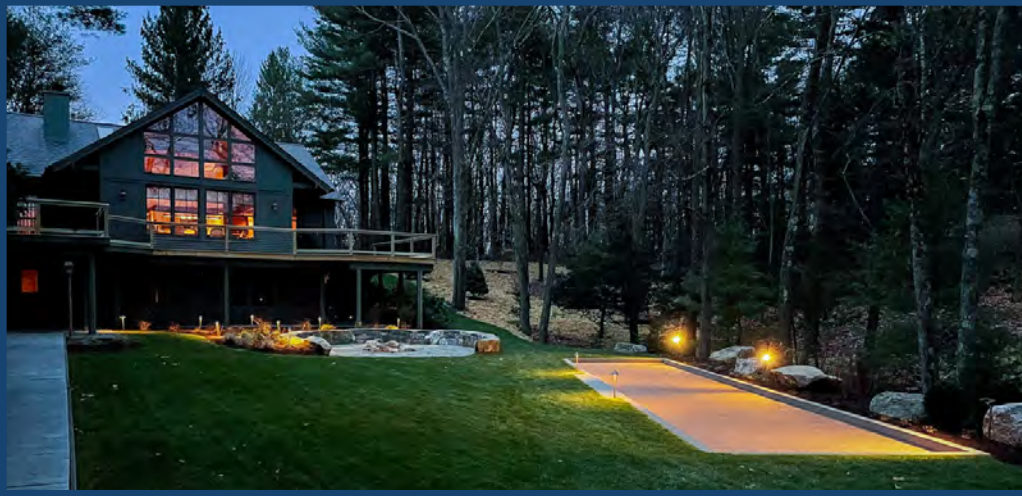


# MAINstreet

MAGAZINE







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## HAPPY SUMMER

We are already in the sixth month of the year. The SIXTH! How can we already be halfway through 2024? I feel like this year just started, and now we're halfway through it? It just blows my mind. And if you think I'm shaking my head in disbelief while writing this, yes, I certainly am shaking it. And this summer hit us out of nowhere; we were trudging along in winter with all its rain and grayness, and then bam! Summer hit at the end of April, and I feel like it's been a mad dash ever since.

For me, it's been filled with end-of-school-year activities, baseball and softball practices and games as well as all things dance. And now June is here. I think that June might just be the busiest month of the year. I always feel like I'm running in twenty different directions all at once between all of the early dismissals, half days, parties, gatherings, and deadlines. Please send help – and caffeine. I'll need it.

Despite the hectic nature of this month, it is also an exciting time. Summer is officially here, and the weather is usually beautiful – and hot! After this winter, we deserve it. And there's just so much to do. Our region is chock-full of events and activities. All of the event venues have started their productions for the season, and there are festivals, concerts, and outdoor seating at so many of our favorite restaurants. It just makes our souls happy, right?

We took that joy as inspiration for this issue. Some of my writers have focused their stories this month on "things to do" and ran with that theme however they defined it. As you'll see, we have interesting stories that really run the gamut of topics. As always, there should be something for everyone to enjoy here. Local Sharon, CT, resident Nat Benchley shares reflections on the 50th anniversary of his brother's book, *Jaws*. You may have heard of it. Nat has penned a piece that takes us on his brother's journey to write it and the phenomenon it became after. Jesse and Barbara on the other hand have focused on a few theatrical venues in our region, sharing their histories and upcoming productions. Abby had her hands full this month talking with nature therapist Ed Thorney, the bicentennial committee in Copake for their upcoming celebrations, a local business celebrating its first anniversary, as well as the celebration up on Mount Washington. And those are just a few of our stories here. Please flip through and enjoy while you enjoy everything that is on offer in the month of June. Happy summer!

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir



**JUNE 2024**

Claire zips around Twin Lakes in Salisbury, CT, on her 1989 Kawasaki 650sx. She painted it with a "razzle dazzle" design, which, according to Olivia, US ships used as a form of camouflage in World War I.

Photo by  
Olivia Valentine

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**PUBLISHER, EDITOR, WRITER, & DESIGNER:** Thorunn Kristjansdottir

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:**

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

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

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

**CONTACT**

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

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# IN THE BEGINNING WAS CLAY

- EVE KAPLAN

By Leora Armstrong  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

My directions to Eve Kaplan's Taghkanic studio were to turn at the pink mailbox. Originally red, it has now faded to a fabulous electric pink. Eve Kaplan hails from an artistic background. Her Norwegian mother was a ceramicist whose first husband was a painter. Her brother was also a painter. Her father, Richard Kaplan, was a documentary filmmaker who directed films about Martin Luther King and Eleanor Roosevelt. Creativity is embedded in Kaplan's genes.

#### Kaplan's gilded age

"I attended Bennington College, which has a strong art department but is not an art school. I felt lost then; I did not want to attend art school, so I studied painting, sculpture, and theater. My interest in gilding and furniture restoration developed, and my first job was at the renowned Thorpe Brothers Restoration in Manhattan. They had terrific clients, so I worked and learned on exquisite pieces. I was not as knowledgeable regarding decorative arts, but they threw me into it. I felt so lucky. On the job, with each piece, I learned a great deal about gilding. I remained in that world for 30 years, immersed in the language of furniture, enjoying working with my hands. Initially, I conceived of old furniture as formal and rather fancy, but when I touched and felt the older objects, I discovered they were fun and creative. You can uncover many narratives within the decorative arts, including scenes of animals, birds, and

flowers that reveal fantastic imagery in some early carved woods. I am fascinated by furniture's history. Gilding techniques have remained unchanged; I still undertake the same early processes today." Gilding is an ancient decorative technique, commonly employed by Egyptians and Phoenicians, and involves the application of thin, fragile metal leaves, oftengold or silver, onto a surface, resulting in a lustrous finish after burnishing. "Eventually, I co founded Fitzkaplan, opening our antique restoration studio in New York City. My gallerist Gerald Bland became a client then; now the table has turned, and I am one of his artists."

For centuries, the person who received the most and often the only credit for a finished piece of furniture was the maker who created the wooden frame and carved the wood. The upholsters who sold the work were unrecognized, as were the gilders; only the carpenters making the wooden frame and the inlay received acknowledgment. Gilding was a hidden craft. Eve Kaplan has undoubtedly turned that chair around. Her large, bold body of work is unique as she pushes the alchemy of clay and glazing finishes.

#### The upstate base

"We have been in this area for over 30 years. Doug, my late husband, and I bought this wholly gutted house with a falling-apart barn. He was a contractor who rebuilt it except for the shell.



This space was the old garage, which Doug renovated into a studio for me. He knew it needed to be larger, but I resisted at the time. Now I've finally expanded, and he was so right! We always had a base upstate, even when working in the city. I had to escape, always getting out for the weekend. I never thought I would live in Manhattan for so long. When I came here, I realized how much I love the countryside. Growing up in the suburbs, I often went backpacking; getting out is essential and good for our souls."

In the newly renovated back studio hang Eve's ceramic chandeliers in various modes of making. Early abstract expressionist paintings Kaplan made in the 1980s hang on the walls alongside a beloved fireplace abandoned on a sidewalk. Large work tables center both studios, and the walls are lined with shelves packed with glazing materials, small work samples, and a treasure trove of work. Huge, glazed windows overlook a long field, and her sleepy dog snoozes beside an old leather armchair.

**Changing Hats**

"After many years of working in restoration, I felt restless and wanted to explore ceramics further. I was not too fond of the pottery wheel; instead, I enjoyed hand-building the pieces, and once I discovered this, I could not stop. I started creating built-up pots. Most ceramicists start with pots, and my mother taught me to pinch pots. The journey began with one piece of clay, building up and up. I experimented with glazing and introducing gilding into the ceramic pieces, quickly realizing that gilding on glaze resembles gilding on glass, like *verre églomisé*."



Kaplan's work is a marriage of techniques; she has pushed boundaries by incorporating a contemporary twist to 18th-century decorative pieces. "An early work that caught Gerald's attention was a mirror made up of a series of small block forms in dark rock-glazed clay. I thought of them as rocks built to form a mirror. Gerald recognized it and exclaimed it was akin to a Georgian mirror with all the correct dimensions. I had worked with Gerald for years as his furniture restorer and gilder and it was an easy transition to become one of his artists! Ever since, he has represented my work, and we have not stopped working together."

"One project led to another: commissions requested that I create varied techniques on original pieces or create those forms smaller or larger. When I was in college, I had always thought asking an artist to do a commission was weird; if someone had asked me to paint a painting to fit a size and make it purple, I considered that ridiculous because the work must have your voice in it. But I quickly realized these assignments challenged me, forcing me to expand where I might have just remained on one object. So, I will work on an object with different finishes and change the proportions."

The work has now created its own journey. Kaplan's prolific practice includes ceramic wall-light fixtures, large hanging chandeliers, pieces of furniture, huge pots, candlesticks, pedestals, and tables. One is amazed that they are all made of clay with no supporting parts.

We are looking at a clay rope table with a glass surface, a commission for a decorator who wanted a traditional rope-style piece. "These stools are usually carved from wood and occasionally gilded; I always saw them as ottomans. This designer approached me and asked if I could make a rope table with clay. I copied the rope concept literally in the clay, down to the knots as feet. Sometimes, claw feet may appear with small animals embedded in the legs, and vine-like imagery creeps through."

Kaplan showed me images of the powder room she created for designer Alex Papachristidis, whose conception was a shell grotto; here, she embedded tiles with shells and animal and bird



Above: Eve Kaplan in her front studio, with recent works on the floor and many smaller works on shelves behind. Below: Manganese glazed and glazed ceramic mirror, 57 1/2 x 32 1/4". Opposite page, L-R: Pair of gilded ceramic candlesticks, 11.5 x 5.5". Various gilded and blue glazed pots.

images made with clay and installed them in mirrors both in front and behind, giving this room the sense of infinity. One feels transported into a garden folly by a room made of clay. Behind the tables are two tall pillars, which Kaplan regards as sculptures.

"They are quite different, but when I see them together, they talk to each other a little. So when I'm not working on a commission, I can head off the deep end and play," she shared. Many smaller objects fill the shelves, both old and newer ideas.

**And what inspires you as an artist?**

"The historic world of objects constantly inspires me, as does being outside, walking, and surrounding myself with nature. Occasionally, I use leaf or flower forms, but my work is not literal. I don't do a lot of drawing or sketching. It all comes up from the clay as I work," but she smiles at the advantages of drawing before sculpting. "I started doing animal tracking and learning more about woodlands. Now, when I walk in the woods, I notice every little action and the various relationships. Like what these mushrooms are, their relationships, and how they will communicate and support each other. You know, the connectivity of nature is interesting, but only if we could be the same."

This practice seeps into her work, making it feel organic in nature.

"Is that a Medusa up there?" I

ask. "Yes, I was afraid of doing any figurative work, so I took a figurative sculpture class in Italy. I enjoy seeing images carved on furniture – classical faces, gargoyles, and creatures. Even though there aren't necessarily faces in my work, I see faces, or other forms, appear now and then. So there's a column where I put a little ram's head. I'd done some other mirrors where I included some animal narrative." There is a sense of humor in her work.

**Can you describe your transition from painting to clay?**

"I loved the abstract expressionist painters; my painting work was loose, and I achieved a similar energy when making ceramics. Many ceramic artists work much more freely and loosely today, leaving the craft tradition of making beautiful pots. That's interesting to me. But I still think I get my looseness from my background in painting; I still want to get back into painting but find it very hard. Sometimes I make wall pieces, which are similar to paintings. It's always good to keep pushing the boundaries of the artform. My objects are not easily recognizable; they are my interpretation. It is all about the tactility of the clay and the process, the sensual experience of it. That's why

Continued on next page ...



when I stopped painting and worked in restoration, I was so happy mixing colors and applying them to objects. Sometimes, it's the physical act of making that holds you. Most materials are from Sheffield Pottery. I want to work with local clays. Ceramics involves so much technical stuff, so you need a reliable source. There's a stream back there, and I've taken clay from it, but if it could handle better, I would use it more."

**What's the scariest or the most complicated piece you've ever done?**

"The chandeliers were initially nerve-racking because I didn't understand how they were constructed and did not think I could do that in clay, but I relished the challenge. I slowly figured it out. Some of my mom's early glass chandeliers started these pieces off. I know this plate is in the middle, and the arms can go this way, but I didn't know that before. After a time, I've mastered these technical problems. A prototype can take weeks or months, and then you suddenly figure out a system. I lose some of the spontaneity of the original ones once I have a system. Some pieces have actual weight, and it's fascinating that clay is so robust and heavy. I am getting to my maximum in terms of size. I rely on Joanne, my assistant, for the larger pieces. We created an oversized fireplace mantel, so we had to make everything in sections. I might make a single large piece, divide it up to fit the kiln, and reassemble it; there is no

metal inside these large pieces to hold them. I created the eagle consoles, and my assistant and I have since worked on them and made other iterations. More than 50% of the commissions are from my original ideas. The early rock-like mirrors were rectangular, and I am now working on a rounded version. The sunburst objects have morphed into different shapes as well."

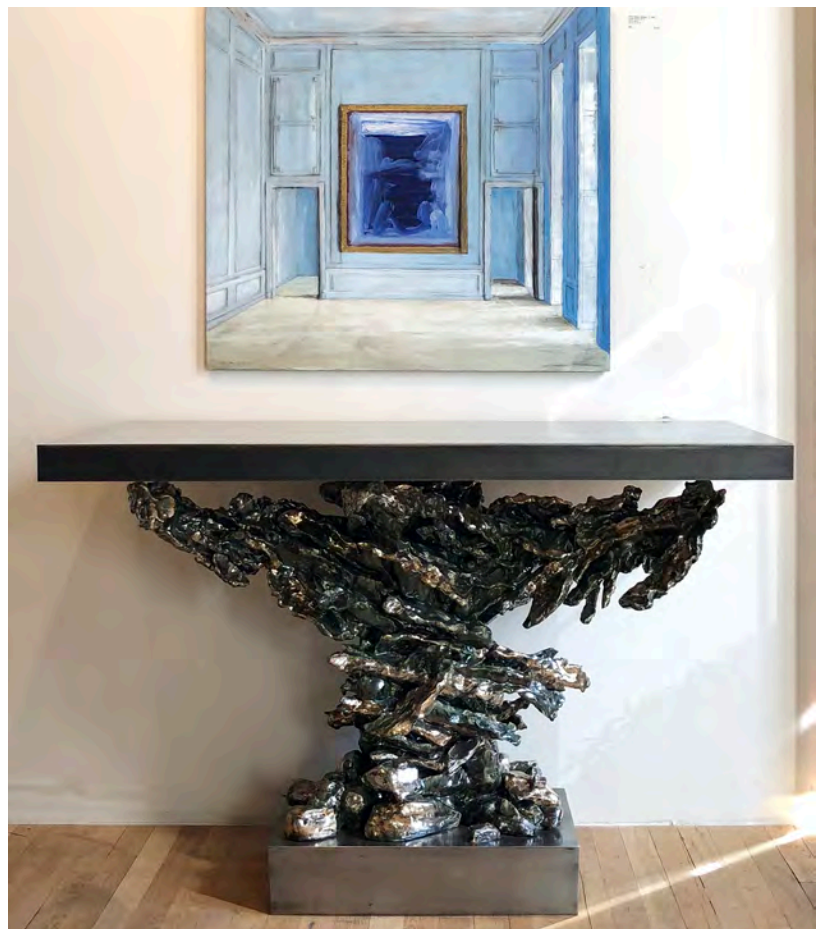
**What would you choose if you could own any piece of work in the world?**

"I would buy a Georgio Morandi painting, but it could also be an early Italian Renaissance or medieval art piece. But really, I don't need anything. I have an enormous house, and it is already filled with stuff. Sometimes, I make work I want to hang onto longer, but they tend to leave immediately. Some of these older works on the shelves are for my notetaking and practice. They're better than little pieces of paper to jolt the memory."

**What do you think of the Japanese kintsugi approach to repair?**

Japanese *kintsugi* is a form of repair often used in ceramics, whose philosophy regards breakage and repair as integral to the narrative of an object, rather than something to disguise.

"I always thought that was an exciting way of repairing work with the *urushi* lacquer mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum to highlight the break rather than hiding it. In some of the early mirrors, I hid all the seams so they would disappear. However, one day, I thought, why don't I make it a visible *kintsugi* repair? I made the seams in gold leaf. I incorporate the seams into the design rather than making the edges and joins disappear. In some baroque-style mirrors I kept the tiles' grid visible rather than hiding them, separating each piece with gold leaf. Now, it is an exciting part of the work." Kaplan shows me a mirror and explains, "First, I made the whole mirror, then cut it into pieces so it fits in the kiln and doesn't warp. The mirror rejoined after firing, and these joins are visual elements like the bones of the work."



Above: Gilded and glazed ceramic eagle-form console with steel top and plinth, 31 x 44 x 21". Below: Copper glazed ceramic mirror, 49 x 35". All images with this article courtesy of Eve Kaplan.

**What motivates your practice?**

"My need to work, my need to use my hands to work. It is not an intellectual thing or a concept. It's generally motivation to make objects. But seeing artists that are more intellectual or conceptual and go from one medium to another puzzles me because it differs from how I am. What defines an artist is some obsessive personality that they must do this work. If there's nothing else they can do, this is what they do; you follow that path. I keep going to the studio every day. I realize restoration is tedious and requires lots of patience, and I don't think of myself as patient. I'm rather impatient and work quickly, but I have the same obsessiveness."

**Do you have a specific routine for firing the kiln?**

"I don't have a big wood kiln; if you have one, you must fill it up before firing. I don't have that patience. When I make something, I want to fire it right away. I don't want to let it dry for three months. I like to work fast. I tend to have much more energy in the morning than when working late. I put in a typical working day." Kaplan is prolific, so much clay comes through her hands.

There are two kilns in Kaplan's back studio, one of which her mother

used in her ceramic studio, and it is still working hard. The shelves are filled with pieces of glazed clay, 'spares' as Kaplan describes them, ready to be added to work, "These are from chandeliers that I didn't use; nothing wasted, you can use them at some point, so I keep all the bits and pieces." Two chandeliers hang over the kilns; one is a rock/glass creation that incorporates a broken crystal chandelier, which was too severely damaged for repair. "I made loose copies of all the pieces that I glazed. We then made two chandeliers that were opposite to each other, half ceramic, and half glass. It feels akin to *kintsugi* putting it back together and repairing it, with some of the repairs being obvious."

We ended up nattering about the Giants Causeway in Northern Ireland, which was born from interlocking basalt columns caused by an ancient volcanic eruption. These are deep rock formations. Rocks deeply inspire Kaplan's practice and constantly remind me of her work, which is born of the earth. ●

*You can see more of Eve Kaplan's work through her gallery at Gerald Bland, Fine Arts Building, 232 E 59th Street, NYC. Visit her website [geraldblandinc.com](http://geraldblandinc.com) and Instagram [@evekaplan](https://www.instagram.com/evekaplan).*



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## friendly faces: meet our neighbors, visitors, and friends



**Gina Trivelli** is a classically trained chef and the owner of Manna Catering Company. She came to her passion early, and has been working in restaurants since she was 14 years old. She attended the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY, where she was schooled in the art of cooking and learned everything from classical to contemporary cuisines. Gina is also certified as a holistic health coach. For Gina, cooking is about using fresh, seasonal, and locally sourced food whenever possible. “Rather than a style of cooking, it is a way of respecting food and bringing it to the table in a way that accentuates its natural flavors and conserves its healing properties,” Gina said.



**Melissa Brady** is a certified dog trainer, canine athlete specialist, and the owner of K9 Fit For Life. She is also certified in K9 First Aid/CPR and as an AKC Canine Good Citizen Evaluator. She’s been helping pet owners and their dogs for the past eight years and she loves building confidence and motivating pet owners to train their own dogs. “I am very passionate about helping pet owners, and I love what I do. I look forward to working with my current clients and meeting new ones!” Outside of work, she enjoys hiking and kayaking with her children and their dogs. “You will also see me out on my motorcycle on the beautiful country scenic roads!”



