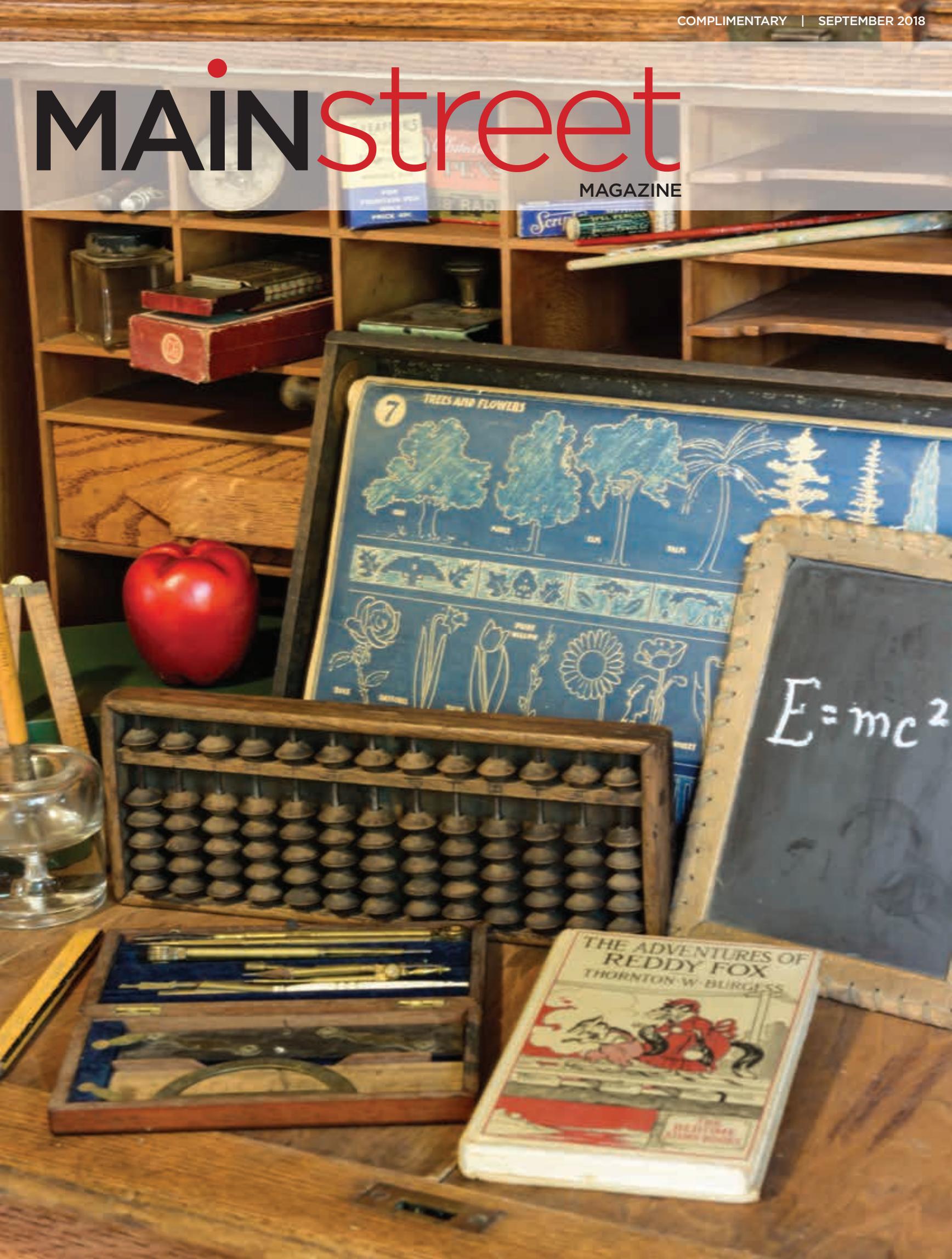


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CLASS IS IN SESSION

Well, well, well. Would you look at that: September has arrived! It seems that summer just began, but in fact it whizzed by in the blink of an eye, and the kiddos are all returning to school. Meanwhile the adults, just like the kids, are scrambling to get back in the swing of things. Obviously September is a perfect month to have an issue dedicated to learning, whereas school is back in session. But since we began devoting this September issue to learning three years ago, we've always said that learning isn't just for kids. I personally believe, and know, that we continue to learn throughout our entire lives. That is how we continue to grow as well as evolve as human beings. So listen up folks, *learning* is in session!

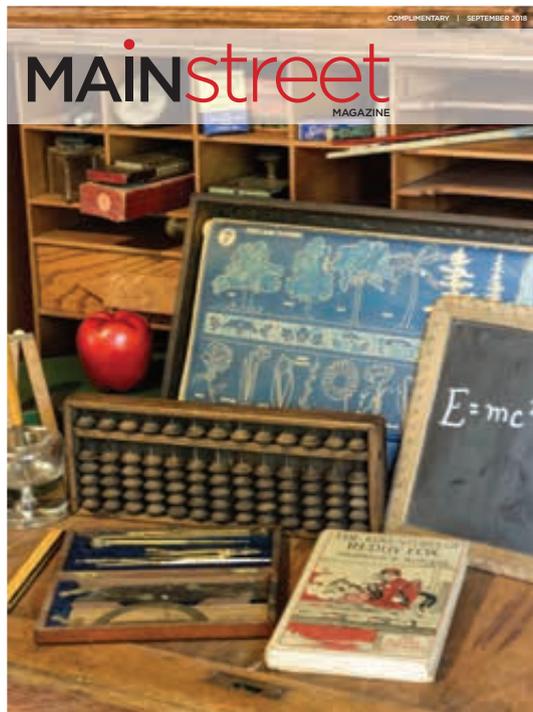
In this September issue we bring you an array of stories that are all somehow linked to learning. Christine interviewed the Superintendent of Webutuck school to learn what's involved in running a school and being responsible for so much and so many. She also dove into solar panels and how they affect real estate. This was a real learning experience I might add, because there's a lot of homework one has to do to see if solar panels make sense for your home and circumstances. On a much lighter note, Jessie's recipe this month is more of a tutorial, and a great one might I add. It is a tutorial on how to make the best chocolate chip cookie – everyone's favorite cookie, right?

Ian, also the principal of Housy, shares with us some information about grading and changing grading policies in schools today. Meanwhile, Mary shares with us a story on mentors, and how and why one can benefit from having a mentor. Mentors can play a vital role all throughout our lives, something that Lindsey also touches on. But Lindsey shares with us her journey to figuring out what she wants to be when she grows up, along with the journey of a few of her friends. Deciding on a career is one of the biggest decisions that any person will make in their life, and the steps that we each take can vary greatly.

We have a new contributor this month, Professor John Waldman. His tale is fascinating; his experience of traveling to a little island in Norway where they are raising salmon. John is not just a professor, but an expert in his own right, and I decided that his travel story fit perfectly with the learning theme because not only is he an educator, but we can all learn something from his experience. It's also a great story!

Stay thirsty and keep learning.

– *Thorunn Kristjansdottir*



SEPTEMBER 2018

Learning never gets old.

Cover photo by
Olivia Markonic

the
LEARNING
issue

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Cowboy Jim & the Oldtone Roots Music Festival



By CB Wismar
arts@mainstreetmag.com

There's a genteel tone to The Oldtone Roots Music Festival website (www.oltonefestival.com) that eloquently reflects the nature and intent of the four-day music event. This isn't a raucous bash bound to spiral out of control and create painful headlines. This is a true music festival that unites the broad spectrum of Americana and presents it in a bucolic, relaxing setting. It's family-friendly. It's simply fun.

From Thursday, September 6 through Sunday, September 9, set on the rolling hills of Cool Whisper Farm in North Hillsdale, NY, The Oldtone Roots Music Festival will offer up waves of music, hours of dancing, peals of laughter, great farm-to-table food selections, and the innocent games of tag played by children whose parents have come to listen and enjoy. For Jim Wright, artist, musician, and budding entrepreneur, The Oldtone Roots Music Festival has grown organically, from a very simple, "Why don't we invite some friends and play ...?" to "We've got 30 acts booked for 2018 and will likely have 2,000 people with us over the weekend."

The simple idea was hatched in 2015 when three musician friends – Matt Downing, Kip Beacco, and Jim Wright – were having so much fun playing in their group, The Hay-rollers, a traditional blue grass band, that they wondered if a wider audience might share in their enthusiasm for "Old Tone" or "American Roots" music.

Simple beginnings

They started with a flatbed truck, built a simple stage on it and moved it into place outside The Lantern in Wassaic, NY. The nearby Wassaic Project campus seemed the perfect compliment to a day of roots music. With nothing more than "word of mouth" and a few posters, an idea became an event.

The day-long musical review was a success ... so much so that Jim, Kip, and Matt realized that "Oldtone..." had outgrown its humble beginnings in its first year.

"We started looking up and down Route 22 for places we could play," offers Jim. "We needed more room ... easy access ... place for parking ... maybe camping for people who came from a distance." From the back of a truck to a budding festival was a significant jump.

"Someone suggested we look at Cool Whisper Farm," recalls Jim. "When we took a look, it was the winter and things looked pretty bleak." The group, now joined by Beth Carlson, who has a keen interest in historic preservation, kept looking.

This is the place

It wasn't until the snow was gone and spring had made the hillsides green and inviting that the Oldtone team returned to the farm of Matthew and Lisa Schober and realized they had found the right spot.

"It's a terrific location. We've got room for camping, for three different stages, for an arts and crafts area, and great views of the Hawthorne Valley," affirms Wright. "It really works. People come and want to stay, which is a great tribute to the location, our hosts, and the incredible bands."

Originally from Northern Virginia, Jim Wright attended high school in the District of Columbia and, during the commuting drive, would listen to a local PBS affiliate radio station that featured American roots music during the afternoons. "I was hooked," he



Above, top to bottom: Tuba skinny on the main stage. An appreciative audience. All images courtesy of Cowboy Jim.

recalls. “The Stanley Brothers sound was so honest – so direct. I wanted to play music like that.”

Music was an avocation, however, and Jim pursued his first passion – fine art. With a Master of Fine Arts degree from New York’s Hunter College, “Cowboy Jim,” as he has become known, settled in New York and pursued his art career.

Well regarded and well reviewed, Wright pursued his career through Brooklyn and Chelsea gallery shows and international exhibitions. He married (his wife is also an artist), started a family, and played his music on the side. And, suddenly the economy shifted, the art “scene” changed dramatically, and it was time to focus on his family and to leave the city.

Into the country

Jim Wright’s artistic skills have served him well as a fine carpenter in his adopted home of Ancramdale, NY. And it was here, settling in and becoming part of a wider musical community of friends who would gather, casually, and pursue their passion for traditional music, that the first spark of what became Oldtone Roots Music Festival was struck.

There is a very eclectic audience that enjoys American “roots music,” a term that covers a sweeping range of genres from spirituals, cajun, bluegrass, honky-tonk, and traditional country music to swing and New Orleans “street” music. Guitars, mandolins, upright basses, banjos, fiddles abound – and when the New Orleans

influence comes in, trombones, clarinets, and trumpets appear.

The underlying beauty of The Oldtone Roots Music Festival is the interaction of the audience with the musicians. There are master classes in every instrument. Members of the performing groups mingle easily with the audience and exchange stories, tips and techniques.

The dancing stage welcomes everyone from two-step beginners and square dancers to accomplished swing dancers, with instructions, experienced callers, and a general feeling of exuberance and acceptance.

Common courtesy rules

A casual read of the expectations of those who attend the festival quickly underscores the fact that decency, politeness, casual but mindful approaches to the way folks conduct themselves are all part of the experience. “The leadership of the Hillsdale community have been terrific,” asserts Jim Wright. “We know there are economic benefits to community businesses, but more than that, there’s been real community support. And, as for the Schober family, this is their place, their home, and they welcome all of us every year. We want to respect that kind of hospitality.”

The reputation built by the expanding success of The Oldtone Roots Music Festival has allowed the four principals to expand their catalogue of events, an effort that has been eagerly welcomed by both the musical community and the audiences



Above, top to bottom: Jammin’ and dancing on the main stage. Jim Wright performing. Below, left: Billy C. Hurt, Jr. playing with Karl Schiffler and The Big Country Show who are playing on Sunday afternoon this year. All images courtesy of Cowboy Jim.

they attract. Under Beth Carlson’s guidance, swing dances are hosted at Dewey Hall in Sheffield, MA, and “Supertone 2018,” which was held at Roe Jan Park in Hillsdale in late July, welcomed area rock musicians as well as traditional musical groups.

The fiddler’s convention

A much heralded event, The Northeast Fiddlers’ Convention, was presented at Hancock Shaker Village in June, and the response and reactions were heartening. “The Hancock Shaker Village is intriguing enough on its own and their hospitality was wonderful,” commented Wright. “When you add incredible music by some of the best fiddlers and string players in the northeast, it was magic.” Plans are well along for a repeat festival in 2019 as the Oldtone portfolio grows supported by the loyalty of an expanding audience.

Tickets for The Oldtone Roots Music Festival are available online, with pricing that ranges from simple day tickets to packages that include

camping and even “green room” access. Things begin on Thursday, September 6 as the gates open at 2pm and the program runs from 3pm to 10:30 that night. Friday’s offerings run from noon to 10:30 while Saturday offers a full day and evening of music, dancing, instructions, crafts, programs for the younger audience, and ample offerings of locally sourced food – hours are 10am to 10:30pm.

Things wind down on Sunday with programs beginning at 10am and ending at 1:30pm, affording distance travellers to head home after a full weekend of diverse, infectious music. ●

The Oldtone Roots Music Festival is held at Cool Whisper Farm, 1011 County Road 21, Hillsdale, NY. Learn more at their website www.oldtonemusicfestival.com.

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



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Dr. Scott Fellows is a math teacher and department chair at Housatonic Valley Regional High School. In addition to this, Scott sometimes works as an adjunct instructor in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Hartford. “I very much enjoy the students at Housatonic, who are simultaneously funny, interesting, and frustrating!” Being a teacher for 29 years, and an adjunct for about ten, Scott has had the chance to teach many, helping his students to discover the wonders of algebra, geometry, and calculus. When he’s not teaching, Scott loves playing golf, wishing that he played more often though. Dr. Fellows is from Watertown, CT, and has lived in North Canaan, CT, for 20 years. The quiet and peaceful nature of the area drew him to live there, and the Housatonic community is so happy to have him!



Lucy Amash is currently five years old and will be entering first grade in the fall. “My favorite subject is reading because it’s fun and I like stories and pictures, too.” This past spring Lucy was on her local T-ball team, and she spent her summer participating in the park program, playing outside, and swimming at her Aunt Dawn’s house with her cousins. Around the time school starts, she will be playing on the soccer field, too. As you can tell, she is full of energy and says, “When I grow up I want to be a dancer in the Nutcracker because I like music and to do splits.” At home Lucy is a great helper with her baby brother Charlie, and she also enjoys helping take care of her two cats James and Bazel, and her dog Zip. Good job, Lucy!



Ryan Proper is the Technology Integration Specialist at Taconic Hills. “I am a resource for PreK-12 staff and students for anything technology related.” This is his third year in this position, previously serving as a middle school math teacher for ten and a half years, and STEM Coach for a year and a half. “This year we’ve created holograms for author visits, taken virtual field trips all over the world with iPads, and learned about landforms and the water cycle with our Augmented Reality Sandbox.” When Ryan isn’t at school, you’re likely to find him playing or watching sports, spending time with his wife and two sons, and cooking. Ryan grew up in Copake, NY, and attended Taconic Hills as a student and currently resides in Claverack, NY. “The Hudson Valley has such beautiful scenery and I really enjoy experiencing all four seasons ... yes, even winter.”



