

Commissioner of Agriculture visit showcases local farms
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Firms carve piece of history with Arch of Titus project
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BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE *monthly*

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SEPTEMBER 2017

PITTSFIELD BETTER BLOCK Event to provide real-life display of district's potential for revitalization

BY JOHN TOWNES

An upcoming event in Pittsfield will combine elements of a street fair with economic and community development to create a real-life demonstration of the potential for revitalization of the Tyler Street business district and the adjacent Morningside neighborhood.

The Pittsfield Better Block Day of Transformation will take place on Aug. 26 from noon to 7 p.m. in the block of Tyler Street from Courtland Place to Smith Street.

Pittsfield Better Block is part of the Pittsfield Transformative Development Initiative (TDI), a program sponsored by MassDevelopment, the state's quasi-public economic development agency, to foster revitalization of that section of the city.

The specific block selected for the Pittsfield Better Block project has a high number of vacancies in storefronts and other commercial spaces. It also includes challenging sites such as a deteriorating former gas station that has become a prominent example of blight, and a former city fire station that has significant character but has been empty for many years.

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SWEET TALK...

Robin Helfand holds a box of Violet Crumble candy bars amidst other assorted sweets in her downtown Great Barrington candy shop. While the Australian-made confection may be unfamiliar to many customers, it reflects Helfand's successful strategy of stocking her shop with nostalgic favorites as well as more adventurous items from around the world. Helfand, who recently has been garnering attention outside the Berkshires as a brand ambassador for American Express, shares her views on small business marketing and survival in a wide-ranging interview beginning on page 21.

Workplace benefit program provides student loan relief

Lee Bank employees get debt paydown assistance

BY BRAD JOHNSON

Like many young professionals, Laura Brown has been dutifully paying down her student loan debt ever since graduating from college in 2008.

Even with those regular payments over the past nine years, Brown said she still faced the same amount of time going forward until her loans were finally paid off. As the mother of a 5-year-old son, she noted that this meant she'd still be paying off her own student loans when her son was ready to start high school.

So, when her employer recently introduced a new employee benefit that would significantly shorten that loan repayment timeline, Brown jumped at the chance to participate.

"I didn't hesitate for a minute," said Brown, who works as loan compliance supervisor at Lee Bank.

Nor did several other of her co-workers who also are carrying student loan debt, when Lee Bank became the first Berkshire County employer to partner with Gradifi, a Boston-based leader in student loan pay-down benefits programs.

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Makers of Fire Cider making new home in Pittsfield commercial site

Fast-growing company can now consolidate its varied operations in one location

BY JOHN TOWNES

An industrial facility that once was used to bottle soft drinks to cool people's thirst is being returned to its original role with an important difference, as the new home of Fire Cider, an apple-cider-vinegar tonic whose name reflects its extremely tangy taste and spicy ingredients.

Shire City Herbals, which makes Fire Cider, has purchased a 20,000-square-foot facility at 15 Commercial St. in Pittsfield to consolidate its operations and offices, and handle its recent and anticipated growth.

Located just off East Street, the building was originally constructed in 1952 and was used as a Coca-Cola bottling plant. More recently it was owned and occupied by Protech Armored Products.

The owners of Pittsfield-based Shire City Herbals had been looking for a new site that would enable them to expand. The decision was hastened earlier this year by a new agreement with the nationwide GNC retail health and nutrition products chain to sell Fire Cider in 4,500 of GNC's stores across the country.

"We have been growing rapidly and needed more space," said co-owner and CEO Dana St. Pierre. "The deal with GNC will

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Shire City Herbals owners Dana St. Pierre, Amy Huebner and Brian Huebner are consolidating their Fire Cider operations within this 20,000-square-foot facility in Pittsfield.



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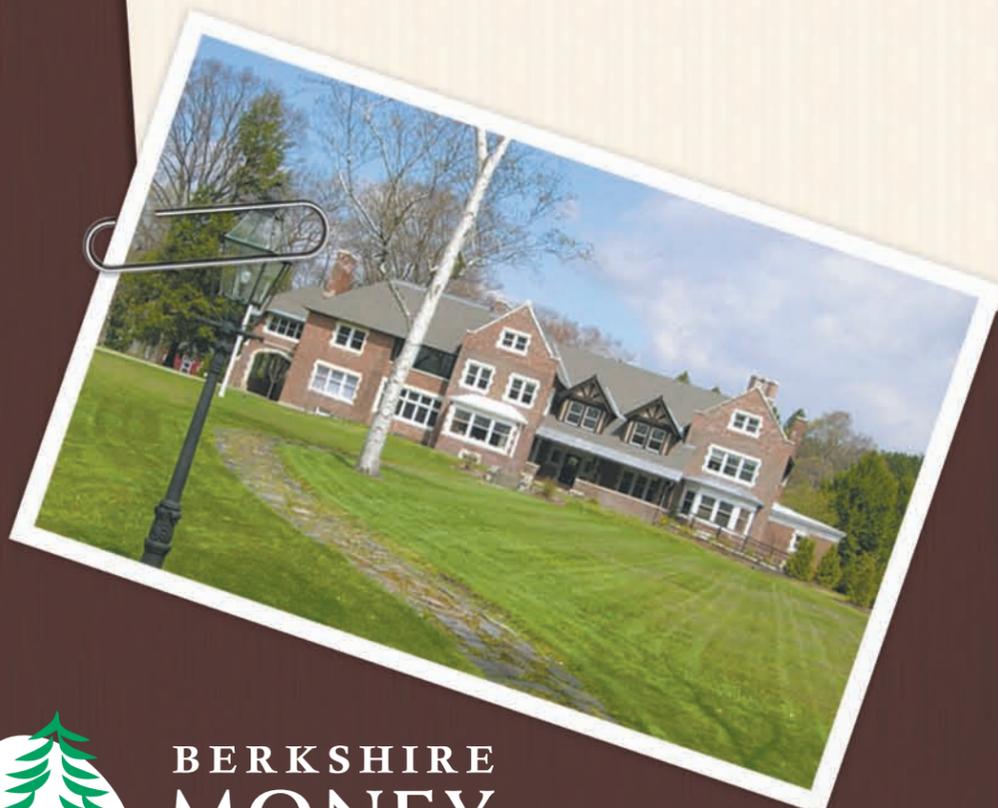
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FRONT *pages*

news & notes from the region

Local banker claims top spot on association board

BY BRAD JOHNSON

For the past few years, Charles O'Brien has been on a path that has taken him up through the leadership ranks of the board of directors of the Massachusetts Bankers Association (MBA).

That path has now led to his ascension to board chairman of the advocacy organization for a one-year term that began on July 1. As such, O'Brien, president and CEO of Adams Community Bank, has become the first Berkshire representative to serve in this capacity in the MBA's 111-year history.

"Charles O'Brien, our new chairman, is highly regarded in our industry, has great knowledge and skill and, we are proud to say, is from western Massachusetts and the Berkshires," said MBA President and CEO Daniel Forte in announcing the election of the board's leadership team and new members.

"I am humbled by this election to serve the members of the Massachusetts Bankers Association," said O'Brien, who has 37 years of experience in banking and financial services and has served as president of Adams Community Bank since 2002.

As chairman, O'Brien is also currently the only Berkshire-based banker serving on the board of the MBA, which represents some 155 commercial, savings and co-operative banks and savings and loan associations located in Massachusetts.

"It is very much an active board," said O'Brien, who has been a member since 2013. He noted that the board holds regular monthly meetings, including his first meeting as chairman on Aug. 7.

While on the local level, state-chartered mutual institutions such as Adams Community Bank have long positioned themselves as community-minded alternatives to larger multi-regional stock banks, O'Brien explained



Charles O'Brien, president and CEO at Adams Community Bank, has become the first Berkshire representative to serve as chairman of the board of the Massachusetts Bankers Association.

that such competitive distinctions are put aside within the workings of the MBA board.

"When you're in this capacity, you work on behalf of all our member banks, and advocate for the interests of small banks and large banks alike," he said.

In that respect, he said, the board looks at legislative and regulatory issues that have an impact on how member banks operate and how they deliver services to their customers. "We're trying to promote different policies on the state and national level that advance our ability to offer the best services and products to our customers," O'Brien said. "We look at ways to keep the banking industry healthy and things that best allow us to meet the needs of our customers."

This comes in the form of submitting draft legislation on various banking and financial services issues for consideration by lawmakers on Beacon Hill. One such issue currently drawing attention involves shifting more of the financial responsibility for data security

breaches in credit and debit card transactions to retailers who are not utilizing up-to-date technology in their processing systems.

While O'Brien described his recent election to chairman as an honor, it was not something that was unexpected. "The only surprise came two years ago when I was first asked to get on the leadership path," said O'Brien. He explained that the MBA board each year nominates one of its members to advance to the chairmanship through a succession of officer positions. In 2015, O'Brien began that process as board treasurer and then served as vice chairman in 2106.

Following his term as chairman, O'Brien will serve one final year as immediate past chairman. "So, that will have me leaving the board on June 30, 2019," he said.

While acknowledging that he will not miss making the regular trips to Boston when that time comes, O'Brien said his participation on the board has been very satisfying on both personal and professional levels. "It has been an honor and a privilege to get to know the MBA team and other board members," he said. "Hearing the perspectives of other bankers from across the state has, on balance, been a very positive experience." ♦



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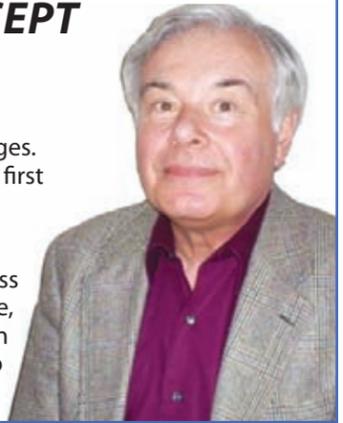
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FRONT pages

TUNNEL CITY COFFEE

New shop among several changes at roasting business

BY JOHN TOWNES

Change on several levels is brewing at Tunnel City Coffee.

The business operates a coffee roasting facility in North Adams. It sells its coffee at its popular coffeehouse at 100 Spring St. in Williamstown. It also has a smaller cafe in Building 11 on the campus of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) in North Adams.

At the beginning of August, Tunnel City Coffee opened another cafe in the new Williams Bookstore at 81 Spring St. across the street from its flagship coffeehouse.

Tunnel City is also preparing to move its coffee-roasting operations from a building in the Heritage State Park complex to the Norad Mill, the former Excelsior Printing plant at 60 Roberts Dr. in North Adams that is being redeveloped for commercial tenants.

"It's a busy time," said Paul Lovegreen, owner and founder of Tunnel City, which is marking its 25th anniversary in August.

The new cafe in the Williams Bookstore is named Uptown Tunnel Coffee. "Someone suggested that name because it's just up the street from our other site," said Lovegreen.

While opening a second shop across the street may seem like an unusual move, Lovegreen said it was logical given the circumstances.

Williams College has constructed a three-story building of almost 15,000 square feet for its new bookstore on the corner of Spring and Walden streets. It had a soft opening in early August, with an official opening celebration scheduled for the start of school on Labor Day weekend.



Tunnel City Coffee owner Paul Lovegreen visits with well-wishers at an Aug. 3 sneak preview event for the new Williams Bookstore, which also houses the newest cafe for the 25-year-old coffee roasting business.

The Williams Bookstore is also intended to serve the larger community. Different components of the bookstore are on the first two floors, with a related gift shop on the second floor. Leased commercial office space is on the third floor.

Uptown Tunnel Coffee is in a small section of the building's first floor.

"The college wanted to have a small cafe in the bookstore and they solicited proposals," said Lovegreen. "They asked me to submit one. It made sense for us to do that, since there was going to be a cafe there in any case."

Lovegreen said Tunnel City Coffee and Uptown Tunnel Coffee will be complementary, with somewhat differing approaches.

"A little different"

"One reason I wanted to do this is as a chance to do something a little different," he said.

One major difference is its hours of operation. Tunnel City Coffee is open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Uptown Tunnel Coffee, on the other hand, is open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

"The college wanted to offer students and the public a place to go at night for a cup of

coffee," Lovegreen said. "People can stop by after a movie or other nighttime activity, or an evening event at the bookstore."

He added that Uptown Tunnel Coffee is set up so that it can remain open during hours that the bookstore is closed.

The new shop is also much smaller in scale. It has 850 square feet with about 12 seats, compared to the 80 seats at Tunnel City Coffee. (Lovegreen noted that patrons can also use other seats that are scattered throughout the bookstore.)

The service and selection will also differ. "Uptown Tunnel Coffee is more of a Third Wave approach to the coffee and service," said Lovegreen, using a term for an artisanal approach to specialty, high-quality coffees and serving methods. "It is slower service than the high-volume, faster pace of Tunnel City Coffee. We can also brew to order, and we will be serving pour-over coffee shortly."

Lovegreen also invested in a \$30,000 La Marzocco espresso machine from Italy for the new cafe. "That's a very elaborate, top-of-the-line machine," he said.

Unlike the original Tunnel City Coffee, which serves a large selection of fresh pastries made on site, and continental breakfasts all day, the bookstore cafe has very limited food offerings.

"It doesn't have a food preparation area, so we'll just have a small selection of pastries," said Lovegreen. The cafe will be staffed by one barista, although newly hired staff will also work there as trainees.

Lovegreen started Tunnel City Coffee (413-458-5010 or www.tunnelcitycoffee.com) in 1992. Its original coffeehouse was in a smaller storefront on Spring Street. In 2004, it moved to its present location, which

is on the ground floor of a larger building owned by the college.

Lovegreen noted that the building had not been constructed when he agreed to move there as a tenant, and he worked with the college on the space's design.

"Back then, there was very little going on at that end of Spring Street," he said. "The college wanted to stimulate business and activity so they constructed a new building to attract more people there."

In 2016 Lovegreen opened another cafe at the MASS MoCA complex. That space is about 850 square feet and has 12 seats.

"I knew the Hudsons, who had an antique shop in that space," said Lovegreen. "They told me they were closing, and suggested that it would be a good location for us. I approached MASS MoCA, and they agreed."

Tunnel City also recently began selling coffee and pastries to residents of the Sweetwood of Williamstown Retirement Living Community, at a small coffee bar by the dining room.

Raised profile for roasting

Lovegreen said that one of his current goals for Tunnel City Coffee, which has about 30 employees, is to expand its wholesale and online sales, and bolster its brand.

While its Spring Street coffeehouse is a popular destination for coffee lovers and a center of community activity in Williamstown, Lovegreen said Tunnel City has had a lower profile as a coffee roasting business.

"Roasting quality coffee has always been our primary focus," he said. "We put a lot of time and care into our coffee, and we source from sustainable farms and cooperatives. But, although we've been doing this for 25 years, we're under the radar of a lot of people, because we have concentrated primarily on selling it at our own locations."

Now, Lovegreen said, the business is preparing to branch out.

The impending move from its present roasting facility in the Heritage State Park in North Adams, (which it has occupied since 2002) to the Norad Mill complex is intended to accommodate that.

Tunnel City Coffee will be one of the first tenants in the conversion of the former site of Excelsior Printing into a mixed-use commercial complex by developer David Moresi of Moresi Associates (*August 2017 BT&C*).

"Now that we've opened in the bookstore, we're going to focus on our website, and building up our online sales," Lovegreen said. "After that our plan is to expand our wholesale business." ♦

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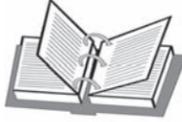


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news & notes from the region



the month in business

Through Sept. 14: **The River Art Project**, exhibition to raise awareness of the importance of the river environment and its protection, featuring five recognized painters who work with the river as their subject matter: Bart Elsbach, Mary Sipp Green, Stephen Hannon, Scott Prior and Jim Schantz. Half of the net proceeds of each sale will be donated equally to the Housatonic Valley Association and Riverkeeper, nonprofit organizations that are actively working to protect and preserve the Housatonic and Hudson rivers. Thursday through Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Stockbridge Station, 3 Depot Rd., Stockbridge. Information at 413-298-5163 or www.riverartproject.com.

Aug. 19: **7th Annual Berkshire Bike-N-Fly Festival** presented by the Great Barrington Rotary from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Great Barrington Airport, 70 Egremont Plain Rd. Begins with bike rides of varying lengths (pre-registration required), followed by a full day of fun activities. Admission is \$15 per car load, with proceeds to fund scholarships and community projects. For more information, visit www.berkshirebikenfly.org.

Aug. 23: **Career fair** for nursing positions and others hosted by Hillcrest Commons Nursing and Rehabilitation Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 169 Valentine Rd., Pittsfield. Information available on careers for registered nurses, nurse management, certified nursing assistants, nursing scheduler and housekeeping/laundry. For more information contact Brenda Stokes at bstokes@bhs1.org or 413-445-9718.

Aug. 23: **Chamber Nite** networking event and BBQ, 5 to 7 p.m. at MountainOne Bank at the corner of East Street and Silver Lake Boulevard in Pittsfield. For information, call Danielle Thomas at 413-499-1600.

Aug. 24: **Networking Before Nine** presented by Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce from 7:45 to 9 a.m. at the Egremont Village Inn/The Barn, 17 Main St., South Egremont. For information or to RSVP, call 413-528-4284.

Aug. 25-27: **Lenox Library's 22nd annual book sale** at the library, 18 Main St. For a donation of \$5, book dealers and members of the public can gain early admission from 9 a.m. to noon on Friday, Aug. 25; free admission from noon to 5 p.m. on Friday and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For more information, contact Maris Katsir at mmkksir@gmail.com or Nancy Cohen at nancycohen1112@gmail.com or go to lenoxlib.org/support/book-sale/.

Aug. 27: **Brunch fundraiser for Berkshire Grown** featuring a talk on "Food, Farming and Our Future" with Dan Barber, chef and co-owner of Blue Hill New York and Blue Hill at Stone Barns, and the author of *The Third Plate*; and Paul Krugman, a *New York Times* op-ed columnist and winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Economics. Brunch catered by The Old Inn on the Green and The Southfield Store, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in a private barn in Sheffield. Tickets start at \$125 and must be reserved in advance by calling 413-528-0041.

Aug. 27: **Talk by Lorraine German**, author of *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires: The Untold Story of Sandisfield's Jewish Farm Colony*, 11 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Free and open to the public. For more information, visit sandisfieldartscenter.org or call 413-258-4100.

Aug. 27: **25th Berkshire Humane Society Horse Show** hosted by Overmeade Farm in Lenox. The show begins at 9 a.m. and is free to the public. For more information, call 413-499-2850.

Aug. 29: **Berry Crops Field Workshop** hosted by The Berry Patch in Stephentown, N.Y., in collaboration with Cornell University. Designed for the commercial berry grower, this free workshop will give farmers up-to-date tools and techniques for monitoring for pests, designing an effective pest-control program and general troubleshooting, as well as a variety of effective growing and management techniques for different berry crops. 5 to 7 p.m. at The Berry Patch, 15589 Route 22 in Stephentown. Although the workshop is free, registration is required. Call Abby at 518-746-2553 or go to <http://enych.cce.cornell.edu> to register.

Aug. 29: **Sheffield Historical Society Historic Feast**, featuring traditionally prepared food and drinks to celebrate the opening of the permanent Milt Barnum Tool Exhibit. 4 to 6 p.m. at 159 Main St. Suggested donation \$25 adults, \$20 society members, \$15 youth ages 7-18, under 6 free. For more information or to reserve tickets, go to www.sheffieldhistory.org, email sheffieldhistoricalsociety@gmail.com or call 413-229-2694.

Aug. 30: **Career fair** for nursing positions hosted by Williamstown Commons Nursing and Rehabilitation Center from 1 to 5 p.m. at 25 Adams Rd. Information available on careers for nurses and nursing assistants, with on-site interviews and applications as well as tours of the facility. Those unable to attend may call Frantz Thimot at 413-458-2111 or email frantzthimot@bhs1.org or visit www.williamstowncommons.org and click on the "Careers" tab.

Aug. 31: **Summer Wrap Party & Karaoke Lounge Evening**, presented by #DanceForTheArts, a collaboration of Only in My Dreams Events, Berkshire Theatre Group, and the Norman Rockwell Museum, to support MASSCreative, a statewide advocacy group for the arts, cultural and creative community. 7 to 10 p.m. at The Barn at The Egremont Village in Egremont. Suggested donation from \$5 to \$35.

Sept. 2: **Melissa's Choice**, staged reading of the play by Lenox-based playwright Steven Somkin, to benefit Multicultural Bridge, a Lee-based not-for-profit organization that works to bridge gaps between ethnic, racial and economic groups in the Berkshires. 7 p.m. at the Unicom Theatre in Stockbridge. Tickets are \$35; the full amount is tax deductible and will be applied to a Summer Challenge matching grant. Call the Berkshire Theatre Group box office at 413-997-4444 or go to www.berkshiretheatre.org.

Sept. 6: **Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year event**, honoring Mary White of Barnbrook Realty, 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge. For information or to RSVP, call 413-528-4284.

Sept. 7: **Fairview Golf Classic 2017**, mixed scramble format at Stockbridge Golf Club. Registration at 413-854-9609.

Sept. 7: **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.

Sept. 7: **How to Keep Up With the Evolving Role of the Press Release**, program presented by 1Berkshire with PR tips and tricks from PR consultant Cathy Husid-Shamir. 1 to 2 p.m. at Hancock Shaker Village. For information and to RSVP, call Danielle Thomas at 413-499-1600.

