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Being Authentic

In a world of copycat wannabes and one-upmanship, authenticity seems to be going the way of the dodo bird. But to me, it should be the opposite.

With everyone copying every one and thing, isn't this the prime time to be unique and authentic? To stand out from the rest? That's my approach and viewpoint at least. But I suppose one could argue that this is easy for me to say, because I have always strived to be as authentic as I can whether it be in life or work. Take this magazine for example, sure, what I do in creating this publication isn't rocket science per se. Anyone could, in theory, do this. *How* one does it is what sets you apart from the rest though.

For me, creating interesting, positive, and genuine content is the heart of what I do. This magazine, from day one, has been content-driven. Sure, on occasion we've featured a story that's also been featured elsewhere, but that's the nature of the business despite me actively trying to avoid having this happen. But for every one of those stories that I do feature, I've turned away 100 others because of the eternal search for authenticity. My motivation to do this is to create something that my advertisers and readers like you want to read. I want to create content that makes people *want* to pick up this magazine and read it. I want to create content that drives people to follow us on socials and read our online content and listen to our podcast. That is my goal in everything that we create.

I'm not in a unique position though, and what I mean by that is that every business has their challenges with competitors and having their business stand out from the rest. This is something that we actively speak about with our advertisers. This is also something that we always try to help our advertisers with, because we are invested in our advertisers' success. And on a larger scale, we are invested in the success of all our fellow businesses within our communities because all of us make up the community that we are a part of.

A rising tide floats all boats.

Together we succeed, together we can also fail. To me, failure should never be an option. I want everyone to do their best so that they can be the best, because then our communities thrive. That said, instead of competing with one another, we should use this as an opportunity to highlight what makes each of us unique and different – what each of us can contribute. There's space for all of us. Together we can do better, because we should always strive to put our best foot forward.

– Thorunn Kristjansdottir

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SEPTEMBER 2026

Sunrise at Innisfree Garden in Millbrook, NY.
Photo by Olivia Valentine

CONTENTS

- 6 | LOOKING INTO THE TREES
artist profile
- 11 | SEPTEMBER MUSTS
- 13 | THE SERVICE SECRET
business
- 17 | CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE
food
- 19 | IT TAKES A VILLAGE
real estate
- 23 | BLOWING NEW LIFE INTO AN OLD FARM
- 27 | HUDSON, NEW YORK
history
- 31 | WHERE WERE YOU?
remembering september 11th
- 33 | EXPERIENCING THE TOUR DE FRANCE
la petite reine
- 37 | JANE STRONG, CO-FOUNDER OF
THE EQUUS EFFECT
- 41 | AN OPEN BOOK
author profile
- 45 | THE RHYTHM METHOD
at large
- 47 | MARKERS NOTE THE LONG AND VAST
HISTORY THAT HAPPENED HERE



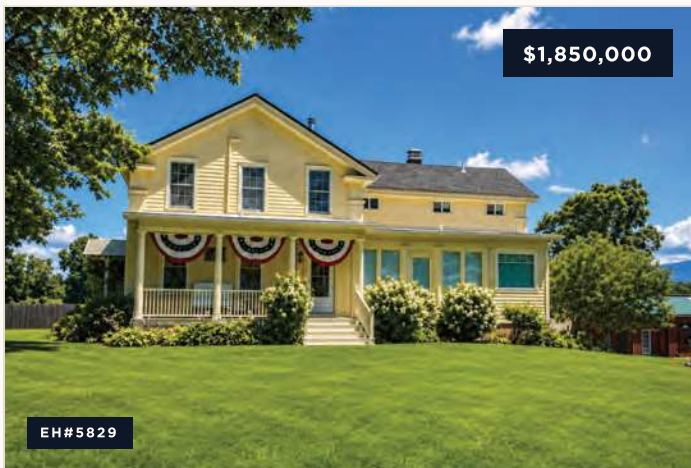
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By Leora Armstrong
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I met Ari Kardasis at his studio near Pine Plains, NY. Outside of his space stands a mature red Japanese maple with its gnarled trunk twisting upward toward a burgundy canopy of deeply etched leaves. This tree seems a fitting neighbor to his practice of working with wood and metal, forming both practical furniture pieces and wall hangings shaped through his lifelong passion for mathematics and by a drive to turn the abstract into tangible objects.

Some works depict an essence of a place, others lean towards water; each creation is exquisitely made using the natural grain of wood, bringing both light and texture to each piece. Raw cut lengths of wood lean patiently awaiting their turn in their second life to be turned into a piece of art. He selects each by hand for its hue, knots, and history.

What were your earliest memories of making?

I have a strong memory from high school of getting my hands on some mathematical software called Mathematica long before 3D printing was really a thing. This gave me this realization that I could turn abstract

math formulas into physical objects. The concept that a formula could become a thing you could hold was both beautiful and significant to me, opening a whole new way of making.

Fascinating that it started with mathematics. Where did you study?

Initially I headed to architecture school at MIT, in a department that was more focused on design and computation. It felt collaborative, open ended, and interdisciplinary. My master's was about what was behind architecture, for making and building smaller objects versus buildings. It was a kind of transition from a rigorous math background toward a creative discipline.

Architecture is amazing, and I'm so grateful I did it. Through that training, the pedagogy, the design process, and the self-reflection it demanded, I built a foundation I didn't fully understand at the time. I only came to see how it would shape my practice much later.

It's fascinating how our journeys take these obscure paths before they find the right one. What motivates your creative practice now?

For me, it's about taking these kinds of conceptual ideas from math and science and bringing them forth into the world, in ways that expose their

beauty to a wider audience. When I look at a math textbook, that's my world, I love numbers, but many people find them alienating. So, I want to translate that language, to expose the beauty of mathematical thinking in a form more people can appreciate and connect with. A lot of people in STEM want a real connection to aesthetics, to be able to appreciate and learn from beauty the way they do from data. There's so much within the sciences that people are hungry to connect with.

I see a real crossover with artists and painters drawing on the sciences too. What pulled you to this area?

I was based in Brooklyn and bought the Pine Plains house in 2015 as a weekend space. Gradually we moved up with our young family until we were here full time by 2019. It made sense for us to raise our children out of the city. At the time I was focusing on startup companies remotely, which made the move here easier. Obviously, having the space here enabled me to move into this work full time. And being able to draw on local, felled trees turned out to be significant – incorporating a sense of place became a real part of my process.

Do you have a favorite wood that you like to use?

I like to let wood sit and mature for a few years before I use it. Black walnut is my go-to tree with an intensity of

LOOKING INTO THE TREES

ARI KARDASIS

coloration I keep coming back to. Maple is also another favorite, and of course ash is common right now due to tree loss from the emerald ash borer beetle. We had to pull five or six ash trees from our property because they were affected by the borer.

Looking at these current black walnut projects, the variation in hue is remarkable to me. Every tree is genuinely unique. Sometimes I'll laminate two different woods together before cutting, to build gradations of color once the piece is cut and sanded. I step the cutting down gradually until I'm happy with how the gradient reads. I've come to really appreciate the imperfections in the wood that make it much more complex to work with, but the magic is in the imperfection. Every piece of wood carries the story of where it grew. Shade, light, water – all of it plays into the tone. Some walnut is dark, whereas other pieces can be quite pale. That's beyond my control, and it's part of the process I enjoy most.

Surface feels integral to your work, it evokes sand, dunes, or water. Some of your surfaces feel like a beach after the tide has pulled back, leaving wave patterns. These lines through the wood feel abstracted as well, yet they're all created by weather, season, and light, akin to drawings in that sense.

Yes, the wave patterns are inspired by liquid, from both water and sea, which I integrate into the surface. The spirals are also from an ancient source, akin to ammonite in stone. My inspiration moves between abstract calculation and the physical world, and I don't feel a contradiction there – as I'm cutting into the wood, the patterns emerging are really an extension of an abstracted idea. With the wall hangings, the wave-cut patterns open the grain in a way you wouldn't normally see, and they let the light in differently. Those are lightly oiled. The furniture has a flatter surface and is finished more traditionally, with a French polish, so you get that burnished quality where the light really sits on the surface.

You mentioned Georgia O'Keeffe as a spark in your work. Who else inspires you?

There's a canon of mathematicians, as well as artists, who have led me to this work. The 18th century Swiss mathematician and physicist, Leonhard Euler, who was a widely considered one of the most prolific mathematicians in history, and John Conway and Roger Penrose are embedded with me. Finally I would add Henri Poincaré, a French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher of science.

Yes, I think there are many artists who do work with math and data, like Sol LeWitt in his wall drawings and British artist Bridget Riley for her vibrant optical patterned paintings. There's an algorithmic, systems-based thread running through that work, where the result isn't explicit but it's clearly mathematical underneath and still deeply personal.

In the early days I felt I was not an artist; therefore, I needed to make furniture because it's practical. It is labeled as craft, but it is also art. I now realize when you look at the wall carvings, they are art, as ancient as early carvings.

Yes, it's interesting, the influence that math has had on your work. It's not a common thread, maybe more within the architectural world. Math plays a part for my work. Many artists work with numbers and sequences. It's quite common, especially the grid, as interpreted by the likes of Piet Mondrian, Sol LeWitt, and Frank Stella. You made a collaboration with Emily Weiner. Can you share that?

Yes, I made various panels for Emily to paint on, the frames and panels cohesively fit together. I keep coming back to the spiral. It's older than people. Ammonites turn up buried in stone from centuries ago, and that shape has stayed constant in my work across different pieces, coming from something deeper than any single reference.

Do you have a collaboration or a dream project that you really want to do that you have not yet realized?

I would love to make a work on a larger scale, for example using spaces you work with or interact with would be fantastic – a large installation where the space envelopes the viewer.

A recent furniture project is this games table made with a lighter black walnut and maple wood as the wood



Top: Ari Kardasis in his Pine Plains studio.

Above: *Longitude* showing Indian Mountain in Lakeville, CT carved from black walnut with 1/8-inch solid brass veins running along the lines of longitude. 12x24x3 inches.

Left: *Flowers* Demi-lune Table. Walnut. 35x20x34 inches.

Opposite page: *Ribbon Table*. Ash, Glass. 25x25x16 inches.



Continued on next page ...

varies so much from tree to tree. I must consider this when choosing the wood. I need to integrate both color and grain patterns, density of line, and how they play with their neighbors. Marquetry comes into play for furniture pieces, integrating brass for finer lines as well. Here the maple is a wonderful grain, but you cannot reproduce each piece, as they are unique. Some trees grow by water, others in arid places. Each environment affects the tone and density of the wood. No two are alike.

Working with materials that are out of my control, with the wood as my collaborator, is interesting. I don't decide how a piece finishes; the wood does, and that allows the magic to appear in the final stages. I have a 3D printer where I can conceptualize a piece there in the abstract, but with wood, the knots and color decide the final piece. Taking my abstract ideas into the physical world, the materials each decide the piece. Imperfection matters here; the places where you see knots and twists are much harder to work. You must pay for that beauty with effort, but you cannot replicate these knots. On the other hand, some maples are easy to work with, clear grain smooth, but they are not as interesting.

Have you ever taught? What advice would you give to a younger person starting out in a creative world?

I've done workshops, art projects, and talks in different places at MIT and Princeton. I've also taught high schoolers math, which I enjoyed.

There's a moment when students realize math is genuinely hard, that it isn't formulaic and can't just be regurgitated. I enjoy that moment, the chance to help kids appreciate a subject even if they never excel at it, just to give them a real sense of its complexity.

As for advice: it's about the blank page we are faced with at times. The creative block. So, make ten shitty things. If you don't know what you want, if you're convinced it won't be good, or if you don't know where to start, just make something terrible. Make it as bad as you can, then do it again. By the second or third attempt, you're usually over the hump. The inertia of the creative act is powerful. The only way through it is to just make the work. Thomas Edison said that "genius is one percent inspiration and ninety nine percent perspiration."

Finally, don't let your ego hold you back, you do not have to be an Artist with a capital A to make things. Whatever you want to make, make it, whether it's a mathematically inspired sculpture or something that makes no sense on paper. It doesn't have to belong to a category. Listen to your gut, and don't build work from inside a box, build it from what you're passionate about. When I found Mathematics in high school, I just loved it, full stop. It still took years of sticking my neck out and getting it chopped off more than once before any of this worked.

Yes, you must go after inspiration with a club it seems. Is your work mostly commission based?

Almost all my work is commissioned. I also make many pieces I want to see in the world, usually furniture or objects, leaning more towards these wall hangings. I make furniture that is useful, but it also feels like art. Some



would say it is craft, and it started as that centuries ago, but even that work was inspired by place or nature.

The studio will undergo a reboot as I am installing a much larger CNC machine. I'm curious to see how large some of these pieces can go once it's in.

