



The Gardiner Gazette

A call to community



Fall 2016 - Issue #32

Free! Please take one

More Money For Gardiner's Parks

By Barbara Sides

In July, following public meetings and input, the Town Board voted 4-1 to change the Gardiner Zoning Laws to strongly encourage developers to provide money for Gardiner's parks in the form of fees rather than donating land to be used for recreational purposes. Supervisor Marybeth Majestic cast the dissenting vote.

The new law provides that each lot after the first developed in a subdivi-

sion will be assessed a fee, and makes paying per-lot fees the default unless the donation of land is shown to clearly be in the best interests of the town.

In the past, particularly in the 1980s into the 90s when some large subdivisions were being built, developers were permitted to give the town land ("park sites")

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The playground in Majestic Park.
Photo: David Sides

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The Wallkill River Can Be Mighty Again

By David M Sides, Riverkeeper Partner, Water Sampler

The Mighty Mighty Wallkill (as I call it), is in my backyard. As it winds through Gardiner, this bucolic stream is both a scenic treasure and a source of concern. Yes, we have all read that our river is currently not fit for swimming. Does that mean all is lost? No! Just as the Hudson River has been going through a cleansing transformation, the Wallkill can too.

The Wallkill River is a tributary of the Hudson River, one of only 30 rivers in the US and about 60 throughout the en-

tire world that flow north. The Nile, which is the longest river on Earth, flows north just as does the Wallkill. That puts us in quite famous company! So, let's fix it. How?

First, data is needed. That's where Riverkeeper and its partners excel. For the past five years volunteers have been taking monthly samples at 24 sites from May through October. Samples come from as far as the source waters at Lake Mohawk in Sparta, NJ, to the river's end at Tillson below Sturgeon Pool, a distance of 83 miles. Gardiner sites

River, continued [page 12](#)

The Wallkill in a very dry season. Photo: David Sides



Winter Is Coming. Can Your Trees Cope?

by Fred Gerty

Did you plant a tree on Arbor Day last April? I did, and after nurturing and watering it all summer, now I'm making sure it will be prepared for the winter. Young trees, and others as well, do better when a few easy steps are taken to protect them from freezing temperatures, hungry rodents, and winter conditions. So let's get started ...

Mulch: All trees benefit from an inch or two of mulch, spread around for a foot or more from the stem, year round. In summer, it protects the soil from drying out, discourages weeds, and looks good, too. In winter, mulch provides protection from freeze-thaw cycles, which can literally lift a small root ball right out of the soil.

Mulch can be most any organic matter, peat moss, wood chips or sawdust, well decayed garden material, even grass clippings. Newspaper can be used also, directly on the ground, and covered with a thin layer of organic matter, to hide it. Whatever, be sure to mulch your tree before the ground freezes, and don't mound it up around the trunk, like a tree sprouting from a mini-volcano. Leave it shal-

low next to the trunk; mice, shrews and other rodents burrow beneath the snow, and are always looking for something succulent in the midst of the cold season. What better than the inner back of a nice, healthy young tree, found at the end of a thick mulch tunnel? Rodents may completely gnaw around the circumference of the tree, girdling it, so that the tree will not grow the following spring.

Trunk protection: In addition to attack by rodents in the winter, young trees are especially vulnerable to the common string weed whacker. When hit by the strings, the bark can be stripped away, right down through the cambium layer beneath, which is the only living part of the trunk of a tree. The last mowing of the season may be especially dangerous to young trees.

Protection is easy. Several types of "Trunk Protectors" are readily available at garden centers, or you could make one yourself out of hardware cloth or edging material. These

should be six or eight inches tall, wrapped around the base of the tree, down to and slightly into the soil itself. Make sure it completely encloses the tree; no gaps. Keep them in place all year long. As the tree grows, additional sections may have to be added, but once a tree is about six inches in diameter at the ground, the bark is probably thick enough that you can relax with the trunk protector.

Wind Damage: Most new trees planted with a root ball are firm enough in the ground and can withstand typical winter windy conditions, especially with the

leaves gone. Trees planted "bare root" may be susceptible to damage from gusty winds in winter. Also, a tree with a large set of branches, or a new tree in an exposed and very windy location, will benefit by providing support for the stem with tall stakes. Two stakes are better than one, driven into the ground a foot or so from the stem of the tree. Use a couple of short pieces of old hose or similar cushioning on the rope or wire to protect the bark. Leave a bit of slack, so the tree can move a little, which will encourage root formation. After a year, the



Above: Birches bent from the weight of snow and ice.
All photos Fred Gerty. See our facebook page for more.

