

Inside

September/October 2009

THE MAGAZINE FOR NEW CASTLE AND BEYOND

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Children Well



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Janine Crowley Haynes Tells the Truth about "Crazy"

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Healthy Eats Around Town!

Chappaqua Goes Poe!

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Chappaqua Teachers

Photo by Bill Bramswig
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Publishing is pretty clear. So many different voices all in one neat little package...it's like forming an original choir each time with new songs to perform to keep engaging a loyal audience. Oh, and that audience. That would be all of you. The beauty of YOU is pretty clear too. Why else produce these pages if it were not for you? On that note, I'd like to thank you for reading this particular edition, and also, thank profusely the over 100 families who sent in *voluntary* subscriptions over the late spring and summer to help IC weather the cutbacks in advertising that is hurting virtually all print media. (Not too late if yours is still sitting in a "to do" pile! Or see coupon on the left.) Please know that I am deeply appreciative of your generosity and support.

I hope this edition appears as beautiful to you as intended and still chock full of the kind of good stuff you've come to expect from *Inside Chappaqua Magazine*.

You know what? I'm going to keep my letter short and sweet this time—there is a beauty in word economizing too!—and let the articles speak for themselves. Enjoy. Oh, one thing, since I opened this letter with a music analogy, may I encourage musical instrument donations via contacting MusicMitzvah@gmail.com for more info? See lower left. Some fair disclosure: It's my son's bar mitzvah project! Happy back to school and all that. Visit www.insidechappaqua.com to download IC pages anytime and check out our sponsor sites too.

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September/October 2009

Volume 7, Number 1

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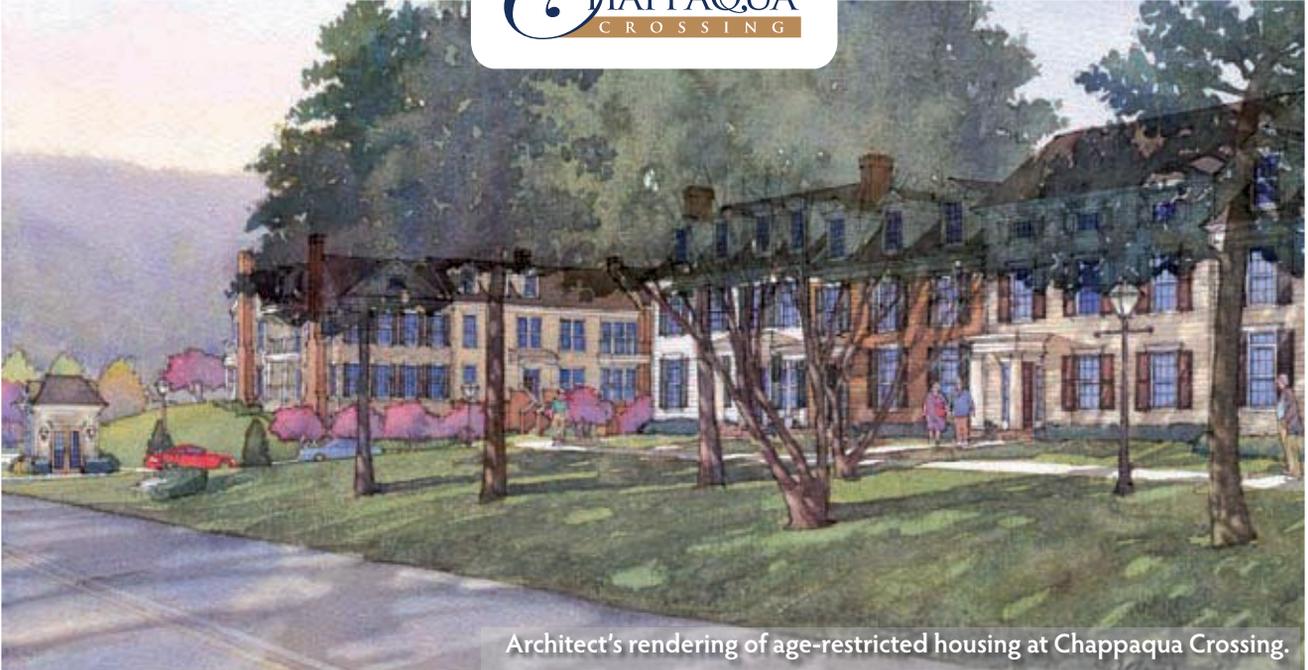
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Inside Chappaqua™ is published seven times a year, and is owned and operated by The Inside Press, Inc. Mailing address: PO Box 643, Millwood, NY 10546. Phone Number: 914-238-2600. Copyright © 2009. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Reproduction of any portion is prohibited without permission from the publisher.

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Architect's rendering of age-restricted housing at Chappaqua Crossing.

Great Schools Need a Growing Tax Base

Chappaqua is renowned for its excellent schools which consistently rank among the best in the nation. In fact, many people move to Chappaqua because of the outstanding reputation of its schools.

Chappaqua's schools are great because of its talented and dedicated teachers and an administration and school board that are committed to excellence.

But maintaining this high level of excellence requires a strong and growing tax base. As the Town of New Castle's single largest taxpayer, Chappaqua Crossing on the former Reader's Digest site annually contributes over \$1.5 million in property taxes, of which \$1.1 million goes to the Chappaqua School District.

The Town is currently reviewing plans for developing the Chappaqua Crossing property with a mix of age-

restricted housing for adults 55 and over as well as affordable senior housing and workforce housing for teachers and municipal employees.

When the proposed Chappaqua Crossing plan is fully constructed it is projected to generate over \$5.2 million annually in property tax revenues, including nearly \$3.9 million in annual taxes to the School District.

In these tough economic times, it's vitally important that Chappaqua look ahead for new sources of property tax revenue to maintain its excellent school system.

To learn more about Chappaqua Crossing and the many benefits this plan will bring to the Town and School District, please visit www.chappaquacrossing.com.

The proposed Chappaqua Crossing plan is projected to generate over \$5.2 million annually in property tax revenues.

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Early 20th Century Dresses Dazzle at the Horace Greeley House...through Dec.

BY MICHAEL KOHN

Years of mall experience shopping with my three daughters only partially qualified me for the splendid exhibit currently installed at the New Castle Historical Society, appropriately entitled "Dressed for the Occasion." Even so, I was enchanted by the ornate detail of the Victorian-era and early 20th century afternoon, wedding and garden dresses on display. A visit to the Horace Greeley House on 100 King Street in Chappaqua will transport you to an elegant time in our not too distant past when women changed their outfits three times each day in order to be "dressed for the occasion."

Toni Hutin chaired the Exhibit Committee and led a group of dedicated volunteers who carefully sifted through, cleaned and organized the many family items generously donated by area residents. Supported by a grant from Mimi Sherman, the exhibit provides the visitor with a beautiful and unique perspective into the lives of New Castle society people. Toni Kelly, who graciously guided me through the house, delighted me with descriptions of bonnets, "mad money" holders for subway change, French lace, fans, hair combs, purses and garters. Today, a calling card is something you purchase to make phone calls. Back then, it was something you dropped off at a friend's house to let them know you had stopped by.

One item in particular caught my fancy—an eggplant colored wedding dress. Why? The bridesmaids at my daughter's recent wedding wore eggplant. It's amazing how things come back into fashion after 140 years. Like most of the other wedding dresses on display, my daughter's was white.

The centerpiece of the exhibit is an exquisite lace wedding veil first worn by the daughter of Horace Greeley,



Gabrielle Greeley Clendenin on April 23, 1891. It has been passed down through the family and was most recently worn in 1996 by the great-great granddaughter of Horace Greeley.

The exhibit includes children's clothes and toys, together with many fascinating accessories used by the ladies of the time. There are also a variety of evening dresses dating to 1950 and a marvelous beaded dress which will make you think Jackie O. The display of these newer dresses is part of an ongoing effort of the Historical Society to increase their 20th century collection.

I highly recommend this historical fashion tour. It's a lovely way to absorb a slice of our haute couture past. Just don't try returning one of the 1910 shirtwaists from Lord and Taylor without a receipt.

The exhibit runs through early December. The museum is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays between 1 p.m.–4 p.m. For further information, the New Castle Historical Society can be contacted at (914) 238-4666, newcastlehs@aol.com and www.newcastlehistoricalsociety.org



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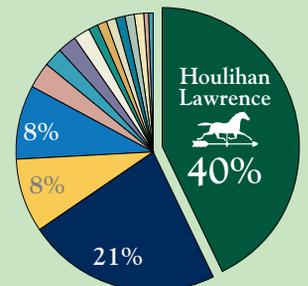
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Lexington Center Fundraiser Features Art and Food

BY PAMELA BROWN

Art and cuisine come alive in the Hudson Valley at the second annual Arts & Edibles in memory of Jonathan D. Pfeffer to support the Lexington Center for Recovery (LCR). On Sunday, September 13th, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., this special event places the spotlight on raising awareness about substance abuse and treatment. “We’re really looking forward to our second annual fundraiser. This year, the Board chose to honor the memory of my son, Jonathan, who we lost too soon. It’s a great way for us to raise funds that support our programming and help spread the word about substance use, abuse, and the recovery process,” said Irene Pfeffer, event chair and LCR board member.

Artwork, created by various professional artists throughout the Hudson Valley, will be showcased and available for sale at numerous restaurants. The restaurants will serve samples of their specialties. A silent auction will also be held at the LCR clinic at 24 Smith Avenue, Mount Kisco. Attendees can bid on a variety of items donated by area merchants. “Arts & Edibles is a fun way for families to sample local restaurants without spending a lot of money and it’s a great way to see what the latest trends are in the local art scene. We felt this combination was a perfect match for our fundraising efforts and to help raise awareness of recovery,” said Irene. Tickets cost \$35 in advance and \$40 on the day of the event. Proceeds will benefit LCR and featured artists will earn a portion of their art sales.

One of two trolleys, at 24 Smith Avenue and South Moger Avenue in Mount Kisco, will wind around the trail, making stops at participating restaurants in Mount Kisco and Bedford Hills. They include A Taste of Jamaica, Basilico, Big Apple Bagels, Blu, Café of Love, La Camilia, Lefteris Gyro, Lexington Square Café, Mango Cafe, Passage to India, Pierros, Spinellis, Starbucks, Temptation Tea House, The Fish Cellar, Tuscan Oven, Via Vanti, and Woody’s on Main. “Attendees are welcome to walk along the trail then take the trolley back to Smith Avenue to participate in the silent auction there,” said Irene.



L-R: Jodi Sawyer, Director of Finance; Harvey Rogers, Intake Coordinator; Dr. Adrienne Marcus, Executive Director; and Irene Pfeffer, Board member, all of Lexington Center for Recovery (LCR), at the 2008 Arts & Appetizers Trolley Trail, which was hosted by LCR.

