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THE ETERNAL STUDENT

I consider myself somewhat of an eternal student. When in school I studied everything that I could, even getting the Dean's permission a few times to take more classes than was allowed. Yes, yes, I can hear some of you out there whispering under your breath "nerd alert," but that had nothing to do with it. Yes, I was always a good student, but I also had a busy social life, played sports, and I was involved in various other school and non-school activities – but being a good student wasn't related to being a Steve Urkel! I simply had a thirst for knowledge. I was always interested in learning as much as I could about all kinds of things. As I got older my interests became more refined, and so I was able to direct my interests better to the subjects that specifically interested me. And I firmly believe that all of that schooling and learning has helped me 100% to get to where I am today.

I don't believe that much of what I learned (even as unimportant as it may have seemed at the time) has been wasted because I have found that all of that "learning" has helped me in my adult life, as well as in my career. And it is that learning, combined with life experiences, that has made me realize time and time again (probably on a daily basis) that we learn something new every day. So for that reason, being the eternal student that I am, I thought that devoting an entire issue to learning was so very fitting for this year's September issue. Yes, of course all of the schools are going to be back in session at the time this hits newsstands, but learning does not start, nor end with school. And for that reason we call this the "learning" issue, not the "education" issue, because as I've stated, we keep learning throughout our entire lives.

Learning could encompass learning to play an instrument or to cook, tending to animals or to farm, painting, or going back to school to learn a new career – or even going back to school to refresh your memory on your current career. There are so many things that fall under the 'learning' umbrella, and you know what the best part is? We never stop learning!

In honor of this, we have dedicated this issue to this very theme and my team of writers have come up with a number of great pieces about the never-ending search for knowledge and experiences. I hope that you enjoy this, and that perhaps one (or more) of them will entice you to stay hungry and to keep wanting to learn – no matter what it may be!

- Thorunn Kristjansdottir



SEPTEMBER 2016

Goodbye summer, hello fall ... as viewed from the Hotchkiss peer.

Cover photo by Olivia Valentine Markonic

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PUBLISHER, EDITOR, ADVERTISING, WRITING, PHOTOGRAPHY & OTHER DUTIES

Thorunn Kristjansdottir Publisher, Editor-in-Chief, Designer. **Pom Shillingford** Assistant proof-reader.
Ashley Kristjansson and **Daniel Martucci** Directors of Advertising.
 Contributing Writers: **Allison Marchese** | **CB Wismar** | **Carol Ascher** | **Christine Bates** | **Claire Copley** | **Dominique De Vito** | **Ian Strever** | **John Torsiello** | **Mary B. O'Neill** | **Melissa Batchelor Warnke** | **Memo-ree Joelle** | **Sarah Ellen Rindsberg**. Contributing Photographers: **Lazlo Gyorsok** & **Olivia Markonic**

ADVERTISING

Ashley Kristjansson and **Daniel Martucci** Call 518 592 1135 or email info@mainstreetmag.com

CONTACT

Office 52 Main Street, Millerton, NY 12546 • **Mailing address** PO Box 165, Ancramdale, NY 12503
Phone 518 592 1135 • **Email** info@mainstreetmag.com • **Website** www.mainstreetmag.com

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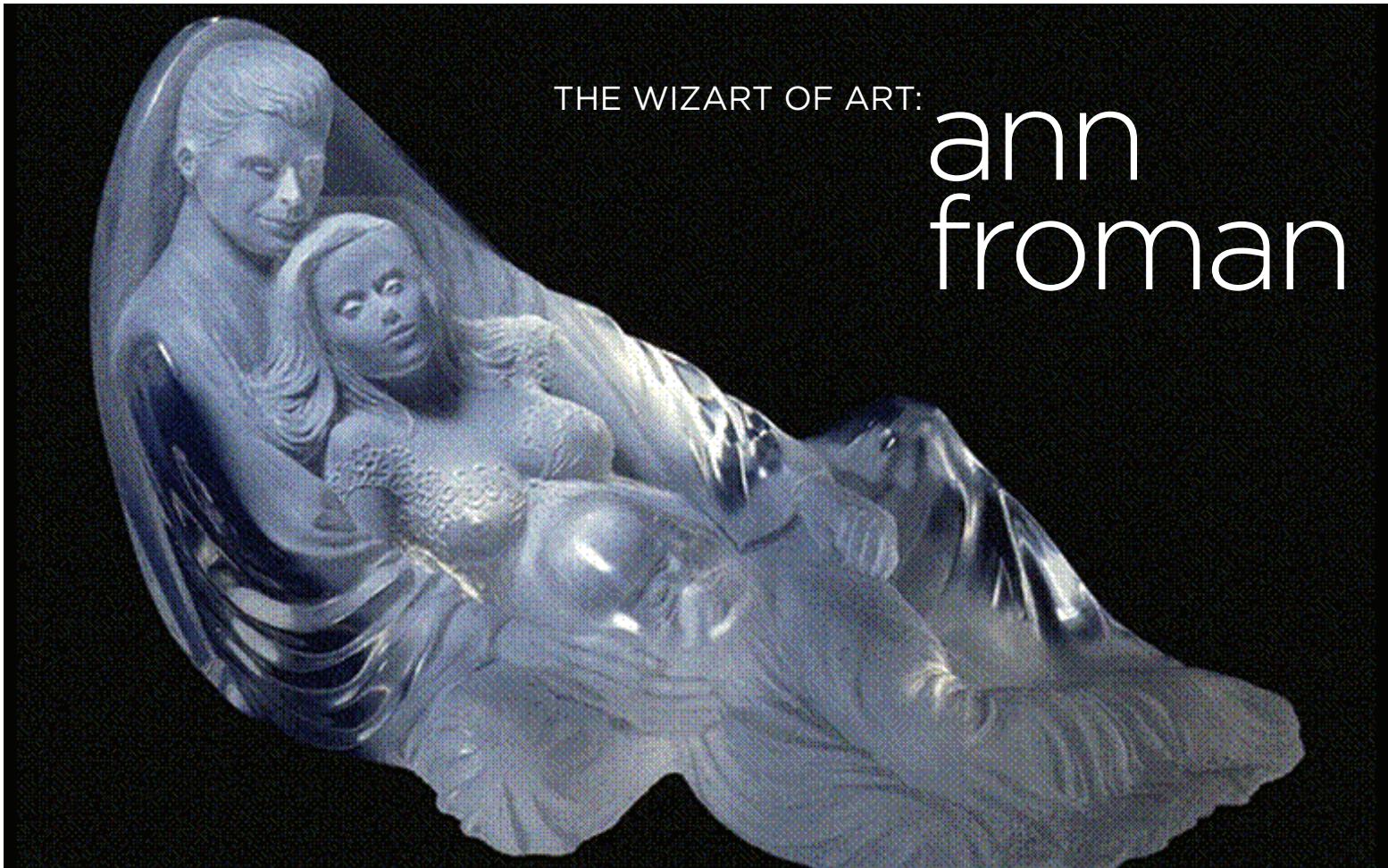
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THE WIZART OF ART:

ann froman

By CB Wismar
arts@mainstreetmag.com

Some people have it. That special "aura" that makes being in their presence a unique experience. There is no rhyme or reason to it. Some leaders have it ... some don't. Some performers have a magnetic air about them that washes over you when you see them in person. Some simply perform without sending ripples through the cosmos.

Meet Ann Froman for the first time and her presence greets you before she does. It's electric. The word "ebullient" comes to mind, even though it is no longer in common usage. Ann Froman is a person who is ebullient.

Ann's road to the enjoyable period of life when she is a widely shown and keenly collected sculptor has been a long and winding one. For 31 years, she and her husband, Rodney Silvernale, have lived in Stanfordville, NY in the open, cheerful house that he built for her – a house that is much as a studio, and gallery as a welcoming environment for family and friends.

Bags packed, Ann moved to Italy, brought her imaginative vision and "Teddy Roosevelt on San Juan Hill" leadership style to the task and engineered not only a turnaround, but a huge success.

Kicking off a career with shoes

Her first serious foray into design took her from formal training at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology into the highly competitive world of shoe design for women. New York was filled with houses that competed fiercely for the lucrative women's shoe audience, and from her first days on the "battlefield" Ann was destined for stardom. "I was the first one to put rubber soles on women's shoes. Everyone thought I was crazy," reflects Ann, "until they couldn't keep them on the shelves."

The zenith of that career came when Ann received a phone call from actress/fashion entrepreneur Polly Bergen asking Ann to come to her office for a meeting. It seemed that Bergen's design and manufacturing facility in Italy needed some serious help, and Ann had been identified as the kind of designer and trendsetter who could help.

Bags packed, Ann moved to Italy, brought her imaginative vision and "Teddy Roosevelt on San Juan Hill" leadership style to the task and engineered not only a turnaround, but a huge success.

But there were other forces pulling at Ann than yet another elegant shoe design. Ann wanted to be a sculptor, so the call of the national Academy School of Fine Art in New York and the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts in France signaled a major shift in direction. Studying in France under Le Corbusier and Henri Goetz, Ann found her passion realized in her art. Working in bronze, her first major series *Women of the Bible* established her as a fresh and creative force.

When her next series, *Dancing Bronzes* toured United States galleries, the critical acclaim was as dramatic as the pieces. Dame Margot Fonteyn and choreographer June Taylor were both enthralled with Ann's work as were Alvin Ailey, Rudolph Nureyev and Ann Miller, all of whom included her pieces in their own personal collections. June Taylor commented "Froman's dancers come alive, possessing a timeless quality, an outstanding tribute to the dance."

As much as the intense emotion of the creative experience captured Ann's attention in the creation of her dancers, the darkest sides of history also have had their draw.

Survival, a towering bronze that was a gift to Radcliffe College by Time Warner, Inc. commemorates the humanitarian work of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish architect, diplomat, and humanitarian who was credited with saving nearly 100,000 souls from the Nazi Holocaust before he, himself, disappearing in 1946. The Raoul Wallenberg Foundation recognized Ann's artistic contributions by hosting the inaugural show for one of her most dramatic pieces.

Heroes take many shapes

Blinded by a fall, Ann tragically spent over two years in relative darkness, unable to work and deeply frustrated. Through a series of delicate operations, when her sight was finally restored, her passion for sculpting carried her decisively back to work. "The surgeons," Ann reflects, "were heroes. I owe them so much."

When America's own tragedy struck on September 11, 2001, Ann was moved to capture the heroism and dedication of those who perished in the Twin Towers – the first responders who risked their all to save others. *Heroes of 9/11* captures

the emotion and total dedication of that day in bronze and acrylic. At the time of its creation, the piece was considered by some to be too evocative of the tragic losses of that day. As the years have passed and the iconic nature of that event has become part of the American consciousness, Ann's piece has gathered renewed interest and great appreciation.

A. Froman

Truly cosmopolitan in the classic sense of being a citizen of the world, Ann's work has preceded her into collections and museums across the globe. She smiles when she explains why her arrival at several gallery and museum openings caused some awkward moments for her hosts.

"I sign all of my work 'A. Froman' which is both a calculated device and a tribute to the great French sculptor who signed his work 'A. Rodin.' You see, the art world has not always been open to the idea of women creating dramatic pieces, especially sculpture." And so it ensued that Ann found it easier to gain acceptance for her work if the necessarily vague use of her first initial eclipsed use of her name.

"Once the pieces were installed

and I showed up, it was a bit awkward ... but what could they do?" Exhibits opened, reviews glowed, pieces sold, and Ann smiled discretely and continued to create her masterpieces as A. Froman.

In her world travels, Ann has been able to meet countless "A-listers" and truly enjoys numbering them as her friends. Paging through photographs of exhibits and receptions, she fondly remembers a trip to Europe. "I was there with Jimmy. We really had a grand time." Ann could very well be the only person alive who casually refers to the great actor James Earl Jones as "Jimmy," but that's Ann's way – unpretentious and thoroughly appreciative of the rich experiences her celebrity has brought her.

The WizArt of Art

When artists achieve the kind of notoriety and success that has accompanied Ann's career ... or, rather, careers ... the "next steps" are often intriguing to witness. Some artists create foundations to both protect their work and make sure that some good will come from their on-going success. Some artists, regrettably, withdraw into a self-protective posture and view the outside world with apprehension and mistrust. Ann Froman exhibits that ebullient nature and looks to the future for her next opportunity and challenge.

"I've been stunned," she offers with an intensity that taps into her emotional character. "My daughter is a brilliant artist and jewelry maker in her own right, but what about the next generations? How are they going to learn when there are so few opportunities to experience what it means to imagine and create?"

With all of the passion of an artist who has boldly stepped into new areas of creativity, taken new risks and been willing to learn new techniques (Ann worked in a foundry when she was first learning how to fashion her bronzes), Ann has decided to turn from the tactile world of clay and plaster and bronze and acrylic to the electronic and digital magic of television and the



Opposite page: *New Generation*. This page, above: Ann Froman with her piece *Survival*. Below left: *Heroes*.

internet.

"The WizArt of Art" or, for short, "Wizart" is Ann's grand idea for a television program designed to bring basic art instruction and motivation to new generations of artists and craftspeople who have the gnawing hunger to learn, but have no access to the instruction and encouragement that was formerly part of basic education.

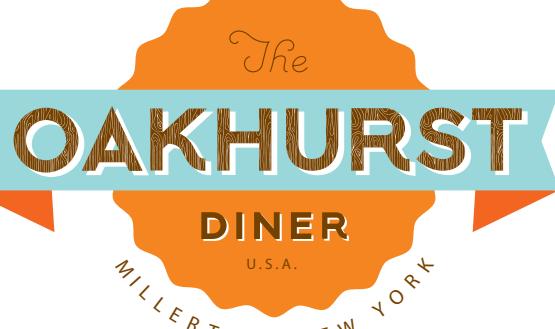
"Kids are going to get the chance to have the 'hands on' experience of creating paintings, sculptures, collages ... whatever" she offers in a burst of energy that belies the fact that Ann is very much thinking and planning well into the future. "We've had some of the networks

here, already," she says solemnly, realizing how quixotic broadcast networks can be. But as great a challenge as it would be to produce a series of programs targeted at new generations, she is not dissuaded. "If it sells, the proceeds will go to charity," she asserts. "This is about the future ... and I want to play a part." •

Further exploration of Ann Froman's work can be accomplished at www.annfroman.wordpress.com.

Are you an artist and interested in being featured in Main Street Magazine? Send a brief bio, artist's statement, and a link to your work to arts@mainstreetmag.com.





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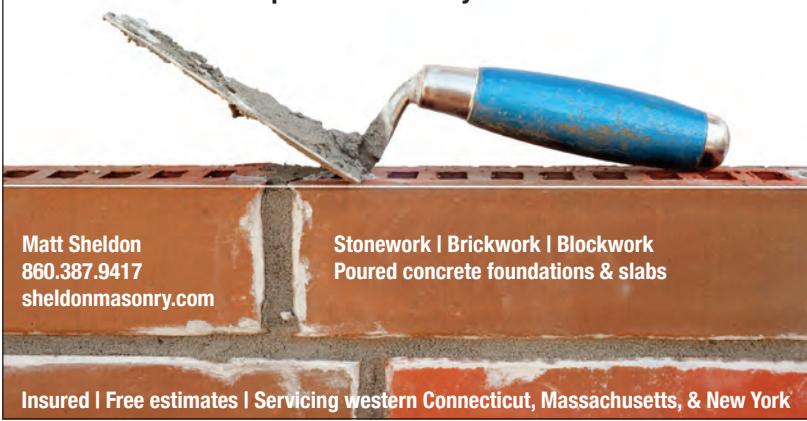
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Ava Becker and **Alex Proper**, aka “The A Team,” have been friends since Alex was born. While Ava is excited to be starting third grade, Alex will be entering first grade at Taconic Hills. Alex’s favorite subject is math, “Because I like to learn about numbers.” After school he loves playing in the pool, but when asked what he wants to be he said “I want to be a scientist when I grow up because I like science. They make robots and potions. And big explosions!” Ava’s favorite subject, on the other hand, is writing, “I get to explore my imagination.” After school she likes to play outside with her little brother. Ava says that when she grows up she wants to be a gymnast because she really enjoys challenging herself with new skills in gymnastics. Sounds like this A Team has a bright future ahead of them!



Kyle Barton currently works for the town of Ancram a few days a week, mowing the town ball field, town hall, and a small cemetery. He also works on his grandfather’s dairy farm, Berkshire Dairy, in Hillsdale, NY. He has been working on the farm his entire life, and for the town since March. Kyle says “the best thing is getting the paycheck at the end of the week.” We can all relate to that feeling and experience, while we learn and work our way to finding what it is that truly gives us satisfaction. Outside of work, Kyle likes to fish, hang out with his friends, and have the freedom to live in this great area. Kyle just graduated from Pine Plains High School, but plans to attend Columbia Greene Community College to study business in the fall, after which he plans to further his education elsewhere.



