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# BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE *monthly*

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"The Business Journal For Berkshire County"

JUNE 2019

## INTRAPRENEUR CHALLENGE

### Lever Inc. launches new competition to foster innovation in existing businesses

BY BRAD JOHNSON

Having completed its first entrepreneurial challenges focused on start-ups in manufacturing and health technology, Lever Inc. is now taking a different approach with a new program aimed at promoting entrepreneurial thinking within well-established businesses.

The five-year-old North Adams-based nonprofit organization, which provides a range of support services for regional start-ups and entrepreneurs, will soon be accepting applications for its first-ever Lever Intrapreneur Challenge.

According to organizers, this program will bring together companies from around the Berkshires to compete for who can present an innovation for a new product or service with the most potential for top-line growth and job creation.

In addition to the chance to win \$25,000 to fund further development of their innovation, all participants will gain access to resources to help strengthen the innovation culture within their companies, along with guidance in the use of low-risk modern entrepreneurial methods for bringing new products or services to market.

"This is a logical extension of what we are doing with our other challenge programs that are focused on specific industry sectors," said Brent Filson, director of operations and programming at Lever. "It's all part of trying to build a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in Berkshire County."

In the most recent of those programs, Lever awarded \$25,000 in seed funding to My Core Floor, a multifaceted web resource for women with pelvic floor dysfunction, which was selected by a panel of judges as

*continued on page 9*



Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires and Southern Vermont CEO David Twiggs (left) joins members of his management team in front of the new larger location of the organization's Great Barrington retail store, which will have a grand opening celebration on May 18. Shown here are Maryam Kamangar, director of community development; Wendy Coulter, lead processor; Kathy Anker, director of mission services; Karen Harrington, project manager; and Eddie Mutch, facilities manager.

## Bigger presence in Great Barrington for Goodwill

BY BRAD JOHNSON

The recent closing of the Sears Hometown Store in Great Barrington has opened the door to an opportunity for another type of retailing operation to significantly beef up its presence in the south county town.

Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires and Southern Vermont Inc. is completing the transition from its current store at 396 Stockbridge Rd. to the former Sears site just a quarter-mile down the road at 228 Stockbridge Rd. A grand opening at the new location is slated for May 18.

At the same time, the nonprofit organization is also expanding the range of its services and support programs at some of its other Berkshire locations that are related to its mission of helping community members with barriers to employment attain independence and self-sufficiency, gain confidence, and enhance their quality of life.

This includes the establishment of a dedicated space for training programs within the organization's existing North Adams store. The new North Adams Career Center had its own grand opening event on May 8 (*see related story on page 14*).

According to officials with Goodwill, the much larger new location for the Great Barrington store will allow for a wider selection of clothing and accessories to be displayed on its sales floor, and will provide more room for processing of donations and other aspects of Goodwill's operations.

"We've been in Great Barrington for 13 years, and the community has always been very supportive," said Goodwill CEO David Twiggs. "But it has been a challenge for us to find a location there that worked for us."

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Amy Brentano is transforming this 3,600-square-foot building in West Stockbridge's central village into The Foundry, an arts and performance center that will host a range of cultural and community activities.

## THE FOUNDRY

### West Stockbridge site ready for new role as multifaceted arts, performance center

BY JOHN TOWNES

Amy Brentano of Richmond has started a for-profit business to support nonprofit cultural organizations and activities.

Earlier this year Brentano purchased a 3,600-square-foot building at 2 Harris St. in the center of West Stockbridge that previously housed the Diana Felber Art Gallery and an attached sculpture studio.

She has since been converting the building into an arts and performance center called The Foundry, which is owned and operated by Brentano as The Foundry LLC. She is preparing to open the full facility this summer.

Brentano's goal is for The Foundry to become a vibrant regional center for creative expression and community engagement. The Foundry will host live theatrical performances, music, readings, discussions, educational workshops, art exhibits and other activities.

She described it as "a holding tank for emerging artists creating relevant, intentional work in music, theater and spoken word," and as a facility for educational and community workshops.

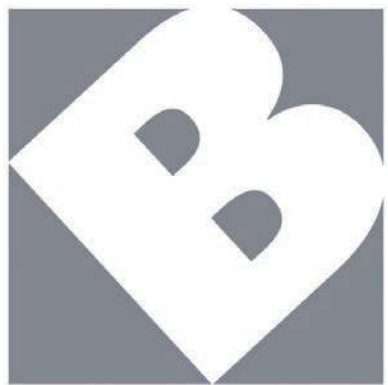
"It will have an emphasis on new work that is relevant and challenging, and gives voice to young artists and others who are not always heard," said Brentano. "It will also be oriented to community programs and events for diverse audiences."

She added that it is organized to foster partnerships, collaborations and residencies with local and outside theater companies, other cultural and community organizations, and educational programs.

Among other roles, The Foundry is the new home of Bazaar Productions Inc./Berkshire Fringe, a 12-year-old nonprofit

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## FRONT *pages*

### Sweet deal for buyers of Catherine's Chocolates

BY JOHN TOWNES

A popular confectionery staple in Great Barrington has been sold, but the new owners plan to retain its longtime role as a locally oriented purveyor of chocolate.

On April 12, Steven and Trent Kinney closed on the purchase of Catherine's Chocolates at 260 Stockbridge Rd. from Kathleen Sinico.

"Many people love this business and the candy we sell," said Steven Kinney. "We'll be making some changes over time, but overall people can expect to see it continue to be the same type of traditional old-time candy shop it always has been."

Catherine's Chocolates (800-345-2462 or [catherineschocolates.net](http://catherineschocolates.net)) was founded in 1958 by Sinico's mother, Catherine Kereszts, who had grown up working in her uncle's confectionery business in New York. Kereszts brought her skills to start the new business after moving to Great Barrington.

Sinico grew up in her mother's business, and eventually became its owner. Her own children and grandchildren have also worked there. She lives in an adjacent house.

Steven Kinney said he and his husband Trent had been familiar with the business through an earlier part-time venture they operated, Berkshire Treats. That business prepared and sold gift baskets with local products.

"One of the products we included were Catherine's Chocolates, and we became familiar with the business," he explained. "When we learned that Kathy was selling it, we made an offer."

When asked what made them decide to purchase the business, he replied with a chuckle: "Who wouldn't want to own a chocolate store?"

In a more serious vein, Kinney said they saw it as an opportunity to take over an established local business with a loyal customer



**With the Easter and Mother's Day holidays now under his belt, Steven Kinney is settling in as co-owner of Catherine's Chocolates. He and his husband, Trent, purchased the Great Barrington business on April 12.**

base. Also, as part of the sale agreement, Sinico offered stay on for a training period, which would make the transition easier. Sinico stayed at the store for the period from the busy candy-oriented holidays of Valentine's Day through Easter.

"Since she lives next door, we can also call her if we have a question or problem," he said. "Also, most of the employees will continue here, which provides continuity."

They also acquired all of the recipes that Catherine's Chocolates had developed over the years.

Kinney added that Trent has a personal interest in chocolates and food. "He is considering attending culinary school," he said. "He also has a very strong sweet tooth."

The purchase includes the business and the building that houses it. (The adjacent house where Sinico lives was not part of the purchase.)

Steven Kinney lived in Pittsfield until

he was in the third grade, when his parents moved to eastern Massachusetts. He attended West Point and served as an aviator in the U.S. Army for eight years.

He met Trent (the former Trent Mielke), who is also an Army aviator, while both were stationed in Afghanistan. Trent is a native of Minnesota.

After leaving the Army, Kinney moved to Berkshire County to be closer to his family, who had returned here while he was in the service.

Trent Kinney is still in the military and is deployed in Europe. He will be moving here and working at the business full time when his period of service ends within the next year.

"In the meantime, I am handling the management of the business," said Steven Kinney. "I'm in regular contact with Trent, and he provides as much input and assistance as possible."

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news & notes from the region

He noted that the business name will be changed eventually to Mielke Confectioneries.

“Since he agreed to change his last name when we married, that seemed fair,” said Kinney. “It also has the benefit of sounding like the word ‘milky,’ which is a quality people associate with chocolate.”

In the short-term, they are making some cosmetic changes to the business, including repainting its exterior a chocolate brown with blue and gold accents.

Over time they also plan other renovations. He noted that there is space for a small expansion of the building and additional parking in the rear.

“We’ll be expanding and opening up the interior retail space,” Kinney said.

They also plan to enlarge its candy production area to support future growth of the business. “One of our goals is to eventually add several branch stores in Berkshire County,” Kinney said. “This location would also produce the candy for those.”

They also expect to expand their product offerings, including compatible items such as ice cream and other candies.

“We also are planning to carry our Berkshire Gift Baskets in the store,” he said.

Overall, Kinney emphasized, while it will be updated, the store will continue in its current role and relationship to the community.

“It seems like in Great Barrington, many longtime local businesses are closing or being sold and changed significantly,” he said. “We don’t want that to happen with this business.”

He added that they will continue the store’s role as a local business.

“We’re very aware that Catherine’s Chocolates has been a longtime favorite in the community,” Kinney said. “Many of our customers know the people who work here personally. While we would like to also draw business from tourism, the majority of our customer base is the year-round population, and that will continue to be our primary focus.”◆

Historic Stockbridge inn marks ‘Fifty Years of Fitz’

BY JOHN TOWNES

The iconic lobby of the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge is slated for a makeover as part of the hotel’s 50th anniversary celebration.

Also, to mark its 50th year of ownership by members of the Fitzpatrick family, the hotel on Main Street in the town center is sponsoring related events for a 50-day period that began on May 4 and concludes on June 23.

“The Red Lion Inn has been operating for more than 240 years, but this last chapter has been our family’s contribution to its ongoing stewardship,” said Sarah Eustis, third-generation owner and operator as CEO of Main Street Hospitality Group.

The celebration kicked off on May 4 with a day of walking tours and pop-up entertainment by the Berkshire Theatre Group in the lobby, and a televised showing of the Kentucky Derby.

The hotel will host a “Fifty Years of Fitz” gala dinner on May 29, featuring a contemporary interpretation of the menu on the day the hotel reopened in 1969.

Walking tours of Stockbridge curated by Jayne Church will be offered during the celebration period.

The Red Lion will also feature a series of “Pop-Ups on the Porch” on its front porch, with a roster of performers and artists from Tanglewood, the Berkshire Theatre Group and other cultural institutions.

An Anniversary Closing Party will take place at 3 p.m. on June 23.

A full schedule of anniversary events can be viewed at [www.redlioninn.com/news/50th-anniversary-celebration](http://www.redlioninn.com/news/50th-anniversary-celebration).

The inn is also making a change to its lobby entrance this year to mark the anniversary. The restoration will return the first-floor spaces to the way they were when the family purchased the Red Lion in 1968. It is slated to be completed by the end of the year.

The inn’s lobby will be extended into the front dining area to create a living room that will serve as the hotel’s social center.

Located adjacent to the lobby, the dining room will be renovated, and an extension added that will be transformed into the Fitzpatrick Room for additional dining and events.

“The restoration of the lobby and dining spaces of the Red Lion Inn will honor the past while welcoming and meeting the needs of our current and future guests,” said Eustis.

The inn has been a fixture in Stockbridge since it was established as a small tavern in 1773. It was rebuilt as a 100-plus room hotel in 1897.

It went through a difficult period in the mid-20th century until it was purchased by the late Jane and Jack Fitzpatrick in 1968. They also operated Country Curtains, a manufacturer of decorative furnishings.

They extensively renovated it and reopened as the Red Lion on May 29, 1969. Their daughter, Nancy Fitzpatrick, took the helm in 1993 until her retirement in 2018.

Nancy’s step-daughter, Sarah Eustis, now oversees the business.◆

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# FRONT *pages*

## WEST STOCKBRIDGE

### Familiar players have hand in launch of Tap House at Shaker Mill

BY JOHN TOWNES

Brian Alberg, a prominent regional chef and proponent of the local food economy, is establishing a new restaurant in a familiar location in West Stockbridge.

Alberg is vice president of culinary development for Main Street Hospitality Group (MSHG), which has signed a long-term lease for the site of the Shaker Mill Tavern at 5 Albany Rd. (Routes 102 & 41).

He is renovating it and developing the space for a tavern and restaurant, which will be named the Tap House at Shaker Mill.

The business will be owned and operated by MSHG, which owns and/or operates several prime lodging establishments in the Berkshires, including the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge and Hotel on North in Pittsfield, among others.

Alberg will continue in his culinary oversight role with MSHG while focusing on the Tap House as manager of record during its start-up phase.

The site has long been a well-known destination for locals and visitors in town. It was created in its present form by the late Gordon Rose, as one of numerous redevelopment projects he had undertaken in West Stockbridge the 1970s and '80s.

It was a popular gathering spot in its earlier incarnations as the Square Rigger and later as the Shaker Mill Tavern.

However, in more recent years it went through a period of instability with a succession of short-term operators and identities, along with periods of vacancy.

Alberg said his goal is to revitalize the site to its original role, and to ensure that it operates on a more stable, long-term basis.

Its business plan is to create a year-round village pub and a site of seasonal "back yard" dining and events in season. "We want to bring it back to the days when it was the living room of West Stockbridge, and was also a popular site for outside dining," said Alberg.



This longtime restaurant and gathering spot in central West Stockbridge is taking on a new identity as the Tap House at Shaker Mill, which is being developed by Brian Alberg of Main Street Hospitality Group.

The two-story building is owned by Karden Rabin, who purchased it as Morab LLC in October 2017.

Most recently, the space was the Shaker Mill Tavern Family Smoke House, a barbecue smoker and restaurant operated by James and Jennifer Hallock. That restaurant closed and the space went on the market earlier this year when James Hallock became the pit master at the Morgan House in Lee.

Alberg approached Rabin after learning the site was on the market, and in March they signed a five-year lease with options to renew.

Since then Alberg has been developing the restaurant's operations, hiring and training a staff, and renovating the space for a planned opening in late May or early June.

The restaurant includes 3,500 square feet inside and a 1,500-square-foot deck patio. It has seating for 120 inside and 80 seats outside. It will initially have a staff of about 20.

The renovations have included reconfiguring and remodeling the interior space.

"We got rid of some of the wood inside, and freshly painted it to retain its tavernish look and history, while brightening it up," said Alberg.

#### Quality food that's accessible

Alberg said the final menu is still being developed and will periodically be revised over time. Generally, he said, it will feature a mix of familiar staples and comfort food and some specialized items.

An initial preliminary concept menu (subject to change) includes appetizers, sandwiches and entrees.

Appetizers include items such as BBQ

Pulled Pork, Sweet Corn and Cheddar Arepas; Italian Sausage Stuffed Peppers; Lion's Ale Beer Cheese Dip, Salted Soft Pretzel, and Sloppy Wings with Blue Cheese and Chalula, among others.

Sandwiches include Grilled Chicken Club, Cheeseburgers, and Chick Pea and Quinoa Cake. There are also flatbread items and a selection of salads.

Entrees include such items as Cavatappi Mac & Cheese with various optional ingredients; Shrimp and Grits; Buttermilk Fried Chicken Waffle; Campfire Trout, and Grilled New York Strip Steak. There will be weekly dinner specials such as Spaghetti and Meatballs, Sheppard's Pie, and Roast Prime Rib.

There will also be features related to the outdoor activities, such as a raw oyster bar and barbecue items.

Basic price ranges on the sample menu are \$8 to \$12 for appetizers, \$11 to \$15 for sandwiches, and \$14 to \$28 for entrees.

"We want to offer quality food, including local ingredients as much as possible," said Alberg. "At the same time we're very conscious about pricing. We want people to be comfortable coming in and having a meal they can afford."

They are also preparing the outdoor deck and exterior.

In addition to regular outdoor dining, the Tap House will be the site of special events and "deck take overs," such as weekend clambakes, pop-up raw bars and food-truck services, cauldron lunches, barbecue competitions, and other activities and entertainment.

The Tap House will have a full bar. As befits the name, it will have 10 beer taps inside and four taps outside. In addition to standard brands, it will emphasize a selection from regional brewers such as Bright Ideas in North Adams and Big Elm Brewing in Sheffield.

The Tap House will also have space for private parties and a catering service.

#### Appeal of West Stockbridge

Rabin said he is very enthusiastic about the new version of the Shaker Mill.

Rabin operates Boundless Integrative Wellness Center, an alternative pain management practice on the second floor. He was a tenant there for two years and then purchased the building when the opportunity arose.

He and his wife Gillian Gorman have also developed the upstairs as The Werkshires, which provides offices and workspace for business and other tenants (*April 2018 BT&C*). Gorman is the director of Yoga Great Barrington and Radiance Yoga in Pittsfield and the co-founder of the Yoga Institute of the Berkshires.

Among other tenants, The Werkshires houses the offices of the Sprout Brothers (*November 2018 BT&C*) and Hosta Hill.

Rabin believes his project and the new Tap House are part of a revitalization in West Stockbridge, with a mix of new businesses and attractions such as the TurnPark sculpture garden and The Foundry, a new arts and performance center (*see story on page 1*).

"In some respects, West Stockbridge is the Switzerland of Berkshire County," he said, referring to that country's central location in Europe. "Many roads converge here."

Rabin noted that since purchasing the building he has invested about \$200,000 in renovations to it, primarily on the second floor.

"I'm very excited about Brian, and I believe he will successfully return the restaurant to its glory days when it was a fixture in the area," said Rabin. "For me, this ties a bow around the whole package we've been creating here." ♦

### Carr Hardware plans new store for Center at Lenox

BY JOHN TOWNES

A prominent Berkshire-based retailer is expanding with a new store in conjunction with an upgrade and expansion of The Center at Lenox shopping plaza at 489 Pittsfield Rd. (Routes 7/20).

Carr Hardware will take up residence in an 11,000-square-foot section of the former Price Chopper supermarket, which moved to a new larger building at The Center in 2011. The space has been vacant since then.

It will become Carr Hardware's seventh store, joining other Berkshire locations in downtown Pittsfield, North Adams, Lee and Great Barrington, and the company's stores in Avon and Enfield, Conn.

"This is an important step for us, because it fills in the last geographic piece in our physical coverage of the Berkshire County market, and will complete our expansion of new stores here," said Bart Raser, who is president of the family-owned business.

He explained that the new store will be oriented to homeowners, contractors, resorts and other customers in Lenox and other nearby areas between Pittsfield and Lee.

"We also recognize that it will probably draw some customers who presently shop at our Pittsfield store, but we've factored that into our business planning," he added.

Raser said the Lenox store is expected to open early next year.

Carr Hardware stocks over 40,000 products including paint, tools, hardware, electrical, plumbing, outdoor living, lawn and garden supplies and more. In addition to its primary customer base of homeowners, the company is also a major supplier to contractors, and serves other institutional, industrial, and government customers.