Trees, continued [next page](#)

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Greg Dawes

Trees, from page 2

stakes can be removed.

Drought: While mulch will help, the tree will still need water, even after the leaves fall. If very dry conditions continue through the fall, be sure to water new trees (and shrubs, too), before the ground freezes. Roots will



A homemade trunk protector.
Photo: Fred Gerty

need water to allow them to survive the winter.

Heavy Snow and Ice: Heavy, wet snow, typical of early or late storms, can bend a small tree to the ground, or snap it part way up. Little can be done in advance, but going out in the storm, or right afterward—yes, a winter challenge for us all—and brushing or shaking the snow off may make the difference in a tree's survival, and certainly in

its appearance. Brooms or dusters on long handles work well. Don't wack the branches with sticks. Some trees, like white birch and willow, are highly susceptible to snow damage so be especially watchful, and act promptly to clear them off. Small trees bent over may remain that way, and may need to be propped up for a year or so with long wooden stakes. Ice is another matter and, fortunately, fairly rare in Gardiner. A thin coating of ice will probably melt at the first sunny day, but little can be done about a thick coating. Ice won't brush off, and shaking a tree coated with ice will probably only produce a fall of broken branches, small and large. Best to leave things be, and hope for the best.

Older Trees: Trees grow surprisingly fast. Soon, small trees tower over us, and get thicker year by year. Older trees need little attention, summer or winter, and once so tall as to be out of easy reach, cannot be helped much, except by professional tree climbers and arborists. Should heavy snow from an early or late storm, or a rare destructive ice storm, produce a lot of broken branches, you might consider hiring an arborist or tree care professional to trim or re-balance an especially valuable or favorite yard tree. Otherwise, trees have survived many a winter, thank you, and can be expected to recover by themselves in the years to come. □

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Sunflower Art Studios And Festival Settle In

by Carol O'Biso

The first Sunflower Art Festival, held in August of 2015 at Tuthilltown, was not intended to be the start of an annual event. It was, instead, a spontaneous effort by festival founder Liz Glover Wilson to honor her only sister, Esther, who had died suddenly not long before.

A tragedy is "a powerful force," she says. "It shakes you up and brings both positive and negative changes." One of the positive changes for Liz was a close look at her life. "It makes you ask, 'Who am I,' and what do I really want to be doing." Liz knew that she loved community and she loved art, particularly accessible art, and the idea for the festival emerged as an honorary 40th birthday party for her sister.

"It was a passion project," she says. "I'm not known here." (Liz has lived in Gardiner, on Halcyon Road, only eight years.) "But I had vision, heart, experience (as an event producer) and some savings."

After putting in the not inconsiderable organizational work, she had no idea if anyone would show up. "If five people come, that's fine, and if 500 people come, that's fine too," she said to her boyfriend, local topiary artist Keith Beussing. In fact, 2,700 people came that first year. In the face of such numbers it's hard not to continue; the Second "Annual" Sunflower Art Festival was held at Tuthilltown in August,



Liz Glover Wilson at the studio. Photo courtesy Liz Glover Wilson.
See our facebook page for more.

2016, and was a similar success. It appears to be off and running.

In the year since the first festival, the tapestry of riches that Liz Glover Wilson brings to Gardiner has exploded. Sunflower Art Studios, currently located at 120 Main Street in the Hamlet, offers a "Creative Kids" program of

weekly art classes for children Kindergarten through fifth grade, and monthly weekend classes for kids who are either overbooked during the week, or who only come to Gardiner with their families on weekends. Creative Kids will soon be adding sessions for 6th to 8th grade, too. Classes, taught by Andrea Stetson, a New

Sunflower, continued [next page](#)

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Sunflower, from page 4

Paltz resident with 24 years of experience in early childhood education, are modestly priced at \$25 per class. The fee allows the studio to provide canvas, paint and healthy snacks for the kids as they come off the school bus, which drops them in front of the building. "Accessibility" is a word you will hear over and over when talking to Liz, though, and \$25 should not be what keeps an interested, talented child from attending. "We just had a couple of local businesses step up and contribute to our scholarship

fund," she says. "For \$100, a child has a chance to reap the benefits of an art class." There are also two completely free art days each year at the Gardiner Library.

Community is another word that comes up over and over at Sunflower. "Our website is www.sunflowerartstudios.com," Liz says. In fact, it's our slogan: We're not a dot com, we're a dot community." Accordingly, Sunflower Art Studios also offers Community Yoga classes for nine dollars, taught by local

instructors like Gardiner resident Peter Beuf, and a program called "Sipp'n Creative," art classes for adults held at local venues like Whitecliff Winery and Tuthilltown Spirits. The name says it all; you get to sip the local brew and paint at the same time.

