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THE END AND BEGINNING

December is such a crazy month in my opinion. It marks the end of the year, while it marks the "almost" start of something new: the new year. It's a busy time of year, maybe the busiest! For many it can be the most joyous time of year, while for others it can be challenging. The air often feels electric because there's such a hubbub during this month with everyone going a million miles in every direction. Sometimes it feels like folks are throwing everything and the kitchen sink at it, trying to get it all in. We've got winter concerts, end of school year "things," winter markets, various holiday performances and activities, not to mention the holiday get-togethers and parties ... the list goes on and on. Add on to that our own special hustle and bustle of getting all of the gifts, decorations, as well as holiday food and drink. Or maybe this is just all me and you're a planner like my sister-in-law and you've finished all your shopping and planning by Thanksgiving. Bless your heart if you have. But that's not me. I'm one of those who doesn't believe the Christmas season starts until after Thanksgiving. But with that comes the stress of cramming it all in, and that's on me.

That said, and let me take a deep breath, here we are. We're in it. It's December. How am I doing? I'm trying to simplify things and make it more about the experiences and not harp on getting all the little things just so. Or at least I'm hoping to do that. I don't need a repeat of last year when my eye twitched for five weeks before Christmas and I spent Christmas Day sick on the couch. I'm trying to take some quiet moments to reflect on 2025, which literally zipped by in a flash, while also having another quiet moment to think about the coming year and all that I want to accomplish in 2026. It's a fresh slate, as they say. It's a new beginning. I view it as an opportunity, too: let all the old go (that you want to let go) and start anew ... however that may look for you. There is no time like the present, and you'll only regret the things in life that you didn't do. That's my approach at least, and that seems to work for me. But I hope that you too take a quiet moment in the December rush to reflect back on your last year as you plan your coming year. Write it all down, too. Seeing it in black and white feels more real. Regardless of how you end your year and start the new, I wish you all the best, I thank you for the year that is passing, and I wish you a very happy new year.

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir



DECEMBER 2025

From our *Main Street Magazine* family to yours, happy holidays!

Photo by
Olivia Valentine

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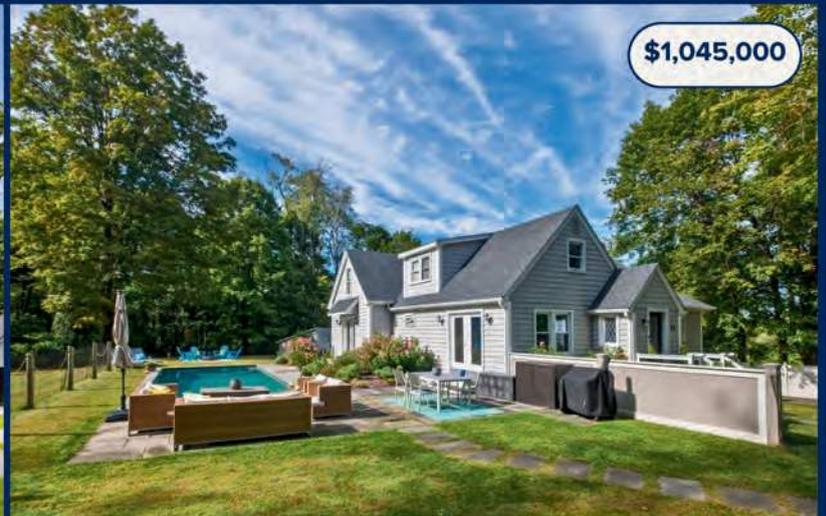


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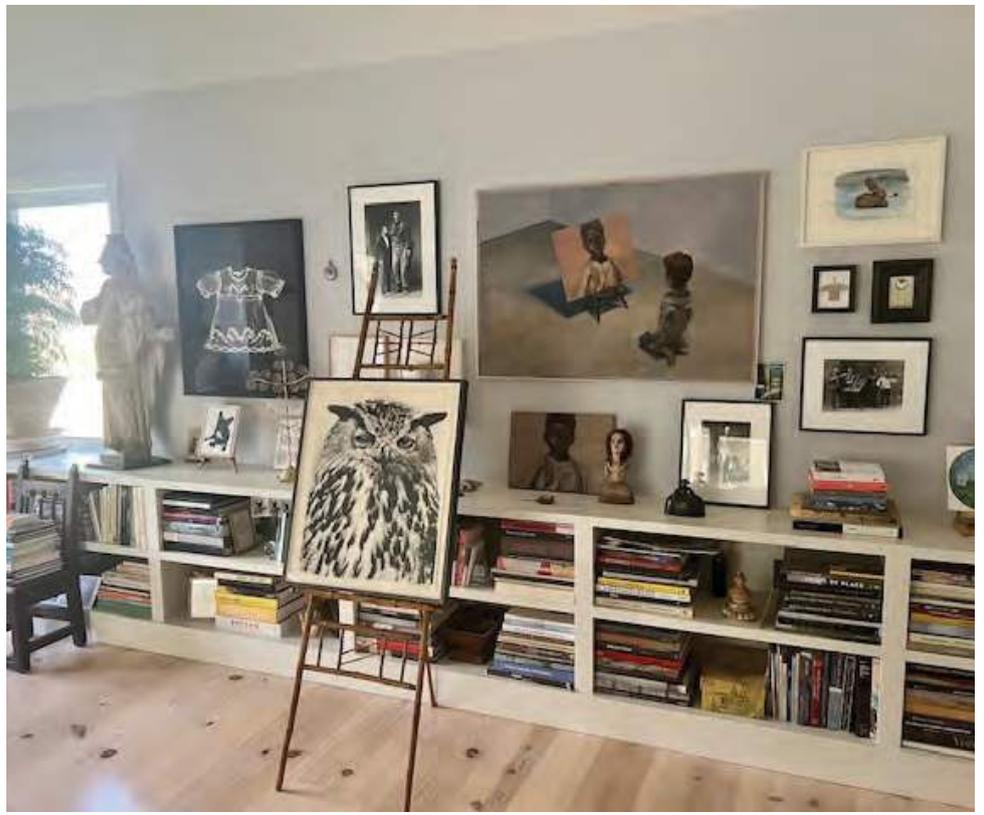
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THE STORY BEHIND THE ART

- KIM SCHMIDT

By Leora Armstrong
info@mainstreetmag.com

Behind many artists and creatives are galleries, curators, and collectives whose passion for art, in both historical and contemporary senses, supports these artists in showcasing their work on a broader platform than studio visits. This helps the artists place their work, allowing them to focus on the creative aspect of their world. I met Kim Schmidt at a gallery show. She has a genuine passion for her practice. Growing up in New York City, she witnessed the art world through multiple facets and has worked with some incredible artists. Schmidt wants to know the artist's narrative, why they are driven to make pieces, and also how to find a way to showcase their work and voice. Her positive approach to creativity and living with art and objects we love is infectious.

Where did you study art, and what prompted you to have a career working in the art world?

Born and raised in Manhattan, growing up with my three sisters was amazing; we were all encouraged to look at art, and our parents loved it, collecting works that gave me an early appreciation for seeing their joy as they looked at an Ellsworth Kelly or a Howard Hodgkin. I also realized that anyone could collect. That can be as small as a single piece from an artist, but art is accessible to everyone.

I transferred to Georgetown from an open curriculum in Europe, which initially felt stifling, especially being in a dorm. However, I soon found my feet off campus and loved being im-

mersed in DC, with its numerous museums and research facilities, such as Dumbarton Oaks, and, of course, the National Mall, with its museums on my doorstep. Interning each summer in NYC galleries, I knew my calling. Studying photography, photogravure became my favorite, a wonderful medium that is also incredibly challenging.

After a wonderful eight years with Crown Point Press, I started at Marlborough Gallery, which was a fantastic experience, a vast gallery with multiple locations in Madrid, Barcelona, Santiago de Chile, London, and New York. Throughout my career, I have worked with some incredible artists, including John Cage, Claudio Bravo, Richard Estes, and Paula Rego, and it was a great privilege.

As Magdalena Abakanowicz said, "Art does not solve problems but makes us aware of their existence. It opens our eyes to see and brains and hearts to imagine." However, at that time, the art world was predominantly male dominated, both in galleries and among artists. I started as the sales director of the gallery's print department, and I slowly introduced more women into the roster and to the clients. Seton Smith, Anne Chu, Stacey Davidson, and Jean Pagliuso were a few of these artists, and it was such an honor to work with them.

It was an exciting time, joining artists with printers for editions and hosting their exhibitions. In the gallery, we were a tight team. I traveled

to exciting museum fairs across both Europe and the West Coast to work with artists, building relationships and deep friendships that have lasted throughout my career. It is a thrilling moment when you can call an artist to tell them their work has been sold or accepted into a collection or museum. For the better-known artists, this was expected, but the newer or younger artists felt truly valued and often laughed back with gratitude and humility. These relationships are pivotal, from the first studio visit, when clients come to see the artist's studio and hear the narrative behind the work.

Staying with Marlborough Gallery for 20 years was never dull. Saturdays were our busiest day, as everyone came to view art, as well as curating work for shows and fairs. It has been a gratifying career, thanks to all these connections and lifelong friendships with artists, peers, and clients. I cut my teeth on the vibrancy and grit of New York iCity.

I later worked at Mary Ryan/Ryan Lee Gallery for six years as director of sales, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Eventually, however, I realized it was time to step away from the gallery world, and I never looked back. I founded Kim Schmidt Fine Art in 2021, but its creation was a long time in the making.

What was it about this area that prompted the move?

In 2013, Andre and I initially purchased, somewhat spontaneously, an old, restored farmhouse in Ancramdale and then moved to Millerton in 2017. We have been here largely full-time since the pandemic.

This area has always been rich in artists, and now that I am here, I feel part of the art world, with many friends who are curators, artists, or gallerists. I have witnessed the Was-

saic Project evolve and grow, drawing many artists to this location to work, explore, and put the area on the map as a destination for art, as have multiple galleries that have added satellite spaces upstate. I have hosted annual pop-up shows at Furnace Art on Archive and hold salons in our apartment, typically twice a year. I am happy not to have a brick-and-mortar space, but I often acquire art for clients who have known me for a long time. I also show at various art fairs, such as the IFPDA Fair and Art on Paper.

Pulling together the Ukraine benefit show also put me in touch with many artists here. We managed to raise about half a million dollars with their help and generosity, as well as the support of many local community members, which was fantastic. Art can bring people and communities together for a cause and support so many people. All of this is made possible through the creative process.

Can you describe your experience in curating exhibitions or collections?

Pulling a print edition was always exciting for me. I just love being with the artists on press. Creating something for a print publication; selecting the artists; matching the project to the perfect medium; and choosing the inks, the papers, and the titles – it was magical. At a pre-digital time, a considerable team effort was required to complete this finished body of work and then work to find its home.

When a particular print came to market and you knew it would be a success and likely increase in value, it was exciting to see the fever the art generated.

I genuinely love the genesis behind the work, and it is essential to know that narrative. I believe being an artist is one of the most noble professions, as artists bring so much joy and awareness to the world we live in.

One of my favorite aspects of my work is installing art, whether for an exhibition, in a client's home, or within my own space. I find it deeply rewarding to place objects in proximity and observe how they begin to speak to one another, how relationships and energy form between them.



Above: Kim Schmidt at Arbus Art Fair. Below: Clive Smith. Beak, Claw, Hand Brush (at one time they lived together) 2016. Oil on canvas. 24x24 inches. Opposite page, L-R: Richard Estes. Study, VI, New York Harbor, 1997. Color woodblock print on Echizen - Kozo paper. 9 3/4 x 7 3/4 inches. Sheet: 17 3/4 x 13 3/4 inches. Edition of 45. Kim Schmidt Salon NYC.

I'm particularly drawn to salon-style installations; there's a sense of alchemy in watching the composition come to life before your eyes.

This love of installation naturally extends to my passion for curating exhibitions, fairs, and pop-ups. Over the past two years, I've had the pleasure of organizing two projects at Furnace Art on Paper, Kathleen Kucka's space, which will be closing at the end of this year. Working on those exhibitions within our own community was a significant experience, an opportunity to connect artists, audiences, and places through shared visual dialogue.

What is the best piece of advice you were given regarding your curatorial practice?

I have had many wonderful mentors along the way, particularly Kathan Brown at Crown Point Press, with whom I worked for eight years. She recognized that we were the next generation in the art world and wanted to teach us how it was done. Above all, she valued the artist! It was not easy to make a mark in a male-dominated world, but the relationships I have formed have been my strongest allies. It is through the love of a piece of work that the work will sell, not necessarily its value. Living with what you love is essential and never to just 'sell' – know the story behind a body of work, see the artist, and build good relationships. It is teamwork. It is interesting; I have been involved in selling art throughout my entire career, but I have never been an aggressive salesperson. It was never about the

numbers, and fortunately, this worked for me and is also why I would not open a physical space today.

What artists or writers inspire you, or have influenced your journey?

There are so many. I feel fortunate to have encountered countless artists, both historically through reading and studying and through personal connections made through shared meals, studio visits, travels, and exhibitions. Exposure to artists and their unique perspectives has always been essential to me, and in many ways, a career in the gallery world made sense and seemed like a natural path.

I have many personal anecdotes to share from my years at Crown Point Press and Marlborough. It was a privilege to meet and build relationships with so many extraordinary artists and curators. I was often invited into their studios and homes, included in dinners and events, and able to witness their processes up close. These experiences shaped not only my understanding of art but also my sense of community. For me, there is no greater joy than placing an artist's work in a collection where it will be genuinely valued and seen and help them in their journey. The life of an artist managing a studio practice and making excellent work is never easy: it can be isolating, uncertain, and financially precarious. I have had moments when notifying an artist

Continued on next page ...



of a sale, large or small, has meant they could pay their studio rent that month. That kind of connection and tangible impact is what continues to inspire me; it's why I continue to do what I do.

I have also maintained a lifelong commitment to espousing women artists. From an early age, I was both fascinated and perplexed by the scarcity of women's representation in the galleries and museums I visited. It didn't make sense, and yet it was rarely discussed. Fortunately, that conversation has become more visible, and I am proud to play even a small part in helping women artists find their voices and audiences.

One of my most formative professional experiences was my time with Crown Point Press in New York City. The gallery's gorgeous 3,000-square-foot space at 568 Broadway was alive with energy and creativity. Artists such as Pat Steir, Francesco Clemente, Judy Pfaff, and John Cage would visit regularly to proof and sign their new editions. Being part of that environment was extraordinary – I knew I was exactly where I was supposed to be, and I never tired of it. That kind of exposure and intimacy with the creative process feels rarer today, and I remain grateful to have experienced it firsthand.

My husband and I continue to collect and support work along these same lines, particularly focusing on women artists, among them Eve Bidle, Louise Bourgeois, Stacey Davidson, Tania Alvarez, Kathleen Kucka, Ghost of a Dream, Valerie Hammond, Jean Pagliuso, Paula Rego, Kiki Smith,



and Sandy Skoglund, many of whom have become dear friends. Their work and their dedication to their practice continue to inspire me every day.

How do you stay updated on current trends and developments in the art world?

I stay engaged with art in NYC and worldwide, primarily walking through current exhibitions in person with colleagues and artists. These shared explorations often evolve into full-day itineraries, mapped out on See Saw, which combine studio visits, gallery tours, and informal discussions over meals, an essential part of how I absorb and exchange ideas.

Earlier in my career, when I worked in the gallery world, the exchange of ideas was constant. Writers, artists, and collectors frequently visited the gallery, and we maintained subscriptions to art magazines and journals, which kept us informed worldwide. The atmosphere in New York during the 1980s and 1990s was dynamic!

Now, in addition to in-person dialogue, I stay informed through several publications and podcasts, including *Artnet*, *Art News*, *Modern Art Notes*, and *The Great Women Artists* podcasts, which provide thoughtful insights into current conversations in contemporary art.

Do you have a project, series, or show you are most proud of?

It isn't easy to pinpoint just one project, as each has held significance at different points in my career. However, two moments stand out as particularly meaningful. One was curating the photogravure exhibition during my time at Marlborough Gallery, a true highlight. I had long been fascinated by the medium of photogravure. I was both surprised and deeply grateful when I conceived the idea for this exhibition and was then entrusted with curating it. It presented an overview of the medium's evolution from its historical origins to contemporary practice. The process, which unfolded over many months, was profoundly rewarding.

Grace Glueck's exhibition review in *The New York Times*, titled "When Faster and Cheaper Is Not Necessarily Better," remains one of my happiest



Above: Kim Schmidt booth at McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, TX. Below: Valerie Hammond, *Deer with Tears*, 2024. Etching ink and watercolor on handmade Indigo paper. 27 x 25.5 inches. Unique.

professional memories. For a moment, upon reading the title, I feared it might be a critique, but it was instead a thoughtful and complimentary reflection on both the exhibition and the enduring quality of the medium I so admire.