Kardasis draws his inspiration from the poetry of mathematics and from ancient, newly unearthed shells – cutting through them to reveal the intricate patterning hidden inside, then drawing that same patterning out of the wood grain. Two forms from nature, joined by a mathematical concept, let the purity of wood, line, and place collaborate – bringing a tree's second life into the home, after decades of standing tall outside it. •

To see more of Kardasis's work, dig a little deeper: Instagram: @arkadasis. Website: ari-kardasis.com. Email: ari@arikardasis.com.



Top: *Interference Nightstand*. Black Walnut. 16x16x28 inches.

Middle: *Loxodromic*. Maple, Black Walnut. 35x16 inches.

Above: *Games Table* in progress. Maple, Black Walnut.

Left: *Three Quarters Interference Pie Safe*. Black Walnut. 32x16x72 inches.





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Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait of Margaret Lemon* (detail), c. 1638,
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SEPTEMBER MUSTS

to eat



Fern. We recently stopped by Fern in Lakeville, CT on a Saturday night. We were coming back from a car show in Colebrook and the bar was hopping on this particular night, but we were all about the food. We ended up ordering an appetizer, a couple of pizzas, and a steak. All to share. The menu at Fern literally has something for everyone, and the ambiance of the restaurant is really cool. Fern is located in the heart of Lakeville, in the old fire house. It is really quite the space! One of the center pieces of the restaurant is the bar, followed by the pizza oven and the rolling garage doors. But back to the food: just yum. As you can see in the picture to the left, the string fries? IMHO these are the best types of fries and they paired perfectly with the steak. The pizzas were a little larger than your typical personal size and the topping choices made it difficult to choose. Fern is an amazing place to go for date night, there's something on the menu for everyone but I do recommend that you make a reservation!



to watch

The Bombing of Pan Am 103. Netflix recently released a six-part television drama about the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 that exploded over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in 1988. This was originally a British television drama that aired on the BBC. Connor Swindells, Merritt Wever, and Patrick J. Adams star in the series. At the time of this writing I am five episodes in, and may I just tell you that the acting in this is superb. The raw emotion that you feel through these various characters is palpable. The acting, the directing, and how these episodes have been put together to depict the multiple viewpoints of what happened as a result of the bombing of the Pan Am flight is truly incredible. This was the deadliest attack in British history, and this television drama, I feel, depicts not just the events but the people involved with such respect and grace. It truly tugs at your heartstrings and shows you the many sides of humanity.



TO READ

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead by Brené Brown. This book is a #1 *New York Times* bestselling book with more than two million copies sold so it must be good, right? As Amazon begins to describe this book, "From thought leader Brené Brown, a transformative new vision for the way we lead, love, work, parent, and educate that teaches us the power of vulnerability. ... Every day we experience the uncertainty, risks, and emotional exposure that define what it means to be vulnerable or to dare greatly. Based on twelve years of pioneering research, Brené Brown PhD, MSW, dispels the cultural myth that vulnerability is weakness and argues that it is, in truth, our most accurate measure of courage." I think it's safe to say that in today's world and society that we can all continue to cultivate our courage and leadership skills, hence why this is our September book rec! We hope you enjoy as much as we did.

To do

Apple picking and visiting local farms. One of my favorite things to do on a crisp fall day is to go apple picking. The sun is warm, but there is a crispness to the air. And wandering around rows of apple trees? There's just something so fun and peaceful about it. When it comes to apple picking, or even pumpkin picking (to name just two), we are fortunate to have lots of choices in our region. There are a handful of farms in every which direction, so if you're not familiar with pick-your-own places in a particular area, just turn to Mr. Google. Every farm will differ too because some are quite elaborate with food trucks and adult beverages, while others may cater to families, while others still may keep it simple and focus on the picking part. There's sure to be something out there to strike everyone's fancy. When it comes to apple picking, my favorite thing about it is tasting all the different kinds of apples and discovering which kind I like the most. Some of the names I find that I've never even heard of, so to take a bite of that crisp apple and not knowing if it'll be sweet or tart is like the apple equivalent of Russian roulette: will it be hit or miss? This fall, pack up the family and head to your local (or far afield) orchard and pick to your heart's delight!





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Lann Rubin, Founder/Owner of North East Ford, Millerton, NY

The Service Secret

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

On a weekday morning Lann Rubin, the founder of the North East Ford Dealership, explained his 33-year automotive career, from working as a night time manager while still in high school to owning, operating, and building the Ford dealership in the Town of North East on Route 44. All of his customers have his cell phone number in case they need to talk to him, and our conversation was frequently interrupted by negotiations and instructions.

How did you get started in this business?

When I was in high school, I worked as the night manager of a diner in Roscoe, NY in the Catskills. A waitress had a brother with a used car lot, and she introduced us, as I needed help buying a car. He took me to an auto auction, and in addition to the car I needed, I saw a Dodge Omni for \$400 and knew kids would love it. I sold it for a profit in Roscoe two days later. The owner of the used car lot suggested that I do this full time, and I went to work for Country Chevrolet driving to Warwick every day selling cars and also becoming a part time finance manager. Eventually I landed in Dutchess County working for Poughkeepsie Ford in finance and became the longest running manager for a tough boss. He taught me a lot about the kind of questions to ask customers, how to talk to people, and quite frankly, often, what not to do. Next, I went to Miracle Ford, a big group, which had just bought the Ford Dealer in Pleasant Valley. I progressed to general manager. I next became general manager of Rhinebeck

Ford, where I turned their business around in three months and made it profitable. Dave McLean, the owner of McLean Ford in Millerton and Pine Plains, had been after me for years to purchase the Millerton location and in January 2018, after 25 years in the car business, I became the new owner with a good friend and partner, Stephen Hoare, and renamed it North East Ford.

When you acquired the dealership what changes did you make?

The business had only two technicians and a part-time helper when we arrived. It was failing. Now we have 43 employees, making us one of the largest employers in the town after the school district and Harney & Sons Tea. The Town of North East and the Town Planning Board were very supportive of our plans to expand. They approved blowing out the back of the building so we could service heavy trucks. We built this very large garage and had to get special permission from Ford for the exterior appearance. It's the only one in the country designed to look quite a bit like a horse barn with cupolas on top and specially made Ford weather vanes. Now we have 13 heavy truck bays where we can service large vehicles from truck fleets to motor homes in addition to 10 standard service bays.

What else is different about North East Ford? Everyone on the floor was so welcoming and helpful when I came in.

We don't have salesmen. We refer to anyone who comes through the door



Above: Lann Rubin behind the wheel of a Bronco in his Ford dealership in Millerton. Photo by Thorunn Kristjansdottir. Below: The showroom of North East Ford was completely updated. Photo by Christine Bates.

as a guest, not as a customer. In 2015 when I went into an Apple store, I noticed that the staff in blue shirts were helping customers, and the leaders in black shirts were actually closing the sale, explaining warranty coverage, and collecting payments. Every survey suggests people do not like the sales process, but they do want to be helped. Here we don't pay commissions; we pay employees to interact with our guests, to start conversations, and to answer questions. Staff on the floor receive a salary and a grid of bonuses. Then the sale is consummated personally by myself or a manager who has been with me for many years.

Another unusual distinction is our pick-up and delivery option for car servicing. If you want your vehicle serviced, you can give us a call, and we'll schedule a pick-up at your home or business and then bring it back to you when the work is completed at no additional charge. People call from Albany County, the Berkshires, Connecticut, and all the way down to Orange County. On an average day we have at least six drivers on the road. A few times a month, I even go myself.

I've learned that customers care about communication and service more than anything. We strive to be

better than most. We fail less than others. We thank the customers for their patience.

Would you pick up my Honda in Millerton for servicing, new tires, or NYS inspections?

Sure, we can handle all makes of vehicles.

How important is your service compared to selling vehicles?

That's an interesting question. Today the products we sell is diagnostics – which includes the valet service and the club-like membership – and you happen to get a beautiful vehicle with it. The two are interconnected, and all of our team is involved in both in some way.

What's the most popular vehicle you sell?

Everybody, young and old, buys Ford 150 pick-ups. Ford shifted away from hatchbacks and sedans and no longer makes standard passenger cars like the Taurus or the Lincoln Continental, which was discontinued in 2020 as Ford shifted to focus on SUVs and crossovers. Second most popular is the fun Bronco, built on a Ford Ranger

Continued on next page ...



frame, which feels like a truck. And then there's the electric Mustang Mach E and the Escape, a compact SUV, which was available as a hybrid or gas engine, but this is the last year for Escape. The Ford Explorer, used by families and police departments, replaced the minivan. We also sell the heavy-duty Ford trucks like the 250 to 450 and F550 commercial vehicles.

Are electric vehicles in demand? What happened to the Ford 150 Lightning?

The electric Ford Lightning 150 had a long waiting list and now Ford has retreated. In my view the introduction was premature because of the truck's limited range and particularly poor range when towing. It was a real shame. The hybrids however are going strong, which is the bright spot now. They come with an on-board gasoline engine that generates the electricity that will continuously charge the battery, extending the range and increasing the towing limits.

Who are your customers?

The closest Ford dealership in any direction is over 45 minutes away. About a third of our clients are from Connecticut and Massachusetts and the rest from Dutchess and Ulster counties in New York. We rely heavily on truck sales and service, so it's not surprising that the majority of our customers are in the trades. Over 1,500 contractors have my personal cell number and can reach me 24/7.

What sort of marketing do you do?

Our advertising is primarily videos on Facebook, YouTube, and some cable. We have billboards but do very little traditional advertising except for our local print media. Charitable sponsorships that support our community,

especially children, put us front and center and build our image. We do non-profit hole-in-one golf tournaments where we give away a chance to win a Ford. We try to do something for everyone that asks. This year in conjunction with the 175th Year celebration in Millerton, we ran info ads on six cable providers that ran over 3,000 commercials.

I believe that a town has to do a big event every quarter to be a destination. It's good for business when outsiders visit and spend more time here. We're coming along with more development on the boulevard and Irondale districts.

What about your silent partner?

I've known Stephen for 26 years. He represents us in the wholesale vehicle world by buying used vehicles for us to sell, which is a massive undertaking. He's very happy letting me be the face of the dealership. He brings clients to the dealership as he has deep roots in the communities we service. I have known and/or worked for other partnerships, and truly I say to you, I have never seen a partnership as good as ours.

Are used cars important?

We sell more used cars than new. When we opened there were eight used cars on the lot. Today we have 42. It's getting more and more difficult to procure saleable used cars. Auction prices are often similar or more than retail. Our guests need better pricing and payments; so we scour the web and social media. Stephen is on the road every day; we buy cars the old-fashioned way, face to face. "Buying off the street" is better as the sellers get more, and since we aren't paying wild auction fees and transportation, our guests buy them for a



Above: Broncos are the biggest seller after trucks at North East Ford in Millerton. Photo by Thorunn Kristjansdottir. Below: North East Ford's service bays are always busy. Photo by Christine Bates.

more competitive price. It takes a little extra work, but your repeat guests give great Google reviews and are loyal, very loyal, long term.

What is the trade cycle these days? What about leasing?

I say you buy service and get a car with it. Typically, another trade will happen in 26 to 48 months. Today we only do leases on certain new vehicles.

Have tariffs and the uncertain international situation affected you?

Everything is getting more expensive, that's for sure. I can't really determine how much of this is due to tariffs. I don't understand the math or the impact, but they definitely hurt for a while. The car and truck business is a global one. No one country makes everything for a truck. For example, Ukraine has traditionally made electrical wiring harnesses, not just for the automotive industry, but also for washing machines and other electrical appliances. Only two companies make airbags. Another example is coconut, which is used to make some trunk bases. We can't grow coconuts, we have to import them – the same is true for many components and materials found in vehicle parts.

What about the high price of cars and trucks?

New car prices are high. An entry level Bronco is in the 30s and the average truck in the mid 60s. Thus, the certified and pre-owned trucks are top sellers. We sell just about every make and model in our pre-owned lineup. Next to Chevrolet and Dodge, the most popular pre-owned brand we

sell is Subaru – with all-wheel drive at a reasonable price. Subarus, like pickups, hold their value because the manufacturer didn't over expand and has maintained quality.

What about recalls?

Recalls are a problem for everyone, especially given the advance notice to consumers, often months before a fix is established. Communication and transparency are crucial. Informing the consumer that there's a problem protects the manufacturer, but receiving the parts to fix it is another issue and often takes a long time. We seem to be making inroads and timelines have improved some. I am optimistic that this trend will continue, and turnaround time will continue to improve.