Sept. 9: **Free community celebration** to highlight Berkshire Natural Resources Council's 50th anniversary year, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Holiday Farm in Dalton. Open to the public with activities for all ages, including hayrides, live music, a birds of prey demonstration, guided walks, and more. Local food and beverages will be available for purchase throughout the event. A full event schedule is available at www.bnrc.org/50.

Sept. 9: **Evening of Song with Music by Cole Porter** to benefit the Sandisfield Arts Center, featuring vocalists Kathy Lawrence, Linda Mironi and Brian De Lorenzo, with accompanist Michael Rheault. 8 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammetown Rd. Tickets \$50 at sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Sept. 10: **Woofstock**, annual fundraising dog walk presented by the Berkshire Humane Society, begins at The Common in downtown Pittsfield. Participants raise money on behalf of BHS's shelter animals and register to walk a loop around downtown with or without their dog. Register online (berkshirehumane.org) to take advantage of social media and sharing tools, as well as guarantee an event T-shirt (for a minimum of \$60 in donations). Same day registration begins at 10 a.m. with the dog walk at 11, followed by activities for families and canines on the lawn. For more information, call 413-477-7878 ext. 131.

Sept. 14: **Community Access to the Arts (CATA) Annual Poetry Reading**, a celebration of CATA's writers, at 5:30 p.m. at The Mount in Lenox. Free but reservations required by Sept. 7. For information and reservations, visit CATAarts.org or call 413-528-5485.

Sept. 15-17: **Lee Founders Weekend**, this year celebrating the town's 240th anniversary, includes Founders Weekend Parade at 10 a.m. Sept. 16 (registration forms must be returned by Sept. 10). For parade information, email thomswift@hotmail.com or call 413-243-6737. For general information about Founders Day Weekend, call the Lee Chamber of Commerce at 413-243-1705, or email director@leechamber.org. For a complete schedule of activities visit leechamber.org/festivals.

Sept. 16-17, 23-24, 30-Oct. 1: **16th annual Heritage Walks** presented by the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, with 80 free guided interpretive tours offered in Berkshire County and Litchfield County, Conn. Information and walk schedule at www.HousatonicHeritage.org/events/heritage-walks/.

Sept. 17: **41st annual Josh Billings RunAground**, triathlon crossing five Berkshire towns with a 27-mile bike ride, a 5-mile canoe, kayak, or paddleboard sprint, and a 6-mile run. Teams and ironpersons can register or find more information at joshbillings.com. Organizers also seeking volunteers to help support the event. Those interested should email party@joshbillings.com or call 413-344-7919. Proceeds benefit Berkshire United Way.

Sept. 19: **Getting the Word Out About Your Small Business or Nonprofit**, workshop featuring a multi-channel approach to increasing awareness of your organization through marketing, advertising, publicity, and outreach. Presented by Liana Toscanini of the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires. 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at BCC South County Center, 343 Main St., Great Barrington. \$25 NPC members/\$35 nonmembers. Register online at npberkshires.org.

Sept. 19: **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 Jane Winn at jane@thebeatnews.org or 413-230-7321.

Sept. 20: **Boots to Business/Reboot**, a unique training program offered free of charge to all veterans, service members (including National Guard and Reserves) and their spouses, that provides an overview of business ownership, knowledge of the components of a business plan, opportunity recognition, as well as an introduction to available public and private sector resources. Presented through a collaboration between the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Veterans Business Outreach Center, the Berkshire Office of the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (MSBDC) and SCORE. 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Berkshire Athenaeum Auditorium, 1 Wendell Ave., Pittsfield. Register online at: <https://sbavets.force.com/s/> by Sept. 12. For more information, call 413-499-0933.

Sept. 21: **Spark!** networking event focused on the creative economy, presented by 1Berkshire from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at The Lake House Cottages of the Berkshires, 636 S. Main St., Lanesboro. For information and to RSVP, call Danielle Thomas at 413-499-1600.

Sept. 21: **3rd Thursdays** monthly outdoor event in downtown Pittsfield with music, performance, food and community activities from 5 to 8 p.m. Organized by the city's Office of Cultural Development. For information, visit discoverpittsfield.com/3rdthursdays, email slemme@pittsfieldch.com or call 413-499-9348.

Sept. 23-24: **38th annual Lenox Apple Squeeze**, hosted by Visit Lenox, with local shops, restaurants, artisans, musicians, farm stands and performers in a fun and engaging free street festival for all ages. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

Sept. 25: **19th Annual Harvest Supper** to celebrate local food and support farmers, presented by Berkshire Grown, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Upper Lodge at Ski Butternut in Great Barrington. \$75 for Berkshire Grown members, \$85 for non-members, \$40 for Berkshire Grown farmer members, \$40 for attendees under 40 years old (limited number of tickets available). For tickets and information, call 413-528-0041.

Sept. 26: **Entrepreneurial Meetup**, free event presented by 1Berkshire that gathers entrepreneurs together to network, learn, and engage. 8 to 10 a.m. at Fuel Coffee Shop, 293 Main St., Great Barrington. For information and to RSVP, call Danielle Thomas at 413-499-1600.

Sept. 29: **Hillcrest Educational Centers 16th Annual Fall Classic** benefit golf tournament at Wahconah Country Club in Dalton, with proceeds going toward renovation of St. Marks School into a state-of-the-art academic facility for autistic and special needs children. Registration and information at www.hillcrest.org/golf.

Sept. 30: **11th Annual Buddy Walk of the Berkshires** hosted by Berkshire County Arc's Down Syndrome Family Group, to promote awareness and inclusion of people with Down Syndrome who reside in Berkshire County. Registration at Craneville Elementary School in Dalton from 10 to 11 a.m. For information about registration, donations, sponsorships and volunteer opportunities, visit www.bcarc.org/dsfg or contact Chris at 413-464-7262 ext. 11 or cferrari@bcarc.org.



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FRONT pages

BUSINESS

Update

A sold-out audience of 225 guests was on hand for the "ANight in Havana" Gala fundraising event for **Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires (VIM)** on Aug. 10 at **Ski Butternut** in Great Barrington. Longtime VIM board member Jane Salamon was honored for exemplifying the scores of volunteers that have donated their time, money and creativity to help VIM thrive since opening its doors in 2004. This year's gala grossed more than \$150,000 to support the operations of the clinic and the more than 45 doctors, dentists, dental hygienists, nurses, and other healthcare volunteers who offer their free services five days a week at the VIM clinic in Great Barrington.

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival has received \$225,000 from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF), a state initiative co-administered by the **Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC)** and **MassDevelopment**, to support the construction of its new year-round dance rehearsal and event space. The Perles Family Studio will be the home of The School at Jacob's Pillow and will host year-round community events and activities, as well as professional convenings and choreographic research, and technical residencies (*October 2016 BT&C*). CFF grants support projects that create jobs in construction and cultural tourism; expand access and education in the arts, humanities, and sciences; and improve the quality of life in cities and towns across the state. The Pillow's \$225,000 award is among the largest grants distributed in this round. The \$5.5 million Perles Family Studio is a 7,373-square-foot dance studio and administrative space that will feature a 3,500-square-foot dance floor – nearly double the size of the main rehearsal space currently used by The School at Jacob's Pillow, the Sommers Studio. The building will be fully climate controlled, eliminating the current temperature and humidity challenges faced by dancers and artist faculty during the summer season. The space will accommodate room for spectators to view classes and rehearsals without interrupting dancers and faculty, and up to 200 seats for Inside/Out performances in the instances of rain and inclement weather. During the fall, winter, and spring months, the studio will be used for workshops, community events, professional convenings, and artist residencies. The name recognizes a lead gift from the Perles Family Foundation and Jacob's Pillow Trustee Claudia Perles. The building is designed by **Flansburgh Architects** of Boston, and constructed by **Allegrone Companies** of Pittsfield. Jacob's Pillow Dance will celebrate the opening of the Perles Family Studio with an official ribbon cutting ceremony on Aug. 18. The Pillow's 85th Anniversary Festival Finale, on Aug. 26, will be the first event in the new space.

The finalists have been announced for the 2017 **1Berkshire** Trendsetter Awards, which showcase Berkshire-based individuals and businesses who demonstrate excellence in several categories. This year's finalists include: Comprehensive Marketing Campaign – **Haddad Auto Dealerships**, **Lenox Chamber of Commerce**, **MountainOne**, **Pittsfield Public Schools**, **Shakespeare & Company**; Creative Economy Standout – **Berkshire Pulse**, **IS183**, **Jacob's Pillow**, **Shire City Herbals**, **WAM Theatre**; Entrepreneur/Visionary of the Year – **Berkshire Sterile Manufacturing**, **Latent Productions**, **Mungy Studios**, **Tad Ames**, **Whole Life Pet Products**; Growing/Advancing the Berkshire Economy – **Allegrone Companies**, **Berkshire Health North**, **Fire Cider**, **Jimmy Peak Mountain Resort**, **MCLA**; Newcomer of the Year – **Adam Hinds**, **Berkshire Scenic Railroad**, **Dr.**

EGGCELLENT!



Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture **John Lebeaux** (above) points to a cache of freshly laid eggs in the "Eggmobile" – a mobile henhouse at Square Roots Farm in Lanesboro. Farmer **Michael Gallagher** (shown above with Lebeaux) explains that moving the henhouse to various sections of the farm used by other livestock helps keep the land in balance and promotes the beneficial breakdown of natural waste. Lebeaux and other representatives from the state Department of Agricultural Resources visited Square Roots as part of a multi-farm tour on Aug. 3 that was coordinated by **Berkshire Grown**, a local farming advocacy organization, to highlight the importance of agriculture and local food to the Berkshire community and economy. At right, Gallagher shows members of the tour group the on-site processing facility that provides the fresh, locally raised poultry sold by the farm (which also raises other livestock for a wide range of beef and pork products). Commissioner Lebeaux's tour also included a visit to neighboring **Lakeview Orchards** (directly across the street from Square Roots) and earlier stops at **North Plain Farm** in Housatonic and **Brattle Farm** in Pittsfield.



Jamie Birge, **Everett Lamm**, **The LakeHouse Inn**; Nonprofit Impact – **Berkshire Baby Box**, **Berkshire Humane Society**, **Hillcrest Dental Care**, **McCann Technical High School**, **Northern Berkshire Community Coalition**; Under 40 Change-Maker – **Alice Maggio**, **Ben Lamb**, **Jay Green**, **Jesse Cook Dubin**, **Jessica Vecchia**. In addition, the community of **North Adams** has been selected by **1Berkshire** to receive the 2017 Putting the Berkshires on the Map award in recognition of the substantial contribution that this community has made to the economy of the Berkshires. "While

many of the communities in our region are deserving of recognition for their progress in recent years, the national attention garnered by North Adams and the organic way in which the city, business community, **MASS MoCA**, and other community stakeholders have collaborated has been an amazing thing to observe," said Jonathan Butler, CEO of **1Berkshire**. "The community as a whole is a tremendous honoree for the 2017 Putting the Berkshires on the Map recognition." This recognition and other awards will be presented at **1Berkshire's** seventh annual Celebrate the Berkshires event on Sept. 14 at **Bloom Meadows** in Hancock. Visit 1berkshire.com/calendar/celebrate-the-berkshires/ to reserve tickets.

Berkshire Community College (BCC) is offering a free course to students that will help them achieve a level of financial independence, thanks to a partnership with **Guardian Life Insurance Company of America**. The three-credit course, **Money Management for Life**, will cover strategies to help students manage budgets,

expenses and debt; save and invest for the future; plan for the unexpected; and establish personal financial plans to achieve their goals. The course helps educate and arm students with the critical skills and knowledge they need to manage their personal finances throughout the various stages of their lives. Through in-depth lesson plans and presentations, students are offered the chance to learn about key personal finance issues that could impact their overall financial health, and are guided in developing a personal financial plan for the next 15 years. "This course offers BCC students the opportunity to garner money management skills that will set them on a good financial track for the future," said Dr. Charles Kaminski, dean of Business, Science, Mathematics and Technology at BCC. "The more knowledge students have, the better off they will be when it comes to making major financial decisions such as buying a house or a car, taking out a loan or planning for retirement." For more information, contact the BCC Admissions Office at admissions@berkshirecc.edu or 413-236-1630.



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news & notes from the region

The Massachusetts Cultural Council Cultural Facilities Fund has awarded \$84,000 to **Berkshire Pulse** for installation of an elevator to make its third-floor dance studios accessible to every member of the community. Together with a lead gift from the **Jane & Jack Fitzpatrick Trust**, and generous gifts from the **Feigenbaum Foundation** and the **Great Barrington CPA Fund**, Berkshire Pulse has all the funds necessary to proceed with the \$214,000 project. "Our beautifully renovated and welcoming state-of-the-art facility can only be reached by those who are undaunted by and able to climb the two flights of stairs that take you to our front door," said Bettina Montano, founder of the Housatonic-based nonprofit dance and performing arts education center. "Correcting this issue will make us fully code compliant and improve the Pulse experience for everyone." In addition to installing the elevator, Berkshire Pulse will make additional accessibility and site improvements to the parking area, entry vestibule and downstairs access leading to the elevator. "Berkshire Pulse is working to ensure that every person in the community has equal access to our studios and classes," said Diane Pearlman, Berkshire Pulse board chair. "This includes students with disabilities, dancers from **Community Access to the Arts**, and elderly students who regularly attend therapeutic movement classes."

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) is adding two new major programs in the Department of Biology. Beginning this fall, MCLA will offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Sciences and in Community Health Education. Also starting this fall, the Biology Department will offer two new concentrations – pre-medical professions and pre-veterinary. In addition, new biology faculty members will join the campus in September. MCLA is the first public institution in the commonwealth to offer this type of Health Sciences major, which will prepare students to pursue advanced study or immediate employment in a variety of health professions. This new degree will be available as a general major or with four different concentrations: pre-physician assistant, pre-physical therapy, pre-occupational therapy, or medical technology. In addition, the college added the Community Health Education major, which addresses a growing demand for healthcare educators, both locally and nationwide. MCLA's pre-veterinary concentration will be the only one in the State Universities of Massachusetts. The pre-medical professions concentration will serve students who are interested in medical, dental and pharmaceutical careers. MCLA will welcome three new faculty to its Biology Department this fall to teach in the three majors and the newly restructured biology degree. They include Dr. George Hamaoui, whose research focuses on microbial communities in both soil and animals; Dr. Matthew Kostek, a certified strength and conditioning specialist and an American Colleges of Sports Medicine (ACSM) certified exercise physiologist; and Dr. Nicole Porter, a specialist in public and community health, who will be the coordinator of the Community Health Education program.

The **Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires** will publish the 2nd annual "Giving Back" guide in the fall. Designed to connect nonprofits with those who want to volunteer or donate, the publication is distributed free throughout Berkshire County through the support of advertisers and sponsors. Officially titled, "Giving Back: Your Guide to Charitable Opportunities in the Berkshires," the booklet features a directory of 1,000 Berkshire nonprofits organized by category. Berkshire nonprofits are encouraged to verify the accuracy of their free listing in the directory by going online to npberkshires.org/resources/giving-back-guide.

Olympia Hotel Management has assumed management of **The Williams Inn** in Williamstown. The property had previously been managed by Stockbridge-based **Main Street Hospitality Group** since its purchase by **Williams College** three years ago. Olympia, based in Portland, Maine, is also engaged to support development of a new inn for the college and will manage that property once it is open. The new 64-room hotel, which is currently in the design development phase, will be built at the end of Spring Street. **Cambridge Seven Associates** are the architects for the project, with interior design by **Bill Rooney Studio**. The new Williams Inn will offer a full-service restaurant, 3,200 square feet of meeting and event space, and a fitness center. Completion of the new hotel is anticipated for late spring of 2019. The present Williams Inn at the intersection of Routes 2 and 7 will continue to operate until the new inn is open.

Berkshire Bank Foundation has selected four nonprofit organizations to each receive a \$5,000 grant as part of its Xtraordinary Day Grants. Through the program, the foundation invited proposals from nonprofit organizations in Berkshire Bank's footprint seeking to build their capacity, performance and impact. More than 160 organizations submitted applications. In the bank's Berkshire region, **Berkshire Horseworks** in Great Barrington was awarded a grant toward the purchase of a mobile trailer.

Under the fiscal umbrella of the **Sandisfield Arts Center**, a group formed to write a comprehensive history of Sandisfield's Jewish farm colony has received a \$500 grant from the Wasserman-Streit Y'DIYAH Memorial Fund of the **Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation**. The 250-page history book – entitled *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires: The Untold Story of Sandisfield's Jewish Farm Colony* – tells the nearly forgotten story of how refugee-immigrant families who escaped the pogroms in Eastern Europe in the early 20th century fared as farmers in the Berkshires. Chapters on social, economic, cultural and religious life through the years will be followed by family histories and selected genealogies including vintage photographs and biographies of personalities in the town. Jews were the largest ethnic group to establish roots in Sandisfield in the 20th century, arriving when the town's economic situation was perhaps at its lowest point. They settled on old or abandoned farmsteads and bought deteriorating historic homes and businesses, rejuvenating the town socially and economically and, in the process, preserving its rich historic character. To pre-order a copy of the book, which debuts in the fall of 2018, email info@sandisfieldartscenter.org.

The **Guardian Life Insurance Company of America** has awarded grants totaling \$111,000 to 11 local nonprofit organizations in support of programs benefiting low-income and low-asset Berkshire County families and individuals. "Just as Guardian is here to help our customers achieve financial security, we're also committed to the communities where we live and work," said Gordon Dinsmore, senior vice president of product for individual markets and president of Guardian's **Berkshire Life** subsidiary. Grant recipients for 2017 include: **Berkshire Children and Families** – Bridge to Economic Self-Sufficiency Program; **Berkshire Community Action Council** – Community Action Rides Initiative; **Berkshire County Regional Employment Board** – Youth Works Summer Employment Program; **Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity** – Building for Tomorrow and Volunteers in Tax Assistance; **Construct Inc.** – Building Bridges to Self-Sufficiency; **Elizabeth Freeman Center** – Money School Program; **Hillcrest Dental Care** – Portable Dental Care Equipment; **Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts** – Financial Programs in Pittsfield Schools; **MCLA Foundation** (Berkshire Compact) – Career Fair for 8th Graders; **Miss Hall's School** – Money Matters Financial Literacy Workshop; and **The Food Bank of Western MA** – Door-to-Door Delivery Program in Berkshire County.

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FRONT pages

BUSINESS Update

Four separate grants have been awarded to recipients within Berkshire County to conduct community-wide environmental assessments and to clean up a north county brownfield site. The **Berkshire Regional Planning Commission** is the recipient of a \$300,000 award for regional assessment of known and suspected brownfields including former textile and paper mills, auto shops, fueling stations, and dry cleaners among others. The **Town of Great Barrington** and the **City of North Adams** were also awarded \$300,000 each for community-wide assessments. The Great Barrington grant will target the village of Housatonic, with an emphasis on the Monument Mills cluster and its surrounding residential neighborhoods along with the former Housatonic School. The North Adams grant will target a one-mile stretch of commercial/industrial development between the eastern gateway and the downtown along the Route 2/Mohawk Trail Corridor. The **Town of Williamstown** has received a \$200,000 grant to remediate the 5-acre former Photech Mill site off Cole Avenue, which is contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and inorganic contaminants. Grant funds also will be used for air monitoring and community engagement activities.

In late July the **City of Pittsfield** reopened the newly renovated First Street Lot, which is now available for both permit and metered parking. As with other municipal lots in the city, metered parking at the First Street Lot is in effect from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., with several kiosks stationed around the lot to assist patrons. There is free parking after 5 p.m. on weekdays and parking is free all day on Saturdays and Sundays. The reconfigured lot features new paving, additional lighting and landscaping. Contractor **Maxymilian** began work on the project this past spring. "We are very pleased with the results of this parking lot reconstruction project," said David Turocy, commissioner of the Department of Public Service and Utilities. "It includes several improvements that people have long requested, including improved drivability with no potholes or standing water, additional handicap spaces with better accessibility to the sidewalk, and new overhead lighting that improves public safety in the lot and nearby surroundings." Mayor Linda Tyer said the First Street Lot's new amenities will help to better serve the needs of the public. "We have a newly reconfigured parking lot that is both aesthetically pleasing and functional," Tyer said. "I look forward to the First Street Lot serving as a great asset to our downtown."

The **Massachusetts Broadband Institute** at MassTech (MBI) and **Charter Communications** have reached agreement on a contract to deliver broadband internet service to five unserved towns in Massachusetts, eventually providing high-speed connectivity to more than 3,600 homes and businesses. Under the MBI's Last Mile Initiative to bring broadband access to unserved residents and communities in the Commonwealth, the agency will provide Charter with a grant of \$4,420,000 toward the cost of constructing state-of-the-art broadband networks in the towns of Egremont, Hancock, Peru, Princeton and Tyringham. Once completed, Charter's networks will deliver the company's full suite of TV, Internet and voice services to residents and businesses in each town, including broadband speed of up to 60 Mbps. The contract calls for Charter to provide a minimum coverage level of at least 96 percent of premises in the five currently unserved towns, and is contingent on each town negotiating and signing a cable television license agreement with Charter. The MBI will cover 100 percent of the public costs of the grant to Charter, relieving the towns of the need for municipal borrowing. Charter has committed to completing the project within one year following the issuance of all necessary permits and authorizations, including receipt of pole attachment rights from local utilities. This is the second award made to Charter under the Last Mile program, following the MBI's award in August 2016 to support construction of broadband networks in the unserved towns of Hinsdale, Lanesborough and West Stockbridge. That project is scheduled for completion in early 2018.

