessible path located near the Visitors Center. Guests will see lots of furry friends, from woodpeckers to squirrels, chipmunks, and more. For more adventurous folks, there's Verplanck Ridge - a moderate climb through mixed hardwood forest and open meadow. Wildlife includes Eastern bluebirds, furry rabbits, redtailed hawks, and other winged- and cuddly creatures.

The Sierra Trail passes through hardwood forest, evergreens, wetland, and open meadows, which are home to ducks, geese, herons, frogs, turtles, and beyond. Those who yearn to escape and find some serenity, will enjoy the Muller Pond Trail. While there, they'll likely spot a variety of critters from salamanders to waddling ducks and hopping frogs.

Finally, explore the Freedom Trail for diverse terrain that engages visitors with its rock walls, hills, wetland, field, and forest. Keep your eyes open for great horned owls, spring peepers, red-backed salamanders, and wood frogs. The Farm Trail offers a loop between a cornfield and woodland area. There are a host of animals and birds from red-tailed hawks to kestrels, north harriers, woodchucks, covotes, and tree swallows.

Be sure to check Stony Kill Foundation's website and social media for hikes, events, and other programs on the farm. •

To learn more about the Stony Kill Environmental Center, visit stonykill.org or call (845) 831-3800. Visit in person at 79 Farmstead Lane, Wappingers Falls, NY.



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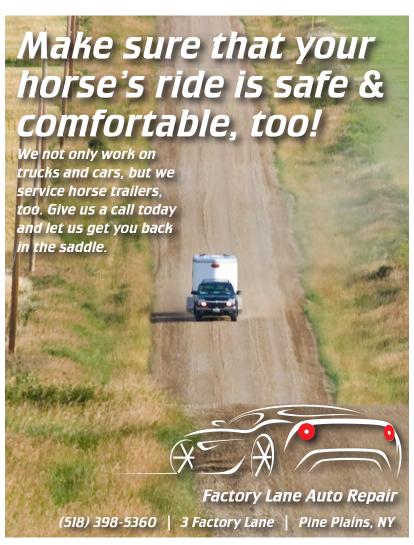
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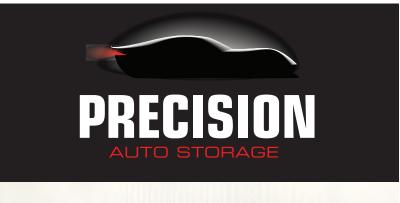
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HOW TO MAKE BOARDING YOUR PUP

Not so ruff

By Whitney Joseph info@mainstreetmag.com

While we at Main Street Magazine haven't exactly been hounded by folks seeking stories on how to go about boarding their pets for the first time, we do know there are many animal lovers living in the Harlem Valley, Northwest Corner, and Berkshire Foothills with active lifestyles who will, at some point, very likely need to do so. While we seldom encourage one to put the cart before the horse, so to speak, we do agree that Alexander Graham Bell was correct when he said in the 19th century that "preparation is the key to success.'

With many local pet owners living vibrant lives that we well imagine include jetting off on both quick weekends away and extended vacations abroad, logic dictates that those zoophiles might well appreciate some tips on how to make the perfect accommodations for their furry friends.

### Those puppy dog eyes

That's where I come in – a doting dog mom who gets separation anxiety when running errands for a few hours. It may sound silly, but when I try to leave the house, simply locking the door can be challenging. All I see as I put key to lock are two brown eyes, sweet as liquid honey, staring back at me; above them are two soft-as-butter caramel-colored

ears cocked back as if waiting to hear me say, "Come on, Bailey, you can come, too." But when I say "goodbye," Bailey's ears inevitably pitch forward as she realizes I'll be going solo when I venture out into the world. That ultimate moment comes with the swoosh of a tail, fierce and swift, as my beloved pup pivots and exits the foyer, leaving little behind besides a trail of dejected puppy prints and windswept waves of fur floating in the air – all before I can even manage to pull the door shut.