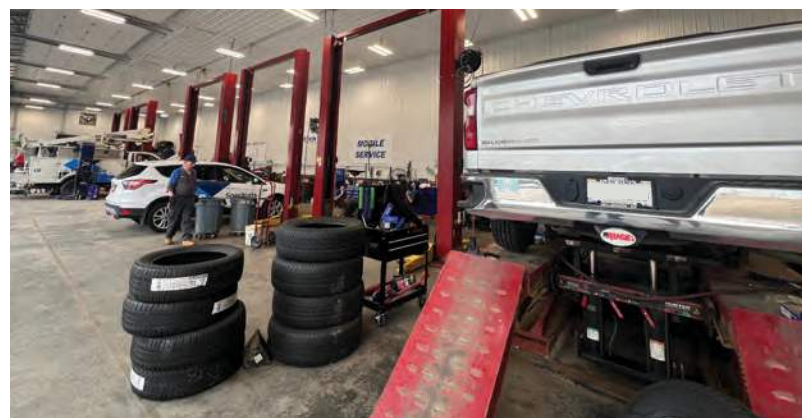
Is there anything you regret about your automotive career?

I wish I had learned more about the mechanics of vehicles rather than starting in sales and finance. Our two youngest sons are 17 and 20, and they are both starting in the business as technicians. Not sure where their passions will land, but the service side is the best place to start.

What do you do when you're not working or answering the phone?

I love carpentry and construction projects, the outdoors, spending time with my family, and being active in my congregation. ●

To learn more about North East Ford, visit them at 182 US-44, Millerton, NY, or call (518) 789-4477. You can also visit them online at northeastfordmillerton.com.





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CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI Cake

By Olivia Valentine with
Caroline Markonic
info@mainstreetmag.com

Yes, I am still harvesting zucchini from my garden. At this point, I'm beginning to wonder if I planted a zucchini patch or if I somehow accidentally started a small zucchini farm. We have eaten more zucchini this summer than I have in my entire lifetime. Note to self: DO NOT plant as many zucchini plants next year!

We have used zucchini in so many savory dishes and added it to more sweet desserts than I can count. I'm pretty sure I've reached the point where I can sneak zucchini into just about anything! This cake, though – Wow! It is so moist, so easy to make, and just hits the spot. I knew when I tasted the batter that it was going to be great, but wasn't expecting it to knock my socks off!

Little secret: I had actually made a version of this cake earlier in the summer and wasn't thrilled with the results, so I debated whether or not I should even share the recipe. Caroline and I also made an apple cake with a brown-butter, cinnamon frosting. The frosting was absolutely fantastic. The cake? Not so much. Let's just say it didn't exactly live up to the frosting's potential. I may revisit it and see what I can do to make the cake worthy of

that brown-butter, cinnamon frosting goodness. Maybe it will become an October recipe. Perfect for the season. Stay tuned!

Back to the zucchini cake. The addition of espresso powder, reducing the amount of sugar, and adding butter and vegetable oil really put this one over the top. If you're worried that this cake will have a coffee taste to it, don't be. The espresso powder just gives the chocolate a little extra depth and makes it taste even more chocolatey.

The cake would definitely be delicious without the ganache, but honestly, who doesn't love a good chocolate ganache poured over a good chocolate cake?

If you choose to skip the ganache, you can dust the cake with powdered sugar, garnish it with a sprinkle of flaky sea salt, or just leave it naked! You can't go wrong with any of these options.

The cake was incredibly easy to put together, and it helped us use up some of the last of my zucchini. Although, judging by the number of zucchinis still sitting on my kitchen counter, I may need to start looking into zucchini donations. As always, enjoy!

Cake ingredients

½ cup vegetable or canola oil
½ cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled
1 ½ cups granulated sugar
3 large eggs at room temp
2 tsps vanilla
1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
¼ cups cocoa powder
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1 tsp espresso powder
2 cups shredded zucchini (do not squeeze dry)
1 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
½ cup chopped walnuts

Cake instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9"x13" pan. Combine the oil, butter, and sugar in a mixer and beat until incorporated. Add the eggs and vanilla, and beat until thoroughly combined. In a separate bowl mix the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, salt and espresso powder. Add the flour mixture to the wet mixture and beat until combined. Stir in the zucchini, chocolate chips, and walnuts. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 30-35 minutes. Mine was done in

30 minutes. Let cool before frosting.

Ganache ingredients

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chopped fine
½ cup heavy cream

Ganache instructions

Heat the cream over medium heat until very hot and steamy. Do not let the heavy cream boil. Place the finely chopped chocolate in a shallow bowl. Pour the steamy, hot cream over the chocolate and cover it for about 5-10 minutes. Stir with a metal spoon or spatula until combined. My chocolate didn't thoroughly melt, so I set the bowl over another steaming hot bowl of water and stirred it until all chocolate was melted. The mixture should be very smooth and glossy. Pour the ganache over the cooled cake and refrigerate for a few hours. Enjoy! •

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



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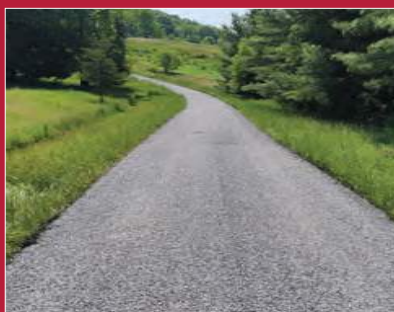
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It takes a Village

REVIVAL IN PHILMONT, NY

By Christine Bates
info@mainstreetmag.com

Ten years ago, Main Street Magazine mentioned the Village of Philmont in Columbia County, NY, in an article about the Town of Claverack. Philmont was then described as the “forgotten village coming back to life with ambitious plans to revitalize its reservoir and industrial history.” The plans are ambitious, and progress is moving ahead.

The Village of Philmont developed in the 19th century based on water power generated by the Agawamuck Creek. Wool, hosiery, and straw paper industrial mills were the thriving community’s economic backbone until the 1950s when the mills moved south and the Philmont economy declined. In 1873, an estimated 3,671 residents represented two-thirds of the entire population of the Town of Claverack. Recent estimates place the current village population at 1,450 – up from the 2020 census of 1,377 due to the influx of urban migrants, especially creatives, attracted to very affordable housing.

Philmont has long moved past its old nickname of “Filthmont.” The elegant Vanderbilt Lakeside, built by Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1863 as a railroad hotel, operates as a boutique event space. The nonprofit Philmont Beautification Inc., known as BPI, helped establish fine dining at Local 111 in an abandoned service garage and a co-op grocery store with a commercial kitchen, locally grown food, and a café. The Hudson Valley Rail Trail is planning an extension into the village.

Over the past six years, the Village of Philmont’s real estate market has been transformed gradually, while staying affordable with median home prices remaining in the mid to low \$300,000s. The Village continues to balance newcomers and rising home values with community needs, infrastructure pressures, and the ongoing challenge of maintaining an aging historic housing stock.

Added to this mix is increasing income disparity. According to the US Census Bureau, Philmont’s median household income stands at \$56,563, while average income is much higher at \$91,330. This gap between the median and the average income points to the impact of affluent out-of-town buyers. The Village continues to have a 21.6% poverty rate, substantially higher than that 12% rate of all of Columbia County.

Still affordable with median prices under \$350,000

When everything shifted during COVID in 2020 and 2021, the ripples did not spread immediately to the secluded, historic mill town of Philmont. Nestled in Columbia County just down the road from the City of Hudson, Philmont has long retained a quiet, caught-in-time character. Its empty storefronts, 19th century Victorian homes on winding side streets, and industrial skeletons still hint at its prosperous manufacturing past. But the post-pandemic working-remotely exodus combined with holistic community-based development efforts are gradually changing the feel of the Village and promise a brighter future.

Adventurous buyers from the New York City region and the broader tri-state area looked beyond the gentrified roads of the Hudson Valley and discovered Philmont with character,



community, and low price-per-square-foot real estate. As home prices rose everywhere, Philmont became an alternative. By 2022 and 2023, the median home value across the region began a steep climb, eventually pushing up home prices in Philmont above \$300,000 for the first time by 2024. Even more noticeable is the increase in prices at the top of the market, from a low of \$360,000 in 2020 to almost \$1,000,000.

Homes that have sold and resold in the last five years illustrate the change in the residential real estate market. 1 Main Street at the edge of the village sold for \$72,000 in July of 2021, renovated, and then sold for \$400,000 in May of 2022.

Philmont’s housing stock, like many old factory towns, includes a large number of multi-family homes, which can account for as much as 40% of all home sales and typically sell for below the median price of single-family dwellings.



Top: The home of a knitting mill family at 40 Main Street has sold twice since 2020 for \$995,000.

Above: The former Summit Knitting Mill located between two dams is in the early stages of being reimaged as artists’ studios, a restaurant, and performing arts center.

All photos by Christine Bates.

Continued on next page ..



Above: 52 Church Street, a two-family home, sold for \$153,000 in January of 2020, renovated, and is now listed for sale at \$495,000.



Left: Overlooking High Falls stream, 1 Main Street, built in 1860, was sold fully renovated for \$400,000 with four bedrooms and two bathrooms in May of 2022.

Apartment buildings are not usually found in small villages but attest to Philmont’s former bustling past. Four apartment buildings were sold in 2022 alone, many in disrepair ranging in price from \$299,000 for 15 Church Street to \$2,525,000 for 5 Church Street. Many of these buildings were not maintained after the mills migrated south and were acquired by slum lords. They are now being slowly renovated with state grants.

Very little for sale or rent in Philmont

Always a small market with fewer than two sales a month, only seven homes were sold in the first six months of this year, with a median price of \$330,000 in line with results in 2024 and 2025 despite lower sales activity. In mid 2026, only three single-family homes were listed for sale; however, seven multi-family homes are available at prices from \$110,000 to \$525,000. Only three rental units are listed around \$1,500 monthly; however, according to Airbnb, there are 19 active Philmont Airbnb listings with an average nightly rate of \$308.

Ambitious plans

Philmont has made plans for the future based on a three-volume resource study, a comprehensive plan, environmental studies, and a housing survey. Philmont was listed on the New York State Register of Historic Places on December 4, 2023, and subsequently added to the National Register of Historic Places on March 15, 2024, when it was recognized as an intact example of a 19th-century upland industrial

and mill village in New York’s Taconic Region.

Spearheaded by non-profit Philmont Beautification with genuine community engagement, various “Philmont Rising” projects are now underway with assistance from New York State grants supporting Philmont’s redevelopment. Vacant building rehabilitation has improved Main Street with bids now out to restore the Empire House, another vacant former railroad hotel and adjoining opera house. The Summit Knitting Mill, a historic, 34,000-square-foot textile mill perched dramatically above Agawamuck Creek, stands as one of the best-preserved symbols of the Village’s industrial boom. Vacant for decades, the project is moving forward and will house performing arts, a restaurant, and artists’ studios with an emphasis on textile arts in recognition of the mill’s past.

Philmont remains a study in contrasts. It is a market where a sprawling historic home can command close to a million dollars, while a fixer-upper near the commercial corridor might still trade hands below \$100,000. The core tension identified in local comprehensive housing plans persists. How does a small, historic working-class village preserve its soul, protect its seniors and working families, and manage an aging physical plant while navigating a permanent shift in regional desirability? ●

Christine Bates, real estate advisor with William Pitt Sotheby’s International Realty, Licensed in CT and NY. Opinions expressed are those of the author alone.

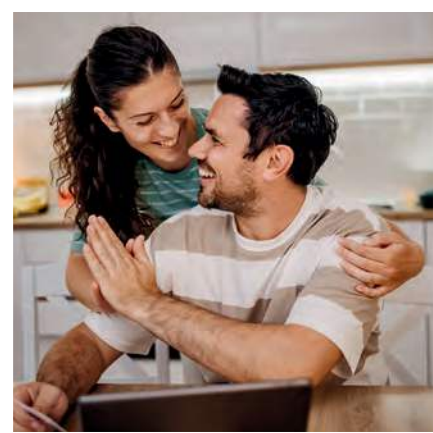
VILLAGE OF PHILMONT REAL ESTATE 2020 – 2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Median All Residential Homes Sold	\$216,000	\$160,000	\$260,000	\$235,00	\$350,000	\$320,000
Highest Price	17	20	20	22	16	19
Appartment Buildings Sold	\$360,000	\$386,200	\$995,000	\$520,000	\$815,000	\$995,000
Multi-Family Sold	1	0	4	3	0	1
	1	7	8	2	3	3

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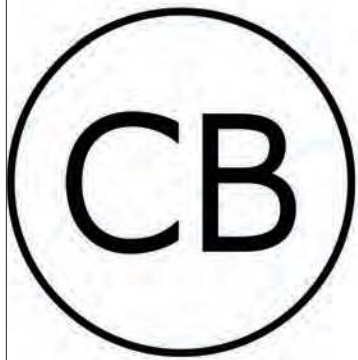
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BLOWING NEW LIFE INTO AN OLD FARM

By Dominique DeVito
info@mainstreetmag.com

Are we slipping into fall already? For some this is the best time of year, when summer's heat lingers just long enough to bring a golden glow to the days, but winter's chill comes calling at night. Here in the Hudson Valley, September (and October) are harvest season, and that means apples and pumpkins. It means corn mazes and hayrides. Fresh-pressed apple cider and cider donuts. And pies.