The first edition of *From the Mayor's Desk*, Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer's quarterly newsletter, is now available. A link to the newsletter is located on the "Mayor's Office" page on the city's website: www.cityofpittsfield.org. "From the Mayor's Desk" is the City of Pittsfield's official newsletter. In each issue, we'll share with you highlights on the people, projects, initiatives, developments, and funds that are in place to move our city forward," said Tyer. "I'm proud of the work that's taking place in our city, and while there's always more to do, it's important for our community to know the good things that are happening right now." Sign-up for future editions of the newsletter is available through the city's subscription system: <http://www.cityofpittsfield.org/enotify/index.php>.

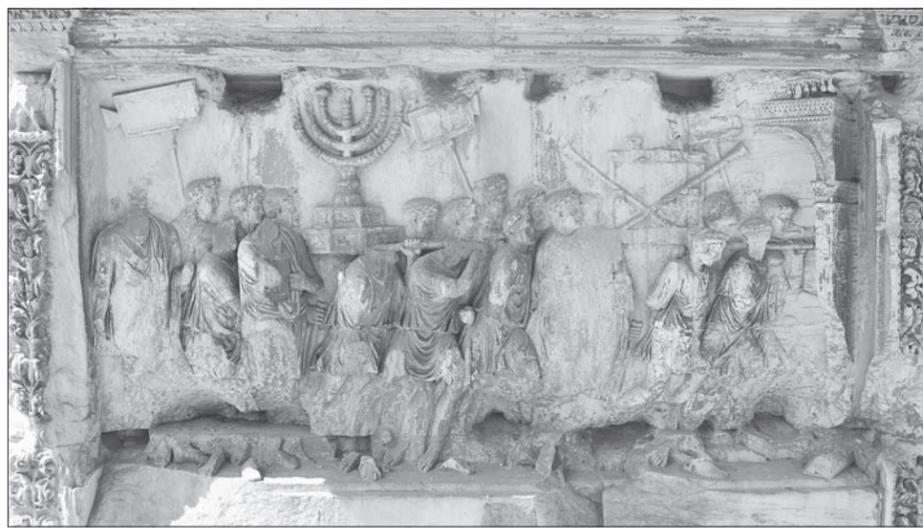
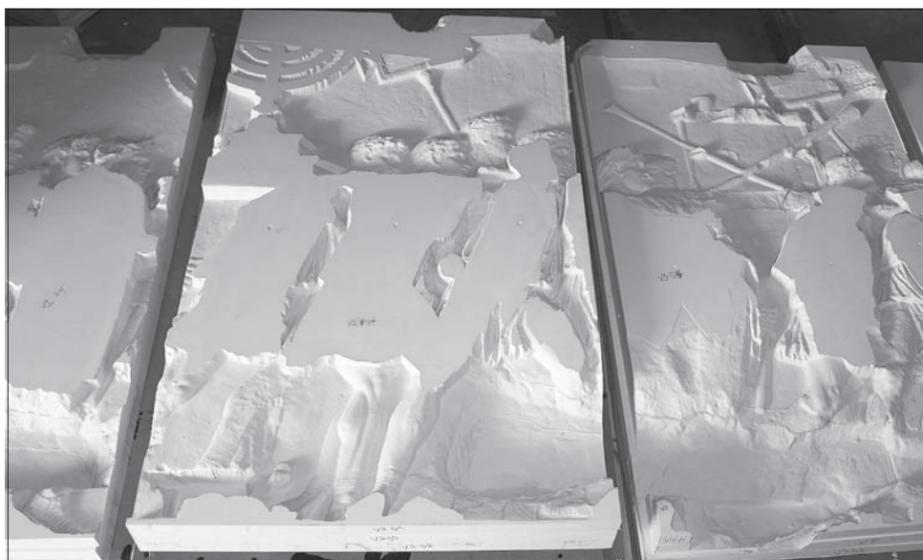
Berkshire Health Systems has been named among Healthcare's Most Wired for 2017 according to results of a survey released by the American Hospital Association's (AHA) Health Forum. Now in its 19th year, the annual survey reports that technology is making it easier for patients and providers to interact, thus improving communication, safety and patient-provider relationships. New tools are helping patients become more actively involved in their care and maintaining their health. Healthcare's Most Wired survey, conducted between Jan. 15 and March 15, is published by *Health & Hospitals Networks* (H&HN). Detailed results of the survey and study can be found in the July issue of H&HN. For a full list of winners, visit www.hhnmag.com.

Berkshire Community College (BCC) has announced that the **New England Public Radio** (NEPR) Berkshire bureau has moved from the 1 Berkshire building at 66 Allen St. in Pittsfield to the BCC main campus at 1350 West St. BCC and NEPR have had a partnership since 2015, where NEPR has offered internship positions to BCC students, one per semester, including the summer months. This partnership will continue, now with NEPR's Berkshire bureau housed on BCC's main campus. NEPR has expanded its service to cover Berkshire County over the past decade. It is heard at 88.5 FM on the eastern edges of Berkshire County; 101.1 FM in North Adams; 98.7 FM in Great Barrington; 98.3 FM in Lee; 106.1 FM in Pittsfield and Lenox; and 96.3 FM in Williamstown.



CARVING A PIECE OF HISTORY...

Lindsay Neathawk (left), of Neathawk Designs, joins Donald Sanders, owner of Learning Sites, and Steve Churgin, professor of Jewish History and director of the Center for Israel Studies at Yeshiva University in New York City, during the carving of a large high-density foam panel with a CNC machine in Neathawk's Williamstown workshop in early August. This panel will become one more layer in a three-dimensional full-scale replica of the Arch of Titus, a monument built on Rome's Via Sacra around 81 CE to commemorate Roman triumph in the Jewish War of 66-74 CE. Sanders' Williamstown-based firm, a pioneer in the field of virtual heritage (*January 2016 BT&C*), was hired to oversee creation of the physical replica of the Arch of Titus as it exists today (photo at bottom), as well as the digital reconstruction and colorization that will show the entire relief as it would have looked when first built, for an exhibition at Yeshiva University Museum focused on the importance of the Arch of Titus over the past 2,000 years. Neathawk, whose company specializes in three-dimensional signs and related work, was hired by Learning Sites to handle the intricate carving and layering process required for the project. The photo at right shows one section of the replica with some of the initial layers in place and details starting to take shape. The replica is slated for completion and shipment to the museum in late August. Before the project travels to New York City, however, local residents will get a sneak preview of the replica at an open house on Aug. 27 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Neathawk Designs, 610 North Hoosac St., Williamstown. "This will be a chance for everyone around here to see the panel, find out about the carving process, learn more about the meaning of the relief and the methods used to create the replica, and show off the capabilities of our two companies," said Sanders. For more information on the project, go to www.learningsites.com/Rome/Titus_home.php.



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news & notes from the region

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) has signed an articulation agreement with Berkshire Community College (BCC) to benefit students who earn an associate's degree in early childhood education at BCC and wish to continue their studies at MCLA to earn a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies. Students from BCC who have earned an associate's degree in early childhood education will be guaranteed various privileges that allow for a seamless transition from BCC to MCLA. Through this coordinated program of study at both institutions, students may obtain an associate's degree and a bachelor's degree, as well as required Early Education and Care (EEC) certifications. These credentials support requirements of the state's Department of Early Education and Care, and further advance students' knowledge, skills, confidence, dispositions and professional connections. Both BCC and MCLA's programs are cohort-based, where students move through the series of classes together as a group. Students may complete the requirements for their bachelor's degree in just over two years. "With this agreement, it will be easier than ever for qualified early childhood education students at Berkshire Community College to join our campus to earn their bachelor's degree," said MCLA President Jamie Birge. "We look forward to welcoming students to this program in the fall, and are delighted to continue our partnership with BCC as we move forward with this newest articulation agreement." Ellen Kennedy, president of Berkshire Community College, agreed. "We are excited to continue the long tradition of working with MCLA to ensure our students are able to smoothly transition from one institution to another to pursue their passions and achieve their dreams," Kennedy said. "Adding the early childhood education programming is another great example of our commitment to our students' aspirations."

The Austen Riggs Center has been recognized as a "Best Hospital" for 2017-18 by U.S. News & World Report, ranking ninth in psychiatry nationwide. The annual Best Hospitals rankings, now in their 28th year, are part of U.S. News' patient portal, designed to help patients make informed decisions about where to receive care for life-threatening conditions or for common elective procedures. For more information, visit Best Hospitals and use #BestHospitals on Facebook and Twitter.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council Cultural Facilities Fund has awarded \$84,000 to Berkshire Pulse for installation of an elevator to make its third-floor dance studios accessible to every member of the community. Together with a lead gift from the Jane & Jack Fitzpatrick Trust, and gifts from the Feigenbaum Foundation and the Great Barrington CPA Fund, Berkshire Pulse has all the funds necessary to proceed with the \$214,000 project. "Our beautifully renovated and welcoming state-of-the-art facility can only be reached by those who are undaunted by and able to climb the two flights of stairs that take you to our front door," said Bettina Montano, founder of the Housatonic-based nonprofit dance and performing arts education center. "Correcting this issue will make us fully code compliant and improve the Pulse experience for everyone." In addition to installing the elevator, Berkshire Pulse will make additional accessibility and site improvements to the parking area, entry vestibule and downstairs access leading to the elevator. "Berkshire Pulse is working to ensure that every person in the community has equal access to our studios and classes," said Diane Pearlman, Berkshire Pulse board chair. "This includes students with disabilities, dancers from Community Access to the Arts, and elderly students who regularly attend therapeutic movement classes."

Greylock Federal Credit Union (GFCU) has announced that its Greylock Employee Community Giveback Program (GECGP) raised \$3,555 for three cancer support organizations: Pop Cares, Moments House and the Denise Kaley Fund. Each organization received \$1,185. The credit union's staff recently formed GECGP to annually support a worthy cause in the community. This is the program's first year. "In our inaugural year, GECGP selected 'Cancer Support within our Community' as our focus, and chose local organizations that help people with cancer in north, south and central Berkshire County as the recipients of our fundraising efforts," said Cindy Shogry-Raimer, vice president and community development director at GFCU, and GECGP committee member. In addition to Shogry-Raimer, GECGP committee members include Emily Stanford, Jean Noel, Dawn Carlson, Becki Beron, Terry Ziemba, Marissa Kirchner, Anna Flynn and Jennifer O'Neil.

The Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires (NPC) has partnered with Elder Services of Berkshire County and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) to offer office hours in central and northern Berkshire County. On the second Friday of every month, the NPC will be on location at Elder Services at 877 South St. in Pittsfield, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. NPC founder Liana Toscanini will offer consultations free of charge by appointment. Toscanini is donating her time, and Elder Services is donating space, so that nonprofits in the Pittsfield area can gain access to NPC services more easily. In North Adams, the NPC will take up residence the first Thursday of every month in MCLA's Design Lab at 49 Main St., through December. Hours in the MCLA Design Lab are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., by appointment. Nonprofits can stop by to discuss their needs, learn about available information and services, and make valuable connections. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 413-441-9542.

Dalton United Methodist Church has launched a five-year, \$150,000 capital campaign to raise funds to replace the church's heating system. "The existing heating system has needed frequent repairs for years and recently failed inspection," explained David Badeau, a church trustee and member of the campaign committee. "The church trustees' fund will cover the cost of asbestos removal for the project, and our congregation is giving generously, but we're still well short of the funds needed to complete the work." The church's Roof and Restoration Committee, formed a decade ago to replace the church roof, recently made its own pledge, and has begun canvassing the congregation for donations. To date, the campaign has received about \$95,000 in pledges, including more than \$48,000 in up-front gifts. According to Bernie Klem, Roof and Restoration chair, the church has the largest weekly Methodist attendance in Berkshire County and has been an important part of the community for more than a century. "We've supported the community, and we'll need the community's help to achieve our goal," Klem said. He noted that individuals and businesses could help the campaign through financial gifts or by supporting church fundraising events, and other churches could consider special collections. For further information, contact Klem at 413-684-3286. ♦

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BERKSHIRE MUSEUM

Bold 'New Vision' calls for innovative, sustainable institution

BY VAN SHIELDS

Since I became the executive director of the Berkshire Museum six years ago, hundreds of people have told me that they visited the museum as children on school field trips or with their families. Each of those stories was different, but the outcome was the same: the childhood visits made a big impact on the lives of these people.

Stories like these are what helped fuel our effort to create a Master Plan for the museum that will ensure engaging, transformative experiences for future generations.

Since 1903, the Berkshire Museum has provided exciting learning opportunities for visitors. Today, we are known for our robust partnerships with area schools that, in this era of scarcity, are more valuable than ever. The demand for those educational experiences is growing. In fact, the number of educational experiences provided by the museum has doubled in the last five years to nearly 30,000.

At the same time, rising costs and a changing economic and philanthropic environment have threatened our financial sustainability.

This is our paradox: Berkshire Museum has been struggling financially even while experiencing a burgeoning demand for its services to the community. With that as a backdrop, how did we arrive at this juncture in our planning process?

The museum has always been "for" the people of Pittsfield and the Berkshires, and we are committed to using our unique resources to meet community needs. At the outset of our master planning process, we chose to hear voices before making choices. We started by asking our planning part-



Berkshire Museum Executive Director Van Shields.

ners: "What are the biggest challenges facing our communities today?" The sobering answers: a starved educational system; population and business decline; systemic poverty, drugs, and gangs; financial and other barriers to accessing community benefits; and the county's north, central and south divide, among others.

So we set about developing ideas on what we could do to help meet challenges. As we worked our way through the list, we identified direct impacts – and impacts we could help make through collective action.

We are already a leader in delivering educational experiences, participate in county-wide collaborations, and create socialization opportunities across boundaries. Could we help improve perceptions of Pittsfield, attract people to the region, overcome barriers?

Although we determined we couldn't impact poverty, we agreed that – if we align our programs to meet the challenges we know we can impact – over the long haul we could contribute to broader community transformation.

Along the way, our planning partners told us that we should heighten our emphasis on science and history, which would be of great benefit to our schools and the public. (Art is still integral to our mission and programming.) They asked us to weave Berkshire stories into the mix but continue to connect to the wider world – and please make experiences accessible for people from all economic levels.

Once we understood how impactful the museum could be in addressing these concerns, we asked our planning partners to explore different scenarios for the

museum's future. Should we be a science or children's museum or a museum of the Berkshires? No, too limiting. What about the definitive STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) museum? Bingo! But make sure you keep history and weave in the Berkshires, too.

Our New Vision announced last month calls for a 21st century institution wrapped in historic skin, a STEAM-plus-history experience utilizing the latest engagement and educational practices.

Based on thematic zones exploring what it means to be human and our relationship to the world around us, tools such as digital labels will allow us to provide deeper, richer content with more detail, so visitors

can choose the appropriate age level and degree of interest for the objects on view. A significantly expanded aquarium will highlight the streams and ponds of New England as well as exotic environments from around the globe. A modern multi-media space with greatly improved sound and projection capabilities will function like a planetarium and cinema.

Plans for exhibitions and programs are still evolving, and we look forward to sharing them as they mature.

So, circling back to the paradox, how do we reconcile increased demand for services with financial struggles?

To frame that answer, we need to understand that a nonprofit organization is, by its very nature, defined by the way it serves its community. Its primary concern is to fulfill its mission, and a commonality for nonprofits is the question of how to do that within a healthy financial model that will allow it to continue to do so. This is a charge stewarded by the nonprofit's governing board.

In the case of museums, annual operating budgets are almost always supported by a three-legged stool. Two of those legs are earned income from admission, fees, etc., plus contributions from members, donors and sponsors. The third leg is either earnings from investments or government support.

Why does a museum need that third leg? Because museums are educational institutions, they can rarely make a business plan work solely on annual earned or contributed income. Like for-profit enterprises, museums also need capital to grow services to match demand, make improvements and weather hard times.

In the past, the third leg might have been a single patron model, which up until the mid-1990s was true for the Berkshire Museum. It is worth noting that the museum did not begin charging admission until 1996, and, as noted above, our region is experiencing a population and business decline that is exacerbating changes in the philanthropic environment.

Our board of trustees has a keen weather eye, as fishermen say, and has looked over the horizon and seen the storm that could sink this venerable institution. We have made no secret about the fact that for decades the museum has been challenged by an annual operating structural deficit that has averaged more than \$1 million over the past 10 years. Our trustees realized that nothing short of a bold but prudent, fiscally conservative financial model could move the museum forward and enable it to provide for the pressing needs of our community. This financial model lays the foundation to make the museum sustainable for decades to come – although it meant making hard, controversial and even unpopular choices.

The museum's bold New Vision will result in an innovative institution, supported by an equally bold financial strategy designed to properly capitalize the

organization. The ambitious upgrade of the facility and core educational experiences is expected to cost \$20 million. But, first, the museum will establish an endowment of at least \$40 million, sufficient to sustain annual operations through investment earnings to complement annual earned and contributed income.

The museum will also strengthen its balance sheet to reduce financial risk, pay down existing debt, and establish reserve funds for long-term capital maintenance and to mitigate unforeseen events. This endowment will ensure our sustainability through times thick and thin as far into the future as we can see.

The Berkshire Museum's board of trust-

"By aligning our vision to community needs today, we will ensure the Berkshire Museum continues its century-long track record of success as a vital cultural and educational resource for Pittsfield and Berkshire County."

ees took the painful though courageous step of voting to remove and sell 40 works of art from our collection to support the New Vision for the museum and to create the endowment needed to ensure sustainability. The list of artworks includes two paintings by Norman Rockwell

and other selections that we knew would be controversial. As agonizing a decision as it was, the board was compelled to take this action – believing it to be the right thing to do, at the right time, for this community. Sotheby's New York will conduct the sale, anticipated to generate at least \$50 million.

The museum will also continue to engage with its members, visitors and supporters through fundraising campaigns, annual appeals, corporate sponsorships and support from its membership base, including the \$10 million New Vision campaign to support the new strategic plan. The generous lead gift of \$2.5 million from the Feigenbaum Foundation, added to other gifts and pledges for a total to date of \$5.4 million, means that the campaign is already more than halfway to the goal, an auspicious beginning.

More than a century ago, Zenas Crane founded the Berkshire Museum to bring the world to the people of Pittsfield and Berkshire County – and, in doing so, to serve the community in a way that was non-existent in 1903.

Now it is time to take the museum forward, to create a 21st century museum to serve the community in a new way – to help create thriving, world-ready students right here in Pittsfield. We honor and continue Zenas Crane's legacy by assessing the community as it stands in 2017 and making sure the museum is an institution that will serve the needs of the community today – not by preserving the museum as it was more than 100 years ago. The community has changed, and the museum must change.

The New Vision was built based on our understanding of the community – what it wants as well as what it needs – and the challenges and opportunities we are facing. By aligning our vision to community needs today, we will ensure the Berkshire Museum continues its century-long track record of success as a vital cultural and educational resource for Pittsfield and Berkshire County.

I may not get to hear those stories, but I'm hoping to help create another hundred years of childhood memories at the Berkshire Museum! ♦

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Berkshire Museum Executive Director Van Shields was invited by BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE to submit this column discussing the museum's master plan for future programing initiatives and financial stability. Readers with opposing or supporting views regarding these plans are welcome to contact us at info@btaconline.com.

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WORKplace

Student loan benefit

continued from page 1

“Student loan relief is a relatively new and highly coveted benefit in today’s marketplace, and we are thrilled to offer it to our employees,” said Chuck Leach, who recently completed his second year as Lee Bank’s president and CEO. “In my view, the bank has to have a really, really good relationship with our employees, and [offering this new benefit] sends a message that we’re in their corner.”

“We are still small enough that we know each of our employees,” added Susie Brown, senior vice president of human resources and a 37-year employee at the bank (and no relation to Laura Brown). “We care about our people and the pride they take in caring for our customers. So, from a management perspective, it is very important that we convey that to our employees in whatever way we can.”

Brown and Leach noted that the new student loan payoff benefit comes on top of an already robust package of employee benefits offered by the bank.

“It sweetens the mix,” said Leach. “We hope this added benefit will improve the quality of life for our employees and in turn benefit our community, as ultimately it may enable our employees to put roots down and invest in our local backyards sooner and with a greater impact.”

The specific Gradifi program offered by Lee Bank is known as the SLP (Student Loan Paydown) Plan. Through this plan, the employer contributes a set monthly amount for each eligible employee that goes toward the principal owed by the employee on his or her student loan.

“The employee payment doesn’t change,” said Andy Bessette, an account manager with Gradifi (www.gradifi.com), noting that the employee continues to make the full regular monthly payment on the student loan. “The employer contribution is supplemental.”

As a result, Bessette said, the employer contributions take an additional bite out of the loan’s principal, which both reduces the overall amount of interest paid on the loan and shortens the time it takes for the loan to be paid off.