**Loren Whiteley** is the owner of the Hair Lounge by Loren in Millerton, NY. She has been a licensed hairdresser for over 15 years and has worked in the salon business for over 20. “I love when clients leave the salon feeling beautiful and with a smile! I get to see and meet people all day – some new clients and some I’ve been working with for years. You create a friendship with them, and they start to feel like family.” Loren is originally from Stanfordville, but now resides in Copake with her family. When she’s not busy working, Loren loves spending time with her husband and daughter at her favorite place – their summer house on Copake Lake!



An esthetician, **Virag Mate-Kovacs** has worked in the skincare industry for nearly 20 years. She first worked in Budapest, Hungary, then in New York City, and is now the owner of One Cream Studio in Millerton, NY. Outside of work, Virag enjoys being a mother and discovering the suburban lifestyle. “I love the quiet and the beautiful nature,” she said. She resides in Lakeville, CT, with her husband and their four-year-old daughter. “We love the community, the mom group, and our neighbors. We feel super safe here.” When asked if there was anything else she’d like to share, Virag said that she enjoys meeting the local ladies through her work. “If you need a skin care service or a pampering, relaxing facial, come to me!”



**Craig Colgan** is a third-grade teacher in the Pine Plains Central School District and an author. He began writing his first novel two years ago. “For me, the best part of writing is the completion of the first draft,” he said. Outside of work, he loves to work in his yard, read, exercise, and spend time with his friends and family. He is originally from Rockland County but loves living in Dutchess County. “I think we live in one of the most beautiful parts of the state.” Craig’s novel *The House Where Dirt Grew* is available online, and he hopes to have the first draft of his second novel completed this June!



**Joanne Scasso** is the owner of Country Gardeners Florist in Millerton, NY. She started working in a flower shop when she was 15 years old and never looked back. She opened her first shop in Amenia in 1986 and moved to her current location in Millerton a few years later, saving the historic 1851 train station from demolition. At Country Gardeners Florist, Joanne offers floral arrangements and styling for a variety of events including weddings, birthdays, and more. Outside of work, Joanne enjoys gardening – of course – rescuing horses, traveling, and spending time with her husband, Jay; her son, Stone; her mini ponies, Cheech and Chong; and her dog, Sadie.





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# Talking wilderness therapy

By Abby Audenino  
abby@mainstreetmag.com

Ed Thorney has an affinity for the woods; as he says: “I’ve always wanted to be outside.”

Ed is a certified Gestalt therapist, wilderness guide, experiential educator, and life-long advocate for people and nature. He has worked in the outdoor education field since 1982 in various capacities and founded Wilderness Therapy & Mentoring to blend his passion for the outdoors with his desire to help people.

He got his undergraduate degree in biology from Plymouth State College, then worked as a therapeutic wilderness instructor for the state of Connecticut’s Wilderness School. At the same time, he worked as a certifying instructor for Wesleyan University and Wilderness Education Association to certify others to be wilderness guides. He earned a masters in organizational development from Antioch New England University and from that training ran a corporate leadership consulting firm for 15 years.

“Human beings are intelligent creatures, and we get chock full of thoughts, concerns, fears, and options – many of which present us with more reasons to remain frozen in the same ineffective behavior! As a therapist or instructor, my job is to help people simplify the options, informed by their values so making decisions is easier. Life is all about choice.”

## A humanistic approach

According to *Psychology Today*, Gestalt is an “approach to psychotherapy that helps clients focus on the present to

understand what is actually happening in their lives at this moment, and how it makes them feel in the moment, rather than what they may assume to be happening based on past experience. Along with person-centered and existential therapy, it is one of the primary forms of humanistic therapy.”

“The term ‘gestalt’ comes from the German word that means ‘whole.’ It has a lot to do with the ways in which we need to interact with our environment and have reciprocal, authentic connection. If we don’t get that – if the gestalt is interrupted in some way – we make up for it by being the loudest, quietest, strongest, smartest, funniest, etc. all in an effort to try and make things whole again,” Ed explained. “When these learned survival skills start to get in the way of their goals, people look for help.”

When Ed is working with people, especially parents and teenagers, he uses a dry erase board so that his clients can see their thoughts and feelings written out in front of them.

“I’ve found that nobody argues with their own data. My job is not to tell people what’s wrong but rather to ask the relevant questions so they see their own answers in print. Visual representation helps eliminate confusion,” he said.

This helps clients sort through their fears, assumptions, and thoughts to separate symptoms from causes. Symptoms do not go away until the cause is addressed.

“As a person goes through this process, it’s easier for me, then, to take guesses about what it’s like to be in their shoes and then ask to be corrected. This shows respect for who they are. It’s a joint effort. This is my version of Gestalt therapy.”

His career now is a culmination of the work that he’s done in corporate leadership, Gestalt therapy, and wilderness training.



Above: Ed Thorney. All other images with this article depict a few of the folks, of all ages, that Ed has worked with. All images courtesy of Ed Thorney.

“I tend to want to simplify things because my clients are always overloaded. I take the best of each of the disciplines that I’ve studied and apply what makes sense to each client.”

Spending years as a teacher has also taught him how to adapt to the people that he’s working with, so he readily recognizes that what works for one person likely won’t work the same for someone else. He works to make authentic connections with his clients so that the process is collaborative rather than hierarchical.

“At this point in my career, I love the work that I do because there are so many different aspects of it,” Ed said. “Today, I was hired to be a rock climbing facilitator. Other times, I’m asked to do more serious work. The work varies, and that’s part of what’s so great about it.”

Continued on next page ..





**Blending therapy and nature**

So, why is it so important to blend therapy with nature?

“The real simple answer is to get away from walls and ceilings. You’re not being confined. You’re emotionally and visually more free.”

A big part of Ed’s work is creating an emotionally safe space where people feel comfortable opening up to him, and he believes that nature is the environment that does that the best. “Emotional and physical safety has to be unlocked in order for people to think and feel differently, and I think nature does that for people,” he explained.

In a classroom setting, he considers the relevant questions to ask students about their school and their lives. This means that they’re driving the conversation and therefore that Ed is sharing power with them.

“I often think about the balance of power. In my experience with thousands of people, the fundamental question, ‘who is running my life?’ is almost always at the center of their issues. As a therapist, I really function as a facilitator – sharing the power. Yes, they allow me the authority to structure the session, but they’re the ones providing the leadership and doing the work!”

In family sessions, Ed prefers to hear from the child first and allow them to get all of their feelings out while their parental figures sit quietly and listen. Then the parents speak while the child listens.

“That’s the creation of an emotionally safe environment, and it’s often

the kind of boundary that people can’t set on their own,” he said. “It’s all about creating emotional safety in whatever environment we’re in, whether it’s individual, family, or group. It’s not just work, it’s a lifestyle.”

**Services offered**

Broadly speaking, Ed’s work is split between mentoring and school support. As far as age range goes, Ed doesn’t limit himself. He works with clients that are toddler-aged through grandparenthood.

Therapeutic wilderness mentoring is based on developing a relationship built on trust, respect, and fun. Activities include hiking, canoeing, rock-climbing, stream walks, and more. He offers therapeutic wilderness mentoring to individuals and in a family-style setting.

A wilderness therapeutic mentoring session is two hours long, with the first 90 minutes being spent directly with the child, young adult, or parent, and the remaining 30 minutes serving as a follow-up via email, phone, or in person within a week of the initial appointment.

“For family sessions, that’s where that intergenerational piece comes in. Working with kids and their parents, or sometimes even their grandparents, the connection between two or three generations and the patterns that are present become very apparent,” he explained. “I think it takes some of the blame out of the situation, too. When you start to look intergenerationally at patterns, people are more open to see that this has been going on for a while and it redirects the power back to them to end the cycle.”

He also works with schools in an outdoor education setting and as a counselor when he’s doing one-on-one work with individual students. Sometimes he facilitates a classroom dialogue. Ed works closely with educators to fit the same activities listed for mentoring into the school schedule.

Ed also offers professional development programs for educators and business leaders. He facilitates



a two-hour workshop that focuses on effective communication and has on-site follow-up. The goal is to train educators to be more therapeutic in their approach to day-to-day teaching. From his experience as a corporate leadership trainer, he understands the importance of professional, empathetic development, which translates into emotional intelligence.

Finally, Ed also created the Institute for Wilderness & Community, which provides meaningful and relevant professional development to educators.

“IWC is how I see myself ‘passing the torch’ by training other adults,” he explained. “I am recruiting professionals – teachers, counselors, administrators – who wish to learn more of what I do and apply it to their own careers.”

**Helping others**

For Ed, the most rewarding part of his work is being able to see people feel better about themselves after sessions. “When I realize that someone has turned a corner in a positive way, and they’ve let something go that kept them from being emotionally free, well, there’s nothing better than that,” he said. “Plenty of moments I’ll be out at a restaurant, and I’ll run into former students or clients that will come up and talk to me. I’m

reminded often of the importance and the benefit of living and working in a small town.”

Nothing comes without challenges, however, and Ed’s biggest obstacle to his work is time. “Time is always the reason that people can’t justify putting more effort into what they want to do,” he explained.

In the same vein, Ed also noted that the number of students can occasionally make it difficult to provide attention to everyone equally.

Going forward, Ed wants to pass the torch to others who have a passion for wilderness therapy and mentoring through his IWC program. “I’m hoping to attract more people to learn how to integrate outdoor education with social emotional learning.”

He also hopes to go into semi-retirement and do more private practice. “My personal goal is to have more people come to me to work on that family healing,” he said. “Passing the torch to as many others as I can means that more people can be helped.” •

*To learn more about Wilderness Therapy & Mentoring and Ed Thorney, visit his website [wildernesstherapyandmentoring.org](http://wildernesstherapyandmentoring.org).*



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# Angel lime pistachio

## CHIFFON PIE

By Olivia Valentine with  
Caroline Markonic  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Last June we gave you key lime cream-sicles, which tasted like summer on a stick. This June, we are giving you a lime chiffon pie of your summer dreams! It is so light and fluffy, has the perfect amount of lime flavor, and the crust, oooooohhhh the crust! It has a meringue base with crushed pistachios. It's crunchy, it's light, it's sweet, it's deeeee-lish. We have never made a pie with a meringue crust but can't wait to try more variations of this with different flavors. It literally is that good.

### Meringue crust ingredients

4 egg whites  
1/8 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp cream of tartar  
1/2 tsp vanilla  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/4 cup finely chopped pistachios

Preheat oven to 275° degrees.

Beat egg whites, salt, cream of tartar, and vanilla until soft peaks form. Gradually add the sugar until stiff peaks form and the sugar is dissolved, but the meringue is still shiny.

Spread mixture on the bottom and up sides of a greased 9" pie plate and sprinkle the entire bottom with the finely chopped pistachios. I used a pastry bag to decorate the edges, but it is not necessary; it just makes for a prettier crust, as you cannot shape the meringue as you can with a traditional pie crust. Bake it low and slow for one

hour. Be sure not to open the oven door until the timer goes off!

### Lime chiffon ingredients

4 egg yolks  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/4 cup lime juice  
2 tbs cornstarch  
Zest of one lime  
1 cup heavy cream  
1/2 tsp vanilla

Beat egg yolks until thick and lemony colored. Gradually beat in the sugar. Stir in the lime zest, juice, and cornstarch.

In a double boiler, cook the mixture over simmering (not boiling) water, stirring constantly until the mixture is thick, approximately 8-10 minutes. The mixture should have the consistency of pudding. Set aside in the fridge to let cool.

Beat 1 cup of heavy cream together with vanilla until it is the consistency of whipped cream.

Fold the cooled lime mixture into the whipped cream and spread into the cooled meringue crust.

Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight before serving. Decorate with more whipped cream (add a little sugar and some vanilla to sweeten it up a bit).

I have to admit, that it took me a few attempts to get this pie recipe sharing ready. The first time the lime filling was a bit too runny and the nuts that were in the crust were not chopped fine enough. It created a texture that was a little weird on the



palette. It was a recipe that I thought was maybe a flop, and since it wasn't a big hit, I was ready to bag the entire idea. However, my taste testers thought it should be perfected. I am glad I listened to them because this recipe is definitely a winner. Everyone that ate this absolutely loved it. I have a cute video of my dad and my step-mother trying the pie. If you subscribe to *Main Street Magazine* Facebook and Instagram pages, you can find it there. Remember, my dad makes a killer lemon meringue pie, and it was his awesome French onion soup recipe we shared back in March. His opinion is important because he knows what awesome tastes like!

As always, enjoy! •

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





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# Milan, NY

## REAL ESTATE IN AN IN-BETWEEN TOWN

By Christine Bates  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Some towns are drive throughs or fly overs. You don't know exactly where they are, where they begin, or where they end. There's no center, no bank, no traffic light, no school – sometimes there's not even a post office.

Milan, NY, is one of those in-between towns on the way to the Taconic Parkway or Millerton. It is bordered by Rhinebeck and Red Hook to the west, Pine Plains to the east, Stanford to the southeast, Clinton to the south, and Gallatin in Columbia County to the north. With a population of 2,245 it is the least populous town in Dutchess County but the fastest growing one since 1980.

Originally the western part of the Little Nine Partners Patent of 1706, Milan was largely an area of farms and small local mills. In 1818 the New York State Legislature officially created the town, but no one knows why an area settled originally by Palatines was named Milan or why the accent falls on the “Mi” not the “lan” like the Italian city.

The opening of the Erie Canal fostered the growth of Hudson River towns, and then the railroad cut down on the east-west road traffic crossing Milan, and the population declined after 1840. The forested terrain is not quite mountainous but undulates with rock outcroppings, and some areas have views across the Hudson Valley to the Catskills. During the Gilded Age, wealthy New Yorkers, including Frederic Wilcox, purchased struggling farms and created grand estates.

### Milan roadside attractions

Route 199 is the only major east-west thoroughfare in Milan, with three landmarks all west of the Taconic. The solitary Milan Town Hall, which has the look of a country club, is surrounded by lawns and has a view of the Catskills. Lacking a post office, it is the only spot for community gatherings. The building was donated to the town by Irene Kilmer Wilcox who also gave it the 615-acre Wilcox Park, one of Dutchess County's largest parks, named in honor of her husband and son and located the border of Red Hook and Milan.

People drive hours to cut their Christmas trees at Battenfelds or buy anemone bouquets from its green houses. The Mad Man of Milan, Steve Schreiber's 31-foot-tall steel “Fork in the Road” along with other whimsical sculptures mark the borders of Rhinebeck, Red Hook, and Milan at the convergence of Route 199 and Route 308.

### Surprising sales results

Like the rest of the Hudson Valley, Milan has seen a steady increase in median price over the last ten years rising from \$300,000 in December 2013 to a peak in August 2021 of \$725,000 before declining to \$510,000 in December 2023. Generally, Milan median prices are below Rhinebeck's, often above those of Red Hook, and consistently above those of Pine Plains, whose December 2023 median price was \$350,000. The same

relative values are true in price per square foot; Milan's \$202 was well over Pine Plains' \$115, but below Rhinebeck's \$243.

Both Pine Plains and Milan are smaller in terms of people and parcels with



The availability of large, residential parcels of land and proximity to Rhinebeck appealed to Aston Martin when it branded Sylvan Rock as its first luxury residence in the country. Pending and listed for \$8,250,000. Image provided by Upstate Modern.

only 20 to 25 closed sales a year compared to the more populous river towns of Red Hook and Rhinebeck, which range from 70 per year to a peak of almost 150 in 2021. Realtors hypothesize that Milan's strong numbers are due to its proximity to Red Hook and Rhinebeck and their superior school systems, closeness to the Taconic State Parkway, and availability of land. Most residents who live in the town seem to identify with Rhinebeck but value the privacy Milan offers.

### Luxury properties in Milan

“High-end modern home builders have been attracted to Milan over the last few years for its larger land parcels, which offer both more natural beauty and very much coveted privacy,” according to Joseph Briggs, a realtor with William Pitt Sotheby's in Chatham, NY.

Sales statistics confirm that in the category over \$1,000,000, Milan sells higher priced homes than Rhinebeck with a median sale of \$1,667,500, although the number of sales is far fewer. The best example of this is Sylvan Rock, the first private residential estate designed by Aston Martin, which listed pre-construction at

\$8,250,000 and is now pending. It offers a sleek design, four bedrooms, and six baths on a 56-acre lot.

### Milan right now

Looking online for property for sale in Milan is confusing because listings are typically coded by zip codes and post offices, so some homes that appear in Stanford, Red Hook, Rhinebeck, and Pine Plains may well be in Milan. To peruse availability, be sure to type “Milan” into your search.

Twelve homes are actively listed in Milan in a range of prices up to \$3,500,000, with small discounts taken from listing prices. In any given year, Milan averages about ten residential lots for sale, including three on Academy Hill, each for \$300,000. Yearly home sales in Milan average between 20 and 25 – it's a steady, unhurried market that's well worth the time to explore. •

*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.*



Described by the listing agent as Jane Austen meets James Bond, this Rowe Road home has a glamorous 1970s addition to a farmhouse that is ideal for entertaining. Priced at \$3,500,000 with 147 acres. Photo by Alon Koppel courtesy of Joseph Briggs of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty in Chatham, NY.





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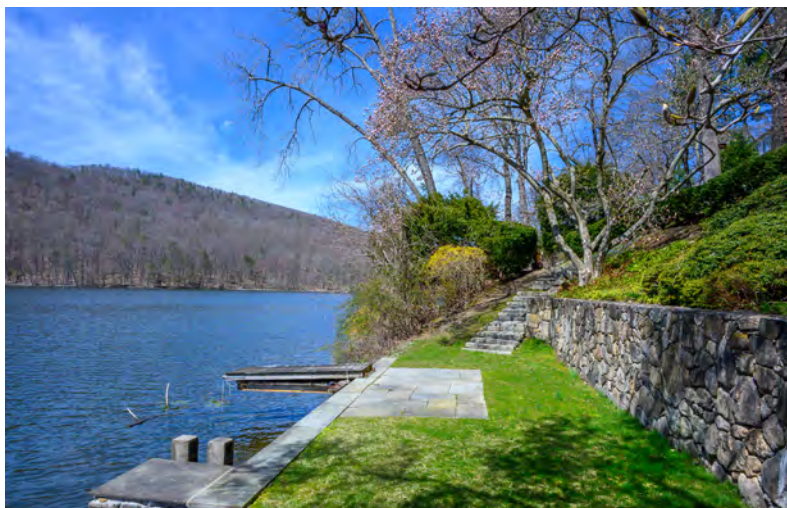
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# ARTS IN WESTERN MASS

By Jesse DeGroot  
abby@mainstreetmag.com

Thinking about where I might go and what I might trot out to see in the realm of live performances given my druthers this summer, it was time to poke around and make a few decisions. In the event anyone's asking, after a bit of whittlin' here and some slicing and dicing there, I hereby present my personal summer dream/wish list this time around:

## The Royal Ballet at Jacob's Pillow

While dance per se is not exactly my thing, it'd be nearly impossible to pass up the Royal Ballet of the United Kingdom onstage at Jacob's Pillow in Becket, MA, where it will appear July 3 through 7, billed as the sole Royal Ballet appearance in the United States this year. The Royal Ballet is widely regarded as one of the great ballet companies extant.

According to the venue, this summer's program will feature the US premiere of *Secret Things* by American choreographer Pam Tanowitz, and a world premiere by Wayne McGregor created especially for Jacob's Pillow, alongside works by Frederick Ashton, Kenneth MacMillan, and Christopher Wheeldon. Along with an array of the company's dancers, Royal Ballet principals Matthew Ball, Mayara Magri, Marcelino Sambé, Anna Rose O'Sullivan, and Sarah Lamb will perform over the five-day span.