This event has special meaning for Irene, whose 18-year-old son, Jonathan, passed away as a result of a heart attack caused by an accidental drug overdose. “My son was a young man whose life ended too soon. I’m chairing this year’s fundraiser to not only honor his memory but to help educate the public about the dangers of substance use and abuse,” she said.

Established in 1982, LCR is the largest substance abuse program in the Hudson Valley, offering over 18 programs and services throughout Westchester, Dutchess,

and Rockland Counties. “In Dutchess, Rockland, and Westchester counties, there’s an estimated 80,000 adults aged 18 and over with a chemical dependency problem. Our mission is to assure the needs of those affected by substance abuse are addressed in a holistic approach to service delivery with the recognition that successful recovery comes with a loving circle of support,” said Adrienne Marcus, Ph.D., co-founder and executive director.

“We strive to provide quality community-based service delivery to anyone affected by the tragedy of chemical dependency during the day, evening, during the week or weekends. We have to educate the public about the dangers of D.W.I., drug overdose and underage drinking while encouraging parents to talk to their children in open and honest conversations.”

Arts & Edibles is a worthwhile event not to be missed. “It’s a really fun way to spend the afternoon, to ride a trolley through Mount Kisco and taste delicious treats from local restaurants while helping to raise funds and awareness for LCR,” said Irene.

**Arts & Edibles takes place, Sunday,
September 13th from 2 p.m.-6 p.m.**

Tickets will be on sale at Mount Kisco Sales Days on September 12th and 13th. For more information on LCR, visit www.lexingtonctr.org



FRAMINGS makes it to all three “A” lists!

“I got a phone call one day last year from a woman who told me she had just moved to Greenwich from L.A. Three neighbors welcomed her with a luncheon and presented her with their lists of favorite stores and services in the area. She told me, ‘you were the only business on all three lists!’ Boy, was I happy to hear that. We’ve worked tirelessly for the last twenty years at being the most creative, highest quality custom frame shop anywhere. What a thrill to hear we made it to all three lists!”

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In The Loupe... The *Initial* Attraction

by Varda Singer & Ilene Davis

Fall is associated with new beginnings like the changing colors of leaves on the trees. In a time when our lives move so quickly, it is comforting to hold on to some nostalgia.

Many of us enjoy searching for that item that takes us back to a special place in time. Jewelry can do just that with its personal significance. One particular item that has made its way back is the Initial pendant. Keeping up with the fashion trends, designers have recreated initials with distinctive signature styles. Produced in sterling silver, gold or platinum and adorned with diamonds and semi precious stones, the Initial options are limitless! Some of these pendants are crafted so beautifully that they can be worn dressed up or down.

Initials aren't exclusive to the wearer's name. Women are layering their own initials with their husbands, kids, friends and even words of significance. Combining Initials with other significant charms or birthstones make for a more personal statement. In addition, layering with longer or shorter necklaces creates a fresh look highlighting the Initial piece.

Always keeping in mind the current state of the economy, we suggest shopping in your own jewelry box to see if you have any old Initials. Lucky if you do, wear them as is or update them with charms or gemstones. There is beauty in simplicity and the Initial represents just that!

ICD has a complete line of Initials available (including Hebrew initials from Israeli designer Nirit Berman) for you to see. And if you don't see yours, we can easily get it for you! As always we look forward to assisting you!

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SPECIAL EVENTS/HAPPENINGS

United Way's "Top Chefs" Event a Scrumptious Success



Randi J. Brosterman and Robert Hutchens of Mount Kisco, Co-Chairs of the Top Chefs of Northern Westchester event.

More than 140 guests gathered at the Mount Kisco Country Club on Tuesday, June 23rd to enjoy an epicurean evening of delicious specialty dishes, fine wines, and sumptuous desserts presented by some of the best culinary talents from the region. The "Top Chefs of Northern Westchester" featured a wine tasting arranged by Mount Kisco Wine and Spirits, and served as the celebratory finale affair for United Way of Northern Westchester's 50th Anniversary (1959-2009).

Co-Chaired by **Randi J. Brosterman** and **Robert Hutchens** of Mount Kisco, the

event was sponsored by the Mount Kisco Country Club, Mount Kisco Medical Group and White Plains Linen of Peekskill. **Dr. Scott Hayworth**, President and CEO of MKMG, **Tony Scullo** of White Plains Linen, and **Mr. Huessin Ali**, Manager of Mount Kisco Country Club, were on hand to accept sponsorship awards presented by **Naomi Adler, Esq.**, President & CEO, United Way of Westchester and Putnam, and **Dr. John Pinckney**, President of the United Way of Northern Westchester board. Receiving special recognition and appreciation from United Way were **Grace Bennett**, publisher and editor of *Inside Chappaqua*, and the *Record Review's* editor, **RJ Marx**, and writer, **Eve Marx**.

Guests were hard pressed to choose a favorite delectable edible as the offerings ranged from sea scallops with lemon grass to grilled vegetable and goat cheese napoleons and everything in between! This year's participating Executive Chefs and restaurants included Anthony Rubeo of **Armonk Lobster House** (Armonk), Kevin Bertrand of **Crabtree's Kettle House** (Chappaqua), Christine Tegtmeier of **Happiness Is** (Greenwich), John-Michael Hamlet of **John-Michael's** (North Salem), Andre Molle of **Le Chateau** (South Salem), Garand Alcin and Dominique A.J. Baptiste of **Lexington Square Café** (Mount Kisco), Luis Allaioco of **Piero's II** (Mount Kisco), Daniel Rubino of **Restaurant 353** (Mount Kisco), and Karen Miller of **Three Dogs Gluten-Free Bakery** (Briarcliff Manor).

For more information about United Way of Westchester and Putnam, please call (914) 997-6700 or visit United Way online at www.uwvp.org



Grace Bennett, Publisher of *Inside Chappaqua* and 2008-2009 Media Sponsor for United Way of Northern Westchester, and Margaret A. Tramontine, Senior Director, United Way of Westchester and Putnam.



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Greeley Senior Launches an Exchange Program with Australia's Carey Grammar School

The Horace Greeley Foreign Exchange Club is offering an exciting opportunity for two incoming 9th graders to participate in an exchange program with The Carey Grammar School in Melbourne, Australia. This is a 7-week direct exchange program where students will live in each other's houses. Chappaqua students will go to Australia the summer after they have completed 9th grade (2010). Two students from Melbourne will come to Greeley during second semester (February 2010) for 7-weeks.

Alec Sherman, the founder and President of the Foreign Exchange Club, is a senior at Horace Greeley High School. In 2005, just after he finished 7th grade at Seven Bridges, his family re-located to Melbourne, Australia for two years. Alec and his siblings, younger sister Katie and younger brother Tyler, attended Carey Grammar School during this time.

Alec wanted to share his experience at Carey--which taught him about the differences and similarities of being a student on the other side of the world--with other students in Chappaqua and began the groundwork for this exchange program a few months before he left Australia with Ms. Crabtree, the head of exchanges at Carey.

Once the Board of Education approved the exchange program, the Lions Club of Pound Ridge agreed to sponsor and organize the exchange, as they are one of the worldwide leaders in youth and student programs.

Carey is a private, co-educational, international day school. It is one of the few schools to offer not only the Victoria Certificate of Education Program (VCE)-- the standard high school curriculum--but also the International Baccalaureate Program (IB) for students in the High School. The school has two academic campuses in Victoria, Australia.

Carey's reputation as one of Australia's elite independent schools began when the school was founded in 1923 and a tradition of academic rigor was established. Carey is a school with over 2,200 children, with a broad based curriculum and an extensive co-curricular and pastoral care program. For many years,



Alec, Tyler and Katie Sherman at Carey in school uniform in June 2007.

Carey's graduating class has achieved results that placed the School in the top ten academic schools in the state of Victoria.

Horace Greeley High School has never before participated in an exchange program. Unlike Greeley, Carey has been running exchange programs for many years and it is a crucial element of their 9th grade curriculum. Destinations of their exchanges include: London, Germany, Canada, France, India, China, New Zealand, and other parts of Australia. They are very excited about hosting students from Greeley and sharing their classes, activities and ways of life. Ms. Crabtree will be visiting HGHS in September to observe the student culture and classes, and to meet the two selected HGHS students. She will use this information to select the Carey students in order to have a successful exchange for all. At Carey, there are over 50 applicants for these two spots.

Alec summed it up by adding, "The Carey families are eager to show students their country and introduce them to their culture, slang words, specialty foods and scenic wonders. Most importantly, the students, faculty and families are nice, friendly, and welcoming."

If you are interested in the exchange program or to get involved in the club, please email Alec at HGHSForeignExchangeClub@gmail.com.

Hot off the Press:

Danielle Weinstein and Christopher Koster were the first two Greeley students to be accepted as exchange students at Carey!

The DNA (Dedication, Niche, Authenticity) of Sheila Siderow



In the fifteen years since Sheila Siderow founded her real estate firm, she has differentiated herself through dedication to her clients, created a niche boutique style, and earned the community's trust with her tell-it-like-it-is authenticity. The celebration of this DNA is evident in her company's new name and new location: Siderow Realty Guild at 26 South Greeley Avenue in Chappaqua. At her award-winning website www.siderow.com clients can easily access all properties throughout Westchester and Connecticut.

Her dedication to clients is Sheila's way of replicating the feeling of shopping at Neiman Marcus. "The way you are treated at Neiman's, the feeling that 'someone cares about me by offering a higher level of personal service', that is what I have always strived for with my clients." Working with just a few brokers, hand-picked by her and networking throughout the country, Sheila is involved in every detail of every relationship, from personally meeting each buyer and seller to offering free services that help ease the stresses of transition for clients. Siderow Realty Guild offers sellers free "houselifts" by talented stagers who tweak each home so that it presents at its most crisp-and-clean best. Peace-of-mind is provided with free cleanup, pre-market inspections, and lists of painters, electricians and handymen.

For buyers, Siderow's commitment to making families happy is unprecedented. "These clients are becoming part of my community and the place that I love," Sheila says. Going above and beyond for Sheila meant founding both the Chappaqua and Pleasantville Parents Pre-School Associations; supporting Autism Speaks and referring families with special-needs children to services and programs; founding and chairing her own Woman-to-Woman Network to provide single women with the resources, referrals and support they need after separation, divorce or loss of a spouse.

Her straight talk, constant market analysis and unparalleled client care are the trademarks of Sheila Siderow's **DNA**. She is a true original in a world of sameness.



The Eyes Have It... Summer Vision:

Spring and summer are allergy season. Pollen and ragweed add to the regular culprits of dust, mold, pollution and pet dander to make itchy, watery, red eyes attack full force. Some contact lens wearers suddenly find their lenses uncomfortable, blurred or hazy. Swelling under the lids produces discomfort and sometimes pulls the lens up from the center of the eye causing blurry and double vision. Sometimes switching to a new brand of contact lenses, or daily disposable lenses can really make a difference. Changing the solution or care regimen can also improve symptoms. Many kids are going to camp where hygiene and taking care of traditional lenses is difficult and would benefit from daily disposable lenses.