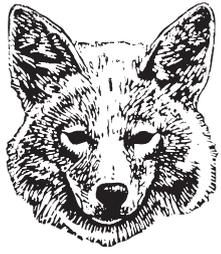
This is **Lauren Malin’s** sixth year as a special education teacher. “I have a self-contained class of 3rd-5th grade students. “Having a smaller group of students helps me bond very closely with them, and they are very supportive of each other, as well. I also love having the opportunity to celebrate success everyday! Outside of work Lauren loves to spend time hiking with her husband and their dog, Enzo, reading, running, playing tennis, yoga, snowshoeing, and skiing. She has resided in the Philmont/Claverack, NY, area her entire life. “I appreciate being able to experience all four seasons here. Columbia County is the perfect place to live in my humble opinion.” Lauren recently published a book titled *What’s on Your Mind, Maurice?* about yoga and mindfulness for children, based on her experience as an educator – strategies for anxiety and stress reduction are helpful for everyone!



Lucky for us, we are able to catch up with adorable five-year-old **Memphis Siok** for a quick minute before summer vacation ended. Memphis said that he spent this summer playing outside, camping, and fishing with his mom, Jamie Walton. “I love fishing!” He also spent a great deal of time this summer four-wheeling and detailing cars with his mom at Copake Truck & Auto Repair. During the last school year Memphis liked coloring and learning letters in pre-Kindergarten, but is looking forward to learning so much more in Kindergarten this coming school year. “When I grow up I want to be a ‘fixer,’ for cars and trucks like my Pop [Jim Walton, of Jim’s Auto Body in Copake, NY], because I already fix everything when I’m at the shop.” Memphis mentioned when he isn’t at school he also likes playing with his dinosaurs and visiting with his Gram.



“Nothing I do is work – everything is enjoyment from serving as a trustee on Village of Millerton Board, to being Chair of the Board of Directors of the North East Community Center, selling real estate for Best & Cavallaro, to writing for Main Street Magazine,” says **Christine Bates**. Since Main Street’s first issue came out five and a half years ago, Christine says she has learned so much about our region through the topics of real estate and the amazing people who live and work here. She also loves to cook, garden, read, and travel. Raised upstate in the Mohawk Valley, Christine has lived and worked all over the world, but enjoys living in Millerton, NY. Always looking for ways to gather more information, Christine says, “Google and my iPhone are incredible tools! Travel is another great teacher that helps you understand other people and cultures.”

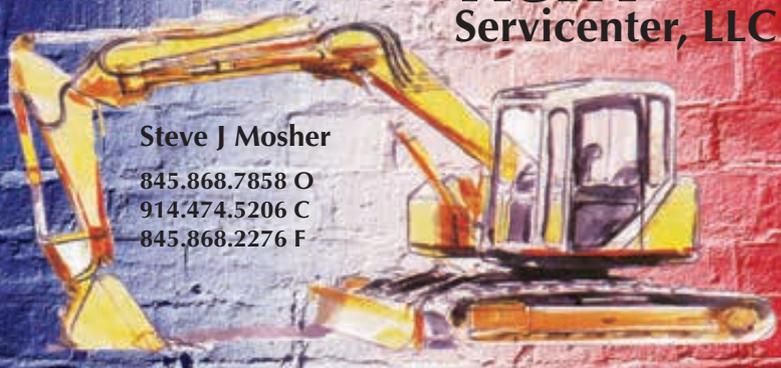


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BIG JOB

RAY CASTELLANI, SUPERINTENDANT
OF WEBUTUCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

By Christine Bates
christine@mainstreetmag.com

Running a school district is a very big job. What's your budget and how many employees do you have?

Our operating budget is almost \$23 million with taxes contributing, about \$14 million. We have between 140 and 150 employees, including bus drivers and cafeteria workers, who may be the most under-valued staff in terms of what they offer.

What's the most important part of your job?

First is to keep faculty and students safe. After security, hiring professionals is most important and it's difficult in this area. There's actually a shortage of teachers now. They have to be excited about what's happening here. The process starts with advertising and screening resumes. Then a committee of teachers, parents, and principals choose three to five for a mock lesson and get student feedback. Two or three finalists are sent to me for the final interview and then I make a recommendation to the Board of Education. I'm also responsible for their training and professional development – and holding them accountable.

How do you become a school superintendent?

Like most superintendents, I started off as a teacher. I taught an inclusion class in Ulster County, which

included some disabled students. After school I was pursuing a MBA degree at Mount St. Mary College and a MA in education at Pace College. I went to school four nights a week. At the same time the superintendent suggested that I look into the administrative side of education, and then asked me to become a principal in the school. She was very convincing. She said the staff needed someone they could trust. It was a trial by fire and sometimes very difficult as I became the supervisor of my peers and had to put work responsibility above friendship. I expected to be there forever when I got a call from Marlboro, my home town, where I went to high school and where I still live, asking me to be Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and then Superintendent. I took the job.

Why did she ask you and not another teacher?

I guess it was my energy and commitment to children as a top priority. As VP of the Teacher's Association I had taken an unpopular stand about a new program that would require teachers to put in more hours. The union didn't like that, although it was a big benefit to the students.

Why did you leave Marlboro and come to Webutuck? Our district has gone through a number of superintendents.

The town of Marlboro went through a tough time when two electric plants, that paid 80% of the school taxes, went bankrupt. I had to close two elementary schools and let 61 people go. We managed to find jobs elsewhere



Above: Ray Castellani in his office. Superintendents work all year long. Below, left: Webutuck is the school with the best view in the county. Photos Christine Bates.



for 40 of them and 14 retired. There were significant tax increases and I found myself spending most of my time politicking to get funds for the district – not on education. I found money in Albany to offset some of the losses, but I was not focusing my efforts on children. The school board and I agreed to disagree on the direction and at the same time headhunters were calling me. I received a call about this district and did some research.

Webutuck was a small district that had the potential for success where I believed I could make a difference. This community supports education, the Board of Education is magnificent and has a vision, and the children I meet every day are wonderful and want to be successful. This is a community where people care and respect each other.

What is your vision for the Webutuck school district?

In the next four to five years this school should be the jewel of Dutchess County. The community needs great schools to attract people.

We already have affordable housing and we're close to employment in the New York metro area.

Specifically, our literacy program is continuing to grow, and our number of after-school programs, including the North East Community Center's program recognized by the county for its excellence. A really big difference will happen this fall when every student will receive an iPad and the whole school has access to the internet. We're also changing our instruction method to a more blended approach across the curriculum. And our physical plant can't be ignored any longer. We're building a new septic field, installing a new boiler for the high school so there's heat during the winter, repaving parking lots, and providing better security and access to the school. We're moving into the 21st century.

Continued on next page ...

What is the most challenging thing about your job?

Calling snow days is always tough. But seriously providing the balance of the best education possible in the most cost effective way for taxpayers is the biggest challenge of all superintendents. New York State mandates 93% of the things we have to do and there's no local input. An example might be the APPR – the Annual Professional Performance Review – that is directly tied to student performance on unproven state tests that are “norm” referenced – the “norm” and the tests are constantly moving around. The state assessment was done in March and there are still no results. It is not a true assessment of growth or change and has a tremendous impact on every service (special education, academic intervention, etc.) depending on where students place. Every year the state changes the curriculum for New York State regents courses, which is also tied into teacher evaluations.

Do you miss teaching?

I do miss the classroom, but I am teaching staff everyday. And I interact with students all the time. I try to be super visible. I sit in classrooms and hallways. They feel comfortable calling me Mr. C., especially at the four to 12 level. Students come into my office to talk to me about what



Above: Taking a rest from summer school, the buses are ready to go for September. Photo Peter Greenough.

happened at the basketball game or problems or concerns. I worked with students to organize responsibility for the day of the walkout in solidarity with the Parkland students. I encourage student leadership. They wanted a change in our graduation ceremony and it was a great experience to come up with a solution together.

You deal with so many constituencies – parents, teachers, staff, students, and the school board. How do you do it?

For every decision I ask myself how my own children would be affected.

What about the bullying issue?

It's an issue everywhere and at the top of my list. You'll hear more about this, but we're working with the county to

provide educators to work with teachers and students on this issue.

Could you talk about the declining school population and school consolidation?

The district has a stable student body of about 700 students. We don't see that changing very much, up or down, in the near to medium future. I'm not opposed to consolidation, but what practically occurs is that the school district with the lower costs sees them rising to the higher contractual level of the other school. We're at the lower end of county expenses, so any consolidation would actually increase our cost per student.

Even though we are a small system we still offer a lot of academic choices. Working with Dutchess County Community College, students are able to graduate with 32 hours of college credits. Our regular teachers who have been accredited in English 101 and 102, Biology, Spanish, Introduction to Business, Statistics, Precalculus, Government and Economics, teach these college level courses. They graduate knowing they can succeed in college with free college credits. Plus our technology program is first rate; we have new music and engineering labs, and STEAM offerings. Our debate team is one of the best in the county.

What % of students are immigrants?

I have no idea if they are illegal immigrants – we don't ask. We estimate that about 30% of our school population is composed of immigrants and

we are committed to giving everyone the same opportunity. Any of these families might be living in fear and it makes children less engaged in school.

Is it true Webutuck is an impoverished school district?

60% of Webutuck students receive free or reduced price lunch – the highest outside of the City of Poughkeepsie. On the flip side, because of our assessed tax base, we are considered wealthy, which reduces our state aid. The system is broken and we are treated unfairly because it doesn't measure income.

Have you ever considered another career?

No! I have a contract until 2022 and hope to renew it. I'd love nothing more than to stay at Webutuck for the rest of my career. I love my job, but my first job is as a father, then a husband. I have five children, one in college, two in middle school, and two in elementary. Between softball, lacrosse, track, band, and drama, I don't have time for much else. Being a parent also makes you a better superintendent. •



Above: Glorious trees surround Webutuck School. Photo: Peter Greenough.

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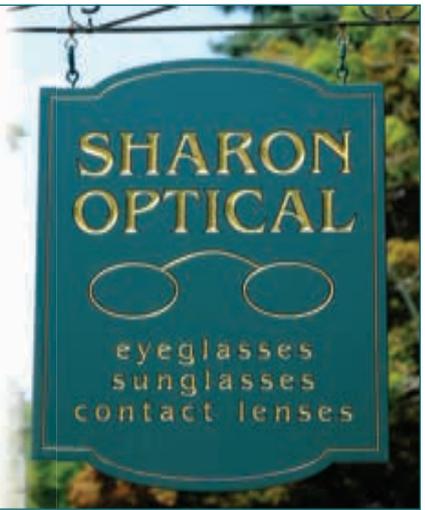
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THE PERFECT chocolate chip cookie

By Jessie Sheehan
info@mainstreetmag.com

I am, and have always been, obsessed with making (and eating) the perfect chocolate chip cookie. Many of my fellow sweets-lovers may understand such an obsession, as there is no more iconic, nostalgic, and delicious cookie than the chocolate chip.

What with its buttery, slightly salty, and a tad molasses-y, vanilla-infused dough, studded throughout with semi-sweet chocolate chips, we can all agree (I hope) that it is as tasty raw, as it is baked (and by “baked,” I mean slightly under-baked . . .). Yes, some people add oats and nuts and raisins (the horror), to their chocolate chip cookies, but to me, a “perfect” chocolate chip cookie needs no adornment.

But what does the “perfect” chocolate chip cookie need? Honestly, a few tweaks to the ingredients listed on the back of a bag of Tollhouse Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips, coupled with a modified mixing and assembly method, and iconic cookie perfection can be yours. And, lucky you: because this is the magazine’s “learning” issue, sharing my recipe for perfect cookies with you, as well as “teaching” you why the recipe produces such a special treat, seemed only fair.

Cookie perfection

The “perfect” cookie falls into (basically) three camps: there is the thin and crispy camp, the soft and cakey camp, and the thick and chewy camp. I am very much a member (camper?) of the thick and chewy camp, and to achieve said thick and chewy cookie perfection, I modify the ingredients called for in the original recipe in several ways: I use bread flour rather than all-purpose flour; I call for

melted butter rather than softened; I add quite a bit more brown sugar than granulated; and I add yolks in addition to a whole egg.

But I don’t only make little changes to the ingredients to achieve my thick and chewy ideal: In addition, I scoop large balls of dough, as the larger the cookie, the more likely the center will remain slightly molten post-bake, and thus chewy. I also let my dough sit in the fridge for at least a day after I scoop it, for the longer the dough rests, the chewier the baked cookie. And I slightly under-bake my cookies in order to contribute to the molten centers described above (don’t worry: the cookies continue to bake a bit as they cool).

Moreover, I add plenty of salt – both in and on the cookies – as I love a cookie with a sweet and salty combo, and the salt helps bring out the other flavors (molasses, butter, vanilla, etc.). Finally, I fold in a tad fewer chips than others might, as I like to keep the sweet in check, and add a very generous glug of vanilla.

Here’s to hoping you, too, are a lover of a perfect (read: thick and chewy) chocolate chip cookie, or at the very least, open to giving one a try.

Ingredients:

2 1/4 cup bread flour
2 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp baking soda
3/4 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 sticks, 1 cup, unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
1 1/4 cups dark brown sugar
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 egg
2 yolks
1 tbsp pure vanilla extract
Flaky Sea Salt for sprinkling



Instructions:

In a medium-sized bowl, whisk the flour, salt, and soda together. Add the chips and toss them in the flour mixture to coat. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugars together on medium speed until glossy and thick (about five minutes) scraping down the bowl with a rubber spatula, as needed.

Add the egg, yolks, and vanilla to the mixing bowl all at once and beat until fully incorporated, scraping down the bowl, as needed. The dough is super wet and needs much less scraping than your average cookie dough.

With the mixer running on low speed, add the dry ingredients to the mixing bowl, and mix until barely combined. You should still see unincorporated flour in the dough. Remove the bowl from the mixer and finish mixing with a rubber spatula, making sure to scrape up the wetter dough from the bottom of the bowl.

Using a 1/4 cup ice cream scoop (or 1/4 cup measuring cup) scoop the dough on to a parchment-lined baking sheet, cover with plastic wrap and place the sheet in the refrigerator for

24 to 72 hours.

When ready to bake off the cookies, preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Remove only as many cookies as you want to eat (you can transfer the rest to a zippered plastic bag and place in the freezer for another day), place them on a different parchment-lined sheet and bake for 10 to 12 minutes (I’m in favor of slightly under baking cookies). The cookies are ready when they are lightly browned and crackly, but still look a tad undercooked in the middle.

Once removed from the oven, slightly flatten each cookie with a spatula (I like flat, thick cookies, as opposed to puffy ones). Let cool briefly and enjoy. ●

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



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It all depends

DO SOLAR PANELS ADD VALUE TO YOUR HOME?

By Christine Bates
christine@mainstreetmag.com

Do solar panels add to the value of your home when reselling or do they make a sale more difficult? Will that change over time? Will you recoup your up front cost? Will you save money or pay more in property taxes?

It all depends on where your house is located; its orientation to the sun, the age and angle of the roof, Federal, state, and local tax incentives and rebates, finance and leasing terms, your utility's policy on buying excess energy, or even the neighborhood.

One study in San Diego, CA, showed an average price increase of 3.5% on homes with panels with a higher premium in neighborhoods with a larger share of college graduates and registered Toyota Prius owners. Remember this is southern California where there are 3,055 hours of sunshine and 146 clear days annually as compared to 2,585 daylight hours and 82 clear days in Hartford, CT.