## In full swing at Tanglewood

Let's tool on over to legendary Tanglewood in Lenox, MA, where my choice this summer will, okay, show my age, but I'm all in for the Pretend-

ers on July 16. Coming with summer in full swing, personal preference would find me out on the grass for the evening, watching the lawn do its thing, turning velvety as the sun sets and simultaneously tuning in to such faves as *Back on the Chain Gang*, *Brass in Pocket*, and *My City Was Gone*. The surroundings will leave no wonder why Nathaniel Hawthorne once lived on this land. In fact, the venue is named after his *Tanglewood Tales*.

Tanglewood, summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, annually presents a true smorgasbord of musical selections in what seems like a wickedly compressed bit of time after having been plunked down inside all winter. This time around, in its usual fashion, the BSO offers up solid opportunities for some serious consideration to hoist one's self off the sofa. Here's but an eensy-weensy sampling: *Broadway Today! Broadway's Modern Masters* with the BSO on July 6. On July 17, internationally renowned pianist Yuja Wang in Seiji Ozawa Hall. Skipping ahead to August 2 and 3, John Williams and Ken-David Masur conduct the Boston Pops Orchestra on John Williams' Film Night – think several Star Wars films, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Jaws*, for starters. On August 24, Karina Canelakis conducts the BSO performing Beethoven, Brahms, Chausson, and Ravel featuring Leonidas Kavakos on violin. And now you're on your own!

## A Body of Water at Shakespeare & Company

On to Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA, where I'm itching to have a look at *A Body of Water*. The outdoor Roman Garden Theatre serves



Photo of and courtesy of the Terra String Quartet.



Hannah Grennell and Giacomo Rovero in *Secret Things* by Pam Tanowitz. The Royal Ballet. Photo by Alice Pennefather ROH 2023.

as the setting for this Lee (*A Walk in the Woods*) Blessing work. The idea here is that both halves of a middle-aged couple, afflicted with recursive amnesia to the extent they don't know their own names, wake up one fine day to discover themselves occupying an unfamiliar house on a mountain surrounded by water. Every day is a new day, as the pair daily attempts to put themselves and their lives back together based on things they find around the house and whatever other clues they might uncover. It gets trickier yet when a young woman appears who's ... who? *A Body of Water* runs June 21 through July 31.

## Music on Mount Lebanon

As someone who's always had something of a soft spot for string quartets, I'm looking forward to the Terra String Quartet landing at picturesque Tannery Pond on the – formerly Mohican lands – grounds of Mount Lebanon Shaker Village and Darrow School in New Lebanon, NY, on August 31. Composed of violinists Harriet Langley and Amelia Dietrich, violist Ramón Carrero Martínez, and cellist Geirþrúður Guðmundsdóttir, the quartet seems to snag most every competition that it enters. In recent times, among its triumphs were the Senior Strings Division gold medal and grand prize at 2022's 49th annual

Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition in Notre Dame, IN. On August 31, the quartet plans a program of Mozart's D-minor Quartet, K. 421; Britten's First Quartet, Op. 25; and Schubert's Death and the Maiden Quartet, D. 810.

## Headin' to MASS MoCA

Time for a little noise! The Fresh Grass festival will give autumn a warm welcome at MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA, from September 22-24. Produced in partnership with MASS MoCA, the FreshGrass Foundation, and No Depression, the 2024 festival will feature Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway, The Devil Makes Three, Drive-By Truckers, Béla Fleck, Alison Brown, and way way way more.

Tough to know what you'll hear here, beginning early in the morning and cooking along well into the night in an unparalleled atmosphere and surrounded by food choices that include first-class ice cream and other goodies. For those so inclined, onsite camping is available a short walk or shuttle bus ride away.

If there's a single thread running through all this, it's that if there's a chance to spend time amidst the sublime environs of the Taconic Mountains and the Berkshires, while some of the planet's finest artists and theater companies do their thing, I'm in! ●



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# COPAKE CELEBRATES

## *its birthday with a bang*

By Abby Audenino  
abby@mainstreetmag.com

The Town of Copake is celebrating its bicentennial with a jam-packed schedule of events throughout the remainder of the summer. In February 2023, Copake formed an all-volunteer committee that has been working hard to create a line-up of events to celebrate Copake's 200th birthday.

### The planning process

The bicentennial committee, led by Kellie Nardin, wanted to play to Copake's strengths, as well as to the strengths of the committee members. From the beginning, the committee was determined to highlight the unique history and culture of Copake and the ways in which it has evolved over the past 200 years.

In addition to all of the temporary special events planned to celebrate Copake's bicentennial, Copake Town Hall has mounted a permanent exhibit that tells the town's story in 24 illustrated panels written by Howard Blue and designed by Peter N. Fritsch. The exhibit is open weekdays, except Friday, from 8am to 4pm, and on Saturdays from 9am to noon. The town's historic preservation committee has designed and purchased plaques that will be awarded to buildings 100 years old or older, identifying them as historic sites. In addition, the town is selling a variety of bicentennial merchandise, including T-shirts and hats.

### The lineup of events

**The Kickoff:** The bicentennial celebration commenced with a special town board meeting in the Copake Town Hall on April 4. The meeting marked the 200th anniversary of the first town meeting. Afterwards, town supervisor Richard Wolf called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance, and he read a land acknowledgement recognizing that the land on which Copake stands is

the unceded land of the Stockbridge Munsee Band of the Mohican People. The meeting, which was filled to capacity, ended with the cutting of the 200th birthday cake.

**Your Town:** Local playwright Carl Ritchie wrote an original play, titled *Your Town*, which featured local talent as well as professional actors. The play was loosely based on *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, as well as the minutes from the first town meeting in April 1824. Five performances of *Your Town* were held at the Copake Grange Theater and were directed by Mr. Ritchie. The play featured music by Wayne Moore and Chuck Petellier, accompaniment by Joe Rose, and period costumes designed and donated by J. Kevin Draves.

### The Roeliff Jansen Historical

**Society:** 2024 also marks the 50th anniversary of Roeliff Jansen Historical Society! Throughout the spring, the RJHS held three presentations covering significant aspects of Copake's past: "Mohican Heritage: Past, Present and Future," "The Rent Wars: Crusaders or Criminals," and "The History and Mystique of the Bash Bish Inn: Captured in the 1912 Autochromes of Pioneer Photographer Paul Guillumette." On July 6, the historical society at 8 Miles Road in Copake Falls, will open a bicentennial exhibit titled, "Mementos, Maps, and Milestones: Copake at 200," showcasing documents, maps, photographs, and objects related to the large and small history of Copake's five hamlets; Copake, Copake Falls, Copake Lake, Craryville, and West Copake.

**The Rail Trail Art Project:** Also happening on July 6 will be the Rail Trail Art Project, designed especially for children and families by Copake Grange President Roberta Roll. This project will include art activities based on nature and the area's history. The event will be held at the pavilion in



Taconic State Park in Copake Falls at 10am, and the children's art will be displayed along the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. The event is sponsored by Sheldon Glass and Herrington's and pre-registration is required.

### Four Panel Discussions of Copake

**History:** Howard Blue has organized a series of historic panel discussions that will take place throughout the summer. Assembled by long-time local residents, each panel will cover a different aspect of life and work in Copake and will be held at the historic Copake Grange, which has recently celebrated its 120th anniversary. The schedule is as follows:

"Looking Back: Life on a Copake Farm" will be held on Friday, June 14, from 7-8:30pm and will feature moderator Howard Blue and panel members Stosh Gansowski, Dean Pells, Wayne Miller, and Judy Ackley Whitbeck.

"The Copake Pharmacy: Growing Up in Copake," will be held on Saturday, June 29, from 1-2:30pm and will feature Steve Kaufman and Nancy Fuller.

Continued on next page ...



Above top: Supervisor Richard Wold and bicentennial committee members Roberta Roll, co-vice chair Lesley Doyel, and secretary Gina White.

Above: The 200th anniversary cake.

All photos courtesy of Kellie Nardin.



“Copake Falls and Copake Lake: A Retrospective Look,” will take place on Sunday, June 30, from 1-2:30pm with moderator Steve Kaufman and panel members Edgar Masters, Fran Miller, Jane Peck, and Jed Luchow.

Finally, “Copake Businesses,” will be held on Saturday, July 20, from 1-2:30pm featuring moderator Howard Blue and panel members Heather Thomson, Vana Stang Hotaling, Richard Barton, Steve Kaufman, and Miike Fallon.

**The “Come Home to Copake”**

**Picnic:** This special day-long event will be held on July 13, from 11am to 8pm, at Copake Memorial Park. Current residents and anyone who has ever lived in Copake are invited to attend. The event will feature live music, an art exhibit, a car show, and attractions to amuse children, including a hot-dog-eating contest and sack races. A dessert-baking contest will be judged by Nancy Fuller of Copake and the Food Network show Farm-house Rules.

Families are invited to bring a picnic lunch and/or dinner, but food will also be available for sale. The Copake Fire Company will be doing a chicken BBQ with pre-sale tickets only. Tickets can be purchased by contacting the Copake Fire Company or calling (518) 755-8833. The day’s music will start off with longtime resi-

dent Dick Stabler at noon, followed by The Ghent Band, who will play at 2pm, and Night Train at 6pm. The picnic will be an opportunity to share memories, renew old friendships, and make new friends.

“We’re sending out invitations to people who used to live in Copake to re-meet and greet neighbors,” Kellie explained. “During the day, we’re going to have an audio recorder where people can tell their story about what Copake means to them, and the recording will be edited and preserved in the historical society for years to come.”

**Bicentennial Parade & Picnic:** The finale of the bicentennial celebration will be the parade and picnic on August 17. The parade will take place in the Hamlet of Copake, followed by a celebration at Catamount Mountain Resort. The parade will line up at 2:30pm by the Copake Fire Department on Center Hill Road and will step off at 3pm. All local organizations and businesses are invited to participate.

The grounds at Catamount will open at 5pm. Attendees are welcome to bring picnic dinners or may purchase food and drink at Catamount. There will be live music and chairlift rides, and the evening will conclude with fireworks.

**The committee behind the event**

Kellie’s extensive experience in business and events management has been invaluable, while vice chairs Liana Gaston, chair of Copake’s Park and Recreation Commission, and Lesley Doyel, president of the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society in Copake Falls, provided insight into the possibilities presented by Copake’s rich parkland and the diverse history of Copake’s five hamlets. The committee has been further enriched by honorary chairs former Copake supervisor Angelo Valentino, Flora Bergquist, and Edgar Masters.

Throughout the planning process, both former Copake town supervisor Jeanne Mettler and current town supervisor Rich Wolf have acted as liai-



Mike and Mary Ann Fallon in *Your Town*.

sons between the Copake Town Board and the bicentennial committee, providing institutional support as well as their knowledge of the vast range of resources throughout the township. They are joined by chairpersons Jeffrey Judd, Stosh Gansowski, Robert Haight, Will Morningstar, and retired town board member, Terry Sullivan.

The committee is composed of 12 enthusiastic residents who have brought a myriad of skill sets, ideas, and talents to the table. Committee members are Robert Callahan, former Town Clerk Vana Hotaling, Maryanne Fallon, Lindsay Lebrecht, Cyd McDowell, Roberta Roll, Winette Herrington, Heather Thomson, and Gina White. Copake’s town historian Howard Blue has been a valuable source of knowledge and help throughout the process.

**Celebrating and engaging community**

Kellie reflected that the bicentennial celebration is “a great opportunity for younger people to get involved in their communities.” She hopes that

the bicentennial events will have a domino effect and encourage more people to come out and engage more.

“There’s something here for everyone. It’s been amazing to learn about the incredible and unique history that we have here in Copake,” Kellie said. “The entire bicentennial committee hopes that this celebration will be fun and that people will see it as a chance to learn about where you live, what makes your community special, and what you can do as an individual going forward.” •

*To learn more about Copake’s bicentennial celebrations, visit its website [townofcopake.org/bicentennial-committee](http://townofcopake.org/bicentennial-committee).*



The Copake Fire Department raised the flag for the 200th anniversary of the first town meeting.





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# PS21 2024

All photos courtesy of PS21

By Jesse DeGroodt  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Stir in a moral dilemma, add oranges and watermelons, and sprinkle in a pinch of Shakespeare in a freshly imagined way, and off we go into the 2024 season at Chatham's PS21, the handsome theater – or make that two theaters: a state-of-the-art black box and an open air pavilion – tucked away amidst the apple trees of a long-ago farm, where the surroundings are about as charming and low-key as you will find anywhere.

I recently spent part of an afternoon with PS21's executive and artistic director Elena V. Siyanko and development manager Zack Levine to have a look at what treasures we can expect to see on stage this upcoming summer. These include, Siyanko pointed out, "international premieres you cannot see anywhere else."

### Up first

At the height of the summer season, on July 4 and 5, comes the United States premiere of *Catarina and the Beauty of Killing Fascists*, which poses the tricky age-old question: Is it okay to perform an act of violence, let's say murder, to right a perceived analogous wrong? Following a generational family tradition, *Catarina*, named by *The New York Times* Paris theater critic as one of her 2022 favorites, delves into a fictional Portuguese family that hunts down and kills fascists, thereby eliminating a perceived threat to society. In this case, the youngest daughter of the family questions her right to kill, setting off a series of familial conversations. This is a National Theatre of Portugal production, noted Siyanko.

On July 19 and 20, PS21 presents

the New York premiere of a reimagining of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by Chela De Ferrari of Teatro La Plaza in Peru, featuring eight performers with Down syndrome who share their lives through a merging of Shakespeare's text and the actors' own experiences. "To be or not to be" assumes new meaning as the question gets asked: How can you exist in a world that considers you and others like you, in many cases, invisible?

### Affordability and accessibility

It was significant to Siyanko and Levine to stress that they keep PS21 ticket prices low to expand access to these types of quality productions. "This is our position and mission against the backdrop of the increasing cost of attending high-end performances in the country and this region. It's important to us not only to offer low-cost tickets, but also to work very actively with community groups to make sure that those low-cost tickets are actually offered to people who would benefit the most, such as young families and students," said Siyanko.

In 2020, she said, "we introduced a stream of programming called Pathways. Subsequent iterations have resulted in almost free programming and partnerships with local organizations and local communities, so that the cultural and educational experience is steeped in community collaboration. In our view, this creates an enormous sense of cohesion and connection because we not only present programs on our fabulous, state-of-the-art stage where it's incredibly pleasant to be in the summer, but we also take productions off-site into our communities."

### Community programming

Siyanko offered as an example taking to the Shiloh Baptist Church and the First Presbyterian Church – both in Hudson – what she deemed a highlight of PS21's June programming, *The Legendary Ingramettes*, who will appear on June 16 as part of the Juneteenth celebration. Formed more than six decades ago in Richmond, VA, *No Depression* has noted, "What the group puts out onstage is fiery, Southern-fried jubilee gospel, served with deep-dish soul."

With *Pathways*, she said, "We want to make sure this programming is not just a nod to the community, or here we are, have something from us, but that it's really something that is done at a very high level. The tickets to community partners are free of charge, and tickets to students and youths are \$10. We're thinking of youths as anyone 35 and under. We want people who live in the community and have lived there year-round for generations to benefit from what PS21 does."

"*Pathways* is a real essential piece of the season and the programming and the ethos," added Levine. "That is sort of emblematic of the PS21 mission, which is centered around access to the arts, around not boxing out anyone based on ticket prices or means or anything like that. We want to actively dismantle the barriers that may exist for someone who may want to check out a performance."

Siyanko stressed that working collaboratively with a number of local organizations is important to PS21, while at the same time bringing "the highest possible quality of international performance to this region. This is part of our response to where we are in this country. It's extremely difficult to bring international artists

here – the cost of a US visa for performing artists is extremely high. We feel bringing international work is of paramount importance."

### Other PS21 season highlights include:

**June 22: *Noli Timere***, a performance-installation by Rebecca Lazier and Janet Echelman. A soaring aerial work, eight dancers moving, within, on, under, and around Janet Echelman's voluminous floating, iridescent net sculpture, choreographed by Rebecca Lazier with an original score by Jorene.

**July 12–13: *Gandini Juggling – Smashed2***. Seven women and two men share the stage with 80 oranges and seven watermelons to disrupt the rigid conventions of etiquette, dress, and body language. The company that enchanted audiences in Phillip Glass's *Akhmaten* borrows from Pina Bausch's gestural choreography to reimagine the dark art of juggling and contemporary circus for the 21st Century.

**October 5: *Half Waif and Elori Saxl***. Chatham-based singer, songwriter, and producer Nandi Rose, who records and performs internationally as Half Waif, premieres a brand-new work – a collection of songs focusing on themes of fertility and pregnancy loss, motherhood, mortality, and the role of nature in healing. Ghent-based composer and filmmaker Elori Saxl, whose music is "more serene than Steve Reich, more textured than Philip Glass" (Jayson Greene, Pitchfork) combines the rich resonances of experimental electronics and traditional chamber orchestration. •

To learn more about the PS-21 and its upcoming season, please visit [ps21chatham.org](http://ps21chatham.org).



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# 55 YEARS OLD *and Mac-Haydn Theatre is stronger than ever*

By Barbara Peduzzi  
info@mainstreetmag.com

“It was start a theater or drive to Alaska,” Linda MacNish said of the decision she and Lynne Haydn faced before opening The Mac-Haydn Theatre in Chatham, NY.

Mac-Haydn is the flagship of live theater in Columbia County. In 1969, seeing a professional musical meant either going to New York City or attending a rare tour stop in Schenectady.

Haydn was an aspiring actress and director and MacNish managed performers and had started the city’s first luncheon theater, when they met in New York. Their shared wish for somewhere for people to get experience in musical theater led MacNish to muse, “Where I grew up would be perfect.”

## In the beginning

They drove back roads looking for a place to say “We’ve got a barn, let’s put on a show.” Not finding one, they rented space on the Chatham Fairgrounds. In the cattle judging ring. They reminisced, “We started every season on our knees,” using scrapers to remove residue from the cows.

New York auditions brought in a small core of performers. The ensemble were local people with a passion and ability for musicals honed by high school music teacher J. Lyman Congdon.



MacNish’s father, Preston, built a stage in two sections to be moveable. The audience sat on borrowed folding chairs. All of it had to be carried in and then back out in one busy night when the season ended. The performers joined in, singing their way through Chatham’s Main Street as the piano was trucked to its winter quarters.

At the end of that season, enough people asked “Will you do this next year?” that they decided to do it again. And more after that, until the ninth summer, when the need for a longer season for financial feasibility, and the number of things to move, made looking for a permanent home imperative.

Another search revealed property with several acres and a large building just outside Chatham Village, and at the end of the 1977 season, Mac-Haydn moved in.

Volunteers worked several months to reconfigure a factory into a theater, dressing rooms, lobby, and costume shop. Parking areas, driveways, and a terrace were bulldozed into existence and bathrooms added. The old façade and counter from Chatham’s old post office became the box office. The Crandell Theatre was upgrading its seats and donated the old ones.

During the rush to finish construction, performers would put down hammers to rehearse a number, then go back to building the space. Despite consternation that all might not be ready, in June, 1978, *Fiddler On The Roof* began Mac-Haydn’s tenth season, the first in its own home. That was followed by *Man of La Mancha*, featuring *The Impossible Dream*, which MacNish and Haydn considered the theme song of the venue.

## Non-stop schedule

To coin a phrase, “summer stock ain’t for sissies.” One new company was told, “even if this summer shows you that this business is not for you, it has



done its job.”

On the fairgrounds, shows rehearsed for six days and then ran for one week. For several years, costumes and props were the part-time jobs of volunteers; with staff added as the productions grew.

The new space enabled going to a two-week schedule, including days off, but the season is still a non-stop round of opening one show and then starting another the next day.

Everyone just smiles when patrons stop at the end of the season to say, “Now you can relax until next summer!”

