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MAGAZINE





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## THINK: ENVIRONMENT

In honor of this year's Earth Day on April 22, we have dedicated our April issue to the environment. The *Main Street* staff of writers did a gangbusters job with the range of stories that they bring to you this month. We are tackling some of the serious issues that plague the environment, but we are also bringing you a lot of information and tips for what you can do to make a difference locally, as well as globally.

Whether you are a believer in such things as global warming or not, we can't deny certain simple truths like the average citizen produces too much waste (on average, 25% of the groceries that you buy will be thrown out); that there is just entirely too much plastic (in general and that is being thrown out); and that our earth, water, and air are being polluted. It may seem like a daunting reality and the task equally daunting with some having uttered the words, "What difference will I really make – I'm just one person?" But imagine this: if the (maybe millions of) people who made that same statement were to make one small change to help the environment, all of a sudden you have millions of people making a difference!

In this issue Regina shares with you how Earth Day began almost 50 years ago. Christine has focused her monthly real estate article on ponds, and how they impact not just the environment but real estate values. Christine also changed this month's entrepreneur feature to focus on dark skies. Do you know that there's such a thing as light pollution? Well, there is. And Christine will tell you all about it and how it plays an impact on our environment, as well as on humans and animals. Meanwhile Ian urges us to think a little differently about recycling, and that we can do other things such as reuse and or repurpose. Peter Greenough shares some tips for what we can do and how we can help preserve our environment and the things in it. Peter Vermilyea on the other hand brings us back in time to a little piece of environmental history. Have you ever wondered where your garbage goes? To find out, you'll be interested to read Dominique's article. And if you want to partake in an environmental challenge, read Jeanne's piece on the EcoChallenge that is happening in Millerton, NY, in April.

There is something that each and every one of us can do. I urge you to make at least one change, preferably more, to help the environment and all of us who live here. We are all in this together and we all need a healthy and thriving planet to survive.

– *Thorunn Kristjansdottir*



APRIL 2019

The embodiment of nature and the environment: a fern about to open for the first time in springtime – much like all of the life coming to life at this time of year.

Cover photo by  
Lazlo Gyorsok

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# A is for apple ... C is for cider



Above, top to bottom: Apples. Photo: istockphoto.com contributor bratan007. Tyler Graham. Photo from the *Lakeville Journal*.

By *CB Wismar*  
[arts@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:arts@mainstreetmag.com)

“Prohibition was what changed everything.” Tyler Graham, journalist, entrepreneur, and cider maker seems to be wistful about the changing tastes and tendencies of the American palate and the critical role that reactionary politics play.

“When Congress finally passed the 23rd Amendment and FDR signed it into law, it took months to re-purpose brewing and bottling plants to produce cider. It took weeks for them to make beer.”

And, so it was that the national taste for cider – the crisp beverage favored from Colonial times – shifted to the golden and amber brews that have become as American as Fourth of July picnics, watching football games with friends, and Friday night at “the local.”

Tyler Graham is doing his level best to change all that ... or at least to even the playing field by originating and expanding Kings Highway Fine Cider, the brand that he created in a Brooklyn apartment and moved to the hills surrounding Millerton, NY. His distribution area may be regional at the moment, but his ambitions are great and the response to his multiple dry cider offerings has been quite positive.

## History as prelude

The origination of cider ... or “cyder” as it was known in pre-Revolutionary America – is part of American history ... inextricably bound to the importing of apple trees to the “New World.” Apples did not naturally occur in the forests and valleys of North America, so it was up to the colonists to bring them along or have them shipped across the Atlantic with the primary intent of growing the fruit to turn into cider.

There is evidence that a cider press was on board the *Mayflower* when it set sail from Plymouth, England, heading to its destination at what would be named Plymouth, MA. The support for that theory is found in the record of using a “jack screw” from the passengers to repair a broken mast suffered in a storm early in the passage. The item would have been carried as a part for a cider press. The Pilgrims wanted to be prepared.

Early records for both Plymouth and the earlier attempt at settling Jamestown in Virginia indicate that seedlings as well as seeds for apple trees were transported to the colonies. It was only when bee hives were also imported that the pollination required to produce healthy fruit was achieved and, soon after the process of making cider began in earnest.

Cider was the beverage of choice for decades throughout the colonies. Water was often contaminated and otherwise suspect in the settlements, so cider with the purification of naturally created alcohol made cider a staple.

As more and more settlements were created up and down the East Coast, more orchards were planted, more apples were grown for food – and for cider. When the cider produced on eastern Long Island was transported into the fledgling city of New York, the journey wound its way through paths and roads that moved through Brooklyn on their way to Manhattan. The collection of these trails were known as The Kings Highway ... which tradition has been carried forward in the naming of Tyler Graham’s dry cider.

## Cider and the Westward Expansion

The history of cider in the US continued through the Westward Expansion. The work of one John Chapman, better known through folklore as “Johnny Appleseed,” did much to expand the presence of apple tree orchards and nurseries from Massachusetts through New York and Pennsylvania to Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, and into Canada. Since Chapman had been

trained as a nurseryman and was against grafting – the physical introduction of one plant strain with another – the only good use of the thousands of trees that Chapman planted and cared for in his wanderings was cider.

Through the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, and the Civil War, the presence of cider in rations for the troops was standard. Even in World War I the troops that joined the war late in Europe discovered the rich heritage of cider in both England and France.

Then came Prohibition.

A pietistic movement had sprung up well before World War I engulfed the world in conflict and created political tensions within the American public. In the aftermath of the war, the Volstead Act was passed to implement the 18th Amendment in 1920. Prohibition. There could be no manufacture, transport, or sale of intoxicating liquor.

**Clearing the orchards**

The fever to rid America of alcoholic beverages was so intense that in the frenzy, entire orchards were cut down so that no apples could be grown and, as a result, no cider could be made. It took 13 years to enact the Cullen-Harrison Act which implemented the 23rd

Amendment ... the repeal of Prohibition.

Which brings us, fast forward, to contemporary tastes, choices, and appetites. Enter Tyler Graham.

Trained as a journalist with impressive credits that include pieces both written and edited for several of the high profile publications in the country – *Playboy*, *GQ*, and *Men's Journal* – Tyler found himself drawn to issues of health and, particularly, the impact of sugar in the diet.

During a visit to Maine, Graham had his first encounter with “hard” cider and the experience was intriguing. Light, crisp, and – this was important – sugar free, the beverage was so intriguing that Tyler decided to make some for himself ... not an easy decision seeing that he and his family lived in a Brooklyn apartment.

**Ready for prime time**

What followed was an entrepreneurial tale of try, test, sample, share, and learn. If you bother to read the label on your shampoo bottle, it’s “Wash, rinse, repeat.”

When Kings Highway Fine Cider (named for the nearby road) was “ready for prime time,” Tyler dared present it to competitions. Getting the evaluation and honest assessment of peers and experts was a critical moment for him. It



Above: Apple crushing and pressing machinery from days past. Image: istockphoto.com contributor Roberto. Below, left: Kings Highway has some fun packaging.

was proof of concept, and had a great deal to do with a life-changing decision that had the family pack up the apartment and move to rural Millerton, NY, where an available farmhouse and out buildings became the headquarters of Kings Highway Fine Cider.

The cider is made from New York apples, making wonderful use of a bountiful crop that would otherwise go to waste. Environmentally sound, this cider is a great connection between orchards, farmers, energized small business, and the community.

Kings Highway ciders have gained an increasingly wide acceptance, due in great part to Graham’s marketing sense and his belief in both the emotional and scientific reasons why fine, dry cider is a better choice than other products offered in bars, restaurants, and liquor emporiums in the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York State areas.

**Think local**

Through his own self-distribution, Tyler Graham has been able to become a part of the local community – Kings Highway Fine Ciders are featured offerings at McEnroe Organic Farm Market and, with the projected May 3 seasonal opening of the outdoor café, poised to expand their offerings.

It is noteworthy that Tyler’s line

of fine ciders is far from limited. There are bouquets and blends that rival the carefully measured blends of fine wine. Ginger Snap, Whip Appeal (made with a hint of guava), Pool Party, and NY Brut are but a few of the delicate ciders on offer.

If New York City is a regular part of your travel cycle, there are restaurants and wine and spirits stores that offer the full line of Kings Highway Fine Ciders including Plumb Oyster Bar and Fresh Direct Wine & Spirits. Pop-up events at Rhinebeck’s Liberty Public House, Amenia’s Troutbeck, and Night-hawks in Troy, NY, continue to invite and enroll loyal cider drinkers in the Kings Highway Fine Cider family.

The reputation grows, and the imagination and energy of Tyler Graham and his cider works continue to bridge history, taste, and celebration of the bounty of the environment. ●

*Explore Kings Highway Fine Cider and learn more about the what, where and why of Tyler Graham’s artistry at [www.cider.nyc](http://www.cider.nyc) or [www.facebook.com/kings-highway-fine-cider](http://www.facebook.com/kings-highway-fine-cider).*

*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](mailto:arts@mainstreetmag.com).*



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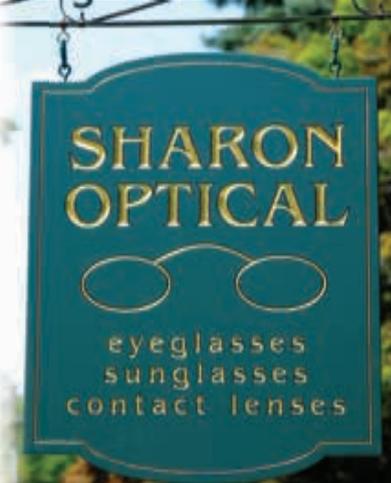
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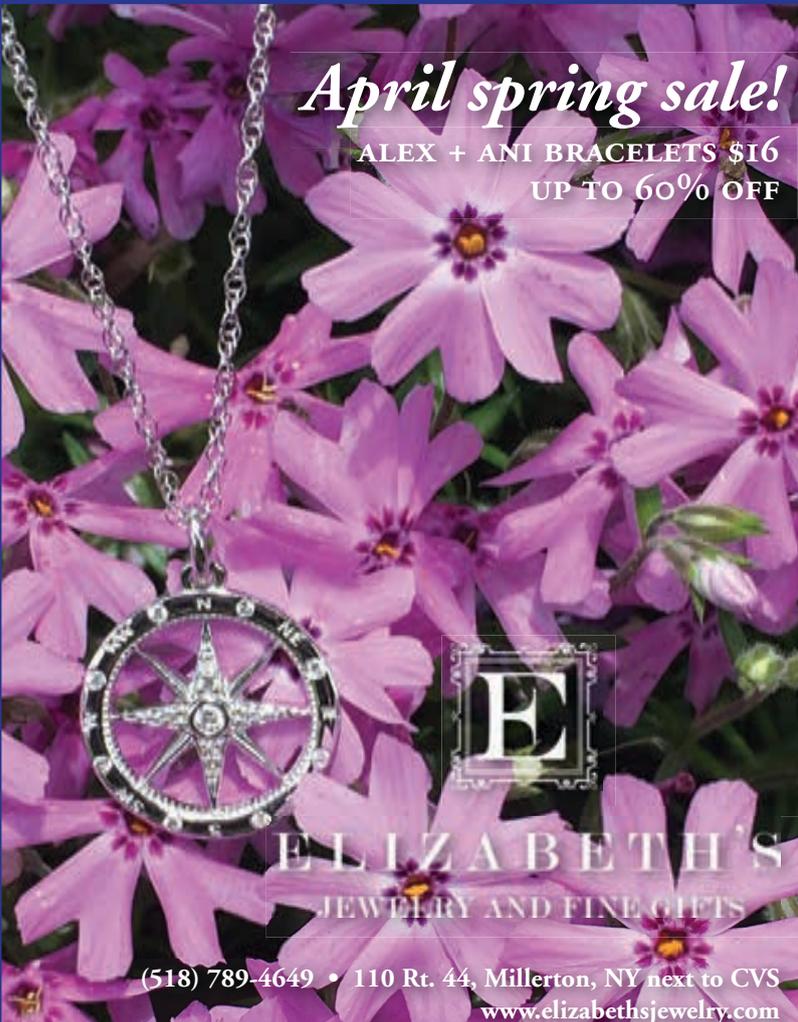
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## friendly faces: meet our neighbors, visitors and friends



**Katie Shanley** owns Buddhi Tribe Yoga & Wellness in Millerton, NY. “I’m a yoga teacher and holistic health coach with a myriad of certificates, which allow me to help clients on many levels. I’m also an aromatherapist with my own handmade line of products, called Buddhi Witch.” Katie opened Buddhi Tribe in June of 2017, after teaching yoga for almost two years and practicing for close to a decade. She’s been a holistic health coach since 2010 and her aromatherapy line started coming together when she opened Buddhi Tribe. Aside from the obvious love of yoga, she enjoys traveling, is a big foodie, spending time with family, hiking, swimming, dancing, and a solid Netflix binge. “I’m from Brooklyn, but spent every summer and weekend in Salisbury. I settled into the area as a full-timer seven years ago.” Katie is always looking for ways to treat the environment better by recycling, and encouraging the use of reusable water bottles.



**Rich Stickle, Jr.** (pictured above left) was born and raised in Amenia, NY, but has currently planted his roots in Claverack, NY. He’s worked for Meltz Lumber as a logger and forester for seven years – and counting. “I love everything about my job; the woods, working outdoors, the people I work with – both co-workers and landowners alike.” Rich takes so much pride in his work that he makes sure to use selective timber harvestry when in the woods. “This means that we don’t just clear cut the property. We select the correct trees to harvest at the correct time. Leaving all other trees to continue to flourish.” When Rich isn’t working hard, he enjoys spending family, hunting, dirt-track racing, and going to the Columbia County Fair with his kids and dairy cattle. Maybe we will see you there this year, Rich?



**Letitia Garcia-Tripp** has been teaching environmental science, biology, and marine biology at Housatonic Valley Regional High School for 21 years. “I love working with the kids, and witnessing the moments when they are inspired to want to make change in their world.” For this reason, environmental science is Letitia’s favorite course to teach, and keeping these ideas in mind, she always aims to implement environmentally-conscious initiatives at Housatonic. She has gotten water bottle filling stations installed at the school, reducing the usage of disposable bottles, and is now working with the cafeteria to phase in silverware and reusable plates. When she’s not teaching or making beneficial change in the school, Letitia enjoys spending time with her family, running, and hiking with her dog across miles of beautiful, local trails. “We live in an area that is so beautiful and peaceful. I just love the sounds of nature, and the wonderful views.”



**Abigail Cusick** is the executive director of the Little Guild Animal Shelter in West Cornwall, CT. Abigail started at the end of September after spending ten years at NBC Universal in New York City. “I love so many aspects of my job, but my absolute favorite part is seeing the joy on the adopter’s face when they take their animal home.” When Abigail isn’t at the shelter, she loves hiking with her rescue pup Domino, cooking, skiing, and playing tennis with Edgar Giffenig from Salisbury. Originally born and raised in New York City, but spent her childhood coming up on weekends and in the summer, Abigail notes she’s been bringing her own bags to the supermarket before it was cool, and has recently transitioned to natural cleaning products. “I feel good that I’m not using harsh chemicals that are harmful to the planet and our bodies. Plus, I’m keeping my carbon footprint in check.”



The above-pictured gentleman is not just a “farm boy,” but he’s a Spartan competitor, too (hence the picture). **Daniel (Dan) Kneller** works at his family farm, Locust Hill in Ghent, NY, where he cares for animals, makes hay, weed whacks fence lines, and markets the farm. “I’ve been working on the farm for several years, but I am proud to say that I am putting my bachelors degree in agricultural business to good use. I love getting to see the fruits of my labor. Raising a bottle-fed calf is very laborious, but seeing that same calf all grown up and healthy makes it worth every second.” In his spare time, Dan likes to work out, read, hike, watch movies, swim, or just simply relax. As a true native to the area, Dan appreciates all of the undeveloped land that we have left. “It is nice to see small farms rather than apartment complexes.”