Finally (at least for now!) Sunflower Art Studios has initiated a "pop-up shop" of local hand-crafted jewelry, pottery, napkins, quilts, clocks, fine art, scarves, gloves, hats and so on. It is "popping up" at 120 Main Street from 11:00 to 6:00 every Saturday and Sunday for the foreseeable future. "It's a small space so we rotate the work of different artists through," Liz says, "but that is also great for repeat visits. What you saw there last week is not the same as what will be there this week." It works for everyone. Artists get to showcase and sell their work and local residents have a place to buy gifts or

needed items for themselves. Asked what her vision is, what she sees when she looks out ten years, she says, "A beautiful community center. A sanctuary for art and yoga, and a festival to honor art and the area." She thinks for a minute and adds, "I can see it." □

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A Long Way From Home An (Almost) 70 Year Gardiner Resident Recalls The Trip

by Ray Smith

What's the shortest way to get from Coffeeville, Mississippi, to Gardiner, New York? The answer: World War II . . . about which more later.

Lois Vick, the oldest of six children, was born in 1926 on her family's 200 acre cotton and soy bean farm in rural Coffeeville—population about 425. (A possibly related North Carolina Vick, Joshua Washington Vick, MD (1843-1900), lent his name to the inventor of Vicks VapoRub as both the company and product name.)

After finishing school in Coffeeville, Lois attended Jackson Commercial College in Jackson, Mississippi. With World War II underway, she got a job working for the captain in charge of maintenance at an ordnance plant, constructed near Jackson in 1941 to produce igniter charges for large-caliber guns. There, she met a young draftee from New York City named Bill Stamatedes who was assigned to the commissary at the plant. Bill then moved on, serving as an MP in Alaska until his discharge as a sergeant in 1945.

Apparently Bill didn't forget about the girl he'd met. "Later, they were closing down the plant so I got a job at the Veterans Administration in Jackson," Lois said, "And that's where I was when Bill got discharged and came immediately to Mississippi." Lois smiled at the recollection. The two were married in Jackson the end of 1945. "My parents were very upset at my leaving for New York City; but they accepted it as long as I was happy."

Bill's father had a three bedroom apartment at 181st Street and Broadway in New York City, so the newlyweds moved in for two

years. "Bill worked at Bloomingdale's and I'd gotten a secretarial job at House Beautiful magazine. He'd meet me for lunch." Lois chuckled.

During the war, Bill's older sister, Irene, had married George Majestic Sr., who wanted Bill to come work with him at his hardware store in Gardiner. "We had visited of course, and loved it up here," Lois recalled. "We came up in '47 and we've never left. We weren't blessed with our own children, but George and Irene had one girl and three boys and they were in and out all the time."

In 1947, soon after moving to Gardiner, Lois became secretary to Walter M. Wallack, the Warden at the Wallkill Correctional Facility. Wallack, warden from 1940 until his retirement in 1966, had a Ph.D in education and was an early innovator of educational programs for inmates. Wallkill was in need of corrections officers and since Bill had been an MP in the Army, he went to work at Wallkill about a year after Lois.

Bill and Lois built their home on Dusenberre Road in 1958. They had a patio in need of shade, so Bill's uncle dug up a few small maples in the woods. The patio was later converted into a closed porch and now the towering maples make that room the coolest summer spot in the house.

Often, Lois and Bill were able to commute to work together until Bill retired in 1978 at 62. Lois worked three more years before she could retire and



Lois Stamatedes. Photo: Ray Smith

during the interim, "Bill usually prepared dinner and he'd have a couple of girls who were alone come along. One was our niece and the other was a friend."

For well over fifty years, Bill was a member of the Gardiner Fire Department and served as a Fire Commissioner while Lois participated in the Women's Auxiliary and was active in the Gardiner Library, which had its origins during a 1974 meeting of the Gardiner Reformed Church's Women's Group at the Stamatedes' home. Frances Scott suggested exchanging books. "We did that for awhile and then we got 25 books from the New Paltz Library and put them in a room at the church. People would go in and check

out the books. That started it. Eventually, they gave us the old firehouse. Florence Tosti was a retired IBMer and she could get a newsletter printed for us. She also knitted a lovely afghan and pillow we put in a raffle to raise money for the library and low and behold, I won it." Lois laughed, ". . . and I was a member of the board!" Lois is still a member of the Friends of the Gardiner Library.