We are blessed to have many wonderful farms to choose from to take part in these simple but profound pleasures. One of them is Goold, a 90-acre property in Castleton, NY, that has been farmed for over 100 years. That's generations of people coming to enjoy the bounty and the beauty of this farm.

And here's some wonderful news: The farm is getting a big dose of TLC to take it into its next 100 years. That's no small feat, and its new owners are taking it seriously.

Open again

Knowing their goal was to be open for apple picking, cider, cider donuts, pies, and a preliminary tasting room by the time this issue of *Main Street Magazine* is released, I wanted to catch up with Neviana Zhgaba and Ardian Llomi to talk about how they're working to make this happen. There's an important nod to the past in the farm's name, which is now Goold Hill Estate. It was chosen "to honor the history of this farm, which has been a part of the commu-

nity since 1910, and comes with the blessing of Sue Goold and the Goold family, whose legacy continues to be woven into the land and its future."

In fact, when I arrived at the farm to meet with Neviana, Sue Goold was part of the welcoming committee! As was Goold Hill Estate's general manager, Ashley Hanson. Ashley, Sue, and Neviana were ticking off boxes on what was clearly an extensive to-do list, but their enthusiasm for the tasks was evident. There were big smiles all around.

A deep love of the land

For Neviana, Ardian, and their family, Goold Hill Estate is a place "rooted in the land and inspired by its rich farming tradition," which also "represents our commitment to preserving what makes this property special while thoughtfully stewarding it into the future."

It's clear that Neviana and Ardian share a deep love of the land and the property. Their family home is two hours away, in Newtown, CT where they established and operate the award-winning Aquila's Nest Vineyards. To take on this farm too, it had to be even more than love at first sight for them – it was and is a vision for what's possible not just for the land, but also for everyone who visits.

"I am most excited about making this a vibrant place where people want to be for the beauty and the bounty," Neviana says. "I was born in the countryside in Albania," she shares,

"and I understand a commitment to agriculture. For me," she says, "being outside and working on a farm was always a fun family time."

She and Ardian know how special the property is. "People have been coming here for decades," she acknowledges, adding, "It's a lot of responsibility to honor that. And it is nice to bring in a new era." She is grateful for Sue's knowledge of apples and the extensive orchard on the farm. I asked Sue if this spring's low temperatures set the orchards back, and she was quick to reply with relief and pleasure that while she suspected it might have, "I've been keeping an eye on them, and the trees are loaded with apples." Great news, of course, and a kind of sign, if you want to think of it that way, that the TLC going in will be expressed in what's coming out.

Whence they came

To understand what Neviana and Ardian envision for Goold Hill Estate, it helps to look at what they've already accomplished.

In 2016, they purchased a 200-year-old, 41-acre farm in Newtown, CT. At the time, it had no vines, no tasting room, and no infrastructure. Within a few short years, they transformed it into Aquila's Nest Vineyards – now one of Connecticut's top agritourism

A view of the orchards in springtime bloom that have been part of Goold for generations.

All photos courtesy of Neviana Zhgaba.

Continued on next page ...

destinations, celebrated for its wines, cultural programming, sustainable farming practices, and visitor experiences.

It's not surprising to learn that in addition to their love of land and farming, Neviana and Ardian are engineers – she is a software engineer, and he's a mechanical engineer. It may be cliché to say that engineers are planners, but in their case it seems to play out in full force.

Every detail of Aquila's Nest was thought through to maximize their vision.

Aquila is the Latin word for eagle. Albania is often called “the land of the eagles,” and the majestic bird is on the Albanian flag. A nest, of course, is a primal home and gathering space.

Aquila has a mythological meaning, as well. As told in Homer's tale, *The Iliad*, Aquila is the eagle who carries the Greek god Zeus's thunderbolts, and who brought Ganymede to Olympus to serve as Zeus's cupbearer. Later, Zeus put Ganymede in the sky as the constellation Aquarius, protected by the wing of the Aquila constellation.

For Neviana and Ardian, Aquila's Nest was meant – destined – to be a place where the land and the wine inspired connection and conversation. Neviana wanted labels for the wines

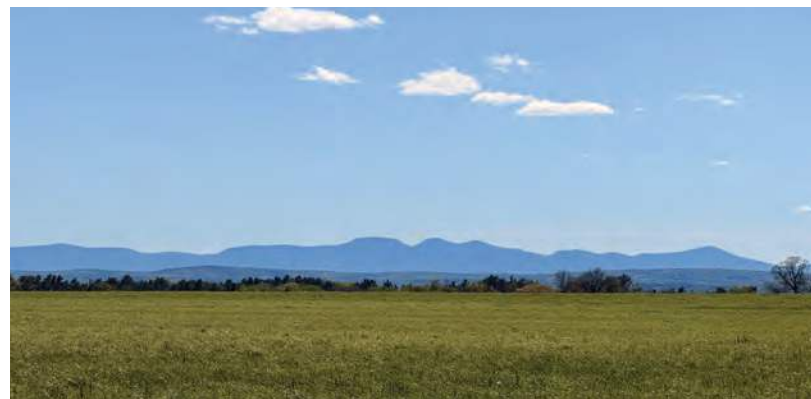
that celebrated women as constellations, archetypes, and mythic figures, each one “nesting” within the broader story of feminine strength, creativity, and resilience.

The ideas resonated with people immediately, and the winery has received many top awards and distinctions, including being named a 2026 USA TODAY 10 Best Readers' Choice Winner, ranked at number five for Best Wine Tasting Room! *Connecticut Magazine* awarded it Best Winery in Connecticut in 2025 and 2026. (Learn more about Aquila's Nest at aquilasnestvineyards.com.)

For now and for later

Clearly, Neviana and Ardian do not hold back. If they commit to bringing everything that's possible for Goold – from its past success to its potential for even greater enjoyment – then it's going to happen. In fact, it is happening.

Case in point: This spring, they planted 7,500 grape vines. Not 500. Not 2,500. 7,500. Twelve acres of grapevines. This is so Goold Hill Estate can offer a range of estate wines, which are all part of the big picture. What did they plant? They understand that hybrids are desirable not only for the quality of the fruit



Top: The gorgeous view of the Catskills in the distance. Bottom, L-R: Neviana and Ardian on the hilltop where the vineyard has been planted. Neviana and Sue Goold. Neviana, Ardian, and their sons take a break and enjoy the land (also below, top left). Below, top right and bottom: “Now” pictures from the farm that Neviana recently posted to the farm's social media.

they produce but also because they are best adapted to the environment and can therefore be grown more sustainably. They also know what New York wineries have become known for. They've planted Cayuga White, Valvin Muscat, Riesling, Steuben, and Corot Noir. Nice!

They are also investing in the building that generations have known as the farm store at Goold. It's being made over to reflect Neviana's vision of “rustic contemporary.” It will include plenty of room to explore the farm store's offerings, and it will have lots of seating for tastings and enjoying events like live music, all of which is in the works.

When Neviana walked with me up past where the farm store is being renovated to the crest of a westward-facing hill with a view of the newly planted vineyard on the right, she explained that another building is planned for this spot. “People love sunsets, and this is where they will be able to see them, with the Catskill Mountains in the distance.”

A place you want to be

Neviana is resolute in her vision for Goold Hill Estate. “I want this to be a vibrant place,” she shares. “I envision gatherings of all kinds; people happy to be here and to be part of this journey. Now and for the future, it's a journey of becoming.” That will be

reflected in the names and labels for the wines, which will be associated with different winds.

Ardian is equally passionate. “For me,” he says, “stewardship is about leaving the land better than we found it. Every decision we make – from restoring the orchard and planting the vineyard to renovating the buildings – is guided by respect for the generations who cared for this property before us and a commitment to creating something that future generations will enjoy. We want Goold Hill Estate to be a place where agriculture, craftsmanship, and community come together in a way that feels authentic and lasting.”

Goold Hill Estate had its soft opening for the public on Friday, August 14, and is now officially open. They've already lined up live music and other special events. And don't forget the apples! And do say hi and congratulations to all there who have worked so hard to breathe new life into this beautiful farm. ●

Welcome to the journey of Goold Hill Estate, where the past is honored to usher in the future. And where you'll find all kinds of deliciousness all times of the year. Stay in touch online through Facebook and Instagram (@gooldhillestate). Visit the website at gooldhillestate.com. Best of all, visit. The address is 1297 Brookview Station Rd, Castleton-on-Hudson, NY.



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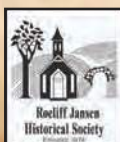
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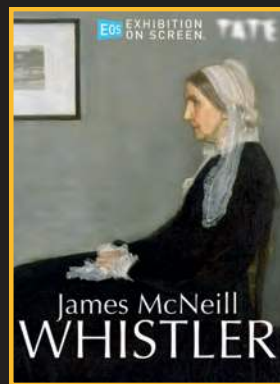
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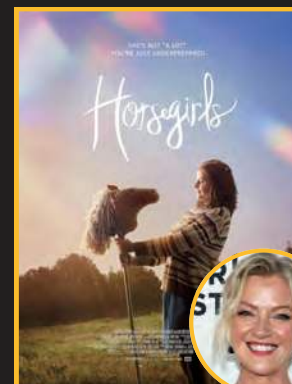
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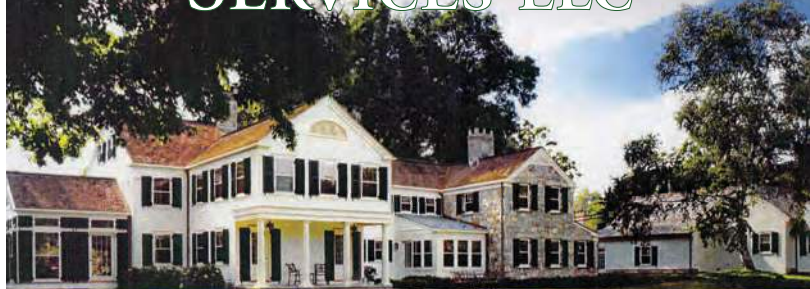


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Hudson, New York

By Jesse DeGroodt
info@mainstreetmag.com

Perhaps as much as any one particular group, you might say the British were responsible for the ultimate creation of what we now know as the city of Hudson, NY. In those days, what's now known as Hudson was then called Claverack Landing, settled in 1662 by the Dutch.

A little perspective here. For 11,000 years, Native Americans lived in what's now known as Hudson and Columbia County. The white man, on the other hand, has lived here around 400 years. Let's think about that for a second. Where we now flit about in our shiny jalopies, fiddle with our smartphones, and watch our television programs delivered via satellite or Internet, Native Americans lived, worked, and played.

The Quakers and their "safer and more sheltered location"

In 1700s, New England seafarers and owners of whaling ships were convinced that King George would not be content to let the American colonies go, and the British would be back to recapture what they'd lost. In all, about 30 persons, most of them Quakers and "all of whom were or

had been engaged in commercial pursuits, the whale fishery, or other branch of marine navigation (and all possessors of considerable pecuniary means, while several were persons of large wealth), having suffered very severely in their business by reason of the ravages of British cruisers during the war, had formed an association with its goal of establishing a commercial settlement or town at some safer and more sheltered location."

Heading up this party was Thomas Jenkins, Esq., of Providence, easily the wealthiest member of the association, who was said to be a man of "excellent business capacity, fine attainments, and great dignity and polish of manner." Of the original 29 founding fathers of Hudson, née Claverack Landing, 14 hailed from Nantucket and the remainder from New England.

After passing through Long Island Sound and the East River, the group headed up the Hudson River, stopping along the way to examine a possible site in Poughkeepsie but eventually declining that location. Subsequently, they proceeded up river until they came to what was then known as Claverack Landing. By this time, Claverack Landing had begun to flourish – more than 100 sloops were known to operate along the river at the time.

Purchasing the land from the Dutch

The association "bought the land on the bluff and along the river from Dutch families whose ancestors had purchased it from the Mohicans generations before, and they set about to create there a seaport far from the sea."

Prior to their arrival, according to *The History of Columbia County, 1878*, orchards thrived "upon the lands along the old country road, and the farms were well tilled, as was usually the case among people of Dutch birth or extraction. Besides bestowing the necessary care upon their lands and cattle, some of the inhabitants here found time to engage in fishing, particularly during the herring season, taking large numbers of these fish, for which they found ready sale in New York."