By then, plans have already started, with an audience survey, calls to royalty houses, and lining up cast and crew. Setting shows and hiring go on all winter. Auditions, which used to bring in stacks of resumes and take days in New York City with long lines of hopefuls, now start with digital

Above: Founders Lynne Haydn and Linda MacNish created a legacy of top-quality musicals, which continues for the 55th season at The Mac-Haydn Theatre in Chatham. Photo by Barbara Peduzzi.

Left: Monica M. We-mitt has played Dolly Gallagher Levi twice at Mac-Haydn. She holds the distinction of performing the role as a stand-in for Carol Channing, while on tour with the show; she was also in it on Broadway. Photo by Jesse DeGroot.

Photos courtesy of Mac-Haydn.

Continued on page 31 ..





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submissions, from which people are chosen for call-backs. Trips to colleges to view talent are made, and zoom interviews with technicians done.

Clean-up and fix-up projects at the theater and numerous cast houses go on through spring. A new company arrives, and another season is underway.

#### "Stars of tomorrow at Mac-Haydn today!"

The original purpose of having "the stars of tomorrow on the Mac-Haydn stage today!" has been fulfilled many times over, with people going on to the ultimate dream of Broadway, theaters and tours around the country, movies, and television. Several Mac-Haydn alumni are now running their own theaters.

A partial list includes Broadway and movie star Nathan (we knew him when he was Joe) Lane, who ended his 1976 season at Mac-Haydn with the quip to MacNish, "So, what am I? Chopped liver?"

Lovely Paige Turco made a bored man sit up and straighten his tie with a dance move in front of his seat; she went on to star in the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movies and on television in roles in *The Agency*, *NCIS*, and *Blue Bloods*.

Monica M. Wemitt came across the street to the fairgrounds to join the ensemble in *Oklahoma*. She's had a host of roles since then and she will reprise her Mother Superior in *Sister Act*. She was featured in *Hello, Dolly!* touring and on Broadway with Carol

Channing; in Liza Minelli's Radio City Music Hall concert and tour; and as Madame de la Grande Bouche in the first *Beauty and the Beast* tour.

Others from early summers include Chathamite Joe Howard, star of public TV's *MathNet*; J. Lee Flynn, Clay in *State Fair*; Ted Keegan, the title role in *Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway; and Frank Lopardo, who played leading roles at the Metropolitan and opera venues around the world.

From more recent years, Ashley D. Kelley, whose powerful voice and comedic ability shone as Sylvia in *All Shook Up*, just finished the leading role of Storyteller 1 in Broadway's *Shucked*, as well as singing in a feature role on *Ghosts*.

Jelani Alladin was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for originating the role of Kristoff in Broadway's *Frozen*. Ryan Vandenboom is currently

moon-walking *MJ* on Broadway and was a featured dancer in the movie *Hail, Caesar*. Aneesa Folds (Deloris Cartier in *Sister Act*) sang on Broadway in *Freestyle Love*, *The Supremes*.

Stage manager David O'Brien worked on Broadway productions of *Cats* and *Wicked*, plus years with the tour of that show. Thomas Gates' numerous credits include stage managing *Waitress*.

Jeff McWay, sound designer straight from a Missouri high school, is back on the road after a long run as assistant and head audio on tours of *Book of Mormon*, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, and *Mamma Mia*.

People with major credits, including Broadway, often are heard in Mac-Haydn shows.

#### The show must go on...

As the saying goes, "The show must go on." Performers have gone on stage holding a script because they were taking over last-minute for someone ill or injured. Over the years only a few times (not counting, of course, 2020) have shows been canceled; Hurricane Irene was one of those.

A favorite story is when a thunderstorm knocked out power to the fairgrounds during the first act of *Oklahoma*. It was raining so hard that no one in the audience wanted to leave. Cars at the several doors shone headlights at the stage, flashlights lit

Continued on next page ...

Above, top: Dynamic dancing highlighted *West Side Story* in the 2015 production, and will be equaled if not surpassed when the show opens the upcoming season. Photo by Jesse DeGroodt.

Above: A poster from the first season in 1969, which included one of the only two non-musical shows ever done at The Mac-Haydn Theatre.

Right: At that time the most technical show done, 1980's *On The 20th Century* featured a train set along one wall, with performers using an outside walkway to wave from, a lighted stage floor and scenic pieces. It was so much work, and fun, it was done again the next year. Photo by Tracy Trimm.

Photos courtesy of Mac-Haydn.





the music, performers dashed under umbrellas, and the show went on. At the finale, as the whole cast sang the rousing “O-K-L-A-H-O-M-A! OK!” title song, the lights came back on.

A few years ago, another power failure scrapped a performance of *The Wedding Singer*. Using acoustic instruments, emergency lights, and lots of flashlights, the company gave patrons who stayed a ‘talk and sing through’ of the show. They were given a standing ovation.

### Striving for excellence

Both founders have passed away, MacNish in 2002 and Haydn in 2018, just two days before the opening night of the 50th season.

Producing artistic director John Saunders was ready to step in. First at Mac-Haydn as a performer in 2001, he performed, directed, and worked with Haydn: “She usually called in October or November to talk about shows. This one was different; she said if I could come for the whole summer, ‘that would be good.’”

Haydn needed “someone who would preserve the mission and take it forward. I have a good knowledge of the genre, musicals, so it felt organic.” He spent “a couple of summers seeing things from behind her desk, time to observe how the institution ran, and formulate a game plan with what I could do to tighten it up.”

Saunders feels the theater is pushing forward and striving for excellence in every department. “The addition of live musicians alone is huge!” Citing a new scene shop building, upgraded sound equipment, and painting inside

and out, he added “improvements to the facility is a big part of my journey here.”

Some things will never change, he reassured. “The welcoming family environment is a distinguishable trait. There’s still the friendly face.” A huge mission is to stay accessible, “We are really fighting to keep live theater affordable to all, with the highest caliber entertainment.”

Asked about plans for the future, he took a beat before saying, “Whew – Okay!” Modernizing is high on the list. Roofing repairs and bathroom expansion plans are in the works. A pipe dream is to build a full campus on the property, to include housing and costume storage.

“I want to develop new works, nurture a new musical,” Saunders ended with. MacNish and Haydn had looked through scores of manuscripts towards this shared dream.

*Call It Love*, written by MacNish, was part of the second season. “An original show, in one-week stock,” she and Haydn would say afterward, “What were we thinking!”

### Classic and contemporary musicals

Each season includes classics from the ‘Golden Age’ of Broadway, newer shows as they became available, and rarely presented yet thoroughly enjoyable gems, with a mix of plots and musical styles.

Smash successes *Les Miz*, *Mamma Mia* and *Jersey Boys* were scheduled the instant their rights were released. Countless requests for *Phantom of the Opera*, still not available, brought the



substitutes *Phantom* and *Phantom of the Country Opera*, neither of which ever played on Broadway, but both have their own delightful stories and music. *Lil Abner*, *Copacabana*, and *She Loves Me* are just three of the seldom-staged treasures done over the years.

This summer’s line-up includes drama and dancing in *West Side Story*, comedy and inspiration with *Sister Act*, and the still timely commentary of 1996’s *Rent*. Elvis will be in the building in *All Shook Up*, and a musical mixes with Shakespeare in *Something Rotten*. *The Fantasticks* is the world’s longest-running musical; MHT alumni Christine Long is one of dozens of actresses who played Luisa, *The Girl in the off-Broadway* run.

### “Look at what you’ve done”

Bonnie Estes Drowne, at Mac-Haydn for numerous seasons, reminisced, “The founders put people first, that they worked there second. We were invited to be part of something bigger than ourselves.”

MacNish passed away during a run of *Crazy For You*. Audiences were told to think of her when they heard a line in the show that certainly pertains to both she and Haydn; determined, brave, and caring women who nurtured their dream of a stage where people creating all parts of musical theater could grow and flourish: “Look at all you’ve done for us. Look at what you’ve done.” ●



Above, top: *Les Miserables* was a most requested show for several years; when rights were finally released Mac-Haydn created an ingenious production, with stunning vocal and dramatic performances. Photo by Jesse DeGroot.

Above: Producing artistic director John Saunders (right) began his MHT career as a performer, and went on stage for many seasons. Here he and long-time favorite Gabe Belyeu share a moment in *La Cage Aux Folles*. Photo by Jesse DeGroot.

Left: Where it all began, The Mac-Haydn Theatre, in the cattle judging ring on the Columbia County Fairgrounds.

Photos courtesy of Mac-Haydn.

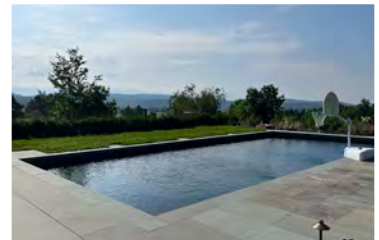


To learn more about the Mac-Haydn Theatre and its upcoming season please visit [machaydntheatre.org](http://machaydntheatre.org).



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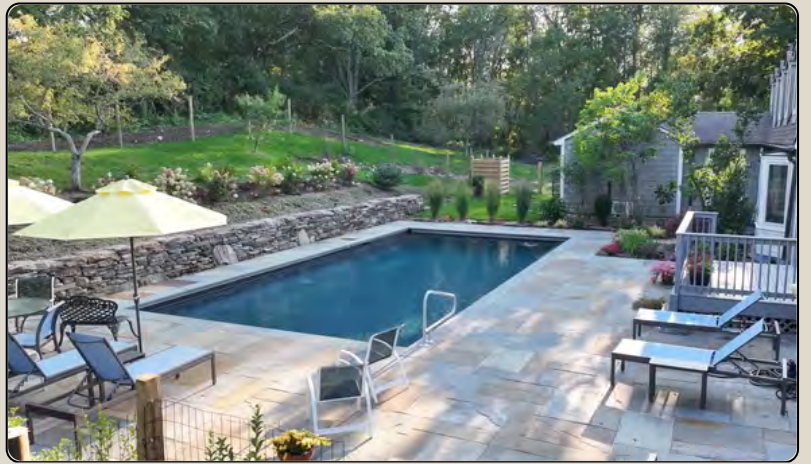
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# Mount Washington

## CHURCH FAIR CELEBRATES 91 YEARS



By Abby Audenino  
abby@mainstreetmag.com

The town of Mount Washington is nestled in the Berkshires along the Massachusetts/New York border and boasts a population of only 144 people, per the annual town report. But at the start of the summer, the population more than doubles as part-time residents come to bask in the comfort of the mountains for the summer season.

The Mount Washington Church of Christ only operates for ten Sundays each summer because there aren't enough people to attend services during the winter. In addition to resuming services, the church also hosts its biggest fundraiser of the year, the Mount Washington Church Fair, every summer. The bulk of the funds raised by the fair support various local, national, and international charities, and the rest supports church maintenance and operations. Some of the charities that have received funds from the church include Doctors Without Borders, the Children's Defense Fund Action Council, Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity, the Egremont Fire Department, and Fairview Hospital.

This year, the fair will take place on Saturday, August 3.

### The fair's history

Fair chair Lila Wilkinson shared that there is evidence that the fair took place all the way back in the late 19th century, but it's definitely been an annual occurrence since 1933, making this year its 91st edition.

Over that impressive tenure, the fair

has expanded from a homemade event where the ladies of the mountain got together, cooked delicious food, and ran some booths to an event that draws nearly 500 people annually.

Lila's parents were involved with the fair, so she has been an active participant since she was a child. When she was young, her mother hosted an antiques table and her father grilled hamburgers and hot dogs.

The fair is renowned for its handmade crafts and homemade food, all of which are made and donated by local residents. "It was a simpler fair and a simpler time," Lila said. "But it's still simple in a way. It's homemade, handmade, and has a very personal quality to it. That's one of the most important aspects."

### What to expect

Features at the fair include a white elephant tent, which offers gently used household goods, sports equipment, books, and other items, and an artists and artisans table that features handcrafted items that are stitched, knitted, quilted, carved, and painted by mountain residents. Also for sale will be an array of Mount Washington merchandise, including T-shirts, hats, aprons, and tote bags.

For food, you will find lots of hamburgers and hot dogs, as well as a wide array of salads at the salad bar. This year, there will also be a new edition of the *Mount Washington Salad Bar Cookbook*, detailing all of the recipes of the homemade salads that are offered at the fair each year.

The dessert table will include a huge variety of homemade pies – apple, blueberry, and blueberry cream,

among others – as well as funnel cakes that are provided by Harriet Bergmann and her family. Other homemade delights at the Mountain Goods table include pastries, jams, pickles, and grab-and-go goodies, some of which are gluten free.

A "kids' neighborhood" will include games, face painting, a story corner, and a nature craft table that will feature leaves, twigs, and other natural items that kids can use to create collages.

This year, local guitarist Steve Adams returns to the fair to provide music for the afternoon.

Fairgoers can bid on higher-end items in a silent auction, and the winners will be announced at the end. Each fairgoer also receives a door prize ticket with entry, that winner will also be announced at the end of the afternoon. The fair will be raffling off a variety of gift certificates to restaurants in the Southern Berkshires.

In addition to all of the other fun events that occur at the fair, the big draw is the quilt that gets raffled off every other year. For years, the "mountain stitchers" have been stitching quilts by hand. Each person that volunteers to participate stitches and embroiders a square for the quilt that then gets sewn together. One of the most important parts about the quilt production is the laborious hand-quilting process by many people over the course of many weeks. The assembled quilt is then stretched on a quilt frame at someone's home.

"They're truly astonishing works," Lila said. "The quilts are a huge, traditional part of the fair." Some quilts from previous years have been

returned for a number of different reasons, so at this year's fair, they will be re-raffling the 1989 quilt.

### Creating community

Lila shared that by far, the most amazing part of the fair each year is watching the way people from all walks of life come together for a common goal. "The most extraordinary thing about it is the collaboration. The collaboration between the neighbors on the mountain, most of whom don't go to the church and many of whom come from a variety of backgrounds, is incredible."

Lila, who has an MFA and DFA from Yale School of Drama and has been teaching theater at colleges and universities for over 30 years, compares organizing the fair to putting on a production. "I love working with people, and I love designing something that's going to be presented to an audience," she said. "The process is very similar to creating a participatory stage piece. I love conceiving what it's going to look like and how people are going to move through the fair. It's a lot of fun."

Lila shared that the Mount Washington Church Fair experience is different from attending a larger fair or expo. "It's personal and it's homey," she said. "In an age of technology and less and less face-to-face contact, this is so important. The more you can be in the moment, the better. That's what we strive for here." ●

To learn more about the 2024 Mount Washington Church Fair, visit its website at [churchofchristmtwashington.org](http://churchofchristmtwashington.org).





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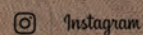
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THE DREAM THAT BECAME A MEME:

# JAWS AT 50



By Nat Benchley  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

51 years ago very few Americans knew much about sharks, much less about great white sharks.

All that changed in early 1974.

A first novel from a 33-year-old writer jump-started awareness of sharks to the point that many people refused to go swimming, or, in some cases, even take a bath.

### The creation

The author of the novel, Peter Benchley (my older brother), said many times that he knew the book would never be a big success, but he just wanted to write and publish a novel. He knew it couldn't be popular because it was a first novel and a novel about a fish!

After having worked as a low-level speechwriter for President Lyndon Johnson, Peter left gainful employment in 1969 and struck out on his own, with a wife and two children to support.

He blithely ignored the caution of our grandfather, humorist Robert Benchley, who proclaimed that a freelance writer is "someone who is paid per word, or per piece, or perhaps."

He had always kept two stories in the back of his mind in case he ever got the opportunity to write a novel. Several publishers expressed mild interest, but never enough to commit any money.

In 1971, an editor from *Doubleday*, Tom Congdon, took Peter to lunch and asked if he had any ideas for novels. Peter laid out his two outlines. Congdon didn't think much of the idea for a history of modern-day pirates, but he was intrigued at the thought of a large shark terrifying a beach community. So he gave Peter a \$1,000 advance for four chapters.

Peter quickly spent the advance and continued on his freelance work.

Several months passed, and the people at *Doubleday* began to request either the promised chapters or the return of the advance. Since the advance money had long ago disappeared, Peter sat down and cranked out the four chapters.

Unfortunately, he channeled his grandfather and tried to write the story as humor. As he put it "a funny thriller about a shark eating people is, I soon realized, a nearly perfect oxymoron."

Fortunately, Tom Congdon was patient enough to reject that oxymoron and send Peter back to the typewriter.

A month or so later, four acceptable chapters emerged and the story began to take shape.

### The story

For the benefit of troglodytes, hermits, the newly-born, and anyone else who may somehow have missed the story of *Jaws*, a summary would seem to be in order.

Summer visitors flock by the thousands to enjoy the seaside entertainment in the beach community of Amity Island. The small year-round population relies almost entirely on summer revenues from home rentals, fishing boat charters, and other leisure activities.

On a pleasant early July night, a young girl meets a man, has a quick tryst, and decides to go skinny-dipping. He is too exhausted to swim with her.

Her remains wash up on the shore the next day.

The local coroner determines that she died from a shark attack, a very rare occurrence.

Continued on page 39 ...



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The police chief, Martin Brody, decides to close the beaches, for safety's sake. But the mayor and town council panic about closing the beaches, because they don't want to drive away the much-needed summer tourist traffic. The mayor is also involved with mob characters who push him to keep the beaches open.

After several more shark attacks, word spreads that Amity is "shark city," and the visitors stay away in droves. Police Chief Brody closes the beaches.

Mayor Larry Vaughan, whose main business is real estate, tries to pressure the chief to re-open the beaches: "Have you ever tried to sell healthy people real estate in a leper colony?"

The chief requests help from an ichthyologist from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Matt Hooper. After seeing a tooth that was embedded in a fisherman's boat, Hooper confirms that they are dealing with a very large great white shark. Unheard of in those waters.

Desperate for a solution that will salvage Amity's season, the town hires a fisherman who specializes in "monster fish." Quint is a grizzled loner who has spent most of his life chasing big fish for charter parties. For a large sum of money, Quint agrees to try to capture the offending fish.

Chief Brody insists that he and Hooper go along on the hunt.

And so, the three men board Quint's boat, the Orca, and set off to chase the great prehistoric dragon. The last section of the book is the story of the details of trying to catch and kill a three-ton "eating machine."

(In a nod to George S. Kaufman, Robert Benchley's colleague at the *Algonquin Round Table*, the novel has occasionally been referred to as "the fish who came to dinner.")

### The final touch

After slaving over rewrites for nearly a year and a half, Peter had not quite figured out what to call the book. On his website ([peterbenchley.com](http://peterbenchley.com)) and in the newly-issued reprint of the novel is a list of the scores of options under consideration and the tortuous process of trying to define the story in a succinct title. (One word of caution: a few of the suggested titles are not fit for family reading.)

So, finally, the book was finished and titled and sold to book clubs, digests, and those foolish movie producers who thought they could re-capture the magic on-screen.

### The reception

When the book was published in early 1974, it instantly struck a nerve with the public. It stayed on *The New York Times*' best seller list for 44 weeks, despite complaints from some critics about the writing or the story.



Above: Peter Benchley in his everyday "uniform": khaki work shirt, pen at the ready. Mid-late 1970s.