What do appraisers and assessors say?

Appraisers estimate home values for mortgages, estates, divorces, and complaining about your tax assessment. They should know if solar panels add value to your real estate. Randy Johnson of Berkshire Appraisal Services' initial question was, "Are they leased or owned? If they are leased they add no value." Next, "If they are owned, is it an over improvement?" His opinion

was that whatever you spend will not add the same amount to the value of a property. In Connecticut, Roger Rawlings of Resources Valuation Group admits there is very little data. "So few houses have been sold with solar panels, that the difference in price, up or down, could be attributable to anything."

Rules for adding the cost of a solar installation to property tax assessments also vary by state. By law in Massachusetts and Connecticut solar panels will not increase the value of your property for tax assessment purposes as other capital improvements would. Salisbury's assessor, Kayla Johnson, said, "I don't pay any attention to them." In New York the cost of the solar system will be added to the assessed value of your property for tax purposes unless you fill out a form and request an exemption from the local assessor. In order to get this exemption there are complex criteria. And certain taxing authorities have voted to disallow the tax exemption, like Wappinger's Falls in Dutchess County.

Estimates of installation costs and energy savings are all over

According to www.energysage.com, an informative website on renewable energy, five installers in our Miller-ton, NY, area zip of 12546 submitted estimates on the same set of solar



Above: Designed by Nathalie Brodhead, this new Connecticut farmhouse incorporates solar panels into traditional architecture. Photo courtesy of Litchfield Hills Solar. Below, left: Smooth glass roof tiles by Tesla are coming to market soon, but price and efficiency have not been announced. Photo courtesy of Tesla.

panels with break even from 6.5 to 10 years and 20 year savings of \$15,000 to \$26,000. Across the state border in Lakeville, payback was an estimated 7.7 to 8.9 years with 20-year energy savings of \$25,000 to \$27,000. The assumptions on interest rates, rebates, and tax credits, not to mention the future cost of electricity, change in net metering policies, interest rates, etc. account for these huge variations. Few consumers are equipped to question the underlying assumptions on efficiency, electrical costs and consumption, financing alternatives and lease options.

Two homeowners in Boston Corners, NY, Janice and Gail, considered installing solar panels for the good of the planet and tried to logically figure out if solar was a good idea. They are still up in the air about the economics, "Maybe we're too old to see break-even on the investment. We still talk about it."

Solar panels are a big investment. The average 5 kilowatt system (just to confuse people even more, energy is measured in metric units) with a cost per watt of seven to nine dollars brings the total costs before incentives of \$18,000 to \$25,000 – again depending. The Federal government and most states offer various incentives to make the installation of solar panels more attractive to homeowners. At the Federal level there is the "Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit" (also known as the ITC – investment tax credit) of 30% which will reduce your Federal income taxes by up to 30% of the cost of buying and installing panels to help cover the up-front cost. For example if you owe Uncle Sam \$20,000 in taxes and your solar panels cost \$20,000 you would get a \$6,000 reduction on your taxes. The credit declines to 26% in 2020 and 22% in 2021 and then expires, unless renewed.



An average solar systems can cost \$18,000 to \$25,000 before discounts

Continued on next page ...



Above: Tesla photovoltaic roof shingles, which look like slate, will be available in the next few years. Photo courtesy of Tesla. Below, left: The solar panels on this house at 7 Grove Street in Salisbury, CT, generate about \$100 in energy savings every month. That's after lease/financing payments. Photo by Christine Bates.

Incentives at the state level vary enormously. Oddly, the cloudiest states seem to have much better solar incentives than sun-drenched states like Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. New York offers some of the best incentives to homeowners. There is a 25% income tax credit against state taxes of up to \$5,000 or 25% of the costs, whichever is lower. There is also attractive financing at 3.49% with zero down and no payments for the first 12-month and a subsidy of as much as a dollar per kilowatt to reduce the cost. The amount depends, there's that word again, on how much solar energy is being produced in your area. Net metering permits you to bank excess kilowatts transferred to the grid on sunny days for rainy days. And, again depending, 7.8% state sales tax may be exempted, as well as local sales taxes.

Incentives in Massachusetts and Connecticut are also complicated and always changing. Select a knowledgeable, accredited solar installer who understands the shifting programs in your state. In general, incentives and rebates have become less attractive over time.

Some cities also offer incentives. For example Austin, TX, offers a rebate of up to \$15,000 to cover the cost of panels. One wonky Texan calculated the return on investment at 17.5% after all the subsidies and reduced power costs.

This year California became the first state to require all new homes to have solar power. Critics say it will add \$8,000 to \$12,000 dollars to the

cost of new construction in a state with a severe shortage of affordable housing. Advocates of the law say that the costs will be recovered in lower utility bills.

Selling back to the grid

On a long, sunny summer day when solar panels are working at peak efficiency, even a small solar display will produce more electricity than the home utilizes. Unless you install a Tesla Power Wall or other battery to store the electricity, this excess power flows back into the grid of the public utility company. Today Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut all have a version of "net" metering, which credits consumers for the energy they produce. However, all are considering tampering with the buy back rates. Don't expect the outcome to be favorable to consumers.

Technology is there, aesthetics coming

Newer solar panels are far more productive and much cheaper than initial versions. In 1954, Bell Labs announced the invention of the first practical silicon solar cell – it was about 6% efficient and sold for \$1,735 per watt. Today more efficient design and production has brought the cost below \$1.00 per watt.

Moore's Law of increasing power and decreasing cost has applied to solar panels; however, many experts feel the technology now has only incremental steps for improvement. In short, if solar panels make sense for your home today, don't wait for breakthrough technology to take it to the next level.

Solar panels still look like flat screen TVs that landed on the roof, and we are unaccustomed to them, especially on traditional houses. Architect Jim Crisp recommends that they be installed on the back of homes or on an accessory building. They can be especially useful for heating swimming pools! It takes a while to get used to new technology and for manufacturers to lower prices and improve design. The Tesla glass tiles which can be installed as a shingle and produce electricity, are beautiful, but still a year or two away like the Tesla Model 3.

The bottom line

When buyers are looking at a house, everyone asks, "How much is the electric bill? How much does it cost to heat?" An often-quoted figure that

seemed to have originated with some energy commission study is that a home's value is increased by \$20 for every \$1 in energy savings with a typical increase of 4% to 10% in the property's value.

For a small house with almost perfect orientation and little shade at 7 Grove Street in Salisbury, CT, that would equate to a \$24,000 increase in value. (\$100 lower electric bill every month x 12 months x \$20) – more than the cost of the installation. "Even if Connecticut changes its net metering, I'm still ahead," said the enthusiastic owner.

Once installed, whether or not they increases your home's value here in the Northeast, solar panels will save you money as a homeowner. No New England realtor would advise you to add solar panels to your house to make it more attractive or to increase its sale value, but solar panels will probably become more desirable as people understand the economic benefits, and every summer gets warmer.

We are in the early stages of a transition to hybrid energy sources with California leading the way. In the meantime one thing is clear: turn your thermostat down in the winter and turn out the lights to save on energy bills before you put your house on the market, whether or not you have solar panels. •



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The eye of the beholder

THE WORK OF ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHER PETER AARON

By Dennis Wedlick
dwedlick@barliswedlick.com

Peter Aaron of Hudson, New York, was in Venice, Italy, accepting his kudos for being included in the Biennale, the renowned celebration of contemporary artists from around the world, when I posted these three images on Instagram. These are three interpretative images of Olana, the home of the Hudson River School artist Frederic Church captured by Peter's eye. Obviously, Olana, its interior and landscape is a flawless subject for any photographer; but what Peter does is not just dryly record a reality but rather playfully offer a personal perception of the world he encounters.

As an architect and occasional author of design pieces, I have had the great pleasure of commissioning professional photographers to create imagery of homes, rooms, and gardens of designs that I admire. When a photographer and a designer “get” each other, a friendship is formed where few words are needed to communicate their mutual likes and dislikes. That's how it is with Peter and me and with other designers who are fans of his work. When I create or come across a design I find intriguing, I often catch myself thinking, “Oh, Peter's going to love this,” in the same way you might do when you see something you know your best buddy would appreciate. Then I hope that someday Peter will take a photograph to capture what it is that we both will love about it.

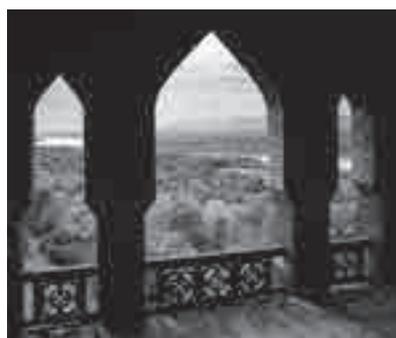
Interpreting the designer's story

Peter's photographs never fail to amuse and plant a smile on my face, even when the subject of the piece is sober. That's because I am so happy such compelling imagery has been created and such good storytelling has been offered up. When Peter takes photographs of architecture, interior or landscape designs, he uses his medium to convey his interpretation of the designer's story. Designers, like photographers, hope to tell stories with their work, and that is

especially true for romantic designers like Church. Many times, the only opportunity the designer has to share his/her ideas is through the work of the design photographs. Therefore, designers appreciate photographers like Peter, who understand what message they are trying to deliver with, say, the placement of a chair, the design of a stair, or the planting of a public square.

I posted on Instagram these three photographs of Olana by Peter because they tell the story of a prolific Hudson Valley painter who was also the poetic co-creator of this superb example of Picturesque architecture, interiors, and landscape. The first image shows the arched colonnade that frames the one-of-kind view of the Hudson River. It is important to realize that this is the view Church held in his imagination and painted, but it did not match the reality of his time. For example, there are no cargo ships, no smoke from factory stacks, and no neighboring neoclassical mansions of factory owners to be seen. They would have distracted from the message of Church and other Picturesque artists, who treasured nature and its spirituality. It isn't that Peter edited out that reality, he crafted an angle, selected a time of day, and pinpointed a pattern of weather that would offer the idea that nature has prevailed.

The next two images show how a superior photographer allows his or her subject to speak from a still, silent image, which only can be done graphically. The subject of the interior shot is the decor, the objects, the flora arrangements, the textiles. Every element in Church's interior design was selected to complement or contrast with the other elements of the space. Without having been in the room at the time, I could not say for sure that Peter had rearranged any of those elements or that he felt he needed to. What I do know is Peter creates images that allow each element to explain what its role is – the curtains add layers, the flora arrangements enliven, the chair orchestrates. He sometimes does this by rearranging, like a florist rearranges a bouquet, or



Courtesy © Peter Aaron/OTTO

through lighting, like a stage director lights the actors. If you take a tour of Olana, this image tells the same story of the interiors you would hear from the docent. If you never get around to it, no photograph can substitute as well as Peter's.

The cover shot

The long shot of Olana illustrates what is super about Peter's work: his uncanny ability to deliver the cover shot. That is the dramatic photograph often used on the cover of a magazine to not only summarizes the theme of the cover story, but also to pull you in. When Peter delivers an architectural cover shot, he presents the design as compelling and powerful but, at the same time, frail, on the brink of being overcome by some commotion that engulfs it, such as an incoming storm, a sunburst, or, in this case, the relentless growth of the Hudson Valley landscape. This image is telling

the story of an architectural fantasy, Church's castle in the air, never intended to be a reflection of reality, always intended to excite and amuse while leaving the viewer wondering how long will it last.

Peter's work is a true reflection of his charisma. He is that rare artist that amuses with no pretentiousness. He is also an artist who – randomly smiling, raising his eyebrow or chin at something you said or did – leaves you wondering what he is thinking, but again, always genuine. He is Peter being Peter. Knowing the care he puts into his work, I am delighted, and not at all surprised, that it is celebrated by a worldwide audience. He sees and offers what we would all like: an amusing life and a world filled with wonder. ●

To learn more about Dennis Wedlick, email him or follow him on Instagram @denniswedlick.



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What do I want to be when I grow up?

By Lindsey Clark
info@mainstreetmag.com

We've all been through the stage in life where we have to decide what we want to be when we grow up. This decision comes easily to some, harder to others. But this is one of the most important decisions that we make: deciding how we'll sustain ourselves and what we will do every day. Our paths are all different in reaching a decision, and that is what a lot of young people in our area are currently going through. Lindsey, our returning intern, shares with us what she's thinking along with a few of her friends who are all students at Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Connecticut.

From a young age, whether it be in school or at a family dinner, I have frequently been asked: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" When I was in kindergarten, I remember my answers were either that I didn't know or that I definitely wanted to be a teacher, doctor, etc. Of course, being five years old, it depended on the day, as did my favorite color and favorite snack. But now, being 16, I am quite firm in my belief that my favorite color is blue, and that my favorite snack is Nutella and graham crackers. However, though it's been eleven years, the whole career thing hasn't really sorted itself out yet.

Decision time nears

I'm going into my junior year of high school this fall, balancing volleyball practices and AP Language and Composition. With the pressure ramping up with each passing school day, this period of my life is starting to feel like the beginning of "decision time." I heard a lot throughout my first two years of high school about how fast it will fly by, and how you have to start tackling these things, like community service and building your resume, early on so that you aren't overwhelmed come senior year. Two

years later, it feels like I got that speech just yesterday. Time does, indeed, fly by.

Luckily for me, I took the aforementioned advice to heart, and I started volunteer work at the local elementary school the spring of my freshman year, and continued this work in the winter of my sophomore year. In addition, I joined Student Government Association, as well as my 2020 class council to keep involved. I now hold the position of treasurer in my class council.

Despite delving into different school activities in an attempt to find my calling, choosing a career path I avidly want to follow has, unsurprisingly, been difficult. I know that I am by no means the exception to some sort of rule, and that it is common for many people my age to not have the slightest idea of what they want to pursue. I feel fortunate enough to have some sort of grasp on what I want to study, having it narrowed down to about four broad fields: law, psychology, English, and history. I have also looked more specifically into, of course, journalism, and the process of working in that field. I may decide, once educated further on my options as a whole, to pursue a combination of two or more of these topics in a more concentrated sense, or scrap my current thoughts and go with something completely different. Regardless, I feel lucky to know even that much.

Val's story

Many of my friends, though stuck in a bubble of indecision similar to my own, also have more specific aspirations as far as careers go. Val Lenis, a friend of mine and incoming junior like myself, has been looking into the fields of medicine and psychology, as well as journalism and careers related to the visual arts. She too, however, has not yet delved into the specifics of each of



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor seb_ra

her career interests. "I want to do something that I like doing, that I won't dread doing every day, and something that will allow me to live financially comfortably. I also want to do something where I work and interact with people, whether that be by helping them or entertaining them."

Val has been a very active student at her school who has been willing to involve herself in a range of clubs and extracurriculars, some of which she's enjoyed, and some that she hasn't. However, her participation across a wide variety of activities has provided her with a better gauge on her future studies, as well as valuable resume additions. "My involvement in things has helped me navigate what I would prefer studying and pursuing, but also might help me to fill out my resume, demonstrating my versatility and proving that I'm a person that's willing to try new things and become an active member in any community."

Jessy's story

Another one of my close friends, Jessy Haggard, has been thinking along the lines of psychology and

Continued on next page ...

law-related careers. She has specifically delved into research on child psychologists and criminal justice lawyers. “I love working with kids and psychology really interests me, so being a child psychologist would allow me to combine both of those interests in one pursuit.”

