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THE ANIMAL / FARM ISSUE

Who isn't an animal fan? Or a farm fan for that matter? We all are, because if it weren't for farms and animals, we couldn't exist! Farms grow our food, or grow the food for animals that then often become our food. Animals are vital to our ecosystem; some feed us while we call others our family and friends. For those reasons, and so many more, we devote this entire issue to all farms and animals, making this our third annual "Animal Issue."

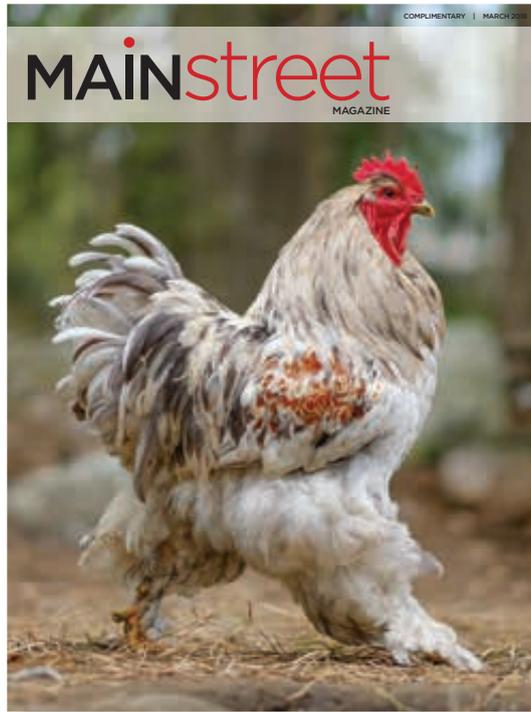
In this issue we examine the real estate market in the farming community of Ancram and Ancramdale, NY – Christine breaks it down with her charts and information with this realty update. Christine also brings us an entrepreneur feature of the folks behind Whipoorwill Farm and finds out how they started and what it takes to run a farm like they do. Speaking of running farms, Carol caught up with the Osofsky brothers of Ronnybrook Farm in Ancramdale. Carol shares with us this farming story, which is multi-generational, and how they have made Ronnybrook into such a well-known and respected dairy with all of its wonderful offerings. And speaking of dairy farms, Dominique was able to meet with the farmers at Churchtown Dairy and share with us their dairy farming venture.

As for the animal side, our artist feature this month is our very own cover photographer Lazlo Gyorsok, but Lazlo is well-known for his animal photography! We're also back with our "furriently faces" – get it? Instead of "friendly faces" they are "furriently" because they're all animals instead of humans. Cheesy? Maybe, but we have fun with it!

We are also lucky to have an interview conducted and written by award-winning CBS News Correspondent Richard Schlesinger. Richard interviewed Justin Vagliano of The Little Guild of St. Francis in Cornwall, CT – an animal rescue. Their interview shares with us what The Guild is all about, and hopefully after reading it, a few of you might consider lending them a hand or adopting an animal in need.

Mary has brought us a piece about the out-of-the-box thinking that the South Kent School brings to their student body, and how they incorporate farming. Meanwhile, Claire has written a tremendously interesting piece about seeds and seed catalogues. I was surprisingly so interested in this, and I don't have an inkling of interest in gardening or flower gardens – but that's the beauty of a magazine like this, you never know what story will pique your interest. Enjoy!

– *Thorunn Kristjansdottir*



MARCH 2018

A rooster, struttin' his stuff!

Cover photo by
Lazlo Gyorsok

The Animal issue

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PRINT, LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, & INSURANCE

Printed by **Snyder Printer, Inc.** • Legally represented by **Davis & Trotta Law Offices**
Accounting services by **Pattison, Koskey, Howe & Bucci CPAS** • Insured by **Brad Peck, Inc.**

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BEAUTY THROUGH THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

By *CB Wismar*
 arts@mainstreetmag.com

“I can’t remember when I didn’t love photography.” Lazlo Gyorsok speaks with both confidence and devotion when he addresses his art. “My first camera was a Russian version of the old Kodak box camera. I was ten years old. That was the beginning.”

Growing up in Dunafoldvar, a small town outside of Budapest, Hungary, son of a tram operator and an opera singer, Lazlo pursued a standard educational trail. Grammar school led to vocational school, to three years of service in the Hungarian army, and then to college where he studied mathematics and physics. The arts and the sciences were part of his life from the beginning, and the creative tension between the two paid great dividends as his life has unfolded.

“I was too restless for college,” he admits. So after a bit more than two years of higher education, he and a cousin took advantage of a momentary relaxation of the travel restrictions in then Communist-controlled Hungary and found their way onto a bus headed for Italy. They had no intention of making the return trip.

The road from security to refugee to opportunity

“We sought political asylum, which was granted, and ended up living in a re-purposed camp that had been built under Mussolini for slave laborers. When we were there it was a refugee camp. Very austere. We stayed for a few months, then made our way to Germany.”

Still a refugee, Lazlo found work with the US Armed Forces stationed in Germany and learned what would be a valuable skill. He became a window washer.

“We met a man while working with the US Army who agreed to sponsor us in the United States. Off we went to New York.”

It was 1973. Lazlo did not have a job, but he had a skill, and in a city of skyscrapers with a million windows that needed washing, he set out to make his way.

“I met my wife, Christina, the second day after I arrived in New York. We were married two years later.”

Unimpressed with the ways of city life, Christina and Lazlo found their way up into Litchfield County, Connecticut, bought some property and built a house. “We’re still here, all these years later.”

One reason that city life did not excite the couple might have been the

fact that pursuing his lifelong love of photography, Lazlo had accumulated not only a collection of cameras and lenses, but the equipment required to have his own dark room. Coming home one evening, the couple found that their apartment had been ransacked and that among the missing items were all of his photographic equipment.

Putting down roots and settling in

Making his way in Northwest Connecticut as both a house painter and a window cleaner, Lazlo began to build a reputation for superb work as he found the time to re-ignite his passion for photography. His painting business morphed into having a home decorating business and, eventually, a photography studio and gallery, as well. “Brian Wilcox and I had a portrait studio in Kent, so I could balance the art of taking portraits with a fascination I’ve developed for exploring abandoned factories, and savoring the incredible beauty of the landscapes around here.”

As the digital age dawned and online communication became first a novelty, then a necessity, Lazlo forged an alliance between his early study of physics and mathematics with his appreciation for art and the allure of



Above, top to bottom: *Buffalo in the snow*. The artist, Lazlo Gyorsok.

strong visual design: websites. The new world of mass communication.

“I put together websites for the Town of Kent, CT, and for Cornwall, CT, just for the fun of it.” The “fun” made his transition from full-time career work to his unique interpretation of what retirement is when he stepped out of the business world eight years ago and settled in to photography as a full-time occupation.

“I’ve been very fortunate. The images that I love to take have been well received by a widening audience.”

There’s little doubt that the audience has become wider as Lazlo’s work has been awarded prizes in photographic competitions and has been presented to a wider audience in two books: *An Evening at the Opera*, an elegant exploration of the abandoned Ansonia Opera House with text by Lazlo and Christina’s daughter, Lesley, and *From Photographs to Painting*, a volume created by Lazlo with fellow artists Judi Bailey and David Rowley that visually documents the transition from unique photographs to painted interpretations of the images. Both books are available on Amazon.

Celebrating and giving back

As both an artist and a mentor, Lazlo has been a key figure in the growth and success of the Housatonic Camera Club, a group that encourages hobbyists and professionals alike, and holds periodic gallery shows that attract wide attention. Shows at Noble Horizons and an up-coming exhibition at the North Elm Home Gallery Wall in Millerton, NY, will give members the opportunity to present some of their finest work.

To view Lazlo’s work is to be startled: first, by his composition and use

of juxtaposed images. The “URBEX” portion of his portfolio is a consuming journey into what is left when progress, practicality, and functionality leave a factory or forge. There were giant machines and sophisticated mechanical systems that once turned and hummed and fired into the night. What is left is that which is no longer needed. Ansonia Brass. Wingdale Power Plant. Stanley Tools. Southington Forge. People worked here. Now all that is left are ghosts, skeletons of machines, and rust. The images are eerily profound.

In amazing contrast, Lazlo’s landscapes and candid animal portraits are very much alive. Even winter scenes that celebrate the smooth covering of fresh snow over rocks, trees, barns and fences have a vibrancy to them that almost celebrates winter while being calming, at the same time.

On the cover

It was Lazlo Gyorsok’s uncanny ability to take even the most pedantic object and turn its presentation into a work of art that has led to dozens of cover photos for this publication. Introduced by a fellow photographer to the potential of having his work set the tone and mood for a monthly exploration of the tri-state area, his work has become synonymous with *Main Street Magazine* and attracts readers with great regularity. Like the cover photo of a rooster announcing this “animal issue,” Lazlo’s work has the consistent ability to point us in a new direction and encourage us along the journey.

To fully appreciate the breadth and depth of Lazlo Gyorsok’s art – his ability to see and to tell a story with a single image – an extended exploration of his website is recommended.



Above, top to bottom: *Bear on a bench*. *Factory fans*. Below, left: *Sunset over Lake Warmaug*.



Internationally celebrated photographer Diane Arbus offered this riddle to explain the inherent value of photographic art: “A photograph is a secret about a secret. The more it tells you, the less you know.”

It is just that circular logic that makes exposure to a Lazlo Gyorsok photo such an exhilarating journey. There always seems to be something more – a tweak, a revelation, a hint, a suggestion that pulls the viewer back to discover another moment of visual insight that starts the imagination and moves us along. ●

Lazlo Gyorsok’s photographic portfolio can be explored and enjoyed at <http://www.pictures-by-lazlo.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@t.



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friendly faces: meet our pets, fur-babies and friends



Kosmo, aka “Kosmo The Himmie,” is a three-year-old Himalayan cat. Kosmo, along with his mom and siblings, were rescued from a house fire and rehabilitated. “I suffered from some smoke inhalation, but luckily made a full recovery!” Pet parents Terence and Nicole Miller adopted him from an animal rescue in Torrington, CT, and he now resides in his “furrrever” home in, Sharon CT. “I am a master at comic relief, in fact my name came from Cosmo Kramer of the TV show *Seinfeld*. My *Dennis the Menace* antics keep my pet parents laughing and my sweet and snuggly side is equally endearing.” Kosmo is a master bird watcher, lover of treats, and enjoys long naps in his favorite chair. He would like to remind folks to adopt, not shop, “Even beautiful cats like myself can be found at your local shelter.” Don’t forget to follow Kosmo on Instagram, @kosmo_the_himmie



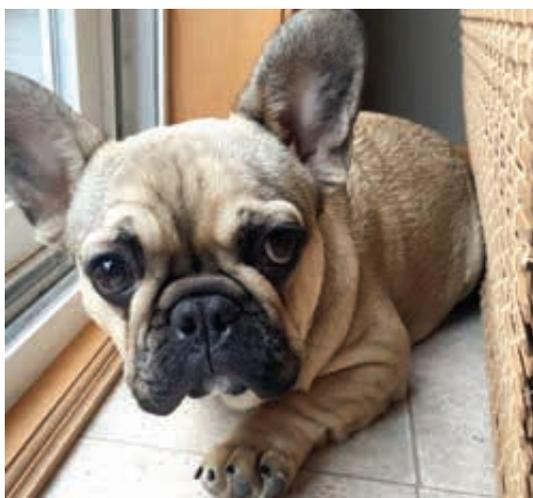
This little piggy, originally from Salt Point, NY, **Milo** is one-and-a-half year old mini-pig that now resides on the outskirts of Hudson, NY, with his pet mom Jessica Jennings and five-year-old pet sister, Emily. “I love to snuggle with my family, play with Emily’s toys when she forgets to put them away, taking naps, and play with my dog sister, Sage (a Pit/Shepard mix).” According to Jessica, Milo also loves to eat – a lot! Thank goodness he has a healthy diet of fruits and veggies. Aside from the one time Milo took pots and pans out of the kitchen cabinets, he has good house manners and is even litter box-trained. “I love being part of this family. In fact, Jessica and I have a special bond because we share the same birthday, August 29. Break out the party hats!”



This adorable (currently nameless) Holstein calf, tagged **number 97** was born on May 31, 2017. She is owned by Kenneth Beneke, of Willow Brook Farms in Millerton, NY, which she also happily calls her home. She is the daughter of Gill and granddaughter of Glacial. “I’ve been told I come from a long line of show animals, which you may have seen at the Dutchess County Fair. Maybe one day you will see me there, too!” Until then, if you would like to meet this pretty girl, visit her at The Farm Store at Willow Brook starting in May when they will be open for the season. “And if you have any name suggestions (that start with the letter G to carry on the family tradition), please contact us through the farm’s Facebook page or swing by the farm store.”



Gotta Lotta Fizz, or better know as Fizz, is an American Saddlebred. Hailing from sunny California, Fizz went from big city California life to small town life in the Northeast in a blink of an eye when his person, Hilarie Thomas, moved back to New York nine years ago. “I’m not fond of rain, but do like an occasional snow day. And I’m still scratching my head about the local wildlife, especially geese – theeeyy scare me.” Fizz takes everything he does in stride, usually with his head up, ears pricked, and his tail over his back, striking a jaunty strut. He was bred to be a show horse and was for many years. One of his special tricks is the “passage” which is a dressage movement. Fizz will be 25 years young on April 12 and enjoys eating bananas, having his belly and cheeks scratched, and long, leisurely walks.



Chloe is a two-year-old French Bulldog. Originally from Connecticut, she was brought to the area by her parents, Eric and Rebecca Clark. Chloe’s fawn fur and Hungarian background make her a special pet to have around. “Whenever I’m feeling hyper, I love to play tug-of-war with my sister, Lindsey, and run around the house!” She also enjoys stealing dish towels. Despite her seemingly endless energy, Chloe appreciates a good nap, a seat by the heater, and a peaceful walk in the woods every once in a while. After going on one of these walks, Chloe always expects getting a few treats in return. She loves to eat, and always makes her presence known during meals by barking when she wants a snack. “My family can always hear my mighty bark – whether it’s because of a squirrel outside or some guests that just walked in the door!”



Born only two days apart, these eight-year-old Miniature Mediterranean Donkeys, **Duncan** and **Donovan**, are best friends. The boys were born in Peru, NY, and now reside at the beautiful home of Marie Meltz. “You know what they say: time flies when you’re having fun! We are very playful with each other; pull on each other’s manes and chase each other around the barnyard,” says Duncan. “It is fun to play with Duncan, but I make my presence known by braying when a car comes up the driveway or someone is outside,” said Donovan. Miniature Mediterranean Donkeys can be trained to count, pull carts, and do tricks. As for Duncan and Donovan, their favorite past time is enjoying treats, especially apples and carrots, while watching the sunset over the Catskill Mountains.

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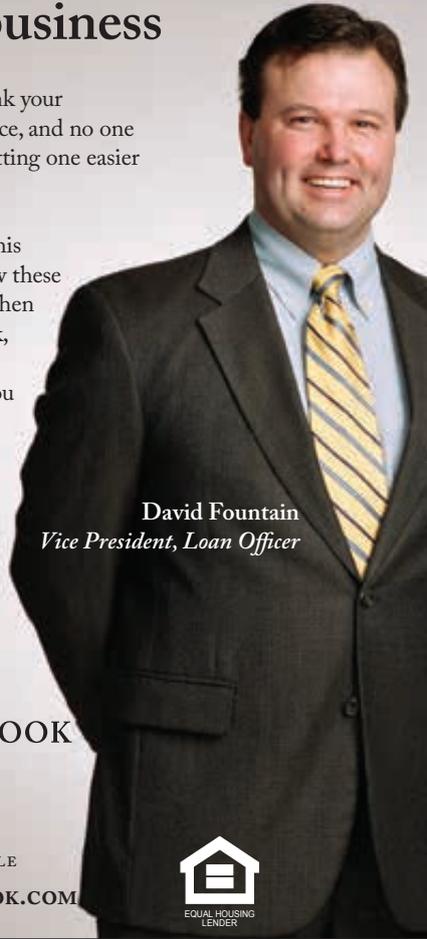
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One farmer. One store. Family business.