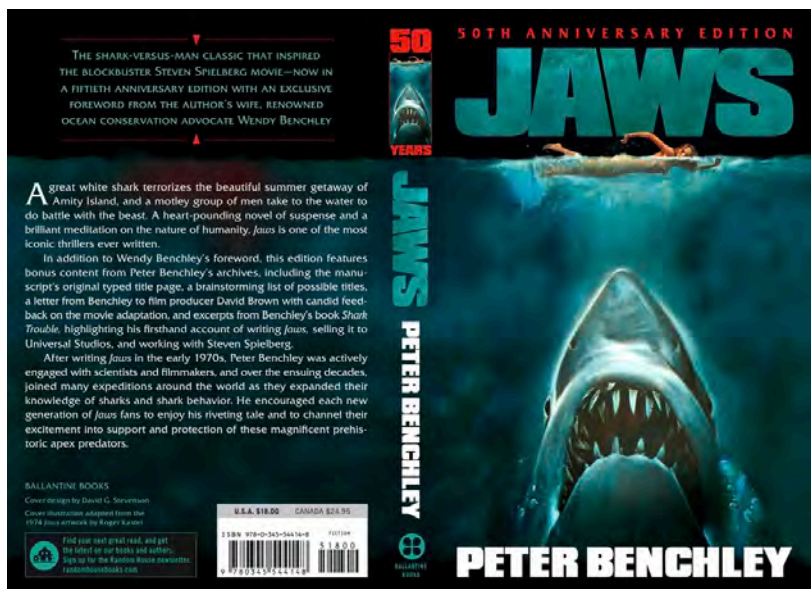
Below: The cover of the 50th anniversary re-issue of *Jaws*.

### The adaptation (1975)

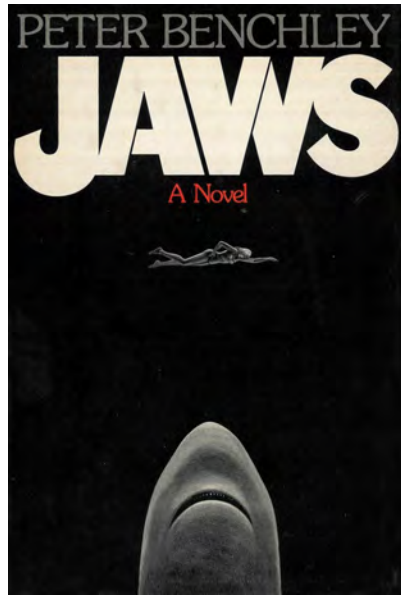
When Peter's agent told him that movie producers were interested in optioning the film rights, Peter was astounded. He knew they couldn't catch and train an actual great white. And he assumed that the technology at the time was insufficient to make a believable monster. But his agent was smart enough to persevere and advise him to sell the rights (and the rights to unimaginable sequels).

Fortunately, the creative team of Richard Zanuck, David Brown, and Steven Spielberg did not listen to Peter's cautions about trying to create a monster fish. They persevered through a gruesome summer (1974) trying to make the first ocean adventure actually filmed on the open ocean. Thanks largely to the mechanical genius of Robert Mattey, a special effects wizard who had helped create Walt Disney's mechanical effects department, they produced the first summer blockbuster thriller.

Continued on next page ...







Above, left: Peter in his work uniform, a wet suit.

Above, right: The original cover art of the novel in 1974. There were some complaints about the graphic interpretation of the cylindrical creature.

Below: Peter's extended fame as a *Jeopardy!* answer. Two of the earliest promotional pictures, one in front of Richard Ellis's stunning painting of a great white shark.

All images with this article courtesy of Nat Benchley.

Spielberg and co-screenwriter Carl Gottlieb had the sense to dispense with several sub-themes from the book (the mayor and the mob, Hooper's affair with the police chief's wife) and produce a straight-line adventure story.

And so began the craziness.

The movie became the highest grossing film in history (to that date).

And the general public went wild.

### The reaction

As there is no way to account for human behavior, there was no way that any of the participants could have anticipated the manic, insane blood thirst that exploded in this country. People spent untold resources chasing, mutilating, and even killing sharks.

Once Peter and his wife Wendy actually got in the water and met great white sharks, their attitude changed completely. Peter was in awe of the beauty of the beast and the efficiency of its design. After his first cage dive with a great white, he surfaced and stated "we must begin to think differently about these wonderful creatures."

So he launched a campaign to educate people about the need to preserve (and not persecute) these magnificent animals.

Still, the success of the book and the movie tended to obscure some of the themes of the original story. The adventure disguised the fact that the many deaths attributed to the shark could have been avoided (after the first victim) if the town had closed the beaches and listened to the experts.

In fact, in the late 1970s, an analogous incident occurred at a

coastal town in New England not too dissimilar from Amity: several cases of Rocky Mountain spotted fever arose on one small island. The board of the local cottage hospital debated whether or not they should report it to the Centers for Disease Control. When the side favoring not reporting it because it would affect the rentals for the rest of the summer won the argument, one board member stood up and said, "Have you not learned from the lesson of *Jaws*?" and promptly resigned. The outbreak did not get reported until late August.

### The aftermath

Peter and Wendy devoted the next thirty years to championing environmental causes specifically related to the oceans and shark preservation. Peter's words were carefully crafted to reflect Wendy's attention to policy and pragmatism.

Peter died in 2006, but Wendy marches on carrying the campaign around the world. She was a big factor in instituting bans on the odious practice of shark finning (mostly for shark fin soup). And for ten years she administered the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards, which were often referred to as the "Academy Awards for the Ocean."

Interest and admiration for sharks has grown exponentially in the past few decades. People now appreciate the sheer beauty and efficiency of these prehistoric creatures.

In 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread and public resistance to treatment rose for a variety of ill-informed reasons, editorials and other think pieces cropped up all

over the world decrying the willful ignorance of "the lesson of *Jaws*." The underlying theme rose once again to remind people of the book's pre-science.

And since there is still no accounting for human density, Britain's ITV television production house has announced that this year they intend to produce a "reality" show in which "ocean-fearing 'celebrities' are brought face-to-face with a series of increasingly scarier sharks."

What could possibly go wrong?

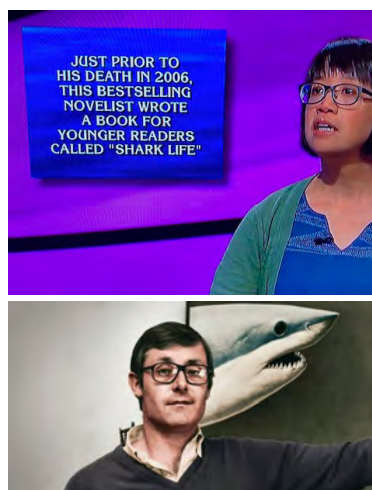
Fortunately, numerous books are available for those who care to educate themselves about the reality of sharks. To name just a few favorites, Carl Gottlieb's *The Jaws Log* is the most thorough, fact-filled telling of how the movie survived all the impediments to become a blockbuster. As Peter said in the 25th anniversary reissue, Carl's stories about the making of the movie are "how it was."

And, for a series of scary, amusing and informative stories about life around and among sharks, Peter has left us *Shark Trouble*. It has been described as combining high adventure with practical information in a book "that is at once a thriller and a valuable guide to being safe in, on, under, and around the sea."

In a lovely tribute to Peter, a newly-discovered type of shark, the "Ninja lanternshark" was officially named *Etmopterus benchleyi* in 2015.

So Peter's dream of just getting a novel completed has now spent fifty years entertaining, scaring, educating, and amusing people all over the world.

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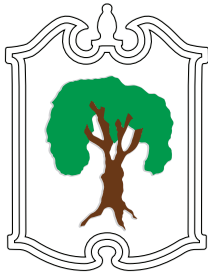
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# ABODE HOME GOODS CELEBRATES ONE YEAR

By Abby Audenino  
abby@mainstreetmag.com

Abode Home Goods, located on Main Street in Millerton, NY, is celebrating its first anniversary in June.

Susan Maloney opened Abode Home Goods after a lengthy career in design. She previously worked as a fashion editor, set designer, stylist, and entrepreneur and has renovated multiple homes. Throughout her career, one thing has remained constant: her love of interior design, art, and architecture.

She had always dreamed of having a home design store, so when the opportunity opened up for her to have her own space on Main Street, she couldn't pass it up.

## Thoughtfully curated

Susan carefully selects and edits the products that she carries in Abode so that others can discover objects for their home, family, and friends that spark joy, beauty, and memories. "I carry items here that I love and would put in my own home, or give to others as gifts," she said.

She also works closely with a variety of local artisans to source items that are produced as locally and sustainably as possible.

She carries wooden cutting boards by Khem Studios in the Hudson Valley. Each board is handmade from regionally sourced, furniture-grade, kiln-dried wood. They come in a variety of shapes and woods, such as walnut, cherry, and maple. The store sells a selection of cooking utensils, such as spoons and spatulas, as well as salad servers, toast tongs, chutney spoons, and jam spreaders that are handmade from repurposed American hardwoods by local artisan Troy Brook Studios in Litchfield, CT.

On the shelves, you'll find hand-poured candles made from all-natural coconut wax for a clean and complete burn from Keap based in Kingston, NY. Keap works with a master perfumer to create well-balanced compositions that evoke nature, such as Lavender + Petals, Wood Cabin, and limited seasonal scents for a fresh

take. The candles are made with zero waste using innovative plastic-free materials – even the candle holder can be reused as a drinking glass. You'll also find candles by Catskills Candle Studio, a female-owned business located in the Catskill mountains. The candles are made from 100% natural soy and fragrance oil infused with essential oils for a clean burn.

On the walls are paintings and photographs from a variety of local artists based out of the Hudson Valley, Litchfield Hills, and the Berkshire Mountains. Abode currently features oil paintings from Lilly Woodworth, an artist living and working in the Northwest Corner of Connecticut, and photographs by Sarah Blogett, a naturalist photographer based in New York and Connecticut.

Abode also carries lovely handmade ceramic pieces such as bud vases, creamers, and sugar bowls by Sentiment Pottery of Sharon, CT, and a collection of hand-thrown vases in rich color hues by New York and Connecticut-based ceramist Judy Jackson. Also available are handmade "good thoughts" porcelain dishes with sweet sayings or images – a perfect gift – sustainably crafted in the Hudson Valley by woman-owned Davis Studio.

"I try to support local artisans whenever possible," Susan said. "I go to a lot of local shows to source products as I'm always looking to work with other local artists."

Although local is always the focus, Abode also offers unique items from craftspeople across the globe, such as handblown glassware from Paris-based La Soufflerie, a family-owned business that runs as a non-profit supporting local glassblowers. Items include wine and drinking glasses, pitchers and decanters, vases, and candleholders made from recycled glass. "Each piece is unique and slightly different, which adds to its beauty. They're a real hit with customers who often return to add to their collection."

You'll also find one-of-a-kind vintage items including vases, decorative plates and bowls, and select antique



tables and chairs.

"I like to include a range of products that can be given as hostess gifts or to loved ones, as well as unique items that add to the personal style of your home, such as decorative pillows, quilts, and throw rugs," she said. "Wellness inspires me too, so you'll find soothing all-natural bath soaks, soaps, and incense."

## Design services

In addition to her storefront, Susan is also available for interior design projects and consultations. Interior design is a collaborative process. Susan typically starts by learning her client's interests, needs, and tastes so that she can effectively design a space that they're going to be happy and comfortable in. She said that her main job as an interior design consultant is to act as the editor.

"Instead of my client getting overwhelmed with 25 options, I'll present them with three or four," she explained. "My objective overall is to make a livable, beautiful space for my client. I always factor in how a family will use a space and work around pieces with sentimental value." In her own home and when she's working on design projects, she enjoys mixing pieces of different styles and vintage decor pieces with newer, modern ones.

"Many antique pieces are made so much better and are good for the

environment. They last longer and warm up a space," she said. "It's easy to see a mid-century modern chair next to a vintage table. Mixing styles often makes the overall appearance more interesting."

## Looking long-term

In the coming months, Susan is looking forward to partnering with other artists and makers to host events at Abode and welcome in members of the community. "Events bring the community together, and people get to learn something new about a product or craft that they're interested in as well."

Susan also likes to carry a variety of products and rotate them regularly so that there's always something new or different for customers to discover. For Susan, learning more about the community's interests has been the most rewarding part of running her business. "It's fun to be able to help when people are looking for a gift or object for their house," she said. "It's satisfying and makes me happy to know that people are bringing home something that they love for themselves or to give to someone else." ●

Visit Abode Home Goods on its website [abodehomegoods.com](http://abodehomegoods.com), on Instagram @ [abodehomegoodsny](https://www.instagram.com/abodehomegoodsny), or in-store at 52 Main Street, Millerton, NY 12546.





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# Help Dover dive into summer

## SUPPORT THE NEW REC CENTER REFERENDUM



By Whitney Joseph  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

Splash into summer and enjoy the ample activities throughout the area available for individuals and families alike, as well as the many events ideal for friends hoping to connect. Whether one wants to head to New York's Hudson Valley, Connecticut's Northwest Corner, or Massachusetts's Berkshire Foothills it matters not, for there's no shortage of choices during this time of year.

One place worth checking out is the northwest Dutchess County town of Dover. About half an hour south of Millerton along Route 22 and about two and a half hours north of NYC via the Metro-North Railroad's Harlem Valley line from Grand Central Station, Dover has a robust recreational program despite its lack of a rec center. Its indoor programs are held at Dover High School off Route 22; the majority of its outdoor programs are held at Boyce Park in the hamlet of Dover Plains (located within town lines).

Dover Plains' 2020 US Census counted 1,322 residents, while the town of Dover had 8,415 respond. Dover is one of the Harlem Valley's larger towns. Just to compare, the town of North East's 2020 Census count clocked in at 2,971, and the

village of Millerton (located within the town of North East) had 903 respondents.

The Dover Town Board wants to build a recreation center to provide for its population, as well as those living nearby. A \$9 million public referendum will be on the ballot this July in hopes of making that a reality.

### A robust program and Dover Day

Despite its lack of a centralized recreational facility, Dover already offers an extensive rec program. Programs expand exponentially during the summer, coming to a peak with Dover Day. This year, Dover Day is set for Saturday, September 21. It promises to be a day full of family, festivities, and fun. Everyone is invited, said Recreation Director Julie Muncey.

Muncey took over the Dover Recreation Department three years ago following former rec director Teri Ptasnick's retirement after 25 years of helping the department. Muncey lives and breathes all things recreation. As Ptasnick's former secretary, she knows the department inside and out, and said she was thrilled to step into her mentor's shoes, though sad to see Ptasnick leave.

Muncey said she's happy to spend her days planning and plotting how best to entertain Dover residents and ensure they thrive — physically and mentally — whether they're tiny toddlers ready to romp around the playground, kooky kiddoes enjoying

Kite Day, crazy classmates seeking adventure at day camp, active adults challenging their buddies on the basketball court, sassy seniors ready to kick up their heels line dancing, or frenzied friends needing a night out at the Summer Concert Series. It matters not, said Muncey, who just loves planning the perfect activity.

### The need for a rec center

Muncey noted if voters approve the referendum for the recreation center, it would make her job easier and the town's recreation program better. "I personally think that they should approve it, because right now we are at the mercy of the school, and if we need to run inside activities and there are schedule conflicts, whatever we have scheduled we are normally bumped out," explained Muncey. "We can use that new space to bring in more activities and projects."

She further added that "right now we are 100% in the school except for day camp." Only the town's outdoor activities are held at the Boyce Park pavilion.

"One thing with a rec center, anything you do outside you can do inside — we celebrate Easter, Christmas, Dover Day," said Muncey. "We can bring some of those events inside. Obviously, we'll need rain dates, but having a facility would allow us to host everything in Boyce Park. Muncey added that municipal basketball is played twice a week during Novem-

ber through March in Dover High School, but obviously the high school practice and game schedule "comes first," which she said is understandable.

"If they have to cancel, we reschedule. Our games are January through March, and we are in there Saturdays from 7:30am to 3:30pm. We've had to cancel games, so we only get to do two games in January, two games in February, and in March maybe three games," said Muncey. "It's just hard scheduling, and it plays into other programs; soccer is in the winter, and baseball is in the spring. We're always fighting for space. That's the biggest thing — we would like to have our own facility, and then 95% of all our recreation would be in that building. The summer theater program would still be in the school because it has a beautiful auditorium. If we had our own facility, we could actually be open from 8am to 8 at night, and it would not just be paid programs. We would also provide free open gym time, free senior programs, a bathroom, big storage, a teen center, and hopefully a room in there to rent out."

### The referendum

Muncey explained the proposal that's currently before the public might not be the final project line, but it gives

Continued on next page ...



a sense of what the town would like and puts it before the public to garner support, which is essential for the rec center to become a reality.

“It’s a vote. If people don’t want it, it’s dead in the water. If people do want it, we can move forward,” she said. “We’re going for \$9 million. The original price was \$7.7 million, but we upped it 15% because there is always something that happens.”

The town also thought it was worth adding bleachers, solar panels, radiant heating, and a generator big enough for the entire 12-13,000-square-foot building to the proposal.

“If it gets approved for \$9 million then we have \$9 million and we can work within that,” noted Muncey. “We can’t go over \$9 million, nor can we change or add to that. It would be a hard limit.”

The project would be funded through a 30-year bond. “Broken down, the project would increase each property owner’s annual taxes by about \$12.75 per \$100,000 of property value for the 30-year bond. That’s a happy meal or a coffee and a bagel at this point I think that’s how people have to see it. Yes, your taxes will go up, and it will show on your tax receipt that you’re paying this much more per month, but I try to break it down so residents can get the idea,” said Muncey. “We’re trying to be as transparent as possible, not hiding anything. That’s why the number is \$9 million; everyone is aware of the cost over a 30-year period.”

Muncey said she doesn’t give that example “glibly,” as she understands that Dover is a “low to middle income community” but added that if residents approve the referendum they’d be “giving something back.” She said while not all programs can be free, the town offers as much as it can as affordably as possible, though it must run paid programs to cover the cost of day camp and other activities, and it works hard to offer open gym, free movies, bonfires, Kite Day, holiday celebrations, and of course, Dover Day.

### Much more than just hoops

The Recreation Director emphasized that the rec center would serve as more than just a place to shoot hoops. It could be a location for farmers markets, a heating and cooling center, a meeting hall, a place for arts festivals, and even an event rental hall or a catering hall to help the town earn some extra income.

“In the long run it’s going to benefit not just us now but the kids and the community in the future. Our grandchildren and great-great grandchildren can use this facility and hopefully add on to make it bigger and better as the town’s needs grow,” she said. “We have to start somewhere, and this has been in process for years and years and years. I think it will be a huge, great thing.”

The referendum will be Saturday, July 27, at Dover Town Hall, from 10am to 4pm. It was purposefully scheduled for a Saturday so voters won’t have a work conflict when heading to the polls.

Originally the vote was set for March, but because Dover wanted to be lead agency in the environmental review, the date was delayed. But getting more time to garner public support has not been a bad thing, said Muncey, who pointed out that many improvements have been made at both Boyce Park and Ketcham Park in the meantime.

Dover Recreation assistant Paula Holmes said both parks, which are town operated, maintained, and open from dawn to dusk, seem to be experiencing an uptick in usership and appreciation. “We have added a walking track with exercise equipment stations, and we do run a program called Kiddy Corral for younger kids. I see people using that track every time I go,” she said. “Last week I saw two people walking the track with a cart pushing younger children. I’ve seen seniors who participated in our balance program up there and afterwards, though it wasn’t part of the program, they said, ‘Since we’re here let’s go walk around the track a couple of times.’ I’ve seen people posting on Facebook about using our exercise equipment. The Dover playground is great, people can bring their kids to play. Anybody can use it.”



All images courtesy of the Dover Recreation Department.

### Maintenance and more

As far as the condition of the town’s facilities, Holmes said she has no complaints, nor does she receive many complaints. “We have pails throughout the grounds, and our crew are there numerous times during the week to clean up any garbage. We also maintain the Stone Church garbage bins, and we have dog waste stations throughout both places. Dogs are allowed as long as they’re on a leash and don’t go to the playgrounds or athletic fields because we don’t want them on soccer fields if people are playing. A lot of people come to Boyce Park and walk their dogs.”