Reflecting on her long and varied life and her sixty-eight year marriage to Bill Stamatedes, who passed away in 2014, Lois said, "We had a wonderful life together even though we had some disappointments." Relatives and friends from around the corner and distant states visit frequently along with their very young offspring, as attested to by a shelf on Lois' porch dedicated to children's toys. □

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The Church Corners Gazette?

Gardiner's Little Known Past ...

by Town Historian, A.J. Schenkman

Hamilton Child wrote in *The Gazetteer and Business Directory of Ulster County, N. Y., for 1872* that Gardiner, New York "is rolling in the east and hilly in the west and center." He continued that the Shawangunk Mountains extend along the west border... The Wallkill flows north-east through near the center, and receives the Shawangunk from the south-west... Lumber and leather are manufactured to some extent. The Wallkill Valley R.R., extends through the town."

The subject of Child's picturesque description, the locality then and today known as Gardiner was, according to Kenneth E. Hasbrouck Sr., originally named Church Corners, after Samuel Church.

Why did it become Gardiner? The change occurred when the Seventy-Sixth Session of the Legislature passed an act "to erect the town of Gardiner in

the county of Ulster on April 2, 1853." Gardiner's borders were based on a map drawn by Calvin McKinney. Gardiner was carved out of the towns of Shawangunk, New Paltz, and Rochester.

The first town meeting of the new town was ordered to be held the, "third Tuesday of May next, at the dwelling house now occupied by Denton Smith...."

This still leaves the question, why the name Gardiner? The town was named for Addison Gardiner who was a Lieutenant Governor of New York State. He was elected to Lieutenant Governor in 1844. Later, he sat as a Judge on the New York Court of Appeals from 1847 to 1855. Although both a Lieutenant Governor, and Judge for New York, Gardiner was not born in New York State.

The New York Historical Society of the New York Courts lists his place of birth as "Rindge, New Hampshire on March 19, 1797." He was the child of "William Gardner, who served as a colonel of a local regiment and for three years as a member of the state legislature, and Rebecca (Raymond) Gardner."

The family left New England for New York after 1809. They settled in Manlius, located in Onondaga County. William Gardner quickly became "a successful merchant and manufacturer." It was while in Manlius that the family "restored the original spelling of the family name, Gardiner."

Addison Gardiner retired from public life in 1855. Although he still came out of



Addison Gardiner, from *Notable Men of Central NY* published in 1903

retirement for affairs of the court, he mainly spent time on his farm outside of Rochester where he died on June 5, 1883.

The question that remains is whether Addison Gardiner ever visited the town that was named after him. □

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Pete Patel

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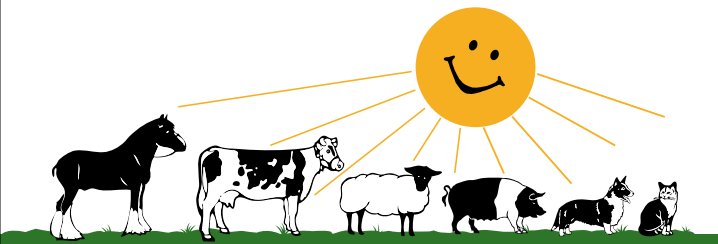


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The Green Room

No Need To Choose Between Health And Beauty

by Laurie Willow

There is a new face on Main Street at Gardiner Gables. The Green Room is an organic hair care salon with three owners, Kristen Nicoli, Allie Demorest, and Tina Betterton. These three women have a great deal of collective experience and expertise, and have decided to parlay that knowledge up a notch. The guiding principle for their services is that neither the client nor the operator should have to choose between health and beauty. At The Green Room, you can have both!

A conventional hair salon often includes an atmosphere of toxic chemicals that are part of the hair styling process as well as the nail care process. Products are applied to the scalp and skin where they're absorbed into the

body. The stylist who spends all day in that environment is exposed to these chemicals, as is the client during treatment.

The Green Room uses only products made by Oway, as in "organic way." The three owners of the Green Room are committed to providing their clients the same kind of results they're accustomed to with traditional hair care practices, but without sacrificing health for either the stylist or the client.

Prices at The Green Room are moderate: the organic hair coloring system, which works better than conventional chemical hair coloring because it covers gray, and



left to right are Kristen Nicoli, Allie Demorest, Tina Betterton owners of The Green Room, a new salon located at Gardiner Gables in Gardiner.

Photo: Lucia Pecore

is actually good for your hair and scalp, is \$75. Highlights run from \$60 to \$100. Haircuts are \$45, cut and color are \$95. Lip, chin and eyebrow waxing run \$10-\$15 each.