So, perhaps this explains why, when my beau and I began planning a two-week European vacation, the thought of what we would do with our little girl was a very real concern. Our first choice was to have a family member watch Bailey, as that way she would be with a familiar face in a familiar territory. But we needed a backup plan, as we were all-too aware that even those with the best of intentions could have emergencies arise. In our case, that's exactly what happened, as our family member got COVID, and we didn't want to burden her with watching Bailey while she was recovering and trying to regain her strength.

### Kennel-prep

Thankfully, we had already started to research how to go about boarding a pet and what would be required to do so. Firstly, kennels and boarding facilities mandate pets be up to date with their vaccines – typically rabies, Bordetella (commonly called kennel cough), and DHPP (distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza, and parvovirus). This will ensure the health of other animals staying at the facility; your veterinarian should be able to forward your pet's records to any facility where you may be interested in boarding your animal.

I highly recommend you ask your vet about the kennels where you're considering boarding your pets; word-of-mouth goes far with this type of service. Ask at your veterinarian's office, for starters. Ask your vet directly, even, because if you can get him or her to tell you where he or she takes their animals, that should instill a lot of confidence in the people who run it and how they operate their facility.

Take advantage of today's hi-tech world and read reviews online, but beware that people can hire folks to post nice things – or do it themselves – or folks with a grudge can write something nasty about a place over something inconsequential. So, look at the reviews, but always take them with a grain of salt. Also be cognizant of how many reviews have been posted, for example 23 vs 2,300.



To help you really get a sense of what goes on when Spot has a sleepover, I spoke with a couple of people who know a thing or two about pet sitting. Chip Barrett has owned and operated Ledgewood Kennel in Millerton, NY, with his wife, Kirby, for the past 24 years. They have a full-service kennel on a 75-acre working farm on Smithfield Road that offers everything from horses to dock diving, which is when dogs competitively jump off of a dock into a pool of water.

I also spoke with Gina Hoiser of Gina's K-9 Bed and Breakfast in Copake, NY, who like Barrett has been boarding dogs for decades. She opened her pup hotel 28 years ago and hasn't looked back since. Housed in a charming white farmhouse lovely enough to be an actual bed and breakfast, Hoiser said it's a labor of love and there isn't anything else she could imagine herself doing. In fact, she had been a dental hygienist but slowly moved from doing that full time to part time so she could run the K-9 B&B to leaving dentistry altogether so she

Continued on next page ...

could pursue her dream. Nowadays she gets to spend morning till night making sure the dogs are fed, watered, walked, entertained, and loved. She described it as pretty much the best job in the world.

#### Ledgewood Kennel

As both Barrett and Hoiser agreed, cynophilists need vacations just as much as – if not more – than nondog-owners, and they're pleased that after so many years in the business, they're still able to offer their services. Of course, it's not always easy. Ledgewood Kennel, for instance, has struggled finding workers ever since the COVID pandemic, said Barrett. Because of that, he has had to raise prices slightly, something he had not done in years.

"We never had problems with help in the kennel until COVID," he said. "Then it got insanely busy. We were turning people away, not calling people back, we couldn't keep up; it was really a nightmare. We're trying to rebuild, charge more and take fewer dogs. We fewer people now and are using a new model."

Ledgewood Kennel has 20 runs, with an overflow that can take up to 40 dogs. The runs are inside the cages, "and can easily take two medium dogs," described Barrett, who added that the interior of the run is heated with a sliding door under a roof

There's a third outdoor play area that has gravel and large cages, where the dogs go twice daily. In addition to boarding, owners may opt to have their pets come in for

doggy daycare along with grooming and dock diving at the pool. That global competitive sport takes place May through October and has for about 15 years, said Barrett, always drawing a crowd.