Sara Krauss is an English teacher and Diversity Coordinator at Millbrook School. The 2016-17 school year will be her fourth year at Millbrook and sixteenth year as an educator. She truly loves everything about her job, but is particularly inspired by the creativity and ingenuity of the Millbrook students. It’s the kids that keep her motivated and instill in her a desire to create better curriculum and to be her best self. Outside of teaching, Sara is raising two young boys with her husband Brian, who also works at Millbrook. Sara enjoys taking advantage of the natural beauty of the Hudson Valley, reading, and baking. Sara grew up in Millbrook, as did her parents and (most) of her grandparents. For this reason the Village of Millbrook holds a special place in her heart.



Greg Kilmer was born and raised in Millerton, NY, and he is no stranger to hard work and neighborly interaction. As the owner of GK Electric, his company’s motto is “Lighting the Way Since 2001,” which shines a light on Greg’s commitment to serving the local area in all facets of electrical work. He is so proud to be celebrating a 15-year anniversary this September. He says that the codes are always changing and that he takes a continuing education class once a year, in addition to staying up-to-date with the latest lighting technology. He is a fervent supporter of his community and a seeker of adrenaline by way of snowmobiling, ATVing, motorcycling, traveling, and anything else that goes fast and gives a rush. He and his wife Kelly enjoy their mountaintop home which is located in Sharon, CT.



Brad Boyles is a business and marketing education teacher at Taconic Hills Central School District and has been there for the past five years, in addition to being a TH graduate himself. Brad has also been working as the Student Activities Coordinator at The Summer Academy for Youth at The College of Saint Rose for the last two summers. “Both jobs are extremely rewarding. I love being able to connect with young people and help them explore what they want to do in the future.” Outside of work, Brad loves to cook and garden, and loves to paint – especially using watercolors. Brad currently resides in Albany, but he grew up in Columbia County and one day hopes to move back. “The area is so beautiful and peaceful, and it’s really growing into its own with new businesses and attractions to check out.”



Kevin Pendergast has been the head of the Kildonan School for four years and he loves to see a student grow from diffidence and shame to self-awareness, bold confidence, and self-advocacy. Kevin is also busy raising three boys, writing creatively, and studying Italian. He grew up 90 minutes north of the Capital Region, but has lived here for nine years and what he loves most about the area is the stunning natural landscape, which he and his wife hike regularly. Kevin says that “Although located in a beautifully rural region and not in a prominent city, Kildonan has become a major thought-leader and model for the education of bright dyslexics the world over. Professionals and students from around the world come here to see how we do it.”

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New leader at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies

INTERVIEW WITH
JOSHUA R. GINSBERG, Ph.D.

By Christine Bates
christine@mainstreetmag.com

Is the new president of the world-renowned Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies also in charge of an educational institution? Dr. Ginsberg, known as Josh to the staff talked to Main Street for our September issue about his new job, and the educational aspects of a research institution.

Why were you interested in leaving New York City and moving to a research institute in Millbrook?

Prior to coming to the Cary Institute, I was managing the \$90 million dollar Global Conservation Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which also runs the Bronx Zoo, three other zoos, and the New York Aquarium. My work with WCS was very rewarding, but after 18 years I was interested in a change. I was aware of the important work being conducted at the Cary Institute, and when a colleague alerted me that Bill Schlesinger was retiring, I decided to throw my hat in the ring and apply.

At WCS, my career focused on wildlife conservation. Here at the Cary Institute, our research is bigger



Above: Dr. Joshua Ginsberg is a wildlife ecologist and president of the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. Photo: John Halpern.

picture. Our scientists are working to understand and protect the ecosystems that support all life. Expertise ranges from air and water quality to forest health to the way environmental conditions influence the spread of diseases like Lyme and Zika. As president, I have the privilege of overseeing the whole organization and influencing its future, which is incredibly exciting, given the importance of the Cary Institute's science to society.

It's also been a real gift to move my family from Manhattan to the country. Every day on my way to work I marvel at the beauty of this region. My 11-year-old daughter has appreciated that change in our pace of life.

What are your main responsibilities? Do you see yourself as a CEO?

I think that a CEO runs things, as president I try to guide them. We have an excellent staff that runs this place day-to-day. My role is to provide leadership, support the staff, hire and mentor people, and raise money. Our scientists set their own research agendas; I work hard everyday to ensure they have the support and resources needed to advance their programs.

What have you found to be your biggest challenge?

It is increasingly difficult to finance an independent research organization. Traditionally, government has funded scientific research. Over the last few decades government funding has remained flat while the number of scientists competing for grants has increased. The National Science Foundation (NSF) once funded one in four research applications, now it is one in twelve. Those are daunting odds. We are fortunate that our scientists are more successful than most, but the process can be dispiriting for younger scientists



Above: The Cary Institute's research campus is situated on 2,000 acres in Millbrook, NY. Portions of the grounds are open to the public for hiking, biking, and walking through October 31. Photo: Pamela Freeman.

with bold ideas.

For example, one of our scientists has a program exploring how pharmaceuticals and personal care products impact freshwaters. Due to aging infrastructure, pretty much everything in your medicine cabinet eventually makes its way into our streams and rivers. These compounds alter water quality and aquatic life. This isn't something NSF funds – it's considered too applied. The FDA wants projects that focus solely on people, and EPA isn't mandated to study or fund this issue. So the work falls into a regulatory sieve, even though it's widely recognized as important and valuable.

The Cary is fortunate in having a significant endowment that supplies half of our operating costs but we still need to raise more than \$5 million a year through grants and donations to run our existing programs.

What's the most important skill you bring to the Cary Institute?

I'm a scientist who is committed to ecology and the environment

and likes to raise money. If I am passionate about a project, I am very comfortable asking people to support our work. Foundations and private donors play a vital role in advancing ecological science and it's very rewarding to get people on board.

What are some of Cary's educational activities?

We spend over a million dollars annually on education. Our free public offerings include monthly lectures, weekend guided walks, and forums that connect science with land managers and stewards. Our lectures feature scientists, authors, and environmental luminaries. It's wonderful to see our auditorium regularly fill to capacity. Lectures are posted on our website for online viewing, although we do need a technology upgrade! Our weekend walks immerse visitors in our beautiful 2,000-acre campus, where they learn about everything from butterflies to winter ecology. Forums are

Continued on next page ...

typically offered with land conservancy partners; our last offering (also online!) spotlighted the future of oak forests. Our campus is also home to our summer ecology day camp. This year we held two new Science & Art sessions for older students.

We are committed to bringing science to our public schools. Our educators offer school programs and organize the annual Hudson Data Jam, a creative competition that engages middle and high school students around the Hudson Valley in data literacy. One of our most important activities is training high school teachers how to teach science through our Summer Institute and workshops. We also offer an ecological curriculum database on our website as a resource to all teachers.

At the college level, for 29 years we have hosted budding scientists as part of the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduate program. Every summer, eight to ten students come to our campus to conduct independent ecological studies under the direction of an Institute mentor. Nearly half of participants are minority students – it's critical that the face of our field more closely resembles the face of society. Right now we are not doing so well: a recent survey of the Ecological Society of America's 10,000 members found that fewer than 4% were minorities. A more diverse work force is increasingly important as we focus on the ecology of urban areas where human diversity is at its peak.

Post-doctoral fellows, who are already fully trained scientists, come to the Cary Institute to pursue research after they finish their Ph.D.'s. For them, it's a moment of exquisite focus on a particular piece of work with few distractions. Post-docs are also critical to our intellectual vibrancy as they bring new ideas, and cutting-edge approaches from their own institutions to the Institute.



Above: Many hands are behind The Tick Project, a five-year study taking place in Dutchess County that will test interventions that have the potential to make communities safer by reducing the ticks that spread Lyme disease and other illnesses. Photo: Pamela Freeman.

What's most exciting to you right now?

The Tick Project – a five-year, \$8.8 million research project exploring interventions that have the potential to effectively reduce the incidence of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases. For the last 25 years, Cary's Rick Ostfeld has led the world's longest running study on the ecology of Lyme disease. Now, with \$5 million in funding from the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation, we are running a community-based research project in 24 Dutchess County neighborhoods to test different ways of controlling tick populations with the goal of preventing Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases. We need to raise another \$3.8 million. Thankfully, I am confident that funders will recognize the critical nature of this work. Lyme is a public health crisis that affects our region and is expanding rapidly across the country.

How big is the Cary Institute?

We have a total staff of around 110 which includes 20 full-time Ph.D. scientists: there are an additional 25 visiting and adjunct Ph.D. scientists. Our core scientific staff represents some of the most distinguished and productive ecologists in the nation. But the median age of our core scientific staff is around 60 so identifying and recruiting new researchers will be an important aspect of my job. We have over 2,000 acres of property and 14 buildings for research, education, and housing.

What are your plans for the Cary Institute?

I envision a future with the best scientists continuing to conduct important research that affects our lives. In the coming years, I hope we can grow both to expand our impact and influence and to see some economies of scale. But I don't want to get too big: a decade from now I could see the Cary Institute as a \$25 million institution. We need to build a critical mass of scientists, including expansion of our post-doctoral programs. We also need to increase collaborations and partnerships with other scientific organizations, nationally and internationally. Cary has deep local roots, but a global reach: currently we carry on research at 73 sites around the world. And, as I mentioned before, we have to be more aggressive about raising money. We need a broader base of private citizens and foundations in the \$500 to \$500,000 giving range.

Is there anything else that you do or don't like about your job or find especially difficult?

Let's see. I like management. I like going out in the field with our staff, and giving presentations and welcoming people to the Cary Institute. I like raising money to support the great work we do. I like hiring new staff, bringing new blood to the institution. The most difficult task was completing a new strategic plan, but it had to be done.

Do you think of yourself as an entrepreneur?

Scientific entrepreneurial drive is different from being an entrepreneur in the for-profit world. We don't maximize financial profit: our metric for success is maximizing the quality and impact of our science. And in the 21st Century, every scientist and scientific institution really has to be bit of an entrepreneur in the sense they have to market themselves both through traditional scientific publication and presentations. The next generation of scientists is using blogs and social media to build a their own scientific brand.

How did you learn to become an executive?

I was very fortunate to have professional mentors during my career who taught me how to manage on the job. It's not that hard – you just have to listen. •

The Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies is an independent, nonprofit environmental research organization located on 2,000 acres in New York's Hudson Valley. A world-premier center for ecosystem science, areas of expertise include disease ecology, forest and freshwater health, climate change, urban ecology, and invasive species. Since 1983, Cary scientists have produced the unbiased research needed to inform effective management and policy decisions. The science research programs are complemented by education and outreach initiatives. To learn more, visit www.caryinstitute.org.

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(Re)learning how to stay healthy

By Thorunn Kristjansdottir
info@mainstreetmag.com

They say that you get wiser with age – which is true for the most part. Through experience, humility, and living life, you actually do learn and get wiser. I have found that when it comes to health and fitness that the learning curve is truly never-ending, and perhaps that's in large part due to the fact that our bodies and lives never stop changing either. Did you, for example, go through a stage in your late 20s when you realized that your metabolism changed and all of a sudden you were gaining weight where you never had before? How about in your 30s when the exercise and diet routine you used to adhere to in your 20s was just too strenuous, for one because you didn't have an hour or two of spare time every day to go to the gym? Life happens.

Where do you find yourself?

When I catch myself in a free moment, I often do a self-check and contemplate where I find myself in my life. Do you ever do that?

Right now I find myself at a very interesting point in my life as it pertains to my health and fitness. I firstly feel that I am much wiser, more confident, and content with where I am than where I was in my 20s (which my former 20-year-old self would probably never have thought possible). I feel that my lifestyle then, although pretty healthy, wasn't complete nor had the privilege of foresight over the big picture. Today, some 15 years later, I find myself being more relaxed, yet serious about my lifestyle choices.

I look around at my contemporaries, a lot of whom are young mothers in their 30s and 40s, and you know something? I believe that we're all healthier and in better shape than we were in our 20s! Of course I'm generalizing, because life is busy, especially with kids. And I'll be the first to admit that I don't exercise nearly enough. But with that being said, I find that exercising has changed for me in the last five to ten years. I



actually don't like going to the gym anymore, but I prefer taking a brisk walk outside on a nature trail with my husband, riding and working with my horses and doing chores around the barn, as well as going to Pilates, and it's my goal in the very near future to take up yoga. These activities just seem way more appealing to me at this stage in my life, and I feel that a lot of people would agree that their preference of exercise has changed from one, five, or 20 years ago. And that's alright! Because our exercise and approach to health and nutrition should evolve with our lives.

Group activities

Something that I've noticed and that intrigues me are the various themed 5k activities, and other such runs and obstacle courses that are prevalent in the summer months. I'm not saying that I'm excited about the idea of getting completely filthy in a mud run (some of which have snakes I hear), but the concept intrigues me.

A couple of my girlfriends have participated in a few of these throughout the last few summers, and they love it! They like these runs because it's a way for them to do an activity and exercise with their spouse, and/or to get together with friends, and have

lots of fun. And it doesn't hurt that some of them take place at wineries and that there's wine at the finish line! I foresee the moms scrambling for Google right now.

I feel that these themed group activities are growing, as is their popularity. I think that this is wonderful, and as I said earlier, I believe the appeal of these types of activities is to a wider audience for various reasons. For me and my contemporaries, it's a fun way to get together, exercise, set a good example for our kids, challenge ourselves, and to possibly have some wine afterwards in celebration.

Looking forward

I stated earlier that I now feel that I somewhat have foresight over my life and lifestyle, which includes my health. I shared with you two months ago that I am an expecting mother and my pregnancy has graced me with my body literally rejecting non-real foods. I don't mind this, and I see myself continuing on with my healthy eating habits after my daughter is born. I am also planning to add yoga to my lifestyle, and my hope is that once she's born that I will finally have more energy, enabling me to be more active than I am in my current state. Plus, running after a baby is sure to

keep me on the move!

But besides all of these plans, I do think about reality and how busy our lives get. My husband constantly comments about the fact that we better be mindful of our health now, and that there's no time like the present to get in better shape because it will just help as we age. And he's right.

Look around you, at the people you see every day, the people in your life, even celebrities – you can fairly easily spot the healthy ones who take care of themselves. But to be healthy, you need balance. It is about eating in such a way that your body gets what it needs, exercising to keep your mind and body sharp, and finding the balance between these things and your life and what makes you happy.

With that being said, learning how to maintain a healthy lifestyle is an ever-changing part of our lives. School is not out for summer when it comes to our health, but everyone's body and needs are also so different, so it's about finding that sweet spot for you as an individual. Finding what works for your lifestyle and what makes you feel your best. As long as you are striving towards being the best you, I tip my hat to you, because that is all that we can hope for in life! Stay healthy my friends. •

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THE REAL ESTATE OF FORMER SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Back to school real estate

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

September is back to school month so for Main Street's learning issue our real estate feature tracked down one-room school houses to see what has become of them as well as examining the challenges of re-purposing, vacant, twentieth century masonry school buildings.

One-room schoolhouses, like graveyards, mark the history of forgotten communities. You can peer through the windows into the past in some preserved schoolhouses (see photo of Falls Village school below), while others have been transformed into homes, and some have been renovated to preserve the past and serve new community purposes. But many have disappeared without a trace. Take the schoolhouse quiz on page 21 to see how many of these structures you can identify.

During the rapid growth of the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, one-room schoolhouses dotted our landscape. Each town was divided into school districts with one-room school houses built close to the road within walking distance from the surrounding farms and hamlets. There were 14 school districts in the Town of Salisbury, CT, and 19 in the Town of Washington, NY. It wasn't until 1870 that all states had free elemen-



tary schools, and by 1918 all children were required to attend elementary school. With the advent of the car, highways, and a booming population, larger, centralized schools, including high schools, were built and one-room schoolhouses were shuttered.

Who buys a school?

Mimi Harney of Elyse Harney Real Estate recalls a young, relocating couple that didn't want a house on a main road until they encountered a former one-room schoolhouse with an attached teacherage, a residence provided for teachers sometimes attached to schools. The teacher's quarters had been used as a home but the interior of the original schoolroom with chalkboards had remained untouched (see above). "They were sold the moment they entered the former classroom section of the property. The large room was just what they needed for their art and studio purposes. The house had been on the market for 285 days with an initial asking price of \$525,000 and sold for \$235,000. I believe these unique properties sell to people with vision and imagination."

Eight years ago Ralph Fedele, a

resident of the Town of North East, NY had that same vision and imagination when he organized a volunteer group to buy an abandoned one-room school next to Route 22 in the hamlet of Irondale, NY for \$30,000. Eventually the building was reroofed and moved to a site on Main Street in Millerton, NY next to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. The project raised \$160,000 of private money before it opened as a visitors center in 2015. Kids can ring the bell, write on the chalkboards and have their photo taken at an old desk. This August the schoolhouse featured Algonquin Days which was both a celebration and an education event with teachers from the Schaghticoke First Nations.

