

UPSTATE Life

FALL 2023 magazine

**Garden of Weedin':
Give in to Garlic**

**Vinyl: Putting a
New Spin on It!**

Booked for Success

**Cookin' with Collins:
Pumpkin-Chai Hand Pies**

When the Time is Right:
What to Know about
Helios Care

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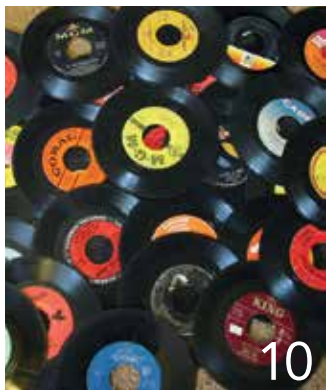
UPSTATE Life

magazine

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Valerie Secor

Editor
Allison Collins

Graphic Designer
Tracy Bender

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On the cover



ALLISON COLLINS

Katya Carey, of Unadilla, plays in the leaves in this late September photo, taken in Unadilla.

EDITOR'S CORNER



My kids like to tease me about my love of ugly colors. Lately, I've been buying all the neutrals. Give me any shade of brown.

Part of it is, that's what's popular; so many stylized, beige-heavy arrangements on social media and in stores. But for me, right now, I think part of the appeal is that all those olives and mauves and rusts mirror the natural world. Everything outside is dimming, and so am I. And not in a

sad way (though I do think the close of summer brings a certain mournfulness), just in a neutralizing, earthy, grounding way.

As I'm writing this, the fall foliage has hit a sudden peak. I drove to Walton and Sidney Center the other day and those curvy backroads were bracketed in swaying goldenrod, purple sprays of New England asters and the odd doleful cow, all backgrounded by rolling crimson-and-gold hills.

But by the time this prints, those hues will have done what fall does so well and so fast – fade. The start of the season saw the renewal of school and sports and what felt like an appointment or meeting every single day. The crockpot and the early-morning alarm made their reappearance, along with a sense of frenzy. It was hectic, especially so soon after the long, lazy, sunlit days of summer. Now, deep in fall, life and nature are slowing. An article at buddingoptimist.com puts it nicely:

“As the air cools and the daylight wanes, we naturally settle back into our usual routines. The pace of life slows to a comfortable rhythm, allowing us to catch our breath – like a slow song would at a dance party.”

This edition is full of ways to enjoy the cozy of fall. Find a chunky (beige) blanket and wrap up with a good book from Oneonta's Green Toad, or take a recommendation from Bookmarked with Ash. Maybe eat a pumpkin-chai hand pie and drop on a record from a local record store while you do. Or get your knees dirty planting garlic, preferably under a full harvest moon (nudity optional), as per the new column, Garden of Weedin', by returning writer and former Upstate Life editor, Joanne Arbogast.

Whatever you do, let this time of year be your slow song at the dance party.

Reimagining Our Food System

with

CATSKILLS AGRARIAN ALLIANCE

BY CHELSEA FRISBEE JOHNSON

What does a healthy and just food system in the Catskills region look like? With a new nonprofit umbrella model housing a social justice farm, a retail CSA serving 600-plus members at 40 locations, farm-to-institution work getting local food into schools and colleges, land access projects for new farmers and mutual aid that gets fresh, healthy produce to upstate pantries and downstate organizations, the Catskills Agrarian Alliance is proving what's possible. They're bringing together farmers, innovative thinkers and collaborative partnerships to reimagine what food production, distribution and consumption can look like.

Tianna Kennedy, executive director of the Catskills Agrarian Alliance, explained how more than a decade of work has recently

culminated into the newly formed nonprofit organization.

"We started with the 607CSA, which was a multi-farm CSA (crop-sharing association) that helped fund Star Route Farm, a farm in Charlottesville, New York with a social justice mission," she said. "Everything scaled enormously with the pandemic, and we added in mutual aid as an important part of our work. We received some funding in 2020-2021 and were able to hire more staff. Opportunities to expand into land access and farm-to-institution work came up and we took on more funding and staff to help realize those ideas. We just kept expanding, and then shifted from a for-profit model to a nonprofit model. We have an amazing group of people and somehow have weathered these transitions together."

Above: Star Route Farm farmers dig potatoes at the new farm location.





“EVERYBODY INVOLVED COMES FROM A COMMUNITY ORGANIZING BACKGROUND OR HAS EXPERIENCE WORKING ON RADICAL PROJECTS. WE’RE ALL DOING THIS WORK BECAUSE IT’S A NEED THAT NEEDS TO BE FILLED. WE’RE ALL WORKING IN SERVICE OF THE FARM AND THIS WORK. WE’RE IN PROGRESS AND ALL TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT TOGETHER.”



West Branch Commons land stewards Jessica Tobon, Sea Matias and Kadeesha Williams are pictured in this undated photo.

Cropped Together

Catskills Agrarian Alliance’s mission is to model food sovereignty in the Catskills, by “protecting and promoting the right of all people to healthy, culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, as well as by supporting our right to define our own food systems.”

The organization is set up to model these values through a horizontal, collaborative structure.

“Everybody involved comes from a community organizing background or has experience working on radical projects,” Kennedy said. “We’re all doing this work because it’s a need that needs to be filled. We’re all working in service of the farm and this work. We’re in progress and all trying to figure it out together.”

Much of the collaborative nature of CAA’s work involves local farmers, organizations and institutions. In 2022, they worked with 39 farmers and producers in the Catskills, 29 organizations serving food-insecure communities up- and downstate, a CSA membership of more than 700 households and 30 schools and universities, including large-scale institutions responsible for feeding thousands of New Yorkers every day.

CAA is in a unique position to serve community needs in the upstate and downstate regions. In 2022 and 2023, they developed a prescription box program with the Rural Health Network and send produce every other week to 19 program participants in Delaware County. They also support multiple organizations’ consistent food distributions across the year, reaching an average of more than 3,000 people weekly through partnerships with 14 downstate mutual aid organizations and 15 upstate food pantries.



Farmed Fare

For Kennedy, her love of this work starts with farming.

“I moved up here to be a farmer,” she said. “I’m super excited about our upcoming transition to a more distributed leadership model and working as a group instead of in isolation. A lot of my time as a farmer in Delaware County, I feel like people humored me and all my ideas. Now that we have a little more reach and funding, I can’t wait to have this work continue with brilliant, new, younger people and I can go back to farming. I see my role as a supporting role in realizing other people’s ideas.”

In their model, CAA finds funding to pay farmers to then give food away to organizations already connected to food-insecure communities. Along with the 607CSA and other wholesale distri-

bution, the goal is to increase farmers’ market share. CAA is also partnering with the American Farmland Trust in Delancey, New York to create a community land trust called the West Branch Commons, with a goal to lease the land long-term to new and beginning farmers at affordable rates.

“It’s really hard to solve any of these problems in isolation, so we’re trying to tackle them together,” Kennedy said. “We want to serve our community as deeply as we can. All of the projects support one another.”

As an organization rooted in and serving their community, Catskills Agrarian Alliance is always looking for more people to get involved.

“The best way for people to get involved is to become a 607CSA member or buy from us wholesale,” Kennedy said. “We also need help fundraising or on the farm. If there’s some aspect of any of this that seems intriguing or relevant, we’d love to hear from you.”