**Donald Fournier** is a carpenter by trade, but also mows lawns, and most recently worked on a vegetable farm. “I’ve been doing carpentry for about 40 years. I love working with my hands and creating something from nothing that people will use.” In Donald’s spare time you are likely to find him outside, tinkering in the garage on tractors, spending time with his family, or occasionally taking road trips to Vermont, where his wife is from. “I was born and raised here, in Copake, NY. I love the small town life and camaraderie among the residents. Not to mention it is a great place to raise a family. I’ve been married for almost 32 years, have two children (one daughter and one son), and two granddaughters, with another granddaughter coming in May.”

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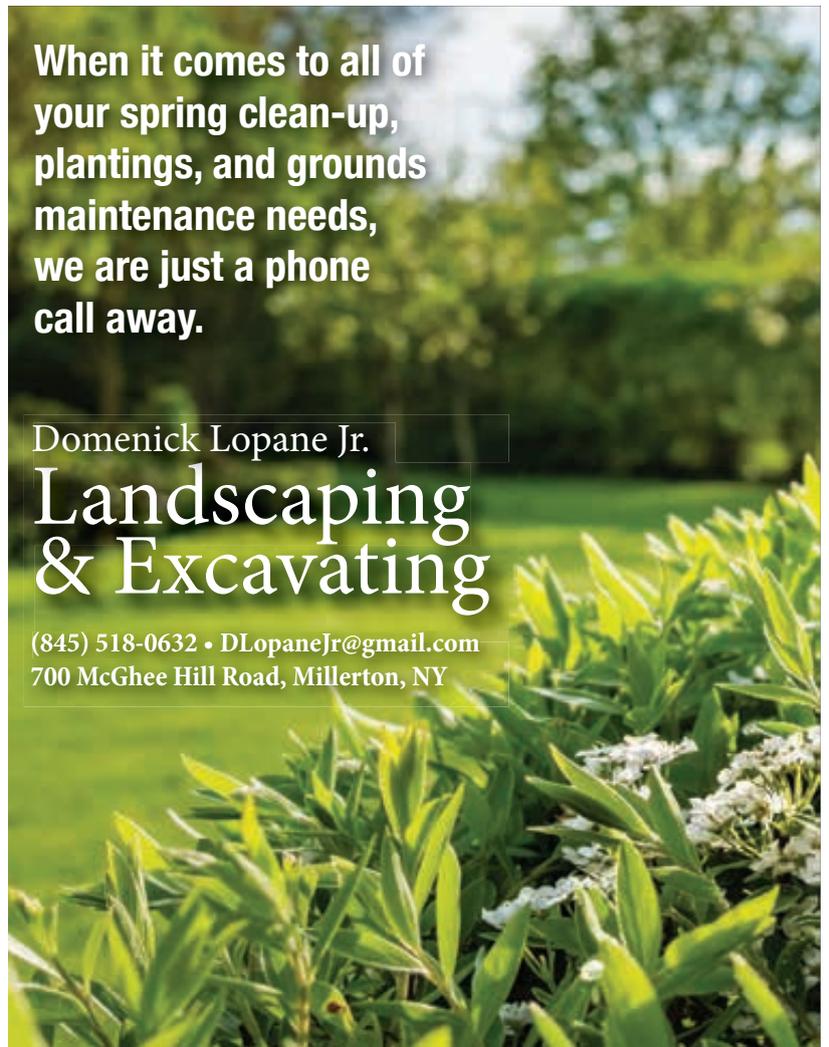


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# Dark skies above

## US:

### SAVING THE MILKY WAY



By Christine Bates  
[christine@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:christine@mainstreetmag.com)

When the moon is new or below the horizon and the sky is clear, we can marvel at the infinite blackness above us. You will see the endless universe sparkling stars, glowing planets, maybe some shooting stars, meteors, or even a stray comet. From our four adjacent counties in three states, this unmatched marvel is possible because we are removed from the form of pollution that we seldom consider: light pollution caused by wasteful misdirected light sources that lighten the skies. Most people have never given it a thought.

#### **Are you able to marvel at the universe from where you live?**

If you go online to <http://darksitefinder.com/maps/world.html#10/42.9040/-73.2828> you will be able to find your location and the amount of light contamination where you are, or anywhere in the United States. In our corner of the Northeast, we can still see the night sky's wonders (like the Milky Way that's pictured above) like visitors to our national parks out west. You will probably be

surprised to learn how widespread this Edisonian contamination has become in our highly-developed and increasingly urbanized country, where 80% of Americans are unable to marvel at the universe.

In 1994, when all the lights were extinguished in the Los Angeles region due to the power blackout created by a big earthquake, emergency call centers were inundated with panicky calls fearful of a large cloud in the dark night sky. People had no idea of what it was, because they previously had never observed the celestial magnificence of the darkened firmament, suddenly unpolluted by millions of light sources in that mega city region.

#### **Wasteful light**

Aside from obscuring dark skies, all these bright lights are expensive and wasteful of electric energy. Estimates tell us that approximately 30% of all outdoor lighting in the US is wasted simply because of unshielded and misdirected street and parking lot fixtures. Dark Skies' policies, when properly implemented, cut energy use reducing energy costs and the air pollution created by power generation. Directing the light where and when it is needed is easy and not expensive to implement.

*"The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be. Our feeblest contemplations of the cosmos stir us... We know we are approaching the greatest of mysteries." - Carl Sagan*

#### **Dark Sky protection against light pollution**

The International Dark Sky (IDA) was founded in 1988 and identifies the negative impacts of nighttime artificial light on human health and heritage, wildlife, and climate change. The glow of streetlights and illuminated signs disorients migrating birds and sea turtle hatchlings, disrupts the nocturnal hunting of creatures like bats, foxes and owls, etc. It also upsets the natural circadian rhythms, sleep patterns, and hormone production of humans, animals, plants, fungi, and cyanobacteria. It may also lead to a host of health problems ranging from diabetes to depression, as numerous studies of graveyard shift workers like nurses have demonstrated.

The IDA works with the public, municipalities, city and urban planners, legislators, universities, parks,

Continued on next page ...

lighting manufacturers, contractors, and protected areas to provide and implement smart lighting design and choices which result in protecting the nighttime environment. According to the IDA's website, there are 97 recognized dark sky locations across the world – communities, parks, preserves and sanctuaries. The IDA has established minimum requirements for communities and their planning authorities to use when seeking official dark sky designation. These range from shielding street lights to turning off illuminated signs from one hour after sunset until one hour before sunrise. Architects, civil engineers and planning authorities are increasingly familiar with the concept and accompanying dark sky techniques, trends and recommended requirements.

### Open a window into the night

In 2019 International Dark Sky Week is a worldwide event (March 31 – April 7) and seeks to bring attention to the wonder of the unobscured night sky and the problems of light pollution and how to mitigate them. Locally, informed residents could start the conversation about public utilities and local authorities replacing sodium vapor street lights with low intensity LED fixtures, limiting illumination in early morning hours, and enforcing existing zoning regulations, including sources like illuminated signage.

Individually, you could check your own home and business' light pollution. Be a good neighbor and shield outdoor lighting or angle it downward to minimize light trespass, as it is called. Use lighting only where and when needed enabled by time or motion sensors.

Additionally, you could become a Dark Sky Ranger and document light pollution in your area, sharing the results to motivate improved practices. Introduce yourself to and join local astronomy clubs like the Mid-Hudson

Astronomical Association; they meet in New Paltz and also at Wilcox Park (about a mile off the Taconic Parkway exit for Rhinebeck and Pine Plains, NY). You will be able to learn from knowledgeable hobbyists and expert astronomers. Experience a special evening under the stars in Poughkeepsie by visiting the historic Walkway Over The Hudson bridge on one of the dates when there are open evenings to stargazers, including MHAA events. Check their website ([walkway.org](http://walkway.org)).

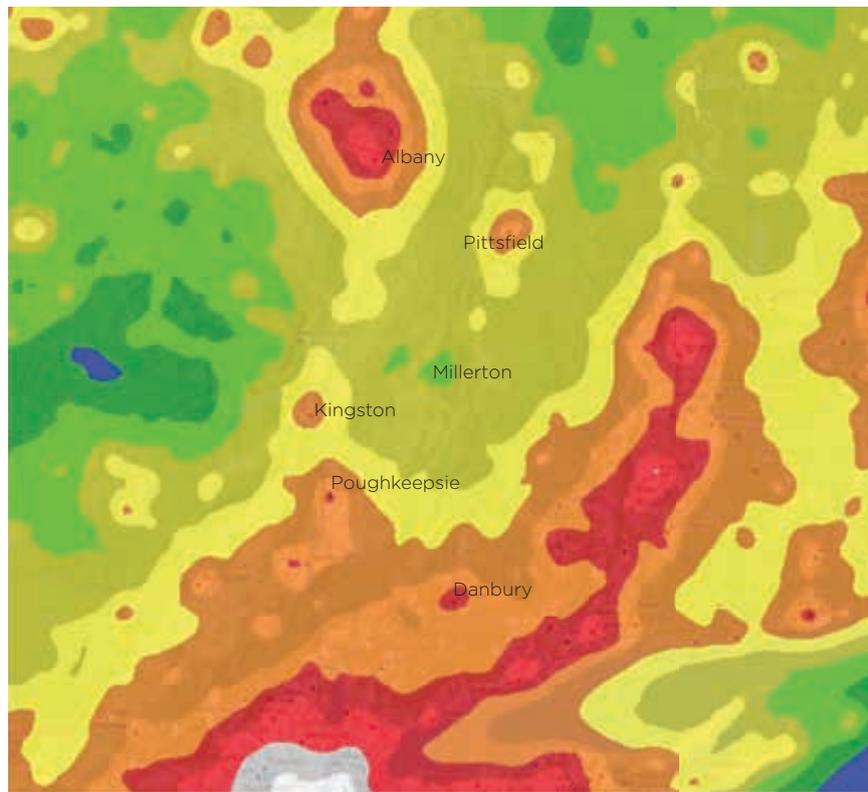
In the northern hemisphere the darkest skies occur between the months of September and April during the two hours after the sunset is complete. A clear winter sky window into the universe is something to behold, not just see.

### Astrotourism - really

Tucson, AZ, has a population of more than half a million people, and the darkest skies of any urban location of similar size in the United States. This is the result of self-imposed local restrictions on artificial light pollution. The first law regulating light pollution was passed in 1972 in order to conserve energy and protect the night skies clarity. For more than a century Tucson had attracted professional astronomers, and now has become a center of "astrotourism," with bed and breakfasts boasting of their own observatories, as well as local bars being equipped with rooftop telescopes.

One of the more interesting illumination free nighttime locations is the world's first official dark sky islands, the self-governing Island of Sark. Possibly sounding like *Star Trek*, it is the smallest of the four UK affiliated islands in the English Channel, about 80 miles from England's southeastern coast (and very close to France near Bretagne). Extending over only two square miles, with no cars and only 700 full-time residents, the tiny island attracts stargazers during dark, cold winter nights – it extends their tourist season. Visitors observe meteors streaking across the sky and the Milky Way from horizon to horizon.

Elsewhere gatherings of stargazers abound in parties from our local state park locations in the Taconic Mountains to star safaris in the Sahara



Above: The amount of light contamination in our region. If you go online to <http://darksitefinder.com/maps/world.html#10/42.9040/-73.2828> you will be able to find your location and learn the amount of light contamination where you are, or anywhere in the United States.

Desert, Australian outback, and events like the Astrophotography Conference in the upstate New York Adirondacks. People are increasingly fascinated by astronomy as we learn more and are venturing into space. There is a telescope atop the mid-Pacific Ocean Hyatt Regency Maui in Hawaii, and under the stars outdoor bathing in Sedona, AZ. Never to miss a marketing opportunity, real estate developers are now designing environmentally respectful ventures that pitch the preservation and enjoyment of the glorious clear night sky.

Perhaps the way to look at all this is that we have another valuable and scarce regional resource to protect (see map above) – dark hour skies unpolluted by light contamination (or hopefully air pollution). We need to retain a barrier against human sprawl.

So look up at night and be grateful to see the celestial expanse of stars, planets, and the humbling immensity that we are incapable of properly comprehending. Dark Sky initiatives are an initial step toward preserving the wonder and eternal questions about our own insignificance. •

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NO-BAKE

# Banana

## SPLIT CAKE

By Jessie Sheehan  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

When I was first alerted to the fact that there was an old-fashioned dessert called a “no-bake banana split cake” making its rounds on the internet, I was immediately intrigued, and on several fronts: 1) I love banana, splits; 2) I love no-bake desserts; 3) I love cake; and 4) I love old-school treats.

As I surfed the web, reading recipes, and collecting data, I learned that the dessert does not call for ice cream at all, but is instead replete with the flavors (and most of the components) of your traditional “split.” The cake is usually made with a layer of graham cracker crumbs, a few raw eggs (!) beaten with some sugar, whipped cream and a can of crushed pineapple, bananas (of course) and a sprinkling of nuts. Sometimes strawberries are folded into the mix, and often a drizzle of chocolate syrup and a few carefully positioned neon-red Maraschino cherries decorate the top.

Despite the fact that I am not much of a fan of crushed pineapple, or raw eggs, either on their own, or in my cake, I was still very much smitten with the whole concept of the dessert. I realized that with a few choice tweaks this really could be the most excellent of banana split-esque desserts.

### The chocolate touch

First, being a chocaholic, I decided to substitute chocolate cookie crumbs, for the graham cracker crumbs called for in the original. I didn't want the flavor of chocolate to overpower the cake, but I did think a chocolate crust might be just the suggestion of the flavor the cake needed. Then, knowing I needed a substitute for the cake's raw egg and sugar layer, I notice that

some recipes called for substituting cream cheese for the eggs. I riffed on that and incorporated a layer of cream cheese whipped cream into my cake, layering it thickly atop the cookie layer (you're welcome!).

I omitted the pineapple and included a layer of strawberries atop the bananas, in its stead. Finally, I topped the cake with homemade whipped cream (many recipes call for Cool-Whip, which I love, don't get me wrong, but homemade seemed appropriate here). I drizzled the cream with chocolate sauce (I used Hershey's), sprinkled on some toasted walnuts, and placed a few cherries on top, to insure the ice cream sundae/banana split vibe really popped.

The recipe is easy to put together (as the recipe title states: there is no baking) and benefits from a rest in the fridge before slicing. This is a great dessert to serve after Easter Brunch or dinner, as it feeds a crowd and will appeal to guests of all ages (and if it doesn't, I want to hear about it . . .).

### Ingredients for the cookie crust:

1 1/2 packages (13.5 ozs.) Nabisco chocolate wafers, or a similar thin and crispy cookie  
 1/4 cup light brown sugar  
 3/4 cup / 12 tbsp, unsalted butter, melted

### For the cream cheese-whipped cream/banana-strawberry layer:

8 oz cream cheese, room temperature  
 2 cups heavy cream  
 2/3 cup confectioners' sugar, sifted if lumpy  
 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract  
 1/4 tsp table salt  
 4 medium bananas, sliced into discs  
 16 oz strawberries, sliced thinly



### For the whipped cream:

1 1/2 cups heavy cream  
 7 tbsp confectioners' sugar

### For the “sundae” toppings:

Chocolate sauce for drizzling, I used Hershey's  
 1/2 – 3/4 cups walnuts, toasted and chopped  
 Maraschino cherries

Grease a 13x9x2-inch pan with cooking spray or softened butter. Line with parchment paper and set aside.

Add the cookies and sugar to the bowl of a food processor and process until crumbs form. Add the melted butter and process until combined. Evenly press the crumb mixture into the bottom of the prepared pan, using the bottom of a dry measuring cup, or your fingers, making sure the crumbs are quite compact. Place in the freezer for 30 minutes, until firm.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, add the cream cheese, and whisk it on medium speed until smooth. Add the heavy cream and continue to whisk on medium speed until incorporated. Add the confectioners' sugar, vanilla, and salt and, on medium-high speed, whisk the cream mixture until it holds

stiff peaks that stand upright when the whisk is raised.