Jessy babysits among her other jobs, working at a café and life-guarding, so she has been able to build up a taste of what working with children would entail. “I also really like to debate and argue points, and the criminal justice system fascinates me. Because of this, a criminal justice career path would also definitely be one worth considering.” Jessy also participates in Student Government Association and holds the position of secretary in the 2020 class council, which enables her to dabble in the more government-oriented aspect of her potential career ideas. She also likes to keep involved through athletics, jazz band, and taking care of her school’s small animals on the weekends.

Lily’s story

On the other hand, Lily Bibro, also a friend and fellow junior, has been set on a career path long before high school. “Ever since I was small, I’ve been wanting to go into the field of law enforcement. I would watch every show about it available on TV, whether it was *Cops*, *Law & Order*, or, my favorite, *Criminal Minds*.” What drew Lily so greatly to this career was the honor that a person in the field holds while working, vowing to protect and serve their country and its people. She found the concepts of being able to prevent tragedies and to find those responsible for ones that have already occurred to be captivating. Because of this, Lily plans on taking courses in politics and psychology in her senior year of high school, both of which tie in to her hope of one day becoming a FBI special agent.

“The prospect of being able to help and better people’s lives at any and all costs is so appealing to me, and it gives me the drive to better myself as a human being in the process.” Lily continues to challenge herself academically throughout her high school career, while also participating in Student Government Association, Environmental Club, and her school’s athletic teams.

How to pick a college?

Along with wondering about my future career, I have also started to think about what type of college I want to attend. Since I seem to have multiple career ambitions, I would definitely want to go to a school with many options regarding my course of study. This is so that if I did decide to switch majors, I can keep learning in the same environment, providing it was beneficial to me.

While I think my mind will be more made up once I go on some college visits and truly see what each school has to offer, I at least think that the right campus for me will be a bit more on the personal side, with a more homey, comfortable atmosphere. As far as I know, I would also like to stay around the East Coast location-wise, and would be open to a city landscape or a more rural one. This is mainly because I’ve never made a big move before, and haven’t travelled much outside of the East Coast region as it is. Soon, as I have a family connection in Massachusetts who attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I plan to start by visiting colleges in that area in order to get a feel for what I’m looking for in a school.

My friends, of course, have their thoughts on college, too. My friends, all curious about their futures, have delved deeper into researching colleges, and are starting to take note of specific schools. Val has been looking at Boston University, Georgetown University, University of Chicago, and the University of Massachusetts Boston,



Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Delpixart

among others. She wants to make sure that her schools of choice offer all the majors that she is thinking of pursuing, and that they offer accepting, diverse environments with a large student body.

Coming from a smaller town, Val thinks it would be a new and exciting experience to adapt to a bigger community. Lily and Jessy both have similar preferences. Jessy, who has been looking at Boston University and Northeastern University, enjoys that the campuses are near or built into the city, which is her preferred atmosphere to study in. Also wanting to attend school in an urban area, but not wanting to stray too far from her home and family, Lily has been looking at schools in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and D.C., taking specific notice of the University of Maryland outside of D.C. for its outstanding criminology program.

Real life experiences

Even if my friends and I differ in regards to what career paths we may want to take, and what college we are hoping to attend, we all aspire to take up real-life experience in our fields of choice to get a better grasp on what our potential careers may entail. Personally, I have taken up an internship here at *Main Street Magazine*, which has helped me to discover what journalism is all about, and has put valuable field experience under my belt.

In the future, Val hopes to participate in a job shadow or take some summer courses at a college

in order to better focus in on a specific career. Additionally, Lily has expressed that she is always on the lookout for internships related to working in her preferred division of law enforcement around her local community.

College isn’t for everyone

Though many people I know are on the path to college, this is not the only route that is available to today’s high school students. My own father, owner and operator of Clark’s Outdoor Services, is a prime example of how you can be successful in a trade without obtaining a college degree. I’m sure he is just one of many business owners and workers in our area who fall into this category.

Along with taking up a certain trade, there are also students I know of that plan on joining the military after graduation, or they aspire to attain an apprenticeship at a local business. There are many options, and, as I stated before, it can become overwhelming trying to decide on a specific vocation. The most important thing, though, is that you decide on something that you’re passionate about, and that you love doing. As the saying goes: “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” ●

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Much ado about grading

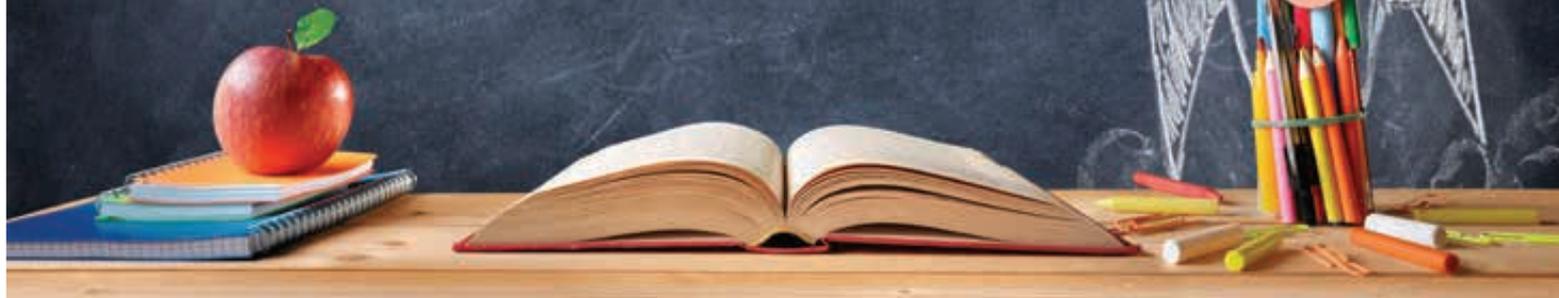


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By Ian Strever
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It is summer, and I'm sitting in a coffee shop just yards from the Yale University campus, eavesdropping on two families who clearly have their sights set on admission. Two of the girls are wearing Yale sweatshirts and a third sports a Dartmouth hoodie. Their mothers model that incongruous ensemble of athleisure and expensive watches that will probably look ridiculous to them in ten years, and they order the requisite \$9 smoothies to complete the motif.

They sit down at a family-length table, and within minutes, they are talking grades: how one girl did in Mr. So-and-so's class; how the other one got an A in History without doing any of the homework; how frustrated they were about group work in AP Physics. Again, this is summer. July 12, to be exact.

Measuring up

There's a reason some people call grades "marks": they leave them on us. Everyone has a story to tell about grading, whether we graduated last June or forty-seven Junes ago, valedictorian or high school dropout. As the poet Taylor Mali put it, teachers can "make a C+ feel like a Congressional Medal of Honor and an A- feel like a slap in the face." Being evaluated, scored, ranked, and quantified is to be mea-

sured, and when we don't measure up to someone's expectations, it can be traumatic.

But learning isn't traumatic by nature, and most of us will question, investigate, research, and think about topics that interest us without the incentive of a grade. A growing body of educators is recognizing the disconnect between grading and learning, and they are causing a shift in schools with their efforts to align how they measure progress with what they are trying to measure. Beneath grades and curriculum, however, is communication. If schools are organized for the purpose of learning, how can they accurately communicate the learning progress of students to the satisfaction of parents, colleges, and other interested parties?

The Sweater Problem

This past school year, schools in the Region 1 School District in Connecticut took the first steps in dramatically changing their grading practices by eliminating grades of D and F, allowing students to re-do work that did not meet expectations, and working with students to help them meet those expectations at their own pace. Sounds simple, right?

As the Assistant Principal at the high school, I was in the center

of these changes, and during my twenty-year career in education, I can't think of any other educational issues that have been more controversial or complicated. Grading is what I call a "Sweater Problem"—it seems like a straightforward matter until you begin picking at one thread and the whole thing unravels. What about class rank and GPA impact? Athletic eligibility? Scholarship decisions? Honor roll? College admissions? And for goodness sakes, who is going to be the valedictorian?!

Although grading on a percentage or alphabetical scale has only been around since the late 1800s, it has become a part of the institution of school, and our culture is thoroughly interwoven with the notion of ranking and scoring. Furthermore, in the digital age, numbers have taken on a new significance and luster as states use standardized test results, attendance statistics, and demographic data to measure the effectiveness of schools according to statutory mandates such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Research into grading has rightfully called into question just what

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Photo: istockphoto.com contributor Weedezign

is behind some of these numbers, and specifically classroom grades. Such research is not new: one study from 1912 reviewed the grades of English and Geometry teachers and found variances of 34 to 67 points, causing some schools to adopt the A-F scale as a more fair and accurate method of scoring (Starch & Elliot, 1912, 1913). Moving from an F to a D on that scale is one score point, whereas it could be up to 60 or 65 points on a percentage scale.

In most traditional classrooms, a final grade is an aggregation of a set of measurements performed primarily by teachers, and generally at their own discretion. Individual grades may value tests, projects, quizzes, and homework to varying degrees, and this is both necessary and accurate in high schools that offer a range of subject matter and assessment methods. Schools should also have the freedom to determine the values they are trying to instill in their graduates, and to find accurate ways to report on how students are progressing toward attaining those qualities. For instance, if a school believes that citizenship is a worthwhile value to nurture in students, they should be able to clearly communicate what a good citizen is and where a student is in acquiring those skills.

Grade determination

But exactly how a grade is determined can be confusing, especially in high school when students take as many as eight different courses at a time. Take my daughter's middle school grades, for example: she takes four core courses, plus several "specials" in Art, Music, and Health/PE, and come report card time, all I see is a lot of numbers. Each of the teachers has different percentage weights assigned to tests, quizzes, homework, and projects, so that even I, as a former teacher and current school administrator, have difficulty determining the relative impact of a low quiz score on the overall grade.

This is missing the real point of grades, though. When parents attempt to discern the cause of an unsatisfactory grade, the construct of grading becomes the "Emperor's New Clothes." Should my daughter be doing more of her voluntary math homework to boost her grade? Or if a good grade is the goal, should she put her effort into studying for tests? Throw in extra credit options, and the whole endeavor becomes a game that not every student plays well. Rather than chasing points, students should be pursuing learning that they need in order to master the content of a course. As parents, we can support the learning process much more effectively if we know that, say, plotting points on a graph is really the cause of a low grade, not our child's study habits or forgetfulness about turning in homework.

Power Standards

Ultimately, the goal of grading reformers is to communicate those learning needs as accurately and efficiently as possible. At this time, it is unrealistic for teachers to report progress on the dozens of learning standards that comprise the content of a course, but teachers in most schools have been working to identify the "Power Standards" that capture the most important learning a student must master, and as testing technologies and grading programs evolve, we are approaching a day when teachers, students, and parents will all have timely, accurate, helpful information about a student's development that will inform what, how, and when they learn.

By the time you are reading this, nationally-recognized grading expert Tom Guskey will have spoken to teachers and parents in Region 1 about the need to shift grading practices and how to do it (his visit was planned for August 31). If you weren't able to make it, his clear and sensible explanations provide helpful starting points for schools that are considering a shift and for parents who are pining for more information to help their students learn, and his *Answers to Essential Questions about Standards, Assessments, Grading, and Reporting* is a great place to start your own learning about the topic. •

Below: Dr. Tom Guskey is a professor of education psychology at the University of Kentucky and is currently studying the way teachers grade, a popular topic in the news and education policy circles as more schools consider standards-based grading. Photo and caption courtesy of the University of Kentucky.

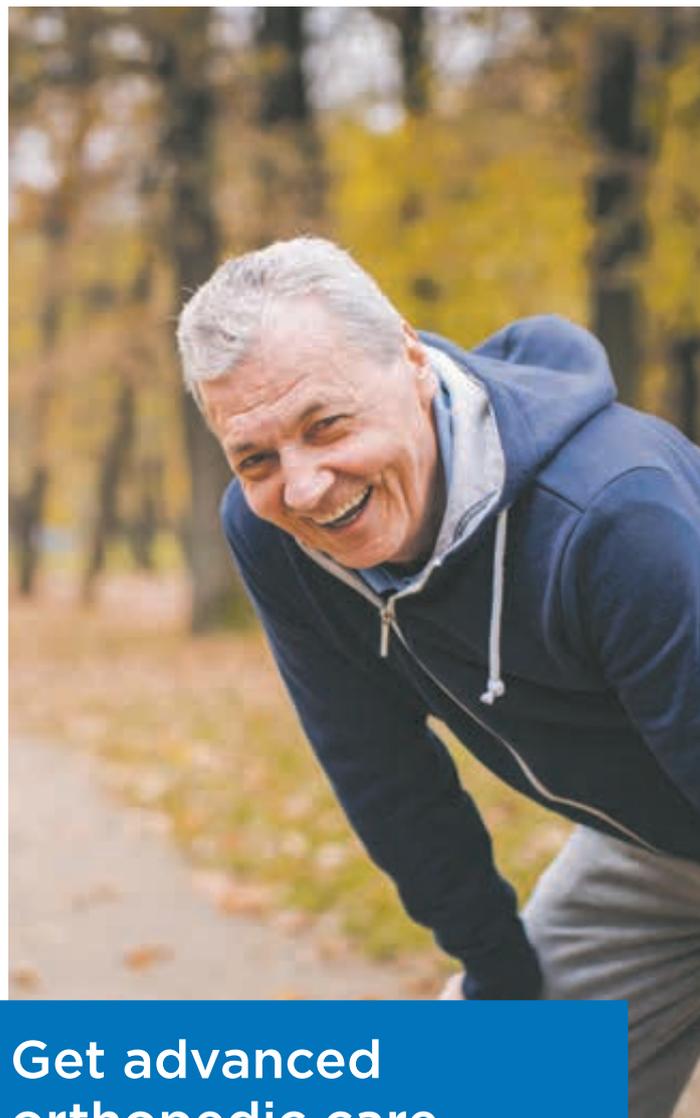


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Mentors: making a valuable connection

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

Mentors are individuals we seek out and invite into our lives, usually to advance our professional or educational aspirations. Mentors are generally older and hopefully wiser, or at the very least more experienced than we are. They offer wisdom, advice, guidance, and sometimes supportive criticism – all with our best interests at heart.

For me, mentors have also served as role models for a life well lived. While I'm learning and observing from their professional expertise, I'm also picking up clues for how they balance the professional and personal, how they cope with change, how they deal with setbacks, and how they treat others outside the professional realm.

Mentoring benefits

The presence of a mentor in a life and career makes a positive impact, and studies have proved this. Student performance increases and employees become more effective at their jobs. But it also makes intuitive sense. With a mentor/mentee relationship there is increased personal and professional connection, raised standards, increased accountability, greater sharing of knowledge and best practice, and a strong emotional one-to-one bond.

Even with the positive benefits of mentorship not everyone has one or knows to look for one. In my eight years of teaching at the college level, both in the schools of liberal arts and business, few hands go up when I ask if students know what a mentor is, let alone if they have one.

My business ethics class includes a unit on mentors as a tool to create and sustain ethical behavior. Why? Because the right mentor can prevent us from being the victim of what's

known as “bounded ethicality,” a term that signifies how our ethical decision making can be impaired by the blinders we wear as employees embedded in a department, within a company that possesses its own unique culture and incentives, within an industry with practices that may be ethically questionable though legally permitted. Mentors can help us see the forest for the trees.

Recognizing the need for a mentor in your personal and professional life is the first step. The next step, and sometimes the more challenging one, is finding that person.

Living an authentic life

I met my first mentor, Dr. Richard Klonoski, my freshman year in college. I didn't know what a mentor was, but I instinctively knew this guy could help me figure things out. I took his classes, made extra help appointments, proposed independent study opportunities, and made it a point to seek his counsel.