ROBIN AND ALLEN COCKERLINE OF WHIPPOORWILL FARM, SALISBURY, CT

By Christine Bates

christine@mainstreetmag.com

Life intervenes to create destiny. Robin and Allen Cockerline met at Montserrat Art School in Beverly, MA, planning on design careers. When their money ran out and the economy tanked in the mid-1970s, Allen took a job on a dairy farm. “It’s a primal need, an obsession that’s very satisfying and doesn’t let you go,” said Allen. “It’s the way you want to spend your day creating your own environment.”

The couple never looked back and ended up managing a dairy farm in Falls Village, CT, and always trying to figure out how to make a better living for themselves. The relatively small dairy could no longer keep production costs in line with milk prices, so after 20 years, the Cockerlines switched to raising dairy heifers. By the late 1990s they moved on to MIG “management intensive grazing” beef cattle. Long before it became popular they were committed to grass-based farming.

Meet me in the maize maze

Next they went retail and began selling their grass-fed meat direct to customers at the White Hollow Farm

store in Lime Rock. In 2001 Allen and Robin came up with an agro-art idea to boost traffic and add an additional income stream. The 11-acre amazing maize maze was designed and planted. “The hardest thing was getting it photographed,” said Allen, “but it did make money.”

Robin is not so sure about the profitability, but for weekends in September and October people lined up to find their way through the complex paths and also stopped in the store to shop.

When Michael Pollan’s book *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* came out in 2006, customers came from all over looking for this grass-fed, hard to find locally raised beef.

“If you’re eating grassland meat, your carbon footprint is light and possibly even negative.” – Michael Pollan

How Whippoorwill Farm came to be

Whippoorwill Farm is owned by the Miner/MacLaren family, which brought the name to the Salmon Kill valley in 1895. When Allen visited to talk to Malcolm MacLaren, the owner of farm, about marketing options for local grass-fed beef, he learned that the 19th-century farmhouse with two acres of land was for sale. Allen called Robin on the phone and informed her that they were buying a house in Salisbury and leasing the barns and acreage to begin farming on their own.

The Whippoorwill Farm store, designed by Robin and built



Above: Whippoorwill’s cows graze in the fields with a rainbow above. Photo courtesy of the Cockerlines. Below, left: Allen Cockerline in the farmhouse kitchen preparing maple syrup peppered bacon. Photo by Christine Bates.



by Allen and their two sons, went up immediately to serve an already established customer base. The charming farmhouse was completely renovated by the family over three years – plaster removed from ceilings to expose beams, rooms opened up, windows enlarged, a working chef’s kitchen created.

The store next door

Retail was a pleasant surprise to the skeptical farmer that mostly spends his days by himself. Robin manages the store and shares cooking instructions. The day I visited she was explaining how to make lard.

Whippoorwill’s customers are local families, as well as some loyal, high volume clients who drive from as far away as West Hartford and New Haven with ice chests to stock up on meat. They also sell wholesale to local restaurants like the White Hart, Interlaken and Falls Village Inn, as well as Paley’s Market. Hotchkiss School, where Allen is the farming advisor,

Continued on next page ...



Above: An aerial view of the maize maze. Photo courtesy of the Cockerlines. Below, right: The poetic Whippoorwill store on a winter night. Photo by Christine Bates.

orders whole carcasses from Whippoorwill's cattle pastured at Hotchkiss's Fairfield Farm in Lakeville. The store also sells pork, chickens, eggs, maple syrup, lacto-fermented hot sauce, Sky Farm greens, and honey from Vermont (or their own when the bees cooperate).

The store is only open two days a week or by appointment, but brings the world to the couple's doorstep. "We live near one of the greatest cities on the planet and that world of divergent backgrounds and careers enriches our lives," observed Allen. "We entertain a lot, cook a lot, and have so many friends because of the farm store." Many customers find Whippoorwill through the www.EatWild.com website which was mentioned in Pollan's book. And then there's an interview on NPR six years ago which customers still remember.

Every year it gets better

At any one time, Whippoorwill Farm will have 150 cattle, which includes 45 brood cows. "We watch the cows very carefully to make sure they are good mothers. Not all of them are, maybe 10% don't watch over their calves."

Whippoorwill uses a Wye Bull as well as artificial insemination. "A bull is never a friend and never an enemy," from Allen's experience. It takes a minimum of two years for a steer to develop good flavor and be ready for market. The cattle are taken to Adams Farm in Athol, MA, over 100 miles away, to be slaughtered, butchered, and custom packaged. "Our product is not a commodity, we got out of that business when we sold the dairy cows," according to Allen. "We make money on what we sell – something you cannot always do with commodity pricing. The price of our products

reflects the true costs of raising good quality food. Our business seems to be counter-cyclical. 2008 was 20% higher than the previous years – we never felt the great recession. Of course there are seasonal ups and downs. The weekend after Labor Day is always the worst, but there is never a lull."

One farmer, 450 acres

Whippoorwill Farm has one farmer. Allen does all the haying by himself because, "Farming is all about the equipment – expensive equipment that breaks easily, especially in the hands of a part-time worker. We have some very generous neighbors, who were farmers, that help us out from time to time. But I am the mechanic. It's just easier to do it all myself."

All 450 acres of hay and pasture and even the barns are leased from various owners and worked by Allen. The land is taken care of in a sustainable way with 200 acres certified organic. Haying starts in May and grass is harvested through October. In the summer the cows graze while Allen harvests hay for the winter.

Calving starts in March. The calves come into the yard every night until May when they are no longer in danger from coyotes whose attention turns to feasting on new born fawns. "Although we are one of the largest farms using organic methods, technically we will never have a certified organic herd because if an animal gets sick we do dose with an appropriate antibiotic if needed and they also eat

plenty of non-certified hay so that exempts them," explained Allen. "We are responsible, but not rigid, and we care about the wellbeing of our animals. This is not a religion for us."

The secret to success

"How did we do it? We did it by working for other people and learning how to get really good at farming. We saved our money, which goes into the business and our home. We have low overheads and don't have any debt."

Allen tells young farmers: "Prove that you can build a business generating a \$150,000 a year. Do not take a vow of poverty. Farming is not an ideology, it's a business. Find a high value product."

Asked about building a brand, the Cockerlines are not interested. "We get proposals from marketing people wanting us to become the next Neiman Ranch. This is a small New England farm that supports one family – it's pretty modest."

The secret of their long-running success is quality and maintenance of consistent inventory. They always have product available for clients. "We love it here. We can't easily go away, but we have our daily life, a good life. Our business is in good shape and we'll just keep doing it. It's a good place to be. And one night we even heard the whippoorwill." •

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Brown sugar cream Scones

WITH DRIED CURRANTS

By Jessie Sheehan
info@mainstreetmag.com

Scones get a bad rap, which is hardly a surprise considering so many of them are either dry, crumbly, and flavorless, or too sweet, and cake-like (not that there is anything wrong with cake, but if I want it for breakfast, I'll eat a muffin). Back in the day, I didn't give the scone in the pastry case at my local bakery a second glance. Save for the fact it was large, and yes, I am fond of generously sized sweets, it was just too risky a purchase.

But here's the good news: although I still tend not to purchase scones when out and about (unless they've been vetted by a trusted scone authority, of which, sadly, there are few), I make pretty spectacular scones at home, and now you can, too.

The secret

The secret to these special scones is all in the assembly, as the dough is treated very much like pie dough, with cold ingredients, very little handling, lots of visible butter chunks, and some resting in the fridge. Now, if making a pie scares you even more than eating a dry scone, rest assured: this dough is simple to put together, requires no rolling out or kneading, and as long as you feel comfortable smooshing dough into a tall-sided cookie cutter with your hands (essentially making a hockey-puck-type shape of it), you're going to be golden. Moreover, because the scone dough assembly shares some characteristics with the making of a pie, get ready for the flaky, buttery scone of your dreams (or am I the only who dreams of breakfast treats?).

These do take a tiny bit more time to prepare than the average scone, but none of it is time on task, and the results: a slightly sweet, flaky and

buttery breakfast treat, deeply vanilla-flavored, with tiny bursts of tang from the currants, and a golden, crispy top with plenty of sparkly sugar for crunch, is anything but average (but I think you already knew that).

Ingredients:

Yield: 10 scones
2 sticks unsalted butter, cold
1 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons pure vanilla extract
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
5 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
A rounded 3/4 teaspoon table salt
1 cup packed light brown sugar
1 cup dried currants

For the egg wash:

1 egg
2 teaspoons heavy cream
Turbinado sugar, for sprinkling

Instructions:

Cut the butter into small cubes and place in the freezer. Combine the cream and vanilla in a glass measuring cup, whisk to combine, and place in the refrigerator.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and sugar, and whisk to combine. Remove the butter from the freezer and add it to the bowl of dry ingredients. Using your hands, toss the butter in the flour mixture until all of the butter pieces are covered. Then, using your fingers, smear/press the butter into the flour, breaking up the butter pieces as you do so. When you are finished, you should have a bowl of crumbly, buttery-floury bits and not a lot of loose, dry flour.

Add the cream and vanilla, and with your hands or a wooden spoon, mix gently to combine, until all of the



Ceramic cake stand by Julie Hadley

dough is moistened by the cream and is – for the most part – in pea-sized clumps (if you squeeze a bit of dough in your hand at this point, it should stay together, but the goal is not to create a single mass of dough). Add the currants and mix again. Place the bowl in the refrigerator, covered in plastic wrap, for at least an hour, and up to overnight.

Grease a baking sheet with cooking spray or softened butter and line with parchment.

Remove the bowl from the refrigerator and stir once to combine. The dough should still be loose and clumpy at this point – like pie dough that has not yet been kneaded together. Dip a 2 1/2-inch cookie cutter, that is at least a one-inch tall, in flour, and using your hands, begin pressing the dough into the cutter, filling it until it is tightly packed (i.e.: you are shaping the dough into a hockey puck of sorts, with 1-inch sides and a 2 1/2 inch diameter – if you don't have a cookie cutter, you can make this shape, as best you can, in your hands).

Gently push the shaped dough out of the cutter and on to the prepared baking sheet, re-flour your cookie cutter, and continue making “pucks,” until you run out of dough.

To make the egg wash, whisk the egg and heavy cream in a small bowl, and brush the mixture on the tops of the scones. Sprinkle (generously) with Turbinado sugar, and place in the freezer for about an hour, or overnight.

Preheat the oven to 375-degrees Fahrenheit.

Remove all but six scones from the baking sheet (you only want to bake six at a time, as they do spread a bit) and bake for 24-28 minutes, rotating at the halfway point, until the scones are golden brown and the tops are firm and dry to the touch. Repeat with the remaining scones (or place them unbaked in a zippered plastic bag in the freezer, and bake them off at a later date, when the feeling moves you). Let the scones cool for a bit, and serve when they are warm or at room temperature with butter and jam (although truly, they need no accompaniment – yes: they are that good). ●

Jessie is a baker and cookbook author; you can learn more about her through her website jessiesheehanbakes.com.



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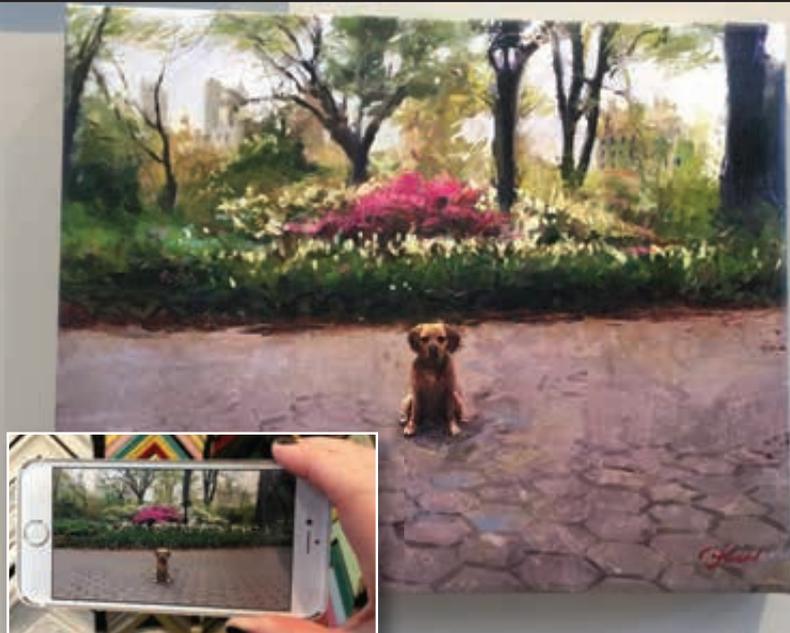
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A farming community: THE REAL ESTATE MARKET IN THE TOWN OF ANCRAM, NY

By Christine Bates
christine@mainstreetmag.com

Ancram, located in the southeast corner of Columbia County, is a rural town that doesn't welcome change. "We want to maintain agriculture as a way of life," according to the Town Supervisor, Art Bassin, when *Main Street* talked to him in 2013. "In 20 years, Ancram's residents want Ancram to look and feel much as it does today." Five years after *Main Street's* interview the town has succeeded in maintaining its rural, authentic agricultural character. But there have been some changes – good changes.

The old town dirt-floored highway garage has been economically renovated and the town's shiny new firehouse stands completed. Under Bassin's leadership, plans are now in place for conserving natural resources, protecting productive farmland, and preserving scenic views. Rumors about the closing of the SWM factory that employs 60 workers and is the single largest employer in the town, are unfounded according to the plant manager Dwayne Hotaling. Hugging the Roeliff Jansen Kill River, the plant, which now produces reconstituted wrapper binder for cigars, is located on the site of the first forge in the colony of New York founded in 1743 by Robert Livingston.

Habitat for Humanity is planning to build two new affordable homes in Ancramdale on the lot right across



from the post office. You sense the energy and commitment to make Ancram a better place, but not a different place.

A proud farming community for centuries

Ancram's first European residents were crop farmers imported from Scotland in 1740 by Robert Livingston. Dairy farming developed with the mid 19th-century advent of trains that could transport milk from Ancram to big cities. The town has produced a "Do It Yourself Tour" with a map of 16 farms that can be visited and where you can buy cheese, pick blueberries, ride horses, and sample whisky made from locally grown corn and grains.

Ancram remains true to its roots and is actively farmed today with 63% of its acreage devoted to some type of agriculture, including 28% of that in large rural estates.

The town estimates that 15% of residents are employed in

agriculture, generating farm revenues of around \$8 million. Ancram Assessor Ken Leggett reports that there are 180 agricultural exemptions in place that reduce owners' property taxes. In 2016 a revaluation of Ancram properties was conducted, which increased assessment values at the high end and reduced them on less valuable parcels. Despite New York State's reputation for constantly increasing taxes, Ancram's town tax rate was actually lowered to 2.51 mils this year, a decrease of 1.01%.

In addition to protecting agriculture, the town has chosen to actively focus on resource conservation and preservation of natural habitats such as fens and kettle wetlands, flora and fauna. Land acreage continues to be donated to the non-profit Columbia Land Conservancy. Most recently a local resident gave 1,300 acres of farm and woodland with an endowed fund that will pay property taxes and keep it on the tax rolls. About one third of Ancram's land is protected by conservation easements or outright gifts to the Columbia Land Conservancy.