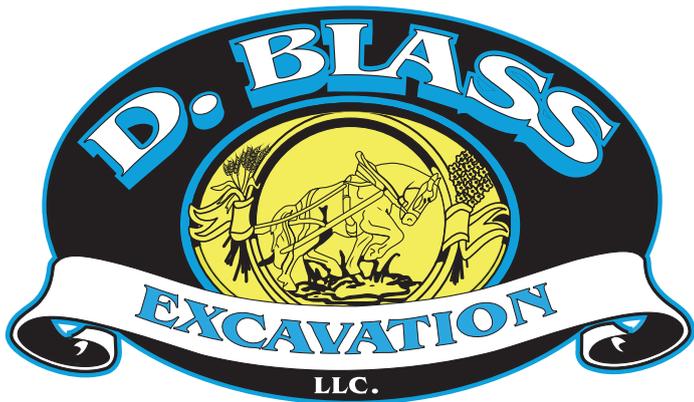
Spread the cream cheese whipped cream over the chocolate cookie base. Top with the sliced bananas and then the strawberries.

Place the heavy cream and confectioners' sugar in the mixer bowl (no need to clean it) and whip the cream on medium high speed until soft peaks form.

Spread the whipped cream over the bananas. Drizzle the chocolate syrup on top of the cream, and sprinkle nuts over the top.

Refrigerate for four hours, or overnight. Decoratively place the cherries on the surface of the cake before slicing and serving. •

*Jessie is a baker and cookbook author; you can learn more about her through her website [jessiesheehanbakes.com](http://jessiesheehanbakes.com).*



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# WATER WORLD

## THE APPEAL OF PONDS

By Christine Bates

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What is a pond? Limnologists (this was a new word for me – it is the scientific study of fresh water bodies) classify a water body as a lake or a pond by its depth, not its size.

Walden Pond, one of the most famous “ponds” in America, was the setting for naturalist Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, first published in 1854. Many consider it the birthplace of the conservation movement in our country, BUT it’s not a pond. With a depth of 100’ this kettle hole water body created by glaciers during the last ice age is definitely a lake because the water is deep enough that light does not penetrate to the bottom, and photosynthesis is limited to the top layer. In contrast Rudd Pond in Taconic State Park with a maximum depth of 14 feet is filled with rooted plants that weed harvesters try to clear every summer. It’s definitely a pond as is Monet’s famous water lily garden at Giverny, which the painter regarded as his greatest work of art.

### Are ponds a plus?

For real estate agents a pond is a smallish body of fresh water that can add, or possibly subtract, value from a property listed for sale. Various descriptions as “serene reflecting pools, swimming holes, or fisherman’s dream come true,” a pond should ideally be

clear enough to swim in the summer, fish in the spring, skate in the winter, and photograph all year long. It should be big enough to paddle around in a small boat or canoe.

“The desirability of a pond always depends upon the personal goals, beliefs, and fears of the buyer,” according to William McGinn, a broker with Houlihan Lawrence. “One buyer appreciates the buffer that ponds can provide without the burden of land management and mowing. The richness of wildlife in a natural habitat can also be a strong draw. For others, a pond can restrict their ability to build on a property or just be seen as a place for unwanted critters and insects to thrive.”

Ponds can add to the grandeur of an estate like Les Bichettes in North Canaan, CT. “Located at the very entrance of the property with a backdrop of sweeping lawns all looking towards a French country house in the far distance, it is not uncommon to see a pair of geese with their goslings splashing in the water or on the lawns nearby,” according to listing agent Thomas McGowan of Elyse Harney Real Estate.

For some buyers, like a young couple who recently purchased in Kent, CT, a pond is both aesthetic and recreational. She likes to paint, he likes to fish and kayak. In some ways ponds are like swimming pools – some people definitely don’t want them and others seek them out.

Assessors don’t treat them any differently than vacant land when calculating the value of a property for tax purposes. Insurance companies don’t increase a property’s liability premium because of a pond according to Kirk Kneller of The Kneller Insurance Agency. “While swimming pools are considered an attractive nuisance,



ponds are a natural feature with implied risks.”

### Ponds have other uses, too

Ponds can also be utilitarian. They can be used as reservoirs for irrigation. A two-acre pond can potentially provide water for 30 acres of crops. Livestock can drink from ponds – a cow or a horse can consume over 15 gallons a day. They can also provide protection against fire in the form of a firebreak barrier. With the installation of a “dry hydrant” and access for fire trucks a pond can supply water in rural areas in case of fire. Or you might want to start a home-based fish farm business, bird sanctuary, or wildlife preserve. Imagine a Japanese pavilion for drinking tea, meditating, and viewing the moon.

### Pond due diligence

Anyone looking at a pond property should have the pond assessed by a specialist for water source and quality, dam and bank structure, leaks, sedimentation, flora and fauna. No one wants a pond filled with snapping

Above: Mirroring the sky, this pond is included on a 45-acre parcel of land in Ancram, NY. Photo courtesy of Mary Taylor, Best & Cavallaro Real Estate. Below, left: Everyone can enjoy Rudd Pond in Taconic State Park. Photo courtesy of William McGinn.



Continued on next page ...

turtles or water polluted by agricultural run-off. Your attorney should pay special attention to riparian rights if you share a pond with other parcels. Do you have the right to swim or to erect a dock or anchor a boat? If the pond was built recently you should examine the permits that were issued.

### Before you dig

Be clear about your priorities if you want to create your own pond. Are they aesthetic, recreational, agricultural, or environmental? Be sure there are no hazards near by – power lines, a nearby road or trail or bordering streams or wetlands.

Your first stop should be a call to your local building department. Pond regulations are complex and vary by state. If it's under an acre in size in New York you will not need a DEC permit, but Connecticut and Massachusetts regulate ponds of any size. Next contact the Soil and Water Conservation officer in your area who may be able to provide guidance. Regardless of permitting, the advice of a soil engineer and soil testing is required to determine the feasibility of the site.

Soil composition is one of the most significant factors in siting a pond. The soil should have low permeability and good compaction. That usually

means high clay content and relatively low organic content. The other big consideration is water supply – volume, source, and quality.

Underground springs provide the most dependable source of clean water and six-foot deep test pits will indicate with certainty their presence. Do not plan on diverting a stream or swamp to fill a pond which violates state and federal laws, and can create floods, siltation, compromised groundwater recharge, unwanted fish species, destruction of wildlife habitat, and bacterial contamination. Even if the stream is only intermittent, diverting it is not a good idea.

“A pond could cost anywhere from \$25,000 to \$100,000 to build depending on size, location, and design,” according to Dusty Blass of D Blass Excavation in Canaan, CT, “and it will take at least two years between planning, permitting, and excavating. You have to leave time for the ground to stabilize before final grading.”

Depending on use you may also have to consult with other governmental agencies. For example in New York the Fish & Game Department regulates your ability to stock ponds with fish, or even design them for wildlife support. Health departments can also get involved.



Above: A bridge over a pond provides a grand entrance to a French chateau in North Canaan, CT. Photo courtesy of Thomas McGowan, Elyse Harney Real Estate.



Above: This pond on Winchell Mountain is dramatic in all seasons. Photo by John Harney.

### Mindful ponds

Ponds can add refuge and habitat for an assortment of birds, mammals, amphibians and fish, and enjoyment for humans. They may not require fences, gates, covers, heaters, and chemicals like swimming pools, but ponds do require maintenance by a specialist who understands how to treat pond problems like algae, cattails, and muck – both chemically and naturally.

Natural solutions include Grass Carp (*Ctenopharyngodonidella*), which can vastly reduce the amount of vegetation in some ponds. They are considered an invasive species, so states generally require them to be sterile, and be contained within the pond. A permit is required to ensure these requirements are met before the fish can be purchased and stocked.

The application of a combination of specific strains of bacteria and bacterial enzymes to reduce sludge, control foul odors, and digest the excess nutrients which may cause problematic algae growth is another environmentally-friendly solution that requires no special permit. Naturally occurring soil and water bacteria work to clean the water and sludge layer by digesting organic wastes and contaminants.

Pond aeration through fountains and sub-surface aerators can also keep water clear but site electricity is required. Native aquatic plants, which are both functional and aesthetic, also improve pond health. Plants like

arrowhead, pickerelweed, and native hardy water lilies grow slowly and improve water quality and bank stability over time.

### What's your pond's priority?

If you want to encourage wildlife in a pond create irregular edges, shallow and or deep microhabitats, large sunning rocks and logs at the pond's edge and wait for the frogs, turtles, and dragonflies. Trees and bushes, at the edges, not near a dike or dam, provide shelter, nesting areas, and shade. In our region red maple, high bush cranberry, red-twig dogwood, button brush, and elderberries grow well. Don't forget nesting structures, wooden boxes or small rafts, to provide shelter for breeding birds and waterfowl.

If your priority is a swimming pond make it round with steep sides to discourage plants and animals. Unlike swimming pools, which lurk under a cover behind a fence for eight months, your pond could delight all year long. •

*Christine Bates writes about real estate and business topics for the magazine. She is a registered real estate agent with Best & Cavallaro in New York and Connecticut.*

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As we gear up for Earth Day 2019, let's take time to reflect on this global event's origins & history

# The origins of Earth Day

By Regina Molaro  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Every April 22, people across the globe unite to celebrate Earth Day – the largest environmentalist movement worldwide. Together, they embrace environmental activism and support the protection of our planet. Beyond their efforts to clean waterways, plant trees, minimize pollution, and reduce climate change, they promote awareness of environmental issues.

This year's global event marks the 49th Earth Day celebration. The theme "Protect Our Species" aims to slow the rate of extinction and save threatened and endangered species. From California and New York to England, Germany, Indonesia, and beyond, more than one billion eco-minded people will be pitching in to make a difference.

Earth Day Network is the non-profit organization behind this annual initiative. Its team works year-round to solve climate change, end plastic pollution, and protect endangered species. Since its inception, the organization has recruited more than 50,000 partners who hail from approximately 193 countries.

Earth Day Network and the annual Earth Day event are applauded for their accomplishments including planting hundreds of millions of trees in 32 countries. One year, it organized a record 1,100 Earth Day college campus events, which included more than 230 voter registration projects, which went a long way in making a difference. It also introduced *The Story of Climate Change*, the first interactive digital textbook.

A public rally held on April 18, 2015 at the National Mall in Washington, DC, united leaders, corporate innovators, and dignitaries. Many organizations made a pledge to address climate change. Among them was Global Environmental Facility's announcement of a \$200 million investment in ocean cleanup.

Thanks to the efforts of Earth Day Network, activists, and concerned citizens around the globe, there's a wealth of awareness about this annual event. However, Earth Day's early history and evolution have escaped many. Let's travel back a few decades to explore its roots.

## Early activism

Gaylord Nelson, a former US senator and environmentalist from Wisconsin is credited as the founder of Earth Day. Distressed by the 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara, CA, in which thousands of sea creatures perished, Nelson yearned to make a difference. Inspired by the student activism that fueled the anti-war movement in Vietnam, Nelson channeled his fervor into action.

At the time, there was increasing awareness about the environment. Many people credit the 1962 release of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which documented the misuse of chemical pesticides and its adverse effects on the environment.

With a mission to cast environmental protection onto the national political agenda, Nelson announced his idea for a national teach-in on the environment. Pete McCloskey – a congressman from California served as co-chair. The duet was joined by Harvard University student Denis Hayes who served as national coordinator of the first Earth Day. The date April 22 was selected because it fell between Spring Break and final exams.

On April 22, 1970, an estimated 20 million people participated

in nationwide rallies and peaceful demonstrations, which were held at thousands of colleges and universities and in communities across America. They also planted trees, cleaned parks, and pitched in with other initiatives. By the end of the year, the efforts, actions, and initiatives of the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts under President Richard Nixon.

Hayes went on to establish Earth Day Network. Beyond his current role as Board Chair Emeritus, he has been awarded the national Jefferson Medal for Outstanding Public Service as well as the awards bestowed by the Sierra Club, The Humane Society of the United States, and National Wildlife Federation among others. *TIME* selected Hayes as one of its "Heroes of the Planet."

Continued on next page ...



**Milestones....**

The 1990 Earth Day celebration marked a milestone celebration in which Hayes spearheaded a movement to take Earth Day global. With Hayes at the helm, the event garnered support from 200 million people in approximately 141 countries. The year 1995 marked another milestone when Nelson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his role as founder of the event.

In 2000, Hayes spearheaded another campaign that harnessed the power of the internet. Five thousand environmental groups, which hailed from 184 countries, reached out to hundreds of millions of people.

This year, mark your own milestone by making a commitment to participate in Earth Day. Get inspired by visiting [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) to explore ideas and find out how you can make a difference.

Next year, Earth Day will mark another milestone when it celebrates its 50th anniversary. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the US Department of State teamed up to launch Earth Challenge 2020, which has a mission to engage millions of global citizens to aggregate and collect more than one billion data points on air quality, water quality, biodiversity, pollution, and human health.



**Hudson Valley initiatives**

The beauty and bounty of the Hudson Valley area has also inspired – and continues to inspire – others to pitch in to make a difference. Decades ago, musician, singer, songwriter, and folklorist Pete Seeger of *Turn! Turn! Turn!* fame, launched the Clearwater – a 106-foot long replica vessel of the sloops that once sailed the Hudson in the 18th and 19th centuries.

In 1966, the Hudson River was rank with raw sewage, toxic chemicals, and oil pollution. Many fish vanished. “Pete Seeger was in despair over the state of the river. His idea was that by building this beautiful sloop, people would be able to experience the Hudson River in a new way and be inspired to protect it,” says Erin Macchiaroli, director of operations, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater.

In an effort to educate and promote preservation, the activist, environmentalist, and peace advocate launched the Clearwater in 1969. “Clearwater is a pioneer of onboard environmental education programs. Many programs throughout the country have been modeled after it,” adds Macchiaroli.

The sloop is recognized as a symbol of grassroots action through hands-on learning, music, and celebration. Clearwater continues to forward Seeger’s legacy and mission. It sails with many schools and



groups, including Ulster BOCES, Beacon City School District, Lenape Elementary School, and Marist College.

Programming includes the sailing classroom program, which invites students to go on a sail, as well as in-class programs in which educators visit students in the classroom. The Clearwater also offers tideline programs, where students meet the educators on the shores of the Hudson. Subjects range from ecology to water quality, history of the river, navigation, and climate change.

In 2004, the Clearwater was named to the National Register of Historic Places. Visitors are welcome to come aboard one of the Clearwater’s many public sails, which are available throughout the season. The sloop is also available for private charters. For more, visit [www.clearwater.org](http://www.clearwater.org).

We encourage you to join in the global efforts to help protect our planet and all of its inhabitants and resources. Please visit [ww.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) to learn how you can make a difference. ●

Above: Clearwater. Photo: Dorice Adren. Below, left: Seigning. Photo: Alon Koppel.

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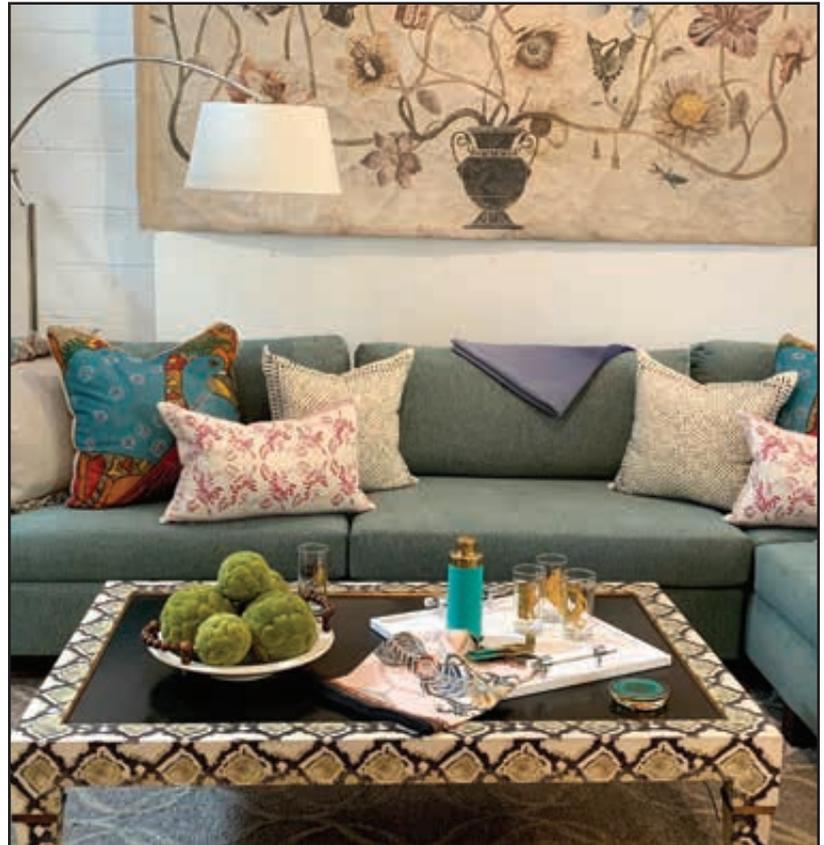


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# REDUCE, REUSE, AND...