Barrett said his kennel has a loyal clientele with a solid reputation. "We have radiant heat in the winter and central air, too, so the dogs are really well taken care of," he said. "The other thing, we really never had much of an outbreak of anything, and we keep a very clean facility. The dogs get walks, swims, daycare, grooming; it's really like going to the spa. When people bring their dogs the second or third time, the dogs run out of their car and can't wait to get into the kennel; that's how the owners can tell everything is good."

Ledgewood Kennel boards cats as well, though less often than it does dogs. When folks bring their feline friends, the cats stay in a separate room with big cages and a big window so the kitties may look out the window. Barrett said, "if they're not completely unruly, we let them out to roam around and sit on the windowsill — but not in the same area as where the dogs are."

### Gina's K-9 B&B

Hoiser does not accept cats at her K-9 B&B. She is fond of all furballs, but catering solely to canines makes life a whole lot easier for her. So, too, does excluding certain breeds, which is why she does not accept pit bulls.

"Don't get me wrong: I'm not anti-pit bull, but it's a completely



Above is Whitney's sister's dog, Taffy, (photo by Rorry Joseph Lovins) and below is Whitney's dog, Bailey (photo by Whitney Joseph).

different license and insurance policy, and it's exceedingly expensive. The number of pit bulls I get really wouldn't cover the cost. But I am not anti-pit bulls, they're dogs too and deserve a wonderful life. They just get a bad rep."

All other pups may check into her doggy bed and breakfast, however, which is on nine acres in the town of Copake. About half an acre is fenced in for the dogs to roam free.

"The Roe Jan stream is on the bottom half of my property, and in the summertime I take some of the dogs down there for walks. If they want, they can swim there on a 30-foot rope," said Hoiser, explaining that's for individual excursions that must be booked separately. "Not everybody wants to go in the water, mostly just labs and goldens."

The set up at the K-9 B&B sounds idyllic, with the entire four rooms of the first floor dedicated to the dogs. Typically, three to four dogs will be housed in one room per night, depending on the size and temperament of the animals. Before setting up a stay at the B&B, Hoiser said she has a process for new dogs – and their owners.

"I invite them over to come into the house, to inspect every room and see exactly where their dog will stay, and I explain how they'll spend the day. I give references, including the Copake Vet Hospital," she said.

She recommends anxious dogs spend a half day with her prior to being boarded, which is a good idea for any animal to get comfortable with new surroundings. Hoiser takes photos of the half day and sends them to the owner so they can get a visual of their dog's day, and then schedules a full day for the next visit. After that, the dog can do an overnight.

Gina and Chip's priorities are always the animals and their wellbeing. With the various services that their respective facilities offer, their prices will vary, but both explained that all of their prices remain very affordable and competitive.

So when it comes to planning your next getaway, one that your furry family members can't go on, it's good to know that you have options for Spot and Trixie. They, too, can have a little R&R at some of our region's top doggy / kitty resorts like Ledgewood Kennel and Gina's K-9 B&B. •

To contact Ledgewood Kennels, call (518) 789-6353 or email info@ledgewoodkennel.com. To contact Gina's K9 Doggy Bed & Breakfast, call (518) 329-4675 or email ginask9bnb@gmail.com.





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#### business snapshot



### Petpourri

333 Main Street, Lakeville, CT. (860) 435-8833. Find them on Facebook at facebook.com/petpourriinc

Petpourri was started in 1993 when husband and wife duo Frank and Stephanie Pellegrino noticed that there was a need for a pet supply store in the community. "We were working for an establishment, and we were seeing people who were coming in looking for things for their dogs and cats, so when that store closed down, we were like 'let's do it.' There wasn't a whole lot of forethought involved; we just went for it," Stephanie said. Petpourri offers food, treats, toys, and accessories for dogs and cats. "We're husband and wife owned, and we've created a very close relationship with our clientele, many of whom have been supporters for 30 years," Stephanie said. "We have the same core group of people who started with us, we have a very hands-on ownership, and we want to know who our customers are." The most rewarding part for Stephanie and Frank is being able to help owners find solutions to their problems. "We love being able to steer people in the right direction and see positive results." Going forward, Frank and Stephanie hope to continue to grow their business and their clientele while remaining a vital business in their community.