Learn more at catskillsagrarianalliance.org. ■



From top, clockwise: A student is seen enjoying local corn as part of CAA’s partnership with DCMO BOCES. Cheryl Landsman from CAA is seen processing local tomatoes at SUNY Delhi. Pack day for the 607 CSA.

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BY JOANNE ARBOGAST

PHOTOS BY JOANNE ARBOGAST



Give in to Garlic

Growing a garden is and isn't easy. Poke a seed in the ground and, in due time, eat what was sown – easy. But more factors than you may imagine can thwart getting from Point A to Point B. Still, consuming what you planted is so rewarding. With success comes a strong urge to do it again.

Hardly an expert, I am addicted to the gardening game. I learn new things every year. One thing I learned this year is not to bother with carrots. Why? Because the seeds are tiny, and I find it sort of sad to thin out seedlings. By not spacing them out, I've grown some pretty ugly and deformed orange lumps. I'm not doing it anymore.

In this space, I'll share with you some very basic tips. For more details like harvesting, fertilizing and storing, best to search online.

One of my earliest efforts of trying a garden was sparked by leafing through a spring mail-order catalogue and seeing artichoke seeds. I ordered some. When they arrived, I popped them in the ground and waited. Plants came up, but never any artichokes. I figured it was my fault. It didn't dawn on me that New York's climate might not be conducive to growing artichokes. (It can be done, I've been told, but I haven't tried again since. Maybe next spring.)

Around the same time, early summer I think, a neighbor told me her father grew garlic. I was interested. She said it was easy and brought me some cloves. I stuck them in the ground with about the same preparation I gave the artichoke seeds. The garlic never sprouted.

Forget about artichokes; if you want almost guaranteed success in the garden, plant garlic. It took me years to figure out the key is getting it in the ground in the fall, not early summer. Ask around, probably lots of folks you know are growing it. Or visit a garlic festival. Or buy some organic bulbs with fat cloves, which are the seeds.

There are many kinds of garlic, but you can research that later after you've proven to yourself you can do it. I've been growing garlic from bulbs I bought five years ago. I don't even know what kind they are, but this year maybe I'll experiment with other varieties. On my radar is, no joke, is garlic called Softneck Artichokes.

Pick a nice sunny spot for your crop. If you are putting them in an established garden, simply stick your index finger in the ground, place the clove in there pointy side up and cover with some soil. I plant them about a hand's distance apart. If you don't have a garden, dig a small hole and loosen up the soil so the bulbs won't have a hard time growing.

Mark the spot. It's easy to forget they are there until they sprout in early spring. Even then, you may not recognize them for what they are.

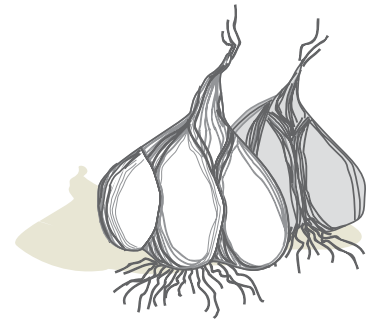


The only reason I remember to get garlic in the ground at the right time is because I was told to plant it while dancing naked in the light of October's full moon. I don't follow those instructions because I have neighbors, but I do wait for the lunar sign.

This October's full moon was on Oct. 28 but it's not too late to plant. In fact, The Old Farmer's Almanac recommends planting while the moon is on the wane, so there's time. Just get it in the ground three to six weeks before it freezes solid.

Incidentally, this month's full moon was a hunter's moon. The almanac explains that this name was chosen as a signal to hunters to prepare for the upcoming winter by going hunting. Since the fields had been cleared under the harvest moon, hunters could more easily spot deer and other animals fattening up on field scraps. The hunter's moon is also called a blood moon. Maybe because of hunting or maybe because of the color of the changing autumn leaves. ■

Joanne Arbogast lives in Worcester with her husband, Fred, and a garden that seems to expand every year.



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Vinyl!

Putting a New Spin on It!

BY LEIGH INFIELD



Greg Evans, of Sounds Good Music House, stands in his Andes store in this undated photo.

“Hello old friend, it’s really good to see you once again.” – Eric Clapton

Who would have thought that in the age of Spotify, Pandora, Google Play, Apple Music and other streaming services, an older technology would make a comeback? Vinyl records are spinning once again, outselling CDs consistently each year since 1986. And, like the line from Eric Clapton’s Top 40 ‘70s hit, they are a welcome old friend.

Vinyl Sounds Good in Andes

Vinyl is selling briskly at Sounds Good Music House in Andes, the latest vinyl record shop to open in the Catskill area.

“Sharing music has always been important to me,” Greg Evans, proprietor, said. “Looking back, I remember inviting my grade school friends over to my house for the sole purpose of listening to music. At the time, we would take blank cassettes, wait for our favorite radio shows to come on and record the best songs into our own mixtapes and mash-ups.” Evans, 36, grew up in an age of cassettes, then CDs and digital. “But the sound, artwork and curiosity of finding new music in a physical way brought me back to records.”



“LISTENING TO VINYL RECORDS IS A VERY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE. SOUND QUALITY IS BETTER—WARMER AND MORE AUTHENTIC THAN DIGITAL. PEOPLE LIKE HOLDING THE ALBUM, STUDYING THE NOTES AND LYRICS, AS THEY LISTEN. THEY FEEL MORE CONNECTED WITH THE MUSIC THAN DIGITAL.”

Left: Records are pictured at Andes' Sounds Good Music House. Right: Vinyl records are spinning again at the Sounds Good Music House in Andes.



Music-sharing has come full circle for Evans and his wife, Lindsay, a visual artist, with the opening of Sounds Good Music House. After 10 years in New York City, the couple moved to Andes in 2020. They were up and running shortly thereafter, with the help of three friends who continue to be active in the business. Greg and Lindsay split the second floor between his design office and her painting studio. The first floor is divided into two areas – one for the record shop and the other for art shows. In addition to records and art, the shop also deals in turntables and mid-century furniture.

“Listening to vinyl records is a very different experience,” Evans said. “Sound quality is better—warmer and more authentic than digital. People like holding the album, studying the notes and lyrics, as they listen. They feel more connected with the music than digital.”

Evans said, surprisingly, it isn't just nostalgic baby boomers driving the market for vinyl. Millennials and Gen X-ers are getting in on the trend. Even Gen Z, the youngest market for vinyl, has embraced the music that their parents and grandparents loved. Notably, they are shelling out money for custom vinyl albums cut by their favorite artists, such as Taylor Swift, whose vinyl albums are snapped up as soon as they are released.

“Everyone has a different reason as to why they collect vinyl,” Evans said. “Boomers, who may have given away or sold their vinyl albums, are looking to rebuild their collection. They are hunting for records from the '60s and '70s – the heyday of vinyl. Classic albums like Fleetwood Mac's 'Rumours' and David Bowie's 'Let's Dance' are caught up right away.”

In the time of fleeting digital pleasures, Evans said, people are looking for more tangible assets. They are building collections to pass on to their children and grandchildren.

“One summer, my parents sold their vinyl records at a garage sale,” he said. “The person that bought them knew what he had found. When I began collecting, my mother had to rebuy copies of her favorites to pass along to me. Someday, I hope my son will be excited to go through and appreciate my collection.”