Founded in 2014 and now a wholly owned subsidiary of First Republic Bank, Gradifi was the first company to bring this specific benefit to the market. “It’s a mission-based organization,” said Bessette, noting that it was established to provide a student loan repayment solution aimed at tackling the nation’s \$1.4 trillion student loan problem.

Bessette explained that Gradifi interfaces with its clients’ human resources departments (or related management staff) to provide

services that simplify administration of the payoff benefit.

“We facilitate the payment to the student loan servicer,” he said. “The employer knows that the funds are coming through us. The money never goes into employees’ hands.”

Gradifi generally charges its clients \$5 per participating employee per month to provide this service, along with other annual administrative fees.

According to Bessette, the company has to date attracted over 140 clients to this service. Those clients range in size from a few dozen employees to over 25,000. They also represent a wide variety of industries.

Fierce war for talent

Bessette noted that the banking industry comprises almost 10 percent of its client base. That sector has been growing following the endorsement of the student loan payoff benefit by the American Bankers Association last February. “We’re looking at a huge uptick [in that sector] in the year ahead,” he said, adding that a 20-percent discount on its monthly fees for ABA members will help fuel that growth.

Another driver of interest in the benefit within the banking sector is what Bessette described as a challenging environment for

recruiting and retaining highly qualified employees. “The war for talent in banks is so fierce,” he said, adding that the Gradifi benefit is another tool to help employers attract and retain talent.

Leach explained that Lee Bank learned about Gradifi’s program through a banking industry conference last winter where the issue of attracting and retaining employees was discussed. “A speaker on HR and recruiting talked about community banks’ track record recruitment,” he said. “There’s a view that millennials don’t want to work for banks, and that we have to do a better job of selling ourselves.”

While agreeing with that premise in general, Leach noted that Lee Bank has had a different experience in terms of recruitment. “We have people banging down the door to work here,” he said. “I think that’s because we have developed a good culture here where people care about each other.”

However, Leach said he also recognizes the need to continue to foster that positive workplace environment, and he sees the student loan payoff benefit as one way to do that. “People were talking about it at the conference, and it seemed like a novel program that fit with the strategy that was formulating in my head,” he said.

Brown, who was tasked with implementing the Gradifi program, said it addresses a real need among younger members of the workforce. “It’s the big hot-button issue,” she said. “Student loan debt is such a big burden, and we need to look at what we can do to help these young people struggling with this.”

Working with Gradifi’s team, Brown set up a plan for Lee Bank in which eligible employees would receive an SLP benefit of \$100 per month for up to 72 months (six years). Eligibility guidelines included working at least 20 hours a week, with new employees qualifying for the benefit 90 days after being hired.

While the benefit is directed primarily toward younger workers paying off their own student loans, Brown said that some employees who took out certain types of student loans for their children’s education also qualify.

Brown noted that 11 of the bank’s 75 employees are now receiving the SLP benefit, which took effect in August. Also participating are a few employees at Freedom National Bank in Rhode Island, a separate institution that is also under Lee Bank’s holding company, Berkshire Financial Services Inc.

While Lee Bank is the first employer in the Berkshires to offer this benefit, Leach and Brown expect others will soon follow their lead. “We’re hearing from other employers asking about it and how to set it up,” said Brown. “You know that it’s going to catch on.”

Leach said he expects the student loan payoff benefit will become a very effective recruitment tool for Lee Bank, which will be featuring the Gradifi program along with other information on the bank’s new Careers page on its website (www.leebank.com). “It’s another way of showing [prospective employees] what a unique culture we have here,” he said.

Of course, the benefit also reinforces that point for the employees who are now accelerating the payoff of their student loans. Participating employee Laura Brown expressed her sentiments on this point in an email to Leach and Susie Brown: “Thank You!! What an amazing benefit,” she wrote. “This will accelerate my maturity date by 37 months (68 more payments) and couldn’t be more appreciated.”

In a subsequent interview, Brown said knowing that the seemingly endless payment schedule for her loans will now be three years shorter makes each of her regular monthly payments a little easier. “Being in the financial industry, having things planned out is part of what we do,” she said. “So, for me, it’s really a great feeling to see that shortened.” ♦



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people on the move



Touloukian

Berkshire Health Systems has announced the appointment of **Christopher Touloukian, MD**, a board certified and fellowship trained general surgeon, to the medical staff of Berkshire Medical Center and the physician staff of Berkshire Surgical Services of BMC. Dr. Touloukian is expanding outpatient general surgery services in northern and central Berkshire County. He and Dr. Robert Lincer provide minimally invasive outpatient general surgery at the North Adams Campus of BMC and also provide surgical services at BMC in Pittsfield. Dr. Touloukian comes to the Berkshires from Canton Potsdam Hospital in Potsdam, N.Y. He previously served at Indiana University Hospital and Wishard Hospital in Indianapolis.

Debra Allen, RN, BSN, CCN, has been named vice president of the home care division of Porchlight VNA/Home Care. Allen comes to Porchlight with many years of clinical experience in home care, skilled nursing, program development, wellness, prevention, community health and case management in primary care working in a variety of settings in both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. She most recently served as the associate regional manager of case management at Atrius Health. Previously she was the senior care manager at Southborough Medical Group. Allen had also earlier worked for the former Lee Regional VNA (now Porchlight) as a visiting nurse and case manager from 2006 to 2008.



Allen

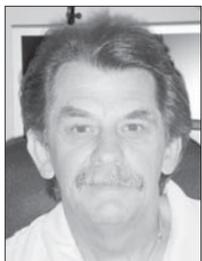
Big Y Foods Inc. has announced the appointment of **Jim Wilson** as director of workforce management, succeeding **Jim Killian**, who has retired. In his new role, Wilson will oversee workforce management operations, including labor budgeting, for all 77 Big Y stores. Wilson, an industry veteran with over 30 years of experience, celebrated 25 years with Big Y this past year, having joined the company in 1991 as a full-time head cashier in their Holden store. In 1994, Wilson was accepted into Big Y's store manager training program and in 1996 was appointed store manager in the Worcester location. In 2000, he began working in the chain's corporate headquarters in the finance department as business process manager and later the treasury and budget manager. From 2005 to 2017 he went back into the stores as the director of four different locations in Massachusetts, most recently in Franklin.



Mullally

Berkshire Health Systems has announced the appointment of **Sean Mullally, MD**, a board certified and fellowship trained hematology oncologist to the BMC medical staff, and to the physician staff of the BMC Cancer Center. Dr. Mullally had previously served with Berkshire Hematology Oncology from 2007 to 2010, and most recently was medical director of the Massachusetts General Cancer Program at Cooley-Dickinson Hospital in Northampton.

Proelios, an Anglo/German brand gaming consultancy, has announced the appointment of **Thad Kubis** of Sheffield as their North American marketing partner. Kubis, founder and president of the Omni Channel Marketing Group/TIFMC, will offer marketing-based brand gaming consultation, creative design, development and services to the North American market.



Kubis

Berkshire County Arc (BCArc) has hired **Cybele Kilby** as director of day and family enrichment services. Kilby has been with BCArc since 2006, working as a residential site manager and a case manager at its Center for Development day program, and most recently as a case manager and family advocate in the Advocacy and Family Support department.



Kilby

Greylock Federal Credit Union has announced the hiring of **Rebecca Riordan** as vice president, human resources. Riordan has held human resources leadership and management roles since the 1980s, most recently serving as vice president of human resources at Country Curtains in Stockbridge, where she worked for more than 20 years.



Riordan

Salisbury Bank has announced the promotion of Jennifer Peterson to lending compliance specialist and assistant Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) officer. Peterson has been with the bank since 2013. As assistant CRA officer, she will continue in her role to provide support to the CRA officer and will assume responsibility for various aspects of the CRA requirements.

Brooke Mead has been named director of the Berkshire Immigrant Center (BIC), following the announcement by longtime director **Hilary Greene** that she is stepping down from the position. Mead has been at BIC for 15 years, for many of them the center's only full-time staff member, and has worked closely with Greene to ensure successful programming in support of the county's growing immigrant and refugee population. In addition to these changes in management, the BIC has announced the hiring of **Sheryl Lechner** as development coordinator and **Ben Fish** as case worker. Greene will also remain at the BIC as a case worker representing clients on an interim basis until additional staff are hired.

James Poole, MD, has been appointed medical director for the Centers for Living and Rehabilitation (CLR), a part of Southwestern Vermont Health Care. Poole has served as a hospitalist with Southwestern Vermont Medical Center since 2008 and has been a member of Dartmouth-Hitchcock Putnam Physicians since its inception in 2012.



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people on the move

Community Health Programs has added two nurse practitioners to its practices in North Adams and Great Barrington. At CHP North Adams Family Medicine, **Donna Tew**, ARNP, BC, has joined the staff as a primary care provider for the practice. Tew, a retired lieutenant colonel in the U.S Air Force Reserves, is certified as an advanced registered nurse practitioner and earned national certification as a family nurse practitioner from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. She has worked as a primary care provider in community health centers and private practices in Florida and Arizona. At CHP Barrington OB-GYN, **Molly Rivest** has joined the staff with a special focus in obstetrics and gynecology care. Rivest most recently worked as a primary care provider at UMass Memorial-Hahnemann Family Health Center, specializing in women's and adolescent health. She has also been a primary care provider in a Worcester family health center and worked as a hospital emergency room nurse.



Tew



Rivest

Trustees of the BART Charter Public School have elected **Dianne Cutillo** as board chair, **Jennifer Kerwood** as treasurer, and **Maura Delaney** as a new trustee. Officers re-elected were **Christopher Perkins**, vice chair; and **Geraldine Shen**, secretary. Cutillo, proprietor of Cutillo Communications LLC, previously served on the BART board from 2006 to 2014, including several years as chair. Before establishing her consulting business in 2015, Cutillo served as a marketing and public affairs executive at Cooley Dickinson and North Adams Regional hospitals and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center. Previously, she was a journalist at the *Berkshire Eagle* and editor and publicist for Storey Books. She succeeds **Charles Swabey** as chair; he remains a BART trustee. Newly elected trustee Maura Delaney previously served as a community volunteer on the board's Charter and Accountability Committee, which oversees the school's faithfulness to its charter and compliance with the accountability plan the school has with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She is interim vice president for academic affairs at Berkshire Community College and previously served as associate professor of English, English Department chair, and Liberal Arts Program advisor at BCC.



Cutillo

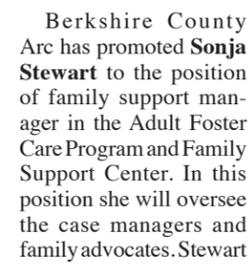
Linda Burlak, a science teacher and academic dean at Buxton School in Williamstown, has been awarded the ninth annual James C. Kapteyn Prize for excellence in teaching. She will receive a \$10,000 award for study or travel to enrich her teaching, and the school will receive a \$2,000 grant in her name. Currently in her 29th year at Buxton School, Burlak has taught biology and physics, algebra and geometry, and popular electives in marine science, astronomy and nature writing. She will be honored at an event to be held in October.



Supranowicz

The San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis has named **Austen Riggs Center Research Psychologist Katie Lewis**, PhD, as the next Robert S. Wallerstein Fellow in Psychoanalytic Research. This fellowship, which includes a minimum of five years of grant funding, will support Lewis' research study, "Impact of Interpersonal Experiences on Maladaptive Thoughts and Behaviors: An Object Relations EMA Study." **Jane Tillman**, PhD, ABPP, Evelyn Stefansson Nef Director of the Erikson Institute for Education and Research at Austen Riggs, is co-investigator on the study and will serve as Lewis' sponsor.

Greylock Federal Credit Union has announced the promotion of **Dianne Supranowicz** to senior vice president, finance. Previously, she held the position of vice president, controller at Greylock Federal for four years. In her new role Supranowicz will direct, plan and organize activities in the areas of finance, accounting, credit union investments and asset/liability management. Before joining Greylock Federal, Supranowicz served as vice president, audit operations manager and vice president, controller at two other area banks.



Stewart

Berkshire County Arc has promoted **Sonja Stewart** to the position of family support manager in the Adult Foster Care Program and Family Support Center. In this position she will oversee the case managers and family advocates. Stewart has completed training through the Federation for Children with Special Needs and works to offer educational advocacy to families. She also organizes educational events and trainings that are made available to members of the community.

Berkshire Community College (BCC) has announced several new faculty and staff additions. **Jonah Sykes** has joined BCC as the manager of marketing and communications. Sykes previously worked for six years at Berkshire United Way, first as their executive assistant, then as the coordinator of marketing and communications and finally as development manager. During his time at BUW, he oversaw the fundraising efforts of over 190 employee charitable campaigns and led marketing efforts around website design, digital marketing analytics and event planning. **Deborah Thayer** has joined BCC as a database analyst in the Information Technology (IT) department. Thayer comes to the college from the CSC Corporation, a worldwide IT consulting services company. She has extensive programming and analysis experience, project management skills, and software development expertise. **Colleen Kays** has joined BCC as an accountant II in the Student Billing Office. Kays has worked as a data coordinator and support and stabilization coordinator at Berkshire Children and Families for the past seven years. Prior to that, she worked in accounts payable at KB Toys. **Tricia (Burr) Guerino** has joined BCC as an assistant professor of nursing in the BCC Nursing-LPN Program. She comes to the college from Berkshire Medical Center where she has been a staff/charge nurse in the emergency department and also held a position as clinical nurse manager of critical care services. **Kathy Timpane** has joined BCC as the learning specialist in the Disability Resource Center. Timpane has worked with students with disabilities for over 20 years. She comes to BCC from the College Internship Program (CIP) in Lee, where she served as a student advisor and wellness instructor for college-age students on the autism spectrum. Prior to her work at CIP, she served as an adventure-based counselor program coordinator and clinical case manager for Hillcrest Educational Center in Lenox.



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Beth Petropulos has joined MountainOne Bank as vice president, senior human resources officer, where she will be responsible for recruitment efforts across all MountainOne divisions, as well as supporting employee training and development, promoting a healthy and engaged workplace, and fostering a corporate culture focused on talent, integrity and teamwork. Prior to joining MountainOne, Petropulos, who has over 20 years of human resources experience, served in roles of increasing responsibility at organizations in Berkshire County, Boston, New Hampshire and New York.



Petropulos

The Stockbridge Library, Museum & Archives has announced the election of **Chuck Gillett** and **John Gillespie** to the library's board of directors for three-year terms. Gillett, a resident of Stockbridge since 1978, was owner for 35 years of The Studley Press in Dalton, which printed books and catalogs for museums and art galleries throughout the United States. Presently he is a realtor with Wheeler & Taylor in Stockbridge. Gillespie recently retired as vice president of finance at Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health. He has over 30 years of experience in finance, especially in the nonprofit sector. He is founder and president of Beyond the Bottom Line, a firm that provides financial services and support to nonprofits and social enterprises.

Abbie von Schlegell, CFRE, has reached a milestone of 10 years as a development consultant and principal of her firm a. von schlegell & co. Focusing on the non-profit sector, her company has served clients in arts and culture, independent schools, human services and more. She delivers numerous workshops and board retreats on topics such as major gifts, women in philanthropy, and trends in fundraising, among others.



von Schlegell

David Hopkins has joined Miss Hall's School as director of admissions and enrollment management, where he has responsibility for all of the school's enrollment management and student recruitment efforts, including the development and implementation of strategies to meet enrollment objectives and provide outreach for Miss Hall's

both locally and globally. He also joins the school's senior management team that meets regularly to exchange information, set policy, advise the head of school, and anticipate future needs. Hopkins comes to Miss Hall's from Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, in Rabun Gap, Ga., where he was director of international programming since 2012.

Salisbury Bank has announced the promotion of **Julianna Sinchak** to vice president, marketing and sales administration manager, where she will continue in her role to manage the overall responsibilities of marketing functions and strategies within the bank, as well as oversee the sales administration function. Sinchak started with Salisbury Bank in 2005, and has held various positions in retail, commercial credit, and business development. ♦



Sinchak



Scussel

Joel Scussel has joined the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank as vice president/commercial loan officer. A member of the area's financial community since 1982, Scussel began his career with the former First Agricultural Bank, working in consumer lending. He went on to serve as vice president, commercial lending for First Agricultural, Greylock Federal Credit Union, and most recently MountainOne Bank. Scussel has managed numerous substantial commercial loan portfolios and possesses lending knowledge in multiple industries. He is based at Pittsfield Cooperative's main office on South Street in Pittsfield.

Berkshire South Regional Community Center has announced that **Rebecca Wolin** has been hired as director of finance and administration. She brings over 25 years of experience in accounting and financial management, most recently as staff accountant at Country Curtains. Berkshire South also announced that **Jaelyn Sinay** has been promoted to director of employee and community engagement from her previous title of director of membership. Sinay will continue to oversee membership while providing added support to all employee relations issues, including oversight of employee communications, staff development and general employee guidance.



Wolin



Sinay

The Rotary Club of Pittsfield has announced that **Sheri Quinn** and **Anthony Mazzeo** are the 40th recipients of the Dr. David B. Kagan Award. Established in 1977 in memory of the long-time Pittsfield Rotarian and community citizen, the award has been given annually to one woman and man from central Berkshire County who have made significant contributions to their community through volunteer activities. Quinn, a CPA and a partner in the firm of Fenton Quinn PC in Pittsfield, is a longtime board member at the Berkshire County Kids' Place and Violence Prevention Center. She also serves on the board of the Coolidge Hill Foundation, making grants to community organizations primarily serving children and the disabled. Mazzeo manages his time between the family-owned businesses of Mazzeo's Ristorante, Catering & Home Made Pasta and Mazcot's Sports Bar & Grill. He is an active member of UNICO of Pittsfield, an Italian heritage organization that provides assistance to those in need and grants educational scholarships to local high school seniors and continuing education students. He is on the board of Berkshire County ARC and the Boys & Girls Club of the Berkshires, and sponsors both a little league team and a softball team for the youth of the community, among other volunteer activities.

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OUR *region*

A CLOSER LOOK: In-depth report examines issues affecting Berkshires

BY JOHN TOWNES

An ambitious research project is shedding new light on many important issues affecting Berkshire communities and those in neighboring counties in New York and Connecticut.

In July the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation (BTCF) released *A Closer Look*, an in-depth report on the foundation's survey of residents in the region on what they believe are the most important factors for improving lives, the challenges they face, and what is keeping them in the region or causing them to consider leaving.

The report includes opinions collected from a cross-section of about 2,300 people in a dozen focus groups and online surveys. It also incorporates available data from various sources on jobs, housing and other issues.

"It's a chance to look at the factors affecting people's lives locally, and animate and inform public discussions about them," said Peter Taylor, president of BTCF.

Copies of the report are available online at www.berkshiretaconic.org.

BTCF is a nonprofit foundation headquartered in Sheffield that provides expertise and management services to help people establish and manage charitable funds. It works with individuals, families, businesses, financial advisors and nonprofit organizations.

Each year, the foundation distributes over \$8 million through grants and scholarships to nonprofits and individuals in the arts and education, health and human services, and environmental protection. In addition to Berkshire County, BTCF serves northwest Litchfield County in Connecticut, and Columbia and northeast Dutchess counties in New York.

One purpose of the report is to assist the foundation, its donors and nonprofits to determine priorities and strategies in allo-

cation of resources and funding to meet the contemporary needs of the region.

"We wanted to do an analysis to understand the issues, trends and needs in the area we serve, to help us sharpen our strategic direction," said Taylor, who assumed his position with BTCF in January 2016. "Our goal is to support a broad spectrum of issues, but also shine a light on needs for more targeted efforts."

Taylor added that the report is also oriented to the larger community. "It's intended to be a broad information resource that will be helpful to donors and nonprofits," he said. "It is also for a wider audience of civic and business leaders, community groups and individual citizens."

Taylor noted that the foundation is also planning a related series of public forums in the fall. "One goal is to stimulate a community conversation about the issues that affect the region," he said.

Year-long project

The process of compiling *A Closer Look* began in June 2016. BTCF worked with Mt. Auburn Associates, a Boston-based consulting firm that conducts research and develops strategic planning on economic and community development.

The report highlights five themes that emerged from the research and community dialogues: jobs and the economy, demographic transitions, youth and the future workforce, deepening inequality, and the region's assets and infrastructure.

The analysis highlights a mix of positive trends and problems, including paradoxes and contradictions. Because the report covers a large region, there were variations among communities and counties, as well as common concerns and themes.

"In the report, we recognized that, as we look at the issues, it also has to be placed in the context of the region's strengths and opportunities," said Taylor. "There are many problems and concerns we have to address. But we have tremendous assets for a rural region in terms of cultural and natural advantages and human capital."

One concern that emerged was economic inequality and related gentrification. Poverty is rising in three-quarters of the region's towns and cities, and incomes have not kept pace with inflation in over half the region. At the same time, the number of housing units used as second or vacation homes has grown by 28 percent since 2000.

"Many people in the conversations and surveys cited deepening economic inequality as a major concern," said Taylor. "There are points of affluence and economic strength, but also pockets of poverty."

Among responders, the expense of living here was cited as one of the top three reasons for considering leaving the region.

Taylor said the cost of housing is a major burden for many people, especially renters.

About 30 percent of respondents said they have had challenges accessing housing that is affordable.

The report also found that slow economic growth since the recession and the shifting economic base are primary concerns for many people, despite growth in jobs in some sectors, such as the arts, the creative economy, food-related industries and tourism.