Municipalities are another buyer of schools. For the consideration of one dollar the Town of Amenia, NY accepted ownership from the Westtuck school district of a 22,000+ square foot brick building constructed in the 1920s that sits in the center of the hamlet of Amenia. In 20 days the building was converted into a Town Hall and community center. Now the



Above, top: The old school room remained intact when this schoolhouse was purchased in 2013. Photo by Peter Greenough. Above: This one-room schoolhouse on Route 22 in Irondale, NY was reroofed, and moved to the center of the Village of Millerton, NY. Photo courtesy of The Friends of the Irondale Schoolhouse. Left: Looking through the window at the preserved Beebe Hill School District in Falls Village, CT. The original school, built in 1843, was destroyed by fire and rebuilt. It ceased operating as a school in 1918. Photo by Christine Bates.

Continued on next page ...



municipality is applying for grants to create a community/commercial kitchen for use by the farmers and events. Line dancing, exercise classes, and cheerleaders use the facility and Victoria Perotti, the town's energetic supervisor, is leading the effort to make the school into a regional shelter in case of disaster.

In Kinderhook, NY, Jack Shainman, a successful Manhattan art dealer, had a different vision in 2013 when he bought a 1929 colonial revival brick 30,000 square foot school for \$550,000 to create an art outpost. He recruited Spanish architect Antonio Jiménez Torrecillasto to completely re-imagine the Martin van Buren Elementary School. Classrooms have become galleries with hallways doubling as exhibition spaces. The design required excavating eight feet below the building and redoing sections of the foundation. The ambitious re-imagining included 15 geothermal wells to provide heating and cooling for the school-turned-art space. The resulting arts space feels open, but still looks like a converted school rather than a generic white box.

Shainman is quoted as saying "It's not the price of the building; it's the fixing up that costs the money. We never imagined that we were going to go so far with the renovation as we



Above: The Thorne Building in the Village of Millbrook, NY owned by the village has an uncertain future. Photo by Christine Bates.



Above: The Millerton Elementary School rented by the North East Community Center from the Webutuck School District will soon be put on the market. Photo by Christine Bates.

did, but luckily we were naïve in a lot of ways."

What to do with an empty school?

Unless a Jack Shainman comes along or a forward-looking town government, large, masonry and brick schools that were built in every town in the early twentieth century are difficult to sell. They can be too big or too small for effective redevelopment. Some are bound by property deed restrictions or sit in residential zones. It is estimated that a school must have around 60,000 square feet to economically be converted to housing and must be in an urban area that can command high rental rates.

In many communities these schools, like the empty, imposing brick school on Route 22 between Hillsdale and Copake, NY (see photo page 21), stand empty waiting for a new life. Converting these buildings to other purposes is expensive and difficult because of their large size, location, condition, zoning, asbestos risk, inefficient mechanical systems, and original design.

Further complicating the sale of schools is that they are public property. "Communities feel more owner-

ship over a school building than they might over another abandoned building," according to Emily Dowdall, author of two Pew Charitable Trusts reports on the topic of shuttered schools. "It's seen as a community asset. When it's closed, it's seen as a loss, and one that's shared by the whole neighborhood."

A 2013 Pew report looked at how school buildings that were sold were reused. The largest portion, 40 percent, became charter schools. "That's the easiest thing to do with a school building – make it a school again." But schools have also been transformed into homeless shelters, churches, community centers, offices, recording studios, daycare facilities, tech centers, shopping centers, and condos. Ultimately the economic state of the neighborhood in which the school is located decides its fate. There's not going to be a market to turn every school into a boutique hotel or luxury lofts.

The Millerton Elementary School

In 2013 the Town of North East considered paying just one dollar (school districts can transfer title to municipalities for just \$1, but must sell the building at a market price to other buyers) to purchase the 26,000+ square foot Millerton Elementary School from the Webutuck School

District to house town government (see photo above).

Although the town planned to use only 15% of the space, the cost to renovate just 4,000 square feet and make needed repairs to the roof, and heating system was estimated at over \$2 million. The Millerton Elementary School, built in 1938, had been the center of the village life when the district closed the school to regular classes over ten years ago. Every morning students walked to the school, teachers lived nearby. Today the school continues to be used by the North East Community Center for its afterschool, teen, and transportation programs, but the school's future is unclear. The school district, which wants to eliminate its ongoing operating costs associated with the building and still have it serve a community purpose, is considering listing it for sale.

The Thorne Building in Millbrook

The Thorne Building in Millbrook, NY (see photo left) was a gift from the Thorne family to Millbrook – in fact the Village of Millbrook was incorporated on January 1, 1895 so it could take title to the school.

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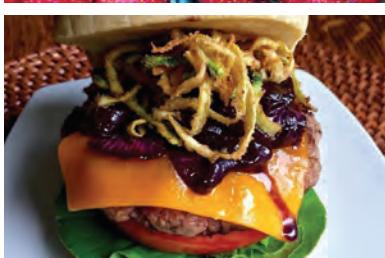
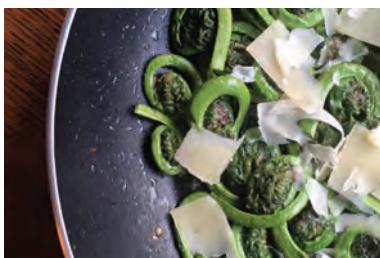
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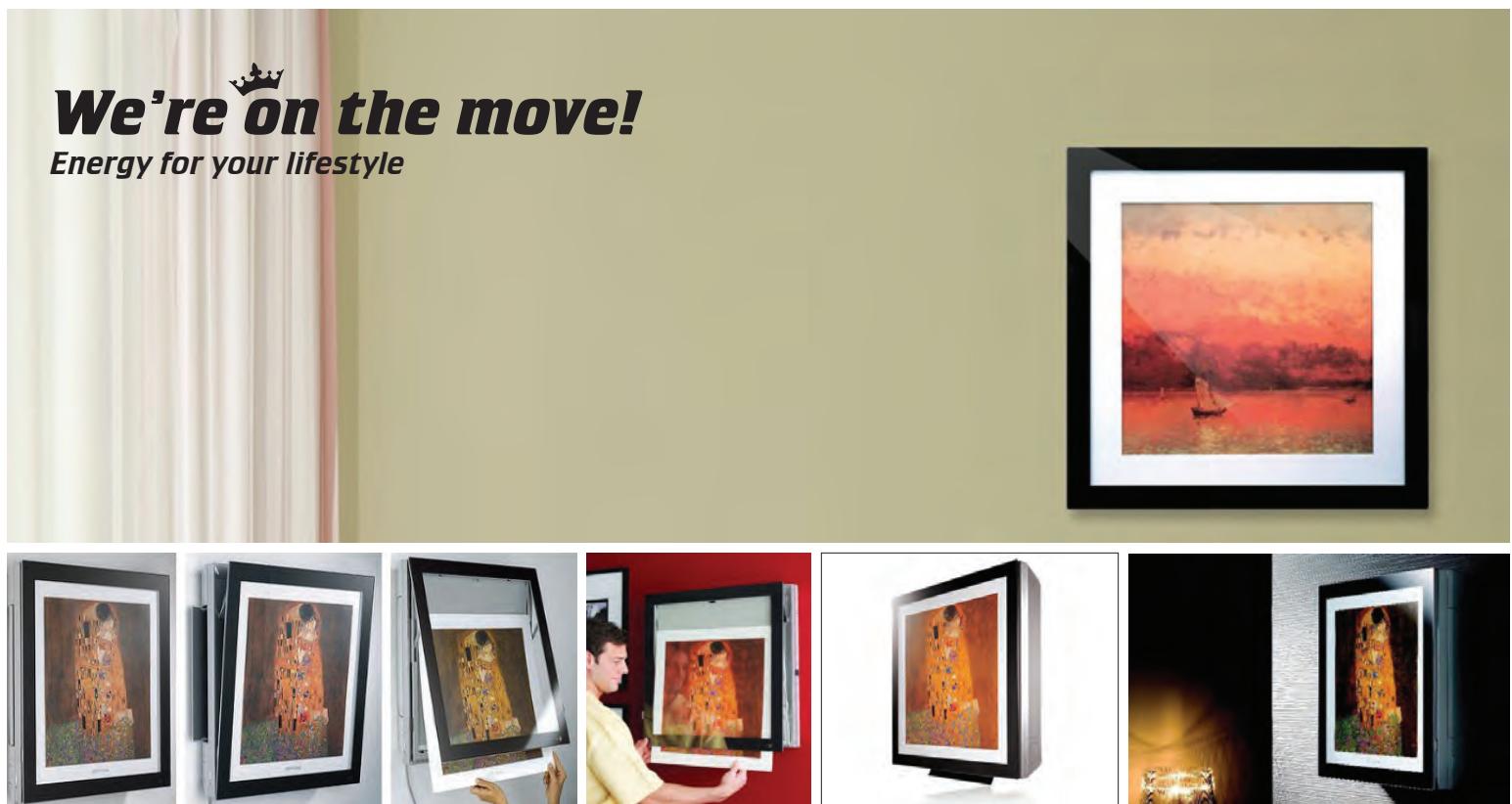
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Above: The vacant, privately owned Roeliff Jansen School sits on a large piece of property between Copake and Hillsdale, NY. It has been vacant since Taconic Hills Central School opened in 1999. Photo by Christine Bates

The distinctive, grand structure dominates the entrance to the village. Any first-time visitor wonders, "What is that building?" Unlike most publicly financed schools, the Thorne Building is elegant – a grand Beaux-Arts mansion with a *porte cochere* and elaborate wrought iron details that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was used as a public school along with the cobble stone blacksmith shop at the back of the property until 1962. It has been under-utilized ever since with minimal maintenance and many miss starts as a possible DMV, music venue, art center, and most recently a country home for the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Private groups have been formed to buy the building for community purposes. At the moment everyone is waiting to hear whether the building will finally be put up for sale by the village.

Adhocmillbrook12545, a local 501C3 formed to preserve the Thorne Building, has been an advocate for public transparency. They have requested that any transfer of ownership be discussed and vetted with the public, including sales price, recent appraisals, and how the building will be marketed to possible purchasers. They are also questioning the status of the funds and trusts that were conveyed with the building to the village.

The Roeliff Jansen School

The Roeliff Jansen School, built in 1932 and designed by New York architectural firm Tooker & Marsh, is a prime example of the difficulty of finding a use for a large school building in a rural area. It has stood empty for 17 years, ever since the opening of the sprawling state-of-the-art Taconic Hills Central School in 1999 which combined the Roe Jan School District with the Ockawamick Central School District under one roof. The new Taconic Hills Central School draws students from ten towns, and nearly 250 square miles.

The Roe Jan school building has had several private owners since 1999, according to Hillsdale Town Supervisor Peter Cipkowski, who has been trying "to shine a light on it at the county level." A number of organizations have been interested, including the New York Philharmonic and educational institutions, but it remains empty and minimally maintained waiting for a suitable owner.

"Unless a building stands in the path of progress, there are issues with any obsolete building," according to Richard Slesman, Managing Director of CBRE, the world's largest commercial realtor. "The seller's expectations have to be tempered by reality. If there's asbestos and lead paint, the costs are off the chart. The cost of conversion and code issues make nonprofits the most viable users." •

One-Room School Quiz

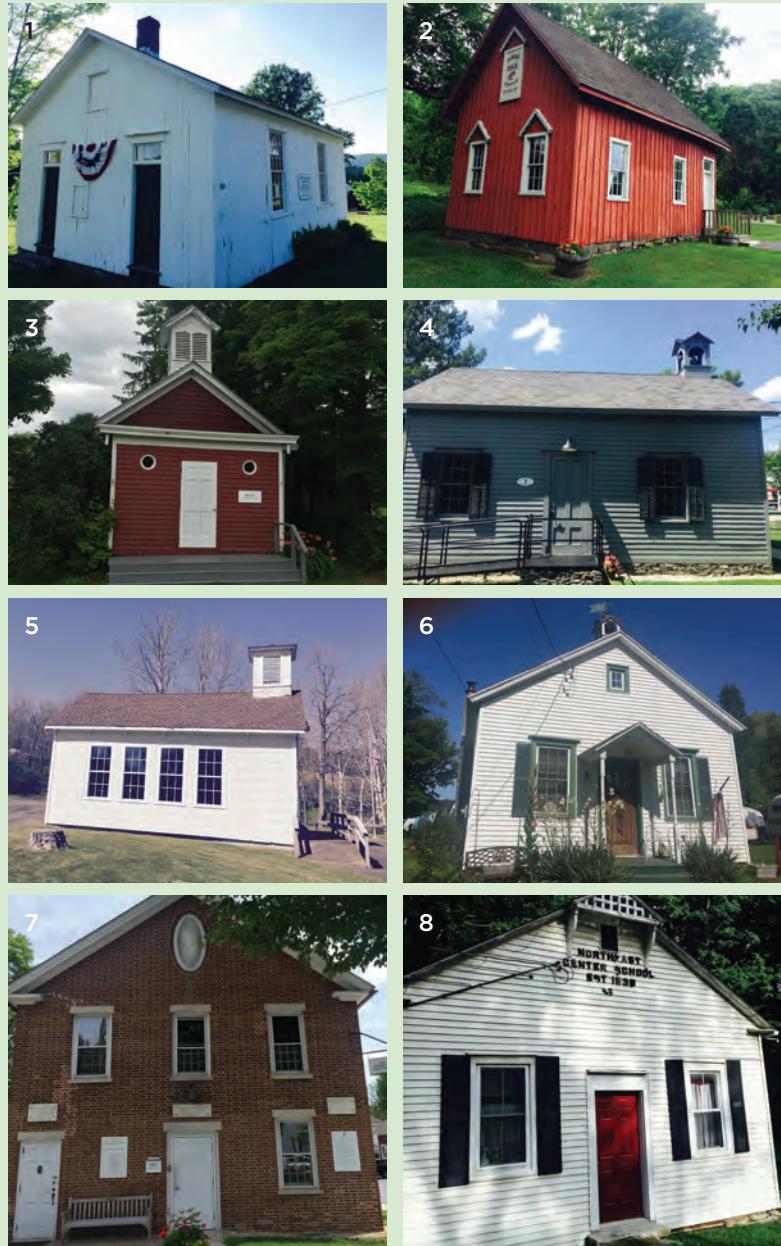
Match the schoolhouse pictured with its correct location. Include information on the building. Answers on page 55. All photos taken by Christine Bates.

Schoolhouses:

Academy Building Salisbury
Falls Village Beebe Hill
Indian Rock, Amenia
North East School

Austerlitz
Gallatin
Millerton, Irondale
Spencer's Corner's Millerton

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2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
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The artgarage success formula:

BE KIND. CLEAN UP. MAKE ART.

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

During the academic year, four days a week, the last bus leaves just as Housatonic Valley Regional High School shuts down for another day. For those who have spent their after school hours on the court or the field playing soccer or tennis or basketball, or being part of a club that refines a specialty like debate or music, this is the ride home for supper.

Some of the early evening pilgrims that roll out of the "Housy" parking lot on their way home, however, are not competitors. Their efforts don't build toward the moment of performance or struggling to be on the winning end of a hard fought match. They are the denizens of "artgarage."

Artgarage's birth

Born of awareness that budgets and time constraints can have a negative impact on the chance for young artistic expression, artgarage was the imaginative product of the dedication of Lakeville, CT artists Diane and Joel Schapira. "We'd been part of 'Fourth Grade Arts Day,' the Region One program that brings fourth grade students to Hotchkiss School's great facilities for a day of



art immersion," says Diane. "Joel thought it was such a great experience, how could we bring that to the high school?"

Joining with local artists Jim Meyer and Amy Jenkins, they set out to create an accessible, non-judgmental environment where budding artists, or simply high school students searching for a personal outlet could work and learn.

How artgarage came together is a mixture of serendipity, tenacity, and ingenuity. Naturally, there were a series of obstacles to get from "great idea" to "welcome to artgarage." A space that had been scheduled for demolition at HVRHS was, instead, "mothballed." Space was available. The Region 1 School Board needed to approve, which they did, with the caveat that there was no budget available to make the dream a reality.

Fundraising became an art project in itself. The founding artists gathered together and held three shows, proceeds going to the building renovation and program funds. "The businesses in the area really

helped us," recalls Diane. "Builders, contractors, suppliers all pitched in and helped us convert the space to an open, working studio."

In the spring of 2005, artgarage was ready for its "soft opening." By the beginning of school that fall, the concept was ready to proceed, ready to open its space and facilities to whichever students wanted to step inside and become part of the unique environment.