Like Muncey, Holmes seems to thoroughly enjoy figuring out how to keep those who make use of Dover’s recreation programs fulfilled. She acknowledged it’s not always easy getting today’s youth to take part in simple play. When asked if youngsters play like they did generations ago, Holmes paused and then chuckled. “No, not compared to when I was growing up,” she said. “We had a call yesterday from a lady who was running the Little League asking if we had any restrictions on the field because she heard schools were not letting kids outside to play because of gypsy moth caterpillars and allergic reactions. We live in the country; there are bugs all over the place, but we of course want our kids to be able to go outside and play. We have four different posts on the town page about caterpillars.”

### They have adult rec programs, too

She was excited to address the adult recreation program, including the senior program at Dover’s American Legion Hall on Thursdays, line dancing every Monday morning, and a fitness program on Thursday mornings. The town also has about a half dozen day trips planned this summer through October ending with German Fest.

Seniors have already visited Lake George as well as Mohegan Sun Casino. The trips vary in price, and a \$5 tip is asked for the bus driver. Dover seniors are given preference if tickets are made available to area seniors. A day trip to Silver Birches in Pennsylvania is planned for summer’s end. Call the recreation office at (845) 832-9168 or go to doverrecreation.com for details.

Both Holmes and Muncey said it’s worth marking the summer concert series on the calendar. Holmes personally knows the first band to play – New Desperation, a blues-rock, country band. “It’s always good to see a friend,” she said, encouraging locals to catch the show, held underneath the pavilion rain or shine. Concertgoers are encouraged to bring a blanket or chair, snacks, marshmallows for a bonfire, and the entire family.

“It will be a good time for all,” said Holmes.

The two-hour summer concerts will take place on Fridays and Saturdays for a six-week period during the summer starting between 6 and 6:30pm at Boyce Park in Dover. Again, check doverrecreation.com for details.

The pinnacle of the summer will be Dover Day on Saturday, September 21. The town is seeking donations, large or small, for the annual event. •

*To chip in, visit [doverny.myrec.com/info/activities/program\\_details.aspx?ProgramID=29920#activities](http://doverny.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=29920#activities). Donations to Dover Recreation are tax deductible with reference to Federal Tax ID# 14-6002160. Request donor acknowledgement letters by emailing [recreation@doverny.us](mailto:recreation@doverny.us). Donation checks and money orders may also be mailed to Dover Recreation, 126 E. Duncan Hill Road, Dover Plains, NY 12522.*



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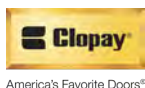
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# SHARE A CAB

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

For the moment, let's consider it "accidental intersection." Coincidence seems too grand a designation, so it could only have been a simple twist of fate that the first song emanating from the car stereo speakers after we had emerged from a screening of Alex Garland's *Civil War* was Joni Mitchell's *Big Yellow Taxi*. The irony was not lost, however, as we sang along to familiar lyrics and navigated out of the theater parking lot.

"Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what  
you've got  
'Til it's gone."

*Civil War* has generated its fair share of comment and controversy. The term that appears most often in reviews and descriptions is "dystopian," which should be enough of an alert to dissuade the more gently inclined from rushing out to see it. It's brutal. It's disturbing on many levels. It's disorienting at moments when the crashing decline of the republic becomes most inevitable.

It's an important film.

## When in doubt, blow it up

Film auteur Garland has a colorful cinematic history that focuses his wildly imaginative projections of the future with a seemingly intense need to blow things up. *Civil War* has provided him with a canvas that he crams with so many frightening images that the occasional reaction to turn away from the screen is understandable. It is as if Picasso's *Guernica* has become animated and we have been forced into the middle of the experience with no place to hide.

The film is a "what if?" projection that begins with the premise that the ideological fracturing of the United States has gotten to the point where state armies are converging on Washington, DC, to overthrow the government of a despotic president – a demagogue who has appointed himself to a third term and rules brutally without any sense of reality. California is banding with Texas. Florida has launched its own campaign. Chaos and killing abound.

Into this miasma are thrown four journalists – two photographers and two writers – who are intent on getting one last interview with the president, hence the road trip from New York to Washington via Pittsburgh and through Charlottesville,

home of Jefferson's vaunted University of Virginia. The film documents their experiences. Some survive. Some do not.

The conclusion of the film is far from triumphant but rather has the emotional impact of beating a drum with a broken head. There is rhythm, but it is a numbing thud, not a crisp report.

## Back on the radio

And what could all of this possibly have to do with *Big Yellow Taxi*? How could Joni Mitchell's often recorded 54-year-old ecological anthem have anything to do with a contemporary cautionary tale about politics gone horribly wrong?

We have been warned.

So many years ago Joni warned us about paving paradise and putting up parking lots, about putting trees in a "tree museum" and charging us just to see them. Yet, the world gets warmer, species continue to disappear, and the rising water levels may one day provide Vermont with oceanfront property. Human rights, always tenuous, seem to be fracturing as we watch on the evening news or "your favorite streaming device."

Garland's new work warns us what could happen if we become lazy while

groups that almost defy the label of "fringe" assume control and grind decent, rational thinking into the dust.

## Ah, summer

These are the wonderful days in New England, summer days that encourage us to be outside, to visit concerts and parades and fairs and soak in the sun late into the evening. What a great time to hike part of the Appalachian Trail, wander through a sculpture park, or sit on the lawn for a concert at Music Mountain or Tanglewood. What an opportunity to drive wherever we wish to take in a meal, stop by a tag sale, cross a state line without batting an eye, and choose to visit friends whenever we please.

Over the course of our separate lives, we likely have all been cautioned not "to take things for granted." Both the song and the film echo that enjoinder with searing honesty. The song is lilting. The film is jarring. The message is not lost, however. Celebrate what we have and with an intensity we may have retired for some years, work to preserve it. After all, "you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." ●



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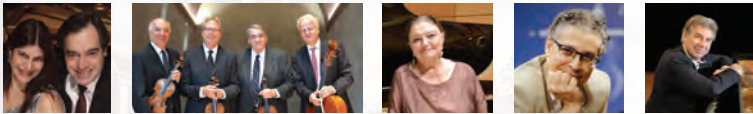
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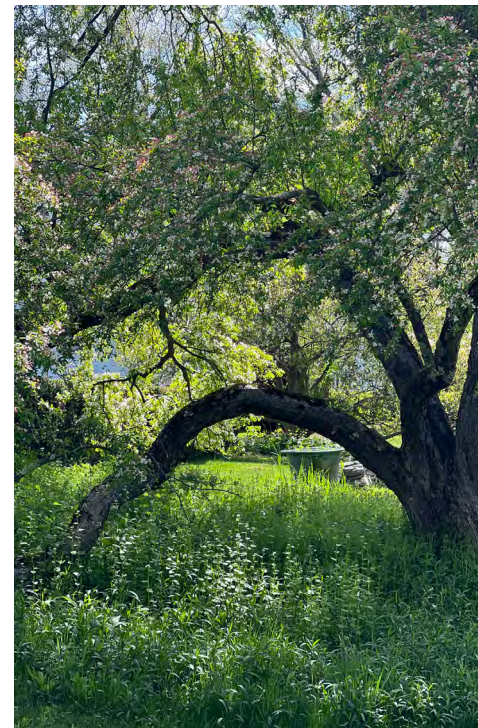
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# THE GARDENER'S Sweet spot



**J**une, June, June! The month every gardener spends the rest of the year dreaming about. The longest days of the year. Generally reasonable weather with frosts behind us and droughts/flash floods still to come. And, after months of planning, sowing, potting up, and planting out, the garden is a go. We have finally hit the sweet spot. So time to sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labor? I don't think so!

*By Pom Shillingford  
info@mainstreetmag.com*

It may seem that the heavy lifting has been done by now, but the devil is in the details when it comes to gardening, and you don't want to miss some windows of opportunity that occur in June. This is (some of) what we'll be up to in our garden this month.

### Weed them weeds

My first piece of advice is ironically not about the plants you've invested time and/or money in but instead it's about weeds. The definition of a weed

is a plant growing in the wrong place, either where you don't want it or where it is going to be a bully to those you do want to thrive. The problem with weeds is that because they are so perfectly attuned to the environment wherever they lay their hats, they're going to be the boss.

### Going native

There has been lots of chat in recent years about rewilding, meadowscapes, and the use of native plants in our gardens. All of which are wonderful and possible to do without investing thousands of dollars and calling in the experts. I discovered this by accident when having left our spring bulb foliage to die back one year, I never found the time to tackle mowing these areas once this had happened. Instead, along with the long grass, they became a haven for hesperis, goldenrod, asters, fleabane, and milkweed, attracting all kinds of lovely insects and adding height, color, and interest to the garden for months on end. Zero dollars, no effort, and saves me multiple occasions of getting in a temper trying to mow around all the

low branches of the orchard trees.

So, for some weeds I'm all "Please come on in and make yourself at home." For other places, where you don't want the weeds, you need to get your skates on now.

I would estimate a good 40% of my summer gardening time is spent weeding. I can tell you not just what month but almost what week of the month it is by the arrival of particular weeds. I can rank weeds 1-10 on their 'pullability'. I can tell you which are really not so bad and which are devious little ... that, once established, are like the garden equivalent of bedbugs. Near on impossible to get rid of. My best advice is to get on top of those weeds as soon as they appear. Do not let them get well rooted and, God forbid, do not let them go to seed. Some hands and knees time and perhaps an achy back now will pay off hugely for the rest of the summer.

Continued on next page ...



**Clip them, thin them, and cut 'em back**

Next up, I suggest you get out your clippers and loppers. I know everything has barely got flowering, but bear with me because some judicious pruning, thinning, and cutting back pays benefits that will last through this summer and long beyond.

First, we are going to think about clipping back those plants that have already flowered. First up, woody shrubs. These need pruning at some point each year to maintain both shape and/or height, health, and vigor. It's when to do this that is very important. Some plants bloom on new wood and some on old. You need to know which type your shrubs are. Pruning them at the wrong time won't affect this year's blooms but it most definitely will impact next year's. What you are looking to identify for now is old wood bloomers. These need trimming back into shape this year right after flowering. If you leave them until next spring, you will wind up cutting off next year's flowers.

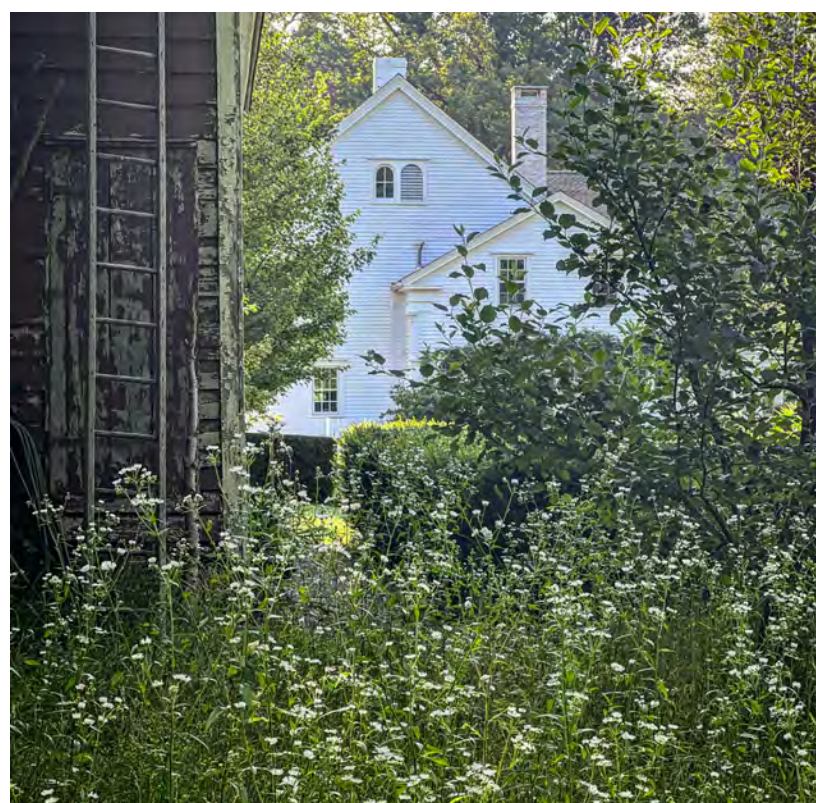
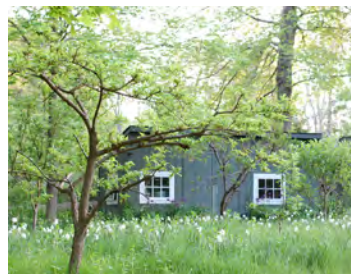
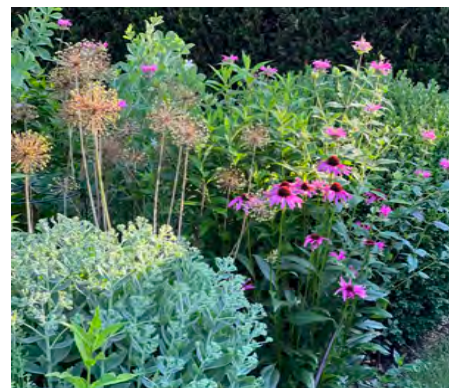
I know this might seem a minefield, but the key to this exercise is to actually know the name and specific variety of your shrubs. I have an old shoe box with just about every plant tag I've ever invested in for just this

occasion. One day I will sort it into categories so it doesn't take me half an hour to find that one elusive hydrangea tag for which I'm searching. What my children (with an eye roll) would tell me to do is just snap a photo and ask an app on my phone to instantly identify the plant in question. Each to their own!

While thinking about keeping a grip on the size of the shrub, be guided by the plant's natural growth patterns. It is also key to ensure that sun and air can get into the branches in the center of the plant. Cut back any dead wood and any criss-crossing branches. I know pruning can be painful – I definitely fall into the all-or-nothing camp of veering from too timid or going all-out *Mad Max*. But even if it ends up being a little more dramatic than you first thought, despair not, like being talked into some ill-advised bangs at the hairdresser, they will grow back – and all the healthier and more vigorous for it.

**Fresh as a daisy**

Something else to keep in mind for the end of the month or early July is pruning back your early flowering perennials. Hopefully you remembered to do the Chelsea chop last month. This is the technique of cutting



back the height of a lot of perennials – nepeta, phlox, sedums, achillea, echinacea, penstemons and rudbeckia – by a third. It is used to control their growing habits; think shorter bushier plants vs. flopping and splaying, all-over-the-place after five minutes and a sprinkle of rain – and/or delay the normal flowering time of these plants so they give an extra three weeks of late summer color when everything else is beginning to run out of steam.

If you miss this window with these or with other perennials, such as salvias and hardy geraniums, whose first exuberant bloom has passed, this is a perfect way to have a second later-season flush of color. And I don't just mean giving them a gentle snip but cut hard to just above the ground. I know it's painful to do, but this will give them a second fresh-as-a-daisy flush in a few weeks' time.

Finally, in the chop-chop department, and this is really my husband's realm: tomatoes. We joke – ha, ha, but it is true – that my husband spends the same amount of time tending to his eight tomato plants as I do on the 80,000 other plants in our garden. I agree that sunlight and air circulation are again key here to avoid the dreaded blight, and the sniping back of excessive growth is crucial. Whether it needs to take as long each day as a brain surgeon in the OR is a debate you will have to take up with your own tomato enthusiast.

**Christmas shopping in summer**

And one last job for June, I know this seems nuts, and I'm in danger of being a smug Christmas shopper who is done by Columbus Day, but this is the best time to get your bulb orders in for next spring while all your spring garden thought are still fresh in your mind. (I guarantee you will not remember a thing by September otherwise.) Your orders won't be delivered until time for planting in late October, but place them now, and you will avoid disappointment when favorites sell out.

Finally, and most importantly, despite the instructions to work your socks off all month out there, a plea to remember to stop and savor the joy of your June garden. It is too easy to get obsessed with making everything perfect. Gardens are not meant to be perfect. They are always works in progress. June is a magic month for gardeners in this part of the world. Make sure you step back and enjoy the fruits of your labors – even if they are still on-going. •

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





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# An interview with executive director Maria Rundle

# Flying Cloud turns 40!

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

This year, Flying Cloud Institute, based in Great Barrington, MA, turns 40. For decades, Flying Cloud has been inspiring young people and educators through dynamic science and art experiences that ignite creativity. *Main Street Magazine* sat down with executive director Maria Rundle to find out more about the organization's history and programs.

## What is Flying Cloud, and how did you find your way to becoming the executive director of the organization?

My background is in education and labor rights. My children were going to a local public school, and it had an amazing half-day robotics program. I knew that one of my children had a special drive and curiosity for science that wasn't necessarily being met during the school day.

So we sent her to Flying Cloud Camp, and she came back saying, "This was the best day of my life," having done chemistry, ceramics, and engineering design. And this was as a six-year-old!

What impressed me most was how committed Flying Cloud was to treat-

ing young people, even six-year-olds, as interesting, creative, curious scientists and artists and working alongside them to answer their questions, solve problems, and make art – and that is a very appealing approach.

Flying Cloud plays a very important role right now in holding space in our school system for creative learning and in igniting a passion for science and art. But I also see Flying Cloud as a model for how we need to shift public education away from the high-stakes, standardized testing model.

## And now Flying Cloud is 40?

Yes! And I see this 40th as a way to appreciate and celebrate our founders in the community.

Our founders, Jane and Larry Burke, have a beautiful property in New Marlborough, MA. Four decades ago, they were in the midst of raising their own children in the spirit of creativity and investigation. They started inviting neighborhood children to be part of that. And that was the start of Flying Cloud, which is this beautiful, loving, caring, curious approach to youth.

The Southern Berkshire school district heard about what was happening and started inviting Jane to come into its schools and share what she was doing with her kids in the neighborhood. The program grew from there.

## What are the program priorities for Flying Cloud?

We have three streams of programming in our approach to creative education. One is SMART – Science Meets Art, which is a concept Larry came up with. We go into the classrooms of our SMART schools. We teach the state-specific standards through hands-on inquiry-based experiences. Then, we bring in local artists to help students make their learning visible through creative expression. We also offer professional development for teachers and share strategies



All images courtesy of Flying Cloud Institute.

for bringing creative learning into the classroom.

The second stream of programming is SMART studio, where we bring all of our experiments and investigations into the field to art studios and laboratories around our region. We have summer programs and camps. During the summer school breaks, and in after-school programs, we work in public schools to share these workshops.

The last stream of programming is our Young Women in Science program, which is set up to work towards closing the gender gap that exists in STEM fields, specifically in many careers where women are making very slow progress: engineering design, computer science, AI, and mathematics. Even though overall women have closed the gender gap, we've actually made the most gains in the least lucrative sciences and in healthcare.

Research has taught us that girls lose their identity as STEM-capable at age nine and at the end of middle school, so we try to run programs that meet girls at those vulnerable moments and match them with successful women from their own communities who are engineers and scientists and can share their inspirational

stories with these young girls.

We are now working with our next generation of Flying Cloud students. We invite STEM-professional scientists and engineers who used to be members of our girls' science clubs and were with us when they were six years old to volunteer in our summer camps and school programs. It's exciting to see the program's impact and the ways that the culture of learning integral to Flying Cloud continues.

## Starting from its homespun roots, how has Flying Cloud been able to keep that backyard ethos created by Jane and Larry, or have you moved away from that?

We're not moving away. We have intentionally dug in further. The big commitment that we've made is to authenticity. I know that that word gets thrown around, and I probably should come up with a better word at this point, but whatever you call it, involving youth in real work of science, engineering, and art is the most engaging way to stay committed to the principles and the values that were part of our founding. That's why we hire real scientists, engineers, and

Continued on next page ...





artists to work alongside youth.

One of the things that our adult graduates have said is that being seen and heard by real scientists and artists when they were children transformed their thinking of themselves as creators and gave their questions real meaning. So, making sure that we still work alongside the professionals of our community and that our kids get to work with them is a key piece of our mission.