By Ian Strever  
info@mainstreetmag.com

There was a time in the 1990s and early 2000s when recycling helped us feel better about our environmental impact. As programs sprouted in nearly every community and, single-stream programs made the process easier for consumers, we felt a sense of urgency in our weekly deposits. By 2009, Connecticut had managed to divert 65% of plastics from landfills through recycling and incineration. If we all did our part, the planet would be okay.

Or so we thought.

## Wunderkind & Wilson

It turns out that we'd been using too much plastic for far too long. By 2010, word was spreading about an "island" of garbage floating in the middle of the Pacific Ocean (also known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch), and public concern began to grow about the mess we had already made. No problem: with typical Millennial hubris, twenty-two-year-old Dutch wunderkind Boyan Slat conjured up "Wilson," a floating rake that would sweep clean the debris and render our water pristine once more.

Slat's experiment has proven more complicated than he'd imagined, but even assuming his gadget works, then what? What do we do with all of the garbage it extracts? And what about the microscopic plastics it never catches? Is the whole enterprise "a misdirected activity" that "makes it harder for those working to focus the narrative to prevention," as lamented by Marcus Eriksen, founder of the 5 Gyres Institute?

While Slat tinkers with his design in the middle of the ocean, more and more plastic continues to accumulate around him.

## The only statistic you need to know

In 2018, Great Britain's Royal Statistical Society named the following its statistic of the year: "of all the plastic waste ever created, only about nine percent has ever been recycled."

It is tempting to end this article here, in hopes that brevity and impact alone might send readers reeling against their recycling bins like punch-drunk boxers. When I tripped over that sentence in Carolyn Kormann's article, *The Widening Gyre* about Slat's attempts to clean up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, I first doubted it, then inspected it, chasing its thread back to the original article in *Science Advances* to learn more about the methodology of the study.

The picture only gets worse.

## The Plastic Era

As stated in the original report, "plastic waste is now so ubiquitous in the environment that it has been suggested as a geological indicator of the proposed Anthropocene era." We are living in the Plastic Era.

None of the plastics most commonly used in packaging are biodegradable. Or, to be accurate, they will break down in 450 years – if they are exposed to sun and oxygen. In all reality, that means that most of the plastic in landfills will never decompose. By 2015, we had generated an estimated 5800 metric tons of plastic waste, with very little of this ever recovered. Just based on sheer mass, this kind of waste generation is not sustainable.

But then there is the chemical impact of plastic production. Many of the microfibers involved in plastics degrade to a very small or microscopic level, allowing them to be ingested by wildlife and ultimately, humans. Moreover, the polymers, resins, adhesives, and coatings employed in food packaging often wind up in the foods themselves, and several of these substances are categorized as toxic, bioaccumulative, and disruptive to the endocrine system. This is in addition to plastic fragments, or microbeads, which scientists at the University of Vienna have already documented in human stool samples.

## Reduce, reuse, and forget it

By any measure, we simply use and discard too much plastic, and it is harming our planet and us. Recycling alone cannot atone for our relentless, voracious appetite for plastic, and we must take other measures to rein in the bloating.

In fact, we would do well to forget recycling and focus instead on reducing and reusing. This is not to say that we should stop recycling, but the reality of its impact is so minimal and our attention to it so outsized that we lose sight of the more pressing need to decrease the amount of waste we produce. It is like Slat, tinkering with his gadgetry in the Pacific while toothbrushes and milk crates continue to float into his gyre.

54% of the plastic waste leaving us each year is from packaging, most of which is single-use or short-term use (as opposed to construction and household materials such as PVC pipe, light switches, picture frames, etc.). Every time we break the seal on a bottle of Tylenol, open a bag of peanuts, or uncouple a

Continued on next page ...



Above, top to bottom: The Berkshire Co-op has a bulk purchase section that includes much more than the usual fare. Reusable produce bags are one way to reduce the amount of plastic that gets sent to the landfill. Photo credit Kim Valee. Right: Aluminum cans are easier to reclaim than other recyclables, but refillable growlers from local breweries and in-home soda machines can decrease the amount of energy spent in the recycling process.

Coke from a six-pack, we add to the global accumulation of plastic, and while there are strategies to reduce our plastic footprint, the most important step is to adopt a mindset that considers each of our actions in the context of a lifetime and a planet. If we are one of a million people who will throw out a straw today, our collective trash constitutes a massive amount of new plastic in landfills. If we are one of a million people choosing not to use a straw, it is the same as saving that space.

**Life hacks for a healthier planet**

Changing our mindset means being a conscious consumer, and stores in our area are already helping us to make more sustainable choices when it comes to mundane purchases. For starters, stores in Great Barrington, MA, have banned single-use plastic bags, a measure that Connecticut State Representative Maria Horn introduced for statewide adoption almost the minute she took office. Reusable shopping bags are a baby step in thinking

sustainably, and while legislation can help encourage us to use them, there are many other hacks that help to reduce not only the amount of trash we produce but the amount of recycling we need to do.

Guido's Market in Great Barrington has long embraced environmental awareness, but when one of their baggers deposited a complimentary set of reusable produce bags in my groceries as a holiday gift, it caused me to rethink my vegetable purchases. Thanks to Guido's, instead of buying greens encased in plastic or using plastic produce bags, I now use washable mesh bags to buy green leaf lettuce, kale, and escarole wrapped only in a rubber band, which I can also reuse at home.

Sustainable purchasing requires intentional purchasing on the part of the store, too, and many merchants in the area are starting to provide bulk purchasing options for shoppers who want to use their own containers to restock on grains, legumes, and other sundries. The Great Barrington Co-Op features a bulk purchase section that contains not only these basics, but peanut butter, coffee, shampoo, and laundry detergent – to name a few. Bring your own container to the register or customer service counter and have it weighed without product in it, and then fill it up. I have been able to reuse a plastic bottle of

Dr. Bronner's liquid soap for over two years, and I have not bought a plastic jar of peanut butter in about the same amount of time. As I empty a container, I wash it and return it to my car where it is ready for the next trip to the Co-op.

**Tread lightly**

Travel demands reconsideration, as well, but a sustainable mindset and a few thoughtful purchases can minimize our plastic footprint. Refillable travel-size toiletry containers negate the use of complimentary hotel bottles, and collapsable or reusable water bottles and lightweight bamboo cutlery save money and reduce our environmental impact, which is especially important when traveling in countries where recycling and waste disposal are less modernized.

All of these considerations demand more of the consumer. I am constantly cycling reusable containers through my household and back to my vehicle, and the attention I pay to my plastic consumption extends to other ways in which my existence strains our natural resources. Some people would consider these measures a hassle, but I find them helpful as mechanisms to induce more intentional purchasing. Not only am I asking myself, "Do I need this?" but I am asking myself, "Do I need this, packaged in this way?" The answer, usually, is no. •



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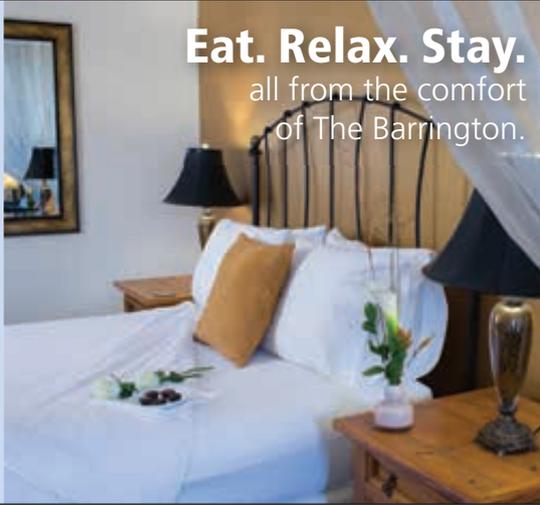
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# Townscape of Millerton & Northeast, NY: Drawdown / Climate Smart Project

April 1-22, 2019

By Jeanne Vanecko  
jvanecko@msn.com

*Townscape of Millerton and Northeast is a not-for-profit organization, which focuses on improving the Village streetscape and strengthening our sense of community.*

In previous years Townscape has hosted a tree planting event to celebrate Earth Day on April 22. This year we're reconceiving that event and launching the first of what we hope will be one of many climate and environment awareness challenges.

Globally there are many 21-day "EcoChallenges" (see drawdown.ecochallenge.org); and we're going to do our version of that in the Town of North East, NY. Our idea is to engage as many of our citizens as possible and we will begin by gathering data about what we do as a community that contributes to global warming and to environmental degradation.

## We're doing our part

We'll begin on April 1, by tabulating our plastic use. Tabulation forms will be available at stores on Main Street starting March 28. The first two weeks (April 1-14) will be devoted to what we are calling "Establishing a Baseline." Every participant will receive a small notebook and will be asked to catalogue, on a daily basis, personal statistics in two areas: plastic use and recycling. We want everyone to record every time they use a plastic straw, a plastic bag, a plastic cup or cup cover, or a plastic bottle. Every time.

A free environmental film, *The Human Element*, will be shown on April 14 at The Moviehouse in Millerton, NY. Tabulation forms will be collected at The Moviehouse and or can be dropped off at any store on Main Street.

We also want a daily list of each individual's recycling. At the end of two weeks we'll tally everyone's information, and publish the results on Townscape's website. You see where this is going?

## Will little old me really make a difference? If so, how?

One of the issues with our already increased awareness of climate change is that the numbers are so staggeringly large that most of us think "What on earth can I do, as a single individual, to make a difference?" As a community we're going to see at the end of two weeks that large numbers come from small numbers. I know we're each going to be amazed by how much plastic we consume and how much garbage we produce, individually and collectively.

During the two weeks that we're collecting data, Townscape will sponsor other inquiries which will investigate where our garbage and recycling goes; what are we harming with our use of pesticides, how do our local practices of meadow management or farming effect our insect population, our soil health or our food supply; what are some of the products we consume or produce which have serious knock-on effects for the world's forests, energy consumption, environmental pollution or human exploitation and poverty: coffee, concrete, light bulbs, clothing.

There are thousands of subjects we could choose to pursue during our Challenge. We've opted to select just a handful, which are common to most of us and which reflect our particular community. Our goal is know more about what we are doing that is problematic for our small piece of this earth. If we don't understand the problem, we can't find solutions.

## Our findings

And, finding solutions is what Week Three of the Challenge is all about. While we are cataloguing our use of



Image: istockphoto.com  
contributor den-belitsky

plastics, etc. in the first two weeks, we'll be exploring with local merchants, farmers, and artisans, alternatives. Knowledge is power and our community is filled with folks who have found ways to live or grow their businesses without degrading the environment or increasing their carbon footprint: food vendors who use locally grown products, food merchants who source "Green Revolution" products, clothing stores which sell products produced by fair trade sources – to name a few. We want to hear from all of these folks and draw on their collective wisdom.

We're blessed in Millerton to live in a community that is small enough that each part touches every other part. And, we live in a community of great natural resources and beauty. But we need to act now to preserve it! Join us for our April EcoChallenge! ●

*If you'd like to participate in the Challenge or to learn more about what you can do, please visit [www.townscapeofmillertonand-northeast.com](http://www.townscapeofmillertonand-northeast.com), or contact Jeanne Vanecko at [jvanecko@msn.com](mailto:jvanecko@msn.com).*

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# Doing all we can to protect where we live:

*you can do these things*

By Peter W. Greenough  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Unfortunately, our environment has become a political football. Is the climate changing as a result of human activity or not? Don't we all want the healthiest environment possible for our children, ourselves, and our grandchildren? Is that not a universal value? Let's avoid discussing the politics, and examine what we can do to safeguard our waters, air, soil, oceans, food and food chain, the fauna and flora everywhere, and our atmosphere.

Let us begin by stating that what may be good for business and the economy is not necessarily best for the world and its creatures. It is safe to say that the earth will survive whatever impact humans might inflict on it, but the world would be different after nuclear, chemical, or other negative human impact(s) have occurred. Evolution would bring a new set of living organisms, and a new natural equilibrium would eventually be restored without humans.

But to prevent such a drastic change, what can we do now to protect our existing world and future?

I have some ideas. The checklist that's to follow may provoke some readers to realize that there are individual actions that collectively can make a significant difference.

Born near downtown Los Angeles, CA, I remember the stinky smog brown skies that made people tear up and cough; subsequently the mandate

to adopt unleaded gasoline and other measures greatly improved the air quality despite the rapid statewide population increase from 10 million then to today's 40 million – we can improve our environment. We can modify our daily human behavior in hundreds of small ways so that we have a positive impact on the quality of life and the way our children and their heirs will be able to live. Comfort often is a result of familiarity or habit, so let's consider creating some modest habit modifications.

**The CHALLENGE of CHANGE:**

Many Americans are already doing some or many of these things. Put the checklist on your refrigerator after discussing it with your family members. Maybe they will have some more ideas or suggestions, or get grumpy about trying these. Remind them that if you leave your trash on the beach, or don't clean up after walking your dog, you should not complain about a littered beach or your smelly shoe (basic Golden Rule manners).

**Home**

- Electricity – is it a green source (wind, solar, geothermal), or hydrocarbon generated? Sign up!
- Turn off lights, TV, computer, etc. when not in use
- Use energy-efficient or LED bulbs and switches with movement sensors for on/off
- Buy energy-efficient appliances (A/C, refrigerator, laundry appliances, heating with zones, on-demand hot water, energy-efficient TV, digital systems, dehumidifiers, etc.)
- Benefit from excellent insulation
- Install solar panels for electricity generation
- Take daylight advantage of window passive solar for light and heat
- Recycle plastic, glass, metal, paper, and cardboard



Above, L-R: 100% organic peaches grown in front yard. Seek a green source of electricity. Below, left: Magnolia bud, a wonder of nature. Photos by Peter Greenough.



- Compost vegetable kitchen scraps daily (compost year around = ~25% trash reduction)
- Use finished compost as fertilizer and gardening soil
- Install "Dark Sky"-compliant exterior lighting
- Apparel, bedding, curtains, etc. (seek natural fibers = cotton, wool, flax, leather, etc.) FYI: synthetic fibers are made from petroleum, gas, man-made molecules, e.g., recycled plastic-like fleece
- Repurpose anything and be creative. Example: broom handles for tomato stakes, empty jars and takeout containers for grains, nails and screws, ties, seeds, etc.
- Donate or take unwanted items to thrift stores
- Take reusable fiber bags with you when you shop
- Avoid "convenience" short cuts that are highly anti-environmental (Keurig coffee capsules)

**Yard**

- Landscaping that conserves energy consumption (strategic tree placement, less lawn to mow, use native plants, rain barrels for roof runoff,

- irrigation systems, rain gardens for stormwater run-off, etc.)
- Use kitchen compost soil for fertilizer
- Use design and natural ingredients to fight bugs and other critters (vinegar, etc.), not Roundup or the like
- Grow some of your own food! Herbs are simple, root veggies, flowers, fruits, etc. (Farmers are thrifty people).

**Recycling**

- Batteries (Lithium, Nickel Metal hydride, Alkaline, Acid)
- Batteries (D flashlight, AA, AAA, 9V, hearing aid buttons) from toys, etc.
- Plastic, plastic, plastic (food, laundry, cleaning, drugs, shampoo, cosmetics, tools, fasteners, meat, veggies, etc.)
- Dispose of unused pharmaceutical and other drugs, OTC remedies, etc. properly, not in toilets
- Glass, metal containers, paper, cardboard, boxes, etc.