The conveyance of property commenced on July 19, 1783, when Peter Hogeboom, Jr., conveyed his store and wharf property by deed to Thomas Jenkins for the consideration of 2,600 pounds.

The original signees to the articles of agreement subscribed by the proprietors (as they called themselves) of Claverack Landing were Stephen

Continued on next page ...

Paddock, Thomas Jenkins, Joseph Barnard, Reuben Macy, Benjamin Folger, Cotton Gelston, Seth Jenkins, John Alsop, William Wall, Charles Jenkins, Hezekiah Dayton, Ezra Reed, David Lawrence, Gideon Gardner, Titus Morgan, John Thursten, Reuben Folger, and Nathaniel Greene.

A growing city and whaling

Two years had not passed before Hudson had grown into New York State's third largest city, from which it sent out whalers while adding carpenters, caulkers, riggers, smiths, sailmakers, and merchants peddling footwear, medicine, and liquor. In addition to transporting whaling catches, boats fetched home hides, smoked or pickled river herring, beef, and pork. A jail complete with whipping post and stocks was erected on Warren Street, the main means of passage then as now, and, in 1818, an almshouse was built. That building would later become Dr. White's Lunatic Asylum, and later still, the Hudson Female Academy, a private residence, and an orphanage, even later to morph into a library.

"Similar to the Nantucket whaling industry," notes the Washington State University History Graduate Student Association, "Hudson whalers operated as floating factories with the sole purpose of killing as many whales as possible. Hudson whalers were not all Quakers, but they were all incentivized by either sustaining their families or the prospect of starting a family and buying a small farm."

"However, unlike Nantucket, the Hudson whaling industry's prosperity only lasted a short time. (Hudson lost its designation as a Port of Entry in 1815). Resentment toward the city's comparatively high taxes, which subsidized the whaling industry and provided for the maintenance of city roads, lights, and the construction of municipal buildings, fostered resentment from farmers who in 1830 established the town of Greenport [costing Hudson the loss of more than 12,000 acres]. As a result, the whaling industry lost revenue, forcing many whalers to leave."

But Hudson, holding the distinction of being the first city in the United States to be incorporated after the 13 colonies became the United States, and named county seat in 1805, was just getting up its head of steam on its way to what we can now, from this vantage point, characterize as a full and colorful past.

Gambling, the FBI and Secret Service

There was a time in the mid-20 century when gambling became such a prominent part of the Hudson landscape as to be considered an inalterable feature. As noted in *The Chatham Courier* at the time: "Current [extensive] investigations have not stopped gambling in the county. It has merely revised the system of betting." Shortly thereafter, the FBI and Secret Service were called into the investigation.

Reported the *Chatham Courier* at the time: "The fur will fly VERY



Hudson from 1901-1902.

SOON in Hudson where gambling, it is reported, has reached an all-time high! A floating crap game, one of the largest in the country, which has been operating seven days a week, has attracted some of the crummiest hoodlums in this area and several carloads of goons from New York City are visiting the cities horse-rooms daily."

The huge floating crap game carried on seven nights a week, with a seemingly endless array of out-of-town racketeers and hoodlums who arrived by night and "must pass through something that looks like a Hollywood stage setting. There are three well-guarded doors, lights, more barred doors and finally a portal where a goon peeps out from a tiny slot, a la the old speakeasy days."

This, in a city where word has it that when legendary gangster Legs Diamond stopped for a haircut on Warren Street during the 1930s, the barber would pull the shades while Diamond's "security guards" would stand outside on the sidewalk, tommy guns secure in violin cases.

Temperance

A century earlier, with the founding of Hudson well in the rear view mirror, temperance had been the name of the game. By 1842, upcoming temperance meetings were not only scheduled for Hudson, but also set for Mellenville, Federal Stores, New Britain, Chatham Center, and North Chatham.



Middle: Henry-Hudson 1565-1611.



Above: Farmers Bank Hudson.



Left: Making ice cream, turn of the century.

Under the 1847 *Columbia Washingtonian* headline, “Drinking Ardent Spirits,” the paper states, “There was a time, and it was not long ago, when fashion and public sentiment did not frown on the drinking of spirits. Now, thank Heaven, there is no man, no matter how great his talents or wealth, or how high the station he occupies, who can make vice respectable. There was a time, too, when the crime of rum selling was winked at and yes, licensed. A rum seller is a rum seller, a pest in the community, a libel on humanity. Shun him, nor enter his vile chanel house.”

And the movement blossomed. By 1870, *The New York Times* made note of the Grand Division of Eastern New York – Quarterly Session at Hudson, NY, at which “56 delegates were introduced and duly initiated” and the Grand Scribe read his report, which included eight new divisions since the last meeting, bringing the total to 441 divisions. Male members now totaled 16,356, with female members at 6,981.

Diamond Street and prostitution

It wouldn't do to dip a toe in Hudson's history without visiting its red light era, which the *Times* did in 1994 when author Bruce Edward Hall released “Diamond Street.” Diamond Street, coincidentally, had by then been renamed Columbia Street.

“Prostitution flourished in Hudson, along with gambling and bootlegging, because generations of local police officers and public officials either

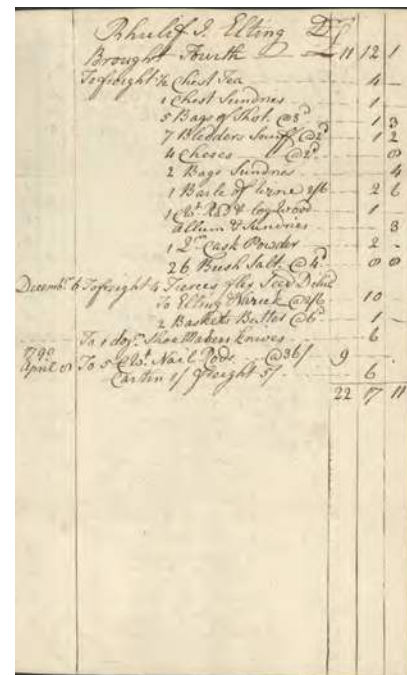
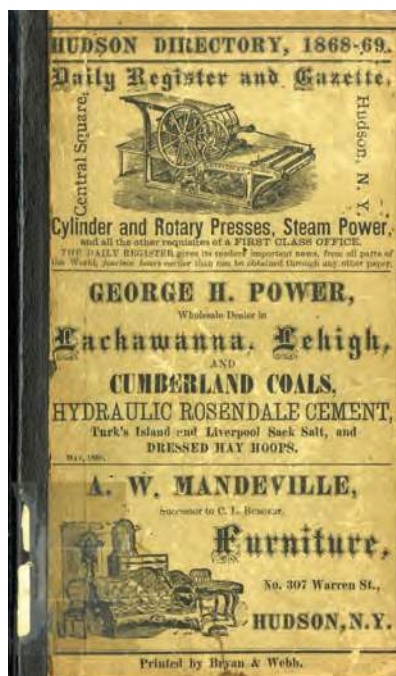
averted their eyes or were corrupt,” observed the *Times*. “‘Hudson was a schizophrenic city then,’ Hall said. ‘It was a virtual shopping center of vice while at the same time respectable citizens held their church suppers, lived and worked, and ignored the vice around them.’”

Herbert Weintraub, a retired merchant, told the *Times*, “When my sister went off to the University of Michigan, my father told her to say she was from Albany, not Hudson, because of the city's reputation.” The operator of a paint store on Warren Street, Weintraub, who was born and raised in Hudson, said he had “fond memories of old Hudson and the red-light district. ‘It was a marvelous cottage industry,’ Mr. Weintraub said. ‘The girls were customers as well as prostitutes. Hudson was prosperous in those days.’”

In 1950, a raid of the brothels and the arrest of many madams by state troopers, who did not notify local police, ended organized prostitution in the city.

Little could the Jenkins' boys and the “proprietors” know that what they had spawned was an ever-vibrant city, constantly reinventing itself, its populace carrying forward the adventure-some spirit it had summoned more than two centuries ago. •

Sources: The Chatham Courier, The History of Columbia County, 1878, and The New York Times.



Top: Warren Street in Hudson.

Middle, L-R: The old toll gate in Hudson. 1789-1791. Receipts of Rhuilif J. Elting. Credit: Historic Huguenot Street.

Above, L-R: 1868-1869. City Directory. No copyright. Capt. Best and Non Commissioned Officers of Co. F 10 Rgt. Hudson, N.Y. Credit: Hudson Area Library.

Left: Hudson, NY boat races, 1951.

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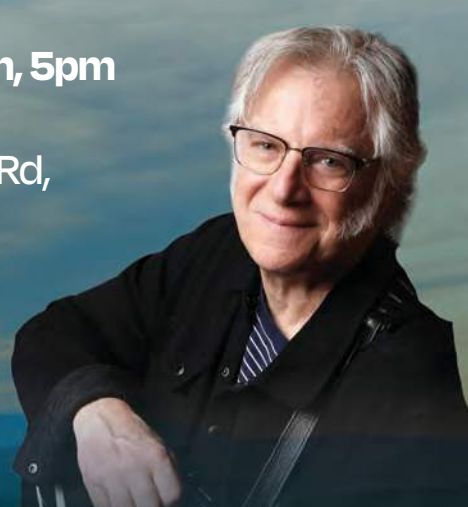
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Remembering September 11th

WHERE WERE YOU?

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

It was a beautiful fall day. Typical for an early September day. The sun shone bright, while the temperature was absolutely perfect. No humidity. Arguably the most perfect fall day.

Until it wasn't.

Actually, saying that feels like an understatement and a gross injustice to those who perished and had to endure the aftermath of what happened. At 8:46 a.m. on this particular day, the world forever changed.

Yes, I'm talking about 9/11.

The day that a terrorist attack happened on American soil. When the first airplane hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center, the entirety of the United States was in disbelief. Even more so when at 9:03 a.m. the second airplane hit the South Tower. How could this be happening? And what, in fact, was happening?

It is hard to believe that this September marks 25 years since that day. The day that will forever be imprinted in our hearts, souls, and memories for those of us who were here to experience this fateful day. For everyone else, this day – and the days that followed – will forever mark a significant part in the history books and the culture of our country.

Where were you?

Where were you 25 years ago when you got the first news of the attacks? Do you remember, as vividly as I do, where exactly you were, the sounds, the smells, the confusion, the fear?

I had just started college and I

was sitting in my first class on that particular Tuesday. We were halfway through the class when someone came in and told us to turn on the overhead televisions. We sat there, in silence, watching one of the Twin Towers burn. Shortly after an announcement echoed through the entire college campus that everyone was to leave. Immediately. Go home.

The Rip Van Winkle Bridge bridging the Hudson River between Hudson and Catskill was going to be closed, and so those students who lived in Greene and Ulster counties needed to get home, immediately.

When I got home, my parents and a family friend were all in my living room. Glued to the television. Our family friend was frantically trying to get a hold of his son who worked in adjacent building to the Twin Towers. The panic grew as phone calls went unanswered and some phone lines wouldn't even ring.

At 9:37 a.m. the headlines changed: The Pentagon had been hit. Excuse me? The Pentagon? What was happening?

At 9:59 a.m. we watched as the first tower collapsed.

I still get goose bumps as the footage plays in my head, as if I were watching it all over again.

At 10:03 a.m. there was an airplane that went down in an unknown location somewhere in rural Pennsylvania. No other information was available at this time.

At 10:28 a.m. the second Tower collapsed.

All of those poor souls. The innocent people on the airplanes. The

innocent people on the ground. All of the brave men and women who ran into the burning buildings.

All airplanes in the entirety of the United States were grounded. There was an eerie silence, even in rural upstate New York. Later that afternoon that silence was broken by military aircraft that flew overhead. It felt like the loudest noise I had heard in my life, as we stared up at the sky and saw multiple military aircraft fly overhead.

We continued to watch on television as the New York City skyline was obscured by smoke. It was like something out of a movie. *This couldn't be real.* Not long after, two hours north of New York City, we smelled it too.

Where were you?

We will never forget

For those of us who lived to witness 9/11, it is forever embedded in our very essence. For those of you too young to remember, or who weren't even born yet, you've heard all about the fateful day and read the accounts. Regardless, it is a day that we will never forget as a nation. We don't need to get into the aftermath of what happened, but instead this September 11th, let's take a moment out of our busy day to pay tribute to all of the innocent lives that were lost that day and in the days, weeks, and years that followed. Let's pay tribute to the ultimate sacrifice that those 3,000+ souls made.

Even though it has been 25 years, I am still in disbelief over the events of that day.

A few years later I visited Ground Zero. It was devastatingly emotional.

There was just a big hole in the ground. *All of those poor people.* In late July of 2001 I had been there. I had stood in that same spot, except instead of looking down into the hollowed out earth, I had stood in the square between the Twin Towers and looked up at them before I paid for a ticket to take me to the very top. I had *just* been there mere weeks before the attacks. How could this happen?