The new store will have the same basic mix of products as Carr's other stores, but there will be some differences, and it is being designed specifically for the Lenox market, according to Raser.

Raser noted that Carr Hardware is partnering with another company on the new store, whose identity he could not reveal yet.

"It will definitely be a Carr Hardware store with the same base mix of products and level of service people expect from us," he said. "But the new partner, which is an industry leader, will bring a freshness to our presentation and enable us to expand our products in certain specialties. These will create a new experience for shoppers."

He said that will include enhanced sections in the store. "We'll have larger display areas for products such as kitchen and bath furnishings," he said.

The new Carr Hardware store is part of an overall redevelopment of the original section of The Center at Lenox.

The shopping center is owned by WS Development of Chestnut Hill, which has developed 98 properties comprising 23 million square feet across 10 states, with an

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news & notes from the region

additional five million square feet under development. Its portfolio of properties includes urban core retail, high-end lifestyle centers, and mixed-use developments.

While The Center at Lenox includes several separate newer structures, much of its original L-shaped core section has been largely vacant for years.

In addition to Price Chopper, a CVS pharmacy also moved from there into a new structure on the property. Other businesses, such as Radio Shack, have closed. The only current business in that section of the shopping center is Marshall's.

The developer is planning to substantially upgrade and modernize that section, an estimated \$4 million project. It will include space for about eight stores in the former Price Chopper and other empty adjacent storefront spaces. They are also considering building new structures on the 36-acre property, depending on demand.

Raser said the cost of creating the new Carr Hardware store will be shared by his business and the developer. The opening date will also depend on the progress of the overall redevelopment.

"There's significant construction involved in preparing the new store, including remodeling the interior, creating a new exterior, a new roof and flooring, installing an entirely new HVAC system and upgrading the parking areas," said Raser.

Originally founded by Sam Carr in 1928, the company was purchased by Marshall Raser in 1962. He and his son Bart manage its day-to-day operations and have overseen significant expansion of the business.

Carr currently employs about 100 people, according to Bart Raser.

"We'll need at least 16 additional people with the new store, and we've already started the hiring and training process," he said. ♦

Project looks to enhance  
Ashland Street corridor

BY JOHN TOWNES

A coalition of local organizations are pursuing a project to visually revitalize the Ashland Street corridor in North Adams, to make it more accessible and appealing to pedestrians and cyclists.

Proponents are currently conducting a fund-raising drive on the online site Patronicity to raise \$12,500 by May 30 to qualify the Ashland Street Initiative for a matching Commonwealth Places "placemaking" grant from MassDevelopment, the state's finance and development agency.

"The goal is to leverage the street's existing assets to enhance its use by pedestrians and cyclists, and make the corridor an inviting place to spend time," said Benjamin Lamb, a North Adams city councilor and one of the organizers of the project.

"It will also create a more direct connection between Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) and downtown," he added.

The plan is to add new benches, plantings, and art along the corridor (including a mural on the exterior wall of a building at

50 Ashland St.). It will also include custom-made single-mount bike racks and stations with crossing flags for pedestrians. "It will encourage people to stop and linger, and visit businesses along the street," said Lamb.

Ashland Street is one of the city's primary thoroughfares. It extends south from Main Street downtown. In addition to a mix of shopping centers, restaurants, small businesses, galleries, service providers and residences, it also borders the campus of MCLA. It eventually merges with Church Street to the south.

A primary focus of the project is on the section of Ashland Street in the city center from Main Street to MCLA.

"[Ashland Street's] history of businesses, institutions and assets extends back through time over 100 years," states the project's description on Patronicity. "But it's lost the sense of place that it once served when it was traveled more readily by pedestrians in eras gone by."

Although it is a separate project, the Ashland Street Initiative is an outgrowth of the NAMazing Eagle Street Project, which was launched two years ago to enhance the streetscape of Eagle Street, which extends north of Ashland Street on the other side of Main Street. That was also funded by a Commonwealth Places grant.

"The two streets and projects are different, but in a sense, the Ashland Street Initiative is a continuation of the Eagle Street project," said Lamb. "They're both intended to help engage people downtown by creative placemaking."

Commonwealth Places is a collaborative initiative of MassDevelopment and Patronicity that leverages public support for placemaking projects through crowdfunding and a matching grant from MassDevelopment.

The Ashland Street Initiative has been organized and is supported by a network of community stakeholders. Its participating partners include the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, the NAMazing Initiative, the O+ North Adams Festival, Mass in Motion, and the North Adams Complete Streets Initiative, among others.

Supporters can make contributions to the drive on a designated web page on Patronicity ([www.patronicity.com/project/the\\_ashland\\_street\\_initiative#!/](http://www.patronicity.com/project/the_ashland_street_initiative#!/)). Incentives will be offered for larger pledges, such as private concerts, dinners or naming rights to a bench.

If at least \$12,500 is raised by the May 30 deadline, MassDevelopment will provide a matching grant, for a total of \$25,000. (As of May 12, \$5,050 had been pledged.)

If the target amount is not raised, whatever donations have been made by May 30 will be applied to the project.

"The project will progress either way," said Lamb. "The difference is that if we receive the full amount by May 30, all donations will be doubled, and we will be able to do more."

Lamb said their actual goal is to raise \$35,000, which also includes additional pledged contributions and in-kind donations.

The money will be used to support the creation of artwork that will be placed along the street, as well as the benches and seating areas, bike racks, and other features.

The O+ arts and health festival, which started this May and is intended to become an annual event, will oversee the mural, which is slated to be installed next year.

"If we raise the full amount, we may be able to have two murals instead of one," noted Lamb.

In a separate program coordinated by the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and U.S. Forest Service, several hundred new trees will be planted throughout the city as part of its designation as a Tree City.

"The Ashland Street Initiative will coordinate with them on the trees planted here, and we'll also concentrate on low plantings at the base of the trees to tie them into the streetscape at ground level," said Lamb.

He said the goal is to complete the initial project within a 12-month time line. "We'd like to have the basic installations in place by next spring," said Lamb.

He emphasized that donations of any size are encouraged. "It doesn't matter if you can just contribute a few dollars or a larger amount," he said. "Community participation and support is important, and every donation is helpful." ♦

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FRONTpages

BUSINESS  
Update

The 64th Annual **1Berkshire** Fall Foliage Parade, which will travel through downtown North Adams on Oct. 6, will have the theme “There’s No Place Like Home in The Berkshires” in honor of the cinematic classic Wizard of Oz which is celebrating its 80th anniversary. The parade committee invites the Berkshire community to explore ways to participate in this year’s parade, such as signing up to have a float; entering a band/music, marching, veterans or public safety unit; or volunteering on the parade committee. There are also parade sponsorship opportunities. Questions or comments about the 1Berkshire Fall Foliage Parade can be directed to Stephanie Bosley at sbosley@1berkshire.com. More information about becoming involved in the parade can be found at 1berkshire.com/events/fall-foliage-parade/.

The **Civitan Club of the Berkshires** raised over \$8,000 at its 13th Annual SoupFest to benefit local food pantries and meal programs. The 240 attendees at the event, held March 22 at the **Berkshire Hills Country Club** in Pittsfield, enjoyed a wide range of soup tastings, appetizers, desserts and giveaways. The funds raised are being distributed in donations to the **Christian Center, Lee Congregational Church, First United Methodist of Dalton, Charlie’s Pantry** in New Lebanon, N.Y., **St. Raphael & Patrick** in Williamstown, both the Pittsfield and North Adams **Salvation Army**, along with many other organizations. Including this year’s tally, the Civitan Club has raised more than \$100,000 through the SoupFest over the last 13 years. For those who could not attend, donations are still being accepted and may be made payable to Civitan Club of the Berkshires, PO Box 42, Pittsfield, MA 01202.

**Northern Berkshire United Way (NBUW)** held its 2nd Annual Spirit of Caring and Awards Celebration on May 9 at the Holiday Inn Berkshires, where the organization recognized individuals in the community for their length and breadth of service to NBUW, its network, and the overall northern Berkshire community. Among them were: Tracy Rougeau McConnell, presented with the Spirit of the Future Award; Dianne Cutillo and Bernie Pinsonnault, presented with the Spirit of Community Award; and Steve Green and Sue Walker, presented with the Al Nelson Spirit of Caring Award. **Specialty Minerals Inc.** received the Campaign of the Year award for their many years of supporting NBUW and in consistently achieving record campaign results. Butch Parrott, campaign coordinator and NBUW board member, who recently retired from Specialty Minerals after 42 years, was recognized for his years of service coordinating the company’s campaign during his tenure.



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The **Pittsfield Cooperative Bank** has been selected to participate in Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston’s (FHLBank Boston) Housing Our Workforce (HOW) program. Launched this year, HOW provides assistance to FHLBank Boston financial institution members to help local homebuyers earning more than 80 percent and up to 120 percent of the area median income with down payments on owner-occupied primary residences. The \$2 million program offers a two-to-one match of down payments made at the time of purchase by eligible homebuyers. Borrowers can receive up to \$20,000 in assistance on a first-come, first-served basis. “Many home ownership programs are designed to assist lower-income individuals and families. It is often challenging for those in a slightly higher income range to afford housing, particularly in communities where home prices are escalating,” said Michael Barbieri, senior vice president of residential and consumer lending at Pittsfield Cooperative Bank. “With this program, a greater number of borrowers who are incredibly important to the economic well-being of our communities will be able to achieve home ownership.” The Pittsfield Cooperative Bank is eligible to receive up to \$100,000 in 2019 through Housing Our Workforce, depending on availability of funds. To learn more about applying for assistance, contact Richard Whalen at 413-629-1610.

**Berkshire Community College (BCC)** has been informed that the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) has restored continuing accreditation to the Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) program through 2023. In its notification to the college in late April, ACEN acknowledged that deliberations on their change in status centered on the materials that were submitted to the board following the visit by the peer accreditation team. In mid-April, BCC announced that it would voluntarily and temporarily suspend admission to the first year of its ADN program for fall 2019. The ACEN announcement does not change this decision. “BCC has developed and is implementing a systematic evaluation plan,” said Jennifer Berne, BCC’s vice president for academic affairs. “To do this work effectively, our team of faculty and staff will use the 2019-2020 academic year to continue making systematic improvements to our internal curricular processes and make the adjustments recommended by our accrediting and licensing bodies.” BCC offers both a two-year associate in nursing degree as well as a 10-month practical nursing certificate. For more information about these programs, call 413-236-1636 or visit [www.berkshirecc.edu/nursinginfo](http://www.berkshirecc.edu/nursinginfo).

**Wild Oats Market**, a cooperatively owned natural foods grocery store, bakery and cafe in Williamstown, has launched a new catering website that will streamline the ordering process for customers. The new site ([wildoats.coop/catering](http://wildoats.coop/catering)) will allow customers to begin their order online with a few clicks and get a preliminary quote in real time, anytime of the day or night. “The convenience of online ordering is important to many of our customers,” said David Durfee, general manager at Wild Oats. “We are pleased to be able to offer it and, at the same time, simplify the process for both the customer and for our catering team.” Wild Oats has been offering catering services for over 10 years in their Main Street location, which includes a full-service kitchen and bakery. The catering options at Wild Oats include breakfast, lunch and dinner items as well as party platters and custom cakes for birthdays, retirements and graduations. Customers can also special-order meat and seafood from the new website, including beef tenderloin and salmon by the pound and special holiday menus, when available.

As part of its annual celebration of National Small Business Week, held May 5-11, **Berkshire Bank**’s business banking teams hosted events that honor local **Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)** chapters and **Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)** across the bank’s footprint. These organizations each received \$1,000 grants from **Berkshire Bank Foundation** in recognition of their commitment to supporting and assisting local small businesses for their role in the economic development of communities. Among those recognized was the **Berkshire Regional SBDC** in Pittsfield.

The **Jewish Women’s Foundation of Berkshire County**, an associate of the **Jewish Federation of the Berkshires**, is soliciting grant proposals from not-for-profit Berkshire-based organizations for projects or programs aimed at fulfilling unmet needs in the Berkshire community. Programs targeted for grant consideration are those that meet clients’ basic needs for shelter, food and clothing; or promote the development of life skills including communication, academics, literacy, and empowerment. Both Jewish and non-Jewish nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply for grants up to \$3,500. The foundation will accept grant proposals through May 30 at [www.jewish-berkshires.org/jewish-womens-foundation](http://www.jewish-berkshires.org/jewish-womens-foundation). Final decisions will be announced in September. For more information, call 413-442-4360 ext. 10.

**Main Street Hospitality Group (MSH)** has announced the company’s commitment to enhancing and intensifying its ongoing sustainable practices through programs such as its partnership with Clean the World, utilization of large-size refillable room amenities at all hotels, elimination of plastic straws and drink stirrers, and elimination of single-use plastic bottles, among others. “The move is the most recent commitment to responsible ‘earthkeeping’ practices employed by the hotel management company,” said Sarah Eustis, CEO of the Stockbridge-based company, which owns the **Red Lion Inn** and affiliated properties, and provides management services for several prominent hotels in the region. “Throughout the company and to a person, we are steadfast in our responsibility to smart, sustainable practices. From simple actions, like being mindful to turn off lights, to larger initiatives like replacing inefficient HVAC systems, we consistently seek alternative, ecologically sound practices that lighten our hotels’ footprint while benefiting the communities we serve.” In addition to increased energy efficiencies in heating and lighting, a water-saving on-request linen laundry service, and rigorous recycling of plastic and metals, the company has broadened its sustainability practices in recent years to include a food composting program in partnership with local farmers. Eustis noted that the Red Lion Inn alone collects nearly 36 tons a year of compostable food and end products that are delivered to local composting farms for the benefit of farmers in the region. Also by this summer, all MSH properties will have phased out individual bath amenity products for large bottle amenity dispensers. Since 2018, MSH has partnered with Clean the World, a global hospitality recycling and waste reduction program, to collect used soaps and small bottled amenity products. These are shipped to be sanitized, reprocessed and reformed to create new soaps and hygiene kits to assist with disaster areas, homeless shelters and impoverished communities worldwide. “In addition to taking measures within the four walls of our hotels, programs like composting and our Clean the World partnership bring benefits to our community and globally,” said Eustis. “And we have so many ideas for the future under research and consideration, from irrigation systems that use collected rain water for gardening and installation of solar panels for hot water energy, among many others that will yield meaningful returns for our community, our guests, and our business.” Formed in 2013, Main Street Hospitality Group has a hotel management portfolio that includes the Red Lion Inn, **Maple Glen** at the Red Lion Inn, the **Porches Inn** in North Adams, **Hotel on North** in Pittsfield, the **Briarcliff Motel** in Great Barrington, and **Race Brook Lodge** in Sheffield, an affiliated hotel.

Applications are now available for the **City of Pittsfield**’s Senior Tax Work-Off Program for FY 2020. Eligible candidates must be Pittsfield residential property owners 60 years of age or older at the time of the application. For a married individual, yearly income cannot exceed \$36,840. For a single individual, yearly income cannot exceed \$31,163. All volunteer work must be completed between June 1 and Nov. 30. An application for this program can be found on the city website: [http://cityofpittsfield.org/city\\_hall/board\\_of\\_assessors/index.php](http://cityofpittsfield.org/city_hall/board_of_assessors/index.php). Applications are also available at the Assessors’ Office in City Hall, Room 108, 70 Allen St. Program applications must be postmarked or received by the Assessors’ Office by May 31. For more information, contact the Assessors’ Office at 413-395-0102.

**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)** will welcome approximately 800 eighth graders from Berkshire County schools on May 30 and 31 for the eighth annual Eighth Grade Career Experience in Bowman Hall on the MCLA’s North Adams campus. Eighth graders from **Hoosac Valley Middle/High School** in Cheshire, **Berkshire Arts and Technology (BArT) Charter School** in Adams, and **Drury Middle/High School** in North Adams will attend the fair on May 30 from 8:15-10 a.m. Students who are in eighth grade at **Herberg Middle School** in Pittsfield and **Clarksburg School** will participate that same day from 9:45-11:30 a.m. On May 31, eighth-grade students from **Mount Greylock Middle/High School** in Williamstown and **Nessacus Middle School** in Dalton will attend the fair from 8:15-10 a.m. They will be followed that day by students from **Reid Middle School** in Pittsfield and **Gabrielle Abbott School** in Florida, who will participate from 9:45-11:30 a.m. Funded in part by a grant from the **Guardian Life Insurance Company of America**, and sponsored by MCLA and the **Berkshire Compact for Education**, the fair will help students learn about different types of jobs and careers so that they can make informed decisions about course selection in high school and begin to think about higher education and a career. The fair will include a motivational video from the state’s “WOW Initiative” to introduce students to career opportunities within the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. Each student also will attend two workshops of their choice, which will be led by local employers, as well as high school and college faculty. The 20 career workshops include those in education, environmental studies, journalism, law enforcement, culinary arts, health care, law, engineering, advanced manufacturing, aviation and the arts. For more information, visit [mcla.edu](http://mcla.edu).

**Berkshire Bank** has been selected to participate in the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston’s Equity Builder Program (EBP), which assists local homebuyers with down-payment and closing costs, as well as homebuyer counseling and rehabilitation assistance. “We’re proud to provide funding that greatly benefits individuals and families to afford home ownership and that will help build inclusion and community belonging,” said Andrew Rubino, vice president, home lending sales manager at Berkshire Bank. Income-eligible households can receive up to \$15,000 in grant assistance, which is forgivable after five years from the date of loan closing. To be eligible, borrowers must be at or below 80 percent of the area median income based on the address of their new home, and must complete a homebuyer counseling program. Berkshire Bank is eligible to receive up to \$150,000 through the Equity Builder Program in 2019. Those interested in learning more about how they may qualify for EBP funds may contact Patrick Browne, vice president, mortgage operations at 978-857-0665 or [pbrowne@berkshirebank.com](mailto:pbrowne@berkshirebank.com).

**Berkshire Humane Society** and **Haddad Subaru** have launched their 7th annual Subaru Car Raffle, this year featuring a new “Choose Your Subaru” twist in which one winner will have their choice of a 2020 Subaru Crosstrek Limited, Forester Premium or Outback Premium with a package value up to \$33,000. “Haddad Subaru is very excited to partner up with Berkshire Humane Society for the 7th annual Subaru Raffle,” said George Haddad, president of **Haddad Auto Group**. “We love being able to help raise money for such a wonderful organization so they can continue to do the important work they do for our four-legged community.” Tickets are one for \$40 or three for \$100. The raffle is limited to 2,400 tickets. If a minimum of 1,000 tickets are not sold, the raffle will convert to a 50/50 drawing of the net proceeds. The winner will be drawn on Oct. 26 at Berkshire Humane Society during the Fall Open House event. Tickets are on sale at the shelter, 214 Barker Rd., Pittsfield; Haddad Subaru, 652 East St., Pittsfield; **Greylock Animal Hospital**, 1028 State Rd., North Adams; and **Purradise**, 301 Stockbridge Rd., Great Barrington, with additional locations to be announced. All proceeds benefit the homeless animals of the Berkshires. For more information, call 413-447-7878, ext. 131 or go to [BerkshireHumane.org](http://BerkshireHumane.org).