Old buildings, new owners, new uses

The historic 1873 Simon's General Store, saved by the Ancram Preservation Society (APS), was purchased in 2016 for \$120,000 by artist James



Above, top to bottom: 76 acres of rural privacy and glorious views on Roche Drive are listed by Mary Taylor of Best & Cavallo Real Estate. Photo by Ren Nickson. The Stiehle House is the next project of the Ancram Preservation Group. The boarded up windows feature profiles of Ancram children. Photo by Christine Bates.

Kennedy who is converting it to a painting studio and home. Plans are underway for the Stiehle House at the intersection of Route 82 and Route 7, which was purchased by the APG for \$15,000 in 2014 after a long legal battle. The Ancram Opera House, purchased for \$380,000 in 2015, is now a center of contemporary performing arts. Directors Paul Ricciardi and Jeffrey Mousseau were charmed with the intimate, rustic space and when they learned it was for sale they moved from Hudson and made it their new creative home. "One of the things that has been most rewarding

ANCRAM HOUSES FOR SALE*

Number of properties listed	24
Total \$ of all listings	\$15.9 million
Median price	\$379,000
\$ Listing of homes over \$1,000,000	\$9.1 million
Million \$ homes listed as % of market	57.4%

ANCRAM AGRICULTURAL AND RAW LAND FOR SALE*

Number properties listed	17
Total \$ sales value	\$9.1 million
Total acreage	1,170
Average price per acre	\$7,810
Largest acreage	155.4

* Listings compiled from www. Realtor.com at end January 2018 and do not include pending sales, or non-broker listings.

Continued on next page ...

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES SOLD IN ANCRAM 2008-2017*

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
# properties sold	16	12	14	15	10	15	14	18	22	26
Total \$ sales	\$5,933,175	\$3,267,829	\$4,083,000	\$5,352,692	\$4,762,000	\$6,329,860	\$4,023,500	\$6,427,894	\$8,490,438	\$7,419,954
YTY change		-45%	25%	31%	-11%	33%	-36%	60%	32%	-13%
Median price	\$310,000	\$225,000	\$155,000	\$225,000	\$300,000	\$307,500	\$178,500	\$255,000	\$247,500	\$259,000
# Homes sold >\$500,000	4	2	1	4	3	4	3	3	6	1
% of total sales	56%	35%	41%	72%	62%	61%	54%	54%	62%	10%
Highest price	\$1,100,000	\$599,820	\$1,675,000	\$1,450,000	\$1,289,000	\$1,350,000	\$900,000	\$2,400,000	\$1,200,000	\$720,000

AGRICULTURAL AND RAW LAND SALES IN ANCRAM 2008-2017*

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
# Properties sold	6	1	1	3	6	6	9	12	5	2
Total \$ sales value	\$4,849,500	\$85,000	\$30,000	\$678,442	\$3,862,000	\$1,746,600	\$1,391,232	\$3,086,405	\$330,500	\$58,000
Total acreage	303.68	3	2.12	306	354.49	105.04	156.55	480.06	48.31	8.36
Price per acre	\$15,969	\$28,333	\$14,151	\$2,220	\$10,895	\$16,628	\$8,887	\$6,429	\$6,841	\$6,938
Biggest sale acres	225	3	1	275.12	194	284.3	40	143	29.42	7.1
Highest sale price	\$4,200,000	\$85,000	\$30,000	\$550,942	\$3,000,000	\$825,000	\$225,000	\$627,000	\$180,000	\$38,000

* Sales Figures compiled from NYS Sales Data Base of "good" sales and may exclude distressed property sales. Second half of 2017 sales supplied by Columbia County Clerk.



Above: Most Long Lake homes are sold fully furnished as their owners downsize. Photo courtesy of Anne Levitt of Beach & Bartolo.

about running a rural performance space in a small town, is the opportunity to really get to know our audience," observed Ricciardi. "Many of our audience members live within a few miles of the Opera House. We're also so inspired by the beauty of Ancram."

A record number of houses sold in 2017 – but not expensive ones

Ancram's last three years of residential sales show a leveling off of market sales volumes to around \$7.5 million annually – almost double that of 2009, which was the worst year. But median prices hovering around \$250,000 are still below 2012 and 2013 levels. Last year's sales activity was almost all at the lower end of the market with only one home selling above \$500,000. The average selling price last year of \$285,000 was very close to the median price of \$259,000. This is in contrast to the

previous nine years where more expensive homes constituted at least half of the sales value. Last year it was only 10%. This slow down is also reflected in declining revenues for building permits and mortgage taxes in the last two years.

Where have all those million-dollar buyers gone? Million-dollar-plus residential sales have never been common in Ancram, and only eight homes have sold for more than a million in the last decade. The architect-designed contemporary house on Ballymount Road is an example of the difficulty of selling expensive properties. Situated on 53 clear acres with views of the Taconics, it was listed in 2011 at \$3,325,000 and finally sold five years later for \$1,299,000. Cornelia Guest, the IT girl of the 80s and debutante of the decade, purchased a house, barns, and 276 acres on Wiltsie Bridge Road in 2015 for \$2,400,000 – the most expensive Ancram residence sold in the last ten years.

Raw land sales swing widely

Only eight acres of vacant land, just two parcels, were sold in 2017 – the fewest since 2009 and 2010. The \$30,000 cost per acre seems high because only two small lots were purchased compared to the hundreds of agricultural acres purchased in 2008, 2011, 2012, and 2015 at prices ranging from \$2,000 to over \$15,000 an acre. 2008 was the record year for land because of a single \$4,200,000 sale. In fact during the last ten years the two highest sales, \$4,200,000 and \$3,000,000, were for farmland, not houses.

Currently on the market

With 26 homes listed for sale as compared to 26 sold last year, the Ancram residential market appears to be in equilibrium. However, only five of these properties have asking prices at or below last year's median sold price of \$259,000, and the total dollar amount of residential listings is twice last year's sales with an average listing price of \$661,495! There are four-million-dollar plus residential properties for sale constituting half the value of all listings.

Raw land for sale is listed at an average price per acre of around \$8,000. The smallest and least expensive is a 1.5-acre home site on Five Roses for \$52,000 and the largest is 330 acres on Shepherd Road for \$2,400,000. The most expensive per acre is 74 acres of farmland with expansive views listed by Mary Taylor of Best & Cavallaro for \$1.2 million. "It's all about the location and views, and this parcel has it all."

Long Lake, an architect-designed development with 50 similar units,

is its own distinct market. Currently, seven of the 26 houses listed for sale in Ancram are within this homeowner's association, which has its own lake, tennis courts, pool, and maintenance crew. Listed at an average price of \$365,000, around \$159-a-square-foot, some of these homes have been on the market for many years and asking prices are dropping. Built about 20 years ago, the homes originally sold for around \$500,000, but since 2014 most units are changing hands below \$400,000 and that's fully furnished. "It's the second home life cycle," explained Anne Levitt, an agent with Beach & Bartolo. "This is the second or third home for most buyers, and now the original buyers are aging out, downsizing, and moving on."

Where is this market going?

Comparing the prices on homes listed for sale to what actually sold last year suggests that there is a paucity of affordable homes for sale and an overabundance of more expensive properties. Will more family homes come on the market in the spring? Will more seven figure buyers show up? The weakness in the upper part of the housing market and the lack of inventory of affordable homes below \$400,000 is not unique to Ancram. The new tax bill and rising interest rates may make these properties even less attractive.

"My opinion is that owners should try to sell now before interest rates rise more and this lengthy economic expansion ends. I can't imagine it will get better," opined one local real estate investor. ●

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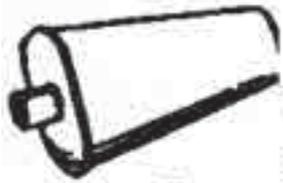


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It's hard not to be moooved by Churchtown Dairy

By *Dominique DeVito*
info@mainstreetmag.com

You think you know a place after living in it for over ten years, but in fact, there are always surprises. I learned that again when I discovered Churchtown Dairy right here in Columbia County, NY. I didn't even discover it, really, I was told about it and then came to discover it. When I did, in mid-2017, I realized Churchtown Dairy was not just another farm in our agriculturally rich area, it was – it is! – a place that is a farm, yes, but also so much more. Here's why.

Churchtown's origins

Churchtown Dairy is indeed a dairy. It has a herd of about 28 cows on its 250 acres, and the herd produces milk that is bottled as raw milk and is also made into several kinds of cheese. The herd is milked twice daily, every day, year-round. Dairy farmers are a dedicated bunch, to say the least.

If the herd is the heart of the farm without which the rest is inconsequential, doesn't it make sense to tend it in ways that have been practiced by generations of dairy farmers in Columbia County and across the state and the region? Abby Rockefeller, who owns the land, considered otherwise. Her vision was for a farm that was truly beautiful in every way, and was also a beacon of sustainable agriculture and regenerative community.



Above: Churchtown Dairy as seen from the road. Photo by Georgia Landman.

When you visit Churchtown Dairy Center for Regenerative Community (its full name), you'll understand how that vision is playing out. Inspired by Bill Coperthwaite's statement, "Beauty is a birthright, and where there is no beauty there is great danger," the Churchtown team is a group of a dozen or so people committed to beauty in all that they do.

Rick Anderson is the farm's architect/builder (and much more, like everyone on the team). When he was approached to participate in Abby's vision, he couldn't resist her decree: "It has to be beautiful." But what is beauty, especially as it pertains to a dairy farm? The two of them went in search of real-life inspiration, touring farms throughout the Northeast, and particularly resonating with what they saw at Jack and Anne Lazor's Butterworks Farm in Vermont, and Katia

and Brendan Holmes' Misty Brook Farm in Maine. These were places where the focus was on not just the cows, but on the land and the farm's ecosystem. Rudolf Steiner is another inspiration. He was the founder of a biodynamic approach to agri-

culture back in the early 1900s; this is the principle and practice at work at nearby Hawthorne Valley Farm.

Bringing Churchtown to life

With inspiration a-plenty, Rick got to work, and in 2012 construction began. The farm team started coming together about two years ago, and the dairy opened to the public in 2017. It doesn't look like a traditional dairy farm at all. The buildings that make up the farm are connected in a long line leading from a farm store on one end (communal space), to a large, domed, round barn on the other. The buildings that make up the store and milking barn date to the 1800s and were transported here from a farm in New Hampshire.

The 80-foot in diameter round barn is where the herd lives in the winter, passing from a bedded pack where they eat hay grown on the property to the milking area for twice-daily milking. They are milked individually into buckets that are taken to a tank, a gentle process that accounts for each cow's contributions (and consequently its state of being). The raw milk is bottled according to health and safety standards, and more milk is allocated for the dairy's cheese production.

From roughly April to November (depending on the temperatures), the cows move outside for the season, grazing in pastures that are sustained by agricultural integrity where the

impact of the cow and the ability of the land to feed her are ultimately in balance. The herd includes Brown Swiss, Jersey, and Guernsey cows, split fairly evenly between dairy cows and beef cattle. The farm also has some pigs that feast on whey-soaked grains – a byproduct of the cheesemaking process; all are part of the "whole-farm system" where nothing is wasted.

Beauty all around

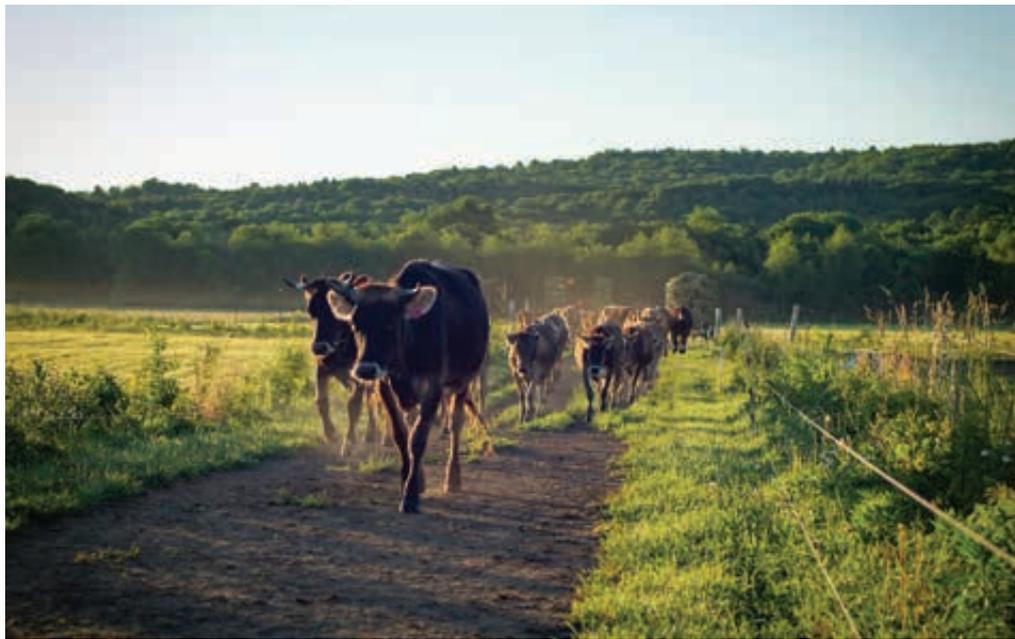
That is a beautiful thing. And while the dairy is what Churchtown built itself around, the concept of balance and beauty and integrity are pervasive. I met with Kam Bellamy and Amy Gavaris, the executive director and farm store & cafe manager, respectively, on a cold but sunny morning to talk more about beauty and agriculture and community. We sat at a butcher block table in the Farm Store, which is now open to the public. It's a light-filled room that's simple but not austere, with a fireplace in the middle where you can sit on sofas on one side or enjoy a wood stove on the other. The windows on nearly all sides let in lots of light. It's a room in which you feel centered and relaxed. Currently, it contains two large refrigerators, one with raw milk and cheeses for sale, the other with packaged meats.

"We'll be opening a café here in the spring or summer," says Amy. "There will be a selection of beverages and



Above: One of Churchtown Dairy's cows. Photo courtesy of Churchtown Dairy.

Continued on next page ...



Above: Churchtown Dairy's herd. Right: A bottle of Churchtown Dairy's pure raw milk. Photos by Georgia Landman. Far right: Aging in the cheese cave. Photo courtesy of Churchtown Dairy.

light fare for people to enjoy at these tables," she continues, "in what is a communal space. All of us who work here come and go through this space, too," Amy adds, "so we'll get to know our visitors, and they'll get to know us. We want to share our table; share what the land brings to the table."

Plans for the café are to expand it to a library and to a store that offers a wider range of locally sourced farm goods. There's a lovely kitchen down a short, wide hallway off of which is a restroom with composting toilets. Beauty truly abounds.

Kam explains that at Churchtown they are challenged (and inspired) to always be thinking about what makes their space – their property – beautiful in a myriad of ways. "Our team eats lunch together," she shares, "and we're a diverse group of people who all strive to come to communal decisions about what's beautiful and how to incorporate beauty. There's aesthetic beauty, of course," she says, "but also the beauty of simplicity and efficiency, in design, in food, in everything."

"Farming is healthy," she adds, "but it's also hard, hard work, and constant. We want to assist in how everyone here can maximize the quality of their life. We're tasked with coming

up with new ideas, new ways to imagine how the world can be different."

It starts with the land

Kam explained that in addition to the Foundation for Agricultural Integrity, they've also established the Hudson Carbon Education Research Project (Hudson Carbon), which studies the "carbon storage potential of soil managed with regenerative agricultural practices that are profitable while improving soil health and function." Crops and grazing operations throughout the Hudson Valley will participate collaboratively to develop best practices.