Economic opportunity

Taylor said the responses and discussions cited the need for opportunities as a major priority.

"A predominant theme was the importance of economic development to ensure more jobs will be available than there are today," he said.

Among the residents included in the survey and discussions, 60 percent reported challenges accessing job opportunities for themselves or a family member.

As noted in the report, the employment picture varies among communities. "While job growth in the region since 2010 has been positive at 3.3 percent, it has been weaker than the U.S. average of 9 percent," it states. "The unemployment rate ranged from 1.1 percent to 14.9 percent in the region's towns and cities between 2011 and 2015. About a third had rates higher than the national rate of 8.3 percent. The measure that shows the active portion of an economy's workforce, the labor force participation rate, ranged from 50 percent to as high as 75 percent. But nearly half of towns fell below the national rate of 64 percent."

Among the target region's 68 towns and cities, 54 have median household incomes that exceed the U.S. median of \$53,600. However, the report states, "incomes have not kept pace with inflation in over half the region, so many workers are earning less today than they did in 2000."

Overall, the region had a poverty rate of 11 percent in 2010-2014, which is lower than the national rate of 15 percent. However, poverty has increased in almost three-quarters of the

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region since 2000, and by a rate of 10 percent or more in a majority of towns and cities.

In the three cities of Pittsfield, North Adams and Hudson, N.Y., as many as one in five residents are living in poverty. Notably, Pittsfield is characterized by persistent poverty, meaning 20 percent or more of the population has lived in poverty for three decades.

Taylor said the results also highlighted the contradiction between this and a shortage of people with the skills for many of the jobs that are being created.

“At a time when employers are looking to fill positions with specific skill sets, there are many workers who don’t have those required skills,” he said. “This mismatch between jobs and skills highlights the importance of investing in education and workforce development programs.”

Aging and diversity

With one in five residents over 65 and a shrinking share of working age families, the region is losing population but is also slowly becoming more diverse.

The report cited recent estimates by the American Community Survey that the region lost 2.5 people for every person it gained from 2010-2014. Between 2000 and 2014, Berkshire County lost nearly 5,000 people, or 3.6 percent of its population.

In the responses to the BTCF surveys, 44 percent of residents under age 46 answered “yes” or “maybe” when asked if they are considering moving in the next three years. Over 50 percent of residents with annual household income from \$50,000 to \$124,000 answered “yes” or “maybe” when asked if they are considering moving in the next three years. Among all of the respondents, 23 percent said that limited opportunities for their children is a reason to consider moving.

The report also cited the aging of the population. Among 68 towns, 59 of saw an increasing share of seniors, while the number of children grew in just five places. The share

of families without children, at 62 percent, was much higher than the national average of 43 percent.

Overall, public school enrollment decreased 12 percent between 2009 and 2015, compared to a 2-percent rise nationally. The report noted that all but three school districts had fewer students in 2015 than in 2009.

The region overall remains predominantly white and non-Hispanic, with individual towns ranging from 85 percent and higher in 2010-2014. However, the ethnic diversity of the region is increasing.

“Between 2000 and 2010-2014, nearly two-thirds of towns and cities saw a decline in the number of white residents and an increase in the number of non-white residents,” the report states. “In nearly one-third of the region, the non-white population at least doubled during that time.”

The report notes that a key factor in this has been a rising Hispanic population, which more than doubled from 2000 to 2010-2014, increasing from 2 percent to more than 4 percent.

Overall, Taylor pointed to a challenge that affects the overall level of engagement in public life.

“One flashing yellow light is that the level of civic participation and volunteerism is not as high today as it was 10 or 20 years ago,” he said. “But the good news is that there are many organizations that are vibrant and active.”◆

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MARKETplace

Fire Cider

continued from page 1

require a much higher level of production. So the move became a necessity.”

Shire City Herbals (413-213-6700) was launched in 2011. St. Pierre's partners include his wife, Amy Huebner, and her brother, Brian Huebner.

They are presently remodelling the Commercial Street building with the goal of relocating the company's administrative offices there this summer. Actual production at the new facility is scheduled to begin this autumn, when a new 6,500-square-foot commercial kitchen is completed there. The final phase will include the installation of bottling equipment next year.

Up to now, Shire City Herbals has been operating out of three geographically dispersed sites. Their offices and warehouse have been based in a commercial facility on West Housatonic Street in Pittsfield.

To prepare the Fire Cider, they regularly travel to a shared commercial kitchen at the Franklin County Community Development Corporation Food Processing Center in Greenfield, a production facility for food businesses that is operated as a regional economic development initiative.

The tonic produced in Greenfield is then transported for bottling by a third-party contractor in Connecticut.

By eliminating the need to regularly travel to Greenfield and then send the product to Connecticut, the company's new facility will enable them to focus and control all of their business, production, storage and shipping in Pittsfield.

The building provides sufficient space to continue to meet their current demand and the added requirements of the GNC agreement. It will also enable them to pursue their overall plans to expand the distribution of Fire Cider throughout the United States and Canada.

The company has been experiencing cumulative average annual growth of about 60 percent. Last year they sold some 200,000 bottles of Fire Cider. It presently is sold in about 2,000 outlets, which will increase to 6,500 when the GNC stores are added. Fire Cider is also sold online at the company's website, firecider.com.

Shire City Herbals has a staff of 16 (including the owners), with plans to add at least 10 more employees with the move.

Started small

The owners of Shire City Herbals did not originally envision Fire Cider becoming a best-selling national product when they started producing and selling it.

Fire Cider is based on a variation of a New England folk remedy that St. Pierre's grandmother, Elisabet, served to her family.

"I grew up with it and made different variations for my own use," he said.

St. Pierre focused on one of her recipes – a mash-up of onions, garlic, and honey that she steeped in mason jars on a sunny windowsill.



As Shire City Herbals has grown, the company has expanded its product line to include an unsweetened, vegan-friendly version of Fire Cider; an African Bronze variety made with fairly traded multi-floral honey from Zambia that gives the tonic a smooth texture and a flavor that has hints of toffee, smoke and spice; and the original recipe that continues to be its top seller. (Photo provided by Shire City Herbals)

He then added apple cider vinegar, which is traditionally associated with a variety of health benefits.

The idea of selling it arose after he made a batch for his wife to help her cope with health issues she was having during the winter.

"When I started using it, I could feel a positive effect," said Amy Huebner. "I've always been interested in food and medicine, and we decided this was something we should share. Our whole mission was simply to get the tonic out to as many people as we could."

They further developed a formula to sell with a specific mix of ingredients that includes garlic, onions, horseradish, ginger, habanero peppers, oranges, lemons, turmeric and honey.

Initially they started very modestly by making a batch to sell at a booth in 2010 at the annual Shire City Sanctuary Shindy, a holiday artisan festival in Pittsfield.

"It sold out during the festival," said St. Pierre. "After that people started knocking on our door and asking if they could buy more of

it. Pretty soon it became a runaway best seller locally, and the business grew from there."

They started by making small batches in a commercial kitchen in the Unitarian Church in Pittsfield, before moving the production to Greenfield on a larger scale.

They make Fire Cider in a 350-gallon stainless steel tank, similar to those used in wineries. The ingredients are shredded and poured into a base of raw unfiltered apple cider vinegar with a "mother" culture that includes enzymes, proteins and beneficial bacteria. This is then left to steep for several weeks. After that it is pressed, mixed with honey, and sent to the bottler.

"It's similar to what people might do at home with a mason jar and cheesecloth," said St. Pierre.

Fire Cider is sold in retail locations primarily in 8- and 16-ounce bottles (with half gallon and gallon containers available through the website). There are also a few variations of flavors, including an unsweetened Fire Cider made without honey.

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Klara Sotonova, Co-Founder of Klara's Gourmet and Jennifer O'Neil, Branch Manager for Greylock FCU in Lee.

The tonic has a very sharp, strong taste that its makers admit takes some getting used to. They emphasize that instead of being a ready-to-drink product, it is a tonic, meant to be used in small amounts in spoonfuls or as drink shots or diluted with water. Users also mix it with tea or other beverages, or as an ingredient in sauces, soups and other foods.

The individual ingredients in Fire Cider have long been associated with health and the prevention and alleviation of a variety of ailments. The company uses only certified organic ingredients.

However, like many similar natural products and nutritional supplements, the company has to adhere to stringent regulation by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), including restrictions on any specific claims of medical benefits.

"It's a grey area, and we have to be very careful about how we describe it," said St. Pierre. "We basically call it a half-ounce of prevention and an energizing morning eye opener."

Brian Huebner added that the product largely sells itself. "Our best marketing is simply to get people to try it, and let them draw their own conclusions," he said.

They noted that its sales are very seasonal, with the highest demand during the cold weather months.

They initially set up marketing and distribution on their own, by calling and visiting potential sales outlets to get it placed on store shelves. They continue to deliver the product to sales outlets in the area themselves.

It has also been picked up by several distribution companies, which recruit and service accounts over a larger geographic area. Shire City Herbals also offers online sales at the company's website.

Its primary sales outlets include gourmet and gift shops, natural food stores, farm stores, and wellness establishments across the United States. "There has also been increasing interest in supermarkets and other mainstream retail outlets," said Brian Huebner.

It is also sold and served in cafes, coffee houses and juice bars, as individual shots or mixed with tea or other prepared foods and beverages.

The GNC deal takes the company to a new level, in terms of scale.

"That came as a total surprise to us," said Huebner. "GNC approached us. They are responding to a trend in the market by adding more products that are organic and which are transparent about their ingredients. They decided that we meet those criteria."

GNC will sell the product in 8-ounce containers.

Phased expansion

The owners say the estimated cost of the first phase of the move – including the purchase of the site from Protech's parent company, Safariland LLC, and the construction – will be over \$900,000.

The installation of the bottling equipment is the second phase that will be started when they have settled into the new facility. Lee Bank is providing financing for the expansion.

Shire City Herbals worked with Billy Keane at Jan Perry Realty; David Harrington, vice president of Lee Bank, and David Curtis from 1Berkshire on the project.

The business has also received \$74,000 in tax credits from MassDevelopment, a state economic development and finance agency.



THEN AND NOW...

The photo at left accompanied an article in the June 2013 issue of *BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE*, at which time Brian Huebner, Amy Huebner, and Dana St. Pierre comprised the company's entire staff. In the photo below, the three co-owners (shown in the third row) are joined by most of their staff in their current warehouse and distribution facility on West Housatonic Street, just prior to one of their monthly "all-hands" meetings. Shown in the front row are: Bethany Geiger, wholesale order and customer service; Sheri Pingryn Esko, office manager and customer service; Najwa Squailia, wholesale orders and customer service; and Heather Franckling, wholesale accounts manager. Shown in the second row are: Kathie Penna, wholesale orders and customer service; Stephanie Gravalese, director of marketing and communications; Caitlin Porter Loverin, events and trade marketing coordinator; Sara Delaney, digital marketing and e-commerce associate; Patrick Delaney; warehouse manager; Dylan Hamilton, production associate; and Carol Severson, bookkeeper and administrative assistant. (Staff members absent from the photo are Erick Esko, operations manager; and Jake Roach, lead shipping associate.)



It will also receive local support under the city's Tax Incentive Program (TIP), in which taxes on the added value of commercial properties that are upgraded are phased in over 10 years.

Shire City Herbals will initially pay taxes on the property's pre-improvement (\$500,000) value. Taxes on the difference between that and the higher subsequent value will be phased in at an incrementally increasing annual rate for ten years, after which the company will begin paying taxes on the full value. Between \$24,000 and \$27,000 in taxes are expected to be forgiven over this period.

The Dennis Group of Springfield, which specializes in projects for the food and beverage industry, is providing architectural and engineering design. Steve Mauter will serve as general contractor on construction of the 6,500-square-foot kitchen

For now, the partners say that their primary focus is on completing the move, preparing for the GNC rollout, and managing and growing their other sales venues.

St. Pierre noted that they are also concentrating on ensuring that Shire City

Herbals remains sustainable as a business. Their priorities include creating local job opportunities. He noted, for example, that their policy is to start all employees at \$15 per hour.

"We've got our hands full keeping up with our present growth," St. Pierre said. "We're committed to focusing on our core product of Fire Cider, and we're nowhere near the limits for that."

However, looking ahead, they also plan to explore other possibilities for growth and diversification, including the addition of other products. This may also include collaborations with other food producers in the region.

"As we develop this, we're also establishing a platform," said Brian Huebner. "Ideally, we'd like to leverage our resources and relationships to help other small producers in the region to reach larger markets."

Overall, their move reflects what the partners say has been a consistent goal of the business since it started.

"Adding to the economic health and well-being of Berkshire County has always been an underlying tenet of our business philosophy," St. Pierre said. "Being able to purchase and revitalize a building along the once vital East Street corridor, while adding jobs to the area, allows us to be a part of the rebirth of a city we love to call home." ♦

"Ideally, we'd like to leverage our resources and relationships to help other small producers in the region to reach larger markets."

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Better Block continued from page 1

During the Better Block event, this section of Tyler Street will be temporarily transformed into a vibrant center of community life and commerce. Vacant spaces will be filled with pop-up retail shops, art displays, performance venues, a beer garden, and other activities.

There will also be temporary traffic modifications and streetscape improvements, including bike paths, "parklets," and other features to make it more inviting and pedestrian friendly.

While it is meant to provide an enjoyable day for attendees, the Pittsfield Better Block Day of Transformation has a serious and lasting purpose.

Better Block is a rapid planning process that results in the creation of a demonstration urban block. In addition to economic development goals, the strategy is intended to foster healthier and more vibrant communities.

According to Sika Sedzro, transformative development fellow with MassDevelopment, Better Block illustrates in tangible form the possibilities for what a neighborhood could permanently become with planning, investment and community engagement.

"The advantage of the Better Block approach to community planning is that, instead

of just discussing ideas and future goals, this quickly creates a prototype and vision of revitalization that people can experience now," Sedzro explained.

Better Block strategy

The TDI is a multifaceted community engagement and planning program oriented to "gateway" cities that are working to overcome economic challenges. It provides planning, technical assistance and other resources to foster public/private partnerships to revitalize specific neighborhoods of a city.

TDIs are set up as collaborations between MassDevelopment, local government, businesses, neighborhood residents, community organizations and other stakeholders.

Pittsfield was selected in 2014 as one of 10 Massachusetts cities to receive support and expertise for revitalization through the TDI program. That support is being facilitated by Sedzro, who began her three-year assignment in Pittsfield last year (*August 2016 BT&C*).

In Pittsfield, the TDI is focused on the Tyler Street business district covering the area from First Street near Berkshire Medical Center to Woodlawn Avenue and the surrounding Morningside neighborhood.

As part of its overall efforts, the TDI contracted with Team Better Block, a consulting firm based in Dallas that developed the Better Block concept and has organized similar projects in about 150 cities.

In one sense, the Better Block event is a successor to Discover Tyler Street, an annual street fair that has been held for the past six years by the Tyler Street Business Group, a membership organization that works on revitalization of Tyler Street and Morningside.

The Better Block Day of Transformation takes the goal of Discover Tyler Street to the next level, according to Diane Marcella, president of the Tyler Street Business Group.

"We originally organized Discover Tyler Street as an event to encourage people to visit and discover what we have here," she said. "It accomplished that goal. Now, instead of continuing with that, our group decided to participate in the Pittsfield Better Block project because it is more of an economic development program."

The actual Day of Transformation is just one facet of the Better Block strategy.

The process is designed to be a vehicle for community building to foster connections among businesses, residents, property owners, officials and other stakeholders.

It takes a grassroots approach that enables the community to have direct involvement in the planning and rapid build-out and construction of the demonstration project.

It is also intended to encourage recognition of how placemaking and design influence

successful aging, health, economic vitality and overall livability.

The initiative relies heavily on participation by community organizations and businesses, including the Tyler Street Business Group, the Dream Center, the Morningside

neighborhood initiative, Berkshire Community College, and the Funky Phoenix, among others.

The project also includes extensive community outreach to

recruit individual volunteers to help with planning and do the physical work required to implement the transformation.

"This event will stimulate thought in the private investment area, which has many possibilities," said Marcella. "It will allow for wide community engagement, a chance for neighbors and people that want to share their abilities to come out and create a vision for Tyler Street together."

Updated information about the project, progress reports, workshop schedules and ways to participate and volunteer are available online at www.teambetterblock.com/pittsfield and a Facebook group (Team Better Block, Pittsfield).

Implementing specifics

Planning for the Pittsfield Better Block began in early June, when the TDI and Team Better Block held two initial meetings and walks of the neighborhood. The first included invited community leaders and others actively involved in revitalization of the area, followed the next day by another session that was open to the public.

Participants were asked to consider what is missing from Tyler Street, what its assets are, and how both the issues and possibilities for the neighborhood can be showcased.

"Participants looked at the neighborhood in depth, and filled out surveys and scoring cards," said Sedzro.

The process also determined which block should be chosen for the demonstration. The selection was based on a combination of factors, including the physical scale and characteristics, and the issues and assets that were most suited to the goals of Better Block.

Once the selection of the Courtland-Smith block was made, participants developed a concept plan with proposed activities and features. This was presented in an open meeting in July to solicit public feedback and ideas.

A call for applications was also issued to invite retailers and other entrepreneurs, artists, performers and community organizations to submit proposals for specific pop-up programming at the event. About 25 proposals were received, according to Sedzro.

While specific activities are still being finalized, they are expected to include pop-up shops such as an affordable community-oriented grocery store, a cafe and bookstore, as well as other features such as an art gallery and performance space.

A series of organized workshops and work sessions will precede the actual day of the event, with the physical setup reaching a peak from Aug. 23-25.

The project is intended to have an impact after the day is over. Feedback will be collected and analyzed to determine what elements were successful, and how individual improvements might be pursued on a long-term basis.

For example, elements of the temporary changes to the streetscape could be developed further with the city to install them on a permanent basis.

It's also possible that some pop-up businesses could remain. "In this process, relationships are established with the owners of vacant sites," said Sedzro. "In some cases, that could lead to a pop-up shop becoming an actual tenant of a space."

While the current Better Block project is focused on this specific block, it is also intended to stimulate interest and ideas that can be applied to other sections of Tyler Street and the overall neighborhood.

"This is a prototype for revitalization of one block," said Sedzro. "However, it can also be translated to other blocks. If this is successful, it's possible that maybe next year it can be repeated on another block." ♦



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ON THE *record*



No basket of deplorables here – just a treasure trove of tasty treats that Robin Helfand tempts customers with at her downtown Great Barrington candy shop.

Robin's Candy owner shares views on small-business life cycle

Operating an independent retail business has always been challenging, especially in a modern economy dominated by chains and big-box stores.

In recent years, a new challenge has emerged for all brick-and-mortar stores, as shoppers have increasingly turned to the Internet and online e-commerce, preferring to order merchandise from their homes rather than heading out to a store.

Independent retailers have adopted a variety of strategies in this volatile environment, such as an emphasis on personal service and sense of community that chain stores or e-commerce cannot replicate. Many retailers have also responded by offering their wares online and/or expanding their inventory by incorporating web sources into their in-store operations.

Robin Helfand, has carved out a sweet niche in the retail market with her store Robin's Candy, at 288 Main St. in Great Barrington. Since 2004, Helfand has built a thriving business by combining the roles of local corner candy store, soda fountain and novelty shop. In 2008 she expanded to a larger location in Great Barrington.

In June, Helfand augmented her brick-and-mortar store with the launch of a new e-commerce website, Post Sweet P.S. (postsweet.co).

Over the past year, Robin's Candy has garnered attention outside the Berkshires, as a representative of small business for American Express and its OptBlue campaign to encourage merchants to use the credit card. The store and Helfand were featured as a brand ambassador in several digital online banner ads and videos on the American Express website for merchants. That led to an invitation to be a panelist discussing how to take advantage of growth moments in the life cycle of a small business. The panel was held at the Big Show, an annual exposition sponsored by the National Retail Federation, in New York City in late January. From her panel participation Helfand was subsequently asked to record a podcast on overcoming challenges faced by small business owners.

American Express is about to produce another digital spot at Robin's Candy that will be reaching a broader national audience including both larger merchants and consumers. (Videos and links to her appearances and other articles are featured on her website robinscandy.com and postsweet.co.)

In addition to focusing on her own business, Helfand is also an advocate for small business – with a drive to share her experience, ideas and knowledge. In a recent interview, Helfand describes her own experience as a business owner, as well as her thoughts on the state of small business, with a mix of enthusiasm and candor.



BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE: What prompted American Express to select you as a public representative of small business?

ROBIN HELFAND: As part of our marketing for Robin's Candy, I had been working to get media coverage outside of the Berkshires to raise awareness of the store as a destination for people who are visiting the Berkshires.

Our media coverage likely led to the initial contact from American Express. We have been fortunate to have the business featured in newspaper and magazines articles

and television programs, including the Barefoot Contessa on the Food Network, Samantha Brown on the The Travel Channel and, most recently in *Bon Appetite* and *Conde Naste Traveler*.

Since opening our first shop in 2004 we have taken advantage of American Express' merchant support, and are on their map of merchants accepting the card. I believe someone at American Express or their media agency was aware of our interest in card acceptance and may have seen or read about us, leading to a reach-out in 2015. They decided Robin's Candy had the characteristics they were looking for as a brand ambassador for their OptBlue initiative.