Summer also brings the chance to spend plenty of time outdoors. However, people who wear glasses may find them a nuisance during physical activity as they can slip, fog up or just get in the way. Contact lenses are often a good remedy, but those people who are wearing progressive or bifocal spectacle lenses may find that regular contacts limit their vision. They may wish to be able to read a menu, sign a receipt, shop, check email or even catch up on their summer reading. In the past bifocal soft contact lenses were of poor design and limited range. However, today many great options are available, depending on the needs of the individual. Multifocal (bifocal) contact lenses are easy to use and don't depend on looking through different parts of the lens like with spectacle lenses. Monthly, daily disposable, and even lenses that also correct astigmatism are used with very good results. We will work with you to treat your allergies and find a contact lens that works for you...in all seasons.

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SPECIAL EVENTS / HAPPENINGS

Support for Pace Women's Justice Center at Desires by Mikolay October Event

Shop the week of Oct 11th-17th to benefit a deserving local charity. The Pace Women's Justice Center provides free legal aid to victims of domestic violence in the Westchester area. Customers will receive 10% off all in stock items with an additional 10% going to the non-profit Justice Center. Join us on the final day of the sale at our Chappaqua store for a benefit cocktail party! Enjoy fine wine generously donated by WineEnthusiast.com and gourmet hor'dourves. Fabulous gift bag given with every purchase.

Parenting Center Expands at Bet Torah Nursery School

Bet Torah Nursery School expands its Parenting Center this fall with brand new classes for moms, babies and toddlers. Fall classes include Bagels and Blocks, Mommy & Me Musically, Hands-on Holidays, Yoga Babies and Yoga Moms. Classes will be offered at Bet Torah Nursery School, 60 Smith Avenue in Mt. Kisco.

Shari Harris, LCSW, and Barbara Brandfon will offer conversation, support and a morning of fun for parents and children (to 20 months) on Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30 in **Bagels and Blocks**. Shari will lead a discussion group for moms, while Barbara, a twos preschool teacher at Bet Torah, will supervise art, play, and toddler time.

Pam Gittleman, Bet Torah Nursery School music educator, will lead **Mommy & Me Musically** on Friday mornings from 9:30 to 10:15. After learning new songs and revisiting children's favorites, children will share a special challah snack making for a fun-filled morning for adults and children from six to twenty months.

Carol Offman, experienced yoga instructor of all ages, will lead **Yoga Babies** for moms and infants four to twelve months on Thursday mornings from 9:45 to 10:30. Moms Only are invited to join Carol for Yoga Moms on Thursday mornings from 10:45 to 11:45.

Parents signing up to meet other parents and families, learn something new, share a special morning with their children or just relax are invited to call 666-7595, extension 110, for more information and registration or visit the Bet Torah website at www.bettorah.org and click on Early Learning/The Parenting Center.

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SPECIAL EVENTS/ HAPPENINGS

Community Day— Saturday, October 3



There's something for everyone at Community Day. At this annual celebration, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Chappaqua, residents and merchants, gather in one place to socialize, learn and have fun.

The event will be held on Saturday, October 3 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and takes place at the Chappaqua Train Station plaza. Plans are in the works for more rides than ever, musical entertainment, and of course every kids' favorite, the fire trucks will be back again. More than 50 exhibition booths staffed by local merchants, school organizations, fire and police departments, arts organizations, after-school programs, NCCTV, a meet and greet with local and perhaps national politicians, cotton candy and many other surprises are in store for you. There Town of New Castle will feature an expanded "Green Alley," with many ideas on helping the environment. At the Sustainability Advisory Board's booth, come by to see what you can do at home to reduce your carbon footprint.

**Tell them you
saw it in
Inside Chappaqua**

New Castle Community Television Reaches Out

By: Robert L. Unger



New Castle Community TV is the area's ultimate media venue to involve all residents of our Town and surrounding communities in the expression of their own thoughts and to provide a public forum for views no matter how controversial or mundane. It is the ultimate First Amendment vehicle and allows, indeed encourages, residents to express their views in an unfettered format. Individuals, community groups, Town and business groups are all encouraged to participate. To quote from the station's Mission Statement: "The mission of NCCTV is to strengthen our sense of community... by promoting and facilitating community use of public access television... To accomplish its mission, NCCTV will actively seek the participation of residents in its programming and operations by making available instruction in the use of video equipment, assisting in the development and production of programs... and otherwise providing a structure in which residents can learn, create and develop ways to get involved in public access television."

Current shows range, for instance, from programs on Political issues, Theater, Cooking, Movies, Bridge, Crossword Puzzles, Library, Historical Society, and other community service group programming, through interviews with local business owners and others who contribute to our community. Programs which provide an outlet for those who do not ordinarily have access to "mainstream" media is an important part of NCCTV'S mission. Government officials, ranging from local through state are also frequently interviewed. As a vital community service, NCCTV broadcasts Town Board Meetings and other government programs of interest to local residents. School Board meetings, school plays, concerts and other educational programs, so important to parents are broadcast on a regular basis. In fact NCCTV runs three stations, Public, Government and School, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No commercial TV network does that.

New Castle Community Television welcomes and encourages all those who might want to produce a television program (including seeing themselves on TV!) to participate. It is fun, satisfying and it will get you involved with a "family" of nice and dedicated people. How to do it?

Many people who would like to participate are "camera shy", don't know how to start or are otherwise reticent. Now New Castle Community Television will provide the tools necessary for anyone to get involved.

This fall, NCCTV will be offering four courses as part of the Chappaqua Continuing Education program which will teach anyone interested how to do this and be at least as "professional" as those already participating. Perhaps more so! These four courses are just one Saturday each. Take one or more and join NCCTV's family.

The courses are:

- Shooting a Professional Video
- Editing a Video for YouTube and the Web.
- Mastering iMovie '09
- Become a Public Access TV Producer

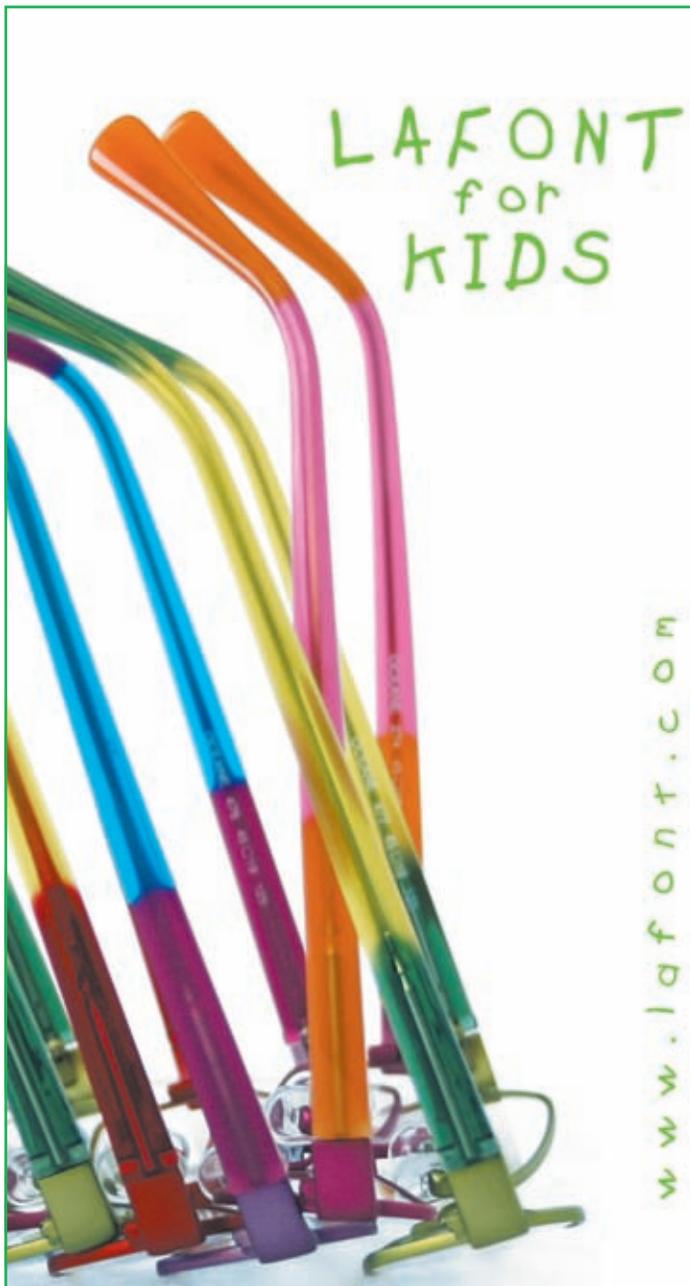
Instructors are:

- Carrie Krams—Station Manger, NCCTV
- Lyle Anderson—Former head of technology—News Corp./TV Guide
- David Wolfson—Professional Cameraman—ABC TV (Eyewitness News)

Some of these course titles might seem slightly intimidating. Fear not. They are taught by professionals but they are designed for members of the community, not for professionals. In fact, since the courses are new, several current producers plan on taking these courses in the fall to increase their skills. And if you want to join NCCTV's family without the courses, NCCTV will welcome you anyway.

Be on the lookout for the Adult Education brochures, which will be mailed very shortly, unleash your creative juices and come join us in an exciting, fun, satisfying venture. It may very well be one of the best things you have ever done!

Bob Unger, a long time Chappaqua resident and former senior vice president of Marketing for Pfizer, Inc., is currently President of the Board of New Castle Community Television. He has taught marketing courses at Pace University; he is married to Susan Ruth Unger and is a proud father and grandfather to two grandsons.



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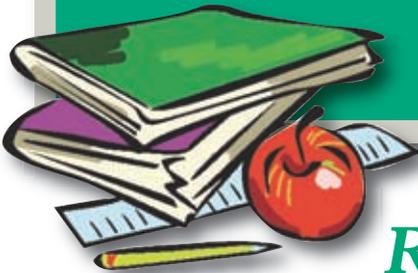
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The Making of Good (Even Great) Teachers

Insights into Hiring, and Snapshots of Chappaqua Educators

BY VICKI DE VRIES
PHOTOS BY BILL BRAMSWIG



Remember the esteemed British boarding school teacher in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* or Anne Sullivan, who patiently taught Helen Keller? Did you cheer for band teacher Glenn Holland in *Mr. Holland's Opus* or for math teacher Jaime Escalante, whose story of turning gang members into math geniuses was chronicled in *Stand and Deliver*? Their inspiring stories highlight the qualities that make good teachers great.

How does our own Chappaqua Central School District hire good teachers with even greater potential? While economic realities have limited hiring this year to leave replacements, the District is “still looking to hire the best teachers from the pool—just as we always have,” according to Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Tom Cardellichio. He and District Superintendent Dr. David Fleishman have offered their insight into the making of a good teacher:

What makes a teacher great?

Fleishman: Great teachers need both academic skills and the ability to connect with kids emotionally. They also have to be lifelong learners and keep up with changes in society. Staying on top of the profession includes keeping up with new research, acquiring new knowledge, and maintaining good relations with kids and colleagues.