It wasn't just his expertise in ancient philosophy I was after – it was how he lived his life. In return he helped me figure out how to live mine in a way that was right for me. He was the complete package: successful professional, devoted family man, and active community member. His intellectual and professional knowledge and achievement were linked with personal integrity. For me, Klonoski modelled a life well lived that derived satisfaction from hard work, mistakes made and corrected, and persistence, combined with service, sacrifice, and rootedness in place. Those ancient Greek virtues really did have a place in the modern world!

There was also an invisible line and a directional flow to my mentor relationship with Klonoski. He knew more about me than I knew about



Above: Women's Enterprise Initiative mentor team (L to R): Anthea Disney, Deborah Seidel, Maggie Selby, and Carole St Mark. Photo: Peter Howe.

him. Although it sounds harsh to say, we were not friends. Our mentor relationship had limits that commanded both our respect.

I've made it my business to stay in touch with him over the decades through Christmas cards, phone calls seeking advice and giving updates, and an occasional visit. He's met my husband and children and he remains as relevant to me today as he did those many years ago. And while our relationship has morphed into more of a friendship, he'll always be my mentor.

Résumé and eulogy virtues

The New York Times Op-Ed contributor David Brooks gives us a way to think about this connection between the personal and professional. He calls them “résumé virtues” and “eulogy virtues.” He writes, “Résumé virtues are the skills you bring to the marketplace. The eulogy virtues are the ones that are talked about at your funeral – whether you were kind, brave, honest or faithful.”

Brooks continues, “We all know that the eulogy virtues are more important than the résumé ones. But our culture and our educational systems spend more time teaching the skills and strategies you need for career

success than the qualities you need to radiate that sort of inner light. Many of us are clearer on how to build an external career than on how to build inner character.”

Finding a mentor that possesses the professional expertise you seek and the personal qualities of character and integrity is critical. It's confusing to take advice from someone who is a successful professional but a personal wreck.

View from the other side

While the mentee certainly is looking for the right mentor, the same is true the other way around. Mentors are careful to make sure their time and effort are falling on the right ears.

My current professional mentor is Anthea Disney, a partner in the Litchfield, CT-based nonprofit Women's Enterprise Initiative (WEI), which provides business advice and mentoring to individuals, small businesses, and nonprofits. The four women who compose WEI cover a wide range of

Continued on next page ...

career paths and industry expertise. Now retired from the professional world, they are helping the next generation find career fulfillment and grow thriving businesses.

Disney has had a long and successful career in journalism and communications as a foreign correspondent, television producer, and newspaper and magazine editor. She then transitioned to the business side when she ran an early digital business, was CEO of *TV Guide* and CEO of HarperCollins before moving into a corporate role at News Corporation.

She's also my go-to person as I professionally recreate myself.

As a mentor, Disney wants to "make sure that all that was hard learned as a woman and businessperson in my career can be learned more easily by others as they progress in theirs."

Key ingredients for mentor relationship

Disney cites that "chemistry is key – for both parties. You both need to believe you can help and be helped by the relationship." Without feeling this initial connection, the mentor relationship won't develop.

After chemistry comes trust. "My clients must trust me to be discreet with what they tell me and know that I'm in their corner supporting them in a way that's incredibly difficult to find within an office setting."

This trust is so important, because it helps me listen to the tough love Disney dispenses mixed in with her encouragement and support. While what she tells me may be difficult to hear, even with Disney's lovely English accent, I know that she has my back and her advice is coming from the best of places to achieve a singular

goal – my professional and personal growth.

Getting there from here

In return, Disney is looking for trust of a different sort. She doesn't want me to rotely follow her counsel. Rather, she wants to trust that I'll listen to her views, think about how I can use her advice in my situation, and engage in "an ongoing conversation that often ends up somewhere quite different from where it started." Disney further observes, "The career issues that people bring to me at the outset of our relationship are often not the issues we end up working on."

I have found this to be true in my mentor relationship. The objectives I identify down in the weeds of my own career have sometimes differed from what Disney sees from her mile-high view.

The confusing hedgerow maze of my professional life benefits from Disney's perspectives. She can often see a way forward I didn't or break out her chain saw and carve a new path for me to explore – one that I don't have to take. She wants me to consider new slants on a direction and justify my views on them.

Being coachable

Disney looks for mentees who are open-minded and "truly want to learn, not those who think they want to learn but actually just want confirmation that they are right." Being coachable is critical for a mentor to see, along with a willingness to do the hard work required to change and grow.

Mentors looks for mentees who are open to working on their A game, face up to self-limiting behavior, reach beyond their perceived comfort zone, and break bad habits to make room for good ones.

Communication

Open communication is also fundamental. As with any mentor, Disney puts time and energy into her mentees. Disney admits, "It can be frustrating when you don't hear back

from someone you have spent time counselling. I derive my satisfaction from seeing my clients' progress – whether they have taken my advice or not. I encourage interaction, but some people are reluctant to use me to the fullest extent and let me know how they're getting on."

Setting boundaries

Disney's mentor relationships have distinct boundaries and parameters, which she sets out very clearly at the first meeting. She's not a therapist. She's not a buddy. Yet, for Disney "mentoring is a dynamic, not static relationship." She is mentoring the whole person and that requires getting to know them on a personal level as well. In turn, she shares details from her own life and experiences to make her three dimensional and relatable. In her experience, it's difficult for that elemental trust to be developed without a personal bond.

Creating a mentor relationship can be a valuable part of progressing in your professional and personal life. Having someone in your corner who believes in you and offers the benefit of their wisdom and experience can be a game changer. It's a connection worth making. •

For more information about how to find a mentor in your area or profession, visit the Small Business Association's SCORE network at www.score.org. For information about Women's Enterprise Initiative, go to www.wei-nwct.net. Other fertile ground for mentor hunting can be your chambers of commerce, industry organizations, community and/or recreational affiliations, houses of worship, educational institutions, alumni associations, and places of employment.

HOW TO FIND A MENTOR

Make it Intentional

Finding, cultivating, and maintaining a mentor relationship takes intention and work. They have what you want – wisdom, perspective, and advice. Therefore, you need to build and stoke the mentor/mentee relationship. What follows are some suggestions about how to do that.

Define your needs

Consider what you'd like to get out of that relationship. Is it building work or entrepreneurial skills? Investigating a different career or life path? Balancing work and personal life? While you may not be completely clear about the "why" at this point, try to get some ideas down on paper. You'll need some amount of clarity about your objectives when you go mentor hunting.

Look around you

Now, lift your head up and look around you through the lens of seeing bosses, neighbors, community members, or teachers as mentor material. Observe them more closely through this lens. Make opportunities to interact with them on multiple levels, not just professionally. How would they stack up in the resume/eulogy virtue litmus test?

Do your due diligence

While this might seem a bit stalky, my rule of thumb is: if it's out there online – in the press or in their professional and personal social media – and I'm not paying money for access to it, then it's fair game. What kinds of insights can you glean from their online presence? That will give you a greater sense of the person from all angles.

Make the ask

While it might seem weird to ask someone, "Will you be my mentor?" it still may be worthwhile – but only after you've invested time in getting to know your potential mentor and believe the relationship shows signs of mutual value. By asking a person to mentor you, it makes it clear that you're taking this relationship seriously and that you find worth in what they bring to the table. It signals to them that you see them in that light, sets mutual boundaries, and creates a level of stewardship, obligation, and care.

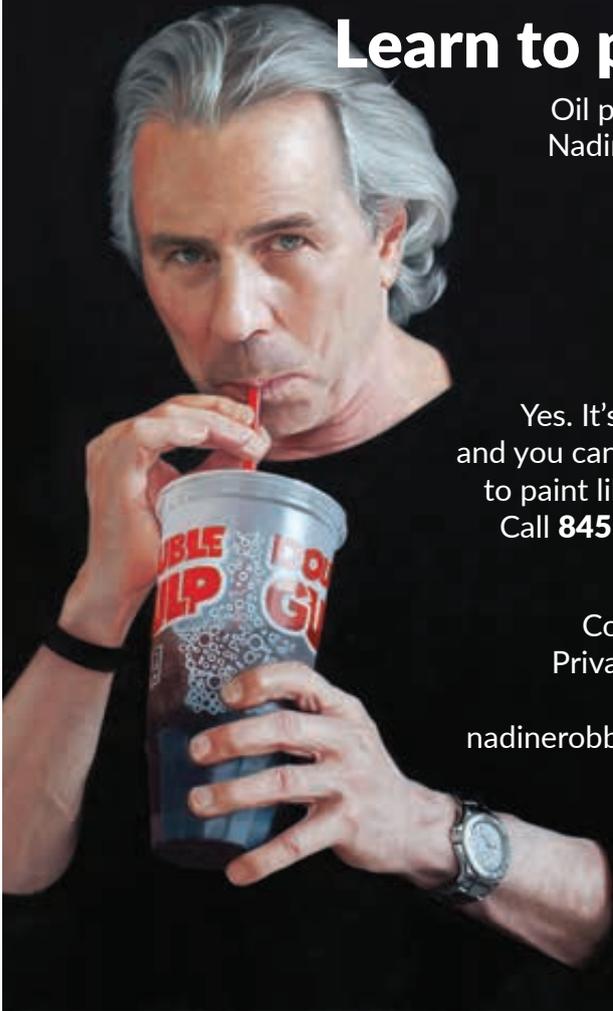
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The literary life ... times two

SUSAN AND WILLIAM KINSOLVING

By CB Wismar
info@mainstreetmag.com

Together, they are an imposing couple. Their elegant repartee flows back and forth, effortlessly. They complete each other's sentences, but not in words of one syllable. When William and Susan Kinsolving are deep in conversation, their respect and admiration for each other's intellectual prowess is palpable. Individually, they are giants – each recognized, applauded, and celebrated for their accomplishments over the years. Books published to rave reviews; verse shared in publications around the globe; novels published, screenplays written, performances met with standing ovations; and a loyalty from students that is legendary.

Susan and William Kinsolving, like so many of the power couples who live quietly among us, enjoy the casual anonymity of living where the Litchfield Hills, the Berkshires, and the Hudson Valley blend together. They are among the faces you see and recognize at the local market, or the couple sitting in rapt conversation two tables over at your favorite bistro. They may be world famous, but here, they are comfortably at home.

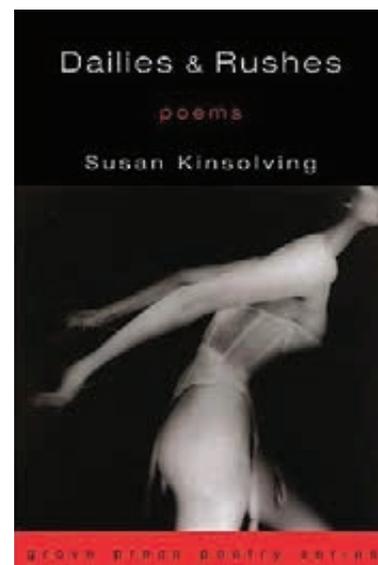
Susan was born in Elmhurst, IL, and demonstrated an early affini-

ty for writing, especially poetry. While in elementary school, her works found publication in the local newspaper's "Poetry Corner," where Susan published them under a pseudonym. She migrated to California for both college and graduate school, and having lived a somewhat peripatetic life, now teaches at The Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, CT. Since 2009, she has been poet-in-residence, teaching courses in creative writing and American Literature. Her academic degrees are from both the University of California and the California Institute of the Arts, the prestigious school where she met William and also served on the faculty.

"...A dark elegance..."

A poet of international renown, she has published three volumes of poetry: *Dailies & Rushes*, *The White Eyelash*, and *Among Flowers*, the latter being a joint project with painter Susan Colgan whose vivid illustrations accompany Susan Kinsolving's verse. Susan's volumes of poetry have all been widely reviewed and received several awards. Individually, her poems have been published in, among others, *The Paris Review*, *The Texas Review*, and *The Nation*. A fourth volume of original poems, titled *Peripheral Vision* is due out in May of 2019.

The late poet and editor J. D. McClatchy said of her work, "Susan Kinsolving's poems skate with a dark elegance on the thin ice between the upper air and a deepening sorrow, between the day's figures and memory's pattern. But she's headed towards love: the distant shore, the beckoning warmth; and by the end of *Dailies & Rushes* she has gotten herself – and, to our delight and gratitude, brought us as well – triumphantly there."



The "musings" of Walt Whitman

William is an actor, playwright, singer, director, and novelist who has most recently shared readings of one of his current creative efforts – *America & Me*, a thoroughly engaging send up of Walt Whitman, performed "in character" as if it were Whitman speaking in celebration of his 67th birthday. The one man show was emerged after a lengthy conversation with noted actor Daniel Davis (recognizable for those who were fans of *The Nanny* where he played Niles for 145 episodes). The two were lamenting the fact that there were no choice roles for actors "of a certain age," and William's response was to dig deeply into his love of Whitman and create a suitable, very enjoyable piece.

The son of a Bishop in the Episcopal Church, William, traveled, read voraciously, and majored in both Far Eastern Theology and Drama at Stanford, choosing the latter over the former as a career direction.

While acting and directing in plays across the country, he invested his backstage time in writing his first play – *Nicholas Romanov* –

Above: The covers of two of Susan Kinsolving's books. Image courtesy of Susan Kinsolving. Below, left: Susan Kinsolving. Image courtesy of The Hotchkiss School's faculty website page.



Continued on next page ...

managing to weave 83 speaking roles and an acappella chorus in the script. To both his amazement and amusement, the play was actually produced, and his talents brought him scores of assignments “doctoring” feature film screenplays in need of help.

His penchant for storytelling made a transition to novels almost effortless. Four of his published works, including *Born With the Century*, and *Mister Christian* blend his flair for the dramatic with his love of history. *Forrest Gump* author Winston Groom offered, “In *Mister Christian*, Kinsolving ratchets up the historical novel, making that elegant era of England’s mastery of the seas come alive.”

Blessed with musical talent as well as the genetic penchant for acting and writing, William has appeared as what he casually refers to as “a saloon singer” in New York night spots and venues across the country. His specialty – *The Great American Songbook* – allows him to

sing, tell stories, and with seemingly great ease, get the audience laughing and singing along ... within reason.

A place of belonging

When they arrived in Connecticut some years ago, the Kinsolvings found a 1793 farmhouse in Bridgewater and truly felt like they “belonged.” For the self-described wanderers, the notion of calling one place home, settling down and building a future quickly became the norm as their family grew.

The Kinsolvings have two daughters, Eliza who works in San Francisco as Development Manager for the non-profit JDRC (diabetes research), and Caroline, an actor who received glowing reviews in the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s June 2018 production of *Tartuffe*.

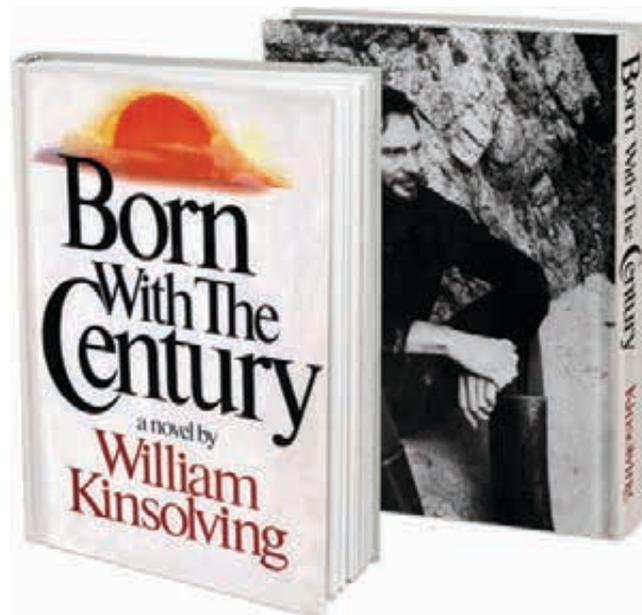
Although Susan and William Kinsolving have called Connecticut home for several years, their pursuits and passions have led them to several overseas destinations, if the residencies have been merely

temporary. Susan has been awarded poetry fellowships in Switzerland, France, Italy, Ireland, and Scotland while William has, during his illustrious career worked in Rome and London in the film industry.