We also talked about Churchtown's healing and medicinal gardens, which are overseen by Jean-David Derreumaux. The two acres of gardens support the beauty of the property and the health of both the land and the people that sustain it. According to the website, the gardens yield, "plants that can heal when turned into Anthroposophical or homeopathic remedies, and plants that heal when we simply stand or sit in their presence." To that end, the public is encouraged to learn more about what's grown there and why, and tours are offered every Wednesday at 2pm when the garden is in bloom.

From the beginning, the dairy knew

it would be making cheese. There's a cheese cave that includes a hand-cranked elevator to transport wheels to the cave, where aging takes place in a temperature-controlled environment. Tours of the cheese cave are conducted monthly. Cheesemaker Matt Spiegler is currently making phenomenally fresh and flavorful cheeses – a fresh cheese, a feta, a tomme, and a Camembert-style cheese. When you taste them you'll understand what Kam was able to summarize for me: "Healthy soil, healthy farm equals healthy food." Beautiful? You bet.

Visit the farm

Go to Churchtown Dairy's website and Facebook pages to learn more about what's going on and the best times to visit (though almost any time is good). The Farm Store is open from 8am to 6pm every day, so come in for the freshest raw milk, cheeses, and meats (with expanded offerings coming soon). You're encouraged to witness the milking at 6:30am and 4pm daily. When the cows move to pasture in the early summer, the bedded pack will be cleared out to create compost, and a temporary wood floor will be laid so the barn can host concerts and other events. This past December, Churchtown Dairy held two markets in its Farm Store, after which shoppers moved to the round barn to sing carols to the cows. You can't help but be mooved by what's happening here. In a profound way. ●



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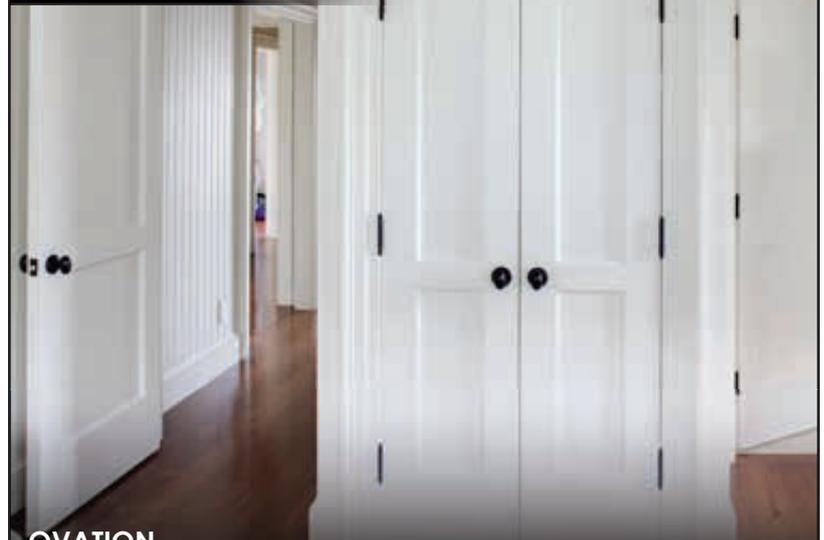
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The Little Guild:

SAVING ANIMALS, ONE LIFE AT A TIME. ANIMAL RESCUE, REHABILITATION, AND ADOPTIONS.

By Richard Schlesinger
info@mainstreetmag.com

At the beginning of 2017, Justin Vagliano's varied career took a surprising turn. He had known about The Little Guild in West Cornwall, CT, for years through his wife, Dr. Katie Vagliano, a vet at Millerton Veterinary Practice. And when he heard about their search for a new Executive Director, he decided to put his experience as a businessman and entrepreneur to work to solidify the foundation of the venerable animal shelter and begin charting its new future.

Justin recently sat down with award-winning CBS News Correspondent Richard Schlesinger, an animal enthusiast and member of The Little Guild's Advisory Council, to discuss the state of the organization today and hear about some recent developments.

Richard: The Little Guild is a very well-known and very popular organization in our area. How many dogs and cats on average do you have in the shelter?

Justin: It varies really at any given time. We have space for 25 cats and 16 dogs, and we keep an open dog run for the Town of Cornwall Animal Control.

There is no average length of stay, right? You have some that stay for a long time here.

We have some that get adopted in a matter of days or weeks. I would say our target is to get animals into a home within a month. Our longest resident right now is a great dog named Zeke, who's been here for over a year and a half. He's been working with our new trainer and is one of our best examples of the socialization work that we can do with animals to desensitize them. We expect he will be adopted soon.

Where do you get most of your animals?

We get them from a mix of places – from Animal Control offices, from owner surrenders – which can happen for a whole variety of reasons. People also find stray cats and dogs and bring them to us. Then, if we have space available, we will sometimes bring dogs from out-of-state, usually from down South where there is a significant need for help.

I think a lot of people think that there are a lot of sad stories in shelters, but it's a happy place on balance.

It sure is.

What is it like when you have a dog who's been there for longer than you think he or she should be finally goes home. What is that day like?

It really is special. Everyone at The Guild can get very emotional about that. Everybody who's involved at The Guild and who touches these animals really develops a bond with them, and they want to see them succeed. When that day comes, it is very emotional and there are many times where tears of joy are shed to see that this animal now has a chance at what we call a forever home.



Above: Puffy was a local surrender. Below, left: Award-winning CBS correspondent, Richard Schlesinger interviewing The Little Guild's new Executive Director, Justin Vagliano. Photos are courtesy of The Little Guild and Josh Shanley.

Talk to me about Linus, who as we sit here now is your latest success story.

Linus came to us about three months ago, surrendered by a family. The backstory was a little unclear, but he came to us emaciated, fully malnourished, suffering from seizures, and couldn't walk. Some of the family decided to bring Linus to us, which is a very positive part of the story. Somebody made the decision to get help. When he arrived, he had to be carried just from the back of their car into The Little Guild van.

He couldn't make it on his own?

No. We wrapped him in blankets and brought him to one of the great local vets we use when we need extra care. He was given some medicine for the seizures, and IV fluids. Really what he needed was nutrition. We quickly identified a terrific foster home, where he further rebounded and started to thrive. He's now in a forever home and will be a terrific companion.

To watch a dog go from I guess near death, emaciated, couldn't walk, to where he's ready to go home to some lucky adopter, that has to make your day worthwhile, to put it lightly.

It sure does. We have a number of amazing stories, and those success stories really do make it so gratifying. It's what carries me, the rest of the staff, the volunteers, through some of the harder cases. They're doing it for the welfare of these animals, also knowing that there's a positive impact on the families that they'll end up with.

What do you do to help animals with problems become more adoptable?

It depends on the problems. There can be medical problems that we can take care of. We now have an in-house vet at the shelter, Dr. Ferris Gorra, who comes once a week and cares for all the animals in The Guild. If it's more behavioral or socialization training, then we do a number of things.



Continued on next page ...



This page, above, L-R, top to bottom: Linus at intake when he was surrendered to The Little Guild, emaciated. Linus after medical and foster care. Willa was part of a rescue from Tennessee. Opposite page, top to bottom: Sherbert, wearing a cast, was a stray that came to the Guild with serious injuries. Reba came to The Guild from a local Animal Control office. Photos are courtesy of The Little Guild and Josh Shanley.

A couple of hours out of everybody's day is spent either walking or playing with a purpose, with some specific training mixed in to those times; sit, stay, come, gentle handling of food, gentle handling of toys, those types of things with the dogs. With the cats it's also socialization – getting the cats out of their cages and with other cats or people. Just that time outside of the cages makes a huge difference. We also work on crate training and are big believers in slow introductions for these animals into new homes, and a crate is a great tool for the dogs.

And we have a great dog trainer named Shelly Cote who comes regularly to train the staff and volunteers on how to work with the dogs. Sometimes we do controlled socialization with other dogs, putting them in situations that they might not be comfortable with and using techniques to help them get comfortable in those situations. Shelly also now runs dog-walking classes for volunteers, which has been a big success.

Has Shelly worked with dogs and gotten them to a position where they can be adopted?

Yes, absolutely, and she even makes the commitment beyond that. She can be available for consultation by phone to adopters to give them guidance when they might need some extra answers.

You're still available for people after adopting if they have problems with their animals?

We are, we've made a big effort on that front. Sometimes adopters might not feel comfortable calling us with questions, but when we proactively reach out to them, we've found that

that's been a big help to them, and to the animals because it helps keep them in the homes. Sometimes there are things that we can suggest that simply make the animals more comfortable, too.

I think another misperception of a shelter is that you just take in these animals, hold them there until somebody happens by, adopt them out, and then move on to the next one. You're involved in this process deeply.

We sure are, and I think it's something that makes The Little Guild special in the world of shelters. A number of rescues and shelters are fully foster-based – and there are positives to that, they're in homes – but they don't have a dedicated facility where they can run focused programs for the animals. We believe in that rehabilitation.

You mentioned that you have some socialization for cats, do you work with them daily?

We do. About two-thirds of our adoptions are cats. We have a schedule where the cats get out on a rotation so that they can socialize with other cats. Some cats by nature are more independent animals, certainly than dogs. But they still need exposure to other animals. We have three different cat rooms, and in each cat room each cat has its own cage and then we let them out on a schedule everyday. The staff and volunteers also spend dedicated time hanging out, playing with them, giving them human exposure.

Do they respond to that?

They do, yes. They can become overly withdrawn without socialization. Making sure that they have that exposure to both people and other animals is very positive. You can really see the

results with that work and it makes a difference when they go home.

I know that there are a lot of feral cats, at least in the Cornwall area, and I assume in the surrounding towns.

Almost everywhere, really.

That must be a challenge for you because they reproduce quickly.

Yes, feral cats are wild cats and the vast majority have not been spayed or neutered, so we're starting this year to re-establish a TNR program (Trap, Neuter, and Release) where we take the animals in, get them fixed, and return them to their natural environment. Then we also want to re-establish a program where we create habitats for them. We're not trying to bring all of them into homes, because most of them don't want that. But there are some things that we can do to improve their lives, especially in the winter, and to help control the population.

Let's talk about your community outreach to different organizations because I know that one of the great things about animals is that when people help them, the animals get help and the people get help. People are better for it I think – I know that's the case in our home.

Sure. We've had a relationship with the Susan B. Anthony Project, based in Torrington, CT, which helps survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, and we're just starting a similar one with Women's Support Services which serves our neighboring region. We offer short-term boarding for the cats and dogs of the people in their care. Some people will put off getting

help for themselves because they don't know what to do with their animals.

It can literally save lives.

There's documented data that shows there's a link between abuse of animals and abuse of people, and vice-versa. The more we can help in that process, both to help the person get help and the animal to be safe, is a huge positive.

You take care of the animal so that the person can take care of themselves for a while.

Yes, and there are other organizations. We'd like to do the same when people are looking to get help with substance abuse. There are some great programs for that care, but again, people sometimes won't get help for themselves because they're not sure what to do with their animals while in treatment.

Lest anybody reading this doubt the strength of the bond between humans and animals, I covered several hurricanes in my career and met people who were staring down the eye of a hurricane and would not go to a shelter because, at the time, shelters wouldn't allow dogs and cats. They would ride out huge hurricanes in beach houses because they were concerned for their animals.

Amazing.

People would be wrong to underestimate the bond between humans and animal.

No doubt about it, yes.

You mentioned the Susan B. Anthony project, you mentioned Women's Support Services. Are there other organizations you're looking to become involved with?

I'd really like to put something together with a substance abuse program. And Shelly Cote has her own organization called Mutts Mending Military, which is another program that we are developing a relationship with. Shelly trains dogs to be Emotional Support Animals and sometimes PTSD Service Dogs. She is working with very committed owners and we're helping to find a good match with animals that can support them. This helps us too,

because some of our dogs need the extra attention that, say, a working couple simply cannot give. So, these placements can be hugely beneficial for both sides. Those I would say are the main ones that we're looking at right now.

It's such a great idea that you can help the animals and you can help the people at the same time. It's sort of a win-win for mammals.

Absolutely. One of the other things that we have done for a few years is something we call the Pittie Party. We might be able to expand it this year depending on the amount of funding that we can get. We offer free vaccines and a quick exam with a veterinarian for every animal that comes to us. There's zero cost to the owners.

You need volunteers?

Always! We survive on volunteers really. We have a staff of full-time and part-time employees, and we rely on volunteers as well for a whole range of things. From socializing with the animals, to cleaning up after them, to helping us with the significant laundry. We can also use help with carpentry, plumbing, office work, marketing, events. We do events throughout the year and we definitely rely on volunteer help for those.

Again, this isn't a one-way street. I mean, the volunteers aren't just helping the animals. You've seen relationships develop between the volunteers and the animals?

For sure. Many of our volunteers, if they didn't come to us as an adopter, they often end up as adopters. They also might end up as a foster. Fosters are another critical part of what we do.

How diabolical of you, you get these volunteers in thinking that they're just going to walk a dog and they end up taking them home.

Very clever marketing on your part. Hah! I can't tell you how many meetings I've had at The Guild with people that say, "I can't stay here too long or I might actually leave with an animal."



Well, it happened to us. You have any ideas for the future for expanding your services?

We do yes, and I do. We have, I would say, a number of ideas on how we could help more.

For that, of course, you need money.

We do, yes. We made the specific effort to significantly tighten all of our expenses last year, in order to balance our budget. To reinstate some programs and/or add new ones, we need to increase our support.

Your background is a business man so you are keeping a close eye on where those donations are spent and how they are spent.

Absolutely, we have a very close eye on everything.

How does somebody donate?

To donate funds, they can either donate through our website – we have a new website at littleguild.org. You can donate as a one-time gift, or you can donate as a recurring monthly gift.

There are other ways to donate financially, like through Planned Giving, where you can gift assets either during your lifetime or after your lifetime, utilizing various structures.

Then, we talked about the volunteer time. Giving time as a volunteer is a huge contribution, and is always something that we need. Also giving as a foster or an adopter. People that have the ability and desire to bring a cat or dog into their home is a wonderful gift to these animals.

And to the people too. Thank you, Justin.

Thank you, Richard. ●

To learn more about The Little Guild, to donate, or to volunteer, please call them at (860) 672-6346, or visit them online at www.littleguild.org.

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Seeding dreams

By Claire Copley
info@mainstreetmag.com

Here we are again: trying to avoid the cold and fight off the cabin fever that sets in. The landscape is white, frozen, pretty bleak. We can only dream of gardens and flowers, fruit trees and tomatoes and hydrangea blooms. Our dreams are aided by our beloved winter companions – the seed catalogs that come pouring in at this time of year, containing color, inspiration, and new possibilities. Usually, we toss them by the time Spring arrives but several institutions have been collecting these catalogs for hundreds of years and these collections document and celebrate the history of gardening in America.

Seed catalog history

Seed catalogs have been a part of the gardener's world for centuries. In the eighteenth century, English seed catalogs reached American growers by ship from Britain. Early seed catalogs included essays, notes about the culture of plants, instructions on how to plant them, how to care for them, and how to harvest their fruit. The catalog sometimes contained general articles on gardening and farming. Over long cold winter nights, then as now, the faraway customer could read the catalogs not only for seed ordering but for information on gardening, plant cultivation, and new crop ideas.

The fate of the early settlers of this country initially lay in the seeds

that they brought with them to their new homes. No one knew what they would find here, and a collection of food crop and medicinal herb seeds was essential baggage. Most saved and traded seeds amongst themselves, and with the local Native American populations. British seed companies supplied what the settlers could not get in the New World.