Cardellichio: Intelligence is primary, as is “cognitive empathy”—the ability to get inside a child’s head and figure out what they know and don’t know. That’s different from emotional empathy, which is also on any standard list of what makes a great teacher.

Certainly, teachers have to be compassionate. Also, there’s knowledge of subject. Those [four qualities] are hard to learn on the job, whereas pedagogical moves and techniques can be taught.

What accounts for the District’s successful educational system?

Cardellichio: One contributing factor is the culture of respect for education. Our students are motivated and

work hard, their parents value education, and that allows teachers to do the work that they do. We also spend a lot of time trying to hire good teachers and allow them to do good work. So, there’s a kind of synergistic effect.

What also distinguishes the District is the emphasis we put on actual performance. So, for example, when we’re hiring administrators, they spend a day with us observing classrooms and talking about what they’ve seen. Teachers are asked to teach a lesson and then reflect on what they did.

Fleishman: Virtually none of our teachers are new to teaching—less than 10%.

What happens once a teacher is hired?

Fleishman: Our goal is to foster the greatest success possible with a multi-faceted approach to supporting our teachers. A staff development team works with teachers in their classroom. For example, we have a literacy consultant who works with our elementary and middle-school teachers to give hands-on help and collaborate with them.

We’ve also hired a new staff developer to help teachers working on the new math curriculum. Informal work goes on all the time as teachers share ideas with each other.

Cardellichio: Some of our teachers new to the District have mentors in their first year. Also, teachers are always taking in-service courses coordinated by Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Lyn McKay.

How does the District evaluate hired teachers as part of the State-mandated tenure process?

Cardellichio: We have an annual professional performance review that evaluates teachers every four years, although it could be more often. In the intervening years, teachers are involved in a self-evaluation process. And teachers who are not tenured are usually evaluated by their principal three times a year.

Fleishman: Also, for already tenured teachers, we've put in place the Teacher Action Research Program. It allows tenured teachers to research a question about student learning in the classroom. All of these forms of evaluation tie into the idea that teaching is a craft that requires practice like anything else. The more practice a teacher has, the greater the likelihood that a teacher can get better and better.



Individual teachers bring their own history and experience to the table as well, making each class and classroom unique. The following six relatively new teachers reflect the high caliber of the Chappaqua educators and underscore the high level of achievement in the District:



If Indiana Jones needed a stand-in, Horace Greeley High School social studies teacher **Patrick Healy** could apply. Last summer, he went on a 12-day trip to Turkey and then backpacked through Eastern Europe for several weeks. He shares his experiences with his students, tying them to historic people, places and events.

"Teaching allows you to follow your passion, and there are different things to do every day," Healy said, noting there's "always something new to learn about history." His easygoing enthusiasm about teaching history seems

to be infectious: "Students have told me they noticed I really enjoy my job."

Healy expressed warm appreciation for his Greeley colleagues. "You get the sense that the teachers love being there, that this is an overwhelmingly popular place with a lot of enthusiasm." And he recalled that at least half of his students during the past school year thanked him or said, "Have a great weekend," on their way out of class.



"I was even invited to the Senior Prom," he said, which speaks to Healy's ability to relate to students, whom he described as "amazing" and "eager to learn." He values helping students make connections between current and historic events. During the presidential campaign, for example, Healy took advantage of Internet resources to utilize in class.

If given unlimited funds, Healy would make his classroom "a super-sized jet to fly my students and me all around the world. After all, you can learn only so much hearing about history. Actually touching the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. and the engravings of all the veterans who died, or seeing and smelling the Sistine Chapel or breathing in the dust around the Great Pyramid" would truly bring history to life.

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Few people have bottled a baby kangaroo in Australia or studied mangrove forests in Kenya.

Jessica Hermesch, sixth grade science teacher at Robert E. Bell Middle School, has done both.



"I love to be put into a new situation and learn from it," said Hermesch. Wanting to travel after college graduation, she obtained a plane ticket and a work visa to New Zealand, followed by another work visa to Australia. "Being in a different situation got me thinking differently," she explained. It was in Australia that she began to see teaching as "a way to maintain my connection with the things I love," she said.

Why science? "I grew up being in love with animals and treating things nicely," she explained, crediting her parents for instilling in her a respect for nature and the environment. Sixth-grade science, focusing on life, earth and physical science, was a natural fit. "I've always had a lot of curiosity about how things work."

Getting students to think for themselves is an important part of her teaching approach. "I love seeing kids perk up and get excited about a topic in science," she said. "I want students to be independent thinkers and take ownership of their learning, to go beyond the textbook

and apply their learning to the real world." A case in point is her popular Forensics Crime Lab class, what she dubs "Chappaqua CSI." Students tested synthetic blood and matched what turned out to be a fellow classmate's fingerprints.

"I feel like I'm living my hobby," said Hermesch, adding "I want to be the learner I want my students to be." Over the summer, she took a course on insects and climate change at the Bronx Zoo. "It's important to let kids see that you're learning," she commented, adding that it's also okay for them to see that teachers are people and people make mistakes.



On a typical day the past school year, **Sharra Jackson's** first-grade students at Grafflin Elementary School sometimes called her "Mom" by accident. Their error didn't upset Jackson, who noted that "kids at this age need a lot of patient nurturing. Every day, each one needs individualized attention."



Jackson first aspired to be a lawyer, but while a college intern for a family court judge, she had the opportunity to play with children in a daycare center the judge had created. "It was great seeing their eyes light up because I was teaching them something,"

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Jackson said. It clicked: she could make a difference by teaching kids. Even though she has eight years of teaching under her belt (one in Chappaqua), Jackson still finds it rewarding and loves “seeing the proverbial light bulb go on when a kid goes ‘Ohhh.’”

Jackson has a no-nonsense approach to teaching—“we get our work done and then we have fun.” She helped her first-grade class create their own set of rules and consequences, which fostered a sense of community and order, which she believes is indispensable. “Kids need rules—just like society,” commented Jackson. “Without rules, things can descend into chaos.”

Jackson puts a premium on organization and neatness, reinforced as homework assignments in which students organize their bedrooms or a drawer in their homes. Having an organized approach to life won’t guarantee success, she said, but it will help students be “more apt to succeed.” She also stresses the development of independence. “A lot of things are done for children that they can do for themselves, but children need to be self-reliant,” Jackson said, adding that she always encourages them to keep trying when they say “I can’t” do something. And knowing the “type” of learner each student is enables Jackson to appropriately tailor lesson material.

“I believe children are going to rise up to meet goals. I’m not afraid to expect the best from my kids,” she said. “If you have faith in them, it doesn’t matter what age they are. They’re going to feel it. And they’re going to know you believe in them.”



Renee Mattiello has wanted

to be a teacher since she was five years old. The oldest child in a large family who enjoyed helping younger siblings, she relates well to primary school children, who are “eager to learn” and “eager to come to class.”

A Westorcharde Elementary School fourth grade teacher, Mattiello said she loves “teaching younger kids the fundamentals” and having the same students the entire day. “Teaching is like no other job. You’re a nurse, parent, friend, helper, besides instructor. I try to teach children as individuals, but they all need a hug every day.”

Mattiello chalks success up to clear expectations of behavior and academic goals. When children know what is expected of them, they gain a sense of security. Her own high school government teacher influenced Mattiello’s teaching philosophy, as he “taught from a notebook that was a compilation of ideas and basic knowledge” rather than from a textbook, lectured with insight, made sure students knew what to expect and commanded respect. “I try to create an environment that is similar,” she said.



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In addition, “no matter what their learning style is, I try to make my students feel that they’re part of the classroom and that everyone matters,” Mattiello pointed out.

Mattiello enjoys seeing her students accomplish goals, like her second graders’ PowerPoint presentation describing the life cycle of the frog. The activity demonstrated mastery of a science lesson and a new computer program, as well as gave students a sense of accomplishment. Similarly, classroom “publishing parties” celebrate student writing. “Parents enjoyed being part of their children’s learning experience.”



Taco, senorita, and sombrero may be commonplace words in our culture, but they signify more to **Dawn Stapleton**, now a second-year Spanish teacher at Seven Bridges Middle School. She wants her students to appreciate the cultures that speak Spanish, not just to learn another language.



Following one year of teaching at Seven Bridges, Stapleton credits her “supportive department that’s been willing to share and be helpful,” she said. A college Spanish major with a minor in American Studies, Stapleton taught English while living abroad. After five

years of working in the sales and marketing department of an educational publishing company, she realized that teaching would bring her loves together—working with children and helping them learn Spanish—so earned a masters degree.

Stapleton described teaching as “an awesome profession and a great job experience, if you’re passionate about teaching, love being creative every day, love kids, and have patience.” Learning another language also aids in English grammar and vocabulary. “My students in general are excited about learning,” she added, explaining that she motivates them by incorporating art, music and literature into her lessons. “I aspire to create fun activities” that are also “dynamic and interesting.” The whole point is to help her students know “how important it is to speak, understand, read and write another language,” as well as “to communicate with people who are different from themselves.”

This past school year, her seventh grade students studied a Mexican holiday called *Dia de Los Muertos* (Day of the Dead), which celebrates the memory of loved ones. “This activity gave them another perspective on how other cultures deal with death,” explained Stapleton. This fall, fifth grade Spanish classes will, for the first time, meet five days a week, enabling Stapleton and her fellow language teachers to further expand their curricula.

Stapleton believes that great teachers possess patience, flexibility, high expectations for students, a positive attitude, creativity, energy and the ability to simplify complex concepts. She added that parental support makes a



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big difference in classroom success for both students and teachers alike. "Parents are the teacher's strongest allies," she said.



Roaring Brook School third-grade teacher **Jenny**

Steingruebner calls herself "a pretty active person" in describing her hobbies of rock-climbing, hiking, biking, kayaking, skydiving and scuba-diving. Given the physical rigors of teaching, it is a good thing that Steingruebner has prepared herself so well.



Being a teacher allows Steingruebner to do all of the things she loves—helping, encouraging and teaching kids who are "curious about the world and excited about learning," she said. "Every child has strengths and the ability to succeed. I feel it is my job to build on the strengths of my students and create an environment in which kids want to learn and have confidence in their abilities."

Children learn best when they are "able to make sense of the world and construct their own understanding, rather than be dictated to," she added. Steingruebner also believes that a teacher is "responsible for contribut-

ing to the development of the whole child—social, emotional and academic."

"No two students will ever be the same, nor will two classes," she said, noting that teachers must get to know their students and tailor teaching to student strengths and needs. "I want my students to find their strengths and soar and not ever reflect on what they can't do." Steingruebner recalls that one of her own teachers "believed in me when I didn't. He wouldn't let me quit when I was down... and showed me the importance of setting a goal and sticking to it. I learned a lot about personal success from him."