**This idea of being seen and heard by real scientists and artists is so critical. How have you made efforts to ensure that those professionals and artists reflect the diversity of the populations Flying Cloud serves?**

That's such a crucial thing for every nonprofit who works out of the Berkshires to take on in a very serious way because the danger with something really special like Flying Cloud is that we actually exacerbate the gaps between the haves and have-nots in our community in terms of learning opportunities. So, if we're only catering to those schools that have the time, bandwidth, and money to bring Flying Cloud in, we are contributing to the problem. Where these gaps of opportunity exist in our community, we fill them with a two-fold strategy.

The first is exactly what you just described. We try to hire people who

represent diverse communities and bring in volunteers, sometimes from as far away as Rochester, Syracuse, and Boston, who can work with our youth and represent the population of students in our schools. We also work very closely with organizations such as Volunteers in Medicine, who support our immigrant community in the Berkshires, which is our only growing demographic. It's crucial that we welcome and celebrate the immigrant children who are coming to our community in ways that encourage them to see themselves as successful, curious, creative humans and help them achieve a sense of belonging within the culture that already exists here while sharing their cultures as well.

The second way is creating more access by bringing our programs to where the youth who otherwise would not have these experiences are already living, learning, and working. Instead of children coming to Flying Cloud, we bring our work to where the families and youth already are. We develop deep partnerships with our public schools, healthcare community, public officials, and wonderful organizations like the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, as well as our fellow providers like Greenagers.

Those partnerships create access points for Flying Cloud to reach youth and families who might not



otherwise be able to engage deeply with these programs because of barriers like transportation, food security, and childcare. We want to make transformational change, and that means developing relationships over time and showing up in our children's lives over a period of years, not just on a weekend.

Over 80% of our programs are free, which is a big part of our commitment to diversity and access. We also offer financial aid for all tuition programs. To fund this organization, we need to fundraise from scratch starting every January. Every dollar that we raise goes directly back into the community.

**Has Flying Cloud been able to incorporate Indigenous wisdom into its mission as it pertains to natural processes and observation of the natural world?**

Yes! We have an ethnobotanist on staff who is also one of our scientist educators. She started with Flying Cloud when she was five and was inspired by it to become an ethnobotanist. That's exactly what we want to reflect. All of the Indigenous people who were here before us and who we honor were the scientists who were exploring and coming up with the questions and investigations to make a life of meaning. They were the engineers who were building solutions to the problems of living in this area and this climate, and, above all, they were the artists who were coming up with creative ways to express the human experience of living in this beautiful land that we now share. It goes beyond the land

acknowledgment to actually acknowledging the people.

We have learned so much about that tradition as a community of educators. They were using direct experience with their youth. This is how we make meaning and share wisdom and creativity across a people and a time. And to me, those methods of education need to be honored just as much as the fact that indigenous people owned this land.

**You mentioned bringing back your graduates to teach and mentor. I love the snowball effect of Flying Cloud. You keep accumulating people and bringing them back, so the snowball grows bigger over time and picks up more mass and momentum. How do you cultivate that model and organizational culture?**

A lot of institutions make what I think is a key mistake by thinking that when a participant ages out or finishes with the services, they're gone. Bringing them back again keeps them involved. When they come back, you can build a network that spreads into spaces you didn't originally imagine.

That's how you hold the culture, which can sustain itself over time. We stay in a relationship with people as they change. And as you and the organization change and grow, so does the relationship, but you're always centered on the relationship. •

*Visit [flyingcloudinstitute.org](http://flyingcloudinstitute.org) for more information about Flying Cloud, to help celebrate its 40th anniversary, and to donate to its programs.*







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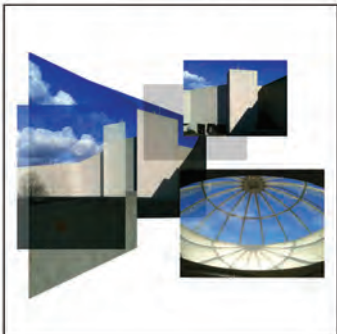
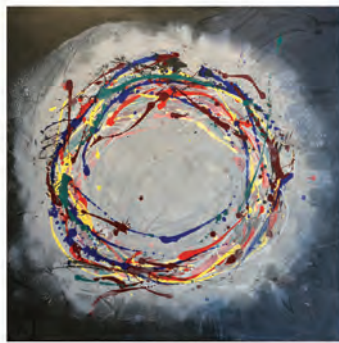
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# FLYING FREE AT MT. BRACE



Joachim Roesler flying. Winter flying, 2022.  
Photo by Zoe Sheehan Saldana.

By *Dominique DeVito*  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

**T**he yearning to be as free as a bird and to soar on wings in the sky has been with humankind since the dawn of time. One of the best-known legends about that lure – and the danger inherent in its pursuit – is that of the ancient Greek father and son, Daedalus and Icarus.

Daedalus, a masterful inventor, was imprisoned on Crete by King Minos for angering him. To escape this wretched condition, Daedalus crafted sets of wings from wood, feathers, and wax. Finally it was time to go. The wings worked, and he and his son flew away from the island. But Icarus, exhilarated with the flight, took off higher in the sky. His fate? The sun melted the wax, the feathers fell out, and Icarus plummeted to earth, fell into the sea, and drowned.

One can only speculate on how many attempts have been made to do what Daedalus and Icarus attempted. While we take air travel for granted today, it's mind-boggling to think that it was just 121 years ago – 1903 – that Orville and Wilbur Wright finally succeeded in getting off the ground on a winged contraption and stayed suspended for 12 whole seconds over the sand dunes of Kitty Hawk, NC. The Soviet Luna 2 rocket landed on

the surface of the moon in 1959, and ten years later, Neil Armstrong, an astronaut on the Apollo 11 mission, was the first human to walk on the moon. Air and space travel became a reality, and we sort of left the birds behind.

But being in an engine-propelled airplane doesn't do that yearning to be a bird justice, and people will always want to fly with their own wings.

## It's happening at Taconic State Park

The members of the Mt. Brace Outdoor Club, a group of hang glider and paraglider pilots, do indeed fly off Mt. Brace. The mountain is located in Taconic State Park at the intersection of New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts – a beautiful location for any outdoor enthusiast and also one of the best locations for free flying on the East Coast. It's what's been drawing flyers to the park for 50 years, since the early 1970s.

Zoe Sheehan Saldana and her partner, Joachim Roesler, are officers of the Mt. Brace Outdoor Club. Zoe is excitedly planning for a 50th anniversary celebration, tentatively on Labor Day weekend. As she explains, "Back in 1974, some intrepid humans hauled their gear up to the summit, hooked in, and flew off, landing safely about 1,500 feet below in a Boston Corner farm field." Some of those early pilots are still soaring over Mt. Brace. They include Lee Keeler, John

McNeely, Blaise Thompson, and Dale Ely. What a legacy. "The flying apparatus and community have changed with time," Zoe says, "but the spirit of adventure and exploration continues unabated."

Sure enough, on a day that's suitable for flying, you may spot up to a dozen or more paragliders in the skies over Taconic State Park and beyond.

"On a good day when the weather favors us," Zoe says, "we can stay up for hours making turns with hawks, eagles, and even butterflies as we follow thermal updrafts." A good day depends on a lot of meteorological syn-copations, and there's a basic season that's best, too, typically May through October, Zoe explains. "When the hummingbirds start to come out," she says, "is when it seems the weather is settled enough to fly more regularly."

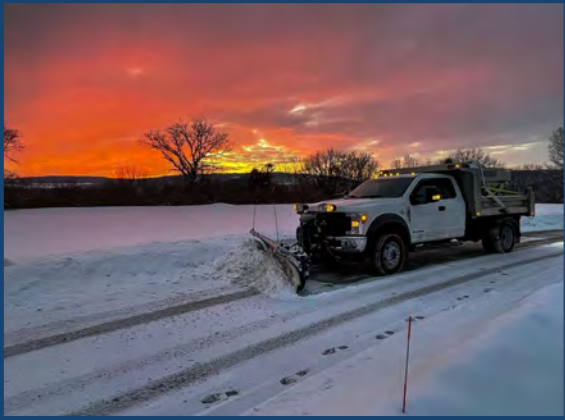
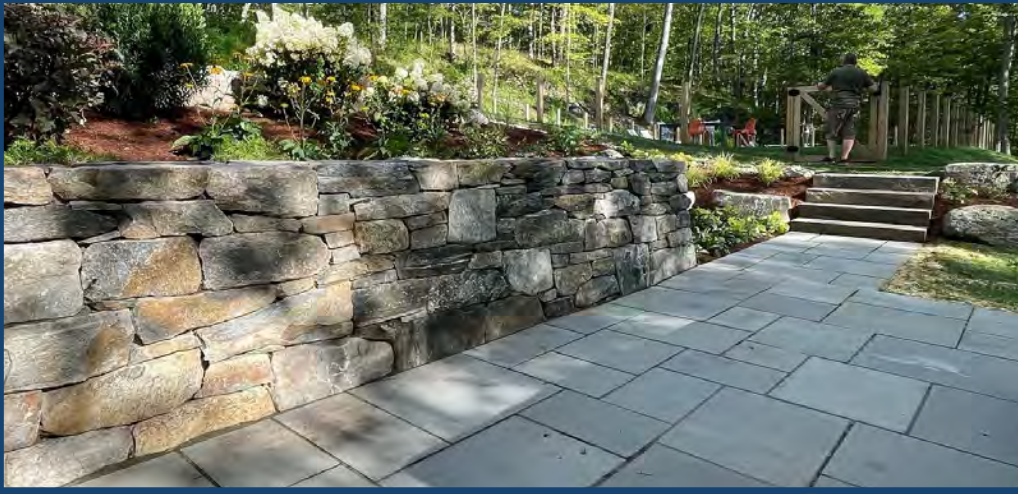
Hawks, eagles, butterflies, even hummingbirds. Catching the wind and soaring.

## A pioneer pilot

Being in the air was an obsession for Tom Peghiny, who in Junior High School was part of an aviation club whose members studied wing designs with the hope and intention of getting off the ground with something they

Continued on page 61 ...





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could build. This was in the early 1970s. In the back of a magazine called *Soaring*, which was edited by Richard Miller, they found an ad for plans for building wings. The plans cost \$5. What arrived was a set of plans designed by Miller for what were described as “bamboo butterflies.” They were based off the concept of a Rogallo wing. This was a self-inflating, flexible wing invented in 1948 by Francis Rogallo, a NASA engineer, and his wife, Gertrude, and it went on to be the prototype for early hang gliders that would launch the sport around the world in the 1970s.

Tom calls Miller the “patron saint of early hang gliders.” Miller’s butterfly “wings” were constructed from bamboo and polyethylene plastic bound with what was considered a miracle material at the time, fiberglass tape. “We built one, and by pulling it with ropes we could jump off a knoll, get airborne, and say ‘whee,’” he says. It was enough to fuel his imagination and determination to hang glide.

“When I was 15,” he recalls, “I met an aeronautical engineer who was starting a hang gliding company outside of Boston, where I grew up. I was his test pilot.” Tom literally took off with his love of free flying.

“My first real flight,” he shares, “was at Blue Hill in Milton, MA, a steep ski area. I got about 50 to 70 feet off the ground for about 20 seconds. It was transcendent.” There was no turning back.

In 1973, when he was just 17, Tom participated in the Hang Gliding National Championships in Sylmar, CA. In 1974, just after graduating from

high school, Tom competed in the Hang Gliding World Championships in Kössen, Austria. “After graduation, I went right into hang gliding and aeronautics as a career, and I’ve been at it ever since.”

### A wonder for wings

The Rogallo Wing was what led Zoe to the sport, as well. She was living in Brooklyn and teaching art and design at CUNY. She had always loved flying kites and started building them for fun in her studio. Her research and experimenting led her to the Rogallo wing, which introduced her to hang gliding. She couldn’t resist the desire to try it – to fly. “It’s the most vulnerable I’ve ever been,” she says. She was hooked.

When Zoe committed to hang gliding about eight years ago, she would travel out of the city to Mt. Brace to fly. “It got heavy to haul the hang glider up to my third-floor walk-up in Brooklyn,” she laughs, explaining how she pivoted into paragliding. “With paragliding, you just put the equipment in a backpack and go.”

And she did, spending more and more time traveling to Mt. Brace to fly. She fell in love with the area – and also with a fellow pilot, Joachim – and when COVID hit and school went virtual, she made a new home near Mt. Brace and now flies as often as she can.

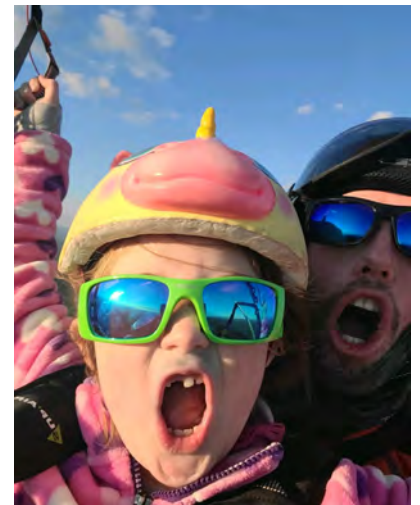
Tom understands the decision. His first flight on Mt. Brace in a hang glider was in 1975. “It’s a beautiful place to fly,” he says. “Ideal, really. The shape of the hill allows for a safe launch, easy gliding, and a nice



distance to a landing.” Tom travels from his home near Mansfield, CT, and loves the drive from Hartford to Millerton. When pilots arrive at the mountain, there are two ways to get to the top: a “very challenging hike up the front,” Tom says, “or a drive around to the back where we all typically meet up with our friends to do the easier but longer hike up.”

When I ask Tom about the differences between hang gliding and paragliding – and he still does both – he says the main difference is that when paragliding you can stay up in very light conditions. “It feels like you’re flying in a soap bubble,” he says. Another plus is that you can fly with only a 25-pound pack, which is “just great,” he says, and “gets back to the original idea of free flight” – you just take off.

“What I really like,” says the man who has flown in places around the world, “is going to Mt. Brace on a nice weather day, meeting up with friends, flying and landing safely, and being home in time for dinner.”

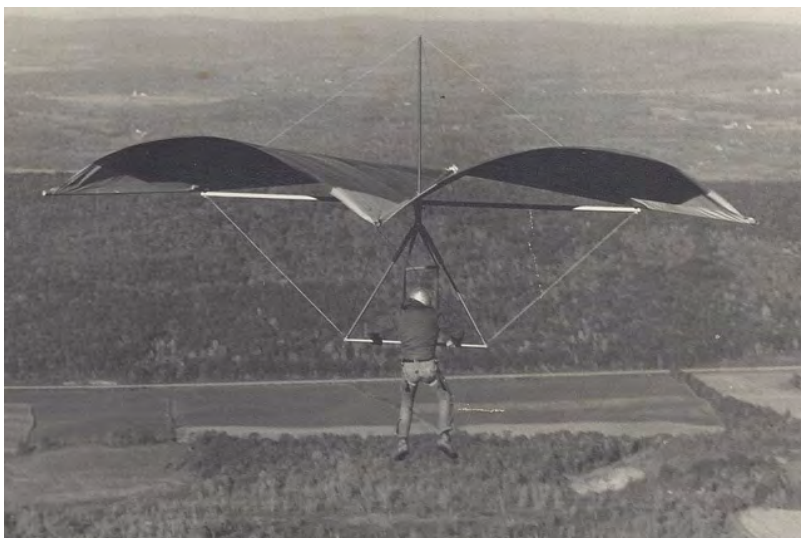


Top: Eduardo Garza flying over Brace Mountain and Rt. 22 valley.

Middle: John Pettinato in 1979.

Above: Shane McKeon snaps photo while 5-year-old Quinn McKeon flies the glider. Next generation. 2020.

All photos with this article courtesy of Mt. Brace Outdoor Club.



Zejke Hermann in November 1974. Photo: Harper Blanchet.

Continued on next page ...





James Bradley flying. Fall flying at Brace in November 2021. Photo by Tom Peghiny.

### Appreciating the Park

The members of the Mt. Brace Outdoor Club understand how fortunate they are to have access to Mt. Brace. The club has a website where its rules, regulations, and pro tips are clearly stated for anyone interested. A nod to the importance of good relations is right at the top:

“Paragliding and hang gliding are expressions of freedom, including our freedom to choose our own life and take our own risks. At the same time, to sustain a flying club in the US we have to stay aware of the context in which we fly. Here at Brace our launch is on NY Taconic State Park land, and our privilege to launch there is revocable. Lawsuits of many kinds are always possible. We also have the usual potential for issues with the local landowners who are our neighbors. Please, then, be respectful of the rules, of the environment, of the Park staff, and of all the people that you meet, in order that we may all be able to fly here for many years to come. You are an ambassador of our sport and of our Club! Thanks, and see you in the air.”

Chris Rickard was the park manager at Taconic State Park for a dozen years until the end of 2023. “When I

started,” he says, “the pilots immediately reached out to introduce me to what they were doing and how. I had a stereotype of people who did this extreme sport as hot dogs or surfer dudes, and boy was I wrong. They’re engineers, artists, pilots, people from all walks of life and from around the world,” he says.

Chris noted that the club and pilots who come to fly off Mt. Brace have an important set of rules that includes not flying alone, flying in minimal winds, honoring the launch as a take-off spot only and remembering that the park is a state park first and foremost.

“They’re the extra sets of eyes that help us know what’s happening all over the park,” Chris says. “They’re hiking the trails and getting the bird’s eye view of the park, and they report anything unusual.” Abigail Parry Leo is the current park manager, having taken over from Chris late last year. This will be her first season with the Mt. Brace Outdoor Club, but she’s already a huge supporter and is looking forward to the 50th anniversary celebration.

“I look forward to working with and continuing our partnership with the Mt. Brace Outdoor Club,” Abigail says. “Working with organizations such as this helps to ensure safe and diverse recreational opportunities within our State Parks, while ensuring that we continue to respect and appreciate our natural

resources. The Mt. Brace Outdoor Club values our commitment to preservation while offering enthusiasts a unique perspective of this beautiful region.”

Chris did a tandem flight with a pilot so he could further understand the experience. “It was awesome,” he says. “You’re quietly in another world. There’s not a sound except for the wind. And the trees look like broccoli from the sky,” he adds with a chuckle.

Another much-appreciated property is where the pilots typically land. It’s a field originally owned by the Scofield family. Imagine the flyers descending into your property. As Zoe says, “Without the neighbors’ generosity in letting the gliders land in their farm fields, there wouldn’t be any flying!” When the landing area was purchased by the Chevalier family, it was Robert Chevalier’s vision to carry on the free flight tradition. Today it’s owned by Paul Hogan and Ciaran Egan, who are themselves paragliders and are keeping the tradition alive.

### Being and staying safe

While all of this sounds – and looks – like the happiest of endings to the tale of Daedalus and Icarus, to be as close to flying like a bird as possible at this point in time, knowing your wings won’t melt in the sun, it’s impossible not to wonder about the inherent dangers even today.

“We’re not meant to do this,” Zoe says of human beings free flying. “Gravity always wins if you’re not careful,” Tom echoes. “The safety level is similar to driving a motorcycle

on the street,” he says to help clarify. “You have to be careful, stay aware of your surroundings, and use good judgment.”

Flyers are typically in good shape, too. “You have to hike a bunch to do this in New England,” Tom says. “Flying motivates me to stay in shape. And if you’re in decent shape, it’s something you can continue to do into your later years.” He’s a testament to that! And with advances in equipment, the sport will continue to become more accessible. No wonder it’s thriving among like-minded enthusiasts.

And what about getting back to your car after flying if you’ve gone any significant distance?

Technology to the rescue! “With cell phones and lightweight GPS systems, we can be in touch and track each other easily,” Zoe says. If we fly far from the common Landing Zone, another flier or friend can pick us up.”