The origins of the American seed catalog are most often attributed to David Landreth, who founded the first American commercial seed company in 1784. Landreth sold seeds to George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and others. He introduced the white potato, zinnias, and tomatoes to the American garden. He even sold seeds of the botanicals sent from the Lewis and Clarke expedition, among them the osage orange, the snowberry bush, and new varieties of beans and corn.

The British garden and its influence in North America

It wasn't until the nineteenth century that North American nurserymen began to grow flowers and ornamental plants commercially, largely inspired by the gardening industry in England. The tradition of British gardens was America's primary influence in landscape design and development. British nurseries were only too happy to expand their customer base and used catalogs to promote the new interest. As the business shifted, or added focus on ornamentals, the American transplants were hungry for the new ideas.

Seed and bulb merchants in Britain were largely responsible for this shift. They used their catalogs to promote gardening as a respectable and desirable activity for the emerging middle class. "...Nothing more conspicuously bespeaks the good taste of the possessor than a well cultivated flower garden." Wrote James Thorburn in his 1847 catalog.

J.M. Thorburn and Co. was an early seed company founded in 1802 in New York, with English roots. Thorburn's catalogs brought the British gardening enthusiast detailed information on plants and how they performed in America. They listed seeds, plants and bulbs, and prices for everything. Independent traders and representatives of seed and nursery companies played an important role in distribution and delivery in these days before reliable mail service.

Burpee and the growing seed business

The story of W. Atlee Burpee is an example of the trends of the time. Mr. Burpee began his business when he was a teenager, mostly concentrating on feed and poultry breeding. The infant science of genetics fascinated him. By the 1880s, the W. Atlee Burpee Company was supplying the Northeast as well as the booming plains states with seed as well as livestock. However, many of the European seed stocks Burpee acquired had to be adapted to American growing conditions, either by means of hybridization (Burpee created the first hybrid vegetables) or selective breeding for desirable characteristics.

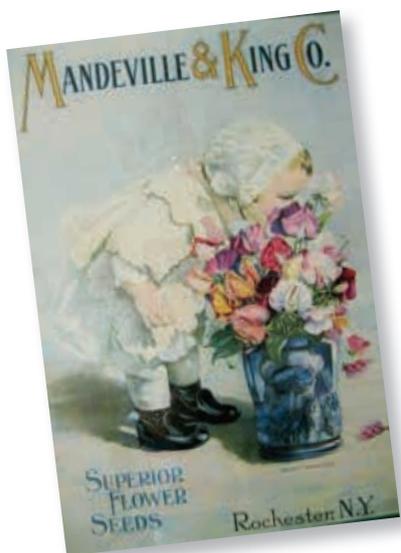
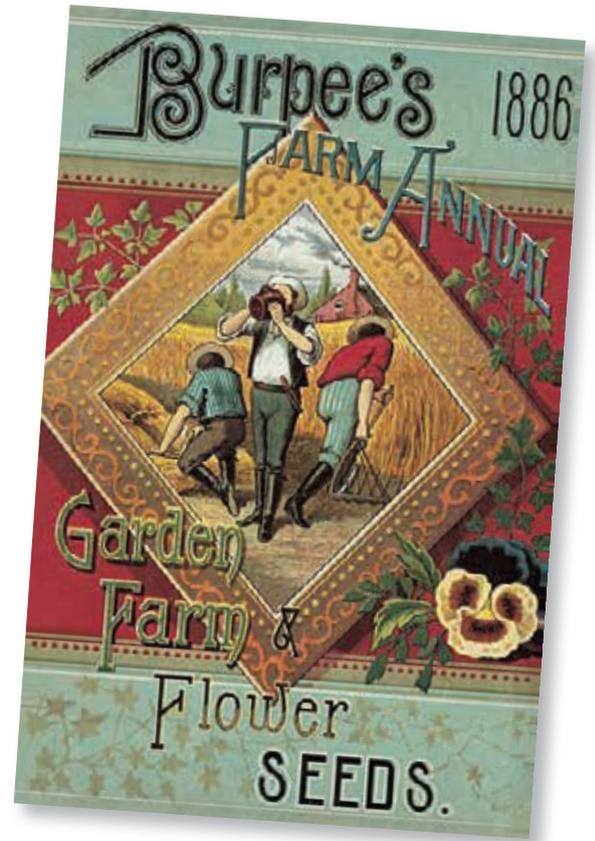
Burpee became a household name, and the largest seed company in the world by the 1890s. In those years, farmers rather than home gardeners made up the majority of customers; the catalog was called *Burpee's Farm Annual*, and a lot more catalogue space was allotted to corn and cabbages, melons and beans, potatoes

and squashes than to flower seeds and bulbs.

Catalogs were intended as marketing tools, describing the inventory of the current year. Yet they often included articles and advice written by well-established plantsmen. The earliest American seed catalogs preceded the first published book on gardening by some 30 years. American nurserymen and women of the nineteenth century taught their readers about horticulture. They were America's first garden writers, and played an important role in teaching basic gardening techniques as well as the aesthetics of (English) gardening. Through expanding the American market for gardening products, importing plants, trying them out in the new environment of American soil, and working on plant adaptation, they contributed to the development of a new American plant pallet and style, as well as creating a new American industry.

The effects of modernization

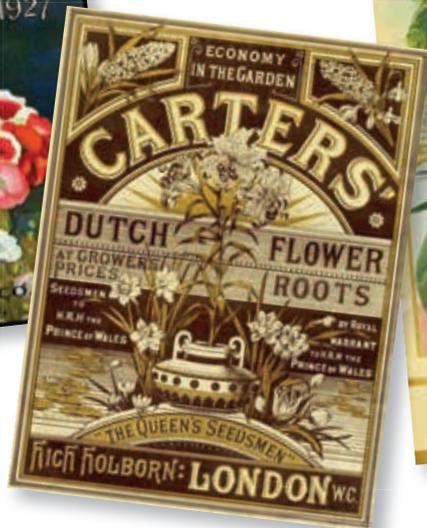
Building on the ideas and methods of the fledgling businesses of Landreth, Thorburn, Burpee and others, new nurseries opened selling ornamentals and bulbs as well as food crops. After the Civil War, reconstruction produced rapid improvements in printing technology, which meant that new



Continued on next page ...



All images of the seed catalogues depicted come from the public domain.



engraving techniques could be used to glamorize the appeal of catalogs. Rail transportation as well as reforms in the US mail system meant that orders could be received and delivered in much less time. These changes cleared the way for mail order businesses to flourish. Companies distributed catalogs for free and were able to ship seeds and plant material at cheaper prices.

Commercial nurseries and greenhouses flourished throughout the United States after the Civil War. Plants and flowers became increasingly popular for social occasions such as funerals, weddings, and parties, and Victorian interiors called for houseplants such as palms and ferns. Nursery owners would display their plant wares in their catalogs, and often promote popular uses and designs for planting. Looked at today, these catalogs provide historians with insight into the aesthetic sensibilities and the influences that helped to form those sensibilities over two centuries. To historians of landscape design, and those involved in the restoration of landscape and gardens, these catalogs provide an invaluable record of available plants, garden choices, and styles over the past 200 years.

Park Seed Company published its

first catalog in 1868, and three years later initiated a monthly catalog it called *The Floral Gazette*. *The Gazette* was more magazine than catalog. It included articles on gardening and plants, but encouraged readers to trade seeds bulbs and plants among themselves. It accepted advertisers, many of whom were small seed dealers and nursery owners. By 1918 the readership was around 800,000. Among the targeted audience were home market gardeners, amateur and professional landscape gardeners, and professional florists.

World War I and photography

The first World War temporarily cut off exports from Europe to the United States, greatly stimulating American agricultural and horticultural production. The amateur gardening market was well established by then and demand grew for new varieties of plants. Marketing was in full swing and the catalog business boasted of their new varieties with descriptive titles like “Mammoth,” “Colossal,” and “Perfection.” The more competitors appeared, the more lavish the seed catalogs and packaging became, all in an effort to grab a share of the booming American garden market

Artwork became an important distinguishing feature in the seed business early on. As printing became

cheaper and techniques improved, catalog covers became more elaborate and illustrations of individual plants became common. Engraved covers of catalogues from after the Civil War tend to have a variety of images, patterning, and gorgeous colors. Black and white photographs became common in these catalogs during the 1890s, shortly after Kodak introduced the first handheld camera in 1888. The pictures it produced were less than ideal for marketing purposes, but photography was hyped as a more “honest” form of description. From 1890 to the start of World War I, companies continued to use elaborate chromolithographs for cover art and engravings for individual plant descriptions. Gradually photographs replaced hand drawn imagery in garden catalogs, and after the 1920s hand-drawn artwork had all but disappeared.

Today's catalogue

As it has in so much of our lives, the internet is changing the mail order business. Printed seed and nursery catalogs are becoming an endangered species. Many gardeners enjoy the efficiency of online ordering but some, myself included, still like to browse the illustrated catalogs at their leisure. I do order online, but only after selections are made from browsing print catalogs. The catalog arriving in my mailbox is a glorious reminder of

spring and a new season coming that I would miss if companies stopped producing them.

Some newer companies seem to be taking cues from the past and re-introducing artwork into their catalogs and seed packaging. These companies recognize the long history of gardening businesses reflecting their aesthetics in their marketing. Most catalogs use photographs now, but most still have a distinctive aesthetic sense. I enjoy the return to hand-drawn images but I also think that it is the overall artistic component that makes the seed catalog such a pleasure, and this is less dependent on medium than one would think.

In the gardening world, publishing is big business and these days many of our most knowledgeable plantmen and women write books on their subjects, rather than contribute to catalogs. While catalogs still provide education and ideas, they rarely contain the in-depth explorations we gardeners might be looking for. The advice and education we receive from expert plantmen and women, people who know their plants like we know our pets, is a comfort and an inspiration, even though now we frequently must buy their books to really educate ourselves.

Many people have differing views of the future of the garden catalog. Some see it as being subsumed by the internet, others believe, as I do, that there is something about the experience of flipping through the pages of a garden catalog that cannot be replaced. Most likely it will all come down to dollars and cents, as all things seem to in this country of ours. If that is true, and catalog production proves too expensive, it will be a crushing loss to those of us here in the dark cold New England winters, waiting for, and dreaming of, spring. ●

Several major collections of historical seed catalogs exist. Three collections stand out as stellar: The Smithsonian Institution (www.si.si.edu/DigitalCollections/SeedNurseryCatalogs/collection.cfm), Henry G. Gilbert Nursery and Seed Trade Catalog Collection, a part of the National Agricultural Library's Special Collections (<https://archive.org/details/usda-nurseryandseedcatalog%26sort=-reviewdate&tab=about>), and The Mertz Library at the New York Botanical Garden (<http://libguides.nybg.org/nurseryandseedcatalogs>).



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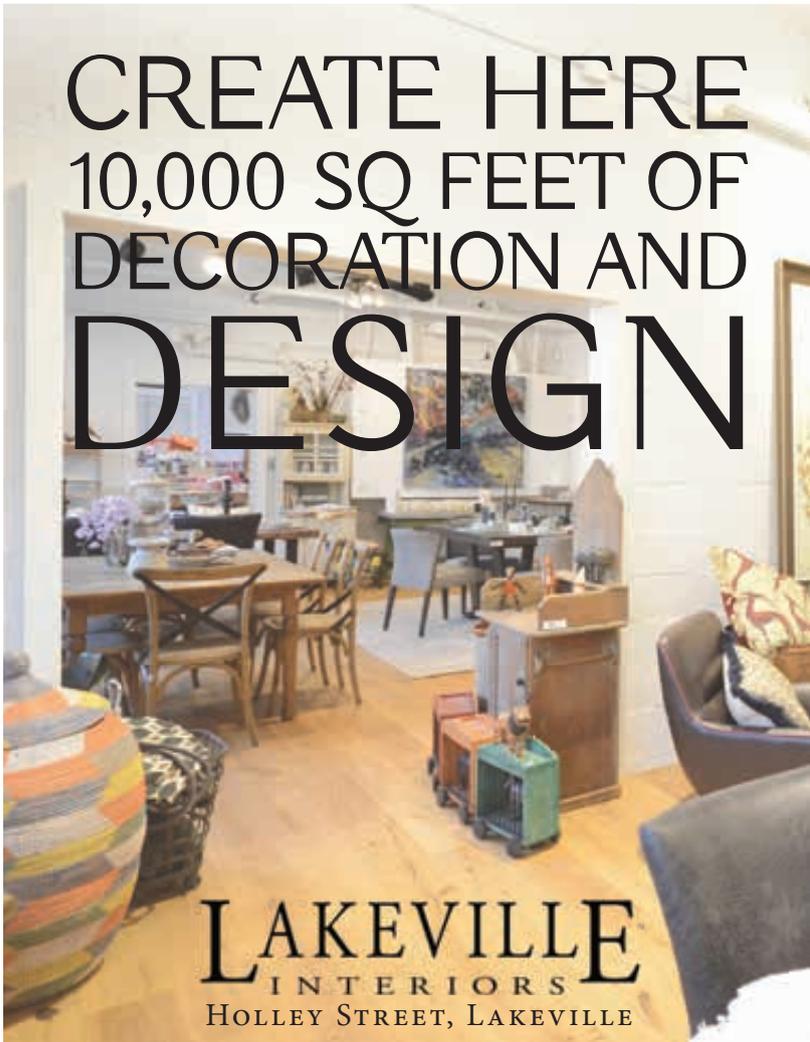
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Ronnybrook

AND A CENTURY OF OSOFSKY DAIRY FARMERS

By Carol Ascher
info@mainstreetmag.com

Ronnybrook Dairy sits on a wide expanse of pastureland about a mile north of Route 199 in northern Dutchess County, NY, just west of Pulver Corners. Coming onto the 750-acre farm owned by Rick and Ronny Osofsky, two brothers in their seventies, what you see are a few stray cows wandering about, half a dozen cars parked higgypiggly around an old tree; a two-story bungalow that serves as offices for the brothers, Rick's daughter Kate, and a couple of employees, a large barn where a third of their 300 cattle can be milked at any one time, and a processing plant in which the milk is pasteurized and turned into yogurt, butter, cheese, and ice cream. It's a reassuring site, suggesting both a world largely gone by and the Osofsky's creative energy.

Farming is who I am

Ronnybrook is a boutique dairy whose products are coveted throughout the tri-state area. But, if it remains a testimony to the Osofsky's persistence and imagination, it has not been immune to the strains under which small dairy farms have operated over the past eighty years. Rick, who spent his career as a lawyer in Poughkeepsie, coming back every weekend to farm, is more than aware of the obstacles to keeping Ronnybrook going.

"I'm not sure why we're here. It has to do with who I am. This is really important to me." And he tells me a joke about a farmer who has just won the lottery. When asked what

he's going to do now, the farmer says, "Keep farming until I've used up all the money."

Their farming origins

Farming is in the Osofsky's genes: Rick and Ronny's grandfather, Nathan Osofsky, was a recent Russian immigrant when in 1907 he and his brother, Max, bought a farm in the Ellsworth Hills above Sharon. Weakened by tuberculosis, Nathan soon turned to the less strenuous work of cattle dealing. Meanwhile, his wife Rebecca began by offering room and kosher board in their Ellsworth house and later ran the Hotel Grand House in Amenia.

Still, Rebecca must have hankered for the farming life, for she made sure that her four sons all became farmers; Abe, Dave (Rick and Ronny's father), Phil, and Sid Osofsky had dairy farms in Goshen, Connecticut; and in Amenia, Millerton, Boston Corners, and Pine Plains, NY.