Another recent highlight was assisting the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas, in acquiring Alice Ayccock's monumental sculpture, "Devil Whirls," for their campus. I have deep ties to both the museum and the San Antonio arts community, and it was an honor to contribute to a project of such scale and significance. The entire process from site visits to installation was a collaborative and inspiring experience, and the work now occupies a prominent and dynamic place on the McNay Museum grounds.

What advice would you give an artist today?

Do not be too pushy in presenting your art; instead, be professional and proof, proof, proof! Use professional images with accurate data, and update and maintain your website. Know your work and where to properly showcase it so that it aligns with the gallery's or dealer's voice. Know who you are targeting, and most importantly, keep trying. Keep searching and always be curious. If you are interested in curating, I recommend applying for an internship and exploring the diverse fields that the art world has to offer. I loved mentoring my interns, and many went on to work within the art world in their own capacity. So much happens in this world, it is not just high heels and cocktails. I hang work, wield hammers, use spirit levels,

work long days, and navigate between clients and artists. Most importantly, you need a sense of humor for the fairs and lots of stamina for longer days. Being able to work with the public is a valuable skill, which not everyone has developed.

Do you have a favorite show for 2025, or one you are most looking forward to in 2026?

Among recent exhibitions, several have left a strong impression. Noah Davis's exhibit at the Barbican in London was a standout, profoundly moving and beautifully curated. We look forward to seeing it again when it travels to the United States. Laura Owens at Matthew Marks Gallery in New York was another of my favorites. Christopher Wool's *See Stop Run* was both memorable and inventive, and the recent Giorgio Morandi exhibitions at both Mattia De Lucca and David Zwirner in New York offered quiet reflections on form and stillness.

Looking ahead, I am particularly anticipating the 61st Venice Biennale, titled "In Minor Keys," in 2026. While Koyo Kouoh's curatorial vision will be altered, we are hearing that it will still be her vision: "a tender response to a chaotic world." I am eager to experience how that translates across national pavilions and practices. I plan to spend a week in Venice with close friends and artists, walking, cooking, looking, and learning together. I can hardly wait! •

To learn more about Kim Schmidt, you can visit her website kimschmidtfineart.com, email her at kimschmidtart@gmail.com, or find her on Instagram [@kimschmidtart](https://www.instagram.com/kimschmidtart).

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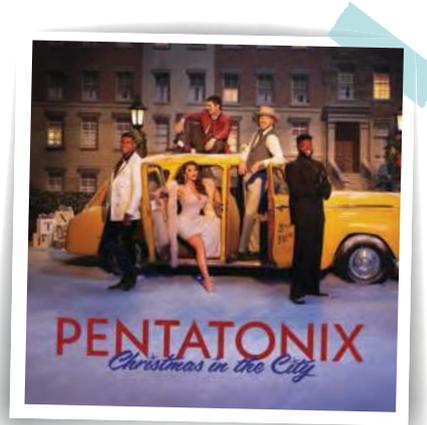
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Charles Meryon, *The Vampire* (detail), 1853, etching on paper. The Clark, 1968.4

DECEMBER MUSTS

to see



Winterlights at Naumkeag. What are the holidays without Christmas lights? I recall driving around with my parents during the holiday season to look for Christmas lights as a kid. I wish I could share those same types of memories with my daughter, but sadly, not many people decorate the outside of their houses the way they used to. To remedy that, this year we decided to visit Winterlights at Naumkeag in Stockbridge, MA, for the first time. There's nothing quite like a cold winter night accompanied by the soft glow of Christmas lights to ignite the spirit of Christmas! Running from November 28 through January 3, the Winterlights at Naumkeag has been a holiday staple in the Berkshires since 2018. Each year, thousands come to experience the sparkling light displays, custom laser shows, festive music, and seasonal treats. To learn more about the Winterlights at Naumkeag or to purchase tickets, visit thetrustees.org/program/winterlights-massachusetts. Photo courtesy of The Trustees of Reservations' website.



TO LISTEN

Christmas in the City by Pentatonix. Some may say that any time before Thanksgiving is too early for anything Christmas-related, much less Christmas music. Well, "Bah Humbug", that's where I respectfully disagree. Christmas to me is a season, and as soon as the last trick-or-treater leaves, Mariah Carey has thawed and you can find me cranking the Christmas jams for the remainder of the year. While anything from traditional holiday hits to modern day classics are all on my playlist, there is certainly no shortage of the iconic acapella group Pentatonix. The group's debut Christmas album was released in 2012, and each year, their holiday hits have just gotten better and better. On October 24, 2025, the group released their eighth Christmas studio album, *Christmas in the City*. Pentatonix's choice of musical arrangements, collaborations with other artists, and surprising appearance of instruments are always unmatched and impressive – and this album is no different. I will say it has more of a theatrical vibe, which is a bit unlike their previous albums, but the holiday energy still carries through. I was able to see Pentatonix live during their tour last year for the holidays. While it's one thing to hear them through the stereo speakers, it's a completely different and incredible experience to see them live! Watching their collaborative skills come together right before your eyes makes you appreciate their talent on another level. Santa, if you're reading this, I'm a size Pentatonix Christmas concert ticket! Until then, I'd like to wish you all a "Holly Jolly Christmas"!

GO WATCH

Holiday Specials. Each year, one of the things I look forward to the most during December is watching all of the festive holiday specials that premiere on TV. There are plenty to choose from, of course, but I'd be remiss not to start with the "Christmas in Rockefeller Center" airing on NBC on December 3. The annual tree-lighting ceremony will be hosted by Reba McEntire this year and will include a display of musical performances. On December 2, ABC will be airing "Dancing with the Holidays," a ballroom-inspired holiday special featuring the professional dancers from *Dancing with the Stars* and including festive-themed routines. Also on ABC on December 2 is "CMA Country Christmas," while NBC will air "Christmas in Nashville," on December 3. "A Motown Christmas," hosted by Smokey Robinson and Halle Bailey will air on NBC on December 9 and promises to have performances by Motown legends, as well as today's stars, to celebrate the iconic Hitsville USA classics and their favorite holiday songs, too. Looking for all of the holiday classic specials like "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "Frosty the Snowman," and "Shrek the Halls"? Have no fear, they are airing on the major networks at least once throughout the month. Check your local listings for more information.



To shop: Winter Craft Fairs

On Saturday, December 6 from 10am to 4pm, the MJN Convention Center in Poughkeepsie, NY, will be hosting its annual winter craft fair. With over 100 talented, local vendors, this craft fair is a great way to find the perfect gift for everyone on your list. Explore a variety of handmade items, unique gifts, holiday decor, yummy treats, and more. Also on Saturday, December 6, and Sunday, December 7, Troutbeck in Amenia, NY, will be hosting its annual Holiday Bazaar. With a thoughtful selection of vendors, this event celebrates small businesses with craftsmanship and creativity at the forefront. You can really get your shopping checked off the list because also on December 5 and 6, Noble Horizons in Salisbury, CT, is hosting its annual holiday market. Browse holiday gifts and enjoy free hot cider and donuts while supplies last. Proceeds directly benefit Noble Horizons residents. To learn more about these craft fairs, visit the organization's websites. Photo courtesy of Troutbeck's website.



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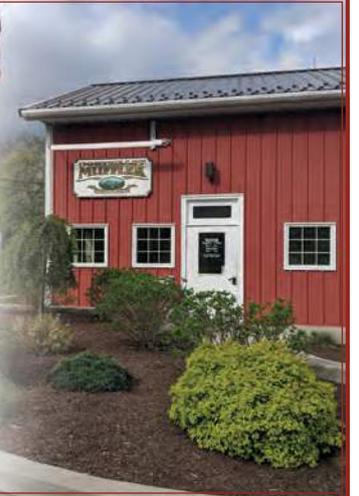


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Community banker

George Whalen III, president and chairman of the board of Bank of Millbrook



*By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com*

On a gray Wednesday morning, George Whalen III invited me into the conference room of the Bank of Millbrook's newest branch in Millerton, NY. Whalen may look like a banker, with a starched oxford shirt and tie, but his easy manor is spontaneous and genuine. Those who know him well describe him as "a good guy."

You're the third George to head the Bank of Millbrook. How did that happen?

The Bank of Millbrook was started in 1891 by a group of local citizens in the just-incorporated Village of Millbrook. By the time of the dark days of the Great Depression in 1932, the bank required new leadership and capital. My grandfather George Sr. and his wife Lillian were hard workers and had built several local businesses – a real estate and insurance brokerage and a dairy. When there was an opportunity to acquire stock in the bank, they were in the right place at the right time, and our family eventually gained a controlling interest.

My grandfather was incredibly personable, and people trusted him. He became the bank's president in 1938 at the age of 36 until my father George Jr. succeeded him in 1970. In 1998, I was elected president. My son George IV, who joined the bank in 2018, is now senior vice president of lending and next in line.

What would people be surprised to learn about you?

Maybe that I originally wanted to take over the family dairy farm or that I studied sociology in college and was a social worker before getting a MBA and becoming a banker. Or that my idea of leisure is running 10 to 12 miles on Sundays with my running group, the Junk Yard Dogs. I don't play golf.

Why did the Bank of Millbrook open a branch in Millerton?

We are always looking for opportunities and had been considering Millerton for a long time. Initially we passed on the Key Bank branch when it was offered to us, but when Salisbury Bank was purchased by NBT, we realized there was an opportunity for our kind of banking in Millerton.

It's going really well. We are now the only community bank in the northeast corner of Dutchess County

with branches in Millbrook, Pine Plains, Stanford, Amenia, and Millerton.

The Millerton branch is so modern – not like your branches in historic buildings.

We wanted it to be compatible with the style of this building. Our architect Doug Larson helped transform the former Elizabeth's Jewelry store into a light-filled, modern space. Our interior designer, Rebecca Hathaway, selected everything locally. The cow paintings are by Virginia Meili, and the dollar bills over there are all by local artists.

How do you compete with other banks? What sets you apart?

I used to say other community banks were our competitors, but they have largely disappeared. The consolidation of banks has led to a reduction in relationship-based lending, as larger institutions favor standardized underwriting criteria creating credit gaps for small businesses, especially in rural areas like ours.

Continued on next page ...

Above, left: The newest branch of the Bank of Millbrook opened in the summer of 2025 in Millerton, NY. Photo courtesy of the Bank of Millbrook.

Above, right: George Whalen III, here with one of his Holsteins, originally wanted to be a farmer. Photo by Carlise Stockton

Our customers select us because of our local connections and personalized service, which large banks can't offer. The bank's board of 12 directors are all local business people who refer customers to us.

We can do everything a large bank can and do it faster and better with a personal touch. There's an ease with doing banking with us. Everyone who works at the bank from the teller line to the board lives and works in our community. Our culture is stable and consistent – no 180-degree turns. The mortgages and commercial loans we extend remain on our books, and we retain the relationship with the customer. We know our customers and understand their business. History makes a difference.

One of the bank's directors told me he gives your cell phone number out to potential customers. Is that true?

Yes it's true, and my son George and I sign off on most of the lending – commercial and mortgages. We are always asking for business.

What's challenging for banks right now?

We've learned to deal with the increased scrutiny and regulation after the 2008 banking crisis. Right now the biggest challenge is ever-changing technology and cyber security. We used to think we could do this internally, but two years ago decided to outsource it to experts.

What's your take on the local economy?

The business climate is strong, and our downtowns continue to evolve. The real estate market shows no sign of weakening with a lack of supply and healthy demand.

You mentioned a strategic plan. What are your goals?

Our strategy is steady growth, growing with our customers and taking advantage of opportunities that fit with our way of doing business.

When did Bank of Millbrook add money management capability in addition to consumer banking products, mortgages, and commercial lending?

We started the fiduciary business 25 years ago and built it from scratch. It took guts. We have our own portfolio managers who create customized investment strategies for clients and will also pick up the phone and talk about the market. We're very proud of their track record compared to various indexes. We now manage over \$200,000,000. In general, our approach is conservative. We don't chase the latest get-rich-quick schemes.

Residential mortgages are a big part of your business. Why do home buyers prefer the Bank of Millbrook to online companies like Rocket Mortgage and big New York banks?

Again, it's the personal, individual interaction. Being local, we understand the value of the real estate and can make fast decisions. We primarily do adjustable rate mortgages, but we also offer 10-year and 15-year fixed-rate mortgage products. We do not fix the rate on mortgages for 30 years because of interest rate risk.

The Bank of Millbrook does not sell mortgages to other financial institutions or investors. Our ARM product can be more affordable and attractive, especially in the current environment, where there is the general expectation that interest rates will decline. We maintain the client relationship and



Above: Three of the friendly faces you might encounter at the new Millerton branch of Bank of Millbrook. Photo courtesy of the Bank of Millbrook. Below: An enormous dollar bill painting by local artist Erik White adorns the entrance to Bank of Millbrook's Millerton branch. Photo by Carlise Stockton.

service the loans ourselves. George IV and I personally approve all of the mortgages we make.

Who are the directors of The Bank of Millbrook?

The twelve directors on our board are primarily owners of local businesses. We meet monthly and discuss business issues and opportunities. Some, like Farnham Collins and my father, have served on the board for decades and offer incredible perspective. The bank is actually owned by Millbrook Bank System Inc., which is a single bank holding company created to make it easier for shareholders to buy and sell their shares in the Bank of Millbrook.

Has the bank been approached by likely purchasers?

Not recently. We've said no thank you for three generations.

What business leaders do you admire?

Well, all bankers admire Jamie Dimon, but I think locally, I admire the perspective, the instincts, and the values of my 94-year-old father, George T. Whalen Jr.

Can you recommend your favorite business book?

With limited downtime, my reading is more newspapers and magazines or financial newsletters. Anything I can get my hands on that provides business news.

What do you worry about most?

What I think about most is how to allocate my time between my family, the bank, and its 50 employees; our real estate business; and my civic responsibilities to the Millbrook Community Partnership and the development of the Thorne Building and Bennett Park. They are all so important to me.

What's the best part of being a community bank president?

No one has ever asked me that. Leading a healthy strong bank for the next generation. I love coming to work. Our region has changed in a good way with a larger weekend influence, which has strengthened our communities and our real estate market. ●

To learn more about Bank of Millbrook you can visit or call one of their many branches, or visit them online at bankofmillbrook.com.





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PISTACHIO NUT- CRUSTED *Salmon* WITH LEMON BEURRE BLANC

By Olivia Valentine with
Caroline Markonic
info@mainstreetmag.com

I am in love with this salmon recipe. I worked at a local restaurant in my late teens and early twenties, and this dish was on the menu back then. Believe it or not, it's still there more than 30 years later. It's that good!

I first tried recreating this salmon dish during COVID, when I found myself craving this exact meal. Restaurants were closed, and I just had to have it. I thought it would be tricky. The idea of making a beurre blanc intimidated me, but it turned out to be much easier than expected. The secret? Super cold butter and a very quick whisk.

The salmon itself couldn't be simpler: a drizzle of olive oil, a coating of finely chopped pistachios, and a sprinkle of salt and pepper. Bake, then serve it over rice with your favorite vegetable. Drizzle that luscious lemon beurre blanc over everything, yes, even the veggies!

This recipe makes enough for four servings, and I can almost guarantee that if you make it for guests over the holidays, they'll thank you for it – and ask for the recipe before dessert! Or, they will be asking to make a reservation at your house for dinner!

Happy holidays and as always, enjoy!

Ingredients

Salmon

- 4 salmon fillets
- 1 cup unsalted pistachios, chopped
- Olive oil (enough to coat each fillet)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Lemon beurre blanc

- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1½ tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons shallots, finely diced
- 8 ounces very cold unsalted butter, cut into tablespoons
- Sea salt, to taste
- Juice of ½ small lemon

Instructions

1. Prepare the salmon.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a baking pan.

Brush each salmon fillet with olive oil so the pistachios will adhere. Press the chopped pistachios onto the top of each fillet, then season with salt and pepper.

Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until the salmon flakes easily with a fork.

2. Make the beurre blanc.

In a small to medium saucepan, combine the white wine, white wine vinegar, and shallots over medium



heat. Simmer until the liquid reduces to about two tablespoons.

While it reduces, keep your butter very cold (a quick chill in the freezer helps).

Whisk in the butter, whisking constantly until smooth and emulsified. Remove from heat and stir in the lemon juice. Season with sea salt to taste.

3. Serve.

Spoon the beurre blanc over the salmon and, well, everything on the plate! •

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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Give me shelter: *What's new with garages*

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

Garages are a relatively new addition to real estate, a new word in the English language with the advent of cars in 1902. By the mid 1920s, Ford was selling over two million Model T's every year in the United States, and real estate agents at the time reported that the first question asked by home buyers was about the garage. Today garages are largely invisible in real estate listing descriptions – seldom photographed, not usually highlighted as a key feature, and with size typically not included in square footage calculations; however, over 80% of home buyers reportedly factor in the garage when making their decision.

Garages are critical to buyers, especially those looking at new construction or high-end properties. Tom Callahan, expert renovator and real estate agent with Elyse Harney Real Estate, includes garages in all of his renovation projects, “Garages today are as important as a pool” in the experience of Callahan. “Virtually all new homes we design include a garage,” Jimmy Crisp of Crisp Architects in Millbrook observed. “Sometimes it’s part of the home and sometimes it’s free standing. The second story of a garage is a great place for a gym, guest quarters, home office, painting studio, or music studio.”