Finding creative expression

Artgarage is never a place of competition. There are no "winners" or "losers" here. There are no prizes, no lessons. These are simply individuals who find that creative expression adds a valuable dynamic to their young lives. They find the welcoming environment for that dynamic in artgarage where students interface with established local artists willing to become mentors – to encourage, inform, educate, and simply listen.

Continued on next page ...



A budget to keep artgarage going year after year was surely needed – both a source of funding and a disciplined way of spending what was received, since the supplies, the tools, the canvas, the clay, the fibre and paint, and the necessary furniture and fixtures all needed to come together.

An important foundational principle of artgarage is that there will never be a charge to the students for what they use in their creative expressions. Money can never be an excuse for not stepping into the artgarage environment and savoring the acceptance and encouragement that flourishes there every day.

The rules of artgarage

There are, in fact, only three rules at artgarage. They're life lessons, really, so once agreed to, they have a tendency to stay with the over 300 students who have been part of artgarage in its 12 years of successful existence.

Although these precepts seem so simple, they were born of the natural tendencies that, at times, become exaggerated in one's teen years. Paint brushes are not designed for use in playful sword fights. Gossip and negative conversations don't encourage freedom and imagination. Personal space is very important to an artist, so leaning in, pushing or poking are truly unwelcome violations of that premise.

"At first," remembers Diane, "it was the mentoring artists who had to remind folks that although there were only three rules, they were the rules. It seemed our mantra became 'not at artgarage ...'."



Over time, however, the message became endemic to the young artists, and when the mentors overheard students reminding each other of the regulations, they knew the change had been accomplished.

- Be kind to each other.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Make art.

Modeling an artist's life

As one artgarage alumni's mother put it, artgarage is "a warm, nurturing, and creative environment where students are always encouraged to express themselves and to be confident in who they are."

Photographer John Brett, who with Nancy Hegy Martin and Katie Baldwin share administrative responsibilities and serve as artgarage artist mentors, finds his time with the students both refreshing and satisfying. "It's an investment of two hours a week ... and the emotional return is incredible. This is a safe place. It's a place where the students can be themselves ... and the artist mentors can, in our own way, model what an artist's life entails."

At times, mentors share their experience and technique with the artists. At times, when asked, they offer constructive insight on what

does and doesn't work. At times, they simply listen. At all times, they are supportive and encouraging. "It's a fine dance," reflects Diane.

One student artist spoke of his deep appreciation of the welcoming environment. "It's not just a place where I come to express myself, it's the place where I come just to be."

By coordinating artgarage offerings with the HVRHS curriculum directed by Warren Prindle, the studio becomes a place to explore, expand, and execute. Completely non-competitive, artgarage is refreshingly collaborative, a fact not lost on the students who arrive ready to experiment, learn, and share.

It's to be expected that some of the young artists who pass through artgarage should find that art is their calling. One 2012 graduate of "Housy" who went on to study at the prestigious Savannah School of Art and Design summed it up this way: "at artgarage I got to meet other minds and collaborate with them, which was a new experience. It helped me figure out that I wanted, to go to an art school, more specifically a school that encouraged a collaborative environment."

Supported by the generous con-



tributions of people in the community, artgarage is a fund within the non-profit, 501 (c) (3) corporation, the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, so those contributions are tax deductible. •

Artgarage is open Monday through Thursday after school during the academic year. More information about artgarage can be secured from one of its co-founders, Joel Schapira via email at jaschapira@net.net. All photographs courtesy of artgarage.



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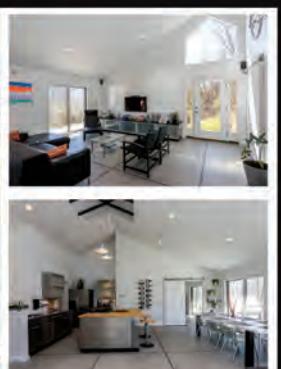
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Wise owls

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

By Mary B. O'Neill, Ph.D.
info@mainstreetmag.com

Remember the last day of school? The really last day? The relief of no more pencils, no more books, no more teacher's dirty looks?

Even though formal schooling might have ended for you long ago, the ability to learn hasn't. Seeking learning opportunities and developing new skills throughout your life, known as lifelong learning, is part of nurturing mind and spirit and is crucial to aging well.

Lifelong learning is learning for its own sake and the benefits are myriad. It fosters a growth mindset, where you believe you can learn and master new knowledge and skills; keeps you involved; helps create meaning and purpose; allows for rich social interactions; and promotes mental and intellectual agility.

A study on studying

A recent study released by the Pew Research Center reveals some interesting findings about lifelong learning. Although digital learning is an important part of lifelong learning, it's "place-based learning" that resonates with many. This highlights the value of face-to-face interactions and the social component of learning that is important to older adults.

Pew classifies those who participate in a learning opportunity to gain new knowledge about something they're interested in as "personal learners." In the survey, 74 percent of adults have participated in a lifelong learning activity – whether it be reading, performing volunteer work, or taking courses and workshops.

The most common reasons cited for personal learning are to pursue knowledge in something of interest, learn something to help others, and do something productive with extra time. The study finds benefits of lifelong learning to include increasing feelings of capability and efficacy; opening up to new

perspectives; making new friends; connecting to the local community; and becoming involved in volunteer opportunities.

Whatever your reason for sharpening your pencil and heading back to class, here are some local institutions with rich and varied programming to help you become a wiser, more fulfilled you.

OLLI

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) is based at Berkshire Community College (BCC) in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. A program of the Osher Foundation, it is one of 119 such institutes in the country. Each OLLI offers courses designed for adults aged 50 and older who are "interested in learning for the joy of learning."

At BCC, OLLI is administered and taught by over 150 volunteers and has more than 1,000 members. It believes that "learning is a lifelong, multifaceted experience," which is demonstrated by its extensive offerings of courses, lectures, trips, and special events over four seasonal semesters. Programs are run at BCC and its partner locations of Williams College, Bard College at Simon's Rock, and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

The tax-deductible member fee of \$50 entitles a member to register for classes in all four semesters and participate in the Distinguished Speakers Series and other special events. There is also a summer membership and flex pass available for those who only live in the area for part of the year.

Tuition per semester is \$45 for one course; \$90 for two or three courses; and \$100 for unlimited courses. In addition, OLLI maintains a relationship with 36 Cultural Partners in the surrounding area that provide programmatic and curricular support, along with discounts on tickets and events.



Above: The author teaching a class in philosophy of happiness at Noble Horizons in its Lifelong Learning classroom. Photo: John Emmons.

Taconic Learning Center

The Taconic Learning Center (TLC) is the lifelong learning institute of northwest Connecticut. It is also a volunteer-run membership organization and is open to residents of the area and adjacent communities in New York and Massachusetts.

Fall offerings include travelling to hell and back again in Dante's *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*; connecting Cole Porter's body of work to his life and times; probing great foreign policy decisions; and delving into post-1945 Middle East.

Annual membership dues are \$60 per person and are fully tax-deductible. There are no other set fees. Individuals may sign up for any number of courses. Classes lasting two hours are held once a week at one of three venues in Connecticut – Scoville Memorial Library and Noble Horizons in Salisbury, and Geer Village in Canaan.

Noble Horizons

Since its founding, Noble Horizons in Salisbury, CT has offered stimulating learning opportunities that intentionally emphasize meaningful, creative, and intellectual interactions between residents and the wider community.

Instructors come from the local area and beyond to conduct master classes, lectures, and workshops on topics such as global affairs, the fine arts, health, politics, history, Russian literature, and philosophy.

Caroline Burchfield, director of Community Relations and

Development, sees the greatest benefit of Noble's programming in the opportunities for participants to interact and grow. Burchfield is thrilled when the program spurs conversation during and after classes and workshops. "Social interaction is crucial at any age. When our programs generate discussion immediately after class at Noble or even days later in the aisles of the supermarket, it connects the community in meaningful ways. Both teachers and participants are incredibly willing to share expertise and experience and learn from each other." She continues, "This area we live in has such a depth expertise, and I encourage community members to recommend speakers and program topics."

Noble rarely charges for its programming and all events are open to Noble residents and the larger community. Says Burchfield, "No one is ever turned away. We always find room for people who want to learn."

Being a lifelong learner is a way of looking at the world. Opportunities to enrich your life abound. So go ahead, channel your inner Socrates and pursue new knowledge, because the only life worth living is the examined one. •

For more information, class schedules, and locations contact: OLLI www.berkshireolli.org, Taconic Learning Center www.taconiclearningcenter.org, Noble Horizons www.noblehorizons.org.

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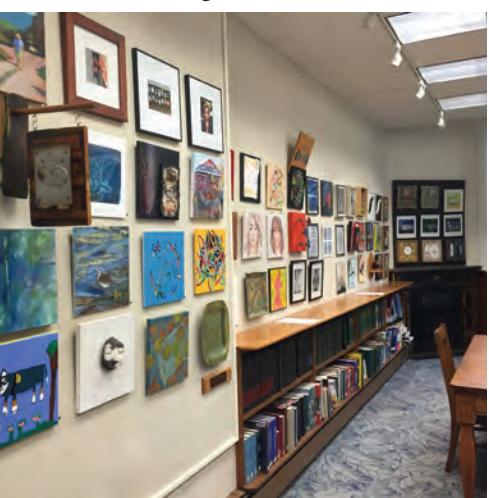
Lifelong learning at the library

By Dominique De Vito
info@mainstreetmag.com

I profess to a passion for libraries – and books in general. You probably do, too, if the title of this article got your attention. I grew up in a rural area where the nearest library was an hour or so away. To compensate, there was a Book Mobile that came to the post office every week. It was a large van outfitted with shelves of library books. Every week my mother, brothers, and I were there. That book-filled space captivated me from a very young age, and I never tire of walking into any book-filled spaces even now. Open a book and you're in a different world.

As the need to use and reference and even access books (and learning) has changed, there's been talk about books – and even bookstores and libraries – being dinosaurs headed for extinction. That notion strikes fear in my heart, as it does for all book lovers I know.

When Thorunn (Main Street's editor) put out the call for articles that would support the theme of "learning" at any age, the first thing that came to me was libraries. At the Chatham Public Library, which is my local library, I have noticed over the past ten years how the space has been used to support the interests of writers, knitters, animal lovers, puzzle enthusiasts, aspiring chefs, art lovers, those who are technology challenged, and – of course – kids.



Libraries are for the curious, the quirky, the community.

A new life for libraries

Days after getting the assignment, I came across this in the New York Times: "Adding Classes and Content, Resurgent Libraries Turn a Whisper Into a Roar." The article, by Winnie Hu (7/4/16), noted that, "Far from becoming irrelevant in the digital age, libraries in New York City and around the nation are thriving ... No longer just repositories for books, public libraries have reinvented themselves as one-stop community centers that aim to offer something for everyone."

This was so clearly confirmed in my research on the offerings of the libraries in the Tristate area served by this publication. And there are lots of libraries in this area. Here are glimpses into just a few.

In Connecticut

The David M. Hunt Library in Falls Village, CT, is a classic example. This library was founded in 1891 and is celebrating its 125th Anni-

versary. Its Director is Erica Joncyk, who started there as a children's librarian in 1998 and took over the reins as Director in 2010. She is delighted, of course, to be part of the anniversary celebration, which took place on August 21st.

Joncyk acknowledges that, "technology is changing how libraries behave," and that to sustain the vision of the Hunt Library's founders for it to be "a house of learning fitted to the wants of our youth and the high purpose of promoting the intelligence and welfare of this community," the library has to offer more than the proverbial good read.

And it does, bringing in artists, musicians, writers, storytellers, and more. Its summer program for 2016 lists activities for nearly every day of the week, from learning to juggle to building a tiny house out of cardboard to bread baking, scavenger hunts, and a Fiesta Day.

Besides the scope and variety of programs, the Library has ten art



Above top: The new state-of-the-art Roe Jan Library building. Above: The Hunt Library. Left: An art exhibit at the Hunt Library. Photos courtesy of the libraries.

Continued on next page ...

shows a year, which Jencyk says are all well attended. “The library,” she says, “should always be a place where everyone feels safe to gather and learn – on their own and from each other.”

In New York

About 30 minutes northwest of Falls Village, in Hillsdale, NY, is the Roeliff Jansen Community Library, which serves Ancram, Hillsdale, and Copake. Its mission is, “to serve every sector of the community by inspiring lifelong learning and curiosity, advancing knowledge and understanding, strengthening the vitality of the Roe Jan area and securing the Library’s stability for generations to come.”

Roe Jan is another example of a dynamic, community-centered place of learning. Director Carol Briggs is proud of how the “sleepy town library” that was once open just nine hours a week has become one that’s open “seven days a week, 47 hours a week.” Briggs has been the Director for over 40 years, and she has seen plenty of change.

In 2010, the Library opened at its new site at 9091 Route 22, a modern building complete with geothermal heating and cooling, solar panels on the roof, and other energy efficiencies. The bright, spacious building is host to a plethora of programs illustrative of those that libraries are holding to provide for their communities. Briggs notes that Roe Jan has everything from “hunter safety to medicare concerns, technology, job finding, concerts, speakers, writing groups, yoga, and youth programs.” Supported by “great trustees, staff, and volunteers,” Carol says she may be stating the obvious, but that the Roe Jan Library “is a happening place.”

In Massachusetts

Another half hour drive north and then east into Massachusetts finds the Stockbridge Library on Main and Elm Streets in Stockbridge, MA. This venerated library has been serving its residents and community since 1864. It was one of only five libraries built during the Civil War – a labor of support on the commu-



nity level that today's library patrons can appreciate.

One of the library's treasures has been its museum and archives, which house numerous artifacts, from a large Native American collection to rare instruments, old town documents, and so much more. The library, which is in the center of town, was last renovated in 1938, and in 2011 it was deemed in need of a major overhaul – a \$4 million project that preserved what was great about the library while modernizing and expanding on what was necessary for today and the future. The Stockbridge Library formally reopened just this past June.

Library Director Katherine (Katie) O’Neil is justifiably proud of the library and all it has to offer. “Public libraries are about creating a sense of connectedness,” O’Neil says, “and while new technologies abound, people need help learning them.” Stockbridge offers what its community wants and needs: preschool story time, book groups, cemetery walks, speakers, a cookbook club, and a series called Behind Closed Doors, where people who live in Stockbridge come in and talk about the history of their houses.

The renovation has brought a lot of attention to the Stockbridge Library, and O’Neil confirms that there are more locals coming back, as well as tourists, historians, and others who are exploring the library. Local libraries are everywhere! Every library in our area has a great story to tell – and programming to meet the needs of people of all ages interested in all kinds of things. The (short) profiles here are proof aplenty of that!

Here in New York, we’re lucky to be part of the Mid-Hudson Library system, which serves Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam, and Ulster counties. If you’re looking for something and it’s not in your local library, if it’s in any of the nearly 70 libraries served by Mid-Hudson, you can request it and it will be delivered to your branch.

There are over 30 public libraries in Berkshire County, and nearly that number in Litchfield County. The Internet may be today’s Book Mobile (that’s an understatement!), but libraries remain, as their Directors point out, community centers that promote connections for learning every day as they have for many years in the past and will for many years to come. •



Above top: A children's event at the Roe Jan Library. Above: Some fun at the Stockbridge Library. All photos courtesy of the libraries.



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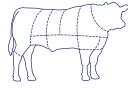


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Plantin' Seeds

CREATING INTENTIONAL CONNECTIONS

By Mary B. O'Neill, Ph.D.
info@mainstreetmag.com

Sometimes there's nothing like a good metaphor to illustrate a concept. Plantin' Seeds uses the germination process to illuminate its mission of educating the wider community about farms, local food, and the importance of sowing seeds and ideas in fertile soil.

There are two components to the Plantin' Seeds organization: plantin' seeds farm kitchen in Canaan, and Pom's Cabin Farm in Falls Village, where Plantin' Seeds was first conceived. Both are instructional venues for educational programs.

Magical thinking

Plantin' Seeds is the intuition child of Falls Village resident Dale McDonald. Her vision, in collaboration with a team of local farmers, chefs, and other dedicated individuals, was to create an opening for ideas about this local area's particular intersection of farming, food, and community, which is a defining part of our lives here.

McDonald is a firm believer that direct experience is a wise teacher. She also has faith in the power of creating an intentional space and allowing others to fill it with their talents and energy. Two such bringers-of-energy are Brandon Scimeca and Tracy Hayhurst.

A farmer and seasoned CIA-trained chef, Scimeca is Plantin' Seeds' director of education. Hayhurst,



formerly of Chubby Bunny Farm and trained at Ireland's famed Ballymaloe Cookery School, is director of community outreach. Together with McDonald and other team members, they nurture Plantin' Seeds' growth process with their collective expertise and fertilize it with a healthy dose of magic.