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news & notes from the region

Great Barrington-based **Iredale Cosmetics Inc.** is celebrating 25 years of global expansion in the professional and retail channels with a range of products designed to promote healthy skin under the brand “jane iredale – THE SKINCARE MAKEUP.” Founded by former casting director and producer Jane Iredale, the brand entered the market in 1994 with a first-of-its-kind product, a loose mineral foundation designed to enhance the health of the skin. The line has since expanded to include more than 400 color cosmetics, skin care and nutritional supplements. The company’s anniversary coincides with a retail partnership in which the brand will have a strong in-store presence on the beauty floor at **Bergdorf Goodman** with a curated assortment of almost 200 products. The brand will also be available on BergdorfGoodman.com.

**TR Wells Custom Framers** of Dalton has launched a new division, **Teak Property Management**, a residential and commercial property management company serving western Massachusetts. Teak Property Management plans to offer a comprehensive property management services including tenant services, bookkeeping, and property maintenance, as well as remodeling and second homeowner services. Owner Timothy Wells noted that a property management division was a natural progression for his company, which has operated as a construction contractor as well as a residential landlord for over 20 years. Over this span, Wells has owned multifamily duplexes, built new homes on speculation, and purchased and rehabbed existing homes, giving him an understanding of all facets of the real estate process.

**City of Pittsfield** residents and business owners can now register their property’s alarm system for free through a new electronic form available on the city’s website. “The registration information provides public safety departments with accurate data in the event of a possible emergency,” said Chief Information Officer Mike Steben. The electronic registration form, along with a brief video tutorial, is available at [www.cityofpittsfield.org/alarm\\_registration/index.php](http://www.cityofpittsfield.org/alarm_registration/index.php). For those who may not have access to a computer, paper copies will be available in the lobby of the Pittsfield Police Department, 39 Allen St. For more information, or assistance with the registration process, call 413-499-9404.

**Oldtone Productions**, the producer of the Oldtone Roots Music Festival and the Northeast Fiddlers’ Convention, received four local grants for their concerts and dances at Dewey Hall in Sheffield. The towns of Sheffield, Alford-Egremont, Monterey, and Mount Washington granted funds to Oldtone in this round of **Massachusetts Cultural Council** grants. “We are a DIY organization, and having the support of the community in the form of these grants provides us with a safety net and warms our hearts,” said organizer Beth Carlson. “We love this music and the people drawn to it.” The producers of Oldtone are dedicated to the preservation of old-time music and the communities created around those arts. In 2016, they began holding concerts with roots performers at Dewey Hall, and in 2017 added community Swing Dances to mix, with instructors of this American dance form and live music at each event. In 2019, Oldtone will bring over a dozen bands/performers to the hall for at least 16 events. For a schedule of upcoming events go to [www.oldtonemusicfestival.com](http://www.oldtonemusicfestival.com).

**Berkshire Bank** has released its inaugural Corporate Social Responsibility report, which highlights the bank’s commitment to positively impacting others through volunteerism and giving, investing in its employees, and advancing its ongoing efforts in diversity, inclusion and belonging. This is reflected in its Employee Volunteer Program, the XTEAM, which had 100 percent of Berkshire Bank employees participating in the program in 2018 for the third consecutive year. In addition to its volunteer support, the bank, along with the Berkshire Bank Foundation, invested over \$4 million dollars to support local nonprofit organizations and community events. The report also highlights Berkshire Bank’s commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable work environment. In 2018, the bank raised its minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and implemented the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act companywide. In 2018, 63 percent of the bank’s workforce were women, of which 42 percent were in senior executive management positions. Additionally, the company has made a commitment to develop a work environment that’s more reflective of all the communities it serves. To read the full Corporate Social Responsibility report, visit the Investor Relations page at [ir.berkshirebank.com](http://ir.berkshirebank.com).

The 14 students in **1Berkshire’s** Youth Leadership Program Class of 2019 marked completion of the 10-month program with a May 7 graduation ceremony at **Mazzeo’s Ristorante** in Pittsfield, where they shared the results of their collective impact project with attending family, friends, and regional leaders, and were recognized for their program completion. For their collective impact project, the Class of 2019 chose to conduct a sustainability fair in coordination with the **Downtown Pittsfield Farmers Market**. Through their project, they engaged more than 60 people and helped educate them about ways to be more environmentally sustainable in their own lives. Additionally, the students conducted a year-long fund-raiser series, and during their graduation ceremony, they provided a check for \$338 to **Berkshire Children and Families** to help support the work of that organization. Participants in the Class of 2019 were: Alyssa Anderson, BART Charter School; Madison Tatro, Drury High School; Alex Morin, Mount Greylock Regional High School; Elena Crane Cuerda and JT Novitsky, Lenox Memorial High School; Adam Boscarino, Monument Mountain Regional High School; Aliyah Heideman, Allison Henderson, Szofia Lewis, Gwyn Smith and Emelyn Theriault, Pittsfield High School; and Annabell Allesio, Catherine Boino and Avery Price, Wahconah Regional High School.♦

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FRONT

pages

May 18: **Community Day** presented by Salisbury Bank from noon to 3 p.m. at Community Health Programs (CHP), 444 Stockbridge Rd., Great Barrington. Includes free Shred Day as part of the bank's commitment to help in the fight against identity theft, and a Food Drive to support local food pantries in the area.

May 18: **Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts 120th Commencement exercises**, with keynote speaker Richard Neal, who represents the First Congressional District of Massachusetts in the U.S. Congress and chairs the House Ways and Means Committee. 11 a.m., in the Amsler Campus Center Gymnasium. For more information, go to [www.mcla.edu/commencement](http://www.mcla.edu/commencement).

May 19: **Opening reception** at Kimball Farms Life Care for its Spring art show, LIGHT WORKS, in the Connector Gallery, featuring the work of Roselle Kline Chartock, Paul Graubard, Tom Warner, and Michael Wolski. 3 to 5 p.m. at 235 Walker St., Lenox. The public is invited to attend or to view the exhibit any day through June 24.

May 19: **The Impact of Private Philanthropy on Local Economies**, topic of panel discussion following the joint Annual Meetings of Berkshire Community Land Trust and the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires. 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Saint James Place, 352 Main St., Great Barrington. Admission is \$10 or 10 BerkShares, and free to members of the Berkshire Community Land Trust. To reserve a seat or inquire about membership, email [office@berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org](mailto:office@berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org) or call 413-528-4472.

May 20: **Ukulele4You!** free drop-in ukulele sessions at Berkshire Botanical Garden's Center House, held on the third Monday of the month through September from 4 to 5 p.m. in the Garden's Center House, 5 West Stockbridge Rd., Stockbridge. For more information, call 413-329-4141. Additional dates: June 17, July 15, Aug. 19, and Sept. 16.

May 20, 21, 23: **Understanding Paid Family Medical Leave**, free educational workshops for employers on steps they must take to comply with the 2019 Paid Family Medical Leave requirements in Massachusetts, which go into effect July 1. May 20 at 9 a.m. at City Hall in Pittsfield; May 21 at 8:30 a.m. at The Green, 85 Main St., North Adams; May 23 at 9 a.m. at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge. For more information or registration, look under events at [www.1berkshire.com](http://www.1berkshire.com).

May 21, June 18: **Pittsfield Green Drinks**, informal gathering of people interested in conservation and environmental issues on third Tuesday of each month. 5:15 p.m. at J. Allen's Clubhouse Grille. Sponsored by the Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT). For more information and meeting location, contact Elizabeth Orenstein at 413-717-1255 or [elizabeth@thebeatnews.org](mailto:elizabeth@thebeatnews.org).

the month in business

May 22: **Bridging Schools and Community Across North Berkshire**, topic of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition's monthly forum, from 5 to 7 p.m. at MCLA Church Street Center in North Adams. (Organizers of the Al Nelson Friendship Center Food Pantry at 45 Eagle St. ask friends who attend the nbCC forums to bring a non-perishable food item for donation to the pantry.) For more information, contact Amber Besaw at 413-663-7588 ext. 13 or email [abesaw@nbccoalition.org](mailto:abesaw@nbccoalition.org).

May 23: **First-Time Homebuyers Class**, free program offered by Greylock Federal Credit Union from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Greylock Insurance Agency office at Allendale Shopping Center in Pittsfield. Covers creating a budget, understanding credit and financing options, and reviewing the home-buying process. Registration required. RSVP by calling 413-236-4125.

May 25, 26: **Berkshire Pulse's 2019 Performance Celebration & Fundraiser**, supporting their Tuition Assistance Program, which makes Pulse programs accessible to everyone regardless of their ability to pay. Tickets available at the Mahaiwe Theatre Box Office, 14 Castle St., Great Barrington, online at the Mahaiwe website or by calling 413-528-0100.

May 25-27: **Official opening of "The Hospital on Main Street: Human Dignity and Mental Health,"** a new permanent exhibition presented by the Austen Riggs Center as part of its centennial celebration in 2019 (see story on page 17). Begins with opening ceremony on May 25 for invited guests; the exhibition will be free and open to the public on May 26-27 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Old Corner House, 48 Main St., Stockbridge. Throughout the summer and fall, the exhibition will be open Thursdays to Mondays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For additional information on this and other Riggs centennial events, visit [www.austenriggs.org/100](http://www.austenriggs.org/100).

May 28: **Capital Investment Program (CIP)** public meeting held by MassDOT to gather input that will help guide capital investments in transportation between 2020 and 2024. 6 p.m. at Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, 1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield. For those who unable to attend, public comments will be accepted via email until 5 p.m. on June 7 at [masscip@state.ma.us](mailto:masscip@state.ma.us). MassDOT's draft plan will be available online after May 20 at [www.mass.gov/service-details/capital-investment-plan-cip](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/capital-investment-plan-cip).

May 28: **Entrepreneurial Meetup**, free networking event presented by 1Berkshire from 8 to 10 a.m. at Framework in Pittsfield. For information, call 413-499-1600 or email [info@1berkshire.com](mailto:info@1berkshire.com).

May 29: **Chamber Nite** presented by 1Berkshire in partnership with the Stockbridge Chamber of Commerce, 5 to 7 p.m. at Fairview Hospital, 29 Lewis Ave., Great Barrington. Free for members of either organization. For information, call 413-499-1600 or email [info@1berkshire.com](mailto:info@1berkshire.com).

May 29: **Customer Service Solutions**, educational seminar featuring Jerry Posner who will share proven, practical strategies that you can use right away to provide "absolutely outrageous customer service" and exceed your customers' expectations. Presented by the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce, with two sessions from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m. at the Williams Inn. \$20 chamber members, \$35 nonmembers. For information and advanced registration, contact Susan Briggs at [info@williamstownchamber.com](mailto:info@williamstownchamber.com) or 413-458-9077.

May 30: **5th Thursday Dinner** presented by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, with the topic of tiny houses. 5 to 9 p.m. at Proprietor's Lodge, 22 Waubeek Rd., Pittsfield. For information, call 413-442-1521 or email [info@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:info@berkshireplanning.org).

May 31: **Annual symposium** of the Williams Graduate Program in the History of Art, with members of the Class of 2019 presenting scholarly papers from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Clark Art Institute auditorium. Free and open to the public. For more information, visit [clarkart.edu](http://clarkart.edu) or call 413-458-2303.

May 31: **Berkshire Community College's (BCC) 59th Commencement Exercises** featuring U.S. Sen. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) as keynote speaker. 4:30 p.m. at Tanglewood in Lenox. Open to the public. Tickets are not required.

June 1: **29th Annual Heart Hike and Community Wellness Walk** organized by the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) Cardiac Rehabilitation program. Starts at 9:30 a.m. at the Bennington Elks Lodge on Washington Avenue, with one-, two- and three-mile courses available. Free and open to all, no preregistration is required. Pre-walk warm-ups will be led by SVMC Cardiac Rehab staff. For more information, contact Cardiac Rehab at 802-447-5132.

June 1: **Breadlines and Barricades: Rebellion vs. Authority in the Lawrence Textile Mill Strike of 1912**, topic of talk by local historians about the Lawrence textile strike of 1912 – its causes, the struggle to put it down, and the women who fought for better working conditions, improved quality of life, and property rights. 2 to 4 p.m. at the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum, 67 East Rd., Adams. Free and open to the public. For more information, visit [www.susanbathonybirthplace.org](http://www.susanbathonybirthplace.org), call 413-743-7121, or email [info@susanbathonybirthplace.org](mailto:info@susanbathonybirthplace.org).

June 3: **Berkshire Business and Professional Women**, monthly networking dinner meeting to promote professional and personal development for Berkshire businesswomen. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Hotel on North in Pittsfield. For more information or to register, visit [www.berkshirebpw.org](http://www.berkshirebpw.org).

news & notes from the region



June 6: **Great Barrington Green Drinks**, informal gathering of people interested in conservation and environmental issues on first Thursday of each month. 5:30 p.m. at the Prairie Whale, 178 Main St. For more information, contact Natalie Narotzky at [nnarotzky@gmail.com](mailto:nnarotzky@gmail.com).

June 7: **First Fridays Artswalk** featuring the work of over a dozen accomplished regional artists in Pittsfield's Upstreet Cultural District from 5 to 8 p.m. Free guided walking tour begins at 5 p.m. at the Intermodal Center at BRTA, 1 Columbus Ave. Most art exhibits are on display in participating venues throughout the month. For more information and to view a listing and map of participating artists and locations, visit [www.FirstFridaysArtswalk.com](http://www.FirstFridaysArtswalk.com).

June 7: **Opening reception** at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown in celebration of its summer exhibitions, at which visitors will have the opportunity to view two special exhibitions: *Renoir: The Body, The Senses and Janet Cardiff: The Forty Part Motet*. 7:30 p.m. Free and open to the public, but reservations required. To reserve, visit [clarkart.edu](http://clarkart.edu) or call 413-458-0524. Light refreshments will be served.

June 8: **Pasta Dinner Dance** fund-raising event for the annual Fourth of July Parade in Pittsfield, with '60s music from the Happy Together Band from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Elks Club on Union Street in Pittsfield. \$20 per person which includes meal and music. For ticket information, call the Pittsfield Parade Committee at 413-447-7763.

June 8: **Stanton Home Run/Walk-a-thon & Picnic**, where participants can join the Stanton Home community for a day of accomplishment and fun, concluding with a community picnic. 10 a.m. at French Park, 65 Prospect Lake Rd., Egremont. For more information and details on ways to participate, call 413-528-0506 or email [info@stantonhome.org](mailto:info@stantonhome.org).

June 8: **6th Annual Lenox Rhubarb Festival**, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 24 Main St. in Lenox and other locations around town. Includes Rhubarb Breakfast, Rhubarb Celebration, Savory Rhubarb Contest, live performance by Eagle's Trombone Ensemble, and Rhubarb Around Town. For full schedule and additional details, go to [www.lenoxrhubarbfestival.com](http://www.lenoxrhubarbfestival.com).

June 9: **The Role of the Honeybee in Our Environment**, topic of talk by veteran beekeeper Kenneth Warchol at the fifth annual William Selke Memorial Lecture, 4 p.m. at the Stockbridge Library. Free and open to the public. For more information, call 413-298-5501 or visit [www.stockbridgelibrary.org](http://www.stockbridgelibrary.org).

June 11: **Lean Lab**, monthly meetup group designed for entrepreneurs who want to grow their businesses using lean startup methodology. Hosted by Lever Inc. from 6 to 8 p.m. at location TBA. For information, email Brent Filson at [bfilson@lever.org](mailto:bfilson@lever.org).

June 13: **Artscape's Fine Art Auction**, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Framework Coworking, 437 North St., Pittsfield. All proceeds to benefit Artscape, a volunteer committee which sponsors, plans and oversees an annual juried exhibition of public art in Pittsfield. For more information, email [artscapepittsfieldma@gmail.com](mailto:artscapepittsfieldma@gmail.com), call 413-499-9370 or go to [cityofpittsfield.org/city\\_hall/arts\\_and\\_culture/artscape/](http://cityofpittsfield.org/city_hall/arts_and_culture/artscape/).

June 13: **Stockbridge Art Walk**, presented by the Guild of Berkshire Artists and TKG Real Estate, featuring art exhibits along with open galleries and shops in downtown Stockbridge from 4 to 7 p.m. A map of participating locations is available at the TKG office at 10 Elm St. Upcoming walks scheduled for second Thursday of each month through Dec. 13. For more information, visit [www.berkshireartists.org](http://www.berkshireartists.org) or call 413-298-0610.

June 13: **Business After Hours**, networking event for members of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, 14 Castle St., Great Barrington. For information or to register, contact Betsy Andrus at 413-528-4284.

June 15: **3rd Annual Hopped Up for Health Bike, Run, and Walk** presented by Volunteers In Medicine Berkshires at Big Elm Brewery, 65 Silver St., Sheffield. Bike ride at 9:30 a.m., run/walk at 10, followed by full day of activities including brass band and fresh food from local vendors. To register to run or walk, go to: <https://bit.ly/2XAbiNM>. To register to bike, go to: <https://www.bikereg.com/hopped-up-for-health>. Registration on the event day will be open until 9 a.m. at Big Elm Brewery.

June 20: **Music Therapy and MS: Music-Based Interventions for Self-Care**, free educational program presented by the MS Support Foundation, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Orchards Hotel in Williamstown. Features guest speaker Jacquelyn Holloway, director of recreation at Sweetwood of Williamstown. Dinner is included. Pre-register by June 12 at 844-280-7292 or [officestaff@msresource.org](mailto:officestaff@msresource.org).

June 22: **2nd annual Scavenger Hunt** hosted by Berkshire HorseWorks, with all proceeds going towards funding EAGALA Model Equine Assisted Psychotherapy, life skill development, and team building programs for children, families and veterans with mental health and behavioral challenges. Begins at 10 a.m. at Berkshire HorseWorks ranch, 101 Patton Rd., Richmond. For full details and registration, visit [berkshirehorseworks.com](http://berkshirehorseworks.com). For information on becoming a sponsor, contact Hayley Sumner at 310-488-9777 or at [info@berkshirehorseworks.com](mailto:info@berkshirehorseworks.com).

Ongoing: **Berkshire Business Builders** networking meeting every Thursday morning from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. at 55 Church Street in Pittsfield. All business people looking for an opportunity to network are invited. For information, call Kathy Hazelett at 413-442-8581. ♦



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Intrapreneur Challenge

continued from page 1

the winner of the Berkshire Health Technology Challenge, held on May 9 at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield.