Evans noted that there is equal interest in new and used records. In addition to the used bins of classics like jazz, hip hop and country, Sounds Good Music House also carries new pressings and releases.

“Our focus with these records has been smaller labels and artists whom we admire and want to give a broader audience,” he said.

The shop carries LPs by Catskill-area artists as well as global labels focused on reissuing more obscure recordings—recordings that Evans said may not have gotten their fair chance when originally released. “For me,” he said, “the resurgence of vinyl is also about going back to a better way of sharing music with people and once again giving artists a real way of getting in front of new listeners.”

Sounds Good Music House is a welcome addition to Andes' busy Main Street. Visit soundsgoodcatskills.com or follow @soundsgoodcatskills on Instagram for news about upcoming art and musical events. The store, at 119 Main St., is open from noon to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, or by appointment. Call 845-676-6233 for more information,

Open the Vault in Oneonta

Visitors to Oneonta's Vinyl Music Vault – the destination for vintage records from the 1920s on – will find hundreds of records. The Vault is a total music emporium, featuring records in all formats: 8-tracks, 45s, 78s, tapes, CDs, albums, LPs, and the vintage equipment to listen to it all. Interested in soul, rock, folk, jazz, classical, hip hop, metal or country? The Vinyl Music Vault has it.



Vincent Mashburn, owner of the Vinyl Music Vault, is known as 'the Music Guy.' Six days a week, he is in the store, helping customers with their selections and talking music.



Visitors are sure to find a special album at the Vinyl Music Vault. Individual records sell for as little as 10 cents, up to \$1,000.

Right: Hundreds of vinyl records are available at Oneonta's Vinyl Music Vault.

“VINYL NEVER LEFT. DIGITAL COMPRESSES EVERYTHING. VINYL IS NATURAL. THERE ARE NO FILTERS, NO BUFFERS – IT IS JUST PURE SOUND.”



Owner Vincent Mashburn has been buying records since he was 12. He stocks between 150,000 to 200,000 albums at the Vault.

“People will come in and are amazed to find the album they had been searching for, for years,” Mashburn said. And, they are sure to find something within their price range. Individual records sell for as little as 10 cents up to a \$1,000.

A visit to the Vault is as much about meeting the owner as it is shopping the collections. Fast-talking, no-nonsense, Mashburn lives music. Locals, he noted, are fond of calling him “the Music Guy.” His store is a labor of love. Since taking it over nine years ago, he has put his personal stamp on it, staying open six days a week and extending hours during special occasions such as New Year’s Eve.

With 37 years’ experience as a junior high band teacher as well as a talented trombone and trumpet player, Mashburn shares his knowledge and passion for all musical genres with his customers, providing advice on instruments, artists, recording mediums and equipment.

“Vinyl never left,” Mashburn said of the current trend. A purist at heart, he prefers the sound quality of old-school formats over digital. “Digital compresses everything. Vinyl is natural. There are no filters, no buffers – it is just pure sound.”

The Vinyl Music Vault is at 300 Main St., Oneonta. The store is open from noon to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday; closed Sunday. Contact vinlmusicvault@gmail.com or 607-441-3121 for more information.

Pressing Matters in Margaretville

Pressing Matters is Margaretville’s Main Street record store, where visitors will find a curated collection of rare records – vintage and new issues – turntables, musical instruments and music memorabilia. The owner, called ‘Heavy,’ has amassed more than 30,000 carefully selected albums, specializing in those hard-to-find and very collectible first pressings.

“The original audio documents of music and words were pressed on vinyl,” Heavy said. “Over the years, those runs of pressings with real-time sound on metal plates were carved by mastering engineers, each with their own personal processing techniques.” Vinyl records issued as first pressings, made from the initial batch of lacquers used in the production process and from the original master recordings, are highly collectible for their superior sound. An album that is a first pressing may also have a special cover, sticker, band poster or album notes that makes it unique. Pressing, therefore, matters.

“Vinyl never went anywhere,” Heavy said. “People are discovering that vinyl is still the superior sound playback method, as the records themselves are a purer form of the artists and engineer’s visions. Put on a Robert Ludwig-mastered copy of a Led Zeppelin record on a quality stereo system, and electricity pumps from the needle, pushing sound from the artist to your ears. That’s real.”

Heavy said vinyl from all eras and genres is selling these days, but noted that records from the ‘80s to the 2000s are often rare, as CDs were prevalent then. “Artists burned those rather than the more expensive and involved process of pressing vinyl,” he said. “The timeframe includes grunge and punk bands, with early releases they pressed and put together themselves. Records from bands like Minor Threat or Black Flag, for instance, are extremely valuable these days as they were made by the hands of the artists themselves.”

Active in the music business since the early ‘90s, Heavy and his team have participated in the “Run Far Fast Fest” in Margaretville for the last two years. They are in the process of readying for a third festival in July 2024. The fest pairs punk bands from all over the U.S. with camping and other activities.

Contact Pressing Matters at 845-707-5255 for tickets and information, or for an appointment at the store. Pressing Matters does not exist online, so come in and experience it for yourself. ■



Grab a bag and take advantage of this special on vinyl records at Andes' Sounds Good Music House.




Look for the upcoming issue of **Holiday Life Magazine**, publishing in **November 2023**

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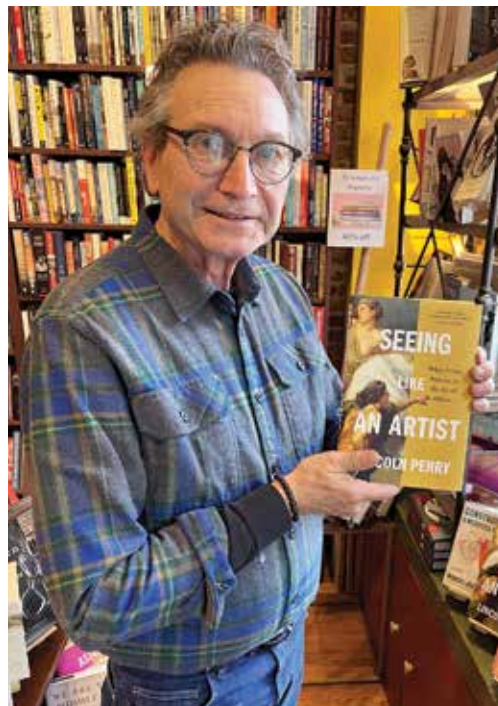


BOOKED FOR SUCCESS

BY MONICA CALZOLARI



“THE BOOKSTORE IS AN EXPRESSION OF MY PERSONALITY. IT IS A PLACE OF CURIOSITY, DISCOVERY AND ORIGINALITIES. MY EXHIBITION IS ONGOING AND EVER CHANGING.”



Green Toad Bookstore owner Jim Havener pictured in this updated photo. | CONTRIBUTED

The Green Toad Bookstore has been a Main Street, Oneonta establishment for 16 years. Owner Jim Havener will celebrate his 10th anniversary as its second proprietor early next year. He brings a unique background and training to operating an independent bookstore in the age of Amazon and big box retailers.

Havener arrived in this area 42 years ago from Illinois for an interview at SUNY Oneonta's Cooperstown Graduate Program in Museum Studies. He was one of 75 students out of 1,500 applicants interviewed and one of only 15 students offered admission to this prestigious program in 1981. At the time, this program was one of only four of its kind in the United States.