Gardiner Gables, 2356 Route 44/55, Tuesday through Saturday. Reserve an appointment by calling (845) 419-2125. More information is available at www.thegreenroom-gardiner.com or visit "The Green Room" on Facebook. ☐

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Give 'Em What They Want!

by Nicole Lane

In the book *Give 'Em What They Want!* (Baltimore County Public Library committee, 1992), larger numbers of librarians started to promote the idea of buying more items that their patrons wanted, regardless of the intended purpose (entertainment, education or information), or what they considered to be the quality of the literature.

Developing collections has never been easy. In the late 1800s many librarians often made purchasing decisions based off what they believed would provide "serious reading and useful knowledge," even though popular fiction made up a large percentage of all public library circulation. This practice, to some degree, still persists today; it wasn't until 1996 that Nancy Drew books, considered "junk food" by many, were added to San Francisco's Public Library collection!

In addition to the more popular or "commonplace" books, other books were deemed inappropriate for library shelves and were often not purchased based on profanity, romance, sexuality and different political, social, religious and cultural views. Although not common, some of these practices still exist today. Most librarians, however, try to find a bal-

ance between providing items that the community wants with offering authoritative and current works that they believe the public will be interested in and that will add value to their collections.

Past Director Charles W. Robinson of the Baltimore County Public Library said "Our users are often quite different from the kind of people who become librarians, and placing value judgements on other people's interests and reading is certainly a violation of the intellectual freedom which librarians profess to hold so dear."

At the Gardiner Library, a collection development policy and the Freedom to Read and View statements written by the American Library Association provide an overarching framework which guides our buying decisions. However, our day to day interactions with community members influence our purchasing choices greatly as we discover people's interests and needs. Recommendations are also seriously considered and often end up in the collection. Given that we are tax supported it is our duty to buy what the public wants and adhere to our policy to find mate-



Joan Fagan who donated money in memory of her late husband, John J. Fagan, for the new Do It Yourself collection. Photo: the Gardiner Library

rials that fulfill the educational, informational and recreational needs of the community.

Regularly weeding our collections creates space for new purchases and makes it easier to access popular items. Most recently we have expanded our graphic novel section and developed a Do It Yourself (DIY) collection (through a generous donation—see photo above). We are also building our language learning materials section, which is often used by literacy tutors.

Some more interesting items are available to check out as

well, including Mohonk Preserve passes, a Mid-Hudson Children's Museum Family Pass, Taco (our stuffed animal that kids take home with a picture book to share) and Kindles. In the next few months we will start to lend out Speck monitors (that measure air quality in a room) and board games. We are also in the process of forming a partnership with the instrument lending library in New Paltz.

Ideally our collection would represent and reflect everyone in our community but I know we are not there yet. Come in and talk to us, we'd love to get to know you. □

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Just A Bite ...

A Crab Cake Po' Boy that won't leave you hungry!

by Carol O'Biso

I rarely order crab cakes anymore, anywhere. No matter how good they are, they are always expensive, almost always tiny, and I always need to be fed again soon after. Very annoying. Not the case with the Crab Cake Po' Boy at the Village Market and Eatery. It may be \$12, but the day I had it for lunch I didn't need any dinner. I'm calling that a bargain. The menu says "6 oz. crab cake served with lettuce, tomato, onion, Cajun remoulade and fries," but "6 oz" didn't really get the message across that this is a *big* crab cake! (See picture at right; that's a full size Kaiser roll, and a dinner sized plate.)

Chef Billy Phillips, who has been

at the Market since May, gets a good sear going on both sides of the crab cake so it's texturally complex, with a bit of crispiness complimenting the creaminess of the interior. The remoulade, a tangy sauce typically made with mayonnaise, mustard, paprika and a touch of hot sauce, was nicely executed at the Market, giving a punch to the whole thing (though I did ask for a bit more of it!).

The fries, by the way, are not to be ignored. They were about as good as French fries get: crispy outside; soft inside; beautifully seasoned. And there were a lot of them. That always makes me happy.



The Crab Cake Po' Boy at the Village Market. Photo: Carol O'Biso

These days there is a slight perception that the term "Po' Boy" is politically incorrect, but that idea should be put to rest immediately. Market owner Carl Zatz explained that the name for these traditional sandwiches from Louisiana was coined in New Orleans during a strike; the sandwiches were served free to the out-of-work strikers, who were jokingly called "poor boys." The name soon

came to be associated with the sandwiches themselves. (This story has been corroborated by the unassailable wikipedia, which adds that it was 1929; the strike, against the street car company, lasted four months; and that in Louisiana dialect, poor boy was naturally shortened to "po' boy.")