While Sid, the youngest, served in World War II before buying a farm, the older three Osofsky brothers were young farmers when the Depression hit. The government tried to protect farms by keeping the price of milk from cycling. But its base price was keyed to 1914, which was too low for farmers to make a living. Like many dairy farmers in the region, the Osofsky brothers sometimes subsidized their farming life by working in the armaments industry, and they lost farms when they couldn't pay the mortgage, only to buy new farms when they had a little cash.

Failure is not an option

Unwilling to fail, the Osofskys were among several dozen dairy farmers in the



Above: The next generation of Osofsky women. Below, left: The iconic glass milk bottles. Photos by B. Docktor.



Hudson Valley around Pine Plains in 1986, when the Reagan administration deregulated the dairy business and attempted to stabilize the market by encouraging farmers to get rid of cows. The Federal Dairy Buyout Program paid \$1,000 for every cow sold, but the farmer had to stop farming for five years. "In one year, almost every dairy farm in the Hudson Valley went out of business," remembers Rick, who managed to keep Ronnybrook going by appealing to consumers with "old-fashioned" glass bottles. "There were no glass bottles on the market. So we got a small government grant to start the glass bottles, and we were suddenly on the map when a story came out about Ronnybrook in *The New York Times*."

These days, Ronnybrook Dairy is one of two farms left in Pine Plains. (The other, Chase farm, has made a go of selling raw milk). In addition to diversifying their products and

offering glass bottles, Rick and Ronny Osofsky have taken advantage of the urban farm markets to sell directly to consumers. Ronnybrook trucks drive ninety miles to New York City several times a week and on the weekends, setting up their stalls in green markets at the United Nations, Columbia University, the Museum of Natural History, and other venues. "People in New York City are concerned with where their food comes from," Rick acknowledges, grateful that, for the moment, there has been a way forward. ●

To learn more about Ronnybrook Farm, you can call them at (518) 398-6455 or visit them online at www.ronnybrook.com.



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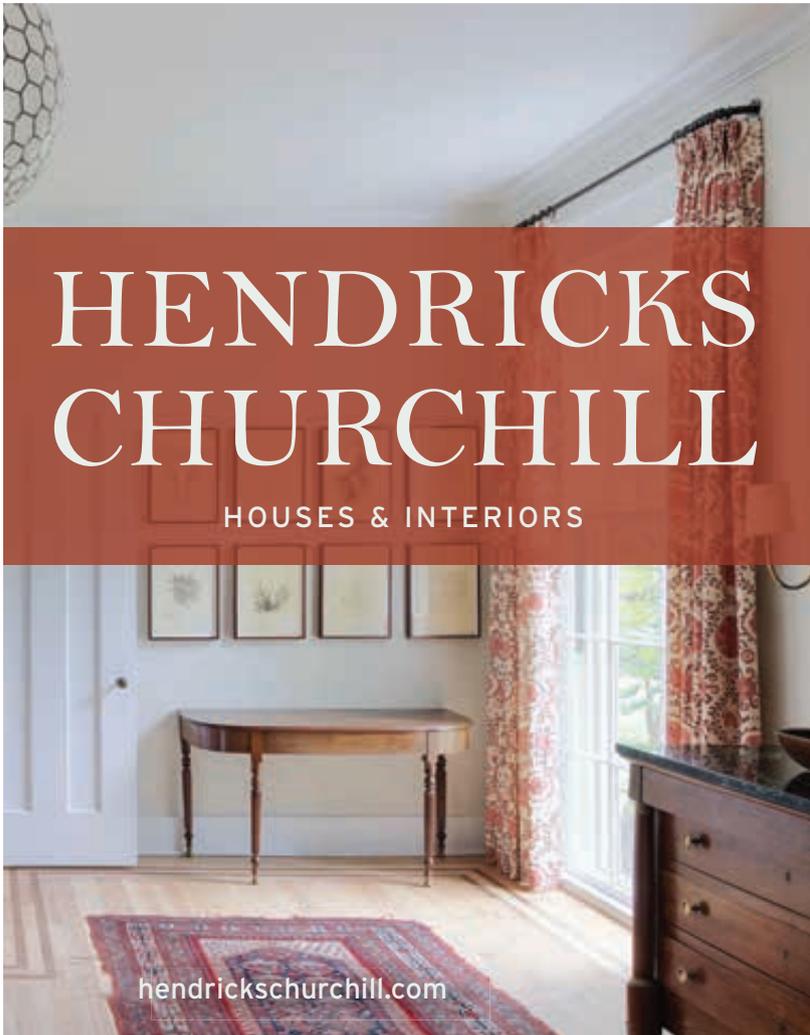


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EILEEN FIELDING, CENTER DIRECTOR

At Audubon Sharon, the doctor is in

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

“I can’t remember when I haven’t been totally engrossed in nature – in the environment and ecology.” The self-revelation causes Eileen Fielding to gently smile, an expression that she shares with great regularity. “It’s been quite a journey. My four older siblings were always involved with animals, so I grew up in a house that was very animal friendly. My older brother, in fact, had the largest live reptile collection in the entire Springfield area in our basement.”

The snakes, turtles, iguanas, and small alligators and the Fielding family all shared a home in Springfield, MA, where Eileen grew up. In addition to her brother’s reptile collection, her sister pursued a love of horses by working on a nearby farm and another brother would return from hikes in the woods with baby squirrels in his pockets that would be raised as pets.

“When we moved to a house that abutted a 20-acre city conservation area, it was like having a great backyard to explore.” And, exploration became so much a part of Eileen’s soul that her years of education and professional experience reflected a constant journey of discovery. The newly named Center Director for Audubon Sharon brings very impressive credentials to her new position that can only serve to greatly benefit the Center and its far reaching work.



The young volunteer

At a point when jumping on her bicycle and peddling eleven miles came without second thought, Eileen volunteered at the local Massachusetts Audubon Nature Center working in the rehabilitation of birds. She was all of 13 at the time, and considered these weekend forays her extra-curricular activity.

It was little wonder that she enrolled in the University of Massachusetts to pursue her ecological ambitions. “I must have been easily distracted,” confides Eileen. “After a couple years of academics, I got the chance to join the staff of The Children’s Museum of

Hartford as a staff naturalist.” So, off to Hartford she went, working for two years before returning to Amherst to resume her academic studies.

But, just as she returned to the rhythms of academic life, another temptation presented itself

and Eileen couldn’t turn it down. “I was offered a spot on the team studying blue whale migrations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It was for the summer, but extended into the following academic year, so I took my second hiatus.”

The study, conducted in the frigid Gulf, not only tracked and photographed whales, but included study of other migrating wildlife. “Since I had experience working with birds at Mass Audubon, I became the bird specialist. I’d get dropped off on one of the Mingan Islands and spend the day tracking bird migrations – the bird person on a whale team.”

Her circuitous journey continued as Eileen finished her degree in Natural Resources at UMass, returned for a time to The Children’s Museum of Hartford, then made the conscious decision to pursue her passions in graduate school.

Ever higher

It was off to the University of Connecticut with the goal of getting a Master’s degree when one of her mentors made a powerful suggestion.

Above: Eileen Fielding and kestrel.
Below, left: Eileen Fielding and eagle in 1978. Photos courtesy of Eileen Fielding.



Continued on next page ...

“He looked at what I’d done and where I believed I wanted to go and suggested that I not simply pursue a Master’s – but go straight for a Ph.D.” There was only one caveat in her academic pursuit. Over the years of dealing with the feathered and furred creatures found in nature centers and museum programs, Eileen had developed an acute allergy. If getting an advanced degree is, as the old cliché suggests, “learning more and more about less and less,” she was going to have to find a subject that had neither fur nor feathers.

“I spent years learning about the ecological impact on fish. Specifically, I became focused on the evolutionary biology of desert topminnows ... tiny fish threatened with extinction.”

The doctor is in

Degree in hand and growing a relationship with Richard Haley, the man who would become her husband, Dr. Eileen Fielding needed to find a position that would allow her to put her extensive learning into action. She will quickly tell you that the “Dr.” title “isn’t important.” The depth of knowledge and the experience, however, is.

The employment listing in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* was cryptic, at best – “Ecologist, Director, Librarian for a small wildlife center in the Indiana Dunes.” And, she was off to Richardson Wildlife Center on the shores of Lake Michigan. While



there, she was invited to teach at the University of Chicago in an adjunct role.

“Richard and I agreed that when he completed his master’s program at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Science, our next move would be for him.” With a growing reputation as an expert field naturalist and educator, when Audubon New York offered Richard a position as director of centers and education, the couple found a home in Pittsfield, MA, Eileen accepting a position as executive director of the Hoosic River Watershed Association in nearby Williamstown and extending the opportunity to continue her teaching experiences which eventually included Trinity College, St. Joseph’s College, and Wesleyan University.

Personal tragedy and strength to move on

In 2006, with Eileen unable to join him because of her professional responsibilities, Richard made a trip to Arizona to meet with friends and take some time to do some camping. During the course of that trip, he was fatally injured in an automobile accident – leaving Eileen a young widow and forcing her to make a career decision.

An opening as Executive Director of the Farmington River Watershed Association presented itself and Eileen began crafting a new life in Connecticut. During her nearly ten year tenure in that position, she was recognized and her accomplishments celebrated as a strong advocate, a patient educator and a visionary in the increasingly critical pursuit of ecological conservation.

Welcome to Audubon Sharon

Eileen is no stranger to Audubon Sharon. “I visited the campus when I was a teenager and loved it,” she recalls. “When I relocated to the area several years ago, I was drawn to volunteer in the critical wildlife rehabilitation facility at the Center.” Eileen and her partner, noted performance artist Michael Moschen, live in Cornwall, CT, not far from the Center.

Tentatively, at first, then with more confidence, Eileen found the allergies



Above: Eileen Fielding. Photo by John Brett. Below, left: Eileen Fielding and racoon in 1978. Photo courtesy of Eileen Fielding.

that had plagued her years before had become much less acute. Working in the delicate environment of wildlife rehabilitation was possible, and she loved it.

In time, the senior staff at Audubon Sharon and members of the Volunteer Stewardship Board recognized both the knowledge and the skill she brought to her activities. In time, she was asked to join the Board and have her contributions recognized.

Hail and farewell

Sharon Audubon learned in late 2017 that Center Director Sean Grace – a leader credited with bringing both vitality and a keen sense of the economics of managing the sprawling forest wildlife preserve – had been invited to take a major career step. Sean accepted a position as president of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and Audubon Sharon needed a new leader.

In life, there are moments of serendipity that bring people and opportunity together at just the right moment. As Audubon Sharon Advisory Board Chair, Alexandra Peters, reflects, “Eileen knows who we are and what we do. She is a practical visionary, and they don’t come along so often! So, of course we thought of her immediately.”

Keep conservation in the culture

“I am humbled by the opportunity to serve as Audubon Sharon’s Center Director,” offered Eileen with a modesty that is both typical and thoroughly charming. “It would be foolish to

pretend I have a grand plan for the future. I’ve just started and am learning the great talents and contributions of the Center staff.”

What she will affirm, however, is that her perspective on the Center’s role in the community is to be welcoming, supportive, and accessible. “We will strive to keep conservation in the culture – the very fabric of what our community is about ... what it cares for ... how it thrives.”

The resources available to the surrounding community are most impressive; 3,000 acres in four sanctuaries, a robust wildlife rehabilitation program supported by professional staff and trained, dedicated volunteers, a summer camp program that has grown dramatically over the past years, and a year-round educational effort that reaches into the schools and community organizations in the tri-state area.

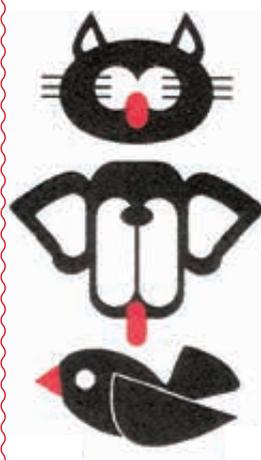
“We want the community to care about what we do and to feel welcome to the trails, displays, and the Center programs.” Eileen Fielding offers the affirmation accompanied by her gentle smile – and a new journey begins. •

For more about Eileen Fielding and Audubon Sharon, visit their website at www.sharon.audubon.org.

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South Kent School's Center for Innovation

Spheres of influence

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

The hills of South Kent are percolating with energy and the epicenter is the South Kent School. It's there that the Center for Innovation is changing the way that this boys school community sees itself as an educational institution and a force for social good.

Center for Innovation

In its fifth year, the Center for Innovation (CFI) is not a physical place on campus. Rather it's a guiding core ideal that permeates the curriculum, pedagogy, and school ethos. If you're one of those people who needs to locate the center in something physical, then it would have to be the mind of Headmaster Andrew Vadnais. It is from here that the CFI idea has sprung – not fully formed, like Athena from the head of Zeus, but rather as a seed to be planted and cultivated.

Intentional community building

A historian by training, Vadnais has long been intrigued by intentional communities, such as the Shakers. (He's also a trustee of Hancock Shaker Village). Learning from history, he is intrigued by the Shaker vision of a communal existence, a life not defined by consumption but lived within the limits of nature, and an inventiveness to use technological advances in the service of human needs – not to create wants. It's these Shaker ideals that he sees worthy to carry forward into today's world.

For Vadnais, "Industrialization of production, food supply – even education has divorced us from the natural world, and our current consumption levels defy earth's limits. We need to educate young people that there are larger ideals at work, those of connection, wholeness, and compassion. By re-establishing a sustainable connection to land, design, and community we hope to teach those lessons."

During his time in education he's also seen the consequences of a lack of intentionality in technological use, something he observes playing out with his male students and culture at large on a daily basis. He envisions an educational model to counteract the addictive and mindless use of technology taking hold in our society today. One that puts technology in the service of humans, not the other way around.

Branching out

While the lofty worthiness of these goals underpin CFI's founding, Vadnais also saw the Center's potential to diversify the school's focus and claim a niche in the competitive New England boarding school environment.

In recent history, this 170-student boys boarding school is primarily known for its competitive Division I-bound athletes. Vadnais conceived CFI as a way to bind the community and offer a nexus of meaning for all students.

From the ground up

A dairy farm that bordered the school's property caught Vadnais's imagination as the perfect site for North Campus, where one hub of the Center for Innovation would be located.

Vadnais carried that vision to Chicago, and in a back-of-the-napkin conversation with alumni F.K. Day, he gained the green light to continue conversations if the farm came up for sale. Soon after, the farm was on the market, Day, Vadnais, and other trust-



Above: Students working on mortise and tenon joints in the Historic Building Technologies course. Below, left: South Kent School's Randall oxen pair Pancho and Pepe. Images courtesy of South Kent School.

ees were trudging through the snowy property adjacent to Hatch Pond, a vision for the future was shared, and a sale agreed.

F.K. and his brother Lincoln also purchased a connecting 22-acre parcel that abutted the farm and donated funds to make the Center for Innovation a reality, no strings attached. Their only proviso year after year is to "keep rockin' it."

Why and how

Every great why needs a great how, and Allison May Gennings plays that role. As the CFI coordinator she is critical to executing and helping to shape Vadnais's vision. As a former English instructor at the school with a background in outdoor and environmental education, she is perfectly suited to help the CFI vision and mission find its way both into the curriculum and into the life of the students. She enthusiastically works to keep the Center evolving and further insinuating itself into all areas of the school.

Continued on next page ...



Gennings fully acknowledges the CFI is a true team effort. She testifies, “Our team of dedicated faculty, some of whom have been teaching CFI courses since its pilot phase, create unique challenge-based courses within the CFI program. Their passion and tireless drive is the true value and spirit of not only the CFI program, but the specialness of South Kent School.”

In that spirit, the entire school community keeps CFI developing in three “spheres:” Sustainable Earth, Sustainable Design, and Sustainable Community.