Experiential learning

Although it serves delicious and local fare, plantin' seeds farm kitchen is not a restaurant. Since its opening in June 2015, it's been all about education – a very particular kind of education.

The meal or program is the textbook, the teachable moment, and the direct experience of the food, the land, and the farmer who bridges the two. Each learning event is designed with a specific concept or ingredient in mind. Scimeca and Hayhurst take turns creating these edible educational forums.

The homey farm dining room in Canaan, CT allows a full view into the gleaming commercial chef's kitchen on one side and Main Street on the other. This communal space represents the nexus between food

and people. Every person that walks through the door should come prepared to interact, learn, and be changed by the experience.

Plantin' seeds farm kitchen is definitely not the place for a romantic dinner à deux. Scimeca explains, "When Tracy and I prepare a meal, we're not thinking of ourselves as chefs. We're educators. Our goal is to more intentionally connect the source of the food on our plates to the farmers who grow it. The meal is an opportunity to create relationships with the land and those we share it with," he adds, "If there's an open seat, you're sitting in it. The tables are for building connections and initiating conversation, not seclusion."

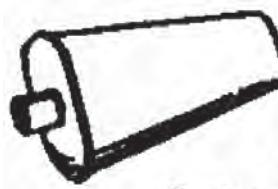
These community relationships are also at the heart of Plantin' Seeds' work. Hayhurst explains, "We live in a rural community. We need to break down barriers between people producing our food and those consuming it. Every meal we prepare is an opportunity to expose the interconnectedness



Above top: Brandon Scimeca introducing Inspiration Dinner for plantin' seeds farm kitchen on Main Street in Canaan, CT. Above: plantin' seeds farm kitchen on Main Street in Canaan, CT. Left: A plantin' seeds taco. All photos courtesy of Plantin' Seeds.



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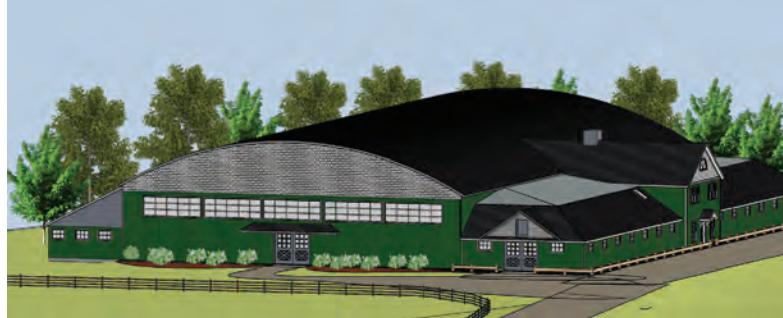
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between people and the land."

Alternatively, Pom's Cabin Farm provides the living laboratory and incubator of inspiration. The farm, with wildflower meadows, fields, and trails, and populated with robust blueberry bushes, sits aside a lazy, meandering stretch of the Housatonic River. Hands-on experiences, such as composting workshops and land walks at Equinox and Solstice are offered here.

Labor Theory of Value

Another component of the Plantin' Seeds ethos is its pricing structure – there is none. However, there is a donation policy for meals, programs, and workshops.

For McDonald, Scimeca, and Hayhurst this is another exercise in intentionality and an opportunity to really think about the experience you've just had. Scimeca elaborates that, "We want people to think about the food itself and what kind of local labor and costs went into bringing it to your plate."

McDonald explains, "Our country's food pricing system, and the layers that exist between how food is grown and consumed, distracts from its true value. It veils our relationship to the land. We believe that the direct experience of the land and food, through the medium of a meal or workshop, will expose that bond and allow you to view value of it in a different way."

McDonald is also clear that there is no judgment about what's in the miniature burlap donation sacks on each table at the end of the night. It's

your responsibility to determine the value of the experience and what you learned from it.

Educating young palates

Scimeca is also concerned with educating our youngest citizens about where food comes from and cultivating their palates to the taste of real food. He has teamed with North Canaan Elementary School (NCES) to do just that.

This summer, garden beds have been built to create a school yard garden that will be tended to by NCES students during the school year and Camp AHA! over the summer. Scimeca sees this kind of education as crucial to the mission of Plantin' Seeds, "NCES students will learn how to grow their own food in a way that is both hands-on and linked to their curriculum. They'll experience firsthand the satisfaction of nurturing a plant from seed to harvest."

Scimeca is also introducing "taste education" to NCES students. Taste education provides a direct sensory experience of a food using all senses, but particularly the flavor of the food. The purpose is to really think about the food in an intimate and immediate way, not in the superficial manner that we Americans are famous for.

Last spring, with NCES students, Scimeca explored carrots prepared in a multitude of ways, e.g., steamed, pureed, and roasted. He encouraged the students to explore the carrots and critically think about their appearance, smell, texture, and flavor. How are they different? Which are most visually appealing? Is the flavor sweet, salty, bitter, acidic or – the one we always forget – umami?

For Scimeca, taste education is fundamental to caring about food and the land, and ultimately to the choices we make in our own diets and for our towns. The child then becomes the food spokesperson and advocate in his or her own home, school, and community.

In the future, Scimeca hopes other schools in Region One will be open to developing gardens and taste education curriculum. He envisions a scenario where each school's efforts will be linked together by a common thread, perhaps a joint gardener/edu-



Above: Tracy Hayhurst making crepes in plantin' seeds farm kitchen on Main Street in Canaan, CT.

cator or a larger unifying garden plan.

FED Talks

Plantin' Seeds also has other opportunities to learn and foster community through lectures, workshops, and inspiration dinners. Hayhurst and Scimeca regularly plan these events throughout the year. In them, they explore a cooking method, concept, local farm, or an ingredient.

Inspiration dinners tap into the creative juices of Hayhurst and Scimeca. They allow them to delve deeper and to expose attendees to a new way of thinking. An example of this is the recent dinner that celebrated the fledgling North Canaan Farmers Market.

All ingredients for that dinner experience came from farmers who sell at the market. The meal showcased the depth and breadth of local produce and meat available there. Farmers, market organizers, and curious community members discussed the food on their plates, how it was prepared, the challenges and rewards of farming life, inventive solutions to



Above: Interior of plantin' seeds farm kitchen on Main Street in Canaan, CT. Left: Cookies served at an invitational cookout event at Pom's Cabin Farm in Falls Village, CT.

Continued on next page ...



rural living, and how to protect crops from predatory rabbits.

Living Lectures

Lecture topics run the gamut. This past spring there was a film viewing and a discussion about the film *Dirt*. When the weather is fine, these lectures take to the fields and pastures. In July, Plantin' Seeds organized a live lecture at James and Linda Quella's Q Farms in Sharon, CT.

On a stunning summer evening, a group of interested farmers, neighbors, reporters, and just regular folks wanting to know more toured the shiny new facility and protein-based farm with farmer Dan Carr. He explained how the USDA-approved humane poultry slaughter process works as the group moved through the immaculate and state-of-the-art facility – the only one of its kind in the entire state of Connecticut.

Participants then walked the high grass alongside the solar-powered electric enclosures as Carr described the continuing challenges of getting the farm up and running. These he illustrated with engaging anecdotes, as well as farming science and technique. He waxed about the chickens, composting best practice, the land clearing power of goats, and how much pigs love acorns. This was no dry, abstract classroom lecture. Again, it was a direct experience of local farming and sustainable agriculture. It explored the difficulties, rewards, and costs and benefits of real food from inception to table.

Hands-on learning

Workshops at Plantin' Seeds are focused on teaching skills involved in



sky the newly-minted campfire chefs tucked into the experience – not just another meal, but an incarnation of our connection to land and food, and a deepening of fellow feeling.



Above: An assortment of fresh produce and plantin' seeds on Main Street's creations. Below left: One of the gardens at Pom's Cabin Farm in Falls Village, CT.

food preserving or preparation. On another glistening July evening, Hayhurst assembled a group of families to prepare a campfire dinner at Pom's Cabin Farm.

Out of a clearing in the field rose up a tipi and Hayhurst's enchanted circle of prep stations and campfire. Like a large extended family at Thanksgiving (without the obnoxious relative) it was all hands on deck. Some seasoned and wrapped potatoes and veggies and others assembled blueberry cobbler in sturdy Dutch ovens, with most ingredients courtesy of the farm.

At the same time, Hayhurst coolly supervised the grilling of blueberry-glazed spatchcocked Q Farms chickens. They sizzled on Tuscan grills suspended over glowing embers. As the sun lowered in the luminous

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Another aspect of Plantin' Seeds honors local farmers, whom McDonald reverently calls "ambassadors of the soil." Monthly farmer dinners are a chance for local farmers to break away from the demands of life on the land to network, advise, share stories, and tips, and you guessed it, talk about the weather.

Dinner conversations move from land access and soil quality to how to build a better chicken coop. Scimeca and Hayhurst agree that farmers in this area are grateful to have a place to go and create bonds between themselves. Although they work independently, local farming is highly collaborative as well.

Organically grown

When one plants a seed, the hope is that it will grow and bear fruit. Plantin' Seeds nurtures its growth in a deliberate, yet serendipitous manner. For McDonald, a three-year plan has involved growing community, extending roots through education, and as they approach year three, making the effort financially sustainable. Right now, the Plantin' Seeds team is looking more deeply into the economics of the small farmer and how their organization can expose the "vagaries of food and finance."

Hayhurst observes, "The magic of Plantin' Seeds is while we have an

overall vision and mission, we don't have an ABC plan for how to get there. We're open to ideas and connections and what individuals literally bring to the table."

Scimeca adds, "We're going down a path, and we don't necessarily have all the answers. But what we do have is a full team effort. There are no individual egos or agendas. We all share a common vision of educating the community about the land and what it yields – all through the direct experience of it."

Plantin' Seeds is an idea whose time has arrived and a thriving example of the fact that if you build it, they will come. •

Plantin' seeds farm kitchen is located at 99 Main Street, Canaan, CT. It educates through meals and sells local grains on Thursdays from 6 to 9 pm; Saturdays from 8 am to 2 pm; and Sundays from 11 am to 2 pm. No reservations are accepted. For more information, visit their Facebook page, their new website at www.plantinseeds.org, or call (860) 453-4363. To be invited to special events at plantin' seeds farm kitchen or Pom's Cabin Farm you must go in person during opening hours to sign the guest book. This puts you on the invitation list for lectures, workshops, events, and inspiration dinners. Farmers interested in attending farmers-only dinners should contact Plantin' Seeds. All meals and programs require a donation to acknowledge the value of the food, its preparation, and the educational experience.

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Mitch Horowitz

By Betsy Maury
info@mainstreetmag.com

As we head back to school and think about getting our brains ready to focus on mastering new skills, I was happy to have the chance to chat with local author Mitch Horowitz about his book, *One Simple Idea: How Positive Thinking Reshaped Modern Life* (Crown). While this book is not, strictly speaking, about education, it is about thought and how positive thought can be an agent for change in one's life at any point.

Positive thinking

Horowitz traces the history and influence of the positive thinking movement in America, from its earliest roots in spiritual communities through to its place today as a perennial favorite on bestseller lists. Positive thinking includes a body of ideas that connects positive thought with successful life outcomes in health, wealth and happiness, so reading his book around the time students head back to school made me think afresh about some of its core concepts and enduring appeal. To me, there's always been a sunny overpromise to many tenets of positive thinking (which explains some of its dismissal by serious scholars), but I aimed to learn more from a committed believer and credentialed researcher on the subject. Smiley face buttons and daily affirmations aside, is there something serious to positive thinking?

The positive thinking movement – sometimes known as New Thought – includes many different strains from early thinkers in the Christian Science church to the Transcendentalists to prosperity prophets like Napoleon Hill of *Think and Grow Rich* fame. Horowitz's book highlights the movement's high and low points and tracks some of its most idiosyncratic personalities. Positive thinking in a nutshell asserts that thoughts are *causative*.

In *One Simple Idea*, Horowitz not only traces the history and influence of positive thought, he shines a light on many of its prophets to assess how well they've held up to serious intellectual scrutiny. Not surprisingly, many don't make the grade according to him and Horowitz is up front about this weakness of many of the New Thought leaders. In his view, the evangelists of positive thinking have been wildly successful in dispersing their ideas to a mass audience (think of the number of self-improvement bestsellers in this category), but the ideas themselves have not been

subject to rigorous examination or refining. He squarely levels this charge: the headiest thinkers of New Thought did not grapple with all the complex nuances of human experience.

Though he's very much a believer, Horowitz has argued for less blind reliance on sloganism and an honest recognition of suffering in the world in order to propel the movement forward. What good is a governing principle of thought if it makes no allowance for real-life circumstances, especially dire ones? It's clear that Horowitz thinks that there's a vital place for positive thinking in our imperfect world of challenges and setbacks. He's been scratching around with these ideas for many years, struggling to understand and appreciate their influence. After reading his book and hearing his manifesto – in which he pledges to test the viability of these ideas in his own life – I was inclined to give them a try too.

Practice what Horowitz preaches

Many things we already practice fall into positive thinking therapies even if we don't realize it. And all kinds of people from political candidates (Yes, we can!) to savvy marketers (Just do it.) rely on the very "can do" ideas that have been made accessible by the positive thinking movement. Things like affirmations and visualizations long heralded by mind/body advocates come straight out of New Thought. Prayer is a practice that has its roots in many spiritual traditions and has been touted as an effective palliative care therapy thanks to the widespread message of some of its evangelists. Positive psychology, placebo studies, and neuroplasticity studies that show thoughts change brain chemistry and open up new circuitry all have antecedents in New Thought. At this point, the essential elements of positive thinking have seeped into the groundwater of America so completely that even educators are not immune to their influence.

Horowitz showed me a picture of a mural in a Harlem high school that features language from Norman Vincent Peale, author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*: "Change Your Thoughts and You Change Your World."

Eager to see how positive thinking works in my daily life, I started to consciously check myself from negative thoughts to test whether I could achieve higher levels of well-being, professional success, or happiness. Positive thinking certainly is seductive with its promise of fulfillment on so many levels.

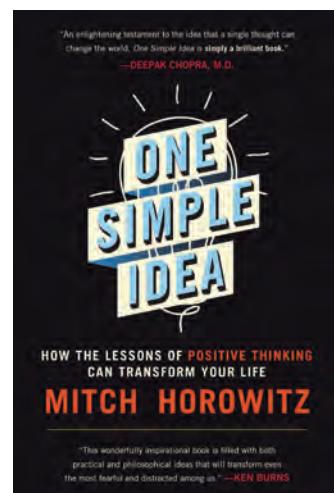


Above: Author Mitch Horowitz. Below: Horowitz's cover of *One Simple Idea*. Photos courtesy of Mitch Horowitz.

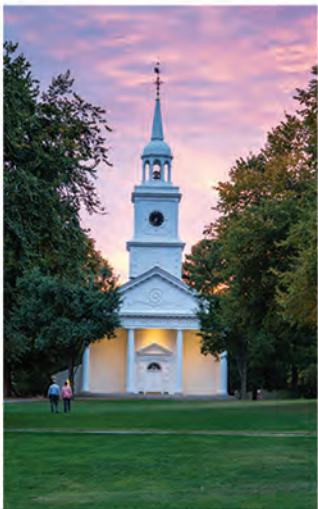
(I confess that I'm one to let a setback spiral into a fairly dark world view so I was skeptical). Would writing down affirmations of gratefulness give me a perspective that could alter my actions? Would mindfully remembering my goal help me go about it with steely resolve? Could positive thoughts in fact lead to positive outcomes?

For my part, it certainly seems worth a try. And that may be the most compelling appeal of this body of thought: why not? What's the alternative? There's simply no reason not to try to captain your own ship with positive mental determination. If waking up with an upbeat outlook can influence the quality of interaction with family, co-workers, and teachers, then doesn't it follow that engagement improves and thereby learning outcomes improve? If we can cast a positive light on our efforts, don't we stand a better chance of achieving our goals in school, on the field, in life? Mitch Horowitz decidedly thinks so.

Maybe there's something in positive thinking not only for students and life-long learners, but for everyone in between. •



To learn more about Mitch Horowitz visit mitchhorowitz.com. Horowitz shared with us his "Three-Step Miracle": As a writer and editor of spiritual literature, I am often asked about my "favorite" book. I have lots of favorites ... But there is one special book that I have given away more than a hundred copies of. It is a 28-page pamphlet, published anonymously in 1926 under the title "It Works." Why am I so enthusiastic about "It Works"? It distills a program of creative-mind metaphysics into three exquisitely simple steps. But these steps work only if approached with your whole being. They are: 1. Carefully devise a list of what you really want from life. 2. Read it morning, noon, and night. Think about it always. 3. Tell no one what you are doing so you remain steady in your resolve. — Then, express gratitude when the results arrive. That's it? How can something so simple really work? Because this exercise pushes us to do something that we think we do all the time but rarely try: honestly come to terms with our truest desires. What do you really want? Try "It works." It will surprise you.