BT&C: What do you see as the future for small independent retailing?

HELFAND: Everything evolves and changes. I think a share of brick-and-mortar shops operating as "Mom & Pops" may no longer be viable without rethinking their business model, particularly in terms of marketing outreach. Retooling is necessary every so often to stay relevant.

Independent retailing for businesses that focus on niche marketing, impulse purchasing and "experiential" shopping remains vital and thriving – especially as the "Shop Local/Shop Small" movement has become a force.

Brick-and-mortar retailing, more than ever, is a combination of people (excellent customer service), place (an inviting atmosphere), products (relevant, unusual or trending) and profitability (rigorous attention to margins and cost control).

As an example, in Great Barrington, the Chef's Shop cooking supply store has built a community of weekend warriors in the kitchen. They offer workshops to hone skills and pair the hands-on experience with products and services that complement the workshops. This approach has broadened their customer base to include a younger demographic that is first becoming independent in the kitchen.

Berkshire County is fortunate to possess a three-season appeal which builds tourism, creating a critical addition to our local customer base for retailers and adding to our ability to maintain strong sales year round.

For small local retailers, success always rests on a combination of conditions. When located in a commercial center that is not a tourist destination on its own, the smaller shops thrive when anchored with essential services and/or products. A strong mix of anchors complement the small independent shops.

In Great Barrington, our hardware store and renowned theater plus our movie theater and variety of restaurants are great examples of anchor businesses that draw customers to the area and, symbiotically, help Main Street flourish.

Public-private partnerships among businesspeople, government and organizations such as the chamber of commerce also support local retailing through group promotion, access to support services and networking. As a small retailer, we consider our involvement in community organizations to be a key component of our success.

Excessive regulation is a foe to small businesses. The challenge of following the myriad rules and ever-changing regulations can detract from an owner's ability to focus on business growth. Our commitment to public-private partnerships helps us communicate the specific needs of small business compliance within the regulatory environment.

continued on next page

ON THE *record*

continued from page 21

BT&C: How did you become a candy entrepreneur?

HELFAND: I've always had a sweet tooth, and I grew up in a culture where the "candy dish" was a sign of hospitality and welcome in the entry of a home. My grandparents owned a soda shop and candy store in New York in the 1930s. When I was growing up in the 1960s, I spent many hours with my grandparents visiting candy stores and meeting shop owners on Manhattan's Lower East Side. My grandfather imparted to me the concept that people want to feel good about the places where they shop – it is part of our core mission to provide excellence via "people, product, place."

After earning an MBA in Marketing from Cornell University, I joined Proctor & Gamble's Brand Management team in its food division.

I moved to New York City and became involved in retailing with a consulting assignment developing the expansion of Dean & DeLuca, a prominent specialty food importer and retailer in New York. I subsequently managed Dean & DeLuca's original store on Prince Street. My experience at D&D helped me find my passion. I knew I would one day own my own business – one dedicated to providing an extraordinary shopping experience for our guests.

In 2004, after moving to the Berkshires to be near my children who were attending school in the area, I opened Millerton Market, a bakery, gourmet specialty food shop and catering service in Millerton, N.Y. I shifted my focus to candy because – literally – the shop's bread ovens kept melting our handmade chocolates. The dilemma was a fork in the road: hot bread or hot chocolate? I chose chocolate, relocated to a larger space in Great Barrington and expanded to a full-service, old-fashioned candy shop. We opened our doors in Great Barrington in June 2008.

BT&C: Great Barrington is one of those towns in the Berkshires where the retail market is a mix of residents, second-home owners and tourists. How does that affect your business, and what do you do to attract customers?

HELFAND: Great Barrington is a seasonal market. Fortunately, it is a three-season market punctuated by the peak "candy holidays" of Christmas and Hanukkah, Valentine's Day, Easter, Passover and the long holiday weekends.

During the tourist season, a lot of our business is second-home owners and visitors. But at other times of the year, 75 percent of our customers are local. We rely on repeat customers, and we have a large following of residents and second-home owners who come in regularly throughout the year.

In Great Barrington, we increasingly find people come for the experience of shopping because the environment inside each shop is creative, unique and fun. It is an important draw.

As candy store, we're a fun destination in the impulse niche. We know we are not selling a necessity. This keeps us on our toes. We need to pay close attention to trends and competition – then go a step beyond, adding value with our service, displays and ability to provide personal attention to each shopper's desires.

The feeling of being welcome and of knowing you will be well taken care of is critically important to our destination status.

The "wow" experience is an intangible but important element to our success. It is the critical first component drawing in our customers. Within feet of entering there is the expectation of "sweets, treats and smiles."

It's also important to differentiate Robin's from other places where people can buy sweets and treats. A typical chain store that sells candy can feel sterile, and generally has a standard selection of familiar products.

We view ourselves more like an old-fashioned neighborhood candy store that's fun to explore while recalling favorite treats from childhood. People can stock up on their favorites, buy a gift, or simply share a sweet memory with their family while they're here. With our new e-shop customers can also order their favorites or send gifts after leaving the physical shop.

BT&C: How specifically do you create that environment?

HELFAND: First, we place great emphasis on enthusiastically welcoming each customer and letting our guests know we are available to help in a low-key, unobtrusive manner. My philosophy is that if your cheeks don't hurt at the end of the day, you're not smiling enough.

We display a large and eclectic inventory with lots to touch, smell and sample. We seek to engage each sense during a customer's visit. There's something for everyone, and it's fun to browse.

We have familiar favorites such as artisanal chocolates, fudge, handmade soft-serve ice cream and frozen yogurt, hard candy and jelly beans. One of our more popular specialties is licorice. We have a wide range of specialty licorice from around the world.

There are also many fun and unusual items. That includes a large selection of nostalgic candies and brands that adults will remember from their youth, such as Turkish Taffy, Necco Wafers, Conversation Hearts, and Wax Lips. People often come in and say things like "Gosh! I haven't seen Good & Plenty in years!"

We also have "eye candy" like our nine-foot-long, 27-pound gummy python.

About half of our inventory is non-edible novelty and gift items. We have classic toys like Slinky and Silly Putty, Mr. Potato Head and Etch-A-Sketch. In addition to their appeal to adults who grew up with them, I call these selections unplugged interactive fun for kids.

We also have "laugh out loud" clever collections including our bumper stickers and caps, surrounded by ant farms and beer-making kits.

We work very hard to maintain a relevant inventory for our customers, and keep on top of their tastes and trends, both nationally and in the Berkshires.

BT&C: What do you mean by relevant?

HELFAND: A business succeeds best when responding to the interests of customers, and adapting to changes in shopping habits. I've seen small businesses fail because they refused to incorporate new merchandise or adopt modern sales techniques such as "tap to pay" options.

We stay up to date regarding our sales techniques and the manner in which we run the business. We work with our energy provider to operate at peak efficiency and use recycled or re-purposed packaging wherever possible to reduce our carbon footprint.

We are delighted to provide our old-fashioned selections, but we merge these offerings with current selections. I'm also always looking for what's ahead of the curve before it becomes a trend. We might be considered early adopters in the candy space.

Right now, for example, there's a growing demand for candy from Latin America and South America. So I've start carrying items like a Mexican "Tamakingo" made of tamarind and sold in a small packet on a spoon. Most people here have never heard of it, but it's incredibly popular in Mexico.

I have added more imported candy from Europe, although imports are becoming harder to find, because, I suspect, export-

ers are concerned about the possibility of new border taxes. I make an extra effort to find sources for these products. We have customers who come to the store specifically for our growing selection of imported treats.

In addition, I keep track of personal interests of our regular customers who shop here, and look for items that will appeal – from super sour sweets to savory-sweet combinations such as our chocolate drenched bacon.

We've always carried some products that address serious topical issues in a light-hearted way. After the election, I worked with suppliers to develop a line of "edgy" political products. Our National Embarrassments reflect the political climate as do our hand puppets of President Trump and Vladimir Putin. We also sell a candy and ice cream flavor called "Impeach-mints." On the other side of the aisle we carry products appealing to both political parties.

Our political line is fun, but there's also a serious aspect. We're donating a portion of the proceeds to social service organizations that face the possibility of funding cuts.

BT&C: When you carry such items, do you worry about offending customers with different opinions? Do you ever get negative reaction from customers who may be supportive of President Trump?

HELFAND: We've gotten a few critical comments, but literally thousands of positive comments from both supporters and detractors. Most people appreciate the need to maintain perspective – humor tends to do that. We are careful not to cross the line and do not offer offensive products that would be inappropriate in a family shop.

We consider our political offerings to be thought-provoking in a respectful if slightly irreverent manner. We may have something that will tease Republicans, but we'll also have something that does so for Democrats.

BT&C: One challenge independent businesspeople can face is reconciling their own personal interests and lifestyle with the realities of running a business and the demands of the market. How do you achieve that?

HELFAND: The most important lesson I learned while studying for my MBA can be simply summarized as: "Surround yourself with bright, loyal people who know more than you do in areas where you lack expertise – and treat them well."

Although I am the sole owner, this is a team operation. Our dedicated staff, our book-keeper, accountant, insurance agent, delivery team and suppliers work together to help us create a profitable, successful and sustainable business.

The rewards of running your own business are many. But as a wise entrepreneur once said: "To own a business you need to be able to sign the front of the paychecks and still sleep at night." Otherwise stated, living with risk and possessing a large toolbox to address problems – physical and otherwise – are the real key to balancing one's personal and professional life.

Long hours, staff shortages (a major problem in our area), and the myriad regulations and compliance requirements add to the challenge of owning a business.

I make a genuine effort to delegate tasks that do not directly allow me to focus on building a profitable enterprise and interacting with my customers and suppliers – both of whom are the essential front line of the business.

Going online reinforced our need to continuously maintain and build a talented team. I have a strong marketing background from my training at Proctor & Gamble



Robin's Candy has garnered attention outside the Berkshires as a representative of small business for American Express and its OptBlue campaign to encourage merchants to use the credit card. The store and Helfand were featured as a brand ambassador in videos on the American Express website for merchants.



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but I lack the technical “DNA” of the younger generation. When we decided to expand our online presence we added a skilled digital designer, local photographer and tech advisor while culling the talents of my three children (in their twenties). The additions were essential to our ability to launch our online presence, our Instagram and Twitter feeds.

In addition to formal staffing and training, it’s also helpful to put together a team of informal advisors who can provide input and advice. We are active with the SBA, local chamber and town committees. I regularly speak with our neighboring business owners to share “intel” and strategies for success. Our networking is also a key means of finding reliable referrals in the professional community of service providers from plumbers to carpenters.

BT&C: How do you balance the freewheeling environment and spontaneous nature of your store with the requirements of running a successful business?

HELFAND: If I come up with an idea for the store that I think would be fun, I’ll try it out. When I find products that are offbeat and interesting, I’ll likewise add them. The “wow” factor is always top of mind.

However, I also track the results carefully. If a product attracts buyers or adds to the overall appeal of the store’s selection, I’ll keep it. But if an idea isn’t working for the store, I’ll stop doing it. If a product isn’t selling an acceptable amount, I’ll stop carrying it.

That applies to small actions and large decisions.

We recently added handmade soft-serve ice cream and frozen yogurt that we produce fresh on site, and use locally sourced ingredients. It caught on with customers, and we’ve expanded its presence in the store.

But not everything works out. Learning from unsuccessful ventures is critical to our ability to grow successfully.

Several years ago, I tried to expand the business by opening another shop in Great Barrington that carried locally made products and gifts with a Berkshire theme. I thought it would do well in Great Barrington. However, it failed to thrive because of the difficulty of getting locally produced, small-scale products that could be sold at a reasonable price point, given the shop’s overhead. So I merged the products into our existing candy shop, thus spreading the overhead and allowing us to continue carrying a curated selection of local items.

I also experimented geographically by opening a branch of Robin’s in Boston. It was popular. However, it was frustrating to our customers to shop in our tiny shop on Newbury Street, and our budget did not allow for a larger space. The commute was also challenging as I found the nature of the business required my regular and frequent presence. Rather than operate two shops with mediocre performance, I closed the Boston shop to focus on growing the flagship business in Great Barrington.

Closing in Boston also led to our decision to grow by developing our online presence. The decision added significantly to sales and helped build the Great Barrington shop’s destination status.

BT&C: Online commerce has become a major factor in retailing. For independent

“After the election, I worked with suppliers to develop a line of ‘edgy’ political products. Our National Embarrassments reflect the political climate as do our hand puppets of President Trump and Vladimir Putin. We also sell a candy and ice cream flavor called ‘Impeach-mints.’”

retailers, it is a threat but also opens new opportunities. What is your approach to that?

HELFAND: The ability to compete in the e-commerce space depends on a business’ ability to sell value-added products that don’t compete with generic or bulk offerings at a lower price online.

I had to think long and hard about online commerce before taking that step. We’ve had a promotional website for a while, but we’re just now getting into selling products online by providing beautifully crafted gifts and monthly subscription treat boxes.

We’ve opened postsweet.co quietly without a major marketing campaign to let us learn the ins and outs of online commerce. As we rise on the learning curve we will expand and promote the site.

Brick-and-mortar stores in resort towns like Great Barrington have more of a cushion if e-commerce is not a viable addition, because people come here to enjoy the shopping experience. That’s especially true for our collection of shops with unique offerings.

I am looking at online commerce as an important way to grow the business and expand our market. I wanted our e-shop to be a way for people to stay connected with Robin’s Candy when they go home, and to open a new venue for sales.

I am also a dedicated “poster child” for tourism in the Berkshires and always look to promote business in the Berkshires, keeping with our mission as we execute marketing and expansion projects.

Our online shop is a separate division of the company for interstate tax and regulatory compliance.

Post Sweet P.S. complements what we do in the store. We emphasize a subscription model, which has become a popular strategy for online commerce. Subscribers will receive a package with a curated selection of specialty items on a monthly basis. Customers can also customize their orders to buy individual items from our general inventory.

Beautifully designed gift baskets are another popular specialty on postsweet.co. During our soft intro we’re focusing on Licorice Lovers, Childhood Favorites and International Explorers baskets. People can buy an individual basket or take advantage of pricing discounts by subscribing for multiple months of treats. Those unfamiliar with our shop may try the single basket, and then decide to subscribe. Conversion to subscriptions has been almost 100 percent.

While we will be offering a variety of items at postsweet.co, we’re placing an emphasis on our renowned collection of licorice, which is becoming increasingly popular. We’ve developed a reputation for licorice, and have sourced a wide range of brands and varieties not available elsewhere. We’ll send subscribers a selection of unusual and rare licorice monthly. For the licorice lover, it is a terrific gift.

The goal is for postsweet.co and our flagship brick-and-mortar Robin’s Candy store in Great Barrington to reinforce each other. We expect the online store will increase awareness of Robin’s Candy Shop – and, hopefully, awareness of the Berkshires – as we promote the store as a destination for online customers when they are in the Berkshires.

In conclusion, we are confident the combination of old-fashioned retailing with our online presence will increase awareness of the shop and bring visitors to the region – a win-win for all. ♦

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Banking products are provided by Berkshire Bank: Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender. Berkshire Bank is a Massachusetts chartered bank.

¹In order to qualify for up to a \$100 cash bonus, you need to be a new Berkshire Bank customer or current Berkshire Bank customer without a checking account relationship and open a Free Checking account with a minimum balance of \$10 and choose up to four of the following options: (1)\$25 when you establish and receive at least one direct deposit for your account within 45 days of account opening, (2) \$25 when you pay a bill through online banking using Bill Pay, (3) \$25 when you enroll in eStatements at account opening, (4)\$25 when you turn in your bank’s debit card and replace it with a Berkshire Bank debit card, (5) \$25 when someone you referred opens a free checking account by using the Refer-A-Friend coupon. Limit one \$100 bonus per individual. Limit of two \$25 bonuses available to individuals when a friend opens a new personal checking account. The direct deposit, debit card and bill payment bonus will be credited within 7 days of your notifying us that the transaction(s) has occurred. To notify us, visit a branch or call us at 800.773.5601. The debit card bonus will be credited within 7 business days of new Berkshire debit card application. The \$25 Refer-A-Friend bonus is credited when the friend opens the checking account with the Refer-A-Friend coupon. The value of the bonus may be reportable to the IRS on Form 1099-MISC. Other fees may apply. This offer may be withdrawn at any time. By referring a friend, you and the friend waive the right to privacy and consent to our revealing to each of you that you are our customers for this transaction. Accounts must be in good standing to receive bonuses.

²The minimum balance to open an account and attain the stated Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is \$1,000. Future increases in rates are determined by Berkshire Bank’s review of market conditions. APY is accurate as of 7/19/17. A penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal. Fees may reduce earnings. This offer may be withdrawn at any time. This premium interest rate and APY is available if you meet the following requirements for the entire term of the CD: (1) You must open the CD with \$1,000 that is not already on deposit in other accounts with us, (2) Maintain a Berkshire Bank personal checking account with minimum daily balance of \$5,000, or (3) Establish a monthly (or more often) direct deposit into the checking account, and (4) You must be the OWNER of the qualifying checking account, and (5) The balance of the CD does not exceed \$1,000,000 per customer. You can open more than one CD, but the total balance combined cannot exceed the \$1,000,000 cap. If you do not meet the requirements at any time during the current CD term, the interest rate and the APY of the CD will change to the published standard rate of the same term CD without checking requirements. Rate will be changed back to date of last interest posting. CD will no longer earn interest if balance falls below \$1,000. You may make unlimited deposits of \$250 or more into your account for the first six months during each term of this account. After the first six months, during each term, you may not make deposits before maturity. Fees may reduce earnings.

This offer may be withdrawn at any time. Offer valid only at Berkshire County, MA branch locations. Rev: 8/11/17

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\$599,900

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REDUCED

5-ACRE COMMERCIAL SITE

Route 7 - Lanesboro

Five buildings ranging from 500 to 6,000 sq. ft. offered at \$899,900. See MLS 214374 at barbhassanrealty.com for more details.(4068B)

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REAL estate

The following real Estate transactions are provided by Banker & Tradesman Real Estate Data Publishing. Only properties valued at \$75,000 or higher are included.

ADAMS

19 Apremont St.
Buyer: Amy Kaczowski
Seller: Michele Purcell
Price: \$144,900
Mortgage: \$130,265
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/7/17

8 Country Rd.
Buyer: Robert Huskins +
Seller: Tricia Tatro
Price: \$255,000
Mortgage: \$204,000
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/16/17

E Hoosac St.
Buyer: Berkshire Natural Resource
Seller: Bannish Land Preserves
Price: \$210,000
Date: 6/29/17

90 E Hoosac St.
Buyer: Sherry Therien
Seller: David Carpenter +
Price: \$137,500
Mortgage: \$123,600
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/27/17

400 E Hoosac St.
Buyer: Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Seller: Berkshire Natural Resource
Price: \$210,000
Date: 6/29/17

27 Enterprise St.
Buyer: Sling LLC
Seller: E&A Properties Group LLC
Price: \$100,700
Date: 6/1/17

162 Friend St.
Buyer: Thomas Livsey +
Seller: Brandon Daniels +
Price: \$229,000
Mortgage: \$109,000
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/30/17

10 Grant St.
Buyer: Shelley Cozzaglio
Seller: Deanna Guettler
Price: \$130,000
Mortgage: \$116,870
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/28/17

6 Grove St.
Buyer: Joseph Chorbaj Jr +
Seller: Joseph Dilego
Price: \$160,000
Mortgage: \$165,280
Lender: Freedom Direct
Date: 6/1/17

BECKET

167 Bonny Rigg Hill Rd.
Buyer: Patrick Grumley +
Seller: Arnold Modell +
Price: \$275,000

Mortgage: \$247,500
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/6/17

138 Deer Trail
Buyer: Christopher Disanto
Seller: Eleanor Lahart
Price: \$136,000
Mortgage: \$140,488
Lender: Mortgage Research
Date: 6/30/17

17 Maid Marian Ln.
Buyer: David Twitchell +
Seller: Mark Bromerski
Price: \$97,500
Date: 6/2/17



830 Moberg Rd.
Buyer: Dwayne Long +
Seller: Phyllis Teich
Price: \$272,500
Mortgage: \$190,750
Lender: Key Bank
Date: 6/27/17

138 Mystic Isle Way
Buyer: Nancy Classman
Seller: Nielsen Christopher Est +
Price: \$294,500
Mortgage: \$220,875
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/23/17

26 Tyringham Rd.
Buyer: David Johnson +
Seller: Paul Faggioni Jr +
Price: \$345,000
Mortgage: \$276,000
Lender: US Bank
Date: 6/22/17

CHESHIRE

76 Ingalls Rd.
Buyer: Brandon Daniels +
Seller: Kai Chee
Price: \$225,000
Mortgage: \$175,500
Lender: Quicken Loan
Date: 6/15/17

136 Ingalls Rd.
Buyer: Jennifer Madewell
Seller: Laura Moquin +
Price: \$182,000
Mortgage: \$183,131
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/21/17

32 Old State Rd.
Buyer: Whitney Farrell +
Seller: Raymond Kellermann +
Price: \$183,400
Mortgage: \$185,282
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/8/17

805 Savoy Rd.
Buyer: Adam Wright +
Seller: All Saints Episcopal
Price: \$285,000
Mortgage: \$228,000

Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/29/17

Stafford Hill Rd.
Buyer: Matthew Pitoniak +
Seller: Brad Sacco
Price: \$130,000
Date: 6/14/17