At the more accessible end of the real estate spectrum in standard multi-home developments, rare in our region, garages, after growing in size through the 2000s, have become smaller since COVID with rising construction costs and shrinking lot sizes. The share of new homes with three or more garage spaces has been decreasing since 2015, and the stan-

dard dimension for a two-car garage has declined from 24' by 24' to 20' by 20', but garages remain an indispensable feature.

Not just a garage

Few buyers need Jay Leno's 122,000-square-foot garage to store 150 cars, but owners of race cars and vintage classics need someplace to store them securely and conveniently. Lime Rock Park recently completed a 20-unit garage with direct access to the race track, offering racing enthusiasts a place to store their valuable automobiles. Each unit is 20' by 40' and can shelter four large cars or six smaller vehicles. Owners can hang out in the fully furnished owners' lounge with kitchen and have access to the balcony overlooking the back section of the track. They also have the use of a common bathroom complete with shower. Many of these condo units were sold before construction was even completed this summer, at prices from \$350,000 for a loft unit and \$250,000 without a loft. There are still a few garages available at \$250,000.

Luxury and classic cars are increasingly seen as investments and require specialized, secure storage facilities. Popular premium rented storage spaces, such as Precision Auto Storage in Millerton, provide security, privacy, temperature-controlled environments, driver's lounges, and services like battery charging, washing, detailing, and pick up and drop off. The soon-to-be-opened Covered Bridge Auto Storage in West Cornwall will offer secure and temperature-controlled individual units.

Reimagined garages

Garages are adaptable spaces that can



Above: The owner of this new home designed by Crisp Architects wanted an attached garage with plenty of extra living space on the second floor. Photo courtesy of Crisp Architects. Below: An aerial of Lime Rock Park. Photo courtesy of Lime Rock Race Way.

be transformed into something entirely different. The former auto body shop on one-acre of land in Mabbettesville in the Town of Washington was purchased for \$350,000 and modified to become Ray's Custom Training Gym.

The 1820 antique house at 31 Belgo Road in Lakeville, CT, that Callahan purchased in 2024 for \$750,000 and restored with Luis Felipe Arroyo is an elegant example. The pair converted a 22' by 17' attached garage into living space and added a striking stand-alone 1,568-square-foot-garage with living space above, dramatically upgrading the appearance, utility and eventual resale value of the property.

When James Demmert of Main Street Research purchased a former art gallery at 343-344 Main Street in Lakeville for his office in 2021, the converted commercial property on the large parking lot in the back was included in the price of \$600,000. “I knew right away that the back building would be an ideal spot for a garage to house my car collection,” Demmert said. With the help of Arroyo, the chestnut beams from the original carriage house were revealed and utilized in the construction of a modern, 1,378-square-foot heated garage to store Demmert's Porsches.

Should you build a garage?

If you are considering selling your

home, building a new garage (like adding an extra bathroom) does not offer a positive return on your investment, and the cost will properly not be recouped in a sale. The cost is just too high, and the return is uncertain. According to Crisp, “We have designed garages that cost as much as a small home. An estimate of the cost to build is anywhere from \$200 to \$800 per square foot.

On the other hand, replacing unattractive garage doors before sale is an improvement that makes financial sense. The least expensive and most important option is the one everyone dreads – cleaning out and organizing the garage and then adding a coat of paint and maybe even a window. Remember that the overall condition of the garage reflects on the owner's maintenance of the rest of the home.

Whether building new or adding, realtors always recommend keeping the garage in a style appropriate to the house, ideally with attic space that could be converted into an ADU or other uses, which helps future resale value. Full-time residents seem to prefer garages that are attached to the house, while second homers, who may avoid using the garage in snowy weather, seem to prefer detached garages with a country style that doesn't look like a suburban two-car garage attached to a ranch. ●



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Season of giving:

Local organizations give back during this holiday season



Courtesy of The Columbia Kitchen



Courtesy of the NECC



Courtesy of The People's Pantry

By Abby Audenino
abby@mainstreetmag.com

In the spirit of the upcoming holiday season, I always like to think about the ways that I can give back to my community. During the holidays when spending is already tight, it can be especially hard to come up with additional funds to donate to worthy causes, but I think it would behoove us all to remember that we don't always have to hand over money in order to make a difference. I've rounded up some local organizations where you can donate your money, time, or other goods in order to make a difference in your community.

Food pantries

Almost all towns and municipalities operate some kind of food pantry; you just have to know where to look. Many times, local food pantries operate in conjunction with local churches, as is the case for the **Food Pantry at St. Michael's** in Litchfield, CT. The food pantry delivers healthy groceries each month to seniors living in subsidized housing in the Town of Litchfield. St. Michael's acts as fiscal sponsor to permit tax-advantaged donations to fund the purchase of

food and offers use of the community house for storage and delivery preparation. Volunteers from across the community are welcomed.

The Columbia Kitchen (formerly the Columbia County Recovery Kitchen), located in Hudson, NY, was formed in 2020 as a response to economic uncertainty during the COVID pandemic. Since then, the organization has grown from preparing and delivering 200 meals per week to 8,000 meals each month throughout the City of Hudson, 23 towns, and four villages across Columbia County. The Columbia Kitchen's work is made possible through the generosity of volunteers; donations small and large; and partnerships with farms, charitable foundations, community organizations, and local government. The Columbia Kitchen's team currently includes five staff members and more than 100 volunteers – and they're always looking for more people who are interested in helping.

The Pine Plains, NY, **Community Food Locker** is located in the basement of the Methodist Church and is sponsored by the Council of Churches. The food locker is staffed entirely by volunteers, and food is distributed on the second Saturday of each month. On a monthly basis, the food locker serves 25 to 30 families, which is equivalent to approximately

40 adults and between 50 and 75 children. Some of the food distributed comes from monthly state supplies; the churches donate staples and toiletries; and local farms supply fresh seasonal vegetables, milk, and meat. The food locker also accepts food donations from the community.

In Millerton, NY, the **North East Community Center** works with the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY, The Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming, Tri Corner FEED, and Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley to operate a community food-access hub. Distribution occurs via an on-site food pantry, which offers weekly walk-in service using a client-choice model, as well as home delivery for transportation-limited neighbors. The community food-access hub also partners with local farms to deliver produce, eggs, and milk to food partners throughout the region.

In 2024, the hub distributed 159,891 pounds of fresh vegetables, fruit, eggs, and dairy throughout six area food pantries. Farms serving the hub have included Rock Steady Farm in Millerton, Chaseholm Farm in Pine Plains, Tenmile Farm Foundation in Amenia, and Ironwood Farm in Hudson.

In Great Barrington, MA, the **People's Pantry** has been distributing

locally sourced, healthy food whenever feasible since 1999. The People's Pantry was founded in response to an increased need for access to healthy food by Southern Berkshire County residents experiencing food insecurity. There are no income guidelines at the People's Pantry, and shoppers are welcome to visit once a week.

The organization is primarily run by volunteers from the community and supported with food collection and financial donations from local organizations and individuals. The People's Pantry provides shoppers with fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen meat and fish, baked goods, and dairy products, as well as a wide selection of shelf-stable items such as pasta, rice, canned goods, and toiletries. The People's Pantry provides locally sourced food whenever possible in partnership with The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, which supplies the pantry with shelf-stable and frozen foods. Community donations make up a substantial part of the pantry's inventory, and they are always looking for volunteers to fill a variety of roles.

Continued on next page ...

Veterans' organizations

You can donate to your local American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars post for community-based support, or learn more about county-wide, state-wide, or even national initiatives to provide support for veterans.

The Berkshire Veterans Outreach Center in Pittsfield, MA, offers a comprehensive array of services and resources for veterans, including help with the application process for VA benefits, housing assistance, legal assistance, and much more. The Berkshire Veterans Outreach Center also operates a no-cost weekly veteran food and clothing pantry. While the Berkshire Veterans Outreach Center is not a part of the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the organization director is accredited through the VA as a national service officer, which means that he is authorized to represent veterans and their families before the VA. For more information about volunteering and donating, visit berkshireveterans.org.

Mental Health America of Dutchess County, based in Poughkeepsie, NY, offers a variety of programs to support veterans at various stages of life. The Vet2Vet program offers support groups that take place on the first and third Wednesday of each month at the "Veteran's One-Stop" office in Pleasant Valley, NY. The HERO program provides Dutchess County veterans with an advocate and resources to combat homelessness. The Veterans Employment Training & Transitions Assistance Program helps Dutchess County veterans in all aspects of employment, includ-

ing resume building, job hunting, application, and interview preparation. The program also offers veterans the opportunity to obtain additional licenses and certifications in various fields to broaden their employment marketability. You can donate to MHA directly through its website or by contacting the organization at (845) 473-2500, extension 3083.

Local branches of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and animal rescues
The Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPCA was started in 1955 in Hudson, NY. Formed by Ella Merle and her daughter, Dede Kline, one small building with five dog kennels has today become a multi-faceted animal welfare organization holding up to sixty dogs and one hundred cats. Over the last six decades, CGHS has expanded its services to include low-cost veterinary services, a food bank, stray dog housing, community outreach, humane education, and more. CGHS accepts donations and volunteers.

Founded in 1871, the **Dutchess County SPCA** is one of the oldest SPCAs in the country. Located in Hyde Park, NY, the Dutchess County SPCA offers a variety of low-cost veterinary services, surrender and consultation, animal care education, and cremation services. There are many ways to donate to the Dutchess County SPCA, including fiscal donations or gifts of goods, stocks, or vehicles.

The Little Guild, the only limited admission shelter in northwest Connecticut, was founded in 1960 in West Cornwall, CT. In addition



Courtesy of The Columbia Kitchen

to covering standard daily needs and medical care, the Little Guild offers a variety of programs to help animals reach their full potential and become adoption success stories. For both cats and dogs, the Little Guild provides playgroups, learning activities, temperament testing, socialization, appropriate exercise, and mental stimulation. The Little Guild's volunteer program is open to the community and they also accept fiscal donations.

Other local organizations

Project SAGE (formerly named Women's Support Services, Inc.) is a non-profit domestic violence response agency based in Lakeville, CT, that serves Northwest Connecticut and the surrounding communities in New York and Massachusetts. Project SAGE's mission is to create social change to end interpersonal relationship violence by challenging attitudes and beliefs about power, control, and gender norms and by advocating for victims and survivors. Project SAGE works with people of all ages and from all backgrounds. Their services include a 24-hour crisis hotline, emergency shelter and housing support, individual counseling and safety planning, and support groups. Volunteers are critical to Project SAGE's work, and after completing a 20-hour certification program, volunteers can support clients in shelter, provide learning activities for children in pre-K and early elementary grades, answer the hotline, advocate for vital resources through

legislative outreach efforts, and more. Donations are also accepted.

In Flight, Inc., located in Red Hook, NY, aims to empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to reach for their hopes and dreams and support them achieving a meaningful quality of life. In Flight works to create and provide programming that simultaneously teaches independent living skills while supporting inclusion and community integration. In Flight provides residential programs and supportive apartments, day habilitation, pre-vocational services, supportive employment, and community services. In Flight offers opportunities to donate, fundraise, and volunteer. Volunteering with In Flight is a rewarding opportunity to make a direct and positive impact on the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Whether you choose to lend a hand at an event or share your skills and expertise, your time and dedication contribute significantly to creating an inclusive and supportive community. ●



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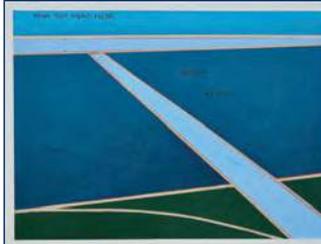
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“We just want to help people,”

rescue squads say about potential insurance reimbursement cuts



By Barbara Peduzzi
info@mainstreetmag.com

As of this writing, the government shutdown has just ended. One contentious impasse involved potential reductions to Medicare and Medicaid. Another issue is depletion of health insurance availability.

Much has been said about the fear of small, rural hospitals having to close as a result of these changes. A less-mentioned effect is, “Not only that, but you won’t have an ambulance to take you to wherever the nearest open one is.”

Chatham and Greenport Rescue Squads in New York and Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington, MA, agree about what cuts could mean to them, and the service they provide you: It’s not good.

Columbia County’s rescue squads: Chatham and Greenport

Chatham has already received a letter from the company used to bill patients, passing on that they have been told that the federal government will not process Medicare/Medicaid claims during the shutdown. Operations manager Esperanza Sanchez said, “We already expect a funding gap for October. We’re gonna see a small bit of what the bigger problem is gonna be very soon.”

Reimbursements have already seen processing delays; board of directors president Elijah Falkner predicted, “Three months later, we’re gonna feel the effects of this issue.”

Medicare, they both reflected, serves the most underprivileged members of society. Sanchez said, “Not having that funding is detrimental. We can’t raise rates because they can’t pay now.”

Falkner finished with, “It’s sad what we’re doing to our most vulnerable populations.”

Aidan O’Connor, executive director of Greenport Rescue Squad and president, board member, and paramedic with Greene County Paramedics, added his concerns: “I’m certainly worried about EMS, but hoping we can work together and work through it all.”

With potential changes ahead, he said, “GRS is doing everything possible to make us healthy as an organization for the next two to three years. I feel there will be some of the most painful EMS experiences, due to rising costs and reimbursements being stagnant.” Private insurance is already negotiating to reimburse less, with Medicare giving only a fraction of costs.

Cuts will be difficult to analyze, he feels, because, “We just don’t know how many people will fall off Medicaid and join the uninsured. Sometimes those people who are the higher users of the system require more care.

If we see too many coming off, that’s the biggest fear. We have a big bucket now of uninsured, and they are the hardest to collect on.”

Berkshire County’s rescue squad: Southern Berkshire EMS

Southern Berkshire EMS chief of operations Kevin Wall noted that, “Medicaid reimburses at the lowest rate of all insurers. Any cuts to the already low reimbursements would be of great concern to not only EMS agencies but also hospitals.”

The three rescue squads have been around through many changes.

Southern Berkshire formed as a volunteer agency in 1968, transitioning to paramedic and primarily career EMS, with some volunteers remaining, in 2014. Besides Great Barrington, they serve the communities of Alford, Egremont, Monterey, and Sheffield, MA.

As to the possibility of increased out-of-service times in their district if local Fairview Hospital were to close, Wall offered, “Yes, delays would be significant as the next closest facility is Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, 35-40 minutes farther from our service area. This would also increase wait times, as BMC is already experiencing longer wait times currently.”

The importance of volunteers

Greenport and Chatham both began as part of the local volunteer fire departments, in the mid-1930s.

In Greenport, that was when fire-fighters had to take an injured fellow fireman to the hospital when no ambulance came. They were the first in Columbia County to transition to career staff and are the busiest in the county, handling over 6,000 calls annually – an estimated total of 6,500 for 2025. Their district includes the city of Hudson and its surroundings, including much of the center of the county. They primarily transport to Columbia Memorial Hospital in Hudson.

In the 1970s, after much discussion, Chatham Rescue’s increasing call numbers led to adding non-fire department members and (gasp!) women. They operate from two stations, with four vehicles to cover the northeastern corner of the county, staffed by career paramedics and EMTs, augmented by a few remaining volunteers. The 300 calls a year back in the ‘70s has swelled to, as of mid-October, 2,334 for 2025. About 20% of their patients go to CMH, others to Albany or Pittsfield facilities, depending upon the severity of their condition and location of the incident.

Sanchez feels that CMH is in the most danger from cuts, “Due to a lot of factors, this will affect the smaller, local ones the most. It’s a trickling

Continued on next page ...

effect; hospitals have a hard time collecting because people can't pay without Medicare. That means the ambulance is also not getting paid to take them to the hospital with the capabilities to care for what they need."

Rescue squad funding

Medicare and Medicaid payments make up about half, or for 2025, \$923,000 of their \$1.8 million budget, which is predicted to rise to \$2.1 million for 2026. Private insurance, self-pay, and monies from towns served make up the rest of the squad income.

Cuts would definitely have adverse effects. Sanchez noted, "We're not in the business of saying 'no' to people, but with reduced income we would have to consider reducing staffing. This would not be good for the entire district."

Falkner added that, "It would affect local taxpayers. We would have to increase the amounts we get from the towns."

Greenport's annual budget is \$3.5 million, with about \$2.8 to \$2.9 million of that from billing, 87% of which is through Medicare/Medicaid. Monies from their municipalities served and the Columbia County EMS system make up the difference.

Potential cuts, staff, and rigs

O'Connor sees ACA cuts as being a massive hit to EMS, and notes they are bracing for that to impact in a negative way as they look to 2026 and 2027. GRS is already being very

thoughtful about raising money through donations and looking at ways to reduce total costs by collaborating with other nonprofits. Recent grants allowed them to purchase \$120,000 in new equipment.