Earlier this year, United Aircraft Technologies was named the winner of Lever’s Berkshire Manufacturing Innovation Challenge for its business plan to develop and manufacture lighter, ergonomically designed wiring clamps for the aviation industry.

In addition to the \$25,000 in seed funding, winners of these competitions also get four months of incubation at Lever at no cost, along with other assistance and support to place the start-ups on a path to growth and job creation.

Filson explained that, while similar in basic concept and structure to these competitions, the Intrapreneur Challenge will instead work with established companies from diverse business sectors which are developing innovative ideas for new revenue streams within the scope of their operations.

These ideas may include existing projects that a company has on the shelf as well as new ones developed specifically as part of their participation in the Intrapreneur Challenge.

“Whether they’re existing projects or those brainstormed on the spot, what this program offers is a way to learn how to experiment with these types of projects in a very low-risk way,” said Filson.

He emphasized that the projects participants bring to the challenge will not be ones aimed at reducing costs through enhanced operational efficiency and productivity. Rather, he said, the focus is on fostering innovation within the company to identify and develop new products or services that have the potential to generate new revenue streams.

Innovation culture

“This is an area I’ve always had a passion for,” Filson said, noting that his own profes-

sional background prior to joining Lever in 2017 included consulting work to promote an internal entrepreneurial spirit within large corporations. This primarily involved the use of lean start-up principals, which focus on low-risk methodologies for experimenting with new products or services to assess their potential for revenue growth before bringing them to the market.

While these strategies can be a vital part of the development process for start-ups, they can also play a valuable role in established businesses by promoting and rewarding an internal culture of innovation.

Filson noted that, for a region like the Berkshires, development of an innovation culture within individual companies can also help foster a broader “innovation cluster” within the regional economy.

“In a region like the Berkshires, we don’t have access to the large research institutions that play a role in some innovation clusters,” he said. “But what we do have is significant intellectual capital right here within our existing firms.”

Citing studies showing that the presence of innovative companies in a region has more of an impact on the organic formation of vibrant innovation clusters than proximity to research centers, he said the raw materials are on hand to fuel the growth of innovation within the Berkshires.

“We have the ability to transform ourselves into an innovation hub by tapping our existing resources – the intellectual capital within the walls of our local companies – and not only incentivizing new innovation but also highlighting the innovation that’s happening already,” Filson said. “In the long term, that can help attract new firms that want to be a part of this ecosystem, and attract the talent and younger workers needed to sustain its growth.”

One step in that direction is the upcoming Intrapreneur Challenge, which itself is something of an innovation.

“There is no model for this,” said Filson.

“We haven’t found an example of this elsewhere, and those we’ve talked to haven’t heard of a program like this before. So, it’s an experiment of sorts.”

**Application process**

This experiment begins with the process of lining up a pool of participants for the Intrapreneur Challenge. Filson said an application window will be open from June 3-14. In advance of that, he has been engaged in informal discussions with local companies that may be a good fit for the program.

The basic criteria that companies must meet to be considered for the program include being based in the Berkshires and having net annual revenues greater than \$500,000.

“I’ve been reaching out personally to individual companies through our network,” he said, noting that they are aiming for a target of 10 companies to participate in the program. He added that other businesses interested in participating in the competition can contact him at [bfilson@leverinc.org](mailto:bfilson@leverinc.org) for more information on the program and application process.

This outreach period ahead of the actual application window is what Filson referred to as the “ideation” stage, in which companies identify the innovation that they want to develop and select a team of intrapreneurs to lead the initiative. Filson noted that he and others at Lever are available to assist these teams with the ideation process in advance of their formal application.

For companies selected to participate in the challenge, the next stage is “validation” – a summer-long period during which the teams work on advancing their innovation projects. Throughout this process they will have access to resources from Lever, including regular consulting from its staff and research assistance from a crew of interns who have been hired specifically to support the Intrapreneur Challenge.

The teams will also attend a series of three half-day workshops that cover low-risk modern entrepreneurial strategies for

established companies. “These workshops will show them how to experiment with new sources of revenue before having to bring that concept to market,” said Filson.

Following this validation stage, all teams will submit final presentations on their innovations to a panel of judges comprised of investment professionals. The judges will select four finalists to compete in the pitch competition at Lever’s first Innovation Summit, an all-day public event scheduled for Oct. 3 (more details to be announced).

Filson noted that this process of selecting participants and finalists differs from that used by Lever for its previous challenges. In those, the four finalists were selected from the initial pool of applicants, and then went on to the multi-month validation process for their business concepts.

With the Intrapreneur Challenge, all of the participating companies continue through the validation stage before being winnowed down to finalists for the pitch competition. This is significant, he said, in that the companies all gain access to the consulting, research assistance and workshops that can be of ongoing value to them in development of these or future innovation projects.

“There are definite benefits for all participating companies,” he said. “They’ll have an opportunity to conduct experiments during the summer on the market potential for their product or service, and we expect that they will be able to apply this experience to other innovations going forward.”

The winning team will receive \$25,000 to be used on development of their innovation, along with four months of consulting from Lever geared towards bringing the product or service to market and strengthening innovation systems within the company.

As with the earlier competitions, the Intrapreneur Challenge is supported by a combined \$450,000 in grant funding Lever secured in 2018 from the Mass Life Sciences Center, the Mass Tech Collaborative, Berkshire Bank and Williams College.◆



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## people on the move

**Gina Nickels-Nelson**, MS, FNP, who practices at CHP Berkshire Pediatrics in Pittsfield, has authored "Adolescent ownership of asthma health: A concept analysis," which is now published in *Wiley Nursing Forum*, an academic nursing journal. Nickels-Nelson is a candidate for a doctor of nursing practice degree at the University of Texas at Tyler. Her paper focuses on the concept of teaching patients "ownership" of their asthma, a chronic medical condition that impairs breathing and requires the use of inhalers for treatment. In addition to its health impacts, asthma can adversely impacts school attendance, participation in sports and other activities. Patient ownership of health conditions is a newer concept in care and is readily applicable to a variety of chronic health conditions. Nickels-Nelson is already successfully using this new technique in her work with patients at CHP Berkshire Pediatrics.

TR Wells Custom Framers of Dalton has announced the addition of **Susan Warden** to its staff. Warden, who brings over 20 years of office management, bookkeeping and organizational skills, will handle the office management of TR Wells Custom Framers as well as the daily operations of its new Teak Property Management division.

Berkshire Bank has announced the 2019 Volunteer Service X-ellence Award winners. Each year, the bank recognizes employees for their volunteerism in the community by naming three top volunteers, who are selected based on their strong record of volunteerism to nonprofit organizations through both company-supported activities and individual service in the broader community. Each of the award winners receives a \$1,000 donation that will be made to the nonprofit organization of their choice. This year's Volunteer X-ellence Award winners are: **Shanatia Bygrave**, financial services representative in Hudson, N.Y.; **Leonard O'Dea**, money desk officer in Pittsfield; and **Melissa Myers**, compliance analyst in Pittsfield. In addition to the three Volunteer Service X-ellence Award recipients, Berkshire Bank named 26 employees to their Community Service Honor Roll. The employees eligible for the Honor Roll completed a minimum of 150 hours of volunteer service in the last calendar year. Honor Roll recipients each receive a \$500 donation that will be put towards the nonprofit organization of their choice. Berkshire County honorees included: **Erin Albert**, **Marcy Canaday**, **Renee DeSantis**, **Daniel Elias**, **Vincent Higuera**, **Scott Holzhauer**, **Kevin Murphy** and **Leonard O'Dea**.

Lee Bank has announced the promotion of **Paula Lewis** to the position of senior vice president of retail lending. Lewis joined Lee Bank in 2012 as vice president of mortgage loan operations, bringing two decades of lending experience in the Berkshires. She was promoted to first vice president of retail lending in 2017. In her new position, Lewis joins the senior officer team and continues to oversee residential lending. Lewis is also a member of Lee Bank's ALCO committee and its executive loan committee.



Lewis

**Tara Franklin**, well-known to area audiences for her stage work, has joined the staff of Chester Theatre Company in the dual role of associate artistic director and director of education. Additionally, this summer she will appear in Martin Zimmerman's *On the Exhale*, a one-woman tour-de-force written in the wake of the events at Sandy Hook, Conn. A Berkshire native, Franklin has enjoyed a professional career in the theater for the past 20 years, working in New York, Chicago and regionally. Locally, she has been seen in numerous productions with the Berkshire Theatre Group, where she also began her career as an educator, both as an artist-in-residence and the head of the apprenticeship program. Now in its 30th season, Chester Theatre Company produces four plays each summer, during which it trains, houses and provides stipends for seven to eight interns, all of whom are embarking on their own professional careers in the arts.

Salisbury Bancorp Inc. has announced the appointment of a new executive officer of the bank and a change in title for an existing executive officer. **Amy Raymond** has been named executive vice president, chief retail banking officer, CRA officer. Raymond had previously served as senior vice president, retail lending and commercial operations, CRA officer since April 2015. **Elizabeth Summerville** has been named executive vice president, chief retail and loan operations officer. Previously she had served as executive vice president, chief retail officer since May 2014.



Raymond



Summerville

**Anna Jaysane-Darr**, an assistant professor of anthropology at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), is preparing for the second of three summers of ethnographic fieldwork in Cape Town, South Africa, where she is studying the work of therapists, educators and clinicians who work with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Her research is being supported by a \$28,000 grant from the Spencer Foundation for Education Research, which she received in spring 2018, leading to her first field summer involving participant observation and interviews in several autism schools. Subsequent research trips to South Africa will take place this summer and in summer 2020. Jaysane-Darr expects her research will contribute to a stronger understanding of the impact of ASD on communities, and provide deeper knowledge of how special education can be strengthened not only in South Africa, but also more broadly in the Global South.

Hillcrest Educational Centers (HEC) has announced that staff members **Aaliyah Alexander** and **Ricky Burston** have been selected to fill new retention specialist positions, which were created to provide an extra layer of support for staff in their work with some of the most challenging students in the Northeast. In their new roles, Alexander and Burston will visit HEC campuses, identify issues, and work with direct care staff to create resolutions in order to keep the HEC team strong. Alexander has been an HEC employee since 2015. Prior to this position, she was a youth development professional at HEC's Autism Spectrum Disorder program. She has expertise in crisis prevention and intervention as a certified TCI instructor for HEC. Burston is a veteran staff member who joined HEC in 1996. He has held multiple positions at several program sites including direct care, supervisory, and stepping up to be an acting teacher when necessary. Burston is nationally credentialed as a Residential Child and Youth Care Professional.



Alexander



Burston

**Eleanore Velez**, Berkshire Community College's coordinator of the Multicultural Center, has been recognized by Amplify Latinx as a 2019 Latina Leader. Amplify Latinx is a Boston-based, non-partisan, collaborative movement whose mission is to build Latinx economic and political power by significantly increasing Latinx civic engagement and representation in leadership position across sectors. In celebration of Women's History Month, Amplify Latinx selected 11 outstanding Latina Leaders who exemplify the best in their professions and who are lifting others as they climb. Velez has over 25 years of experience working with cross-cultural initiatives. At BCC, she has assumed a leadership role in fostering a welcoming and engaging campus for students from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds so that they can thrive and achieve their full potential. Through the years she has been a liaison and advocate with community agencies enhancing the dialogue that leads to deeper community integration.

Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) has welcomed **Scott McDonald**, DO, to the SVMC Emergency Department. McDonald, who is board certified in family medicine, has worked in the Emergency Department of Newport Hospital and Health Services in Washington. In addition to his work experience, McDonald has conducted scholarly research in hospital-acquired infections and preoperative evaluation.



McDonald

**Jenna Grace Sciuto**, a professor in the English/communications department at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), has been selected as an NEH Summer Scholar to attend one of 20 summer seminars and institutes supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The NEH is a federal agency that each summer supports enrichment opportunities at colleges, universities and cultural institutions, so faculty can work in collaboration and study with experts in humanities disciplines. Sciuto will participate in an institute titled "Jose Marti and the Immigrant Communities of Florida in Cuban Independence and the Dawn of the American Century." The four-week program will be held at the University of Tampa in Florida.

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### Bruce Rosenhein, PA

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**Board Certification:** National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants  
**Teaching Experience:** Clinical Associate Professor, Bay Path University, University of New England, Westfield State University

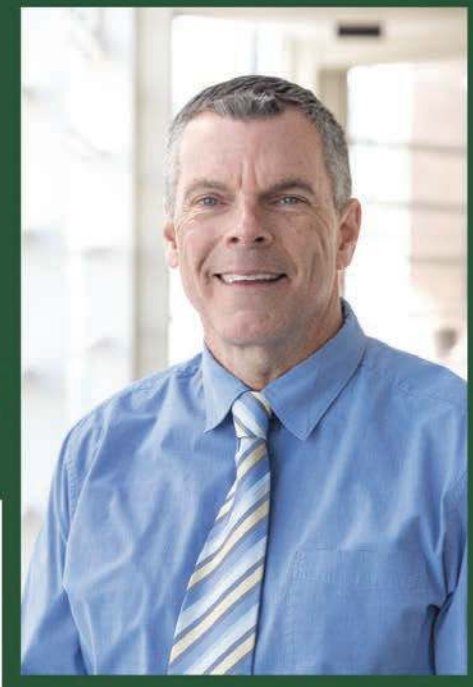
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news & notes from the region



**Clark**

**Ina Clark** has joined Jacob's Pillow, home to America's longest running dance festival, as director of development, where she will oversee all aspects of the development operation to steward and expand individual donor relationships as well as build institutional, government, and corporate support. Clark's professional experience includes positions in advertising and government with over 20 years in fund-raising and marketing leadership at nonprofits, with a focus on issues like the arts, women's rights and education. At Jacob's Pillow, Clark will work closely with Director Pamela Tatge, Deputy Director A.J. Pietrantone, and Jacob Pillow's board of trustees to set comprehensive multi-year development and stewardship strategies in support of the Pillow's near and long-term goals.

**Nate Tomkiewicz** with Berkshire Money Management (BMM) has recently become a Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor (CRPC) by completing a course program through the College for Financial Planning. In addition to his work with the College for Financial Planning, Tomkiewicz in December completed an accelerated degree program to receive his Bachelor of Science in Business from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and became a full-time financial advisor at BMM. Tomkiewicz, who at 22 is the firm's youngest team member, began as an intern at BMM three years ago.

**John Patrick Jr.** has been appointed to the New England Advisory Board of NBT Bank and will serve in the role of vice chair. The advisory board is comprised of business leaders from markets served by NBT across the region. Patrick has over 30 years of experience in the financial services industry. He served as chairman, president and CEO of First Connecticut Bancorp Inc. from 2011 to 2018 and as chairman, president and CEO of Farmington Bank from 2008 to 2018. Prior to that, he was president of Connecticut Operations at TD Bank.



Patrick

The 2019 Lawrence Strattner Distinguished Citizen Award, sponsored by the Western Massachusetts Council, Boy Scouts of America, will be presented May 23 at Pittsfield Country Club to Berkshire County Sheriff **Thomas Bowler**. This annual award, named after the past president of the Berkshire Life Insurance Company and respected community leader, is presented to a recipient chosen for renowned community service and civic participation.

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) has announced the recipients of the Ninth Annual Berkshire County Educator Recognition Award. This award, given by MCLA in collaboration with Berkshire County K-12 superintendents and Berkshire Community College, was created to honor the region's exceptional teachers. This year's awardees are **Lisa Corkins**, executive director of Williamstown Community Preschool; **Michele Puleri**, fifth grade teacher at Lee Elementary School; and **Kathleen Erickson**, mathematics teacher at Monument Mountain High School. They were recognized at a May 2 event at MCLA's Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation.



**Herzberg**

**Lesley Herzberg** has been selected to serve as the new executive director of the Berkshire County Historical Society at Herman Melville's Arrowhead in Pittsfield. Since coming to the Berkshires in 2009 Herzberg has worked for the Frelinhuysen Morris House and Studio in Lenox, the Bidwell House Museum in Monterey, and Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield. Prior to her move to this area she worked for Leslie Hindman Auctioneers in Chicago and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

WAM Theatre has added two new members to the 10-year-old nonprofit organization's leadership team. Long-time WAM artist **Lia Russell-Self** has been named the new associate producing director, and **Kristen Perlman** has joined the organization as philanthropy manager.

The Berkshire United Way (BUW) has announced that **Candace Winkler** will succeed **Kristine Hazzard** as the organization's CEO and executive director. Winkler comes to BUW from Santa Barbara, Calif., where she served as president of the local Scholarship Foundation. She earlier spent 14 years in Alaska, working on early childhood education initiatives, and running the Alaska Community Foundation. Her professional roles have involved partnering with local United Way organizations as a funded partner or collaborator. Winkler will overlap with the retiring Hazzard in June on a part-time basis and will begin her full-time solo tenure in Pittsfield on July 1.



Winkler

Southwestern Vermont Medical Center's ExpressCare in Bennington has welcomed Family Nurse Practitioner **Robert (Tony) Majors**. With this appointment, Majors also joins the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Putnam Medical Group. Most recently Majors worked as a family nurse practitioner at K's Diet Clinic in Trenton, Ga.; at the Walmart Care Clinic in Dalton/Rome, Ga.; and at Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority in Cherokee, N.C. He worked as a registered nurse in emergency departments and intensive care units for 14 years and as a paramedic for 10 years.



Majors



Cameron

Sand Springs Recreational Center in Williamstown has hired **Adam Cameron** as its new executive director. Cameron grew up in Williamstown and spent many summer days at Sand Springs as a child. He moved back to town after living in Cincinnati, and Albany, N.Y. Most recently, he was a digital consultant for an academic media firm while operating his other business ventures here in the Berkshires. ♦

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BERKSHIRE FOOD CO-OP

Home stretch for store’s expansion, relocation project

BY JOHN TOWNES

The Berkshire Food Co-op in Great Barrington is in the final stages of a move that will be a short distance geographically but a major leap in terms of its size and operations.

The member-owned cooperative grocery store is preparing to relocate from its present site at 42 Bridge St. into the new Powerhouse Square mixed-use development at 44 Bridge St. That move is slated to be completed in

early June, according to marketing manager Jill Maldonado.

The new store is directly west of the current market, which will be demolished when the move has been completed to create additional parking.

The Co-op’s new location will roughly double its total space from 7,100 to 13,900 square feet. This will include about 7,600 square feet of retail space, and 6,300 square feet of back-room operations and offices.

“The first thing people will notice when they walk into the new store will be how spacious it is, with wider aisles that will be easier for shoppers to navigate,” said Maldonado.

The larger site will allow the market to significantly expand its offerings and better serve the public, she said.