And I suppose that, even 25 years later, that is still the question that I find myself asking the Universe. But a part of my personal remembrance and way to pay tribute to all of the fallen is to recount the events in a personal way, as I have shared with you, before then thinking of the day and consequent days in their entirety. Ultimately, this day, these events, did not just shape us individually but this shaped our nation. And it forever changed the fabric of our very culture.

This September 11th, we shall remember those innocent lives. We shall pay tribute to all of the fallen. We shall also pay tribute to all of the brave men and women who have risked their everything to protect our freedoms – then and now. We owe them everything.

Let us never forget.

Let us forever be vigilant, to learn from the past, and to honor those who protect us every day of our lives. Let us also be reminded that we all have a duty as citizens of this nation to do our part, for we can all contribute, whether that be to our town, community, or to the country.

Never forget. Forever in our hearts and souls. •



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La Petite Reine: EXPERIENCING THE TOUR DE FRANCE

By Ian Strever
info@mainstreetmag.com

I don't speak Italian, but I know a few words. *Manubrio*, for instance, is another word for "handlebar." *Selle* means "saddles." *Maglia* – as in *la maglia rosa* – is a jersey, specifically the pink jersey that is awarded to the leader of the Tour of Italy. That tour, really a bike race, is more well known to Italians as the *Giro d'Italia* or simply, "The Giro," to true *tifosi*. You've probably noticed a theme.

My French is somewhat better, thanks to scores of French cognates in our language and a degree in English that made me read a lot. But more relevantly, I have spent years – decades – immersed in all things French while following *Le Tour*, first on borrowed VHS tapes and now online and streaming. It is the soundtrack to my summer mornings, the *cœur d'été*, and I mourn its ending like a dropped ice cream cone. I am a confessed *tifoso*.

A different kind of fan

That Italian term for "fan" also applies to football (soccer) and Formula One, but my first exposure to it was in videos of mountaintop finishes in the Tour. Much more than a "fan," a *tifoso* has the kind of rabid hysteria that is symptomized by body paint, costumes, and fan clubs. The word describes, for example, Didi Senft, the 74-year-old German who has dressed in a devil's outfit to prod suffering cyclists with his pitchfork since 1993.

It explains "The Dutch Corner" on turn 7 of the 21 switchbacks on the climb up Alpe d'Huez, where hundreds of Dutch fans cover themselves in both beer and orange body paint to spur on any and all Dutch contestants, regardless of their chances of winning.

It is the reason for the kind of Speedo-sporting, Viking-hat-wearing, flag-as-cape couture that no one bats an eye at when the wearer sprints up a hill alongside a climbing cyclist – *un grimpeur* – exhorting him at the top of his lungs, the *tifoso* turning red-faced and foaming at the lips.

A lifelong dream come true

It's also the justification for saving my vacation days and several paychecks to be able to see it all in person.

Thirty years ago, my relationship with cycling began with a trip from San Francisco to Washington, DC, and it has evolved to incorporate all kinds of bikes and bike riding, though none of it in Europe. As legendary television commentator Phil Liggett waxes poetic over helicopter shots of such mellifluous-sounding destinations as the Col de Croix de Fer or the Col du Galibier, I have dreamt of soaring down miles-long descents between the sentinels of the Alps. I also realized that the window of opportunity to be able to climb to the tops of those descents was closing. This would be the summer.

Not knowing exactly how to connect all of these *cols* (the French word for a mountain pass), I signed on with touring group, Sportive Breaks, to follow the last week of the tour, which, this year, would feature some of the most epic and masochistic climbing stages in its history: two back-to-back days on the Mecca of cycling, the Alpe d'Huez, including a penultimate stage with three *hors categorie* (beyond categorization) climbs.

The tifosi tribe

There is something – *je ne se qua* – about the Tour that attracts fans of all stripes. While my tribe is *tifosi*, the mass of humanity that comprises the 10-15 million roadside spectators must, of necessity, represent everyone from the impatient seven-year-old to the septuagenarian couple that encamps by a stream, as they do every year. It is the Germans swilling beer in the sun on an unremarkable section of road and the Columbians who will futilely cheer on Egan Bernal, the 2019

Continued on next page ...



Race leader Tadej Pogačar takes a sharp bend during a time trial stage.

winner who is now past his prime. It is the mother and son from California who joined my cycling tour, just for the spectacle of it.

A traveling circus

And a spectacle it is. The six-year-old (or the six-year-old in anyone) will be tantalized by the caravan that comes before the race itself. It is a traveling circus that serves to pump up the crowd with chants and sing-alongs to ABBA and Queen while jettisoning countless gratis detritus to promote the Tour's sponsors: bucket hats, wristbands, neck gaiters, cans of Orangina, bags of M&Ms, branded shopping bags, and so forth. It is 20 minutes of hype that precedes another 20 minutes of VIP cars, police motorcycles, and the helicopters that signal the approach of the riders.

For this, one needs to be prepared. The race director's red Land Rover will zip past (yellow plates, mind you), then a motorcycle with flashing lights, and finally the racers themselves. Depending on the stage and your location, this can last anywhere from three seconds to possibly ten minutes, but the leaders will always be gone in the blink of an eye. I watched portions of five stages in person, and if I added up the time directly viewing the peloton in its entirety, it might be five minutes. In other words, if you're going to watch a bike race, you're going for the wrong reason. The likelihood that the action will take place where you happen to be standing is slim to none.

The bar analysis

I learned this on the penultimate stage when thunderstorms threatened to strand me on Alpe d'Huez overnight and I opted instead to watch the action with dozens of fans at a bar in Vaujany, where we cheered on American Sepp Kuss by the edges of our seats, enjoying helicopter footage, close-up moto coverage, and replays of the two unfortunate crashes that cost him the stage. You will get none of this in person unless you position yourself near an outdoor screen, which are few and far between.

What you will get among the *tifosi* at any French bar is second-to-second assessments of the race through tour tracker apps, conjectures about who will win, recollections of race events from the past, and spirited encouragement of whichever rider is the favorite of that particular crowd. If you are a devoted fan of bike racing, this is where your tribe congregates.

Feeling like part of The Tour

There and on a bike. For five days, I rode portions of stages or rides near them that were open to the public. Reader, they were breathtaking. The moderate climb up the Col d'Ornon rewarded me with the stuff (my) dreams are made of: fast, twisting descents with 100-foot drops to the side and the majesty of the Massif Central in the distance. Another descent off the Col du Chat wound through vineyards and arched around sweeping bends. I have no photos of any of these because they required all of my faculties to navigate, and I was having too much fun to stop.

Alpe d'Huez was another story. It was the only *hors categorie* climb that I would undertake, and our guide skillfully coached us up for the experience the night before.

"The first 3 kilometers are the hardest," he explained in a British accent. "If you get past those, it drops down a little below 8 percent gradient in the middle. There's a kicker around 12 kilometers that goes up to 11.5 percent, but then it levels out around the finish."



Top: A lead rider enters Huez village to the deafening roar of the tifosi atop the Alpe d'Huez climb.

I suppose all that was true, and maybe I felt a slight difference, but this entire climb is incomparable to anything in our area with the possible exception of Mount Greylock, which I had climbed the weekend prior to leaving. It amounts to a little under an hour and a half of suffering, packed into 21 hairpin turns over 14 kilometers at an average gradient of 8 percent. Climbing it gave me a sense of the athleticism required just to finish the hardest of individual climbs. Of course, this was the last of three such climbs on one stage. There are 21 of them.

La petite reine

Once finished, I was content to be more of a spectator, blending in with the crowd at the bottom of the Col de la Croix de Fer the next day to just be one of the tifosi. There is a saying among the French when it comes to bicycles; especially in July, they are called *la petite reine* or "the little queen." Traffic stops for her. Roads get rerouted. For three weeks, all eyes turn to her majesty, Le Tour. In small French villages, bike lanes have their own stop lights, and in Lyon and Paris, one can rent a bike at nearly any street corner and get around faster than in most other conveyances. Bikes are respected, appreciated, and incorporated into French life in ways that will probably never happen in most parts of the United States. And for three weeks in July, the French host a worldwide party in their honor that you have to see to believe. ●



Above: A Danish family cheers on their countrymen.



Left: Crowds fill the streets of Chambéry hours before the stage begins to see the riders off.

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JANE STRONG, CO-FOUNDER OF THE EQUUS EFFECT,

on the non-profit's upcoming annual event and why horses are beneficial for mental health



By Abby Audenino
info@mainstreetmag.com

Due to the nature of their work, military veterans and first responders are significantly more likely to experience higher rates of behavioral health conditions. It was the awareness of this reality that inspired Jane Strong and David Sonatore to found the Sharon-based nonprofit The Equus Effect in 2012.

I caught up with Jane to learn more about the inspiration for The Equus Effect, how horses provide therapeutic support for veterans and first responders, and about this year's annual event, "Honoring the Year of the Horse," which will be held on October 3, 2026.

What inspired you to follow this path into the equine field?

I had been a competitive rider when I was much younger but left it all behind when I was 15. I thought that was the end of my story as an equestrian. I couldn't imagine doing anything but competing, so it came as a real surprise to find another way to engage with horses.

What was your inspiration to begin The Equus Effect?

My inspiration returned in 2002, when I got back on a horse for the

first time through a friend who had access to trails in Bedford, NY. My mind was telling me all sorts of things about being rusty, but my body told another story. It said two things: "You already know this," and, "It's going to be good for others too." I was baffled by that second message, but it made me curious to learn more about how to work with horses for the benefit of others.

After about a year, my exploration led me to a book called *The Tao of Equus* by Linda Kohanov, who runs a school in Tucson called Eponaquest. I soon learned that this was exactly how I could have horses back in my life and actually share the goodness they can bring to the lives of others. Her work centers around ground-based activities and uses practices that help us touch into the many ways our five senses and intuition can tell us about setting healthy boundaries, building authentic relationships, and finding emotional congruence. We forget that. Most of us have lost touch with using non-verbal cues that can tell us a lot about how to respond to the world around us.

At The Equus Effect, my business partner David Sonatore and I offer practices that show participants how to settle down and use emotions as

information, which turns out to be incredibly useful for veterans and first responders. Along with the experiential learning with our horses, we show folks how to respond appropriately to things that scare us or make us sad, feel vulnerable, angry, or frustrated. Horses are excellent at modeling how to take appropriate actions when something upsets us and also how to "go back to grazing" when a situation is over. Veterans and first responders tend to be a bit more inclined to feel threatened than most of us civilians because the stakes are higher for them. As prey animals who are hunted by large predators, horses know that if they make a mistake, they could be someone's dinner.

What guided the decision to gear The Equus Effect toward veterans and first responders specifically?

In 2008, David and I saw that veterans were taking their lives at the rate of 22 a day. We knew right away that the horses could help. They, like military folks, know that things can change in a moment and can have lightning fast reactions that can save their own and others' lives. Unlike horses however, when we humans have been through situations that feel dangerous to us either physically and

emotionally, we tend to second guess our choices and often feel upset with ourselves over what we did or didn't do. We knew the horses could help veterans and first responders recognize what they were feeling, what various emotions really mean, and how to let past experiences go. We knew they could help create new neural pathways that could lead to healthier, more productive lives – and we were right. To that end, in 2012 we became a non-profit organization that relies entirely on contributions from generous donors. Now, we're finding this same approach with the horses works for lots of different kinds of people, but we started out with the types of men and women who were brave, stoic, and resistant to traditional types of mental health treatment. The VA did a research study on our work and found that we do indeed help people regulate their emotions, improve relationships, and feel more grounded and clear about moving forward in life.

Continued on next page ...

What services and programs does The Equus Effect offer?

We offer a 16-hour curriculum that takes place over four four-hour sessions, two weekend days, or sometimes, a longer retreat-style program that takes place over three or four days. We are a multi-component program that includes hands-on work with the horses, an engaging discussion using movie clips to illustrate seven difficult emotions and how to handle them, and some tools and practices to take home. We believe that this way of learning engages the body, the heart, and the mind, all of which are essential to real change.

What is the focus of this year's event?

2026 is the Year of the Horse, and we plan to celebrate our equine partners by demonstrating the ways in which we've written history together throughout our 6,000 year relationship. Until about 120 years ago when cars came along, horses were essential for transportation, agriculture, war, and of course, the pony express.

They've always helped us "get there faster" with the kind of grace and strength that is unique to them – and before cars, unimaginable to us.

We have some fabulous, talented horses this year who are going to show us what they can do and then, we're going to show guests how we work to take people to another level of self awareness and authenticity.

What do you hope attendees take away from this event?

Since our first event in 2015, we've always tried to entertain and educate, and I think this year is going to be particularly enlightening. I doubt many folks know how the various breeds, sports, and even some of the jobs horses have today came about. They'll see some real talent out there, and I hope will be intrigued by the horses' performances.