Today, Havener credits his museum studies background with having a profound effect on his approach to business.

“I am curating a collection of books and gifts and developing an exhibition according to my vision,” he said. “The story I want to tell includes the music I play and the ambiance I create.”

When customers tell Havener that his bookstore “feels like a home,” he smiles with satisfaction.

“The bookstore is an expression of my personality,” he said. “It is a place of curiosity, discovery and originalities. My exhibition is ongoing and ever changing.”

Havener said “the front windows are the face of your business,” noting that he works closely with one of his five part-time employees, who is trained in feng shui to create themes for his displays. One month the front windows featured banned books.

“The idea of people banning books is an anathema to freedom of speech,” he said. “We are part of that conversation.”

When Havener bought the bookstore from Michele Barry in early 2014, he kept the name of the store for practical reasons. A businessman, he knew that changing the name would mean the added expense of new signage and the hassle of changing every single account with booksellers across the country. Eventually, he changed the logo into a “more modern, leaping toad,” he said, “to signify action and forward motion.”

Bookish Beginnings

Havener's love of books began at an early age. Since childhood, he loved history. Thanks to his mother, who was born in Ireland, Havener spent many summers visiting relatives there and soaking up Irish history and culture. It is no coincidence that Havener's collection reflects his love of Irish authors, including Colm Tóibín and John Banville.





Green Toad Bookstore

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PHOTOS BY MONICA CALZOLARI



Havener attributes some of his success to offering a variety of books and items to different audiences. Each inch of the store is well stocked with unique merchandise. There is a large children's section in the back of the store near the greeting cards. When he assumed ownership of the Green Toad, he introduced many new genres to his collection, including art books and books about photography.

"I also bought the books I enjoyed in high school and college, like 'Catcher in the Rye,'" he said. "The college students in Oneonta liked my selection."

Owning a bookstore is a second career for Havener, who successfully operated The Furniture Doctor for 30 years in Milford, where he and his wife have lived since 1986. Havener was a frequent customer of the Green Toad, often ordering books the store did not stock. One fortuitous day, he mentioned to the previous owner that he "always wanted to have a store and she beat him to it." Barry was ready to sell the bookstore and Havener felt that "she handpicked me to be the next owner."

Bound by Community

Being open seven days per week is another modification Havener made that contributes to the store's success.

"When I was doing bookkeeping on Sundays inside the store, I would see passersby look through the window and go next door to Latte Lounge," he said, noting that, now, weekends and the holiday season are when the store gets the most traffic.

Havener credits the local community with being loyal customers that "kept the business alive during the three months it was closed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic." One woman, he noted, contributed her entire stimulus check of \$1,400 to buy a book for every child in the district. "I am so grateful for customers who support local, independent bookstores."

During the pandemic, Havener personally delivered books to his customers and still offers delivery and in-store pickup. This level of service and customer intimacy is a key difference between retail chains like Barnes & Noble or online giants like Amazon and an independent bookstore like the Green Toad. ■

When the Time is Right:

BY MONICA CALZOLARI

If you were diagnosed with a serious illness, wouldn't you want to know all your options? Imagine being told you have Stage IV cancer or need open-heart surgery. Receiving this kind of news can be a shock and may take time to fully absorb. Suddenly, you may start imagining the worst-case scenario. It may be the first time you face thoughts of your own mortality. That's where Helios Care comes in.

"Most people don't like to talk about endings, let alone dying," Dan Ayres, president and chief executive officer of Helios Care since 2017, said. "As a culture, we are often uncomfortable using the words 'dying' or 'died,' often substituting phrases like 'passed away' or 'lost.'"

Helios Care helps approximately 700 local patients and their families annually cope with a serious illness. Most of its patients are elderly. New York has the fourth-largest population of older adults in the country. The number of residents on Medicare is quickly approaching 25%.

Although you and your loved ones may be facing the emotional rollercoaster of a terminal illness for the first time, the Helios team of physicians, nurses, certified home health aides, social workers and grief counselors specializes in end-of-life care. The Helios team covers more than 3,000 square miles, serving the residents of Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie counties for 40 years since 1983.

How it Started

Formerly known as Catskill Area Hospice and Palliative Care, Helios Care was started by a group of Fox Hospital nurses that operated as a volunteer-staffed organization for the first 10 years of its existence. Dr. Yoshiro Matsuo, a local oncologist, volunteered as its medical director for the first 25 years.

The goal of hospice and palliative care is to make life easier for everyone involved, patients and their families. Hospice provides specialty care for those believed to be in the last six months of their life. Hospice is for anyone with a life-limiting progressive illness, such as people with end-stage diagnoses that include cancer, heart disease, lung disease, dementia and others.

Palliative care, on the other hand, can be an option at any stage of serious illness. You can still receive aggressive treatments and seek a cure while receiving palliative care, which can help manage your pain and symptoms. There is confusion about these two options, and it is best to ask questions and get educated about the best options for you at different stages of your illness.

hospice
noun

[a program designed to provide palliative care and emotional support to the terminally ill in a home or homelike setting so that quality of life is maintained and family members may be active participants in care]



Focused on Comfort and Quality of Life

Dan Ayres said, "We've found that patients would much rather be in the familiar surroundings of home and in the company of family and friends as they cope with a terminal illness. With the support of Helios Hospice Care, patients can stay comfortably and safely at home."



What to Know about Helios Care



compassion kindness sense of humor

Helios Care also offers service wherever patients call home, whether that's an assisted living community, nursing home or private residence. Helios Hospice Care provides customized treatment to relieve many symptoms and side effects of cancer and other diseases. The Helios Care team are experts in managing a person's pain. The team works closely with the patient and his/her physician to manage their symptoms.



President and CEO of Helios Care Dan Ayres is seen in this undated photo. | CONTRIBUTED

Hospice Care, Covered by Insurance

Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurances provide a hospice benefit, which can include the cost of some medications, medical supplies and equipment. You may not know that Medicare benefits can also pay for hospice aides, who can help with activities such as bathing, dressing, grooming and light household chores, or massage therapy.

While a physician is required to certify eligibility for hospice care, the process can be started by anyone. Any person or family member can contact Helios Care to discuss what hospice and palliative care options are available to them.

Kathryn Dailey, director of development and marketing, said, "Helios Care will provide care to anyone who needs the services, regardless of their ability to pay."

That's why Helios Care raises funds from multiple sponsors and numerous events, including the annual Daffodil Jazz Brunch in Franklin, New York and the annual golf tournament. Pam Finch, manager of the Helios Care Thrift & Boutique at 5626 state Highway 7 in Oneonta, said "37 wonderful volunteers staff the boutique and 100% of the proceeds from the sale of donated items goes to patient care." ☺

“WE’VE FOUND THAT PATIENTS WOULD MUCH RATHER BE IN THE FAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS OF HOME AND IN THE COMPANY OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS AS THEY COPE WITH A TERMINAL ILLNESS. WITH THE SUPPORT OF HELIOS HOSPICE CARE, PATIENTS CAN STAY COMFORTABLY AND SAFELY AT HOME.”