“We’ll have over 700 brand-new items that we couldn’t carry before because of our limited space,” said Maldonado. “This will

allow for greater variety, while still maintaining our standards for healthy products. It’s a fine line to walk, but we’re confident we can maintain that balance.”

Maldonado added that there will also be more emphasis on competitive pricing.

“Being larger will give us greater buying power than before,” she said. “We want to make it more accessible to everyone to buy quality food at an affordable price.”

There will also be a greater focus on improving their ability to offer competitive prices through price auditing, she said.

“We’ll have two staff members who monitor trends in the overall food market and stay on top of pricing at other stores,” she said. “This will enable us to offer the best prices possible.”

**“Being larger will give us greater buying power than before. We want to make it more accessible to everyone to buy quality food at an affordable price.”**

Maldonado noted that a temporary crew from the National Cooperative of Grocers will assist with the final steps.

“We already have most of the shelving and equipment in place, and are ordering inventory,” she said. “We’ll have a blow-out sale to sell as much of the inventory from the current store as we can before the move.”

The larger store will have new equipment and fixtures. “The equipment in our current store has been outdated, so we’ll either sell or scrap most of it,” Maldonado said.

The new store will have 48 feet of refrigerated space for fresh produce by the entrance, which is double the previous size. “In addition to offering a greater selection, it will allow more room for items from local producers,” she said.

There will also be two islands for dry goods, which will provide four times the space as the previous store.

“Another major change will be in our prepared-food counter for sandwiches, grab-and-go meals and other items,” Maldonado said. “It will be 24 feet long, which will be a big improvement over the small cramped counter we’ve had.”

The “hot bar” of soups and cooked meal items for take-out or on-site consumption will also be enlarged, and features such as a rice cooker to ensure freshness and moisture will be added.

The cafe section will be enlarged about 30 percent and will extend along the front, offering views of the hills on the eastern side of Great Barrington.

“A major difference is that the cafe will be further away from the food preparation area,” said Maldonado. “That will make it significantly quieter in the cafe. It will be possible to have a conversation without being interrupted by noise of the preparation equipment.”

The Co-op’s staff will be increased from 60 employees to about 70 people initially.

The Berkshire Food Co-op (<https://berkshire.coop>) is a community-based for-profit business that is owned by its members. Its goals are to serve as a source of fresh, wholesome food, support the local economy and producers, and provide other services to the community. It currently has about 3,500 member-owners.

However, all members of the public can shop there.



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**Designed for Co-op’s use**

This will be the third location for the Berkshire Food Co-op (413-528-9697 or <https://berkshire.coop>), which was established by a group of local families in 1981 in a small section of the Granary building on Rossiter Street across town. It was expanded there to 2,200 square feet in 1993.

The Co-op moved into its present quarters after renovating an existing building in 2003.

The new space was made available to the Co-op with a long-term lease by the developers of Powerhouse Square, a mix of commercial and residential space. That project, which will ultimately include two buildings, is in the final stage of completion of the first structure (*February 2019 BT&C*).

“This is the first time we’ll be in a space that we could design specifically for our use, so we’ve been able to create a layout and features that make sense for customers and our operations,” said Maldonado.

Powerhouse Square is built on a slightly sloping site along Bridge Street. The Berkshire Co-op will be located in a space on its base level that opens directly onto the parking lot.

Maldonado said the exact opening date will be determined by progress on the final details, but it is expected to be in early June.

“For some reason, Wednesday is the traditional date for opening grocery stores,” she said. “So the official opening day will be the first Wednesday that it is ready.”

The co-op is only expected to be closed for a day or two to accommodate the move.



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As of early May, finishing touches were still in progress for the main entrance of the new Berkshire Food Co-op. Work is also wrapping up on the residential condominium units on the building's upper levels.

“We’re like any retail grocery store,” said Maldonado. “Membership is open to anyone who chooses to purchase an equity share (a one-time fee of \$150) to support its mission and participate in elections of board members. And, in years when we make a profit, that is distributed to member-owners. But you don’t have to be a member to shop here.”

**Financial backing for relocation**  
The overall cost of the Co-op’s move is about \$4.5 million.

“About half of that was provided by owner-investors, who provided individual loans, which will be repaid with interest,” said Maldonado. “Some of those people chose not to accept interest, to support the Co-op. The rest was financed through a traditional loan from the Cooperative Fund of New England.”

*“We have the same smiles with wider aisles.”*

Maldonado noted that, while the store will be larger, they have tried to maintain its personal environment rather than becoming a homogenous, impersonal supermarket. “Even though the space is larger, it’s still on the smaller side of grocery stores and supermarkets,” she said. “We’ve kept a neutral color palate to make it simple but bright and comfortable. I’ve described our goal by saying we have the same smiles with wider aisles.” While the move and expansion will have immediate benefits for customers, Maldonado noted that it will also support the Co-op’s mission in other ways. “This is not just a corporation expanding for its own sake,” she said. “It will also increase our ability to buy locally, hire more people, put more money back into the community, and support our other activities.” ♦

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## SKILLS & training

# Goodwill opens Career Center in North Adams

*Provides dedicated space for employment programs*

BY BRAD JOHNSON

The recent reallocation of some space within the North Adams retail store operated by Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires and Southern Vermont Inc. has created a dedicated space for employment-related programs and services offered by the nonprofit organization.

This comes at a time when Goodwill has been expanding and reorganizing these programs to make them both more effective and more user-friendly in terms of access and scheduling.

"We keep looking at our programs as we go along," said Kathy Anker, director of mission services at Goodwill. "Everything evolves."

"A big part of what Kathy and others are doing involves putting together programs that address barriers to employment and barriers to independence," added Goodwill CEO David Twiggs. "That ties in directly with our overall mission, and we are very glad to be able to expand access to these programs with our new Career Center in North Adams."

The North Adams Career Center, which had a grand-opening ceremony on May 8, is based within Goodwill's retail store at 166 State St.

Anker explained that the space had previously been used for a "Suit Your Self" boutique, which focused on affordably priced workplace clothing and professional attire needed for job interviews and other work-related situations. A similar boutique which had operated at Goodwill's retail store on Dalton Avenue in Pittsfield has also been phased out.

While the boutiques are gone, Suit Your Self has evolved into a more comprehensive program of one-on-one counseling for job search, interview preparation and coaching, along with assistance on appropriate attire. This program is now offered in the North Adams Career Center and at Goodwill's headquarters at 158 Tyler St. in Pittsfield.

Anker noted that Goodwill is also working to establish a stand-alone Suit Your Self program in Williamstown by later this summer at a location still to be determined.

### Group and individual programs

With some minor renovations, the North Adams boutique space has been transformed into an enclosed, private setting for group workshops and individual counseling and assistance.

"We had been doing some of these programs [in North Adams] for some time at various locations on a limited basis," said Anker. "We never had a permanent, dedicated location until now."

The North Adams Career Center is equipped with computers, printers and other office equipment for use by individuals seeking assistance with job search, resume writing and related activities. Walk-in hours at the Career Center are Monday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Wednesday from 1 to 4 p.m.



Kathy Anker, director of mission services at Goodwill, says the new Career Center within the organization's North Adams retail store provides a dedicated space for one-on-one counseling and assistance as well as group programs such as the three-day Employability Workshop, which is held the first week of each month.

The Career Center is also set up with tables and classroom equipment for the Gateway to Employment Employability Workshop, a 12-hour program spread over three days that focuses on so-called "soft skills" – the interpersonal and communications skills that are important for both the job interview and successful integration into the workplace.

"They're life skills, the things we all need to work and interact with others," said Anker. These include communication, organization, teamwork, punctuality, critical thinking, social skills, creativity, problem solving, interpersonal communication, adaptability and friendliness.

She noted that the Employability Workshop complements the one-on-one counseling and assistance offered at the Career Center, and serves as a suggested prerequisite for other workshops and programs that Goodwill offers. "It's not required for the other programs, but we strongly encourage people to do this first because it emphasizes skills that are important in all aspects of work and life," said Anker.

The Employability Workshop is offered in North Adams during the first week of each month on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. In Pittsfield it is offered on the third week of each month on the same daily schedule.

Another program offered by Goodwill is Gateway to Employment Retail. This is

a 12-week course (held three days a week) that is modeled after the National Retail Federation's Rise Up program. While this program focuses on skills needed for jobs and careers in a retail setting, Anker noted that these skills are readily transferrable to other similar workplace environments such

***"A big part of what Kathy and others are doing involves putting together programs that address barriers to employment and barriers to independence," added Goodwill CEO David Twiggs. "That ties in directly with our overall mission, and we are very glad to be able to expand access to these programs with our new Career Center in North Adams."***

as banking, hospitality and customer service. Those successfully completing the program receive Rise Up certification, which is nationally recognized.

Goodwill also offers Gateway to Employment Custodial Training, an accredited program from the Cleaning Management Institute that is held three days a week over eight weeks.

"Our Custodial Training program is OSHA approved and offers nationally recog-

nized certification where students gain the skills necessary to be employed in custodial, maintenance and housekeeping positions," said Anker.

The retail and custodial programs are currently offered only at Goodwill's Tyler Street headquarters. Anker noted that they involve 70-percent classroom time and 30-percent hand-on instruction and experience.

### Supported by store operations

While Goodwill's employment programs and one-on-one counseling are technically open to anyone seeking assistance, most participants come via referrals from various state and local human service agencies.

"We prefer an agency referral," said Anker. "But we won't turn anyone away." She said those seeking information can email [missionservices@goodwill-berkshires.org](mailto:missionservices@goodwill-berkshires.org) or call 413-442-0061 and ask for a member of the mission services team.

These and other programs are supported in part by revenues generated by the organization's retail store operations. Other funding comes from various grant sources from both the public and private sectors. For example, establishment of the new Career Center was supported by funding from the Northern Berkshire United Way.

Goodwill's retail stores provide a venue for hands-on training for individuals in the Rise Up retail program. They also create a number of job openings that are sometimes filled by individuals participating in Goodwill's workshops.

"We work with area employers and assist with placements," said Anker. "But we also see a number of job placements at our own stores."

With the addition of the North Adams Career Center and recent expansion of the organization's Great Barrington store (*see related story*), Anker said she anticipates being able to offer the Rise Up and Custodial courses and other workshops in those parts of the county in the near future.

"We would need to allocate space within the Great Barrington store itself, or find other space in south county," she said. "In North Adams, we now have the space with the Career Center, so it's just a matter working out logistics of bringing the programs up there."

In addition to enhanced access to these existing programs on a geographic level, Anker said Goodwill is also looking to expand the scope of programs that it offers.

"We're always looking to bring on new programs that meet a need in the community," she said. She cited a certificate program in human services as one example of things being considered down the road.

Overall, with the new Career Center and expansion of programs, Anker said she and others involved in mission services take great satisfaction in being able to help people break down the barriers to employment and independence. "The Goodwill spirit is really important," she said. "We really care about the people who come in the door." ♦

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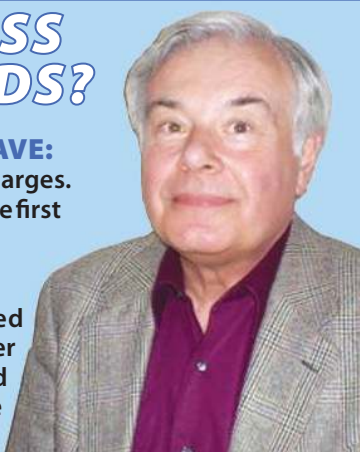
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# Goodwill Industries

continued from page 1

For the first 10 years, the organization’s presence was in the form of an ADC – or Attended Donation Center – a large parked truck that accommodated donations of clothing and other goods from members of the community. These donations were then transported to other Goodwill facilities in the region for processing.

In 2016 Goodwill took the significant step of opening a retail store in Great Barrington in a portion of a former auto dealership building on Stockbridge Road. This became the organization’s first store in the southern Berkshires, joining others in Pittsfield and North Adams, as well as locations in Bennington and Rutland, Vt.

Until the opening of a small 700-square-foot store in downtown Lee in 2017, the Great Barrington store was the smallest one operated by the organization. “We had 1,200 square feet for the storefront, and 2,500 square feet total,” said Twiggs. By comparison, the Rutland store has a sales floor of 8,000 square feet, followed by 6,600 square feet in North Adams, 6,000 in Pittsfield, and 4,700 in Bennington.

“We opened our store in Great Barrington in summer 2016, and within a few months we had outgrown the space we had there,” said Twiggs.

Most immediately apparent, he said, was that the backroom space was too limited to handle the volume of donated goods and merchandise coming into the location. This necessitated the expense of stationing an ADC truck on the site for added capacity.

The store’s modest sales floor also soon proved to be inadequate due to an unanticipated change in the local marketplace. In the fall of 2016 it was announced that the Kmart store in Great Barrington would close by year’s end. The loss of the discount retailer had an immediate impact on Goodwill’s nearby store, as value-conscious shoppers looked for new alternatives.

“We have synergies with the Kmart and Marshalls and Dollar Trees of the world,” said Twiggs. “So, when Kmart closed, it left a big gap in the market, and that translated into a higher demand for more textile goods at our store. As a result, we were driven to look for a larger place immediately.”

As is often the case, “looking” does not necessarily mean “finding” – and for some time the organization came up short in its scouting efforts for a larger location.

## Site attracts helpful buyer

However, when the declining fortunes of another national retailer contributed to the closing of the Sears Hometown Store in Great Barrington last year, things began aligning in a way that ultimately led to Goodwill’s relocation to that site.

“We’ve liked that Sears building for some time,” said Twiggs, noting that its features made it exactly the sort of building that Goodwill hoped to eventually find for its own use. Among those features are its ample size, with 8,300 square feet of total space and a sales floor of 5,600 square feet, a rear loading



Lead processor Wendy Coulter arranges merchandise during preparations for the opening of the new Goodwill store, which has a 5,600-square-foot sales floor compared to 1,200 square feet at its original location.

dock, ample customer parking, and easy access right along Stockbridge Road (Route 7).

So, with the closing of the Sears operation there, Goodwill was quick to look into the building’s availability. “When the building went on the market, we inquired about its cost,” said Twiggs, adding that this inquiry revealed that the building was out of Goodwill’s price range.

The Sears site had also caught the attention of another potential buyer, real estate investor Craig Barnum of North Egremont, who also had connections to Twiggs and Goodwill, and was aware of the organization’s search for a new location.

“I had known Craig from a previous relationship,” said Twiggs, noting that he got a call from Barnum shortly after the Sears site went on the market. “I said let’s get together and see where this goes.”

Barnum noted that his basic approach to investing in commercial real estate in the region is to look for situations where he is able to line up a ready tenant prior to the purchase, rather than holding a vacant property over time until a new use takes shape.

“I try to buy things with a pathway for the property to stand by itself and be financially sustainable,” he said.

In the case of the Sears property, which was bundled with an adjacent commercial building, Barnum saw an opportunity to help Goodwill find the larger location it needs while also securing a solid long-term tenant for a building he was looking to purchase.

“I like being a resource for businesses and organizations who need space but don’t want to own a building,” Barnum said. “I can move more quickly and be more flexible with the purchase of a property, and can often get a better price.”

Over the course of a few months Barnum and Twiggs worked out a lease arrangement, and in early February Barnum completed his purchase of the property for \$1.2 million from Cegam LLC, with financing provided by Lee Bank.

“We worked hard at it and got all our ducks in a row,” said Twiggs. “It was a perfect arrangement for Craig and us and the community.”

In the few months since the purchase, Twiggs said the organization has been busy preparing the building to become Goodwill’s new home in Great Barrington. “We are retrofitting it to our model,” he said, noting that no major construction was necessary for that process.

With the larger store and processing facility, employment is also slated to rise. Twiggs noted that the new location will have a staff of about 16 to 20 full- and part-time employees, compared to eight to 12 at the prior location.

## Volunteer origins

The store’s relocation marks the first significant expansion of Goodwill’s operations since Twiggs assumed the position of CEO in late 2017. However, he has been directly involved in guiding Goodwill’s growth since joining the organization six years ago.

“I came to Goodwill originally as a volunteer,” said Twiggs. “I’m real big on giving back to the community.”

With an extensive background in retail logistics with local operations of national retailers such as Macy’s and Target, Twiggs was soon recruited by then Goodwill CEO Frank Engels to formally join the organization’s management team. “I have a background in logistics, and Frank felt that was a good fit for where Goodwill was heading,” he said.

After a few years as logistics director and chief operating officer, Twiggs was tapped to succeed Engels when he announced plans to retire in 2017.

“So, starting as a volunteer has led me to a variety of things here,” said Twiggs. “Goodwill finds people like myself and the 100 or so people that we have on our team here.”

Another example of a volunteer transitioning to a high-level management position is Kathy Anker, who serves as director of mission services. In that capacity she has been directly involved in the opening of Goodwill’s new Career Center in North Adams and other related programming initiatives.

“Six years ago I was looking for work and started to volunteer at Goodwill,” said Anker, noting that she found herself in a situation shared by many people at the older end of the workforce range. “I was over 60 at the time and knew how difficult it can be for ‘mature workers’ to find positions,” she said.

With her many years of corporate training and management experience, Anker soon transitioned from volunteering to overseeing the core programs that Goodwill offers that address barriers to employment and barriers to independence.

“Everybody has a skill that you can bring out,” said Anker. “That’s my philosophy.”

That philosophy sets the overall tone at Goodwill – both in terms of its own hiring and the assistance it offers to others.

“I’m very fortunate to have an amazing staff,” said Twiggs. “It’s important to remember that this is the community’s Goodwill, and that’s how we approach everything that we do here.”◆

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Dr. Suk Namkoong, SVMC orthopedic surgeon and team physician for the North Adams SteepleCats baseball team, with team members

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(Left to right) Amy Wheaton, PA-C; Suk Namkoong, MD; Matthew Nofziger, MD; Michaela Schneiderbauer, MD; James Whittum, MD; Samuel Smith, Jr., PA-C; Ivette Guttman, MD; Kendra Isbell, PA-C; Katherine Kelleher, FNP-BC; Jessica Moses, FNP; Paul Donovan, DO

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ON THE *record*

# AUSTEN RIGGS CENTER AT 100

*An interview with CEO Eric Plakun on the psychiatric hospital’s prominent role in mental health treatment, research and education*

This year is the 100th anniversary of the Austen Riggs Center, which was established in 1919 by its namesake Austen Fox Riggs MD. Located in several buildings along Main Street in the center of Stockbridge, the Austen Riggs Center has had an influential role in the field of mental health treatment as a psychiatric hospital and residential treatment program, and as center for related research and education.

It has also been a prominent employer in the small southern Berkshire town, with a staffing level currently at 136 FTEs.

In the following interview, Medical Director/CEO Eric Plakun (MD, FACPpsych, DLFAPA) discusses the mission, role and strategies of the Austen Riggs Center in mental health treatment and recovery.