What do you love most about working with horses?

I guess what I like most is that they're big, beautiful, social, and honest. They act how they feel and that's a rare quality these days. I love being outside and watching people learn about how they come across to others, what kinds of old stories the horses help them leave behind, and how quickly people find they can get attuned to the horses' energy and movements. Participants tell us that they are amazed at how much better they can listen, collaborate, and stay grounded in the face of life's challenges.

What is most rewarding about working and educating within the equine industry?

I don't really like to think of it as an industry, although I suppose one might look at it that way. To me, it's about learning to connect and collaborate with another sentient being who relies entirely on their senses to tell them what is real and what isn't. We can do the same. I think we just forgot how to take that part of our-



Photos courtesy of Jane Strong / The Equus Effect



selves seriously. It's a privilege and an honor to learn about finesse instead of force, and I hope more people will come to realize just how much we can learn about ourselves through them.

What's on the horizon for The Equus Effect?

In the short term, we're planning to do more work with military and first responder families. We know that living with someone who is trained to put themselves in harm's way comes at a price, and we want to help families make bridges instead of barriers.

There are about 210,000 911 calls per year in Dutchess County alone. That means folks are going out to calls where they don't really know exactly what they're going to meet, but they know it's probably the worst day of someone else's life. We also know that many veterans become first responders because of their military training. It makes for people who are ready for anything, but whose nervous systems are often spent. We want to offer these brave men and women some tools to help them as well as their families

restore and renew their energy.

We're also starting some programs for young people and others who are struggling with the distractions and demands at home, work, and school. I think we'll just keep offering more and more programs – even some for equestrians who would like to have a better connection with their horses. We'd really like to be seen as a resource for the community on many levels. The applications are endless. •

The Equus Effect's 12th Annual Event will take place on October 3, 2026 from 5-7pm at Highlands Hudson Valley at Keane Stud in Amenia, NY. For more information about the event, the non-profit and its mission, or its upcoming workshops, visit The Equus Effect website: theequuseffect.org.



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AN OPEN BOOK

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

Long before conversations about childhood trauma and youth mental health went mainstream, Janice Erlbaum penned a book about her personal experiences as a homeless teen during the 1980s in New York City.

Her book, *Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir* is now celebrating its 20th anniversary. In recent years, it's experienced a resurgence of interest due to its unflinching portrayal of homelessness and the struggles associated with mental health.

In 2006, *Girlbomb* gained notoriety for its raw honesty, storytelling, and rare, female-centered account of youth homelessness, addiction, and the complicated bonds of friendship and first love. Erlbaum's voice, wry, triumphant, and unmistakably Gen X, helped define the memoir as a coming-of-age story and a cultural time capsule.

Upcoming book reading

On September 5, Erlbaum, who resides in Millerton, will mark the milestone of her first book (four other books followed) with a reading at Black Rabbit Farms, the first dispensary to open in the town. The free event will be held from 7:30 to 9pm and is open to the public.

Entertainment Weekly called the book "a fast and engrossing read in the spirit of *Girl, Interrupted*." *The New York Times Book Review* stated, "How satisfying to watch Erlbaum survive adolescence and produce a smart, engaging book."

"With the anniversary, I want people to talk about support for homeless teenagers and where it comes from. Covenant House – the Catholic faith-based shelter where I lived in 1985, has been the largest provider of beds for unhoused teens in

the US since the 1980s. Local, state, and federal governments are not doing their share," said Erlbaum.

Erlbaum is embracing this moment. "It feels like my baby is growing up. I never had kids, and that was intentional. But the three-year process of gestating, growing, and delivering this memoir made me feel like I'd created new life. At least, I'd created a new life for myself," she added.

Beyond *Girlbomb*, Erlbaum has authored several other books and is working on another. Erlbaum's work has been featured on MTV and in *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vanity Fair*. She also volunteered with at-risk youth via Girls Education and Mentoring Services, which provides services for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation of children, and Girls Write Now, a nationally award-winning nonprofit, media incubator, and multi-generational community.

Flashback: The story

Born and raised in New York City, Erlbaum fled an abusive home when she was only 15 years old. That's when she entered New York City's shelter system. While attending high school at Bayard Rustin High School and starring in school musicals, she simultaneously struggled to navigate all the chaos and instability of living in a shelter.

After sharing the "moving out" story with a few friends, the teen didn't receive any guidance or offers of help. So, her leap into homelessness happened in a flash. "One day, I led a seemingly regular life, and the next day I was a homeless teen," said Erlbaum.

She admitted that the night she left her home in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, an epicenter of New York City's crack epidemic, her decision was split-second and reckless. "I didn't even pack a bag. My body knew before my brain did; my feet walked me out the door, and I followed. I did not understand the level of danger



Above: Author, Janice Erlbaum.

On the following page is the cover of Janice's book, *Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir*.

All images courtesy of Janice Erlbaum.

I was exposing myself to by leaving home, but I understood the danger of staying."

Rather than spending one night on the cold, gritty streets of 1980s New York, Erlbaum took shelter at Covenant House in Times Square for two months before moving into a group home on the Upper West Side.

During the 1980s, New York City was notoriously dangerous. Growing up there required constant vigilance. Being out late at night on the streets and the subways put her at risk of being mugged, beaten, or sexually assaulted. Even one night spent sleeping on the streets greatly increases a teenager's chances of experiencing long-term homelessness.

"I didn't understand the distinction between being housed and being home until later in life. Even after I had my own apartment, it took years

Continued on next page ..

for me to stop sabotaging myself and my safety. The road to stability starts with a stable place to live, but durable emotional stability needs to come from within or, in my case, from literally 35 years of therapy.”

Turning the page

Luckily, Erlbaum managed to remain in school while living at the shelter and group home. “I was very fortunate to have been given a lot of special treatment, and I was able to remain at my high school. I had teachers who cared, looked out for me, and encouraged my writing and acting,” said Erlbaum.

During this time, the teen was still in touch with her mother. She eventually moved back in as soon as her mother barred the abusive ex-husband from their home.

Erlbaum later went on to Hunter College to study writing, and then to New York University for her graduate degree. Erlbaum’s resume includes stints at *New York Press* and Pseudo.com. She also participated in slam poetry at the Nuyorican Poets Café and did “alternative” stand-up comedy on the Lower East Side.

Erlbaum said her life didn’t turn around until she obtained an inheritance left by her maternal grandmother. “When I was 18, my mother suggested that she break into the trust early and give me the money so that I could get an apartment near her place in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn,” she explained.

Once she had a stable place to live, she started talk therapy with a woman she credits with saving her life. “Within a year of seeing my first therapist, Judith, twice a week, my understanding and compassion for myself began to overtake all the shame and self-hatred I’d learned. I managed to begin breaking out of the patterns I’d developed while in crisis, and everything in my life radically improved,” said Erlbaum.

In 2005, she married Bill, whom she met at Sweet Caroline’s (which has since then closed its doors) when he attended a stand-up comedy show she hosted. Erlbaum has spent more than two decades in this healthy, happy relationship.

“I wasn’t able to write *Girlbomb* until I was in a stable relationship. I’d started a career as a writer in my early 20s at *NYP*, but I hadn’t been able to write a book, because I’d been too busy chasing romantic partners. Once I had the stability and support from Bill, I found that I could finally tackle the story I’d been wanting to tell for so long,” she explained.

Birthing books

“When I finally found stability in myself, I knew I needed to take this story out of me and not carry it with me,” said Erlbaum. In 2004, she wrote *Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir* about being a vulnerable teen, making terrible decisions, and the price she had to pay to learn to forgive herself.

“It was important for me to reconcile for that time of my life and see how I contributed to my own problems. Everyone wants homeless kids to be blameless and perfect. I did things I am not proud of just to survive,” said Erlbaum.

In 2008, she wrote her second memoir, *Have You Found Her*, followed by three novels, *I, Liar*, *Lucky Little Things*, and *Let Me Fix That For You*.

The story for *Have You Found Her* unraveled when Erlbaum was writing *Girlbomb* and decided she needed to revisit Covenant House. “I had big ideas about ‘giving back,’ but my unconscious motives were selfish. I was trying to repair some of my own wounds. It was surreal to be in the old environment; it was so similar to the way it’d been 20 years before,” she said.

Dangerously naïve, she was blinded by White Savior Syndrome. “I wound up becoming over-involved with a 19-year-old shelter resident, with

devastating results. She had Munchausen’s Syndrome, which caused her to induce the symptoms of late-stage AIDS so she could stay hospitalized for months.”

The revival

Erlbaum decided to celebrate *Girlbomb*’s anniversary because of a recent resurgence of interest from readers. “There are not a lot of books in this genre,” she said. Several readers have told the author that they found the book because someone in their life personally recommended or purchased it for them. “Some people say, ‘I read this book every few years,’ which is the highest compliment I can imagine,” said Erlbaum.

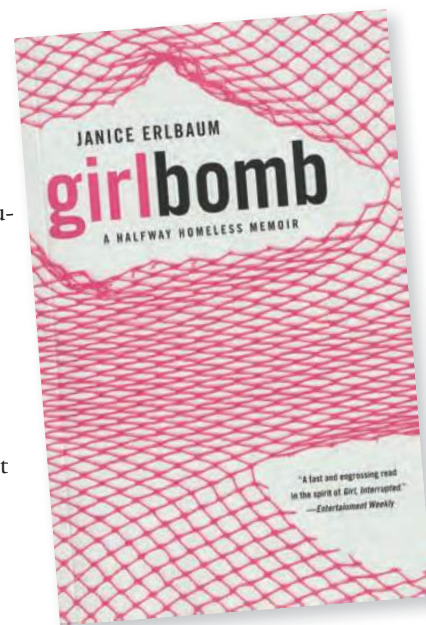
“I think the story continues to resonate, in part, because the root causes of my ‘halfway homelessness,’ issues, including domestic violence, parental neglect, and a deficient social safety net, have not gone away since the 1980s. There are always going to be parents who choose their partner over their kids, and kids who feel the need to make it on their own,” said Erlbaum. She wants people to understand that most homeless teenagers are not “runaways” but “throwaways” who are rejected by their families and told to fend for themselves.

“Even those of us who left home ‘voluntarily,’ did so because we had no better choice. It takes a lot to leave home as a teenager. We weren’t spoiled brats who couldn’t handle a little discipline. Being unhoused involves hunger, fear, discomfort, and an adult level of self-reliance. Those kids panhandling in the park are dealing with overwhelming odds against them,” she said.

Moving up: The Hudson Valley

Erlbaum was drawn to the Hudson Valley region after visiting a longtime friend, Douglas Broughton, who is now the owner of Black Rabbit Dispensary on Main Street in Millerton, NY.

In 2019, after spending her entire life in New York City, Erlbaum suddenly felt the need for space, peace, and nature. “I knew that moving from the Financial District to a dirt road



would be a tough adjustment, so I wanted to be near a friend who knew what he was doing, and Broughton was in Amenias. That led me to Millerton,” said Erlbaum.

A few months ago, Erlbaum and Broughton decided to collaborate on a strain of cannabis named “Girlbomb,” which was fitting since cannabis is a recurring theme throughout the book. To celebrate the launch, Erlbaum will perform a reading from *Girlbomb*. Purchasers of the new strain will get a free signed copy of the book.

What’s next?

Erlbaum has been blogging “old-school-style” on her website, Girlbomb.com, and she’s also been posting excerpts from her diaries, written between the ages of 25 and 30 years old. That time marks the writer’s first attempt at confronting the psychological legacy of her childhood.

At press time, she was busy at work on another memoir, *Not Writing About My Dead Mother*. “Beyond that, I hope to continue to teach, mentor, and volunteer, especially with young writers,” she concluded. •

For more information and to learn more about Janice Erlbaum’s work, visit JaniceErlbaum.com.



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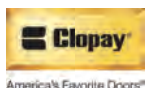
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THE RHYTHM METHOD

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

It's late August. Seemingly without ample warning, the days are getting shorter. It's still summer warm – and occasionally summer hot – but the underlying beat is changing. We can't hear it, but we can feel it. Sitting on the porch, or back deck, or in the summer furniture still neatly arrayed on the lawn, we can hear the katydids reminding us that summer is preparing to take its exit. We can still see lightning bugs in the trees across the road. The Canada geese are just starting to fly south, stopping for a while in the fields before moving on.

There are still concerts with remarkable rhythmic synergy at Music Mountain and Tanglewood that will stretch into September before they quietly end and let the silence take over until next season.

The farm stands, generously offering fresh corn and tomatoes, will soldier on until that morning when the stalks no longer offer up their summer fare, the tomatoes are all harvested, and the opportunity to indulge in summer crops morphs into presentations of bundles of dried corn stalks and pumpkins and baskets of succulent peaches have been replaced by crisp apples.