Sustainable Earth

Sustainable Earth takes place on the North Campus farm. There you’ll find cows, pigs, goats, chickens, raised beds, a hoop house, bee hives, the 1741 Hatch House, and the under-construction Sharpe Classroom. This new building will house a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen and classroom space.

Students work on the farm in fall and spring afternoons under the supervision of the farm manager. There they learn how to garden, compost, tend to goats and explore their invasive-chomping potential, milk cows, and try their hand at bee keeping.

When the Sharpe classroom is complete, the plan is to offer programming to the wider community. Though the building is now just an enclosed space, Gennings is already hard at work contacting potential speakers and devising future educational events, where the boys can demonstrate their learning to a larger audience.

One of the most popular courses in this sphere is a Sustainable Cooking class, currently taught in a cramped dormitory kitchen. In the fall, over 70 students signed up for this course with a class limit of eight. Part of the curriculum is learning to dress deer and pheasant, slaughter a chicken, grocery shop, properly use kitchen knives and other cooking implements, and prepare meals together.

In their own version of nose-to-tail cooking, last spring the class hosted a Foraging and Pork Festival, where more pedestrian American palates were widened by Asian students contributing a gourmet pig’s head recipe!

Sustainable Design

Back on the main campus, The Martin Henry Library is home to the Sustainable Design sphere. Vadnais borrows Walt Disney’s term “imagineering” to characterize the emphasis on imagination, creation, innovation, and fabrication.

It’s here that teams of teenage solutionists embrace hands-on projects aimed at solving campus-based real-world needs. Course projects include developing a high-altitude weather balloon with on-board flight computers and cameras, developing apps to facilitate farm management, social entrepreneurship, and robotics and engineering.

Sustainable Community

The third sphere, Sustainable Community, physically bridges the two parts of campus and connects the work of the other spheres. This part of the CFI trinity is evolving, and philosophically embraces a wider view of the students’ places in a sustainable world.

The goal is that what is learned through the farm and design spaces will ripple outward into other areas of the students’ lives and become the basis for their own intentional community building.

Lessons learned about the importance of biodiversity on the farm can be extended to seeking diversity in human relationships. Resilience, patience, trial and error, and sometimes acceptance of limits encountered in robotics class finds their way into how students take on new risks and collaborative efforts in college or career. An understanding that environmental sustainability involves intergenerational considerations of resource use can affect how students view themselves as future political citizens.

Growing gains

The work of CFI is still in progress, and it’s obvious that Vadnais and Gennings are bursting with energy



Above, top to bottom, L-R: Construction of the new South Kent School culinary building for the farm-to-table program. Students taking a break from the heat on the Sustainable Agriculture course. Fall 2017 honey extraction and bottling. Images courtesy of South Kent School.

and ideas for the future. Yet, in four short years they have a faculty and administration that has enthusiastically embraced the principles of CFI and put them to work in curriculum; a board of trustees that is behind the vision as a cornerstone of institutional planning; a canvas of land on which to create; and financial resources to move along the continuum from idea to reality.

Part of taking a calculated risk in the direction of the school is an openness and willingness to experiment, and yes, make some mistakes. Vadnais and Gennings admit with humor that some programmatic decisions don’t quite always go as planned.

With involvement of faculty and students they head back not only to what went wrong, but re-question the initial underlying assumptions and beliefs as well. In sustainability circles, this is known as “double loop” learning, where making mistakes is integral to progress.

Future building

Last spring South Kent graduated its first class of boys exposed to CSI for all four years of their time there. Anecdotal successes are evident.

Student comments identified benefits such as building relationships with boys outside their natural peer group, willingness to take risks, exposure to important life skills, increased self-reliance, and the fun of hands-on experiential learning. There are also the stirrings of post-graduation decisions being influenced by environmental sustainability.

Vadnais is in this for the long haul. He is confident that the lessons learned and the connections made through CFI’s courses and experiences will yield a fruitful harvest of future global citizens and decision makers – and evolve South Kent School into a hub of sustainability radiating outward. •

South Kent School is a college preparatory boarding and day school for boys located at 40 Bulls Bridge Road in South Kent, CT. For more information about the Center for Innovation, visit www.southkentschool.org or contact Allison May Gennings, CFI Coordinator at genningsa@southkentschool.org.



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SHINRIN-YOKU COMES TO THE BERKSHIRES

By Ian Strever
info@mainstreetmag.com

This morning's edition of *The New York Times* featured a new \$4,000 treadmill that will be released later this month from Peloton, the company famous for bringing the world its "internet-connected, brushed-steel spin bicycle equipped with a 20-inch touch-screen." That is at least three too many hyphenated words than should be needed to describe any product, but if you are trying to get people to shell out two grand for a bike that doesn't move, you better have some whiz-bang selling points.

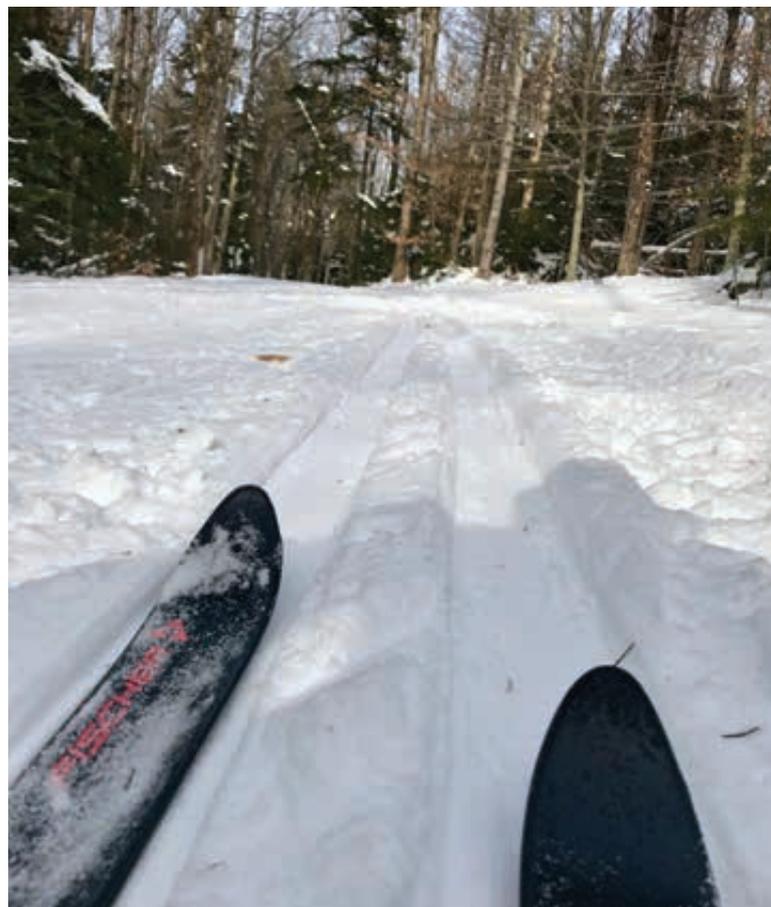
Peloton's offerings feature tie-ins to live classes taking place in their brick-and-mortar spin boutique in Chelsea (still more hyphens), as well as options to ride with professional cyclists through scenic landscapes around the world. Virtually, of course. I'm sure the weather will be lovely in the Dolomites whenever you log on – nothing like the snowstorm that Andy Hampsten endured to become the first American to win the Giro D'Italia, and nothing like the cold, damp rides that most professionals do throughout most of the year to sustain their fitness. But if I can ride in the comfort of my home and get the same level of fitness, why not do it?

No wind, no flat tires, no cars? Sign me up.

There's more to exercise than just exercise

But most cyclists don't ride just for fitness. We don't walk, run, or work out just to get stronger, either. Studies show that exercise of any type promotes both our physical and intellectual wellbeing, but as psychologists are learning, outdoor exercise bolsters our emotional wellness in ways that indoor exercise does not. One recent study reported a significant reduction in the anxiety levels of those who engaged in "green exercise" activities that included road and mountain biking, and other studies indicate that even just visiting natural environments in urban settings (i.e., parks) can reduce stress.

Many of us who call this area home do so because of its natural beauty and charm — an aesthetic that has long made it the subject of landscape painters. But psychologists and therapists in the area are beginning to tap into the healing potential of our surroundings. Eric Krawczyk, a counselor in South Lee, MA, is a certified forest therapy guide who recommends "Vitamin N" for just about all of us who are so divorced from nature in our everyday lives. Krawczyk's background



Above: The rhythmic swish of skis on snow accentuates the peacefulness of the Berkshires. Below, left: Eric Krawczyk (center), a certified Forest Therapy Guide, poses with his band of intrepid skiers after a brisk tour of Notchview.

is in Wilderness Therapy, which he explored after his experience with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), where groups enter wilderness areas to develop technical outdoor and leadership skills.

Outdoor therapy

Krawczyk now brings groups into the outdoors for therapeutic healing, and I joined him on a windy January morning for one of his "Hikes with Healers," a monthly gathering of interested participants with a guest hike leader who connects attendees to the environment or activity. We gathered around a table at the Notchview Nordic Ski Center in Windsor, MA, for a brief group meeting and introduction to Dr. David Martin, a chiropractor from Pittsfield with a background in downhill and nordic ski instruction, which would come in handy as he led our group on the day's activity: a cross-country ski along the groomed Notchview trail network.

There are therapeutic techniques that are explicitly designed to connect individuals to their natural surroundings, but the first step is to get participants to feel comfortable and

safe in the outdoors. On this day, Krawczyk and Martin allayed concerns about the frigid temperatures with a brief discussion on how to dress for cold weather and assurances of safety by way of their training as physicians and wilderness first responders. For Krawczyk's patients – many of whom are adolescent males – traditional therapy is similarly intimidating or fraught, and this slow entry into treatment feels less forced, less clinical. Much of our time on this outing would be spent simply getting acquainted with the phenomenon of exercising in sub-zero temperatures, an experience that demands connection to weather, trail conditions, surroundings, and the aches and pains that accompany any kind of exercise.

I stepped to the trailhead with my skis under arm and blowing a bit in a steady wind out of the west. I had ridden my bike through this area a few years ago, and I concluded that strong winds must be a feature of this spot, located in the Hoosac Range, a southern extension of Vermont's Green Mountains. I

Continued on next page ...



immediately adjusted my sunglasses to account for the brilliant sun, and zipped up my shell to retain some warmth from the cabin before we started moving.

The group ranged from beginners to more advanced skiers, and Dr. Martin provided pointers to everyone while Krawczyk encouraged and supported the novice skiers. After a brief skills assessment, I broke off with another experienced skier to explore the trails on our own, and while our trip didn't involve any overtly therapeutic practices, the novelty of skiing with someone in an unfamiliar setting allowed for many of the same benefits. My partner knew the property better than me, so I mostly allowed him to be my guide while I soaked up the Vitamin N from the red spruces that line the trails. A full sixteen kilometers of the paths are above 2000' in elevation and therefore more frequently skiable than other areas in the Berkshires.

For the better part of two hours, I honed my form, thanks to Dr. Martin's pointers, and beamed at the dozens of other skiers who beamed back at me while enjoying perfect mid-winter trail conditions. I was ... happy!

Shinrin-yoku

More advanced nature therapy can involve practices adapted from the Japanese concept of Shinrin-yoku, or "forest bathing." Forest bathing differs from simply skiing, walking, or hiking in its mindfulness prac-

tics that encourage participants to bond with their natural surroundings. Individuals are invited into nature by, for instance, isolating each of their senses: inhaling the loamy scent of a spring forest, listening intently to each sound at the margins of a meadow, examining the work of an ant. These exercises establish a direct line of communication with our surroundings by eliminating the stressors and distractions that drag us recursively into our heads.

This is not communing with chipmunks: scientific studies in Japan and have documented the physiological benefits of shinrin-yoku. One study of the practice in 24 forests around the island found decreases in heart rate, blood

pressure, and concentrations of stress hormones among participants, and another study found an increase in immune function after longer forest outings. In fact, "in Japan, Shinrin-yoku trails are certified by a blood-sampling study to determine whether the

natural killer cell count is raised enough for the trail to qualify," says Ben Page, a certified forest therapy guide and founder of Shinrin-yoku Los Angeles.

Go outside, doctor's orders!

Krawczyk is an evangelist for nature's healing powers, and in addition to organizing Hikes with Healers, he is working with a group of like-minded practitioners throughout the Berkshires to promote its benefits. Some insurance plans are now reimbursing patients for this kind of therapy, and doctors are beginning to prescribe time in nature as a part of an overall treatment regimen. Krawczyk aims to bring patients out for at least forty-five minutes, once a week for twelve weeks, but he also attempts to create groups of patients for outings of two or three hours.

Additionally, he is working with local land managers and the Berkshire Natural Resources Council to develop an interactive map of trails that could be used for nature therapy. Locations for forest bathing abound: they need not be large or groomed for a particular kind of outdoor activity, but they must offer opportunities for us to absorb nature's healing power. The woods behind your house might do, especially when leaves and seasonal growth muffle the

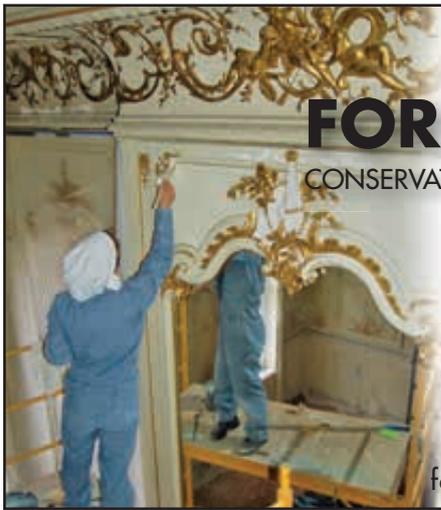
intrusion of man-made noise. For those looking to try nature therapy, resorts such as Kripalu and Canyon Ranch offer introductions to the practices, and Naturetreatment.org provides contact information for trained practitioners in our area. More of a DIY-er? Sign up for their free "Starter Kit" that includes ten "invitations" to get you started on your own schedule.

As Krawczyk explains, however, the experience is like a massage; "you can do it yourself, but it's better when done by someone else." A guide allows you to absorb the surroundings without concern for direction, time, or other outside distractions. My experience on skis affirmed that belief, but it provided another benefit: community. I lost myself as much in companionship and conversation with my skiing partner as I did with my surroundings, and our mutual appreciation of the outdoors led us to exchange email addresses and later trade information about outdoor events we discussed on the outing. A certain irony, I suppose, that setting out to connect with nature helped me to connect more closely with my fellow man. •



Above: Dr. David Martin leads a group of skiers through the healing woods of the Notchview Nordic Center in Windsor, MA. Below, left: The "Magic Wood" trail features elusive forest gnomes that invite younger skiers into the magic of nature.





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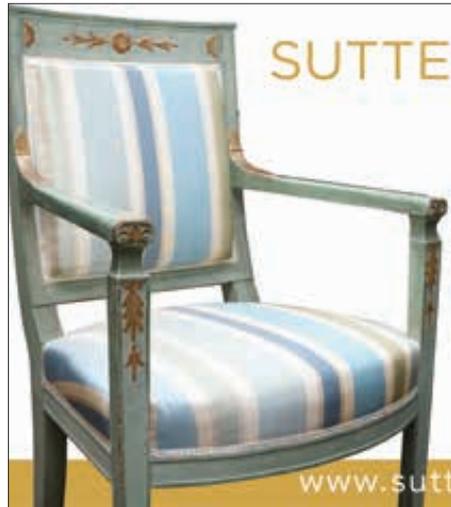


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Backyard birding

By John Torsiello
info@mainstreetmag.com

According to the website www.LiveScience.com, more than 60 million Americans consider themselves birdwatchers. Spring is a perfect time to catch the bug and enjoy our feathered friends up close and personal. There's no better way of doing that than set up feeding stations in your backyard.