### **English Garden Grown**

91 Main Street, Salisbury, CT. (718) 704-7115. @english\_garden\_grown Photo above by Anne Day.

English Garden Grown began as a response to Pom Shillingford's "constant lament on both the limited variety in the range of seasonal local flowers beyond the usual suspects that were available to buy locally and the horrendous environmental cost and quality of commercial grown-and-flown flowers." Pom uses her own garden-grown flowers, and locally sourced and gently forged materials, to provide bespoke floristry services, from a single bouquet to weekly arrangements to special events. Throughout the year, she also offers seasonal, garden-to-vase flower subscriptions made up of varieties of tulips, dahlias, and winter bulbs. "Grown entirely without artificial intervention and focusing on varieties of flowers that do not travel well, along with an established garden of perennials, I offer a quality of flowers with the scent, style, and movement that Mother Nature designed them to have, but which are really hard to source elsewhere," Pom said. Aside from the love of growing flowers and seeing the joy they bring to others, she says "knowing that my flowers literally are not costing the earth to supply them is at the core of my business."



### **Coast to Coast Dog Treats**

Po Box 587, Stormville, NY. info@cost2coastdogtreats.com. coast2coastdogtreats.com

Linda Bloomer was inspired to start Coast to Coast when she moved to California and discovered the organic lifestyle. "After returning east, the frustration with my Westie's lifelong allergies grew. It proved virtually impossible to find healthy options for dogs with allergies, and it was then I vowed to create a treat with simple ingredients that dogs could benefit and thrive from." After six months of nutritional research and developing her own recipes, Coast to Coast Dog Treats was born in January of 2011. Coast to Coast provides heart-shaped biscuits that are made in small batches, hand-rolled, cut, and baked using all organic ingredients – no corn, wheat, or soy! What sets Coast to Coast apart? "We believe that making healthy organic dog treats is not only good for dogs but also for the environment. Because we use pesticide-free ingredients the land and water remain untainted by chemicals, helping keep them safe for today and for the future." Linda is an animal lover, so her favorite part of the business has been creating wonderful relationships with her customers and their dogs. Going forward, Coast to Coast plans to offer a healthy, organic cat food option. "We recently rescued a Siamese cat, so of course Mika is demanding treats for our feline friends, too."



### Poochini's Pet Salon

46 Robin Road, Craryville, NY. 9518) 325-4150. poochinipetsalon.wix.com

Poochini's Pet Salon will be celebrating its tenth anniversary this April. Owner Dawn Gardina started Poochini after working in a corporate job for many years. "I was working 24/7 and decided that it was time to find my own passion. So I left and started doing what I've wanted to do since I was little." Poochini provides boarding and pet grooming, including haircuts, nail trims, and ear cleaning. Dawn believes that what sets Poochini apart from similar businesses is that she doesn't charge for extras. "A dog can't help if it's sick and needs a pill. When we get old, we're going to need extra help too, and we'll get charged for that. I just don't think it's fair, so I don't do it to the animals." The most rewarding part for Dawn is being around animals, which she's loved all her life. "They bring me so much joy." Going forward, Dawn is going to keep doing what she's doing. "I like what I do and there's no need to fix what isn't broken."





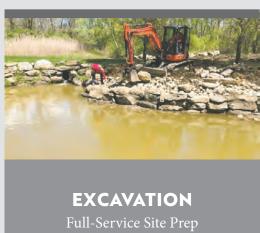
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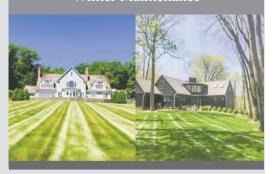
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