So don't hang back. March to the Village Market and Eatery and order up a Crab Po' Boy. Open 7:00 to 4:00. Closed Wed. ☐

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Veronica O'Keefe

Seeing How Art "Becomes"

by Annie O'Neil

You might have met Veronica O'Keefe Ruoff at the Mountain Brauhaus, the so-popular restaurant owned by the Ruoff and Casey families. But visiting the artist and new mom is to discover a serious multi-dimensional talent.



Veronica grew up in Rosendale and early on was captivated by visual imagery. At Pratt Institute she studied photography, but took time off to travel in Europe and Hawaii. Upon returning to SUNY New Paltz, she received a BA in philosophy and a BFA in printmaking with a minor in Asian studies. Honored with a Critical Language Enhancement award she studied Mandarin as a prelude to a Fulbright to China in 2009-2010. During this time she produced the documentary "The Overnight," about shift workers in Ulster County; spent

her Fulbright year in nine major farm regions of China documenting the collision of ancient farming methods with agri-industrial farming methods; and produced a photo essay chronicling a full year in the agrarian cycle that pays homage to "the hardest working, most indispensable and disturbingly undercompensated people on our planet—farmers." After a seven month hiatus working at the Brauhaus, she went on to Hunter College for her MFA in photography.

Her house is an eclectic and provocative collection of idiosyncratic projects and handmade objects. In one corner is a preserved raccoon, hit by her car and then incorporated into an exploration and reaction to the human quandary and condition—the fine line between nature and human nature. Through her art she has discovered a coping mechanism for dealing with the fragility of lives.

In another corner is delicate, sculptural, life-sized clothing crafted from kozo, a prized Japanese fiber that she turns into translucent paper. Home papermaking is no small feat. She soaks and then beats the kozo with an ancient

baseball bat. One of her paper gowns is installed at St. Paul the Apostle on Columbus Avenue and 60th Street in Manhattan in a recently opened exhibit.

O'Keefe is a master at creating functional objects out of non-functional materials, forcing the viewer to "see how art becomes." Her processes attempt to make sense from nonsense. She is also adept in the restaurant world. She has worked in many capacities since the age of sixteen and was at one point general manager of The Falcon in Marlboro. As soon as her daughter Silvia Snow Ruoff is more "portable," Veronica will occasionally leave her newly-built studio and rejoin the Brauhaus family. In the winter she will passionately pursue cross country skiing with her husband Mark Ruoff, an ex-national team biathlete, who established the



Left: Veronica and daughter Sylvia Rose. Photo: Annie O'Neil. Above: Sculptural, life-sized paper clothing. Photo courtesy Veronica O'Keefe

Shawangunk Nordic Ski Association to promote this activity in our region.

You can find out more about this accomplished artist at www.veronicaokeefe.com. □

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New Hamlet Apartments Snapped Up

by Carol O'Biso



You might have noticed another building going up on Milk Street in the Hamlet. It's two new handicapped-accessible apartments (at right), built by long-time Gardiner resident Mario Milano. Both apartments will be ready for occupancy by the end of October and one is already rented. Across the street, the new build-



ing we reported on in the spring issue of *The Gazette* (inset, above left, built by Mario's cousin Sal Acompora) houses four apartments. All those have also been rented, with occupancy scheduled for the first week of October. "There's obviously a need for this kind of housing," Milano says. "People get older or have some physical issues and sometimes they don't want the hassle of a house on a piece of land anymore." The second building in Acompora's project, a series of retail shops facing Second Street, has had its foundation poured but has not yet begun construction. □

River, from page 1

are near the US Geological Survey stream gauge just south of the bridge and the Shawangunk Kill tributary below Tuthilltown.

Second, the data needs to be analyzed. Again, Riverkeeper performs the lab work, charting, and disseminating the information. Currently we test for *Enterococcus* or "entero," a bac-

terium that is an indicator of fecal contamination. According to Dan Shapley, water quality program manager for Riverkeeper, 87% of the samples exceeded Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for swimming. Major contributors to the pollution include human waste from inadequate sewer systems and manure runoff from cattle and horse farms.

Third, action must be taken. Once the water quality results are understood, an action plan must be put in place. Next steps have already begun, including weekly testing for one month at specific sites to determine precise locations of contamination. Only when this specific detail is known can the river be rehabilitated.

Yes, the water quality numbers are not so good right now. However, there has already been evidence of improvement along the river's NJ-NY line and at the border

of Orange and Ulster counties.