647 Stafford Hill Rd.
Buyer: Jeffrey Flor
Seller: Charles Howard Jr
Price: \$296,000
Mortgage: \$302,364
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/27/17

1045 Stafford Hill rd.
Buyer: Matthew Pitoniak +
Seller: David Dupee Jr +
Price: \$595,000
Mortgage: \$651,775
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/14/17

CLARKSBURG

1100 Middle Rd.
Buyer: Carl Gageant
Seller: Sarah Brooks
Price: \$100,000
Mortgage: \$101,010
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/27/17

866 W Cross Rd.
Buyer: Raymond Harvey
Seller: Donald Harvey
Price: \$146,500
Date: 6/1/17

DALTON

437 E Housatonic St.
Buyer: Colin Elliott
Seller: Margaret Gregory
Price: \$194,000
Mortgage: \$190,486
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/12/17

52 Glennon Ave.
Buyer: Pierre Goyette Jr
Seller: William Breyman +
Price: \$205,000
Mortgage: \$201,286
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/5/17

57 Jennings Ave.
Buyer: Marina Burris +
Seller: James Keifer
Price: \$127,500
Mortgage: \$100,000
Lender: Citizens Bank
Date: 6/5/17

8 Myrtle St.
Buyer: Douglas Hand
Seller: Edwin Steele +
Price: \$123,000
Mortgage: \$110,577
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/5/17

319 North St.
Buyer: Shawn Gilbert
Seller: Jeremy Petkus +
Price: \$152,900
Mortgage: \$145,255
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/16/17

37 Norwich Dr.
Buyer: Jarred Mongeon +
Seller: Hope Wendling +
Price: \$133,000
Mortgage: \$126,350
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/26/17

18 Oak St.
Buyer: Mary Palmer
Seller: Peter Larkin
Price: \$91,970
Mortgage: \$91,970
Lender: Seller
Date: 6/1/17

65 Oak Street Ext.
Buyer: US Bank NA Tr
Seller: Beverly Silvernail
Price: \$117,533
Date: 6/16/17

577 Old Windsor Rd.
Buyer: Kenneth Larabee +
Seller: Kathleen Phillips
Price: \$364,000
Mortgage: \$327,600
Lender: Berkshire Bank
Date: 6/30/17

47 Richard Dr.
Buyer: Thomas Adjei
Seller: Martin Huban 3rd +
Price: \$280,000
Mortgage: \$266,000
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/22/17

EGREMONT

4 Boice Rd.

Buyer: Katherine Tighe
Seller: Daniel Martin +
Price: \$75,000
Date: 6/5/17

5 Boice Rd.
Buyer: Mark Guerrero +
Seller: Jonathan Taylor +
Price: \$315,000
Date: 6/28/17

8 Boice Rd.
Buyer: Tighe LT 2017 +
Seller: Sandra Martin +
Price: \$1,100,000
Mortgage: \$880,000
Lender: Salisbury B&T
Date: 6/5/17

196 Egremont Plain Rd.
Buyer: Kifar Zaydee Corp
Seller: Rosemarie Siegel LT +
Price: \$1,850,000
Date: 6/15/17

94 Hillsdale Rd.
Buyer: Stephen Suplita 3rd +
Seller: Abbey Rubenstein
Price: \$325,000
Mortgage: \$292,500
Lender: Franklin American
Date: 6/20/17

GREAT BARRINGTON

38 Avery Ln.
Buyer: Nancy Cicchetti
Seller: Corinne Mckeown
Price: \$335,000
Date: 6/27/17

121 Bridge St.
Buyer: Benjamin Wohlfert
Seller: Lisa Caputzel +
Price: \$310,000
Date: 6/30/17

23 Church St.
Buyer: John Henderson
Seller: Dane Corp
Price: \$300,000
Mortgage: \$200,000
Lender: Village Mtg
Date: 6/30/17

63 Division St.
Buyer: Amy Lanoue
Seller: Winona Harding
Price: \$102,000
Date: 6/16/17

162 Main St.
Buyer: Joshua Cohn
Consulting
Seller: Michael Cleary
Price: \$453,995
Mortgage: \$374,000
Lender: First Home Bank
Date: 6/16/17

263 N Plain Rd.
Buyer: Emma Dweck
Seller: Madeline Mahoney +
Price: \$182,000
Mortgage: \$176,540
Lender: Village Mtg
Date: 6/16/17

414 N Plain Rd.
Buyer: Miles Wheat +
Seller: Philip Barnum +
Price: \$205,000
Mortgage: \$207,050
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/12/17

50 Quarry St.
Buyer: Joshua Pacheco +
Seller: David Atwood-Brooks +
Price: \$434,000
Mortgage: \$347,200
Lender: Lee Bank
Date: 6/2/17

8 Waubeck St.
Buyer: David Guenette
Seller: David Guenette +
Price: \$150,000
Mortgage: \$150,000
Lender: Berkshire Bank
Date: 6/28/17

Burning Tree Rd. U:3
Buyer: Lester Friedman +
Seller: Cottages at Barrington NT
Price: \$499,000
Date: 6/30/17

Burning Tree Rd. U:8
Buyer: Henry Ferlauto +
Seller: Cottage at Barrington NT +
Price: \$499,000
Date: 6/29/17

Burning Tree Rd. U:20
Buyer: Diane Finger +
Seller: Cottages at Barrington NT +
Price: \$529,000
Date: 6/13/17

Burning Tree Rd. U:21
Buyer: William Casper +

Seller: Cottages at Barrington NT +
Price: \$499,000
Date: 6/8/17

HANCOCK

Beaver Pond Meadows U:1063
Buyer: Joseph Maloney +
Seller: John Hatgis
Price: \$115,000
Date: 6/7/17

HINSDALE

305 Forest Hill Dr.
Buyer: Gregg Levante
Seller: Shawn Gilbert
Price: \$271,000
Mortgage: \$257,450
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/2/17

61 Goodrich St.
Buyer: US Bank NA Tr
Seller: Jairus Gunn +
Price: \$160,000
Date: 6/9/17

13 Main St.
Buyer: Virginia Fairbank
Seller: Dawn Frissell NT +
Price: \$140,000
Date: 6/9/17

110 S Shore Rd.
Buyer: Jane Peyrouse +
Seller: Benedetto Sciola
Price: \$142,633
Date: 6/28/17

Pine Cone LN. U:155
Buyer: Austin FT +
Seller: Raleigh Cerel-Gerber +
Price: \$278,000
Mortgage: \$222,400
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/28/17

LANESBORO

11 Balance Rock Rd.
Buyer: Stephen Sweeney
Seller: Robert Decelles
Price: \$110,000
Mortgage: \$111,111
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/29/17

99 Bull Hill Rd.
Buyer: Vincent Villanova +
Seller: Andrew Abate +
Price: \$248,000
Mortgage: \$240,560
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/16/17

14 Glassworks Rd.
Buyer: Robert Hart +
Seller: Mary Boschetti +
Price: \$125,000
Mortgage: \$100,000
Lender: Lee Bank
Date: 6/20/17

68 Greystone Estates Rd.
Buyer: Paul Maloy +
Seller: Jeanne Roy +
Price: \$257,000
Mortgage: \$244,150
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/20/17

15 Hollow Rd.
Buyer: Kyle Cruzen +
Seller: Lucas Cohen
Price: \$185,000
Mortgage: \$179,450
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/30/17

12 Irwin St.
Buyer: Alma NT +
Seller: USA HUD
Price: \$77,100
Date: 6/20/17

75 Meadow Ln.
Buyer: Scott Simonelli +
Seller: Andrew Girard +
Price: \$220,500
Mortgage: \$176,400
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/15/17

558 N Main St.
Buyer: Richard Sookey
Seller: David Morin
Price: \$200,000
Mortgage: \$125,000
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/12/17

239 Narragansett Ave.
Buyer: Timothy Wilson +
Seller: Patrick Flynn
Price: \$220,000
Mortgage: \$146,250
Lender: United Bank
Date: 6/30/17

214 Old State Rd.
Buyer: Alyssa Carra

Seller: Karen Vogel +
Price: \$145,000
Mortgage: \$116,000
Lender: 360 Federal CU
Date: 6/2/17

LEE

485 Devon Rd.
Buyer: Elizabeth Strickler
Seller: Joseph Kavanau +
Price: \$276,000
Mortgage: \$262,200
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/9/17

30 Fox Run
Buyer: Sarah Wright +
Seller: Fox Real Estate
Price: \$358,000
Mortgage: \$273,000
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/26/17

322 Lander Rd.
Buyer: Sharon Dekadt +
Seller: Richard Cleaver
Price: \$415,000
Date: 6/9/17

140 Marble St.
Buyer: Rhett Amos +
Seller: Christopher Niewbuh
Price: \$106,000
Mortgage: \$79,500
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/23/17

10 Pine Ridge Dr.
Buyer: Wesley Hunter
Seller: Edward Thomas 3rd RET +
Price: \$185,000
Mortgage: \$160,000
Lender: Don Hunter
Date: 6/29/17

1235 Pleasant St.
Buyer: Bad Boys RT +
Seller: Gerald Drake Jr
Price: \$275,000
Mortgage: \$184,000
Lender: Lee Bank
Date: 6/23/17

18 Reservoir Rd.
Buyer: Matthew Ranzoni
Seller: Philip Rowe
Price: \$86,000
Mortgage: \$77,314
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/15/17

345 Spring St.
Buyer: James Lees +
Seller: No Place Like Home Props
Price: \$80,000
Date: 6/8/17

LENOX

46 Bentrup Ct.
Buyer: Justin Allen +
Seller: Deborah Mcdermont NT +
Price: \$420,000
Mortgage: \$336,000
Lender: Bank of Canton
Date: 6/23/17

16 Blantyre Rd.
Buyer: Blantyre Hotel Ventures
Seller: Fitzpatrick Holdings LLC
Price: \$4,600,000
Mortgage: \$4,000,000
Lender: Berkshire Bank
Date: 6/28/17

3 Delafield Dr.
Buyer: Citizens Bank NA
Seller: Duane Ross +
Price: \$311,982
Date: 6/6/17

52 High St.
Buyer: Stephanie Kelly
Seller: Connelly Marie Est +
Price: \$275,500
Mortgage: \$220,400
Lender: Wells Fargo
Date: 6/6/17

54 Holmes Rd.
Buyer: John Gromacki Jr
Seller: Randall Coons +
Price: \$172,000
Mortgage: \$162,000
Lender: Greystone FCU
Date: 6/16/17

114 Holmes Rd.
Buyer: Susan White
Seller: Jason Labelle
Price: \$239,000
Date: 6/6/17

351 Housatonic St.
Buyer: Thomas Cornwell +
Seller: Ellen Brodbar RET +
Price: \$315,000
Mortgage: \$280,000

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Berkshire County real estate transfers



Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/9/17

31 Hubbard St.
Buyer: Matthew Merritt
Seller: David York
Price: \$270,000
Mortgage: \$170,000
Lender: Seller
Date: 6/16/17

5 Hutchinson Ln.
Buyer: Mitchell Pires
Seller: Sandra Herliczek
Price: \$266,000
Mortgage: \$274,783
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/30/17

220 Kemble St.
Buyer: Leo Mahoney RET +
Seller: Leo Mahoney RET
2010 +
Price: \$480,000
Mortgage: \$280,000
Lender: Merrimack Mtg
Date: 6/19/17

280 Lee Rd.
Buyer: Alan Schiffman T +
Seller: Joseph Sonsini Jr +
Price: \$200,000
Date: 6/27/17

74 Old Stockbridge Rd.
Buyer: Janet Eason
Seller: Timothy Hart +
Price: \$409,000
Mortgage: \$388,550
Lender: Berkshire Bank
Date: 6/2/17

2 Stoneledge Rd.
Buyer: Julie Digrigoli +
Seller: Abbie Baker
Price: \$140,000
Date: 6/29/17

241 Walker St.
Buyer: Stone Path Dev
Seller: 241 Walker Street
LLC
Price: \$350,000
Mortgage: \$670,000
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/15/17

30 Clifden Ct. U:1-5
Buyer: Jacqueline Galusha
Seller: David Lipsius
Price: \$265,500
Date: 6/22/17

Evergreen Trail U:4
Buyer: Sophie Breton
Seller: Mark Buddle
Price: \$362,500
Mortgage: \$239,500
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 6/9/17

Fairwynds Dr. U:39
Buyer: Jeffrey Ross +
Seller: Claire Lowey RET +
Price: \$835,000
Date: 6/1/17

1 Morgan Manor U:3
Buyer: Mary Farrell
Seller: Ralph Decelles +
Price: \$155,000
Date: 6/22/17

9 Rolling Hills U:10
Buyer: Rita Simon +
Seller: Nina Bleiweiss
Price: \$199,900
Date: 6/1/17

Spruce Trail U:10
Buyer: Alan Ferguson +
Seller: Lenox Woods at
Kennedy Pk
Price: \$409,500
Date: 6/28/17

5 Wexford Ct. U:5
Buyer: Judith Fox

Seller: Mcfalls Joan Est +
Price: \$300,000
Date: 6/28/17

20 Wexford Ct. U:3
Buyer: Edward Rensin T +
Seller: Sheldon Feinstein +
Price: \$280,475
Date: 6/29/17

MONTEREY

111 Hupi Rd.
Buyer: Mark Seligman +
Seller: Patrice Grossman
Price: \$525,000
Date: 6/22/17

77 New Marlboro Rd.
Buyer: Demian
VonPoelnitz +
Seller: Jane Perin
Price: \$395,000
Mortgage: \$316,000
Lender: Salisbury B&T
Date: 6/16/17

Stevens Lake Way
Buyer: Nancy Tomasovich
Seller: Carolann Leffler
Price: \$500,000
Date: 6/16/17

NEW MARLBORO

373 Aberdeen Rd.
Buyer: Kevin Liba +
Seller: Raymond Dunn Jr +
Price: \$392,500
Mortgage: \$314,000
Lender: Village Mtg
Date: 6/9/17

6 Alum Hill Rd.
Buyer: Eric Schaefer +
Seller: John Kim +
Price: \$375,000
Mortgage: \$363,750
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/30/17

20 Brewer Hill Rd.
Buyer: Bruce Pretty +
Seller: Scott Farrell +
Price: \$450,000
Mortgage: \$300,000
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 6/19/17

29-31 Mill River Great
Buyer: Peter Long +
Seller: James Conroy
Price: \$277,500
Mortgage: \$222,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/30/17

327 New Marlboro
Buyer: Thomas Brazie
Seller: CML Berkshire
Land LLC
Price: \$400,000
Mortgage: \$424,552
Lender: Julie Kern
Date: 6/9/17

NORTH ADAMS

190 Bradley St.
Buyer: Fredreka Schouten +
Seller: Last Dance NT +
Price: \$80,000
Date: 6/2/17

19 Clark St.
Buyer: Jared Lampiasi
Seller: David Sherman
Price: \$143,000
Mortgage: \$128,550
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/29/17

449-1/2 E Main St.
Buyer: Adam Jalalian

Seller: Michael Bullett +
Price: \$129,500
Date: 6/2/17

26-28 E Quincy St.
Buyer: TBL Properties LLC
Seller: 26-28 East Quincy NT +
Price: \$200,000
Mortgage: \$136,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/5/17

52 Franklin St.
Buyer: Chance Lancaster +
Seller: Marcel Holland
Price: \$87,000
Mortgage: \$69,600
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/28/17

10 Hospital Ave.
Buyer: Charles Corbin Jr +
Seller: Thomas Partenope +
Price: \$129,900
Mortgage: \$127,543
Lender: Quicken Loan
Date: 6/29/17

923 Massachusetts Ave.
Buyer: Matthew Tatro +
Seller: Dennis Whitney

Price: \$205,000
Mortgage: \$195,925
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/15/17

1406 Massachusetts Ave.
Buyer: Hunt House LLC
Seller: Craig Clough +
Price: \$112,500
Date: 6/15/17

86 Meadow St.
Buyer: Jared Sprague +
Seller: Katherine Quirk
Price: \$75,000
Mortgage: \$67,500
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/9/1715

15 Mill St.
Buyer: David York
Seller: Iris Mgmt LLC
Price: \$90,000
Date: 6/19/17

70 Northern Lights Ave.
Buyer: Tina Wallin
Seller: Harriet Neiman
Price: \$164,900
Date: 6/29/17

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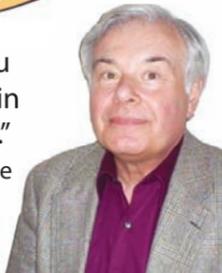
Investment in securities, including mutual funds, involves the risk of loss.



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- Don Raiche



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REAL estate

continued from page 25

456 Notch Rd.
Buyer: Jason Bergeron +
Seller: Monique Bolte
Price: \$225,000
Mortgage: \$229,837
Lender: Navy FCU
Date: 6/16/17

204 Phelps Ave.
Buyer: Rebecca Smith-
Angelini
Seller: Audrey Dumas-
Ghidotti +
Price: \$150,000
Mortgage: \$142,500
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/14/17

89 Wells Ave.

Buyer: Denis Hurley +
Seller: Susan Fisher +
Price: \$125,000
Date: 6/9/17

388 Ashland St. U:2
Buyer: Cathy Freedberg
Seller: Rebelo LT +
Price: \$94,000
Date: 6/30/17

OTIS

Algerie Rd.
Buyer: Town of Otis
Seller: Onehope Fund LLC
Price: \$835,000
Date: 6/1/17

44 Highland Way

Buyer: Michael Boyes +
Seller: Robert Goldstein +
Price: \$254,000
Date: 6/16/17

183 Judd Rd.
Buyer: Jan Healey
Seller: Michael Symons
Price: \$286,500
Date: 6/15/17

27 Kibbe Point Rd.
Buyer: Kevin Orourke +
Seller: Lee Tavernia +
Price: \$480,900
Mortgage: \$382,000
Lender: Lee Bank
Date: 6/9/17

1898 Monterey Rd.
Buyer: Cheryl Howitt

Seller: Wicke NT +
Price: \$140,000
Mortgage: \$125,860
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/20/17

2359 N Main Rd.
Buyer: Rebecca Karpus
Seller: Wellington Joan Est +
Price: \$195,000
Mortgage: \$156,000
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/28/17

PERU

261 E Windsor Rd.
Buyer: Wells Fargo Bank NA
Seller: Donald Wood +
Price: \$180,400

Date: 6/7/17

PITTSFIELD

10 Albermarle Rd.
Buyer: FNMA
Seller: Michael Kysor +
Price: \$112,000
Date: 6/22/17

31 Albermarle Rd.
Buyer: US Bank NA Tr
Seller: Craig Depson +
Price: \$115,200
Date: 6/9/17

107 Allengate Ave.
Buyer: Paul Saldana
Seller: FNMA
Price: \$75,000
Date: 6/9/17

19 Ashley St.
Buyer: Dennis Furlano +
Seller: Edward Filiault +
Price: \$166,000
Date: 6/20/17

152 Bartlett Ave.
Buyer: Josh Bennett
Seller: Nancy Ringer +
Price: \$198,250
Mortgage: \$194,658
Lender: Ross Mtg
Date: 6/9/17

385 Benedict Rd.
Buyer: Anthony Vasolino +
Seller: Plumb RET +
Price: \$164,900
Mortgage: \$146,761
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 6/16/17

33 Birch Grove Dr.
Buyer: Erik Bencotter +
Seller: Greg Levante
Price: \$199,000
Mortgage: \$159,200
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/2/17

200 California Ave.
Buyer: Troy Ziter +
Seller: David Houser +
Price: \$135,000
Mortgage: \$130,950
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/19/17

85 Cheshire Rd.
Buyer: Dalton Center
Block LLC
Seller: Marie Condry
Price: \$90,000
Mortgage: \$72,000
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 6/5/17

1298 Churchill St.
Buyer: David Houser +
Seller: Carol Falcone
Price: \$283,500
Mortgage: \$226,800
Lender: Fairway Mtg
Date: 6/19/17

271 Connecticut Ave.
Buyer: Justin Lyon
Seller: Jason Clark
Price: \$155,000
Mortgage: \$152,192
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/23/17

25 Crane Ave.
Buyer: Paula Ranzoni
Seller: Colin Elliott +
Price: \$167,000
Mortgage: \$115,000
Lender: Lee Bank
Date: 6/12/17

614 Crane Ave.
Buyer: Liza Valenti
Seller: Milton Lestz +
Price: \$193,000

Mortgage: \$183,350
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/23/17

192 Dalton Ave.
Buyer: James Muschett
Seller: Duda Carmella Est +
Price: \$168,000
Mortgage: \$134,400
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/5/17

215 Dalton Ave.
Buyer: Lindsay Hanson
Seller: David Reilly +
Price: \$169,500
Mortgage: \$166,429
Lender: Quicken Loan
Date: 6/9/17

192 Dalton Division Rd.
Buyer: Margaret Shea
Seller: Joseph Kowalczyk Jr +
Price: \$85,000
Mortgage: \$76,415
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/14/17

7 Dexter St.
Buyer: Jenni Zuna-Cabrera
Seller: Anthony Vasolino +
Price: \$148,000
Mortgage: \$145,319
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/2/17