Daffodil Jazz Brunch



Top left, clockwise: Dr. Matsuo, Helios Care's medical director for the first 25 years, is seen speaking with Daffodil Jazz Brunch host, Erna McReynolds. From left, Dr. Tommy Ibrahim, president and CEO of Bassett, Dan Ayres, president and CEO of Helios Care and Erna McReynolds and Tom Morgan, hosts of the Daffodil Jazz Brunch. | PHOTOS BY MONICA CALZOLARI

Helios Care provided care for the husband of Linda Robinson, pictured, and multiple other family members. | CONTRIBUTED

Helios President Dan Ayres speaks with the president of Hartwick College at the 2023 Daffodil Jazz Brunch. Daffodils are seen at the home of Erna McReynolds and Tom Morgan, site of the annual fundraiser brunch. The Rob Hunt Trio plays at the Daffodil Jazz Brunch. | PHOTOS BY MONICA CALZOLARI



“RESEARCH SHOWS THAT – FOR THE DYING AND CAREGIVERS ALIKE – HOLISTIC CARE AT THE END OF LIFE STARTS WITH MAKING SURE PEOPLE ARE AS COMFORTABLE AS POSSIBLE. THE BETTER JOB WE DO AT MANAGING PAIN, THE EASIER IT IS FOR PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES TO SPEND QUALITY TIME TOGETHER AT THE END OF LIFE.”

Helios Patients by Diagnosis

Cancer 39%
Cardiovascular 22%
Alzheimer's & Dementia 13%
Pulmonary 10%
Neurological 8%
Gastrointestinal 2%
Renal 2%



Participants in Helios Care's Camp Forget-Me-Not. | CONTRIBUTED

Camp Forget-Me-Not

Another service that Helios Care provides free of charge is a one-day camp for children 5-18. The camp is for those who have lost loved ones and are processing their grief. Over the last 15-20 years, Camp Forget-Me-Not has hosted 49 camps, offered three times annually. Some participants come back year after year, according to Dailey.

Helios Care

www.helioscare.org
info@helioscare.org
297 River St. Service Road, Suite 1
Oneonta, NY 13820
607.432.5525

Palliative Care, Not Covered by Insurance

Dailey explained the importance of grants and fundraising.

“The Helios Care Palliative Care Service is currently funded through a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation,” she said.

“Through the grant, Helios Care has been able to reduce acute care utilization of those who frequent the emergency department or are admitted to the hospital by 70%.”

Gail Ciccarello, ACHPN, palliative care nurse practitioner, recommends “starting the conversation earlier.”

“Most of us feel discussions pertaining to end of life or death/dying will upset our loved ones – or make them anxious – when the truth of the matter is, most people are relieved to have their family start the discussion,” she said. “It is much easier to carry out someone’s wishes if they’ve been communicated in advance, rather than trying to guess what someone would want in a crisis.”

Many families admit they sought hospice care or palliative care later than they should have and wish they had engaged with Helios Hospice Care sooner.

Five Wishes

Helios Care can provide a free copy of a booklet called Five Wishes® which will help you start the conversation sooner. The booklet covers:

- The person you want to make care decisions for you if you cannot
- The kind of medical treatment you want or don't want
- How comfortable you want to be
- How you want people to treat you
- What you want your loved ones to know

Advance care directives are legal documents providing instructions for medical care and only go into effect if you cannot communicate your own wishes. The two most common advance directives for health care are the living will and the durable power of attorney for health care.

A living will is a legal document specifying a person’s wishes regarding medical treatment, specifically treatments that will prolong life. A living will is typically only used in deathbed situations. They typically detail any Do Not Resuscitate orders.

Ayres said all of this helps cultivate what he called “a good death.”

“Research shows that – for the dying and caregivers alike – holistic care at the end of life starts with making sure people are as comfortable as possible,” he said. “The better job we do at managing pain, the easier it is for people and their families to spend quality time together at the end of life.”

It is all too common to avoid talking about taboo subjects such as death. One way to relieve anxiety associated with the fear of the unknown is to educate yourself and make your wishes known. ■

Pumpkin-Chai Hand Pies

BY ALLISON COLLINS

I love hand pies. They take what can seem like a fussy, holiday-specific, delicate dessert and make it mini, portable and, importantly, easy. I've been making hand pies for a few years, ever since needing to generate a lot of single-serving pies or pie-type options for the Unadilla Rotary Club's annual Pie Night (held, cleverly, on or near March 14.)

I am not someone who goes nuts for pumpkin-spiced treats every autumn, but these treats deliver all the fall flavor without being overpowering. The pumpkin-pie filling is just sweet enough, and the chai-spiced sugar sprinkled over each pastry puts a new, cozy spin on the usual flavor profile.

Using prepared pie dough keeps this recipe simple and, the older I get, the more I value good food that is also easy and affordable to execute. And, as a bonus, kids can help make these without their "help" destroying the kitchen. These pumpkin-chai hand pies are perfect for a fall picnic, an afterschool snack or as an add-on to your holiday spread.

Tips:

- If the rolled pastry is sticking or too warm, assemble and pop hand pies in the freezer briefly before cooking.
- Finished hand pies are great served with a big bowl of whipped cream.
- Leftover chai-spiced sugar (there will be plenty) is nice sprinkled over hot drinks, on yogurt, candied nuts, donuts and more.
- These would also be great with apple filling.



IMAGE BY RAWPIXEL.COM | FREEPIK



Ingredients:

For the Pies:

Recipe modified from one found at lexisrose.com.

- 1 package prepared pie dough (two rounds of dough)
- 1 c. canned pumpkin
- ¼ c. dark brown sugar
- 1/8 c. sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tbsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. dry ginger
- 1 tsp. allspice
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- 1 egg white
- 1 tbsp. heavy cream
- Flour, for scattering
- 2 tbsp. chai-spiced sugar (see below)

Chai-Spiced Sugar:

- 1/3 c. white sugar
- 2 ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. dry ginger
- ½ tsp. allspice
- ¼ tsp. cardamom
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves
- Pinch black pepper

PUMPKIN-CHAI HAND PIES



1. The chai-spiced sugar, pictured, can be made and stored ahead of time. 2. Spices such as cloves, allspice, ginger and cinnamon give these hand pies the flavor of fall. 3. Canned pumpkin forms the base of the hand pie filling. 4. Using canned pumpkin, prepared pie dough and sweetened condensed milk keeps these hand pies simple and affordable. 5. Hand pies are filled with a blend of pumpkin and condensed milk, making a texture similar to pumpkin pie. 6. Rolled-out pie dough should be about ¼-inch thick. 7. Hand pies are filled with a dollop of pumpkin mixture. 8. Assembled hand pies get an egg wash before sprinkling with chai-spiced sugar.

Directions:

Combine all chai-spiced sugar ingredients in a lidded, airtight container. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

In a large bowl, combine pumpkin, brown sugar, condensed milk and spices. Mix thoroughly until smooth. Set aside.

Flour your work surface and roll out pie dough to about 1/4-inch thickness. Sprinkle additional flour as needed to prevent sticking.

Using a pumpkin-shaped cookie-cutter or a round biscuit cutter, stamp out hand pies. Repeat roll-out process with scrap dough until all pie dough is used.

Place bottom layer of hand pies on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Fill bottom layer with roughly 1 tsp. pumpkin filling. Be careful not to overfill.