Continued on next page ...

- Furniture, appliances, lights, implements, tools, bikes, etc.
- Yard waste (branches, leaves, grass clippings trees, etc.)
- Clothing and other apparel should be donated for others to reuse

**Transportation**

- Vehicles (hybrid, electric, fuel economy model)
- Use personal cars/trucks in combined purpose trips
- Car pooling
- Public transportation (subways, trains, buses, trams, ferries, ships, etc.)
- Walk, walk, walk – the best overall exercise
- Bicycles

**Locally-based efforts**

There is a need for all sorts of locally-based efforts that cumulatively will make an environmental difference. Here are a few ideas, and you may have some additional thoughts, or pet peeves. (I personally despise the substantial single-use plastic waste generated by airplane meals and fast food restaurants. Also publicly discarded cigarette butts).

• Years ago my family was visiting friends on an island where there was a trash processing facility they called “the dump.” We went along on a Saturday morning to drop off the trash and we saw a low stone wall where people placed items that were too good to just chuck out. Decades later I still have, and frequently use, a zero cost copper and brass 1.5 gallon watering can that attracted me. The Lakeville, CT, station near Hotchkiss

corners has something similar – for books and sundry items – but many recycling locations do not. Might you talk with the people in charge at yours to initiate a similar way of reducing waste and getting throw outs into appreciative new hands?

- Yard sales, fundraisers, thrift and vintage shops are another way to achieve this same goal of recycling usable items – old CDs, books, picture frames, book shelves, ceramics, dishes... And Habitat for Humanity and other NGOs often will accept kitchen cabinets or other items to reuse in their projects.

• I am unaware of any organized, ongoing drop-off location for used batteries, which should not be dumped into landfills. Might a local hardware, grocery, or drugstore be willing/ convinced to take on this important effort? It could attract customers plus generate substantial goodwill.

• Trees and shrubs in urban locations – along streets, parking lots, yards, etc. – lower summer temperatures and gobble up carbon dioxide while generating the oxygen we breathe. Might you consider planting, watering, pruning, or caring for some trees or gardens near you?

• Although numerous municipalities (ex. Great Barrington, MA) have either already issued laws or ordinances against providing free disposable plastic bags to customers, most have not advanced that far due to opposition by customers and commercial establishments because they are so convenient. FYI: studies indicate that most plastic reaching the oceans begins the journey in fresh water, and flows downstream where it is killing marine life and clogging the oceans, where the earth’s food chain begins.

• Try volunteering. Organize or participate in a town or neighborhood cleanup day in spring and fall. Pick up litter wherever it is found (including



Above, top to bottom, L-R: Plastic toys in plastic packaging. Tree roots and moss at Innisfree Gardens in Millbrook, NY. Heirloom wood block train, no plastic. Below, left: All natural fibers, 2018 Rhinebeck Sheep & Wool Festival. Photos by Peter Greenough.

at the movie theater or Post Office), sweep or rake along the street gutters and storm drains, attend and publicize environmentally oriented events – lectures, events, etc. Talk about this approach with others and share your thoughts. If not you, then who will do it?

• Let your local officials and others know that you care and will support healthy initiatives. Tell them your ideas and suggest programs. Vote for those who fund green.

• Donate time or contribute and support local environmental groups and efforts where you live or visit. Bring home new ideas that you encounter.

**Think about the impact...**

There also are various additional forms of pollution that impact us all – loud noise, street and roadside litter, excessive signage, etc. – that we barely notice. But they still impact our blood pressure and stress levels.

And so it goes...

Help protect your children and grandchildren’s future. Recent scientific studies show that human urine samples often show traces of pesticides, herbicides, or other noxious chemicals or drugs which may affect the human endocrine systems, immune system, fertility, growth, development, and behavior. Think about the impact of the small things we do.

Forty percent of global insect populations are now in trouble, and these are the creatures that pollinate the plants that become our food. Everything is interwoven in nature and together we can all make a positive difference with small daily changes and thoughtfulness. It is not about politics, it is about understanding and respecting this glorious planet that took billions of years to achieve a balance which humans may see disappear in the next hundred years or less. It is easier to adapt now than it will be in the very uncertain future. •



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# Transforming the Litchfield County landscape

By Peter C. Vermilyea  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Modern residents and visitors to northern Litchfield County, CT, note the green, tree-covered hills and numerous state forests, and assume that the landscape is primeval. This terrain, however, dates only to the Great Depression, when the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) spearheaded the planting of trees, and nature reclaimed what had been an industrial landscape. For more than a century prior, the constant burning of charcoal in the iron-making process resulted in a perpetual haze of smoke that hung over the county, the sun visible only as a red disc through the smog.

While the county made significant manufacturing contributions to the War of Independence, the decades leading up to the Civil War marked the true arrival of the industrial revolution. By 1840, there were sixty blast furnaces and seventeen forge plants in operation in Connecticut, the majority in Litchfield County. They all used charcoal; in fact, approximately 8,000 bushels of the fuel were brought by oxen to each furnace per week. It took 200 bushels of charcoal – the product of a quarter acre of woods – to smelt one ton of iron. At that rate, approximately thirty square miles of Litchfield County forest were being cleared

every year. Thus, at an early date, the county's northwest corner was virtually bare of trees. By 1840, the county's ironmasters were bringing in charcoal from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. While the 21st century hiker may be surprised to find stone walls deep in Litchfield County's woods, these are vestiges of an earlier time when the land was cleared and worked, but has since been reclaimed by forests as the region's landscape transformed.

## Reclaimed by nature

It is interesting to note that several of the county's serene state parks or natural areas mask what were once industrial locations, whose economic demise set them on a path toward becoming part of the transformation of the region's landscape. Among the former commercial sites reclaimed by nature are Burr Pond State Park in Torrington, Lover's Leap State Park in New Milford, the White Memorial Conservation Center in Litchfield, and the Steep Rock Preserve in Washington.

In 1851, Milo Burr dammed mountain streams in northern Torrington, creating the eponymous pond. Multiple mill-powered industries emerged at the site, including Gail Borden's condensed milk operation. Two decades later, the Bridgeport Wood Finishing Company purchased land where the Still River flowed into the Housatonic in southern New Milford. The ample water power operated the company's large-scale grinders, which turned quartz and other materials into stains, paints, and wood filler. The Shepaug Railroad passed through the land that became both Steep Rock and White Memorial, while the latter was also the scene of a major ice harvesting operation. These – and the major clock industry that arose in Litchfield, Terryville, and Thomaston – were typical Litchfield County industries: small, water-pow-



Above: Men of the Civilian Conservation Corps at Camp Cross in Sharon. The CCC planted tens of thousands of trees in Litchfield County between 1933 and 1941. Photo: Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy. Below, left: The destruction of Cathedral Pines in Cornwall following the July 1989 tornado. Photo: John Murray, *The Litchfield Enquirer*, Collection of the Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, Connecticut.

ered, and largely doomed to failure. They did, however, reshape the landscape by clearing trees, disrupting the flow of water, and polluting soil, air, and water.

If water led to the creation of an industrial landscape in the county, it was also at the heart of conservation efforts. In 1891, public water was brought to the county seat, and the Litchfield Water Company soon after purchased 500 acres of the watershed surrounding the reservoir (actually located in Goshen), which they allowed to return to a natural forested state – except, that is, the fences they erected to keep out cattle. In doing so, the company became part of a movement that continues to this day, one that has seen the county transform from an industrial area to one noted for its tranquil landscape. The results of this movement have been profound. Perhaps the best example comes from George Black's book, *The Trout Pool Paradox*, in which he laments the Naugatuck River south of Torrington as a “chemical sewer,” while the Shepaug River is the “Platonic ideal of a trout stream.”

The model of preserving acres around reservoirs to protect drinking

water that was employed in Litchfield was replicated across the county. Thousands of acres were preserved at the Barkhamsted Reservoir, the Shepaug and Upper Shepaug Reservoirs in Warren, and the Pitch, Morris and Wigwam Reservoirs (all of which served Waterbury) in Morris.

## A dedication to conservation

In 1908 – the last full year of Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, marked for its conservation initiatives – Alain White, fishing on the Bantam River, turned to his friend William Mitchell Van Winkle and said, “Wouldn't it be wonderful to preserve this river, lake, and countryside as we see it now?” Thus began one of the truly remarkable careers in land conservation, one that would lead Connecticut Park and Forest Commissioner Donald C. Matthews to remark, “no person or organization has given so much for conservation in Connecticut as Alain and (his sister) May White.”

Continued on next page ...



The end result of the Whites' work was the White Memorial Conservation Center, Connecticut's largest wildlife and nature preserve, totaling 3,960 acres. The Whites amassed another 5,745 acres that was donated to fourteen Connecticut state parks, most in the state's northwest corner. The Whites believed in practical conservationism, and thought their lands should be working forests and as such operated saw mills and charcoal works, and harvested maple syrup.

Similar movements were underway across the county. In Washington, noted architect Ehrick Rossiter established the Steep Rock Preserve, which today includes 2,700 acres. Dozens of other conservationists have also helped to preserve the county's landscape. Among these are the Morosanis, whose Laurel Ridge Foundation in Litchfield is noted for its daffodils; Edith Morton Chase, daughter of a brass magnate whose home became Topsmead State Forest; and S. Dillon and Mary Livingston Ripley, whose Kilvarock estate became the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy.

Institutions have also been involved in this movement; Columbia University's summer engineering campus became the 600-acre Camp Columbia State Forest. The Great Mountain Forest, today some 6,000 acres in Norfolk and Falls Village, was established as a preserve by Frederic

Walcott and Starling Childs in 1909. For many years prior to that it was used for charcoaling operations.

Land trusts can be found in most of the county's towns, with the Salisbury and Sharon Land Trusts each protecting over 3,000 acres. Meanwhile, the Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, for example, has preserved over 4,000 acres of land, mostly in Litchfield County.

### The Civilian Conservation Corps

It was a Dutchess County neighbor, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who did perhaps more than anyone to transform Litchfield County. On March 31, 1933 – in the depths of the Great Depression – he signed the legislation establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps. Over the next eight years, millions of men would serve in the CCC, providing income for their economically-ravaged families. Most of the men who served in the CCC were between the ages of 18 and 25.

Several camps were established in Litchfield County, including Camp Cross in Sharon, which housed the 182nd Civilian Conservation Corps. These men were trained in fighting forest fires, chopping and sawing wood, and identifying trees. For their first task, the 182nd cleared 45 acres in the Housatonic Meadows State Park, which had been established in



Above: Charcoaling and farming left much of Litchfield County cleared of trees by the late 1800s, as seen in this image of the countryside around Sharon. Photo: Samuel Orcutt, *History of the Indians of the Housatonic and Naugatuck*. Note: this book is in the public domain

1927. Here they also planted 45,000 red pine trees in 1933, and another 28,500 trees (red and Scotch pine, European larch, hemlock, and white spruce) in 1936. The Corps also repaired and maintained roads and constructed stone walls in the park. By 1936, the 182nd was working 6,800 acres and had mapped topographic and recreational features and catalogued trees on the property.

The Camp Macedonia unit of the Civilian Conservation Corps worked at both Kent Falls and Macedonia Brook State Parks. At Kent Falls, the men built stone walls and constructed the picnic area and trails to the top of the falls. Remarkable retaining walls built by the CCC are still visible along the yellow-blazed trail. At Macedonia, the CCC laid out the "high road" along the base of Cobble Mountain, a popular hiking and cross-country skiing trail. However, Camp Toumey, which was located in Goshen and Cornwall and maintained the Mohawk State Forest, was established to provide relief for World War I veterans. The attack on Pearl Harbor eliminated the needs for the program, but not before the CCC allowed millions of men across the country an opportunity to provide for their families while transforming thousands of acres in Litchfield County.

### Cathedral Pines

By the late 20th century, Connecticut was more forested than at any point since the early 1700s. However, man cannot always protect Litchfield County's environment. Atop any list of the county's ecological treasures

would have been Cornwall's Cathedral Pines, 42-acres of one of the largest stands of white pines and hemlocks (some reaching 120 feet high) east of the Mississippi. In one of the county's first acts of ecological awareness, the Calhoun family purchased the land in 1883 to protect it from logging. The family donated Cathedral Pines to the Nature Conservancy in 1967.

On Monday, July 10, 1989, a powerful family of tornados came out of New York State and devastated Cornwall. Ninety percent of the trees in Cathedral Pines were destroyed. The Nature Conservancy's decision to take a "natural course" by not removing the downed trees sparked debate. While the group issued a press release stating, "Monday's storm was just another link in the continuous chain of events that is responsible for shaping and changing this forest." Others believed that the fallen trees posed a fire hazard to the town, pushed for the trails to be restored, and urged that new pines be planted. A compromise ensued, in which a fifty-foot swath was cleared around the property as a buffer against fires, while the rest of the area was allowed to decay without human intervention. The county's transformation back to a landscape that *Departures* magazine described as "storybook New England" has not been without controversy. •



Above: Charcoaling operations like this in Kent filled the Litchfield County skies with a smokey haze that in some cases blocked out the sun. Photo: The Kent Historical Society.

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# Endangered species in our region

By John Torsiello  
info@mainstreetmag.com

When you take a walk through the woods, a meadow or near a wetland area, look around. What do you see? Birds, flowers, and various and assorted amphibians delighting your eyes and ears. We may take all of this for granted. But some of Nature's small wonders might not be around much longer unless we all do our part in preserving their existence for future generations to enjoy.

## Locally-threatened animals

"Progress is being made to save endangered species," said Robyn Niver, endangered species biologist with the New York Field Office of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), "but we need to do more."

Several of the most threatened species in Dutchess and Putnam counties in New York are the Indiana bat, the bog turtle, and the northern long-eared bat. All three are federally and New York State-listed endangered species.

"There are several other species that are protected in New York that the USFWS is working with states and other partners to assess their status to determine if they might warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act," Niver explained. "For example, this includes the Blanding's turtle, the spotted turtle, and the wood turtle."

The bog turtle is threatened because of habitat loss due to "vegetation succession," invasive species, and wetland fill. The Indiana bat was originally listed due to disturbance in their hibernacula (winter sites), but the current significant threat is white-nose syndrome (WNS), and "additive impacts" such as the loss of maternity colony habitat and mortality from wind energy projects. The northern long-eared bat's primary threat is WNS, but it faces similar potential for additive impacts like those facing Indiana bats.

## What's being done?

"There is a large and active partnership working on bog turtle conservation across the range," said Niver. "Such measures as habitat restoration (prescribed grazing projects, herbicide and manual vegetation removal projects), habitat protection (the purchase of land and easements), disease monitoring, and minimizing impacts from development, transportation, and other types of projects."

For the Indiana and long-eared bats, cave and mine protection (where many bat colonies can be found) and "gating;" summer habitat protection, again through land purchase and property easements; studying where these bats occur in the summer; attempting to find ways to reduce the impacts of WNS; minimizing and mitigating impacts from transportation projects are all on the table.

## Many species are affected, in many states

"Unfortunately there is a broad selection of rare plants and animals to consider when it comes to threatened or endangered species," said Tom Lautzenheiser, central/western regional scientist for Massachusetts Audubon. "Two imperiled species notable in the region (northwest Connecticut, southwestern Massachusetts, and adjacent New York) are the bog turtle and the New England cottontail rabbit. The bog turtle is federally threatened and listed in each state as endangered. The New England cottontail was a candidate for Federal listing, but the USFWS decided in 2015 to not list the species due to ongoing conservation efforts. The New England cottontail is state-listed as a 'Species of Special Concern' in New York."

Lautzenheiser said habitat loss is generally the primary factor leading to wildlife population declines. In the case of bog turtles, which occur in a specific wetland type, wetland filling, hydrological changes, incompatible land uses in adjacent areas, and road mortality are important factors in their decline, although they may



Above: A bog turtle. Image istockphoto.com contributor JasonOndreicka.

never have been abundant anywhere. "Additionally, bog turtles, the smallest (and arguably cutest) turtle species in North America, are prized in the illegal international wildlife trade, and wild populations have been depleted by unscrupulous collectors."