A rhythm to the season

There's a rhythm to the seasons that defies numbers printed on calendar sheets hanging in the corner of the laundry room. For many, the annual rhythm is still defined by the school year. Although we are all reminded that New Year's Day will start the next numeric cycle (remember to write the correct year on your checks), the first day of school still marks a real beginning to the year. New routines. New teachers. New classes. New clothes purchased on tax-free weekends. There's suddenly a football season, soccer games on weekends, endless campaign ads on television, and awkward preparations for a "Sadie Hawkins Day Dance".

The leaves still change

Time was when the Litchfield Hills, the Berkshires, and the Hudson Valley would experience the ebb and flow of seasons by suddenly finding busloads of "leaf peepers" fleeing the grey of the city to search for vibrant color, stopping overnight at the Red Lion Inn, or cruising up Route 22 in search of the reds and yellows that were presented, without charge, by hillsides punctuated by maples and oaks. The post-COVID migration that turned "summer places" into full-time residences has made a dent in that parade, but the leaves still change

on their own timing, and enjoying the displays is still absolutely free of charge.

We have no desire to rush the change of seasons. Major retailers will handle that all on their own as back-to-school sales are replaced by Halloween costumes and large bags of individually wrapped candy. Acknowledging the change of rhythm in our lives as we bid farewell to another summer and begin the time-honored practice of storing the summer furniture, raking the leaves accumulating on the lawn, and cutting back the hydrangeas is, in its own way, a celebration of life in this part of the world.

Certainly, there will be ample time to deal with shoveling snow, hoping the iced, sagging power lines don't snap and leave us in the dark and rummaging in the attic to find the box of lights and ornaments. Winter will come. Of that we can be quite sure. The rhythm of the seasons, however, is something to savor, not dread. We still have time for one last concert, one quick dash to the farm stand, one contemplative examination of the pumpkins offered before selecting the best. We have time to embrace the rhythm of New England's seasons and move gently to that beat. •

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MARKERS NOTE THE LONG AND VAST HISTORY THAT HAPPENED HERE

By Barbara Peduzzi
info@mainstreetmag.com

We're surrounded by history. If you don't think so, start noticing the many historical markers when you go out and about. They tell tales of people, places, and events of the past that range from interesting to amusing, and are always worth a, "Wow, I never knew that!"

We took a couple of rides around to find some to share.

In New York State, the markers stand out. They're usually blue, or sometimes red, and too often rusty. Most are by the building they describe, but they may just as may be beside a blank area where the long-gone subject of their story once was.

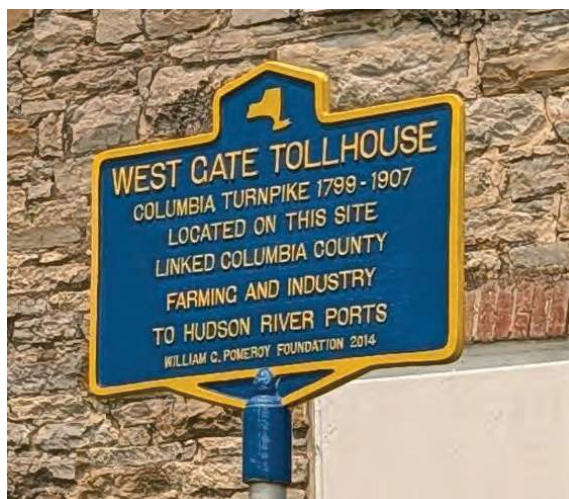
Older ones usually were part of a program managed by the Education Department's State History office and started to commemorate the American Revolution Sesquicentennial in 1926. Public funding ended for this in 1939, after some 2,800 signs were installed around the state. In the early 1960s a new program funded larger signs in highway rest areas, giving an overview of the area's history.

The William G. Pomeroy Foundation Historic Roadside Marker Program ran from 2006 to 2019, giving grants for over 500 signs in New York. No approval is needed for a marker erected on private property, but an application reviewed by the State Education Department is needed for one to be on state property.

In Massachusetts, the markers are not handled by the state, but by individual localities, and thus the type, style, and installment of them varies. A search for some found metal plaques set on rocks, simple black and white roadside signs, and painted wooden signs in period-appropriate style affixed to buildings.

The jaunts through New York plus a bit of Connecticut, turned up a healthy historic collection, from locally important sites to the path of the Knox Trail of the Revolution to an alien abduction to a boxing prize fight.

Come along to see some of what took place around our places. ●



Toll houses were a regular fixture on roads heavily used by farmers and manufacturers taking goods to the Hudson River. This classic stone building is in the shadow of a crumbling cement plant, another bygone area industry. Route 23B, Hudson, NY.



"My father lives on the second floor," the man we met in the parking lot said, "I always feel it's a little haunted. Think about the people who hitched their horses to those same posts out front! There are jail cells still in the cellar, they say." Old Court House, Route 23B, Claverack, NY.



As legend has it, the largish rock in the smallish creek barely seen through the bushes is the site of a lovelorn Native America couple's tragic demise. If you're there at the right time, you just might see them. Spook Rock, Columbia County Route 29/Spook Rock Road, Hudson, NY.



Shay's Rebellion was an uprising following the Revolutionary War; the last battle was fought here, on what is now Sheffield-Egremont Road between the two Massachusetts towns. If you'd like to be able to say you've hiked on the Appalachian Trail, take some steps along where it borders the site.



These markers note where the Knox Trail crossed the state line from New York to Massachusetts. Route 71, Alford, MA/Hillsdale, NY.



Boston Corners Road, off Route 22 south of Copake, NY.



Elizabeth Freeman, also known as 'Mum Bet', was a freed slave who lived in Ashley Falls, MA. More on her can be seen at the Colonel Ashley House in nearby Ashley Falls. This Highway to Freedom is Route 7, through Sheffield, MA.

Continued on page 49 ...



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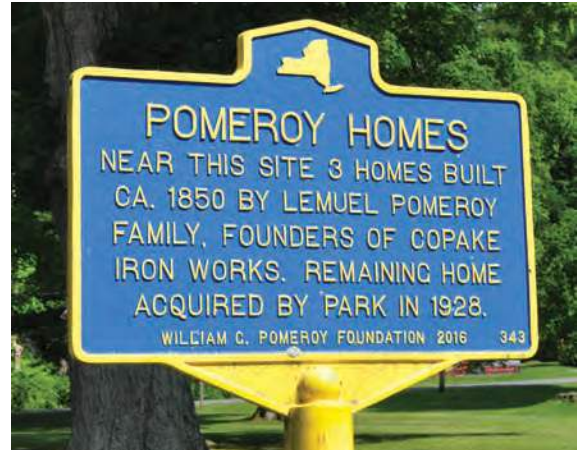
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Veteran's Park, Main Street and Dutchess Avenue, Millerton, NY.



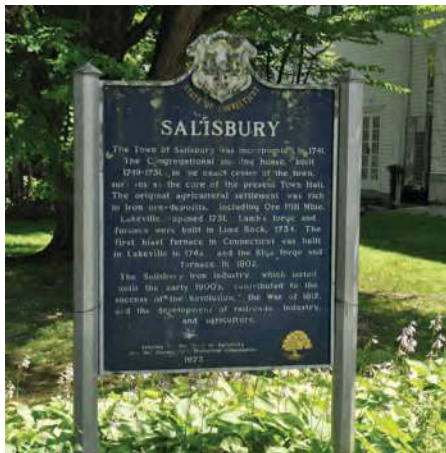
Salisbury, CT is filled with historic places. The former Salisbury Academy is now home of the Salisbury Association. The sign on the corner of the building describes the Academy, while the relic beneath it harks back to the area's iron mining origins. Main Street, Route 44, Salisbury, CT.



At the Copake Iron Works, Valley View Road off Old Route 22, Copake Falls, NY.



Major Bezaleel Rudd entered the Army in 1776, as a sergeant in the 7th Company under Col. Henry B. Livingston, 4th Regiment of Foot Soldiers. His home site is now a NY State Park enjoyed by many every year. Rudd Pond Road, north of Millerton, NY.



More time than we had could be spent in charming Salisbury, CT, exploring the many historic spots there. The marker tells some of the town history, lists of places to check out are found online. Main Street, Route 44, Salisbury, CT.



One of only two Granges still active in Columbia County, this grange in Copake began in 1902 with 65 area farmers joining. The building was erected in 1903. Membership dwindled but in 2017 a group who felt they "Could not lose the building" was formed and is restoring it. Empire Road, Copake, NY.



The 1858 one-room schoolhouse was moved to the center of the Millerton, NY Historic District, and is recognized as a Country School Association of Amica Landmark Schoolhouse. Main Street, Millerton, NY.



Parishioners of centuries past lie under the watchful eye of the Old Dutch Church, hidden behind trees on a knoll above the cemetery. Present-day congregations still gather in the church, on Route 9-H, Claverack, NY.



Many signs stand alone, marking where long-gone buildings once were, or events took place. This shows where the home of Samuel B. Webb, commanding officer of the 9th Connecticut Regiment of the Revolutionary War was, many years ago, on, appropriately, Webb Road in Claverack, NY.



"These trees have been dedicated to the memory of our men of the town who gave their lives in World War II" the plaque tells. A semi-circle of trees outlines the park, with a marker and mementos for each of those lost in front of theirs. Memorial Park, corner of Route 7 and Miller Ave., Sheffield, MA.

Continued on next page ...



Boxing was illegal in New York City, so tiny Boston Corners, NY, with a natural amphitheater and railroad access, won a coin toss to be the site of a still famous boxing match in 1853. Undermountain Road (Photographed by Marc Belanger, April 14, 2012, used with permission of HMdb.org).



Toll houses were a regular fixture on roads heavily used by farmers and manufacturers taking goods to the Hudson River. This classic stone building is in the shadow of a crumbling cement plant, another bygone area industry. Route 23B, Hudson, NY.



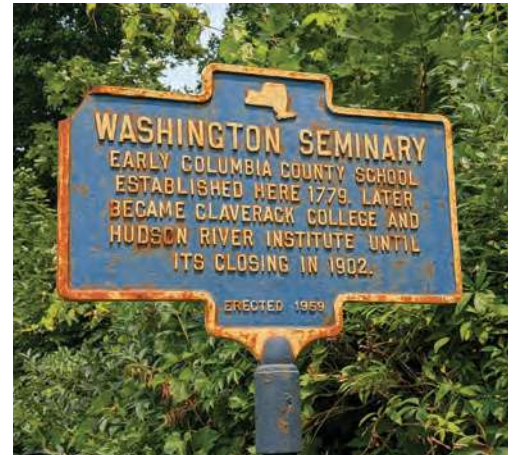
The building still stands, but a portico over the 1799 Columbia Turnpike, busy with goods coming from Massachusetts to the Hudson River, is long gone. Friends of East Gate are working to restore the building, at this sign on Route 23 east of Hillsdale, NY.



The Upper Shemeld Covered Bridge was the oldest in the state when destroyed by arson vandalism in 1994; the marker describes the reconstruction of a replica of it. Cross it to a marker and park dedicated to the most notable event here, the alien abduction of the Reed family. Covered Bridge Lane, off Route 7 north of Sheffield, MA.



Either of the two buildings across the road from the sign may have been the one noted by it, both looked to be the right age. The cornfield did not give any clues. Rudd Pond Road, north of Millerton, NY.



Also known as Claverack College, the school's most famous alumni was 8th President Martin Van Buren; it was unique for its time in being co-ed. The buildings are long gone. Route 9-H, Claverack, NY.



The Sheffield Declaration of 1773 was adopted in the First Congregational Church, also the original town meetinghouse. A small sign at the corner of the building reads: "Old Parish Church of Sheffield Town, First Congregational, Organized 1735, Erected 1760" Main Street, Route 7, Sheffield, MA.



This Know Trail marker, in North Egremont, MA, adds a tribute to lives lost on 9-11. "This monument is dedicated to the thousands of innocent and brave men, women and children killed by terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, DC and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001. They died for our country and our freedom. We shall not forget. Dedicated on September 11, 2002."



The Reed family were driving across the Old Covered Bridge in Sheffield, MA, on Labor Day, September 1, 1969, when they were abducted by aliens, taken onto a space ship and then returned. A polygraph test found Thomas Reed to be "99.1 % truthful". Covered Bridge Lane, off Route 7 just north of Sheffield, MA.



"Through this place passed General Henry Knox in the winter of 1775-1776 to deliver to General George Washington at Cambridge the train of artillery from Fort Ticonderoga used to force the British Army to evacuate from Boston. Erected by the State of New York during the Sesquicentennial of the American Revolution" Routes 23 and 71, North Hillsdale, NY.



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