How can we help improve the Wallkill River and make it safe again for swimming? Check out the Riverkeeper site: www.riverkeeper.org for opportunities to join, volunteer, donate, and advocate for clean water. Even closer to home is the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance: www.wallkillalliance.org. On a personal level, we should check our own septic systems for efficiency. Finally, if we see a pollution problem, say something! We are all part of the problem. Let's all be a part of the solution! □

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Parks, from page 1

in lieu of fees. With the passage of the new law, a developer who wishes to donate land rather than pay fees would have to make the case before the Town Board rather than the Planning Board, and in unique situations, the Town Board might agree.

Over the years the Planning Board has accepted about 12 properties under the old law rather than charge a fee per lot developed. Five or six of the parcels are fairly large, with one about 10 acres; others are small with four being less than an acre each. Most are unknown to the public and unused. They often contain wetlands and are unbuildable. Some are land locked by surrounding private property, and once given to the town they are all off the tax rolls.

In September, the Town Board set the fees to allow a developer

to pay nothing for the first lot, \$1,200 for the second lot and \$1,600 per lot for lots three and above.

All fees collected are to be reserved for the Gardiner Recreation Program to be used for maintenance, programming, infrastructure and acquisition. "In a time of stringent tax limitations and a state imposed tax cap of about 1% for the last five years, this new revenue source becomes extremely important," adds former Town Board and current Planning Board member, Warren Wiegand. "Any extra money the town has goes to the absolute essentials, and the town hasn't been able to keep up with park programming and maintenance. With Majestic Park, we have the infrastructure, but not the

means to provide maximum enjoyment of the park. The new law changes that."

Some contend that donation of land rather than payment of fees leads to more open space, a goal Gardiner has pursued in recent years. Both the Kiernan and Hess Farms have had their development rights purchased and are permanently protected. Wiegand sees it from a different perspective. "The priority is giving more people in our town the benefit of having a usable park and better programming. While open space is important, the immediate priority should be to unleash the potential of our own parks. Other mechanisms have been successfully used to preserve open space. Further, the town should decide where it wants its open space, not a developer looking, in many cases, to unload an unbuildable lot."

Development in recent years has been slow, but going forward, any money collected from subdivision fees will be earmarked largely for Majestic Park, an under-utilized 26 acre resource available to all. In 2013 Wiegand designed a town-wide survey asking what Gardiner citizens wanted to see in their recreational facilities. The response was

enthusiastic and the new law will provide a source of revenue to support the kinds of recreational programming residents of Gardiner requested.

What about the dozen or so properties the town already accepted? Wiegand, proposes selling the parcels. The State Legislature would have to approve the sale because the parcels have been designated as "parks," despite the fact that many have no access and none have infrastructure such as trails or recreational equipment. According to the town attorney, the legislature will most likely approve the sale, and the proceeds, unlike the fees collected from developers, will go directly into the General Fund, alleviating some of the pressure imposed by the tax cap.

With this new law in place, the future looks brighter for our parks. As new developments are approved, the parks will be able to keep up with an increasing population and greater demand for recreational facilities. Share your vision for Majestic Park or fundraising ideas with Town Board member David Dukler, liaison to the Parks and Recreation Committee. You can leave a message for him at 255-9675 X100. Donations can also be made directly into the "Friends of the Gardiner Parks" account at Ulster Savings Bank. □

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Hess Farm. Photo: Laura Wong Pan

Preserving What's Special The Wallkill Valley Land Trust

by Laura Wong Pan

It is easy to take our scenery for granted while speeding along Albany Post Road on the way to work. But I am continuously reminded why I moved here fifteen years ago, especially when we have out-of-town visitors who are charmed by our small town as we take them on a "grand tour." They remind me about the abundance of apple and beef farms, the undeveloped land on main roads, and the inviting views from almost all of Gardiner of the Shawangunk Ridge with its thousands of surrounding acres of private and publicly-owned parkland.

This article, however, is not about the pretty views or my out-of-town guests. It is about the Wallkill Valley Land Trust (WVLT) and its role in preserving those scenic views and important areas through active land preservation efforts in our community.

As many readers may know, the WVLT, a nonprofit organization, funded almost entirely by dona-

tions, acquires and manages voluntary conservation agreements with owners of environmentally significant parcels in southern Ulster County.

The organization holds easements on 11 properties in Gardiner, protecting over 630 acres of land from future development. This means that, at some point in time, landowners of those properties have voluntarily agreed to enter into a conservation easement, which extinguishes the possibility of future development on these lands. In Gardiner, lands that are protected from development include both private residential parcels and farmland practicing community supported agriculture.