Steingruebner likes incorporating computers and digital cameras into the curriculum, allowing her students to create newsletters, literary magazines and PowerPoint presentations on a variety of topics to keep their motivation high. "It makes sense to teach kids safe ways to use computers and technology in our fast-paced, tech-savvy world," she added. Indeed, if given unlimited funds, she would probably spend it on technology, specifically a laptop for every student. She does not believe the 45 minutes of computer lab time the students receive each week is adequate to take advantage of the "amazing ways they can use computers in their learning."

If there is anything Steingruebner would like more of, it's time. "There's not enough time in the day to do everything I want to do."

VICKI DE VRIES is a freelance writer/editor and educator living in Westchester County.

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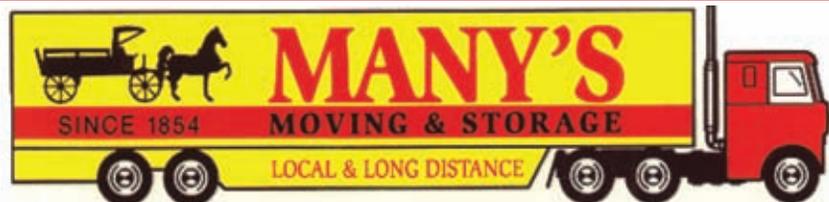
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Designing Woman

BY MICHAEL JEFFERS

PHOTO BY BILL BRAMSWIG



Interior Designer Brenda Kelly Kramer, hard at work in her kitchen.

“I can’t imagine living in a house where the kids aren’t allowed to climb all over the furniture,” laughs Brenda Kelly Kramer. Far from the stereotype of the ultra intense, pretentious interior decorator of old, she delights in creating homes that are as comfortable as they are beautiful. She understands that pulling together a look that is both elegant and inviting can be stressful, and she strives to put her clients at ease. “It should be fun,” is her motto.

Her talent has been recognized by major publications. *House Beautiful* awarded her “Kitchen of the Month,” and touted her use of old wood and vintage marble (all found on the internet) to create a new kitchen with a classic country feel. She’s been featured in *The New York Times*; and in two articles in *Better Homes and Gardens*, with a third in the works.

Her background is equally interesting. Her mom is the great-great-granddaughter of Vice President John C. Calhoun, the Southern firebrand who’s mentioned in the movie *Amistad*. Another ancestor is Dr. William Drennan, the Irish poet who coined the phrase “The Emerald Isle.”

Her dad is British, a former Royal Navy officer. He received an MBE

from Queen Elizabeth II, whom Brenda got to meet in Bermuda.

“I was very much influenced by the décor of my childhood. I grew up in a beautiful 1920’s Tudor overlooking the Hudson in Irvington. My dad started the collection of the Dundee Marmalade and stoneware containers displayed in my glass kitchen cabinet. Our dining room chandelier came from The Crown House, here in town; we also had an old brass one from Russia. So I grew up learning to appreciate antiques. My mom, who has superb taste, is my role model. I’m also inspired by Jackie Kennedy’s style. I love the photographs of her White House bedroom; all blue except for a leopard throw on the chaise.”

Never one to be stuffy or predictable, Brenda has learned to make designing a treasure hunt. “I love to explore and to research to find exactly the right piece. Those marble countertops were from the University of California at Berkeley; the flooring is from a barn in upstate New York; the subway tile, which is cracked and worn, comes from Bucks County. On the top of the kitchen island is karri wood from Australia.. It’s totally practical, since it came already full of holes

and scratches, and looks like a big slab of Hershey’s chocolate.”

With her keen eye, Brenda finds great deals others might overlook. “The green step stool was \$5 at a Chappaqua tag sale. The kitchen stools are from Calhoun’s. When the restaurant went out of business, I asked the owner if I could buy them. He gave them to me, and even delivered! The dishtowels are from an estate sale, as is the rattan porch furniture. I did the reweaving myself, from a picture I have in a book. My petite chaise was being thrown out by a neighbor. I scour E-bay, and even found the original advertisement for our neighborhood development, which I had framed for the kitchen. Remember, you can always have a lamp rewired, and have furniture reupholstered. The thrill is in the hunt!”

Brenda and her husband have lived in Chappaqua since 1990. They’re only the second owners of their house, which was built in 1931. It’s here they’re raising their six boys, who range in age from fifteen to year old twins. In addition to being an avid gardener, Brenda is also a competitive tennis player, an artist, a model, and an accomplished figure skater. To say that she’s blessed with super-high energy is an understatement.

Brenda’s enthusiasm is contagious, and she’s happy to share her tips for successful decorating. Do: As much as possible, think of different ways to use what you already have. Being creative can save you a lot of money. Then, fill in with new things. Mix it up. I have priceless antiques and tag sale items. Every found piece has a story, and this makes for good conversation. Invest your money in good furniture. You can always recover later to follow trends. Pick a focal point of the room, such as a fireplace or bay window, and work from there. Pick colors that you love, but save a favorite as an accent color. That way, it will really pop. Pick fabric and paint colors before any major purchases; then, be certain that the rugs, draperies, and furniture coordinate. Repeat patterns in a room, and then use them in other areas of the house to tie it all together. Consider painting a floor; this is a good way to give a breezy, informal look. I used taupe in

Continued on page 24

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my sunroom, to make it feel like a beach house. Make sure each room has a good flow.

Don't: Make unnecessary changes in a home you've just bought. Live with it for awhile, to determine what you really need to do. Haste makes waste! Get talked into something you hate, thinking that you'll learn to love it later. Pick your paint color only from a small chip, or buy large quantities of paint without first trying it on a wall. Better to paint a small section first, and see if it works. Blow a lot of money on

trendy items. If it's not in your budget, don't buy a \$1000 Dransfield & Ross feather pillow when you can get a similar style from TJ Maxx for \$50. Hug the walls with the furniture. Instead, create conversation areas; employ end tables and lamps in pairs. Let someone else's vision overtake your own. If you love bold colors, use them. Worry about dents or spots; these make a home feel lived in.

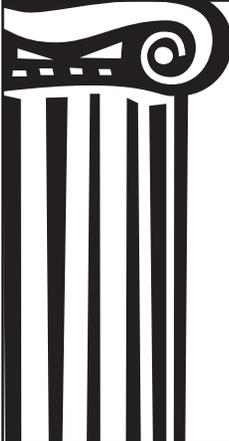
When do you need to hire a decorator? When you have no idea how to start the process. When you need professional expertise to put things together. And, of course, when you want to work with someone who knows where to get everything, and who can often buy items at a discounted price. Even Brenda has goofs, and she's quick to admit

them. "Nothing is perfect, and neither are we. I bought a beautiful white and green needlepoint rug for our family room. Within 15 minutes, it was covered in juice stains.

What was I thinking? I got a cheap wool remnant instead, and it worked just fine. I also made a mistake using expensive cushions for my kitchen chairs and stools. They got totally trashed!"

It's this easy going attitude and ability to find just the right fix for any home decorating problem that has made Brenda Kelly Kramer so appreciated and sought after as a designer. That, and the fact that tackling even the most daunting project with Brenda is just plain fun. For contact info, go to www.brendakellykramer.com

In addition to her writing as a Cultural Journalist, MICHAEL JEFFERS' eponymous cable TV show, featuring celebrity interviews, reviews, and commentary, is seen throughout the tri-state area. She can be reached at michalljeffers@optonline.net; website: www.michalljeffers.com.



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Crazy About Haynes...

A poignant little book delves deep into one Chappaqua mom's struggle with bipolar illness

BY MICHAEL KOHN

PHOTO BY MICHELLE HECHT

Quite frankly, I had no idea what to expect when I set out to interview a self-described “crazy” person. After reading Janine Crowley Haynes’ “My Kind of Crazy—Living in a Bipolar World,” an anecdotal guide to her experience living with mental illness, my head was buzzing with preconceived notions and memories of the “crazy” people I had encountered in my life. When I finally sat down to coffee with her, I met one of the most centered people with whom I have ever been acquainted. So much for personal bias!

“My Kind of Crazy”* tracks Haynes’ experience in a psychiatric hospital following a suicide attempt. Interspersed through this intense and personal narrative are accounts from her childhood, the progression of her disease, and poignantly, a chapter written by her son about his experience living in his mother’s bipolar world. Nevertheless, side by side with the pathos, the book is laced with humor. “I have my mother to thank for that,” notes Haynes.

To those in despair, Haynes offers that “there is light at the end of the crazy tunnel. Even if it takes a long time, there is hope. Even if you can’t get out of bed anymore, it will get better.” The road to healing, according to Haynes, begins first and foremost by dismantling the stigma and shame associated with mental illness as “you let go and accept it and own it and deal with it.”

Haynes did not fully anticipate the personal growth she experienced in telling her story along with the outpouring of affection and empathy



from family and friends that commenced. “It opened up lines of communication,” she said. “It made me realize how much my husband and son had to deal with taking care of a sick wife and mother.” In addition, Haynes finds herself reveling in her new found role as the “go to” friend for those struggling with their own mental health issues. “I love that people are able to feel comfortable enough with me that they are able to share their own struggles,” she notes.

And writing the book trumped therapy too! “I hate to say it, but [writing] it was better than any therapist. Still, I want to give them their due,” she says. Her son’s contributions helped promote family dia-

logue. “He’s funny,” says Janine. “He can joke about it now. That’s where the healing comes in. Laugh at the funny parts and cry at the sad parts.”

Her best advice for getting better? Antithetically enough...embracing the illness. “You own it. You ask yourself—what do I have to do to fix it? I had to sink to a real low before I had that epiphany.”

During the hour or so I spent with Janine Crowley Haynes, I learned a lot about what “crazy” is and what “crazy” doesn’t have to be. She joked that during her manic phases, she would call herself Mother Nature, thinking that she could control the weather. Before I left, I drew a picture of the earth and pointed out that our world has two poles. I guess you could say that we are all living in a bipolar world.

In a world where so many people seem to be writing memoirs about their personal struggles and tragedies, Haynes distinguished herself from the crowd by not leaving me with the suspicion that she had written a book just to get on “Oprah,” the way so many seem to do. Rather, I was left with the feeling that she wrote the book and just put it out there for whomever it might help. She was particularly proud that the book was slowly seeping into the psychiatric community and has been used as a tool in education. “My Kind of Crazy” is sure to touch and entertain you.

MICHAEL KOHN is a contributing editor to *Inside Chappaqua Magazine*.

*See Excerpt on page 26.