As for the New England cottontail, which inhabits dense shrub thickets, the general maturation of forest throughout the Northeast over the past 50 or more years or so has been devastating. "Importantly, the New England cottontail, as the name implies, is endemic to the Northeast – it does not occur anywhere else in the world. If we lose these rabbits here, they are gone for good."

## Conservation efforts

Both the bog turtle and New England cottontail have received substantial conservation attention in the region, and both have benefited from programs encouraging private landowners to maintain and improve habitat conditions for these species on their properties. Funding for habitat management work, specifically for the benefit of the bog turtle and New England cottontail, has been provided through Federal Farm Bill conservation programs administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, as well as state and private grants.

"The foundation of conservation efforts for these rare species is protecting the habitat of known populations," commented Lautzenheiser. "This goes beyond simple purchase by a land trust or conservation agency, which protects the land from development, but this is not sufficient to ensure the health of the rare species' population. Frequently, habitat conditions on property that supports these species are not optimal for one reason or another. Invasive species, plant community succession, and other factors also need to be addressed to best support the specific needs of the rare species' population."

He said efforts to establish new sites through habitat management or captive breeding programs are also important conservation tools. Additionally, rare species conservation efforts require some element of education and outreach. Learn more through the website [newenglandcottontail.org](http://newenglandcottontail.org).

"I think it's important to realize that in a lot of ways the decks are stacked against rare species. Land development, including roads, continues to destroy and fragment wildlife habitat, driving population declines across many species, not just rarities. Climate change, competition or

Continued on next page ...

habitat degradation by invasive pests and pathogens, overexploitation, and other factors are also occurring, leading to an overall depauperation of the natural world,” said Lautzenheiser.

Good work is being done to support specific rare species populations but it’s difficult to hope for any kind of enduring success against the expanding field of problems. “Still, conservationists are probably as determinedly optimistic a group as you’re likely to find, and we take our victories when we can get them. Mass Audubon has recently created habitat patches for the New England cottontail in southwestern Massachusetts, for example, which we hope will draw these rabbits in over the next several years. But collectively we need to do more.”

### Endangered bats and birds

Eileen Fielding, director at Sharon Audubon in Connecticut, also mentioned the number of bat species in the state that have experienced “catastrophic” declines due to the spread of WNS. “People may not notice that bats are gone, especially since their insect prey seems to be declining also. But the loss of bats is a significant change in our mammal fauna and our biological communities.”

Somewhat surprisingly and sadly, a number of birds are on the Connecticut list of Endangered Species. These include the pied-billed grebe, American bittern, sharp-shinned hawk, northern harrier, common moorhen, king rail, upland sandpiper, roseate tern, long-eared owl, barn owl, common nighthawk, red-headed woodpecker, grasshopper sparrow, sedge wren, horned lark, yellow-breasted chat, vesper sparrow, and golden-winged warbler.

“The majority of our endangered birds are contending with disappearing habitat, more especially the loss of grasslands, shrublands, and coastal marshes,” explained Fielding. “We usually think of habitat loss in terms of natural landscapes being bulldozed and replaced by built environments, as in ‘they paved paradise and put in a parking lot.’ That really is a major

cause of lost habitat. It has fragmented forest habitats to the point where true interior forest is shrinking.”

But habitat is also lost when the landscape remains vegetated, added Fielding. The plant community is replaced by a different plant community. For example, grassland and shrubland can be gradually replaced by forest if not maintained by natural events (fire, ice storms, hurricanes). In that case, birds native to grasslands and very young forests decline to the point where they become endangered species.

“A landscape can also be taken over by introduced plant species that are invasive. Invasive plants out-compete and exclude native plants, so that birds in any habitat find themselves surrounded with plants that don’t support the insects they need for rearing their young. Invasive plants can also drastically change the physical structure of a habitat, so that a bird’s typical nesting and foraging sites are no longer present. The good news is that land management techniques can counteract these habitat losses,” said Fielding.

### What can you do?

Okay, here’s the \$64,000 question: What can individuals do to help endangered species? “It depends on the species but there are some common things that can be done,” said Niver. “Learn more about them and share their stories. Donate money and time to local land trusts that have programs targeting the protection of habitat for rare species. Put a conservation easement on land that has a rare species.”

Lautzenheiser said, “First, I think individuals can start to inform themselves of the dimensions of the issue. Not everyone needs to be an expert naturalist, but in my opinion our culture undervalues ecological literacy. The average landowner in the region may never understand what even the common species on a property are, and therefore cannot assess how land use decisions may affect plant or animal populations or identify when something’s amiss. Fortunately there are lots of ways to cut into this general ignorance, such as programs led by various Audubon groups, great apps for learning about and document-



Above, top to bottom, L-R: A cottontail rabbit. Image istockphoto.com contributor PBallay. Long-eared bat. Image istockphoto.com contributor Pat Keith Photography. Red-headed woodpecker. Photo: www.animalspot.net.

ing observations, and a rich trove of natural history writing and references from the region.”

Participation in government, including support for conservation agencies, is critical at all levels of government. Policies and programs benefiting rare species are the products of concerted advocacy effort, often in the face of competing or conflicting interests.

Joining a conservation organization and supporting that organization’s work through donations of time and/or money “can amplify an individual’s voice and enrich one’s social network.”

And for those who have rare species populations on their properties or in their neighborhoods, learn about the species’ habitat needs, and try to provide them. “Too much of the landscape is hostile to nature, and there’s great satisfaction in work that supports our most imperiled wild neighbors,” said Lautzenheiser.

“The good news is that land management techniques can counteract these habitat losses,” Fielding observed. “Where appropriate, we can mimic the effect of forest fires or blowdowns with tree removals and harvests that create temporary

clearings and patches of young forest. We can aggressively manage invasive species where they occur. And we can ‘share the shore’ with our coastal birds by allowing them the places they need to breed.”

Fielding said wildlife sanctuaries and protected preserves can’t do the whole job of restoring endangered birds. The National Audubon Society’s Working Lands Initiative addresses this through work with landowners across the country to improve bird habitat, even on commercially worked ranch lands, timber lands, and sugarbush. “As part of the national program, Audubon Connecticut works with landowners and land trusts to provide habitat assessments and technical help, and offers public programs about how to restore bird habitat.” Check with local Audubon, wildlife sanctuaries, and nature centers to find out about educational programs and seminars about endangered and threatened species.

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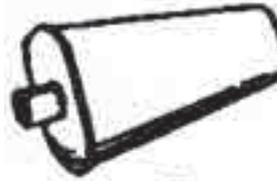
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# Columbia County's Queen of Green

By Dominique DeVito  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Here's something to think about next time you throw away your garbage: The average American generates nearly 4.5 pounds of waste a day. That's nearly 1.5 thousand pounds a year. The population of Columbia County, NY, is about 60,000, so that's roughly 45 tons in this small county alone. The garbage stat also doesn't include "extras" like electronics, appliances, tires, furniture, housing materials, and other things that are discarded. We're a fairly conscientious society with requirements for separating recyclables from other garbage, but no matter how you look at it, that's a lot of trash. Where does it go, and who's in charge of getting it there?

## Columbia County's Waste Collection

I've been curious about how it works in Columbia County since moving here over a decade ago. My family and I hadn't thought about how we'd manage our trash, figuring we'd put it in bins, drag it to the curb on a certain day of the week, and it would be collected. Not so! Turns out you can contract with a private firm to collect your garbage, which can be expensive, or you can deal with it yourself. This means putting it in county-approved bags and hauling it to the nearest transfer station. When we started doing this you had to buy a roll of the bags at a convenience store. We learned that garbage other than recycling went into those bags. Paper and cardboard were a separate category, as were plastics and metals. We discovered that the transfer station on Route 295 in Chatham, NY, was the closest to us, and that's where we went with our trash in tow. It didn't take long for

the process to become a ritual – and to become part of the community of people doing the same thing.

Pull into any of Columbia County's eight transfer stations, and you'll find giant dumpsters relegated to certain kinds of trash: cardboard and paper; plastic and glass; and other garbage. You'll also find a crew of guys that's consistently friendly and helpful, making sure things are processed efficiently and kindly. (If you need to dispose of anything unusual, you have to go to the station in Greenport where you'll be weighed and then charged by the pound to unload what it is you're getting rid of). There's really nothing like slinging the garbage into one of the bins or hearing the glass clank and break as it strikes the metal of the dumpster. With a smile and wave, you pull out to make room for the next person, and you drive off.

Enjoyable as the experience is, I was under the impression that unless your questions were about what to throw away and where, you didn't really ask too much about how all this waste was dealt with. Maybe that's from watching the *Sopranos* and associating waste management with the mob. But I've always wanted to know, and this article was my chance to learn.

## Behind the scenes and meet Jolene

When I called about making an appointment to interview the person in charge – surely this would be a burly guy with little to no time for my questions – I was surprised to learn I'd be meeting with a woman. As you can imagine, no ordinary woman (or man, for that matter) could do this job. I quickly learned that Jolene Race is no ordinary woman.

Jolene is the director of solid waste for Columbia County. Enthusiastic and engaging, Jolene has a smile that can light up a room, a bob of wavy



Image: istockphoto.com contributor den-belitsky

blond hair, and a definite twinkle in her eyes. Her office is in the small house that's just off the driveway to the weighing station at the Greenport transfer station. Her view is – appropriately enough – one of the main dumping barns, so she's always aware of how things are going (and coming).

Jolene has been with the Solid Waste department for 29 years now, starting fresh out of college at Saint Rose. "My degree is in Public Communications and Business Administration," she shares, "and I interviewed for the job of publicist/information coordinator for solid waste. I didn't really think I'd get it," she confesses, "but when the offer came, I gladly accepted."

One of Jolene's first assignments was to get a recycling program started. "People needed to learn what they could and couldn't recycle," she explains, "so I went out and taught them." This was around the same time that the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) started closing the landfills that spotted Columbia County and replacing them with the transfer stations we know today. In almost every town that once had a landfill, a transfer station was constructed to handle the waste. "There are eight of them," Jolene says, "with Kinderhook being the most recently completed."

The transfer stations were designed to collect different kinds of trash in different receptacles – paper waste, plastic and metal, and other garbage. There are three crew members at each, and the hours are typically 7:30am to 4pm, with stations open on different days. The facility at Greenport is open every day but Sunday because it is the only one that takes bigger items like appliances, electronics, and construction debris in addition to the trash collected at all the stations. Its hours are also 7:30 to 4 with the scale going off at 3pm.

"Once a year we have a household hazardous waste collection day at the County Highway Garage off 23B," Jolene says. This year it's Saturday, May 11, from 8am to noon. "Someone once dropped off a chemistry set from the 1960s," she says, "and that had some scary toxic stuff in it!" (There's a complete list of what's acceptable on the department's website at <https://sites.google.com/a/columbiacountyny.com/columbia-county-solid-waste/recycle-1>).

Continued on next page ...

### Trucking out the trash

When the giant dumpsters at the various transfer stations fill up, they're transported to the facility in Greenport. "There are two to three containers a day that go out of here," Jolene explains, "and they hold about 25-30 tons of garbage each." The recycling, which is sorted separately, fills two to three containers a week, weighing about 14 tons each.

"The waste is trucked to Ontario Landfill," she explains. "The US used to ship a lot of recyclables to China, but that has changed. As a result," she explains, "the cost of processing went up from \$60,000/year to \$250,000/year just in Columbia County. Part of my job is to keep things functioning as efficiently and cost effectively as possible, with as little cost to the taxpayer as possible. When we knew this was going to be the case, we struggled with how to absorb the cost and, after much deliberation, decided it was necessary to charge an annual permit fee for recycling."

"I work with unions, employees, and government officials all while following state and federal mandates," Jolene explains, "so things can sometimes take longer than you think. The permit program was approved in November and had to be in place by January 1 of this year," she says, smiling now that it's a thing of the past. "We had to let people know this was happening, and we had to get them their permits. You can't rely on people finding the information in a newspaper anymore," she continues, "so we relied heavily on word-of-mouth – at the stations themselves, and through town and county officials. By the end of 2018 we had distributed 7,500 permits," she says proudly. "And they're still being purchased."

Households receive two permit stickers to place on their vehicles so that transfer station employees know they've paid. The fees are for a calendar year, and are \$50/household; \$35 for seniors 65+; and \$100 for out-of-county residents. Permits can be purchased at all stations and at most town halls.

"People are so cooperative," she says, adding with apparent glee that "the seniors in Columbia County

rock! They really want to do what's right and ask lots of questions. The guidelines for recyclables change with time," she explains, "so it's not just status quo."

When the containers for recyclables leave Columbia County, they are taken by Casella Recycling to a Material Recovery Facility in Rutland, VT. "There's a machine there that's ¼ to ½ mile long," Jolene tells me, "that sorts the materials in a variety of ways, using air, magnets, different sized holes on the belts. It's amazing."

### A Columbia County legacy

It's clear Jolene is turned on by trash – the processing of it, anyway. She's immensely proud of the department's employees. She's rightfully proud of some small but significant successes she's brought to the department, too, including renting the dumpsters to construction companies and residents. She's very interested in the technologies that are evolving to process waste into other usable materials, and she feels food waste recycling is the next big thing. "Everything has to be cost effective," she reiterates, "but it's being explored." She tells me about a farm-based anaerobic digester program that could turn food waste and cow manure into renewable natural gas and fertilizer right here in Columbia County.

"When you're in this business you certainly pay more attention to what gets thrown away," she says, pointing to a collection of refrigerators that are on the Greenport facility lot. "People throw so much away, and keep buying more," she says. "If you pay attention in any store, you'll see that packaging is so wasteful." For example, a K-cup consists of aluminum, plastic, and organic compounds. While each is recyclable, they can't be recycled together so you have to separate them ... which defeats the purpose of the K-cup, which is convenience. There are many other examples of packaging on top of packaging. We start to talk about it, but realize we digress.

"I love solid waste," Jolene says sincerely. "There's never a boring day. You're always learning something new."

Jolene will be retiring in just a few years, and has been working to make



Above: Jolene Race and Nick Fallon of the Columbia County Solid Waste Department at the Greenport facility with one of the newer trucks. Photo by Dominique DeVito.

sure that the County and her crew are set up to keep going strong for the foreseeable future. With the budget firmly in mind, she has ordered new equipment, including new trucks, which has made everyone happier. The trucks have a recycling logo on their sides that can be painted different colors. Her crew ordered them to be pink and green. She's clearly tickled by the choice.

"Being a woman has had its challenges over the years," she confesses, "but I started at the bottom and learned everything, which helps. Also," she shares, "when I have issues on the job, I work harder."

Here's the Mission Statement of the Department, which says it all: "The Columbia County Solid Waste Division provides integrated solid waste management services to the residents and businesses of Columbia County by promoting waste reduction through reuse and recycling, while providing environmentally sound waste management at the most economical cost. The success of our program is, in part, the result of the interaction between the Solid Waste Department and our county residents. We appreciate and respect the public's interest and welcome your suggestions, comments, and recommendations. This cooperation will continue to protect and enhance our beautiful county for future generations." ●



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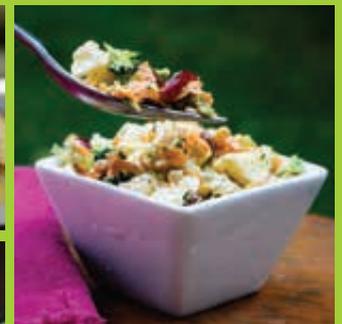
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LISTENING TO AND LEARNING FROM STORYTELLERS LIKE ANNE RAVER

# The gifted messenger

By Dennis Wedlick  
dwedlick@barliswedlick.com

Now that I am living here in the countryside of the Mid-Hudson Valley seven days a week, as opposed to two or three, I have more time to appreciate the little things that make the rural landscape so incredibly multidimensional, to appreciate how interwoven all of life is. I get help from reading stories about ecology and conservation written by gifted storytellers like the German writer Peter Wohlleben and New Englander Anne Raver.