Four ambulance districts in Columbia County are still locally operated. One has been part of a larger for-profit organization for many years. All are staffed with career paramedics and EMTs. An intricate, effective mutual aid system moves rigs and crews to provide coverage when any of the squads depletes their own resources. In other words, if you live in the Community Rescue Squad district (Copake, Hillsdale, and Ancram areas), don't be surprised when you call for an ambulance, that one from Chatham or Valatie shows up.

The challenges facing EMS

EMS is already in a tough spot. Decreasing volunteerism has forced squads to employ career staff, meaning payroll, perks, and bookkeeping. Pay must be competitive, but needs to be within budget constraints; many of the staff work for multiple agencies to make ends meet. Squads must also make ends meet, which they do by billing patients, which means income from insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid. Another income source is payment from towns served, which means annual negotiations at which town officials must balance their need for coverage against potential tax raises.

For many squads, Greenport among them, transporting patients from and to extended care facilities is a considerable percentage of their call volume. Any insurance cuts will certainly adversely affect payments for these.

The cost of doing business

Vehicle prices keep going up, and this will only increase with the new tariff levies. An ambulance costs \$100,000 or more, and that's before any equipment is added. In 2024, information from Chatham Rescue's Advanced Life Support Coordinator Dylan Garbarino noted, "Technology doesn't come cheap," as he listed a Stryker stretcher costing \$17,000,



All photos with this article contributed by Chatham and Greenport Rescue Squads.

a LifePac 15 cardiac monitor at \$45,000 (with the latest version coming in at \$60,000), Stryker stair chairs used for getting patients out of tight spaces or down stairs \$25,000 each, and child restraints to safely secure the small ones to the stretcher at \$17,000. And so on, all of it multiplied by the number of ambulances each squad operates.

Technology does not come cheap ... but neither do lives.

Most Columbia County squads depend upon the local hospital, Columbia Memorial Health, a part of the Albany Medical system, as a primary destination. Their closing completely would be "catastrophic to the EMS system," O'Connor emphasized. Recently, CMH announced plans to apply for redesignation as a critical care hospital. This would include drastically cutting beds and closing the ICU department, while adding operating rooms and specialty care. Squads are concerned that this will force them to make more transports to hospitals further away from their districts. There is a 'golden hour' of emergency care, meaning that the best outcomes happen when patients get the optimum care within one hour of an incident; further travel would drastically cut into this.

The additional transport times would also affect overall coverage. As an ambulance is out of its district longer, it causes a shortage, and other squads have to move in to cover the area.

A side effect of this would be increased wear and tear on ambulances, increased gas usage, and more overtime for employees, all of which must be taken into consideration when planning personnel assignments and budgets.

Reaching out to several squads in Dutchess County brought the information that their status is changing, with some areas being served by and others presumably becoming part of, a large for-profit company headquartered downstate. On the one hand, this could ensure continuous coverage with career staff. On the other, it will take away the long-standing personal tradition and helping-our-neighbors aspect of EMS in these areas.

Regardless of who is operating them, all rescue squads face the same situation, while all want to provide the same service: being there when your emergency needs them. As Sanchez put it, "We just want to help people." ●



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It's time for Ashley's favorite CHRISTMAS MOVIES

By Ashley Kristjansson
info@mainstreetmag.com

Who doesn't love cozing up on the couch in their PJ's on the weekend, getting snowed in with a fuzzy blanket and a cup of hot chocolate, and watching their favorite Christmas movies? Well, I'm right there with you, and here are some of my favorites.

I'll Be Home For Christmas

Released in November 1998, starring *Home Improvement's* heartthrob (or maybe just mine), Jonathan Taylor Thomas, as Jake Wilkinson. After declining to be home for the holidays, Jake's dad makes him a deal to be home by 6:00 PM for Christmas Eve dinner in order for his dad to give him his 1957 Porsche 356. As a college student in California, Jake makes plans to travel back to New York with his giftfriend, Allie, played by Jessica Biel. Sounds like a sweet story line, that is until Jake wakes up the morning of the trip in a Santa suit due to midterm exam cheating gone wrong. This poses a few obstacles to get home. But will he make it in time? As you laugh your way through the movie, you'll find out.

Four Christmases

Going above and beyond to plan and convince their families they will be doing "charity work" in Fiji for the holidays, Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon as their characters, Brad McVie and Kate Kinkaid, plans are halted due to dense fog. After their lie is exposed on live television, Brad and Kate are forced to attend their divorced parents' Christmas celebrations. Four Christmases sounds fun! What could possibly go wrong?

Buckle up as Brad and Kate have us in stitches as they experience four very different household Christmases. The couple learns a lot about each other, and if they are even really meant to be together. Will four Christmases make or break them?

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Mr. Grinch is arguably one of the most iconic Christmas characters. As many of us do, I too grew up watching the 1966 animated TV special. But in 2000, with the very talented director Ron Howard and Jim Carrey as the Grinch, the cartoon became a live action film. The angle of this film of course was about the Grinch stealing Christmas, but also emphasizes Cindy Lou Who's role and really finds out the backstory of why the Grinch is the way he is. Although it might be seen as "scary" to some young children, which is understandable, it's ultimately a film we all grow to love and appreciate.

The cast and crew of this movie pulled out all the stops from makeup and wardrobe, all the way down to props. Oh, how I'd love to hop in one of those cars and just ride around Whoville looking at all of their festive decorations! One last request, can Max ride shot-gun?

Eighteen years later, a more "kid-friendly" version was released of Dr. Seuss' *The Grinch*. At first, I honestly didn't like it. I was too accustomed to the original TV animation and the Jim Carrey version of the film. My daughter has this movie on repeat during the holidays and I must say, I've really grown to like it. Let's add this to the must watch films for Christmas time.



The Polar Express

I'll take a cup of mint hot chocolate for this one! Like many, there comes a time in your childhood when you start questioning the magic of Christmas and if Santa Claus really exists. Tom Hanks is the voice of many characters in the 2004 animated movie and of course masters them all; from the conductor to Saint Nick. Picking up children doubting their belief in Santa Claus and the magic of Christmas, the magical train brings them to the North Pole on Christmas Eve. Throughout their journey to the North Pole, there are many adventures, which ultimately rekindle the spirit of Christmas and believing. A film appropriate for all ages and to ignite the Christmas spirit.

Elf

What is Christmas without Santa's helpers? Will Ferrell, better known as Buddy the Elf, was accidentally transported to the North Pole as a toddler and raised to adulthood by Santa's elves. Buddy never felt like he fit it and as an adult, traveled from the North Pole to New York in hopes of finding his biological father. Dressed as an elf the whole time, this awkward and hilarious storyline ultimately brings father and son together all while saving Christmas. "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!"

The Santa Clause franchise

Tim Allen was cast as Scott Calvin, a divorced dad who accidentally becomes Santa after the original Santa falls off his roof. What seemed like a dream at first becomes reality as Scott's appearance slowly changes and his son, Charlie, continues to remind him of that magical night delivering presents and making their way to the North Pole – really making Scott Calvin, Santa Claus. *The Santa Clause 2* puts pressure on Santa Claus to find a Mrs. Claus by Christmas Eve. On top of that pressure, Charlie made the naughty list. *The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause* puts pressure on Santa as his family is growing all while his rival, Jack Frost, tries to take over Christmas. This is a Christmas movie marathon I'm not about to lose!

The list could easily go on, but I hope you enjoy some of my favorite Christmas movies as much as I do. Happy holidays everyone! ●



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BOOKS & CAKE IN HILLSDALE: A SLICE OF DELICIOUSNESS

By *Dominique DeVito*
info@mainstreetmag.com

I love talking to people who love what they do. Their energy is infectious.

When I sat down to talk to Eve Yohalem and Julie Sternberg at their newly opened store in Hillsdale, Books & Cake, even though they were coming off a grand opening the day before that, “exceeded our wildest expectations” and might have had them quite wrung out, they were grinning ear to ear with enthusiasm.

“Who doesn’t love books?” Eve asked.

“Who doesn’t love cake?” Linda echoed.

Indeed, who doesn’t like books ... and cake? No one that I know. And if you love books and cake, you will find yourself enchanted and happy in this slice of a store that offers both in an abundance of deliciousness.

What’s the story behind Books & Cake?

In 2007 Eve and Julie were in New York, riding the same elevator. They caught each other’s eyes and thought they might know each other, so they started chatting. They hit it off immediately, and agreed to be in touch. That’s not always easy in New York for people who have busy lives, but the two would regularly meet for breakfast and chat about writing and reading.

“We met one time in 2019,” Eve says, “and we started kicking around the idea that we had to do something to bring us joy.”

“Since we love to talk about books,” Julie adds, “I proposed we do a podcast in which we talk about books.”

“I said ‘Yes,’” Eve says, “even though I’d never listened to a podcast before!”

Book Dreams sets the stage

The two started a podcast called Book Dreams in the spring of 2020. Enter COVID. “Although we couldn’t be together, we were recording from anywhere we could – even our cars!” Eve says. Through Book Dreams, the pair explored everything from books they themselves were enjoying to interviews with authors on all kinds of topics. They did the podcast regularly into early 2024, finishing with a bonus episode titled “I’m Sorry I Did This to You, with Eve and Julie,” in which they explore the concept of free will, referencing books, of course. That was Episode 142. In Episode 143, which turned into Episode 1 of their new podcast, named after the store, Eve and Julie announced, “we’re opening a bookstore!”

In a podcast with the new title of Books & Cake, on September 25, 2025, they went live with the announcement of the store’s grand opening. They were so excited they suggested listeners might want to pull over to the side of the road. “It’s October 25!” they exclaimed.

The store of their dreams

Once the seed of the idea to open a bookstore was planted, they started searching for a place. Julie and her family have had a home in Copake for decades; now Eve and her family do, as well. While their time is split between these places and Brooklyn and Manhattan, they have gotten to know the upper Hudson Valley and Berkshires. As all of us who live here can vouch for, we’re lucky to live somewhere where bookstores in small towns are not uncommon. Even though there are some book-y places around Hillsdale, there wasn’t a bookstore in the town itself. They chose Hillsdale.

In the same way that their meeting in the elevator morphed into a solid friendship like the moment was just



waiting to happen, so this decision seemed to line up the dominoes that were the puzzle pieces to their next dream, and they began to fall into place.

“When we were planning all of this,” Linda says, “we anticipated unexpected challenges. Amazingly,” she continues, “they never happened.”

“This is an unbelievably welcoming community,” Eve says, “and the outpouring of support has been beyond our dreams.”

See what I mean about infectious enthusiasm?

Their curiosity and passion infuse the store, too. It’s a small space, so how would they decide what books they’d bring in? How would they present the books? How would the space work with their desire to get people talking about and enjoying books the way they do?

“First,” Julie says, “we created a spreadsheet of all the books we’ve read that we love, and we added from there.”



Top: Julie Sternberg, left, with Eve Yohalem in their sweet store in Hillsdale.

Above: A selection of beverages to enjoy with cake - and books, of course.

Continued on next page ...

A great way to find a book

With title selection falling into place, the next question was how to present the books in the store. How could they engage readers with the titles beyond putting them in the traditional categories, like fiction, non-fiction, history, and poetry?

They thought back to an interview they did with the writer James Mustich about his book, *1000 Books to Read Before You Die: A Life-Changing List*. Published in 2018, the book is still a best seller, with the Washington Post noting, “984 pages later, you still want more.” (You can find this book in the store.) At the back of the book, Mustich included a “Miscellany of Special Lists,” in which he creatively cross-referenced books based on topics readers might be interested in.

They decided – and this is really the icing on the cake (pun intended) – that they would arrange the books by what the reader might need from that book. How fun is that?!

There are 36 categories, ranging from a need as elemental as “To Be Scared,” to one as intimately comedic as “To Remember That Feeling of Falling in Love, and Possibly Being Disastrously Misguided,” to as practi-

cal as “To Understand the Science.”

Eve and Julie’s original selection list included 3,300 books. That might sound like a lot until you consider that the average independent bookstore typically stocks between 7,000 and 20,000 books, depending on its size. Is that a concern for either of them? “We know we can’t be all things to all people,” Eve says, “but we also know that we’re selling books we can really get behind.” Another category? “A Book By One of Our Favorite Authors.” Rather than feel like there isn’t enough of a choice, the selection and quirky categorization make you feel like you’re in someone’s well-curated personal library, where every book says something about who that person is and what you have in common with them.

Linger and mingle

So that you have a comfortable place to eat cake, with or without coffee or tea or another beverage, Eve and Julie placed tables down the center of the main part of the store. They’re like little oases where you can perch and explore. “We hope people will feel comfortable here settling in with a book, talking to others about books, and getting excited about books,” they share.

Asked about books becoming less a part of our digital, distracted world, Eve and Julie look like the thought hadn’t occurred to them. “Actually,” Julie notes, “for ourselves and for the people we talk to who love books, they’re a way to get away from screen time.” Eve agrees, adding that books are a great escape, as they’ve always been.

The cake cannot be overlooked. When I visited on a Sunday morning, the offerings were a chocolate fudge cake and a carrot cake. They were made by a baker in Sheffield, though Eve and Julie share that their current baker may not be available too much longer and they were lining up another one. Stay tuned, and bring your appetite. Good cake – really good cake – will be there for you.



Above: Every part of the store is designed for enjoyment of the experience, including a row of tables where customers can linger to explore, reflect, and eat cake. Below, top to bottom: Books are wonderfully arranged by what readers may need from them. The children’s section is cozily and invitingly tucked into the back of the store.

Behind the scenes

Any creative venture takes a village. They heaped praise upon their contractor, Rick Reinhardt. Their engaging social media is overseen by Gianfranco Lentini, who was their producer for the Book Dreams podcast. Both were quick to acknowledge the contributions of their families. For Julie, that’s her husband, Paul Schoeman, and their daughters, Emily and Isabel, both in their 20s. For Eve, it’s her husband, Nick Polsky, and their son, Joe, and daughter, Maya, also in their 20s. They share that their families are big readers, too, along with their other talents. “Maya is a musician,” Eve says, “and put the playlist for the store together. Joe lives in Germany now,” Eve adds, “but he helped a lot with the selection for fantasy titles.” Julie’s daughters Emily (a medical student) and Isabel (a consultant for nonprofit organizations) have recommended books, alphabetized books along with Maya, helped with design choices, and been avid cheerleaders every step of the way.

Knowing they would need help managing the store, they put the word out that they were looking for booksellers. They were shocked and delighted by the response. “Opening the bookstore was worth it solely for the opportunity to meet the incredible people” who applied, Julie says. Lauren Letellier and Laura Vogel were there when I visited. Lauren is the Hillsdale town historian, and shared that the building the store is in dates

to 1920, when it was a filling station. There’ve been many iterations through the years, as there are in all towns, but she also pointed out with pleasure and pride that the three businesses in the building now – Books & Cake, Trudy’s Beauty & Hillsdale Barber Shop, and Hillsdale Fine Wine & Spirits – are all woman-owned, and that Anthony Street is named after Susan B. Anthony, the abolitionist who helped secure a woman’s right to vote.

Books & Cake is the kind of place you’ll find yourself wanting to return to again and again any time of year, but with the holidays upon us, it’s a must-visit this month if you want to give the gift of a special book to a special someone. In addition to books, the store has a beautiful selection of “sidelines,” as these insiders call them – puzzles, stuffed animals, games, note cards, and other gifts. Best of all, it has Eve and Julie, as irresistible as, well, curling up with a good book. •

Books & Cake is at 8 Anthony Street in Hillsdale, NY. The hours are Thursday thru Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm. (518) 691-2483. Follow the store on Instagram. Support it online through bookshop.org/shop/booksand-cake, or with an audiobook on libro.fm/booksandcaket/about.



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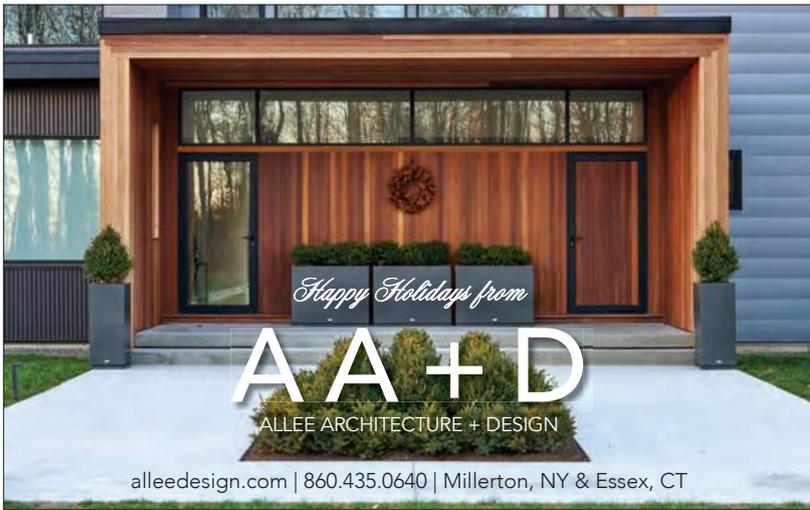
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*Ting-a-ling, ting-a-ling, ting-a-ling!
Ho-ho-ho, Merrrry Christmas!!!*

Wiping the sleep from my eyes, I realize it must now be okay to get up, that Santa Claus has come and gone. I can't wait! But no. Mommy and Daddy haven't come to tell me it's safe to come out of my room yet. Gotta wait. Or maybe Santa almost forgot to leave that microphone I've hoped and hoped for months he'd bring me today, but then he remembered at the last second before winding up his reindeer to fly to the next house, so that slowed things down. That could be it.