Cover hand pies with the top pie crust, crimping edges to seal. Using a small, sharp knife, cut tiny vents in the tops.

Whisk together egg white and heavy cream and brush hand pies to coat and seal.

Sprinkle tops with chai-spiced sugar.

Bake the assembled hand pies for about 20 minutes, or until tops are golden brown.

Let cool, and enjoy! ■

PHOTOS BY ALLISON COLLINS



Self-Care CORNER with Chelsea

The Cardio Club

BY CHELSEA FRISBEE
JOHNSON



Owner Raegan Reed, pictured, and her husband, Travis Reed, purchased the building now housing the Cardio Club in September 2012.



The Cardio Club & Delhi Dance Studio is at 17 Elm St., Delhi, NY and offers two fitness studios upstairs, four bathrooms, locker rooms with showers, a kids' zone and more.

This month I interviewed local business owner and wellness extraordinaire, Raegan Reed, of the Cardio Club & Delhi Dance Studio in Delhi. Reed is passionate about her work and her community and has a range of offerings to help members stay active and healthy.

Tell me about the Cardio Club and the programs/offerings you have for the community.

The Cardio Club & Delhi Dance Studio is a 24/7 facility located at 17 Elm St., Delhi. We have tons of classes for people ages 3 to senior citizens. We have dance classes for kids and adults, aerial yoga, barre, bootcamp-style classes, dance fitness classes, yoga, spin and more. We have classes for the early bird, classes mid-morning and evening, and weekend classes, too. In our facility, we have locker rooms with showers, and a kids' zone for kids to hang while their parents exercise.

Although this facility is open 24/7 for our members, with keycard and QR code access, the staff members are available to offer guidance Monday through Thursday, and trainers can be hired at an additional cost. To help our members attain their goals, we try to offer a welcoming and inspiring environment for all. It's like the TV show "Cheers," the place "where everyone knows your name."

Two times a year we also offer what we call the LiveFit Challenge: a weight-loss challenge where our participants earn points and prizes and learn how to eat clean, exercise and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

What have you heard from your members in terms of feedback on your programming and facilities?

Here are some of our reviews from members:

Love the classes, love the instructors, love the environment. With the help of the Cardio Club, I have been able to reach my weight loss goal of losing 75 pounds, and I'm in the best shape of my life. Raegan's commitment and devotion to all her members is extraordinary. – Judy Wright

I joined Cardio Club to get in shape after having my second child. The owner was so welcoming and made me feel right at home. She checked in with me regularly to make sure I was getting everything I wanted out of my membership. The gym itself is well maintained and has everything you need and nothing you don't. You can feel what a special community Delhi and the surrounding areas are. I moved recently and it was so sad to say goodbye. It was also easy to cancel my membership. The owner even made sure to say I could come back and use the gym if I was ever in town again! Great spot; I couldn't recommend more! – Kate Fitch Wiggins



Above: From left, front to back: Adalyn Schultz, Willow O'Leary, Autumn O'Leary, Lily Reed, Althea Raber, Brynn Moody, Clara Whittaker and Hollyn Tucker enjoy tap class at The Cardio Club & Delhi Dance Studio. Dance classes are offered for all ages.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Top left: The Cardio Club classes are fun and varied. Looking to switch up your fitness routine, or join the CC family? The first week of classes is free. From left, front to back: Amber Gardner, Julianne Karn, Irene Cox, Abi Tessier, Emma Smith, Zara Houshmand and Alanna Donnes rehearse in their Modern IV class before the annual recital, held the second Saturday in June.

Right: From left, front to back: Adalyn Schultz, Willow O'Leary, Autumn O'Leary, Lily Reed, Althea Raber, Brynn Moody, Clara Whittaker and Hollyn Tucker enjoy tap class at The Cardio Club & Delhi Dance Studio. Dance classes are offered for all ages.

What impact do you see the Cardio Club and your broader programming having on the community?

I try to be an active community member in many ways: as a local business owner, a community advocate for the community I love and a support for other business owners and newcomers in our community. I enjoy volunteering, as well. I also host an annual dance recital the second Saturday of every June (for 20 years!), and the Catskill Mountain Yoga Festival, the fourth Saturday in July, at Plattekill Mountain, for the past three years. I love drawing people to our area, so they can see what I see.

What are the top three wellness practices that you recommend to clients at this time of year?

1. Eat three clean meals a day and two small snacks. Meaning real food, from the earth, not junk.
2. Drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily. At first you may need to use the restroom a lot, but it will subside.
3. Get moving! Find a form of exercise you enjoy, and one that is kind to your body. Fitness classes, yoga, use the gym, power walk or whatever floats your boat. Make it something you look forward to.

What's your own personal favorite self-care practice during the fall months?

I try to follow the tips I mentioned. I always eat three meals, I try super hard to drink enough water, I need to exercise to feel great and I also try my best to get seven to eight hours of sleep each night. I also schedule time for fun. I add it to my weekly calendar, so I make certain I don't work too much and not play!

What inspires you about your work? What are the challenges?

I love, love, love my work. It is hard not to want to work all the time, because I love what I do. From teaching dance, yoga and fitness classes, to small group and personal training, to the marketing stuff and event planning, I really love all of it. It is hard to put my work away, because I enjoy doing it.

I love the people and community that we have built at The Cardio Club. The people are the very best part. I love being connected to so many wonderful and unique people. I have made some of my very best friends through the gym. It is nice to have people to work and play with. ➔

I would say that the biggest challenge can be customer service at times. I really try hard to make people happy and bring joy to people's lives, so if and when anyone is not 100% happy, I have to work hard to overcome that feeling. I do not like to let anyone down. When you own a business, though, it is impossible to please everyone all the time.

How can people learn more about the Cardio Club?

People interested in joining The Cardio Club community are always welcome to try their first week free! Fitness classes, yoga, 24/7 gym access – come check it out. You can find out more info on the gym and dance studio by checking out thecardioclub.com or follow us on Instagram @the_cardio_club.

If you're interested in learning more about the Catskill Mountain Yoga Festival or yoga retreats we host in Mexico and Costa Rica, check out catskillmountainyogafestival.com and @catskillmountainyogafestival on Instagram. ■



Chelsea Frisbee Johnson is a life coach, writer and spiritual leader who loves helping people find more joy and peace in their life.