## **The Hidden Life of Trees**

For example, while reading Wohlleben's book, *The Hidden Life of Trees, What They Feel, How They Communicate* (Greystone Books, 2015), I began to admire the fungi that grow on the floor of forests a stone's throw from my back door. Wohlleben talks about the beech forests he manages in Hummel, a forested community in the Rhineland of Germany. At the foot of his beeches is a fungi carpet, and you can find it at the base of our birches and pines. The fungi, through their fibrous, underground web of mycelium, he explains, acts as a communication platform, a Facebook for trees: the fibers pulsate with coded

messages from one cluster of trees to another, from birches here to pines over there. If trees could write, they'd be sending messages to each other like "not feeling well today because of these nasty insects eating away at our leaves." Those thoughts, those feelings, somehow cause a chemical reaction within the mycelium web, which in turn allows the fungi to translate those thoughts, those feelings into a language all trees can understand.

Telling homespun tales of his forest, his fungi, Wohlleben introduces his readers to leading edge conservationists from around the world. This is how he introduced me to Dr. Suzzane Simard, a Canadian researcher who researched fungi and came to understand the important role mycelium plays, and why it should be conserved. It allows trees to forewarn other trees, empowering them to take a defensive position against an attack by insects, disease, and climate change. Once the neighborhood of trees gets the message, each acts accordingly, sending up natural pesticides, or reducing the number of leaves they carry, or in other ways, so they can better survive an unhappy event.

## **Transferring messages**

Heading into another spring among our local flora and fauna friends, I feel empowered from reading books like *The Hidden Life of Trees*, learning how interconnected all of life is. It then becomes evident as I look more carefully upon the countryside surrounding my own home. With a closer look at fungi, I see not only how beautiful they are, but also how beneficial they are to my life, my natural surroundings. Reading Wohlleben made me realize that those who write about such science and the frontrunners of conservation act like this fungi on the forest floor, transferring messages from those who dedicate their lives to understanding our planet's fragile ecosystems to those who are fortunate enough to live close by to those forests, fields, streams, and beaches that we all hope to protect.

In his book, Wohlleben poses the question to his readers: why do we think the trees "are such social beings," sharing knowledge with other species, some of which are fierce competitors for limited resources of water and nourishment? He goes quickly to the answer: there are advantages to working together, just

like humans. This is just one of the universal truths that his landscape writing reveals.

## **Anne Raver**

And this brings me to Anne Raver, whom I know well enough to say is a kindred spirit of Wohlleben; she is the real reason I am writing this story. Raver is a favorite author of many of us here in the Hudson Valley and Berkshires, who we know best through her stories published in *The New York Times*. Like Wohlleben's, only more so, Raver's stories are about the interconnectivity of ordinary lives with nature and the extraordinary ecological science that helps us understand how it all works. I say more so because she aptly explores what motivates the conservationists in their lives to understand the glorious, yet fragile natural environment.

Over the years, she wrote about the people who live right down the road from me and in other nearby, familiar landscapes, such as the countryside of western Connecticut or the eastern end of Long Island. "Kathleen Nelson can't tell

Continued on next page ...

a Ford from a Chevy, but she can spot mile-a-minute weed 100 yards away.” This is how she starts one of her stories in *The New York Times* (*On Patrol with the Weed Warriors*, September 24, 2014). We come to find out that Nelson does her hands-on conservation work up and down Route 7 – mostly near New Milford, CT – ridding the roadside of invasive species. As we read, we learn about the pesky, fast-spreading weed, *Persicaria perfoliata*, and the difference, in general, between a pesky weed and a benign one, like the native, fast-spreading Trillium.

**“That’s my job.”**

Raver considers it her job to connect to the people who study conservation, to find out what they want other people to know about their work – she’s the gifted messenger. She is the one that asks the questions so that she can share the answers. “That’s my job,” is how she simply puts her motivation, for example, to research the most gentle way to persuade whiteflies to decamp from her greenhouse. This particular story is in *Deep in the Green: An Exploration of Country Pleasures* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), a collection of her short stories well worthy of a read – or reread, if you haven’t read it since it was first published. Reading the tales Raver weaves, and observing the way she weaves them, we realize the people working hard every day to conserve the natural landscape have urgent messages that they want to deliver to us, who enjoy the pleasures of the countryside, beachfronts, and mountains, messages to forewarn of invasions, disease, and contaminations, which unfortunately we humans often have a hand in bringing about.



Above: Anne Raver.

Any one of Raver’s stories will remind you of haikus about life, or the most timeless of nursery rhymes, delivering universal truths effortlessly, unpretentiously, and unforgettably. “So why would a thirty-two-year-old biologist named Steve Moreales spend every day, from July through September, out in a boat in Peconic Bay [on the eastern end of Long Island] and thereabouts, tagging and tracking sea turtles?” she asks in one her essays in *Deep in the Green*. Because, she explains, Moreales was working on protecting the habitat of sea turtles, which were, at the time, on the verge of extinction. Raver goes on to tell a tale of motivation, lacing the long-term research that drives the conservationist with biographical tidbits of her protagonist’s day-to-day life.

I came to see Moreales’ life quite like the sea turtle’s, going to and from the sea for the same reason: self-preservation. Raver, like Wohlleben, shows us that all of life is interconnected. If the turtle cannot survive on our planet, then neither can we. Her stories are narratives of particular people, places, and circumstances, but the overriding message is clear: to have bucolic landscapes for ourselves, we must understand the ecology of all life. “And,” as Raver says, “knowledge, and understanding, bring reverence for life.” Amen.

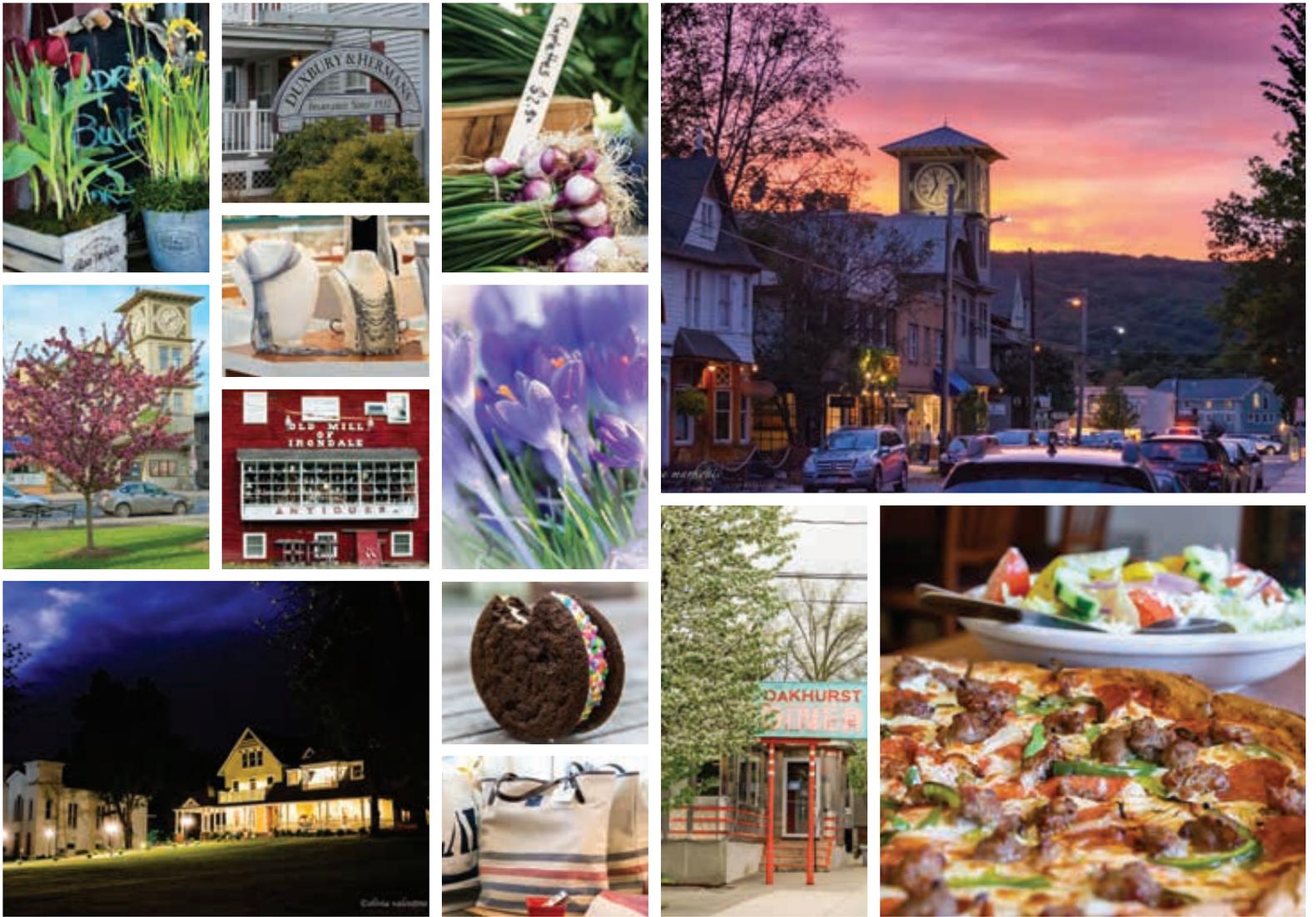
**A suggestion**

When Earth Day comes each year, I have a suggestion for those of us who want to continue to enjoy the pleasures of a natural landscape and leave it behind for future generations in the best possible shape: buy or borrow a book like the ones written by Anne Raver and Peter Wohlleben. Seek out books that have stories about ecology, conservation, or environmental design. Look for biographies about the conservation storytellers of history, such as Rachael Carson, Henry David Thoreau, or Alexander Von Humboldt; many recent ones are a delight to read. While this may seem like a couch-potato suggestion, it serves an important ecological purpose: raising awareness of the problems our natural environment faces is essential for work to be done to address them; resources are rarely invested in addressing a problem that people are unaware of.

The gift that good storytellers offer us is raising awareness, forewarning, like mycelia do for the trees of the forest. However, their work needs nurturing, too, needs conservation, or their messages will wither when no attention is paid. Ironically, in this age of instant messaging, writers are finding it harder and harder to get their stories read by a broad audience. An excellent example of this is that there is no longer a Home Section of *The New York Times*, which is where many

of Raver’s stories were published and had been a reliable source for conservation-minded home and garden design professionals, like myself. On a positive note, Raver’s previously-published stories are easy to find by searching her name on *The New York Times* website. These stories are timeless. By reading them, we may not be getting the latest news on conservation ecology from across the globe, but we do learn about the tried-and-true things that we can do. And what we learn, we can share at a dinner party or at the water cooler.

In turn, we can be inspired to take a weekend hike with a local conservation group, be motivated to help eradicate invasive plant species in the backyard or along the roadside, or volunteer to help protect local wildlife and habitats. If all that sounds too good to be true, consider this: since the worst of the industrial age here in the Hudson Valley, habitats have been restored, species have been protected, and open space has been conserved. And we know that it is due in large part to the gifted messengers of the past and present and people getting their message. ●



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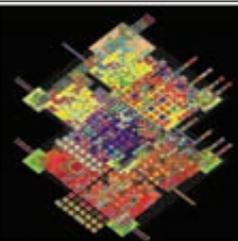
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HOTCHKISS DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION - *George Orwell's 1984*. Adapted by Robert Owens, Wilton E. Hall, Jr., and William A. Miles, Jr. Black Box Theater. (Buy tickets at the door, cash or check only: \$10, \$5 for students & seniors. Reservations are not necessary.)

L to R: Mark Wilson, *e16002*, digital image on paper, 2010; Witkowski Piano Duo; Hotchkiss Dramatic Association.






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# Farms and the environmental impacts of our dietary choices



Above, L-R: Vegetables being grown in greenhouses at The Berry Farm in Chatham, NY. Photo courtesy of The Berry Farm. Cows in Grazin's fields. Photo: Michael Altobello.

By Lisa LaMonica  
info@mainstreetmag.com

Have you ever wondered where your food comes from? Or how it is made? Are the likes of Michael Pollan ringing a bell whilst you think of the source of your food-stuffs?

In the past few years, and especially if you are linked in to any kind of media, you have surely become more aware of the realities of factory farming – which is not pretty. An alternative and to do your part to be more aware as well as healthy and to help protect the planet, you can turn to the local farmers markets and farms as well as learn about the Greenmarket movement, and what the Hudson Valley has to offer for your food choices.

## The key is to be informed

No one is asking you to become a vegetarian or to turn vegan. You can be a carnivore, but the suggestion is

that one should be more informed and should make better choices about where your food comes from. Again, buying local is a great way to support local farms and farmers markets, and it is a much better way to know how your food is getting to your plate. Additionally it is helping to reduce the carbon footprint of your food; i.e. your vegetables are grown and harvested within, say, ten miles of your home and they are not being grown and shipped to you from California or Mexico. Eating from local food establishments can also be a source for safer food, as more and more types of food have been recalled in recent years.

My first job ever, with my little brother Robbie, was working on a dairy farm. It's tough, tough work, especially haying in the summertime. If you think your job is tough working with a bipolar office manager, try farming. I have nothing but respect for farmers.

## Locals

Carlo DeVito of the Hudson-Chatham Winery in Ghent, NY, has produced a film called *Locals*. The film is about where local food is

grown, made, distributed, and why. The Hudson Valley – 300 years going strong – is very diverse in terms of different types of food production: beef, wines, beer, eggs, cheeses, and more, with thousands of small family-run farms.

Think about it: our valley producing everything we want and need, supplying food to the region from Staten Island to Albany.

Carlo explains that the Greenmarket movement started in the 1970s and gave small farms a way to stay in business, while also supplying people in New York City with farm fresh produce and other products. “Greenmarkets are the Kleenex or Xerox of the farm market world,” he explained.

## Grazin'

A local example of farming worth paying attention to is the Grazin' Angus Acres farm in Ghent that operates on 2,000 acres. They use windmill technology and natural animal fertilizer to produce their grass-fed beef end product. The farm has earned the Animal Welfare Approved status, and was featured on *NBC News*. (Go to AnimalWel-

fareApproved.org to learn of their standards).

This makes me so happy, because it's the way farming hopefully can be. This farm's beef can be found locally at Hawthorne Valley Farm store, local restaurants, Albany Honest Weight Food Co-op, and in New York City at Greenmarkets.

Just like recycling, conserving water, and producing less garbage, we as a society, have to demand humane treatment of animals that we harvest for our consumption. It is certainly yet another reason to support local farming, because by so doing you not only support your neighboring farmers and your local economy, but you're helping to reduce your carbon footprint, and you are often times consuming better food.

Eat good, local food. And remember the bumper stickers that are to be found on vehicles all throughout our region: No Farms. No Food. ●

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KARI BRITTA LORENSON &amp; ERIK SHORROCK GUZMAN

# Building the personal environment: those that can ... & do

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

It seems worth noting that not all manifestations of “conventional wisdom” are true. Some of them are not particularly wise, even condescending. Such is the case of a cliché originally penned by playwright George Bernard Shaw and found in his seminal play *Man and Superman*.

“He who can, does; he who cannot, teaches.”

(Editorial comment: Rubbish!)

We invite you to meet two very experienced teachers who not only do, they do with imagination, skill, and verve. They not only create art that finds its way into homes and apartments occupied by people of taste and appreciation, they inspire other artists to expand both imagination and experience.

Kari Britta Lorensen and Erik Shorrock Guzman met in the highly charged, creative environment of New York's School of Visual Arts. They both taught, with distinction, a range of subjects, masterminded workshops, laboratories, residencies and galleries until, confronted with the desire to combine their own talent with the techniques and technology that they had taught, formed KHEM Studios, and therein lies the tale.

## Family affair

The studio name, as an important aside, reflects the family that now resides in Stanfordville, NY, where design, “digitally crafted, benchmade furniture, quilting and fibre art” live in peaceful harmony. K is for Kari ... E is for Erik ... H is for their 21-month-old daughter Hanna ... and the initial M is fully occupied by their Giant Schnauzer Maple.

Kari was born in Connecticut and armed with a degree in Studio Arts from Southern Connecticut State University, headed to New York. With an MFA degree from the School of Visual Arts, she went on to teach, write, mentor, create and develop a residency program that allows artists to learn and experiment with technology that relates directly to their art.