### Check it out:

*The Mt. Brace Outdoor Club welcomes interest from new and seasoned flyers. Find it at [mtbraceclub.com](http://mtbraceclub.com) or on Facebook where, if you join the group, you’ll find lots of photos and videos. You’ll also find videos through a Google search of Mt. Brace paragliding. To check out the action in person, look for the flyers in the skies over the Taconic State Park on good weather days this summer, and if you’re so inspired, get in touch with Zoe about attending the anniversary celebration this Labor Day weekend.*

*If you’re interested in the history of hang gliding, there’s a wonderful movie that includes Tom Peghiny called *Big Blue Sky*. Watch it on YouTube.*



Flyers Zoe Sheehan Saldana, Joachim Roesler, and Cathy Niles and local culture in 2020.





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# The Salisbury Garden Center

## BEHIND THE BILLBOARD

By Ian Strever  
info@mainstreetmag.com

I'm pretty okay with words. But for some reason, when it comes to plant names, my mental dictionary has a gaping hole. The best gardener lingo I can muster is "forsythia," and I only remember that because I face a wall of it every time I look out my front window. There is a small, bushy plant with heart-shaped leaves near my chimney, and a crop of low, green, waxy plants next to them, and if you gave me a multiple choice test on their names, I might pass, barely. But recall them from memory? Not a chance. So garden centers are a revelation and an education to me. All of these familiar-looking plants, helpfully tagged with common and Latin names that inspire such phrases as, "So that's what pachysandra is!"

### Brightening people's lives

Anyone who tends (or in my case, pre-tends) to their landscape needs a local garden center that is accessible, helpful, and well-stocked. For me, that is the Salisbury Garden Center, nestled in the geological fold

between the back side of Satre Hill (of ski jump fame) and the crest of Smith Hill (capped by The Salisbury School). Perhaps this microclimate provides just the right amount of sun and shade for a range of native plants, but in addition to its inventory, the gardens themselves advertise their expertise.

Admittedly, my first awareness of the center came before I started patronizing nurseries. Shuttling between Falls Village and Salisbury with some regularity, I noted the weekly quips on its signage, and during COVID, its witticisms breathed life into a haunted world. Owner Eric Mendelsohn doesn't assign any more significance to the sign than a simple way to brighten people's lives, but his guerilla marketing struck the right note in buttoned-down Salisbury. People were spending more time in their yards, landscaping projects multiplied with the influx of ex-urbanites, and the garden center was perfectly located to meet the needs of the boom.

Location, location, location is the mantra of real estate agents, and the location of the center just outside of the sleepy town center has provided some insulation from the big box retailers that typically undercut local nurseries. That is not to say that its inventory is limited or over-priced, however. Mendelsohn embraces a version of the customer-is-always-right philosophy: whatever locals want, he stocks.

More importantly, whatever a customer needs, it can provide. Mendelsohn prefers the analogy of "a small-town pharmacy to describe the intimate service that a local garden center can provide in contrast to a Home Depot or Loew's." Local businesses know our climate and the kinds of landscaping that are most prominent in our area, and they can



The center is not only widely, but deeply stocked. Photo: Caroline Markonic

recommend plants that will thrive in the northwest corner of Connecticut. Moreover, their employees possess botanical knowledge that is useful.

Case in point: some kind of red-leaved shoot keeps coming up all over my lawn from what was formerly a very large tree. Plant identification apps and web searches failed to uncover its name, so I snipped a shoot and brought it to Salisbury, where a helpful staff member was able to not only identify it as a crabapple tree, but even direct me to a product for treating unwanted "volunteers" like it. Problem solved, time saved.

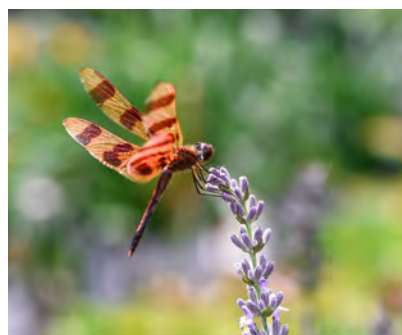
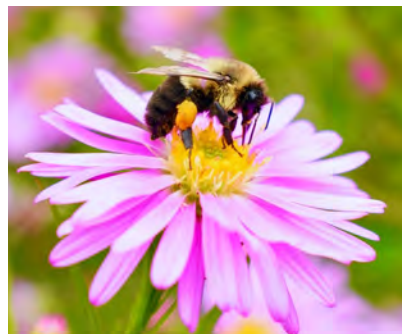
### Keeping up with the Joneses and "re-wilding"

Having lived in half a dozen Connecticut towns, I can attest to the micro-trends in landscaping. Urban settings often feature smaller parcels with manicured lawns and topiaries or arborvitae, and suburban landscapes can be characterized by whatever the Joneses next door have. Our rural location trends more native, sometimes even to an unnecessary extent. Treatment for invasives is downright evangelical among some homeowners, and the preference for native plants is equally feverish, with some customers seeking not only native cultivars

but ones that are genetically pure. Attempts to "re-wild" properties or parts of properties with native grasses and plantings have also shifted the inventory of the center, which now stocks products such as wildflower and meadow grass seed to meet those demands.

Although it isn't a landscaping business per se, Salisbury Garden Center also offers design, delivery, and installation services, and it serves everyone from small homeowners to estates and businesses. Not sure what you want? It offers design services as well that will create attractive settings that add value and enjoyment to your home. The next time you drive by its location on Route 44, don't just laugh at the billboard, but see what is growing just beyond it. ●

*The Salisbury Garden Center is located at 167 Canaan Rd. in Salisbury, CT. Call (860) 435-2439 or visit online at [salisburygc.com](http://salisburygc.com).*



Top: Pollinators and pollinator-friendly plants abound in our local garden centers, in line with our more nativistic landscaping. Photo: Caroline Markonic. Above: A dragonfly inspects a lavender plant at the center. Photo: Olivia Valentine.



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# Dancing Greens Farm

## HOSTS FARM-TO-TABLE SHINDIGS IN THE BERKSHIRES & BEYOND

By Abby Audenino  
abby@mainstreetmag.com

Jamie Nadler and Madison Warren were in Italy together pursuing their master of arts in food studies: policies for sustainable production and consumption when they realized that they shared a common dream.

Creating a farm.

But it wouldn't be *just* a farm. No, Jamie and Madison wanted to create an agriturismo, which is an Italian concept that involves any agriculturally-based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch.

### All roads lead to the farm

Jamie has been farming on and off for the past decade. She started working on farms when she was a teenager and continued throughout her college years while she was studying to complete her degree in environmental science.

"I would never claim that I grew up farming, but I was always a kid who dug for worms and loved vegetables," Jamie said. "The first time I worked on a farm was in high school, and all of these sparks were flying for me, but I kept hearing that it wasn't a realistic option for a career. But I always found a way to come back to it because it's what I love to do."

Prior to attending culinary school, Madison worked in project management. She was one of the first hires at SoulCycle and was responsible for opening up over four dozen locations across the country. While she's worked at a number of start-up companies, her true passion lies in cooking. So

she pivoted her career path and attended the Natural Gourmet Institute in New York City.

Starting her own farm was always on the list of things that Jamie wanted to accomplish, so when she met Madison and realized that they shared a common dream and were both armed with the necessary background and skill set, it seemed serendipitous.

"The health of the soil and the health of people are the same thing, and we have to treat them the same," Jamie said. "Madison and I started talking about our dreams, and we realized that we should be working together on this."

After graduating from culinary school, Madison worked as a private chef and in restaurants, but neither really stuck for her. "I couldn't find my rhythm in a restaurant. You're in a room far away, and you don't actually get to experience people's joy as they're eating. You have no idea if they're connecting with the food or how they feel about it," she said. "I love the ability to be next to the guests and tell stories about the food and take them on that journey. That piece is so special to me."

Madison's favorite part of coordinating shindigs is getting to be creative and utilize the food in whatever way she wants. Much of her work is very structured and operational, so being able to let loose in the kitchen is incredibly fun. "I didn't know I was a creative person until I found cooking, and now I realize that's all that it is. It's just art, creativity, and being adaptable."

Madison has spent the winter cooking and curating recipes that she's looking forward to using during the summer. Sometimes Madison doesn't know what vegetables she'll be working with until the day of, so having a list of tried-and-true recipes that she can pull from is incredibly beneficial.

"Vegetables are the coolest canvas because they're not only tasty, but they're also so beautiful. I really like



All photos with this article courtesy of Dancing Greens Farm.

to think about each dish, not just how it's going to taste, but how is it going to look on the plate? How excited are you going to be when you see it? How does it play with all of the other things happening in the meal, like what's at the table, in the background, etc? I really appreciate the creative aspect of planning a meal."

### Farming sustainably

Dancing Greens is a no-till farm, and Jamie focuses on maximizing soil health wherever possible. The goal is not to break up the microbiology that's living in the soil, so she also utilizes crop rotation and cover cropping to further enrich the soil.

"We try to encompass circularity as much as we can," Jamie said. "We have a compost system and we put that back into the soil. We're constantly building soil biology instead of depleting it."

For Jamie and Madison, farming sustainably is the only way to do it.

"When I was studying for my degree in environmental science, I became really aware of the interconnectedness of agriculture and climate change. That's been my motivating force," Jamie said. "I love growing food, and the only way I want to grow is sustainably."

Dancing Greens doesn't use any inorganic chemical inputs, such as fertilizer or pesticide. Instead, it utilizes non-invasive techniques to help protect the natural ecosystem. Ad-

ditionally, since it is such a small plot of land, it also uses techniques such as solarization and tarping to turn beds over quickly and grow a higher diversity of vegetables.

The spring months were spent seed starting and preparing for the upcoming season. Jamie joked that she was acting a bit like a plant throughout the month of April, meaning that she was waking up and getting back into the swing of things.

She's the main farmer at Dancing Greens, but she does have help from her partner, Andy, when she needs it.

Right now, Madison's days are spent in the kitchen testing out recipes and reading cookbooks. Additionally, Madison handles much of the back-end operations of the business, so in the spring months, you can usually find her elbow deep in the email inbox or in a spreadsheet.

"While Jamie's really busy with prepping the farm during these months, I'm focusing on a lot of partner outreach, communications, budget projections, and social media," she said. "You know, all of the stuff that has to get done on the computer."

### What is a shindig?

On its website, Dancing Greens Farm defines a shindig as a large, lively party, especially one celebrating something. Shindigs are a place



Continued on next page ...



to connect deeply with food and with other people, and they are a curated space for conversation, education, and delicious food.

So why the name shindig? Why not just call it a party or a gathering?

“The whole point of this is to make it as fun, joyful, and exciting as possible. At the root of what we’re doing, we want to educate people in a cool way, but we don’t want that to be what people think they’re coming for. We want this to be an immersive experience that makes you start to think differently about how your food is grown and where it’s coming from without realizing that you’re doing that. A shindig is a full-on celebration, so that’s where the name came from.”

Dancing Greens’ season really gets going in June. It starts with some events in New York City, including bringing the farm to Brooklyn with a shindig dinner experience at Frank’s House on June 11. It will move to the farm on July 13 for a shindig dinner experience partnering with Roots Rising, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower youth and build community through food and farming. A full calendar of shindigs and workshops is available on the website.

“When we started this, we were just thinking of the most simple way that I can grow food, Madison can cook it, and how we can use it to bring people together,” Jamie said. “It’s so much more than a dinner. It’s an immersive experience.”

A big tenet of what Dancing Greens wants to do is centered around

partnerships and collaborations with other farms, chefs, makers, and doers. On its website, it has a section titled “those we admire,” that lists individuals, businesses, and organizations that have inspired Jamie and Madison.

“One of the first pages we created on our website was the ‘those we admire’ page. We added anybody that we came across that we thought was incredible because if we found them, we want other people to find these folks, too,” Madison said. “Everybody needs to know about the awesomeness that’s happening in the region.”

Most recently, Dancing Greens has partnered with The Farm New Marlborough in Massachusetts to expand its vegetable-growing space. Dancing Greens will also be selling its goods at the farm store alongside the meat and eggs that are produced at The Farm New Marlborough.

“Farms and chefs can’t work in isolation. Many cool people are doing lots of fun things in this area and we’d love to find ways to collaborate with as many of those people as possible,” Jamie explained. “We want to think outside the box with our partnership pieces as well. Can we work with artists or musicians? Farming is such a great space to bring lots of people in, so that’s something we’re trying to do more of.”

#### Fostering connection

At its core, Dancing Greens Farm hinges on the importance of bringing people together.

“It’s different from going to a restaurant. The community build-



ing piece is really nice. Meeting new people and sharing this type of experience together is a core of what we’re trying to do,” Madison shared.

Jamie and Madison have no shortage of respect and love for one another, which is likely what makes them such a powerful team.

“I love working with Madison. We’re a really strong team, and it’s rewarding and great,” Jamie said.

Madison agreed. “Working with Jamie has been a highlight of my life. I will say that there’s nobody better to have on your side.”

Beyond that, the biggest reward for Jamie as a farmer is growing her own food and helping to create a space that is warm and welcoming to the community. “The feedback that we’ve gotten from people at the end of the night is amazing. People have come to Madison and said, ‘that was the best meal I’ve ever had.’ It’s incredible to be making memories like that not only for us, but also for the people coming to our farm.”

Madison has found it very rewarding to change people’s minds about food and open up their palates. She said that many people think they don’t like vegetables, but by the end of a shindig, she typically has guests come up to her to gush about how much they enjoyed them.

“Being able to change people’s minds about certain foods has been so fun for me as a chef,” she said.

#### Juggling the present with the future

Running a business has its own set of unique challenges that present themselves over and over. For Jamie and Madison, wearing so many hats has proven to be both rewarding and challenging all at once.

“People tend to dissociate the farm

from the business, which isn’t the case. It’s one entity. Our to-do list never shrinks,” Madison laughed. “We check one item off but add five more.”

Despite this, Madison and Jamie both agree that this is the most fun they’ve ever had at a job. Doing all of the work that’s associated with a business – paperwork, paperwork, and more paperwork – is “so much more enjoyable” because they’re building their dream.

“It makes it all worth it,” Madison said.

Looking long term, they have their sights set on expanding the farm to look like a full-fledged agriturismo. They want to have a large farm with not just vegetables but also animals, an orchard, and a place for people to stay the night.

“We really believe in this dream, and we think that people would be really receptive to having something like it here in the Northeast,” Jamie explained.

One of their other goals is to keep their agriturismo-style getaway accessible price-wise. “I spend a lot of my day in the financial planning and budgeting area trying to figure out how we model something that can be accessible to as many people as possible,” Madison said.

But for now, Jamie and Madison are looking forward to this season on the farm. “If any businesses or creatives are looking to collaborate, we’d love to chat! We have a lot of great events lined up this summer, and we can’t wait to be fully immersed in our second season on the farm!” ●

*To learn more about Dancing Greens Farm, visit its website at [dancing-greens.com](http://dancing-greens.com) or visit it on Instagram @dancinggreensfarm. Check out the shindigs calendar at [dancing-greens.com/shindigs](http://dancing-greens.com/shindigs) or visit in person at 214 Blue Hill Road, Great Barrington, MA.*





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## K9 Fit For Life

496 Route 82, Hopewell Junction, NY. melissa.brady@gmail.com

K9 Fit For Life came to life in March of 2021. “This year, after taking a break, I decided to revamp and reopen the business,” said owner, Melissa Brady. “I will be exclusively in the Millerton area, including Connecticut, and most classes will be held at Ledge-wood Kennel where I started nearly eight years ago.” The services that K9 Fit For Life will provide include basic and advanced obedience training, canine conditioning and refresher, drop-off day training, evaluation seminars, and training on trails, among others. Melissa says, “K9 Fit For Life takes pride in giving pet owners the confidence and motivation to be able to train their own dogs and gain the leadership skills and knowledge to keep the training going for life.” The most rewarding part of her job is watching a pet owner grow and become the confident leader that their dog needs to be able to learn and live a happy life. “To see the owner and dog work together and develop that special bond, makes my heart happy. There are so many pet owners and dogs who need help. My goal is to help as many as I can so we can keep as many dogs as possible out of the shelter. I am confident that I can make a difference in the lives of my pet dog clients.”

# JORDANA HALPERN COMMUNICATIONS



## Jordana Halpern Communications

111 Sheldon Road, Wingdale, NY. jordana@jordanahalpern.com  
jordanahalpern.com

Jordana Halpern started her company in 2021 after a long career in strategic communications, marketing, and program management for a diverse range of non-profit, professional, and government agencies. “Telling people about your expertise, services, and commitment to delivering what you promise with a compelling, relevant story is the best way to help people find you,” Jordana said. As a writer, editor, and communications professional, she helps create original and refreshed content for websites, newsletters, media releases, and more. What sets Jordana apart? “I get to know you. I listen to what is important to you and I tell your story in your voice, staying intentional and thoughtful with a holistic approach to create a greater whole product from the sum of the parts.” The most rewarding part of the business for Jordana is helping people share their stories, highlight their specialities, and promote their products and services. “It’s all about connecting the dots – and there are a lot of dots. Let’s have fun aligning your business with the people who will most benefit from the services you provide.”



## Manna Catering Company

PO Box 425, Salisbury, CT. (845) 233-8513. wholefoodschef1@gmail.com  
mannacateringco.com

Manna Catering Company provides chef services for private dinner parties, large functions, weekly grocery home delivery, and preparation of healthy meals. Owner Gina Trivelli is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY, and has been a private chef for the entirety of her career. She’s also certified as a holistic health coach and has worked in all kinds of catering in the Tri-state area. “I’m passionate about cooking with pure, natural, and quality ingredients,” she said. Manna Catering believes in an “earth-to-table” approach, which promotes serving fresh, seasonal, and often locally sourced ingredients to make elegant and delicious food that is also health-promoting and nutritious. “By working directly with farmers and growers, we are assured of the freshest food. At the same time, we are supporting animal welfare and the local economy and helping preserve farmland and open space.”



## Foxtrot Farm & Flowers

6862 NY-82, Stanfordville, NY. foxtrotfarmflowers@gmail.com  
foxtrotfarmflowers.com

Foxtrot Farm & Flowers is a mom & pup (yes, pup) flower farm and flower studio nestled within the rolling hills of Stanfordville, NY, that was established by Kate Farrar. After working in local agriculture for ten years, Kate opened Foxtrot in 2021. Foxtrot offers an abundant seasonal flower CSA that has pickup locations throughout the Hudson Valley. You can also find it at the Millerton Farmers Market every Saturday. Additionally, it does custom arrangements and stylings for weddings. “At Foxtrot, we use no-till practices and are committed to regenerative growing,” Kate said. “In addition to growing and arranging flowers, we also host events throughout the summer, including farm dinners, concerts, and workshops. We also offer our barn and event space as a venue rental.” The most rewarding part of the business is serving the local community and making life-long friends in the process. “We hope to keep doing what we’re doing for many years to come, and we can’t wait to see how the farm evolves in the coming years.”

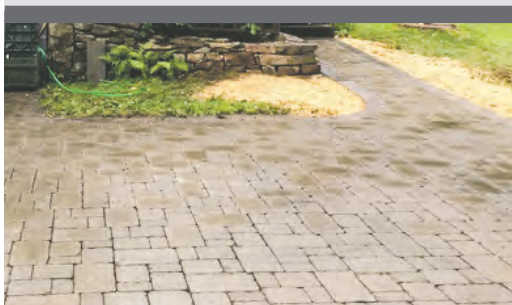
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# REIMAGINE YOUR DREAM HOME

## LOWER YOUR PAYMENT With No Mortgage Insurance

Are higher monthly payments making it hard to qualify for the home loan you want? Get back in the game with only 10% down and no monthly mortgage insurance (MI) payment.

## LOW DOWN PAYMENT For Multi-Family Homes

Earn income while you live in your home with mortgage loan options for 2-4 family unit primary residences. Only 5% down payment required!

Connect with your local mortgage expert today!  
Visit [www.nbtbank.com/mortgage](http://www.nbtbank.com/mortgage) to learn more.