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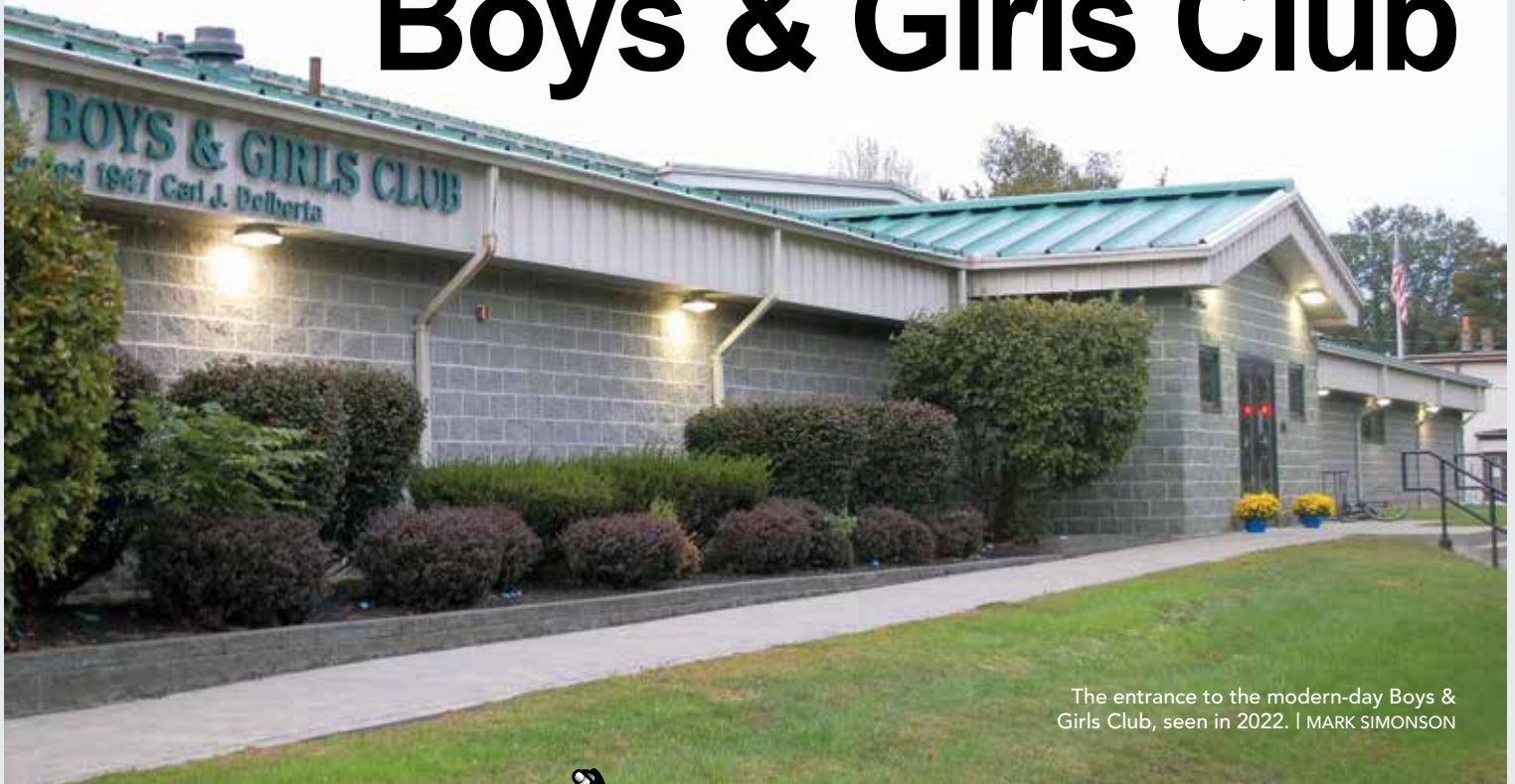
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Oneonta Boys & Girls Club



The entrance to the modern-day Boys & Girls Club, seen in 2022. | MARK SIMONSON

“I FEEL THERE’S A GREAT NEED. I THINK THE TIME IS RIGHT TO HAVE IT, BECAUSE YOU’VE GOT A LOT OF YOUNGER CHILDREN AROUND AND THEY’VE GOT NOTHING TO DO.”



Walls act as witness. They observe a community being built that raises strong, kind, confident kids. That’s the aim of the Oneonta Boys & Girls Club, active in the area since 1946 in or near Oneonta’s Sixth Ward.



Officer Carl Delberta, Sr. is seen in this undated photo. | COURTESY OF THE DELBERTA FAMILY

Kids have always needed things to do in their spare time. Whether it was organized physical activity or games, Oneonta had limited opportunities in the early 20th century. Youth had to find their own ways, until Carl Delberta, Sr. came back from World War II. Carl had an idea, and it later became the Oneonta Boys Club.

Many know that Carl Delberta had a successful professional boxing career. Delberta always stayed in shape and worked out, whether it was in the ring or during time spent working at the nearby Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Gilbert Lake. He also boxed during the war. But when Carl came home from the service, he noticed there weren’t many facilities where a kid could get into shape or learn to box. The need for a Boys Club got into his mind, and for years he pursued such a club.



The Boys Club after completion on River Street in 1968. | COURTESY OF THE DELBERTA FAMILY



Stevie Schulte and Brittany Mykytyn of Oneonta examine a model of the proposed expansion for the Oneonta Boys & Girls Club in July 1997 at a groundbreaking event. | DAILY STAR FILE

Backyard Beginnings

What is known today as The Boys and Girls Club of America began for only boys in 1860, when several women in Hartford, Connecticut believed that boys who roamed the streets needed a positive alternative. By 1906, several Boys Clubs decided to affiliate. In 1931, the Boys Club Federation of America became Boys Clubs of America. It should be noted that the Oneonta organization has never been affiliated with the national organization.

Carl Delberta joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in Oneonta after returning from the South Pacific and became chairman of the organization's Youth Committee. Carl's idea of a Boys Club had already started with six members, and they trained in the backyard of the Delberta home in the Sixth Ward. By joining the VFW, Delberta was able to secure use of an old garage behind the VFW, at 97 Main St. at the time. Although the boys did all the work refurbishing the garage, one could politely call it rustic. Delberta also became a member of the Eagles Club, where he chaired its Youth Committee. There, kids could work out on the stage upstairs.

The Boys Club went through a few more moves in the next several years, as space and vacancies permitted. Some may recall locations on South Main Street, or at the former Oneonta Video offices on Elm Street. But after a year, they came full circle, back to the garage behind the VFW. ➔



Left: The Boys Club met at various sites in the 1950s and '60s, primarily at a barn behind the former Oneonta VFW, 97 Main St. **Below:** Carl Delberta's back yard in the late 1940s, the early years of the Boys Club. Carl is pictured supervising two young boxers, left. | COURTESY OF THE DELBERTA FAMILY.





The Oneonta High School Alumni Association has held recent reunion events in a gymnasium at the club, seen in 2022. | MARK SIMONSON

Fundraising to Fruition

During all these moves, Carl talked with people in the community about a modern facility. He was certainly in the public eye frequently, as he wore a badge for the Oneonta Police Department, patrolling the Main and Chestnut street corners for many years. People respectfully listened to Carl's vision of a modern Boys Club, but few thought anything would ever materialize. Carl kept talking, and working. So did the increasing membership at the Boys Club.

There were candy sales, paper drives and numerous other fundraising efforts. Many individuals, businesses and organizations in the community responded with monetary and other donations. Delberta finally got the official incorporation of the Boys Club in 1964, with about 150 members. The work continued and membership climbed, somehow all fitting in that VFW garage. Finally, land was secured at the corner of Wilcox Avenue and River Street in 1966, and construction began on the \$400,000 facility in April 1967. It was completed in early 1968.

The dedication ceremony and open house on May 5 that year was attended by more than 700 residents, with praise doled out by guests and dignitaries. Carl Delberta thanked the many donors and supporters for their generosity.

"The people of Oneonta have been wonderful," he said. A special guest was Ben Becker, the 1960 Olympic boxing coach who paced Cassius Clay (later Muhammad Ali) through the Olympics, and said, "No man respects Carl Delberta more than I do." After the ceremony, Carl took families on tours through his new dream house at 70 River St.