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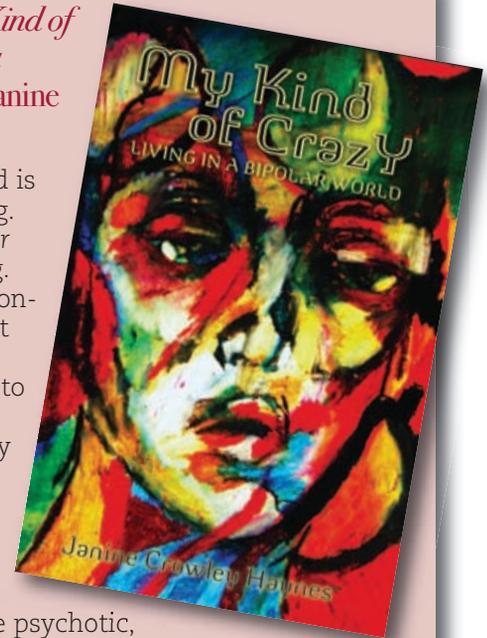
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Excerpt from *My Kind of Crazy – Living in a Bipolar World* by Janine Crowley Haynes

The psychotic mind is an interesting thing. The term *losing your mind* is quite fitting. You actually lose control of your thought process. Once that happens, it is hard to trust your own thinking. I knew my thoughts were not right. My thoughts were scrambled, and I made no sense when I spoke. When you're psychotic, it is a constant battle between the rational and the irrational, an endless deciphering of the real and the unreal, a never-ending struggle to determine which voices are the voices that are only in your head.



Sometimes psychosis gives way to beautiful thoughts and visions. Other times, it produces horrific, nightmarish images and feelings. Looking back on my first psychotic episode, I experienced all of the above. I was seeing things, hearing things, and feeling things that weren't really there. Seeing angel wings attached to my son's back was a more pleasing vision than when I saw my husband wearing his brain on the outside of his cranium. Hearing a lyrical symphony triumphs over the cacophony of voices in your head that tell you, you do not deserve to live. "It could make your skin crawl" is a common phrase that people use to describe something repulsive. I wonder if that saying has a psychotic origin. I prefer the feeling of fresh, clean water running all over my body to the feeling of spiders crawling all over me, but, unfortunately, I don't get to choose.

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PIECING TOGETHER BARLOW

In his engaging new book, a former Greeley student uncovers a recluse teacher's life long gifts

BY MICHAEL KOHN

Without a doubt, any person who values the importance of a quality education can look back and name at least one teacher who was an important influence in life. Most of us can remember that one great teacher we considered a treasured gift without whom we would not be the people we are today. So when I was asked to interview Lawrence Meyers about his biography of Edwin Barlow, who taught mathematics at Horace Greeley for 35 years, my first reaction was less than enthusiastic. Okay, so some former student wrote about his favorite teacher. I thought I would read a couple of chapters to get a feel for the book so I could conduct a coherent interview. However, when I picked the book up, I couldn't put it down. For anyone who has ever loved a teacher, "Teacher of the Year—The Mystery and Legacy of Edwin Barlow" is a must read.



I asked Meyers if he found any irony in the fact that he learned so many important life lessons from a recluse. "In looking over how he ran his classroom, instruction was self-directed. He empowered students to come to conclusions and make those final conclusions on their own. For example, he never really said he was available for afterschool help. If you had the fortitude, you could go. He would be there. You would receive the award of enlightenment if you went," said Meyers. For Barlow, mathematics was life; one equation, one solution.

Meyers raises as many questions as he answers. Perhaps this is the legacy of Edwin Barlow. The enigma and mystery of this "teacher of the year" will surely make you think.

MICHAEL KOHN is a contributing editor at Inside Chappaqua Magazine.

More remarkable than merely crafting an excellent book, Meyers, now a television writer/producer and entrepreneur, had almost no facts about Barlow's life upon which to write other than the school memories of students and Barlow's teaching colleagues. When Barlow died, he left no written record, had almost no possessions and had severed contact with his family decades earlier. He never married and had no children. His was a truly monastic life without close friends. The man was totally defined by his vocation—he was a teacher.

According to Meyers, Barlow was influenced by the "categorical imperative" of Immanuel Kant and the teachings of Aquinas. The fundamental thrust of Barlow's life was finding God, not so much in the religious sense, but in discovering one's true self and one's true mission in life. By using reason and intellect, the gifts given to him by God, Barlow found his mission, his vocation—teaching; and devoted his life to becoming the most perfect teacher he could be. Teaching became his sacred duty.

Meyers deftly assembles the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that was Barlow and constructs a portrait which leads us to an understanding of what made this mysterious man tick, including the underpinnings of his controversial teaching methods, which often included berating his students. Without sugarcoating the potential damage that may have caused some, Meyers portrays a man who believed it was his duty to impart his knowledge to his students, to make them understand that education is not a choice, but a serious business.

Excerpt from *Teacher of the Year*:

"What is that?"

Mister Barlow's voice shatters the customary silence of his classroom. The muscles in each student's body seize. Breaths are held. Only the second hand of the clock above the door defiantly presses on, each successive "tick" raising the level of suspense.

A student is frozen at the blackboard, chalk firmly in hand, just completing the end of a diagonal line separating two numbers (presumably a fraction). The only movement comes from a vein pulsing in his neck.

The clock powers on.

Tick, tick, tick.

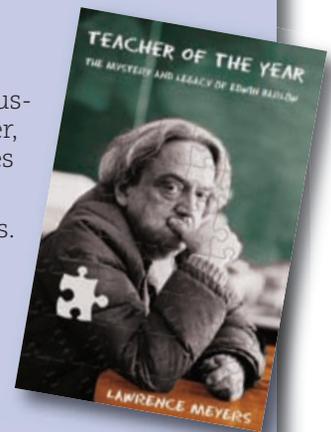
Snap!

The force of student's tensed muscle cleaves the chalk at its center, sending a cloud of microparticles floating past the board.

"It's a fraction?" the student says.

"That is not a fraction, Mr. Jones! Do you know why it is not a fraction?"

The student replies that, "it is one number over another and that makes a fraction."



Excerpt continues on next page

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Mister Barlow's rubbery face contorts with anger. The edges of his mouth tighten and the bellowing commences, the tirade slicing across the room, certain words especially enunciated to have the maximum effect.

"No, it isn't, you *vegetable!* A fraction consists of a *numerator* separated from a *denominator* by a *horizontal* line whose length does not exceed the width of either number written! What you've written could be mistaken for any number of things!"

Mister Barlow punctuates his oration with a firm quotation, jabbing his finger at the student from the back of class, emphasizing *every single word*. . .

• • •

Mister Barlow is a short, oddly built man with a round torso. His disproportionately short limbs give his head a more imposing appearance, characterized by an unusually broad forehead framed by a long, brushed-back silver mane—such that the midpoint of his face is at the eyebrow line. He carries intense eyes, low-mounted ears, and distinctively sculpted lips that rarely lift into a smile (in the classroom anyway).

He shuffles through campus with a slight limp, his somnambulistic stare fixed straight ahead. He always wears ancient, thin trousers and a navy-blue parka. A piece of one ear is missing.

Every student cuts a wide swath for Mister Barlow. He never alters his pace and the students never, ever, bump into him. Unlike other teachers who are both openly and secretly subject to ridicule, Mister Barlow is untouchable—literally and figuratively.

The myths surrounding Mister Barlow are the stuff of a Grimm fairy tale. They say he was in World War I. They say he was in World War II and his ear was shot off. They say he was in Korea and had his balls blown off. They say he'd been in World War I, World War II, and Korea and had part of his ear and his balls blown off. They say he'd lost his wife and children in a car crash. Others say it was a house fire. Others say they'd been murdered. They say he lives at the school, that he sleeps above the rafters in the auditorium or in the nurse's office or in his car. They say he sleeps at his classroom desk. They say he doesn't sleep, ever. They say he lives in Mount Kisco, in Katonah, in Bedford Hills, in Boston, in Portugal. They say he is a vampire. They say he rises every night along with the Headless Horseman in nearby Sleepy Hollow cemetery. They say he is Horace Greeley himself, that he is Methuselah, that he is Elvis.

Nobody knows for certain. Mister Barlow exerts great effort, it is said, to protect his privacy. Nobody, however, knows why.

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Meyers, Lawrence. *Teacher of the Year—The Mystery and Legacy of Edwin Barlow* (H.H. & Sons, 2009)

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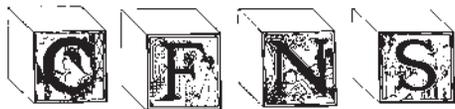
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STORY AND PHOTO
BY CAROL WASSERMAN

Ceviche de Pescado at Don Emilio at Lobos Cafe.

Clients always ask me, what should I eat when I go out?

Losing weight (or simply learning to eat better for health reasons) doesn't mean you have to give up your favorite restaurants. I counsel people all day long on how to lose weight and keep it off. The first step is learning to eat better. The good news is that doesn't mean you have to cook all your meals at home or forgo dining out. Chappaqua has some fantastic restaurants, which I frequent often; and here are my tips for a healthy (and fun!) night on the town.

It's hard to find a healthier restaurant than one which uses organic and local produce; offers naturally-raised meats and poultry, and serves wild seafood. Crabtree's Kittle House does just this.

Glenn Vogt, a partner, gushes about his new all-organic salad. It's called: *Vegetables, Fruits, Leaves, Nut and Herbs*. This is as healthy as it gets; and Vogt says it's really fun to eat too! It's a play on cooked and raw, hot and cold, creamy and crunchy. Also try the light and fresh, line-caught halibut entrée which is the Kittle House's way of supporting environmentally-conscious fisheries.

Don Emilio at Lobo's Café is the new Mexican place smack in the center

of town. It's a bustling, fun spot with authentic food. I like to start with a margarita, rocks, no sugar or salt. It's a bit tart and only a bit sweet too. A real kick in the pants! It's so much healthier than your traditional sugar and salt-laden one. Then, I go for the guacamole—more "guac" and less chip with every bite. I bombard each chip with as much vitamin-packed avocado goodness as it can withstand. Or sometimes, I just ask for a spoon to replace my chip!

Don Emilio, the proprietor, recommends the *Ceviche de Pescado* (red snapper or scallops marinated in lime juice with vegetables). And for an entrée, try the *Huachinango a la Veracruzana*, a baked red snapper in a special tomato sauce. It's served over rice, but you can ask for vegetables instead; they are happy to oblige.

Mmmmmm—Italian! Grappolo's and Villarina's are your best bet. Italians do vegetables really well. A soup, salad, and side of greens (spinach, broccoli rabe, string beans, etc.) is one of my favorite healthy meals. At Grappolo's, I always start with a side of broccoli rabe, which I order for my appetizer. It's really good and very healthy. You can probably get your daily calcium requirement from their generous portion. Greens are chock full of calcium, didn't you

know? Then, I move on to their appetizer of P.E.I. mussels, and finally, the roasted beet and arugula salad. They also have the most delicious wines by the glass and a creamy bean dip to have with your bread in place of butter. Mmmmmm.

Gail and Patrick's Café in the center of town has a lot of salad and vegetable options. I like to go for dishes that include whole grains. Whole grains will fill you up for hours on few calories and they are packed with nutrition, including antioxidants! Some good choices include *Cajun Shrimp and Barley* and *Wild Rice Orzo*. Either of these paired with a couple sides of veggies make for a spectacular meal. Try Carrots and Shallots, Lemon Herb Asparagus, Green Beans Almondine and Broccoli Rabe.