37 Dexter St.
Buyer: Melissa Greiner
Seller: Susan Day
Price: \$80,000
Mortgage: \$76,000
Lender: Lee Bank
Date: 6/27/17

45 Dickinson Ave.
Buyer: Richard Corl +
Seller: Benedetto Sciola +
Price: \$140,000
Mortgage: \$75,000
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/29/17

77 Dickinson Ave.
Buyer: US Bank NA Tr
Seller: Thomas Moriarty +
Price: \$83,632
Date: 6/20/17

81 Dodge Ave.
Buyer: Jacob Cartier
Seller: Sargent Priscilla Est +
Price: \$129,900
Mortgage: \$109,900
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/12/17

73 Donna Ave.
Buyer: Maria Martin-Arenas
Seller: Mclaughlin RA Est +
Price: \$170,000
Mortgage: \$161,500
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/23/17

8 Donovan St.
Buyer: Jeri Wilkinson +
Seller: Lynn Ashburn-Helde
Price: \$175,000
Mortgage: \$140,000
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/1/17

185 Elberon Ave.
Buyer: M St John
Seller: Lisa St John
Price: \$150,000
Mortgage: \$134,850
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/9/17

180 Eleanor Rd.
Buyer: Singer West Street NT +
Seller: Richard Methe +
Price: \$190,000
Date: 6/16/17

104 Elizabeth St.
Buyer: Sonya Sadoway

Seller: Harold Clark Jr
Price: \$113,500
Mortgage: \$100,000
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/30/17

41 Emerson Ave.
Buyer: Christopher Lynch
Seller: Bonnie Heisler
Price: \$137,125
Date: 6/7/17

Federico Dr.
Buyer: Bart Industries Inc
Seller: Federico Realty Corp
Price: \$83,500
Date: 6/16/17

22 Gale Ave.
Buyer: Paul Zuccaro
Seller: Jason Labelle
Price: \$136,000
Mortgage: \$108,000
Lender: Pittsfield Coop
Date: 6/28/17

508 Gale Ave.
Buyer: Mary Talbot
Seller: James Grindrod Jr
Price: \$335,000
Date: 6/28/17

57 High St.
Buyer: FNMA
Seller: Dennis Lefebvre +
Price: \$108,000
Date: 6/29/17

20 Howard St.
Buyer: Michael Baxter +
Seller: Theodore Handerek +
Price: \$159,000
Mortgage: \$127,200
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/5/17

68 Howe Rd.
Buyer: Dennis Astore +
Seller: Victoria King +
Price: \$192,500
Mortgage: \$162,250
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/5/17

30 Julia Dr.
Buyer: Carrie Barth +
Seller: Vladan Jankovic +
Price: \$375,000
Mortgage: \$356,250
Lender: NBT Bank
Date: 6/30/17

87 Kittredge Rd.
Buyer: Michael Mcneil
Seller: FNMA
Price: \$111,600
Date: 6/9/17

595 Lakeway Dr.
Buyer: James Lane +
Seller: Merwin Donna
Est +
Price: \$265,000
Mortgage: \$212,000
Lender: Webster Bank
Date: 6/21/17

30 Lucia Dr.
Buyer: Lindsey Fiero
Seller: Ruth White
Price: \$144,000
Mortgage: \$150,000
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/2/17

157 Maple Grove Dr.
Buyer: Brett Wallace
Seller: Dennis Yon +
Price: \$115,000
Date: 6/2/17

14 Marcella Ave.
Buyer: Nancy Ringer
Seller: Maria Martin-Arenas
Price: \$140,000
Mortgage: \$125,800
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/23/17

118 Morningview Dr.
Buyer: Peter Marino Jr
Seller: Patricia Kerr
Price: \$133,900
Mortgage: \$129,883
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/2/17

161 Newell St.
Buyer: Bonnie Anderson
Seller: Carla Dedolph
Price: \$152,000
Mortgage: \$136,648
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/23/17

366 Newell St.
Buyer: Robin Astore
Seller: Matthew Pennell
Price: \$133,500
Date: 6/15/17

50 Newton Ave.
Buyer: Hanna Gajda
Seller: Charles Wasnewsky
Price: \$165,000
Mortgage: \$155,000
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/22/17

261 Onota St.
Buyer: Travis Altman +
Seller: Deborah Bliss
Price: \$148,000
Mortgage: \$145,319
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/30/17

98 Pine Grove Dr.
Buyer: Lisa Benoit
Seller: Nancy Himes
Price: \$122,000
Mortgage: \$113,900
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/2/17

17 Pleasure Ave.
Buyer: Dustin Babbs +
Seller: Tikki Reshon-
Gerwaski
Price: \$110,000
Mortgage: \$88,000
Lender: Caliber Homes
Date: 6/16/17

31 Rhode Island Ave.
Buyer: Gale Todriff
Seller: Norma Giroux
Price: \$129,900
Mortgage: \$116,910
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/30/17

55 Rockland Dr.
Buyer: Kevin Delaney +
Seller: Lichtenstein FT +
Price: \$265,000
Mortgage: \$238,500
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/26/17

33 S Onota St.
Buyer: Fernando Leon-
Mogollon
Seller: Reinoso INT +
Price: \$138,725
Mortgage: \$104,043
Lender: Greyllock FCU
Date: 6/30/17

64 Springside Ave.
Buyer: Christopher Altiery +
Seller: Cheryl Reed
Price: \$120,000
Mortgage: \$117,826
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/29/17

55 Stratford Ave.
Buyer: John Flynn
Seller: Torran Bagamary
Price: \$145,000
Mortgage: \$140,650
Lender: Lee Bank
Date: 6/30/17

145 Velma Ave.
Buyer: Robert Meucci +

YOUR BUSINESS BELONGS HERE!

FOR SALE: 309 PITTSFIELD RD., LENOX



5,400 sq. ft. first class office building on 2.96 acres. Move-in ready for your company with high-speed wiring, two kitchens and two conference rooms, multi-level contemporary style, large open deck facing private wooded setting, off-street parking, landscaped. Appraised & inspected. **NOW \$679,000**

FOR SALE: 6 RENFREW ST., ADAMS

First class office, plus shop, plus 4-bay garage – all new. Locate your company/business in this superbly rebuilt 3,000 sq. ft. 1880 train station, 5,400 sq. ft. shop with 14' overhead doors & 16-20' ceiling height, and 2,160 sq. ft. 4-bay "showplace" garage. Rail access, Route 8 location. If utility, condition and image are important, this is the place for you. **\$1.2 million**



FOR SALE: 3301 ROUTE 7, POWNAL, VT

Amazing live/work combination with prominent, commanding location overlooking one of the most beautiful valleys in all of Vermont. Create/work/market from the main barn and then stroll into your dramatic and spectacular living quarters featuring 16-ft. cathedral ceiling in the living room, stainless steel and tile kitchen and bath. 5,500 sq. ft., huge spaces, fabulous western sunsets, income apartment, pool, Jacuzzi, close to everything important in the Berkshires and Southern Vermont. **\$550,000**



FOR SALE: SOUTHERN VT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Live and work on the premises of this outstanding, long established, stable and profitable business. Convenience store with gas and liquor caters to locals and tourists. Includes separate three-bedroom home with family room, new kitchen, semi-finished second floor, full basement. Buyer will need minimum of \$100,000 cash for down payment. Gross sales in excess of \$2.4 million. **\$1.1 million**



FOR SALE: 7557 ROUTE 7, POWNAL, VT



17,450 sq. ft. of two-story commercial space in prime Route 7 location across from Stewart's Shop, Vermont State Liquor Store and just over MA/VT state line at the gateway to Vermont. Former furniture store, suitable for antiques, office, retail. Additional one-story 1,280 sq. ft. rental house. **\$595,000**

FOR SALE: PRIME WILLIAMSTOWN BUILDING SITE

Commercially zoned lot featuring 265 ft. of frontage on Main Street (Route 2) and 210 ft. on Adams Road. The only remaining "virgin" undeveloped site in Williamstown, this level 0.8 acre with public bus service and all utilities is ideal for retail, professional, service, or mixed-use business/residential. For sale, lease, or build to suit. Seller financing available. Broker owned. **\$495,000**



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Seller: Paula Ranzoni
Price: \$265,000
Mortgage: \$260,200
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/12/17

15 Virginia Ave.
Buyer: Richard Walden
Seller: Paula Mlynarski +
Price: \$100,000
Date: 6/1/17

96 W Housatonic St.
Buyer: Nubia Ospina
Seller: Greylock FCU
Price: \$85,400
Mortgage: \$83,675
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/9/17

780 W Housatonic St.
Buyer: Jeremy Bourdo
Seller: Kevin Delaney +
Price: \$157,950
Mortgage: \$161,740
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/26/17

43 W Union St.
Buyer: 120 Onota Street LLC
Seller: Kirt Laforest +
Price: \$120,000
Date: 6/7/17

39 Wellesley St.
Buyer: Carl Zartman +
Seller: Edward Lapointe +
Price: \$272,000
Date: 6/9/17

40 Westminster St.
Buyer: Marcial Barahona +
Seller: Jose Goncalves
Price: \$132,500
Mortgage: \$128,500
Lender: Prime Lending
Date: 6/15/17

Churchill Crest U:29
Buyer: Lynn Ashburn
Seller: Erin Ungewitter
Price: \$167,000
Mortgage: \$130,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/1/17

81 Dartmouth St. U:209
Buyer: Jacques Townsend
Seller: David Nye Jr +
Price: \$154,988
Mortgage: \$123,988
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/16/17

33 Maplewood Ave. U:304
Buyer: Cynthia Ross +
Seller: Burton Elliott T +
Price: \$99,000
Date: 6/8/17

1450 North St. U:302
Buyer: Nanik Ram
Seller: Mae Heyer +
Price: \$151,000
Mortgage: \$135,749
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/15/17

1 Pondview Dr. U:H
Buyer: Greylock FCU
Seller: Mendel Bruce Est +
Price: \$157,230
Date: 6/26/17

182 Union St. U:3
Buyer: Gail Kinder
Seller: Tabitha Gerber
Price: \$164,000
Mortgage: \$119,000
Lender: Shamrock FncI
Date: 6/21/7

RICHMOND

1053 State Rd.
Buyer: John Martino
Seller: Castagn Reno Sr Est +
Price: \$125,000
Date: 6/30/17

1736 State Rd.
Buyer: Hedley Stone +
Seller: Keith Stuart Annin Est +
Price: \$337,500
Mortgage: \$270,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/23/17

350 Stevens Glen Rd.
Buyer: Michael Winter +
Seller: Daniel Katzen +
Price: \$247,000
Mortgage: \$170,000
Lender: Northeast Home
Date: 6/5/17

SANDISFIELD

6 Roosterville Rd.
Buyer: Citifinancial Servicing
Seller: Rosiland Finneran +
Price: \$113,823
Date: 6/2/17

SAVOY

41 Main Rd.
Buyer: Shannon Witek
Seller: Kimberly Witek
Price: \$90,000
Mortgage: \$90,000
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/11/7

181 Windsor Rd.
Buyer: Troy Hartlage
Seller: Phillip Koamaya +
Price: \$175,000
Mortgage: \$166,250
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/23/17

SHEFFIELD

947 Barnum St.
Buyer: Stockwell NT +
Seller: Winthrop Barrett
Price: \$275,000
Date: 6/15/17

38 Bridgeview Ln.
Buyer: Catherine Chapin
Seller: Jean Chapin
Price: \$120,000
Mortgage: \$127,000
Lender: Village Mtg
Date: 6/5/17

271 Clayton Rd.
Buyer: Nancy Pecorelli +
Seller: Adams Community Bank
Price: \$95,000
Mortgage: \$55,000
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/12/17

245 E Main St.
Buyer: Roger Cohn +
Seller: Peter Ghitman +
Price: \$355,000
Mortgage: \$284,000
Lender: UBS Bank
Date: 6/8/17

205 E Stahl Rd.
Buyer: John Connor-Nagy +
Seller: William Wandall +
Price: \$180,000
Mortgage: \$144,000
Lender: Peoples Bank
Date: 6/23/17

176 Maple Ave.
Buyer: Julie Vayer +
Seller: James Windus +
Price: \$465,000
Mortgage: \$275,000
Lender: Salisbury B&T
Date: 6/16/17

128 Rannapo Rd.
Buyer: Doran-Trask RET +
Seller: Michelle Demellier
Price: \$259,000
Date: 6/16/17

793 Salisbury Rd.
Buyer: Christopher Mcneill
Seller: Samuel Stolzar
Price: \$183,000
Mortgage: \$
Date: 6/13/17

214 Silver St.
Buyer: Marion Stokes Jr +
Seller: Carole King
Price: \$345,000
Date: 6/23/17

STOCKBRIDGE

14 Church St.
Buyer: Martin Sennett +
Seller: John Spencer Jr
RET +
Price: \$390,000
Mortgage: \$140,000
Lender: Lee Bank
Date: 6/15/17

33 Glendale Rd.
Buyer: Hitchcock Hydro LLC
Seller: Littleville Power Co Inc
Price: \$1,900,000
Mortgage: \$1,365,000
Lender: M&T Bank
Date: 6/23/17

74 Old Stockbridge Rd.
Buyer: Janet Eason
Seller: Timothy Hart
Price: \$409,000
Mortgage: \$388,550
Lender: Berkshire Bank
Date: 6/2/17

9 Quiet Knoll Rd.
Buyer: Leslie Ioffredo
Seller: Nelson Sparks
Price: \$475,000
Date: 6/16/17

8 Church St. U:1
Buyer: Edward Lane +
Seller: Bonnie Watson
Kniskern LT +
Price: \$287,000
Mortgage: \$200,000
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/16/17

TYRINGHAM

2 Brace Rd.
Buyer: 2 Brace Road NT
Seller: Parker Quillen
Price: \$2,100,000
Date: 6/9/17

WASHINGTON

Watson Rd.
Buyer: Commonwealth Mass
Seller: David Drugmand +
Price: \$100,000
Date: 6/27/17

Watson Rd.
Buyer: Commonwealth Mass
Seller: Edward Bond +
Price: \$100,000
Date: 6/27/17

Watson Rd.
Buyer: Commonwealth Mass
Seller: Stephen Fitzgerald
Price: \$100,000
Date: 6/27/17

WEST STOCKBRIDGE

22 Moscow Rd.
Buyer: Casey Gaul +

Seller: George Naventi
RET +
Price: \$152,000
Mortgage: \$144,400
Lender: Village Mtg
Date: 6/23/17

57 W Alford Rd.
Buyer: Randall Gould +
Seller: Kevin Herbert +
Price: \$200,000
Date: 6/13/17

WILLIAMSTOWN

53 Charles St.
Buyer: Alexander Smith +
Seller: Sarah Coelho
Price: \$192,000
Mortgage: \$188,522
Lender: Citizens Bank
Date: 6/20/17

25 Elliott Dr.
Buyer: Mark Mcdonough +
Seller: James Crase +
Price: \$228,075
Mortgage: \$188,000
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/15/17

40 Hamel Ave.
Buyer: Keenan Chenail +
Seller: Roger Putnam +
Price: \$185,500
Mortgage: \$148,400
Lender: Greylock FCU
Date: 6/30/17

134 Hopper Rd.
Buyer: Michael Card
Seller: Long Acre NT +
Price: \$165,000
Mortgage: \$140,250
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/23/17

430 Main St.
Buyer: 430 Main Hotel LLC
Seller: Williamstown PT +
Price: \$950,000
Date: 6/21/17

380 Pine Cobble Rd.
Buyer: Mea Young-Cook +
Seller: Williams College
Price: \$390,000
Mortgage: \$108,000
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/16/17

83 Sloan Rd.

Buyer: John Umlauf
Seller: Carolyn Umlauf
Price: \$500,000
Date: 6/20/17

47 Stratton Rd.
Buyer: Ryan Tainter +
Seller: Robert Jackall +
Price: \$259,000
Mortgage: \$159,000
Lender: MountainOne
Date: 6/23/17

596 Water St.
Buyer: David McGowan +
Seller: Dixie Cortner-Brooke
Price: \$272,000
Date: 6/19/17

203 White Oaks Rd.
Buyer: Philip Koamaya +
Seller: Bonnie Anderson
Price: \$319,000
Mortgage: \$255,000
Lender: Adams Community
Date: 6/23/17

446 White Oaks Rd.
Buyer: Benjamin Cohen +
Seller: Susan Trimarchi

Price: \$355,000
Mortgage: \$284,000
Lender: Quicken Loan
Date: 6/1/17

N Hemlock Ln. U:406
Buyer: Sheila Basarab
Seller: Edward Scofield +
Price: \$355,000
Date: 6/28/17

WINDSOR

733 North St.
Buyer: Joseph Keefe
RET +
Seller: John Ciepiela +
Price: \$324,000
Mortgage: \$280,489
Lender: Academy Mtg
Date: 6/9/17

7 Windsor Bush Rd.
Buyer: Kif Thacker
Seller: Pringle FT +
Price: \$275,000
Mortgage: \$200,000
Lender: Quicken Loan
Date: 6/20/17

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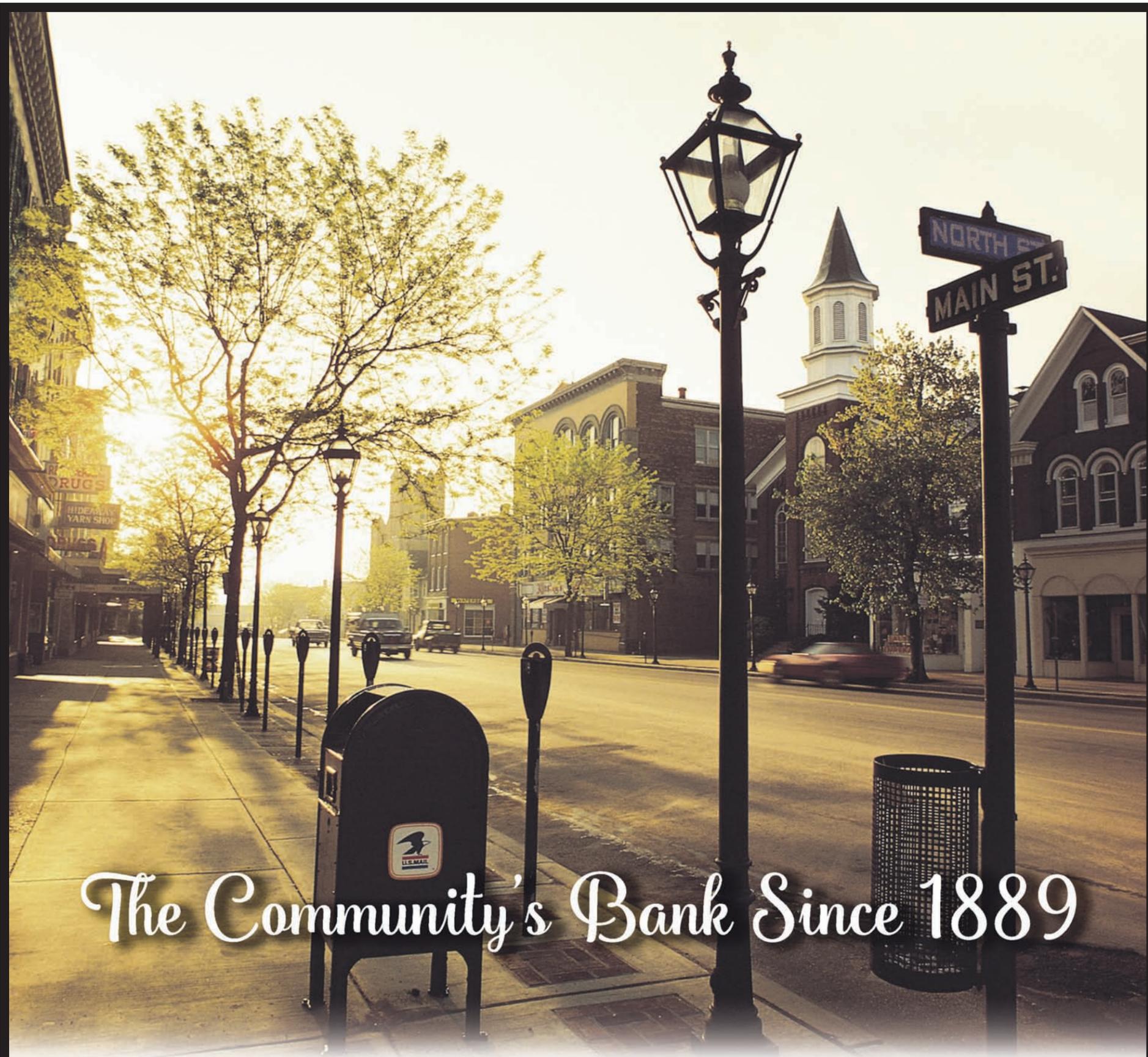
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Investment in securities, including mutual funds, involves the risk of loss.



The Community's Bank Since 1889

The Pittsfield Cooperative Bank opened in 1889 intent on empowering our neighbors to build a better community. Savings and investment products were designed to benefit the customers long-term and lending decisions were made with great thought by honest, local bankers.

They still are.

Today, The Co-op is staffed by 48 people who not only live and work in the area, they've dedicated most of their lives to the region. And — because of the way we conduct business — this little known bank in the heart of the Berkshires is one of the best capitalized lenders in the entire Commonwealth.

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