Prior to his appointment as medical director and CEO last November, Plakun had been on the staff of the Austen Riggs Center as associate medical director and as director of admissions for 33 years.

Plakun received his medical degree from the Columbia College of Physicians & Surgeons. After an internship in medicine at Dartmouth, he worked as a rural general practitioner in Vermont before completing a psychiatric residency at Dartmouth and a fellowship at the Austen Riggs Center in psychoanalytic studies.

Plakun is prominent in the field of psychiatry and psychoanalysis, as the author of more than 50 publications, a member of several journal editorial boards, and a past member of the Harvard clinical faculty. He is a member of the American Psychiatric Association Board of Trustees representing New England and eastern Canada. He has been honored as the Outstanding Psychiatrist in Clinical Psychiatry by the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society and by the American Psychoanalytic Association “for championing psychoanalytic and psychodynamic psychotherapy within American psychiatry and paving the way towards a return to an individualized treatment model.”



Dr. Eric Plakun, CEO and medical director of the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, notes that many Berkshire residents are unaware of the nationally recognized psychiatric hospital’s presence here. He adds that upcoming public events and activities surrounding its centennial celebration may help raise the Center’s local profile. “I hope that people in Berkshire County will take these opportunities to learn more about Riggs and what we do.”

**BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE:** *As the Austen Riggs Center is marking its centennial anniversary this year, what do you believe is most important for Berkshire residents to understand about it?*

**ERIC PLAKUN:** In addition to our history and past achievements, we’re also using this milestone to look ahead to the next 100 years. We also see it as an opportunity for the people of the Berkshires to discover us. In addition to the natural beauty and cultural life of the region, Berkshire County is also the home of this incredible jewel of a nationally recognized psychiatric hospital right in the center of Stockbridge. However, many people who live here don’t even realize that Riggs exists. We’re a small place on Main Street that doesn’t look like a hospital. We serve about 60 people at a time, and about 150 over a year.

While we’re small in the number of patients, the Austen Riggs Center is large in terms of what we stand for. Riggs is widely recognized for its contributions to the mental health field. For example, we’re consistently listed as one of the top 10 psychiatric hospitals in the country by *U.S. News and World Report*.

For our 100th anniversary we’re featuring a variety of events for the public.

We now own the Corner House in Stockbridge (the former Normal Rockwell Museum on the corner of Main and Elm streets). On May 26 we’re going to open a permanent exhibition there, “The Hospital on Main Street: Human Dignity and Mental Health,” which will chronicle the history of Riggs from its founding to the present, and locate us within the history of American mental health treatment.

We’re also collaborating with the Norman Rockwell Museum on a show there that focuses on the relationship between Rockwell and the well-known psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, who was on staff at Riggs from about 1951 to 1960.

On Sept. 21, we’re holding our 100th anniversary gala. I hope that people in Berkshire County will take these opportunities to learn more about Riggs and what we do.

**BT&C:** *What role has Riggs had in the mental health system in Berkshire County?*

**PLAKUN:** As a residential treatment center and hospital, our primary focus is on our own patient population. The majority of our patients come from outside the Berkshires. They are here specifically for treatment, although we have had patients who live in this area.

But over the years, we have also started programs for the local community that subsequently were absorbed into other programs or became independent, such as the Newborn Behavioral Observation system we launched at Fairview Hospital that is now extending to Pittsfield.

Perhaps the most significant example is the Brien Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, which today is the primary provider of community mental health services in Berkshire County. That was started in a small office in Pittsfield in 1916 by our founder, Dr. Austen Riggs. In 1920 it was established as the Riggs Clinic at the House of Mercy Hospital, which is now Berkshire Medical Center. The Riggs Foundation provided most of the funding in its early years. Over time it became a separate entity and merged with other mental health programs and agencies to form what is now the Brien Center.

**BT&C:** *What is the basic purpose and mission of the Austen Riggs Center?*

**PLAKUN:** We’re a private, not-for-profit psychiatric hospital. People turn to Riggs when other forms of treatment haven’t worked for them. Our patients have serious mental health issues such

as depression, anxiety or personality disorders that often carry the label “treatment resistant.” Our basic goal is helping patients to achieve recovery – to live a self-directed life that requires coming to grips with strengths and limitations. This requires much more than simply stabilizing patients in an emergency, or alleviating symptoms.

Admission to Riggs is completely voluntary. People choose to come here. No one can be involuntarily committed to Riggs against their will by doctors, agencies or anyone else. Almost all of our patients are referred from other hospitals, therapists or other professionals. But those are recommendations to explore Riggs. The decision to pursue admission is completely the person’s own choice.

People also apply on their own when they have found Riggs on the internet or otherwise heard about us.

We carefully review and screen all applications to ensure patients can benefit from the type of treatment we offer. We evaluate their condition clinically. But we also look at them as individuals and listen to their personal voice and readiness to pursue recovery

**BT&C:** *How is Riggs designated within the mental health system?*

**PLAKUN:** In the continuum of mental health care, we are a residential treatment center, a level of treatment between crisis intervention and outpatient services. This is often called an intermediate level of care. Many people come to Riggs after being released from hospitalization elsewhere because of an acute mental health related crisis.

Other patients have not had an emergency that required hospitalization. But they have serious – sometimes chronic – issues that interfere with their lives and have not

*continued on next page*

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ON THE *record*

*continued from previous page*  
been responsive to traditional outpatient treatment or therapy. Whether a patient has been previously hospitalized or not, they come to Riggs to devote themselves to intensive treatment for a period of time. There is a minimum stay of six weeks. People generally stay for longer periods, with an average of six months or up to a year or longer.

Treatment at an intermediate level of care is similar to the spectrum of treatment in other forms of medical care. For example, if someone has a stroke, they go into a hospital for acute care to deal with the immediate medical crisis. But when that passes and they are ready to be discharged from intensive hospital care, people who have experienced a stroke often require intermediate care if they are unable to walk or speak or handle other aspects of independent living. They go into an intermediate setting for an additional period of treatment and rehabilitation to recover and regain their abilities to function as outpatients.

Riggs has a similar role in the spectrum of mental health treatment. People come here because they can't make adequate gains in outpatient treatment. They need a period of immersion in residential treatment to improve their functional status so they can return to outpatient treatment and use it better.

**BT&C:** *There are many different models and theories of mental health treatment. What form of treatment does Riggs emphasize?*

**PLAKUN:** We utilize a variety of strategies. To define our overall approach, we use the term “biopsychosocial” treatment. This is based on a recognition that the causes of people’s problems, and the way out of them, is a combination of biology, individual psychology and their social context.

One problem in the field of mental health treatment is the tendency to operate as if a person has a specific single disorder such as depression or anxiety. That leads to treatment that is focused on alleviating that symptom.

But we know from studies that most patients have more than one condition. They are affected by combinations of them, even if one disorder is prominent. The people we treat at Riggs have an average of six disorders. They are the group of people who often get labeled treatment resistant. People seem to be treatment resistant when the focus of treatment is on one condition while the other factors that are affecting them are not being addressed.

At Riggs we focus on the individual and try to tailor treatment to address all the factors that have resulted in their problems.

**BT&C:** *There are also different theories of what causes mental and emotional disorders and how to treat them. Currently there seems to be an emphasis on the belief that our brains and physical biology are the primary cause, and medication is often the most effective form of treatment. But there is also the view that treatment should be based on therapy and techniques to change thinking and behavior. Where does Riggs fit into this spectrum?*

**PLAKUN:** Medication is useful in many instances. At Riggs we do utilize psychopharmacology, and provide medications as needed. However, the mainstay of treatment at Riggs is individual psychodynamic psychotherapy four times a week. Emerging science suggests that there is a limit to the strictly biomedical model. Studying the brain is important but has made little or no contribution to improving treatment outcomes. Pills to alleviate



Rear view of the Austen Riggs Center's Medical Office Building. (Photo by Gregory Cherin)

Overview of Austen Riggs Center’s first 100 years

The Austen Riggs Center was founded on July 21, 1919 by its namesake, Dr. Austen Fox Riggs, who was an internist in New York with a home in Stockbridge. It operated originally as the Stockbridge Institute for the Psychoneuroses, and was renamed the Austen Riggs Center on Nov. 19, 1920.

Dr. Riggs focused on psychiatry and psychology influenced by the mental hygiene movement of the time. He developed his own system of treatment based on talk therapy combined with a structured routine of daily activities. He served as medical director until his death in 1940.

Over time Austen Riggs became internationally recognized as a center of American ego psychology, with a staff of preeminent psychoanalysts. Its clinicians have a long history of making significant theoretical and clinical contributions to the mental health field. Among them was Erik Erikson, who was at the Austen Riggs Center from 1951 to 1960, and was a leading influence on a generation of clinicians and social scientists. He also inspired the Erikson Institute for Education and Research, which applies the learning from intensive work with patients to the problems of the larger society.

The Austen Riggs Center also has a postdoctoral fellowship for psychiatrists and clinical psychologists in advanced psychoanalytic psychotherapy and psychoanalytic studies. Many of its clinicians are involved in research, scholarship, clinical writing, and advocacy.

The Austen Riggs Center treats patients with a variety of conditions including mood disorders such as major depressive and bipolar disorders; personality disorders such as borderline personality disorder; and narcissistic, dependent, avoidant or schizoid personality disorders. It also treats anxiety post-traumatic stress, psychotic disorders, and substance-use (in its remission phase) and eating disorders.

It offers a spectrum of programs from inpatient, residential and day-treatment services. All patients have intensive psychodynamic psychotherapy four times a week. In conjunction, the Austen Riggs Center also offers in-depth family evaluation, support for family members and family therapy.

It has a Therapeutic Community Program in which patients can develop supportive peer relationships and learn about themselves with others. Community members work at practicing “examined living,” in which patients and staff discuss the meanings of behaviors, choices and interactions with one another. It also provides opportunities to participate in social and recreational activities, in reflective process groups, and in health and wellness activities such as meditation and yoga.

As the Austen Riggs Center grew it acquired a number of historic properties in the town. The Inn, which operates as both an inpatient and residential facility, with a capacity for 40 beds, was built in the early 1890s and was sold to Riggs in 1930. The Medical Office Building, the site of medical and administrative offices, was also built in the early 1890s. The Elms, which provides residential housing for eight patients, was built in 1772. In 1939, Riggs purchased the Purinton House on Main Street for patient housing. In 2005 Lavan Hall was redesigned to meet the growing needs of the therapeutic community. The Austen Riggs Center purchased the Lilac Inn in Lenox and renovated it to accommodate eight patients, with educational offerings supporting the development of social roles.

A cornerstone of the growing therapeutic community is the new Edward R. Shapiro Community Center, designed to serve as a central gathering place. The new building is attached to the existing Patient Inn, and contains rooms for group and community meetings, social events, classrooms, recreation and exercise, and staff offices. Moving these activities and offices to the new building provides a focused space for the therapeutic community, allowing more quiet space and additional rooms at the inn for newly admitted patients.◆



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BerkShares Business of the Month

It's common to see a farm named for a location, a family name, or a state of mind. But what about naming it after one's favorite beer? That's what Tony Carlotto did when he named his homestead and longtime family property in Sheffield, MA, Rolling Rock Farm—inspired by the American lager in the iconic green glass bottles with a blue and white horse logo. About 10 years ago, Tony was getting ready to harvest 2,000 heads of garlic at Rolling Rock Farm when he came across a short paragraph in a \$3.95 pamphlet on growing garlic from Storey Publishing about infusing salt. He spent the next few years testing recipes on friends and family and in 2013 he officially launched a business.



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Tony makes everything out of his home kitchen and produces about 15 jars per batch. After many years of research and development, he's chosen three varieties of garlic to form the base of his salt, pepper, and spice blends that aren't too spicy, not too mild, but just right: Purple Glazer, German Red, and Music. With the exception of their no-salt blends, all recipes feature specialty salts like Himalayan, Hawaiian, and Mediterranean. To capture the flavors in the salts and peppercorns, everything is infused fresh, including herbs grown on-site and locally sourced mushrooms and spirits, and then dried.

People are drawn to Tony because of his outgoing personality and cheeky sense of humor. Many of his 70 different products have PG-13-rated titles which either delight or deter customers, he jokes, saying he's an “equal opportunity pleaser and offender.” The top three sellers are “Tony's Tremendous” all-purpose topping, “Darby's Garlic Festival” garlic-salt blend named after Tony's partner Darby Weigel, and “Sex on the Beef,” a black garlic based topping that's rich in umami and intended for beef. Rolling Rock Farm even makes custom recipes and labels upon request; couples often choose the Scarborough Fair blend with parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme to represent love and devotion.

You can find Rolling Rock Farm products at a few local farmers' markets—West Stockbridge on Thursdays, Sheffield on Fridays, and Norfolk, CT on Saturdays—and at general stores throughout the region. Tony and Darby enjoy spreading the love beyond the Berkshires, so you'll find these garlic fanatics at nearly every garlic festival in New England and at fairs up and down the east coast. They also sell their products online through Etsy.

Even though they're always on the road, Tony prioritizes his community. When asked about the most important thing he's learned from all his years in business, Tony says that it's to be nice to people, adding, “When you're happy and show up with a big smile, it spreads.” He applies that mentality to the local economy, too: when you help your neighbors, they help you back. That's why they accept BerkShares. Tony reports that his customers consistently use BerkShares and he encourages newcomers to spend them when they open their wallets to make a purchase.

Having retired from full-time jobs to pursue Rolling Rock Farm, Tony and Darby don't like to take themselves too seriously these days. Darby says that their motto is “make some money, meet people, and have fun.” Tony adds, “and take anything we say with a grain of salt.”

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physical symptoms of a disease such as depression or anxiety are often of limited benefit in our patients, who have tried many before they arrive. The genetics and biology of mental health are very complex. It is both nature and nurture that matter in causing disorders – and in their treatment. Genes alone do not equal disease. We’re learning that it is the interaction between genes and the environment that matters the most.

We have been unable to find genes for major disorders like depression or schizophrenia. Instead we find dozens or even hundreds of bits of genetic material that are associated with multiple disorders.

Meanwhile, we are discovering that early adverse experiences – childhood abuse, neglect, severe loss – greatly increase the likelihood someone will develop depression or another disorder.

**BT&C:** *What is the approach at Riggs to encourage recovery?*

**PLAKUN:** A key to our philosophy is collaboration and community. We work with each person to identify the underpinnings of their struggles and provide a treatment that meets their specific needs. The process includes careful evaluation, individual therapy, groups, social interaction, family work and medication as needed.

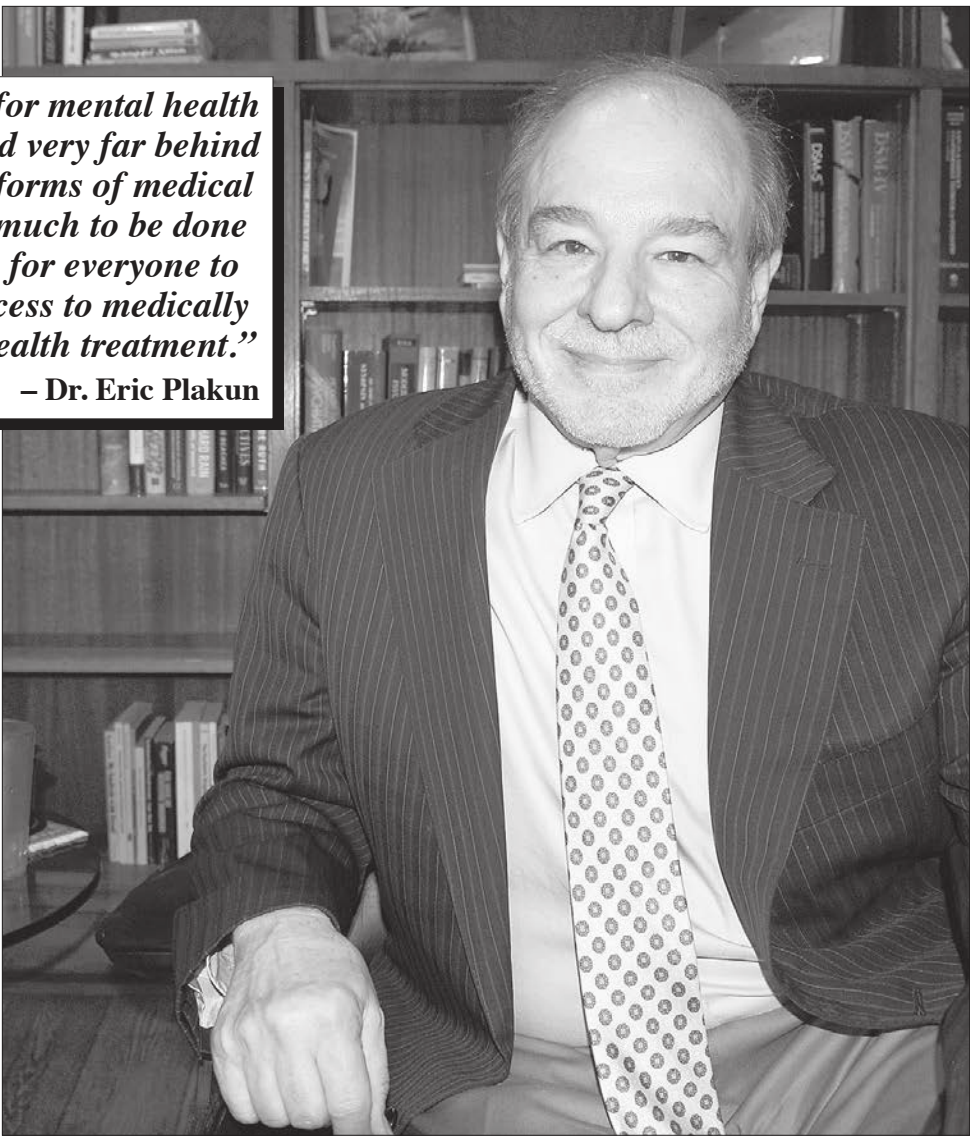
We pay attention to the patient’s voice, and we work with the patient to find the meaning of their symptoms and struggles. We offer treatment through relationships that continue over time even when a patient steps down from the higher level of care they were admitted to and moves to lower levels of care and out into the local community. We approach treatment as a partnership between the patient and the professionals they are working with. It’s not a relationship in which we tell the patient what they need to do. The person is responsible for determining their personal goals and how to reach them. We’re here to support and guide them with expertise in that process.

And we do this in an entirely voluntary and open treatment setting. We don’t restrict the person’s freedom. There are no locked doors or other restrictions. This helps them recognize that they are in charge of their treatment and lives. We work with patients to balance their freedom with responsibility.