Le Jardin offers some wonderful salad options, including a Tuna Nicoise with freshly grilled tuna and a salmon salad with both poached and smoked salmon. One of these salads paired with an appetizer of sautéed shrimp would make for a satisfying and healthy meal. Steamed mussels is a nice choice for an entrée, but ask for a side of vegetables in place of the fries. Or try the roasted sole. They also serve omelets for breakfast and lunch. I order mine without the cheese.

Here are a few final tips for healthy restaurant ordering. It's usually easy to replace a side of French fries or white rice with steamed vegetables, a baked potato or brown rice. For the most nutrition, start your meal with a salad or soup made with lots of vegetables and/or beans. I will also order a side of vegetables with my meal, but if it ends up being too much food, I will finish the vegetables and take the leftover entrée portion home for lunch the next day. And finally, sometimes, I won't even accept the breadbasket so I'm not tempted to eat from it!

Carol Anne Wasserman is a holistic health counselor specializing in permanent weight loss via the use of whole, natural, and organic foods. She lives in Chappaqua and has a healthy cooking show on local public television called *Get Healthy With Carol*. For more information or to sign up for Carol's Healthy Living Newsletter, please visit www.GetHealthyWithCarol.com.



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“A desk is a dangerous place from which to watch the world.”

—John le Carre

There is an ad for jelly featuring two boys, around 10 and 12 years old, walking a bike along a road. The younger one says to the other “Nobody has ever asked me what I want to do when I grow up.” The older, and perhaps wiser boy replies, “That’s because your name is Smucker.”

Most of us do not have a family business to join nor did we enjoy the comfort, as kids, of knowing exactly where and for whom we would work when we were adults. Now that we are grown up, we are in the midst of doing whatever it is we chose as a career for several decades. Ideally, we are pretty good at whatever it is that we are doing. Over the last decade, as members of the work force we have experienced employability, seniority, tenure longevity, performance measurability and mobility. Today, with unemployment at 9.5%, a 25 year high, words like expendability, outsourced, and right-sized have entered our everyday vocabulary.

The Future Of Work, a piece in a recent issue of TIME magazine, reported that changes in work/life trends, the growth of high tech, changes in employee benefits, environmentalism, the influence of women in the workplace, Boomers, Gen-Xers, Gen-Yers, and the continuing obsolescence of American manufacturing, will yield “...a more flexible, more freelance, more collaborative and far less secure work world.” This is our wake up call.

Reinvention is a necessity but can be a daunting task for those on the same path for so long.

So where do we start? Say you are a lawyer. You don’t want to give that up and become a landscape architect. Risk averse by nature, few lawyers would choose this path. You may choose to develop a new area of expertise. Take continuing legal education courses, read everything you can, take someone to lunch and pick his brain. Can you transition from a worker bee to a rainmaker? Yes you can but you need a game plan that includes a day at the spa or golfing with your rolodex.

If the risk of extinction is imminent for you, here are Ten Commandments to follow:

- Think big and outside the box. Be open to change.
- Picture yourself doing what you want to do next.
- Understand that EDUCATION is key; you will have to be open to learning a new business language and new substantive information
- Seek out people in your new field of interest. Use every contact you can think of and go for the “ask.”
- Obtain work experience relevant to your new field of interest. You may have to be an intern or work for free until you get your degree, license or client base.
- Be willing to take a back seat, management-wise.
- Manage your expectations. Change takes time.
- Find a mentor.
- Think about your passions in life. Try to parlay those into a new way to earn a living.



- Understand that you own your career and the choice is yours, nobody else’s.

Reinvention can be scary, particularly if it involves a financial compromise. I recently launched my own Human Resources legal, operational, and strategic consulting business so I know first hand what it requires. I do business development by day and client work at night, I am the IT and accounting departments, and know that new business is everywhere. It’s different from my former professional life but it’s what I set out to do. Understanding this strange new workplace, identifying your passions, anticipating the next trend, and mastering the art of networking are the keys to a successful reinvention. What have you got to lose?

MARA WEISSMANN, Esquire is President of WISE HR Strategies LLC and Founder of Second Shift, an educational events and networking organization for career women. She is a practicing attorney and advises on employment issues and strategies (mara@wisehrstrategies.com; www.wisehrstrategies.com).

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Art In Cantonese And Spanish

BY MICHALL JEFFERS
PHOTO BY MICHELLE HECHT



Artists Grace Lam Chui and Marie Lou Ortiz display their work.

There is no better example of both the rich cultural diversity of Chappaqua, and the exceptional talent of New Castle artists, than the current exhibition at the Chappaqua library.

The much sought after Gallery is booked solidly for the next two years. So when Library Director Pamela Thornton and Curator Larry D'Amico recently received a request to exhibit the artwork of two gifted local artists, they voiced their approval, and decided to display the paintings on the walls of the library itself. The striking pictures vividly showcase the ethnic backgrounds of Marie Lou Ortiz, who is of Puerto Rican descent, and Grace Lam Chui, who was born and raised in Hong Kong.

The artwork, with subtitles in Spanish or Cantonese, is especially interesting when seen in juxtaposition. As an artist, Chui is balanced, disciplined, and precise. The warm colors and sensual style of Ortiz is vibrantly Latina. Chui's work features a lot of "negative space," area purposely left blank, while Ortiz fills her canvases with detail. Shown together, they form a complementary dynamic.

While there were challenges involved in hanging the display in the limited venue, the artists were in good

hands. Thornton has performed the Herculean task of making everything run smoothly at the library complex since 2007; D'Amico is an acclaimed artist in his own right, with impressive credentials as a Curator. They state their credo, "We respect the artists and the work. We've done this many times, and our goal is to show the paintings off to their best possible advantage in the space available."

While paintings often have to be framed to be presented properly, in the case of Chui's Chinese brush and ink hanging scrolls, "That would go against tradition," explains D'Amico. As for Ortiz's oversized work, framing would be prohibitively expensive, and the outer edges are painted instead.

The result of this careful consideration is an art show that is both educational and a delight to the eyes.

Ortiz's signature piece, 1950's *Adjuntas Plaza*, is particularly evocative. In the artist's words, "This is the park in Puerto Rico where my mother, Maria Magdalena Aviles, played as a child. While I prefer to work in pastels, this is done in acrylic, as is *Tanama*, which shows the mountains of my mom's barrio, or district. I created it especially for this exhibit; I was inspired by the zinc roofs, and the healthy atmosphere of the area. The challenge in working on large canvases with acrylic is that you must make choices and work very quickly, because it dries so fast. Also, the scope must be taken into consideration when conceiving the image, as I do when I'm working on a mural. Historical accuracy is very important to me, and I do a lot of research before I ever begin, to make sure everything you see is faithful to the period."

Ortiz reflects, "Puerto Rican art and culture are a mixture of many influences from very different groups: the native Indians, the Taino; the Spaniards, who conquered; and the Africans who were brought there as slaves. I've been to Puerto Rico many times to visit relatives. Island style, which is slower and more colorful, is so different from the way we live here on the mainland. It's hard to explain, so I try to convey this feeling through my paintings."

The first one to recognize and encourage Ortiz's talent was her teacher, Sister Celeste, so it's not surprising that Ortiz is a dedicated teacher herself, and uses her gift to enrich the lives of her own students.

To the Western eye, the long panels created by Grace Lam Chui look simple, elegant, effortless. In fact, they are the result of ten years of study with a very demanding Master Artist in Chui's native Hong Kong. "In Chinese brush and ink work, no mistakes are allowed," explains Chui. "Every imperfection means the work must be immediately destroyed, and the artist must start over

from the beginning No sketching ahead of time is allowed; it's all done freehand. The rules are very strict: a picture must be completed in one sitting, only one brush may be used, and the painting must always be done on a special type of rice paper. When you are looking at this kind of art, which is formally called Hanging Scroll, Ink and Color on Paper, what you are seeing is most likely the result of a dozen previous tries." D'Amico understands this well, and adds, "It's not unusual for a student to spend an entire year learning to draw a single line."

Chui continues, "There are four major areas of culture in which all Chinese ladies are expected to be accomplished, in order to marry well: music, calligraphy, chess, and painting. Chinese painting uses colors found in nature and the Earth; for example, the red will come from reddish sand. Hong Kong is unique because we are steeped in the ancient traditions of China, and also influenced by contact with the West. Watercolor is very Western, and has become quite popular. One of my scrolls features a saying which is used in both Chinese and English: Grow where you're planted. I created this just before I left for America."

This beautiful exhibit, which underscores how much is added to the culture of the town by inhabitants of different heritages, colors, and faiths, will run through September 20th.

MICHAEL JEFFERS and her husband, John Warner, have lived in Chappaqua so long, they remember when there was only one local place to eat Chinese food, and no Hispanic restaurants at all. Michall can be reached at michalljeffers@optonline.net; website: www.michalljeffers.com.



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September/October 2009 Inside Chappaqua 35

BEYOND THE RAVEN

BY SARAH ELLEN BERMAN

The raven will soar at the Chappaqua Library during October. October 4 will be the kick-off for Chappaqua Goes Poe, a month of events inspired by Edgar Allan Poe. Countless works of art, ranging from literature to music, reflect Poe's work and many of them will come to light this fall.

Chappaqua Goes Poe is being spearheaded by Joan Kuhn, the library's Cultural Programming Specialist. The library decided to highlight an author this fall and subsequently chose Poe. His work is particularly appropriate for the time around Halloween. It has been described by Walt Whitman, in his essay, *The Significance of Edgar Poe*, as having a, "demonic undertone behind every page." In his short story, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, Poe wrote, "He is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of acumen which appears to the ordinary apprehension praeternatural." Many puzzles will be presented at the library in various forms; ranging from the literary to a specially designed crossword puzzle by Stan Kurzban, Library Board President.

Kuhn related that her goal of getting, "everybody involved" is well on its way to being accomplished. Everyone is, "bending over backward," to assist her in insuring the success of the events. Merchants will advertise the programs and the local schools are discussing incorporating Poe in the curriculum. The staff will don black garments and wear black nail polish. The Bruce Museum is lending their preserved raven to enhance the eerie atmosphere.

For the kick-off day, Kuhn has assembled a stellar lineup of people to read selections from Poe's work. Town Supervisor Barbara Gerrard, State Representative Adam Bradley, Senator Suzi Oppenheimer, Grace Bennett, Editor and Publisher of *Inside Chappaqua*, and Marvelle Gilbert, who will be representing the seniors in town.

In the afternoon, The Chappaqua Orchestra will present a concert of Poe inspired work at the library. Executive Director Marjorie Perlin noted that contemporary and classical composers have been largely influenced by Poe and the Orchestra's program will, "give voice to that."



Larry D'Amico

October 2009
CHAPPAQUA LIBRARY

They will present parts of Debussy's unfinished opera based on *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Rachmaninoff's choral symphony, *The Bells* and an adaptation of the music for the ballet, *Murder at the Masque*. Perlin has also discovered some local links to Poe including Mary Greeley's obsession with the occult and Poe's letter to the editor (written to Horace Greeley), which will be interspersed with the musical part of the program. While some of the Orchestra's concerts "are strictly music, in this we really want to cover Poe, his work and what it was about his work that other people found interesting."