***I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!
LET ME OUT OF HERE!!!***

A mental inventory and naughty kids

Sudden terror. I'm pretty sure I did everything right last night. Didn't I? Mommy and Daddy forgot, I think, but I sure remembered that I needed to carefully set out cookies and a glass of milk for Santa to snack on. Not just any cookies, but good ones, not those crummy ones that fall all to pieces the second you try to pick one up. Plus, I left him a note thanking him for visiting my house (and leaving me stuff). I know some kids in my kindergarten class who aren't even going to come close to having Santa bring them fun stuff. In fact, they'll be lucky, given their records as serial miscreants, if he doesn't permanently erase them from his annual travels. That is, if all this business about it being important to be good all year or else he won't come is true. I don't know. Pop-Pop tells me not to believe everything I hear.

Those are probably the same kids that keep saying Santa isn't real. That's just plain dumb, if you ask me. Where else has all this stuff come from? And even if it does happen to be true, which I seriously doubt, why would you want to take a chance? I

sure hope I didn't land on Santa's bad list. He wouldn't have stopped here if I had, right? Well, I guess that's not true anymore since he may have come only for my sister, who's a new thing around here that I need to take into account.

Quickly, I review the past 364 days in my head. Did I do anything bad enough to be blacklisted by Santa? I don't think so. But these things are subjective. Oh boy. Now that I think about all this, I should receive extra credit for having my birthday in the same month as Christmas. Something doesn't seem right here. Is it possible I'm somehow being swindled out of extra presents because somebody thinks I didn't notice?

Sibling stuff

Pop-Pop tells me this is a good time to introduce myself (I think he's trying to get my mind off possibly being ignored by Santa). Amaryllis, that's me. He says my sister, Violet, and I are experts at this holiday business, but that's only half-true. This is Violet's first Christmas. While I'm sure she as-

Continued on next page ...



pires to my level of holiday expertise, she has some major league catching up to do. This is serious business. You can't just show up out of the blue and expect to know exactly what-all is going on, or when to play it cool and when to be excited, like when you open a box you think is going to contain a new Barbie but instead holds a package of socks. Ugly socks, at that. Look happy and pretend you've spent months pining for new, ugly socks is my best advice.

Mom and Dad watch a lot of crime dramas on the TV. You know how crime dramas often begin with the phrase, "it was a morning like any other," before suddenly someone's dead on the floor and there's a big commotion over who's responsible? Ha! Christmas morning, for example, decidedly does not operate in that fashion. It is a morning *unlike* any other, even if most times no one winds up dead on the floor and there is no crime to solve.

Hey everyone! I'm still stuck in here!!! Waiting ... waiting ...

For weeks, even in the days and years when I had no concept of what constituted a "week," or much of anything else, Mommy and Daddy would gin up a big uproar over the upcoming Big Day, and they would keep it ginned up, until I was pretty sure they could sink an olive in it and call it a martini. The older I get, the more I think they're trying to snow me, not only with this whole Christmas thing but at other times, as well. I know, I know, a little kid should believe his or her parents, but I've come to think that *Trust, But Verify* might not be such a bad policy overall. They're a good set of parents, yet suddenly turn sketchy at times you might least expect it. An example? How about the time I had to get shots to go to school, and they, all serious and stuff, told me *this-won't-hurt-a-bit?* Huh? How about that? Wronggg!

Making demands and Santa Claus Prime

Part of the problem with Christmas morning is that a few others in my family have to travel a while to get here. I wish they would leave earlier but I don't see that happening. Besides, they all do nice things for

me, and I don't think I'm exactly in the position to start making demands when they're already buying me things and sneaking me Smarties and all kinds of cool stuff.

I don't get this one at all. At my friend Nate's house they do things differently: They open all their presents on Christmas Eve. I don't understand how they manage to do this, since everyone knows Santa doesn't make his deliveries until after everyone in the house has gone to sleep on Christmas Eve. Maybe Nate and his family are getting gypped. Or maybe they've sprung for Santa Claus Prime, which I've heard about but have no idea how it works. Ohhhhh, wait a second. Could that be why the big delivery van pulls up to the front door the week before Christmas and leaves a batch of stuff on Santa's behalf? I don't know if I like what I'm thinking here. Assuming that it is indeed Santa bringing in the presents while I'm sleeping, one thing I don't get is how he manages to get the big boxes down the chimney, no matter when he makes his delivery. Just sayin', as all the kids say.

The infamous wish list

While I'm sitting here (pacing, actually, and trying not to scream out of frustration), how about we take a look at what I'm hoping is in some of those pretty boxes underneath the tree? A quick run-through: a microphone, K-Pop Demon Hunters, Disney Zombies, Barbies, baby dolls, books, and stuff for jewelry making would be fantastic. Mommy says I need pants (of course she says that). For Violet, I'm thinking anything Miss Rachel-related, since she seems to like Miss Rachel so much. I've listened to Mommy and Daddy say often enough that fine motor skill toys for her would be good. Also, Mommy keeps saying she could use anything fidgety. I don't get that one. Violet is plenty fidgety enough all on her own without any extra help, if you ask me. I wonder if I was like that when I was her age.

They're here!

Hey, I heard a car pull up out front!

False alarm. Crud! I'm going to die from loss of hope. This is getting ridiculous. Or maybe not. They have



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor garadenkoff

to be here at some point, I just know it. Wait a minute. I was right: they're *heeeerrrrrrrrre!*

Do I play it cool? Or act really excited? *I am excited, and that's that!* To the top of the stairs I go to ask (plead) for the 19th time, "Is it okay for me to come downstairs now?" But this time Daddy says, "What are you waiting for?" Nothingggggggg!

C'mon, c'mon, c'mon everybody. Why do adults move so slow? What could be more important than seeing what's in these boxes? Patiently I wait (still!) – hopping from foot to foot with a big grin on my face can't possibly be giving away my intention to commit Christmas morning mayhem, can it?

First things first. This year is different, of course. Right away, I spotted that Violet's instincts were good, that she knew she needed to get that box open at all costs, but her execution was off. Clearly, I need to instruct her on the proper procedure for ripping off the wrapping paper and getting inside the box.

Nifty. Violet seems to have absorbed that lesson, perhaps a little too well. She has now managed to get herself inside the box and turn it upside down, covering herself completely. I think I hear her giggling inside there. Solid new box move there, sis.

And let the Christmas morning chaos begin! •

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Dog gone it, PETS DON'T ALWAYS MAKE THE BEST GIFTS

By Whitney Joseph Shavelson
abby@mainstreetmag.com

Those of us from a certain generation likely remember the iconic opening scene of the 1955 animated Disney movie, *Lady and the Tramp*.

It's Christmas morning. Sparkling snowflakes drop gently onto the ground outside of a cozy living room; the young Darling sits before a flickering fireplace, unwrapping a hatbox she pulled from under the tree. Inside, the little girl discovers an adorable cocker spaniel puppy named Lady. The frisky little pup does all of the endearing things puppies do.

She wags her tail with vim and vigor and excitedly lavishes Darling with puppy kisses from head to toe. In fact, it's hard to tell who's more thrilled, Darling or Lady. That's probably part of the puppy in the hatbox scene's magic, and why it's such a famous holiday image.

But the Disney film does more than invoke an idealized holiday tableau: it romanticizes the idea of gifting a pet, conjuring up images of instantaneous bonding, love, warmth, and connection.

Sadly, it doesn't address the realities of pet ownership, nor mention the sleepless nights of new puppydom, the frustrations of potty training, the high costs of animal care, or the lifelong commitment of pet ownership.

Beyond the fairy tale

Lady and The Tramp does no favors for the millions of people, including many young children, who fantasize about pets being the perfect holiday gift.

And while loving the thought of more dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, mice, gerbils, or whatever creatures great and small are in need of permanent homes come Christmas, Hannukah, Kwanza, etc., skeptics express concern that once the holidays end, the novelty of a new animal could wear thin, and those pets might wind up back where they came from, or worse.

And a surrendered pet could wind up a dead pet, because while some shelters are no-kill, others are not. Kill shelters euthanize the animals they can't afford to house because they're overpopulated or underfunded. Some no-kill shelters won't accept surrendered animals, period. So, an owner might ultimately find themselves dropping their unwanted animal off at a shelter that that euthanizes, even if that wasn't their original intent.

Worse yet, many pets are simply abandoned by their owners – irresponsible people who were clearly never meant to have a pet and maybe never would have, if not given the animal by someone else.

Post-holiday pet return concerns

The reality is, having a pet entails work. Commitment. It requires loyalty and love. It takes money, training, attention, and care. And lots of time and energy.

Every year, shelters across the US report fear of spikes in pet returns after the holidays – when such realities set in with newbie pet owners – especially those gifted pets.

According to a December 19, 2018,



All images this page are courtesy of The Little Guild.

article posted online by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, “By January, many of those ‘present’ animals will have joined the more than six million who enter shelters in the US every year.” PETA blames some animal shelters for promoting “discounted or free adoptions and encouraging people to give animals away as gifts,” stating “their intentions may be good, but they likely don't realize that they're exacerbating the homeless-animal crisis.”

Shelley Simmons-Bloom is vice president of the Board of the Dutchess County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, an independent 501(c)(3), nonprofit, no-kill shelter in Hyde Park.

“The DCSPCA never euthanizes the animals it cares for due to space, unlike municipal shelters that sometimes have no choice but to euthanize due to space constraints,” explained Simmons-Bloom. “If an animal is surrendered to us by an owner, we will do our best to find a new home for them.”

She agrees with PETA that gifting pets during the holidays is a bad idea. “Every year, shelters take in pets that were given as gifts but later returned once the novelty wears off or the reality of the care commitment sets

in,” said Simmons-Bloom. “Plus, the holidays are often busy, loud, and unpredictable. This is the worst time to introduce a new pet as it can cause them stress.”

A pet requires time, stability, and money, as pets need food, vet care, and emotional support.

“For an adoption to be successful, it's important to match an animal's temperament, energy level, and care needs with the adopter's lifestyle,” she said. “Gifted pets often bypass this process, and so this increases the risk of mismatches and, sadly, eventual surrender to shelters.”

Simmons-Bloom said many people get swept up in the romance of the giving season. “I think that sometimes people get caught up in the fun, surprise element of the gift without thinking through the possible consequences,” she said. “Who doesn't love puppies and kittens? But they are animals, not toys, and it's important to think carefully about the commitment that's being made. Animals rely on us 100 percent to take good care of them and that's the commitment you are making when you adopt.”

That commitment could be a 10-to-20-year responsibility.



Continued on next page ...



Above: Two DCSPCA doggies ready for adoption. Images courtesy of DCSPCA. Below: Rendering of the new The Little Guild building. Image courtesy of The Little Guild.

“The challenge is that a surprise gift doesn’t allow the recipient to prepare for the lifelong emotional, financial, and time commitment that comes with responsible pet ownership,” she added. “Are you ready and prepared for that? It’s also important to make sure that you think about what kind of animal personality will fit into your family. If you have young children, you need to know that the animal is comfortable around children who can be scary to a small creature who is noise averse, for example. Are you introducing the new animal to existing furry family members? Do they have the right temperament for that? If you’re adopting a dog, are you willing to make the time commitment to ensure they get plenty of exercise and fresh air every day? It helps to talk to the shelter staff and explain your lifestyle, and they will help you find a good match.”

Bottom line: It’s the pet owner who should choose their pet, as they’re the one who will be responsible for the animal. That requires a long-term commitment of time, emotion, caring, and finances.

Pets – permanent post-holidays?

Jenny Langendoerfer has been executive director of The Little Guild in West Cornwall, CT, since 2020. When first joining the no-kill shelter, she worried about the high rate of surrenders after the holidays. She’s since learned from those managing adoptions at the popular Northwest Corner shelter that post-holiday surrenders are rather low.

“When I first came on board I was concerned about it,” said Langendoerfer. “But pets given during the holidays seem to have a higher home retention rate, if you believe that. We don’t have a ton of people coming in looking for pets as holiday gifts. When we do, we talk to people to make sure we help them try to avoid any pitfalls.”

Being a good pet parent

Langendoerfer added, “I will say we don’t treat [holiday] adoptions any differently, as our staff is pretty thorough – that’s one of its strengths. They ask a lot of questions about those adopting: their lifestyle, their former pets; they work very hard and strive to make sure it’s a good fit.”

To help attain that “good fit” for both pet and pet owner, Langendoerfer and her staff of 13 part- and full-time workers – in addition to The Little Guild’s roughly 150 volunteers – “encourage everyone in the family to come in and meet the new pet before going forward with an adoption to tackle any problematic areas before the animal leaves the facility.”

Little Guild does not allow adoptions “on first sight.” The first visit is for potential adoptees to meet the animals and complete an application. The shelter encourages everyone living in the household to meet whatever potential animal might be going home as a pet. A second visit provides an opportunity for folks to return to make sure person and pet connect. Langendoerfer said that’s key to The Little Guild’s “remarkably high adoption rates.”

Through all of its outreach, The

Little Guild helps “to support approximately 2,000 animals annually with food and medical needs through our programs,” she said, explaining the shelter’s numbers are a little skewed in terms of adoptions since it’s been building a new facility and sheltering out of temporary accommodations. “Prior to moving to the temporary facility, 200 to 250 animals were adopted from us annually. ... We anticipate increasing those annual numbers by up to 50 percent, once we have the capabilities the new facility offers.”

The Little Guild has one of highest adoption rates in Connecticut. “We’re very successful in matching people with appropriate pets,” she said, “but we don’t want to make it overly tedious for people to adopt; we want to streamline the adoption process as much as possible, but we don’t want to skip any important steps.”

The rationale behind the process is that pet ownership is a lifelong obligation. “I definitely want people to realize the commitment,” said Langendoerfer. “At Little Guild, if you adopt from us and it doesn’t work out, we will be taking the animal back, 100 percent. A lot of other shelters don’t do that. After COVID we did see a definite increase in surrenders. I will say it’s a difficult time right now, a lot of folks are struggling. Little Guild is offering a lot of programs for people who can’t support pets: free vaccine clinics, free spay/neuter clinics, and we launched The Lasey Fund in June 2025, named for a beloved rescued pet. The fund provides financial aid towards preventive care, dental services, specialty surgeries, and critical medical treatment for animals whose guardians meet financial-need criteria.”

Langendoerfer said that she’s “excited for our new facility, the Robert

Rosenheim Building – it’s amazing.” Named after an animal lover and Little Guild donor, the new facility is expected to open in early 2026.

Langendoerfer described Little Guild’s new \$5 million, 8,000-square-foot facility that’s nearly completed as “not massively larger, just so much more capable to care for the animals in a more calming, relaxed atmosphere; in the old building, the animals had no noise proofing, and there was no quarantining available for the animals or for the volunteers.”

The new structure was paid for through private donations, with the exception of a \$35,000 ARPA grant from the Town of Cornwall, along with support from several community foundations; half of the building’s cost came from the Robert Rosenheim Foundation.

Alternatives, and place-keepers, until you’re ready to adopt

Rather than gifting a pet, you can always suggest, or help a friend, foster a pet; sponsor a shelter pet; make a donation to an animal welfare organization in someone’s name; volunteer at a shelter; or gift pet supplies to a pet or food shelter, both of which are in constant need. Simmons-Bloom also suggested “pet adoption certificates,” which the DCSPCA and other animal shelters offer to cover an animal’s adoption fee for when a person is ready to adopt, so they can choose “the right pet at the right time.”

Meanwhile, feel free to visit a dog park, an animal shelter (socializing is free!), or your favorite pet owner to get your furry fix.