So, what is a conservation easement? Like a Deed, it is a legally-enforceable document with restrictions that last in perpetuity. As Executive Director Christie DeBoer frequently says, "in perpetuity is a very long time." It means

that future landowners are bound by the terms described in the conservation easement, which is filed along with the deeds and mortgages with the Ulster County clerk. Typically, conservation easements will first identify the important environmental attributes that make the property worth protecting. These are also called values, and may be things like an uncontaminated aquifer or other water source; prime soils unique to the area that supports agricultural production; old growth trees; or a view shed important to the community.

Once the parties have identified the important environmental attributes of the property, the easement will describe the restrictions that are put into place to protect and preserve those environmental values. Common restrictions in conservation

easements for residential properties include prohibiting additional residential structures, or limiting the size of structures, while easements for agricultural land will allow for farm-related structures, but sometimes limit, say, farm worker housing units. There are typically restrictions on new roads and other impervious surfaces. Deforestation projects or large clearing measures are usually prohibited by stating a limited right to cull trees in accordance with a forest management plan.

Because conservations easements run with the land, new landowners inherit the easements and may be unfamiliar with the terms. Organizations like the WVLT are responsible for monitoring and

WVLT, continued [next page](#)



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Land Trust, from page14

enforcing the easements, in perpetuity. The Land Steward visits every property at least once a year, examining the condition of the land, documenting changes or alterations, and educating new owners regarding the content of the easements. Any issues found are brought back to the WVLT to be examined. If it is decided there is a violation of the terms in the easement, additional measures are taken to address the violation.

So what's in it for the landowners? New York offers a Conservation Easement Tax Credit, which allows taxpayers to take a refundable income tax credit of 25% of their school district, county, and town property taxes. The maximum credit available is \$5,000, and if the landowner's tax credit exceeds the amount he or she owes in state income taxes, the landowner receives payment for the difference.

The donation of a conservation easement is also a tax-deductible charitable gift under the Internal Revenue Code, provided that the easement is not temporary but is intended to last in perpetuity and is donated "exclusively for conservation purposes" to a qualified conservation organization or public agency. While the tax breaks are a plus, most often the Land Trust hears from land owners that the driving factor in the decision to place an easement on their land was the knowledge that the land would be protected in perpetuity.

In Gardiner, agricultural conservation easements held by the WVLT include Phillis Bridge Farm, home to a very well-know CSA which was the first one in Ulster County. The easement was donated by the Ottaway Family in 2003 to protect valuable soils, wetlands, woods, and the rural

character of Gardiner. Conservation easements are also held over the Hess Farm on Sand Hill Road, and the Kieran Farm on Brunswick Road.

Residential examples in Gardiner are many. The 1992 easement from Anne and Bill Finn on eight and a half acres of fields and habitat runs along the Shawangunk Kill. The Greene easement., one of the earliest, was donated to the WVLT in 1989 by Trina Greene. It is a seven acre parcel along the Wallkill River providing lovely views and protecting both habitat and water quality.

The Katz-Hollander Easement on Brunswick Road was donated by Joe Katz and Sue Hollander in 1995 and preserves 65 acres of fields and woods, while the Osborne North easement, near Albany Post Road, was donated by Vals Osborne, a Land Trust Board member, in 2004. It protects 69 acres of

working farmland and woods with much frontage along the Wallkill River.

Finally, the 43 acres of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail that fall in Gardiner are also protected with a conservation easement held by the WVLT. Thousands of people enjoy this recreational linear park, which is now a little over 22 miles long.

The Land Trust's operations are overseen by a volunteer Board of Trustees and managed by Executive Director Christie DeBoer, Deputy Executive Director Melissa Brunette and part-time Land Steward Lynn Bowdery. They are aided by a handful of dedicated volunteers.

So, next time you take out of town visitors on a tour of the highlights, remember the 630 acres of environmentally significant lands that have been preserved for future generations by this partnership of the WVLT, private landowners, the Open Space Institute and the Town of Gardiner. □

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Some Dates To Keep In Mind



October 27th, 6pm (Rain date, Oct.28th)

The Gardiner Day Committee hosts Gardiner's Annual Pumpkin Walk. Bring your little ones in costume to the Library parking lot for a short and safe parade down the rail trail ending with homemade refreshments. Candy treats will be given out courtesy of Friends of the Library.

November 8th, Get out and VOTE!



November 12th, from 9:00 until 2:00 there will be a jewelry sale at the Gardiner Library.

December 2nd, 7pm sharp, The Gardiner Day Committee hosts Christmas Caroling and Tree Lighting. Santa will be joining us for caroling beginning at Gardiner Gables and ending at the Town Hall for the Tree lighting and homemade refreshments. They're also collecting new toys for Toys For Tots.



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