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Not your father's farm: TODAY'S AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

By Ian Strever
info@mainstreetmag.com

Ian Strever is the assistant principal at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, one of just nineteen schools in the state of Connecticut that offer Agricultural Education programs.

Imagine the satisfaction of prehistoric man, his arms folded before a tidy field of planted seeds, admiring his handiwork and reflecting upon his ability to harness the land to his purposes. Years of experimentation and observation led him to believe he could raise crops on his own terms instead of gathering them as his ancestors had, and with the help of some rough tools, he laid out his orderly rows and waited to see the results.

A rainless week later, the earth pale and cracked, our first farmer began to look to the skies, wondering how the world around him would impact his experiment, and what he could do to account for the fickleness of nature. Perhaps this gave rise to the first bucket, or maybe the first irrigation ditch. There is no underestimating the ingenuity of a hungry man, and from the beginning of time, the necessity of food has spawned some of our greatest scientific discoveries.

Today, farms employ methane recovery technologies, robotic milking operations, and GPS-driven tractors that are revolutionizing the indus-



Above: The Housatonic FFA students at this summer's national convention in Harrisburg, South Dakota. Below, left: Current students learn about tractor operation and crop planting from HVRHS Alumnus Austin Jacquier of Laurelbrook Farm in East Canaan.

try by increasing production and maximizing efficiency. Lab coats and iPads are becoming the norm in farms around the country as our farmers and environmentalists employ the power of these digital tools.

In the 1940s, when the Agricultural Education program began at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, tractors and hand-milking were the order of the day. Today's

"Ag" students, however, are preparing to meet the needs of many more consumers, both locally and abroad.

Today's farmer

Cricket Jacquier, owner of Laurelbrook Farms in East Canaan, CT, watches the world news, attentive to how the political winds in Russia can impact his bottom line as much as the winds that bring rain to the Canaan Valley. As the president of Housatonic's Agricultural Advisory Board, he works with the faculty to stay abreast of developments in the industry and the skills required of the modern farmer. This partnership between local agricultural professionals and educators has been a model of school and community cooperation for decades, and it ensures that Housatonic graduates are prepared for further work in the discipline.

This means continuous learning for Agricultural Education faculty and students alike. In addition to learning about forestry and agricultural engineering from Department Chair Mark Burdick, students now work as part of

an Electric Vehicle team, where talk turns to gear ratios, efficiency, battery life, and programming. Students use ultrasounds and milk testing in Karen Davenport's Animal Sciences class while learning about the biology and care of livestock. Aquaculture and drip-feed systems are regular features of David Moran's plant science classes, which meet in a working greenhouse, and his students learn about fish and wildlife by raising trout in freshwater tanks on campus before releasing them into local rivers.

The trout release is just one example of how learning moves from the campus to the field. One of the busiest pieces of equipment in the school is the Ag-Ed bus that transports classes to off-site locations such as forests, farms, and streams. Some of these trips are singular learning opportunities that expose students to hands-on farm management or



Continued on next page ...

emerging technologies.

Other outings may involve repeated trips to sites where students manage property, such as the forest plot on nearby Barrack Mountain, or where they participate in conservation efforts, such as Trout Unlimited's Salmon Kill Restoration Project. Longer trips to ag-focused high schools, colleges, and events connect students with the larger agricultural community, extending the network for many students who are already involved in 4-H and other regional programs.

What's Envirothon?

The Envirothon team, led by David Moran, brings students to state and local competitions, where students undertake site-based ecological problems and test their knowledge against other schools. This past summer, the group traveled to Ontario, where they visited parks and worked together to create an eco-friendly solution to a local environmental challenge.

Becket Harney, a graduate of HVRHS, is currently enrolled in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University, a career path that was the direct result of his Envirothon experience. "I can say that one of the primary frustrations I had freshman and sophomore year at Cornell was that Envirothon had actually overprepared me for my college environmental courses. When I had my introductory field bio course in the fall of my sophomore year, I was shocked that so few of my classmates could tell the difference between an ash and a hickory, and even worse – students weren't expected to learn Latin names for tree identification!"

"Learning to do..."

The glue that holds together all of these programs is the FFA, previously known as Future Farmers of America. This national organization extols the virtues of not just farming, but of being a farmer and all that comes with that ethos. Their motto, "Learning



to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live and Living to Serve," captures the mission of the organization, and students model it both in school and in larger contexts.

Students "do to learn" and "earn to live" through supervised agricultural experiences (SAE) at local farms and businesses where they put their skills to work. The chapter also "lives to serve" by providing free rabies clinics and by donating a portion of their annual fundraising to local food pantries, which supports the national organization's priority issues of food security and hunger.

By virtue of their upbringing, however, Housatonic students experience learning differently than their peers at many other schools with agricultural programs. Many students grow up on farms or participate in the family business, so from an early age, they are "doing to learn." By the time they reach high school, some of these students are not only familiar with the fundamentals of farm life, but they may already be involved in advanced fields. These young people care for valuable livestock and operate equipment that can run to the hundreds of thousands of dollars in value, all of which means great responsibility at a very young age.

FFA Open House

One hallmark of educated people is the ability to speak at length about a topic, and by that measure, Ag-Ed students exhibit their knowledge at the school's FFA Open House, held each year in the middle of May. It is a community show-and-tell to which students bring their award-winning cows, new tractors, and even post-and-beam barn frames to illustrate their areas of interest. They talk shop with members of the community, who not only learn more about the subject themselves, but who also test students' grasp of the content.

One of the most organic and cooperative examples of learning from the night is the Envirothon presentation, when the team shares its environmental study with the public, who strengthens the students' work by asking challenging, probing questions about their conclusions. A transcript of these sessions reads more like a wetlands hearing than a school competition, and while the team emerges stronger for the experience, eventually, our community does, too. •

Above: The HVRHS Electric Car rounds the bend at Lime Rock Park.

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Learning in the garden

By Claire Copley
info@mainstreetmag.com

We all know that one of the best ways to learn is through doing. Activities that allow us to use knowledge and information in new ways, increase both the breadth and depth of learning. As a former educator, I am always looking for ways that the “classroom” can be expanded and for different frameworks in which learning can happen. I have known for some time that the garden is just such a place.

Having spent a lot of time in classrooms discussing various aspects of plants and gardening, I know that the work that I do in the garden covers a lot of territory; from learning about geology and soils to using long-forgotten geometry and trigonometry skills to measure, grade, and draw plans. (I will confess, I went out and bought *Trigonometry for Dummies* to refresh). I need knowledge of botany, biology, and ecology. In fact, working in a garden involves such a wide range of knowledge that it becomes a perfect laboratory for learning across disciplines.

Planning in a garden

Just look at vegetable garden planning and think of all the decisions that are made and all the knowledge that goes into them. If one has a prescribed growing season, how can you plant enough lettuce for a given number of people to have fresh lettuce to eat all season? How many plantings should you have? At what intervals? What are the spatial limitations? What are the potential pitfalls and how much loss can be expected? How can those pitfalls be managed? ... And that's just lettuce!

Increasingly, educators are developing in-school programs that use gardens and greenhouses as learning labs to teach a wide variety of science disciplines. A vegetable garden is a perfect opportunity for students to learn about food, soils, weather, plants, insects, ecology, botany,

biology, and more. The underlying goal of this type of program is an increased knowledge of, and relationship with, the natural world. In a garden there are a thousand curriculum opportunities. If schools at all grade levels had working vegetable gardens, they could be used as labs for subjects throughout the curriculum. Basic science activities like observation and recording would be key. Biology, just to pick a discipline, could teach the relationships between the plants, their environment and the many insect species that are present. Botany might focus on the planting process, and study what happens to a seed as it turns into a plant. Ecology studies might explore how the conditions in the garden change over time and the impact of plant additions and subtractions, or weather patterns. Learning about insects and how to attract the right kinds to the garden to create ecological checks and balances is a complex strategy that requires a good knowledge of entomology.

Education and connection

What I am suggesting goes beyond using a garden to connect young children to their food sources, although this alone is a wonderful learning tool for younger students. By planting a “Victory Garden” at the White House, First Lady Michelle Obama intended to make students at Bancroft Elementary School aware of the great tastes of homegrown organic foods and to connect the students to food in a new way. Food activists, led by the California chef and Chez Panisse founder Alice Waters, have praised the move but are more focused on the message about food than the potential learning experiences that such a garden could provide.

The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG), my *alma mater* (full disclosure), decided to enlarge the



scope of their on-site children's gardening programs and began working with a school in the Bronx, (CS 211, a Pre-K through eighth grade school) in 2009. They assisted the school to build a learning garden and integrate it into the curriculum. After three years the program underwent a thorough evaluation to aid in extending the program to other schools. They concluded that when gardening occurs in a school setting, and is tied to curricula, the impacts are positive on educational achievement, individual and family health, and the environment. Even failure of a garden is considered a positive learning experience. The key to success seems to be how well various aspects of the garden are connected to subjects that are already part of the school's curriculum.

NYBG is committed to incorporating gardens into schools. This commitment takes many forms. On its website there is a section for teacher resources which includes garden-based lesson plans for many grade levels. Subjects such as life

and earth sciences, art, literacy, math, and social studies have been covered. All lessons have been created to align with the New York City Science Scope and Sequence, as well as New York State Standards. These lesson plans also serve as models from which teachers and curriculum specialists can extrapolate and create their own lessons using a garden.

In its evaluation of the School Garden Initiative, NYBG researchers found that appointing a school garden coordinator and supporting a well-defined position for this role is critical for the successful functioning of a school garden. This person can write grants, ensure the schools participation in support programs, collect data from other educators and institutions about running these programs, maintain a blog or website about the program, create and maintain effective public communications, and coordinate volunteers and summer maintenance.

Continued on next page ...

The Citywide School Garden Initiative was established by an organization called GrowNYC, and The New York City Mayor's Fund to "inspire, facilitate and promote the creation of a sustainable school garden in each and every public school across New York City." Started in 2010, the program is intended to bring gardens and gardening into New York City schools both as a learning tool and as a source of nutritious food. Grow to Learn provides the ongoing resources, technical assistance, and training to get learning gardens up and running. These school gardens also provide a much needed means of connection between schools and their communities, through volunteer and summer programs.

An increasing need for knowledge about nature

As many case studies have shown, students who participate in garden learning in school gain a better understanding of their environment as well as better attitudes towards the environment. While environmental education may not be the main focus of the school garden program, many schools report that it still remains a major positive aspect. This environmental education seems to me to be an increasingly important aspect of life in the 21st Century.

A greenhouse, possibly a more expensive project, can greatly enhance the science curriculum of any school. The Boulder Valley School District in Colorado, launched a Greenhouse Management program in 2011. The project aimed to develop 21st Century skills while supporting core content goals. Students keep inquiry-based lab notebooks, blog on their findings, and do extensive research as part of their training.

Some topics to which students are introduced and explored are:

- Plant anatomy and physiology
- Classification and taxonomy
- Greenhouse structures, environmental controls and design
- Plant propagation and reproduction



Photo source istockphoto.com contributor Jani Bryson

- Careers and educational opportunities within the industry
- Genetics, inheritance and speciation across the plant kingdom
- Biotechnology and advancing technology in the production and improvement of plants and crops
- Plant processes such as photosynthesis, respiration, and transpiration
- Soil science and soilless media
- Nutrient cycling and the role of carbon and nitrogen within an ecosystem

While some of these topics may seem esoteric, the reality is we are living in a world where this type of knowledge is increasingly essential. How many of us really understand the ecological changes and challenges that are occurring today? How many of us simply deny the existence of climate change because we don't understand it? Our children will need to understand the principles that underlie our changing ecology, and a School Garden or Greenhouse is a great way to learn these principles.

Our relationship with- and to the world...

Further, our children, in order to be employable and competitive in their world must have a greater degree of scientific and technological knowledge. So many of the new industries focus on aspects of the natural world: pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, renewable energy, ecological management. The preschool

through twelfth-grade concepts and skills that all students must master to ensure their success in a college or workforce setting now includes things you and I never learned.

From my perspective the visual arts is also a curriculum area that can be improved and enhanced by providing a garden-based experience. Concepts such as design, texture, form, color, and spatial relationships are central to gardening in the landscape. I believe that focusing on these visual and design concepts changes the way we see, and the way we look at the world around us, for the better. Our relationship to and with the world around us is the bottom line of education in all disciplines.

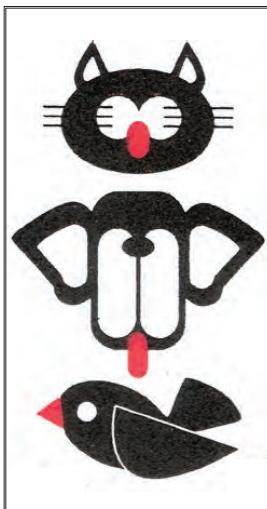
For years, educators have understood that people learn better when they engage several parts of their brain at once. Referred to as "hands-on learning," the principles have been employed with children to enhance the learning experience. "Kids learn through all their senses," says Ben Mardell, Ph.D., a researcher with Project Zero at Harvard University, "and they like to touch and manipulate things. But more than simply moving materials around, hands-on activities activate kids' brains. When you combine activities that require movement, talking, and listening, it activates multiple areas of the brain."

These concurrent activities help the student make connections and retain the information that is being processed.

Gardens, greenhouses, or landscapes form a physical as well as intellectual bridge to learning. The pleasure of working outside, out of the traditional classroom, is undeniable. While this type of classroom poses new and difficult challenges for the teacher, teachers are remarkable at managing children and at creating curricula that will seize and hold the interest of children of all ages.

While key questions remain in the design and implementation of these programs, those that have been tried tend to be successful. Clearly significant planning and curriculum work would need to be done in the school setting. But the potential rewards are huge, and the education of our children could be greatly enhanced. In an agricultural area such as ours, our children should be schooled in the science and business of growing. If there are any educators reading this, I encourage you to look into these programs. I have suggested some websites below. While I am not looking for a job, I hereby declare myself available to assist any educator who might want to explore this more deeply. •

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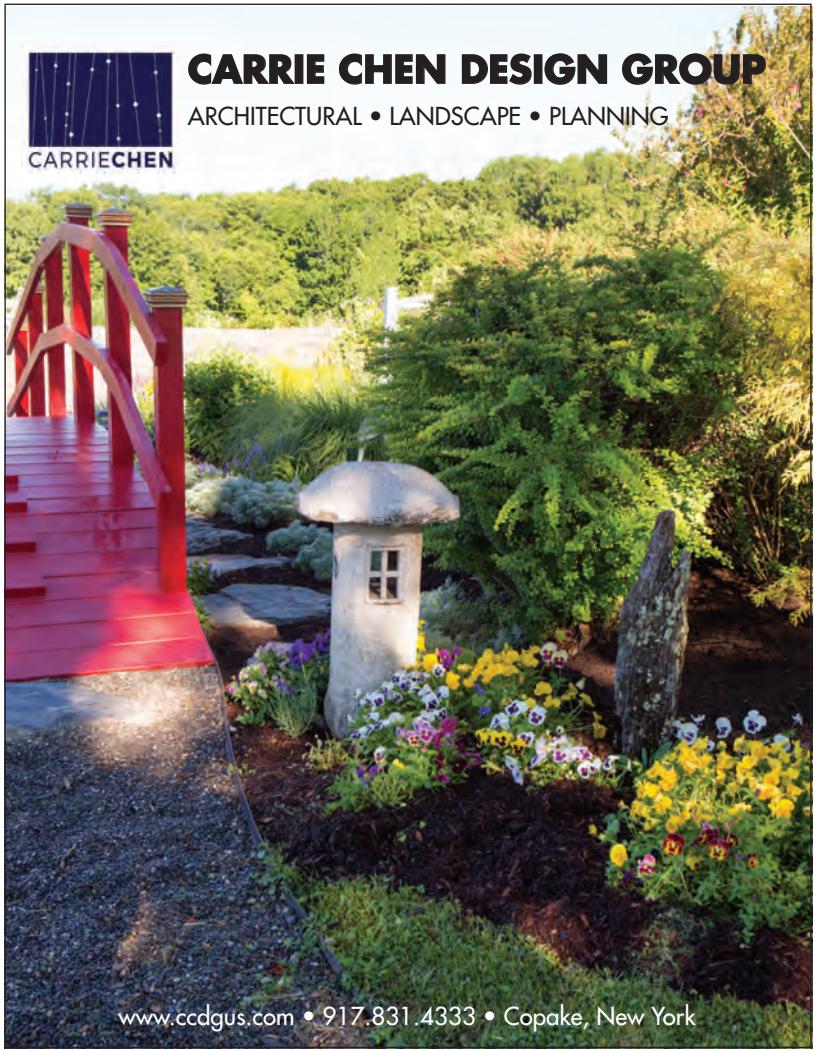
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Sean & Maria Grace

ON THE NATURE OF EDUCATION

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

He was in the midst of, by his own description, "the greatest job anyone could want." Sean Grace was on his cross-country skis in the back country of Wyoming, tracking coyotes. It was during his tenure at the Teton Science School in Jackson Hole, WY, where between learning and teaching, and days of skiing, he took part in three detailed studies of animal migration – elk, moose, and coyotes. "I'd ski out in the morning, find coyote tracks, and with a GPS, map their movements."