And just remember to think long and hard before making the decision to adopt. Because once you bring an animal home, it should be fur-ever. As we like to say in my family, pets are people, too! ●





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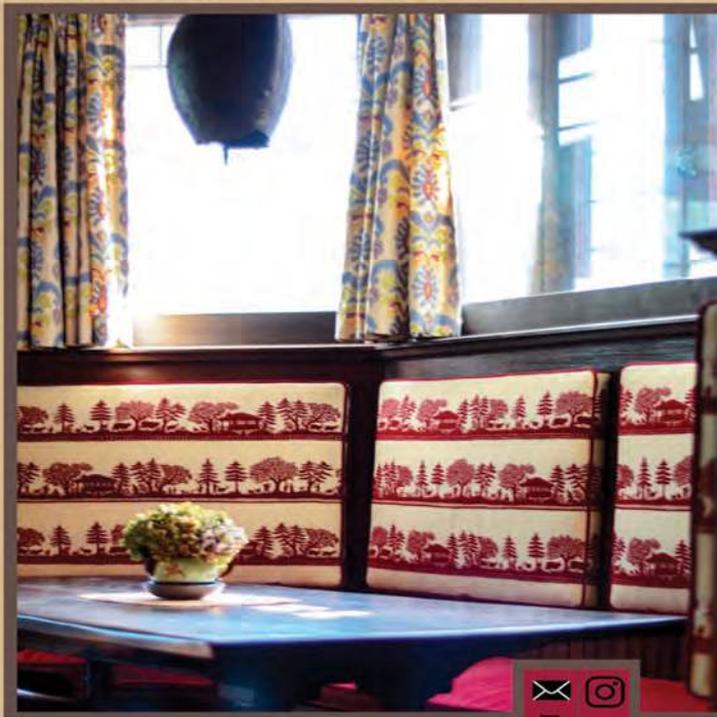


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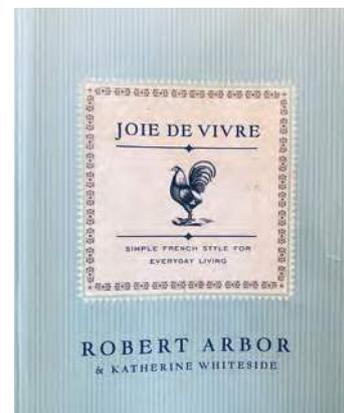
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LE BAR / LE GAMIN



By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

From an objective point of view, it may have appeared to be a tenuous idea. Bring a French restaurant to remote Sharon, CT ... during the COVID-19 epidemic? Take over a spot that had been various iterations of casual eateries over the years and turn it into a local bistro? All of this after running successful restaurants in New York City – a place that has a few people in the neighborhood to sustain it?

Few have accused Robert Arbor of being conventional, and years on, Le Gamin has become more than a regional fixture. It's a magnet – known not only for its food but also for the buzz of activity that has been built around this location. From breakfast latte and croissant or French toast “*pain perdu*” to dinner punctuated with steamed artichokes and “*Merguez frites*” (locally sourced spicy lamb sausages served with fries perfectly matched with a green salad and Robert’s wonderfully balanced salad dressing), the restaurant is more than a welcome fixture. It’s a trusted place to meet.

“When *The New York Times* published the piece calling Litchfield County ‘the secret Hamptons,’” Robert offers with a smile, “we experienced a wave of transient guests who added a stop at Le Gamin to their excursion.” The influx of diners complimented the regular customers who had found comfort, convenience, and

engaging cuisine during the unsettling days of the pandemic.

That smile on his face is part of the enthusiastic welcome he shares whenever a regular patron enters the room. Carrying on a conversation with Robert during business hours is, in itself, a joyful study in patience. Mid-sentence he’ll excuse himself to offer a hug, a laugh, a smattering of French to a recognized friend. It’s a *Cheers* moment – where everyone seems to know his name.

Ancient games and memorable finds

Not a square inch of space has been overlooked, both inside the building and outside where the wraparound covered patio folds into an expanse of lawn. Saturday mornings find devotees of backgammon hovering over intense games while sipping coffee and exchanging weekly updates on life and art. No politics allowed.

Four times a year, the lawn is host to a flea market with a decided French flavor, complete with antiques and memorabilia, some of which may find their way into the restaurant as part of the décor. And one Saturday a month a guest DJ arrives, the restaurant tables and chairs are moved to the side, and a disco takes over the space. Need a break from the club-like atmosphere, then wander through the passageway for a break in.

Le Bar

The newest addition to this community complex is Le Bar, a 25-seat bar joined to the restaurant by an inner hall and a pass-through window from the kitchen. “When The Edward

closed,” Robert explains, “there was a vacuum that wanted to be filled. Le Bar gives us that increased connection with the community.”

Monthly wine tastings (the December feature is champagne for the holidays), private parties of up to 18, and a comfortable sense of “*bonhomie*” are all offered in a compact, eclectically decorated space that nightly invites the community to come in, relax, and enjoy this cozy “*isle de France*.”

The décor alone may be worth a visit. Resplendent, suspended from the ceiling, is a dramatic chandelier that once graced Broadway’s Beacon Hotel. Placed carefully on a shelf nearby, a weathervane that topped a Revolutionary War-era barn proudly displays the bullet holes inflicted by a past session of target practice.

And a recipe ...

With the holiday season, resplendent with parties and carefully designed meals, the notion of a bit of gourmet counterpoint to roasts and gravies and traditional casseroles seemed appropriate. There are moments when the palate needs a break, and Robert’s honeyed fruit salad may be the simple answer to that challenge.

Simple, easily assembled, and perfectly balanced, it goes like this:

Ingredients:

Fruit, ripe and according to your taste – an apple; a pear; an orange, grapefruit, banana, or mango; and pineapple. Add a handful of blueberries, strawberries or grapes
½ bunch of fresh mint, chopped
Juice of one orange
½ cup honey

½ cup water
2 drops vanilla extract
Perhaps a sprinkle of rum, to taste

Cut the fruit into bite-sized pieces. Place it in a bowl with the chopped fresh mint. Toss with the squeezed orange juice.

Place the honey, water, vanilla (and the rum, if using), in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Cool and pour over the fruit mixture and refrigerate. Voila!

All the comforts, at home

This recipe, along with a wonderful commentary, is captured in Robert’s *Joie de Vivre: Simple French Style for Everyday Living*, the cookbook that has been enriching meals and moods since 2003.

Molly and Erik Wensberg, whose travels bring them to the region for events at Lime Rock Park offered this – “Reading the book gave me even more appreciation for Le Gamin and the beautiful intention behind it, which is to share some of the French food and dining traditions that Robert clearly loves.” Available on Amazon, *Joie de Vivre* provides exactly what its title promises: – a joy and a way of bringing all of the good feelings and great food of Le Gamin home.

Bon appetit! ●

Le Gamin and Le Bar are located in the Sharon Shopping Center, 10 Gay Road, Sharon, CT. Check the website, legamin.com, for hours, menus, and special events.



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Get fit and have fun

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

It's holiday time, and that translates to lots of packed calendars and socializing. After work soirees, gatherings with neighbors, boozy lunches with friends, and late-night parties certainly catch up with us. Yummy food, festive cocktails, and decadent desserts are plentiful this time of year, but unfortunately so are the calories.

During this season, many of us vow to shed the weight we gained from the period between Thanksgiving and the New Year. In our quest to get healthy and fit, many of us make New Year resolutions. Fitness and losing weight are always popular picks.

According to Statista, a global data and business intelligence platform, 17% of Americans made resolutions to exercise more, and another 15% vowed to lose weight in 2025.

Unfortunately, it's often challenging for people to stick with their resolutions. According to an article posted on The Ohio State University website, researchers said that only 9% of Americans that make resolutions complete them. In fact, research revealed that 23% of people quit their resolutions by the end of the first week, and 43% quit by the end of January.

The art of play

Rather than joining a gym, try upping the fun factor by exploring workouts that you truly enjoy. There are so

many to choose from, including upbeat dance-based workouts and even aerial yoga. Flip around, and practice inversions with the support of a silk hammock. Making your workout feel more like play will make it easier to remain committed.

On the topic of play, the National Institute For Play states that it's important for all of us to be in touch with what puts us in a state of play. Exactly what is play?

"The definition of play is that it is an absorbing, apparently purposeless activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of self-consciousness and sense of time." The motivation to do it comes from inside you; you are instinctively drawn to it, so you want to do it again.

The positive effect of play is not dependent on age; we can all experience the joy, relaxation, relief from day-to-day stresses, and self-satisfaction that comes from being in a state of play. There are lots of fitness studios in the Hudson Valley to choose from. There's also cycling and hiking in the great, but cold outdoors. Here are a few fun ideas to get you started. Get creative and mix it up.

Studio time

Breathe Studio – Barre and Pilates Studio, Rhinebeck, NY

Just breathe! This Rhinebeck-based boutique fitness studio offers a lineup of small group classes in an array of disciplines, including barre, Pilates, sculpt, Pilates/barre fusion, barre/sculpt fusion, yoga, cardio kickboxing, and beginner adult ballet.

Regardless of the type of class, instructors at Breathe Studio focus on core-based workouts that build strength and stability while toning muscles and improving flexibility. All workouts are low impact and provide a full body workout for all fitness



Above: Breathe Studio. Photo by / courtesy of Mike Lawrie Photography.

Left: Have some fun on the silks at Hudson Valley Circus Arts in Kingston. Photo by Steffen Thalemann.



levels. Private classes and special event sessions are also available. Breathe will come to your Airbnb and provide a private class for girls' weekends, family reunions, or other gatherings.

Breathe's adult ballet class embraces the beauty of ballet in a welcoming and supporting environment. Whether you are a true beginner or have some dance experience, this class is designed for adults of all levels who want to explore the art of ballet while also getting a great workout.

Breathe Studio's owner, Nicole McGrath wants to ensure that every fitness enthusiast feels challenged, supported, comfortable and safe, regardless of their level. Modifications are encouraged and always provided.

"At Breathe Studio, we believe our community is everything. The studio is a special place because our staff and members are welcoming and inspiring and cheer each other on. Small classes enable our clientele to connect, grow, and feel supported," said McGrath.

6423 Montgomery Street, Suite 17A (2nd floor), Rhinebeck, NY,
breatherhinebeck.com

Continued on next page ...

Hudson Valley Circus Arts, Kingston, NY

Remember when you were a kid and enjoyed climbing trees and hanging upside down on the monkey bars? Well, Hudson Valley Circus Arts offers a bunch of fitness classes that tap into that same spirit of fun and adventure, but in a more adult, artistic fashion.

Although Alisha Mai McNamara, founder of Hudson Valley Circus Arts, loves to perform, teaching and coaching are her passions, specifically assisting students in achieving what once seemed impossible.

McNamara's background as a registered yoga teacher and expertise teaching all styles of yoga, from athletic to gentle, have helped her break "circus" into digestible lessons for students of all fitness levels.

Via her studio, McNamara offers a playful, safe environment for physical learning and creativity. All are welcome to join in the fun. That means everyone from circus-curious beginners and recreational students to dedicated athletes.

Classes include aerial silks, an acrobatic art form that fuses elements of dance with acrobatics. Performers use two long pieces of fabric or "silks" suspended from the ceiling to climb, wrap, drop, and strike different poses.

For beginners, McNamara's team works primarily in supported positions, including a knot that creates a hammock-like structure for the hips and armpits. Another knot is tied

around the feet to enable standing. As students progress, the team incrementally spends more time supported by the hands and shoulders with appropriate progressions. There are no prerequisites for this class.

Other fun fitness workouts include a hammock class in which a loop of fabric is suspended in the air at a variety of heights for accessibility. This class offers fluid transitions, freedom of creative movement, and the opportunity to spin. As you advance, an array of acrobatic movements will be introduced. No prerequisites are required for newbies through level 1 classes.

Hudson Valley Circus Arts Get Fit. Have Fun. Join the Circus. (845) 377-3393. Those who have already learned the ropes can enroll in hammock and silks level 1-1.5, and hammock spin and flow; 1300 Ulster Ave., Kingston, NY (845) 377-3393, hudsonvalleycircusarts.com

LifeWorks Studio, Great Barrington, MA

LifeWorks offers a spectrum of mind-body wellness programs designed to support all levels and life stages. Whether you're just beginning your wellness journey or seeking to deepen your practice, there's a spot here for you. More than a yoga or dance studio, Ilana Siegal founded LifeWorks Studio in 2013 with a vision to offer a welcoming space where people could move, heal, grow, and connect. The practice is rooted in Siegal's extensive background in yoga, Pilates, dance, bodywork, and personal development.

Remain fit and fab while having fun and engaging with other like-minded people at group yoga, strength-building workouts, and dance classes. As for dance, there's everything from cardio dance to dance for fun, and even a high-intensity workout that masquerades as a dance party. During this electrifying class, you'll burn calories while grooving along to a series of cool beats that hail from destinations around the globe. There's even an isolations and undulations class – a cardio and strength-building session



Above, L-R: A group enjoys working out on the silks at Yogamat. There are lots of great classes at Yogamat in Tivoli. Photos courtesy of Yogamat. Below, left: Explore new fitness offerings at Hudson Valley Circus Arts. Photo by Steffen Thalemann.

that invites female participants to move in a slightly irreverent way. The mantra: "Move your body, twerk your booty, and shake what your mama gave ya."

Time to bring it down. For those who want to ground, there's private and semi-private yoga and yoga therapy sessions. Beyond the class schedule and various programs hosted throughout the year (from weekly parents' groups to a doula collective, childbirth education, a lending library of baby gear, and beyond), LifeWorks hosts a two-week retreat in Costa Rica every year. This immersive experience unites a group of adults and teens who go there to reset, recharge, and reconnect through movement, mindfulness, and community – all set against the backdrop of lush tropical beauty.

The studio welcomes all bodies, all levels of ability, and all people who are curious about living more fully. 50 Castile Street, Suite 2, Great Barrington, MA, (413) 591-0189, lifeworks-studio.com

Yogamat, Tivoli, NY

The mission at Yogamat is to bring the fun and excitement of fitness to the community. The Tivoli-based boutique studio offers a range of classes, which includes vinyasa (a flow that moves through fluid transitions, synchronizing movement with breath to focus on grounding in the present moment); flow, and Pilates mat and tower (half hour mat with core workout; then on to the towers, an apparatus that offers resistance

through springs), and TRX Pilates workout – where guests will learn to execute core TRX movements such as planks, pulls, squats, and lunges.

It also offers Ashtanga – a flowing yoga style rooted in karma practice. Up the adventure with aerial yoga or Zumba, a dance workout that mingles Latin rhythms and easy-to-follow salsa.

For those who enjoy moving in a different way, there's adult aerial yoga, which combines yoga poses with the aerial fabric, promoting flexibility and strength. Yogis can also do inversions with the hammock. Kids aerial is another super fun class that teaches balance while building strength and flexibility. Kids can have fun with flips and hanging upside down like a bat.

Once a month, Yogamat offers floating sound baths. Slip into the hammock for an hour of absolute bliss, in which you can meditate while floating above the ground and tuning into the sound of the crystal gong and other instruments.

1 North Rd, Tivoli, NY (518) 701-3717, yogamattivoli.com

With all these fun, fab offerings, there's no excuse to abandon your workout schedule. Even better, grab a friend and you can both keep one another accountable, ensuring that you'll make this year's resolution stick. •



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Berkshires-based After Hours expands traveling dining experiences worldwide

DINING WITHOUT BORDERS



By Abby Audenino
abby@mainstreetmag.com

“Our human desire for connection and collaboration through food is stronger than ever,” shares Kevin Kelly, founder and CEO of Berkshire-based culinary business After Hours GB. “With this in mind, we’re excited to take After Hours to the world, creating experiences that honor local food systems, foster human connection, and put collaboration at the heart of every event.”

After Hours, the innovative traveling restaurant, has grown from a regional experiment into a culinary movement in just two short years. After spending the past two years curating and hosting memorable culinary experiences that blend storytelling, culture, and gastronomy to connect people throughout the Berkshires, Hudson Valley, and Litchfield County, the traveling dining group will now be expanding across the globe.

Reimagining the approach to dining

The Great Barrington, MA, native has been in the restaurant scene for over a decade, starting as a busser in his teenage years for the former Allium Restaurant + Bar in Great Barrington. From there, he worked at a handful of other local restaurants in a variety of roles, from front of house to back of

house, until he graduated high school.

The concept of After Hours came together in the winter of 2023, during Kevin’s final semester at Babson College in Wellesley, MA. He had been working on fleshing out a plan to open a traditional brick-and-mortar restaurant in Great Barrington, but after working through financial projections, menu planning, staffing viability, and the countless other aspects of the restaurant business, it became apparent to Kevin that the traditional restaurant model simply wouldn’t be financially sustainable, especially in a highly-seasonal area with a declining working population.

“From here, I stepped back and asked, ‘If the traditional restaurant model doesn’t work, then what does?’ And from there, After Hours, a traveling dining group that creates collaborative dining experiences, was born,” he explains.

Global starts local

Starting in January of 2026, After Hours GB will continue as After Hours Global, expanding its mission of collaboration over competition across the globe. For Kevin, the inspiration to expand globally is deeply rooted in personal curiosity and a professional acknowledgement of the need for change in the restaurant industry and food systems.

“Consumer preference has surpassed the rate at which restaurants and food businesses can innovate, and with already stressed global food systems, how can we challenge everything that we think we know about how restaurants are supposed to operate – a brick-and-mortar location, open from 5pm-9pm, soup, salad, appetizers, entree, dessert?” Kevin asks. “The need of the business and I aligned near perfectly with timing. I need to experience more cuisines, cultures, ways of business and life, and simultaneously, the business needs to continue to develop, connect, and collaborate with wider audiences.”

From day one, After Hours was intentionally designed to not be just one thing. Kevin ensured that the business would be able to pivot as needed, and so the idea of travel and global expansion has been in the back of his mind since he first created After Hours. Now, two years after learning and developing in the Berkshire region, it’s time for After Hours to learn and develop from cultures across the globe.