We also work to create a strong sense of community among the patients and staff. In addition to daily interactions with others, patients collaborate with the staff in running many aspects of the treatment program. This includes a work program, budgeting for activities, and patient self-

**“Overall, coverage for mental health treatment has lagged very far behind coverage for other forms of medical care. There is still much to be done to make it possible for everyone to have affordable access to medically necessary mental health treatment.”**

**– Dr. Eric Plakun**



governance in community meetings. These community meetings can get lively and resemble a Stockbridge Town Meeting.

**BT&C:** *How is the cost of staying at the Austen Riggs Center covered?*

**PLAKUN:** The specific cost depends on the services and length of stay.

It is not inexpensive. Our patients are generally people who are well-insured and/or have the resources to be able to cover the cost that is not reimbursed.

For example, it might be a student who

develops psychological problems at college and has to leave the school and return home. Their parents may have set aside money for college, but decide this is more important, and apply it to treatment at Riggs. It all depends on the individual.

**BT&C:** *Does insurance adequately cover the cost of staying at Riggs?*

**PLAKUN:** That’s a subject we could talk about for hours. Some of our patients, a minority, have good insurance that covers Riggs treatment. Most do not.

Overall, coverage for mental health treatment has lagged very far behind coverage for other forms of medical care. The reimbursement and services covered by insurers was very limited compared to coverage for other medical conditions. That’s one reason treatment has often moved toward the model of emphasizing medication, rather than intermediate residential or outpatient care. That’s improved somewhat, but there’s still a long way to go.

A large step was taken in 2008, with the passage of the national Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. *(Editor’s note: This is a federal law that generally prevents group health plans and health insurance issuers from imposing less favorable benefit limitations on mental health treatment compared to other medical/surgical benefits.)*

But it continues to be an issue. One reason is that each insurer has been able to establish its own guidelines for what they will cover, and there are wide discrepancies.

Recently there was a verdict in a class-action lawsuit in which thousands of members of United Behavioral Health, the nation’s largest behavioral health insurer, filed suit. They had been denied coverage for mental health treatment by very restrictive access-to-care guidelines.

In March, U.S. Chief Magistrate Judge Joseph Spero in San Francisco ruled against United Behavioral Health, saying the insurer had inappropriately denied coverage by developing overly restrictive guidelines for access to care.

If that ruling stands, it will enable more people to benefit from intermediate and outpatient treatments. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done to make it possible for everyone to have affordable access to medically necessary mental health treatment. ♦

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13 E Hoosac St.  
Buyer: J Crew Properties LLC  
Seller: Marion Wandrei  
Price: \$95,000  
Mortgage: \$76,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/11/19

27 Enterprise St.  
Buyer: Amanda Carpenter  
Seller: Sling LLC  
Price: \$124,000  
Mortgage: \$124,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/1/19

5 Godek St.  
Buyer: Henry Yarnal +  
Seller: Diana Carmel  
Price: \$117,000  
Mortgage: \$118,181  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/28/19

55 Highland Ave.  
Buyer: Eric Betsold  
Seller: Krystal Safa  
Price: \$262,500  
Mortgage: \$262,500  
Lender: Quicken Loan  
Date: 3/15/19

11 Myrtle St.  
Buyer: Myrtle Street  
Development  
Seller: Big Y Foods Inc  
Price: \$348,995  
Date: 3/11/19

19-1/2 Quality St.

Buyer: Thomas Dubis +  
Seller: Thomas Dubis +  
Price: \$125,000  
Mortgage: \$100,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/14/19

16 Randall St.  
Buyer: Randall Street NT +  
Seller: Misha Morey  
Price: \$110,000  
Mortgage: \$88,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/29/19

6-8 Smith St.  
Buyer: Joseph White +  
Seller: Dennis Wandrei +  
Price: \$138,000  
Mortgage: \$135,500  
Lender: Movement Mtg  
Date: 3/15/19

35 Spring St.  
Buyer: Greenridge Enterprises  
Seller: Nazeerah Sookey T +  
Price: \$300,000  
Mortgage: \$240,000  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 3/14/19

ALFORD

East Rd.  
Buyer: Cloud Kingdom LLC  
Seller: Peggy Bell T +  
Price: \$857,500  
Date: 3/22/19

110 Green River Rd.  
Buyer: Thomas Canning +  
Seller: Joseph Ward  
Price: \$125,000  
Date: 3/15/19

BECKET

119 Algeria Rd.

Buyer: Richard Graf +  
Seller: Thomas Leclair +  
Price: \$295,000  
Date: 3/28/19

178 Chippewa Dr.  
Buyer: Kathryn Baugh  
Seller: Stephen Schneider +  
Price: \$295,000  
Date: 3/1/19

160 YMCA Rd.  
Buyer: Kristen Snyder +  
Seller: Darlene Demarest RET +  
Price: \$180,000  
Mortgage: \$239,590  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/11/19

CHESHIRE

236 North St.  
Buyer: Behrens  
Investments LLC  
Seller: Sling LLC  
Price: \$1,815,000  
Mortgage: \$860,056  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 3/18/19

DALTON

43-45 E Housatonic St.  
Buyer: Nicholas Lighten +  
Seller: Scott Ochs  
Price: \$160,000  
Mortgage: \$157,400  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/22/19

50 Eleanor Rd.  
Buyer: Robert Lamay  
Seller: Gordon Bailey +  
Price: \$132,400  
Mortgage: \$128,428  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/11/19

80 Lake St.  
Buyer: C Jade Nicholas +  
Seller: Kenneth Streeter  
Price: \$170,000  
Mortgage: \$164,900  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/13/19

917 Main St.  
Buyer: Sarah Margolis-Pineo  
Seller: Brian Gibbons +  
Price: \$220,000  
Mortgage: \$198,000  
Lender: Bk of America  
Date: 3/21/19

21 Maple St.  
Buyer: Kim Lavelle  
Seller: Dagaka FT +  
Price: \$184,400  
Mortgage: \$129,080  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/14/19

816 South St.  
Buyer: Christopher Burke  
Seller: Laurie Trasatti +  
Price: \$210,000  
Mortgage: \$203,700  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/29/19

830 South St.  
Buyer: Christopher Burke  
Seller: Laurie Trasatti +  
Price: \$210,000  
Mortgage: \$203,700  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/29/19

96 Depot St. U:A  
Buyer: Henry Williams 3rd +  
Seller: Gail Ginthwain  
Price: \$124,900  
Date: 3/28/19

EGREMONT

4 Bott Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Joseph Lopez +  
Seller: Aaron Becker +  
Price: \$140,000  
Date: 3/29/19

43 Lakeside Dr.  
Buyer: William Paul  
Seller: Santander Bank +  
Price: \$200,000  
Date: 3/6/19

39-A Oxbow Rd.  
Buyer: Greylock FCU  
Seller: Joshua Nunberg +  
Price: \$83,289  
Date: 3/28/19

7 Taconic Ln.  
Buyer: Courtney Lane  
Seller: Herbert Heath +  
Price: \$375,000  
Mortgage: \$356,250  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 3/1/19

31 Townhouse Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Alice Tortoriello  
Seller: Susan Trag +  
Price: \$89,000  
Date: 3/25/19

GREAT BARRINGTON

110 Brush Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Jonathan Wolf +  
Seller: Joan & Robert Klein IRT +  
Price: \$927,500  
Mortgage: \$600,000  
Lender: Bk of America  
Date: 3/1/19

90 Christian Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Thomas Ferris Jr +  
Seller: Christopher Callanan  
Price: \$431,000  
Mortgage: \$215,500  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 3/18/19

37 Grove St.  
Buyer: Jeremy Ridenour +  
Seller: Grove Street NT +  
Price: \$373,000  
Mortgage: \$298,400  
Lender: USAA Fed SB  
Date: 3/8/19

Knob Ln. Lot 3  
Buyer: Blackwater RT  
Seller: Ernest Drucker +  
Price: \$130,000  
Date: 3/20/19

6 Lake Buel Rd.  
Buyer: Benjamin Haft  
Seller: Karl Bergmann  
Price: \$227,500  
Date: 3/15/19

211 Oak St.  
Buyer: Ari Meyerowitz +  
Seller: Delarosa Dana Est +  
Price: \$296,000  
Mortgage: \$281,200  
Lender: Village Mtg  
Date: 3/15/19

72 Seekonk Cross Rd.  
Buyer: David Carter  
Seller: Daijiro Ban +  
Price: \$532,500  
Mortgage: \$399,375  
Lender: Village Mtg  
Date: 3/25/19

HANCOCK

137 Whitman Rd.  
Buyer: Douglas May  
Seller: Robert Bewkes  
Price: \$200,000  
Date: 3/18/19

LANESBORO

12 Park Dr.  
Buyer: US Bank NA Tr  
Seller: Kristin Heidel +  
Price: \$225,000  
Date: 3/29/19

465 Williamstown Rd.  
Buyer: Midland T Co  
Seller: Saint Jude Childrens  
Price: \$220,000  
Date: 3/20/19

LEE

310 Bradley St.  
Buyer: Matthew Tyer +  
Seller: Ana Garcia +  
Price: \$239,000  
Mortgage: \$231,830  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/14/19

625 Cape St.  
Buyer: Mohamed Zabian  
Seller: AJT RT +  
Price: \$397,958  
Mortgage: \$397,958  
Lender: AJT RT  
Date: 3/15/19

150 Columbia St.  
Buyer: Casey Montemagni  
Seller: Glenn Collins +  
Price: \$205,000  
Date: 3/27/19

55 Davis St.  
Buyer: David Delgrande +  
Seller: Stephen Guidice +  
Price: \$242,000  
Mortgage: \$289,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/7/19

239 Fairview St.  
Buyer: Robert Bartini  
Seller: Yukon Ridge Prop Mgmt  
Price: \$716,000  
Mortgage: \$637,500  
Lender: Seller  
Date: 3/27/19

70 Franklin St.  
Buyer: Caroline Hinkson  
RET +  
Seller: Joanne Thompson  
Price: \$270,000  
Date: 3/6/19

701 Greylock St.  
Buyer: Leetown Development Inc  
Seller: Lenox Development LLC  
Price: \$3,800,000  
Date: 3/15/19

435 Laurel St.  
Buyer: M&M Lodging LLC  
Seller: Black Swan Lodging LLC  
Price: \$4,245,834  
Mortgage: \$2,315,000  
Lender: Middlesex SB  
Date: 3/28/19

84 Washington Mountain  
Buyer: Planet Home Lending LLC  
Seller: Michael Bona +  
Price: \$159,900  
Date: 3/29/19

LENOX

55 Crystal St.  
Buyer: Graysam LLC  
Seller: Tucson Lenox LLC  
Price: \$775,000  
Mortgage: \$620,000  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 3/25/19

39 Elm St.  
Buyer: Audra Burns +  
Seller: Kathleen Friend +  
Price: \$321,000  
Mortgage: \$256,800  
Lender: City National  
Date: 3/11/19

2 Jennifer St.  
Buyer: Glenda Alfaro +  
Seller: B L Sheldon-Garfield  
Price: \$150,000  
Mortgage: \$145,500  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 3/15/19

236 Kemble St.  
Buyer: Greenwald-Bach FT +  
Seller: Susan Kaplan  
Price: \$1,515,000  
Date: 3/15/19

151 New Lenox Rd.  
Buyer: Daniel Gushard  
Seller: Rachael Huntley +  
Price: \$412,000  
Mortgage: \$425,596  
Lender: Navy FCU  
Date: 3/5/19

71 Taconic Ave.  
Buyer: Patricia Symons +  
Seller: Robert Hart +  
Price: \$319,000  
Mortgage: \$239,250  
Lender: Village Mtg  
Date: 3/29/19

10 Yokun Ave.  
Buyer: Herbert Gregg  
Seller: Stephen Prunier +  
Price: \$480,200  
Mortgage: \$384,160  
Lender: Berkshire Bank  
Date: 3/29/19

260 Pittsfield Rd. U:C13  
Buyer: Eva Schuster  
Seller: Sheila Puleri  
Price: \$87,000  
Mortgage: \$60,000  
Lender: NBT Bank  
Date: 3/29/19

260 Pittsfield Rd. U:E12  
Buyer: Casey Potts +  
Seller: David Levinson +  
Price: \$92,500  
Date: 3/8/19

260 Pittsfield Rd. U:F16  
Buyer: Christine Mcevoy  
Seller: Michael Heck Jr +  
Price: \$128,000  
Date: 3/1/19

Sedgwick Ln. U:8  
Buyer: Joseph Finkelstein +  
Seller: Lynn Foggie QPRT +  
Price: \$735,000  
Date: 3/19/19

MONTEREY

478 Main Rd.  
Buyer: Heather Ball  
Seller: First Cong Church Monterey  
Price: \$265,000  
Mortgage: \$265,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 3/13/19

38 Sandisfield Rd.  
Buyer: Aniko Vig +  
Seller: Shawn Tryon +  
Price: \$290,000  
Mortgage: \$217,500  
Lender: Salisbury B&T  
Date: 3/21/19

NEW MARLBORO

Canaan Southfield Rd.  
Buyer: Greylock FCU  
Seller: Orit Kadosh  
Price: \$96,740  
Date: 3/28/19

Canaan Southfield Rd.  
Buyer: Greylock FCU  
Seller: Joshua Nunberg +  
Price: \$96,740  
Date: 3/28/19

Hartsville Mill River Rd.  
Buyer: Erik Mandell +  
Seller: Evelyn Vallianos +  
Price: \$100,000  
Date: 3/8/19

33-35 Mill River Great  
Buyer: Steven Butler +  
Seller: Alfred Lenardson Jr  
Price: \$155,000  
Mortgage: \$152,192  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 3/29/19

654 Shunpike Rd.  
Buyer: Alexander Norton +  
Seller: Kathryn Moritz  
Price: \$440,000  
Mortgage: \$352,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/15/19

NORTH ADAMS

3-5 Ballou St.  
Buyer: Eric Gordon  
Seller: FNMA  
Price: \$84,000  
Date: 3/28/19

65 Chestnut St.  
Buyer: Galo Lopez +  
Seller: RSB Properties LLC  
Price: \$145,000  
Mortgage: \$116,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/18/19

302 Eagle St.  
Buyer: 24 Realty LLC  
Seller: David Atwell  
Price: \$95,000  
Mortgage: \$167,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/7/19

130 Franklin St.  
Buyer: Chad Richard +

Seller: Joelle Collins +  
Price: \$261,000  
Mortgage: \$253,170  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/1/19

33 Johnson St.  
Buyer: Edith Cardinal  
Seller: Robert Grandchamp +  
Price: \$163,000  
Mortgage: \$160,047  
Lender: Broker Solutions  
Date: 3/29/19

60 Park Ave.  
Buyer: Robert Malloy +  
Seller: David Babcock +  
Price: \$84,500  
Mortgage: \$81,400  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/21/19

25 Rich St.  
Buyer: Jaye Pause +  
Seller: Timothy Garrity  
Price: \$175,000  
Mortgage: \$169,750  
Lender: Quicken Loan  
Date: 3/29/19

181 Rich St.  
Buyer: Matthew Davis  
Seller: Inne Gertje +  
Price: \$163,000  
Mortgage: \$123,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/13/19

OTIS

1008 Reservoir Rd.  
Buyer: Michael Gatzounas +  
Seller: FNMA  
Price: \$212,500  
Mortgage: \$170,000  
Lender: Bk of America  
Date: 3/4/19

PERU

57 North Rd.  
Buyer: Hildegard Hoeller +  
Seller: Michael Caryofilles  
Price: \$268,850  
Date: 3/12/19

5 Weeks Rd.  
Buyer: Joshua Simeone  
Seller: Alicia Smith  
Price: \$172,500  
Mortgage: \$155,250  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/15/19

PITTSFIELD

173 1st St.  
Buyer: Wellington Legacy LLC  
Seller: Mark Montemagni +  
Price: \$139,000  
Mortgage: \$111,200  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/26/19

20 Andover St.  
Buyer: Michael Hart  
Seller: David Massey +  
Price: \$153,900  
Mortgage: \$123,120  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 3/15/19

4 Atwood Ave.  
Buyer: Fredy Bernal-Bernal  
Seller: Jacob Trudeau  
Price: \$125,000  
Mortgage: \$105,700  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/4/19

125 Benedict Rd.  
Buyer: T&D Rental Prop  
Seller: Patricia Kilmartin  
Price: \$77,000  
Mortgage: \$65,600  
Lender: NBT Bank  
Date: 3/15/19

48 Dalton Ave.  
Buyer: Jordaos LLC  
Seller: Louis Costi +  
Price: \$100,000  
Mortgage: \$20,000  
Lender: Joy Costi  
Date: 3/1/19

29 Daytona Ave.  
Buyer: Kenneth Rock Jr  
Seller: Richard Dupree Sr +  
Price: \$226,000  
Mortgage: \$221,906  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 3/15/19

136 East St.  
Buyer: James Perez  
Seller: Leonid Poretsky +  
Price: \$642,000  
Mortgage: \$513,600  
Lender: Citizens Bank  
Date: 3/25/19

4 Eastbrook Ln.

Buyer: Ibrahim Zia +  
Seller: Paul Clark +  
Price: \$700,000  
Mortgage: \$560,000  
Lender: Salem Five Mtg  
Date: 3/15/19

88 Edward Ave.  
Buyer: Benjamin Collins  
Seller: Mary King  
Price: \$120,000  
Mortgage: \$96,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/7/19

23 Elberon Ave.  
Buyer: Paul Saldana  
Seller: Matthew Conry +  
Price: \$101,000  
Date: 3/21/19

366 Elm St.  
Buyer: Lucas Mancari +  
Seller: Lawrence Edward Bowerman +  
Price: \$175,000  
Mortgage: \$169,750  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/15/19

503 Elm St.  
Buyer: Lyndsey Turner  
Seller: Samantha Ghitman  
Price: \$180,000  
Mortgage: \$144,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/22/19

75 Henry Ave.  
Buyer: Fredy Bernal-Bernal  
Seller: Jacob Trudeau  
Price: \$125,000  
Mortgage: \$105,700  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/4/19

345 Hungerford St.  
Buyer: Corey Aiello +  
Seller: Robert Deforest +  
Price: \$235,000  
Mortgage: \$227,950  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/14/19

108 Jason St.  
Buyer: Frank Fajardo  
Seller: Chad Poirier +  
Price: \$227,000  
Mortgage: \$234,491  
Lender: Mtg Research Ctr  
Date: 3/15/19

42 John St.  
Buyer: Norman Smoller  
Seller: Gaetan Michaud  
RET 2010 +  
Price: \$93,900  
Mortgage: \$70,425  
Lender: JPMorgan Chase  
Date: 3/12/19

110 Kearney Ave.  
Buyer: Andrew Woodward-Montes  
Seller: Benjamin Buchinski  
Price: \$231,000  
Mortgage: \$207,669  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/29/19

11 Kellogg St.  
Buyer: Kellogg Properties LLC  
Seller: Parker Kellogg T +  
Price: \$111,800  
Mortgage: \$89,440  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/15/19