On that day, moving through the fresh snow pack, Sean looked above the trees and saw the telltale signs of a kill. Birds were circling, waiting for their chance to dine on the carcass.

When he arrived at the scene, there lay the remains of a giant elk, attacked by a pack of coyotes, or wolves, and now splayed out on the snow, awaiting the cycle repeated for millennia as the animals and birds picked the carcass clean.

A chosen pursuit

Sean and his wife, Maria, look up at the magnificent skull and antlers of that elk, mounted high in the rafters of their Sharon, CT home. Without

missing a beat, Sean moves easily from the tale of skiing five miles through the snow, lugging the skull and antlers back to the laboratory for it to be tested and recorded, to explaining the process of stripping and cleaning the bones, drilling into the teeth to determine age and health of the herd.

Every moment in their chosen pursuit of conservation and preserving the environment is a teachable moment for Maria and Sean Grace. Their home sits on the verdant campus of Audubon Sharon, where Sean is Center Director. They need only to walk out their front door and they are in the midst of the teaching environment they deeply care for.

To track their passion for conservation and preservation of the environment and its countless species, one only needs to look out the back doors of their childhood homes. Maria grew up in New Jersey and "just loved to be outside. I was fascinated with every part of nature and how it worked together." A high school trip to the Rio Bravo Conservation Area in Belize became, as Maria says with conviction, "transformative for me. I knew what I wanted to do."

And, pursue her passion is what she did, through a college degree in Environmental Science, through being a teaching assistant while in pursuit of her Master's Degree in Environmental Education. "It was a three-pronged program in environmental studies, arts, and humanities and outdoor pursuits. I learned a great deal about ecology ... and also learned how to blacksmith."

Sean's voyage

It was at Montclair State University that Maria met Sean. An adventurer since childhood, Sean had explored the woods and streams around his Acton, MA boyhood home, earning



the nickname "Euell" (after the outdoorsman, Euell Gibbons) from his older brother because of his intense connection with the environment. An undergraduate degree in business management might have seemed like a diversionary pursuit, but Sean uses his learned skills every day as both the Center Director and the Team Leader for the Eastern Forest Habitat Assessment.

After spending several years on the retail side of his love, working in mountaineering stores and filling his free time with climbing, hiking, skiing, and learning the invaluable skills of tracking and wilderness awareness, Sean headed west to the Grand Tetons and settled in Jackson Hole, WY in order to attend the Teton Science School. Although the life was fulfilling and the setting magical, Sean knew he needed an advanced degree to move forward in his chosen field, so he headed back to graduate school and the professional road that unfolded from there.

Continued on next page ...

Above: Sean and Maria Grace. Below left: The giant elk's antlers hang in the Grace's Sharon, CT home.



"I've maintained my standing as an Ecological Travel Guide," adds Sean, "so when the opportunity presents itself, I can still find myself back in the Tetons or Yellowstone, leading a winter conservation education trip."

Coming to Sharon

Maria and Sean found their way to Sharon Audubon by way of educational and program positions at New Jersey Audubon Society, The Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, and a consulting position at Princeton University's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

With their two young sons, Cooper and Elden, the Graces have become influential environmentalist advocates in their two years in Sharon.

Maria, thinking she would spend time at home while the boys were young, was invited to work on the "Source to the Sound" paddling event for the Housatonic Valley Association – a project that combined her skills in event management, sponsorship solicitation, and the underlying premise of education about the river and its ecological importance.

For his part, Sean moved into a mature organization that had been run for decades by his predecessor. With a keen sensitivity to the interlocking relationships between the



Above: Children from the Audubon's summer camp at play. Below left: Sean with a Red-shouldered hawk. All photos courtesy of Sean Grace.

community and the environmental role of Sharon Audubon, Sean has moved the center into a variety of quickly popular educational and engagement programs that reflect the substance of his dialogues with community and educational leaders.

Working with the area's youth

The summer day camp welcomes 30 young people from kindergarten through sixth grade. A regular program operated in cooperation with Marvelwood School in Kent brings students to the center almost weekly to volunteer, explore, and learn. A new initiative that will begin in September with the resumption of the school year will bring students from Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Connecticut and the Northeast Community Center in Millerton, New York to become interns at Sharon Audubon. "It'll be an interesting experience for them," suggests Sean. "It's encounters like these that help form future plans. Who knows? Someone that interns here and gets to work with the birds and the environment may decide to stay in school and become a veterinarian ... or an environmentalist."

The birds at Sharon Audubon continue to draw crowds, winter

and summer, to the second largest avian rehabilitation facility in the country. "It's an amazing program," says Sean. "We bring 350 birds a year through our rehab program. Each one has a story. Each one allows us to touch the community while we give our best efforts to setting these birds free, again."

For the raptors – the eagles and hawks and owls, part of the rehabilitation process is "mouse school," when the healthy birds are tested to see if they can manage the active capturing of prey. "If they can't do that," laments Sean, "we have to find homes for them – places where they can be part of a program that benefits the public."

Bird-talking

With the turn of the seasons, Sean and Maria will continue to encourage and educate. She is proficient in the tools of social networking, and so supports the communication efforts of the center.

They both will welcome the "phenological shifts" – the timing of nature and the constant ebb and flow of the seasonal bird population. "There's likely not a bird call he doesn't recognize," says Maria with due admiration. "He's right

at home joining the 'dawn chorus' as spring marks the birds' mating season."

Sean not only has a delicately tuned sense of the nuanced calls of the region's birds, he can call to them with a series of beautifully inflected whistles.

"Last year we had a group of students out in the wildlife sanctuary," recalls Sean. "It was night and I was calling an owl. Slowly an immature owl moved closer and closer until it was no more than 10 yards away. With a great thundering of wings, the parent owls appeared, protective of the young. We must have spent 30 minutes calling back and forth. The high schoolers didn't stop talking about that experience for a month."

Such is the nature of education for the Graces ... and the education provided by nature. •

To learn more about Sean or Maria Grace, you can contact Sean directly at sgrace@audubon.org, or visit <http://sharon.audubon.org> for more information about the Sharon Audubon.

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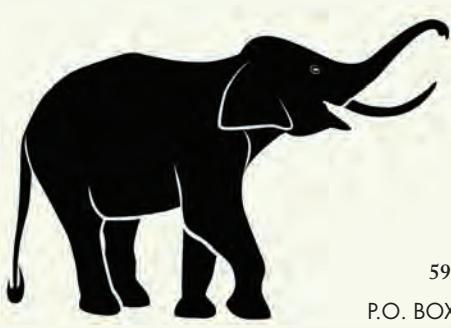
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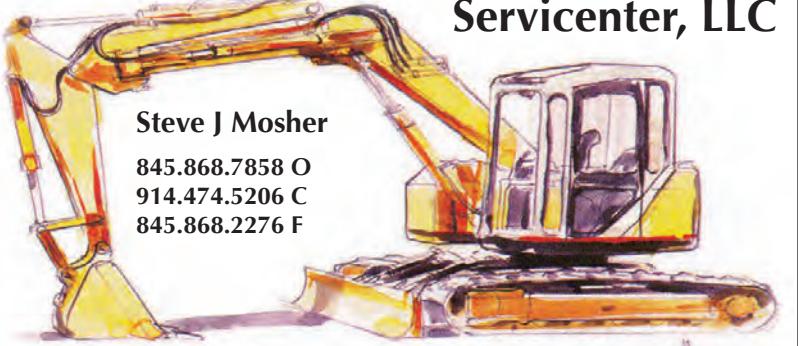
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Who turns 50 & becomes a yoga teacher?

By Allison Guertin Marchese
info@mainstreetmag.com

At the risk of sounding like some kind of a cliche right out of a Shirley McLean movie, when approaching my 50th birthday, I decided I would challenge myself and become a yoga teacher.

As I reflect on that time, now some six years ago, it wasn't so much of a stretch (no pun intended). On my 30th birthday, I took up riding horses after a nearly 20-year hiatus. At 35, I started running five miles a day. At 45, I purchased a young horse, a four-year-old Thoroughbred cross and trained him myself. It seems almost fitting, as I look back that at my half century milestone, that I should do something radical to mark the occasion.

Continual learning

Learning for me has been a constant. It's a thrill to find a subject that truly excites my mind and stirs my imagination. Yoga has been one of these areas of intrigue. Back in the 1990s I had an opportunity to work for the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, MA. Throughout the 1970s up until the mid 90s, Kripalu operated as an authentic ashram, meaning a kind of spiritual monastery in the Indian tradition. Sadly, however, when I arrived to take the position of Communications Director, the entire peace, love, and understanding experiment had blown up.

As all utopian societies find, humans are humans and they make mistakes. In the case of Kripalu, the Guru, who professed celibacy, made a really big mistake when he, let's just say, fell off the wagon. I worked two long years to help the 'disciples' find their way out of the defunct ashram, and into independence. It was a long, and difficult road, to right the ship in terms of restoring the Center's public reputation. What I took away was a true appreciation for yoga in the fullest sense by working closely with over 400 people who devoted themselves to yoga as a lifestyle.

At the time I worked at Kripalu, I was in my mid 30s. Since then I've practiced yoga, on and off the mat, studied texts like the *Bhagavad Gita*, and done a fair share of inner contemplation by way of simply enjoying the beauty and nature of where I live, here in the Hudson Valley.

Becoming a teacher

By the time I turned 50, I felt that I had enough knowledge and experience in yoga to take the important step of learning to teach others. Prior to entering the training program I had devoted four full years to practicing yoga with one teacher. A small group of us met in her barn religiously. Week after week, without fail. We trained. After four years together, she introduced me to a more advanced teacher, I'll call him Ben, whom she felt could "advance my practice."

Ben indeed took my yoga to a new level, and when I found out he was training students to be certified yoga teachers, I signed on.

The training

Today there are many, many different styles, types, and lengths of yoga teacher training. Since the 1970s, yoga has boomed, blossomed, and broken all records as a self-help growth industry. I found out early that yoga philosophy is complex beyond my wildest dreams. I also found out that while different people like to put their own different spin, or style onto a yoga practice, there's really only one real yoga.

Yoga started 5,000 years ago in India. The word "yoga" translated from Sanskrit means, "union" or "yoke." The 'asana' practice, or what we commonly know as the varying movements or yoga postures, are intended simply to prepare the individual to tolerate deep meditation. Yoga, in its truest form is meditation. The meditation we achieve in yoga is meant to join an individual's spirit with the 'universal spirit,' which some people



Photo source istockphoto.com contributor _chupacabra_

call God.

It's just like ego-driven humans, however, to take a concept and mold it around one's own tastes. There are different styles of yoga like Bikram yoga done in a heated studio. There's the more traditional Iyengar yoga which focuses on body alignment. There are also designer yoga classes like "Power Yoga" that build strength and "Yoga for Athletes" to help professionals train, and the list goes on. I like to tell people that "yoga is like ice cream, it's all the same ingredients. It just depends on what flavor you like best."

The flavor of yoga that I picked is called Vinyasa yoga which combines yoga postures with the breathing. Many yoga practitioners call it "Flow Yoga," for the reason that students move gracefully from one asana to the next almost like a form of dance.

Training ... at 4am

So back to the training. After I decided to sign up, I sent in my check for \$3,000 and filled out the application. Thankfully both the instructors leading the yoga teacher training knew me well, so entrance into the 200-hour session was a breeze.

Not all teacher trainings look alike. At Kripalu, teachers are immersed for a full month of classes, combined with lectures, and they are required to

stay at the Center for the thirty-day period. My training took place over several months. We were asked to commit to four long weekends and then do study on our own in between.

My first weekend started at 5am on a cold morning in March. When my significant other saw the training schedule and the early time I was required to "report in," he said, "It's a test."

And he was right. Getting to the location at 5am meant I needed to get up at 4am and pack food, a change of clothes, books and such, and drive thirty minutes to the yoga studio. Getting up at 4am meant trying to get to bed by at least 9pm in order to get enough sleep to make it through. Already I was onto yoga lesson #1.

Discipline.

The first morning I miraculously arrived on time only to find the teachers had not. In the hallway waiting for the doors to open I met another obedient student who was about five years younger than me. Let's call him "D." D and I introduced ourselves and we liked each other immediately. Like first graders, we nervously chatted about what we had gotten ourselves into.

Continued on next page ...

Soon our yogi leaders bounded up the steps. Ben was wrapped in a saffron cape and was singing at the top of his lungs and his co-teacher, let's call her Emma, wore loose bright purple leggings and a black T-shirt. Ben's head was totally shaved, his large muscular arms bulged out from under his cape. Ben's body was intimidating ... like an ultimate fighter. Emma was petite, fit, lean, and her bright orange hair had endured a brisk cropping.

A mottly group of bedraggled students soon walked into the studio. They were barely awake, and dressed in black shirts, black coats, and black boots. It was easy to see there was going to be two distinct groups. The group I fell into was the local students who commuted to the weekend trainings from homes in the area. We ranged in age from 30s to 40s to me being the oldest at 50. The other group were imports from Brooklyn who came upstate on Friday and stayed the three days in a communal house that was rented for such a purpose. These students were all in their early 20s. I was aware of the stark contrast as group one, the locals, eyeballed group two, the imports.

It's not so much that I minded being the oldest, but I was a bit shocked when soon I found that in a group of 17 trainees, I was a) the only person that held a full time job, b) the only person in the group that was paying my own way, c) the only person in the group that was in a long-term relationship, and d) I was the only person in the group that didn't have a tattoo.

I told myself quickly that I was there to learn and to stop looking over my shoulder. I realized with a jolt, I was experiencing yogic lesson #2.

Observation without judgement.

Just breathe...

Every training session began with sitting on the floor facing the teacher and meditating. D and I took the front row while most of Brooklyn sat behind us. We crossed our legs, closed our eyes, and listed to the chimes ring us into silence.

If you've never sat on the floor in lotus position and meditated, I want to point out that it's a challenge. And while there is peace to be found when



Photo source istockphoto.com contributor shironosov

a yoga student falls blissfully into a state of calm, getting there, I must admit, is a painful fight.

It didn't matter that I'd practiced yoga for ten years, sitting still and breathing for two, five, ten, twelve minutes is no picnic. Hence, I was well into yoga lesson #3.

Ceasing the cessations of the mind. Ask any seasoned yogi what this means and you'll get a thousand different answers. To break it down to its basic premise, yoga is, traditionally, the meditative practice of quieting the mind ... stopping the chatter ... shutting down the constant conversation we all hear in our heads. The Indian sacred text, *The Yoga Sutras*, defines it in Sanskrit as "Chitta Vrtti Nirodah," or stilling the changing states of the mind. This control of the mind is achieved by simply doing something that we do every minute of every day ... breathing.

So here we sat, not asleep, not fully awake, but in a place of meditation, with hips aching, back muscles pinching, and stomachs growling for breakfast. Gratefully the soft bell rang, and we were allowed to stretch our legs. The relief of this simple act brought overwhelming joy.

The rest of the first day included a strenuous vinyasa yoga class, a lecture on anatomy, chanting, independent study, reading, and finally sumptuous vegetarian food, which was prepared and consumed at the rented home for Brooklynites, which was coined, "the yogi house."

When the first day ended at 9pm after a nearly 20-hour day, I was deliriously happy as if I'd fallen in love, strangely sad as if I was saying

goodbye, thoroughly exhausted, as if I'd run a marathon, and totally exhilarated as if I'd won the Lotto. I didn't try to explain any of it. I opted for bed because I knew that I would be getting up at 4am to head back to the studio for day two of the training. This is how it went, early mornings, books, hours and hours on the mat learning yoga postures and practicing.

By June, I had successfully completed the four long weekends, and the many weeks in between. I had read twelve books on yoga theory, philosophy, anatomy, and autobiographies describing the personal journey's of a few great enlightened men. I had traveled a path that I never knew I would take. I started the training thinking that I knew everything about yoga and ended the training realizing that no one ever really masters yoga ... and that's why they call it a "yoga practice."

I walked away from the months of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual examination with a new confidence in my abilities. At age 50 I had learned to read, sing, and write Sanskrit. I had memorized more than 108 yoga postures. I had stood in front of 40 people and had successfully instructed them in a vinyasa flow. And I made a friend for life in D ... my trusted partner throughout the yoga training. It all seemed like a giant hurdle. I'd leapt blindly over an obstacle, and made it over the top. The final graduation ceremony brought happiness and uncertainty. When the locals said goodbye to the kids from Brooklyn, we all cried. Something important had taken place; something binding, and true.