Global dining events will begin in Puerto Rico from January through March of 2026, with stops in San Juan, Arecibo, Cabo Rojo, and Rincon, followed by stops in Spain, Southern France, Portugal, and Morocco from April through July. Finally, After Hours will come back home to the east coast, with events in Boston, MA, and New York, NY,

in July and August. After Hours will then continue on to various European cities throughout the remainder of 2026 and into 2027.

After Hours Global is going to function very similarly to how the business has over the past two years – focusing on pop-up events, private events, and local collaborations that promote mutual success for local businesses.

“We’re committed to working locally wherever we go: food, staff, and collaborators,” Kevin says. “Our dining events will focus heavily on highlighting local produce and cuisine, with our own influence and interpretation being served on every place.”

Events will encompass everything from prix fixe dinners hosted at cafes after they have closed for the day; scenic dinners on beaches, farms, and mountain tops; and late-night, fast, casual pop-ups with live music and dancing. Specific partnerships and event details will be announced one month prior to each event, but Kevin gave us a little inside scoop about what people can look forward to at some of the After Hours Global events in 2026.

Continued on next page ...



All photos this page courtesy of After Hours.

Right, top, photo by Christina Allingham / Bite of New England.

Previous page, photo by Christopher De La Rosa.

“We are currently working with a range of potential partners from coffee and cacao farms in Puerto Rico, vineyards in the Basque Region of Spain, and artisans in Italy,” he shares. “We also have some interesting things in the works with the launch of our second internship program this January, including a marketing and business development internship.”

Evolving across the globe

Since its inception, After Hours has been “completely bootstrapped and has functioned similarly to an early-stage start-up.” For the past two years, Kevin says this has looked like everyone wearing many hats, making lots of creative pivots, incredible highs, and humbling lows.

“We’ve always been very scrappy, working first with what we have at hand and slowly developing as we go.”

In its first year, After Hours had a group of five or six different part-time employees that supported events (mostly made up of family and friends). In the second year, this number grew to a network of more than 20 employees as Kevin built After Hours Gigs, the business’ in-house platform that hires part-time and gig work employees to join After Hours

for one event, or many, as servers, bartenders, and cooks.

“Since starting, we’ve had some unimaginable opportunities – cooking for Michael Pollan being a personal highlight!”

In the past two years, After Hours has hosted more than 250 events and collaborated with more than 150 different businesses in a wide range of industries including musicians, artists, farms, florists, content creators, restaurateurs, bars, grocery stores, wineries, distilleries, breweries, educational institutions, media publications, and the list goes on.

Kevin notes that it hasn’t been easy. The most challenging part of operating After Hours has been finding the balance between giving people what they know, while also staying true to creating a concept that has never been done before. Catering, pop-up restaurants, ghost kitchens, and event management are all areas and concepts that After Hours touches, but they do not solely define what the business offers.

After Hours partners with local businesses to host culinary experiences that help promote partners and create more ingrained collaboration within communities – which is exactly what Kevin finds so rewarding about the business.

“It has been eye-opening to set a goal and far surpass it, by simply sharing ideas with people who share your values,” he explains. “Another rewarding part of the business has been a lot of our community advocacy and support with non-profit organizations. Whether that be food distribution or youth education, it’s been incredibly rewarding to support the development and sustainability of local food systems.”

According to Kevin, the next two years of After Hours will be focused on developmental expansion through focused, international growth. Starting in the fall of 2026, Kevin will be pursuing a master’s degree that

focuses on world food studies. The longer-term concept of After Hours is currently under development and is being held close to the chest for now, but in the short term, After Hours has plans to continue to expand internationally. As the business progresses and grows, it will lean into longer-term residencies at various locations across the globe.

“We’re always looking to connect with people who are passionate about food, travel, and culture. If you or anyone you know is interested in working with us – in any corner of the world – we would love to hear from you!” Kevin shares. “We are also working on integrating documentary-style filmmaking into our expansion and travels, and are looking for an independent filmmaker – someone who loves travel or telling stories. If this sounds like you, reach out!” •

To stay up-to-date with After Hours’ journey and to see what city they’ll be in next, be sure to follow them on Instagram @afterhours.global, on Facebook, and sign up for their newsletter for updates on event locations, dates, and collaborations. After Hours invites food enthusiasts, local businesses, and culinary adventurers who are interested in collaborating to reach out directly via email at info@afterhours-global.com or to Kevin directly at kevin@afterhours-global.com.



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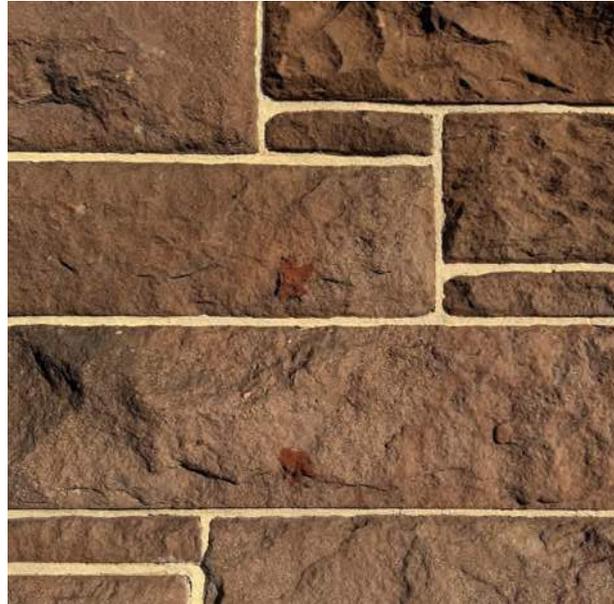
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All about whiskey:

NOAH ROTHBAUM ON HIS NEW BOOK, *THE WHISKEY BIBLE: A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S GREATEST SPIRIT*

By Abby Audenino
abby@mainstreetmag.com

Drinks expert and award-winning author Noah Rothbaum has spent 25 years researching, reporting, and tasting whiskeys from around the world. Now, he brings his passion for whiskey to this comprehensive new guide, *The Whiskey Bible: A Complete Guide to the World's Greatest Spirit (The History, Secrets, and Lore Behind the Best Scotch, Bourbon, Irish, Rye, Canadian, Japanese, Single Malt, and More)*. Published on September 9, 2025, the guide offers up a country-by-country examination of the prominent distillers and whiskey culture, as well as tasting notes from hundreds of whiskeys and a collection of cocktail recipes.

I caught up with Noah Rothbaum to learn more about his background in whiskey, what inspired him to write *The Whiskey Bible*, and what advice he would give to those who find themselves intimidated by the spirit.

What is your background in whiskey?

Over the last 25 years, I've written about whiskey for a number of publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Daily Beast*, and *Liquor.com*. I'm the author of several drinks books, including the recently published *Whiskey Bible: A Complete Guide to the World's Greatest Spirit* as well as *The Art of American Whiskey*

and *The Business of Spirits*. I'm also the associate editor of the award-winning *Oxford Companion to Spirits & Cocktails*. Currently, I also serve as *Men's Journal's* spirits editor and *Bartender Magazine's* editor-at-large.

How did you initially get into whiskey?

During college I did an internship at *Food & Wine Magazine* and worked for Pete Wells, who later became *The New York Times's* restaurant critic. That summer, I worked on a number of whiskey stories and was utterly fascinated by the spirit.

What was the inspiration to write *The Whiskey Bible*?

In the winter of 2020, Workman [a subsidiary of Hachette Book Group] approached me about writing *The Whiskey Bible*. I am a big fan of their *Wine Bible* and *Beer Bible*, so I was very excited to continue the series with *The Whiskey Bible*.

What was your process of conducting research and putting *The Whiskey Bible* together?

I spent most of my time searching in libraries and archives for primary sources and vintage newspapers, magazines, government reports, and books. Over the last few years, many books and periodicals have been digitized, which made searching a lot easier and I was fortunately able to find many new sources.

How did you decide what aspects of whiskey to include in the book?

I tried to include everything I possibly could – that's why the book is more than 600 pages!

What advice do you have for people who are interested in, but may be intimidated by, whiskey?

Whiskey is truly for all people, and you should drink it any way that you



Above: Noah Rothbaum, photo by Eric Medsker. All images courtesy of Noah Rothbaum.

enjoy it. The best way to learn about whiskey is, of course, to taste whiskey.

What is the difference between drinking whiskey and tasting whiskey?

Drinking whiskey is all about enjoyment. Tasting whiskey, on the other hand, is about analytically evaluating a spirit.

What should you look out for as you're tasting?

Whiskey can include a huge range of flavors, but generally, the most common are vanilla, baking spice, apple, pear, raisin, peat, smoke, hot sawdust, cedar, corn, barley, banana, and even dill pickle.

What makes craft whiskey brands different from the big whiskey brands?

Craft distillers have a major advantage over bigger brands: innovation. When a large liquor conglomerate launches a new whiskey, it essentially has to be a hit immediately. Since smaller craft brands don't generally need to answer to Wall Street, they can take more time to nurture and grow a whiskey.

How did you curate the cocktail recipes that you included in the book?

The Whiskey Bible includes 30 classic whiskey cocktails and also 30 modern classic whiskey cocktails from some of the top bartenders around the world. I wanted readers to understand that not only is it okay, but historically accurate to use whiskey in cocktails.

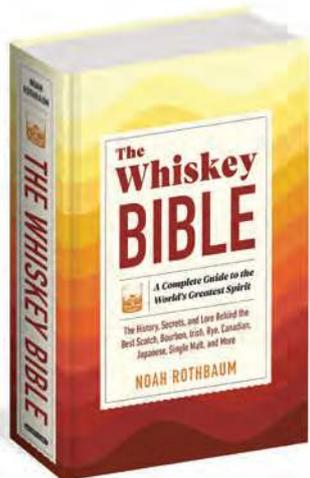
What do you hope readers take away from this book?

I hope that people who read *The Whiskey Bible* will be more confident drinkers. To truly enjoy a dram is to know where it came from and who produced it.

Where do you see the whiskey industry going in the future?

I think we're going to see whiskey distilleries opening up in even more countries and regions around the world. I can't wait to try these new drams! •

To learn more about Noah Rothbaum, follow him on Instagram @noah_rothbaum. To order your copy of *The Whiskey Bible: A Complete Guide to the World's Greatest Spirit*, which was released on September 9, 2025, search for *The Whiskey Bible* on [hachettebookgroup.com](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com).



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HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

The morning started out benignly enough. No major aches or pains. No rain. Temperature moderate enough for a light jacket. Out the door for a quick walk to get the blood moving, then back home to put the coffee pot on, make some toast, and settle in with the news, the weather, the sports.

You get the idea.

Based on its chipped intelligence, the coffee maker signaled that it was low on water, so we engaged in the oft-repeated routine of adding to the reservoir. But there was distraction. Something scampered by outside the kitchen window, and, eager to determine what the intruder might be, we kept pouring ... without thinking.

Overflow.

Seemingly without warning there was water on the counter, then on the floor. It's what happens when one doesn't pay attention, and we were guilty as charged. No harsh words could remedy the situation. Paper towels and bending over seemed to do the trick, and soon the coffee maker was emitting its morning bouquet, and the day was back on track.

Except for the song coming from the computer that had been providing the soundtrack for the breakfast routine.

"How many deaths does it take 'til we know

That too many people have died?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind

The answer is blowin' in the wind."

There he was. Bob Dylan, 60 years on, slicing through the morning with unanswered questions, jabbing at our

conscience. It was that cosmic intersection of seemingly unrelated forces. Water on the floor and a song, and the random question – "How much is too much?"

On the green in regulation

It is but a distant memory by now. After all, it's December and the Ryder Cup golf tournament at the Bethpage Black course in New York was concluded at the end of September. Europe beat the US by two points, and it would be another two years before the next international contest would be staged, this time in Ireland.

The bitter aftertaste of that tournament remained, however, and it stampeded forward as the contemplation of how limits are established and maintained overtook our morning.

To say that it was not the finest hour for the American fans who lined the fairways and crowded the greens would be an understatement. Verbal abuse of the European players seemed to be the order of the day, with vulgar epithets and threats poured down on the players, their wives, and families. "Oh, it's just New York" was offered as an excuse ... a flimsy one, at best.

At one point, a "fan" (painfully illustrating the term "fanatic") threw a beer at one player's wife.

How much is too much?

Rory McIlroy, one of the greatest golfers of this or any time, seemed to be the prime focus of the crowd's abuse and in painful retrospect, he offered this:

"I think golf should be held to a higher standard than what was seen out there this week. Golf has the ability to unite people. Golf teaches you very good life lessons. It teaches you etiquette."

– Rory McIlroy as quoted in *The New York Times*, September 29, 2025

Golf should be held to a higher standard? How about life in general? How much is too much?

That's just politics

We doubt that there would be much disagreement with the statement that political division has grown out of hand in this country. Conversations morphed into shouting matches long ago. Mudslinging gave way to rock throwing and ultimately to bullets and fire bombs. Slogans stitched on hats and printed on t-shirts became epithets etched on bullet casings and carved into the finishes of expensive cars. Shootings at schools and churches have been met with shrugs and a chorus of worn-out platitudes. Thoughts and prayers.

How much is too much?

Where is Miss Manners when we need her?

The haunting, condemning message of Dylan's paean from the '60s rings true year after year. Golf may not be life or death, but politics in this country has become just that. Within a generation, or so it seems, it has become perfectly acceptable to ignore any sense of etiquette and barge through life with a blind intensity that ignores everyone around us and acts in angry self-promotion.

Driving has become a treacherous activity. "Yield?" "Stop?" "Pass with care?" Merely suggestions to be ignored. Me first. You go to hell.

Shopping has become a contact sport. "Get out of my way." "Move over!" Being old isn't much fun, but in a grocery store, it's become downright frightening.

We plead guilty to the habit of reflecting on music of the '60s and '70s. The ballads, country songs, and early vestiges of rock with lyrics we could not only understand but also sing along with continue to haunt us. We also plead *nolo contendere* to lingering images from the long past that haunt

us. When the two are tied together, the impact is numbing.

In 1962, photographer Diane Arbus spent days in New York's Central Park, capturing images of those who were there. Her "Child With Toy Hand Grenade in Central Park" is a chilling image. It moved singer/songwriter Graham Nash to write "Teach Your Children," a 1968 song that would find captivated audiences when Crosby, Stills, and Nash recorded it in 1970:

*Teach your children well
Their father's hell did slowly go by
Feed them on your dreams
The one they pick's the one you'll
know by
Don't you ever ask them why
If they told you, you would cry
So just look at them and sigh
And know they love you*

Enough is enough. •

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A holistic approach to home UPSTATE DOWN



By Abby Audenino
abby@mainstreetmag.com

“Our whole philosophy centers around home and helping people find the resources that guide them toward where they want to live. Whether that’s through buying, designing, merging the two, or simply finding a beautiful pillow that brings them joy when they walk through the door,” explains Delyse Berry, co-founder of Upstate Down.

Upstate Down, based in Rhinebeck, NY, is a design-forward real estate company that encompasses a boutique brokerage, interior design studio, and home goods shop. Upstate Down’s mission is simple – to help people feel more deeply connected to where they live.

“Homes, to us, are not transactions. They’re places of feeling that provide a sense of being, fulfillment, and love,” Delyse explains. “We want our services to meet people where they are and help them arrive at that sense of home. In that way, we really see ourselves as a lifestyle company rather than just a brokerage or design firm.”

Founded by husband and wife duo Delyse and Jon Berry, Upstate Down was launched in 2021 with a focus on

real estate brokerage, before evolving into the three-pillar, vertically-integrated business that it is today.

Delyse’s background was originally in real estate, but as the daughter of an interior designer, she always had a strong interest in the creative side of homes. “I dreamt of having a company that did more than just sell real estate – a company that could meet clients where they were on their home journey and offer a more creative process in building and shaping home values,” she said.

When Jon decided to leave his career as a financial advisor, the couple began thinking seriously about how to bring the vision of Upstate Down to life. He got his real estate license and began selling homes as a team under another company while the couple crystallized their long-term vision for their own business.

After launching in 2021, they came across a storefront available in the village of Rhinebeck. While they would have loved to be in a storefront, they recognized that having an office on the main floor in the village wasn’t ideal for visitors, so they decided to incorporate a small, gallery-style store to help bridge the connection with the community. Shortly after opening, they recognized that their newly launched interior design studio and storefront had the opportunity to grow into something more.

At home in Rhinebeck

The couple have deep ties to Rhinebeck, and being located there was important for them not only on a business level, but on a personal level, too.

Delyse’s brother attended Bard College in the 1990s, and her mother moved to Rhinebeck full-time in the early 2000s. She fondly recalls visiting her mother with Jon during their early days of dating, and in 2008, they got married on her property.

At that time, Delyse and Jon had been living in Brooklyn in a tiny one-bedroom apartment that was rapidly becoming too small as they began having kids. “We would visit my mom on weekends with our two little babies and found ourselves not wanting to go back to the city,” she recalls. “Eventually, we realized we were craving that connection to nature and community, so we made the leap and moved to Rhinebeck full-time.”

In their first year upstate, they managed to buy a small starter home – “a total fixer-upper” – which was all they could afford at the time. They lived there for ten years, spending time improving it and making it suitable for their family, and their third child was even born there.