The spirit of Poe will prevail during the month of October. Programs will include: a Poe-etry walk sponsored by the Children's Room at the library, a Poe inspired meal at the Kittle House during which Alan Sklar will read, *The Pit and the Pendulum*, the presentation of a quilt in which each square will encapsulate a piece of Poe's oeuvre, films, artwork by Greeley students (to be judged by a representative of the Katonah Museum of Art), and Goth Day in town. A panel from the Mystery Writers of America, group of authors, "who write in the Poe genre," according to Kuhn, will speak at the library on October 27. They are, "The group behind the Edgars." The Edgars are prestigious literary awards which are granted annually to mystery writers. The panel of five will include the illustrious writers Wendy Corsi Staub and Reed Farrel Coleman.

Z, as Zahra Baird, the new Head of Teen Services, at the library has dubbed herself, is particularly enthusiastic about the possibilities of introducing Poe to her constituents. She observed that Poe is, "The forerunner of things teens like to read," including horror and detective stories such as those of Arthur Conan Doyle. Although Z concedes that some find Poe too dark, "He has something for everyone, you just have to find it. Part of my contribution is resources that are accessible." One of the teen book groups will read and discuss, *The Man Who Was Poe by Avi*.

Z is also working on a Poe scavenger hunt which will take place on October 30 in conjunction with the

WE ASKED OUR ADVERTISERS

What's Really Beautiful?

BY JESSICA VON BRACHEL

Step back and take in the varied beauty that surrounds you. Whether it's our gorgeous parks, the faces of our neighbors, the acts of kindness and generosity that seem to multiply during challenging times, there's an ample supply of loveliness here. It only takes a moment to pause and rediscover, or perhaps come upon for the first time great beauty in familiar surroundings. In this issue, we took time out to ask our advertisers where they find beauty or about their inspiration for creating beautiful things.

Beauty By Design

Judy Gilmartin-Willsey of FRAMINGS in Armonk has a formal education in beauty. As a Parson's School of Design graduate and the child of an artist, Gilmartin-Willsey was raised and taught to see beauty in the smallest things, the simplest things and the most grand as well.

So what is beauty then? "The quality that gives pleasure to the mind or senses and is associated with such properties as harmony of form or color, excellence of artistry and originality," she says. On the other hand, in her travels she's come across people with a completely different aesthetic assembled from what they themselves have been exposed to.

At FRAMINGS, Gilmartin-Willsey will put her knowledge to work finding the right presentation for your artwork and helping you select accessories for your home.

FRAMINGS, 420 Main Street in Armonk. 273-4242. Judy Gilmartin-Willsey and Carter Willsey, co-owners.

Eye-Popping Elegance

Scott and Tara Mikolay of **Desires by Mikolay** balance the creation of outwardly beautiful objects with a passion for the beauty that comes from within. "It is how you conduct your life and act towards others that really matter," says Tara. To that end, the Mikolays continue their annual charity event this month. (Read more about it in our Happenings section!) As for the outer beauty, the variety of Scott's gorgeous designs will compliment your own best features. Want to make your eye color pop or find the right color of gold to match your hair and complexion? Set up an appointment with a personal shopping assistant to bring out your best assets. It is really all about the accessories. **Desires by Mikolay**, 55 King Street. 238-2223



A Taste for Beauty



As the creator of custom cakes, Natalie Johnson spends her days making beautiful things. Finding much of her inspiration in nature's wonderful blend of hues, tints and shades, she is able to give her exquisite, realistic sugar flowers great depth and beauty. She'll also find what's beautiful from her customer's point of view, highlighting a pattern, fabric or selection of colors specific to the event and incorporate it into the look of the cake for a final result that is truly sweet to look upon. **A World of Cakes**, 238-0020 or visit www.aworldofcakes.com

Pretty Cool

Patrick Filacchione of Gail Patrick's Cafe invites you to bask in the beauty of an easygoing, low cost dining experience. Grab a lunch date and go for the always fresh and delicious and generous "three item plate special" (at \$7.95, it may truly be one of the best deals in town) and kick back from your busy day. "We've made a point of keeping our price point very reasonable and beautifying the environment for our customers; it's quaint, clean and comfortable." Here's another beautiful thought: Gail and Patrick plan to retain their oh-so-popular ice cream bar year round. **Gail Patrick's Cafe**, 31 South Greeley Avenue 238-0690



Skin Deep

Clients of Lucia DiGiorgio, Proprietor of Armonk Laser Hair Removal, tell her they feel younger and prettier with smooth, hairless skin. "Plus," she says, "Never having to wax or shave again is a beautiful feeling!" **Armonk Laser Hair Removal**, 2 Byram Brook Place, Armonk. 219-5045

The Beauty of Youth

There may be nothing more satisfying than the varied and abundant joys children share so generously. Play Care Director Carol Cleary and her loving and dedicated staff are fortunate to delight in the carefree sounds and sights of children laughing on the cheery new playground. For Cleary and her team, true beauty is simply their happy, smiling students and their equally delighted parents. **Play Care Nursery & Preschool** is located at 210 Orchard Ridge Road. 238-6206



See "Beauty of New Castle" on next page



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Town Hall Officials Weigh in... *on the Beauty of New Castle!*

I remember Nancy Laun who lives near the Duck Pond talking about the graceful beauty of the cranes that visit the Pond. There's the remarkable beauty of the town in the fall—when you can look at the hills in either direction and see nothing but multiple shades of gold, crimson, and orange. What's most beautiful to me? The happy faces of so many children excited about Halloween at the Town's Ragamuffin Parade! All in all, we live in a very, very beautiful town that we are all fortunate to call our home.

— **Town Supervisor Barbara S. Gerrard**

Many of us can attest to the beauty of the evening baseball games on the Recreational Field in the summer and the beauty of our parks and open spaces. What also makes our town beautiful is our sense of community as evidenced at Community Day, the Holiday Tree lighting, and summer performances at the Gazebo. I can go on and on!!

— **Deputy Supervisor Elise Kessler Mottel**

The people.... Residents in our town constantly surprise you with random acts of kindness and compassion.

— **Town Councilman Michael Wolfensohn**

What is beautiful about this town is that it is welcoming and open to a diverse population.

— **Town Councilman John Buckley**

Continued from page 36



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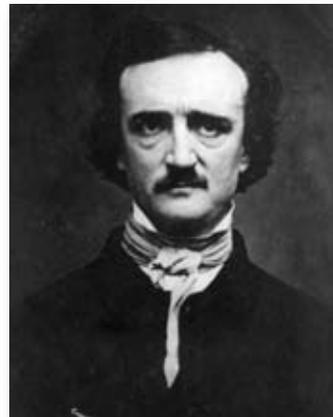
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Department of Parks and Recreation and Teen Alliance. "It's a traditional event with Poe flavor." The event will include the screening of a spooky film replete with goody bags, pizza and potions. "Poe is happening and we're getting on the bandwagon!" Additionally, Z has scheduled Poe Lego Madness on October 2 for 5th through 8th graders.

Karen Baker, Library-Media Specialist at Seven Bridges Middle School, has been brainstorming about ways, "To get middle school students excited about Poe." To increase the appeal of Poe, she will focus on his poetry and new ways of presenting Poe's work. "One way authors and publishers are making these classics more accessible is through graphic novels." One of Baker's goals is, "To introduce middle schoolers to it with the hope that later on they'll read the originals." Seven Bridges and Bell are considering holding a contest where students will create public service announcements regarding Poe in the form of podcasts or flip videos.

For full details on all Poe events go to Chappaqualibrary.org.

SARAH ELLEN BERMAN is a literature aficionado.

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The Flap Over Twitter

BY RICK REYNOLDS

Prior to Samuel Morse's telegraph and Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, indeed going back a million or more years, we had actual face-to-face communication. For better or worse, you knew when "people" were disgusted with you by the look of their hominid brows and the glisten of their canines. Technology changed all that: from dots and dashes, to voice only, to emails, to IM's, to phone texting (if you have fingers like styluses), and now—if your thoughts run 140 characters or less—we have Twitter.

Unless you live in a cave, you know that the Twittersphere is so pervasive, one needs to run Tweet Scans to see what people are Twittering about you. Already, friends don't let friends Twitter drunk, as imbibers often go a Tweet too far. Your mother Twitters, Barack Obama Twitters, Hilary and Bill Twitter—in fact everyone in our government Twitters—though it's said our more dignified English counterparts on Downing Street "don't engage in emotive political dialogue." I'm pretty sure Rome fell shortly after a Latin version of Twitter hit the stalls.

With fingers like a bricklayer's, I can't really text or Twitter, at least on phone keys. One finger stroke hits a minimum of three keys, and that's assuming I can see clearly enough to aim for the right one. It's sad, because as a child, I loved pushing buttons. I was the one in the high rise elevator pushing all of the floor buttons, to the dismay of my parents and other riders—but they were reasonable-sized buttons. My dad told me that if I kept it up, I would be more reviled than those who leave trouser burps just before stepping off the elevator. After that, I resorted to just pushing the big red button—for the nice sound effects and the herky-jerky motion.

Anyway, when Twitterers show me they can Twitter using their elbows, I'll believe there's hope for me. Thankfully, there's TwitSay, which allows voice-to-text conversion for Twitter, Facebook, Pownce, and other social networks, however, you're unceremoniously cut off after you've spoken words totaling 140 letters. This can lead to interesting and undesirable results. So we've gone full circle, converting

speech to telegraph, to phone, to text, to IM, to Tweets, to speech-activated Twitters.

But wait. For those who don't have the time or patience to read (let alone type) 140 characters on a cell phone, we now have Flaps. A blogger, Matt Ibsen has come up with Flapper, which automatically shortens 140 character Tweets to 26 character Flaps. Flapper's logo, the hummingbird, flaps faster (or so the thinking goes) than a bird tweets, and so for those of us too busy to sneeze, Flapper can take posts from Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace, and automatically shorten them to a maximum Flap of 26 characters. This is perfect for someone like me, who has little time to think about what I'm posting, and find my missives to be irrelevant by the time I get to the end.

As the next new thing, Flapping definitely takes micro blogging to the next level. If Twitter is micro-speak, Flapper is nano-speak, in a non-verbal sense, of course.

If all this leaves you seeing red, there's help on the way. Someone has come up with the Primal Tweet (140 uppercase A's), which I've found to be a great release. It's not as much fun as elevator buttons, but you won't get grounded for it. That our kids live, eat, and breathe this stuff should be of little concern. After all, Twitter is based on, "What are you up to, now?" If you're not a parent, "who cares?"

Chappaqua alumnus and long-time resident, humorist RICK REYNOLDS divides his time among book, blog (www.my-pnl.blogspot.com), magazine column, and marketing communications assignments. He resides in southern New Hampshire with his wife, daughter and two dogs.



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