Lectures, poetry readings, teaching assignments for Susan at Bennington College,

UConn, Southampton College, and Chautauqua Institution have kept them on the move, as have fundraising performances by William up and down the West Coast.

With the continuous refinement of *America & Me!* William hopes to have the piece – currently “a one hander,” meaning the actor holds the script and reads from it as opposed to memorizing it – settle with an actor of note in the genre of *Mark Twain Tonight* presented by Hal Holbrook and, as such, find



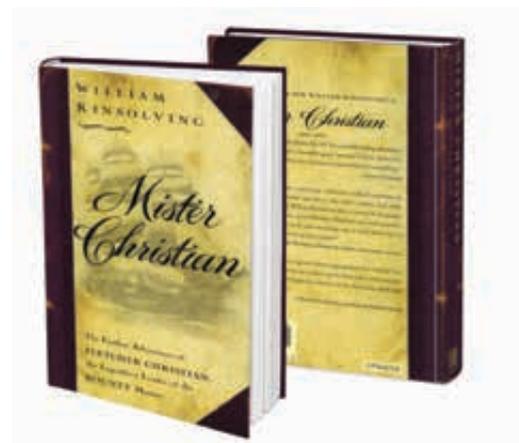
wider distribution. If local audiences in Salisbury, CT, are any indication, the prospect is a good one. In the meantime, there are books to finish, publishers to charm, poems to write, release of *Peripheral Vision* to support and classes to teach.

For the sheer enjoyment of the experience, readers are invited to discover the wit of William’s website (www.williamkinsolving.com) to keep up on the adventures, expectations, and explorations of the author. Books are summarized and offered, films are listed, adventures are celebrated in a conversational style.

As summer fades into another New England autumn and the campus of Hotchkiss is enlivened with new and returning students, Susan Kinsolving readies her syllabus and prepares to encourage, form, and enlighten a new class. As for William, the polishing of a new novel and the daily wait for a publisher’s response will mark the days, and two creative giants will move easily into the new season. •



Above and bottom, right: The covers of two of William Kinsolving’s books. Directly above: William Kinsolving during a performance. Images courtesy of William Kinsolving.





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The Fall Festival of Shakespeare

By Madison Smith & Anne Savage
info@mainstreetmag.com

In a typical high school classroom, students are often less than thrilled when forced with the prospect of reading Shakespeare. The Bard's dated language and intimidating reputation often cause young people to view his works as inaccessible or irrelevant. But one local program has found a way to get students to connect with Shakespeare's plays. At the Fall Festival of Shakespeare, held every November at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA, local high schoolers put on productions of classics like *Romeo & Juliet* or *Macbeth* with energy and enthusiasm.

A real collaboration

Over five hundred students from ten public high schools in the Berkshires and Hudson Valley participate in the Festival every year. Shakespeare & Company sends two directors to each school to help the teenagers create their own production of a Shakespeare play in just three months. Costume and set designers from the company also assist with the creative process, resulting in productions of exceptional quality. The ten schools gather for "Common Classes" at Lenox, where they learn about theatre tech, dance, stage combat, and performance from professionals. The students then reunite during Festival weekend to perform their shows for each other.



Every Festival participant is allowed free admittance to other schools' shows; many students make it a goal every year to attend as many other plays as possible. The section of the theater closest to the stage, where the first row of seats is mere inches from performers, is reserved for students. This allows for the Festival's trademark actor-audience interactions: performers will frequently break the fourth wall by holding hands with, clambering over, or even spitting on theatergoers. The audience is fully engrossed,

often cheering at heroes' triumphs and hissing at acts of villainy. No wonder students will line up in the cold November weather to attend four performances in a row. One participant likens

the performances to "a Shakespeare rock concert."

When watching a Festival performance, one cannot help but think that this is how Shakespeare's work is meant to be experienced.

Sharing what they love

One key part of the Festival's philosophy is that it is not a competition. At the end of the weekend, no trophies are awarded. No single school is declared a winner. Instead, all students are united by a common love of the Bard's work, and only wish for each school to do their best and have fun. "People are so happy to share the experience of Fall Fest," one student said. "We love what we do and can't wait to share it with others."

Continued on next page ...

This page:
Students from
Taconic Hills High
School performing
*As You Like
It*. Photos by
Denise Smith.





Above, top to bottom: From Taconic Hills' performance of *As You Like It*. A group of festival students talking to director of education Kevin Coleman. Photos by Denise Smith.

The skills gained

Involvement with the Fall Festival of Shakespeare provides an opportunity for students to gain many practical and academic skills. Whether taking on famous roles such as Prospero or Cleopatra, participating as an extra, or working backstage, all students glean a comprehensive understanding of the play they are putting on. Tackling such difficult texts improves vocabulary, and many plays help bring complex history to life. Performers become more adept at public speaking, and more comfortable in their own skin. Other students help design and sew costumes, build sets, and run the lights and sound booth.

But whether students are acting in front of an audience or helping the play run smoothly backstage, the Festival relies on teamwork, creative problem-solving, and collaboration toward a common goal.

Putting their own spin on it

Of course with only a limited number of Shakespeare plays available, shows are bound to get repeated.

But every year, each school interprets the text in a new and unique way. One festival participant commented on this phenomenon: "Even though our school did the same show as another school this year, the shows were completely different... That's what's so cool about Shakespeare – everything is left up to the performers!"

The directors from Shakespeare & Company stress student understanding of the text. Even though Elizabethan English can be difficult to translate for a twenty-first century audience, they make sure each student really understands every line of their assigned play. Each student develops a unique knowledge of the characters they portray. The creative flair which each school brings to their performance allows students to really delve into the plays and discover the humor, tragedy, and enduring themes of Shakespeare's work. Students form personal connections with the plays, the kind of connections which rarely take place in traditional classrooms.

Anything but boring

One Festival participant describes Shakespeare as "...the best part of my entire school year ... I never thought I could be so excited about

Shakespeare, but Fall Fest has really opened my eyes to how meaningful and exciting it can really be."

Most other students who experience the Fall Festival feel similarly positive about the program, and return to participate in the next year's performance. They also have to fundraise every year. While the Festival is partially dependent on large grants from the National Endowment of the Arts, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Dr. Robert C. and Tina Sohn Foundation, and various other charitable organizations, schools also rely on the generosity of their local communities in order to take part in the program.

The Fall Festival of Shakespeare is now entering its thirtieth year of inspiring and educating students. For many years, it was the only program of its kind. But other schools and other theater companies have begun to realize the value of letting students express themselves through performing Shakespeare, and similar programs are being started in other parts of the country. Every year, more and more students will be able to prove that the Bard is anything but boring. •

Here's a link to Shakespeare and Company's Fall Festival page. During Festival season, the schedule of shows is posted here. <https://www.shakespeare.org/education/fall-festival-of-shakespeare>

During each Festival, all of the shows are professionally recorded by CTSB and put on Vimeo. Below is a link to a trailer for Fall Fest 2017 on CTSB's Vimeo. Full versions of all of the shows are available for purchase. <https://vimeo.com/243139144>

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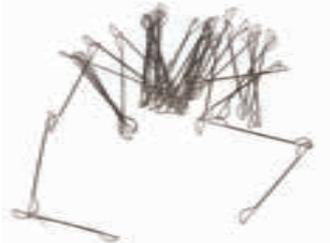
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A “Formel”-dable undertaking

By Dominique DeVito
info@mainstreetmag.com

In hindsight, I realized it was a good thing Stephen Formel led me to a couple of Adirondack chairs overlooking the Ockawamick Creek that runs through his property when I came to visit him in mid July, instead of heading straight to the old mill, which is what I came to talk to him about. Sitting in the chairs chatting about his background and how he came to be resuscitating and using the old mill on his property in Claverack, NY, (just south of Philmont, with a Hillsdale address), I couldn't even see the structure that was of ultimate intrigue here unless I deliberately turned to observe it. Instead, my view – our view – was of the water making its way downstream, an apt metaphor for the journey of Formel's life to this point.

The man for the moment

In hindsight, upon hearing his story, it made perfect sense that Stephen Formel should be taking on the huge challenge of bringing the water-powered mill on his property back to life. Steve's dad was a contractor, so Steve grew up fixing

things, and learning all aspects of construction.

His family is from Pittsfield, MA, and Steve went to Siena College. His dad moved his construction business to Puerto Rico, and though, Steve noted, “I hadn't particularly wanted to work construction, I was drawn to business in general. The construction business worked on different islands,” he continued, “and I saw what I thought were some inefficiencies in the shipping business. Containerization had revitalized the shipping industry and had put most small cargo lines out of business.”

He turned and looked me in the eye. “No good idea fits all circumstances all the time,” he said. So with the ideology of youth and the training of a contractor, having never done anything remotely similar, Steve bought a small cargo boat and took it from Long Island to Puerto Rico, where he started an inter-island shipping company. Steve became intimately familiar with the power of water.

Fast-forward to the 1990s. The Formels' cargo business was sold. Steve and his wife and their six children were looking for a place to call home. Their search turned up an ad for the property with the mill, upon which there was also a house. “The property was really run down,” Steve told me, “but I was intrigued. I knew I wanted to return the mill to working order.” The family bought the place and settled in. The kids went to Taconic Hills. Steve served on the Board of Education there. And he learned a lot about the history of the mill property and the people who worked it in the past.

When mills were essential

“Water-powered mills were necessary for people to make flour and



Above: The Mill at Green Hole is fed by the water that flows from this dam down the waterfall on Ockawamick Creek south of Philmont. Below, left: The mill, which dates to the 1700s, has been lovingly restored. This is just a glimpse into its impressive interior workings.

cut wood,” he explained. “This piece of property is nice and flat just beside a waterfall ... perfect conditions. The oldest document I have on the operation of the mill dates back to 1763,” he added, “but some additional research I've done has led me to conclude that the mill goes back to 1720.”

As with a lot of property in Columbia County and the Hudson Valley at the time, it was owned by the Van Rensselaers. They rented the property to the people who lived on it and operated the mill, and at the time the renters could not legally buy or own the property. This egregious policy in the wake of the freedoms gained in 1776 led to a rural uprising – the Anti-Rent Wars, launched on July 4, 1839. (This is a wonderful slice of upstate

New York history all by itself. To learn more check out the piece, *History of America's Other Revolution: The Anti-Rent Wars*, through the link shown at article's end).

In 1832, the property was bought by the Bartons. The patron, Solomon C. Barton, had nine children. Stephen Formel said to me, “Interestingly, one of the sons who eventually inherited the property was Stephen Barton – spelled the way I spell my name – and he had a son named Stephen K. Barton. I also have a son Stephen whose middle initial is K.”

The Bartons were on the property for generations, and the site was known as Barton's Mills, Highland Mills, and even South

Continued on next page ...



Bend Mills. Howard Barton and a sister were the last of the line, and Howard, who operated the mill all his life, died in 1988 at the age of 88. It was a few years later that Steve and his family bought it from the step-children of Howard's sister's daughter. Steve figures by that time the mill had not been used for about a decade.

A labor of love

Getting a large, old, broken-down house in good working order is hard enough, but to also bring back to life a large water-powered mill is, well, formidable. A labor of love. An amazing gift to the community. The full effect of that was apparent when Steve and I wrapped up our creek-side chat and he invited me to tour the mill. "I call this the two-beer tour," he said, "because you need at least that many to see everything and hear the stories."

It was too early for the beers, but the stories were abundant. We started at the top of the hill where Steve showed me how the water flowed through a succession of two waterfalls into a hole that is 14 feet deep. The color of the water there is a beautiful shade of green, and was the inspiration for Steve's designation of the property as The Mill at Green Hole.



There was once a natural dam at the lower falls to direct the water over a drop of about eight feet to a water wheel with a ten-foot diameter. As demand for power increased, the pressure source needed to increase, too, so a second dam was built above the upper falls in 1880, and turbines replaced the water wheel. The dam and some of the mill buildings were destroyed in the 1938 flood that also hit the village of Philmont. Steve needed to rebuild that dam and put in a new, modern turbine.

We walked through the mill while Steve pointed out how all the parts work together to create power to cut wood and make cider. It was a tour with technical elements that were beyond my understanding, but which I could certainly admire – the way belts move to control speed; passages that were built out of the rock to help direct water flow; the craftsmanship of the wood from which the mill was built; the positioning of huge pieces of heavy equipment – all done by men and horses not that long ago! Fortunately, Steve has put together a history of the mill itself on his website, ascribing dates to when things were added and how it was used. It's an excellent resource, and I defer to it for additional details.

Deserving of an audience

The Mill at Green Hole, with its beauty, history, and functionality, is a real treasure. Steve understands that his hands are just part of the story that contributes to its place in the history of our area and our country.

In an effort to keep it alive, Steve has recognized that it needs an audience that will appreciate and help sustain it. The Mill at Green Hole is open for tours and demonstrations. It's a fantastic site for a one-of-a-kind wedding or other gatherings. It's a testament to what was and is possible with what was available before all the power sources we take for granted today, which is a reminder that we need to continue to understand our past if we're going to survive in the present, and the future. Make an appointment to visit with Steve. You'll be forever grateful and inspired. ●

The Mill at Green Hole is at 2136 County Road 11 in Claverack/Hillsdale. Learn more at www.themillatgreenhole.com or email themillatgreenholeny@gmail.com. You can also call Steve at (518) 360-1715. Follow The Mill at Green Hole on Facebook, too!

History of America's Other Revolution: The Anti-Rent Wars, learn more at www.hvmag.com/Hudson-Valley-Magazine/August-2015/History-of-Americas-Other-Revolution-The-Anti-Rent-Wars.



Above: The site is ideal for celebrating special occasions, like a wedding. Photo by Tom Starkweather. Below, left: Captain Stephen Formel poses in front of a wall of the mill that's decorated with old parts and tools.

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Homes with history

By Regina Molaro
info@mainstreetmag.com

For centuries, the scenic Hudson Valley region – with its majestic mountains and spectacular river vistas – has been home to many prominent families including the Livingstons. Their history can be traced back to Scotland's twelfth-century Saxon nobleman Leving whose manor was regarded as “Leving's-tun” (“tun” meant house). By the thirteenth century, surnames came into use and his descendants began identifying themselves as “de Levingston.”

Robert Livingston (the Elder) – the founder of the American branch of the family – was born in 1654 at Ancrum on Scotland's Teviot River. In 1673, he arrived in Massachusetts and later married Alida Schuyler Van Rensselaer – the sister of Pieter Schuyler, who later became the mayor of Albany. The widow of Nicholas Van Rensselaer, Alida had ties with prominent families in the region. Through these affiliations and via negotiations with the Mahicans due to his language proficiency, Robert purchased many acres of land. Eventually he acquired an enormous swath from the Hudson River to Massachusetts.

In the years that followed, many more Livingstons were born into the family. In 1746, another Robert Livingston joined the clan. He would

later become the most prominent member of the family. His many achievements include becoming one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. He also administered the presidential oath of office to George Washington. Also known as “The Chancellor,” he was a member of the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence.