What does it all mean?

Despite the hard work, the early mornings, the time and financial commitment, and what seemed like inhumane physical torture at times, months after receiving my certificate, I still hadn't taught a single yoga class. D asked me if I ever planned to teach. Eventually I would get to it, organizing a local community class in my neighborhood and teaching students for over two years.

I came to realize, however, that what I truly loved about yoga training was the learning process. When I did teach, I enjoyed beginner students. The freshness and enthusiasm that beginners bring to the class is always rewarding. Perhaps it reminded me of myself on that first cold morning in March back in 2010.

Today I'm six years past my graduation. I'm looking down the road at the next big birthday. I've taken recently to applying my love of yoga to another sport, golf. Body alignment, deep breathing, observation without judgement goes a long way when you're trying to smack a small white ball straight up a grassy fairway into a tiny little hole. There is a Zen quality to golf that I enjoy and strangely, golf has taught me many yogic lessons. When I miss a putt, or lose my ball in the weeds I'm reminded what the Buddha said about how wanting things causes us suffering. He didn't suggest we renounce the pleasures of life, but rather that we travel the middle path avoiding extremes of behavior and thought. He encourages us to opt for tolerance and moderation and in doing so we can achieve balance. Namaste! •

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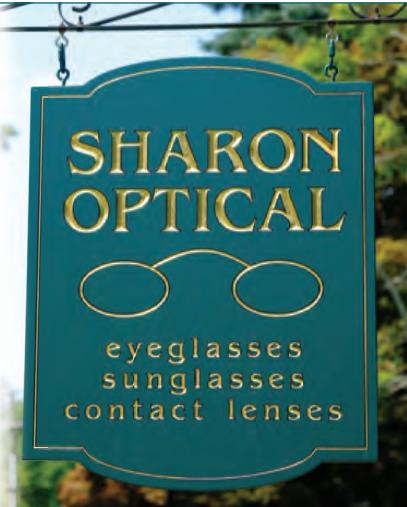
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Masha's Fitness Studio

Individualized personal training, specializing in Pilates. 36 Main St., 3rd floor, Millerton, NY. (860) 671-9020. mashasfitnessstudio.com

Masha's Fitness Studio in downtown Millerton provides individualized personal training and specializes in Pilates, ranging from one-on-one to small group classes. Masha focuses on correct posture, stretching, and core-muscle training which lead to strength, mobility, and range of motion throughout life. She moved to America in 2003 and started a family, but continued to teach as a hobby. She got certified as a Personal Trainer and Classic Aerobic Instructor and trained in Zumba, Spiritual Belly Dance, Water Aerobics. But she was still looking for something that she loved indefinitely and found Pilates, "I couldn't get enough – I was constantly continuing my education in Mat Pilates, Reformer, Trapeze Table/Cadillac, Barre, Anatomy and other disciplines." After several years of working in different studios and running a home business, she decided to take it to the next level. Masha's Fitness Studio was officially born in March 2010. Masha's interest is in nurturing mind and body, she is constantly educating herself on new methods, disciplines, and avenues to a healthier lifestyle. Masha's Fitness Studio is more than simply training for your physical being, through education of movement, food selection, essential oils, self-awareness and empowerment, she leads her clients into a lifetime of healthy habits for mind and body.



The Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School

Providing education for toddlers through 8th grade. 35 West Plain Rd., Great Barrington, MA. (413) 528-4015. gbrss.org

The Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School is celebrating 45 years. Steiner started as a kindergarten and grew with the children, now offering Waldorf education for babies through eighth grade and summer programs. Its sister school is the Berkshire Waldorf High School (Stockbridge, MA). Waldorf education is revolutionary because the rich curriculum meets each child where they are developmentally, through academics, movement, music and the "outdoor classroom" (recess, camping, farming, hiking the Appalachian Trail). Head of school Michael Junkins says it's rewarding to see the students graduate. "They are the culmination of everything this education brings to them, and they graduate into being the most wonderful, well-rounded human beings." Going forward, Mr. Junkins would like to see an understanding in the US that Waldorf education is the education of the future. Students are graduating with 21st Century skills like collaboration, creativity, and courage. "It's my dream that Waldorf education become as accessible to every child as a public option, as it is in Europe." Junkins is proud of Steiner teachers' untiring dedication, as well as the consciousness the whole community of parents, staff, families, and friends holds around this education for their children, and how all strive to keep human connections alive.



Maplebrook School

Coeducational boarding and day school for students with learning differences and/or ADD. (845) 373-9511. maplebrookschool.org

Maplebrook School was founded in 1945 in Amenia, NY by Serena Merck, Sunny Barlow, and Marge Finger. They envisioned an alternative to public school and traditional boarding schools for young people with learning challenges. Maplebrook provides academic, social, vocational, and emotional support to young people who have been unable to thrive in typical academic settings due to their learning needs. In addition to small classes and multisensory instruction like Wilson Reading and ACTIVATE for executive functioning, students receive support in speech/language, occupational therapy, and counseling if necessary. The postsecondary program provides collegiate preparation, vocational direction and independent living skills. Maplebrook enrolls students from as close as Clinton Corners, NY to all over the world with approximately 22 different states and 12 foreign countries represented among the student body. The Responsibility Increases Self Esteem (RISE) Program provides a foundation for student success so that students can fully embrace opportunities like athletics, art, drama, attending dances, and making lifelong friends. Students discover their own talents and special gifts as well as hope for the future.



Teri's Kool Kidz Pre-Skool

Hands-on learning for two-and-a-half to four year olds. (518) 329-1302. tproper2@gmail.com

Teri Proper started Teri's Kool Kidz Pre-Skool in September 2004, located in the center of Copake. She offers a ten-month program for two-and-a-half to four year olds who are fully potty-trained. Teri's classroom holds 14-16 students, three days a week; Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from nine to noon. Teri engages the children with painting, songs, baking, arts and crafts, music and movement, games, exercise, and more. She also works with the kids on concepts including colors, numbers, letters, shapes, and identifying body parts. Most importantly she encourages socialization skills such as taking turns, getting along with others, sharing, making friends, and using our manners. Activities are planned around various weekly/monthly themes, such as "colors of the month," "letters of the week," and "sharing" days. Throughout the school year, the class also takes short field trips to local businesses including pumpkin picking at Daisy Hill Farm, Housatonic Valley H.S. Agricultural Day, Copake Park, Hillsdale Library, and trick or treating. Teaching preschool aged children is rewarding to Teri because her goal is to make each one of her students feel special, and to open their world to new opportunities.

INSURING YOUR WORLD

Health insurance is a very hot topic these days considering Obamacare and all the changes it has brought to the private health coverage marketplace. There is one type of health coverage that is becoming very popular and that is Pet Health Insurance...yes that's right, covering your cat or dog the same way we cover ourselves. There are a number of different plans available yet they are basically similar to our health plans and what they cover. Typically you have three different plans that pay varying limits of coverage. Basic, broad, and comprehensive is the easiest way to explain the plans. Basic is the least expensive, with broad and comprehensive being increasingly more expensive. For dogs, premiums are based upon the age, sex, breed, zip code locale that the dog lives, and type of plan, with the same for our feline friends. Premiums can range for as little as \$20/month to as high as \$90/month for a typical policy covering your dog. With the ever-increasing veterinary fees, it might be high time to contact your agent and look into the merits of a Pet Health Plan. Remember to "Be Sure and Insure!"



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Back to School Finance Tips for Young People

Learning smart money management at a young age is a lesson that lasts a lifetime and can help young people avoid or navigate through financial difficulty in later years. "When the young people in our lives receive or earn money," says Stacey Langenthal, Executive Vice President of Bank of Millbrook, "it's our responsibility as adults to teach them not to spend it all impulsively, to save for the short and long term, and also to give to those in need."

The importance of savings: Regularly setting money aside and watching it grow as a result offers a rewarding experience and a valuable lesson.

Money for now: Help the young people in your life put together a list of what they want to buy, understand what they can afford, and that sometimes, what they want isn't in their budget.

Investing for the longer term: Savings accounts are just one way to save. Teach young people about other investments ranging from Certificates of Deposits to bonds to equities. Help them understand risk, market fluctuation, and how to invest for college or big ticket items.

Giving feels good: Part of having money is sharing it with those in need, and learning this early can have great social value for young people. Help them determine what percentage of their money they'd like to give, whom they want to help, and praise them when they do.

"We encourage you to bring young people by the bank to learn more," offers Langenthal. "As a community bank we're always happy to help."

Stacey M. Langenthal
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Crate training your pooch:

Crate training can be effective for confining your dog when he can't be supervised, as well as a place for him to call his own. Here are some tips:

Types of cages: There are typically three kinds of cages: metal wire, nylon crate, and plastic pet carrier. Wire is the most popular because your dog can see his surroundings. The soft-sided nylon crates are okay, but can become easily damaged. Plastic pet carriers are used primarily for traveling. You will want a cage that is big enough for your dog to lie and turn around in, but not much more. If it is too large, they may choose to use the excess space they don't lie in as their personal bathroom.

Starting the crate training: Don't throw your dog in the cage and expect him to know what's going on. At all stages of the process, keep it positive. Never put your dog in the cage as punishment or he will learn to fear it. Start by placing something soft for him to lie on and toys in the cage. Leave the door open and him wander in the crate on his own – praising him and give him a treat! Until he seems comfortable in there, don't move on to the next stage.

Eventually closing the door: Once your dog is comfortable, close the door but stay in the room. After a few minutes, if he isn't whining or barking, open the door again and let him out. Keep doing this while extending the time that your dog stays confined. Once you get it up to an hour with your dog being comfortable, you should be all set.

Things to remember: Just like you, your dogs need to go to the bathroom. They can hold it for three to four hours, but you shouldn't expect much more than that. Crates are good when dogs can't be supervised but they should not be used for an indiscriminate amount of time.

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learning to play music

I still remember when learning to play guitar seemed like such an unreachable and daunting undertaking. I would pick one up and have no idea how to control it to make music. All the frets and strings discouraged me, and I picked up drum sticks and a trumpet instead. Two sticks and three buttons was much better than 126 places to put your fingers on a guitar! I learned to keep a steady "rock" beat with my hands (try this: right, right, both, right, right, right, both, right) and learned about pitches and melody by reading trumpet music. My friend got an electric guitar that looked so cool and made the best sounds when plugged in and turned up! So I picked it back up and applied the basic right-hand pulse of the drum beat to the Low E string of the guitar. A steady bass line came out, and by placing my left pointer finger on different frets, harmonic progression was born! I learned a few basic chord shapes, and drummed away on the guitar strings. It wasn't so hard after all. For years I knew basic chords and songs, but pushing beyond that was always lazily set aside for another day. The next step into real guitar playing seemed as daunting as the first. I clearly remember a moment where I told myself I was done neglecting the practice time that was necessary to improve. I resolved on the spot to put in more effort and really learn how to play. I got to work on music theory, playing by ear, and learning songs, and it has brought me both challenge and joy ever since. So take that guitar from under your bed, put it in a stand somewhere where it begs to be played, and don't wait to embrace the rhythm that lies within all of us! Radiohead weren't far off when back in '92 they said "anyone can play guitar." Just look where they are now.

the music cellar.

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WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You have some things left that are undone that you need to quickly finish. Stay healthy, because the bad stuff does you no good.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

It's a great time to have company over. Someone is going to push you around, but you're just not sure what you want.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Don't be afraid to ask the questions that lie heavy on your heart. Let the loved ones around you help you to smile.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

A sweet little love affair will likely spruce up your life in every aspect. A lot of uncertainty is on the horizon, but keep your calm.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Joy, romance, and a kind of celebration will rule your life. You're going to get news that will baffle you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Business dealings are going your way these days. But try to take some time off, go berry-picking!

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Think about what you want. Improve the things in your life that have bothered you. Be prepared for the unexpected.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

You need to work towards making your dreams come true, no matter how distant they may seem. Your heart is in the right place.

SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

There are a few things you need to consider. Someone unexpected is going to show up in your life to see how you're doing.

CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Romance will get the better of you, and you're attracted to those who are understanding and accepting. There will be a close call though.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

A joint working effort with someone will lead to progress. Nothing is better than a refreshing walk in nature.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

You love fiction novels and dream of writing one yourself one day. Keep promoting the issues that truly matter to you.

OUR FAVORITES:

OUR FAVORITE PICKS FROM AROUND THE AREA...

Our amazing area has so much to offer! Whether it be restaurants, farm stands, or food; activities and outdoor nature things; or stores and attractions – there's just so much to choose from! Aren't we lucky?! In honor of that, we've decided to give a little shout-out and share with you *just a few* of our favorite haunts, but of course there are way too many to list them all.

Food:

We are big fans of The Fernando breakfast sandwich at Irving Farm where we usually pick up a coffee or Harney tea. The meatloaf at the Oakhurst Diner is a must-try. The Woodlands is of course a staple where the beet and Burrata salad is Thorunn's favorite thing on the menu. The green drinks at Isabelle's Kitchen and at the Mountainside Cafe are so good! The ready-to-go salads at Jam Foods and their cookies – oh their cookies ... heaven, especially with a glass of Ronnybrook milk. And speaking of bakeries, if you're in Kent you must stop by SoDelicious HomeMade Bakery. For Italian we love visiting Joe at Trattoria San Giorgio. The soft-serve ice cream at Quattro's and Dad's Diner are always a home run. Baba Louie's pizza and salad, yum. Paley's and McEnroe's always bring a smile to our face with their fresh produce and flowers. ... You know, we just have too many favorite food places and are truly unable to list them all, so let's move on to the next item on our list.

Activities:

We love all of the conservation areas and state parks, like Bash Bish Falls and Alander Mountain. The Rail Trail is of course one of the area's main attractions. And if you like fire towers, check out the one on Stissing Mountain – it'll test your vertigo for sure! But for the more indoorsy types, The Moviehouse has good flicks and great popcorn. And The Sharon Playhouse always puts on a good show!

Stores:

There isn't much room left here, but for a good read Oblong Books is one of the best places to go. For unique household items and gifts we love visiting Hamertown Barn and the Pine Plains Emporium. If we're in the antique shopping mood, wandering up and down Main St. in Millerton or Warren St. in Hudson will surely fit the bill (they're an antiquers' dream-come-true). Then we of course love the stores that have just about anything and everything that you need, like Saperstein's, American Pie, or BW's Eagle Eye. Then there are of course the little specialty shops like Passiflora, Passports, and Mirror Mirror. Ohhh, what girl doesn't love a little shopping and there's so much of it to be done in our area!

Attractions:

Now with our attractions, a list of favorites will not suffice. In our opinion, our whole wonderful Tristate area is one big, beautiful attraction! So folks, we hope that you too like some of our favorite spots and maybe you'll tell us some of yours so we can expand our list.

Answers to the one-room school quiz

Match the schoolhouse pictured on page 21 with its correct location. Include information on the building. Answers are here below. All photos taken by Christine Bates.

Schoolhouses:



Beebe Hill, Falls Village, CT

This preserved one room schoolhouse stands at the corner of Beebe Road as you enter Falls Village. The District #1 original school in Canaan, CT, was destroyed by fire and rebuilt. The last class was held here on June 4, 1918. It is maintained by the F.V. Canaan Historical Society and the Town of Canaan, CT.



Indian Rock, Amenia, NY

Indian Rock School House located at 25 Mygatt Road in Amenia has a picnic pavilion and schoolyard gardens. In 1858 a small barn was donated to District #3 for use as a school, which operated until 1927.



Austerlitz, NY

The District #3 Schoolhouse of Austerlitz was built in 1852 and sits in the center of historic Austerlitz on Route 22.



Millerton, Irondale, NY

Trick question. This one room schoolhouse built in Irondale on Route 22 was restored and moved to the center of the Village of Millerton in 2015. It functioned as a school from the 1850s until 1930.



Gallatin, NY

The current Town Hall of Gallatin is a former schoolhouse.



Spencer's Corners, Millerton, NY

This former one-room schoolhouse on Rudd Pond Road in Spencer's Corners in the Town of North East has been turned into a home.



Academy Building, Salisbury, CT

The brick Academy Building in Salisbury at the corner of Academy Street and Main Street was built as a private school in 1833 and eventually became a public school. Younger children were taught on the ground floor while high school students were on the second floor. It stopped functioning as a school in 1929 and was eventually restored for use by the Salisbury Historical Society by the Salisbury Association.



North East School, NY

Located next to the cemetery in the old center of the Town of North East is this one-room schoolhouse with a date of 1839 now converted to a cozy house.

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Kimberly J. Downey

Assistant Vice President
& Trust Officer

860.596.2143

kdowney@salisburybank.com