Erik was born in Cuba and moved, at an early age, to the United States. As a scholarship student, he received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees in fine art from the School of Visual Arts and served for years both as Director of Operations for the Sculpture Department and taught computer art and design. He is a widely recognized conceptual sculptor, having created *Weather Beacon*, a commissioned piece of engrossing kinetic sculpture that was set near the site of the 9/11 Memorial in New York City.

From New York, there was a foray in Maryland, attracted by the opportunity to create a 3D printing workshop and to blog about fiber art, textile creation, and digital fabrication technology. The creative process continuing to seek opportunity and pushing the edges of blend-



Above: Cherry side table and stool built at KHEM Studios. Below, left: The KHEM family portrait. Photos courtesy of KHEM Studios.

ing computer design with actual fabrication, Kari and Erik settled on Maryland's Eastern Shore where their Digital Fabrication instruction rapidly grew from an online experience to residency programs that drew artists from all over the country to intensive three-day, hands-on experiences.

## “IKEA'd out”

Back in Brooklyn, where they had lived for most of their adult lives, the apartment seemed small, but the potential to branch out, great. It was time to expand, and the rolling hills and rich enclave of artists in New York's Hudson Valley drew them in.

It was all very challenging and exciting. With their growing understanding of computer design and the connections that could be made from conceptual designs to machines that could actually execute the digital files, Erik and Kari had established themselves as both artists and educators. It was time to make the next, giant step.

They were going to create a studio where their ideas could become appreciated objects. “Small batch manufacturing,” is the term Kari uses to frame the creation and intent of KHEM Studios.

Continued on next page ...





Making the dream real necessitated a move ... and that coincided with the point in their lives where quickly expendable furniture and functional but not aesthetically designed pieces needed to be replaced.

"IKEA'd out" is certainly not a critique of the design, fabrication, and marketing genius represented by the global Swedish company nor the usefulness of their products as dormitory living becomes small apartments, larger apartments, small homes, children's rooms, basement, garage, and attic storage. It represents a moment of transition ... the point of inflection where one's living environment becomes more tailored to the tastes of the individual and acquired pieces take on a more permanent place in individual style.

"We wanted cleanly designed, well made furniture for ourselves," affirms Kari. "And we knew just how to design and build it," completes Eric. And, so they did.

**Digitally crafted bench made furniture**

Meticulous design done on computers is translated into prototypes that are assembled, tested, critiqued, refined,

and re-done. The process involves acronyms and terms that are, at the very least, daunting to the uninitiated, and in practice become the elegant connection between ephemeral designs and sturdy, comfortable, cleanly designed pieces. CAD, CNC, CAM ... to those who work in this environment, they are familiar terms. To the rest of the world, it is the results that become familiar.

Chairs, tables, and tabletop items are created using maple, walnut, aluminum, brass, and linoleum. "The linoleum, which is eco-friendly, comes from Switzerland and not only gives our pieces color," offers Erik as he sits in a chair of his design and manufacture and leans on the linoleum tabletop he has created, "...but makes them very durable."

**Cutting edge software ... and a Singer sewing machine**

While Erik concentrates on creating the line of furniture that now graces the KHEM website and appears at regional shows, fairs, and on Etsy, Kari continues to create beautiful quilts and pieces of fabric art that begin as carefully realized computer designs, become large format prints and are finally linked from computer to the long arm quilting machine that occupies her studio workspace.

"The one item I couldn't live without is the sewing machine," Kari says as she reveals the classic black and gold Singer sewing

machine that has been meticulously maintained through its decades of solid service. Almost a throwback to an age of families making their own clothes, or at least carefully repairing them, it is the precision and reliability of this beautifully designed, efficient machine that makes it so critical in the artistic process.

"We want to create pieces that endure," affirms Kari. "Pieces that become heritage pieces in your home." To date, the appetite for Kari's quilts and Erik's chairs, tables, and cutting boards has been concentrated in the east and west coasts with hopes of expanding both their reach and their capacity to deliver these engaging works of art.

**Giving Shaw an encore**

We began this exploration with a somewhat condescending quote from George Bernard Shaw. It is only fitting that we give the brilliant playwright his due with a return engagement. He notably affirmed "great art is never produced for its own sake."

That could be an underlying theme of the creations that emanate from the studios of Kari Lorenson and Erik Guzman. Their work is most definitely art ... art that has emerged from lifetimes of absorbing copious amounts of information which, generously mixed with their impressive talent has provided the foundation to create pieces not made for their own sake, but for the enjoyment and long use by those who acquire them, live with them and treasure them. •

*To learn more about Kari, Erik, and KHEM Studios and how their creations may be attractive in building your own personal environment, visit their website at [www.KHEMStudios.com](http://www.KHEMStudios.com).*



Above, top to bottom: Erik's studio and work space. *Weather Beacon* by Erik Guzman. Left, top to bottom: Kari working at her Singer. Scribble quilt on Stickley couch next to a Thomas Moser bench. Photos courtesy of KHEM Studios.



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The Dutchess Land Conservancy (DLC) is a private non-profit land conservation organization founded in 1985 in Dutchess County, NY. To date, the DLC has protected more than 42,000 acres of our area's most important environmental and agricultural resources by working with our local communities, private landowners, like-minded organizations, local, state, and federal agencies. In addition to securing conservation easements to preserve land, the DLC protects farmland through purchase of development right projects, and provides conservation land planning services to individuals and towns. The DLC is the only county-wide land trust in Dutchess County. They are widely recognized on a national, state, and regional basis for working with landowners to create customized land protection plans which ensure that each property's special scenic, rural, and natural features remain intact to provide a public benefit while meeting the needs of landowners. Land plays a critical role in our lives; it matters to each and every one of us in the same, but also different ways. DLC is excited that so many working farms are being protected, that students and youth are seeking an ever better understanding of the environment and how it ties into the bigger life picture, and that towns are working hard to ensure well-planned communities by balancing appropriate growth with open space protection. Saving land isn't just about the land, it's about the people and the critters that the land supports. Land provides so many things that help sustain us and make our lives both healthy and fun. This is what makes DLC so important and they tremendously appreciate all who support their work.



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## III Generation Tree Service

Tree climbing specialist: big and small tree take-downs and removal, pruning, vista clearing, stump removal. [peterlorenzo3@yahoo.com](mailto:peterlorenzo3@yahoo.com)

Tree work is not a job that should be taken lightly or a job that should be done by yourself. There are many dangers that come with the job and that can occur. When in doubt, please call a professional, such as III Generation Tree Service. Peter Lorenzo established roots for the business in 2009 when he realized that he was capable of branching out on his own in the field of tree work, and he did not want to continue working under someone else. III Generation Tree Service specializes in tree climbing. Tree climbing involves big and small tree take-downs and removal, including hazardous trees that are decayed or fallen from storm damage, in addition Peter provides tree pruning, small vista clearing, stump removal, and tree felling. "Being located in the very far corner of Northwest Connecticut – that is where I primarily service. However, I do service over state lines into New York and Massachusetts as well," say Peter. He goes on to say, "I strive for customer satisfaction and I know that I am capable of getting the job done the right way, in a safe and cost-efficient manner. Safety is always the number one priority on the job site where we work, and especially after seeing so many people not using any safety equipment whatsoever." III Generation Tree Service isn't looking to branch out in any different directions at the moment, but is happy to be able to continue to climb trees every day. And if you're curious to see what that looks like, you should find Peter on Facebook and Instagram (@peterlorenzoiii) (he's also an amazing photographer), where he documents in pictures and video his work. It is quite breathtaking!



## Riverkeeper

Member-supported organization defending the Hudson River since 1966. (914) 478-4501. [riverkeeper.org](http://riverkeeper.org)

In 1966, the Hudson River was dying from pollution and neglect. Run-down factories choked it with hazardous waste, poisoning fish, threatening drinking water supplies, and ruining beloved places for boating and swimming. The Hudson River fishermen decided they had enough. They banded together to use a decades-old federal law to turn the tide from ruin to recovery. This was the start of the Hudson River Fishermen's Association – now Riverkeeper. The member-supported organization, based in Ossining, works along the length of the river. They patrol the Hudson, inform the public, and go to court when necessary, to eliminate illegal contamination. They team up with citizen scientists and advocates to reclaim the Hudson and find solutions for cleaner, healthier water. Pollution levels are down, but the Hudson's recovery is still fragile, and still incomplete. Fish species have not recovered, and many remain too toxic to eat. Pollution levels spike with every rainfall. By protecting streams, removing dams, restoring wildlife habitats, and going deep with science, Riverkeeper is renewing its efforts to restore the living river. Would you like to get involved? One way is to join the annual Riverkeeper Sweep on Saturday, May 4, 2019. Sign up for one of 100+ shoreline cleanup projects at [Riverkeeper.org/Sweep](http://Riverkeeper.org/Sweep). To learn more, please visit their website, [Riverkeeper.org](http://Riverkeeper.org), and follow them on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The Hudson needs your voice.

## INSURING YOUR WORLD

Things to do prior to a loss: No one likes to pay for insurance yet it is a necessary evil to protect all of our assets. To that end we should all be mindful that it is our responsibility to ensure we are properly covered. When was the last time that you had your home evaluated for proper insurance to value? This is imperative to avoid a coinsurance penalty should you have a partial loss, or worse yet, a total loss and you find that you don't have enough coverage to rebuild. How about your collectibles, jewelry, fine art, stamps and coins, or guns? These items are limited in coverage under all homeowners policies and should you wish these items to be insured to their true value, please get an appraisal and add a floater to your policy! Have you inherited a property with other family members? If so does the policy of insurance reflect your name as an insured and interested party? If not, you have no coverage ... do you have an antique car or truck, if so is it on a collector car policy? And lastly, when was the last time you reviewed your life insurance coverage – do you have enough? As they say, people don't plan to fail, they fail to plan.



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## The environmental positives of propane

In theme with *Main Street Magazine's* April Environmental Issue, I thought it might be challenging to justify being a part of this conversation whereas folks may argue that propane and heating fuel oils are by-products of non-renewable fossil fuels. Non-renewable and environmentally-friendly usually don't go hand-in-hand. But that's where watching TV and watching the shows where families build "Off the Grid" homes can help to shed some light on the environmental positives of propane. Several of the homes that I have watched these families build used propane in many different applications and as the main source of fuel. These homes used propane in extremely versatile ways to use a clean and efficient fuel to detach from their reliance on electricity. Propane with its flexibility and high efficiency ratings are able to run the following:

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## Construciton & the environment

It is always important to consider your impact on the environment when you build. And some of today's building products can help you leave a very small carbon footprint on Planet Earth.

The first thing to consider when building is the size of the structure. You want to try to build something that is ideal in size for your needs. Once you have established the perfect size, heating and cooling comes next. Depending on what type of heating and cooling you want, it will help to determine what type of fuel oil and/or electricity you will be using. To help keep your carbon footprint as small as possible, it is always smart to look into high-efficiency units for your heating and cooling.

Insulation is also key to minimizing your footprint. A house with very little insulation will consume (and essentially waste) a lot more fuel and energy in the colder months to maintain heat in the structure. Making sure a house has a high R value of insulation will help to ensure that you spend less money on heating and cooling, and by so doing, also helping the environment.

There are also alternatives to help with energy consumption, like installing solar panels and using wind power, which will help offset the electrical usage of the house. There are of course pros and cons to both, and you would have to weigh your options to determine which would suit your needs better than others. One thing to keep in mind is to build it right the first time. This will help avoid unnecessary remodeling, and with remodeling comes a lot of energy consumption and waste. Think and plan ahead. The less of an impact we can make on the environment the happier the planet will be!

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## Getting ready for spring: the mulch basics

Oftentimes as spring approaches, many of us want a flourishing, healthy lawn or garden that adds to the aesthetic value and overall enjoyment of our outdoor areas. Mulching helps to serve this purpose, making a clear distinction where lawn areas end and flower beds begin. However, in picking the wrong type of mulch to do so, we can cause drastic damage to the surrounding environment, leading to many negative consequences.

For starters, red, black, and some brown mulches are dyed, and therefore should be avoided. The dyes within these mulches often seep into the ground, contaminating the soil beneath and the organisms within it. Additionally, these mulches commonly consist of ground-up wood pallets and various types of waste wood that add no nutritional value to the soil, therefore diminishing plant growth and ultimately depriving plants of vital nutrients.

Natural mulch, on the other hand, has plenty of benefits, and works with the environment rather than combating it to contribute to healthy plant growth and high soil quality. Thus the advantages to natural mulch are numerous, and include:

- Breaking down and supplying nutrients to the soil
- Keeping plants moist for feeding to prevent stress
- Keeping soil cool and damp during hot, dry spells in the summer
- Keeping weed growth at a minimum, especially if weeds are eliminated prior to mulching

In tandem with all of these valuable environmental effects, natural mulch is decorative, and adds to the beauty of the landscape. All in all, natural mulch is more than fit to meet the needs of an aesthetically pleasing lawn and garden, while also serving a key role in the maintenance of fertile soil and hearty plant life.

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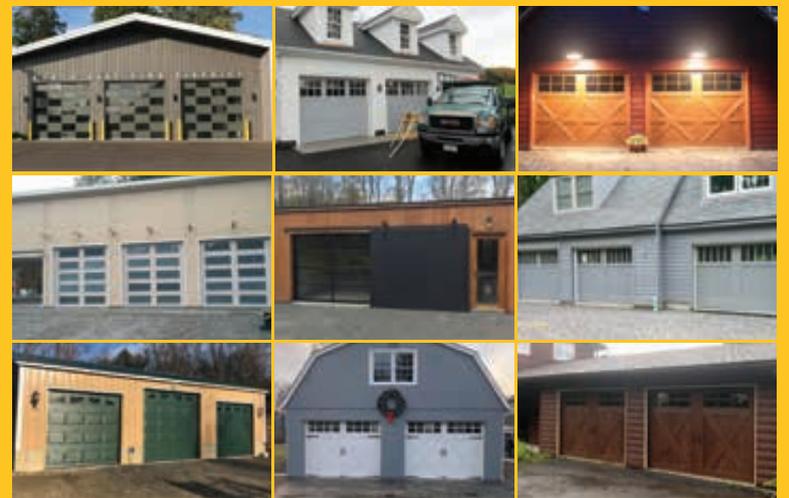
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<sup>1</sup> To earn the Reward Rates and ATM fee refunds, all qualifications must be met in the qualification cycle. The "qualification cycle" is a period beginning the first business day of each month through last business day of the month. The "statement cycle" ends the last business day of the month. Make 10 debit card purchases per monthly qualification cycle (transactions must be posted and cleared, not pending). You must be enrolled in our e-Banking service and authorize the Bank to deliver your monthly statements electronically to qualify. If you do not log into your e-Banking account for twelve (12) months, you will be automatically un-enrolled from e-Banking, and e-Statements will expire. A \$5.00 monthly service charge for paper statements will be charged each month you do not receive your account statement electronically. As long as you are enrolled when your statement cycles, you will not receive a monthly service charge for that month. You must have at least one direct deposit or one electronic payment post and clear to your account each monthly qualification cycle.

<sup>2</sup> ATM Fee Refunds up to \$25.00 per cycle when all qualifications are met. ATM Fee Refunds are automatically paid on the last day of your monthly statement cycle. International ATM fees are not refunded.

\*APY – Annual Percentage Yields are accurate as of 02/01/2019. Minimum deposit to open account is \$25. Reward Rate tiers are as follows when qualifications are met: If your daily balance is \$.01 up to \$25,000, the interest rate paid on the entire balance will be 1.98% with an annual percentage yield of 2.00%. An interest rate of .50% will be paid only for that portion of your daily balance that is greater than \$25,000, and the annual percentage yield for this tier will range from 2.00% to .50% depending on the balance in your account. The Base Rate of 0.05% APY will be earned on all balances if qualifications are not met. Rates may change at any time, and may change after the account is opened. Fees may reduce earnings. Available for personal accounts only. Certain restrictions may apply, please contact a Customer Associate at 860.596.2444.

Please see our separate Fee Schedule for other fees that may apply to this account.