Retelling history

Until now, the captivating stories behind the historic homes that belonged to the Livingston family and their many descendants has not been told by one person – with a singular voice and vision.

Those stories, along with the opulent interiors, sprawling grounds, and spectacular views are what lured New York-based photographer Pieter Estersohn to capture and detail them in his new book, *Life Along the Hudson: The Historic Country Estates of the Livingston Family*. Published by Rizzoli New York, it will be released in September.

Estersohn's initial inspiration to photograph these homes can be traced back to 2010. That's when the photographer purchased a second home in Red Hook and joined the board of Friends of Clermont – the support group of the Clermont Historic site.

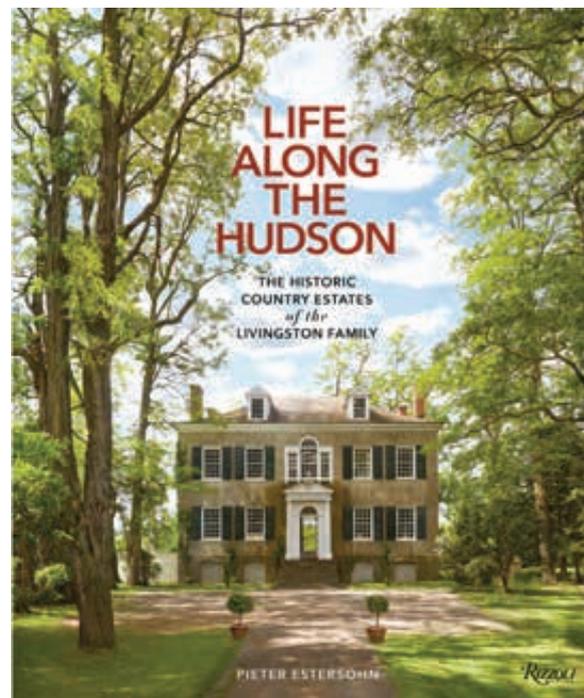
“Through the Friends of Clermont, I was introduced to the genealogy of the Livingston family – and their 68 Robert Livingstons. The spider web of genealogical connections amongst themselves and the small circle of Astor, Van Rensselaer, Stuyvesant, and similar families intrigued me,” admits Estersohn, photographer and author.

The Livingstons – or descendants of the family – were of interest to Estersohn since the family was extremely politically active. Its members held an array of prestigious posts. Beyond the three ambassadors to France, there were many senators and representatives.

As he became better acquainted with the community and visited these historic homes, Estersohn recognized a unique story that hadn't been told comprehensively.

With a keen eye for aesthetics, Estersohn enjoys a successful career shooting covers for countless magazines including *Architectural Design*, *Departures*, *Elle Décor*, and *Condé Nast Traveler*. Beyond the ultra-stylish interiors, his vast portfolio of work includes portraits, advertising and travel photos, and beyond. Although his photographs have been featured in 80 books, *Life Along the Hudson* marks the first book that Estersohn has photographed and written.

Life Along the Hudson spotlights 35 magnificent homes built between 1730 and the 1940s. “A specific American thread connects the homes through the architects, landscape designers, and decorators that have



Above: New York-based photographer Pieter Estersohn's new book spotlights 35 historical homes that belonged to Hudson Valley's prominent Livingston family. Image: © *Life Along the Hudson: The Historic Country Estates of the Livingston Family* by Pieter Estersohn, Rizzoli New York, 2018. Below, left: One of the homes and images featured in the newly-released book. Photo © Pieter Estersohn.



Continued on next page ...



Above top and below right: Homes and images featured in the newly-released book. Directly above: The author and photographer, Pieter Estersohn. Photos © Pieter Estersohn.

collaborated with the Livingstons and their extended family in building the family's country seats, often consciously trying to outdo one another," says Estersohn.

Included in the book are several associated gate houses and lodges as well as the Beaux Arts splendor of Staatsburgh in Dutchess County.

"My goal was to create a document that covered the extensive history of the region and the houses, but also one that – through contemporary interviews – brings a fresh voice and exposure to how these homes are being lived in today; the struggles, occasional influx of finances, and preservation concerns that are inherent in owning historically significant properties, sometimes with massive land holdings," reveals Estersohn.

For his first written project, Estersohn selected a subject that was extremely vast. Beyond involving a lot of research, the project required many visits to historical societies, libraries, and personal archives.

Photographer's faves

One of Estersohn's favorite chapters is Teviotdale, which is prominently featured on the book's cover. Built by Walter Livingston in 1774, Teviotdale is situated between the Roeliff Jansen Kill and the Kleine Kill in the hamlet of Linlithgo.

Rokeby in Barrytown is another home that is of notable interest to Estersohn due to its spectacularly poetic interiors, which were improved upon in 1894 by American Beaux-Arts architect Stanford White.

"It's situation on a hillock overlooking the Hudson River is one of the unifying elements that most of these homes offer. They look out over what the family referred to as 'our mountains,' which they owned at the time. Their landholdings covered the Catskills to the Massachusetts border," reveals Estersohn.

Life Along the Hudson includes a foreword by John Winthrop "Wint" Aldrich, a descendant of the original Builder of Rokeby.

In recent years, several of the opulent homes have been redecorated. These include Rose Hill – the home of artists Brice and Helen Marden; Marienruh, the home of writer Andrew Solomon; and Astor Tea House, the home of Robert Duffy, co-founder and deputy chairman of Marc Jacobs International.

"Many have accumulated a patina only possible over a period of many generations of collecting, traveling, and improving upon inherited country seats," says Estersohn.

The son of an abstract expres-

sionist painter and documentary film maker, design, color, and composition were certainly part of his upbringing. The self-taught photographer honed his photography skills in his family's dark rooms in California and New York. Stints living and studying abroad further cultivated Estersohn's love of style, including architecture, art history, and interior design.

Of the roster of 35 architectural and historical gems included in *Life Along the Hudson*, three are open to the public. These include Wilderstein in Rhinebeck, Clermont in Germantown, and Staatsburgh in Staatsburg.

Wilderstein is a nineteenth century Queen Anne-style country house, which was once home to the Suckley family – descendants of the Livingston and Beekman families. Its last resident was Margaret (Daisy) Suckley – a cousin and confidante of former president Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The original Clermont home was built by Robert Livingston around 1740 on land inherited by his father, Robert Livingston, the First Lord of Livingston Manor. Finally, the elegant country home of Staatsburgh, which once belonged to Ogden Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills is exemplary of the great estates constructed during the Gilded Age.

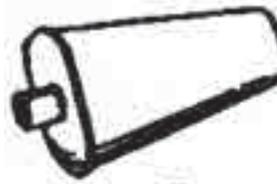
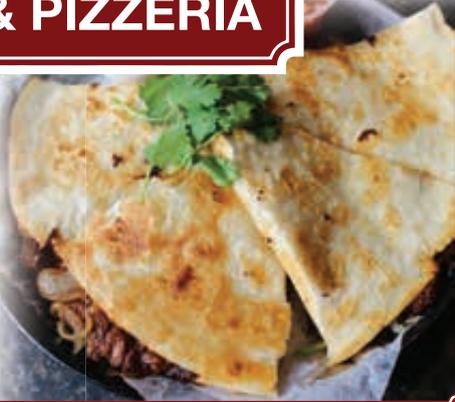
In September, 2018, *Life Along the Hudson* will be available at Oblong Books & Music locations in both Millerton and Rhinebeck. Estersohn's last book, *Kentucky; Historic Houses and Horse Farms of Bluegrass Country*, was published by Monacelli Press in 2014. ●



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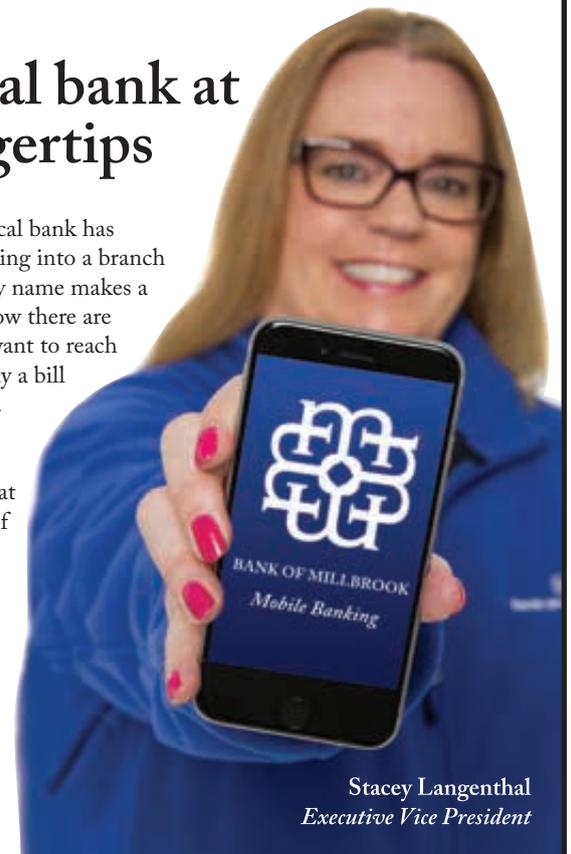
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Branding facelift

Your identity is the first impression because it is often the first thing a potential customer/client sees, and how they encounter your business.

What does your logo say about you? What does your overall identity say about your business? What emotion does your identity convey? These are important questions, therefore your logo is not just a logo: it is the face of your business.

When it comes to an identity system, it is important that it conveys the correct feeling and evokes the desired emotional response. To do that it is important that your identity has the appropriate colors, fonts, and graphic images used – but

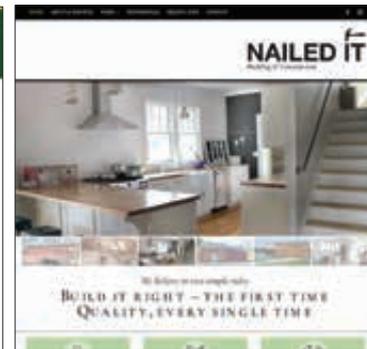
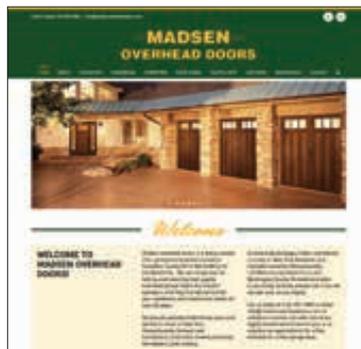
they also have to be appropriate for your business. Those items are then taken and carried throughout the entire identity package, from the business card to your apparel, vehicles and your website. These factors impact the audiences' perception of your business, and when designed properly, your identity will help to make the right impression.

Your identity should always showcase the best image of your business – remember the importance of that first (and second) impression?! In order to do that, you want an eye-catching and beautiful logo, identity system, and overall brand.

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ON THE VERY FEW PEOPLE AND VERY MANY SALMON OF

Norway's Kvarøy Island

By John Waldman
john.waldman@qc.cuny.edu

John Waldman is a professor of biology at Queens College, NY, with a focus on aquatic conservation biology. Previously, he worked for twenty years at the Hudson River Foundation for Science & Environmental Research. Dr. Waldman has authored more than 100 journal articles, several books, and contributes essays and op-eds to the New York Times, Environment 360, and other publications. His most recent book is "Running Silver: Restoring Atlantic Rivers and their Great Fish Migrations" and he is currently working on a book titled "Awe & Nature." He and his wife Carol live in Sea Cliff, NY, but also have an old country house in West Cornwall, CT – a base for their part-time antiques business, for enjoying the region's many cultural activities, and for fly fishing in the Housatonic.

It was an invitation I could easily refuse: Arctic Circle. In winter. But then I couldn't: Charming little island in Norway's Inside Passage. State-of-the-art salmon ranching. Gourmet seafood dinners.

I was to be a guest of Whole Foods – part of a small party invited to view some of the sustainable fisheries they sourced their seafood from. I got packing.

Flying to Oslo is easy, but getting around greater Norway definitely is not – it's mountainous and its coast is savagely irregular. Punctuated by



fjord after fjord, Norway's shoreline is longer than that of the United States – despite having only 3% of America's landmass. But Norwegians make travel work, relying on an efficient network of boats and planes of all sizes. After a local flight northward from the capital city, we board a vessel and speed toward Kvarøy Island down the Inside Passage, a spectacular world of rock and water. Along the way, Dave Pilat, the Whole Foods Global Seafood Buyer and Steve Damato, co-owner of Blue Circle Foods, a seafood distributor committed to environmentally responsible seafood, describe Kvarøy Fiskeoppdrett, or Kvarøy Fish Farming, as what they see as an exemplar of

sustainability.

The sheer health of these clear green waters is obvious, there is little human intrusion, seabirds abound and, as we ease into Kvarøy Island's cozy harbor, we see thousands of young saithe, a groundfish related to cod and pollock, milling among the docks. A tall ruddy-faced blond greets us and grabs our dockline – it's Alf-Goran Knutsen, the CEO of Kvarøy Fiskeoppdrett, who we soon learn is an ubiquitous presence on the island.

Kvarøy Island

What is commonly known as Kvarøy Island is actually Inner Kvarøy Island; its rugged outer twin was last inhabited year-round more than a millennium ago. Though Outer Kvarøy is several miles away, with its lofty profile reminiscent of a man riding a horse, I feel it looming – a mysterious monolith that continues as a source of legends involving trolls and other whimsical Norse creatures.

Even today, keeping residents put on far flung islands and remote peninsulas is a chronic problem in Norway, with populations some-

times dwindling to below a viable number. Some coastal villages shrink from the pull of Oslo and other big cities; most often it's the women who flee, leaving behind bachelor communities of lonely men who refuse to give up the sea.

Kvarøy now teeters at 70 inhabitants, down from 80 not long ago. In such a place, everyone must wear more than one hat and people are always in motion. Alf wears many, serving as a veritable engine for the community. Beyond being the CEO of the fish farm, he is CEO of the tourist company, accountant for the market, pub, and restaurant, and leader of the community organization. Alf's wife, Lill owns the salmon company and is chief of the kindergarten. Her mother, Olea, runs the restaurant and the market. Communities like this are why flow charts were invented.

Alf settles us into his well-appointed cabins overlooking the Inside Passage and high above a primitive shore-side enclosure where



Above top, to bottom: The harbor at Kvarøy Island. A typical young Atlantic salmon being raised in the net pens.

Continued on next page ...



Above top to bottom: Cod and other ground-fish air-drying in traditional outdoor pens. John Waldman landing a cod in Norway's Inside Passage. Right: A hearty Norwegian country breakfast made from local fish, animal, and plant sources.

hundreds of slabs of "klippfish" are curing, the name stemming from the traditional practice of drying fish on stone cliffs. Before dinner we explore Kvarøy's two-square miles, a rustic landscape of fir trees and heather, dirt roads, farm plots, and naked outcrops. Remarkably, we are downright comfortable, the nearby Gulf Stream conveys heat from lower latitudes to these northern reaches; in fact, that week it was warmer than back home in New York. But most of all we are enchanted by the atmosphere – it hangs with a magical luminosity from the sun burning at low angles through sea-suffused air and reflecting off snow-lined mountains.

An emphasis on seafood

At dinner time we gather at the island's only restaurant, Olea's Kjøkken, housed in a refurbished cobbler's shop on a pier and open only by request. Olea insists we first have drinks downstairs in what she has turned into a museum of the island's modest commercial history and we chat among aged cannery

tins and antique machinery. Then we take seats upstairs at a long table where we are served an epicurean dinner prepared by Geir Olsen, the originator of the salmon farm.