487 Lebanon Ave.  
Buyer: Wendy Gable  
Seller: Alexandra Gott  
Price: \$96,900  
Date: 3/27/19

176 Lenox Ave.  
Buyer: John Mckenna  
Seller: Ryan Mcatewer  
Price: \$132,500  
Mortgage: \$121,336  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 3/21/19

18 Linden St.  
Buyer: 5 With Everything LLC  
Seller: CCP Realty LLC  
Price: \$300,000  
Date: 3/1/19

35 Montgomery Ave.  
Buyer: Jose Verastegui  
Seller: Jack Elliott  
Price: \$188,000  
Mortgage: \$178,600  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 3/15/19

885 North St.  
Buyer: US Bank NA Tr  
Seller: Ricky Pierce +  
Price: \$117,000  
Date: 3/29/19

1196 North St.  
Buyer: Yess LLC  
Seller: John Morelli  
Price: \$110,788  
Date: 3/25/19

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Berkshire County real estate transfers



7 Parker St.  
Buyer: Napster Properties LLC  
Seller: Parker Kellogg T +  
Price: \$148,200  
Mortgage: \$118,560  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/15/19

104 Parker St.  
Buyer: MTGLQ Investors LP  
Seller: Andre Duguay  
Price: \$100,819  
Date: 3/19/19

180 Ridgeway Ave.  
Buyer: Peter Mason Jr  
Seller: Ryan Lucier  
Price: \$164,900  
Mortgage: \$144,900  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 3/11/19

116 Sherwood Pkwy.  
Buyer: Lorraine Utter +  
Seller: Doris Beddoe RET +  
Price: \$205,000  
Date: 3/4/19

80 Spadina Pkwy.  
Buyer: John Obrien +  
Seller: Peter Mason Jr  
Price: \$238,000  
Mortgage: \$230,860  
Lender: Wells Fargo  
Date: 3/11/19

20 Taylor St.  
Buyer: Eric Guinen +  
Seller: Edward Cestaro  
Price: \$153,000  
Mortgage: \$150,228  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 3/18/19

186 Velma Ave.  
Buyer: Joseph Butterfield  
Seller: Nicholas Maniatis +  
Price: \$215,000  
Mortgage: \$204,150  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 3/29/19

356 Wahconah St.  
Buyer: Michael Lord  
Seller: Richard Graziola +  
Price: \$75,000  
Mortgage: \$52,000  
Lender: Richard Graziola  
Date: 3/1/19

49 Wealthy Ave.  
Buyer: Michael Lupisella +  
Seller: Kathleen Lander  
Price: \$182,500  
Mortgage: \$182,500  
Lender: Res Mtg Svcs  
Date: 3/7/19

1 Colt Rd. U-6  
Buyer: Jonathan Levine  
Seller: Thomas Jeffrey +  
Price: \$131,000  
Date: 3/22/19

33 Maplewood Ave. U:204  
Buyer: Lawrence Kratka +  
Seller: Mark Weiss +  
Price: \$112,500  
Mortgage: \$84,375  
Lender: TD Bank  
Date: 3/29/19

433 North St.  
Buyer: 433 North RE LLC  
Seller: Ronald Kelly 3rd  
Price: \$162,000  
Date: 3/29/19

RICHMOND

35 Maple Rd.  
Buyer: Bryan Treharne +  
Seller: Margaret Wyman  
Price: \$114,900  
Mortgage: \$91,920  
Lender: Berkshire Bank  
Date: 3/29/19

83 Swamp Rd.  
Buyer: Vincent Stannard  
Seller: Loring D&D M  
Mandel RET +  
Price: \$518,000  
Date: 3/22/19

SANDISFIELD

57 Sandisfield Rd.  
Buyer: Seth Fritch +  
Seller: Fredge RT +  
Price: \$80,000  
Date: 3/27/19

SHEFFIELD

Bull Hill Rd.  
Buyer: DG Mountain Realty LLC  
Seller: Sheffield Land T Inc  
Price: \$245,000  
Date: 3/13/19

110 Maple Ave.  
Buyer: Faith Reynolds  
Seller: Jonathan Reynolds +  
Price: \$155,000  
Date: 3/1/19

10 Rannapo Rd.  
Buyer: Kenneth Schopp +  
Seller: Steven Levine  
Price: \$200,000  
Date: 3/13/19

216 S Main St.  
Buyer: Douglas Pendergist +  
Seller: Margaret Curletti  
Price: \$485,000  
Mortgage: \$436,015  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/28/19

Silver St.  
Buyer: DG Mountain Realty LLC  
Seller: Sheffield Land T Inc  
Price: \$245,000  
Date: 3/13/19

STOCKBRIDGE

176 East St.  
Buyer: 176 East Street RT +  
Seller: Deutsche Bk Natl T  
Price: \$195,783  
Date: 3/29/19

83 Swamp Rd.  
Buyer: Vincent Stannard  
Seller: Loring D&D M  
Mandel RET +  
Price: \$518,000  
Date: 3/22/19

WASHINGTON

14 Nocher Rd.  
Buyer: Bank of America NA  
Seller: Paul Nocher +  
Price: \$106,600  
Date: 3/29/19

Pittsfield Rd.  
Buyer: Scott Hayward +  
Seller: Michele Carver  
Price: \$127,500  
Date: 3/14/19

WEST STOCKBRIDGE

53 Maple Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Orion Davidoff +  
Seller: William Merelle +  
Price: \$565,000  
Date: 3/12/19

5 Pomeroy St.  
Buyer: Kenneth Knox +  
Seller: Jane Curtin  
Price: \$294,000  
Mortgage: \$296,969  
Lender: Quicken Loan  
Date: 3/29/19

83 Swamp Rd.  
Buyer: Vincent Stannard  
Seller: Loring D&D M  
Mandel RET +  
Price: \$518,000

Date: 3/22/19

**WILLIAMSTOWN**

888 Hancock Rd.  
Buyer: Simon Tidmarsh +  
Seller: Frances Jones-Sneed  
Price: \$375,000  
Mortgage: \$337,125  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/29/19

510 Henderson Rd.  
Buyer: Mark Pierson +  
Seller: Cheryl Diamond  
Price: \$260,000  
Mortgage: \$206,000  
Lender: Fay Marigliano  
Date: 3/29/19

54 Linden St.  
Buyer: Rennab LLC  
Seller: Jean Culver  
Price: \$325,000  
Date: 3/1/19

156 Luce Rd.  
Buyer: Wade Hasty  
Seller: Kira Breard  
Price: \$210,222  
Mortgage: \$210,222  
Lender: Navy FCU  
Date: 3/13/19

674 Main St.  
Buyer: Mason Williams +  
Seller: William Olney +  
Price: \$620,000  
Date: 3/11/19

194 N Hoosac Rd.  
Buyer: Linda Block  
Seller: Gendron Daniel Est +  
Price: \$165,000  
Mortgage: \$132,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/1/19

540 Water St.  
Buyer: Jared Dilalla +  
Seller: Benjamin Brake +  
Price: \$310,000  
Date: 3/29/19

Lower Windflower Way U:42  
Buyer: Chad Higdon-Topaz +  
Seller: Jose Cifuentes +  
Price: \$451,000  
Mortgage: \$370,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 3/26/19

Thistle Path U:31  
Buyer: Joan Leonard  
Seller: Basedow T +  
Price: \$220,000  
Date: 3/18/19



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413.749.1126  
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# ARTS & culture

## The Foundry

continued from page 1

Berkshire-based theater company. Brentano is a member of Bazaar Productions and is on its artistic advisory board.

After a hiatus of about two years, Bazaar Productions is relaunching their programming this summer at The Foundry and plans to revive its Berkshire Fringe Festival next year (*see related story on opposite page*).

The building was constructed in 1994 to house a glassblowing studio and gallery. It has two sections, including a large open studio space. The other section includes the art gallery, and an upper floor.

Brentano is converting the former studio into a 99-seat black-box theater/performance space equipped with lighting, sound system and other elements. (A black-box theater is an open space that has the flexibility to accommodate different configurations of stage and seating.)

The first floor of the adjacent section will serve as a combination lobby and art gallery, and will also be used for receptions and other events.

The second floor includes offices and a large space suitable for rehearsals and other activities.

Brentano has already held events on a limited basis at The Foundry (413-232-5222 or [www.thefoundryws.com](http://www.thefoundryws.com) or Facebook page The Foundry WS).

Early examples of the type of productions that The Foundry will bring to West Stockbridge included a performance in April of Shakespeare's play *Pericles*. That was presented in the gallery space by The Rig, a touring theater company that specializes in bringing accessible professional theater to diverse audiences in community settings including shelters, low-income family and senior centers. Admission was on a "pay what you can" basis.

On May 19, The Foundry will present *Gaspin Whiteness*, a play and community workshop exploring white supremacy's impact on parenting in progressive, middle-class communities. It tells the stories of two families (one white and one African-American) and is performed as a staged reading by a cross-racial, cross-generational ensemble, followed by a discussion.

This will be the first production in the black-box theater space, which has been undergoing renovations this spring. Tickets are on a sliding scale, and the proceeds will



Amy Brentano notes that this section of The Foundry will serve as an art gallery and flexible space for performances, workshops and other activities. It will also be the main entrance to an adjacent black-box theater/performance space that will be used by Bazaar Productions and other regional nonprofit theater companies.

benefit Multicultural BRIDGE, a Berkshire-based organization that serves as a catalyst for racial and social justice.

Lenox-based WAM Theatre, which is marking its 10th year, will have a residency there in July.

### Venue for creative innovation

Brentano is a professional theater educator, director, playwright and actor. A native of Indiana, she moved to the Berkshires in 2001 from New York City.

She has worked with WAM Theatre and other Berkshire theater organizations, as well as being an instructor at Berkshire Country Day School, Richmond School and other educational institutions.

Brentano said she had been percolating the idea of establishing a venue for creative innovation and education for a while.

When the Harris Street property went on the market, she took the plunge and purchased it for \$535,000, with a commercial mortgage from Pittsfield Cooperative Bank.

"I had more than a few sleepless nights

about taking on a mortgage of that size, and my husband did a lot of reassuring that it would work out," said Brentano, who is married to Adam Weinberg, a garden designer and stone mason who operates Second Nature Garden Design.

She said the location and quality of the building were catalysts for her decision because it was so well-suited to her goals.

"It's a phenomenal building," she said. "Because it was a originally a glassblowing

studio, it's very sturdy and is already equipped with all the electric power we'll need."

She sees its location in West Stockbridge as an advantage because it

is near both central and southern Berkshire County. It is also accessible to the wider region, and is near the Massachusetts Turnpike and New York Thruway.

"There's also a lot of exciting things happening in West Stockbridge, and it's great to be part of that," she said. "The local community has been very supportive of this."

The building is situated on just under one acre in a parklike setting. It is adjacent

to the site of the West Stockbridge Farmers Market, and Brentano plans to have programs in conjunction with that.

It is also near the TurnPark Art Space, a sculpture park.

### Business venture

While The Foundry's primary mission is to support activities in the nonprofit sector, Brentano has set up its ownership and management as a small business.

"I decided that would be the best way to keep the investment financially sustainable and enable it to support nonprofits," she said. "I also don't have any other investors because this allows me to have the flexibility to make decisions myself."

Brentano said The Foundry will rely on a combination of revenue sources, including rentals and user fees, ticket sales, commissions on art sales, and sales of beverages and other concessions at a bar being established in one section of the building.

(In early May Brentano said she plans to apply for a full alcoholic beverage licence once renovations are complete and a Certificate of Occupancy has been obtained.)

She added that her goal is to make The Foundry affordable and practical for organizations that use the facility.

"The structure of agreements will vary," she said. "In some cases, an organization may rent it on a straightforward lease agreement. In other situations, it may be combination of rental and portion of the ticket sales. It will be based on what works best in each situation."

In addition to events produced by other organizations, Brentano also plans to produce shows, such as concerts, and other events at The Foundry.

She said it will also be available for rental for private events such as small weddings.

Brentano said she will rely heavily on outside assistance for the gallery programming and operations.

"Visual art is not my field, and I'm not familiar with how the art market works, so I'll need help with that," she said. "Fortunately, I have a sister in New York who is a professional artist, and she's been assisting me."

Her sister, Pat Brentano, has her own work featured in the gallery's inaugural exhibit, "Is There No Decency? Angry Faces, Dark Landscapes and Native Habitat," which opened on March 8 and remains on display through June 15. Gallery hours are Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or by appointment.

Pat Brentano will also be leading *Removing the Blinders*, a two day visual awareness workshop at The Foundry on June 1-2 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days. The cost is \$200. For information, email [amy@thefoundryws.com](mailto:amy@thefoundryws.com).

"I also hope to work with organizations like the Berkshire Artists Guild (an association of artists that is based in West Stockbridge) on that aspect," she added. "I'd also like to have art exhibits that tie in with the theme of productions."

***"There's a lot of exciting things happening in West Stockbridge, and it's great to be part of that."***

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The Foundry will operate year-round. “There are many things that can be done throughout the year,” Brentano said. “For example, Pittsfield High School has an excellent chamber orchestra, and I’d love to have them perform here.”

Brentano said that she has received many inquiries from potential users of the facility. “There’s a lot of enthusiasm about it, and the phone’s been ringing off the hook,” she said.

She also sees The Foundry as a site for lighthearted uses.

“In May and June we’re going to try sponsoring Morning Raves two days a week,” she said. “The idea is to offer a place where you can stop by in the morning to mingle, do some dancing, get your blood flowing, and have a little fun before work.”

These raves, or community dance parties, will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 8 a.m. from May 21 to June 6. The \$5 charge per session will benefit Bazaar Productions/Berkshire Fringe. Those attending all six sessions will receive a free Berkshire Fringe T-shirt.◆

## Foundry sparks theater company’s revival

*New productions this summer, Berkshire Fringe returning in 2020*

BY JOHN TOWNES

The establishment of The Foundry, a new arts and performance center in West Stockbridge, was a spark that helped to revive Bazaar Productions and its Berkshire Fringe Festival.

Between 2005 to 2014 the Berkshire Fringe Festival became an innovative staple in the region’s summer cultural calendar. It took place in the performance center at Simon’s Rock College at Bard in Great Barrington until 2014 when it relocated to the Shire City Sanctuary in downtown Pittsfield for one year.

The Berkshire Fringe was discontinued after 2014, although Bazaar Productions produced one show called *Passage at Shire City* in 2016. Since then, the company has been on an extended hiatus.

However, despite its low public profile, its members remained committed to the nonprofit theater company’s original mission, according to co-artistic director Chris Tucci.

“We all were focused on other projects and activities, but we continued to meet regularly to discuss and plan what we wanted to do next with Bazaar Productions,” said Tucci. “We also had to consider where we should be located. Shire City is a great facility, but it wasn’t ideal for our purposes.”

Amy Brentano, owner of The Foundry (*see related story*), has been part of the group for about two years and is on its artistic advisory board. Her offer of The Foundry as a base for Bazaar Productions stimulated its revival.

“At one meeting, Amy surprised us and mentioned that she was acquiring a space that could serve as a performance home for us,” said Tucci.

Bazaar Productions was established as a counterpoint to the existing cultural offerings in the region. Its stated mission is to “radicalize the cultural landscape of the Berkshires by commissioning, developing and presenting original and ground-breaking new works of theater, dance and multimedia performance by the most vital and revolutionary contemporary voices.”

Other stated goals include fostering equity, diversity and inclusion, to make cultural experiences accessible across identities, socio-economic status, race, religion and creed.

It has roots that could be traced to earlier theatrical innovators such as playwright Samuel Beckett, and subsequent movements that have been referred to as Performance Art and New Theater, among other terms.

While it has many variations, this approach is based on eclectic and experimental combinations of words, music and multimedia to tell stories and express ideas in new ways.

“It acknowledges that TV and film do a better job of conveying realism and traditional forms of storytelling,” said Tucci. “However, theater can create other forms of live experiences you don’t get from those. We explore inventive and unusual ways to tell stories.”

### Emphasis on production

Tucci noted that their re-evaluation process had included the type of programs they wanted to focus on.

Their primary activity had been organizing the Berkshire Fringe, which brought in outside theater artists and groups for residencies, performances and workshops as an incubator for new works. It had hosted about 600 theater artists and groups from the U.S. and internationally. However, after they discontinued the Berkshire Fringe, they decided that they wanted to become more active as a producing ensemble.

In 2015, they had the opportunity for a residency at the Millbrook School in Millbrook, N.Y., where they developed *Passage* (a work addressing the issue of climate change) in collaboration with the Kickwheel Ensemble Theater. They performed it at the Shire City Sanctuary in 2016.

“That was a great experience, and we realized that producing work ourselves as an ensemble is a direction we want to go,” said Tucci. “So our basic plan is to do that, and also bring back the Berkshire Fringe Festival.”

Bazaar Productions will focus on two productions in their first season at The Foundry this summer while preparing to relaunch the Berkshire Fringe festival next year.

They will produce *Particularly In The Heartland*, a play about “losing sight of America and trying to fall back in love with it.” The work was originally developed and produced by Brooklyn-based ensemble The TEAM. Sara Katzoff, Bazaar Productions’ co-founder and co-artistic director, will direct the piece at The Foundry.

Their other major summer project is working with a group of collaborators from around the country and locally to develop a new musical work about 19th century Mexican singer-performer Julia Pastrana. This will take place during a 10-day residency in August.

They are working with participants in the Manos Unidas Multicultural Educational Cooperative of Pittsfield on the project. According to Brentano, it is slated to also include workshops at Tyler Street Lab in Pittsfield (*April 2019 BT&C*).

### Fund-raising boost

In conjunction with this new phase of activity, Bazaar Productions is also bolstering its organizational and financial base.

“We’ve been working to bring in people from the business and arts community to support and assist us with our fund-raising and organizational development,” said Tucci.

Bazaar Productions is currently conducting a fund-raising campaign with a \$30,000 goal. As of early May they had raised over \$14,000.

That effort gained a major boost in April when they released a video with popular Oscar-winning actor Allison Janney, who offered to personally match pledges up to \$15,000 total to support Bazaar Productions.

The video was released on the Donation page of the organization’s website ([bazaarproductions.org](http://bazaarproductions.org)), its Facebook page ([Berkshirefringe](https://www.facebook.com/Berkshirefringe)) and elsewhere.

“I love theater – it’s where I got my start,” Janney says in the video. “Did you know that there’s exceptional innovative theater in your own backyard? Bazaar Productions and Berkshire Fringe have a new home, and they need you to contribute to their fund-raising campaign.”

Brentano said Janney is a friend of hers and agreed to promote the organization and provide the match after learning about it. “That made a huge difference,” she said. “Our website exploded after that got around.”◆

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