March is a time of rebirth and the air is full of flying creatures, all looking for a nutritious meal, whether they are on their way to somewhere else or hanging around in your trees and shrubs. With most of their natural supplies (berries, fruits, etc.) exhausted after a winter of foraging, birds will welcome your meals of sunflower and other seeds.

"Your home is a great way to both enjoy watching birds, but also to begin learning about them," says David Grover, president of the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club of Dutchess County, NY. "Having a feeder that attracts birds to your yard is a great time to learn about birds." Once you start to attract birds to your yard, you can identify them by either purchasing a good book online or at a local book store.



Above: American goldfinches at a feeder. Below left: A black-capped chickadee enjoys a snack.

One with the natural world

"In addition to helping birds and enjoying their beauty, backyard bird watching is an excellent way to connect people to the natural world. That can lead to conservation and advocacy, which in turn helps other birds that are not usually found in backyards, as well as all wildlife in general," opines Frank Margiotta, who oversees educational programs for the Waterman Bird Club.

Grover says attracting birds to your backyard provides "great entertainment," especially during inclement weather. "I enjoy watching the birds at my feeders every morning. Feeding birds helps the birds through the cold spells."

I've personally fed birds for many years and taken great pleasure from the pastime. While birds are most aided by human kindness during the cold winter months, when they must eat several times their weight to merely stay alive, feeding them in all seasons provides pleasure throughout the year. As Grover points out, watching chickadees

bob up and down on their flights to and from bird feeders and hearing their distinct "chick-a-dee-dee-dee" calls never gets old. Nor does the sight of a brilliant red cardinal grazing at dusk, or the noisy chatter and brilliant blue colors of a blue jay streaking in to fill up on sunflower seeds. We have counted almost three dozen different types birds (many varieties of sparrows) at our feeders over the years, and there's always a special visitor, like the rose breasted grosbeak that stopped by for a half hour last fall.

"There are many good books or you can Google an online app that will help identify birds in your area," says Grover. "I have between ten to 15 species visit my feeder during the winter. I have red-bellied woodpeckers, downy woodpeckers, a male yellow-bellied sapsucker, and a hairy woodpecker that come

Continued on next page ...





Above: Black-capped chickadee at a feeder. Below, right: Eastern bluebird hatchlings in a bluebird nest box. Photo contributed by Frank Margiotta.

to the suet I have. There are blue jays, mourning doves, black-capped chickadees, tufted titmouses, Carolina wrens, American goldfinches, sparrows, northern cardinals, and dark-eyed juncos. There are many other birds that can be attracted to a bird-feeder depending upon your location.”

Grover puts out a hummingbird feeder in the spring and always attracts the gorgeous and curious ruby-throated little beauties. “If one gets into attracting nesting birds, putting up a few birdhouses is a fun way to watch a family raise their young. Bluebird boxes are popular to place in one’s yard. They may attract bluebirds, tree swallows, wrens, or sparrows.”

The three things needed to attract birds

Margiotta says to attract birds to a backyard three things are necessary: food, water, and shelter.

Food would be natural plantings and bird feeders, with several types are necessary to attract a variety of birds. There are general bird mix feeders, sunflower seed feeders, suet feeders. Water is very important to birds, but more difficult to provide in winter (there are heating devices that are available).

Shelter entails having protective cover for nesting wildlife. For example, dense vegetation areas and

evergreens provide hiding places and winter protection for birds when predators come calling. “The predators will come if you attract birds to your backyard, particularly if you have feeders out. Birdhouses are another good way to attract and keep birds on one’s property.”

A common mistake people often make when trying to attract birds is to keep their property “too neat.” A dense brush pile of branches, twigs, and leaves increases cover for small birds.

Binoculars and a good guide book

Grover advises newbie backyard birders to invest in a good guide book for bird identification. If you are serious about birding a good pair of binoculars are a must for viewing birds. “The Ralph T. Waterman bird club has birding outings every Wednesday and all are invited to participate. New birders are always welcomed and we are always willing to help them learn about the birds we see. Our club is always looking for new members and our members, besides being birders, are also involved in wildlife conservation.”

You can purchase feeders, bird houses, watering stations, seed and other foods at various locations, ranging from many local- to the big box stores. One of my favorite places to fulfill my backyard birding needs is an Agway store. The company has a comprehensive array of feeders (ranging in price from \$30 to over \$100), and they sell quality seeds in bulk, which dramatically cuts down on the cost of the hobby.

Various seeds attract different birds. One of the prettiest of all visitors, the American goldfinch, loves thistle seed, and there are special feeders that hold the thistle. Sunflower seeds attract a wide range of birds; woodpeckers and nuthatches love suet cakes; and mixed seed is good for ground feeders.

The (unwanted or wanted?) guest to the party

A note here about squirrels. After years of being upset by their raiding parties on feeders, I simply gave up and consider them guests to the party. I found there are some very good feeders, especially those made by Yankee Droll, that have metal protecting feeding holes (as well as other brands of feeders) that make it, if not impossible, then more difficult for the fluffy varmints to get to the seed. Buying inexpensive feeders made only of plastic is inviting destruction of the apparatus by the toothy marauders. You will be much happier if you live and let live.

The Waterman Bird Club maintains a website (www.watermanbirdclub.org) that provides information about the club, field trips, member meetings that feature speakers, and more about birding. The club also conducts a “Great Backyard Birding Count” every February. But there are obviously a number of other websites devoted to birding, too.

So, make your backyard come alive this spring by creating an attractive place for birds to feed and live. You will be rewarded by song and colorful aerial displays all year long. •



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INSURING YOUR WORLD

Animals, animals, animals... Have you ever considered the liability of owning an animal? Unfortunately, animals can cause large liability claims such as the cow or horse that gets outside of their fenced-in pasture and gets hit by a car, do you know if you are covered for such a loss? Most homeowners' policies will cover these types of claims – so long as you don't have more than one or two on your property. If you have more than that then you will need a "farmers' comprehensive personal liability" endorsement to your homeowners'. If you allow a neighbor to keep their animals on your property, make sure you get a certificate of insurance from them naming you as an additional insured on their policy. What about dogs? Do you have a "Hot Dog," being defined as a Pit Bull, German Shepard, Rottweiler, etc? If so, make sure you have adequate liability limits since the courts find strict liability against the owner should your dog bite another person. How about a tenant living in a rental house, make sure if you allow dogs that the tenant carries tenant homeowners' insurance since if their dog bites a passerby, they will be responsible and should have their own coverage. If they don't, you, the property owner, will be responsible! The devil is always in the details so check your insurances.

Kirk Kneller
Phone 518.329.3131
1676 Route 7A, Copake, N.Y.



Brad Peck, Inc.

What's a local wine?

The wine grapes and styles most of us are familiar with include Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, and Riesling on the white wine side, and Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Merlot, and Malbec on the red wine side. When you want to try a local wine and you see grape varieties like Seyval Blanc or Baco Noir or even Leon Millot, what are you to think? It's hard not to respond with suspicion to something completely new. Fortunately, since you'll most likely experience these wines in a local winery's tasting room, you'll have the chance to not only taste them, but to learn a lot about them while you do.

The Hudson-Chatham Winery is a place to do just that. If you're a wine lover, a tasting there will introduce you to the grapes mentioned above, as well as other grapes you might not have heard of, like Chelois. They're all French-American hybrid grapes, and they were selected by the winery for their resilience to colder climates and certain diseases, but also because of their potential to make delicious, French-style wines – the ultimate goal.

Columbia County hasn't established itself as the next Napa, but with its short growing season and cultivation of hybrids, it yields wines that are crisp, fruit-forward, light- to medium-bodied, and lower in alcohol. These are actually delightful wines with food, as they won't overpower certain flavors. You also won't feel woozy after a glass or two. Seyval Blanc, like its relative Sauvignon Blanc, is light and refreshing and pairs beautifully with cheese, chicken, fish, salad, and spicy dishes. Baco Noir, one of Hudson-Chatham's signature reds, is like a Pinot Noir, and is the perfect complement to everything from salad to sandwiches to pasta dishes, even roasts. And chocolate! It's lovely with a small piece of dark chocolate. If you're reticent about the potential for these French-American hybrids, consider that both a Baco Noir and a Chelois from Hudson-Chatham are on the wine list at the Culinary Institute of America.

Come see why Hudson-Chatham has been voted the Capital Region's Best Local Winery nearly every year since 2011, and Columbia County's Best Winery annually since 2014. The winery is open year-round and now has tasting rooms in Ghent, Tannersville, and Troy. Follow the winery on Facebook and learn more at www.hudsonchathamwinery.com.



Enhance your landscape (and pay less taxes)

Imagine turning the corner of your garden path and seeing fields rich in various grasses demarcated with old stone walls and mature trees. Do you feel wonder or do you wonder if you can continue to afford to maintain your land and pay property taxes?

Agriculture is part of our heritage. New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts all support preservation through programs designed to help farmers retain land through tax relief. The laws allow reduced property taxes for agricultural land by limiting the assessment to an "agricultural use value" rather than its non-farm market value.

Any owner of land used for agricultural production may qualify for an agricultural exemption if their land meets certain requirements or is rented to a legitimate farm operation. For example a neighbor owned 35 acres of fields that had not been productive for over 60 years. A few years ago he entered into an agreement with a farmer to revitalize and work the land. The property was reassessed as agricultural thereby reducing the valuation and tax bill by 40%. Now the farmer harvests the hay while the neighbor loves the beauty of the hay fields, loves that he no longer has to brush hog, and loves the reduced tax bill.

Our area has several land trust organizations that maintain active databases for matching farmers to landowners. They help parties establish arrangements by providing education and resources including referrals to volunteer consultants who help landowners assess the agricultural potential of their property. The process is not difficult and well worth it because there is no view more rewarding than an agricultural landscape.

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ATTRACTING BIRDS TO YOUR BACKYARD

Winter is a tough time for bird survival. By the time March rolls around, all of the natural resources for seeds and berries will have been depleted. The birds are dependent on you to help until new seeds grow in the late spring. Most birds spend all day looking for food, so you can help by consistently keeping your feeders full.

Suet is a high energy, high fat food source - great for the coldest days. Birdseed: buy the highest quality you can afford. Black oil sunflower seeds, with safflower and grey stripe and nutmeats will bring the best variety of birds. Mealworms provide loads of protein. Peanuts are high in protein and fat which provide energy for songbirds, crows and squirrels. Water is also very important for birds. They will become dehydrated if the ponds, rivers, and streams are frozen. Heated birdbaths are great or put out pans of water.

When planning your spring gardens and landscaping, please think of the birds. Plant as many berry bushes as you can: shadbush/serviceberry, flowering dogwood, viburnum, elderberry, winterberry, mountain ash, and crabapples. The birds will thank you by eating the many bugs and mosquitoes in your yard all summer long.



(413) 644-9007 • www.wild-birdstore.com
783 South Main Street, Great Barrington, MA



Poochini's Pet Salon

Dog grooming & boarding. 46 Robin Road, Craryville, NY. (518) 325-4150. poochinipetsalon.wixsite.com

Dogs like to be pampered (just like we do), and that's why dog lover Dawn Gardina gave up her job in the corporate world to fulfill her life-long dream. Poochini's Pet Salon is celebrating six years of premium dog grooming and boarding services in Dutchess and Columbia Counties, although Dawn has many clients that travel great distances for her services. Dog grooming appointments are made for one client at a time, with few exceptions. This makes the dogs less stressed and more comfortable, and also allows Dawn to give your dog her undivided attention. A puppy's very first groom with Dawn is free and each client is sent home with a small amount of "puppy's first hair cut" as a keepsake. Grooming hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 8am to 4pm. Dawn's boarding services are offered for small to medium-sized dogs and require meet-and-greets, the dogs have to be spayed/neutered and current on all shots, including kennel cough vaccine. All dogs stay at her home and will take part in her daily routine, just like her own two dogs, Bron and Tucker. Boarding pick-up and drop-off times are between 7am and 6pm, seven days a week. Poochini's prices for both grooming and boarding are very reasonable and Dawn looks forward to continuing to offer the best possible care to our four-legged friends.



Ledgewood Kennels

Boarding, grooming, training & dock diving dog pool. 639 Smithfield Road, Millerton, NY. (518) 789-6353. ledgewoodkennel.com

Ledgewood Kennels has been the premier kennel for the New York Hudson Valley, Harlem Valley area, Western Connecticut, Western Massachusetts, and beyond since 1987. Located on a beautiful 50-acre farm on Silver Mountain in Millerton, NY, it offers a peaceful atmosphere for pets with plenty of room to walk and hike. The facility was one of the first national sites for the world wide sport of Dock-Dogs with a 40 foot pool and 40 foot dock. Dogs are also able to go swimming in the property's pond. Other services also include full grooming, most types of training, boarding for dogs, cats, small animals, and birds. Their boarding facility is equipped with radiant in-floor heat and central air conditioning for maximum comfort. More recently Ledgewood Kennels has added a transport service for pets from New York City to the kennel for farm camp. In the future, owners Kirby and Chip are interested in adding a veterinary office for large and or small animal practice. Ledgewood Kennels is proud to be a small enough facility to give personal care to all of their guest, and it feels wonderful knowing that your pets can't wait to hop out of the car and have fun during their stay. "We know that the business would not exist without our customers and staff."



Columbia Tractor Inc.

Sales, service, & parts for Case International Harvester, Kubota, Kawasaki & more. Claverack, NY. (518) 828-1781. columbiatractor.com

Columbia Tractor was incorporated as an International Harvester Farm & Light Industrial Dealership in May 1964. The business has evolved in 50+ years as a farm machinery dealership servicing hundreds of farms, to fewer and much larger farms today. Columbia Tractor has expanded their customer base from Columbia, Berkshire, and Northern Dutchess Counties to Rensselaer, Greene, and Ulster Counties by getting into light industrial and commercial outdoor power equipment. They strive for supreme customer service, and the fact that they have a good core of employees that have been with them for many years speaks volumes for the company and who they are. Their mission has always been to offer top quality lines of farm and home equipment such as Case International Harvester, Kubota, Kawasaki, and Echo, just to name a few. With quality parts and service to back up what they sell, their large inventory parts is second to none, offering parts for all lines they sell and even parts for other manufacturers that they don't sell. Customers can always depend on the service department and the road service department who are ready to fix your equipment on site or pick it up for larger fixes. Stu Kinne and his team believe in taking the time to assure their customers that they are purchasing the right part or piece of equipment that best fits their needs.



Millerton Farmers Market

Fresh seasonal foods, year-round. 6 Dutchess Avenue, Millerton, NY. (518) 789-4259. millertonfarmersmarket.org

The year-round Millerton Farmers Market, now in its eleventh year, brings a wonderful array of fresh, locally produced food to the heart of the Village on Saturday mornings. The market is a program of the North East Community Center (NECC), and it's a place to shop for healthy, delicious vegetables in season plus much, much more. At the market you'll meet local farmers, sample handcrafted products (think luscious cheeses and cured meats or divine baked goods), watch a cooking demonstration featuring market produce, greet fellow customers in a warm setting, and get a great feeling of community. During the winter season, the market is indoors at the Millerton Methodist Church from 10am to 2pm on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. On many Saturdays, the market also offers a community table, where, for example, you can get information about other non-profits, register to vote, or learn about renewable energy in our area. Come Memorial Day weekend in May, the market will move outdoors to the church grounds and operate there every Saturday through the end of October. As always, weekly live music by local performers and special events will add entertainment and fun. Family-friendly fun for all!

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