To launch that complex enterprise Geir put in endless hours. Now, with the salmon business thriving, he affords himself his true passion, cooking local wild and farm products, using traditional recipes, served leisurely in three or four courses and paired with fine wines.

Dinner is superb, carefully conceived with an emphasis on seafood, dazzlingly fresh and expertly prepared. The starter is lobster soup with klippfish confit, followed by scallops roasted in butter with a carrot and ginger puree, and garnished with chips of a ham we earlier saw curing in an old fishing shed. The third course features tongue of cod, a part of the fish most appreciated in its far northern realms, cod-reliant places like Scandinavia and Newfoundland. Combined with mussel cream and cauliflower, the gelatinous meat dissolves on my tongue like no other fish I've encountered.

Evidence of the regional sea's plenteousness continues with a gratine of haddock, followed by the main course: poached salmon (of course) and halibut, vegetables, shrimp, potato mash, all in a buttery fish sauce. Everything is flawless – the attention to detail at Olea's Kjøkken is even shown by the place mats, which are handmade by Olea. Each is shaped like a halibut; each requires fifty hours to embroider.

As marvelous as was the main meal, what follows is sublime, homemade vanilla ice cream bathed in wild cloudberry soup. Cloudberrries were new to me, and what will likely forever remain a rare treat inasmuch as they are found in wild boreal habitats, such as occur in Scandinavia. Although cultivation of cloudberrries is just beginning, I wonder if a farmed product could ever do justice to Geir's cloudberry soup.

Salmon farming

The next morning we are to learn about the salmon farming practices. But first, breakfast, served by Geir and Olea, but with a faster, help-yourself feast for which signs help us negotiate the many unfamiliar offerings. Crab with chili. Gravlax. Shellfish salad. Sashimi. "Sylte," a Norwegian meat roll made with pork. "Rulle," meat roll from lamb. And to soften the gamy flavor of marinated reindeer, cloudberry-suffused sour cream.

Soon I am satiated and ready to learn about the salmon. We gather in the company offices and Dave tells of the evolution of the standards used by Whole Foods, criteria he said were so stringent that salmon producers throughout the world either rejected compliance as too difficult or adopted them, thereby bifurcating the industry. It is clear from Dave that the fish farm at Kvarøy is considered a flagship operation as a Whole Foods supplier. Alf then proudly covers the history and philosophy of Kvarøy Fiskeoppdrett. He informs us that "Three familial generations over



almost forty years have refined their approach to where they produce 1,700,000 salmon each year.” And that this is accomplished using no chemicals and in an eco-friendly way, something not true for many salmon farms elsewhere in Norway and in other parts of the world where raising the fish in open net pens remains controversial and has been shown to cause considerable environmental harm.

The science of feeding

The meeting ends; it's time to go and actually see the salmon. We board a workboat and approach the chain of nets, the scale of which seems colossal. These are the grow-out facilities – a dozen circular pens, each 300-foot wide, 30- to 60-foot deep, and holding upwards of 120,000 fish.

When we arrive the salmon are being fed. This is no minor mission; the salmon appear to live to eat – the water boils with their excited, streaking bodies. A fine balance must be achieved in nourishing salmon: underfeeding slows their growth, yet, there is serious concern from overfeeding when using automated systems in which excess food commonly sinks and pollutes the sea floor. To avoid this, Kvarøy Fiskeoppdrett uses underwater cameras to watch the salmon's behavior, halting feeding just as the fish become visibly satiated. This allows their operation to routinely pass the rigorous quarterly governmental dive inspections as to the ecological health of the bottoms under the nets.

A hungry but frustrated eagle circles overhead, eyeing the myriad silvery forms in the pens as the net tenders scoop a few salmon into a trough for us to inspect. The fish are bright and healthy looking and, most notably, are free of sea lice, an external marine parasite that often flourishes where salmon are kept in high densities and that frequently weaken and even kill their hosts. Then the workers net and display the surprising reason why sea lice are few here. Unlike many operations elsewhere that use poisons to



control sea lice, the Kvarøy facility employs a biological control – an odd little toad-like fish called the lumpsucker. Down-and-out cute in their frumpiness, lumpsuckers inhabit kelp that hangs off floating rings placed in the pens. Salmon swim near the kelp and soon learn that the harmless lumpsuckers will happily eat the sea lice off their flanks. Before long, the salmon are swimming among the kelp fronds as if passing through a car wash.

Fishing and a blind test

With a little downtime before dark we are offered a deep sea fishing trip, targeting cod and wolf fish. Over much of its broad range, and especially in New England and Canada, cod on the various offshore banks have been obscenely overfished. Here, in the wildly tortuous geology of Norway's Inside Passage the deep sea is not miles, but only yards from shore. We motor a short distance from the island, I drop my lure one hundred feet to the bottom, and within ten seconds I am fast to a cod. And in little more than an hour we add saithe, haddock, a flounder, and a wolf fish to the catch.

At the restaurant, but before dinner, Alf announces a test he has prepared for us, a blind tasting of cooked squares of fresh and frozen salmon and cod – the challenge is to discriminate between the fresh



Above top to bottom: Nets pens containing thousands of salmon in a deep side-channel. A delightful pairing of farm-raised salmon and wild halibut.

and the frozen. Between the Kvarøy salmon crew and the Whole Foods group I am in the presence of some world class fish-as-food expertise.

Everyone slowly bites, chews, considers, chews some more, and writes their answers. I intuitively adopt a wine-based approach – taste whites before reds – trying the milky looking cod before the russet colored salmon. More importantly, I focus on texture, not taste; I presume that flash freezing should maintain a flavor's essence but that it might rupture some of the fish's cells, rendering it slightly more mushy. In fact, I find the taste indistinguishable between the paired morsels of the salmon and also of the cod but there is the merest difference in texture. My strategy works. Only Steven and I among the ten contestants get it right and I celebrate with one of Ole's traditional aperitifs, a glass of clear

aquavit, but one lit up by the bright orange shrimp soaking in it.

That night our group climbs a rocky hill to watch for the Northern Lights. Earlier, we enjoyed another extraordinary multi-course repast prepared by Geir and Olea. One dish for me was a gustatory revelation, klippfish in a pea sauce with chunks of home-cured bacon. The fish's flavor exploded in my mouth – not overwhelmed with salt as for baccala – but a manifold magnification of its subtle quintessence. It turns out not to be a great night for celestial phenomena, though we do detect a faint emerald swath in the northern sky. No matter – I am satisfied with the little island community, its salmon, and the richness of the Norwegian Sea. ●

INSURING YOUR WORLD

FLOOD INSURANCE ... as rains continue to get longer and heavier, we are seeing the incidence of flooding greatly increase. Whether it is a small stream, creek, or river close by, your property may be in danger. A common misconception is that you have to be in a flood zone to be able to obtain a flood policy, the answer is a resounding NO! Anyone can purchase a flood policy, even if you are not near a body of water – perhaps your home is at the base of a large mountain or drainage area that could dispense large quantities of flooding waters. This is a prime example of why flood insurance should be considered. The Federal program provides limits up to \$250,000 on a dwelling and \$100,000 on its contents. Basement contents are excluded, as are swimming pools. Additional living expense cannot be purchased through the Federal program either. Private flood policies can be purchased to fill the gaps in the Federal plans. So have a conversation soon with your agent before you have an uninsured claim.



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Soft skills: your career depends on them

Technical expertise is important for our careers, but in this changing economic landscape it's the soft skills that win the day. By 2030, it's estimated that two-thirds of jobs will be soft skill intensive.

Soft skills are the interpersonal and self-management skills we need to do our jobs well. Interpersonal skills are collaboration, communication, conflict management, adapting to organizational change, and negotiation. Self-management skills include confidence, self-awareness of emotional triggers, self-compassion and resilience, and a growth mindset that enables us to keep on learning and staying relevant.

Soft skills are crucial because the nature of work and our relationship to it has changed. In a recent LinkedIn study, college graduates can rack up nearly three job changes in the first five years. Over a lifetime, it's increasingly normal to change careers more than four times.

When you leave a job or career for another one, it may not be the technical skills that you take with you. It's the soft ones. Portraying these soft skills to potential employers can be challenging because they reflect personal qualities. We want to demonstrate our effectiveness, but it's hard to quantify these qualitative traits. How do we truly measure compassion or ability to adapt to change in the workplace setting? Through narrative stories that weave how your soft skills-enhanced performance and the workplace, served customers, and achieved results.

Emotions drive much more of our decision making than we realize – and potential employers aren't immune to that fact. To make an emotional impact, use real stories that incorporate your soft skills, and let your resume, personal statement, social media, cover letter, and interview help you tell them.

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Time to step up the intensity?

So you've religiously been going to the gym and are seeing great results, but are wondering when to up the intensity. Well, here are some tips for doing just that!

Lifting weights, running, and any other exercise-based fitness routine will need to be switched up now and again to keep the progress coming. One clue to let you know that it's time to switch weights is when you have completed an exercise for two workouts at the same weight, and have done so easily. Pick up the next weight in line and start using it for that exercise. This will help break plateaus, which can be downright aggravating!

When it comes to running, intensity is the name of the game, no matter what style of running you prefer. When a mile becomes easy, or you find yourself running it and not breaking as much of a sweat, you can do one of two things: 1. Add time and distance to your run. 2. Change the incline/speed on the treadmill. For outdoors, choose a new route to run! Doing either of these two things will help you get things going again. Another idea is to also add sprints into the workouts. Try a :15 or :20 sprint added to every quarter mile and see what happens.

These are just a few examples of what to look for, and what to do when it's time to up the intensity and keep your workouts rocking!

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Preparing your property for fall

In order to get your property ready for the autumn season, it is important to consider these steps as a part of your process: Blow off and remove leaves and debris from your lawn. Excessive leaves and debris left on these areas can cause dieback and certain molds to form on grass surfaces. Keep your lawn cut to about 3 inches to ensure that it weathers the winter well. Choose a fertilizer specific for the fall months to encourage deep root fortification. Start cutting back perennials, and prune plants and shrubs. Add mulch to any bare/thin spots to help protect planted areas in the winter months. Plant additional trees and shrubs. The fall's cooler temperatures help to alleviate stress on the plant material during the planting process. Drain and put away any irrigation/soaker systems to prevent potential freezing and breakage of lines and sprinkler heads. Do a final mowing of any fields or areas of thick brush and dense growth. Fall is a good time to do this because the areas will then stay clear for the rest of the winter. Begin annual deer protection, whether it be in liquid or barrier form. This is a necessity to prevent deer grazing and to help protect your investment. To prevent storm and snow damage, put away all outdoor furniture and paraphernalia. Doing so will help preserve your items for years of use. Install driveway markers for the upcoming plow season. This helps the snowplow driver to stay within the boundaries of your driveway, and prevents costly damages to your lawn.

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Photo: Isaac Dieboll



Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School

Early childhood education through grade 12. 330 County Route 21C, Ghent, NY. (518) 672-7092. hawthornevalleyschool.org

The Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School (HVS) was founded in 1973 as part of the Hawthorne Valley Association, when a group of pioneering educators and farmers imagined a working farm as a vibrant learning environment where children could develop meaningful connections to nature, the community, and their own sense of purpose. HVS is an early childhood through grade 12 Waldorf school, which nurtures the artistic, academic, physical, and moral development of the growing child through an age-appropriate curriculum inspired by philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner. At HVS, they strive to create a healthy and balanced learning environment where children build living connections to the natural world while cultivating social responsibility, personal excellence, and the practical capacities to meet the challenges of the future. HVS students come from a wide range of geographic locations, including Columbia- (particularly Hudson area), northern Dutchess-, southern Albany counties, and the greater NYC area – and beyond. Each student's journey is unique and leads them on a path to discovering their true self. For nearly 50 years, HVS has served families by offering an independent and holistic form of alternative education, and they look forward to at least 50 more! If you are interested in learning more please contact admissions director, John Darby (jdarby@hawthornevalley.org).



Millbrook Early Childhood Education

Play-based preschool for children ages 2.9-5 years of age. 30 Maple Ave, Millbrook NY. (845) 677-3536. www.mecec.org

Millbrook Early Childhood Education (MECEC) was founded in 2007 when the Hayes preschool in Millbrook was forced to close due to financial insolvency. Through the efforts of parents, funds were raised and MECEC was formed with the express purpose of building a high-quality preschool to replace the wide range of programs and services that had been offered through Hayes. They offer full and half day options, as well as early drop-off and lunchtime. Students come from Millbrook, Washington, Stanfordville, Pleasant Valley, Pine Plains, and Amenia. MECEC is a play-based preschool for children ages 2.9-5 years of age where play is the approach they take to learning and growing. It can be structured and focused, such as a group activity with a purpose in mind; or it can be free and solitary with open-ended possibilities. It provides children with the opportunities to try on different roles, to interact and cooperate with others, to experience feelings, to develop their imaginations, to reason and make choices, to solve problems, to exercise all those growing muscles and to simply delight in the wonders of their surroundings. Today's society is ever evolving, as are the expectations of children and a strong partnership is critical to give children the support in all areas of their life.



The NorthEast-Millerton Library

Free access to information, education, and entertainment for all ages 75 Main St, Millerton, NY. (518) 789-3340. nemillertonlibrary.org

The NorthEast-Millerton Library was incorporated on March 31, 1927 as the Miller-ton Free Library, although it can trace its roots back to 1876, when the Parent Teacher Association and other interested citizens created the Millerton Reading Room. Fast forward to 2018, the library provides free access to information, education, and entertainment for all ages in the form of books and e-books, as well as free Wi-Fi and internet access, computer use and instruction, meeting places, DVDs, audiobooks, concerts, events, workshop, programs like Mah Jong, bridge, writing, knitting, and quilting. Conveniently open Tuesday through Saturday, The NorthEast-Millerton Library is chartered to serve the Town of Northeast and the Village of Millerton. All individuals are welcome to use the Library and participate in programs regardless of where they live. And don't forget to contact the library for more information on how to receive a library card. The NorthEast-Millerton Library believes that libraries are for *everyone* and they try to make their library as welcoming and accessible as possible. The staff enjoys watching the children come to story hour programs and grow up to be educated and literate citizens of the community. The NorthEast-Millerton Library is hoping to hold new workshops focusing on small businesses and begin loaning board games, too. Donations and volunteers are always welcome.



Danica LLC

Center for physical therapy and movement integration. 101 Gay Street, Sharon, CT. (860) 397-5363. danicacenter.com

Bente Dahl-Busby has worked as a physical therapist for 34 years and originally trained in her home country of Denmark, later receiving her doctor of physical therapy degree in 2010. As a previous owner of NordiCare Physical Therapy in Sharon for 23 years, Bente decided to create a solo practice, in which she could provide the best possible physical therapy care without the increasing control and financial restrictions set forth by insurance companies. Danica's mission is to create a physical therapy and movement education center that offers the highest level of physical therapy services, integrated with Polestar Pilates and Tai Chi Chuan, as well as to create educational opportunities and programming that promote healing, wellbeing, and mobility for individuals. Bente specializes in the areas of orthopedics, manual therapy, and pelvic floor health physical therapy. She also holds a Pilates Method Alliance certification as a Polestar Pilates Rehab and Fitness Instructor, and has practiced Tai Chi Chuan for the past 30 years. "To have so many people who on a daily basis entrust me with the care of their most important and valuable asset – their health and wellbeing – is nothing less than an honor and a privilege which I realize and appreciate every single day," says Bente.

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