Expanding the Scope

Membership remained strong, but until 1996, the club was only for boys. That year, the club announced plans to double facilities and provide programs for girls, too.

Plans were unveiled on Sept. 19, 1996, and announced in front of about 50 community leaders and guests. Robert A. Harlem, a Boys Club vice president, reviewed some of the progress the club had made over the years in providing Oneonta's boys and young men with quality after-school activities. At that time, the club served about 500 boys.

As reported by The Daily Star, "Success stories notwithstanding, Harlem said the founding fathers have come to realize 'that it wasn't really a complete job. It was really only half of the job. The young ladies of our community have been excluded.'

"Thus the expansion. Carl J. Delberta, Sr., a former professional boxer and Oneonta policeman who has guided the Boys Club for all of its 49 years, welcomes the addition of the girls club.

"I feel there's a great need,' he said. 'I think the time is right to have it, because you've got a lot of younger children around and they've got nothing to do.'

"It keeps (the boys) off the streets. The girls need the same thing."

The club was already in the midst of a \$3.5 million campaign to fund the expansion of its River Street headquarters to include the new gymnasium for girls and other facilities. It was reported in June 1997 that \$1 million had been raised, and a public campaign was underway. Just as the club had done in 1968, contributions were sought from the public. Nearly 10,000 brochures were mailed to residents asking for any level of support, and other brochures were placed at local businesses.

The campaign was successful, as a groundbreaking ceremony took place on Tuesday, July 22 and was reported in the next day's Star.

"Carl Delberta, Jr. used a golden garden fork...turning over grass and dirt near the sign of the Oneonta Boys Club, soon to be the Oneonta Boys and Girls Club.

“It’s about time,” said Stevie Schulte, 12, of Oneonta. She and other girls have been working on fund raising activities.

“We’ve had a blast doing it,” said Brittany Mykytyn, 12, also of Oneonta. Girls, as well as boys, enjoy sports and athletic activities, said Brittany, who is ‘110 percent’ behind the expansion.

“Under an awning Tuesday, the two girls sat in the front row to hear officials speak about hopes for the expanded club and thank supporters.”

They heard how the project had come in under budget, at \$2.7 million, and all but about \$500,000 had been raised.

“This is really an exciting event for all of us,” Harlem told a crowd of about 45 visitors, including some children. Harlem noted that women in the community have energized the board of directors and other supporters to get the project going.

“It was so ready to happen,” said Jeanie Scarzafava of Oneonta, who was asked to spearhead the project. “When I became involved, I couldn’t contain my excitement.” She and Harlem joined Delberta Jr. by digging into the earth with golden shovels.”

The beams were in place by September, and as construction progressed, plans were set for a grand opening on Saturday, Sept. 12, 1998.

Continuing to Grow

Today’s club offers much more than physical activities. Members 6 to 16 can participate in arts and crafts, take a cooking class or simply do their homework after school in a quiet, supervised space. The Oneonta Boys & Girls Club offers many programs throughout the year. The club is constantly changing and evolving programs to offer the best possible activities for its members.

Find out more at oneontaboysandgirlsclub.org.

While our area can be thankful for what the Boys & Girls Club has done all these years, the club will once again be actively participating in the annual Helios Care Turkey Trot Run/Walk on Thursday, Nov. 23, beginning at 9 a.m. Participants can make an in-person registration and pick up a bib and T-shirt in days leading up to the run/walk. Visit <https://thanksgivingday5kturkeytrotforhospicc.com> for details. ■

Historian Mark Simonson grew up in Oneonta. He has worked in public relations, marketing and broadcast journalism. Simonson was appointed Oneonta City Historian in 1998. He writes a historical column in *The Daily Star* and has published books highlighting local and regional history.



Here, Simonson shares stories about old buildings of interest in the upstate region.



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The Dead Romantics

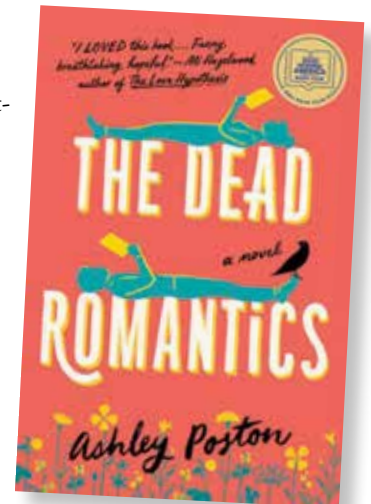
By Ashley Poston

The Dead Romantics is a refreshing new rom-com novel with a supernatural spin. Florence is a ghost-writer for a very popular romance novelist. After a devastating break-up, she no longer believes she will find true love or her happily-ever-after. She is struggling to write a happy ending for her latest novel. This causes problems with her new editor, who demands she submit a completed novel. She can also see and talk to ghosts, though she tries to avoid them.

After her father's death, Florence returns to her hometown to help prepare his services with her family at the funeral home they own. When she arrives, she is surprised to discover the newly deceased ghost of Benji, her new editor, who happens to be a lovable romance fanatic.

Florence and Benji have undeniable chemistry, with the right amount of corny and sap. Poston delivers a quirky and sweet romance story that proves love never dies. Her unique and entertaining cast of characters give the book a feel-good energy and charm. Florence and her family share an uplifting perspective on death that celebrates life and love.

This delightful book will have you feeling the comfort and warmth of a cozy sweater on a chilly fall day.



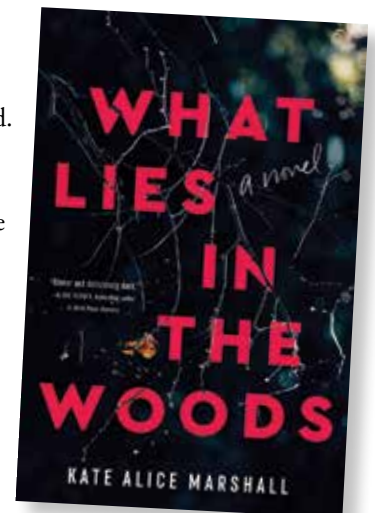
What Lies in the Woods

By Kate Alice Marshall

Naomi was ruthlessly attacked in the woods when she was 11 years old, getting stabbed 17 times. The only witnesses were her two young friends, who stayed hidden during the attack. Miraculously, she survived. Along with her friends, she identified the attacker and sent a sadistic serial killer to jail. The girls are heroes and justice is served, or so it seems.

After the incident, Naomi carries physical and mental scars she avoids confronting and coping with. More than 20 years later, the man convicted of the crimes dies in jail from cancer, and the three friends reunite. Immediately, readers discover the past is not always what it seems, or even how it is remembered. As the story develops, you cannot help but wonder, can Naomi trust the people closest to her, or even her own memories?

Marshall writes a twisted tale so intriguing with tangled secrets and unexpected lies that will have readers eagerly turning the pages, needing to discover how it all unfolds. As history gets dug up and secrets exposed, readers will reveal the twisted truth of what happened before, during and after the attack in the woods. This book will keep you guessing, as Naomi uncovers secrets and lies she struggles to understand. Readers will experience Naomi's paranoia as she tries to find the courage to face the past. Prepare to devour this chilling story in one sitting as you solve the puzzle and discover how it all connects to what lies in the woods.



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