“Over time, this town truly became home. My mother lived here, and now two of my three siblings also live in Rhinebeck. Our roots have grown

deep – getting married, raising our family, and being surrounded by loved ones here,” she says. “It felt only natural that the gateway for our business would also be rooted in Rhinebeck.”

Involved in every aspect of home-owning

Upstate Down’s services include a full-service real estate brokerage, interior design studio, and a home-furnishing store. They have a group of expert agents who handle all of the traditional needs of a brokerage, including helping clients buy, sell, stage, market, prepare, and negotiate from beginning to end of the sales process.

“They’re exceptional at what they do and deeply knowledgeable in their respective categories,” Delyse shares.

In addition to the brokerage, Upstate Down has a design team that focuses on full-service interior design – everything from elevations and floor plans to lighting design, additions, kitchen and bathroom design, all the way to color and furnishings.

Upstate Down’s home and furnishing store carries everything from home decor, tabletop items, and kitchenware to custom upholstery, rugs, lighting, and other curated vintage items. They frequently feature products from

Continued on next page ...

local makers alongside vintage pieces and other specialty sourced items. The focus is to bridge areas of affordability, while also offering access to truly unique and special pieces.

“We also believe deeply in understanding where things are made and who’s making them,” Delyse emphasizes. “Anytime we can feature minority communities or artists with meaningful backgrounds, it feels like such a win-win. That kind of cross-collaboration is a blessing and an honor, and we don’t take it lightly.”

In some cases, Upstate Down has also been able to sponsor student artists, which always feels especially meaningful for Delyse and Jon.

“Each of our three services is designed to stand independently and excel in its category. With that said, each one offers value to the other departments, creating a lot of synergy,” she explains. “Ultimately, Upstate Down was built around that idea: to offer more to our clients and our community. We don’t just want to facilitate a transaction, we want to offer a full-service perspective on what it truly means to create a home.”

Making design approachable

Upstate Down’s design service launched as a way to help people approach interior design in a more thoughtful, complete way. Many of the homes they were selling needed a lot of work, so helping with design became a natural extension of their business.

Their design process follows a phased model. They start off by

understanding what clients are trying to achieve in their home, then they translate that into a full scope of work. From there, they are able to create detailed design concepts and building documents, source materials and finishes, and provide everything needed for execution. In many cases, they also manage the project and spend time on-site to oversee the details and finishing touches.

“A space is a beautiful marriage between the architectural integrity of a home, its connection to its surroundings, and the people who live within it. We always want to encapsulate what’s important to the homeowner, how they live, how things function, and how a space should feel overall,” Delyse explains. “We think deeply about how those three layers – people, architecture, and nature – interact to create harmony.”

Upstate Down also believes strongly in using natural materials and elements that age with the home, giving it “depth and soul.” The Hudson Valley is a constant source of inspiration for Delyse and Jon, who are drawn to materials that feel grounded and timeless, paired with clean lines that bring balance and modernity.

“Ultimately, we think of a home as a storybook. Each room should feel connected to the next, yet evoke a slightly different emotion. Through color, shadow, and texture, each space becomes its own page in a cohesive story that feels deeply personal and meaningful.”

On the horizon for Upstate Down

Although Delyse didn’t anticipate Upstate Down growing nearly as quickly as it has, after the first year in their small space, she began to see bigger potential than she originally imagined. As a result, she began focusing on how to make these branches become more meaningful, refined, and interconnected.

“I think I was – and still am – just a girl with a big dream. In many ways, I still feel that same sense of possibility and fantasy that started this in the beginning,” she shares.



All images with this article courtesy of Upstate Down.

Delyse notes that creating Upstate Down has been incredibly rewarding and not something that she and Jon could have attained on their own. She credits their community of people for aiding them with the vision that has become Upstate Down. “When that combination of hustle, honesty, and passion comes together, it’s truly magical.”

In the future, Delyse notes that she wants Upstate Down’s services to remain “crisp, clean, and beautiful in how they’re presented,” while also ensuring that their process operates at the highest level of expertise for their clients. They are currently expanding their team, their e-commerce business is getting a full makeover, and their e-design work, which creates more accessibility, is becoming more widely available.

Delyse jokes that she cannot exist in a space that isn’t drawn toward growth, so she of course foresees more expansion, evolution, and growth on

the horizon for Upstate Down.

“We’ve never approached this as just a business. It’s always been personal. Every home, every client, every project carries a story, and we treat it that way. The blend of real estate, design, and shop all grew from a desire to create a full-circle experience around what ‘home’ really means,” she says. “We care deeply about how people feel in their spaces, not just how they look. There’s an honesty and a soulfulness in that approach that I think people can sense when they walk into our shop or work with us. It’s less about perfection and more about connection.” ●

To learn more about Upstate Down, visit their website upstatedown.com, drop by the shop at 13 E Market Street, Rhinebeck, NY, or view their Instagram [@upstate_down](https://www.instagram.com/upstate_down).





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SEASON 4: MOXIE PODCAST WRAP-UP

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

In case you weren't aware, we here at Main Street Magazine also have a podcast. The name of the podcast is Main Street Moxie and we are wrapping up our fourth season this month.

The podcast focuses on talking with people from all over the world about their moxie: their courage, their strength, their gumption, or however they define moxie, and how they have utilized that in their life. Mary O'Neill and I are the hosts and we have had so much fun talking with people from all walks of life. I for one have learned a tremendous amount and have taken inspiration from every one of our guests, and the hope is that our listeners will too!

That all said our fourth season is wrapping up. This year was a slower season for us, where we published only three episodes, but we had some tremendously moving and inspirational conversations. And with that as our objective, we're also very excited for some of the incredible guests that we've already begun to interview for season five in 2026.

I wanted to share here a roundup of our season four guests, in case you missed any of them. All of our episodes are available anywhere you listen to podcasts, as well as on our website.

Before I jump into the roundup, I wanted to include an explanation for why I have included our final guest of season three. We spoke with local psychotherapist, Sara Cousins, specifically about how the holidays might impact us psychologically and emotionally. Sara gave some sage advice, and considering we are now in the depths of December, I think that her advice and this interview is very timely. So if you'll allow me, here is a little round-up of our last episode of 2024, as well as our episodes in 2025. Thank you for listening.

Sara Cousins

Got holidays? Then you need moxie to get through them. The expectations, the standards, and the idealized version of the season can wear us

down. Not anymore!

This episode of Main Street Moxie with Sara Cousins is here to help you celebrate the holidays in line with your values and priorities, leaving you saner and less depleted as you enter the new year.

Sara shares strategies and techniques to help us hold space for ourselves while finding connection with others during this holiday season and throughout the year.

Sara is a licensed clinical social worker and psychotherapist with over 20 years of experience in private practice in Lakeville, CT. For a decade, she's been *Main Street Magazine's* go-to mental health professional.

Sara's diverse career journey has taken her from working with Inuit youth in Alaska to serving communities through the Susan B. Anthony Project in Torrington, Harlem Hospital in Manhattan, and Victim Services of NYC. Across all her roles, she has been inspired by the resilience and vulnerability of the people she has served.

Specializing in relational and couples therapy, Sara has been trained by renowned experts, including Esther Perel, Tara Brach, Orna Guralnik, Terry Real, John Gottman, and Harville Hendrix. She is also deeply committed to mindfulness and meditation, drawing on over 20 years of training with Mingyur Rinpoche. She has attended workshops and trainings with Pema Chödrön, Jack Kornfield, and Tim Olmsted.

Mary O'Neill

Happiness is a moxie job!

To kick off the fourth Moxie season, Mary O'Neill, co-creator and co-host of Main Street Moxie, explores the connection between happiness and moxie.

Happiness is a topic on which Mary is well-versed. She has immersed herself in the topic through the lens of multiple disciplines, and it underpins her work as an educator and life design and career coach.

For Mary, rainbows and unicorns

do not signify a happy life. Instead, she draws on the Ancient Greek philosophy's emphasis on living a life of virtue and values. A happy life is one lived in alignment with qualities such as courage, moderation, honesty, humility, integrity, and, most crucially, practical wisdom, which involves knowing how and when to apply various virtues in the situations we encounter.

This kind of life might not always be Insta-worthy, but it will lead to one of authenticity and coherence, which will buoy us in times of struggle and adversity.

Viewing happiness in this way makes it less dependent on feelings and more rooted in action, doing, and MOXIE!

In addition to being the co-founder and co-host of Main Street Moxie, Mary is a seasoned and award-winning educator, lecturer, and trainer. She has taught classes in philosophy, including an interdisciplinary course she created on happiness. She has also taught classes in sustainability and nature, global business, life design, career success, and college first-year studies at Western Connecticut State University.

The Good News Girls: Mimi Madden and Susan Wheeler

What do you get when you combine two moxie-fueled individuals? Moxie synergy that's off the charts! Mimi Madden and Susan Wheeler are the driving forces behind Good News Girls, a social collective for women over 50 in northwest Connecticut.

The Good News Girls started as a musing in an English pub after a long ramble in the countryside. It has evolved into a dynamic and active organization, providing enrichment and social opportunities during a phase of a woman's life that is marked by significant change. Menopause, changes in relationship status, retirement, grown children, and aging parents can add to isolation, loneliness, and a need for connection. Enter the Good News Girls with hikes, book groups,

retreats, and learning-centered dinners, creating opportunities for friendship and positivity. They prove that it's never too late to make changes in your life!

Separately, Susan and Mimi have a wealth of experience and have weathered setbacks in their own lives. Susan overcame a devastating back injury to become a marathoner, author of *The Lemonade Diet*, mindset speaker and coach, and successful entrepreneur. Mimi has served arts non-profit organizations for decades. She is currently a program consultant for the American Mural Project (AMP) in Winsted, CT. She is a Kinder Life Planner and a Keirsey Temperament Consultant, helping clients align their lives with their natural gifts, motivations, and dreams.

Tracy Hayhurst

Tracy whips up moxie every time she steps into her kitchen. A Ballymaloe-educated chef, organic farmer, and food educator, she is passionate about mixing those ingredients to create meaningful experiences for people through her new adventure, Undermountain Pantry.

Tracy is a creative local food systems entrepreneur evolving her work by owning and managing CSAs for Chubby Bunny and Husky Meadows Farms, coordinating education and outreach for Plantin' Seeds, and serving as culinary director at Seed and Spoon. All those endeavors fed into her mission to design seasonal, fun, and educational culinary workshops and meals at Undermountain Pantry.

Tracy's jam is helping people become attached to local and seasonal food, building community through sharing delicious, nutritious food, and helping her students develop culinary skills to take back into their home kitchens and make some moxie of their own. •

To learn more about Main Street Moxie or to listen to our episodes, please visit our website mainstreetmoxie.press, or you can listen anywhere podcasts are available.



JenniWaka Photography

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After spending many months putting her small children to bed and then working late into the night, Jennifer Wakamatsu officially opened JenniWaka Photography in April of 2015. She had experimented with portraiture for years, but it was important that she take the proper steps to create a fully insured, official business. At JenniWaka Photography, Jennifer focuses specifically on high school senior portraits, family portraits, branding, and social media photos for businesses, headshots, and boudoir photography. “For me, good service and communication are equally important. I stay in close contact before and after sessions to make sure that all of my clients’ questions and concerns are taken care of. Also, quick turnaround time is key,” Jennifer explains. The most rewarding part for Jennifer is getting to know her clients. “For senior portraits, watching these bright students head out to find their places in the world; for families, watching them interacting and having fun with each other; and for businesses, watching them use the imagery to show what they’re really all about.” Many of Jennifer’s family and senior portraits are for repeat clients, and she looks forward to continuing to work with them for many years. “The branding work that I do for businesses is growing every year, too, and I’m excited to see what industries I can photograph next!”



Integrative Horsemanship

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Jane Taylor started Integrative Horsemanship in 2020, following 50+ years of pursuing various equestrian activities including competing and working as a veterinary assistant. After discussions concerning global horse welfare came to the forefront, Jane founded Integrative Horsemanship in culmination of her aspirations to unite professionally with the natural idealism of her childhood. Integrative Horsemanship provides consultation services focused on the benefits of improved communication through nuanced appreciation for horses’ intentional body language, including employing hand signaling (adapted ASL) on the premise that horse and human can become one unit. Programs are offered in a group format and in individual sessions. “The most rewarding part is bringing the horse out of their shell and allowing their personality to shine, improving trust and safety through deeper awareness, and the joy of our clients as they begin to fortify their relationships in new and fascinating ways,” says Jane. While there are organizations that also operate with acute attention to the horse-human connection, Jane is not aware of any others focusing specifically on body language dynamics, including performance results in a competition setting, in the way that Integrative Horsemanship does.



Supreme Soft Serve

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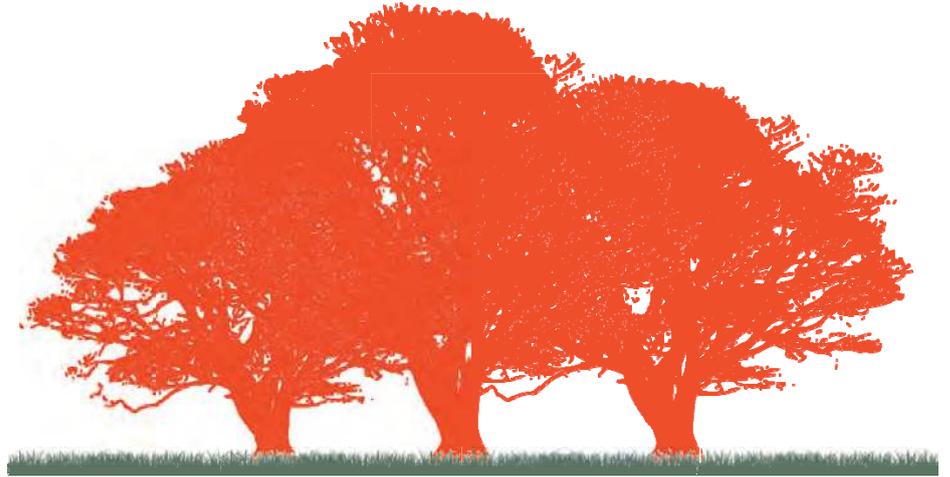
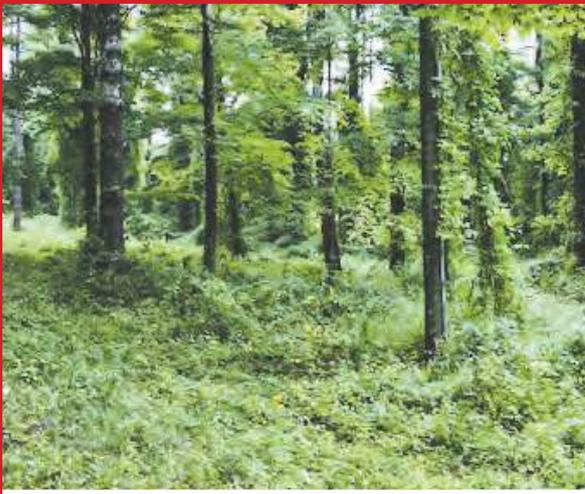
Megan Kitsock started Supreme Soft Serve in March of 2022. Kitsock jumped in with both feet and grew a booming soft serve ice cream business, collaborating with as many local businesses as possible. Supreme Soft Serve provides full-service packages that include soft serve and toppings served out of a chic ice cream trailer. Recently, Megan began lending her expertise in the soft serve field to help build out custom ice cream shops at larger events and weddings nationwide. Megan shares that her favorite part of the business is seeing the joy on people’s faces when they try their first delicious bite – then seeing those same faces over and over again. “I love getting to share my passion with the people in the community, and now, throughout the country,” she shares. What does the future hold for Supreme Soft Serve? Megan says, “specialty mega events and weddings galore! We will only be taking on four big mega events per year and ten OG Ice Cream Experiences so that we can devote our time, passion, and expertise to each and every one of them.”



Hoarding With Style

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Born with an inclination for collecting and decorating, Sarah Blodgett founded Hoarding With Style as the culmination of her work in interior design on a budget. Designs at Hoarding With Style are uniquely curated to embrace the natural world – combining antiques, curiosities from nature, rich and vibrant colors, and a sprinkle of “funky junk!” Services include design for small spaces, window displays, staging, antique restoration, natural flower arrangements, lamp and lampshade repair, art sourcing, and more. Hoarding With Style has an ongoing collection of art and antiques for sale in a barn located in West Cornwall, CT. Services and prices are scaled for average incomes, young people starting out in their first home, and those who are savvy and on a budget. “Hoarding With Style has been a lifelong obsession – collecting, arranging, bringing antiques back to life, bringing color and light into a space, and showcasing wonderful objects in vignettes,” shares Sarah. “Helping others bring their world into a happy place by combining their ideas with ours is creativity at its best!” As Hoarding With Style continues to grow, Sarah will be looking for a new winterized space to work and meet with fellow hoarders, share ideas, and collaborate on projects. “Many projects are in the barn waiting to be tackled!”



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